

EPFMA

Bulletin



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 Due to the long time lag between the call for contribution and the publication, some articles may be outdated.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

Reflecting on the past year, I am proud of the achievements of and contributions made by the Former Members Association and its members. In light of the upcoming 2024 European elections, it is even more important to continue our work as former European parliamentarians to support parliamentary democracy and our common vision of a unified and capable Europe. Accordingly, this December Bulletin fittingly focuses on the 'Advantages of the European Union'. In these difficult geopolitical times, it is essential to focus on how we can make the European Union stronger.

Our Association has remained active throughout this year and has engaged in many different activities and programmes. This was highlighted by our very successful study visit to France, which took place from 28 to 29 September. On the invitation of Quaestor Keller, I had the honour of leading a delegation composed of 27 FMA members from 13 different nationalities. During the 2022 French Presidency of the Council of the EU, only a virtual visit could be organised due to the restrictions related to the pandemic. I want to express my gratitude to the representatives of the French government, Senate and National Assembly, for the enlightening discussions about the most urgent topics such as EU enlargements, health crisis, the rise of impetuous foreign powers, climate change, and the energy crisis. A report on this visit is included in this edition.

In addition, we continued to develop our successful relationship with the European Parliament Liaison Offices. This has also been true in the case of EPLO Spain, which has supported us in organising our Liborum event on 14 September dedicated to the publication of *Tiempo de Paz* Nr. 148 "Europa: Construir el Futuro o Volver al Pasado" by Francisca Sauquillo. President Enrique Barón Crespo

has coordinated this edition. The publication argued that considering the challenges that the EU is currently facing, "the response to these challenges requires the European Union to be strengthened for it to be a useful instrument for the progress of the peoples of Europe." (Enrique Barón Crespo, *Tiempo De Paz* N°148, page 8.) The Deputy Head of EPLO Spain, Juergen Foecking, participated in the event that was opened by FMA Vice-President Monica Baldi. Afterwards followed an introduction by Honorary Secretary Teresa Riera Madurell and a Q&A session moderated by FMA Board Member Paul Rübig.

Other than the FMA Study Visit to France, I also had the honour of leading a delegation of 15 FMA members from 7 different nationalities to a visit to Spain from 18 to 20 October on the occasion of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU. I would like to express my gratitude to the representatives of the Parliament and Government of Spain who engaged in lively discussions on many urgent issues. I would also like to thank FMA Vice-President Baldi for leading the delegation on the second day of our visit to Toledo, where our members met the President of the Cortes de Castilla la Mancha to discuss the cooperation between the EU and regional authorities. A report of this visit is included in this edition of the Bulletin.

I am happy to report on the continued success of the EP to Campus programme under the coordination of Michael Hindley and the FMA Board Members Manuel Porto and Dr. Quisthoudt-Rowohl. For the upcoming year, 8 more EP to Campus programmes are already planned and more applications will follow. I am particularly proud of the international success of the EP to Campus programme and the work we contribute on educating young people on the EU.

I look forward to your continued enthusiasm and support for the EP to Campus programme in the next year, in view of the European elections.

The FMA Annual Events took place this year on 6 and 7 December 2023 in the European Parliament. I thank all MEPs, FMA Members and guests who have participated. On 6 December, the EPRS organised a touching roundtable on the figure of President Gil Robles, Former EP President and Former President of the FMA, who always greatly supported the development of the Association.

The FMA will pursue its activities and meetings next year, starting with the FMA Visit to Belgium, on 8 and 9 April 2024, on the occasion of the Belgium presidency, in combination with the FMA Annual Events on 9 and 10 April 2024. You will soon receive more information on the upcoming FMA events for 2024 and I am looking forward to your participation.

2024 will be characterised by many important elections. This is a year, which has great significance for our Association. European elections represent a major opportunity to continue recruiting more members. I would like to invite current MEPs who will leave the Parliament next year, to join our community of former parliamentarians to continue working for the unity of the European Union and contribute to strengthening parliamentary democracy through our programmes and activities.

Thank you to everyone for contributing to this edition of the Bulletin.

I wish you all Happy Holidays, a Healthy, and Successful 2024.

With my very best regards,

Dr. Klaus Hänsch
FMA President

Key facts

Media Freedom Act: MEPs tighten rules to protect journalists and media outlets

(October session - P9_TA(2023)0336)

In response to growing threats to media freedom and the industry's viability, MEPs adopted their position on a law to strengthen the transparency and independence of EU media. Parliament wants to oblige member states to ensure media plurality and protect media independence from governmental, political, economic or private interference. MEPs want to ban all forms of interference in the editorial decisions of media outlets and prevent external pressure being exerted on journalists, such as forcing them to disclose their sources, accessing encrypted content on their devices, or targeting them with spyware.

Greening the bond markets: MEPs approve new standard to fight greenwashing

(October session - P9_TA(2023)0352)

MEPs adopted a new voluntary standard for the use of a "European Green Bond" label, the first of its kind in the world. The regulation, adopted by 418 votes in favour, 79 against and 72 abstentions, lays down uniform standards for issuers who wish to use the designation 'European green bond' or 'EuGB' for the marketing of their bond. The standards will enable investors to direct their money more confidently towards more sustainable technologies and businesses.

A long-term solution for Ukraine's funding needs

(October session - P9_TA(2023)0363)

Parliament improved and endorsed a proposal for a €50 billion facility to support Ukraine's recovery, reconstruction and modernisation from 2024. The Ukraine Facility is part of the ongoing revision of the EU's long-term budget, for which adjustments are needed, as it has been severely depleted following the multiple crises that have occurred since 2021. MEPs insist that the Facility, along with the entire budgetary revision, should be agreed as soon as possible, as there will be no provisions for assistance to Ukraine from 2024.

EU budget 2024: addressing next year's challenges with mid-term revision boost

(October session - P9_TA(2023)0367)

MEPs enhance the EU budget 2024 to address the fallout from Russia's aggression against Ukraine, support SMEs, youth, and research, and bolster the EU's strategic autonomy. In their draft resolution adopted, members of the Committee on Budgets stress "that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, following on from the COVID-19 pandemic, has brought further substantial economic and social consequences for the people of Europe and worldwide, pushing up inflation, generating energy insecurity, driving up food and energy prices and resulting in a cost of living crisis for millions, especially for the most vulnerable".

Serbia and Kosovo must work to de-escalate the situation in northern Kosovo

(October session - P9_TA(2023)0372)

Parliament calls on Serbia and Kosovo to denounce all forms of violence and acts of provocation, urging them to halt any actions that may further escalate tensions and to actively work towards a peaceful resolution of disputes through EU-facilitated dialogue. The resolution calls on the Commission to draw up and present a transparent and ambitious roadmap for Kosovo's path to integration by the end of 2023.

MEPs condemn Hamas attack on Israel and call for a humanitarian pause

(October session - P9_TA(2023)0373)

Parliament has condemned Hamas' despicable terrorist attacks against Israel while expressing serious concern over the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. They also call for the immediate release of all hostages kidnapped by Hamas and recognise Israel's right to self-defence "as enshrined in and constrained by international law". MEPs call for a "humanitarian pause" in the fighting and stress that attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure, including UN workers, medical workers and journalists, is a serious violation of international law.

Parliament backs plans for better access to, and use of, data

(November session - P9_TA(2023)0385)

The new legislation establishes rules on the sharing of data generated through the use of connected products or related services (e.g. the Internet of Things, industrial machinery) and allows users to access the data they generate. It will contribute to the development of new services, particularly in artificial intelligence, where vast amounts of data are required for algorithm training. It also aims to make after-sales services and repairs of connected devices cheaper. In exceptional circumstances or emergencies, such as floods and wildfires, public sector bodies will be able to access and use data held by the private sector, the new law stipulates.

MEPs clear way for new EU revenue, call on EU countries to swiftly follow suit

(November session - P9_TA(2023)0395)

Parliament has taken an important step towards implementing an amendment to the law governing the EU's revenue, the so-called "Own Resources Decision" (ORD). This amendment, once adopted by Council and ratified by all member states, will introduce three new sources of income: revenue from emissions trading (ETS); the resources generated by the proposed EU carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM); and a temporary statistical own resource based on corporate profits.

Parliament wants tougher enforcement of EU sanctions against Russia

(November session - P9_TA(2023)0397)

Parliament voices its alarm over existing loopholes in the EU's sanctions regime against Russia. While highlighting the unprecedented nature of the EU's restrictive measures, MEPs are concerned about the lack of proper enforcement and attempts to undermine the effort to strategically weaken the Russian economic and industrial base, and hindering the country's ability to wage war. MEPs express deep concern regarding ongoing trade in sanctioned war-critical goods between EU member states and Moscow and over reports that countries like Azerbaijan are whitewashing Russian gas for export to the EU.

Other main dossiers discussed in the plenary sessions were:

03.10.23

Parliament approved **new rules to protect EU workers** from the **health risks** related to asbestos and to **improve the early detection of asbestos**.

The new rules will **decrease the occupational exposure limit of asbestos** and calls for the **use of more modern and accurate technology** to detect the presence of thin asbestos fibres.

03.10.23

MEPs adopt **new trade tool to defend EU from economic blackmail**.

The new trade instrument is primarily meant as a deterrent, but it will allow the EU to **fight economic coercion** and respond with its own countermeasures.

05.10.23

Condemning **Azerbaijan's violent seizure of Nagorno-Karabakh**, MEPs call for sanctions against those responsible and for the EU to review its relations with Baku.

They also call on the EU and member states to immediately **offer all necessary assistance to Armenia** to deal with the influx of refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh and the subsequent humanitarian crisis.

05.10.23

MEPs vote to reaffirm their commitment to **Moldova's future EU membership** and want accession talks with Chişinău to launch before the end of the year.

They underline the **importance of the Chişinău government** continuing the country's reform process, not only in order to reach the political objective of joining the EU, but primarily for the tangible improvement of the living standards of Moldovans.

15.10.23

Parliament adopted its position on **new rules for the collection, treatment and discharge of urban wastewater** to better protect the environment and human health.

They also want EU countries to develop and implement "water savings and reuse plans".

17.10.23

Parliament adopted its position on the establishment of a **"Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)"** designed to boost critical strategic technologies through financial support, the 'Sovereignty Seal' and 'Sovereignty Portal'.

The scheme will support the **deployment of digital, net-zero and biotechnologies**.

18.10.23

Parliament adopted its mandate for negotiations with member states to **revise rules on combating human trafficking**, ahead of a first round of talks in November 2023.

The mandate prepared by the Civil Liberties and Women's Rights committees would expand the scope of the existing directive to include forced marriage, illegal adoption, surrogacy for the purposes of reproductive exploitation and better support for victims.

19.10.23

MEPs have awarded the **2023 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought** to **Jina Mahsa Amini** and the **Woman, Life, Freedom Movement in Iran**.

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought is awarded each year by the European Parliament. It was set up in 1988 to honour individuals and organisations defending human rights and fundamental freedoms.

09.11.23

Parliament adopted its negotiating position on **revamping EU rules for type-approval and market surveillance of motor vehicles (Euro 7)**.

The new regulation will update current limits for exhaust emissions (such as nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and ammonia), and will **introduce new measures to reduce emissions from tyres and brakes**, and **increase battery durability**.

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



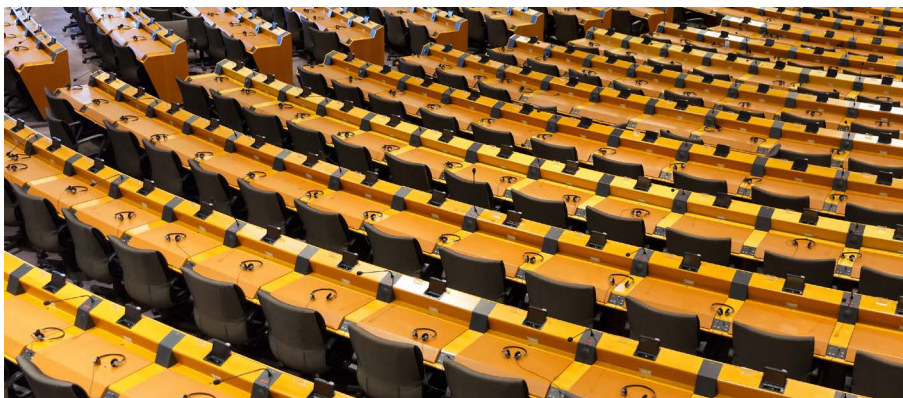
TOWARDS A NEW PARLIAMENT

While all national elections are gripping affairs, only the upcoming European Parliament elections (6-9 June 2024) will truly matter, as it is there that the president of the EU government will look for votes – first for themselves, then for the whole Commission.

