

EPFMA

Bulletin



84 · September 2023

European Parliament Former Members Association

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 Due to the long time lag between the call for contribution and the publication, some articles may be outdated.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

I am pleased to present the European Parliament Former Members Association's (FMA) third Bulletin of 2023, which focuses on the 2024 European elections.

These elections will be of particular importance since the decisions taken on the European level have a direct impact on the life and future of every European citizen, and we, as Former Members of the European Parliament, play an important role in the preparation of these elections. By engaging ourselves after our mandate, we are able to promote the unity of the European Union and strengthen parliamentary democracy. In this issue, you can read several contributions, including those of first Vice-President of the European Parliament Othmar Karas, the Chair of the Committee on Budgets of the European Parliament Johan Van Overtveldt, and MEP Doménec Ruiz Devesa, each of which analyse the European elections from a different point of view.

As far as the FMA's recent activities are concerned, we are very pleased to have helped organise a high-level conference with the Historical Archives of the European Union and the Erasmus+ programme on 16 June in Florence. During this conference, speakers discussed collaborative initiatives between institutions, as well as their experiences of teaching and learning about Europe at primary, secondary and university levels.

The FMA publication entitled 'Participation in Europe', based on the contributions of the speakers and guests of this conference will be published at the end of 2023. In particular, I would like to thank Monica Baldi, Vice-President of our Association, and Michael Hindley, member of the FMA Management Committee and coordinator of the 'EP to Campus'

programme, for their dedication and professionalism in organising this event and for their work as editors of this publication that will be presented on 7 December 2023 in Brussels.

On that note, it is worth mentioning that the 'EP to Campus' programme continues to allow university students to benefit from the expertise and experience of the FMA members involved, whom I would also like to thank. The articles, which have been written about this programme, reflect how successful its varied initiatives have been. On our website and on our social media platforms, you will find several short videos of students who talk about their experience of the programme in their university.

In other news, the Librorum events continue to be presented. We organised the online Librorum event about former French MEP Jean-Claude Martinez' work entitled 'Le grand livre de la civilisation du Maroc' in July. Then, the President of "Tiempo de Paz" Francisca Sauquillo, together with the former President of the European Parliament and of the FMA, Enrique Barón Crespo, both editors of edition 148 of the magazine, presented on 14 September: "Europe: building the future or going back to the past". I would like to thank them both for their involvement in the FMA.

In honour of the European Parliament's 70th anniversary, the EPRS organised a roundtable discussion in the EP library's reading room. Among the speakers were former FMA President Hans-Gert Pöttering and FMA member Hannes Swoboda.

I would also like to express my gratitude to all the members who will be taking part in the FMA's upcoming activities and events.

The two imminent missions abroad demonstrate that the FMA is still successfully fulfilling its primary goal of promoting political dialogue. There is firstly the successful trip to Paris that the FMA organised at the end of September, secondly, to Madrid at the end of October, as Spain has taken over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The aim of the visit will be to foster dialogue between former MEPs and the national parliament on the EU's political agenda. A report on these missions will be published in the December bulletin.

In December, the European Parliament Research Service (EPRS) will organise a roundtable discussing about the life and work of José María Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado, former President of the European Parliament and of our association. His loss has saddened us all. Afterwards, our cocktail and annual dinner will close the evening. The next day, 7 December, there will be a Librorum event on the FMA publication "Participation in Europe" as well as our annual seminar.

Finally, let me thank all FMA members and staff who have contributed to this September Bulletin. We can be proud of the successful engagement with our numerous partners and of every single person who has helped to make the FMA an association that strives to promote the values that we share.

With my best regards,

Dr. Klaus Hänsch
FMA President

Key facts

Breaches of the Rule of law and fundamental rights in Hungary and frozen EU funds

(June session - P9_TA(2023)0216)

MEPs have repeatedly expressed concerns over the state of EU values in Hungary, which have further deteriorated due to the “deliberate and systematic efforts of the government” and despite Parliament’s activation of the Article 7 mechanism. Their latest concerns relate to laws being adopted without sufficient parliamentary scrutiny and public consultation, as well as the abusive invocation of the ‘state of danger’, the misuse of whistleblower protection to undermine LGBTIQ+ rights and freedom of expression, and the infringement of teachers’ social and labour rights.

Foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation

(June session - P9_TA(2023)0219)

Parliament calls for a coordinated strategy to increase the EU’s resilience to foreign interference and information manipulation and protect the 2024 European elections. Foreign interference, disinformation, and attacks on democracy are likely to continue in ever-greater numbers and to become more sophisticated in the run-up to the European Parliament elections in June 2024. The report focuses particularly on Russian and Chinese interference in the EU, in countries applying to join the EU, including the Western Balkans, and countries in the Global South.

Humanitarian situation in Sudan, in particular the death of children trapped by fighting

(June session - P9_TA(2023)0241)

MEPs strongly condemn the continued fighting between the Sudanese military and the Rapid Support Force (RSF). They deplore the conflict’s numerous violations of international humanitarian law, including the disruption of humanitarian aid, the recruitment of children and the deliberate targeting of civilians.

Investigation of the use of Pegasus and equivalent surveillance spyware (Recommendation)

(June session - P9_TA(2023)0244)

Based on a year-long investigation into the use of Pegasus and equivalent surveillance spyware, MEPs argue that the illicit use of spyware has put “democracy itself at stake”. To stop illicit spyware practices immediately, MEPs argue that spyware should only be used in member states where allegations of spyware abuse have been thoroughly investigated, where national legislation is in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission and case-law of the EU Court of Justice, and where export control rules have been enforced.

EU Day for the victims of the global climate crisis

(June session - P9_TA(2023)0245)

Parliament calls for an annual ‘EU day for the victims of the global climate crises’ to be established to remember the human lives lost due to climate change. MEPs highlight that it would help to raise awareness of the human lives lost and humanitarian crisis caused by climate change. They point out that climate change is leading to more unpredictable weather phenomena, including more frequent and intense heatwaves, wildfires and floods, to threats to food, water safety and security.

Sustainable reconstruction and integration of Ukraine into the Euro-Atlantic community

(June session - P9_TA(2023)0247)

MEPs call on NATO allies to honour their commitment to Ukraine and pave the way for Kyiv to be invited to join the defence alliance. In the resolution, MEPs stress that they expect that the “accession process will start after the war is over and be finalised as soon as possible”. Parliament emphasises that Ukraine’s integration in both NATO and the EU would enhance regional and global security and strengthen the bonds between Ukraine and the Euro-Atlantic community.

Protection of journalists and human rights defenders from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings

(July session - P9_TA(2023)0264)

Under draft legislation endorsed in plenary, journalists, media organisations, human rights defenders, activists, researchers and artists will be protected in the EU from strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs), the aim of which are to intimidate and penalise them. MEPs adopted their negotiating position on new rules to protect those working on matters of public interest like fundamental rights, the activities of public officials or corruption allegations.

European defence industry reinforcement through common procurement (EDIRPA)

(September session - P9_TA(2023)0301)

MEPs backed the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act (EDIRPA). The regulation, already agreed with the Council on 27 June 2023, establishes a short-term instrument for the reinforcement of the European defence industry through common procurement until 31 December 2025. It will help member states to fill their most urgent and critical defence needs, which have been exacerbated by transfers of defence products to Ukraine, in a voluntary and collaborative way.

70% of jet fuels at EU airports will have to be green by 2050

(September session - P9_TA(2023)0319)

MEPs approved a new law to increase the uptake of sustainable fuels, such as advanced biofuels or hydrogen, in the aviation sector. The RefuelEU aviation rules are part of the “Fit for 55 package”, the EU’s plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels and to ensure the EU becomes climate neutral by 2050. They seek to encourage the aviation sector to use sustainable aviation fuels in order to cut emissions.

Other main dossiers discussed in the plenary sessions were:

01.06.23

The **Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP)** aims to accelerate the delivery of ammunition and missiles to Ukraine and to help member states restock their arsenals.

By introducing **targeted measures**, ASAP aims to ramp up the EU's production capacity to address the current shortage of defence products.

14.06.23

MEPs endorsed a **deal reached with the Council** to overhaul EU rules on batteries and waste batteries.

The new law takes into account **technological developments and future challenges** in the sector and will cover the entire battery life cycle, from design to end-of-life.

14.06.23

The European Parliament adopted its negotiating position on the **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act**.

The rules would ensure that AI developed and used in Europe is **fully in line with EU rights and values** including human oversight, safety, privacy, transparency, non-discrimination and social and environmental wellbeing.

11.07.23

Parliament has raised **concerns about the recent election reform in Poland** and criticised heavily the "State Commission for the examination of Russian interference". The resolution adopted by plenary takes stock of the latest developments in the country that, according to MEPs, point to **further backsliding on European values**.

11.07.23

MEPs backed the Commission proposal to **extend the IED to extractive industry installations** (mines) and **large installations manufacturing batteries**.

The directive obliges them to further **reduce air, water and soil pollution**.

11.07.23

Plans to **secure the EU's supply of chips** by boosting production and innovation, and establishing emergency measures against shortages, were adopted by Parliament.

The new law, already agreed upon between Parliament and Council, aims to **create a favourable environment for chip investments in Europe**.

11.07.23

MEPs approved new rules on **more alternative fuel stations for cars and trucks**, simple and **easy recharging**, and on **cleaner maritime fuels**.

The new rules are part of the "Fit for 55 in 2030 package", the EU's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, and aim to decarbonise transport.

13.09.23

Parliament adopted its position on **reducing groundwater** and **surface waters pollution** and **improving EU water quality standards**.

MEPs want the EU watch lists - which contain substances posing a significant risk to human health and the environment - **to be updated regularly** to keep pace with new scientific evidence and new chemicals.

13.09.23

MEPs have approved the European Council's decision **increasing the number of seats in the European Parliament** for the next legislative term **from 705 to 720**.

Parliament consented to the legislative decision with 515 votes in favour, 74 against, and 44 abstentions. The upcoming elections (6-9 June 2024) will take place with the new number of seats in Parliament.

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



70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Address by His Majesty the King of the Belgians on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the European Parliament, Castle of Laeken

Madam President,
Mr Prime Minister,
Honourable guests,

Queen Mathilde and I are delighted to receive you here for the 70th anniversary of the European Parliament.

The European Parliament at 70 is a confident institution. It has proven a stark defender of the Rule of Law, fundamental rights and democratic freedoms; these values that guarantee a peaceful and prosperous Union.

The European Parliament has also proven it can deliver in times of crisis. And today, as we celebrate the happy occasion that is this anniversary, we are faced with a serious crisis; a crisis that no one in Europe expected to witness so closely anymore.

A heinous war is raging on our continent. The full impact of this conflict poses a generational challenge and it is our task to respond by increasing resilience at home, in the democratic societies across our Union. This task, which is a collective one, is in full swing. It will require careful stewardship for many years to come.

I am deeply convinced that, in going forward, our longstanding parliamentary democracy will prove a great asset in which the European Parliament has a unique role to play.

It is the institution par excellence that can speak on behalf of citizens in their capacity of Europeans. Your hemicycle is a European stage, in which minorities -and in Europe we are all minorities- come together to debate and persuade each other.



From left to right: FMA President Klaus Hänsch, EP President Roberta Metsola, His Majesty the King of the Belgians, former EP President Josep Borrell, former EP and FMA President Hans-Gert Pöttering and former EP President Antonio Tajani during the Reception on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the EP © European Union 2023 - Source : EP

The European Parliament has also shown itself a staunch supporter of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Rada.

Your voice, your debates, and indeed your parliamentary diplomacy carries thus far beyond the hemicycle.

Together with the federal government and the Brussels capital region, we are proud to host you.

We are impressed with the parliamentary space which has been developed in Brussels throughout the years and that reaches out to the entire continent and beyond.

In six months' time, our country will take over the reins of Europe for the 13th time, when it assumes the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Belgium will pursue its policy of strengthening the European edifice in the face of the crises that surround it, and which sometimes invite themselves into its midst.

If Europe is to maintain its momentum, it must be capable of developing bold policies in the energy and industrial fields, as well as in the military and commercial spheres, to make our continent even more secure and independent. We're going to do our utmost to contribute to this.

