

EPFMA

Bulletin



86 · March 2024

European Parliament Former Members Association

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On 8 March 2024, International Women's Day (IWD), EP_FMA Members **Monica Baldi, Michael Hindley, Julie Ward and Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl** participated at the LFAEuroMUN Conference at Lycée Franco-Allemand in Buc (France). The LFAEuroMUN is an opportunity to use the framework of the UN Model to discuss issues linked to the theme of Empowering Democracy, and to raise awareness about the challenges to Democracy, especially in the context of the upcoming European Parliamentary elections in 2024. The event was organised in cooperation with the Jean Monnet House.

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 Due to the long time lag between the call for contribution and the publication, some articles may be outdated.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

First and foremost, I wish to express my gratitude for being re-elected as President of the Former Members Association. I will diligently take up this task for my next term. I want to thank all colleagues who participated, remotely or in person, in the Annual General Assembly and in the vote for the new Management Committee. I congratulate Monica Baldi (re-elected as Vice-President), Jean-Pierre Audy (re-elected as Treasurer), Paul Rübig and Edward McMillan-Scott for being re-elected as FMA Board Members.

Thank you to all FMA Members for your active participation in the FMA Annual Events, combined with the FMA Visit to Belgium from 8 to 10 April 2024. The FMA Delegation, composed of 27 former MEPs, was able to meet representatives of the Belgian Federal Parliament and Government to discuss the priorities of the ongoing presidency.

On 9 April, the Annual Memorial Service took in the European Parliament, where we honoured our colleagues who passed away during the last year. One of them was former Commissioner President and former MEP Jacques Delors.

You will find in this edition a special In Memoriam written by former EP and FMA President Enrique Barón Crespo, who represented me as FMA President and the Members of the Association during the tribute ceremony held on 5 January 2024 at Hotel des Invalides in Paris. A full report about the FMA Visit to Belgium and Annual Events will be published in the June Bulletin.

The 2024 European elections offer an opportunity for both reflections and new beginnings.

It is crucial to motivate as many citizens as possible to go vote during the elections. At the same time, we need to reflect on what it means to live in a democracy. Therefore, this edition of the Bulletin is fittingly entitled "Freedom of politicians and transparency". In an even more polarising world, the division of powers, the freedom of press, the judiciary, and at all cost the freedom of politicians needs to be guaranteed.

Our Association has started the 2024 with renewed enthusiasm and motivation. Our members continue to engage with citizens and encourage them to participate in the upcoming elections. As such, the FMA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a collaboration with Re-Imagine Europa.

Similarly, our EP to Campus programme continues to thrive with many members holding lectures and attending events specifically dedicated to the EU elections in order to give nuanced and pluralistic perspectives to young people, both inside and outside of Europe. In this edition of the Bulletin, you will read some contributions from FMA Members who participated to EP to Campus programmes with Universities from China, India and Spain.

In addition, you will find many reflections on the topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI) that was the subject of the Annual Seminar we organised in December 2023. Vice-President Monica Baldi wrote about the democratic participation and new technologies and Secretary Teresa Riera Madurell about high-performance computing and AI.

Invited speakers, Marta Cantero de Gamito and Francesco Rulli, wrote a contribution reflecting on the power and challenges of AI and the new technologies. Vice-President of the European Parliament, Marc Angel, has also reflected in his article on the implications that AI has for the next European Parliament legislature.

The year 2024 holds particular significance for our Association, marked by crucial elections. It presents a valuable opportunity for the European elections to serve as a platform for expanding our membership. I extended an invitation to current Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) who will be concluding their terms next year to join our community of former parliamentarians. Simultaneously, we published the Handbook for Outgoing and former MEPs, which contains all information for those leaving the Parliament as an active member.

I want to encourage all our members to continue contributing in promoting the unity of the European Union and reinforcing parliamentary democracy through our diverse programs and activities.

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

With my very best regards,

Dr. Klaus Hänsch
FMA President

IN MEMORIAM

JACQUES DELORS

Three key traits of Jacques Delors stand out in my profile of him: the activist, the leader and the friend.

Jacques Delors was not a conventional politician, but a Christian activist who began his career as a trade unionist in the Banque de France and helped to drive the evolution of the French Confederation of Christian Workers (CFTC) to the socialist CFDT (French Democratic Confederation of Labour). I met him at the end of the 1970s and our paths subsequently crossed on many occasions. Initially, this was at the regular meetings of a group of social democratic MEPs and European leaders. I remember a highly charged meeting in Germany in April 1981 – shortly after the failed coup of 23 February in Spain and on the eve of Mitterrand's triumph in France – at which the 'in pectore' minister promised me his full support for us joining the Community. After his time as French Minister for the Economy, he was appointed President of the European Commission.

And he kept his word: our next meeting was at the Royal Palace of Madrid in June 1985, when he signed Spain's Accession Treaty as President of the Commission.



Former EP and FMA President Enrique Barón Crespo with former Commissioner President and former MEP Jacques Delors in Strasbourg

We talked about Europe. As an outgoing minister, I told him I wished to serve as a Member of the European Parliament. From January 1986 onwards, I played an active role in the decisive push that Jacques Delors gave to EU integration as President of the Commission. I supported and admired both his political career and his personal achievements.

It was when I was President of the EP that we had most contact, collaboration and confrontation, not only because Parliament had to consolidate its own profile and defend its views in light of the reform of the institutions in the run-up to the Maastricht Treaty, but also because we had to deal with the historic whirlwind that began in the summer of 1989, with the thaw in Central Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification.

That was a time when history sped up and we were obliged to make the leap from the European Community to the European Union.



Former EP and FMA Presidents Enrique Barón Crespo and Pat Cox participating at the tribute ceremony on 5 April 2024 in memory of Jacques Delors © European Union 2024 - Source : EP

Jacques acted with political courage and unwavering drive, putting forward proposals without any fear of the controversy they might generate, always abiding by his ideals and principles. In his relationship with Parliament, he was a responsible President, a President before his time, always displaying dedication and a willingness to listen.

In short, he was a man who campaigned tirelessly to build a united, democratic and socially just Europe, constantly reaching for new heights, with the concern of an activist and the stamina of an athlete, incorporating the noblest of dimensions in his political work: serving the common interest. Jacques Delors, a citizen of France and of Europe, led the way during crucial period for Europe. He later continued to work for Europe through the Jacques Delors Institute, free of baggage, but bursting with ideas and, above all, honesty and dignity – values that must be at the centre of public life.

Enrique Barón Crespo

*Former EP and FMA President
PES, Spain (1986-2009)*

Key facts

Critical raw materials: deal on securing the EU's supply and sovereignty

(December session - P9_TA(2023)0454)

MEPs and the Spanish presidency of the Council agreed on plans to boost the supply of strategic raw materials. The Critical Raw Materials Act is intended to make the EU more competitive and sovereign. It aims to cut red tape, promote innovation along the entire value chain, support SMEs and boost research and the development of alternative materials and more environmentally-friendly mining and production methods. The legislation will set up economic incentives and a more stable and secure business framework for the deployment of mining and recycling projects, with faster and simpler authorisation procedures.

