

# EPFMA Bulletin



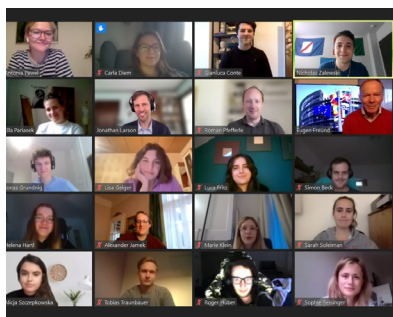
76 · September 2021

European Parliament Former Members Association

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## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Editorial Board would like to thank all those members who took the time to contribute to this issue of the FMA Bulletin. We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the decision to include an article lies with the FMA Editorial Board and, in principle, contributions from members who are not up-to-date with the payment of the membership fee will not be included. Due to the long time lag between the call for contribution and the publication, some articles may be outdated.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Member,

After a difficult year of recovery, the September issue focuses on the next generation, a generation we can learn from and who can learn from us so that together we can create a better and stronger Europe for all. This next generation and its EU budget, gender, employment and youth poverty will be further discussed in the 'Focus' section. You will also be able to read four articles written by FMA Members on the EU after Brexit, electoral law and more. After the summer break, the FMA will continue its autumn activities with an FMA delegation visit to Slovenia to find out more about its Presidency of the EU Council.

Its slogan 'Together. Resilient. Europe.' creates high expectations for increased EU resilience in areas such as health, the economy, energy, the climate and the cyber crisis. I look forward to an exchange of views on the key issues on the EU's political agenda.

The tragedy in Afghanistan must have consequences on the policies of the European Union and indepth reflections will be published in the next edition of our Bulletin.

This year's fifth Librorum event will take place on 20 October 2021. We will present Start Up Europe, a book written by Zofija Mazej Kukovič, during a discussion opened by Brigitte Langenhagen and chaired by Michael Hindley, both FMA Board Members. The book could be of interest to former and current MEPs who are interested in the issues tackled by Ms Kukovič: health, science, the environment, gender and development.

In November, I will chair an FMA delegation visit to Moldova. More information will be available soon via email and the FMA website. We will end this year of celebration with a two-day event at the European Parliament and the House of European History, if the COVID-19 situation allows.

On the first day, 7 December 2021, you are cordially invited to join Commissioner of Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth Mariya Gabriel, Rector of the College of Europe Federica Mogherini and prominent professors in celebrating the 15th anniversary of the EP to Campus programme, followed by the closing ceremony of the FMA's 20th anniversary events. On 8 December 2021, FMA events for the year will conclude with the 'Together for the Future of Europe' event. It will focus on the EU's green transition strategy and will be organised with the support of the main European political foundations and the academic expertise of the European University Institute.

Furthermore, in this issue you will find reports on recent FMA activities. So far this year, almost 40 EP to Campus programmes have been organised and it is thanks to your commitment and dedication that we were able to take full advantage of digital education and teach students around the world virtually about the workings of Parliament and topics such as Brexit, the EU Green Deal and consumer protection. This issue also contains a report on the virtual FMA visit to Portugal on 24 and 25 June 2021, when a delegation of FMA Members visited Portugal

remotely on the occasion of its Presidency of the Council of the EU. We were delighted to receive a video message from the President of Portugal, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, and to meet with parliament and government representatives to discuss relevant and current political, economic and social issues, such as the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, social inclusion, migration, health and the digital and green transition. We also took part in an interactive virtual visit to the Ciência Viva scientific research centre and met with representatives of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, who explained how the foundation contributes to improving people's quality of life through art, charity, science and education.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the September issue and to the success of the FMA's activities.

I hope we can reunite in person in the near future and that I can welcome you all to Brussels during the December events.

With my best regards,

**Hans-Gert Pötering**  
FMA President

## Key facts

### MEPs approved new Social Fund to support young people and the most deprived..

(June session - P9\_TA(2021)0272)

European Social Fund+, with a total budget of €88 billion, will play an important role in the implementation of the action plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights and in countering the socio-economic effects of the pandemic.

### EU Parliament adopted the resolution "EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives".

(June session - P9\_TA(2021)0277).

A "Paris agreement" for biodiversity and an EU Biodiversity Law are needed to ensure that ecosystems are restored, resilient, and adequately protected by 2050.

### MEPs adopted greener funds for regional development and cooperation.

(June session- P9\_TA(2021)0300)

Three EU funds were adopted to strengthen the EU's economic, social and territorial cohesion with a total of

€243 billion. The so-called "cohesion package" comprises the European Territorial Cooperation Goal (Interreg), the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund, as well as the Common Provisions Regulation, a set of norms governing EU regional, cohesion and social funds over the next seven years.

### MEPs confirmed deal on climate neutrality by 2050.

(June session- P9\_TA(2021)0309)

The new EU Climate Law increases the EU's 2030 emissions reductions target from 40% to at least 55%. With the contribution from new carbon sinks it could raise to 57%.

### EU Parliament adopted the 2021-2027 fisheries and aquaculture fund to support the blue economy, protect biodiversity and promote international ocean governance.

(July session - P9\_TA(2021)0325)

€6.1 billion will be allocated to the new European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), which encourages member states to invest in

making the fisheries and aquaculture sectors more competitive and helping develop a sustainable blue economy, new markets and technologies. Protecting and restoring biodiversity is also among the fund's priorities.

### EU Parliament adopted two funds for asylum and border policies.

(July session - P9\_TA(2021)0326)

The 2021-2027 Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (€9.88 billion) will strengthen the EU's common asylum policy, develop legal migration in line with member states' needs, support the integration of third-country nationals, and contribute to the fight against irregular migration. The money should also serve to push member states to share the responsibility of hosting refugees and asylum-seekers more fairly across the EU.

## Afghanistan: Statement by the EU High Representative Josep Borrell



[...] The EU stresses the utmost importance of the safety and security of all EU citizens in Afghanistan, as well as local staff working for the EU or member states.

[...] The EU calls for an immediate cessation of all violence, the restoration of security and civil order and the protection and respect for civilian life, dignity and property throughout Afghanistan. In this regard, the EU expresses deep concern about reports of serious human rights violations and abuses in areas across Afghanistan.

[...] The EU aims to continue its support to the Afghan people and to democracy, good governance, human rights and social and economic development in the country, including efforts to prevent and manage the risks associated with an unstable Afghanistan in continued conflict, resulting in regional instability, drugs trafficking and uncontrolled irregular migration.

[...] However, cooperation with any future Afghan government will be conditioned on a peaceful and inclusive settlement and respect for the fundamental rights of all Afghans, including women, youth and persons belonging to minorities, as well as respect for Afghanistan's international obligations, commitment to the fight against corruption and preventing the use of Afghanistan's territory by terrorist organisations.



## Other main dossiers discussed in the plenary sessions were:

08.06.21

MEPs approved the request of Belgium, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands for support from the **European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF)** to help dismissed workers find new jobs.

MEPs adopted the **EU digital COVID Certificate package** to facilitate travel within the EU and contribute to the economic recovery.

10.06.21

MEPs demanded the temporary lifting of **intellectual property rights protection for COVID-19 vaccines**, to accelerate global vaccine rollout

MEPs urged the Commission to act swiftly in the application of the **Law Conditionality Regulation**.

MEPs call for **tighter EU cybersecurity standards** for connected devices, apps and operating systems, amid recent cyberattacks on critical infrastructure in the EU.

MEPs endorsed EU citizens' call for **gradual end to caged farming** possibly already by 2027.

24.06.21

MEPs urged member states to protect and further enhance **women's sexual and reproductive health and rights**.

MEPs adopted a report supporting for **Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration** into the European Union.

06.07.21

MEPs endorsed a temporary regulation that allows webbased service providers to continue **fighting child sexual abuse material online** on a voluntary basis.

07.07.21

Parliament adopted the upgraded **Connecting Europe Facility programme** and released new funds for transport, digital and energy projects for 2021-2027.

MEPs regret that the Commission has decided to abide by the non-binding December 2020 European Council conclusions and delay the application of the **budget conditionality regulation** by developing application guidelines.

Parliament has adopted a resolution welcoming the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, while calling for **corruption** to be included as a punishable offence.

08.07.21

Parliament adopted its position for negotiations with Council on extending the mandate of the **European Medicines Agency** and strengthening its role.

MEPs stressed the urgent need for the parties negotiating within the framework of the **Commission on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)** to reach an agreement.

Parliament "condemns in the strongest possible terms" the recent **anti-LGBTIQ legislation** and denounces the dismantling of democracy and the rule of law in Hungary.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/plenary>



# LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

“

Dear President,

I have been in the Parliament in one form or another since 1979 and it is to my lasting regret that Britain voted to leave the European Union. There is no future for Europe unless it's a Europe that works with itself and is united. One thing I have become absolutely convinced of, and remain convinced of, is that the European Union has got to evolve to survive. There is no future for Europe without the Union. None at all. There is no real future outside the European Union and Britain is going to find that out. Sadly, it's going to find that out from outside.

I came from a rather nonpolitical background. There were no politicians in my family at all. I probably wouldn't have been a politician but for an unfortunate home background, which ended up with me being in a children's home and falling under the influence - though I never joined them - of the political Party known as the Communist Party of Great Britain the CPGB and the Trade Union Movement. One thing I did learn from them, is that most people in politics try to do good. It doesn't really matter what their political label is - and

there certainly are exceptions - but most people came into politics, because they think they can do some good in the world. I never fitted very well into the Labour Party. People used to say well "Why are you here? You are not really Labour at all. You should be in the Conservative Party." But Conservatives used to say "Well, I think you fit best into the Labour Party", so it has been a good thing, and being in Europe of course helped it, because Britain was never a very good European. Nobody was ever that much concerned. And that was one of the great weaknesses of course in Britain. There was always a lack of the European vocation and for years and years, it was as bad under both Conservative and Labour governments.

After I left the Parliament, in one of the more inspired examples of his leadership, David Cameron, decided to sign me up to work for him. And I was his Trade Union Advisor. After all my years in politics, the most satisfying job I have ever had, was working for Cameron. Because he brought me near the center of power, than anything I had ever experienced in the European Parliament or elsewhere. One of the things I learned, was the enormous

pressure that people at the top of politics are under. Every move they make is watched, everyone is looking for mistakes. Those people who take leadership roles in politics are the true heroes

of democracy. They are the people who deserve our hanks the most. Because they not only keep the democratic machine working, they are the ones who are at the top of it. They are the ones whose families pay the price. And that I always say to people, is something that we constantly underestimate, this personal sacrifice, and I am not talking about me because as Questor you don't make much sacrifice, I am talking about the people who lead our nations and our European Union. They are the ones who make the really big sacrifices.

I often go and speak to schools. And at the end of my speech to schools, I say two things to the pupils: The first thing is that if I can get to the House of Lords, so can any of you. You know it's partly luck, it's hard work, it's doing things. The second thing I always say to them is this; you can be sorry for what you did yesterday, but you can shape what you do tomorrow. Tomorrow is the day that you can change, that you can do some good in the world, that you can make your own, and that is the most important thing. Don't live in the past, sad old people live in the past, brave people live in the future. Remember you can shape tomorrow, you can memorialize yesterday, you can be thankful for yesterday, but you can actually change tomorrow. Always look forward, always look to tomorrow.

**Lord Richard Balfe**

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*Lord Richard Balfe and President Hans-Gert Pöttering during the Annual General Assembly*





## Paving the way for truly European elections

Parliament debates the reform of EU electoral law

For more than 40 years, we have enjoyed direct elections to the European Parliament, but truly European elections continue to elude us. When the EU summit decided to opt for direct elections during the Italian Presidency in 1976, harmonised European election procedures were also promised. Rather an exemption than a rule, the Electoral Act of 1978 enabled the first direct elections to take place the following year under the national electoral systems.

This has had consequences to this day. We still have 27 national election campaigns, 27 lists of national candidates, and different national rules for sending the representatives of EU citizens to the European Parliament. This situation comes at a high price. Quite often campaigning is about controversial national issues, pitting opposition parties against ruling parties;

**"We still have 27 national election campaigns, 27 lists of national candidates, and different national rules for sending the representatives of EU citizens to the European Parliament...."**

not much about Europe, and no campaigning from the heart. Citizens do not regard the elections to the European Parliament as serious and important, but as second-rate.