Though the Treaties grant the European Council the power to propose and nominate, its candidate will be nothing more than a figurehead without a parliamentary majority. As the EU's 'collective president', the European Council certainly has an important role to play, but the stability of the EU government will depend on how the first votes in the 10th European Parliament go. It is important to remember that, while an MEP's five-year term is set in stone, the composition of the European Council could change with each general election.

This institutional bedrock is the 'foundation' of the EU system of parliamentary democracy, granting the EU government the flexibility to effectively navigate the unpredictable crises that emerged in the current legislative term: from Brexit and the pandemic to the war in Ukraine and the prospect of losing control over information technology and AI. In so doing, the EU made strenuous efforts to innovate and find new ways of intervening which will serve it well even after the present emergencies are over.

The EU made a number of difficult decisions with Parliament's approval, from its economic recovery plans (with their broad and binding policy objectives) and its joint (and necessary) acquisition of arms and vaccines, to the united front it put up after the Brexit secession and the leading role it took in enacting unprecedented legislation on AI,



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driven by fears that this technology might spiral out of control. These policies open up opportunities but also obligations for EU Member States.

While Parliament considered them to be 'necessary', they are full of 'limitations' for sovereign states, something that was almost bound to bolster the defence of national prerogatives.

This 'resistance' has taken on two forms: firstly, as an opposition at the institutional level where, for years, Parliament has voted in vain to do away with the European Council's principle of unanimity, which is seen as a hindrance. Similarly, all attempts to put forward trans-national lists at the European elections to overcome national divisions have also come to nothing. This resistance has also taken on an 'identitarian' form, which could be said to be the result of many factors, beginning with the exceedingly vague wording used in the Treaties ('the Union respects the national identities of Member States, inherent in their fundamental structures, political and constitutional'). Other factors are the lack of clarity in defining the legal boundaries of 'constitutional nationalism' and especially the lack of awareness of 'identity-based nationalism' and its *raison d'être*,

a result of the diversity among European societies, rooted in the past but still a factor today. National governments are also guilty of a cardinal sin: using identity politics as a pretext for stripping their citizens of their rights and freedoms and then of challenging EU values.

It is difficult to quantify the importance of each national election in this 'analysis' of European parliamentary democracy. But a shift of sorts has taken place. Previously, EU elections were seen as a survey ahead of national elections. Today, the opposite is true.

National elections, in other words, are comparatively less important in today's EU, which is an institutional and economic network whose actors are all interdependent. Our future depends on the upcoming EU elections: European parliamentary democracy (which brings together national and European legislatures) will be defined by the complex political process that will result in the election of an EU government in Strasbourg. And the 27 Member States know this all too well.

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WE MUST ACT NOW

Once again, Europe is facing a migration crisis. In the space of a week, more than 10 000 migrants arrived on the shores of Lampedusa, a small island with around 6 000 inhabitants, 145 kilometres off the coast of Tunisia. Within a few hours, its population doubled; this will have consequences for the migrants, the authorities and the residents.

Already back in January this year, we raised the alarm about a new migration crisis brewing in Europe. At the time, social democrats and liberals accused us of fanning the flames of populism. They dismissed our warnings and the concerns of citizens. Instead of looking for solutions to stop the irregular flow of migrants into Europe, they ignored it. While mayors and local councillors from all parties state that they have reached their limits, the left is delaying the overdue reform of asylum and migration laws in Europe. They are sabotaging attempts to work with countries in North Africa to reduce the number of irregular boat arrivals.

The only suggestion that the social democrats and the liberals have made with regard to dealing with irregular migration is to conduct

search and rescue missions. But this is not enough. We need a new comprehensive European maritime mission in the Mediterranean which is actually able to bring migrants back to the North African coast. This is the only way to disrupt the business model of the criminal gangs that are enriching themselves through people smuggling. Furthermore, the reality is that the majority of people making the crossing are economic migrants who have little or no chance of getting international protection in Europe. But the people smugglers know that Europe's returns policy is not working.

The procedures and logistics are so complicated and expensive that once someone has crossed the border it is almost impossible to send them back. Despite this, the left in Europe want to make legislation even more restrictive.

Instead of trying to distribute economic migrants evenly across the EU, they should be returned quickly and systematically. We support the fundamental right to asylum. That being said, the scale and complexity of migration has radically changed.

We need more realism and less idealism when it comes to the issue of migration.

"We need more realism and less idealism when it comes to the issue of migration."

Migration crises are not inevitable. Europe must be united in its support of asylum and migration reform. We are closer to an agreement than ever before. Years from now, people will look back on this moment either as the biggest missed opportunity in a decade or as the first step towards restoring order in migration flows. Without a European approach, we will go from one migration crisis to the next, which will only make the far right stronger. We must act now.

Angelika Winzig

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THE NEW MONETARY ORDER OF BRICS+

On 1 January 2024, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Argentina, Egypt and Ethiopia will join BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). This will have a huge impact on geopolitical relations. The new BRICS+ grouping will represent around 42 % of the world's population. Economically speaking, it will hold more sway than the West's bloc, G7.

BRICS+ will not become a military power like NATO, or impose rules on international trade like the EU. The many tensions between China and India, and Saudi Arabia and Iran, will prevent it from reaching a united political front on many international matters.

What does unite the 11 countries – with Indonesia, Nigeria, Vietnam and Mexico lined up to also join soon – is their refusal to subject to the US's monetary dominance. The almighty dollar reigns supreme in all international transactions. In 2022, up to 88 % of daily foreign exchange transactions were made in US dollars. The currency accounted for more than 60 % of international banks' assets and liabilities, and around 59 % of official foreign exchange reserves.

Americans call the shots in the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, where the US Government unscrupulously uses its blocking minority. All international development banks implicitly comply with US interests. Even the wealthiest of the lot, the European Investment Bank, does not make any moves if Washington disapproves.

The US does not hesitate to use its currency as a powerful political weapon. Using a single \$ automatically gives the US law enforcement authorities the power

to have an international company convicted of infringing US law.

Many major European banks have paid dearly for their direct trade with Cuba or Iran. BRICS+, and an increasing number of other countries, no longer accept the West, led by the US, imposing trade sanctions and blocking assets for political reasons.

Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine under Putin was only applauded by a handful of countries dependent on Moscow. Yet a significant number abstained or did not take part in the vote on the resolutions condemning this well-known violation of the UN Charter. Most importantly, many countries refuse to align with the sanctions imposed by the West on Russia.

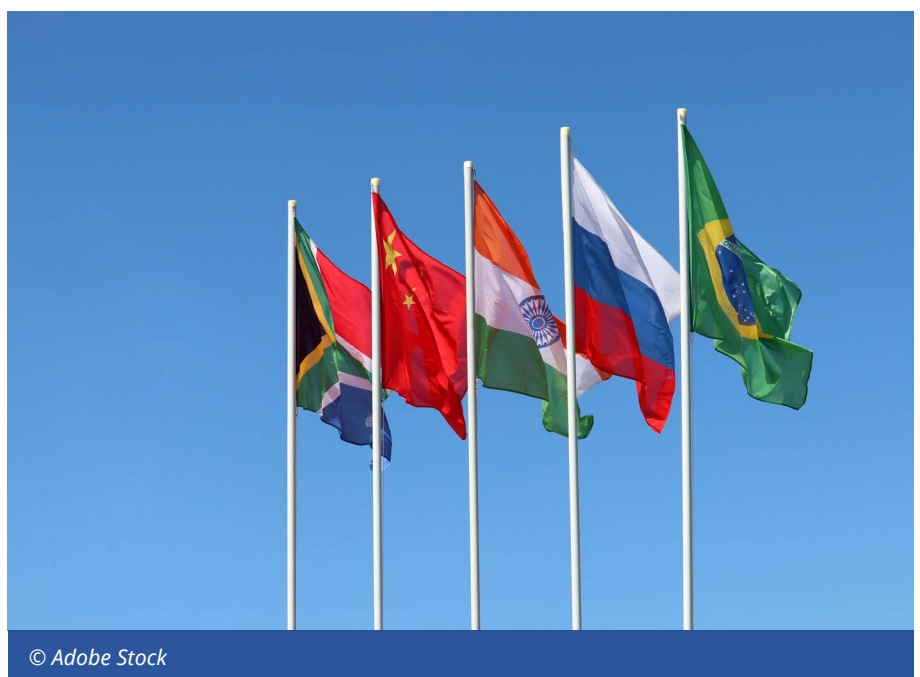
The freezing of assets held by the Russian Central Bank was seen as a brutal warning. How can we cooperate internationally between central banks when one actor feels entitled to claim all rights?

US monetary policy can also bring the dollar up or down, with often disastrous consequences for countries with US debt.

This sometimes toxic dependence on the US dollar encourages more and more countries, particularly the BRICS, to look for solutions outside this excessively dominant currency. Russia accepts Indian rupees for hydrocarbons. Saudi Arabia gets paid for its exports to China in RMB. China has set up a RMB swap network worth over USD 500 billion with 40 central banks of emerging countries. This is the beginning of a long fight against the overly arrogant dollar. The BRICS+ want to establish a new international monetary order. Where will the euro land in all of this?

Robert Goebbels

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TOWN TWINNING WITH UKRAINE AS AN OPTION FOR THE FUTURE

Germany is one of the EU countries with a wealth of experience in establishing town twinning partnerships all over the world. However, in the case of Ukraine, there is potential for further development. Some partnerships were indeed established a long time ago in East Germany, before reunification. In West Germany, a number of partnerships were established only in the 1980s, following the Crimean occupation or in the wake of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Nonetheless, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has resulted in many new connections: there are now around 40 German-Ukrainian twinning partnerships, including Regensburg-Odesa, Munich-Kyiv and Nuremberg-Kharkiv.



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Nuremberg and Leipzig are also twinned with Kraków. On account of its geographical location, the Polish city has become a primary destination for Ukrainian refugees and a logistics hub for aid convoys. In Kraków itself, there is a great need for aid for refugees. In Kharkiv, there is a 'refugee service hotline' and a housing scheme for those who no longer have a roof over their head. An aid convoy called 'Frankenkonvoi' (named after its region of origin) has delivered and distributed clothes, hygiene products, water and food.

Düsseldorf on the Rhine, where I live, has also ventured to Ukraine and established a partnership with the city of Chernivtsi in western Ukraine. The city may be far away from the those that were destroyed, such as Kharkiv or Mariupol, but it is also in need, given that it is a popular destination for people fleeing in search of shelter and supplies. Düsseldorf is therefore helping by providing what is urgently needed. Thanks to local cooperation, it is possible to adapt to real needs and

meet local requirements. A hotline is available to help municipalities with their planning.

It can also assist cities that want to help, but that have not had or that do not have any relations with Ukraine (yet). Many are also wondering how to proceed with their partnerships with Russian cities. Before the war, there were around 80 such twinning partnerships, in addition to around 50 other connections. On the German side, many are hoping that these ties will help de-escalate the crisis. Nevertheless, Düsseldorf ended its partnership with Moscow shortly after the start of the war as a sign of solidarity with Ukraine 'following Russia's unprecedented act of aggression'.

Instead, thanks to the existing good contacts of Düsseldorf's Jewish community, the capital of North Rhine-Westphalia twinned with the Ukrainian city formerly dubbed 'Little Vienna', a suitable match for the Lower Rhine region's 'Little Paris'.

However, Düsseldorf's plans to build a Holocaust Museum are still on hold due to the war.

