

EPFMA Bulletin



77 · December 2021

European Parliament Former Members Association

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A UNION OF ADDED VALUE



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Publication "Overcoming the pandemic" edited by Monica Baldi, Vice-President of the FMA, and Flavia Franconi. Available on the FMA website: <https://www.formermembers.eu/library/>

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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 Due to the long time lag between the call for contribution and the publication, some articles may be outdated.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,

This year comes to an end, and we decided to finish it with this edition of the Bulletin focusing on a Union of added value. It defines the additional value resulting from an EU intervention to the value of the action of a single member state. As we know, challenges must be tackled on different levels and the European perspective is necessary to have a broader impact on the future of our continent. The articles in the focus will consider several political fields in which a Union of added value has an important impact such as the internal market or the food and farming system.

In the "current affairs" section two articles are dedicated to the situation in Afghanistan regarding especially the notion of democracy.

The FMA was very active during the autumn, organising numerous activities. Our Management Committee met again in person in Brussels and had fruitful discussions on future FMA activities and programmes. We also organised our visit to the country holding the EU Presidency: Slovenia. In this edition, you will find a report on the visit. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the EP Liaison Office in Slovenia for its support and Zofija Mazej Kukovic for helping organise this visit. We were delighted to meet with parliament and government representatives to discuss the current priorities of the Slovenian presidency and challenges of the EU such as the rule of law and the recovery from the pandemic.

Two Librorum events took place during the autumn. We

presented and debated the book of Zofija Mazej Kukovic "Start up Europe" and the book of Cristiana Muscardini, "I nostri domiciliari" (Our house arrest). Seeing the interest in these book presentations, we will organise four new editions during 2022.

If you have published a book and wish to write a review for the next edition of the Bulletin, I warmly invite you to contact the Secretariat.

I would like to thank Vice-President Monica Baldi for the organisation of the Conference 'How to overcome COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences' on 23 September 2021, which was co-organized by the FMA, the Women 20 Equity in Health Commission and the European University Institute. "Charta de Florentia", a call to action for G20 countries to prioritise health equity for everyone, and a publication of the proceedings were a result of the event. The publication is available on the FMA website.

We finalised the year with the closing event for the 20th anniversary of the FMA on 7 December and were honoured by the presence of Vice-President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola. Thanks to the continuous support of the European Parliament, we can maintain our network and run successful programmes and activities.

We were very pleased to welcome high-level speakers and experts to discuss the Conference on the future of Europe, in particular the green transition strategy and its impact on the post-Covid recovery measures. We also celebrated the 15th anniversary of the EP to Campus Programme during these

two days and were pleased to count on the presence of Mariya Gabriel European Commissioner Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Rector of the College of Europe Federica Morgherini, Professor Marc Arwed Rutke, Professor Natalia Cuglesan and Professor Vlad Vernygora. They gave us an inside of the learning value of the EP to Campus programme for their students and the challenges of teaching European subjects.

I would like to thank all the members who have participated in the programme during all these years. Thank you for your engagement. In 2022, EP to Campus will continue to visit numerous universities, hopefully also in presence and we count with your active participation.

Next year, the FMA will pursue its activities with a visit to France in February to find out more about the Presidency of the Council of the EU. The end of the Conference on the Future of Europe will be an important moment of the presidency, which we as former members are following very closely. I am looking forward to seeing many of you in France.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the December issue and to the success of our activities. I wish you joyful and restful holidays.

Merry Christmas and come healthy into the New Year 2022.

Hans-Gert Pöttering
FMA President

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AT WORK

Key facts

MEPs adopted the reform of the EU Blue Card to facilitate the employment of highly qualified non-EU nationals and help alleviate labour shortages in key sectors.

(Septembre session - P9_TA(2021)0374)

With only 36 806 Blue Cards issued in the EU in 2019, the new EU Blue Card will offer a more flexible criteria for admission, a lower threshold for the minimum salary and a more simple procedure for moving between EU countries and reuniting with family.

European Health Union: MEPs called for reinforced cooperation between EU bodies and their national and international counterparts.

(Septembre session - P9_TA(2021)0377)

MEPs approved the proposal to extend the mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). They said that the EU member states should develop national preparedness and response plans, and provide timely, comparable and high quality data.

European Parliament approved a legislative initiative demanding to make gender-based violence a crime under EU law.

(Septembre session - P9_TA(2021)0388)

The legislative initiative demands targeted legislation and policies to address all forms of violence and discrimination based on gender (against women and girls, but also against LGBTIQ+ persons), whether offline or online.

MEPs opposed mass surveillance and the use of artificial intelligence by the police

(October session - P9_TA(2021)0405)

MEPs pointed to the risk of algorithmic bias in AI applications and emphasise that human supervision and strong

legal powers are needed to prevent discrimination by AI, especially in a law enforcement or border-crossing context.

A resolution to support European media to recover from pandemic and face future challenges was approved.

(October session - P9_TA(2021)0428)

MEPs pushed for substantial support for the media sector from the EU and member states in order to help the sector recover from the pandemic and transform itself to keep pace with the changing business models of the digital age.

The European Parliament is concerned about attacks on EU media in some member states.

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

(October 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 welcomed the Farm to Fork strategy to make our food healthier and more sustainable.

(October session - P9_TA(2021)0425)

MEPs underlined the importance of producing sustainable and healthy food to achieve the goals of the European Green Deal, including on climate, biodiversity, zero pollution and public health.

They highlighted the need for enhanced sustainability at every step of the food supply chain, from farmer to consumer.

MEPs called for thorough investigations to be launched into any wrongdoing exposed by the Pandora Papers that took place in EU jurisdictions.

(October session - P9_TA(2021)0438)

MEPs called for urgent measures to take to close loopholes that currently allow for tax avoidance, money laundering and tax evasion on a massive scale. They also called for legal action to be taken by the Commission against EU countries that do not properly execute existing laws. MEPs reserved particular criticism for present and former prime ministers and ministers of EU member states whose activities were revealed by the Pandora Papers.

The European Parliament upgrades the existing mandate of the EU Asylum Support Office (EASO).

(November session - P9_TA(2021)0448)

The new EU Asylum Agency will have enhanced operational and technical powers to facilitate cooperation among member states and contribute to converging asylum standards.

MEPs are calling on the Polish government to lift the ban on abortion that puts women's lives at risk.

(November session - P9_TA(2021)0455)

MEPs reiterated their condemnation of the illegitimate Polish Constitutional Tribunal's ruling imposing a near-total ban on abortion.

Last September, a 30-year-old Polish woman died of septic shock because her doctors did not perform a life-saving abortion, waiting instead for the foetus to die because of the restrictions on legal abortions in Poland. MEPs called on the Polish government to ensure that no more women in Poland die because of this restrictive law.

Other main dossiers discussed in the plenary sessions were:

14.09.21

MEPs approved a resolution on the **rights of LGBTIQ persons in the EU**. The European Parliament emphasises that these citizens should be able to fully exercise their rights, including the right to free movement, everywhere in the Union.

16.09.21

MEPs called for a **new EU strategy to promote democracy in Russia**. Parliament said that the EU must push back against aggressive policies while laying the groundwork for cooperation with a future democratic Russia.

The European Parliament urged the EU to accelerate the transition to a **research system that does not use animals**.

06.10.21

MEPs called for urgent measures to **protect victims of intimate partner violence in custody battles**. They said that child custody disputes constitute a form of gender-based violence when used by violent partners to continue to harm their victims.

07.10.21

MEPs demanded common **EU cyber defensive capabilities**. A substantial EU cooperation on cyber capabilities are among the key issues needed for the development of a deepened and enhanced European Defence Union.

The European Parliament outlined its priorities for **reforming the EU policy on harmful tax practices** as well as a blueprint for a new system to assess national tax policies.

The European Parliament expressed strong solidarity with Lithuania, Poland and Latvia, as well as other **EU countries** recently **targeted by the Belarusian regime's** attempts to direct a substantial number of migrants and refugees towards the EU's external borders.

20.10.21

The European Parliament called on the Commission to propose a **"European Status of the Artist"**, setting out a common framework for working conditions and minimum standards for all EU countries.