Finally, in less than a year, European elections will take place. More than ever, national themes will be European themes, and vice versa; from resilience to jobs, competitiveness and tackling the digital and green transitions. I wish you good fortune in what announces itself as seminal elections.

Happy anniversary!
© The Belgian Monarchy

Address by President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the European Parliament, Castle of Laeken

Your Majesty,
Distinguished guests,
Dear colleagues,

Let me say what an honour it is for the European Parliament to be invited by His Majesty the King of the Belgians to the beautiful Royal Greenhouses of Laeken.

It is a privilege for us to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the European Parliament together with you - shortly before you officially mark the first 10 years of your reign. In 70 years, the European Parliament has grown from strength to strength, as has our commitment to the city of Brussels and to Belgium.

Belgium has become home to thousands of Europeans, who have raised families here and who are as proud of this country, as anyone born here.

The European Parliament - the European Union - is synonymous with Brussels. This most European of cities.

Consecutive treaties allowed our European people's assembly, to develop into a powerful, independent, political forum with co-legislative and budgetary powers that impact European citizens, cities and lives.

The role of democratically elected members of the European Parliament is to



Address of President Metsola during the Reception on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the EP with on her right His Majesty King Philippe of Belgium with Queen Mathilde of Belgium © European Union 2023 - Source : EP

protect the best interests of citizens. Our role is to amplify their voice. Together we have achieved so much. We have adopted common rules that allow us to live safer, healthier, more prosperous and more fulfilled lives.

And together we must continue to do more, to re-generate, reform and rebuild our Union of equality, of solidarity and of rights.

I am proud that the European Parliament as the only directly elected, multilingual, multi-party, transnational parliament in the world, has championed freedom and democracy for the last seven decades.

The last 18 months, after the illegal, brutal invasion of Ukraine by Russia, has meant that our rhetoric had to give way to action. It has seen our values tested, like at few other points in the last 70 years.

When it mattered the most, Europe stood up and stood fast. In the next year of our mandate, we must keep listening to citizens. We must keep explaining Europe, we must keep bringing decision-making closer to people and we must keep delivering. That must be our focus.

And, at the turn of the year, it will be Belgium that will, once again, be called upon to lead the Council of the European Union. As a founding member and one of the most pro-European countries, you have been instrumental in developing our Union. By always protecting European ideals and European values. By being the 'first' Europeans.

For all that you have done and for all that you will do, I thank you and I look forward to working with the Belgian Presidency to deliver for all Europeans. Thank you.

EPRS EVENTS: 70 YEARS OF TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL GROUPS IN PARLIAMENT

This event took stock of the origins, evolution, and current experiences of the transnational groups in the European Parliament, 70 years after their creation. Following a historical analysis by Professor Jürgen Mittag, three eminent former group chairs - Hans-Gert Pöttering (EPP), Hannes Swoboda (S&D), and Gijs de Vries (ELDR) - talked about their experiences of leading a transnational group in the EP, thus exploring the past, present and future of transnational politics in Europe. © EPRS



EP Vice-President Dita CHARANZOVÁ introducing the event at the EP Library's Reading Room © European Union 2023 - Source : EP

UPCOMING EVENTS



ACTIVITIES

18-20
OCTOBER 2023

FMA Visit to Spain

On the occasion of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU, the FMA is organising from Wednesday 18 to Friday 20 October a visit to Spain. More information about the visit and the opening of registrations was communicated via mail, the FMA social media channels and the FMA website.

6
DECEMBER 2023

Appraisal to former EP and FMA President Gil-Robles, Cocktail Reception and Annual Dinner

From 15.00 to 16.30, the EPRS in cooperation with the FMA will organise an event to appraise the work and life of former EP and FMA President Gil-Robles. FMA Members are invited to attend the Annual Cocktail starting at 18.30, followed by the Annual Dinner in the Members' Restaurant in the European Parliament.

7
DECEMBER 2023

Librorum & Annual Seminar, Get-Together Lunch

From 10.00 to 13.00, the FMA is organising a hybrid Librorum event about its latest publication 'Participation in Europe', edited by FMA Vice-President Monica Baldi and Board Member responsible for the EP to Campus programme Michael Hindley. FMA Members are invited to attend the Get-Together Lunch starting at 13.00. More information about the upcoming events will follow soon via email, the FMA website and social media channels.

LIBRORUM - TIEMPO DE PAZ N°148

EUROPE: BUILDING THE FUTURE OR GOING BACK TO THE PAST



On Thursday 14 September 2023, the FMA organised an online Librorum event in cooperation with the European Parliament Liaison Office (EPLO) in Spain. Francisca Sauquillo presented the newest publication of *Tiempo De Paz* with the special coordination of FMA and EP former President Enrique Barón Crespo 'Europa: Construir el futuro o volver a pasado', *Europe: Building the future or going back to the past*.

FMA Vice-President Monica Baldi welcomed the participants and gave the floor to Juergen Foecking, Deputy Head of EPLO Spain, for the opening remarks. The 148th publication of *Tiempo De Paz* was introduced by FMA Honorary Secretary Teresa Riera Madurell, followed by an intervention of the editors of the publication, former EP and FMA President Enrique Barón Crespo and President of *Tiempo De Paz*, Francisca Sauquillo.

Additionally, contributors to the publication Mr Héctor Casanueva, Ms Cristina Gallach and Mr Alejandro Peinado elaborated more about the content of their articles. FMA Board Member Paul Rübiger moderated the Q&A session with the audience and FMA Vice-President Monica Baldi concluded the event.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome
to the FMA



Martina ANDERSON
GUE/NGL, United Kingdom (2012 - 2020)



Luisa REGIMENTI
ID, NA, EPP, Italy (2019 - 2023)

FMA AT WORK

MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Klaus
HÄNSCH



Monica BALDI



Jean-Pierre
AUDY



Teresa RIERA
MADURELL



Michael
HINDLEY



Miguel Angel
MARTÍNEZ
MARTÍNEZ



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SCOTT



Manuel PORTO



Godelieve
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ROWOHL



Paul RÜBIG

FMA BUREAU

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Vice-President: **Monica BALDI**

Treasurer: **Jean-Pierre AUDY**

Secretary: **Teresa RIERA MADURELL**

LIST OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

FMA Bulletin Editorial Board:

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

EP to Campus: Mr Hindley (Chair), Mr Porto and Ms Quisthoudt-Rowohl.

Relations with Budgets Committee, DG Finance: Mr Audy.

Dinner Debate: Ms Baldi.

Delegates to the Bureau of the European Association of Former Members (FP-AP): Mr Martínez Martínez and Ms Riera Madurell. If necessary they will be substituted by Mr Audy.

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

Delegates to the Annual General Assembly, seminars and colloquies of the FP-AP: Mr Audy, Mr Martínez Martínez and Ms Riera Madurell. Besides the FMA delegates or their substitutes and in agreement with the European Association, other FMA Management Committee Members may participate in the annual seminars or colloquies at their own expense.

Relations with Former Members Associations outside Europe: Mr Martínez Martínez (Chair), Mr Audy, Ms Quisthoudt-Rowohl and Ms Isabella De Martini (FMA Member with advisory role).

Annual seminar and relations with think tanks, policy institutes and foundations: Ms Riera Madurell (Chair), Ms Baldi, Ms Quisthoudt-Rowohl and Mr Rübig.

Archives: Ms Baldi.

Working Group on Democracy Support and Election Observation: Mr McMillan-Scott (Chair), Mr Hindley, Mr Martínez Martínez and Ms Quisthoudt-Rowohl.

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

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

FMA ACTIVITIES



EPFMA
PEAAD



COOPERATION WITH EUI/HAEU

CAN THE EU LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE?

On 16 June, the conference 'Can the EU learn from experience?' was held in Florence in the prestigious Sala del Consiglio of the historic Villa Salviati – headquarters of the European University Institute (EUI).

The event was promoted by the European Parliament Former Members Association (FMA) together with the Historical Archives of the European Union and in collaboration with the Erasmus+ Italian National Agency Indire. The latter also arranged an excellent opening performance by the Luigi Cherubini Conservatory of Florence's Brass Quintet, which is part of the Erasmus+ Orchestra. Alberto Occhialini played the French horn, Low Yujiu Jin the tuba, Gilberto Scheggi the trombone and Alvaro Martinez and Chenxi Lu the trumpet.

The opening remarks, made by EUI Secretary-General Ambassador Marco Del Punta and myself, emphasised the importance of institutions working together

and being willing to pass on their experience to young people for Europe's future and highlighted the fruitful collaboration between the FMA and the EUI.

The conference examined three specific programmes developed to increase young people's understanding, participation and mobility in Europe. The three panels, introduced by videos created specifically by the organising institutions, addressed the different topics with both in-person and online interventions.

"The conference examined three specific programmes developed to increase young people's understanding, participation and mobility in Europe."

The first one was on FMA and HAEU cooperation, with speeches from HAEU Director Dieter Schlenker, EUI Professor George Papaconstantinou, former MEP Alain Lamassoure, Professor Katia Rossi and high school student Matilde Paoli.

The second looked at the success of the 'EP to Campus' programme, with speeches from members of the FMA board responsible for the programme Michael Hindley and Manuel Porto, former MEPs Isabella De Martini and Eva Lichtenberger, Professor Natalia Cuglesan, Vice Chancellor of Manipal University Lt. Gen. Dr. M. D. Venkatesh and student Riccardo Debrilli.

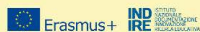
The third was on the Erasmus+ programme, with speeches from the Director-General for Education of the European Commission Themis Christophidou, Erasmus+ Coordinator Sara Pagliai, Professor Giorgia Giovannetti and testimonies from students Elisa De Cassai, Irene Carradori and Federica Rondi.



Speakers of the high-level hybrid conference 'Can the EU learn from experience?' in front of Sala del Consiglio of the historic Villa Salviati © EUI, 2023



European Parliament
FORMER MEMBERS
ASSOCIATION



European Parliament Former Members Association & Historical Archives of the European Union



CAN THE EU LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE?

Friday 16 June 2023 - Sala del Consiglio, Villa Salvati EUI - Florence

14:00 / 14:30 Performance

Brass Quintet, Conservatorio di Musica Luigi Cherubini Firenze

Alberto Occhialini, french horn; Low Yujiu Jin, tuba; Gilberto Scheggi, trombone; Alvaro Martinez, trumpet, and Chenxi Lu, trumpet

14:30 / 15:00 Welcome

Marco Del Panta

Secretary General of the European University Institute

Monica Baldi

Vice-President of the European Parliament Former Members Association

15:00 / 15:30 EP FMA & HAEU Cooperation

Video by Historical Archives of the European Union

Dieter Schlenker, HAEU Director

George Papaconstantinou, Professor EUI School of Transnational Governance

Alain Lamassoure, FMA member testimony, via remote

Katia Rossi, Professor of Philosophy, History and Psychology at IIS "Elsa Morante", PCTO coordinator.

Matilde Paoli, Highschool student at the Ernesto Balducci Institute

15:30 / 16:00 EP to Campus Programme

Video by European Parliament Former Members Association

Video FMA Member Isabella De Martini, Medical Officers Academy

Michael Hindley, FMA Board responsible of the EP to Campus program

Manuel Porto, FMA Board responsible of the EP to Campus program, via remote

Natalia Cuglesan, Jean Monnet Professor Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca - Romania

Lt Gen Dr. M. D. Venkatesh, Vice Chancellor, Indian Manipal University (video message)

Eva Lichtenberger, FMA Member

Riccardo Debrilli, LUISS University, Rome

16:00 / 16:30 ERASMUS+ Programme

Video by Italian National Agency Erasmus+ Indire

Themis Christophidou, Director-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission (video message)

Sara Pagliai, Italian National Agency Erasmus+ Indire Coordinator

Giorgia Giovannetti, International Relations and Multilateral Agreements of the University of Florence, EUniWell European University Alliance

Erasmus testimonials, University of Florence: Elisa De Cassai, Dept. of Engineering, Irene Carradori & Federica Roldi, Dept. of Political Sciences and EUniWell Alliance

Conclusions



Programme of the high-level hybrid conference 'Can the EU learn from experience?'