"Before the war, there were around 80 such twinning partnerships, in addition to around 50 other connections. On the German side, many are hoping that these ties will help de-escalate the crisis."

Town twinning partnerships are not only projects to help in times of difficulty, but also an option for the future for after the war (which Ukraine will win!) in Ukraine's journey to EU accession!

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THE COHESION 2.0 IMPERATIVE

As the joint Franco-German report of last September on reforming and enlarging the EU for the 21st century clearly spells out, the Union is at present facing a critical juncture due to geopolitical shifts, transnational crises and internal complexities. With enlargement high on the political agenda, the report recommends four tiers of European integration.

However this vitally important debate evolves, there is one indisputable imperative, namely that the “center must hold”. Meaning not only the euro area 19, but all 27 Member States. And this is why the kind of Cohesion policy 2.0, due to take shape by December, becomes so vitally important.

The overarching challenge in this regard is for Cohesion 2.0 to maximize the impact of cohesion policy in terms of reducing economic, social and territorial disparities and contributing to a European Growth Model for regions built on a fair digital and green transition in a context of regional recovery and growth. This actually is the task given to a high-level group of specialists under Commission Decision of January 27 last to present their report by year-end. Central to any such exercise are the ever-paramount imperatives of jobs and growth.

These were the very same considerations that were highlighted in an Opinion of the EMPL Committee of the 8th European Parliament back in 2016 (2016/2148(INI) of 17.10.2016) which I had the responsibility of drafting and which was adopted by an overwhelming 47 in favor and only 2 against. The central recommendations we put forward at the time regarding European Structural and Investment Funds were that they must be used to the following ends:

- to create and boost quality jobs and promote quality lifelong learning and vocational (re-) training systems to allow workers to adapt under good conditions to the changing realities of the world of work;
- to stimulate sustainable growth, competitiveness and development and shared prosperity aimed at a socially just, sustainable and inclusive Europe, while focusing on the least developed areas and sectors with structural problems;
- to support the most vulnerable and exposed groups in society, in particular young people and those with the fewest qualifications, as well as promoting greater employment through a circular economy and renewable energies.

Besides, the Opinion drew attention to the fact that one of the most widely utilised funds - the European Social Fund is not entirely an investment tool, but rather an instrument, which supports the implementation of policies of public interest, as well as enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration.

Clearly, Europe and the world have since been subjected to overwhelming transformations. Therefore, the current Spanish Presidency is to be commended for stimulating the debate over Cohesion policy, thus reversing the virtual lack of the issue on the agenda of the preceding Swedish term in office. At the Murcia Informal Ministerial of 29 September, ministers discussed the need for Cohesion policy to learn and reflect the experiences with the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism, allowing for continuous synergies as both a challenge and an opportunity.

Still, the considerations of 2016 outlined above have since, if anything, acquired enhanced relevance and new urgency. Hopefully, they will be given a defining role in the elaboration of the new Cohesion 2.0 framework.

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WHY IRISH UNITY IS A EUROPEAN MATTER: THE CASE FOR EU PLANNING AND PREPARATION



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The question of Irish unity is not just an internal Irish matter; it's a European one too.

As the European Union (EU) continues to evolve, it must consider the potential for future constitutional change in Ireland. This article will explore why Irish unity is a European matter and why the EU should be actively planning and preparing for such an eventuality.

One of the key reasons why Irish unity concerns the EU is the Good Friday Agreement, which brought an end to decades of conflict. The EU played a crucial role in facilitating and supporting the peace process. As part of the Good Friday Agreement, it was recognized that the north of Ireland could potentially reunify with the south of Ireland if most of its citizens chose to do so. This means that Irish unity is already a topic of international agreement and consideration.

"One of the key reasons why Irish unity concerns the EU is the Good Friday Agreement, which brought an end to decades of conflict."

Irish unity would result in a significant shift in the EU's external borders. Currently, the south of Ireland is a full EU member, while the North is under the authority of Britain which has left the EU due to Brexit. If the North of Ireland were to reunify with the south of Ireland, it would automatically re-join the EU. This change in the EU's external border would have implications for customs, trade, and regulatory matters. The EU needs to prepare for this potential shift to ensure a smooth transition.

One of the EU's fundamental goals is to maintain peace and stability in Europe. The Good Friday Agreement and the peace it brought were seen as a significant achievement in this regard. The potential for a successful Irish unity referendum and subsequent reunification presents an opportunity to further solidify peace in the region. The EU should actively support and encourage peaceful, democratic processes that promote unity and stability.

Irish unity would also involve a shift in the demographics with a significant unionist population in a reunited Ireland. The EU has a strong commitment to protecting minority rights and ensuring that all citizens

are treated fairly. Planning for Irish unity should include measures to safeguard the rights and interests of those who identify as British or unionist in a united Ireland.

Irish unity would have economic implications for both the north and the south of the island. The EU should be prepared to assist in managing these changes to ensure that the economic well-being of all citizens is protected. This might involve financial support for infrastructure development, economic diversification, and job creation in a post-reunification context.

The EU has a history of acting as a peacemaker and mediator in conflicts around the world. By actively engaging in the process of planning and preparing for Irish unity, the EU can demonstrate its commitment to resolving disputes peacefully and fostering unity among its member states.

Irish unity is not just an internal Irish matter; it is a European one with significant implications for the EU. The EU should take a proactive role in planning and preparing for future constitutional change in Ireland. This includes addressing issues related to borders, peace, minority rights, and economic stability. By doing so, the EU can uphold its principles of peace, stability, and unity while actively supporting the democratic choices of the people of Ireland.

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MONARCHS IN A DEMOCRATIC EUROPE

As we in UK mark the anniversary of the death of our late Queen and the first year of the reign of Charles III, some question if the age of monarchies is over.

The former King Farouk of Egypt apparently said when he went into exile, that by the year 2000 there will only be 5 monarchies left in the world- "The King of Spades, Diamonds, Clubs and Hearts and Britain". Well, he was wrong. Whilst the monarchy has ended in this period in Greece, a monarchy has been successfully restored in Spain whilst other European monarchies continue to flourish in Scandinavia and BeNeLux. It is certainly not just UK with a monarchic system of government.

I always felt privileged during my time in the European Parliament to sit there with Otto Von Hapsburg. What a great man and great European he was. When I studied European history as a schoolboy and had to learn about all those wretched wars of 17th and 18th century, let alone 20th I never dreamt I would one day walk in the Hungarian Parliament alongside a Hapsburg as I did when we were both members of the Joint Parliamentary Committee helping prepare Hungary for entry to the EU.

But should monarchies be consigned to history and was Farouk just 50 years too early in his prediction?

The death of HM Queen Elizabeth produced in the UK a predictable outburst of loyalty towards the monarchy but at the same time has stirred up some republican sentiment. Firm republicans nevertheless still applauded Queen Elizabeth and the tribute paid by President Macron of France to Queen Elizabeth- particularly when he said "To you she was Your Queen

but to us she was "The Queen" was much appreciated in the UK. I hope Danish colleagues with the wonderful Queen Margaretha were not offended by his comment.

For us, King Charles III will have to earn the respect and affection that HM Queen Elizabeth enjoyed. She truly earned that over 70 years of dedicated service. I doubt though that Charles III will ever have to fear the fate that befell his predecessor Charles I, who was beheaded. We Brits beat France by over a hundred years in executing a king. Others like Edward II had even worse fates.

But will Charles III be loved like his mother and do we need to have a Head of State we love as well as acknowledge?

We Europeans all have different histories and traditions and that is a great quality of Europe. It seems to me a head of state that stands above political differences and unites all people has a role in democracy and as a democrat I am nevertheless quite prepared to sing "God Save the King". Sometimes a monarch is the one institution that can unite a deeply divided nation. That is something a politically elected President is far less likely to achieve. I suspect the USA at the present time could benefit from more symbols of national unity and stability

A monarchy sustaining a sense of identity and continuity is not to be lightly dismissed. We live in an age of rapid change where stability and a sense of belonging and where we fit in the world are not matters to be taken for granted. They might even make us better neighbours.

As to love and affection, as I said earlier, that has to be earned and monarchies just like republics must certainly adapt for changed

times. What was acceptable in the Middle Ages, or even 19th and 20th centuries is not acceptable in the 21st. Fortunately, it seems to me that King Charles and his heir, Prince William, fully appreciate that just as King Wilhelm- Alexander in the Netherlands has shown a male monarch can succeed after the triumvirate of his wonderful 3 female predecessors. The Swedes have led the way in showing us male primogeniture is no longer appropriate and we in Britain have quietly changed our law in that respect.

As for the cost of the monarchy its cheap alongside the cost of elections. I acknowledge more people go to the Louvre in Republican France than visit Buckingham Palace and tourism certainly exists without a monarch but how many Japanese, American or Chinese tourists would come to London if it were not for our trappings of monarchy. They do not come for the weather or the food.

Long Live the King.

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THE OCEAN IS LIFE ITSELF AND WE MUST PROTECT IT

Many excellent speeches were given at the UN General Assembly. Genoa had a central role because this year it hosted the grand finale of the Ocean Race and the signing of the Genova Process, the international protocol to which the city lends its name. Now Genoa will be inextricably linked with the Universal Declaration of Ocean Rights and the protection of these rights forever. First of all, I would like to reiterate what was said by Paul Roughan, representative of the indigenous communities of the Pacific Islands and strategic advisor to the most important international organisations in the sector. Paul reminded us that every significant emotion we experience in our lives is marked by the salt in the tears we shed and the sweat we produce, as if to remind us that 60% of us is water. It follows that it is not just the ocean that exists outside of our bodies that we need to protect but also our internal ocean.

The Prime Minister of Cape Verde explained that, for him, his efforts to save the ocean represent his country's right to life as Cape Verde is completely surrounded by water; his efforts are also a way for him to showcase the country's beauty to everyone. This is a perfect example of how to address a need while linking it to the development of tourism and the economy.

Ministers, ambassadors and opinion makers contributed to an oceanic crescendo as they explained how ocean protection is, as pointed out by Cape Verde's prime minister, not just a vital necessity but an opportunity to build an economy that makes the world a more sustainable place.

The World Bank representative's message was crystal clear and elicited much enthusiasm among those present: The World Bank is ready to invest and to work with the

Universal Declaration of Ocean Rights because it is intertwined with economic development. Some funds have already been earmarked for this and additional funds will follow.

Brazil's Environment Minister announced that within months of the new government coming to power, deforestation in the Amazon forest dropped by 40% and by 2030 there will be no deforestation. She also stated that Brazil sees itself as having two forests, a green forest (the Amazon) and a blue forest, i.e. the ocean that stretches out from Brazil's coastline and surrounds the country's numerous islands. Their blue forest is no less important than their green forest and Brazil's efforts in the field of ocean rights are a priority for the country, as demonstrated by their presence at the UN General Assembly.

The ministers representing Panama and Sweden also spoke with one voice.

In short, it would be impossible to list every single speech as each of them was unique and yet at the same time they were all in harmony with each other. Each speech played its instrument beautifully as part of a global orchestra.

What can I say about the production team and the conductor? The staff representing the UN at the highest level were superb. Huge congratulations goes to the legendary Ocean Race Chairman, Richard Brisius and his collaborator, the equally legendary UN Special



Pietro Piciocchi, Deputy Mayor of Genoa and the Hon. Susy De Martini, Ambassador of Genoa in the World and Senior Consultant for International Relations of the Municipality of Genoa © farodiroma.it

Envoy for the Ocean, Peter Thomson. A mention must also go to Lewis Pugh who uses not only his intellect but also his physical strength to defend the ocean. The indomitable lawyer and swimmer was also on the stage. This is a man who takes on challenges some might consider impossible to spread the word about the defence of our water resources, not only our oceans but our seas, rivers and lakes as well. He has just swum the full length of the Hudson River, completing the challenge in one month, turning the focus of all international media on New York and this UN event. Thank you Lewis and thank you Genoa for understanding the importance of this extraordinary journey that is key to the survival and the wellbeing, including the economic wellbeing, of our planet.