21.10.21

MEPs pushed for binding **reduction targets on methane emissions** to reach EU climate goals and improve air quality.

The European Parliament adopted **new rules to improve protection of road accident victims**. Whether the accident occurs in their country of residence or elsewhere in the EU.

The European Parliament condemned an **attempt to undermine the primacy of EU law** and called on the Council and Commission to urgently protect the people of Poland and the Union. The Polish Constitutional Tribunal is illegitimate, unfit to interpret constitution.

MEPs asked for part of **Frontex budget to be frozen** until there are improvements in fundamental rights monitoring and financial, recruitment and procurement procedures.

11.11.21

The European Parliament is calling for **new EU rules to curtail vexatious legal actions** intended to intimidate and silence critical voices. Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) are frivolous legal actions based on exaggerated and often abusive claims, aiming to intimidate and professionally discredit their targets, with the ultimate objective of blackmailing and silencing them.

MEPs give their final green light to **new rules obliging big multinationals to publicly declare the taxes they pay in each EU country**, in order to undermine tax avoidance.

The European Parliament proposed several ways to strengthen European democracy in a report assessing the existing **rules on the statute and funding of European political parties and foundations**.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/plenary>





THE MANIFESTO OF THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION, 80 YEARS ON

The Ventotene Manifesto, drawn up in 1941 on the small Mediterranean island of the same name, is a document that heralded, and in many ways was a forerunner of, a European 'constitution'. Written by Italian citizens (Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi, Eugenio Colorni), who had been deprived of their personal freedom, it was not merely an act of resistance against the 'model' totalitarian state which seemed to prevail at the time in Europe (not only against the Italian fascist model, therefore). But above all, it was a 'revolutionary' subversive act owing to its radical rejection of the dogma of absolute state sovereignty.

“The legitimacy of European law is therefore based on its ‘ability to include the minimum rate of diversity, but that which is necessary in order to preserve the national identity inherent in the fundamental structure of the Member State’.”

It was the Italian Constitution of 1948 that for the first time converted this manifesto into a legal arrangement. Accordingly, Article 11 reads: 'Italy agrees to the limitations of sovereignty that may be necessary for a world order'. It was not just an Italian constitutional 'revolution', but an overturning of all the dominant ideas regarding European constitutionalism. A year later, the Bonn Constitution followed the

same course, as did the states of the successive enlargements, and the rest is history.

That clause restricting sovereignty was therefore to become a pattern for national constitutions to follow, with a supra-state constitution.

In a reciprocal intertwining of legal systems, 'unity in diversity' was thus achieved. On the one hand, we have a 'single institutional framework' aimed at maintaining the 'common order' referred to in the Manifesto. On the other, we have the incorporation into EU law of the 'constitutional traditions common to the Member States', referred to in Article 6 of the TEU. The legitimacy of European law is therefore based on its 'ability to include the minimum rate of diversity, but that which is necessary in order to preserve the national identity inherent in the fundamental structure of the Member State'.

The supra-state order provided for in the Manifesto should have the necessary means to maintain 'the common order', 'while each State will retain the autonomy it needs for a plastic articulation and the development of political life according to the particular characteristics of the various peoples'.

In short, it is well known that the drafters of the Manifesto were thinking of what they go on to call an 'international state', in a fully-fledged federal system. However, they do not cast doubt on the value of national ideology as 'a powerful stimulus to progress'. They did, however, warn about the degeneration of nationalism when welded to the dogma of state absolutism. In this sense, the Manifesto

appears to set 'identity-based' nationality – which it recognises as vital – against 'sovereign' nationality, which it opposes precisely because it is linked, as a driving factor for populism, to state absolutism in its worst form: totalitarianism. Key to understanding this distinction are the words with which the Manifesto upholds the legitimacy of the right of the supra-state order to intervene in the institutional life of the Member States. 'The principle of non-intervention turned out to be absurd: every population was supposed to be left free to choose the despotic government it thought best, in other words, virtually assuming that the constitution of each individual state was not a question of vital interest for all the other European nations'.

The permanent revolution of the old statism, of which the Union's order will consist, will cause continuous counter-revolutions in the name of tenacious forms of sovereignism that are sometimes supported by national case-law that will go as far as to challenge, under the 'primacy' of EU law, that same supra-state construction theorised in the Manifesto and built over the years. But the Manifesto began to 'shape the outlines of the future', without any facile illusions, but in the knowledge that, expressed in its own words, 'the road to pursue is neither easy nor certain. But it must be followed and it will be'. A duty that is more important today than ever before.

Andrea Manzella
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DEMOCRACY, ITS MODELS AND ITS PARADOXES

One of Chinese President Xi Jinping's latest metaphors – 'only the wearer of the shoes knows if they fit' – provides a very good description of the way the world is going in terms of democratic models and the universal rights that come with them. Events in Afghanistan, which in August 2021 saw a withdrawal of military forces with all its consequences, have reopened the debate on what democracy means and whether it actually can be exported.

“The crisis of democracy we are currently experiencing must also be seen in this context, with an emphasis on whether or not ‘Western’ models can be successfully transplanted in other parts of the world. Debate often focuses solely on agreeing or disagreeing with the idea of democracy being exported.”

In reality, over the last decade, owing to the accelerating process of globalisation and the conditions dictated by the economic and financial interests of the major powers in respect of international law, cautious scepticism has been voiced in political and cultural circles, pointing to what may well be the sun going down on ‘the age of rights’.

While the value of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights – and first and foremost the right to ‘life, liberty and security of person’ (Article 3) – is recognised, debate now surrounds whether a distinction can be made between civil/political rights and social rights, while the dichotomy between the supposed universalism of the Declaration and its actual content, which is based on typically Western individualism, is in the spotlight.

The crisis of democracy we are currently experiencing must also be seen in this context, with an emphasis on whether or not ‘Western’ models can be successfully transplanted in other parts of the world. Debate often focuses solely on agreeing or disagreeing with the idea of democracy being exported.

But put in those terms, this is liable to be productive and even misleading. The start of the century bore witness to two opposing

doctrines – the one followed by George W. Bush, which held that democracy can be exported by force (as in the case of Iraq) and the other, pursued in Europe, in the shape of the process of the enlargement of the European Union. That process has led many Eastern countries to adopt European democratic parameters, and to commit to the constitutions they pen, but it has resulted in full democratic transition owing to the lack of support from suitable economic and social policies. Both strategies have failed: the first because war never resolves anything, and the second because it has highlighted that Europe has absolutely no political or planning role when it comes to managing the integration process.

These examples therefore show just how laughable the idea is of whether democracy should be exported or not, and call for reflection on ‘how’ and ‘what’ can actually be exported.



Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission during the EP Plenary session - Situation in Afghanistan ©European Union 2021 - Source : EP



©European Union, Source: EC - Audiovisual Service

Xi Jinping's metaphor provides an unequivocal answer to this question: each country decides its own destiny and decides on its own model of government. Full stop.

This view is garnering increasing support, owing partly to the fact that 'the West' has reduced questions of democracy to a mere voting exercise. That is an important matter, but is not in itself decisive as it cannot encapsulate all the delicate and complex mechanisms of democracy. Moreover, while the enlightened concepts of 'representation', 'collective interest' and 'popular sovereignty', as Max Weber noted in the last century, are no longer recognisable among the oligarchic elites that govern our Western democracies – indifferent and removed as they are from the needs of the less well-off and even the middle class – active participation of the public will evaporate as will their sense of belonging to a civil and democratic community.

This narrow notion of democracy is also being adopted by many states as a shortcut to removing individual rights issues from their agenda and to ignoring appeals and resolutions by supranational bodies.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also been used, in many countries, to

tighten the screw still further on political opponents, human rights defenders and NGOs.

On careful consideration, the paradox in Jinping's metaphor, is that, while hinting at Western democracy not being exportable to elsewhere in the world, it also shows the extent to which our democracy has been tainted by models that are undemocratic, illiberal and despotic. What has been created is a fusion between these models and the notion of a democracy which is only a 'facade'. Within that paradox, there is a clear gap between words and reality, given that Chinese politics, thanks to the huge economic and financial resources available, has bought and holds sway over a host of countries through an unprecedented form of colonialism which deprives those countries of their freedom and their future.