As co-rapporteur with Danuta Hübner during the last legislative

term, I witnessed Parliament achieve some success, making improvements and innovations. The new electoral law demands gender equality in the composition of the elected Parliament, sending a strong message to the political parties to draw up a balanced list of female and male candidates. However, there was no majority for more precise rules like the postcode method. We worked on reasonable timeframes for the publication of the electoral roll and the lists of candidates in the Member States. This was done in part very shortly before election day. Under these conditions, serious debates with EU citizens about the myriad European topics are not possible. But we also achieved more inclusive elections to the European Parliament.

The new electoral law allows EU citizens to vote in embassies and consulates around the world when

they can't be at home on polling day. Postal voting must be allowed from now on. The Member States are encouraged to prepare for electronic voting, as Estonia is already doing. Lowering the voting age to 16 should also be considered, as Austria has done. Parliamentary democracy needs



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political parties to represent the different opinions and interests of the citizens in elections. The new electoral law is designed to make the role of European political parties more visible and relevant.

for a transnational component at the next elections in 2024. The introduction of an EU-wide constituency and European lists would be a game-changer in many respects. The European political

is the political group's candidate for the election of Commission president. The media would debate the profiles and programmes of the Spitzenkandidaten much more intensively and well in advance of election day. There is now a unique opportunity to introduce European lists. Brexit left a considerable number of seats vacant. No Member State has to fear relinquishing a seat in the European Parliament. An intelligent system should guarantee a balanced representation of candidates from all countries – big and small, old and new. EU citizens and European democracy are the winners of the Europeanisation of these elections. The citizens would get two votes: one for their national candidate and one for their preferred European list. Transnational debates will help to find the best ways to deliver the common good at EU level. I am very much hoping for a breakthrough in 2022 – perhaps one of the outcomes of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

**"The supposedly European elections remain purely national competitions about the distribution of mandates for the European Parliament. [...] The introduction of an EU-wide constituency and European lists would be a game-changer in many respects. The European political parties could finally find their role and purpose in the political theatre. They could decide on a transnational list of candidates and compete with the whole political family across the EU for power in the elected European Parliament. "**

The logos of these European parties and groupings should appear on campaign materials and ballot papers. Citizens could be made more aware of the impact that their vote could have on the political direction of the elected Parliament. However, none of these improvements serve to address the fundamental problem: the supposedly European elections remain purely national competitions about the distribution of mandates for the European Parliament. I therefore very much welcome the fact that this Parliament is committed to achieving a genuine breakthrough

parties could finally find their role and purpose in the political theatre. They could decide on a transnational list of candidates and compete with the whole political family across the EU for power in the elected European Parliament. This would stimulate a much more vibrant European political debate and foster a much greater European public sphere. The left-right deliberations about the best concepts and ideas would create a new dynamic and attract a wider section of the population.

Together with European lists goes the idea of Spitzenkandidaten. The number one name on the list

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# The answers of the European Union in a globalized world

During the 21st century, we will experience a new multipolar world in which the Triad of Europe, the United States and – to some extent – Japan will continue to play an important economic role, but in which other prominent powers will be at play, such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and different emerging countries. The growth of these economies and above all China, which is causing difficulties for competition in Europe, could encourage some countries to adopt a protectionist policy in line with that espoused by former US President Donald Trump and advocated by some politicians here in Europe.

The EU has followed an economic policy of openness throughout the decades – and with good results. As recognised in the Europe 2020 Strategy along with other documents and research, ‘the EU has prospered through trade, exporting round the world and importing inputs as well as finished goods’.

With this strategy, the EU has an important role in contributing to the development of other countries, such as through exports to our neighbouring countries.

However, despite the challenges presented by such an open economy, the EU and the euro area in particular has by far the greatest global economic surplus in its current account balance; this despite some restrictive competitive conditions like high labour costs.

Europe has a significant role to play in showing that it is possible to compete at the global level with its handling of difficult but significant social challenges, as highlighted at a recent European Council meeting that took place in Porto in May under the Portuguese presidency.

To a great extent, the success of the EU in an open world economy depends on the state of its market. This was clearly emphasised in recent publications by the Commission and the Europe 2020 strategy, which affirmed that ‘a stronger, deeper, extended single market is vital for growth and job creation’.

The formation and enlargement of the single market has a direct benefit for its citizens and economy, but it also benefits entrepreneurs from other areas of the world who do business

in the EU. For example, the EU has the advantages of open borders between Member States and harmonised technical requirements. Furthermore, the benefits of the euro are not confined solely to Europe. The euro area will always be a very important market for the business activities of entrepreneurs from all over the world.

A regional bloc like the EU can also play a significant role in establishing an environment which is conducive to the creation of initiatives and the realisation of large projects which, due to the associated costs and risks, one country alone would not be in a position to carry out. One noteworthy example is Airbus. Its success benefits not only Europe but also other countries including the United States, as US transport companies have the option of buying Boeing or Airbus aircraft and are not restricted in having to choose from only one company with a monopoly on producing large commercial aircraft.

Considering the benefits for Europe and beyond, the EU's success in these endeavours will probably lead other regional blocs and countries towards taking similar steps. In this vein, the EU can play a crucial role in helping to bring about a better,



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# West Balkan enlargement is now a geo-political priority

The history of EU enlargement is the history of strategic political decisions about the future and stability of a free, democratic Europe.

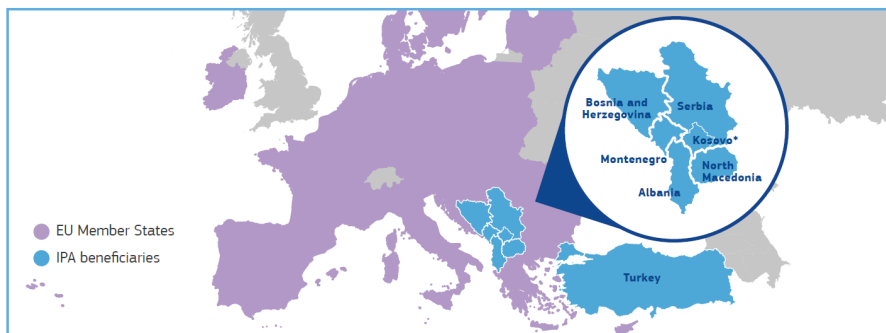
Enlargement, from the very start, changed the character and balance of the European project in pursuit of its central aim – the maintenance of the peace, stability, democracy and freedom from which prosperity can grow. Adoption of the Acquis, the satisfaction of the elements of democracy, rule of law, human rights and protection of minorities remain essential conditions but beyond that the priority has always been politics. Enlargement has almost always had costs. Only the 1995 enlargement to 15 member states raised GDP per capital in the EU. The equation has otherwise been about balancing the costs of enlargement with the strategic costs of not enlarging.

The nature of the calculation with the potential enlargement of the EU to the six West Balkan states is no different. Geo-political actors with a vested interest in fermenting instability on the borders of the EU remain in play and, while the

path of west Balkan states remains unclear, have every incentive to exert what influence they can. Xi's China, Putin's Russia and autocratic Gulf states all have reason to trade potentially transformational resources in return for influence and the erosion of EU ambitions in the region.

Thus far the effects have been limited. The EU remains the chosen road. But it has already been a long road relative to previous accession journeys, frustrated by a lack of perceived importance, the distractions of more immediate issues for the 27 and neighbourhood disputes that have appeared insoluble. No country other than Turkey has been an applicant for longer than North Macedonia, in that time the country has stabilised considerably, became a member of NATO and gone the extra mile by changing the name of the country to end its dispute with Greece. Remarkably, support for EU accession among the population remains remarkably high, but how long can that patience be sustained without demonstrable progress? Though less prolonged, the journeys of Albania and Montenegro

of 12 years from application still have no end in sight, with the possibility of 2025 for Montenegro and Serbia officially "highly optimistic", particularly given the barrier of recognition of Kosovan independence. The post-Soviet central European 2004 enlargement increased the EU's population by 19.6% and lower GDP per capita in the Union by 8.9%. The east Balkans in 2007 brought a further 6.5% population increase and a further fall of GDP per capita of 4%. By comparison all six west Balkan states at 17.9 million people represent only 4% of the EU's population – the equivalent of the Netherlands, their total GDP equal to that of Slovakia. Even a hypothetical enlargement involving all six countries would be well within the capabilities of the EU to absorb – the economic disparities being comparable to those between Spain and Portugal and the ten member states in the mid-1980s. Delays and political flaws in accession processes have had consequences for the functioning of the EU. Applicant states can, not unreasonably, look at rule of law issues and persistence of corruption within current member states and ask, 'why are we waiting?' A clear path to accession in the West Balkans demands that member states manage short term domestic considerations to serve the geo-political interests of democracy.



\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

European Commission 2021

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# Malawi: mothers' groups supporting schoolgirls with words and actions

The widespread denial of educational opportunities for girls in poor countries has been thrown into even starker relief during the coronavirus pandemic. This is supported by figures from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In Malawi, for example, only around a quarter of girls finish primary school, and some 60% leave before finishing, for a number of reasons which include poverty, insufficient motivation and poor sanitation but also early pregnancy and/or marriage. In addition, about 20% of girls below the age of 18 undergo rape or other kinds of sexual violence.

The UNFPA aims to keep girls in schools throughout the world and to improve reproductive and maternal health. Help with this is available from mothers' groups, which have been set up by the UNFPA and Malawi's Ministry of Education to support schoolgirls. Around ten women per school are available to assist the girls with words and actions on a voluntary basis. In some cases this may conflict with the parents' approach

to the girls, as they try to prevent them from going to school, especially if they are married and financially supported by sons-in-law.

Early marriages as child brides are not unusual but represent an intrusion into the girls' life opportunities.

The school mothers' groups have the task of explaining to the girls the importance of a good education for the future and helping them to stay the course even if they are pregnant or have been married off. Advice on health matters is another important factor. Many girls from poor families cannot afford hygiene articles when they have their periods and as a result stay away from school for a few days each month. Over a number of years these absences leave considerable gaps in their education and reduce their motivation. The mothers can offset this with tips about making washable, re-usable sanitary pads, and schoolgirls in some countries have already started providing these for themselves. Some

mothers always have a supply of such articles handy for girls who have not given the matter any thought. They also maintain the school toilets so that the girls are able to wash themselves. The success of the mothers'

groups cannot yet be definitively established, as this is a recent initiative. But data gathered locally suggest that it is a positive development. In one particular district, the number of primary school children rose from barely 11 900 in the 2017/18 school year

to nearly 14 400 in 2018/19. Some schoolgirls have managed, thanks to the mothers, to avoid being deterred by adversity and even to attend secondary school. In the final analysis they are, as educated, grown-up women, not only healthier but also better prepared to give birth later to fewer, healthier children. But much still remains to be done, as there are just 350 mothers' groups operating in Malawi's 6 400 primary schools.

The example of Malawi deserves to catch on in the EU's development work, as better educational opportunities for girls and women also boost countries' social cohesion and future development.

The mothers' groups in Malawi's schools are testimony to the success that can be achieved with modest means: ideas and commitment rather than vast

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*The Joint Programme on Girls' Education brings together teachers and parents to help keep girls in school. ©UNFPA Malawi*

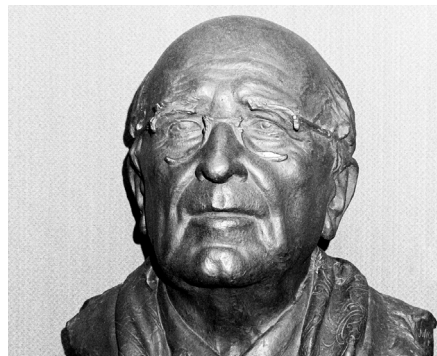
# Salvador de Madariaga and the College of Europe

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Robert Schuman's speech on 9 May 1950, the Spanish Committee of the European League for Economic Cooperation and the Barcelona-based organisation Cercle d'Economia decided to publish 'Salvador de Madariaga and the College of Europe' (Barcelona, 2020) to commemorate Salvador de Madariaga's contribution to what is now the EU: the creation of the College of Europe. Founded in 1949, the College of Europe is an important high-level institution and the benchmark when it comes to providing graduates with an in-depth knowledge of the EU and its institutions. Classes at the College of Europe started in 1950.