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EU LEARNING BEYOND BORDERS

Many young Brits are mourning the loss of Erasmus+ as a result of Brexit. It is not just the opportunity to study abroad as part of a university education that's off the menu. Erasmus+ also includes the programme formerly known as Youth in Action along with a wide range of professional development opportunities for teachers, community education practitioners, and the life-long learning sector. None of this has yet been salvaged from the rupture with Brussels, despite Boris Johnson's promises that the UK would continue to be part of Erasmus+.

It was a wonderful surprise then, to be invited to join a special ceremony at Loreto High School in Chorlton, Manchester, in July where young people and teachers were given prestigious awards for completing the European Parliament's Ambassador School programme. Whilst EPAS is not a replacement for Erasmus+ it nevertheless offers students and teachers a rich learning experience grounded in European fundamental values and parliamentary democracy. The scheme is an EU-wide programme which has been available in the UK since 2021. EPAS connects its member schools to a network of 1,500 schools, and 23,000 pupils and students throughout Europe. In the UK the scheme is run by the European Parliament Liaison Office (EPLO UK) who organised the Manchester ceremony.

Guests were warmly welcomed by Farhat, Loreto High School's outgoing Head Girl, who had been involved in the EPAS programme since the outset in autumn 2021, setting up an EU lunchtime club for her peers. Pupils gave presentations outlining to guests what they had learnt. Ani said, "I attended some of the lunchtime sessions. The one that was most memorable was about the workings of the European Parliament. I learnt a lot about both the countries who were in it, and about the unique and different collection of countries that work collectively to make decisions."

Club members worked with school cooks to plan European-themed menus, they organised quizzes and Europe Day celebrations, they entered competitions and won places to travel to EU countries such as Cyprus to meet



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other EPAS students. Some pupils had the opportunity to visit the European Parliament in Strasbourg, and others went to the EPLO UK office in London. As part of the scheme, the Head of Modern Foreign Languages at Loreto High School began encouraging pupils to greet each other in various European languages, rewarding those who made the effort. All seemed to gain enormously from their EPAS experiences and some spoke longingly about a time in the future when the UK would rejoin the EU.

Nicola Knowles, Head of Personal Development at Loreto High School, said: "... EPAS has boosted our Personal Development programme by providing both tangible resources and support to inform our pupils about the EU, and offer unique experiences. It has resulted in our pupils being more outward looking in their approach and has also boosted our community of European speakers in school. Our EU lunchtime club is popular and allows pupils to use a range of skills to plan projects." As a former MEP representing the NW of England I was invited to unveil a plaque marking the school's commitment to the EPAS programme. I also gave a talk about my time in the parliament, sharing concrete examples of my work as a member of the CULT Committee where I had helped to shape the current Erasmus+ programme, broadening its reach, increasing funding and reducing bureaucracy. I was asked about my motivation to enter European politics which had developed following my involvement in EU funded Youth In Action projects which

focussed on peace and intercultural dialogue, bringing together young people from Russia and Ukraine, Israel and Palestine as well as those from EU Member States. I believe that our youngest citizens are our most precious asset. However, they are growing up in very troubled times. It is therefore hugely important for them to grasp every opportunity to learn about democracy and fundamental values as embodied by the EU, which was, in turn, shaped by post-war British values. Multi-cultural outward-looking schools such as Loreto High School fulfil a hugely important role in our post-Brexit fractured society, providing young people with the opportunity to stay connected to our nearest neighbours, learning beyond borders and developing their citizenship skills.

The EPAS programme is an exemplar, helping to maintain and develop good relations between neighbours through an accredited education programme, an active student body and inspired teachers. I hope the empowered youth who have benefited from this programme will go on to be champions of quality inclusive democracy, reaching out the hand of friendship to their peers across Europe and the wider world.

Further information is available from the European Parliament's Youth Hub:
youth.europarl.europa.eu

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TWO-SPEED EUROPE

The European Union is an international organisation founded on the principles and values of democracy, principles and values that it constantly strives to promote and serve.

Since its creation, the EU has successfully dealt with a number of different challenges and it continues to do so. This success is due to the fact that, in their relations with one another, Member States apply the principles of equality, justice and solidarity in all areas, allowing them to find common solutions and make joint decisions.

At present, with the European elections just months away, there are some serious problems that need to be tackled, otherwise there will be serious consequences. The European Union has grown into a union of states with conflicting political interests and the reasons for this are manifold.

Firstly, the economic convergence of countries has failed. The difficulty in borrowing, which many EU Member

States faced with the Eurobond, was not addressed collectively.

This created a split between the powerful countries of the north and the economically weak countries of the south as regards borrowing from the financial markets. Thus, while northern Europe is recovering financially, southern Europe has a debt crisis on its hands. Furthermore, while northern countries do not agree with the support schemes, southern countries will not accept austerity measures and will react politically.

Another cause of political division is the way in which the migration issue is being dealt with. The people of the southern Member States, which are the entry points for illegal immigrants into Europe, will not put up much longer with being turned into permanent countries of settlement for these immigrants, a situation that is perpetuating austerity and creating a host of other problems. It would not be an exaggeration to state that the tragedy of Lampedusa is further

proof that the political, economic and social unification of Europe will remain an unfulfilled dream.

EU enlargement will lead to similar divisions, as will the handling of the energy crisis. Many believe that the solution to the above problems lies in the creation of a two-speed Europe, in which big countries will advance quickly while 'small countries' will progress less quickly.

Not only is this approach flawed, it is a ticking time bomb that threatens the very foundations of EU cohesion because it institutionalises inequality between nations. Thus, small countries become the puppets of larger, financially stronger countries. This, however, is not progress but regression and cannot be accepted by mainly small countries where it creates a host of problems.

It also begs the question of what will happen if one or more countries refuse to implement the majority decision because major national interests are at stake and because it affects the daily lives of their citizens. Will these countries be punished by the EU? Is it a sign of solidarity or a punishment? How will the EU deal with the potential withdrawal of one or more countries?

In conclusion, I believe that a 'two-speed' Europe undermines the principles of solidarity and equality and the single market and threatens the cohesion and very existence of the EU. The idea must therefore be abandoned. Otherwise, we will simply be opening up Pandora's box.

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FMA ACTIVITIES



EPFMA
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COOPERATION WITH EUI/HAEU

PARTICIPATION IN EUROPE

With the 2024 European elections approaching, the need to reflect on some of the participation instruments that will enable us to learn more about the EU is increasingly pressing. As the White Paper on governance states, one of the key pillars on which the EU is based is participation, which, together with openness, accountability, effectiveness and coherence, creates an opportunity to involve citizens more systematically 'in the drafting and implementation of policies'. Thus, knowledge about Europe and its institutions is crucial for sharing projects based on common values, through training and through primary and secondary education, university and beyond.

I wrote about this topic in the publication *Participation in Europe*, which I curated together with Michael Hindley, a member of the FMA Management Committee and coordinator of the EP to Campus programme.



The Former Members Association published it in November in cooperation with the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU) and with the support of the Italian National Erasmus+ Agency, Indire.

Learning and cooperation among the EU institutions is the central theme of the publication, which not only provides authoritative writing but also presents the proceedings of the 'Can the EU learn from experience?' conference, held on 16 June in the Sala del Consiglio at the European University Institute in Florence.

The speakers highlighted the need to work together within the framework of educational programmes with a view to carrying out joint projects. The importance of giving young people unique experiences in training and politics was also discussed.

In this historic period, marked by serious conflicts and crises caused, inter alia, by the long pandemic lockdowns, the EU is set to transform once again, partly because of further enlargements, which make us reflect on the opportunity for constant discussions. During the three conference sessions, experts, colleagues, actors in the area, lecturers and students spoke about methodologies used to increase understanding, participation and mobility in EU and non-EU countries with the aim of carrying out projects together. The first fruitful cooperation that was examined, begun eight years ago, between the FMA and the European University Institute (EUI), with particular reference to the educational programme with the HAEU. The second session illustrated the

success of the FMA EP to Campus programme, set up 15 years ago, under which former MEPs are invited to speak at universities and higher education institutions. The third one looked at the success of the Erasmus+ programme, which has always been strongly supported by all the EU institutions, particularly the European Parliament, which stresses its merit in promoting active citizenship, civic education and European identity, including by seeking to increase participation by people with fewer opportunities.

We found the genuine and enthusiastic testimonies of participants at the meeting very encouraging.

There can be no doubt that, to bring EU policies closer to young people and the wider public, and to keep the dialogue between the EU and the public open, we need to work together to deliver common and effective knowledge- and learning-based projects by means of fair, shared and inclusive actions.

The soft power wielded by education, particularly at this difficult and turbulent time, should be carefully examined, bearing in mind that unexpected results can be achieved through this form of cultural diplomacy. It is clear that cultural and educational activities are a means to show the best of a country and make it possible to establish more structured and lasting relationships.

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FMA STUDY VISIT TO PARIS

PUTTING OUR EXPERIENCE TO WORK FOR THE FUTURE

Our association used to visit each EU Member State that took over the rotating presidency of the EU Council of Ministers. Because of the COVID pandemic, but also for political reasons (obligation as regards circumspection for senior officials because of the French presidential election on 10 and 24 April 2022), we had an impressive virtual visit on 28 February and 1 March 2022 during the French Presidency in the first half of 2022.

But was that enough? I really felt that the members of the Management Committee had an unspoken desire to visit France properly, in person. But how?

The idea actually came from the Quaestor of the European Parliament who follows our work, my friend Fabienne Keller, former Mayor of Strasbourg and former Senator, who gave us cause for hope, saying, 'yes, you must visit France in person and I will help you'. As treasurer, my only condition was that, in light of our association's tight budget, it could not cost us any more than our usual operating costs, so we decided to hold an off-site Management Committee meeting.

From then on, we had a whirlwind of exchanges and intellectual, political, historical, social and gastronomic delights, in particular at the Hôtel de la Questure de l'Assemblée nationale, where we were welcomed by Marie Guévenoux, Quaestor and Member of the National Assembly, and where we enjoyed a delicious lunch, hosted by Fabienne Keller.

We were impressed with the support offered by the European Parliament Liaison Office in Paris and its vibrant head, Isabelle Coustet, who allowed us to use one of their rooms for our Management Committee meeting.

We were welcomed into some of the most prestigious locations where, through suffering and success, the French Republic had been built: the National Assembly and the Senate, where we had wonderful conversations with François Rapp, a recently re-elected Senator and Chair of the Senate's Committee for European Affairs, and Pieyre-Alexandre Anglade, a young and bright Member of the National Assembly and Chair of its European Affairs Committee, culminating in a meeting with the excellent Jean-Louis Boulanges, a former MEP, a Member of the National Assembly and Chair of its Foreign Affairs Committee. We also had the opportunity to speak to the most senior European affairs official reporting directly to the Prime Minister, Emmanuel Puaillon, Secretary General for European Affairs.

We then travelled to the source of the European Union, to Bazoches-sur-Guyonne (department of Yvelines) and the home of Jean Monnet (1888-1979), the senior French civil servant who was the architect of the Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950 and the Franco-German reconciliation. There we attended a public event on the topic 'Towards the European elections 2024', moderated by Martí Grau Segú, Head of Service and curator of Jean Monnet House. The participants included: the House of Europe, Paris, the Robert Schuman European Centre, the Jacques Delors Institute, the Université de Versailles Saint Quentin and a final-year class from a school in the Greater Paris area (first-time voters).

We also had a lively discussion with Fabrizia Lapecorella, Deputy Secretary General of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development). In conclusion, I would like to say

THANK YOU to our President, Klaus Hänsch, former MEP and former President of the European Parliament, for the competent, good-natured and patient way in which he led and chaired the large 30-member delegation. Thank you to all our members for having participated so enthusiastically. Thank you to our secretariat, especially Elisabetta Fonck, our Secretary General, and Valerie Raskin, our events assistant, who, with the assistance of Pilar Ramos, organised and accompanied us on this visit to France with such skill, dedication and poise.