“It is absolutely vital to thrust back onto the table the issue of democracy, human rights and the fight against impunity.”

Much of the blame for this can be apportioned to the 'Westerners' who

have often made old neo-colonial vices part of their policies and conduct vulgar Realpolitik. This moral disengagement is one of the causes of the problems we face today. This is why Europe now carries less weight in the world. Today, democracy and rights are under fierce attack on several fronts – in conflict and wars, economics, finance, technology (cf. governments using the Pegasus software for spying) and pandemics, etc.

That is why it is absolutely vital to thrust back onto the table the issue of democracy, human rights and the fight against impunity. All this should be done by making constant call on a public who are fearful, confused and in some respects dormant, by continuously monitoring the abuses perpetrated against a large number of people for a wide variety of reasons and by highlighting to the international community those countries which, with impunity, kill and imprison people who hold opinions that differ from those in power.

We should do this because it is our clear moral, ethical and political duty. It is a duty which the philosopher Emmanuel Kant, in heralding the new ethical sensitivity of the modern age, embodied in the clear and simple notion of acting in a manner that always respects one's own dignity and the dignity of others. The rights of the person are of absolute value and as such, morally speaking, demand unconditional respect.

Pier Antonio Panzeri

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AFGHANISTAN: A LOOK BACK TO 2001



Nicole Fontaine, EP President (1999-2001), with Ahmed Shah Massoud, Commander of the Anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan during his visit to the European Parliament in Strasbourg ©European Union 2000 - EP

It sometimes seems as if history repeats itself, tragically, over and over again.

As the lights go out in Kabul, it is worth recalling the events of 2001 and the commitment of the European Parliament and its President to the situation in Afghanistan. On 5 April 2001, Nicole Fontaine had the courage to invite Commander Massoud to Strasbourg. He came to Parliament from Panjshir Valley – the first time he had been received at this political level.

Accompanied by representatives of the Afghan ethnic groups, Commander Massoud warned of the imminent danger of al-Qaeda.

Less than a month later, on 5 May, three women were smuggled out of Afghanistan and welcomed in Parliament as well. Dressed in their burqas, they testified before the foreign affairs and women's rights committees. They alerted the international community to the plight of women and the terrible conditions they had to suffer under the Taliban regime.

On Commander Massoud's recommendation, Nicole Fontaine

requested a meeting with the former king of Afghanistan, Mohammed Zahir Shah, who Commander Massoud thought could help restore harmony to the country. Ironically, that meeting took place in Rome on the very same day as the attacks on the World Trade Center. Meanwhile, on 9 September, Commander Massoud had been killed in a suicide attack by two al-Qaeda members in Panjshir. His death was announced on 16 September.

Etienne Bassot

Director of the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services

Forty years of war and other disasters such as the current COVID-19 pandemic are devastating the people of Afghanistan.

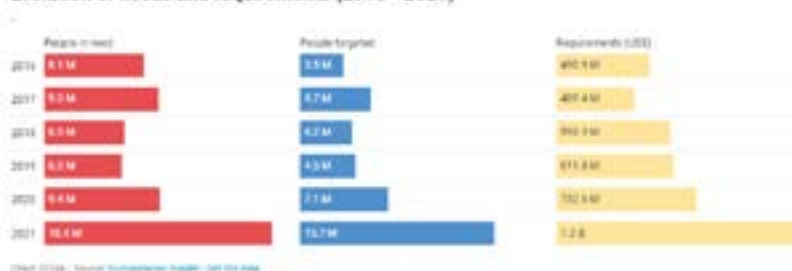
According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, an estimated 18.4 million people need humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan in 2021, which is almost the double since the beginning of 2020.

"Women are facing both an increased burden of care and Gender-based Violence risks due to COVID-19. Additional protection assistance is needed for children who are increasingly required to work outside of home and are at heightened risk of early marriage, exploitation or recruitment into armed groups." (UN Office)

In the graphic below you can see the evolution of needs since 2016.

You can read the full analysis at the following link: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/afghanistan_humanitarian_needs_overview_2021.pdf

Evolution of needs and requirements (2016 - 2021)



ONWARDS AND UPWARDS – GROWING FROM CRISES

To me, Myanmar (Burma) was my home for the past four years until the military coup on February 1, 2021, crushed my hopes and plans for a future in the country. It was not Covid-19, but the totally unsecure living situation.

How did I, a young female professional from Germany, come to live in such a far away and culturally completely different place?

Born into a unifying Germany in 1989, I grew up with a strong consciousness of Europe as my home. I would identify as convinced European. Before I even entered high school, my parents had taken me on trips to Denmark, Sweden, The Netherlands, France, Austria and Italy. I studied at universities in Maastricht, Porto and London. And I came to pick up good command of English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch.

My Europeanness is also at the centre of the two most live changing, career defining moments in my life thus far:

1. One, for obvious reasons, is the Brexit vote for the UK to leave the European Union that forced me to give up my home and work in

London in 2018, despite having worked for the UK Parliament and Foreign Office over the past years.

2. The second is the recent military coup in Myanmar. For the first time, I realised that my European citizenship and passport, which thus far allowed me privileged access to many countries around the world, could not protect me in this situation.

In 2018, the experience of "losing" my London home has pushed me to move to Myanmar on a whim and set up my own consulting firm at 28, with just a few professional contacts in hand.

I worked on a project offering parliamentary expert assistance to the Myanmar Union Parliament in Naypyidaw, the "Brasilia of Myanmar". Myanmar was not an obvious choice for me - I specialized in Middle Eastern security in university (I even studied Arabic for 7 years and lived in Jordan and Morocco for short periods), I despise heat, crowds and chaos, and I knew nothing about Burmese history, culture, let alone the language(s).

And yet - I found in Myanmar

what I did not know I had been searching for, a community of people constantly inspiring me with their optimism (despite everything!), creativity and drive to grow, proper, innovate.

Being embraced by this community, I established a Myanmar branch of my consulting firm led by one of my Myanmar associates and support more young Myanmar professionals wanting to specialize in development evaluation.

I felt guilty about moving on and making new plans while my Myanmar colleagues and friends did not have that privilege. Now, I've come to realize that it is exactly for this reason that I have a responsibility to continue to support development organisations to work in Myanmar, to not let the evil forces that want us to stop our support to its people win.

I am moving to Berlin to find like minded young development professionals who want to join my consulting firm in this endeavor. I am starting again from scratch.

I have learned that every end is an opportunity for a start of something new and exciting. I will continue to put my European passport to good use in seeking it out furthermore.



Frederike Luise Engeland in Myanmar

Frederike Luise Engeland

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Interviewed by **Brigitte Langenhagen**

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FMA ACTIVITIES



EPFMA
PEAAD



PROGRAMME EP TO CAMPUS

A VIRTUAL VISIT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF FLENSBURG

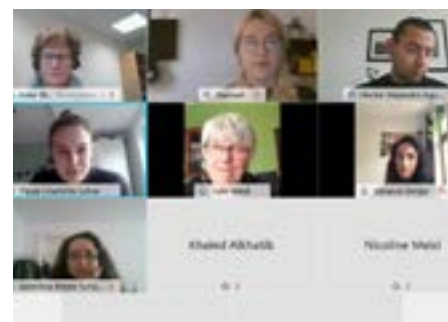
Last November I enjoyed an online discussion with international students currently enrolled on the European Cultures & Society programme of the Europa-Universität Flensburg. The overall theme of our conversation was “Europe as an Education Space” facilitated by Professor Anke Wigger, with a particular focus on key competences for life-long learning.

Professor Wigger and I had a pre-meeting where she shared the results of a menti.com survey she had conducted with the students asking them to rank their competences in different areas. Literacy, learning to learn and multi-lingual competences came out on top, with STEM and entrepreneurship receiving the lowest rankings. I was surprised to see digital competence ranked at 5/8 with citizenship ranking even lower at 6/8. Cultural awareness and expression was ranked fourth.

