Literature on differentiated integration in Europe is booming again. Students of structuralist neo-realism and institutionalism offer various interpretations of the evolving patterns of regional governance in the continent. The evolution of macro- and micro-level integration, however, can be viewed from a complex systems perspective. Interpreted as an evolutionary political and economic process, differentiated integration appears to be the manifestation of the historical and institutional path-dependence of divergent and convergent cyclical trajectories of regionalisation and globalisation. The European Union, functioning as an adaptive self-organising regional system in a highly complex environment, that is the global (world) system, on the one hand, and consisting of highly complex national (sub-)systems, on the other, is facing recurrent challenges to respond to by preserving its unity in diversity.