This programme, as students and professors enthusiastically attest to, is a real platform for exchanging views and sharing perspectives, to promote understanding and thus, strengthen political and cultural ties with the European Union.

"This programme, as students and professors enthusiastically attest to, is a real platform for exchanging views and sharing perspectives, to promote understanding and thus, strengthen political and cultural ties with the EU."

Cooperation with the EUI began, at my suggestion in 2015, with a series of meetings between the then presidents, Enrique Barón Crespo and Joseph Weiler, then continued with FMA Presidents Hans-Gert Pöttering and Klaus Hänsch with EUI President Renaud Dehousse. The hope is that it will continue in the years to come.

I believe that education as a soft power can produce unexpected results. Through this form of cultural diplomacy, cultural and educational activities have the opportunity to show the best of a nation and make establishing more structured relationships possible.

Monica Baldi

EPP-ED, Italy (1994-1999)

baldi.monica@email.it

It was very interesting to learn about and get to know people's impressions of the collaborative activities between our institutions and the teaching and learning experiences on Europe offered at primary, secondary and university level and beyond, which will be mentioned in the book 'Participation in Europe' that Michael Hindley and I will be bringing out.

I would like to thank those who attended this meeting such as our fellow member Cristina Gutierrez-Cortines and, above all, the FMA members who generously committed and their time,

professional skills and credibility across all fields by participating in the 'EP to Campus' programme, which is highly appreciated by the various universities around the world.



Speakers from right to left: Dieter Schlenker, Monica Baldi, Michael Hindley, Natalia Cuglesan, Eva Lichtenberger and Riccardo Debrilli © EUI, 2023

COOPERATION WITH THE EP

PARLIAMENT'S ARCHIVES: PRESERVING THE MEMORY OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

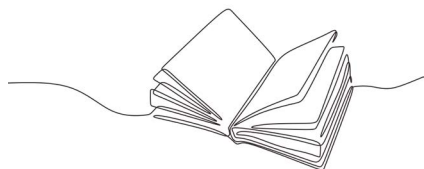
The Archives of the European Parliament have existed since the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952, with responsibility for preserving the institution's memory. In the years since, the Archives Unit has continued to manage and maintain Parliament's official documents and other archival material. The 'fonds', or holdings, now number around five million items: about 5 kilometres of paper documents, and over a terabyte of digital documents —the equivalent of 600 million pages.

How can I find documents from the Archives online?

There are over one million archived public documents from 1952 to 1984 freely available online. They can be accessed via the Archives Unit Dashboard website.

In addition to making documents freely available to download, the Dashboard helps you to analyse them. With the help of integrated AI tools, you can identify historically important topics for the Parliament, summarise texts and establish thematic connections between documents.

To explore the Dashboard visit:
<https://api.summarizer-ep.link/ep-archives-anonymous-dashboard>



Are there historical archives of MEPs?

The Archives keep the fonds of current and former MEPs, as they are a unique testimony of political and parliamentary work. By demonstrating the work done by Members and their assistants, they illustrate their contribution to European integration and their interactions between colleagues and civil society.



"European Parliament: 70 years of democracy in action", exhibition on the Quai de l'Ill in Strasbourg (France) between the tram stations "Parlement européen" and "Droits de l'Homme" © European Parliament, 2023

The fonds of an MEP typically document their parliamentary activities as a deputy, a committee member, or in other roles within Parliament, as well as their work as members of a political group or in their national constituencies, and their public engagements.

Any Member may decide to entrust the European Parliament at any time with documents created during his or her term of office and deposit into the Archives for processing and dissemination purposes.

To find out more about contributing to the Archives, send an email to archives-acquisitions@europarl.europa.eu

You can also visit our intranet page: <https://epintranet.in.ep.europa.eu/home/browse-as/communication/document-management/instruments-and-procedures.html>

What other digital resources are there?

The Archives Unit website provides further information on the fonds of the European Parliament and our other activities including exhibitions, publications and multimedia content. The site, for example, has personalised pages for each MEP who has transferred their documents to the Archives.

Each page gives a summary of the Member's time in Parliament, a concise description of their fonds, and incorporates videos of important plenary speeches during their mandate.

Another online resource is the Oral History project. Launched in 2009, this project interviews former Presidents, Secretary-Generals, MEPs and other personalities involved in European integration. On the website, the interviews are presented in thematic chapters, with a historical background text, relevant archive documents, speeches and photographs included to enrich the interviews. The interviews of former Presidents Pat Cox, Lord Henry Plumb, Enrique Barón Crespo, and Egon Klepsch are already online and interviews with former Presidents Emilio Colombo, Klaus Hänsch, José María Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado, Nicole Fontaine and Hans-Gert Pöttering will be available soon.

Ludovic Delépine

Head of the EP Archives Unit
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FORMER MEMBERS NETWORK

REPORT ON THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF FORMER PARLIAMENTARIANS (CAFP) IN OTTAWA

On 4 and 5 June, I went to Canada to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians (CAFP), held in the country's capital, Ottawa. My presence was in response to an invitation from the CAFP to its partner, the European Parliament Former Members Association (FMA), of which I am a Board Member. It was clearly an excellent opportunity to strengthen the existing links between the two associations, and also to significantly improve my own personal knowledge of, and relationship with, the parliamentary and political institutions of Canada, which have become increasingly influential on the American continent and in the world in recent years. Summarising my impressions of this very brief visit, I would firstly highlight the interest and respect shown by our Canadian counterparts towards myself, as well as their interest in, and their respect and general consideration for, the relations between the CAFP and our FMA.

My presence in Ottawa, at the Canadian Parliament where the AGM of our colleagues was held, served to deepen the relations that have been developing very positively, particularly in recent months. Canada has been showing signs of increased interest in its diplomatic relations with Europe, and with the leading countries on our continent, with Spain's prestige and specific role in this respect having been clearly and indisputably consolidated. As evidence of the esteem in which we are held, the leaders of the host association were keen for me to speak at their plenary meeting. As the only foreign speaker, I particularly emphasised the identity and role of our own association, and also suggested ways of reinforcing our relations, both between the two associations, and between Canada and Europe in general.

In my speech, I focused on three different points: the first two involved explaining why there are two different associations consisting of and representing 'former European parliamentarians', which many of our colleagues sometimes find surprising. The third point of my speech, which was connected with the other points, involved highlighting our interest, our desire, and even our need for the relations of former European parliamentarians not to be limited to intra-continental contacts, but also to extend beyond the borders of Europe

so that vital relations with partner associations in other parts of the world can be established. This will enable us to play an increasingly desirable and, in all likelihood, vital role in the context of international diplomatic relations.

In the first part of my speech to our Canadian colleagues, I focused my efforts on trying to explain why there are currently, and have been for several decades, two different associations consisting of and representing former European parliamentarians. This situation stems from the integration process of the European continent, which occurred in the second half of the last century. The process of structural integration took place in a Europe composed of states that were often at loggerheads, in a very divided Europe, which was referred to as the 'Cold War'. Subsequently, as they moved forward with the process of integrating the continent, those states were unable to develop a single format which included them all. However, they were able to do this when it came to the undoubtedly important point of setting out the values and objectives to be underlined and pursued by the new structure being developed. The values to be defended were, clearly and unreservedly, values such as democracy, freedom, solidarity, parliamentarism, and peace and social progress both in Europe and the rest of the world.

The issue was that, despite agreement on the pursuit and support of the values just highlighted, the very process of integrating the continent was not based on one design, but on two different formats. This resulted in an integration process with two different frameworks: one was the Council of Europe, founded in 1949, which has its seat in the French city of Strasbourg, and which has been supported since its founding by 46 member states on our continent. The other was the one known on its creation as the European Communities, which initially involved the integration of six states (West Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg) in 1957 through the signature of the Treaties of Rome. This number of states has grown, and the name has also changed, eventually becoming known as the European Union. At this point, we should remember that all the EU Member States are, at the same time, members of the Council of Europe

but not all members of the Council of Europe are members of the European Union.

The situation described also extends to the parliamentary levels of each institution, which operate in very different ways. Accordingly, the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly consists of members of national parliaments and national senators from all the Council member states. By contrast, the parliamentary dimension of the European Union is represented by the European Parliament, with delegations that do not comprise national parliamentarians, but rather Members of the European Parliament from each Member State who are elected in elections held every five years since 1979. One of the outcomes of this duality is that there are two different associations consisting of former European parliamentarians. One of these comprises former parliamentarians who have held seats in the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and who, as I have just explained, were previously members of national parliaments or national senators from the institution's member states. By contrast, in the European Parliament, the Members are directly elected by the people of the 27 Member States of the European Union. Accordingly, the European Association of Former Members of Parliament of the Member States of the Council of Europe (FP-AP) consists of former national parliamentarians from the member states (necessarily 'European') of the Council of Europe, whilst the members of the FMA form an integral part of the European Parliament, given that our association is directly recognised by, and even financed by, the European Parliament, and is therefore directly linked to the European Parliament.

It was also important to clarify that, relations between the two associations have generally been very positive and cordial. This has even led to a situation, which is that the FP-AP, which involves delegations of former parliamentarians from the member states of the Council of Europe, has reached the decision of recognising, among its members, a delegation of former members of the European Parliament. I then underlined the need for all former European parliamentarians, despite the differences which we must keep overcoming, to tackle

the concern, which is no doubt shared, about how to increase the extent of our presence and actions. We must go beyond the European framework within which we have, quite naturally and for all kinds of reasons, started our work, in order to extend our influence to more or less distant territories that we must not and cannot ignore if we want our actions to have the force and achieve the results needed to keep realising the dream of our values to which I referred earlier. It is through these efforts that we are most likely to achieve cooperation between our associations of former European parliamentarians and associations such as the CAFP, which gave us an important lesson in hospitality, fraternity and solidarity in this specific context, which we all promised to pursue in all respects and directions.

In my final thoughts, I wanted to express my confidence and hope that this experience of working together would enable us to set examples in many respects with our Canadian colleagues. I have often become frustrated at the thought that, in Europe, our progress has frequently grounded to a halt. I have thought, no doubt wrongly, that we have already covered all the ground that needed to be covered in order to advance the values which define our project and which, both in Europe and in many other places around the world, we have identified as yet to be achieved on our journey. I was inspired in Canada by what we learned from their work as former parliamentarians, which they are continuing through their parliamentary action. As a European, I have repeatedly wondered how, in making the progress to which we are committed, we can tackle the difficulties that we face, without having to relearn time and time again the lessons

learned by the men and women who have shown us the way from continents other than ours and from other societies, almost always facing greater difficulties than the ones which we have overcome to date. As a European, I cannot and do not want to ignore the lessons given to me by men such as Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Salvador Allende and so many others, including women whom we have never heard about before, not even their names. These were the thoughts that I took from the meeting in Ottawa and from the hours of working together, which I was gifted. I assured and promised the meeting that, from now on, I would keep paying close attention to the news reaching us from Canada and from the CAFP. I thanked them for everything and assured them that we would not allow too much time to pass before we meet again.

I feel that it is relevant to add a couple of comments to complete my report on this meeting as I expressed the growing interest within our association in the desirability and even the need to strengthen our relations with partner associations with a similar identity, but located in other countries and continents outside of Europe. I also feel that it is relevant to highlight in this assessment the highly significant participation in the Ottawa meeting of the Secretary General of our European Parliament Former Members Association, Elisabetta Fonck, who was invited by our Canadian hosts to speak in a very important video played at the Ottawa meeting: this video paid tribute to Leo Duguay, who was the founder and first president of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians, and who was one of the most prominent figures in the political and parliamentary life of Canada in the 20th century.

Elisabetta Fonck's contribution on this occasion, on behalf of our Association, was as follows: 'Dear Leo, our association is continuing on the path that we started on together so many years ago. Among other initiatives, we have seen the European Parliament successfully participate in an intensive campus programme which is helping young people in Europe to become increasingly well-informed citizens committed to the values that have existed throughout the process of European integration. I too warmly congratulate Leo Duguay whom, over the years, I have always considered as one of our own, and even one of the best of us. My congratulations, which are also those of my association, express a confidence that the members of our two associations, the European Parliament Former Members Association and the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians, will continue working with the same devotion and enthusiasm that they have shown since the time when our friend Leo had the excellent idea of setting up the association whose meeting we are attending.' We were all touched by this video and, in particular, by the warm and affectionate words of our Secretary General, Elisabetta Fonck.