On November 18th we spent the first part of the session reflecting on our own experiences of informal learning. This was particularly interesting in the context of the current pandemic which has

curtailed normal student life. Students shared how they were accessing extra-curricular online learning in a wide range of subjects. An American student said she had been watching parenting podcasts, another had decided to learn about staying healthy, several Asian students were improving their German language skills, many were following the news. Learning online tools and accessing motivational videos also figured with students openly expressing the difficulties they were having, not only far from home but also unable to forge the all important social connections that university life generally offers.

I gave an account of my work as an advocate of informal education and life-learning and how that had brought me to engage in citizenship and intercultural dialogue as a means of promoting peaceful societies and strengthening democracy, values that I had brought into my parliamentary career. I gave concrete examples of CULT Committee work and also talked about my work as a women's rights campaigner promoting gender mainstreaming in the EU institutions and beyond.



Julie Ward during her participation at the event of Europa-Universität Flensburg

I explained my campaign to promote STEAM rather than STEM, which acknowledges the natural synergy between science and the arts, and gave an account of the evolution of the Erasmus+ programme with its increased opportunities for marginalised groups.

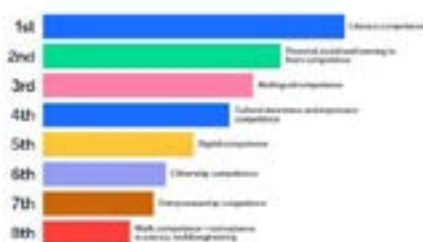
I followed up the session with a list of recommendations for further reading, directing students to sites such as mepranking.eu and my parliamentary page. Professor Wigger sent me a wonderful thank-you which demonstrates the value of the EP to Campus programme and our ongoing work to fight for European values:

“...you are a brilliant role model, especially for the young women, showing the necessity of fighting for arts and culture, that it's worth stepping in for your beliefs and living proof that the European Parliament is much more than white, conservative men.” Prof A Wigger.

Julie Ward

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What's your top key competence? Rank your proficiency.



Survey conducted by Professor Anke Wigger ranking the competences of the students

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF EUROPEAN CONSUMER PROTECTION

The European Parliament has an impressive track record in advocating strong Consumer protection policies. So, it was a great pleasure to be able to accept an invitation from Dr. Melinda Szappanyos, held in November at the University of Pécs, Department of Political Science (Hungary) and International Studies, to deliver an on-line "EP to Campus" lecture and workshop on this topic. Having served 5 years as Chairman of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee (IMCO), I could offer some historical perspectives and unique insights on Parliament's work for Europe's consumers.

In preparing the event, Melinda shared the details of EU consumer legislation already presented to her students. I was then able to focus my talk on the strong influence of the European Parliament in policy evolution and practical outcomes benefitting consumers.

We also agreed that students would become more engaged in the topic if they followed a case study. As the

Commission had recently published its proposals for the reform of the Package Travel Directive, students would be asked to look at some of the issues around this reform and discuss them with me in a "workshop" session.

My public lecture was broadcast on the University Facebook page and promoted with a poster campaign. I reviewed the evolution of Consumer Policy and noted that the current Commission's Consumer Agenda, published in 2020, had evolved from the 2012 Agenda first championed by IMCO. In both documents, the need to empower consumers and provide them with information to make informed choices was a central policy. MEPs raised the ambition of Commission proposals and pressed for better enforcement. They had successfully promoted Consumer Rights across many domains. Highlights were electronic communications, mobile phone roaming, passenger travel, product safety and food labelling.



PÉCSI TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM
UNIVERSITY OF PÉCS

Logo of the University of Pécs

My talk also referred to work by the present Parliament that showed how its consumer activism was continuing. The IMCO demands for more consumer-friendly measure in the Digital Markets Act were a good example. However, Parliament's persistent demand for a unified approach to policy making with a dedicated Consumer Commissioner remained unmet.

After closing the public session, I was able to take detailed questions from students on a wide range of topics including their ideas for package travel reform. Our dialogue extended beyond consumer issues, covering the Future of the EU and the UK's position in a post "Brexit" world.

Dr. Szappanyos was delighted that her students were deeply engaged with the session and the insights they gained from hearing a practitioner's viewpoint. We agreed to plan another project in 2022 and recommend that the "EP to Campus" Programme includes more Single Market topics.



Malcom Harbour during a IMCO meeting at the European Parliament ©European Union 2013 - EP

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VISIT UNDER THE EU PRESIDENCY

FMA VISIT TO SLOVENIA

The FMA delegation's visit to Slovenia was the first visit in person after a long period of restrictive measures due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was a good opportunity to understand the advantages of the single market like the free movement of people, which are somehow forgotten and taken for granted. As some restrictions were still in place and travel procedures varied from one EU Member State to another, it was a major challenge to find convenient ways of traveling, with EU flights cut by an average of 30% and flights to Slovenia - by more than 50%. This experience has clearly shown that the EU's strategic autonomy and economic recovery will not be possible without the development of the trans-European transport network for promoting the internal market, and that additional investment is needed in this area.

Slovenia is not a large Member State with a population of around 2.1 million. It was the first country to declare independence from the former Yugoslavia in the roaring democracy of the 90s and the first in the region to join the EU in 2004 with a wave of major enlargement. During the 17 years of membership, Slovenia became an important EU Member State and holds the presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2021.

Recently, Slovenia's neighborhood, the Western Balkans region - Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia - has attracted a lot of attention from EU capitals as potential candidate countries. This topic was also reflected in one way or another in the meetings of our delegations. All the countries of the Western Balkans are natural members of the EU, but their eligibility for EU membership

varies. Some countries are more advanced than others in adhering to EU membership requirements. The FMA's delegation has previously visited North Macedonia in virtual terms, and members were familiar with the region's challenges and achievements.

At present, the EU is not institutionally prepared and does not have sufficient capacity to absorb new members. The ongoing Conference on the Future of Europe is designed to decide on the EU institutional setting, but that will take some time, so it is now difficult to say when the EU will be ready to accept the new members from the Western Balkans. In order to speed up the transition process as a first step towards EU accession, it is possible to strengthen relations with the Western Balkans countries through trade agreements in the framework of the European Economic Area and to use the expertise of other EEA Member States. Dynamism plays an important role in the development process.

Despite all the problems and delays modernization of the legal and economic system in line with the requirements of EU membership has a long-term positive impact on the development of countries. It should be noted that in the past the region (i.e. the former Yugoslavia) was a more advanced country than Romania or Bulgaria, so the level of economic readiness is high, but the process of regaining independence was unfortunately not peaceful, and the Balkan wars disrupted the



Hans-Gert Pöttering with Igor Zorčič, President of National Assembly ©National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia



Group photo at the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators

development of countries - GDP per capita in PPPs is 45% of the EU average in Montenegro, 37% in North Macedonia, 31% in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 39% in Serbia, 30% in Albania.

The FMA visit program was a high level and very interesting, made with the assistance of former MEPs from Slovenia. During the visit the delegation exchanged views with the senior policy adviser to the President, attended the event EUROPE - YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW with young people organized by Slovenian EPLO and streamlined on the internet in the framework of Conference on Future of Europe from the House of Europe in Ljubljana.

During the visit there was an opportunity to get acquainted with Slovenia culture and science –Ljubljana landmarks, designed by the famous architect Jože Plečnik (1872-1957), and included into the UNESCO World Heritage Site list was presented during the sightseeing tour, at the meeting in Jožef Stefan Institute. Its research

activities and participation in EU research programs have been presented and EU's energy challenges briefly discussed with the European Union Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) member of the administrative body from Slovenia, Romana Jordan (also a former MEP).

The members of the delegation met with the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and co-chair of the Executive Board of the Conference on the Future of Europe and his team who presented the agenda of

Slovenia's presidency of the EU Council. The members of the delegation recognized the high level of professional qualification of Slovenian officials and shared with them their historical perspective knowledge of the EU agenda.

During the visit to the Slovenian Parliament, the delegation met with the President of the Slovenian National Assembly, the Chairman of the EU Affairs Committee of the National Assembly, the Chairman of the Foreign Policy Committee, and other members of both committees, the exchange of views was focused among others, on the impact of digitalization on democratic institutions.

At the end of the visit, members had a very warm conversation with former MEPs from Slovenia and the first PM of Independent Slovenia.