The Franco dictatorship prevented Spain from joining the European integration project, but there was a large Spanish contingent in exile that wanted to join, which was led by Salvador de Madariaga.

**"Our aim at this college is to take as many young people as possible who are ready to become Europeans, and to help them achieve that goal"**

He attended and played a very active role in the Congress of Europe in The Hague in 1948, which gave rise to the creation of the European Movement. At that meeting, the firm belief emerged that the Europe which was taking shape needed a European university. Salvador de Madariaga



*Sculpture of Salvador de Madariaga at the European Parliament in Strasbourg ©Communautés européennes 1986*

not only supported the idea, he orchestrated the project alongside Winston Churchill, Paul-Henri Spaak and Alcide de Gasperi. The College of Europe was founded in 1949 to train an elite of young executives for Europe. Salvador de Madariaga founded and promoted the College of Europe. He also chaired the Management Board from the inception of the college until 1964, when he delivered a

speech to mark the opening of the 1964-1965 academic year.

Salvador de Madariaga was a prominent and internationally renowned figure who made an

outstanding contribution to the establishment of institutions of central importance to the EU.

The fact that they are still in existence 70 years on shows the foresight, commitment and drive that went into making what is to this day the College of Europe a

reality. The college is a prestigious institution that provides the very highest standard of training for EU specialists and experts.

During his speech at the opening ceremony, Salvador de Madariaga said: 'Our aim at this college is to take as many young people as possible who are ready to become Europeans, and to help them achieve that goal'. Salvador de Madariaga proposed to create an elite of young graduates who would put their national origins to one side and become fully-fledged Europeans. An article written by Salvador de Madariaga is included alongside this text. It is his introduction to the November 1954 special issue of 'Synthèses.

Revue Européenne' which focused on the College of Europe. In his introduction, Salvador de Madariaga says: 'The Europe that is taking shape requires institutions'.

He believed that new institutions were needed to instil the European spirit in university graduates, which is why 'the College of Europe is already proving to be the only higher-education institution that is truly European'.

Some 70 years after Salvador de Madariaga founded the College of Europe, the college and its European spirit are still as relevant and necessary as ever.

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# The number crunchers at the Foundation for Social Welfare Services

It has been a challenging time for everyone. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought with it new realities, not least for the social welfare services sector.

My academic background and my work at the EMPL Committee during my mandate as MEP had brought me closer to the social welfare services sector. When I left the European Parliament in 2014 I looked for opportunities in the sector because I believe in social justice and have the sector at heart. Today I am proud to say that I am the Director for International Relations, Service Audits, Quality Assurance and Research (IRSAQAR) at the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) in Malta.

The Foundation is a national one and is a catalyst for change and development, consistent with the real and emerging needs of children, families and the community in order to avoid social exclusion. By providing quality and timely service and support, the Foundation empowers and helps to develop individuals to become responsible, integrated and productive members of society who value life as a resource for self-actualisation.

Today I will focus on work and outputs of the Research Team, which is one of the units within my Department. This team strives to adhere to high ethical and professional standards, guided by principles, policies and procedures relevant to professionals working in the research field. We are determined to bring forward the highest quality in our research projects and ensure a collaborative

process with relevant stakeholders. FSWS management, staff and service users are given a voice in the research process. We produce research which is accessible and user-friendly to its audience, which gives a true and objective picture, and which also acknowledges and celebrates the positive work being done. At IRSAQAR we are open to feedback, conducive to growth and continuous improvement.

Research is a tool to enhance social knowledge to develop further service provision. The Research Office conducts studies, analyses data and produces various reports as a way to keep the FSWS as well as external stakeholders updated in the work of the FSWS and the performance of its respective services throughout the year. We also conduct literature reviews and studies to inform services about different topics of interest.

Among these, there is ESPAD (the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs), a crosssectional study which is conducted every four years.

We are the number crunchers of the FSWS and numbers are important; but we are also aware that behind every number there is a person, a vulnerable person - a

woman, a man, a child, and we do not discriminate; we cater for all.

In 2019, there was a total of 18,688 cases worked with at FSWS. Out of these cases 53% were female, 42% were male, and 0.02% were X. Stratifying by gender gives us an overview of who our service users are. Statistics not yet published for 2020 show that the number of cases worked with during 2020 remained stable and so have the number of women who sought our services. Further in-depth analysis into the lived experiences of female service users beyond the numbers is encouraged to further identify their specific service needs.

Having been an MEP myself, I have a special interest in statistics with the aim of improving the well being of society. I take this opportunity to invite you, fellow colleagues and former Members of the European Parliament to raise more awareness amongst the Member States about the importance of taking a deeper look into statistics; to study them for the improvement of all in society.



*Claudette Abela Baldacchino*

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# FMA ACTIVITIES

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EPFMA  
PEAAD



# COOPERATION WITH THE EUI

## "Europe in your Living Room": web radio conversations for students, teachers and families

It is of great importance that we give space to the new generations of Europeans in order to foster cultural and trans-generational coexistence between different regions of Europe. It is not only important to give a voice, but also to create real spaces for young people where they can establish creative dialogues between Europe and Europeans. This can be reflected in the dialogue between young people and leading figures who have directly experienced life in the European institutions.

The perception of the European Union is multi-faceted and has no visible borders, because young people are openly experiencing their training through interaction with different socio-cultural backgrounds. Although perhaps the most significant of these are, above all, the school environment, family and friends, there is a space that can sometimes escape us, which is that of national and European institutions.

During the period of the pandemic, the fact that it was impossible to receive and involve students at Villa Salviati, in the presence of the former MEPs, prompted the

HAEU educational programme to create new synergies and improve creative efforts.

This is why a new web-radio programme, 'Europe in your Living Room', was launched, in collaboration with the Engaged Academics network of the European University Institute (EUI) and the independent web-radio of the EUI 'Radio Cavolo', aimed at secondary school students and all those interested in issues related to Europe and European integration. This new series of programmes offers the possibility for the HAEU training team to continue to interact with students and teachers in an alternative way, thereby testing out new methods of distance teaching and learning.

Each episode of the 'Europe in your Living Room' web-radio programme contains a short live interview, for the time being in Italian, with a guest working with the HAEU educational programme: these may be former MEPs, archivists, teachers and trainers.

Students can interact and reach the guest by sending their questions to the radio channel, which the guests will answer live on air.

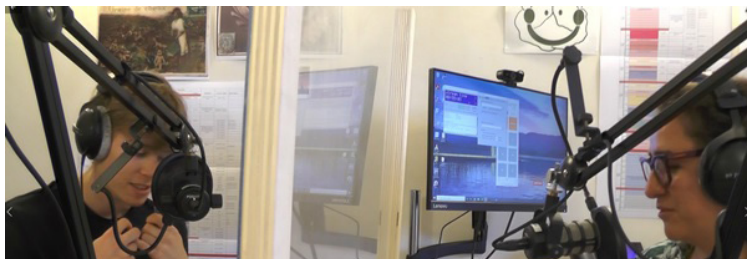
During the meetings, the former MEPs, through talking and narrative, but also through

their choices of music, very generously discuss their life experiences, incidents which have taken place in the European Parliament, as well as any insights they might have in relation to the advancement of the complex process of European integration.

These stories act as incentives for secondary school students in the Florence area and beyond to address European issues, and are an open window onto the world of archives and research activities.

The Historical Archives are a key player when it comes to promoting greater awareness of EU history by reflecting on the past, but also on how to shape our present to create our future. The HAEU educational programme is firmly convinced that the promotion of the cultural heritage that it preserves, through the creation of spaces for dialogue and discussion such as this one, can contribute to social cohesion and inclusion by creating resilience and a sense of belonging and between generations.

Find out more about 'Europe in your Living Room' and listen to all the episodes of the programme: [www.radiocavolo.org/shows/europe-in-your-living-room/](http://www.radiocavolo.org/shows/europe-in-your-living-room/)



*Live participation of a student from a Florence secondary school in the HAEU web-radio educational programme, 'Radio Cavolo' studio, Villa Salviati, 9 June 2021. @EUI*

**Leslie Hernández**

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# PROGRAMME EP TO CAMPUS

## My 'visit' to the Rocky Mountain University

In February 2021 I was delighted to be invited to speak to the students and staff at Boulder University, Colorado, USA on 'Refocussing EU Tourism – post Brexit and post COVID-19.' Boulder is a city in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, some 60 km north of the state capital and major airport of Denver.

Unfortunately the airport and any thoughts of a flight to the milehigh city, were quickly dropped as due to on-going pandemic, this was to be a virtual conference, hosted by the Colorado European Union Centre of Excellence.

The communication from the university was excellent and the planning and preparation on my part was just as intense and (almost) as rewarding as if I had been there in person! This dilemma highlighted once again, the plight not just of the tourism industry but American and European society in general, as we try to rebuild our lives, post COVID-19.

Although restrictions have now been lifted slightly, in February

the UK government's instructions to all citizens were very clear and surprised the audience with their severity, 'Under current UK COVID-19 restrictions, you must stay at home. You must not travel, including abroad, unless you have a legally permitted reason to do so. It is illegal to travel abroad for holidays and other leisure purposes.'

There is still no guarantee that the situation will get 'back to normal' any time soon. Even if all the global restrictions were lifted tomorrow, and they won't be, it will take months, perhaps years before consumer confidence, flight timetables and a tourism mindset returns. From their reactions this was just beginning to sink it to the students of Colorado, many of whom seemed to be looking forward to European travel this summer or working in the tourist related industries in the USA. The Boulder area is a key ski resort – a industry that has been hit hard both in America and Europe.

Tourism is of course, critical to the economy of Europe. In the 27 nations of the European Union, up to 11% of the collected GDP derives directly from tourism. In the USA the comparable figure is 2.6% . In Paris alone, tourism represents the single largest industry, bigger even than services or fashion, and the 38 million who visit the city annually keep nearly 12% of all working Parisians employed.

Quite apart from Brexit,

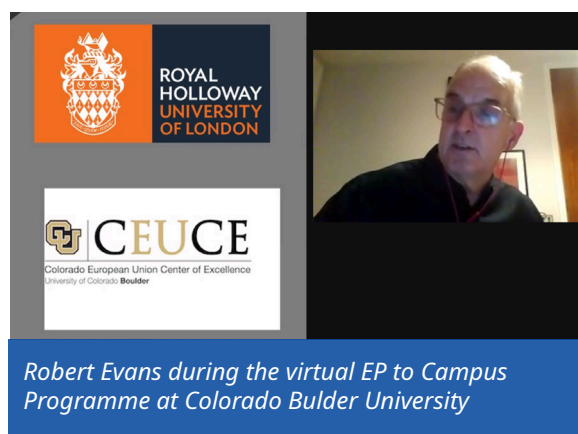
the so-called 'benefits' of which, seem to be unravelling with new passport checks, 'red-tape' and regulations, it is hard to see anywhere near as many British holidaymakers travelling to Paris any time soon. Even the Eurostar has been reduced to one return train a day between London's St Pancras and Gare du Nord.

The conference discussed the European Commission's recently published Tourism and Transport package with its overall strategy towards recovery in 2020 and beyond. This details measures to assist the industry's recovery including, restoring free movement and the gradual lifting of restrictions at EU internal borders; ensuring the safety of passengers and personnel as transport is re-established; recommending travel vouchers as an alternative to cash reimbursement for consumers and a variety of other green or environmentally sensitive measures to help the transport and tourism industries recover from these unique set of circumstances.

COVID-19 has rather masked the impact of Brexit – the full impact of which may not sink in for some years yet. To what extent the European tourism industry will recover and when, is yet to be seen. This conference albeit virtual, provided a really powerful forum for discussion and I was pleased to have been involved.

**Robert Evans**

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# What is the outlook for the European Health Union?

Public health is a Member State competence; however, the COVID-19 crisis has pushed the European Union into taking action to ensure EU citizens do indeed receive the high level of protection of their health they are entitled to expect.