At a formal dinner to pay tribute to Leo Duguay, which was held in the function room of the Canadian Senate, we were invited not only to dine with him and other AGM attendees, but also to sit in his company at the table of honour, right next to him and other prominent figures. In particular, we had the pleasure of dining with Matt Decourcey, the newly elected President of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians and the youngest ever occupant of this post, and also our friend, Dorothy Dobbie, who presided over the association for many years and who also played a key role in the process of bringing her Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians closer to our European Parliament Former Members Association. The key aspect of this dinner was the meeting and discussion with Matt Decourcey, in the company of so many other prominent figures who I was able to update on the work being carried out by our European Parliament Former Members Association.

Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez

S&D, Spain (1999-2014)
micar@email.com



From left to right: Mr Osvaldo Nunez (former Member of the House of Commons of Canada), Mr Miguel Angel Martinez Martinez (FMA Board Member), Dorothy Dobbie (President of the CAFP) and Hon. Don Boudria (former Member of the House of Commons of Canada)

FMA COLLABORATIONS

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS HAS BEEN BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE VIA AI



Speakers of the conference on 30 June in Genova (Italy), from left to right: Gabriella Airaldi, Francesco Rulli, Barbara Grosso, Isabella De Martini, Giuseppe Franceschelli, Monica Baldi, Igor Chierici

New technologies have now made the impossible – such as interacting with historical figures alive hundreds of years ago – possible, and to obtain historically valid answers from those figures. In Genoa, with the active participation of the FMA, through me, and powerhouse Vice-President Monica Baldi, who is always open to new initiatives, that is exactly what happened.

I am delighted that the Mayor of Genoa, Marco Bucci, immediately and enthusiastically signed up to – and financed – this idea of mine of giving a voice to Christopher Columbus by dint of artificial intelligence (AI). He has long been a very popular subject of written discussion, not only for excellent historians but also writers, journalists and ordinary people. He is a subject on everyone's lips, and while he may be divisive, he is still the best known Italian in the United States, famed for his discovery of the New World and as an exceptional navigator. Therefore, it seems more than fair to me that his city, Genoa, at the most important sailing event in the world, the Ocean Race, has finally given him a voice.

I am also pleased that the initiative has been enthusiastically backed and adopted by friends of the National

Italian American Foundation (NIAF), a very prestigious association which brings together the approximately 20 million citizens of Italian origin living in the United States, who have so far been as protective as we Italians at home are of Christopher Columbus and his legacy, or perhaps even more so, as NIAF President Robert Allegrini pointed out at his meeting with the Mayor during his recent visit to Genoa.

The partnership with the European Parliament Former Members Association – at a time when the European Parliament has recently legislated specifically on AI, a subject on which our colleague and friend Monica Baldi spoke brilliantly – is also much coveted.

The New York entrepreneur Francesco Rulli, an AI expert and passionate yachtsman like myself, whom I met a few years ago while we were both in Dubai for work, made it possible for my idea to be turned into reality! During the presentation of the tool, Christopher Columbus was asked questions directly and he replied in real time. The great navigator explained how he had used the easterlies to travel west, following the experiences of the Portuguese navigators who had gone before him and, when asked how long it would take to do the same

journey with the modern sailing boats used in the Ocean Race, he said that it would take six to eight days. The site to converse with Christopher Columbus is now live and available via www.columbustalk.org.

It can be accessed in all known languages and is built on historical guidance from the best scholars on the subject, led by Professor Gabriella Airaldi from the University of Genoa. The site is constantly updated and will be presented in the US in October. I invite everyone to test it and ask all kinds of questions, including the most controversial kind, about the colonisation of the continent that followed him, relations with native Americans, and the current criticism he faces, particularly on the American continent, which, thanks to AI, he can now defend himself from – or not – single-handedly.

Isabella De Martini
ECR, Italy (2013-2014)
isabella.demartini@outlook.it

**Cristoforo Colombo
Rivive Attraverso
L'intelligenza Artificiale**

Genova, Villaggio Ocean Race,
Venerdì 30 giugno ore 13.30

INTRODUCE E MODERA
On. Susy De Martini
Senior Consultant Relazioni Internazionali Comune di Genova

INTERVENTI E SALUTI DI
Marco Bucci, Sindaco di Genova
Barbara Grosso, Consigliere Delegato Affari Internazionali Comune di Genova
Giuseppe Franceschelli, Coordinatore Ambasciatori di Genova nel Mondo
Enrico Granara, Consigliere per le relazioni internazionali del Sindaco
(video messaggio)
Robert Allegrini, President NIAF (video messaggio)
On. Monica Baldi, Vice Presidente FMA e Ambasciatrice
W20 Italia: L'Europa e l'Intelligenza Artificiale
Gabriella Airaldi, Storica-Università di Genova, Colombo fra due Mondi
Lecture di Igor Chierici precedute da un breve filmato
Francesco Rulli, AD Querlo, Colombo e la sua Intelligenza Artificiale

La firma di Cristoforo Colombo,
un mistero mai decifrato fino ad ora

Poster of the conference in Genova that
took place of 30 June 2023.

EP TO CAMPUS PROGRAMME

THE EUROPEAN POLITICAL COMMUNITY

NATIONAL SCHOOL OF POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES (SNSPA), ROMANIA | 16 MAY 2023 | ONLINE

The Conference on the Future of Europe was a unique forum for citizens – and young people in particular – to discuss the future of Europe and feed into future EU policy. The discussions primarily dealt with democracy, justice and development of the European regions, but also covered foreign policy and the relationship that we, as a Union, should have with third countries.

A Europe that is closer to its citizens makes for a more social and inclusive Union. In order to achieve that, however, we need to take the pulse of the EU's social, territorial and economic cohesion. And, in relation to Social Europe, the conclusion was that citizens need a bigger voice. That was the backdrop to the first wider meeting of European countries on 6 October 2022 in Prague: the European Political Community. The new platform brought together European leaders to discuss key issues affecting the European continent.

A total of 44 countries were invited to the meeting.

Alongside the 27 EU Member States were the six Western Balkan states (Albania, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro), the Associated Trio countries (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine), Armenia and Azerbaijan, the four EFTA countries (Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and, finally, the United Kingdom and Türkiye.

The European Political Community (EPC) is a platform for political coordination among European countries across the continent. Its aim is to promote political dialogue and cooperation on issues of common interest in order to strengthen the security, stability and prosperity of the European continent.

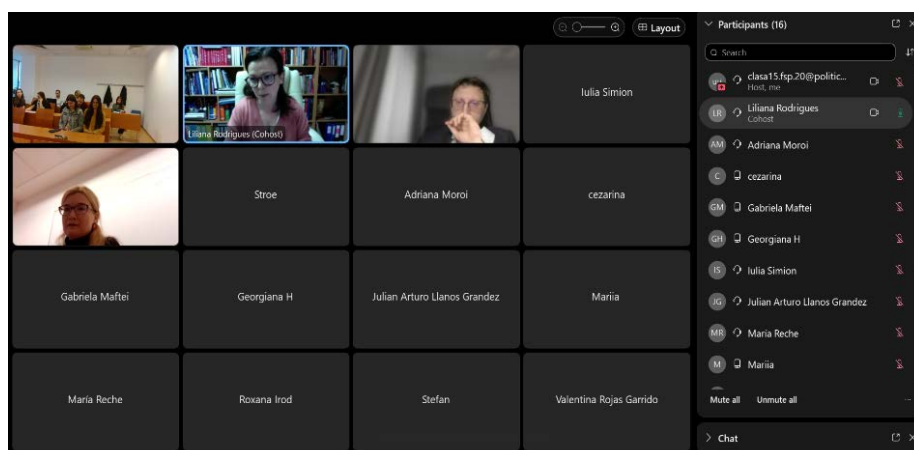
The platform's priority areas are:

- Managing the refugee crisis and Ukraine's post-war recovery
- Energy security
- Strengthening Europe's defence capabilities and cybersecurity
- Strategic resilience of the European economy
- Resilience of democratic institutions

The EPC can help overcome asymmetries because it provides an opportunity to include countries, regions and each and every citizen. The EPC can bring about more cohesion for the EU by enabling countries to work together in a more unified and representative structure. Closer political union means the EU's decisions can be more effective and more representative of the interests of all European people. The EPC can also help strengthen democracy in the EU by encouraging civic participation and enhancing transparency and accountability. It is important to remember, though, that setting up a European Political Community is not easy; it requires constant commitment and effort by Member States and European citizens.

The EU's countries have different histories, cultures and interests, and creating a more integrated political union will involve respecting and bridging those differences. In conclusion, a new European Political Community may be an opportunity to overcome asymmetries in the EU and enhance political and social integration between Member States. However, building the EPC will require constant commitment to civic participation, transparency and accountability so that the democratic systems effectively promote resilience and cohesion in the EU. This is the only way to make every voice count in the European project.

Liliana Rodrigues
S&D, Portugal (2014-2019)
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Liliana Rodrigues during her online lecture at the National School of Political and Administrative Studies on 16 May 2023.

EUROPE OF PEACE UP AGAINST A NEW AGE OF WAR

UPF BARCELONA SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, SPAIN | 22 MAY 2023 | ON CAMPUS

Just as Jean Monnet foretold, Europe has been forged from the crises it has had to overcome. There has certainly been no shortage of crises since 2008, but the EU has risen to the challenge every time. With Russia's war against Ukraine, however, the moment of truth has come. Europe was a place of freedom built in peace, for peace and by peace, which refused to take sides in the world's quarrels; now it is called upon to become a real political and diplomatic power, under the threat of a looming war, with the real thing at stake being its values.

With Ukraine bearing the brunt of the human cost of this war, its accession to the EU must no longer be refused or delayed; the steps need to be taken for this to happen towards the end of the decade. It will not just be a question of further enlargement – affecting most other European countries remaining outside the EU too – but will constitute a real change to the nature of the EU. The European lamb has suddenly awoken in a world of wolves.

With this tremendous existential pressure, the current members of the EU will have to quickly resolve a series of problems that have to date been insurmountable. A major revision of the Treaties has all at once become inevitable.

A few examples:

- With 27 countries, unanimity of signatures is unlikely and unanimity of ratifications impossible: it will therefore, for the first time, need to be accepted that a major European treaty will only apply to those countries that have ratified it, provided that these countries represent a very large majority (75%? 80%?) of Member States and European citizens.
- In a large continental Union of which some dozen members will have fewer than 4 million inhabitants, maintaining the current over-representation of small countries in the European Parliament would call into question the democratic foundation of the European Parliament: a majority of MEPs representing a minority of citizens could impose a law on a minority of MEPs representing the majority of citizens. Until now, this problem has only been identified by the German Court in Karlsruhe. It will also become an issue in France, Italy, Spain, Poland and even Ukraine.
- Foreign policy and defence will no longer be areas of mere coordination: collective action will need to be taken, and on the most difficult issues.



Alain Lamassoure © UPF Barcelona

A decision-making system will need to be put in place: diplomatic action shall not be taken by unanimity or even by qualified majority voting.

• The war in Ukraine was a stark reminder of the limits of neutrality for countries like Sweden and Finland, and of the limits of quasi-pacifism in Germany. But the unprecedented alignment of rhetoric on the need for a European defence pillar has not prevented France from adopting a new military programming law at the same time as Germany has adopted its first national security strategy, without these two major players in European politics having thought to consult each other on the content.

• European leaders have never dared to address the problem of the EU budget head-on. The new responsibilities of the larger EU will require transfers of resources parallel to the transfer of competences.

Who will be bold enough to raise the issue of the EU's future in next year's elections?

Alain Lamassoure

LDR, EPP, EPP-ED, EPP (1989-1991, 1992-1993, 1999-2009, 2009-2019)
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Alain Lamassoure during the on campus EP to Campus event at UPF Barcelona School of Management on 22 May 2023 © UPF

THE EU'S DIPLOMATIC POWER AND LIMITS IN RESPONSE TO WAR IN UKRAINE

APREI AND ZAPORIZHZHIA NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, UKRAINE | 30 MAY 2023 | ONLINE



not realise that an open door does not guarantee passage through it. Little do they know what a tough process the accession negotiations are. There can be no concessions here – this is in their interest and ours.

