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Sommario/riassunto	European democracy doesn't need national heroes, ready to die for their homeland, but critical, active citizens who together develop and build the model of society we want to live in.» European integration represents an extraordinary political experiment, which calls for a critical review of the tools and the lexicon traditionally used by sociology to analyse democracy. In this study the risks and opportunities of the passage from the nation-State to transnationality and original institutional structures, such as the system of multilevel governance, are discussed in the light of a wide-ranging analysis of the transformations of the social bond and of political cultures. With reference to the principles of deliberative and cosmopolitan democracy, focus is then placed in particular on the dynamics of democratic self-construction from the grassroots of European society, which develop from the construction of a transnational public sphere.