On account of the principle of subsidiarity, no Member State feels inclined to hand over management of its health system to the European Union. The Union only has the right to lend support, as stated in Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Hence, it supplements national health policies through its own actions and must rely on cooperation and coordination between Member States, even though it has proven its capacity to set high standards for health and lay down binding rules, as seen with tobacco in particular. The Union does not wield a great deal of influence over health programmes however;



On 26 March 2021 Nora Berra participated in the EP to Campus Programme at the American University in Bulgaria, an online lecture about Model EU Simulation and Current Plans for a European Health Union. ©European Union 2012 - EP

a weakness reflected in the EU's budget for health which was only a modest €449 million for the period 2014-2020, while the budget for the common agricultural policy hit €408.3 billion!

Member States are expected to protect the health of their population; however they do not have any qualms about urging the Union to come to their aid in the event of a health threat.

Health crises have already caused the EU's law to evolve, particularly during the SARS epidemic in 2003 and the H1N1 influenza one in 2009. In spite of enhanced surveillance of cross-border threats, the European Union civil protection mechanism or the joint procurement agreement for equitable access to vaccines or medicines, the means have proved to be far from equal to the ambition sought, while the mechanisms turned out to be ineffective and cruelly lacking in agility when faced with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although the health crisis hit the whole of the continent it did not produce a common and integrated response but a number of different, fragmented and uncoordinated national responses, even if, in the end, measures did gradually converge. Faced with this emergency, the Union even agreed to relax its policies and hand some areas of competence back to the individual nations.

From then on, overwhelmed by a devastating pandemic and its heavy toll of lives lost, the

Union chose to turn the crisis into an opportunity and a driver for transformation of its rules so that the EU is made safer and better prepared. The goals are clear: make health systems more resilient, address serious crossborder threats to health and make health products more accessible.

So new regulations and enhanced governance with stronger agencies better suited to the task are already on the agenda, along with a much more accurate budget, as it will total €5.1 billion over the period 2021-2027, a first!

This ambition is still a gamble and will depend on the Union's capacity to adopt more flexible and quicker decision-making processes, the only way to prevent future crises.

Despite Member States' resistance to further integration in the field of public health, the COVID-19 pandemic has made their interdependence brutally clear to them, and with it, the need for more integrated policies in order to be effective in protecting our fellow EU citizens.européens.

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# The impact of global and European politics on the EU's environmental policy

From the beginning of my membership in FMA and after return to the university I am promoter of EP to Campus programme.

I believe that such programme is the excellent channel for communication with young people. It gives us, former MEPs opportunity to explain the students EU public policies and how they could be engaged as EU citizens in their development and implementation. Therefore, I was glad to respond to an offer of FMA and give lecture about EU environmental policy to the students of University of Pécs. It was great pleasure to work with very enthusiastic team from the University, led by Dr. Melinda Szappanyos.

Her students already have a basic knowledge of legal procedures and rules of European Parliament but for them was the most interesting to get insight how the European Parliament works beyond well known procedures and rules, and balance all the factors for the creation of an efficient policy.

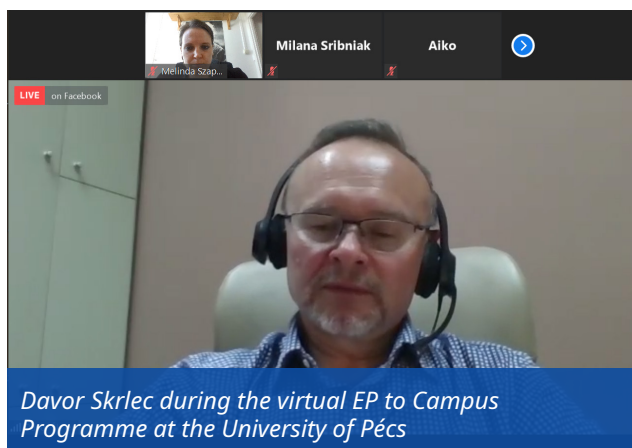
The topic of the lecture was EU environmental policy, how European Parliament had a major role in environmental and climate achievements in its 8th term, and what are expectations of VDL Commission's proposal of the first EU Climate Law, the new EU 8th Environment Action Programme and a Green Deal as whole.

Environmental policy is one of the most important EU public policies because it is embedded in horizontal strategies and has an impact on targets, actions and legislation of other public policies. It is also taken into account in international negotiations and in lecture students get information how EU contribute to the development of UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, about role of European Parliament in defining EU position and climate targets in negotiation process of Paris Agreement and how we include our ambitious environmental and climate goals in EU's international trade agreements.

The focus of the lecture was also about decision making process in European Parliament: from the decision of the Conference of Committee Chairs which Committee is responsible for the legislative document, distribution of points within the Committee and process of

assignment of the document to particular political group, nomination of rapporteur and shadow rapporteurs and final, the whole process of negotiations, interactions with different stakeholders, public hearings and presentations of scientific research studies, all of them before MEPs vote in the Committee and at the Plenary session. During the lecture I also shared my experience from several legislative inter-institutional negotiations with the Commission and the Council. Because of pandemic, unfortunately the lecture was via Zoom platform and Facebook.

To get better response from the students, by the support of excellent IT team from University of Pécs we introduced some novelty, an online survey during the lecture and it was interesting to comment student's response at the end of the lecture. But the best part was live interaction and discussion with students. Very stimulating experience for future engagements within the EP to Campus Programme and I hope very soon we will have opportunity to share our knowledge and experience in live with students and their professors at universities.



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# A Discussion on Employment and Social Rights at the University of Illinois

In November 2020 the European Center at the UI issued a call through the FMA for former MEPs to make presentations on their various experiences in the framework of the University's Program "The European Parliament and parliamentarians in everyday life". On March 31st 2021 I took part in an on-line discussion on the topic of Employment and Social Affairs, aiming to present my 2014-2019 work as a Member of EMPL. In way of preparation in correspondence with the organizer of the Program a format was outlined for the two-hour event, trying to best address a diverse and somewhat conflicting set of challenges:

- the varying interests of a broadly differing set of participants

- from specializing post-graduate students in European studies to members of the general public;

- the range of subjects - from examination of particular EMPL cases to items of everyday MEP routine and home-country life;

- the need to sequence and allocate proper time to each of the varying topics of interest.

In my presentation I attempted to describe the uphill task of giving precedence to the most pressing issues of employment and social affairs in the legislation and activities of the 8th EP in light of my personal involvement as Rapporteur and Shadow Rapporteur for the acts of Parliament setting-up the Platform for Tackling Undeclared Work of 2016, the establishment of the European Labor Authority of 2019, plus the EMPL Opinion on the ratification of CETA of 2017. My main concern was trying to convey to the audience the efforts required to prioritize and effectively deal with the ever more complex challenges of the dramatically evolving world of work, enduring poverty and social exclusion. In this regard I attempted also to draw a link with the novel policies of the new US Administration.

The exposition of these main topics of my delivery had to be combined with describing the itinerary and on-going life

engagements of a MEP from one of the Member States situated farthest from Brussels, as well as responding to questions regarding my personal family background and past positions in Bulgaria. It is my concern that this diversity of queries proved a hindrance to a satisfactory appreciation of the substance of the subject matter of employment and social affairs in the work of the 2014-2019 EP.

Perhaps this was partially due also to an initial distorted and distracting description of my CV – an aspect of such events that ought to be avoided.

In all, doubtless, similar occasions for former MEPs to participate in discussions on the workings of the European Parliament on the most pressing topics of European and of global interest should be greatly welcomed and positively responded to.

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## CASE STUDIES IN THE MAKING OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND PARLIAMENTARIANS

A conversation series

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Each conversation focuses on "cases" of past projects, legislation, initiatives, or crises that the Former MEP found particularly rewarding, vexing, or enlightening for understanding the challenges of European unity and the role the European Parliament has played in navigating them. These conversations are open to the public as part of the meetings of a new EU Center course.

### THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Wondering what the European Parliament is? Check out this one-minute video: <https://youtu.be/ht84s2CBTPw>

This series is supported by the Former Members Association and by a Jean Monnet Chair of Excellence grant from the European Union. This support does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors. The series is also co-sponsored by Anthropology, Political Science, College of Law, and the M.S. in Management Program at Goss College of Business.

Poster of the event

# A Zoom Meeting with the University of Illinois

It is somewhat strange when you talk to students from different parts of the world and you sit in your living room at home. It does work, but still a lot gets lost: the immediacy, the overview one normally has when lecturing in a classroom, the spontaneity. All that was missing in my lecture on April 29, 2021, to students from the University of Illinois. And, yes, I was surprised that my Zoom "guests" were not even in Urbana-Champaign but – as remote as I was – in Vienna. They were mainly Erasmus Plus students who, due to the pandemic, were unable to travel abroad. But, all that aside, I quickly realized that both sides profited from that lecture. At least I did.

As a one-time member of the European Parliament and as a former journalist I combined the two professions: my experience as a former foreign correspondent made my transfer into the Foreign Relations Committee smooth, but everything else was, as I told the

students, a totally new experience.

It takes quite a while before one gets familiar with both the "geography" of the buildings in Brussels and in Strasburg, let alone with the process of the weekly meetings. Aside from the plenary there were many other gatherings to attend, in rooms the numbers of which initially gave you no clue where they possibly could be (PHS7C50, you figure!). And then there are all those I called – secretly – "grey backs", members who have been part of the game forever and know not only all the nooks and crannies of the buildings but, more importantly, know all the tricks to further their interests.

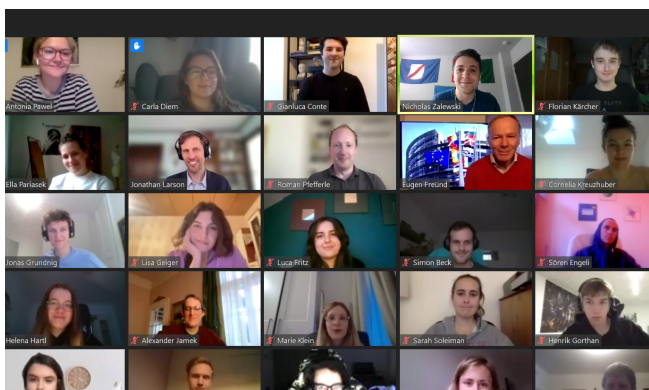
My main point in this regard was that one has to be patient but, equally, insistent to not be totally overlooked and overheard. In my experience, it takes roughly two years to become somewhat familiar with the process and where you can manage to establish some sort of name recognition.

all agree, nothing is agreed upon. That has to end.

In today's world, a strong, common, self-confident foreign policy is indispensable if the EU wants to establish itself as a player among the other "super powers". As one example I mentioned Syria. Had the European Union diplomatically intervened in Syria in 2011 – long before Iran, Turkey, Russia, the IS, Saudi Arabia and many others pulled the strings and dropped the bombs in that country – it would have been possible to negotiate some arrangement between the warring factions and therefore prevent the destruction, the bloodshed, the millions of refugees, both within the country and later the refugee crisis which had spilled the conflict right at our doorsteps.

The students were very attentive and posed many interesting questions. One could clearly realize that they had been meticulously prepared and they were not shy to delve into difficult subjects. At this stage, I would like to thank Profs. Jonathan Larson of the University of Illinois and Roman Pfefferle of the University of Vienna and not least the students for the excellent preparation and the smooth process of this – hopefully – instructive evening.

That is tantamount to getting assignments for reports, foreign travel possibilities, etc. I realized quite early that one of the basic problems of the European Union foreign policy was the reliance on unanimity. Unless



*Eugen Freund and the students of the University of Illinois during the virtual EP to Campus Programme*

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# Similarities and differences between the EU and ASEAN

On May 28, 2021 I had the pleasure to give a lecture on the subject of "EU-ASEAN relations" at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. Due to the travel restrictions caused by Covid 19, the only way to perform this task was via Zoom. Fortunately, I had already gathered some experience with similar lectures given in Turkey, Sweden, the U.S. and elsewhere. At the outset let me confirm that host, audience and the co-lecturer in Kuala Lumpur were very well organized and seemed to master the challenges of such long distance video events with a significant time difference between Berlin and Kuala Lumpur without any problems. I was fortunate in that with Edgar Nordmann I had an expert on Malaysia and as such an ASEAN expert "on my side", i.e. in Kuala Lumpur while I stayed in Berlin, Germany. Edgar is undoubtedly more than anybody else in Germany acquainted with this part of the world. For literally decades he represented Malaysia as Honorary Consul in Northern Germany, he has also a residence in Kuala Lumpur and is married to a Malaysian Lady. That's why he

happened to be in Kuala Lumpur during the lecture and discussion. In fact he was part of the lecture itself and an engaged participant.