Reducing emissions from fluorinated gases and ozone-depleting substances

(January session - P9_TA(2024)002)

Parliament approved new rules to minimise emissions from powerful greenhouse gases, in line with EU and global climate goals. The text foresees a total phase-out of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by 2050, including a trajectory to reduce the EU consumption quota between 2024-2049. It introduces strict requirements that prohibit placing on the EU market products containing F-gases and specific phase-out dates for the use of F-gases in sectors where it is technologically and economically feasible to switch to alternatives that do not use F-gases, such as domestic refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pumps.

Nature restoration: Parliament adopts law to restore 20% of EU's land and sea

(February session - P9_TA(2024)0089)

The new law sets a target for the EU to restore at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030 and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050. To reach the overall EU targets, member states must restore at least 30% of habitats covered by the new law (from forests, grasslands and wetlands to rivers, lakes and coral beds) from a poor to a good condition by 2030, increasing to 60% by 2040, and 90% by 2050. In line with Parliament's position, EU countries should give priority to Natura 2000 areas until 2030.

Parliament adopts new transparency rules for political advertising

(February session - P9_TA(2024)0090)

Parliament adopted new rules on transparency and targeting of political advertising, which will make election and referenda campaigns more transparent and resistant to interference. The new rules will regulate political advertisements, notably online ads, while also providing for a framework for political actors to advertise more easily across the EU. To limit foreign interference in European democratic processes, sponsoring ads from outside the EU will be prohibited in the three-month period before an election or referendum.

MEPs back plans for an EU-wide digital wallet

(February session - P9_TA(2024)0117)

According to the regulation adopted on Thursday, and already agreed upon with EU ministers, this new Digital Identity Wallet will allow citizens to identify and authenticate themselves online without having to resort to commercial providers - a practice that raises trust, security and privacy concerns. The EU wallet will be used on a voluntary basis. During negotiations, MEPs secured provisions to safeguard citizens' rights and foster an inclusive digital system by avoiding discrimination against people opting not to use the digital wallet. MEPs have also mandated an open-source wallet to encourage transparency, innovation and to enhance security.

Cyber Resilience Act: MEPs adopt plans to boost security of digital products

(March session - P9_TA(2024)0130)

Parliament approved new cyber resilience standards to protect all digital products in the EU from cyber threats. The regulation, already agreed with Council in December 2023, aims to ensure that products with digital features are secure to use, resilient against cyber threats and provide enough information about their security properties. Important and critical products will be put into different lists based on their criticality and the level of cybersecurity risk they pose. The two lists will be proposed and updated by the European Commission.

Media Freedom Act: a new bill to protect EU journalists and press freedom

(March session - P9_TA(2024)0137)

MEPs on Wednesday gave their final green light to new legislation to protect EU journalists and media from political or economic interference. Under the new law, member states will be obliged to protect media independence and all forms of interventions in editorial decisions will be banned. In adopting this report, Parliament is responding to citizens' expectations for the EU as expressed in the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

MEPs approve the new Migration and Asylum Pact

(April session - P9_TA(2024)0179)

The European Parliament adopted ten legislative texts to reform European migration and asylum policy as agreed with EU member states. Once the package is formally approved by the Council, the laws will enter into force after their publication in the Official Journal. The regulations are expected to start applying in two years time. For the reception conditions directive, member states will have two years to introduce the changes to their national laws. In adopting this report, Parliament is responding to citizens' expectations to strengthen the EU's role in tackling all forms of irregular migration and strengthen the protection of the European Union's external borders.

New EU fiscal rules approved by MEPs

(April session)

MEPs approved a revamp of EU fiscal rules making them clearer, more investment friendly, better tailored to each country's situation, and more flexible. The new rules were provisionally agreed upon between European Parliament and member state negotiators in February. MEPs significantly beefed up the rules to protect a government's capability to invest. At the request of MEPs, countries with an excessive deficit or debt may request a discussion process with the Commission before it provides guidance on the expenditure path.

Other main dossiers discussed in the plenary sessions were:

20.11.23

MEPs adopted their proposals for EU measures to **improve living and working conditions** for professionals working in the **art, cultural and creative sectors**.

MEPs stress that the **gaps** between national social systems, different national definitions of artists and rules applying to self-employed workers create **unfair conditions**.

12.12.23

Parliament adopted its proposals to **strengthen** the **democratic dimension** of the **2024 elections**, and for the **lead candidate system**.

Parliament's focus is on **maximising the impact of electoral campaigns**, the post-electoral procedure for the establishment of the next European Commission and the election of its President, and ensuring all citizens can exercise their right to vote.

18.01.24

The European Parliament adopted **three resolutions on human rights issues in China, Sudan and Tajikistan**. **China** must release Mr Ding Yuande and Falun Gong practitioners, and stop the persecution of minorities.

MEPs call for EU emergency funding for **Sudan**, where parties to the conflict must cease hostilities and for the condemnation of ongoing crackdown against independent media, government critics, human right activists and independent lawyers in **Tajikistan**.

07.02.24

MEPs adopted **new rules** to ensure **transferred funds arrive immediately** into the bank accounts of retail customers and businesses across the EU.

The new regulation aims to make sure that retail clients and businesses, especially SMEs, will not have to wait for their money, as well as to enhance the safety of transfers.

27.02.24

Parliament approved updated **EU procedures and control measures** for **waste shipments**.

With 587 votes in favour, eight against and 33 abstentions, MEPs endorsed the deal reached with the Council, which aims to **protect the environment and human health** more effectively, while contributing to the EU's circular economy and zero pollution goals.

28.02.24

With more than 20 000 lives lost on EU roads every year, Parliament backs **reforming the EU's driving licence rules** to make sure they contribute to **road safety** and to the **EU's green and digital transitions**.

Mobile driving licences, self-assessment of fitness to drive and better awareness of pedestrians are some of the changes to EU driving licence rules by MEPs.

14.03.24

MEPs approved **new EU rules for the collection, treatment and discharge of urban wastewater**.

With 481 votes in favour, 79 against and 26 abstentions, Parliament adopted the deal reached with the Council in January 2024 on revising the EU's water management and urban wastewater treatment standards to **better protect public health and the environment**.

10.04.24

In a resolution put to a vote, MEPs denounce the **catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza**, including the risk of imminent starvation.

They are set to call on Israel to **open all crossings** to Gaza for humanitarian aid and to urge all parties to immediately **cease attacks on civilians seeking aid**.

10.04.24

Parliament adopted new measures, already agreed upon with the Council, to **strengthen CO2 emission reduction targets for new heavy-duty vehicles (HDVs)**.

CO2 emissions from large trucks (including vocational vehicles, such as garbage trucks, tippers or concrete mixers) and buses will have to be reduced by 45% for the period 2030-2034, 65% for 2035-2039 and 90% as of 2040.

For more information, please visit:

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



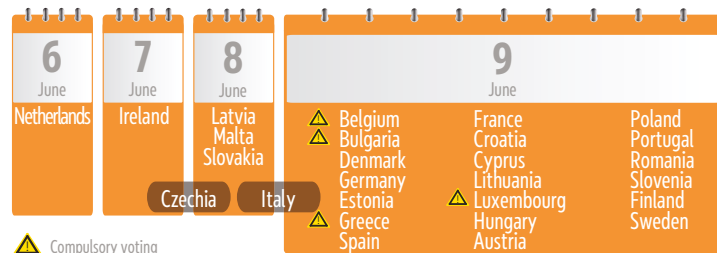
AT A GLANCE

Infographic



2024 European elections: National rules

Election day



Compulsory voting

Election day following national custom.