Margarita Starkevičiūtė
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Group photo at the European Parliament Liaison Office in Slovenia

LESSONS FROM THE PRESENT FOR THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

During this second Slovenian Presidency of the European Council, it was a great pleasure to meet our colleagues from the Former Members Association here across the Alps in Slovenia. In addition to meetings with prominent political representatives, the European Parliament Liaison Office (EPLO) organised a discussion between former MEPs and Slovenian students.

As Jean Monnet said, every challenge is a new opportunity for development, and thus the post-pandemic period is a new opportunity. Young people have indicated that more education about the EU is important for future elections, for them to believe that every vote counts.

Despite more than 38 million COVID-19 cases in the EU and more than 764 000 deaths, young people were not convinced that three of the restrictions imposed during the epidemic were necessary: the restrictions on free movement, on gatherings and on in-person attendance in schools and

universities. Their disagreement with restrictions was also evident in the demonstrations against these measures and against vaccinations.

My focus in the debate on the COVID-19 crisis and the Health Union draws on my experience as former Health Minister. Uncertainty and solidarity have taught us how we need to act in the future. We need to be better prepared and to coordinate better. I'd like to point out the historic and important role of the European Parliament and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) during the pandemic. From the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, the ECDC advised Member State authorities and provided science-based guidance. This will be required even more in the future.

Thanks to connected EU research and knowledge, new anti-COVID vaccines were developed, and the EU created the Digital COVID Certificate which gave us new hope of free movement. Today in the EU on average 72% of adults are fully vaccinated.

The epidemic has had a huge impact on our lives and led to health, social and economic crises. The post-COVID-19 EU therefore needs to be more resilient, sustainable and green. That's why we are creating the Health Union which aims to improve EU levels of preparedness and response to hazards to human health. The basic pillar of the Health Union is the Health Environment Research Agenda for Europe (HERA) incubator, which is starting to connect knowledge within the EU, and will carry out threat assessments and develop forecasting models.

Mahatma Gandhi once made the point that it's not possible to educate the young just with words, we need to do so by the way we live and through our own examples. The same can be said of politics, which is why it is the responsibility of the left and right sides of politics to be examples for young people in how we cooperate and build democracy and solidarity between all generations. The standard of living we have in the EU is not a given and is not constant, and this crisis will not be the last.



A moment during the event at the EPLO in Slovenia entitled "Europe Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" organised in the frame of the Conference on the Future of Europe

Zofija Mazej Kukovič

*Former Health Minister,
Deputy Chair of ECDC Management Board
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SLOVENIA – THE ROUGH PATH TO INDEPENDENCE

During the study visit of the FMA delegation to Slovenia, we had a very impressive meeting with our former colleagues in the European Parliament Zofia Mazej Kukovič, Alojze Peterle (to many colleagues also well known as “the man with the mouth organ”) and Jelko Kačin. Our discussion with our former colleagues was especially remarkable because this year Slovenia celebrates 30 years of independence from Yugoslavia and our former colleagues were in the front row of the personalities fighting for an independent Slovenian state.

The revolutionary events in Central and Eastern Europe led also to a dissolution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia bringing to light the many cultural, religious, political differences between the several Federal States of Yugoslavia. For Slovenia, it opened up the possibility to get an independent state for the first time in the history of the Slovenian nation.

On 23 December 1990 a referendum was held among the citizens of Slovenia, 88% of the voters voted for



From left: Hans-Gert Pöttering, Zofia Mazej Kukovic, Elisabetta Fonck and Alojze Peterle

the independence of Slovenia, on 25 June 1991 Slovenia declared the independence from Yugoslavia. But the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was formerly still existing and the central government in Belgrade answered with war still having the power of the armed forces of the FRY, the Yugoslavian People's Army. But the Slovenians had organised their Slovenian Territorial Defence and as a result of the so called Ten Days War the Slovenians succeeded and the Yugoslavian People's Army withdrew from the Slovenian territory. The way to become an independent state was opened.

Alojze Peterle as the first Prime Minister of Slovenia elected already in May 1990 and Jelko Kačin as the Deputy Republican Defence Secretary and Secretary of Information of Slovenia at that time are the best contemporary witnesses to tell and declare how Slovenia gained an independent and equal member of the international community, who helped them on this way, and also how Slovenia joined the European Union and the NATO in 2004, adopted the Euro in 2007 and became part of the Schengen Area in the same year.

Now Slovenia took over for the second time the presidency of the Council of the EU.

It was more than a lively history lesson by our former colleagues and now members of our Association. It brought fate and success of the Slovenian people in the last three decades closer to us.

Joachim Zeller

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A moment during the event at the Ljubljana Castle with Gašper Dovžan, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-chair of the Executive Board of the Conference on the Future of Europe during the Slovenian Presidency

BACK TO THE FMA VISITS IN PERSON

Since the start of Covid many meetings have been online. This was the first meeting of the FMA face to face in the country of the EU Presidency with its government and Parliament since Covid. For me -the only Brit on the visit -it was the first such meeting since the United Kingdom had left the EU.

The meeting concentrated on the Slovenian government's presidency of the EU. We had excellent meetings well organised by the Slovenian Government, the FMA and the EP Liaison Office in Ljubljana.

Our first meeting was a panel discussion on "the Future of Europe" which was being streamed to various organisations in Slovenia. The discussion was limited to pre-arranged participants. The only people who took part from the FMA were a former Health Minister of Slovenia (Zofija Mazej Kukovic) and former Prime Minister (Alojz Peterle) plus Hans-Gert Pöttering (Chairman of FMA and former President of the European Parliament). Comments relating to the effect of the US

departure from Afghanistan, on EU defence and foreign policy were raised several times during our meetings. The general thrust was the concern about the lack of consultation by the US with other EU and NATO countries.

Our second meeting was with Dr Petric, senior advisor to the President. We discussed the progress towards the EU membership of the Western Balkan states. Throughout our meetings, I gained a sense of pessimism albeit with a sense of the importance of progress on this issue. I noted on occasions that Slovenia is sensitive to being called "Western Balkans" emphasising more its relationship to Austria. References were made regretting the absence of UK from EU meetings not least because of the high quality of its Foreign Office.

We then had a lunch meeting at Ljubljana Castle hosted by the State Secretary with several civil servants. Mr Dovzan largely talked about the Slovenia Presidency. His speech demonstrated a good grasp on EU matters. FMA members raised the issue of the Rule of Law, largely centred on Hungary and Poland, but also mentioned the UK in relation to Northern Ireland. I used this as an opportunity to raise that issue in the light of upcoming decisions on Northern Ireland disassociating myself from any support for the previous line of the UK but saying I was concerned about difficulties for Northern Ireland business. I got a very detailed answer and I gained the impression Mr Dovzan was sympathetic. He said Commission Vice President Sefcovic had visited

Northern Ireland and had talked to business and local organisations. He is working on a range of options and is expecting that the Commission will come up with a solution which the Council and the UK could accept. Clearly, the Commission has moved on from statements earlier in the year to the effect that they would not reopen the issue of the protocol on Northern Ireland. (At the time of writing, the UK and the Commission have not reached agreement on the issue of the role of the European Court of Justice).

Finally, we had a working dinner, which included as a guest speaker Jelko Kacin, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, National Logistics Coordinator for Covid vaccination, previously Slovenian Ambassador to NATO. He talked about the Covid vaccination programme in Slovenia stating that the slow progress in Slovenia had been due to the failure of Astra Zeneca to deliver the supplies. We then got onto the subject of nuclear powered submarines being supplied by US and UK to Australia. The room was largely critical. Mr Kacin wearing his NATO hat said it was very important to increase our force in the Pacific in relation to Chinese threats. It was no surprise that the submarines are to be nuclear powered and therefore it was inevitable that the submarines came from USA and UK whose submarines are equipped from USA.

So ended the visit which all participants felt had been excellent.