The lecture focussed on the similarities and differences between the EU and ASEAN, only a few I shall recall here such as the obvious facts i.e. that while ASEAN has fewer member states (10), the EU has 27, but ASEANs population being larger than the EU's.

While the EU strives for a wide range of common policies, ASEAN is more or less curtailed to trying to become a common market for goods and services. Naturally, we discussed a wide range of economic issues, perhaps the most important one being the subject of "palm oil". It seems that the EU is taking a rather one-sided environmental view of this issue, ignoring the fact that virtually millions of ASEAN citizens live from the production and the export of this product. Hence, the EU's decision to block imports of palm oil from ASEAN, thereby risking to throw many families into poverty, was much criticized. Perhaps a silver lining is now

showing up, as the EU has agreed to look into those of its own agricultural habits which might harm the environment similarly such as the growing of rapeseed and sunflower oil?

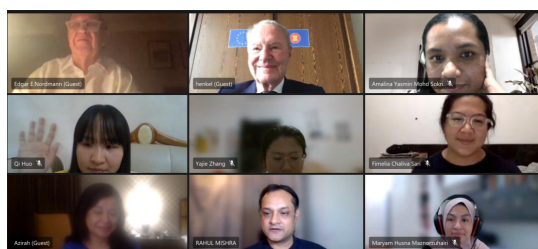
Being a long time member of Amnesty International

I couldn't help but talking about the many violations of human rights, freedom of the press and democratic principles in most of the ASEAN Member States, the latest being the Coup d'Etat by the Military in Myanmar. The fact that the Secretariat of ASEAN, located in Djakarta, brought this subject on the agenda of their last meeting a few weeks ago was in my view the first sign that ASEAN is willing to not always ignore what is happening in the Member States.

I reiterated my strong belief in globalization and that the spreading of democracy, human rights and market driven economies are not only a positive bye-product of globalization, but that these three elements belong together. Contrary to what Brussels always asserts, these are not „European values“, these are universal values. We have good examples elsewhere in the world. For instance, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, South Africa, Australia, Chile demonstrate that these values are global and not only "European" values.

Both Edgar Nordmann and I found the participation by students and hosts very impressive and refreshing. Very surprised was I by the number of engaged women in the probably largely Muslim audience.

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*A moment of the virtual EP to Campus Programme at the University of Malaya*



# VISIT UNDER THE EU PRESIDENCY

## Ciência Viva, a dialogue between science and society

Portugal's National Agency for Scientific and Technological Culture is responsible for promoting successful, internationally recognised strategies for dialogue between science and society throughout the country.

It was set up in by then Science and Technology minister Mariano Gago in 1996, with the name Ciência Viva. It now boasts a network of 21 Science Centres throughout Portugal, many in landmark buildings with strong local roots.

This has helped to nurture a social movement based around science and scientific culture involving hundreds of thousands of researchers, members of the public, students and teachers, young people and adults.

On our visit to Portugal during the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU, we held an engaging meeting with Ciência Viva President Rosalia Vargas and their Executive Director

Ana Noronha. They explained to us how Ciência Viva promotes cooperation between different sectors of Portuguese society, from universities to primary schools, companies to research laboratories, local authorities to private companies and professional organisations, to help create, for example, Ciência Viva clubs in schools. There are 230 of these in both primary and secondary schools, with over 125 000 participating students exploring a wide variety of fields. They also advocate the establishment of Ciência Viva Farm Networks. These are farming areas all over Portugal, each with a specific theme depending on the region. The networks aim to combine tradition and innovation in a way that prioritises close contact between the scientific community and the social and economic fabric of the areas concerned, stimulating entrepreneurship and promoting innovation and scientific dialogue.

We were able to take a virtual tour of the Ciência Viva Knowledge Pavilion, an interactive science and technology museum which opened to the public in 1999. The Knowledge Pavilion is a vital asset for all Ciência Viva centres and is the network's driving force as well as its resource centre.

The museum is located in a building designed by architect João Luís Carrilho da Graça as the Knowledge of the Seas Pavilion for the '98 Expo – one of the most visited parts of that Expo, for which Carrilho

da Graça was honoured with the 1999 FAD award for architecture.

The Knowledge Pavilion is currently hosting a fascinating exhibition entitled 'Water - An Unfiltered Exhibition', with the aim of raising awareness of the way in which science, technology and commitment can help achieve the basic right of safe drinking water for all. This is part of the International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development, part of the UN's Sustainable Development Goal number six to achieve clean water and sanitation for all by 2030.

On 17 June, a high-level round table on citizen-driven creative industries, research and innovation for Europe was held in the Ciência Viva Knowledge Pavilion. The result was the Lisbon Manifesto, emphasising the need to strengthen the EU's cultural and creative industries.

It was a very intriguing visit that once again highlighted the importance of establishing effective channels for dialogue between science and society. Nowadays, scientific culture is a fundamental basis for achieving a truly free and democratic society that prioritises knowledge and education. In turn a strong system of science and innovation requires broad social support and a culture that fosters scientific vocations amongst young people.

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Exhibition "Água" (Water) that the FMA Delegation visited virtually ©Ciência Viva

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## Next Generations

Will the next generation of Europeans live in a carbon-neutral world? Will they live long healthy lives? Will policymaking continue to be based on best knowledge?

The answer to these questions lays in our capacity to engage the next generations with science and to promote scientific culture.

What if...? Is a motto to be attentive regarding new trends in education. Six-year olds are taught to use the alphabet to build words and sentences, and mathematics for adding, dividing, multiplying... What if the educational system engaged them to code, develop collaborative projects or make presentations for national and international audiences? What if they practised citizenship and respect for the planet?

Building critical thinking skills, supporting teachers to develop project-oriented, curiosity-driven education is at the core of the

practice of Ciência Viva. These skills are needed now more than ever.

The next generation has now started school, and is ready to face all the challenges and innovations ahead. Times are changing and the education system must follow suit.

At Ciência Viva, we believe that this work can only be achieved with multi-level partnerships: with the scientific community, schools, and decision-makers, in particular local authorities. Over 25 years, our programmes have been based on similar partnerships, which were only possible thanks to the support of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education to ensure the collaboration of scientists. Political support from the Ministry of Education was also essential for the development of programmes in schools.

Partnerships lead to the empowerment of local stakeholders that ensure the sustainability of the programmes and initiatives.

Through a national network of 21 science centres, we develop activities to promote public engagement with science and fostering interaction with the scientific community. A network of 11 museum schools – the Ciência Viva Schools – was created in some of these science centres, where primary education children learn with their teachers in exhibition halls, laboratories and field trips. The programme blends formal education with active

learning outside the classroom, where children connect topics from the curricula with experiments, emotions and real practice. Students in Ciência Viva School also meet a scientist every week, to learn about the importance of their work and to consider research as a possible career for their future.

A network of 237 science clubs in schools further enables youngsters around the country to develop their own scientific projects, supported by tertiary education institutions, research laboratories, science centres and museums.

In the summer, opportunities for placements at research laboratories give secondary school students a taste of real science, side by side with scientists.

Science centres are at the core of these actions. Their exhibitions provide lively opportunities for citizen engagement with science, by promoting dialogue on its application to important areas for society, from health to environment, from food supply to climate change. They also provide platforms for innovation, as they foster contact between different stakeholders in informal settings. We believe these networks will help to nurture the next generation of Europeans for a sustainable and equitable future.

**Rosalia Vargas**

*President of Ciência Viva*

**Ana Noronha**

*Executive Director Ciência Viva*  
anoronha@ienciaviva.pt



©Ciência Viva

# Virtual Visit to Portugal

Our Association's virtual visit to Portugal was a great opportunity to learn about the programme of the Portuguese Presidency from the people who ran it.

Given my own experience at university, I would like to focus on the new Erasmus+ programme 2021-27.

In my view, the Erasmus programme, which was launched in 1987, has been one of the most successful EU actions ever in terms of mobility and bringing countries closer together – not on a financial level, but by giving participants the chance to find out about other countries' systems of education, culture and language and to live together with students from different countries.

Agreements between universities

Erasmus+ has an estimated budget of

**€26.2 billion<sup>1</sup>**,

nearly doubling the funding compared to its predecessor programme (2014-2020), complemented by around

**€2.2 billion**

from the EU external cooperation instrument<sup>2</sup>.

**70% of the budget will support mobility**

opportunities for all, in a lifelong learning perspective.

<sup>1</sup> The Erasmus+ programme budget is made of €24.574 billion in current prices as part of the new MFF (2021-2027) and an additional top-up of €1.7 billion in 2018 prices.

<sup>2</sup> Neighbourhood, Development and Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA III)

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have also imposed mobility on teachers and non-teaching staff to allow for all aspects of the programme to be covered, and English has been consolidated as a vehicular language for courses and for communication among students from a very wide range of countries and even between national students.

The new Erasmus+ 2021-27 marks a very important step forward for the programme, not only because its budget will be almost double the previous budget but also because it has broader objectives which emphasise inclusiveness, sustainability and progress in digital innovation.

In terms of inclusiveness, it is important that more young people from different social and cultural backgrounds are able to access the programme, by making it easier to find information on it and on how to apply for it and by expanding scholarships so that family income is no longer a barrier. The inclusion of secondary school students and those following a course of vocational training, as well as the exchange of best practices, helps to establish a knowledge network linking more young people to Erasmus.

Sustainability is also a key element of the programme as a specific training tool, although in my view substituting air travel with bus or train travel will not always be feasible in the case of exceptionally long journeys.



**Erasmus+**

Enriching lives, opening minds.

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Digital innovation is crucial, as the current COVID-19 crisis has shown. Most lessons, seminars and tutorials have taken place online, although better online management is also needed to avoid the excessive paper-based bureaucracy that we still see today.

There are a number of other issues to take into account, such as looking into extending health cover to include mobile, computer or bicycle theft and coordinating the health requirements of each country, perhaps by proposing this group of people as a priority for vaccinations despite their young age.

We should give ourselves a pat on the back, though, as after last year's sharp decline in applications, interest in this course has once again recovered to pre-pandemic levels, showing that young Europeans still insist on continuing their life journeys as Europeans.

**Teresa Domingo Segara**

*Spain (NA 1993-1994) & GUE (1989-1993)*

teresado3@hotmail.com



# What do we want for Europe, then?

A year and a half after the outbreak of COVID-19, here in Europe, discussions about what we want for ourselves are finally starting. In recent years, political discourse has focused mostly on national politics.

Not discussing Europe earlier was a mistake and did not help to foster citizen participation. But now the Conference on the Future of Europe, a much-lauded initiative, has been launched; its only flaw is that it is overdue.

I am President of the National Youth Council. In the most recent elections to the European Parliament, the abstention rate was more than 70%. I do not believe that this figure means that Portuguese people and Europeans no longer identify with Europe. Things only become outdated when we can get by just fine without them. We would not do too well without the EU.

The EU co-finances higher education access scholarships at a rate of 70%. In this academic year alone, more than 70 000 students have been granted them

in Portugal. Also this year, more than 7 000 young people have had or are currently enjoying the opportunity to spend a semester in another Member State as part of the Erasmus+ mobility programme. If youth unemployment has fallen, it is mainly because of EU funding, which has made it possible to support active employment measures.

There is no doubt that the EU has considerable influence over our future and for that very reason, we have a duty to take an active part in building a Europe that meets our ideals and expectations. And this is the right opportunity. An opportunity in which each of us can and should contribute with their ideas, their perspectives and their opinion.

The EU is a sui generis organisation, unique and different from all others. It is a political system in a constant state of construction and every European Parliament election must be a new opportunity to deepen that process.

Internally and externally, there are constant changes and challenges. Twenty years ago, at the turn of the new millennium, the EU set itself the goal of becoming a knowledge-based, more competitive and more dynamic economy, focused on promoting low-carbon industries, investing in research and development,

growing the digital economy and modernising education and training.