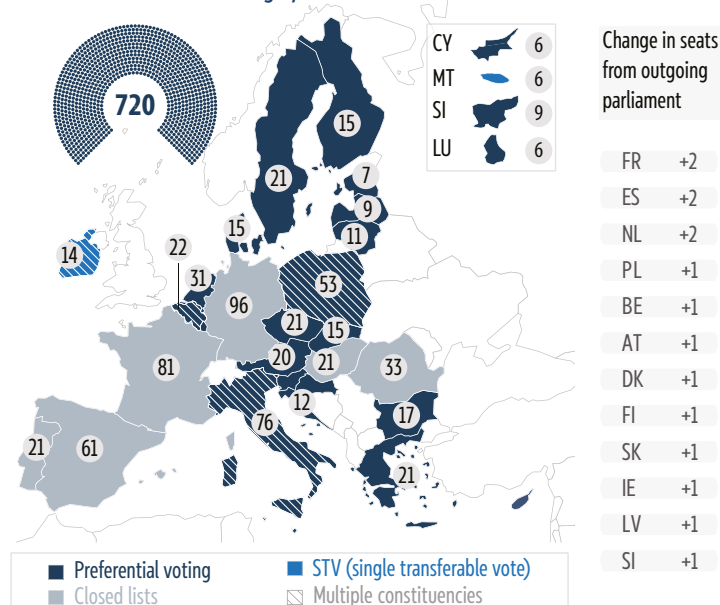
NB In a number of countries the day will only be formally confirmed closer to the election.

Voting methods for citizens abroad

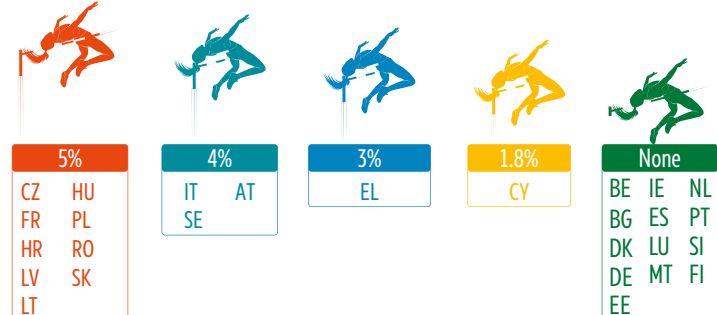
Belgium			
Bulgaria	*		
Czechia	NOT POSSIBLE		
Denmark			
Germany			
Estonia			
Ireland	NOT POSSIBLE		
Greece			
Spain			
France			
Croatia			
Italy	*		
Cyprus			
Latvia			
Lithuania			
Luxembourg			
Hungary			
Malta	NOT POSSIBLE		
Netherlands			
Austria			
Poland			
Portugal			
Romania			
Slovenia			
Slovakia	NOT POSSIBLE		
Finland			
Sweden			

By post Proxy
 Embassy/consulate E-voting
* Voting from abroad only possible within another EU country.

Number of MEPs and voting system



Electoral threshold



Minimum age of candidates



Note: This infographic shows the situation based on information known to the authors as of August 2023. While it has been updated to reflect the date set for the elections in Italy, a full update will be done ahead of the 2024 elections to incorporate any additional changes to the rules in individual Member States.

For any questions on voting rights in specific individual cases, please refer to the relevant Member State authorities.

EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

Authors: Giulio Sabbati and Kristina Grosek
Members' Research Service
PE 754.620 - February 2024

LET US PROMOTE PEACE

Now more than ever we should act with a view to achieving our fundamental objective, namely promoting peace. Even if we are overwhelmed by the urgent demands of defence, by the attacks that have been perpetrated, we find it difficult to prioritise, visualise and materialise peace, a priority of the first order.

These defence and security questions or peace objectives are not usually mentioned as peace issues. On the contrary, the applicable rules concern armed conflicts, Russia's aggression, the counter-offensive in Ukraine or the situation in Israel, the Gaza Strip or the Sahel region. The discussions only ever cover threats to economic security or trade sanctions and restrictive measures: this terminology serves to hide and supplant the fact that it is the desire for peace that underpins and drives these actions.

Security and defence policy is of course governed by a set of diverse and complex strategies and instruments such as diplomacy, humanitarian aid, development cooperation, climate action, human rights, trade policy, economic policy, etc. which do not always explicitly make clear whether cooperation is to be carried out with the armed forces or whether it is pacifist, civilian or humanitarian in nature. Not only that, the word 'peace' is sometimes misused, and we find that some misrepresent its meaning by using the term 'Peace Fund' to refer to an entity that really serves to supply weapons.

Women, by their very nature and with their secular culture of pacifism, have shown since time immemorial their great capacity to defuse armed conflicts and advocate for peace. This strategy has been understood by the UN authorities and has acted as a



© María Izquierdo Rojo

beacon guiding what they do. In the EU, however, it is disappointing to see that women's mediating and peace-making skills have been under-used by relegating them to the periphery, the domains of competence assigned to civil society.

The objectives of peace and progress shine through in the process of building the EU and its predecessor, the EEC. This was the unwavering, decisive will to turn the page on the bombed-out ruin that was the Europe we inherited from the Second World War. These scenes of the total desolation of war have sadly reared their head once more, with Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the events in the Gaza Strip and Hamas's acts of terrorism. Perhaps that is why European citizens, today more than ever, are again yearning for peace.

Millions of young people see war as something that is 'illegal and immoral' and should be banned, and that each time inflicts greater hatred, reprisals, cruelty and suffering, a

failure that is seriously jeopardising the world's achievements in terms of institutional cooperation and human rights. Wars today seem even crueller than ever: while in antiquity and the Middle Ages battles were fought far from home, with warriors leaving for distant lands, things are so much worse now since families, society and the civilian and humanitarian spheres come under fire. The terrifying numbers of people and families killed, wounded and maimed continue to grow; women and children have been and continue to be the hardest hit.

We owe the bold leap forward that our new enlargement represents to Putin's mistakes rather than to an ardour for European values. What unites us more than anything else is disgust for his aggression as well as questions of defensive security. For all these reasons I believe that we must arrange a meeting point with peace for these next elections.

María Izquierdo Rojo
PES, Spain (1989-2004)
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EU AFTER 2024

How will the EU live the 2024 elections, or survive them? A lot will change at any rate. Both internally and externally. The EU is part of a rapidly changing world. How will we reinvent the EU, and position it against other powerhouses?

What will the European Parliament look like and what will its composition be? Will the EU fall apart? Do we need to reinvent the EU?

The European Commission wants Ukraine and Moldova to join the club. This is pure geopolitics on the part of President Von der Leyen. I agree but then you also have to include Bosnia and Herzegovina. Austria makes a point of that and they are right. But if the EU expands to the East, then the seat of the European Parliament should also be placed on the negotiating table. The seat is currently still Strasbourg, the city which symbolises Franco-German reconciliation after World War II. After the 2007 enlargement to include Romania and Bulgaria, Strasbourg (and Brussels as the seat of the European Commission and Council) is far to the West of those countries. If Europe is to make a fresh start and work more

efficiently, a number of taboos need to be removed from the table. Should every tiny country continue to provide a Commissioner? Or hold the rotating Council presidency? The seat of the European Parliament should also be more central in Europe.