Ukraine rightly expects the world to recognise that it is fighting in our common interest. There is an expectation of a 'fast track' into the EU. My interlocutors did not view accession as a unique opportunity to change the law, the economy and the mentality of society – simply put, an opportunity to change the Ukrainian state for the better. I know from the Polish experience how effective the Brussels 'bogeyman' can be in legislative activity.

A lecture for scholars from the Ukrainian Association of European Integration Researchers was combined with a meeting with students from the Zaporizhzhia National University. The theme chosen by the organisers was the European Union as a diplomatic power and the limits it has encountered in its involvement in the conflict in Ukraine.

Reflection was restricted by the title to the diplomatic sphere. Specifically, it would be brief: after all, diplomacy is silent in times of war. I suggested to my audience that we should talk more about whether the European Union is a fully fledged player in the new reality defined by war – is it demonstrating effectiveness? Finally, what is the European defence policy in the context of this conflict?

The perspective of Poland and the Poles is unique. We know our Ukrainian neighbours well, and we have taken in millions of them. We know their pain. We also face specific risks from an aggressive Russia. This makes the message both easier and more difficult.

Our meeting was attended by more than 100 people and lasted an hour and a half, as was planned. In fact, it was only the sounding of air raid sirens in certain parts of Ukraine that resulted in a smaller audience. Several conclusions emerged from my talk and the discussion that followed: the first is the lack of full knowledge about the real financial and military involvement of the Union and the Member States in the fight against Russia.

We do not adequately show, nor do we promote, the enormous efforts that the Member States are making. The imagination of the Ukrainian public has been captured by American weapons, not by European money.

Yes, there is widespread respect for refugee assistance and humanitarian aid, but the European component is overshadowed by frontline explosions and dramatic drone operations.

Ukrainians appreciate that the European Union has opened its doors to their country, but they do

Partners can help, but we're not going to do all the work for them. Today, against a backdrop of war and daily casualties, it is difficult to raise this issue. However, the sooner we do this, the better. Ukraine must fight corruption.

It must raise up a new elite, decentralise the state and introduce a system of self-government. For many years, we have been watching sham reforms in Ukraine. It is time for the real thing. They have sacrificed too much, and we have spent too much money, for them to fail this time!

I urge my colleagues, former Members of the European Parliament, to take part in such meetings. As former politicians, we are credible and still rather appealing partners for such contacts. We are people who have seen a lot, know a lot and can say yet more without beating around the bush.

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EUROPEAN YOUTH EVENT 2023

AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE IN STRASBOURG

It was an honour for me to volunteer at the European Youth Event on 9 and 10 June 2023 as part of my Schuman traineeship with Parliament's Former Members' Association (FMA). The event brings thousands of young people from all over Europe to the European Parliament in Strasbourg to discuss political, social and cultural issues. It's the perfect opportunity for young people to express themselves, share their ideas and interact with MEPs, experts and other young people who are keen to get involved in politics. I was able to take part in debates in the Chamber on topics that included gender equality and ethnic minorities in Europe. The event was also broadcast online.

I was part of the team of volunteers who dealt with accreditation, which meant I had to check participants' credentials. This is how I came to realise that they were from all sorts of backgrounds; some had even come from outside of Europe. Almost 10 000 people took part in this year's event. Whilst some came to express their views on very specific subjects and therefore had very clear aims in mind, others were simply there to enjoy a unique experience at the European Parliament and to take



Former FMA Trainee Isa-Marie Ménart during the European Youth Event in Strasbourg on 9 and 10 June 2023.

the opportunity to get to know the beautiful city of Strasbourg. A number of other activities were organised in addition to the debates, most of which were centred around multilingualism in the EU. For example, you could step into a booth, have a go at interpreting a speech and receive feedback from one of Parliament's interpreters. There were also interactive games to test people's knowledge of the EU's 24 official languages, as well as workshops on other institutions with links to the EU, such as the Council of Europe.

The festivities were not confined to the European Parliament: the 'EYE village' had been set up just across the road. This consisted of a host of stands focusing on different topics such as 'Careers in the EU', the UN, etc. There were also plenty of food trucks on hand to give visitors a chance to refuel between activities.

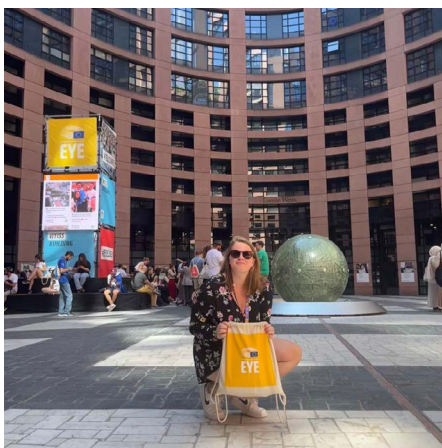
The young people who come to the EYE are encouraged to share their opinions, suggest ways of improving things and come up with specific projects. The outcomes and ideas stemming from the event are then compiled into a report that is sent

to MEPs and policy-makers, in the hope that it will influence EU policies and give a voice to the younger generation.

It was an incredible experience for me because it made me aware of the situations some young Europeans find themselves in, and how these differ from country to country. A gay person in Belgium, for example, will not have the same life experiences as a gay person in Hungary. This is the whole idea behind the EYE: to draw attention to what is happening in the Member States with regard to certain key issues and to make suggestions as to how things could be improved.

In short, Parliament's European Youth Event is an opportunity for young Europeans to come together, debate and actively contribute to discussions on the future of Europe, focusing in particular on democratic participation and civic engagement.

Isa-Marie Ménart
FMA Schuman Trainee
February - July 2023

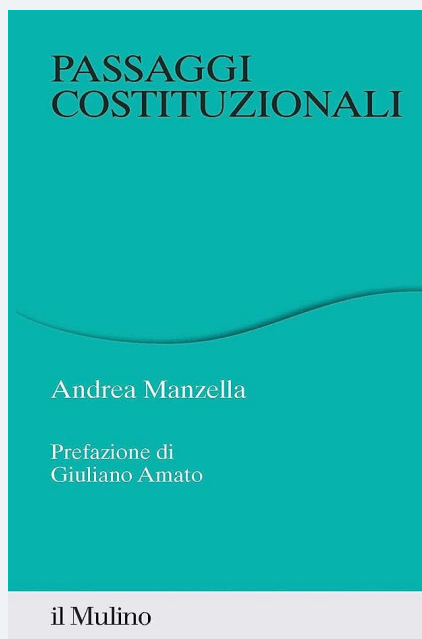


Former FMA Trainee Isa-Marie Ménart during the European Youth Event in Strasbourg on 9 and 10 June 2023.



PASSAGGI COSTITUZIONALI

by **Andrea Manzella**, published by Il Mulino (March 2023)



"I am privileged to call Andrea Manzella a friend, having sat alongside him both in the European Parliament and in the Former Members Association, where he brought a sense of passion and vitality to this Bulletin."

He employs a Renaissance perspective to examine the European construction based on his lived experience – an open constituent process guided by intuition and careful consideration of future developments.

I was particularly struck by the third and fourth parts of the book, devoted to the 'union of constitutions' and the quotes regarding 'parliamentarians at work'.

I would also like to highlight the introduction of original concepts such as the 'federative Parliament' and the 'European parliamentary system'. I found the identification of the EU's constitutive identity based on states, citizens and currency to be especially insightful, with a reflection on the limits of sovereignty as an absolute concept – as outlined in the Ventotene Manifesto, trail-blazingly enshrined in the Italian Constitution of 1948 – and as a basic principle of the state within the Community.

The examination of the relationship between the European Parliament and national parliaments as a system, in which the Conventions have constituent value, rounds off a reflection that has the merit and the plasticity to show that it is not a matter of concentric spheres but of a structural process which is federative – the latter term being derived from the Latin *foedus*, a solemn treaty of mutual assistance between Rome and another nation.

"In short, these passages reflect the intellectual and vital process of a *civis romanus*, a committed and ever-active builder of Europe."

In short, these passages reflect the intellectual and vital process of a *civis romanus*, a committed and ever-active builder of Europe.

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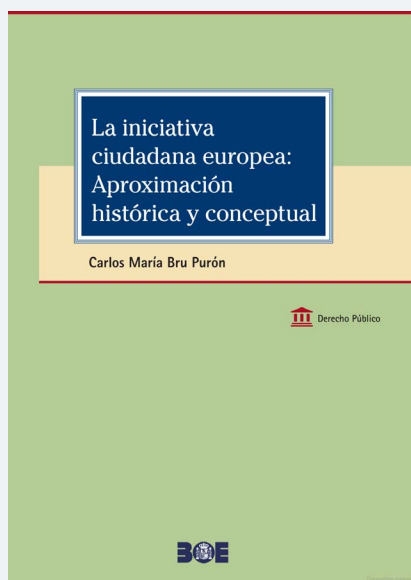
For this book, Andrea Manzella has chosen some of the most significant texts from his extensive public life as a Member of the Italian and European Parliaments, Councillor, scholar and university lecturer. He is one of those thoroughbred horses that are immediately recognisable, as Giuliano Amato so aptly put it.

I am privileged to call him a friend, having sat alongside him both in the European Parliament and in the Former Members Association, where he brought a sense of passion and vitality to this Bulletin.



THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE (ECI): A HISTORICAL AND CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

by **Carlos M^a Bru Purón**, published by Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado



The book written by former Member of the European Parliament (1986-1994, 1999) Carlos M^a Bru Purón offers insight into participatory democracy in the form known as 'quasi-direct' (which is different from the 'direct' – closed and plebiscitary – forms).

He criticises the fact that representative forms of democracy are given priority over participatory forms in the EU Treaties (Articles 10 and 11 TEU).

Within the 'quasi-direct' domain, the author examines prior and ex post consultations – whether binding or not – carried out by public authorities. At EU level, Bru devotes pages to the successive 'conferences', rooted in the white paper on governance (COM 2001/428 final), which have been held with civil society organisations (themselves listed) up to the recent Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE).

He dedicates pages to the interesting – and wasted – experiment Tomorrow's World, a 2002 meeting in the European Parliament of Commission officials and 362 EU citizens following the drawing of lots among 3 500 volunteers. He also gives details on the results of that event.

The core of the book, as its title indicates, is on the form under the 'quasi-direct' umbrella known as the popular legislative initiative (PLI), a legal mechanism that incorporates citizen participation, requiring a minimum support threshold (1 million) and aimed at public authorities. The key characteristics of the PLI are: voluntary support, a specific subject, with a deliberative source and momentum, delegative and empowering in nature (for signatories), the ability to be carried out via a network (online), requiring a response.

The author offers an overview of this institution around the world, in 84 states, with a particular focus on the current 27 EU Member States, and, for Spain, on the Autonomous Communities; and a number of states and regions in North America, Argentina, Mexico, etc.

A historical examination of the evolution and development of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) through the successive Treaties and ad hoc projects (Maastricht, Schüssel/Dini Proposal, Charter of Rights, Laeken Declaration, 1st Convention on Europe, Rome II – which was rejected, and its resurrection in the current Lisbon Treaty and its two components, the TEU and the TFEU) leads to an interpretation of the current Regulation (EU) 2019/788 (replacing 2011/212).

This gives the author the opportunity to criticise a number of points in the regulation and, even more so, in its applications. From the lacklustre fate of all ECIs (starting with the word 'invitation' in Article 11 TEU) to the reprehensible system of signature distribution in each of the Member States and its contradictory system of demographic origin unduly copied from the allocation of parliamentary seats, to the all-encompassing decision-making freedom of the European Commission, as a result of which only two of the hundreds of proposals submitted have reached Parliament.

Bru's criticism – in line with other authors' – is damning. In his comments on Regulation 2019/788, the author offers solutions to these errors, based on legal principles – including Kelsen's permanent theory, updated by Bobbio – ensuring that any rule is effective from the moment it enters into force.

Joan Colom i Naval
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IN MEMORIAM



Sabine WILS

⚔ 18 June 2023
GUE/NGL, Germany (2009-2014)

She served as a German Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Ms Wils represented *Die Linke*.