Robert Moreland

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FMA Members during the working lunch organised at Ljubljana Castle

REFLECTIONS FROM THE YOUTH PANELLISTS

There were three panellists representing youth at the Europe yesterday, today, tomorrow event: Nika Podakar and Urban Lečnik Spaić, law students at the University of Ljubljana, and Maja Kalin, president of the School Student Organisation of Slovenia. They enjoyed the multi-layered discussion, which allowed the participants to address the past, current and future perspectives of the EU. Specifically, they thought that the panel provided a good combination of political experiences from the former members of the European Parliament and knowledge from the EU law experts, with whom the youth representatives engaged in a discussion regarding the rule of law.

A positive reflection was also the fact that the event provided them with the opportunity to be heard and that their voice found an appropriate place in the discussion concerning the future of Europe. Accordingly, the topics of youth participation in the European elections and the meaning of democracy for younger generations were adequately addressed. Nika Podakar added a remark on the



A moment during the event "Europe Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow"

European Union and the panel: "I was born in 1999, so the European Union has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. I have no memories of when Slovenia was not yet part of the European Union, but for me the European Union is something that is always present. But that does not mean that I am not critical of the European Union. Criticism is the first step towards improving or correcting the situation. That is why the Europe Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow round table was so welcome. I was happy to present my opinion, the opinion of young people, on this Union. My being

critical does not mean that I reject the European links; on the contrary, I would like to see them become closer and more effective. I want to be part of writing a new chapter in the European Union."

The panellists look forward to participating in similar events in the future and will continue to actively address the topics, important for a strong, prosperous and youthful Europe.



Urban Lečnik Spaić, Maja Kalin and Nika Podakar during the event "Europe Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow"

**Nika Podakar
and
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and

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FORMER MEMBERS NETWORK

EU AND US: A NEW TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP?

This paper was prompted by a video conference with former members of Congress in July, that I attended together with Miguel Angel Martinez-Martinez (S&D Spain), Charles Boustany (R LA) und Bart Gordon (D TN).

The conference was hosted by Richard Wike of the Pew Research Centre. Given the long and comprehensive experience of all the panellists when it came to transatlantic relations, a lively and even controversial discussion was only to be expected when they were asked: 'Do American and European systems need major reform?' This question, which goes to the heart of democracy in our society and the threats to the liberal rule of law, is of fundamental importance on both sides of the Atlantic, especially in view of the uncertainty created by the pandemic, and immediately leads on to the following questions: How much confidence do citizens

still have in their governments? Can parallels be drawn in this respect between American and European society? How can we define the level of cooperation between the partners?

When asked for their views on democracy, 59% of Americans and 48% of Europeans expressed concern about the sustainability of this form of government. Indeed, we can see for ourselves that authoritarian regimes are also able to function and protect their citizens in this time of crisis.

2. Remark: Public opinion is less influenced by facts and analyses since the advent of the digital age with its short and rapid bursts of information and frequent fake news.

3. Remark: Faced with the complex and challenging nature of solutions to major issues, citizens are growing increasingly distrustful of their governments. All the panellists

agreed that it was a matter of urgency to undertake the major task of restoring trust in governments.

4. Remark: Relations between the EU and the US have gradually shifted over the last few years, with President Obama actively promoting a trade agreement with the Pacific Rim countries and pursuing new geopolitical objectives.

Following the failure of the TTIP and of the protectionism advocated by Trump, two new trends have emerged. On the one hand, President Biden is showing willingness to engage in structured dialogue and initial negotiations have been reopened. While future agreements may be more modest in their ambitions, the conclusion of even partial agreements would nevertheless be a step forward after the stalemate of recent years. On the other hand, present-day trade agreements also address environmental and other socially relevant issues such as quality of life. In that case, why should we not opt for a 'transatlantic green deal', a 'common global goods' strategy or, in view of the pandemic, a health community?

Nowadays, we practically never discuss cooperation with the US without reference to the third power, that is to say China. How then can we define our joint strategy? Is the EU powerful enough to uphold its own specific interests? It goes without saying that we have only a narrow window of opportunity and are being called upon to perform a



Webinar:

Do US and European Political Systems Need Major Reform?



A moment from the webinar organised in cooperation with the Association of Former Members of Congress on 8 July 2021



balancing act between upholding our own interests and adopting a joint approach with the US in dealing with China. The EU cannot stand on the sidelines in this confrontation. Our alliance with the US remains a priority. In view of the demographic development and economic growth in China, it is clear that joint action will, in any event, be required in the not too distant future.

Multilateralism in the third millennium is best described as 'bringing order to disorder'. Although a strong supporter of multilateral systems, the EU is forced to acknowledge that they sometimes have limits. The US and EU need to develop a coordinated strategy to update and rationalise institutions such as the UN, WTO and WHO. Account must also be taken of a shift in the traditional balance within NATO. The EU must increase its strategic defence autonomy, implying the need for a joint security policy framework.

All four speakers had also been members of the EU-US Inter-Parliamentary Delegation, which

was set up in 1972. Since 1999, its work has been organised within the framework of the 'Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue'. In 2020, deputies on both sides agreed that their joint efforts should be focused on containing the pandemic as a matter of priority and that transatlantic solidarity was necessary to overcome the health crisis, with funding being jointly channelled into research, and development and the distribution of vaccines and drugs to counter COVID 19. A robust transatlantic parliamentary agenda has also been drawn up with

a view to combating disinformation and shaping the global digital economy. Legislators are frequently willing to speak out more boldly than are members of the executive.

In describing our partnership, we should never forget that the US and Europe stand closest together on issues relating to democracy, the rule of law and civil liberties.

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Commissioner Margrethe Vestager during the EP plenary session - The outcome of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC) © European Union 2021 - Source : EP

UPCOMING EVENTS



ACTIVITIES

7-8
FEBRUARY 2022

Visit to France

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

1
JUNE 2022

Annual Memorial Service and Dinner Debate

Current and former MEPs will commemorate their colleagues who passed away in 2021-2022. Followed by the Dinner Debate.
From 5.45 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. European Parliament. Brussels.

2
JUNE 2022

FMA General Assembly and Annual Lunch

At 10.00 a.m. followed by the Annual Lunch at 1.00 p.m.

** 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.*

SPONSORS

The FMA would like to thank Candriam and KBC



for sponsoring the "EP to Campus" Programme.

CORRIGENDUM

In the FMA Bulletin number 76, September edition; in the article entitled "West Balkan enlargement is now a geo-political priority" by Jonh Howarth, by mistake a map with the wrong indication of the country North Macedonia was published.

A corrected version of this article is available on our website: www.formermembers.eu/bulletin

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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



Calogero LO GIUDICE

☞ 24 August 2021
EPP-ED, Italy (1989-1994)

He served as an Italian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Lo Giudice represented the 'Democrazia cristiana'.



José VILA ABELLÓ

☞ 25 August 2021
EPP-ED, Spain (2004)

He served as a Spanish Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Vila Abelló represented the 'Partido Popular'.



Amédée E. TURNER

☞ 13 September 2021
DE, EPP-ED, United Kingdom (1979-1992)

He served as a British Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr E. Turner represented the Conservative and Unionist Party.



Jup WEBER

☞ 8 October 2021
Greens/EFA, Luxembourg (1994-1999)

He served as a Luxembourgish member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Weber represented 'Les Verts.'



EPFMA
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A UNION OF ADDED VALUE



ADDED VALUE OF THE INTERNAL MARKET

By Fabian Zuleeg
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Chief Executive of the
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The Internal Market in all its dimensions is one of the core drivers of the EU economies. The benefits of the removal of barriers to internal trade have generated significant additional GDP, created millions of additional jobs and generated choice and cost savings for consumers, as stipulated in the Cecchini Report and confirmed ever since. The UK's choice of leaving the Single Market is also starting to demonstrate the impact of erecting barriers to free movement.

But the added value of the internal market goes much further. With the free movement of goods, services, labour and capital (and knowledge) at its heart, it enables the European Union to have a far more efficient allocation of resources, across many sectors, including for example also the energy and digital domains. One element which has probably been underplayed in public discourse, due to the controversy associated with internal labour migration, is the economic benefit from free movement of people; the UK

currently experiences the effects of imposing restrictions. Free movement of capital not only creates a much greater pool of investment capital for businesses across the Union, by using pan-European funds, there are also opportunities of better control (albeit with the benefits still limited, given that the Capital Markets Union still is to be completed).