If that were to become a reality, the obvious choice would be Vienna as the new seat of the European Parliament, without the monthly travelling circus to Strasbourg. Vienna is more central and has a rich history as a diplomatic centre, but also as a power centre. Europe must now take up the gauntlet and play a role in the world. That way, all the world can see that the European Union has become EU 2.0. Now that would be a geopolitical statement. The idea will certainly not be accepted by France, I fear; they already veto the very idea of giving up the seat of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, a city which symbolises the reconciliation between France and Germany after numerous wars between those two countries. Especially after World War II, reconciliation was unthinkable for many years until Jean Monnet came up with his proposals for economic cooperation.

Our visit to the Jean Monnet study centre near Paris was very enlightening and interesting. Monnet found peace in the countryside to reflect and to invite people.

"Our (the FMA) visit to the Jean Monnet study centre near Paris was very enlightening and interesting. Monnet found peace in the countryside to reflect and to invite people."

I recommend the visit for all political leaders, but also for the general public, especially young people. They sometimes see the future as bleak. But a stronger Europe is the only way to a better future, both economically and militarily. Surely that lesson must have sunk in by now.

Jan Dhaene

*Greens/EFA, Belgium (2002-2004)
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FMA Degelation with students at the Jean Monnet House on 29 September 2023 in Bazoches-sur-Guyonne (France).

FIGHT FOR EDUCATION FOR ALL IN 2024

In countries across the globe, education is competing. It is competing for limited resources. Governments make pledges to guarantee access for every child. Yet, education is falling prey to geopolitical tensions, local conflicts, (religious) prejudices, health crises...

Millions of young people of school age are excluded from educational activities. Many are living in zones of war or conflict; others fall victim to human trafficking, kidnapping, exploitation, persecution because of their faith. In the face of such offences, suffering and loss of identity, silence and inaction are unacceptable.

The global education movement, attentive to the needs of the young people of our time, is growing. To coexist and honour traditions and cultures is their priority. During my activity at a Greek ministry, a young Afghan woman has shared her story. She lives on a Greek island with her four children. They attend a non-formal learning centre. They learn Greek. Make friends, whom they train how to make soap. And are willing to enrol in formal schools. They much appreciate the fact equal rights are among the first things taught in Greece.

A few years ago, the Girls Get Equal global campaign gathered thousands of girls around the globe. For one day they took over - in a symbolic way - jobs as executives at tech companies or as members of government. A 21-year-old took over the Vice President Office of Liberia and challenged her fellow girls to contribute to the nation meaningfully and to make their views heard.

Supporters and I approach such "make some noise" messages

through petitions and campaigns. We have called on the world's leaders and the international community to mobilise in support of the Chibok schoolgirls; of projects for safe places to learn; and to promote the right to education and against discrimination. We commit.

Commitment is a way to go forward. To forge fresh paths to overthrowing the 'style' of conflicts and misunderstanding. To have tough conversations and shed light on the truth and facts about why and what is happening. To say "no" to any form of provoking violence. To say "yes" to justice. Young people are sensitive to this virtue. To a just and inclusive society. To freedom and to safeguarding their inner freedom. They revolt against the colonisation of their hearts and minds.

In the memoirs of a Bulgaria's bright mind - a poet and translator of Shakespeare's works - the author reflects on the 'essence' of rigid political systems, which restrict the freedom of thought and expression.

They encourage suspicion and hostility towards the principles young people adhere to, the access to education being one of them. Education that would empower and foster a space for open discussions. More than seventy decades ago, at the platform of the train station, every day he would wait for the train to deliver the newspapers. No regime or doctrine could prevent him from exploring the news from across the globe. He was eager to make sense of what was happening.

Young people always gaze towards the horizon. They try to find their way amid all challenges. Dismantle obstacles that divide peoples, cultures, creeds. Learn about and understand each other. This is courage to move forward. Audacity to build peace where conflicts never seem to end. Thirst for learning how to live together. An existential thirst.

Mariela Baeva

ALDE, Bulgaria (2007-2009)

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ENLARGEMENT: TOWARDS A NEW EU STRATEGY?

On 9 November 2023, the EU Commission presented its yearly enlargement report. The beginning of its communication states: "Today, the Western Balkans, Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have a historic window of opportunity to strongly bind their future to the European Union." The Commission also cited the conclusions of the European Council at its meeting in Granada, at which "EU leaders reconfirmed enlargement as a geo-strategic investment in peace, security, stability and prosperity."

If these statements truthfully reflect the convictions of today's Council and Commission, it would be in stark contrast to the lack of progress of past years. On both sides – that of the EU as well as that of the candidate countries of the Western Balkans – there have been no serious efforts to prioritize enlargement. However, the war in Ukraine has returned the enlargement question to top of the agenda, and the Western Balkan countries could benefit from this renewed interest in EU enlargement. Moldova and, to a lesser degree, Georgia could also benefit from this new geopolitical thinking.

The EU Commission also came forward with some additional proposals, especially the new Growth Plan for the Western Balkans. Unfortunately, some of the Western Balkan countries themselves have not taken sufficient steps towards enlargement. This is especially true for Serbia and Kosovo, but also for Bosnia-Herzegovina. In each of these three countries, there are powerful political groups who are not ready for true reconciliation. Supporting economic growth is good, but reconciliation must be a prerequisite for advancing towards the EU.

Nevertheless, the Commission seeks to send some positive signals to aspiring members. There have also been some steps – alas rather small – towards a new enlargement

methodology in the direction of a "staged enlargement process." The inclusion of candidate countries in some EU programs and policies could bring the countries closer to the EU – even before full membership. This could also demonstrate the readiness of the countries concerned to accept the "rules of the game" after their accession. But what the EU needs is a thorough overhaul of the accession process.

The Commission is very cautious when it comes to the question of the absorption capacity of the EU itself. The accession of several countries, including a large war-torn country like Ukraine, will be no simple task. Already now, we can observe the limitations of the EU's complicated decision processes when it comes to foreign and defense issues. Some countries have repeatedly taken advantage of unanimity requirements to block important decisions or to force an ignominious bargaining process. Most of the time, the EU finds a way out of these unfortunate stalemates, but the accession of additional countries with unsolved issues at home could bring new uncertainties and weaknesses into the EU. Moreover, additional financial support will be needed for any new members at a time when current member countries want to reduce their contributions.

And what about enlargement fatigue, which has prevailed since Croatia's accession in 2013? Recent research conducted by the European Council on Foreign Relations demonstrated an overall improvement in public opinion towards enlargement, as EU citizens seem to increasingly accept that enlargement is necessary. Nevertheless, there remain several countries that are still skeptical towards enlargement, including Austria, the Netherlands, and Germany.

In addition, there has been a rise in populist – mostly right wing – voters

in these countries and others. Such voters and their elected representatives are keen neither on enlargement nor on continued support for Ukraine. Even countries that have been strong supporters of Ukraine, such as Poland, have grown hesitant after grain exports running through their countries challenged local producers or labour laws.

The slight increase in support for enlargement by EU voters does not necessarily signal an easy accession process for aspiring members. The EU as such – and especially the European Commission – must develop an overall strategy for an enlarged but at the same time, strengthened EU. More creativity and new thinking is needed to overcome the primarily technocratic approach to enlargement. The EU must also explain to its citizens why and under what conditions enlargement can be "a geo-strategic investment in peace, security, stability and prosperity."