Our time in France was wonderful and impressive. How good it is to talk about Europe, about Union and about Peace. Jean Monnet said: 'Nothing is possible without men, but nothing lasts without institutions'. He added: 'There is no future for the people of Europe other than in union'. We returned to our constituencies with these wise words at the forefront of our thoughts and the firm belief that we are putting our experience to work for the future.



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"Nothing is possible without men, but nothing lasts without institutions." - Jean Monnet

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FMA STUDY VISIT TO PARIS

On September 28th-29th, our Former Members Association organized a very successful study visit to Paris which gave us the opportunity to exchange views with high-ranking French officials on various issues of the European agenda and reconfirmed that the experience of former MEPs remains an irreplaceable and valuable contribution to the European project.

The two-day visit started with a guided tour at the magnificent Luxembourg Palace, home of the Senate since 1879, followed by an enlightening discussion with Mr Jean-Francois Rapin, Chair of the Senate's Committee on European Affairs. A lunch has been kindly offered to the delegation by Ms Fabienne Keller, Quaestor at the European Parliament responsible for our Association. We were received at the Hôtel de la Questure de l'Assemblée Nationale thanks to the First Quaestor of the National Assembly Ms Marie Guévenoux. Ms Keller warmly welcomed all of us former MEPs and reiterated the importance of continuing to promote citizens' participation in European democracy with our passion, conviction and enthusiasm.

We had successive meetings with Mr Pieyre-Alexandre Anglade, Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs at the National Assembly, Mr Emmanuel Puisais-Jauvin, Secretary-General for European Affairs in the Council of Ministers. Finally, we met Mr Jean-Luis Bourlanges, who is well known by many of us since he served as a member of the European Parliament for almost 20 years (1989-2007) and is currently leading the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly.

During our meetings, we had in depth discussions on critical issues that are on the European agenda such as geopolitical tensions, immigration, enlargement, institutional reforms,



The FMA Delegation in Paris at Hôtel de la Questure with Quaestor of the European Parliament responsible for the FMA Fabienne Keller

climate change, the competitiveness of our economy, and the implications these have for the EU. We shared the view that the completion of the pending legislative procedures ahead of the next EP elections should be a priority and reiterated our mutual commitment for further enhancing the democratic legitimacy of the decision-making process through, among others, a stronger involvement of European and national parliamentarians. "I have never experienced the national mandate in competition with that of the European Parliament", Mr Bourlanges said.

During the evening of the 28th, we were warmly welcomed at the Jean Monnet House, located in a splendid rural area in the region of Yvelines where Jean Monnet, one of the founders of Europe, lived and worked from 1945 until his death in 1979. It was evidently exiting and touching to have the chance to participate in a guided tour of this house, which has been the scene of decades of efforts to unite Europeans that led to the conception of the idea to establish the European Coal and Steel Community. During our working dinner, we welcomed as a guest speaker Ms Fabrizia Lapecorella, Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD, who presented us with a detailed and enlightening analysis of recent developments on tax policy and tax justice, both on a global and EU level.

There was no better way to conclude this two days visit than the public event entitled "Towards the 2024 European elections" which took place in the conference room of the Jean Monnet House. The event was co-organized by the Jean Monnet House and our association. On this occasion, students from the University of Versailles-Saint Quentin, of a Parisian high school (first-time voters), and former MEPS exchanged views on the value of the European integration project and certainly on the value of participation in this process by taking part (among other things) in the elections.

Which are the main challenges Europe is facing to today? What more needs to be done in order to better defend our principles and values? Which institutional reforms must be considered to better prepare for a future enlargement? These are only some of the issues we touched upon during this very interesting and interactive debate out of which we, former MEPs, came out more optimistic and much more confident towards the younger generations of Europeans.

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TALKING ABOUT EUROPEAN ELECTIONS AT THE JEAN MONNET HOUSE

On September 27-29, the Former Members Association had a study visit to France. The program included a vast array of activities: a meeting of the FMA Council, numerous contacts in the French Senate and National Assembly and... a trip to the Jean Monnet House. It was not the first time that the Jean Monnet House hosted and co-organized an event with the FMA: in February 2022, the study visit that had been planned then was reconverted into online format. Thanks to the invaluable help of DGLINC services with making remote interpretation possible, we had the opportunity to organize a debate between young people from universities, pro-European organisations, and former members of the European Parliament. It was now time to repeat the experience, but in person and discussing the topic of the impending 2024 elections!

That lively discussion took place on the morning of September 29. But before that, other activities awaited the FMA at the Jean Monnet House. In the evening of September 28, the FMA had dinner onsite with a special guest, introduced by president Klaus Hänsch: Mrs Fabrizia Lapecorella, OECD deputy secretary general.

Mrs Lapecorella's presence had a special symbolism given the venue: Jean Monnet, inspirer of the first European Community, was also a driving force in the origins of OECD, and his close collaborator Robert Marjorlin became its first Secretary General. Monnet inspired a great deal of the European multilateral scene in the aftermath of WWII. The topic of Mrs. Lapecorella's talk was a very fitting one from the point of view of the future progress of multilateralism: "Advancing improvements in International Taxation: Recent Milestones and Future Directions". The address was followed by questions and discussion with former members.

The morning of September 29 started with a presentation on the main features of the Jean Monnet House as a European Memory site, and on the main services it provides today as an historic house open to the public, seat of the Jean Monnet Academy (trainings for EP civil servants), venue for scholarly and network events, and destination for school groups. Former members took part in a guided tour in which they could get acquainted with the museum displays.

In the mid-morning the Jean Monnet House was a house full of people, especially students, scholars, and representatives from pro-European organisations, to debate with former members on the upcoming elections, under the title "Cap vers les élections européennes de 2024". Among the participants, groups, and institutions were the Maison de l'Europe de Paris, Queen Mary University in Paris and the Université de Versailles-Saint Quentin. Debora Righetti, in charge of events coordination at the Jean Monnet House, gave an overview of how the Directorate-General for Communication has prepared the information campaign for the 2024 election - the tenth of its kind! Both the former members earlier in the day, and the public on their way in, had had the opportunity to see the panels of the exhibition the Jean Monnet House has produced to inform viewers about the functioning of the European Parliament and its central role in European governance on the eve of the elections.

Many of the questions revolved around tackling fake news, protecting democratic standards, or even whether the EU today is already at a level of unity anticipated by Jean Monnet. When time was up, so many questions were still in the air. Luckily, former members and young people continued their discussion over a very dynamic working lunch!



The FMA Delegation, led by FMA President Klaus Hänsch, together with participants to the hybrid conference at the Jean Monnet House in Bazoches-sur-Guyonne.

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All pictures of the FMA Study Visit to Paris can be found on the FMA Flickr Account:
<https://bit.ly/FMAVisitParis23>



FORMER MEMBERS NETWORK

MEETING OF THE FP-AP BUREAU IN LUGANO

From 21 to 23 September, the Bureau of the European Association of former Parliamentarians of the member states of the Council of Europe (FP-AP), on which our association has two representatives, met in the Municipal Council Chamber of the Palazzo Civico in Lugano (Switzerland). At the meeting, chaired by Walter Schwimmer, former Secretary-General of the Council of Europe (1999-2004) and current President of the FP-AP, after the mandatory formalities, discussions focused on the amendments tabled on the document: 'Influences of climate change on migration and social policy: role of the parliamentary diplomacy' (Lugano Declaration), which had been drafted in response to the report prepared by Valerio Calzolaio, former member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies. The most controversial topic was the proposal to support the establishment of a Parliamentary Assembly at the United Nations. After an intense and interesting debate it was agreed not to address this issue in the document and to organise a specific colloquium to discuss it. Following this agreement, the Lugano Declaration was adopted unanimously.

It was also agreed that the spring 2024 meeting, commemorating the 75th anniversary of the birth of the Council of Europe, would be held in Graz (Austria), which is also the home of the Council of Europe's Centre for Modern Languages, while the autumn meeting would take place in Brittany.

After a short break, the Extraordinary General Assembly met to approve the reform of the Association's Statutes and Rules of Procedure, on which work had been under way for some time. The Lugano Declaration was also ratified

and it was agreed that it would be translated into all the official languages of the Council of Europe for distribution to all Member States. The first day's work concluded with an interesting presentation by Jean Guinard, former Chair of the host association, entitled 'Direct democracy and federalism in Switzerland', which focused mainly on the particular political organisation and functioning of Swiss institutions. This was followed by a dinner attended by all the participants, during which the exchange of views on topical European political issues continued. The following morning, after a welcome address from the Mayor of Lugano in which he spoke about important aspects concerning the city, a colloquium on the 'Consequences of climate change on migration policies' was held, during which Valerio Calzolaio presented his report. All the delegations present at the assembly then took the floor, expressing very positive views on the content of the document.

Highlights of the second day's work included the highly edifying lecture by Ambassador Walter Fust, former Director-General for Development Cooperation of the Swiss Confederation and former Special Advisor to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The ensuing debate addressed the following issues of major geopolitical interest for Europe: the war in Ukraine, the role of Russia, Turkey, China, and the USA on the international stage; the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as migration, EU enlargement and many other issues of direct concern to Europe.

When all work was done, a closing dinner was held at the Villa Ciani, hosted by the Municipal Council of Lugano.

The Villa Ciani is an elegant 17th century palace located in the Parco Civico of Lugano, which took in many Italian exiles during the Risorgimento. In 1912 the Municipality of Lugano bought it from the Ciani family heirs to transform it into a public space of great beauty. Since 1915 it has housed the Historical Museum and the Civic Museum of Fine Arts. The Villa Ciani is now part of the city's unique architectural heritage and the collection of buildings that the Lugano Congress Centre owns for its exhibitions.

The following morning our hosts treated us to an excursion to San Salvatore, a mountain which can be reached by funicular railway, and offers unparalleled views of Lake Lugano (Ceresio) and the neighbouring perpetually snow-capped mountains and their glaciers. We concluded our stay with a boat trip on Lake Lugano, which stretches between the canton of Ticino in Switzerland and the provinces of Varese and Como in Italy.

We would like to thank our colleagues from the Swiss delegation for organising this fascinating meeting and for their hospitality.

Teresa Riera Madurell
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The Lugano Declaration, that was adopted on 22 September 2023, can be found on the following page.

LUGANO DECLARATION

Adopted unanimously by the delegates representing the members of the European Association of Former Members of Parliament of the Member States of the Council of Europe on 22 September 2023.

1. We former parliamentarians underline the relevance of the contribution of parliamentary diplomacy in the ongoing Global and European climate negotiations to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change, to complement and support the efforts of national governments and international organizations. Beyond classic diplomacy, the Parliamentary Diplomacy denotes the means through which parliamentarians and parliaments of different levels conduct dialogues and serve as intermediaries to contribute to improving foreign policy and relations, solving key international important and complicated issues and topics, such as climate change migration or war and peace, and encouraging one another to cultivate enhanced control of governments and democratic legitimacy of intergovernmental bodies.

2. Climate change has always had an influence on migratory phenomena of species, ecosystems and biological communities of departure, transit (or transits) and provisional (more or less) destination and the social evolution of the human species; in turn, our species has influenced the climate and migrated with an ever greater degree of freedom. That is why parliamentary delegation trips should also always take into account the aspect of climate.

3. Climate change and migration are closely linked; global anthropogenic climatic changes (affecting all countries) have multiple effects on the social and cultural biodiversity of the planet (in particular for the effects on water and on the various water cycles), they determine new forced migratory flows, they cause new inequalities (the impact is no longer strong where the human contribution to climate change has been most relevant), and they affect every social policy, and therefore also constitute an important field of parliamentary diplomacy.

4. Outcomes of climate-related migration are highly variable, with socioeconomic factors and household resources affecting migration success; displacement or low-agency migration is associated with poor health, well-being and socioeconomic outcomes for migrants and yields fewer benefits to sending or receiving communities; involuntary migration occurs when adaptation alternatives are exhausted or not viable and reflects non-climatic factors that constrain adaptive capacity and create high levels of exposure and vulnerability.

5. In addition of the high number of Refugees registered in the 1951 Convention for political reasons there are now more and more climate displaced people (refugees for natural-driven reasons) and fleeing migrants (there is no internationally legally recognized definition) who leave their own country to find a new, better life in another, as well as war refugees.