Many of these goals were renewed as part of the Europe 2020 strategy and shifted over to a new strategy for a new decade. Europe dragged its heels. And Portugal followed in its footsteps.

Investing 3% of GDP in innovation and development (I&D) is a 20-year goal! The European average is currently 2.07%. In Portugal the figure is 1.33%. The European economy will not be in a position to compete with the US and Japan or even with emerging China and India if it does not take this goal more seriously.

The EU needs to set a real strategy, with the help of EU citizens, so that they are committed to and supportive of the European project. A cross-sectoral strategy that goes beyond simply implementing funds in any and every supported area. Over the course of this year, Europe will be forced to reinvent itself.

We are discussing Europe now so that we can lay the foundations for devising and introducing the best societal model the world has ever seen.

**João Pedro Videira**

*President of the Portuguese National Youth Council*  
joao.videira@cnj.pt



*Poster of the virtual meeting of the FMA with the Portuguese youngsters*

# COOPERATION WITH THE HEH

## Letter addressed to the Joint Presidency of the Conference on the Future of Europe



*Brussels, 12 May 2021*

*Joint Presidency of the  
Conference on the Future of  
Europe  
Prime Minister António Costa  
President David Maria Sassoli  
President Ursula von der Leyen*

### **Re: The House of European History and the importance of teaching European history**

Dear Presidents,

I am writing to you, at this crucial moment in the history of the European Union, in my capacity as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the House of European History (HEH).

As you may know, the HEH - a project of the European Parliament supported by the European Commission - is unique in teaching the multiple histories of Europe in a museum context. Since its opening in 2017, it has delivered a coherent educational message - across our diverse continent and

beyond - to teachers, students and many other audiences. It has created history-learning resources compatible with school curricula (most of which at present focus, predictably, on national narratives).

The HEH is truly innovative in prompting the visitor or student to interrogate history and explore our current successes and setbacks in the light of historical processes and events that helped define the European continent, the EU and its peoples.

At the heart of the learning approach and resources of the HEH is the development of critical and analytical thinking and the capacity to question. All the learning materials developed for teachers, students, families and adult audiences at the museum begin from a questioning position and encourage learners of all ages to examine and assess what they see, hear, read and experience. The HEH is also creating a forum for the exchange of views and best practice, targeting a wide range of learning professionals and practitioners including teachers, museum educators, historical associations and networks.

This approach, combining high-level historical content and the promotion of critical thinking, has been central to the ongoing success of the House of

European History.

It is developing its digital profile and is expanding its outreach. However, I think we could all agree that we need to do more. We are all aware that, as committed Europeans, we are confronted with an unprecedented attack on learning and expertise: I would urge that the teaching of European history must not be another victim in this race to the bottom.

I am therefore taking this opportunity to urge you, as the Presidents of the Conference on the Future of Europe, to make an explicit commitment to increasing investment in the teaching of European history across the European Union, especially in schools.

The comments in the HEH visitor book by British visitors in 2018/2019, to the effect that "if only they had visited the HEH before the UK's referendum, they would have been better informed", cannot be an isolated case and are worthy of a European-level response.

Kind regards,

Dr **Hans-Gert Pöttering**  
Chair of the Board of Trustees  
of the HEH  
Former President of the  
European Parliament



*Hans-Gert Pöttering ©European Union 2021*

# Extracts of the letter of answer from Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission.



Brussels, 28.07.2021

Dear Chair,

*Lieber Herr Pöttering*

[...] History plays a crucial role if we wish to involve our citizens more in the cycle of policy making at national and European levels and if we expect them to be supportive and proactive in tackling the challenges of our society.

Without historical knowledge and the lessons we learn from it, it is difficult to enquire into the political, social, or ethical issues of our society and to create an informed society, essential for effective participation in democratic processes.

I agree that we are confronted with major challenges and education is without doubt a

part of the solution. Education needs and indeed deserves a boost, especially at the level of general education. We need to do more and coordinate our efforts better.

Vice-President Schinas is committed to promoting the European way of life. Together with Commissioner Gabriel, who is also a member of the board which you chair, he is working to make the European Education Area a reality.

In this context, my services are setting up a specific working group on Equality and Values in Education and Training. It will allow exchanges with the Member States on relevant EU issues, including the promotion of knowledge about European Union history.

In more concrete terms, the Erasmus + programme has extended the Jean Monnet action in the domain of general education. Grants will

be offered for teacher education and training as well as a new learning EU initiative, to bring EU issues into classrooms, in schools and vocational education and

training institutions. Thus, we aim at reinforcing the historical context, in line with the goals of the House of European History. These actions help to develop up-to-date material on EU issues, so that teachers will have access to modern methodologies in subjects related to the European Union, to support schools in designing and integrating EU content in their activities.

The Commission is also making progress in strengthening relations with the Council of Europe, in particular in evaluating the best methods for contributing to and supporting the activities of the newly established Observatory on History Teaching.

I congratulate you on the impressive work of the House of European History, work which is complementary to the efforts of the European Commission, and which has our full support.

Yours faithfully,

*Ursula von der Leyen*

**Ursula von der Leyen**  
Presidente of the European Commission



Ursula von der Leyen ©European Union 2021



# UPCOMING EVENTS



## ACTIVITIES

27-28  
SEPTEMBER 2021

### Visit to Slovenia

An FMA Delegation will visit Slovenia, the country holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU.

2-5  
NOVEMBER 2021

### Study Visit to Moldova

A Delegation of FMA members will visit Moldova in September 2021. Members will meet with Parliament, government and civil society's representatives and universities students.

7  
DECEMBER 2021

### Policy Debate - 15 years of EP to Campus programme

A high-level debate will be organised on the occasion of the 15th Anniversary of the "EP to Campus" programme. More information will be communicated at a later stage.

7  
DECEMBER 2021

### FMA 20th Anniversary

This year of celebrations will culminate with a special event. More information will be communicated at a later stage.

8  
DECEMBER 2021

### Together for the Future of Europe

A new event of the series "Together for the Future of Europe" will take place from 10.00 to 13.00. Details will be communicated at a later stage.

*\* Because of the uncertainty about any arrangements due to the Covid-19 pandemic, you are kindly advised not to buy flight tickets or make any other financial commitments until you have received confirmation of the event format from the Secretariat.*

## NEW MEMBERS



**Alima  
BOUMEDIENE  
THIERY**  
(France  
1999-2004  
Greens/EFA)



**Cătălin Sorin  
IVAN**  
(Romania  
2009-2019  
S&D)



**Derk Jan  
EPPINK**  
(Netherlands  
2009-2021  
ECR)

### WELCOME BACK!

We are pleased to welcome back Derk Jan Eppink to the FMA after his mandate 2019-2021.

## MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



**Hans-Gert  
PÖTTERING**



**Monica BALDI**



**Jean-Pierre  
AUDY**



**Teresa RIERA  
MADURELL**



**Michael  
HINDLEY**



**Brigitte  
LANGENHAGEN**



**Miguel  
Angel MARTÍNEZ  
MARTÍNEZ**



**Edward  
McMILLAN-  
SCOTT**



**Pier Antonio  
PANZERI**



**Manuel PORTO**

## FMA BUREAU

President: **Hans-Gert PÖTTERING**

Vice-President: **Monica BALDI**

Secretary: **Teresa RIERA MADURELL**

Treasurer: **Jean-Pierre AUDY**

### LIST OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **FMA Bulletin Editorial Board:**

Ms Langenhagen (Chair), Mr Audy, Ms Baldi, Mr McMillan-Scott and Ms Riera Madurell.

**EP to Campus:** Mr Hindley (Chair) and Mr Porto.

**Relations with Budgets Committee, DG Finance:** Mr Audy.

**Dinner Debate:** Ms Baldi and Mr Panzeri.

#### **Delegates to the Bureau of the European Association of Former Members:**

Ms Langenhagen (FP-AP Vice-President) and Mr Martínez Martínez. If necessary, Ms Langenhagen will be substituted by Mr Audy and Martínez Martínez will be substituted by Ms Riera Madurell.

#### **Delegates to the Annual General Assembly, seminars and colloquies of the FP-AP:**

Ms Langenhagen, Mr Martínez Martínez and Mr Audy (if necessary the substitute will be Ms Riera Madurell). Besides the FMA delegates or their substitutes and in agreement with the European Association, other FMA Committee Members may participate in the annual seminars or colloquies at their own expense.

**Relations with Former Members Associations outside Europe:** Mr Audy and Mr Martínez Martínez.

**Annual seminar and relations with think tanks, policy institutes and**

**foundations:** Ms Riera Madurell (Chair), Ms Baldi, and Ms Langenhagen.

**Archives:** Ms Baldi.

**FMA Communication:** Ms Baldi (Chair), Mr Hindley and Ms Langenhagen.

**Working Group on Democracy Support and Election Observation:** Ms Langenhagen (Chair), Mr Hindley, Mr Martínez Martínez, Mr McMillan-Scott, Mr Panzeri and Ms De Keyser (FMA member with advisory role).

**Relations with the House of European History:** Mr Martínez Martínez.

**Relations with the European University Institute (EUI):** Ms Baldi.

# IN MEMORIAM

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## **António Antero COIMBRA MARTINS**

⚔ 19 May 2021

*PES, Portugal (1986-1994)*

He served as a Portuguese member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Coimbra Martins represented the 'Partido Socialista'.



## **Siegbert ALBER**

⚔ 4 June 2021

*EPP-ED, Germany (1979-1997)*

He served as a German member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Alber represented the 'Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands'.



## **Gian Piero BONIPERTI**

⚔ 17 June 2021

*FE, UPE, EPP-ED, Italy (2014-2019)*

He served as an Italian member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Boniperti represented the 'Forza Italia'.



## **Ian WHITE**

⚔ 27 June 2021

*PES, United kingdom (1989-1999)*

He served as a British member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr White represented the Labour Party.





©AdobeStock

# NextGenerationEU and Gender equality

The NextGenerationEU (NGEU) Fund, established by the European Council in July 2020 to support Member States stricken by the COVID-19 pandemic, aims to limit its damage by boosting the economy through investment in the green and digital economy, with a package of measures and economic stimulus.

It is important to remember that it is not only a recovery plan, but a unique opportunity to emerge stronger from the pandemic, transform our economies and societies, create opportunities and jobs and make Europe fairer and more resilient.

The funds are divided among the Member States on the basis of the impact that COVID-19 has had on the national economy, and are subject to the presentation of a National Plan outlining reforms and investments up to 2026 to bring about a structural reform of the country.

At this initial stage, National Recovery and Resilience Plans have been approved for 12 Member States: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal,

Slovakia and Spain.

Individual national plans have complied with pre-defined criteria, focusing investment and spending projects on a number of policy areas defined as 'pillars', which include: the green transition, digital transformation, smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, social and territorial cohesion.

Since the coronavirus crisis has further highlighted discrimination, NextGenerationEU has set itself the goal of creating a 'more equal future' by supporting gender equality everywhere and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, in the sense of equal economic and social opportunities for all.

The Italian Presidency of the G20 – the international forum bringing together the world's leading economies – also highlighted the fact that humanity is facing immense global challenges, which are having direct impacts on the lives and well-being of the world's population. The G20, aware of its role, is strongly committed to seeking coordinated, fair and effective responses that can pave the way for a better and sustainable future.

The pandemic has caused profound damage, by negatively affecting health systems, poverty ratios, the performance of the global economy, climate change and by increasing inequalities.

Working on common solutions to build back better and to ensure greener and resilient growth

therefore becomes crucial.

In an increasingly interconnected world, multilateralism is the key to addressing challenges such as gender equality, which for the first time is central to the G20, offering tangible proposals concerning work, support for services, incentives for companies to develop women's careers. The G20 Women, which met in Rome from 13 to 15 July, addressed key issues such as: combating violence against women, the protection of girls, female unemployment and the gender pay gap.

Rather than equality, we need to talk about 'fairness', to build a fair and equitable society with adequate social services and infrastructure that meet all needs.

Much remains to be done in terms of culture and education, especially given the issue of femicides and violence against women, which, unfortunately, have increased exponentially during this pandemic. Both economic and human resources therefore need to be invested in order to be able to address the challenges identified in NextGenerationEU fairly and with the help of all, especially young people.