Finally, in December 2023 the European Council supported the proposals of the European Commission- with Victor Orban leaving the room before the vote took place. Therefore, the opening of accession negotiations with Ukraine will remain contested even inside the European Council. But the big tasks is the following: to bring countries from the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia closer to the EU, make the EU financially and institutionally capable to integrate new and very diverse members and convince European citizens of the necessity of enlarging the EU. Personally, I do not see the readiness of the EU institutions to recognize the necessity of implementing such a comprehensive strategy.

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THE RIGHT POLICIES, AVOIDING ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS

The recent Earth Summit, COP28, once again called attention to the challenges we need to overcome and the measures we need to take.

Understandably, it put particular emphasis on the need to cut the use of fossil fuels. But we have to understand how hard it is to take great strides forward right away without serious economic and social difficulties arising as a result.

Without questioning the setting of deadlines, the most important thing is for all countries to immediately drive forward improvements in a number of areas, producing benefits for all and lowering environmental costs.

This is what happens in the construction industry, for example, where industrial or residential buildings that provide better thermal properties can be built. It is also what happens with industrial equipment, with machinery that requires less energy, is cheaper and comes at a lower environmental cost.

The energy consumption and environmental cost of large urban areas is another field that Europe must remember; those costs are estimated at 1 % of the EU's GDP.

In a digital world where we do not need to be physically close together to get information and promote products, the same or better efficiency can be achieved in medium-sized urban areas. The European countries with the largest surpluses on their balance sheets, among the largest in the world, are countries that do not have large urban areas.

Greater emphasis must therefore be put on cohesion policy, in line with Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU).

Along with better land planning, this would be a way to improve the competitiveness of the EU economy, with real reductions in energy and environmental costs.

Transport is also very important for achieving these goals. It is a sector that takes a heavy toll on the environment and uses a great deal of energy, accounting for around 30 % of all energy use.

An 'easy' path to follow is putting a penalty on private transport use, particularly when it involves fossil fuel vehicles.

We must promote vehicles powered by renewable, non-polluting energy sources right away. However, it would be indisputably more fitting to provide better public transport than to punish people whose personal and professional circumstances mean they have to use their vehicles.

"We must promote vehicles powered by renewable, non-polluting energy sources right away."

In line with what is being done in the European Union, it is important to promote fast trains that offer significantly shorter travel times than individual transport in order to encourage people to make the switch. What is more, good connections are needed among different modes of transport, with countries' main rail line(s) serving seaports and airports in particular.

We have excellent examples of this in most European countries, and hopefully more countries will follow in the rest of Europe and around the world.

Improving economies' competitiveness and people's quality of life also helps improve the environment in our countries and on our planet.

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COMPROMISE



I am a firm believer that compromise is one of the most powerful paths to properly solving the problems we face today. Societies have become more complex, more fragmented and are now more diverse and mobile. As a result, new forms of organisation are emerging that put pressure on governments to open up policy-making to new participants. The smart response to these developments must involve seeking compromise, which means building structured dialogue and social consensus.

Modern times have also seen growing interdependence: financial and economic but also among markets and processes. High interdependence among everything and everyone has made decision-making processes more complex, because different (and sometimes conflicting) interests have to be taken into consideration. A proper understanding of the risks associated with decision-making requires good knowledge of motivations and interactions among the actors and interests involved, and that knowledge can only be obtained through dialogue, conciliation and seeking compromise.

The times we live in also require problems to be anticipated. Being adaptive, which means reacting to situations only when they get difficult, leads to insufficient, late and often cobbled-together responses because the number of options available when it is time to react is much smaller. That understanding can only be achieved through dialogue, consultation and seeking compromise.

"A proper understanding of the risks associated with decision-making requires good knowledge of motivations and interactions among the actors and interests involved, and that knowledge can only be obtained through dialogue, conciliation and seeking compromise."

Our governments are currently just one centre for decision-making, among a number of others that have an impact on people's lives.

Those who think that strength comes only from democratic legitimacy are mistaken. Strength is also increasingly a result of the capacity to build relationships between governments and different economic and social partners so they come together and act. Compromise in action is a decisive factor in the credibility of those in government.

One of the factors in seeking compromise is the stance taken. Compromise involves interaction between parties. If any of the parties takes a passive approach, the entire exercise is made weaker and it becomes harder for a number of stakeholders to play a part in defining strategies or guidelines for what they want for the future. What this means is that participation in structured dialogue requires a stance that rejects waiting for things to happen, waiting for other people to act or divine intervention.

Seeking compromise is therefore also largely one of the most genuine expressions of civic involvement and the assertion of values essential to human existence, such as freedom.

In our times, power does not belong to those who know the most or are highest up the ladder; power belongs to those who are able to convince others. That is another reason why we need a culture of compromise.

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I RECENTLY BECAME A GERMAN CITIZEN: HOW MANY OTHERS HAVE DONE THE SAME?

The evening of 9 November 1938 looked to be just like any other evening in Leipzig and, just like any other girl, Mum had been given a goodnight kiss by Grandma Toni. Mum's older brother, Uncle Rolf, was studying for his university admission exams.

Grandpa Willy was in London on business with his eldest, Uncle Herbert, who was already working for the family firm. But tragedy lurked just outside in the shape of the SS – its infinite cruelty crystal clear in the violent banging on the door. They took Rolf away and, despite the biting cold, wouldn't even let him bring a jacket. Along with around a thousand other Jews of all ages, he was bundled onto a freight train destined for Buchenwald. Mum and Grandma shut themselves indoors until, a few months later, Grandpa Willy arranged for them to escape to London.

In one evening they had lost everything: their home, their business, their friends and family. Rolf got out of Buchenwald two months later thanks to relatives who, as American citizens, were able to secure his release and an immigration visa for family members. Rolf's experience had left him in a wretched state, and he had also contracted pneumonia.

As soon as he'd recovered, he was conscripted by the US Army and took part in the North African and Italian campaigns as a translator, winning praise and medals and helping to free the world from the Nazis and Fascists. My mother met my father while holidaying in Italy, and they later married. She never told us, her children, of the horrors she had experienced.

I only found out later, thanks to Rolf, in the years I spent in the US as a medical student.

A few months ago, I was granted German citizenship as part of a German policy specifically geared towards the children of German citizens who had been stripped of all their rights. Article 116(2) of the German Constitution provides for the naturalisation of persons persecuted by the Nazi regime and stripped, along with their descendants, of their German citizenship.

In delivering my certificate and passport, the German Consul apologised to me on behalf of the government and declared that he was honoured that I was a German citizen. I will go to Leipzig, and stand in front of the home where my relatives lived before they were deported.

I will picture myself hugging them tightly while whispering to them that I have come home, and that I did it for them and for all those who were deported and persecuted. Unfortunately, people are still being persecuted and deported today. Sometimes it feels like people have learned nothing from history. I wonder how many other descendants of deported Jews have made the same decision I have. I think that the figures would be of interest to all us former MEPs, and would give us food for thought.

Isabella De Martini

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Isabella De Martini with Susanne Welter, the German Consul General in Milan, who hands over the Certificate of German Citizenship, during the naturalisation ceremony.