All of them in need for adequate assistance and a chance to start afresh. We acknowledge that after Second World War the term Refugee is reserved to people enshrined in the Geneva Convention and in the UN Resolution 302 (IV) of 1949 only; according to the UNHCR Global Trend 2023 there are in the 2022 world 35,3 million Refugees, under UNHCR's mandate or UNRWA's (UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East); others are referred to as asylum-seekers (5,4 million) or as displaced people, either internal (registered and supported by UN institutions) or internationally (partially safeguarded people by 2018 Global Compacts or other conventions) to achieve adequate burden and responsibility sharing on refugee issues among all UN members.

6. Another group can be described using the adjective connected to global human induced climate changes; environmental displaced people and climate international refugees are those who suffer from the consequences of global warming with extreme unexpected events or slower processes (more frequent and intense extreme weather events, sea level rise, water stress) without being responsible for it through emissions; they are people currently lacking any kind of international protection; in particular, the sea level rise will also affect the coasts of many European countries, perhaps forcing the occurrence of IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) and internal migration and relocation plans. The institutional international instruments to manage migration flows must be found immediately, also by implementing the two Global Compacts for Migration and on Refugees.

7. Parliamentary Diplomacy is certainly not an alternative to classical diplomacy, but constitutes a good complement to foreign policy and creates the necessary parliamentary control mechanism for supranational structures and organizations, such as the European Union, the African Union, the North Atlantic Pact, the Council of Europe or the OSCE.

8. By also acknowledging that parliamentarians constitute several advantages because they have their finger on the pulse of the population, are freer and more independent, and represent a wider political spectrum, and Parliamentary Diplomacy (PD) actors include national and international parliaments, their committees, delegations, friendship groups, inter-parliamentary dialogues and individual parliamentarians, the PD can improve the following:

I. Promote the understanding of contemporary migratory phenomena: no European country is ever just a destination for immigration, all countries were and are also countries of emigration in the past and in the present, from exchanges and partnerships there can be collective and individual benefits and from immigration there can be help to limit and prevent the ongoing demographic decline.

II. Ask for a greater commitment to practically and promptly achieve the objectives of the UN 2030 Agenda: such as peace, resilience, health,

gender equality, youth and the relevance of international migration to the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, with a general emphasis on greater coherence of action and the development of joint evaluation approaches (e.g. between the EU and Africa).

III. Underline the links between biodiversity, climate change and the fight against desertification, taking into account the balance of ecosystems, for example with assisted reintroduction, translocation and migration of species: assisted migration and evolution might reduce extirpation and extinction.

IV. Facilitate and accelerate the intergovernmental climate negotiation within the UN, suggesting that it also address more and better the issue of human "climate" migration as mentioned in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

V. Promote national, bilateral, European and multilateral policies for the implementation of the two agreements approved by the UN at the end of 2018, Global Compacts, for "safe, orderly and regular migration", interest of both non-European immigrants and European citizens.

VI. Promote awareness that Europe can certainly benefit from non-European migrants to secure needed jobs - provided they are enabled and promote mutual respect for the cultures, traditions and customs of the countries of origin and destination in a balanced manner taking into account the universal human rights; for only if we succeed in achieving mutual cohesion in this way will the benefits of such increased immigration be secured.

VII. Mitigate the negative impact of climate change on social inequalities promoting policies designed to prevent the need for displacement; policies that regulate and manage the process of displacement; and policies that address the health-care needs of migrants

VIII. Demands that official bodies be supported with sufficient financial funding to provide migrants with appropriate language training before departure and after arrival, as well as teaching about social norms and customs in the country of destination, including the elimination of nationalist, racist as well as misogynist and xenophobic content in school textbooks.

IX. Mitigate the impact of population movements within each single country and between the countries of the European Union, in particular those forced by the main effects of global anthropogenic climate change (rising seas, water change and growth of the phenomena of scarcity of water, increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events).

9. Governments and parliaments must strengthen social cohesion with due regard to distributive justice. Policies in order to strengthen citizens' confidence in democracy have to be implemented.

VISIT UNDER THE EU PRESIDENCY

EP FORMER MEMBERS ASSOCIATION VISITS MADRID

On 19 October just gone, a group of former members of the European Parliament headed by the association's President, Klaus Hänsch, visited Madrid on the occasion of Spain's stint at the helm of the rotating EU Presidency, and I had the pleasure of accompanying them throughout the morning. Madrid's climate is dry and it had not rained for quite some time but that day our guests were welcomed with a downpour. For the first time in 70 years, Madrid recorded 100 litres of water per square metre. The long-awaited rain may have put a dampener on the outdoor visit but not on the warm and joyous atmosphere of the gathering. We began by visiting the Palace of the Senate or Upper House, where we were welcomed by its President, Pedro Rollán, who presented the mission and tasks assigned to the Senate under the Spanish Constitution and answered a number of questions put to him by our guests.

Palace of the Senate facade

The Palace of the Senate dates back to the 16th century and originally functioned as the School and Convent of the Incarnation, founded in 1581.

It was one of the most interesting cultural institutions in Madrid in the 16th and 17th centuries and since the 1979 elections the building has been occupied by the Senate which, together with the Congress of Deputies, makes up the Cortes Generales (the Spanish Parliament), as established under Article 69 of the current Constitution.

The piece of architecture that stood out the most during the tour was the magnificent neo-Gothic library with its truly unique style.

Designed during 1882 and 1883 by the architect Emilio Rodríguez, what makes it distinctive is that the shelves were built entirely out of iron in order to prevent fire.

The second building we visited on our morning tour in Madrid was



Casa de la Villa building in Madrid © Adobe Stock

the Casa de la Villa where we were welcomed by the Councillor and President of the Madrid City Council Plenary, Mr Borja Fanjul, who spoke to us and accompanied us on our tour.

Casa de la Villa building

Built in 1644 during the reign of Philip IV, the Casa de la Villa was the seat of the Madrid City Council from its inauguration in 1693 until 2007 when it moved to Cibeles Palace. The building currently houses the Secretariat General of the Madrid City Council Plenary and it is used solely for official events and institutional ceremonies. The building also houses a gallery of portraits of Madrid's mayors, as well as numerous works of art, including the magnificent paintings created by Antonio Palomino on the roof of the Plenary Hall between 1692 and 1696, which we were privileged enough to see. We also had the chance to visit and admire the spectacular tapestry gallery.

In short, it was a truly memorable visit that gave us the opportunity to meet old colleagues and to enjoy Madrid, its history and sights.

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Palace of the Senate facade in Madrid © Adobe Stock

EUROPEAN DELEGATION VISIT TO MADRID



The FMA Delegation in a meeting with President of the Spanish Senate Pedro Rollán Ojeda on 19 October 2023 in Madrid.

On 18, 19 and 20 October, I had the honour of joining a delegation of members of the European Parliament Former Members' Association on a trip to Madrid, led by its President, Klaus Hänsch, on the occasion of the Spanish Presidency of the EU. A broad, diverse cross-section enthusiastically took part, undeterred by the intense wind and rain in Madrid. I'd like to thank the organisers of the event; despite the weather and a packed itinerary, I think everything went very smoothly.

First, we enjoyed a guided tour of the historical and cultural centre of Madrid, before visiting the Prado Museum, where we saw important pieces by Spanish painters including Velázquez and Goya. We began the following day at the Senate, the upper house that represents the different regions of Spain, where we were welcomed by its President,

Pedro Rollán. Afterwards we went to the Plaza de la Villa/Madrid City Council and then to Spain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We met some of the ministry's officials and its Secretary-General for the European Union, María Dolores Lledó, who broke down the Spanish Presidency's main objectives. Those objectives include:

- making use of reindustrialisation and research, development and innovation to strengthen the European economy and Europe's autonomy;
- the green transition, making progress with mitigating the negative effects of climate change and working on the energy/electricity market to lower prices, while pushing forward decarbonisation.



The FMA Delegation with the Secretary General for the EU at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation María Lledó Laredo.

primarily focusing on children are also priorities. Another of the EU's priorities is making progress with defining a common EU strategy for defence, security and a common legal area. Continued support for Ukraine and forging ahead with the country's accession to the EU is another.

After the meeting, we moved on to the Congress of Deputies, where we were welcomed by its President, Francina Armengol, who kindly answered all the questions raised about Spain's domestic political landscape.

The trip ended in the historic and beautiful town of Toledo, where, after a cultural guided tour, we were welcomed to the Cortes of Castilla-La Mancha by its President. As a member of the European Parliament Former Members' Association, I found the trip to be extremely positive and interesting, not only so we could meet and share our opinions about the EU agenda for the Spanish Presidency, but also because of the dramatic times in Europe. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a war that not only moves us as people, but primarily affects us economically, and we should remain steadfast in our support for the Ukrainian people. There is also the horrific attack by the terrorist group Hamas in Israel and its consequences, Israel's defence – which is legitimate but is costing civilian lives in Gaza (inhumane, in my opinion) – where the European Union should act by strengthening channels for dialogue, ceasefire and increasing humanitarian corridors, as well as pushing forward compliance with UN resolutions.

My experience as an MEP and my colleagues' input in debates gave me further insight into the enormous challenges we face in the EU, and for that I am very grateful.

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A FASCINATING MISSION TO SPAIN AT A TIME OF POLITICAL TURBULENCE IN EUROPE AND THE WORLD

Thanks to the European Parliament Former Members Association's excellent reputation, our President, Klaus Hänsch, was invited to meet high-level political authorities during the Spanish Presidency.

So, bright and early on Thursday 19 October, we started with a meeting at the Senate, just around the corner from the royal palace. The centuries-old building was home to a convent in the 15th and 16th centuries and was transformed into the Palace of the Senate in 1837, when Spain's bicameral system was created.

The Senate President, Pedro Rollán Ojeda (PP), gave us a warm welcome and summed up the political context in Spain and the negotiations under way to form a government after the last general election. The President thoroughly and expertly answered the many questions. Our colleagues Íñigo Méndez de Vigo and José Ignacio Salafranca were also at the meeting, and we were delighted to see them again. At the very heart of the Senate, we were lucky enough to see one of the largest libraries in Spain. It contains 125 000 historic works, including the 1931 Constitution and the first edition of Encyclopaedia, or a Systematic Dictionary of the Sciences, Arts, and Crafts.

We made our way through the pouring rain to the historic buildings of Madrid City Council, where we were met by the President of the Municipal Assembly since June 2023, Borja Fanjul Fernández-Pita (PP).

After some questions and answers about the council's responsibilities for this six-million-resident city, we visited the building's lavish rooms to discover some of Madrid's treasures: paintings, 15th and 16th-century

tapestries, parchments and precious items that belong to the Spanish monarchy. We had a change of scene and architecture for the second half of the day. María Lledó Laredo, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation's Secretary-General for the European Union, welcomed us to the ultra-modern Plaza del Marqués de Salamanca. She led a lively, open discussion to talk with us, in a number of languages, about the Spanish Presidency's priorities for security and common EU strategies. Thanks to the fantastic European umbrellas we were given by the Secretary-General, we stayed dry despite the downpour on our way to the beautiful Palace of the Cortes, home to Spain's Congress of Deputies, to meet with its new President (since August 2023), Francina Armengol (PSOE).

In the historic chamber, the setting for the notorious failed coup d'état by Franco supporters on 23 February



The FMA Delegation with the President of the Plenary of the City Council of Madrid D. Borja Fanjul on 19 October in Madrid.

1981, Francina Armengol was kind enough to have a conversation with us about the conditions for forming a coalition or, if no agreement can be reached, holding a new election. Before meeting our former colleague Enrique Barón Crespo (PSOE), Luis Planas Puchades (PSOE) and Cristina Gallach Figueras for an informal dinner, we visited the Reina Sofía Museum to see some of Picasso's work, including Guernica, and pieces by Dalí, Picabia, Gris, Miró, etc.