Winifred M. EWING

⚔ 21 June 2023
EPD, EDA, RBW, ERA, United Kingdom (1979-1999)

She served as a British Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Ms Ewing represented *The Scottish National Party*.



Arnaldo FORLANI

⚔ 6 July 2023
EPP, Italy (1989-1994)

He served as an Italian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Forlani represented *Democrazia Cristiana*.



Ann CLWYD

⚔ 21 July 2023
SOC, United Kingdom (1979-1984)

She served as a British Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Ms Clwyd represented the *Labour Party*.



Vittorio PRODI

⚔ 30 July 2023
ALDE, S&D, Italy (2004-2009, 2009-2014)

He served as an Italian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Prodi represented *Partito Democratico*.

IN MEMORIAM



Hélène CARRÈRE d'ENCAUSSE

✝ 5 August 2023

EDA, UFE, France (1994-1995, 1995-1999)

She served as a French Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Ms Carrère d'Encausse represented *Rassemblement pour la République*.



Bryan M.D. CASSIDY

✝ 8 August 2023

EPP-ED, United Kingdom (1984-1999)

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



Véronique TRILLET-LENOIR

✝ 9 August 2023

Renew, France (2019-2023)

She served as a French Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Ms Trillet-Lenoir represented *Liste Renaissance*.

Bryan M.D. Cassidy, former FMA Board Member from 2008 to 2014

Bryan Cassidy who has died aged 89 had a life in which politics and Europe played a major part. He began in domestic politics and as with many had his first electoral contest in the safe Labour seat of Wandsworth Central in London in the 1966 General election. Predictably he lost but from then on electoral politics was part of his life. He first stood for the Greater London Council in 1973 losing to a local doctor Dr John White. It was at that election that I was elected for Southwark Dulwich and we first became acquainted. In 1977 the positions were reversed and Bryan was elected for Hendon North at the same time as I lost my seat. He was a hard-working member but inevitably as these things go was mainly remembered for his campaign to get proper regulation of the then rather ill-disciplined Soho sex shops. Overall, he was successful. In 1984 he was elected to the European Parliament in the place of Basil de Ferranti who retired having made his name campaigning for an open market and was one of the founders of the Kangaroo group in the Parliament. This was named for the Australian animal that could jump over barriers. In the EP Bryan continued the work of de Ferranti and used his membership of the Economic and Monetary committee and the External Economic Relations committee to pursue his goal of a frontier free trading bloc. In 1999 he lost his seat as part of the move by the UK Government to an electoral system for Europe based on Proportional Representation. In 2002 he was appointed as a UK representative on the Economic and Social Committee where he served until 2014. For a time he chaired the EESC Single Market Observatory and during my time on the EESC I worked with him and was aware of the high respect in which he was held. His final years were marked by increasing ill health but throughout his career he had the benefit of a strong supporting partner in Gillian who worked with him throughout and contributed greatly to his reputation. His final years were marked by her unstinting devotion to his welfare. We could do with a few more people of his calibre in politics today but meanwhile "May he rest in peace".

Richard Balfe, PES, EPP-ED (1979-2022, 2002-2004), United Kingdom

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2024



EU ELECTIONS 2024: STRENGTHENING EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN RESPONSE TO COMMON CHALLENGES

On 6 to 9 June 2024, the tenth European elections take place. More than 400 million Europeans, and thus more citizens than the United States has inhabitants, are eligible to decide on the composition of the European Parliament for the next five years – the only directly elected, multinational Parliament with legislative, supervisory, and budgetary powers. The European Parliament then votes to elect the new President of the European Commission, which is the EU's executive body, and decides about the approval of the team of Commissioners. Much is at stake at these elections. It is about nothing less than about choosing the Europe, we want to live in.

Multiple crises and common achievements

One year ahead of this major moment for European democracy, it is worthwhile to look back into the past and ahead into the future. By looking back, we see not only multiple challenges but also many common achievements. Just after the EU agreed on the Green Deal to become the first climate-neutral continent in the world, the Covid-19 pandemic broke out in late 2019. It has cost the lives of millions of people and caused the most challenging health and socioeconomic crisis that Europe has had to face since the Second World War. The EU joined forces for the swift development and fair distribution of vaccines. The largest EU investment programme of all times, including the 750 billion Euros Next Generation EU fund, was adopted to support the economic recovery and the digital, green and social transitions.



First Vice-President Othmar Karas © European Parliament, Source: EP

On 9 May 2021, the largest and broadest pan-European exercise in participatory democracy – the Conference on the Future of Europe – successfully adopted 49 proposals and 326 concrete measures to further develop the European Union.

“One year ahead of this major moment for European democracy, it is worthwhile to look back into the past and ahead into the future.”

Then, on 24 February 2022, Putin started his brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, with all its humanitarian, social and economic consequences. Despite all odds, the EU stayed united and responded resolutely, including by adopting 11 unparalleled packages of sanctions and measures for managing the subsequent migration, energy and inflation crises.

Common challenges and the future of Europe

Without doubt, the common European action shows what we can achieve, on the basis of liberal democracy with the political will to work together. However, despite progress and success, our European project is not yet complete, the Conference on the Future of Europe is not yet fully implemented, and we must continuously develop further our cooperation. The EU is not yet an Energy Union, a Security and Defense Union, a Digital, Health and Social Union, and an Economic and Monetary Union. Our Single Market is not yet complete and identical with the Schengen and the Euro area. The EU so far failed in managing the asylum and migration crisis. And we are still too dependent and susceptible to blackmail in the fields of energy, technology, environment and climate. We continue to face complex challenges that no state can manage alone: Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the energy and climate crisis,

global competitiveness, digitalisation, artificial intelligence, foreign interference and disinformation. In addition, there is a changing political environment: Extremists, populists and nationalists put polarisation and confrontation before the search for common solutions.

In a vicious circle, our liberal democracy comes under pressure – outside and inside the EU. The supposedly “simple answer” does not do justice to the complexity of reality.

“As the First Vice-President of the European Parliament responsible for information policy, the institutional communication campaign for the EU Elections is a matter close to my heart. Information creates awareness and awareness is key for our democracy.”

Clearly, we cannot take peace, freedom, and democracy for granted. The ethical, moral progress of the last decades is not a law of nature. Therefore, we must do everything to strengthen our common achievements and develop our cooperation further. Only united, we will stand before history, find common solutions, reach our objectives and regain trust.

European Parliament’s Institutional communication campaign

As the First Vice-President of the European Parliament responsible for information policy, the institutional communication campaign for the EU Elections is a matter close to my heart. Information creates awareness and awareness is key for our democracy. The purpose of the institutional campaign, which complements the campaigns of the various political groups, is two-fold:

On the one hand, to inform as many citizens as possible about the elections, why voting at the European elections is important and when they take place. The second and equally important goal is to engage as many citizens as possible for the democratic process – this is ultimately a question of mobilising as many people as possible to help spread the word about the Elections and the importance of voting therein.

Messaging “Delivery” and “Democracy”

The communication message for the 2024 elections contains two main elements. First comes what is referred to as “delivery”. Citizens will be informed on what powers the European Parliament has to affect their lives and why it is therefore important to vote. Whereas this angle already features as part of Parliament’s communication activities, it will be further boosted throughout 2023, when it comes into play. This means, the development of additional tools to help media understand the key legislative topics of the past legislature, connecting the delivery message to the European Elections explicitly, providing tools for MEPs to transmit this message to their own constituents in a localised way, and the use and promotion of additional tools such as “what Europe does for me”. The delivery message is not a classic “campaign” approach,

but an editorial and communication support one, although it can be transmitted in both a rational or an emotional way, depending on the audience and channel.

Second comes the democracy message. This is about the actual campaign itself and all the various advertising and other communication activities that will underpin it. The message itself is about the idea of the importance of democratic engagement, irrespective of political orientations or opinions of the EU. Voting is not just the most important tool at the disposal of citizens to “choose their future” and influence the future shape of Europe. Voting is also a way of safeguarding democracy: It marks a stronger democracy through a stronger European Parliament. Both messages will reinforce each other – we thus have parliamentary democracy on one side of the coin and delivery on the other. The context that will colour the upcoming years will be articulated within this framework.

Last but not least, the European Union is about nothing less than about “all of us”. We, the citizens of Europe, have our joint future in our hands. Now more than ever it is crucial to deepen our cooperation, to argue, to justify, and to strengthen our values to encourage the citizens to vote their Parliaments in all elections. After all, it is the composition of Parliaments that shapes the politics of the future.

Othmar Karas

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BUDGETARY OVERSIGHT IN CHANGING TIMES, A CORE TASK FOR PARLIAMENT



A budget is the expression of political choices. This is no different at the European level. However, the EU budget differs from a budget as we know it in our Member States. One of the main features of the EU budget is the role and impact of the multiannual budget: the so-called Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). In a cycle lasting up to 10 years, the Commission, the Council and the Parliament agree on how and where to use European funds. The amounts and limits for the current MFF, which is in force until the end of 2027, were agreed in 2020 following prolonged preparatory work, involving negotiations late into the night and the customary political manoeuvrings. This greatly reduces the margin of discretion for the annual budget procedure, but on the other hand, it offers all parties involved, especially the final beneficiaries, the prospect of funds foreseen for the coming years. The EU budget is still primarily an investment budget for the short and medium term. And while every time there are calls to thoroughly overhaul the whole architecture of the MFF, it is difficult to do away with habits acquired over time.

When the Union faced Brexit and the COVID pandemic in the run-up to the current MFF 2021-2027, additional initiatives were taken within a very limited period of time. It is widely acknowledged that in doing so, mental hurdles were overcome and taboos broken. The repayment of loans for the EU recovery plan will weigh on our budget for decades. And the financing method itself – a common debt instrument that has made the EU a major player in the bond market – is already predicted to have a lasting impact on how the EU will evolve. For some, it is a welcome step and similar to what President Hamilton did for the US in 1790.

“While every time there are calls to thoroughly overhaul the whole architecture of the MFF (Multiannual Financial Framework), it is difficult to do away with habits acquired over time.”

In 2021, we started with an MFF combined with a recovery plan – aiming also to address the often well-known and long-standing structural challenges, which continue to hold back the further growth and development of our Member States – with the national

recovery plans of the RRF forming the largest element of the recovery plan. But also with a new way of ensuring a good return on EU spending: no fixed envelopes, but target-bound payments (milestones and targets) with reforms proposed by the Member States themselves as binding conditions. This means greater involvement of Member States, but also increased risks in terms of control and supervision.

Meanwhile, the COVID pandemic seems like a distant past. Thankfully, I would say. But a return to the world of before seems lost to us forever. In February 2022, Russia launched a brutal assault on Ukraine, marking the onset of the most significant military conflict in Europe since the Second World War, with all the human misery that this entails. At the same time, it is quite clear that nobody should have any illusions regarding the autocratic nature of the People’s Republic of China and that for too long we have naively been trading with an emerging global power that clearly does not share our norms and values.

The series of crises of recent years, where everyone also looks to the EU to provide solutions at least in part, is testing the current MFF. Due to the demands in Ukraine, the capacity to provide humanitarian aid has already been depleted halfway through

the programming period, and the utilization of all available flexibility measures has also reached its maximum threshold. This is why there will also be a mid-term review of the current MFF.

The challenges for the next planning period, i.e. after 2027, are already stacking up and apart from the final choices between policy areas and the financial commitments to be co-decided on by the newly constituted Parliament, there are a number of new challenges rendering the whole exercise more complex. Firstly, there is the speed of change both within Europe and on the world stage. If the EU is to play a meaningful role, it will have to be prepared to continuously adapt and grow further in its role. While the tighter alignment of core tasks

will be important, more built-in flexibility will also be required as regards the proper functioning of the MFF as a tool for sound financial programming and budgetary discipline, to be able to react when needed and to allow for shifting situations. Secondly, there is, of course, the repayment of the recovery plan. This will put great pressure on the size of the current programmes and raises the question as to where, in terms of European public spending, we should target our very limited resources. Achieving real European added value should be the guiding principle. But above all, we must not forget that every crisis is an opportunity for our common future, for growth and for new jobs. In this connection, the quality of our spending is crucial.