FMA ACTIVITIES



EPFMA
PEAAD



COOPERATION WITH THE EP

EPRS HISTORY AND POLITICS ROUNDTABLE: PRESIDENT GIL-ROBLES: A HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

On 6 December 2023, the EP History Service of EPRS devoted a roundtable to José Maria Gil-Robles, Spanish Christian-Democrat who was EP President from 1997 to 1999 and FMA President from 2006 to 2010. The panel included contributions by Professor Maria Cavallaro from LUISS University Rome, as well as former EP President Enrique Barón Crespo and current Director-General Jaime Duch Guillot, who both worked closely with Gil-Robles in different capacities.

“*José Maria Gil-Robles was a sound man. A man of sense. This is the best way to describe José Maria. [...] We met, at the end of the fifties, at the beginning of the sixties. When the new generation, which had not taken part in the Civil War, was trying to re-establish a democratic system and society in Spain. [...] We shared the view that we had to come back to Europe, back to a Europe that had been working to unite itself since the Second World War, the second civil war between Europeans in the 20th century. [...] His behaviour honoured him personally, as well as Parliament. [...] With the Vice-President of the Former Members Association, Monica Baldi, who had understood the gravity of the situation, we had the privilege of paying him a visit in the hospital in Madrid [before his death]. It is important in life to say goodbye to friends and I continue to keep [José Maria Gil-Robles] in my heart.*

Enrique Barón Crespo

Former EP and FMA President
PES, Spain (1986-2009)



Director General of DG Communication Jaime Duch Guillot at the EPRS Roundtable on 6 December 2023
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Former EP and FMA President Enrique Barón Crespo during his intervention at the EPRS Roundtable on 6 December 2023
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“*He had been preparing himself to become President of the European Parliament since many years. [...] the day that he attained the presidency of Parliament, he was ready to start from the first minute. He had the experience, he had the training and all the necessary contacts and the network. You can be president in many ways. At that time most of the presidencies had been very institutional. [...] When presidents were institutional and absolutely neutral they always ended having difficulties with their own political group. That is exactly the moment where you can see that this person is really defending the institution and protecting it, because – and this is natural – people from your own political group will always think that you, at some point, will try to favour them. [...] With José María Gil-Robles this never happened.*

Jaime Duch Guillot

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FMA ANNUAL EVENTS

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

The European elections in June 2024 are expected to be among the most important in the history of the European Union, due to the changing geopolitical context and the use of new technologies, with particular reference to artificial intelligence. This topic was at the centre of a series of events organised by the Former Members Association (FMA) at the European Parliament in Brussels on 6 and 7 December 2023, alongside the usual annual meeting, which focused attention on how to promote democratic participation.

The events commenced with a commemoration of the former EP and FMA President, José María Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado, organised by the EPRS in the Library, introduced by the FMA President, Klaus Hänsch, acting on behalf of the President of Parliament, Roberta Metsola. The testimony of Enrique Barón Crespo, former President of the European Parliament and FMA, was particularly appreciated, as he recalled some of their experiences together, which were part of the history of Spain, including its European integration, as was that of Jaume Duch Guillot, Director General of Communication and Spokesperson of the European Parliament.

The event, moderated by Professor Wolfram Kaiser, was also attended by

the former President of the Parliament and FMA, Hans-Gert Pöttering.

During the reception on 6 December – in which the Vice-President of the Parliament Marc Angel also participated – Vice-President Rainer Wieland, speaking on behalf of President Roberta Metsola, thanked the association for the intense work done for European democracy and underlined the importance of participation in decision-making processes, especially in the upcoming European elections. Participation was essential to be able to cooperate with the EU institutions, to share projects based on common values and, above all, to learn more about European architecture, including through learning and education at primary, secondary and university level and beyond. All of this was covered in the book ‘Participation in Europe’ which was brilliantly presented at the LIBRORUM event, on Thursday 7 December, by the FMA Honorary Secretary, Teresa Riera Madurell, with speeches from the authors, leading figures and students, and with an introduction by President Hänsch.

The publication – edited by myself and Michael Hindley, a member of the FMA MC and leader of the ‘EP to Campus’ programme – was published last

November by the FMA. The Director of the Historical Archives of the EU, Dieter Schlenker, emphasised the fruitful collaboration behind the creation of the volume, which was thanks also to the support of the Italian National Agency Erasmus+ INDIRE, represented by Valentina Riboldi.

In the morning, the seminar ‘New technological transition: opportunities and challenges’ was held, moderated by Teresa Riera Madurell with a conclusion from Paul Rübig, member of the FMA MC. Great appreciation was shown for the addresses by Dr Marta Cantero Gamito from the School of Transnational Governance of the European University Institute – on the ‘Trilemma of political governance’ due to the transition from human to automatic decision-making, which begs the question of multiple expectations – and Francesco Rulli, CEO of customised artificial intelligence solutions QUERLO – who highlighted the potential of AI, taking into account the ethical considerations and potential pitfalls related to the integration of AI into democratic systems. The speeches given by the participants, former MEPs and students, were very stimulating, including the member of the FMA’s management committee Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl, who highlighted the need to offer guarantees of protection in the field of academia, and President Pöttering, who recalled the need to apply measures to ensure data protection and avoid improper use.

There is no doubt that the possibilities and challenges of new technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, must always be examined – especially in view of the forthcoming European electoral campaign.

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Editors of the FMA Publication ‘Participation in Europe’ Monica Baldi and Michael Hindley taking the floor during the Librorum event on 7 December 2023.
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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: HOMEWORK FOR THE NEXT EP LEGISLATURE

With the adoption of the AI Act, the European Union will set the tone for a global regulatory framework on the use of Artificial Intelligence systems. The role of the European Parliament in setting the conditions and boundaries for a human centric and trustworthy use of AI has been prominent.

However, we cannot waste too much time on celebrating, as key challenges are already arising with regards to the use of disruptive technologies.

The first “moment of truth” will be the impact of generative AI, and in particular the use of deep fakes and automated misinformation online in the European elections later this year. The response capacity of our Institution may be limited compared to the role of National authorities. Nevertheless, it is crucial to equip MEPs with the necessary resources and knowledge to effectively be aware of the risk and respond when they are targeted by such campaigns.

A recent publication by our Institution’s research services¹ highlighted that, according to Europol, 90 % of online content may be generated synthetically by 2026. The same report acknowledges that bots made up nearly half of all internet traffic in 2022. This is extremely worrying and raises the question: do we already live in an “artificial” world?

While the concerns raised by the publication regarding the increase in content and bot traffic are certainly valid, it is crucial to acknowledge the potential of AI as a tool in promoting democratic participation. The advanced capabilities of AI can be utilised to enhance the accessibility and reliability of information for all citizens. AI-powered platforms can be designed to filter out misinformation and safeguard the integrity of consumed content.

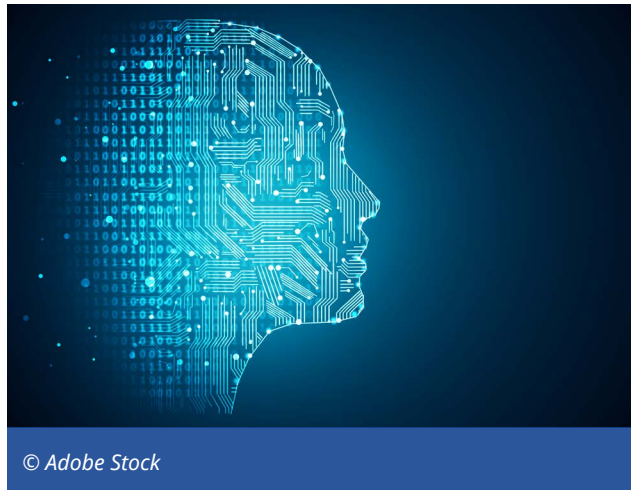
¹ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_IDA\(2024\)757592](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_IDA(2024)757592)

By investing in AI capabilities within Parliament’s administration, Members can utilize technologies to foster an informed, engaged and democratic society where technology complements human interactions rather than replaces them.