On Friday 20 October, the last day of our mission, our colleague and Vice-President, Monica Baldi, led our meeting at the Cortes of Castilla-La Mancha in Toledo. After a fascinating tour of the remarkable city of Toledo, where Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities have lived together for centuries, we were met by Pablo Bellido (PSOE), President of the Cortes of Castilla-La Mancha and by the Vice-President of the Government, José Manuel Caballero Serrano. Our meeting came to an end in the nicest possible way: with a chance to taste some food and wine from this beautiful region!

I'd like to conclude by warmly thanking Elisabetta and Pilar for their work preparing the mission, which was organised fantastically.

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The FMA Delegation with the President of the Congress of Deputies Francina Armengol in Madrid on 19 October 2023.

DIARY OF A VISIT TO MADRID

This visit by members of the FMA was challenging. The heavens opened. The rain really poured-really really poured for a whole day. Above all, it was going to be challenging that the week before Hamas had invaded Israel, and we were addressing the repercussions.

Our first meetings were with the President of the Spanish Senate, Mr Pedro Rollán Ojeda and his colleagues and the President of Congress of Deputies, Francina Armengol.

We addressed what happened next in Gaza. A number of members including myself argued for more humanitarian aid (the controversy over need for a ceasefire was only beginning to emerge). The chair of the Senate stated that there were different views in Spain among politicians. I said that was probably true amongst most politicians in most countries in Europe.

There was however a consensus among those on the visit that the attack on Israel was to be condemned and Israel's right to defend itself agreed. But also an acceptance of assistance for humanitarian reasons and no change in the view that the need for a dual state solution and for end of the occupied territories



Luis Planas Puchades, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food with FMA President Klaus Hänsch.



The FMA Delegation with President Pablo Bellido and Vice-President of the Cortes de Castilla la Mancha José Manuel Caballero Serrano in Toledo on 20 October 2023.

Later, after a discussion with members of the Madrid Council we had a meeting with María Dolores Lledó Laredo. She is the Secretary General for the European Union at the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She handles the Spanish role in the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Her English is better than most English which comes from being a singer and a strong enthusiast for learning languages. She talked mainly about progress made on EU issues e.g. trade negotiation, climate change etc. We did not talk much about Israel or Hamas.

However, I was able to talk to her after the meeting. I asked what problems she had found still with UK-EU relations. She said that relations had been so much better over the last year and the British were being positive and helpful.

We referred to the recent European Political Community meeting hosted by the Spanish Government in Granada, which included not just the UK but 17 non EU European States. Its more informal procedure had led to movements forward on some issues stuck in EU procedures. The UK will be chairing the next meeting.

We had dinner with the Spanish Minister of Agriculture, Mr Luis Planas Puchades (I asked about high food prices).

The following day our final visit was to Toledo. This in a sense brings me back to Israel/Hamas.

Toledo is the seat of government and parliament of the autonomous community of Castilla-La Mancha, the home of the man of La Mancha, Don Quixote. But it is known as the City of the Three Cultures because of the influences of Christians, Muslims and Jews. There were periods when Jews, Christians and Muslims lived in harmony in Toledo. Indeed, we saw the Cathedral of Saint Mary of Toledo, the synagogue of El Tránsito and the Mosque of las Tornerías.

We had an informal meeting with the President of the "Cortes de Castilla-La-Mancha" Mr Pablo Bellido and his colleagues also tasting the wonderful local wine. Then back to Madrid, the airport, London Gatwick and then discovering that England had the same heavy rain as Spain and there was no train to get me home that night.

Robert Moreland

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All pictures of the FMA Visit to Spain can be found on the FMA Flickr Account:
<https://bit.ly/FMAVisitSpain23>



UPCOMING EVENTS



ACTIVITIES

8-9
APRIL 2024

FMA Visit to Belgium

On the occasion of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU, the FMA is organising from 8 to 9 April 2024 a visit to Belgium (in combination with the FMA Annual Events). More information about the visit and the opening of registrations was communicated via mail, the FMA social media channels and the FMA website.

9
APRIL 2024

Annual Memorial Service, Cocktail Reception and Annual Dinner

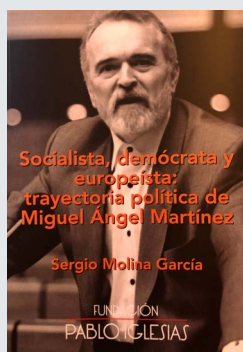
From 17.45 to 18.15, current and former MEPs will commemorate their colleagues who passed away in 2023-2024 in the European Parliament (Brussels). A Dinner Debate takes place from 19.30 to 21.30, preceded by a Cocktail Reception from 18.30 to 19.30.

10
APRIL 2024

Annual General Assembly and Annual Lunch

From 10.00 to 13.00 the Annual General Assembly will take place in the European Parliament, Brussels. The Assembly will be followed by the Annual Lunch. More information will be communicated at a later stage via email, the FMA website and social media accounts.

FMA MEMBERS' PUBLICATIONS



SOCIALISTA, DEMÓCRATA Y EUROPEÍSTA: LA TRAYECTORIA POLÍTICA DE MIGUEL ÁNGEL MARTÍNEZ

Throughout the 20th century, the foundations of the world changed many times. The political career of Miguel Angel Martinez (1940) is a luminous window into the most recent history of the West, such as the formation of socialist organisations in Europe in the midst of the Cold War, the struggle for democracy in Spain, the expansion of socialism in Latin America and Africa, and the various enlargements of the European Union. He is a unique and key figure for understanding socialism as an ideological basis in the sixties and seventies, the Spanish democratisation of the seventies and eighties and the Europeanism that spread within the Community framework from the nineties to the first decade of the twenty-first century. This biography, which has been compiled using primary and unpublished documentary sources, carries out a chronological study of his political experiences, linking them to the historical context of each moment.



SAFARI: VIAGGIO NELLA VITA DI ITALIANI IN AFRICA BY CRISTIANA MUSCARDINI

Safari: books and films are our life in the eyes of others. And we often do not realise it. Safari in Swahili means journey, these pages are a journey into the lives of Italian men and women for whom Africa became home. The life of each of us is a journey and when we meet and walk a little together, a little of the other remains in each of us. Safari: the journey, the life.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Julie Ward has been made an Honorary Fellow of Durham University's Wolfson Research Institute for Health and Wellbeing.

Sir Graham Watson was recently appointed as Professor at the Toronto Global School.

FMA AT WORK

MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Klaus
HÄNSCH



Monica BALDI



Jean-Pierre
AUDY



Teresa RIERA
MADURELL



Michael
HINDLEY



Miguel Angel
MARTÍNEZ
MARTÍNEZ



Edward
McMILLAN-
SCOTT



Manuel PORTO



Godelieve
QUISTHOUDT-
ROWOHL



Paul RÜBIG

FMA BUREAU

President: **Klaus HÄNSCH**

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.

IN MEMORIAM



Mathilde M. van den BRINK

⚔ 22 August 2023
S&D, Netherlands (1989-1994)

She served as a Dutch Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Ms van den Brink represented *Partij van de Arbeid*.



Max SIMEONI

⚔ 9 September 2023
RBW, France (1989-1994)

He served as a French Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Simeoni represented *Verts "Europe des peuples - Per un avvenire corsu - Avenir corse*.



Jean-Paul GAUZÈS

⚔ 13 September 2023
EPP, France (1989-1994)

He served as a French Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Gauzès represented *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire*.



Gianni VATTIMO

⚔ 19 September 2023
PES/ALDE, Italy (1999-2004, 2009-2014)

He served as an Italian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Vattimo represented *Italia dei Valori - Lista Di Pietro*.



Per GAHRTON

⚔ 19 September 2023
Greens/EFA, Sweden (1995-2004)

He served as a Swedish Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Gahrton represented *The Green Party*.

IN MEMORIAM

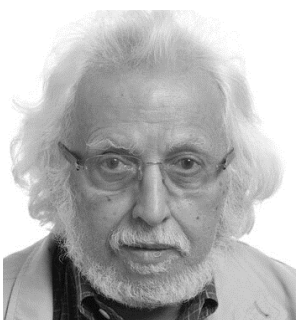


Giorgio NAPOLITANO

✝ 22 September 2023

GUE/NGL-PES, Italy (1989-1992, 1999-2004)

He served as an Italian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Napolitano represented *Democratici di Sinistra*.



Giorgos GRAMMATIKAKIS

✝ 25 October 20223

S&D, Greece (2014-2019)

He served as a Greek Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Grammatikakis represented *The River*.



Philippe-Armand MARTIN

✝ 5 November 2023

EN/UFE, France (1994-1999)

He served as a French Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Martin represented *Rassemblement pour la République*.



Marcel SCHLECHTER

✝ 10 November 2023

SOC/PES, Luxembourg (1990-1999)

He served as a Luxembourgish Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Schlechter represented *Parti ouvrier socialiste luxembourgeois*.



Michèle RIVASI

✝ 29 November 2023

Greens/EFA, France (2009-2023)

She served as a French Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Ms Rivasi represented *Europe Écologie*.

ADVANTAGES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



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THE ADDED VALUE OF THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY FOR THE EU

Imagine the world's greenest battery, not only sourced ethically but made from 100 percent recyclable products, or a machine that directly captures carbon dioxide emissions from the air, or what about a virtual care system that helps eliminate your chronic pain. All these innovations are European 'Unicorns' – privately held companies worth over USD 1 billion – and all of them started with a bold idea that combined with the help of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), have grown to become global success stories.

The EIT is Europe's largest and most experienced innovation network, housing thousands of partners, including research institutes, universities, and private ventures, dedicated to creating new solutions to some of our most pressing global challenges.

By bringing together partners from across Europe in 50 innovation hubs, we drive innovation towards eight strategic areas including health and energy to food and manufacturing, to digital transformation, urban mobility, climate change, raw materials, and cultural heritage.

To date, the EIT Community has powered more than 7 500 start-ups and scale-ups that have gone on to raise EUR 7.3 billion and create more than 17 400 jobs, we have brought over 2 110 new products to the market, while equipping almost 6 000 MSc and PhD graduates with entrepreneurial skills, with thousands more enrolled in our training programmes.

"The EIT leverages the diversity of a pan-European network to three streams of support: entrepreneurial education, innovation driven research products and business acceleration services."

So, what is behind our success? We leverage the diversity of a pan-European network to three streams of support: entrepreneurial education, innovation driven research products, and business acceleration services. Our education portfolio includes training programmes, degrees and courses that transform students with an appetite for innovation and technology into seasoned and successful entrepreneurs. Our innovation programmes connect researchers with technical experts from across Europe to help create new products and services.

And our business creation and acceleration services are designed to capture and commercialise great ideas, boosting businesses to the next level. Our three streams of support make up the EIT Model, which is a proven and successful innovation model that can help an innovator at any stage of their journey.

Whether you are just starting out with an idea or have a company that wants to scale, the EIT can help. Better yet, we also complement the many efforts done at the national level, incorporating local and regional ecosystems into our global network so that the best ideas grow and scale to improve the lives of Europeans.

The EIT is also uniquely positioned in how it operates. As a first in any EU initiative in research and innovation, we have set up nine Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), these are public and private partnerships that we directly fund and oversee for a 15-year period. 15 years allow us to create a long-lasting impact, with a view towards the future. While the EIT supports and guides the strategy behind each Innovation Community from the start, they are also set up to generate their own revenue and become financially sustainable in the long run, creating lasting impact.



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As an example, EIT InnoEnergy, our innovation engine in sustainable energy houses over 180 portfolio companies, including world leaders in energy, transport and hydrogen. Thanks to their success in supporting and investing in promising start-ups, they themselves have most recently secured a financing round of EUR 140 million from private partners, income that it will reinvest into its public mandate. EIT InnoEnergy is also the driving force behind strategic European initiatives which include the European Battery Alliance Academy and the European Green Hydrogen Acceleration Centre. The EIT directly builds the infrastructure and the networks needed for innovation to thrive, allowing partners from different sides of the continent to come together and collaborate leveraging the diversity and strength of the Europe Union.

Our newest project, the Deep Tech Skills Initiative, leverages the expertise of our network to tackle Europe's skills gap head on.