NGEU sketches out a plan for the new generations of the EU and can truly be an investment in the future of young people, if we give them a voice.

**Monica Baldi**

*EPP-ED, Italy (1994-1999)*  
baldi@monicabaldi.eu





# Reimagining Europe: engaging the younger generation is vital for the future

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the failures, fractures and fissures of our society and hit the younger generation particularly hard. Young people more than others have suffered the consequences of the economic crisis caused by the lock-downs decided in most countries to contain the pandemic. A recent report by the International Labour Organisation shows that workers between the ages of 15 and 24 have globally suffered a decline in employment 2.5 times worse than that of older people. Schools have given up on classroom education by taking refuge in digital platforms used with teaching

methods that were not always appropriate. The networking opportunities with companies that university students used to cultivate have broken down.

according to the OECD, young people's access to quality jobs with average levels of preparation has been lower than the number of people leaving those jobs in the

**"Young people more than others have suffered the consequences of the economic crisis caused by the lockdowns decided in most countries to contain the pandemic."**

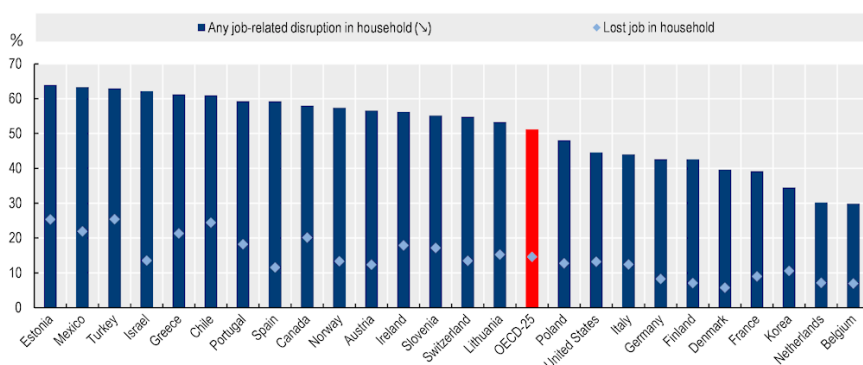
Access to work has become more difficult. This has accelerated a medium-term trend:

last two decades (OECD). And not only for demographic reasons.

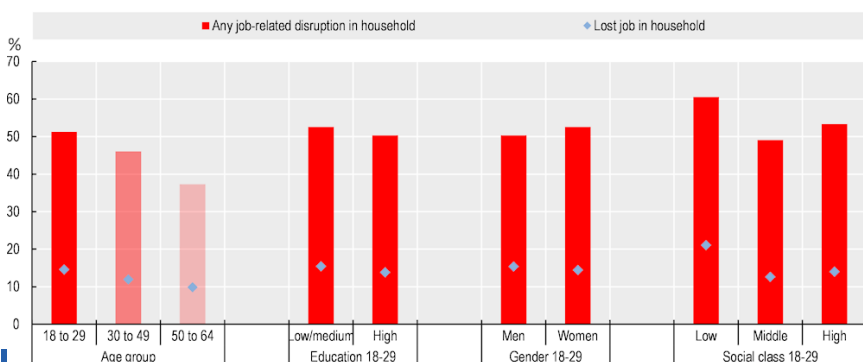
The polarisation of economic resources is an underlying problem that particularly penalises young people. Several analyses of wealth distribution point to a concentration of resources in the top percentile. As of 2016, more than half the world's wealth is in the hands of the richest one per cent of the world's people (Oxfam).

And the greater the inequality, the lower the social mobility (The Spirit Level). In many cases, this is accompanied by a relative decrease in work space for the middle class, while the growth in employment is polarized between the bottom and the top (OECD). For young people, these phenomena translate into greater difficulty in accessing opportunities for professional growth: of course, the doors are always open for access to precarious gig economy jobs, but are relatively closed for access

Panel A: By country



Panel B: By age group and by socio-demographic group for 18-29 year olds, weighted averages across 25 OECD countries



About half of young people's households have suffered some form of job-related disruption since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 ©OECD



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## "If Europe wants to have a future, it must acknowledge that this future will be written by those who are young today."

to quality jobs (David Blanchflower).

This lack of hope towards the future is translating into outrage and movement towards alternative political perspectives, underlining a growing fracture in society between the old way of thinking and the new (Manuel Castells – Networks of Outrage and Hope).

Yet, we need the ideas of the younger generation to adapt. We need the input from digital natives to better understand how to think differently about the challenges these technologies are creating.

We need their creativity and dream of change. As Keynes once said: "The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones."

In the network society, based on digital media and the financial economy, resources become almost organically polarized, in the absence of adequate correctives and incentives for alternatives.

Europe has long since initiated a review of the rules governing data, artificial intelligence and digital services, in the name of a human rights-sensitive conception. It has thought about directing innovation towards ecological transition and sustainability, not forgetting the main themes of social inclusion. But it has not focused its policies in

favour of young people. The task of reimagining Europe is also to open doors for young people, whether they are exceptionally talented or ordinary human beings. The merit of the former must not cancel out the importance of the quality of life objectives for all. The common ground is easy to find: young people recognise the importance of the ecological transition best of all and are actively engaged in changing the course of history in an environmentally friendly direction. If Europe wants to have a future, it must acknowledge that this future will be written by those who are young today.

Is it possible to do this without engaging and listening to them? Re-Imagine Europa has designed a path of research and action to engage the younger generation in the production of ideas and

projects, a platform for emotional and rational involvement in the co-design of opportunities for the quality of their lives and the expression of their ideas.

The narratives that today seem to overwhelm young people in their fears, disengagement and uncertainty can be transformed.

And the system of platforms in which young people today experience their sociality can be enriched with alternatives, to enhance a diversity that is not divisive.division.

**Erika Widegren**

*Chief Executive of Re-Imagine Europa (RIE).*

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&

**Luca De Biase**

*Research and Media Director of Re-Imagine Europa (RIE).*

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# COVID-19 could lead to another generation of young people being left behind

After the last financial crisis, the youth in Europe suffered disproportionately more, experiencing high and persistent unemployment and destroyed opportunities. In some countries like Italy or Spain, youth unemployment

**"Europe cannot afford to forget its youth again. European institutions and national policymakers must act boldly to avoid another lost generation. "**

persisted even before the pandemic, at levels higher than before the global financial crisis. Another surge in unemployment due to COVID-19 could take another decade to heal. Despite this, preventing youth unemployment does not seem to be a high priority on the recovery agenda: European leaders should take bold action now to prevent a lost generation.

More than one million people aged

between 15-24 have lost their job since March 2020 in the European Union due to the pandemic. Youth unemployment increased from 15% to 17% between March 2020 and March 2021, while unemployment of people above 25 was around 2.5 times lower and only increased by less than 1%. Moreover, the pandemic hit even harder in some of EU countries, such as Spain or Lithuania: Spanish youth unemployment increased from 32.5% in 2019 to 38% in 2020, while the Lithuanian rate increased from 12% to 20% over the same period.

However, the unemployment rate does not give us the complete picture, as some young people do not fulfil the requirements to apply for unemployment benefits. Usually, they do not have enough working experience. When looking at the employment rate, we see that the decrease is even higher among youth. An explanation is that young people work in the sectors which were hit hardest, like hospitality and restaurants. However, it appears that another reason might be insufficient social protection of young workers. In Poland, which saw the highest outflow of youth from the labour market, a considerable proportion of young people, around 150,000, never claimed unemployment benefits. The requirement to apply is one year of working experience, which is not much for young workers.



Young woman looking for a job in an employment agency © European Union  
Source : EP

Prolonged unemployment (more than half a year) leads to an adverse impact on future earnings, career development and mental health. In addition, after the last financial crisis, the indicators of employment and education and training for young people did not increase for countries where the unemployment rate was high, demonstrating that unsuccessful job searches lead to decreased optimism for the future.

Europe cannot afford to forget its youth again. European institutions and national policymakers must act boldly to avoid another lost generation. First, having sound European macroeconomic policy is a priority. The length of the last recession harmed the recovery of youth employment in the EU.

The premature tightening of fiscal and monetary policy hampered economic recovery. In response to COVID-19, European policymakers did not repeat this mistake and provided the proper fiscal and monetary response. Despite this, countries will need to continue support into 2022 and 2023.

Second, policymakers must create targeted programmes to support the recruitment and retention of young workers. The European Commission tried to address that problem with the Youth Employment support package, including a tool successfully used in the past, the Youth Guarantee programme, and has extended

funding for education, investment and spending on families was cut in many parts of Europe to the detriment of young people. This time must be different. Remote learning has meant that many children, especially from low-income families, have not followed lessons in proper conditions. Many countries

**"After the global financial crisis, funding for education, investment and spending on families was cut in many parts of Europe to the detriment of young people. This time must be different."**

Bridge to Jobs, the proposal on vocational education and training and apprenticeships. But this might not be enough. National policymakers need to direct their budget to support youth employment and opportunity creation.

After the global financial crisis,

are paying a high price for slow digitisation of schools and universities. In Germany, after more than half a year of COVID-19, many schools have not yet implemented proper online learning systems.

Thanks to the fiscal and monetary policy programs massive investments are taking place right now. A good investment is one with a high payoff in the future: there is no better investment than Europe's young people.

**Guntram B. Wolff**  
*Director of Bruegel &*

**Monika Grzegorzczuk**  
*Research Assistant at Bruegel*  
[monika.grzegorzczuk@bruegel.org](mailto:monika.grzegorzczuk@bruegel.org)



*Youth and EU flag © European Union, 2020*



## Regeneration – EU: the ‘five potatoes’ principle

My grandmother taught me how to manage my resources based on what she had learned from her grandmother. If you have five potatoes left, you can eat three, keep one for the bad times ahead and one to plant the following year.

The EU has been living beyond its means in terms of both natural and human resources. The COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis it unleashed have hit the economy and society, including young people. Schools closed down, the world turned digital and our rural and less well-off communities have been ‘cut off the grid’. Isolation and loneliness fuel fear. It has become blatantly obvious: we have shirked our responsibility to save a potato for next year and keep one for the bad times ahead.

We find ourselves at a crossroads, and we can either continue with our past behaviours, do things differently to ensure the welfare of all, or exclude part of society,

**“We find ourselves at a crossroads, and we can either continue with our past behaviours, do things differently to ensure the welfare of all, or exclude part of society, maintain the welfare of a few and leave the rest behind.”**

maintain the welfare of a few and leave the rest behind. Most of the EU Member States and the mainstream political parties are committed to opting for the second scenario, even if they often revert to option one, shrinking away from the opportunity to deliver the transition. Meanwhile, the populists advocate option three at the expense of European values.

The cost of failure is too high. We must not allow the dark shadows of the twentieth century to return. The multiannual

financial framework (MFF) and NextGenerationEU (NGEU) can be the seeds of the regeneration of resources for our next generation.

Seeds. Nothing more, because even if NGEU will provide a surplus for a few years, the MFF still only represents 1% of EU GDP. Not to mention the year 2058, the year by which our children will pay off our debt, for our having consumed more than three of our potatoes over consecutive decades. All this in the era of VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity), where the next ‘bad times’ are just round the corner, whether in the form of a deadly pandemic, a financial crisis, migration as a result of extreme weather or the flooding of coastal areas. The MFF and NGEU are our potatoes for the bad times ahead and for planting next year.

As to whether planting the potato is worthwhile is not something that is



Press conference by David Maria Sassoli, EP President - EU long term budget - MFF  
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judged by today's voters alone. It is up to their children and their grandchildren who have not yet been born to decide.

The MFF-NGEU is a New Deal to replace the short-termism of electoral cycles of four to five years. It is up to the current generation's leaders who are borrowing from the resources available to future generations to take the plunge and reverse the trends. Our compass over the next few decades must be to deliver on our promise and to use the resources generated to regenerate opportunities through changing our behaviour for the benefit of the planet and the climate; through building up reserves to ensure that our economies are resilient and that

cooperation with partners is not merely dependency driven, but a choice we make; through investing and adapting to the changing economic reality; and through preparing our labour force to safeguard the European welfare model for the future. It is a commitment to guaranteeing the fundamental values of the EU in the long term.