“The added value of the internal market goes much further. With the free movement of goods, services, labour and capital (and knowledge) at its heart, it enables the European Union to have a far more efficient allocation of resources, across many sectors, including for example also the energy and digital domains.”



The creation of such public goods at the pan-European level is a further benefit of the internal market, including for example a common approach to consumer and data protection, the creation of a better business and innovation environment through the removal of unnecessary legal barriers, the setting of standards and the creation of a common competition policy and public subsidy control, constraining companies and governments. A body of law that applies to all market actors equally across national borders is not only beneficial but it is

a unique achievement. Being bound together by the internal market is the core reason why, even during the worst part of the COVID pandemic, EU borders remained essentially open, unlike anywhere else.

“The internal market is far from perfect. In addition to numerous areas where it is not complete yet, it is lacking in some crucial mechanisms to help to balance out some of the effects of economic interdependence and market liberalisation.”

This points to the political added value of the internal market. Not only has it created greater cohesion and interdependence between EU member states, also setting the groundwork for the introduction of the Euro, it is also a crucial geopolitical and geoeconomic factor, enabling the European Union to punch far above the weight of each individual member state. Fundamentally, it is the crucial reason why the EU still plays



© European Union 2021 - Source : EC

a significant global role, despite relative decline. When it comes to the internal market, the whole is demonstrably greater than the sum of the parts.

However, the internal market is far from perfect. In addition to numerous areas where it is not complete yet, it is lacking in some crucial mechanisms to help to balance out some of the effects of economic interdependence and market liberalisation. The tools for, for example, addressing the social impacts or different levels of public spending driven by varying fiscal positions are still rather limited.

In addition, the single market was first-and-foremost created for

regulating trade and exchange between the member states, but it now has to become truly global in its mechanisms and outlook. The EU is living through an age of global transition: from technology/digital to green/sustainability, from geoeconomic to COVID. The internal market will have to evolve to address these challenges, including crucially the existential threat of our time, climate change.

So to remain relevant and to deliver the added value the internal market has undoubtedly delivered it has to continue to adapt and evolve, also challenging some of the sacred cows such as competition policy in pursuit of more effective tools to deal with global challenges, including an effective industrial policy and a level of strategic autonomy and digital sovereignty commensurate with the global challenges that we face. To achieve this, the EU needs to create a Single Economic Territory with a common macroeconomic framework as stipulated by the GEMU proposals (i.e. structural reform, fiscal and monetary policy), but also a microeconomic framework that includes proactive sectoral and microeconomic interventions.



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TRANSFORMING FOOD AND FARMING IN EUROPE

Changing the way we farm: Organic's contribution to sustainable food and farming systems

We need to transform Europe's food and farming system.

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Paired with dietary changes, such as eating less and better meat, reducing food waste and the right policies in place, organic farming is part of the solution to transform our food and farming systems and significantly reduce agriculture's impact on our environment and climate.

As European organic movement, our

vision for the future of agriculture is that of a fair, environmentally conscious, healthy, and caring food and farming system by 2030. In its Farm to Fork Strategy, the Commission puts forward a target of 25% organic land by 2030. This target and the new EU Organic Action Plan² are milestones on the road to achieving this vision.

Putting organic farming at the heart of a transition towards sustainable food systems is a smart choice by the Commission. Organic is legally defined at EU level, delivers important environmental benefits, is a successful economic model for farmers, and is based on minimising external inputs and fairer and more

2. The EU Organic Action plan includes many points tailored at further developing organic production and consumption – including a minimum mandatory criteria for organic in public procurement, ringfencing of at least 30% of Horizon Europe budget to topics relevant to the organic sector and actions on taxation and the real cost of food.

stable prices. Moreover, organic farming is both a dynamic and innovative movement working on a transition of European agriculture to agroecology, as well as a [market that grows every year](#).

“The current dominant agriculture model, based on input-intensive production, is detrimental to our natural resources and ecosystem services. It drives habitat and biodiversity loss, contributes to the climate crisis, contaminates soil and water bodies and threatens rural livelihoods as many farmers are struggling to make a decent living.”

Creating a better future with the right policies in place

Several policies will shape the future of food and farming in Europe. The European Green Deal wants to make Europe climate-neutral by 2050 and “addresses the challenges of sustainable food systems in a comprehensive way, recognising the inextricable links between healthy people, healthy societies and a

1. https://www.iddri.org/sites/default/files/PDF/Publications/Catalogue%20Iddri/Etude/201904-ST0219-TYFA%20GHG_2.pdf (page 3)



healthy planet”³.

To help achieve this, both the Farm to Fork and the EU Biodiversity strategies set an ambitious but achievable target of 25% organic land in Europe by 2030, as well as a 50% reduction in pesticides use and a 50% reduction in the sales of antimicrobials in livestock and aquaculture.

A testament to the importance of the Farm to Fork Strategy is the European Parliament’s own initiative report, to which MEPs tabled more than 2,200 amendments. In its draft report, the Parliament welcomed the Commission’s recognition of organic farming as a crucial component in transitioning towards more sustainable food systems and stressed the relevance of the EU Organic Action Plan for developing organic. Yet, the report has been subject to intense lobbying by conventional farmers organisations, rejecting targets and defending the status quo.

Following up on policies to ensure a transformation

On 23 September 2021, the European Parliament, Commission and Council of the European Union celebrated the [launch of the new annual EU Organic Day](#). This was one of 23 actions put forward in the EU Organic Action Plan.

In the coming years, EU Organic Day will be the ideal opportunity to evaluate Europe’s progress towards achieving its goal of 25% organic land by 2030, trends in consumer demand, awareness of organic in the supply chain and putting the EU Organic Action Plan into practice. As European organic movement, we will contribute to its success by

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0381&from=EN>

monitoring its implementation on the ground.

The Common Agricultural Policy’s role in our farming system

To ensure Europe reaches the objectives of the European Green Deal, Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies, the national Strategic Plans on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) are crucial. Despite the disappointing deal on the CAP Strategic Plans Regulation, Member States still face a huge responsibility to ensure that the next CAP will address the collapse of our biodiversity, the climate crisis and help transition to a sustainable food and farming system. IFOAM Organics Europe’s recent study [‘Prospects & developments for organic in national CAP Strategic Plans’](#) visualises the efforts every country needs to put into place to reach their potential national targets, which should fairly contribute to the EU average 25% target.

By supporting organic farming in their CAP Strategic Plans, Member States also have in theory a powerful tool to address the collapse of our biodiversity, which has been a reality in the European countryside for decades. Read the report highlighting the contribution of organic farming to protecting Europe’s biodiversity in line with the Biodiversity Strategy’s objectives.

The road ahead: The need for a true transformation

Following the publication of the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Commission will start working on a legislative framework for sustainable food systems promoting policy coherence at EU and national levels. The European organic movement is working hard to ensure it recognises organic and other agroecological

practices. It is important that this framework is a true lever for transforming food and farming and leaves no room for greenwashing and watering down the organic principles of Care, Health, Ecology and Fairness.

Too often the decision-making process on agriculture issues is captured by vested interests that fight for “business as usual” and oppose any change. But more and more scientific studies show that a transition to agroecology is feasible, will deliver many benefits for the climate and biodiversity, while ensuring an export capacity for products the EU typically exports, such as dairy and wheat.

To ensure the health of people and planet, we need to transform Europe’s food and farming system – away from a broken model that is input-intensive. The Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies are crucial to achieve the EU Green Deal and organic is part of the solution. IFOAM Organics Europe is the European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming, fighting for the adoption of ecologically, socially, and economically sound systems based on the principles of organic agriculture – health, ecology, fairness, and care. It represents almost 200 members in the EU-27, EU accession countries and European Free Trade Association (EFTA). IFOAM Organics Europe’s members span the entire organic food chain and yond: farmers, processors and traders, retailers, certifiers, consultants, and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF EUROPE FOR THE TOURISM SECTOR

By Eduardo Santander

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Tourism in Europe has been one of the most affected sectors by the COVID-19 pandemic and is going through an unprecedented crisis. The European Commission's industrial strategy recognises our sector as the "hardest hit".