In order for Parliament to be ready for the future and to weigh structurally on these upcoming discussions, our institution's leadership has started an internal exercise that will also strengthen Parliament's role as regards the oversight of expenditure. This is much needed and, in this rapidly changing world, perhaps even the task for us par excellence as representatives of the people: that is to ensure the proper and correct utilisation of the funds entrusted to the EU by taxpayers while also contributing to the continuous enhancement of policies for our future and that of future generations.

Johan Van Overtveldt

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Single Market, Innovation and Digital

149.5 (+ 11.5 from NGEU)

Cohesion, Resilience and Values

426.7 (+ 776.5 from NGEU)

Natural Resources and Environment

401 (+ 18.9 from NGEU)

Migration and Border Management

25.7

Security and Defence

14.9

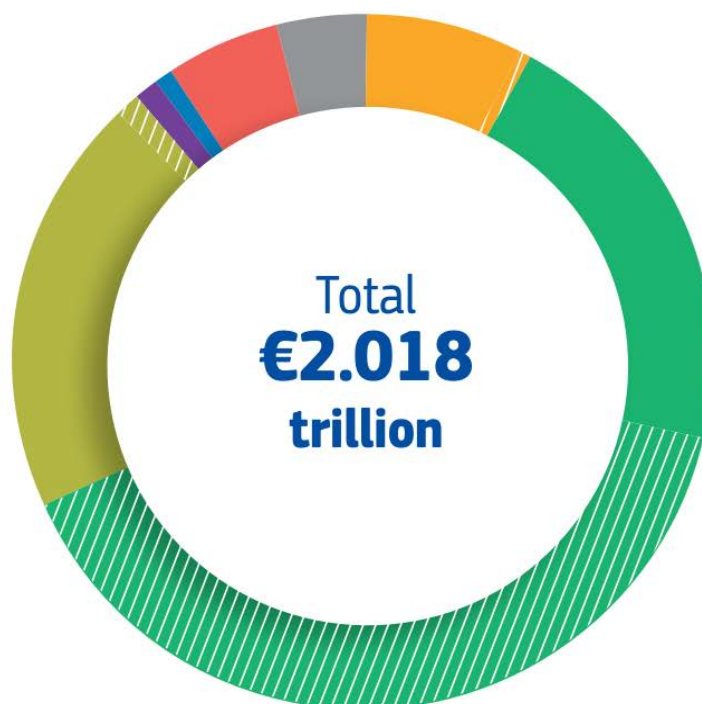
Neighbourhood and the World

110.6

European Public Administration

82.5

Total: €2.018 trillion



A UNION-WIDE CONSTITUENCY FOR DEEPENING THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC SPHERE

On May 3rd 2022 the European Parliament adopted a proposal on a new European electoral law—a fundamental step to improve the European public sphere and to deepen involvement of European citizens in the union’s democracy. It would be ideally applied to the 2024 European elections.

There are many reasons to put forward this new electoral law. In the decade after the Lisbon Treaty came into force at the end of the 2000s, a confluence of factors highlighted the urgent need to strengthen common action by our union and update its constitutional framework: the inequality enhanced by the Eurozone crisis, the challenges at our borders, the climate emergency, the digitalisation of our societies and the transformation of labour relations among others. Then, in 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic came and its consequences — the unprecedented issuance of European federal debt to fund the recovery plan, and the progressive move towards a health union—and, on top, Vladimir Putin’s aggression against Ukraine since February 2022. Therefore, institutional innovations are needed to consolidate a European public sphere and enhance European democracy. Among them a new electoral system, with clearer rules is needed.

The status quo and its inconsistencies

Nowadays there is no uniform procedure for elections to the European Parliament, though that would be compatible with the treaty. This results in important

inconsistencies—in when candidates are nominated, periods for campaigning, voting days, methods for allocating seats, and the age to exercise active and passive suffrage, among others. A remarkable item on the agenda of this new proposal is to eliminate the obstacles to the right to vote for persons with disabilities and those European citizens who live in a different country.

The political dimension of the elections is even more relevant: it is still difficult to generate a pan-European debate that moves beyond the paradigm of 27 simultaneous national elections, which often revolve around domestic issues or are used to hold national governments to account. Consequently, European political parties are weaker, taking the form of loose confederations of national parties, and cannot campaign in the elections as such.

“A remarkable item on the agenda of this new proposal is to eliminate the obstacles to the right to vote for persons with disabilities and those European citizens who live in a different country.”

This new electoral law to tackle the need for pan-European debate is timely, considering the window of opportunity opened by the 2019 European elections. Turnout increased for the first time since direct elections to the parliament began in 1979, exceeding 200 million votes and the symbolic threshold of 50 per cent, with higher participation by young people. Several topics, such as climate change, were common themes during the campaign.

Yet although the European political parties each presented fairly detailed programmes and a candidate for president of the European Commission, the vast majority of voters remained unaware of the Spitzenkandidaten. Neither their image nor their party logo appeared on brochures and electoral advertising, nor on the ballot papers.

Towards a Pan-European constituency

The proposal adopted by the parliament envisages an additional, pan-European constituency of 28 seats (there are currently 705 seats distributed among the member states). It would accomplish three important and interrelated objectives.

First, the European parties would be strengthened, selecting candidates from different member states, campaigning in support of them and the party’s programme, bearing their own logos. These candidates would campaign throughout Europe, not only in their states of origin or residence. That in itself would contribute to the second goal of union-wide lists, to engender a pan-European political and electoral debate across the EU, transcending the national containers of 27 parallel elections.

Thirdly, the *Spitzenkandidaten* principle, rehearsed in 2014 and 2019, would become a reality. Voters in every country would face two ballot boxes: one to express their choice among the domestic alternatives and another for their selection from the union-wide list—carrying the European party's logo and headed by the *Spitzenkandidat* representing its political family.

Finally, the European parties would have to respect geographical and gender balance (including via a 'zipped' list or gender quota) when drawing up their union-wide list. The parliament supported a closed-list system (focused on parties rather than individuals), using the d'Hondt proportionality formula for the allocation of seats—the most common procedure among the member states. An independent European Electoral Authority, with financial autonomy and led by impartial individuals, would supervise the electoral process.

The new European electoral Law: A Citizens' priority

The support to the Union-wide constituency was one of the priorities advanced by citizens in the Conference on the Future of Europe. In this innovative and democratic exercise, which adopted its conclusions on 9 May 2022, citizens and civil-society organizations made their voices heard via a multilingual platform, a European youth event and citizens' panels.

Particularly relevant here is the proposal number 38. It requested 'an election law that harmonizes electoral conditions' and said that 'European citizens should have the right to vote for different European Union level parties that



Citizen's Panel of the Conference on the Future of the EU
© European Union 2021 - Source : EP

each consist of candidates from multiple Member States'. This request was included in the conclusions of the Conference—and since May 2022 the parliament has given its support to the will of the citizens.

The parliament adopted the legislative report for which I was responsible, with no changes and a solid majority (323-262 for the draft legislative text and 331-257 for the attached resolution).

The geographical-balance rule in the adopted proposal was to ensure candidates from the most populous states, whose parties tend to be more influential, did not dominate composition of the union-wide lists to the detriment of those from medium and small states. We expect this rule will also gather support in the Council, representing the member states and favouring unanimous agreement.

We hope that European governments will be able to respond to this citizens' demand

and negotiate with the European Parliament in the coming months an agreement to implement the pan-European constituency with transnational lists for the European elections in June 2024 as a way to strengthen the European public sphere and the European citizenship. With this new proposal, the elections to the European Parliament in 2024 will become a milestone in the federalisation of the union's political system—stimulating greater public interest and adding legitimacy and strengthening our European democracy.

Domènec Ruiz Devesa

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UPDATE ON LEGISLATION APPLICABLE TO THE 2024 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

The next European elections will take place on 6-9 June 2024. The main difference from the run-up to the 2019 elections is that there was then still a lot of uncertainty around the date and the conditions of Brexit. In the end, 73 Members were elected in the UK, but they left the Parliament in January 2020, allowing for an additional 27 Members from other Member States to join the EP.

For the 2024-2029 parliamentary term, the composition of Parliament will total 720 seats following a reform recently tabled by [Parliament](#) – which proposed 11 additional seats – and then adopted by the European Council – which made a further increase to 15 additional seats. This was necessary to take into account demographic changes in some Member States and correctly apply the principle of degressive proportionality. The new allocation of seats sees no Member State losing any, and some Member States being allocated additional seats, as follows: 1 each to Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Latvia, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland, and 2 each to Spain, France and the Netherlands. Parliament [consented](#) to this new allocation during its September plenary sitting, while the European Council adopted (by written procedure) the decision on 22 September 2023.

Taking a rapid look at the regulatory environment for European elections, the rules applying to the election of Members of the European Parliament are a combination of the common principles established

in the 1976 European Electoral Act and the different national rules implementing them.

“The rules applying to the election of Members of the European Parliament are a combination of the common principles established in the 1976 European Electoral Act and the different national rules implementing them.”

At the time of writing, a number of reforms have either been adopted without yet coming into force, or are under discussion by the relevant institutions, and in one case in particular, their application for the next European elections is most unlikely. One reform that has been adopted, but is not yet in force, is contained in [Council Decision 2018/994](#) making some [modifications](#) to the electoral rules, inter alia the obligation to set a minimum threshold – not lower than 2 % and not higher than 5 % of the valid cast votes in the constituency – for the allocation of seats in constituencies of more than 35 seats, including single-constituency Member States. In addition, where there is a national deadline for the submission of candidacies, the Decision specifies that this must be at least three weeks before the date of the European elections in that Member State. Member States may allow the name and logo of the European political parties to which candidates

or national parties are affiliated to be displayed on ballot papers. Although all the steps leading to the adoption of Council Decision 2018/994 have been accomplished according to Article 223 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), i.e. Parliament proposal, followed by unanimous adoption by the Council, after the consent of Parliament, entry into force depends on approval by Member States according to their respective constitutional requirements. In this last phase, a small number of Member States have not yet ratified Council Decision 2018/994.

A further reform is still being discussed by the institutions (but is not likely to come into force for 2024).

Parliament adopted a [legislative proposal](#) on [3 May 2022](#) aimed at reforming, more extensively than the above Council Decision, the electoral rules applicable to European elections. This [proposal](#), currently not progressing due to a lack of support in the Council from Member States, provides inter alia for the following:

- a minimum common voting age of 16 years, except for Member States whose constitutional order establishes a minimum voting age of 17 or 18 years old (Article 4) and a minimum common age of 18 years to stand as a candidate (Article 5);
- the obligation for Member States to ensure the right to vote for EU citizens living in a third country, those without permanent residence, those living in closed

residential settings, those experiencing homelessness and those serving a prison sentence (Article 6);

- the obligation to provide for postal voting as well as the possibility to allow advance physical voting, proxy voting, and/or use of electronic and internet systems, including from third countries (Article 8);

- the obligation to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to electoral materials, voting facilities and polling stations (Article 7) and postal voting (Article 8);