“By investing in AI capabilities within Parliament’s administration, Members can utilize technologies to foster an informed, engaged and democratic society where technology complements human interactions rather than replaces them.”

Concerning the AI Act itself, our Institution should play a major role in overseeing its actual implementation. A lot of foundational conditions for a human centric AI rely on a proper implementation at Member State level. I would strongly advocate for a special committee that ensures proper oversight of the secondary laws.

The only way to remain a lighthouse in the journey towards a human centric and trustworthy AI is also for the Parliament to become a proficient and responsible user of AI systems in its administrative and parliamentary work while there is no doubt that AI can be beneficial to our Institution’s purpose, we must ensure that we have the right capabilities in place and that the adoption of AI in the EP is a well-governed process.



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As Chair of the Bureau’s Working Group on ICT Innovation, I have welcomed the initiative to provide the Parliament’s administration with a clear AI strategy that addresses these concerns. Any AI-driven initiative should carefully assess the risks related to the use of AI systems, ensure proper transparency and accountability of such systems, and focus solely on empowering Members in their political mandate. A governance body shall also ensure that the political authorities of the Parliament are regularly updated on the evolution of the use of AI in the Parliament’s administration.

A more prepared European Parliament, and AI-savvy Members supported by a knowledgeable administration: this is our challenge for the next term.

Marc Angel, MEP

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HIGH-PERFORMANCE COMPUTING AND AI: MAJOR TOPICS FOR THE SPANISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU

During the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU, two important events took place at the Barcelona Supercomputing Center (BSC): the inauguration of the new MareNostrum 5 supercomputer and the sixth Gago Conference on European Science Policy.

The MareNostrum 5 is one of the 10 most powerful supercomputers in the world. It can process massive quantities of data and solve the most complicated calculation problems around today in practically real time. It is able to perform up to 314 million billion calculations per second. MareNostrum 5 is one of the three most powerful supercomputers in Europe, along with Finland's Lumi and Italy's Leonardo. These have been funded jointly by the European Union's supercomputing consortium – the European High-Performance Computing Joint Undertaking – and by the participating countries, which in the case of MareNostrum 5 were Spain (via the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities and the regional government of Catalonia), Turkey and Portugal.

This important piece of European infrastructure will pave the way for great advances in all areas of

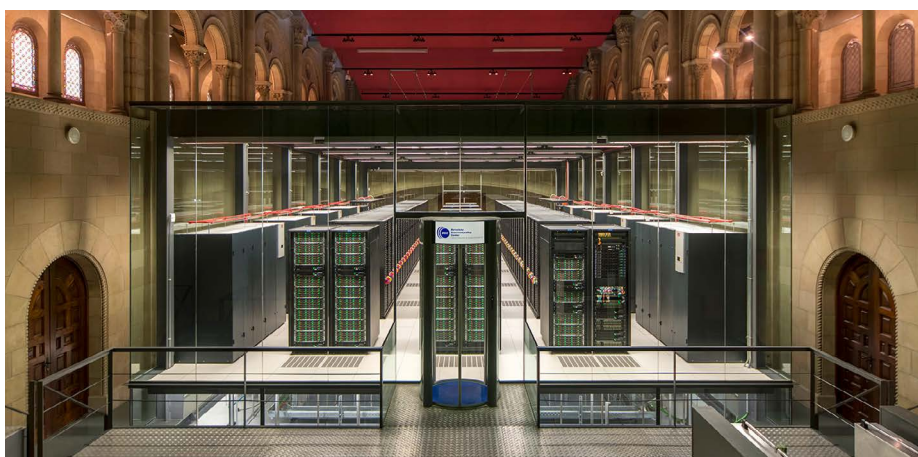
science, from the development of digital twins of planet Earth and the human body, to the pursuit of new treatments for illnesses such as cancer, and designs for healthier and more sustainable cities. It will help in the search for new energy sources and materials and speed up our capacity for research with AI. 'Digital twins' was the focus of the sixth Gago Conference on European Science Policy, organised by the BSC in conjunction with Ciência Viva, Portugal's national agency for scientific and technological culture. The conference was entitled 'How can advanced computing and the use of digital twins help shape our common future in uncertain and unstable times?' Topics considered were new forms of digital monitoring and governance in the health sector, urban planning and the environment. Also discussed was the development and use of digital twins and of artificial intelligence that is ethical, fair and transparent, and that will help spark change in our collective behaviour and help make our societies more cooperative and resilient. The Gago Conference is regarded as one of the most prestigious fora for international debate on European political science.

It is named in memory of Mariano Gago, who did so much for science in Europe.

During the conference, the extremely important Barcelona Manifesto for the promotion of responsible digital global observatories was introduced. Gago European Science Policy Prizes were also awarded to recognise inspiring leaders who have contributed to European scientific and technological advancements in a way which improves our collective future and shared prosperity. And so the annual seminar organised by the Former Members' Association at the European Parliament last December focused on all the issues brought up at the conference. Two top-level guests participated: Francesco Rulli, CEO of Querlo Customized Artificial Intelligence Solutions, which has offices in New York, Florence, Dubai and Taiwan; and Marta Cantero Gamito, Professor of IT Law at University of Tartu and Research Fellow at the School of Transnational Governance (European University Institute). Those who were unable to attend this very interesting seminar can watch the recording on the association's website <https://www.formermembers.eu/event/annual-seminar-2023/>. I recommend you take a look!

Coincidentally, the seminar took place at the same time as the trilogue meeting at which Parliament and the Council came to an agreement on the EU AI Act, the first piece of legislation on AI anywhere in the world.

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MareNostrum 5 © HPC Wire, May 2023

NAVIGATING THE AI FRONTIER: SAFEGUARDING DEMOCRACY IN THE 2024 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

On December 7th, 2023, I had the privilege of addressing the Former Member Association Seminar, exploring the pivotal theme of “Navigating the AI Frontier: Safeguarding Democracy in the 2024 European Elections.”

The discourse presented here is a blend of personal experiences and insights drawn from my digital twin powered by conversational AI, offering a unified expression of my opinions as both a human and my Digital Self.

The event unfolded within the European Parliament, where I addressed former members of the European Parliament. Following the presentation, a luncheon provided networking opportunities, and my active participation in a board meeting where we discussed the specifics of our technological endeavors.

I shared my journey of sponsoring the construction of 13 schools in Afghanistan, emphasizing education and financial independence for young women. This set the stage, acknowledging challenges posed by regional conflicts, immigration complexities, and the era of information overload.

Venturing into the world of AI, I highlighted its dual nature—a force that can exacerbate challenges like misinformation or contribute

positively to societal transformation. This exploration aimed to foster a nuanced understanding of AI’s role in shaping our democratic landscape.