We set out a bold objective to skill 1 million workers by 2025. Currently the skilling revolution is underway.

"The EU will need more talent and labour in deep tech fields to maintain a leading position in emerging and high-growth markets."

The EU will need more talent and labour in deep tech fields to maintain a leading position in emerging and high-growth markets. As a pan-European effort, the Deep Tech Talent Initiative gathers all the stakeholders: companies specialising in deep tech, education providers, students and learners, workers looking for new skills, and together we develop state-of-the-art education programmes based on input from industry representatives, directly supplying the demand for new skills.

To date, we have over 80 partners offering over 50 courses, with close to 640 000 learners already targeted.

We encourage you to learn more about Europe's largest innovation ecosystem by visiting our website and join us in creating Europe's sustainable future!

Martin Kern

Director of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)
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EIT COMMUNITY



THE COST OF NON-EUROPE: WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH AMBITIOUS, COMMON ACTION?

European integration has been a key driver of growth, peace and social prosperity. It has been effective in advancing peace, democratic governance, environmental protection and innovation, promoting resilience in the face of crisis and fostering an expansion in European Union GDP. Yet, persistent challenges remain and potential crises can be anticipated. The move towards a paradigm of so-called “permacrisis” calls for a different approach to policy-making.

The EU’s capacity to take joint action that is more effective than 27 countries individual action is tested almost every day. In line with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, the key question is if and to what extent the aggregation and coordination of budgets, oversight and competences at EU level generate added value and higher benefits, compared to the action considered by Member States at national level. In some cases, the aggregation of competences at EU level, rather than leaving them at national level, could be the only and most

efficient option for integrating the economic impact of externalities allowing for the realisation of projects or the provision of public goods that would not have been available otherwise. The gains of further EU integration would naturally not replace nor offset those from actions taken at the national, regional and local levels, but rather complement and reinforce them.

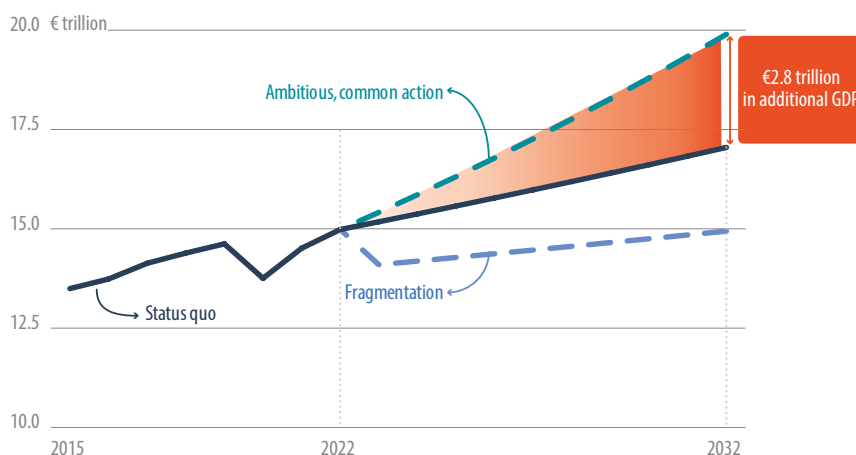
Looking forward to the next 10 years, Europe faces different possible paths. The European Parliament favours the path of ambitious, collective EU action where significant potential benefits can be realised, not only for today, but also for different possible scenarios of the future.

This concept was first introduced in the report “Towards European economic recovery in the 1980s” by Michel Albert and James Ball in 1983. Subsequently, the CoNE concept formed the basis for the landmark Cecchini report of 1988, which helped provide the economic rationale for the programme of single market completion by the end of 1992. Today, the CoNE concept goes beyond the policies falling under the single market field, to potentially cover all policy areas at EU level from energy to justice, from the twin transition to public health, employment and defence.

“The gains of pursuing the path of strategic, collective action compared to the ‘status quo’ can be understood as the ‘cost of non-Europe’.”

The gains of pursuing the path of strategic, collective action compared to the ‘status quo’ can be understood as the “cost of non-Europe”.

The European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) flagship publication “Increasing European added value in an age of global challenges - Mapping the cost of non-Europe (2022-2032)”, drawn up by the European Added Value Unit, investigates the potential benefits that could be achieved in 50 policy areas, taking into account the state of EU legislation and its untapped potential. The authors have estimated that further EU Integration could generate at least €2.8 trillion in gains if the policies advocated by the European Parliament in a series of specific fields were to be adopted by the EU and then fully implemented over the next 10-year period, representing about 16% of the current EU GDP.

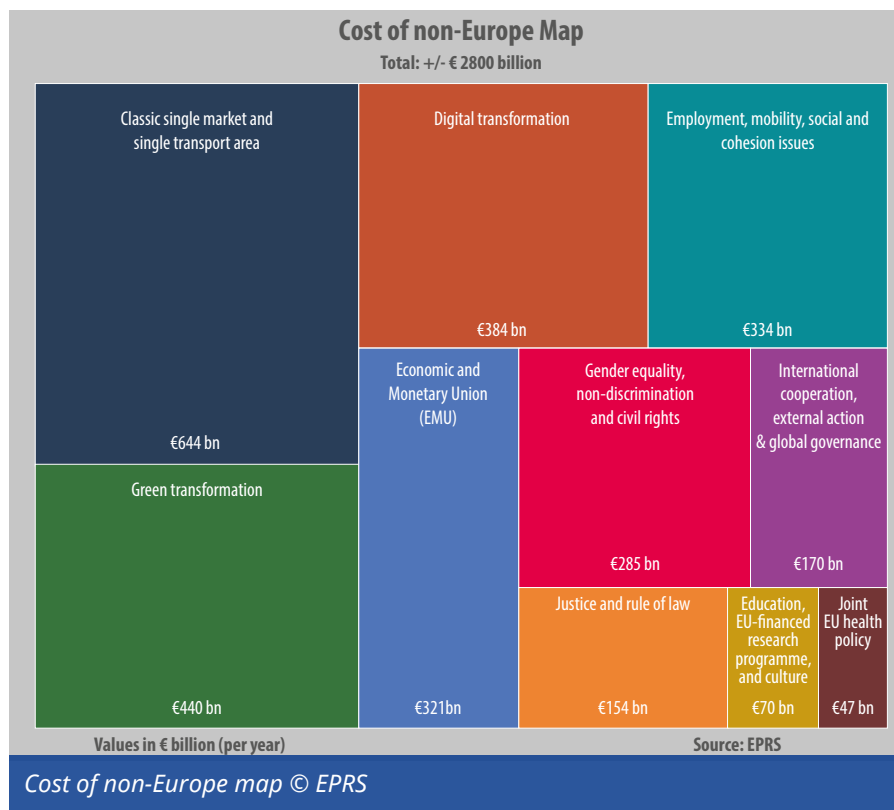


Ambitious action at EU level can result in € 2.8 trillion additional GDP in the next 10 years © EPRS

The CoNE analysis is more complex than a regular impact assessment, which would generally consider the impact of a specific policy action without necessarily looking at the benefit of moving towards more efficient institutional organisations. In this sense, the study seeks to recognize the full range of impacts of EU action (economic, social, environmental, and on fundamental rights' protection) and aims to shed light on the channels of transmission between policy proposals and potential results. EU actions that define the path of strategic, collective action are within reach and within the limits of the existing treaties.

To report one of the most significant examples, EU-level action on single market and single transport area, called for by the European Parliament, could generate economic benefits of at least €644 billion per year by 2032. In fact, despite the already high level of integration, single market rules continue to need better implementation and enforcement, as excessive complexity, unnecessary national requirements, different labelling standards and other administrative burdens are still hampering trade and investment inside the EU.

Reducing the stifling administrative burden to allow EU businesses and citizens to develop and grow to their potential is one of the key policy proposal in this area.



The actions called for by the EP could bring significant benefits to EU's citizens giving them the opportunity to do business, travel and work within the EU and allowing goods, services and money to move as freely as within a single country in a fair and sustainable way while guaranteeing consumer protection.

This is just one of many examples of the potential gains that could be achieved with an ambitious, common action at EU level. For more, please see the full study. ([https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU\(2023\)734690](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU(2023)734690)). An updated version is under preparation and will be published ahead of the European elections in 2024.

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"The actions called for by the EP could bring significant benefits to EU's citizens giving them the opportunity to do business, travel and work within the EU and allowing goods, services and money to move as freely as within a single country in a fair and sustainable way while guaranteeing consumer protection."

BREGRETS



Richard Corbett with Guy Verhofstadt at the National Rejoin March.

Some 50 000 people, including former and current MEPs, marched through the streets of London to Parliament Square on 23 September to demand that Britain apply to rejoin the EU.

They spoke on behalf of millions of others: opinion polls in Britain show that a steadily growing majority regret Brexit and would support rejoining the EU.

This has been a slow but steady trend in opinion polls. While opinion polls on most subjects are volatile, going up and down every month in light of events, this one is a very steady relentless trend.

Brexit has, of course, turned out to be completely different from the nirvana that was promised by Boris Johnson and the Leave campaign. It has damaged Britain economically, notably by creating a customs border and a regulatory border between Britain and its

neighbours, who are also its main trading partners. The UK government's own Office of Budgetary responsibility has estimated that the UK's GDP is around 4 percent lower than it would otherwise have been due to Brexit. That in turn means a loss of £40billion of tax revenue every year, making what is already a difficult fiscal situation much worse. Inflation is higher, inward investment lower, productivity stagnant.

Besides the economy, Brexit has lessened Britain's status in the world, reduced the rights of its citizens (who can now not stay more than 90 days in EU countries without special dispensation), created a thousand inconveniences for travellers, weakened unity in face of Russian aggression, lessened cooperation on the migration crisis, piled extra costs on businesses, undermined environmental protections,

stoked tensions in Northern Ireland, and reduced cultural and educational opportunities (including Britain's departure from the ERASMUS student exchanges). Above all, it has weakened the most successful project of trans-national cooperation in the world: the EU.

"Brexit has weakened the most successful project of trans-national cooperation in the world: the EU."

Many people who voted for Brexit realised they were lied to. That, combined with demographic change (younger people reaching the age to vote are overwhelmingly pro-European), is driving the relentless trend of public opinion to levels where over 60% say they would vote to rejoin if a new referendum were held.

Significantly, this trend in public opinion has happened even without any leading politician going out and systematically campaigning for Britain to rejoin the EU.

Politicians have been cautious, wary of re-opening the deep divisions and political chaos that characterised British politics in the years following the referendum. They also remember that in the last general election in December 2019, while 53% voted for parties which were demanding a new referendum that could stop Brexit, the Conservatives won a majority of parliamentary seats on just 43% of the vote: the non-proportional nature of the UK electoral system punished the pro-European vote as it was fragmented over several parties (Labour, Liberal Democrat, Greens, Scottish nationalists, Welsh nationalists) whereas most of the pro-Brexit vote was behind the Conservatives.

Some politicians are worried that that could happen again. But if the current trend in public opinion continues, then they may find that attempting to placate the smaller and diminishing number of voters who still think that Brexit was a good idea risks alienating a larger and growing number who are critical of Brexit.

No-one is suggesting that Britain could rejoin tomorrow. An Accession Treaty would have to be negotiated and ratified by all. The EU would want reassurances that Britain really had changed its mind and that there was no risk of repeating the Brexit saga again ten years later. The European Movement in the UK has seen a huge surge in its membership and is, remarkably, now the largest national section in Europe. Its slogan is “step by step to rejoin”.

“Many people who voted for Brexit realised they were lied to. That, combined with demographic change (younger people reaching the age to vote are overwhelmingly pro-European), is driving the relentless trend of public opinion to levels where over 60% say they would vote to rejoin if a new referendum were held.”

If Labour comes to government as of next year, which looks likely according to current trends, then Britain will already be seeking to rebuild relations with the EU, rebuilding the trust that was lost when the Conservatives attempted to renege on the agreements that it had negotiated with the EU. That in itself would be worthwhile, and it may pave the way for more ambition later. Especially if the public keeps demanding it.

Richard Corbett

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