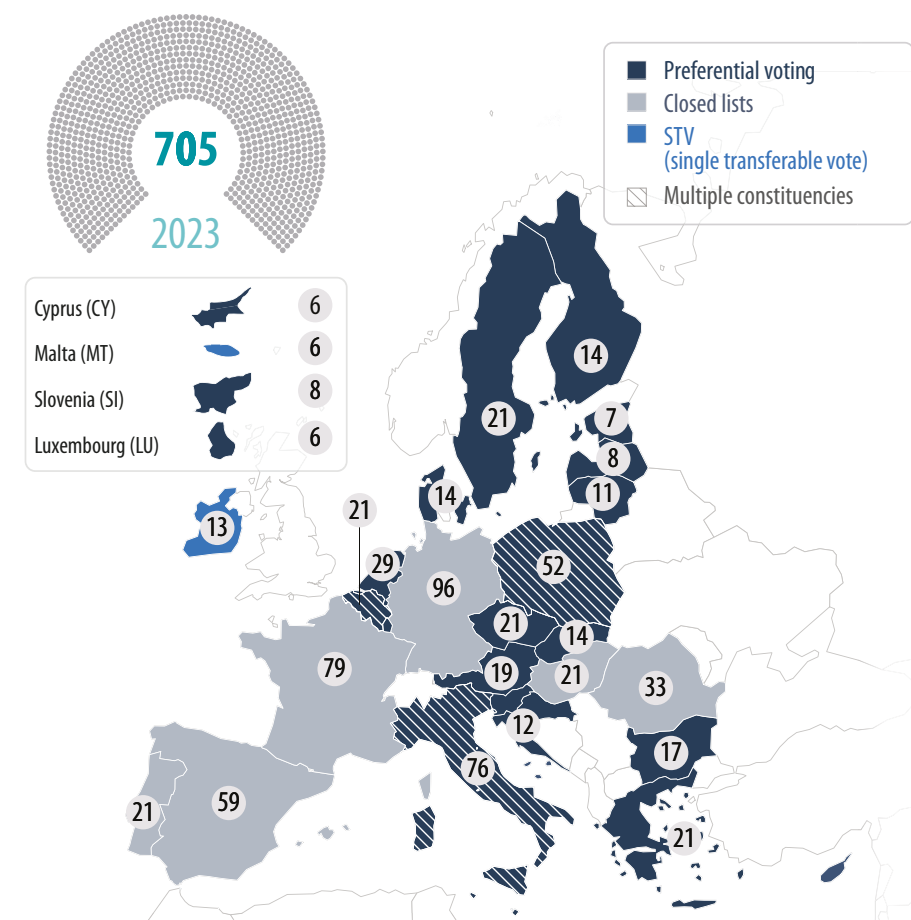
- to set 9 May as the common day for holding European elections in all Member States;

- an obligation to establish a threshold of no less than 3.5 % and no more than 5 % of valid votes cast only for national constituencies comprising more than 60 seats;

- creation of a Union-wide constituency from which 28 MEPs would be elected through transnational electoral lists (Article 15). European citizens would have two votes: one for their national constituency and one for the Union-wide constituency. In the Union-wide constituency a closed-list system and the D'Hondt formula for the allocation of seats after the elections would be used and no electoral threshold would apply. Candidate lists would not be able to include only candidates from the biggest Member States

in the leading positions, but would have to alternate candidates from three categories of Member States defined according to the size of their population (Annex 1);

- the creation of a European Electoral Authority in charge of conducting elections in the Union-wide constituency, coordinating the exchange of information among the national electoral authorities and monitoring the implementation of the rules, including in the national constituencies (Article 28).



Etienne Bassot

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Voting systems for the European elections in the 27 Member States, situation in May 2023. Source: European Parliamentary Research Service

UNDERSTANDING THE RISE OF AUTHORITARIANISM AND SAFEGUARDING DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE

It has been a tough decade for liberal democracy in Europe.

Democracy has been challenged across the continent, with authoritarian forces gaining ground in several EU member states. In seizing power, these leaders, often referred to as “populists,” display characteristics more aligned with authoritarians, posing a threat to democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. This worrisome trend has surfaced in EU member states like Hungary and Poland and even posed a threat to the French Presidency.

One critical question arises: What lies behind the electoral success of these leaders? Why do voters, including many who have never voted before, support politicians who exhibit contempt for democracy?

In response to these questions, the European Movement International has conducted comprehensive polling and research since 2018 (www.listentopeople.eu) in 18 EU member states.

Our efforts aim to analyse attitudes and drivers towards democracy and authoritarianism.

Following the 2019 European elections, the data revealed a widespread sense of alienation among Europeans. More than 50% of respondents in Bulgaria, Spain, Greece, Austria, France, and Hungary felt left behind, witnessing growing economic inequality and losing faith in their country’s future prospects.

Our more recent study, conducted after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, confirmed these trends, with citizens in France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Romania expressing concerns about their country’s direction and viewing the world as increasingly dangerous.

This prevailing sense of despair creates fertile ground for the anti-elite and hate-driven rhetoric of authoritarians, who offer simplistic solutions and scapegoats for the social and economic challenges citizens face.

Moreover, Europeans’ satisfaction with democracy and their sense of empowerment are dishearteningly low. Apart from a few exceptions (Finland and Estonia), trust in governments and satisfaction with democracy are significantly lacking in all other surveyed countries. This lack of confidence in influencing decisions has made citizens susceptible to authoritarian manipulation, leading to disengagement from the democratic process and resentment towards elected representatives.

What’s more, Europeans’ support for democracy experienced a significant decline. In 2022, support for democracy fell below 50% in all surveyed countries, with a consistent downward trend since 2019 in most cases. Germany experienced an 18% drop in support for democracy since 2019 (from 56% to 38%).

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The meaning of this is profound. Europeans’ commitment to democracy is not as strong as we might have assumed. Especially in countries where we have witnessed the worst erosion of democratic



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norms, consistent support for democracy is so low that this in itself can explain the rise of illiberal and authoritarian regimes.

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First and foremost, policymakers need to tackle inequality, offer a coherent and optimistic perspective for their citizens and make them feel that they are at the front and centre of government policy. Inclusive policies that support those in our society that are most in need, combined with investment in education, vocational training, and up-skilling will open opportunities for all.

Governments must also pursue more participatory forms of democracy, give citizens the chance to shape the decisions that affect them, at the local, regional, national, and European level. There are many successful models in Europe and beyond, with modern technologies but also more traditional tools offering solutions diverse enough to be applied in small communities or large constructs at the pan-European level. Democracy does not end at the ballot box and citizens need to feel that their voice still counts once the election is over.

Above all, we must endeavour to underline the importance of the things we take for granted in a democratic society.

There is a need for transparency, parliamentarism, checks and balances, independent courts, free press, debate and consensus. Be it through education or everyday practice, our democracy and the freedoms that it underpins needs to be weaved through every aspect of our experience as citizens, so as it will not be undervalued or neglected.

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The opportunity cost of not doing so is immense as European history has taught us. Let's forget that the worst of dictators came in power through democratic means and after weakening democracy and its institutions.

We must not let that happen again, not on our watch.



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OF EDUCATION, ELECTIONS AND EUROPE

In July I was fortunate enough to participate in a one-day conference in Florence jointly sponsored by the European University Institution (EUI) the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU), Erasmus+ and the Former MEPs' Association (FMA) under the title "Can the EU learn from Experience", the subtext was to encourage participation in forming Europe's future. It was a timely event as we are already less than a year away from the next elections to the European Parliament (EP) in May 2024. The conference took place against the backdrop of two very interesting and encouraging statistics.

Firstly, analysis shows that the turnout in the last Euro-elections (2019) topped 50% (actually 50.6%) the highest figure since 1994. Most encouraging was the fact that this increase was largely due to the participation of younger voters. Voters under twenty-five rose by 14% and 12% by those between twenty-five and thirty-nine. It is important to understand that

"participation" means more than a five-yearly visit to the ballot box, indeed voter turnout will depend on the degree of which citizens feel engaged in pan-European activities. Europe has to mean more than a philosophical concept. The second interesting statistic comes from the report from the Erasmus+ programme (2021) which revealed that some 71,000 institutions had taken part and some 649,000 people had participated in mobility activities. The conference heard enthusiastic evidence from organizers, but more importantly from young participants. Exchanges, intellectual and scientists have been part of the cross fertilization of Europe's creative prowess for centuries, but the actual physical exchanges have largely been confined to a mobile elite.

The Erasmus programmes have made significant advances in enlarging the reservoir of young Europeans who have had and will continue to enjoy such privileges. In learning from experience, the HAEU plays a significant and growing role, which offer scholars of all levels to dip into the documentation of Europe's integration. As George Santayana said "Those who cannot remember history are condemned to repeat it" And Europe has much to remember in order not to repeat its failings. In a similar vein the EUI facilitates that exchange of knowledge. The title "Can the EU learn from experience" opened the door for the activities of the "EP to Campus" programme. Too often the exchange between politicians and electors is a monologue rather than a dialogue.

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These themes mingled and interacted in Florence and more of the same must continue as we prepare (sadly without British participation) for next year's Euro-elections. A collection of the papers submitted and contributions made at the conference will be published and presented in the European Parliament at the “Librorum” event later this year.

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Speakers of the high-level hybrid conference ‘Can the EU learn from experience?’ © EUI, 2023

About the European Parliament to Campus Programme



The EP to Campus Programme allows universities to benefit from the expertise and experience of former Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) who share their insights into how the EU institutions really work and into the factors that shape EU decision-making.

Any university can invite a former MEP, when organising a conference, a seminar or a tutorial, by filling in our application form. For that purpose, our guidelines for an EP to Campus visit and for an EP to Campus webinar will help you. The FMA will match the requirements of the university to the available former MEPs, using a detailed database containing their areas of expertise. Then, the FMA proposes a shortlist of matched former MEPs to the university, from which the university can choose.

More information can be found via the FMA website:
www.formermembers.eu/programmes/european-parliament-to-campus-programme

Applications for the new academic schoolyear 2023-2024 are open here: <https://bit.ly/EPtoCampus23-24>



THE 2024 ELECTIONS – A LANDMARK MOMENT



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In recent years, in the interim between two European Parliament elections, we have been through one of the most challenging periods for the European integration process: a period marked by COVID-19 and the invasion of Ukraine.

Although both very serious situations – and the second is, unfortunately, still ongoing with no end in sight – it must be said that the former benefited from the opportunities for cooperation afforded by the EU, while the latter has brought home the need for an ever closer union.

On the COVID-19 crisis, the Commission summed things up perfectly in its communication COM(2021) 350 final of 5.5.2021: 'We have seen the resilience of our Single Market and the best of industry. Drawing on the pool of excellence in life sciences, it has been at the forefront of global COVID-19 vaccine development and production, notably thanks to the EU Vaccine Strategy and the EU support to ramp up industrial capacity.'

On the economic front, too, the production and, in particular, transport challenges that arose during the pandemic forced some countries to reshore industries that they had given up a few years earlier, when it became more profitable to import products from other countries with cheaper labour. As a result, our entrepreneurs had to make an effort to adopt more efficient technology and production processes.

"It is vital that the European Parliament, as the only institution that is directly elected by the EU citizens, gains further powers."

With the pandemic behind us, it is now once again more economical to import certain products from third countries offering high quality at lower prices. In other cases, however, the new technologies and more efficient production processes developed in Europe have revived old industries and put them on a solid footing, bringing widespread benefits by creating prosperity and breathing life into former industrial regions.

Meanwhile, the war in Ukraine has led to closer political ties between existing EU Member States, as they rally in defence of fundamental rights, and prompted urgent accession requests from prospective members – something that would have been unthinkable two years ago.

These developments should be encouraged within an institutional framework which, ideally, boosts the role of the European Parliament. There is no questioning the importance of the other EU institutions, and the Member States should undoubtedly continue to play a key role (alongside other bodies closer to the citizens, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity).

Yet it is vital that the European Parliament, as the only institution that is directly elected by the EU citizens, gains further powers. It would therefore be best if, unlike in previous elections, a very large percentage of the electorate voted. And this should be the case, as recent events have highlighted the importance of the EU.

What is more, higher turnout is also crucial for reasons that appear less pressing but will become more so over the next few years: challenges in a globalised world in which, in line with the Europe 2020 strategy, we need to push for growth that is smart, sustainable and cohesive. Indeed, the latest documents have also stressed the need to move towards digitalisation.

Such advances call for sufficient funds, and we still have some way to go to secure the right resources;

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the role of the European Parliament, alongside that of the other institutions, will be paramount to these efforts.

The former Members of the European Parliament will play a vital part in getting many more people to vote in the 2024 elections, by recounting their experience and, above all, explaining the role that Parliament, as a democratic institution with certain powers can play: a role that will be greater, the greater the turnout in the June 2024 elections.

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together.eu: Democracy is what makes us

Together.eu is a project run by the European Parliament, dedicated to getting as many people as possible involved in the democratic life of Europe and, in particular, to getting out the vote for the European elections in 2024.

together.eu connects people both locally and across Europe to meet, share knowledge, learn new skills and to bring our message to the communities around us. For the 2019 European Elections our community brought together more than 300.000 people who actively helped promote the elections.

Today, together.eu is a vibrant, connected and growing community working to further European democracy and to do our part to encourage others to vote in 2024 - because the more people vote, the stronger our democracy becomes.

More information via: <https://together.eu/>

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