The twin transition requires a great deal of capital-intensive investment in new technologies, but we also need to attend to our human reserves. Otherwise, we will grow our plantation but only a selected few will enjoy its fruits.

The social, spatial and stakeholder

divides in the labour market are growing. What we need in order to motivate citizens and get them on board is mass reskilling to tackle the twin transitions coupled with organisational safeguards. The Porto Social Commitment is the way to enhance our gold reserve: our peoples.

As other regions and countries are facing and tackling the same challenges, actually delivering on our commitments rather than setting ambitious sounding targets will give us a distinctive competitive advantage. This requires safeguards, checks and balances so that our plans bear fruit instead of being consumed ahead of time. Rule of law conditionality with Parliament's scrutiny and institutional oversight can provide the (eco-friendly) fertiliser for our potatoes, planted in the soil of our knowledge base, cultivated by our competitive talent pool and leadership, blossoming under the sun of European values and consensus-building, and harvested by our citizens.

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**"It is up to the current generation's leaders who are borrowing from the resources available to future generations to take the plunge and reverse the trends."**

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# The net in which we're caught – and which is my futureFMA

**Ms Kage, you are a biology graduate and a philosopher, artist, entrepreneur, microphotographer and researcher in biology, and you also do voluntary work on various aspects of nature and environmental protection.**

**How do you see your future as a member of the emerging generation under the influence of COVID-19, which affects us all?**

The coronavirus teaches us to look at the world and above all nature in a new way.

**The virus is endangering our health and many people's lives. You are young but you're building determinedly on your father's life's work.**

Especially now: nature's amazing networks, even down to life at the smallest microscopic levels, are incredibly complex – which also gives them resistance – and as such they are exciting to analyse as we seek to tease out their impact. My father's life's work comprised a search for what gives the world coherence at its most fundamental level. He set himself the goal of visualising the complexity, beauty and sensitivity of nature with microphotography and his particular 'science art' with such finesse that they would be brought tangibly within everyone's reach.

Microphotography has the ability to make even those mechanisms of nature which are invisible to the human eye intelligible, tangible and comprehensible in a novel and surprising way, linking them to our cultural identities and the way in which we live our lives.

Nature isn't a product on a

supermarket shelf. It's something indispensable around and within us. And therefore essential for life?

Everything we see around us today started out as an unimaginably tiny microscopic dot! This realisation alone is enough to leave us in awe and stimulate our spirit of discovery.

The microscopic oxygen-producers, water filterers and the smallest steps of our food webs, among many other things, form, with vast inventiveness and an amazing aesthetic, the basic structure of our planet which we need to survive and keep the main overarching network intact for all living things.

These connections make it unmistakeably clear that we must be more proactive in our approach to nature; we must understand it better, consistently give it room for manoeuvre and at the same time take a step back ourselves. The survival of each one of us will depend on this. Undamaged biodiversity in biotopes, which must be understood but also undisturbed by humankind, is what will ensure our survival.

**That sounds very philosophical and abstract.**

To put it in very practical, everyday terms: we can't go on as we have done so far. Abstention and concentration on what is essential will inevitably be the watchwords as we follow a modified path into our new common future. And in order to make this work, we will need vigilance, propriety and respect, but also courage, humility, far-sightedness and confidence, together with climate protection, continuous coordinated knowledge

acquisition and food security. Nothing new there – but it has to be put into action!

**Not only politics but, increasingly, unpretentious science was and is needed in the fight against the new virus and its mutant forms. Its origin has not yet been completely explained, but we must press on nevertheless.**

I am firmly convinced that we will together succeed in tackling the current and future challenges and find, as we further our own development, the right solutions for the many divergent tasks and problems.

And in doing so we should never forget: our life on this planet, in Europe, in this country, in this democracy is a precious gift which we must never take for granted.

Let's enjoy our amazing journey of discovery and approach our future with the utmost curiosity and thirst for knowledge, inventiveness, courage and determination!

I am with William Shakespeare on this: 'True hope is swift...'

I am beholden to hope.

**Ninja-Nadine Kage**

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# Young people's perception of the European Union

Since the 2019 European elections, young Europeans have been gaining greater importance in the European Union due to the fact that they are the generational cohort the most in favour of 'more Europe' and whose turnout in the elections has risen the most steeply while simultaneously bearing the brunt of the economic and social consequences of the health pandemic, with the jump in youth unemployment. For all these reasons, the European Union has placed the younger generation at the heart of its policies, even going so far as to call the recovery plan fund the Next Generation EU fund, since the youngest among us will benefit the most from these funds, although they will also be responsible for repaying them later. However, what perception do young people of the Erasmus generation have of the EU? What is their role in the Conference on the Future of Europe?

The 'Erasmus Generation', as those

aged between 16 and 30-35 are popularly known, are evidently young people born during the

granted. They are thus unaware, or unable to conceive, of a reality outside the European Union given

**"The European Union has placed the younger generation at the heart of its policies, even going so far as to call the recovery plan fund the Next Generation EU fund, since the youngest among us will benefit the most from these funds, although they will also be responsible for repaying them later. "**

Erasmus + programme, which will be 35 years old next year, but also within the Schengen area, within the European Union and in some cases even after the advent of the euro. These circumstances and experiences are precisely what lead young people of this generation to take the European Union for

that every aspect of their daily lives is affected by the EU, from the money they use pay for coffee, their academic curriculums under the Bologna programme, metro networks, the recycling system, etc.

All this gives these young people a different perspective on the process of European construction and, in many cases, a more favourable view on the European Union and a greater transfer of competences towards it, as we observed during the European elections, when turnout among young people casting our votes for the first time at European level rose by 30%.

Likewise, Eurobarometer surveys of this generation, especially young people from 16 to 25 years of age, show a much more favourable position towards greater European.

QAS Who do you think should be actively involved in the Conference on the Future of Europe? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (% - EU)



Who should be involved in the Conference on the future of Europe?. Special Eurobarometer 500 : Future of Europe ©European Union, 2021

integration, towards the transfer of powers to the institutions in climate, social, migratory and economic matters, etc. in order to continue advancing in the Union.

We therefore need to understand that there are no youth issues as such: we as Europe's youth should not limit ourselves to discussing youth unemployment or climate change with other young people, we should rather be able to contribute to – and ensure the youth perspective is mainstreamed into – all issues in order to reflect the direction of travel.

This is perhaps why the European Commission named the liquidity injection that was the recovery plan 'Next Generation Fund EU', which aims to achieve a more resilient, sustainable and digital European Union that addresses youth unemployment, the demands

**"We as Europe's youth should not limit ourselves to discussing youth unemployment or climate change with other young people, we should rather be able to contribute to – and ensure the youth perspective is mainstreamed into – all issues in order to reflect the direction of travel."**

of the younger generation for effective measures to fight climate change, and greater protection for users and digital natives, including precisely today's young people.

We, Europe's youth, are therefore the cornerstone in building Europe and must also be crucial to the Conference on the Future of Europe where, despite the opening words of the Commission President Ursula von der Leyen alluding to widespread participation by young people in the Conference, this is not happening. The Conference on the Future of Europe will have

to take account of a series of common challenges such as youth unemployment and climate change which are experienced by young people in this age group and not only those under 25. It is therefore essential that the Conference gives a voice to young people over 25 and under 30, who will otherwise not be heard.

**Guiomar Gutiérrez Pascual**

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# Why you need to take young people's concerns seriously during the Conference

The Conference on the Future of Europe invites all citizens across Europe to get together and discuss the Future of Europe. For Federalists and others wanting the status quo to change, the Conference is an important window of

and national citizen panels should be younger than 25 years, the European Parliament has also set up a project grant for European Youth organisations to organise projects on the Conference.

**"The Conference should truly be a genuine, meaningful and inclusive discussion instead of just another listening exercise."**

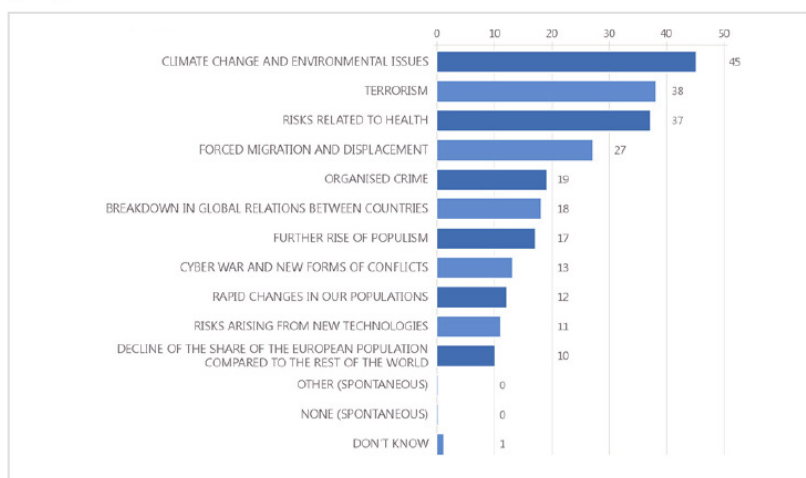
opportunity. Youth will play a special role in the Conference: alongside of one the Conference plenary seats being distributed to the President of the European Youth Forum as well as the rule that minimum a third of the representatives of the European

The special role for youth is a good sign: the Conference covers topics that will affect our lifetime longer than any other generations.

Since the Brexit referendum in 2016, voices have become louder that perhaps the young generation 'is taking the EU for granted'. The stereotypical argument goes that young people have grown up with the European Union, and cannot appreciate all the rights it provides, such as peace, democracy, free movement of persons or very practical elements like the abolition of roaming charges in 2017. Though there

might be some truth to it, we've been able to notice in our activities as JEF that crisis years like 2016 and 2020 have woken up young people who then seek out activities like the ones we organise: Members who join in these years appear to be particularly motivated in our non-partisan youth organisation. Even more so, a recent Eurobarometer (500, October 2020) showed that a majority of the general public in the EU agreed to the statement that the EU offers future perspectives for Europe's youth. The concepts "future" and "youth" are clearly linked. This presents two conditions for the Conference: First, a decent promotion campaign of the Conference implemented by different stakeholders is crucial to encourage a strong involvement of

QA12 Which of the following do you think are the main global challenges for the future of the EU? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (% - EU)



Which of the following do you think are the main global challenges for the future of the EU?. Special Eurobarometer 500 : Future of Europe ©European Union, 2021



## "The European spirit might not always be aligned with being in favour of the way the EU is run."

young people in the Conference. Second, the Conference should truly be a genuine, meaningful and inclusive discussion instead of just another listening exercise.

Young people are a very heterogeneous entity, with different living realities and needs, - and will certainly stimulate a political debate. However, one observation I'm making in my activism is that younger generations tend to more often feel European alongside their different identities (national, regional, local...). Whilst academia still debates on how to set up a

European public space, young people are celebrating what it means to be European, on online spaces like instagram or tiktok: "Europeans will always party on these songs" or "EU citizens be like" are just two recurring video concepts that people tend to make, setting themselves apart from global users, and forming a collection of "European" content creators. Furthermore, European cultural phenomena like Eurovision or the European Men's Football championship are heavily discussed across languages.

The European spirit might not always be aligned with being in favour of the way the EU is run. If in a specific policy the EU herself does not act according to the values herself or is ineffective, confusion and disappointment might rise. Processes might be complex, with news about how and what rarely goes out, or there's a process of blame-shifting in

place that has been spilled over to the wider population - they both have a similar effect: it creates confusion and potentially a feeling of hypocrisy. Unfortunately this largely has to do with the decisionmaking process in the EU where e.g. some Member States can block specific policies, such as in asylum policy. The regular rule of law violations in the EU are another prominent case of "why is the EU tolerating this?". The truth that some EU institutions are working hard in favour of the rule of law and others less is too complex to explain, and also doesn't give a hopeful impression that soon things will change for the better.

The EU in that case becomes difficult to argue in favour of, defend and convince friends and family of. The Conference on the Future of Europe comes hence at an excellent moment to invite in and showcase to your constituents: we're able to change Europe into a way that it can actually deal with its own challenges - and make you more enthusiastic about your future in the EU, too.

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