However, looking from a positive perspective, this crisis has finally demonstrated the real economic and social value of travel and tourism in Europe, giving the visitor economy the attention it deserves.

Tourism lies at the heart of the EU economy and the everyday life of citizens in Europe. Prior to COVID-19, tourism was the third-largest economic sector in the EU. It stimulates economic growth across Europe, generating income, employment and investment in the region. By way of illustration, in 2019 tourism accounted for more than 10% of total EU GDP, providing employment to over 27 million people.

Tourism is not only a business. In effect, the visitor economy brings a plethora of social benefits to Europe, often providing the first job opportunity for youngsters, helping to fight racism and regional disparities, connecting people and their cultures while contributing to increased demand for local agricultural products, handicrafts and gastronomy.

Despite these impressive numbers, for many years the tourism sector was taken for granted, and its value was overlooked. The sector has often been disregarded by EU policies and fully left to national competencies. Since December 2009, tourism policy has had its legal basis at the EU level; however, it still does not have a dedicated budget line. This lack of European actions and support slowed down the sector and impeded genuine European tourism initiatives from flourishing.

"Tourism is not only a business. In effect, the visitor economy brings a plethora of social benefits to Europe, often providing the first job opportunity for youngsters, helping to fight racism and regional disparities, connecting people and their cultures while contributing to increased demand for local agricultural products, handicrafts and gastronomy."



Passengers waiting for their train on the platform © European Union 2020 - Source : EC - Audiovisual Service



© European Union 2021 - Source : EP

At the same time, it is important to mention that the Members of the European Parliament have been extremely supportive of the tourism sector, recognising its importance for EU citizens. Notably, the European Parliament proposed introducing a specific allocation of 300 million euros for sustainable tourism under the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021 to 2027. Throughout the pandemic, MEPs have kept calling for more support to the sector and released a special report on establishing an EU strategy for sustainable tourism.

During the COVID-19 crisis, we have learned how vital European cooperation is. We experienced again what it means to live with borders and travel restrictions in the EU and what a crucial impact it has on our lives. Only by working together in the spirit of European solidarity will we be able to overcome this devastating crisis.

Once again proving the importance of Europe and pan-European solutions for travel and tourism, the EU Digital COVID Certificate has turned out to be a major success supporting the relaunch of

travel across the EU this summer. It allowed EU governments to better coordinate their travel requirements and opened the door for destinations to welcome back travellers, earlier than we thought. Now the certificate is already becoming an international standard, proving that European cooperation also brings benefits to the international community.

“Once again proving the importance of Europe and pan-European solutions for travel and tourism, the EU Digital COVID Certificate has turned out to be a major success supporting the relaunch of travel across the EU this summer.”

Working closely together with the EU institutions, national authorities, destinations and the private industry we will have to reinvent

and rethink a sustainable, digital, conscious and resilient European tourism sector. We need to rebuild our continent not only as the world leader in tourist numbers, but also in competitiveness. Our ambition and future mission is to maintain Europe as the world's leading tourist destination in terms of value and quality. We must together create a new world benchmark for tourism in response to the exponential growth and excesses of the past.

This is why the European Travel Commission and our 33-member National Tourism Organisations strongly welcome the ongoing work to develop the Transition Pathway for Tourism as part of the new Industrial Strategy and the upcoming EU Tourism Agenda 2030-2050. Sufficient funding and political support are required to help tourism micro-enterprises and SMEs, family-run businesses – the backbone representing more than 80% of the industry – to rebuild their activity in a digital and environmentally friendly way, with a clear focus on people: tourists, locals and workers.

As we restart, we now have a unique opportunity to transform tourism and ensure that the sector helps drive digital and green transitions. Only together as Europe can we build the tourism of tomorrow.

COVID-19: DRIVING COHESION IN HEALTH?

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The coronavirus pandemic has affected us all in one way or another – physically, mentally, socially. It also made us reflect on what matters. It showed systemic deficiencies and lack of cohesion in healthcare across EU Member States. It revealed that differences in national healthcare systems lead to unequal patient and treatment outcomes across the EU. It also reminded us that the main European objective of equal and universal access to high-quality healthcare still has a long way to go, partly because quality healthcare is interlinked with the EU Member States' ability to invest in healthcare and reimbursement systems. The pandemic also highlighted the EU added value in supporting and directing joined efforts to tackle health crises of such scale. Lastly, it showcased the pivotal role of medical equipment in fighting pandemics, such as patient monitoring, respiratory, medical imaging and radiotherapy devices, and the use of digital applications and data in healthcare.

“The coronavirus pandemic [...] showed systemic deficiencies and lack of cohesion in healthcare across EU Member States. It revealed that differences in national healthcare systems lead to unequal patient and treatment outcomes across the EU.”

As we are slowly coming out of the pandemic, all efforts are directed towards the recovery of economies and the resilience of healthcare systems. The EU rightly leverages its structural and cohesion initiatives towards a healthy future-proof Europe. As a priority, Europe needs to ensure that the flow of supply chains in the EU remains unobstructed and that smart stockpiling of medical countermeasures - such as personal protective equipment, medicinal products, and medical devices - remains sufficient in case of health emergency. In addition, the EU needs to support Member States' initiatives to improve their healthcare systems' resilience, according to their status of maturity. It is common knowledge that the rule of one-size-fits-all¹ does not apply when it comes to healthcare, and this includes tackling future health crises too. By leveraging its established and innovative funding tools, the EU can improve the investment capacities of Member States and help them address their current and emerging needs for high-quality healthcare. The European Structural and Investment Funds [ESIF] coupled with the temporary support

1. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31089-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)31089-8/fulltext)



A nurse filling a syringe with a dose of the coronavirus vaccine in a nursing home © European Union 2020 - Source : EC - Audiovisual Service



scheme of NextGenerationEU and its pillars – Recovery & Resilience Facility [RRF] and Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe [REACT-EU] – which are indispensable to promote overall recovery and resilience. The EU funding instruments are also key enablers of real regional cohesion in the health sector. To achieve it, they need to rapidly mobilise investment in the development of resilient national healthcare systems.

“With EU support, we are being currently offered the unique chance to finally close the European healthcare investment gap and offer the European citizens high quality healthcare across all Member States.”

EU funding mechanisms can promote equal and universal access to high-quality healthcare for European citizens. Access

to precision screening, quality early diagnosis and personalised treatment can offer various benefits, from better clinical outcomes and improved patient experience to increased satisfaction for health professionals, and improved efficiency for the healthcare systems throughout the continuum of care. Moreover, detecting and diagnosing a disease early can help favour less invasive therapy options, increase survivorship and quality of life, and reduce overall cost of treatment and care². Investment in health systems’ resilience could also target the pivotal yet often unnoticed issue of ageing medical equipment.

As presented in the recurrent biannual COCIR publications on the “age profile and density” of the medical imaging and radiotherapy devices installed in the Europe³,

2. *The Life Savers* https://www.cocir.org/fileadmin/Publications_2019/SB_COCIR_The_Life_Saver_Repor_-_June_2019_0.pdf

3. *COCIR Medical Imaging Equipment Age Profile & Density - 2021 Edition* <https://www.cocir.org/media-centre/publications/article/cocir-medical-imaging-equipment-age-profile-density-2021-edition.html>

there is a growing imbalance between the pace of innovation and the rate of equipment replacement. Approximately 20% of such equipment is now more than ten years old. This situation poses significant challenges to patients, practitioners, and insurers. It makes replacement of medical equipment a health system priority to ensure access to best available medical equipment, ensuring safety and accuracy of procedures. Ranging from >20 to <10 per 100.000 inhabitants the medical imaging devices installed in the EU territory

illustrate highly uneven density and inequalities in accessing high-quality care. It is obvious that this critical situation could be remedied with the support of EU instruments.

In conclusion, despite it all, the pandemic is still providing us with the opportunity to address inefficiencies and inequalities •

About COCIR:

COCIR is the European Trade Association representing the medical imaging, radiotherapy, health ICT and electromedical industries. Founded in 1959, COCIR is a non-profit association headquartered in Brussels (Belgium) with a China Desk based in Beijing since 2007. COCIR is unique as it brings together the healthcare, IT and telecommunications industries.



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