Navigating the contemporary impact of AI, I discussed recent circumstances where AI influenced information and politics, shedding light on real-time implications for our democratic processes. Drawing parallels between “2001: A Space Odyssey” and AI responsibilities today, I underscored the need for a profound understanding of AI programming to prevent catastrophic outcomes—a reminder of the ethical responsibilities tied to AI development.

Examining the rapid evolution of AI and its implications for elections and society, I emphasized the importance of gathering questions from AI/DT (Digital Twins) while mitigating social media risks. This segment aimed to prepare us for challenges and opportunities in an evolving AI landscape.

In conclusion, I highlighted the significance of human agency and commitment in maintaining control over AI, issuing a call to action to proactively leverage AI for democratic improvement.

The final call emphasized the role of politicians in creating AI-powered Digital Twins and secure channels for voter engagement, urging a proactive use of AI to enhance democracy.

Education and awareness emerged as pivotal factors, emphasizing the need to ensure that stakeholders understand the implications of AI.

This focus on knowledge dissemination is a crucial step in navigating the complex intersection of AI and democracy.

This presentation aimed to provide a perspective on the dynamic relationship between AI and democracy, underscoring the roles of individuals and technology in shaping a democratic future. The final call urged a proactive approach to test and use conversational AI, understanding its potentials and limitations. Together, let us forge a path toward a resilient and informed democratic society.

“This presentation aimed to provide a perspective on the dynamic relationship between AI and democracy, underscoring the roles of individuals and technology in shaping a democratic future.”

I want to express my sincere gratitude to Hon. Isabella DeMartini for her introduction to the FMA, Hon. Monica Baldi for her warm hospitality and leadership, and Ms. Elisabetta Fonck and her dedicated team for supporting and coordinating my participation in Brussels. Additionally, I extend my thanks to all esteemed FMA members who engaged with me during my presentations, enlightening me with their questions and comments, thus providing valuable insights into the European Parliament and its decision-making processes.

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Francesco Rulli at the Annual Seminar on 6 December 2023
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THE POLITICAL TRILEMMA OF TECHNOLOGY GOVERNANCE



Artificial Intelligence (AI) has captured our collective imagination, promising remarkable efficiencies and breakthroughs in various sectors while posing significant risks and challenges. This dichotomy leads to a pressing question: What model of AI governance is both desirable and attainable?

Drawing from Rodrik's trilemma of global economic integration, on the occasion of the FMA' Annual Seminar 2023 entitled 'New technological transition: opportunities and challenge' on December 7, I proposed the political trilemma of technology governance. This trilemma illustrates the complex interplay between the state, society, and market forces in technological advancement, suggesting that a globally coherent AI governance system is adamantly complex. It posits that one cannot simultaneously achieve global AI governance, maintain national sovereignty, and foster democratic values. The debate mirrors that surrounding internet governance and the quest for a model that balances the demands of a hyperconnected society with the unknown impacts of revolutionary technology on society and democracy.¹

For example, digital sovereignty seeks to regain control, which in its extreme form may mean nationalizing

companies that develop frontier AI technologies. However, this poses risks, particularly in non-democratic nations, where it could lead to authoritarianism and compromise individual freedoms. It is crucial for regions like Europe to develop their own AI models, influencing by regulation and human-centered design.

"It is crucial for regions like Europe to develop their own AI models, influencing by regulation and human-centered design."

The geopolitical competition intensifies as nations compete for AI leadership, reshaping the role of nation-states. Markets and private companies are increasingly becoming critical geopolitical actors, and while their involvement is key for technological progress, reliance on private governance to safeguard individual rights is far from ideal.

Consider GenerativeAI: systems capable of producing sophisticated and original content, from text to art. These systems raise critical concerns about training methods, especially when involving copyrighted material and personal data. Generative AI has the potential to transform

democratic processes by enhancing citizen engagement and creating more informed public discourse through data analysis and tailored communication. However, it also presents risks, such as the spread of deepfakes and disinformation, which can undermine trust in democratic institutions. We are in the middle of a major transformation with the democratization of generative AI tools like ChatGPT and the many others that have filled the market up in the last months. These developments pose questions about the expectations we set for machines versus our legislators, and ourselves. For the EU legislator, an important challenge is to maintain the 'Brussels effect' –setting high standards that often become global benchmarks. An important part of this challenge is to engage in global multistakeholder conversations and ensuring meaningful participation of civil society. How do we ensure participation is not just a token but impactful and meaningful?

In conclusion, responsible AI governance is not merely a journey of policy-making –it is an ongoing process that must adapt to rapid technological changes with polycentric spheres of power. A multistakeholder governance model, despite its limitations, remains the best candidate to channel the unrelenting technological transition. However, we cannot ignore the absence of technology as a politically debatable issue in societal discourse and elections. Furthermore, a multistakeholder governance designed to overcome politics may risk input legitimacy. Thus, strong independent and democratic oversight is essential to navigate this trilemma and steer the course of our hyperconnected future responsibly.

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¹ <https://www.eui.eu/en/academic-units/school-of-transnational-governance/stg-projects/aidem>

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN EUROPE: A PERSPECTIVE FROM WITHIN



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At the European Parliament every citizen has a say. This is not just a slogan, as it is exemplified by the fact that we — two ordinary students — were given a chance to speak about the participation of youth in Europe, not only during the latest FMA Librorum, but also through this article.

Following the ideas mentioned by Michael Hindley at the event, we want to start by saying that, as part of Generation Z, we had the privilege of growing up while the European project was already in full swing. This made it easier to forget what our ancestors had to go through to build the borderless and democratic Europe we live in today.

There is therefore a risk that the European youth takes the role of the European Union for granted, seeing it with indifference, and overlooking the countless benefits that it brings to our everyday life. We believe that the root cause for this is the EU's lack of visibility among young people.

“There is a risk that the European youth takes the role of the EU for granted, seeing it with indifference, and overlooking the countless benefits that it brings to our everyday life.”

In 2022, 84% of people aged 16-29 years in the EU reported to Eurostat¹ using the internet every day to participate in social media networks. On these platforms, it is extremely rare to casually end up seeing content that is in any way EU-related. While it is true that on the official websites citizens can retrieve all sorts of information, targeted communication on the main media platforms should first play a significant role in sparking an initial curiosity for European initiatives. Particularly, the aim should be reaching those who are currently uninterested or completely unacquainted with the European project.

To give an example: while a great number of people are aware of the Erasmus+ programme thanks to the huge advertisement made in European universities, this is not the case for most youth-dedicated projects that the EU has launched, such as DiscoverEU or the European Solidarity Corps, who are rather promoted through word of mouth. The EU should consequently further exploit these means of communication to its advantage, realizing that it has the chance of reshaping its own narrative and the possibility to adapt it in a tailored way for its several audiences.

Even though it is crucial to critically reflect on what must be improved in the youth involvement process, we

should not underestimate the EU's ongoing success in representing a major hope for progress for many young Europeans. Firstly, thanks to all the enriching opportunities that we now see as the norm, but that were exclusively accessible by the elite in the past, such as studying abroad. Secondly, throughout our lives, we have already encountered multiple global crises, causing us to develop a growing awareness that we need cooperation to tackle the future challenges that lie ahead. In the face of such large-scale issues, the EU has a key role: reminding us that the more we stand united, the greater strength we have.

To conclude, we want to highlight what Monica Baldi thoroughly recommended during the FMA Librorum: it is fundamental that youth participation in Europe remains at the centre of discussion, not only in the next months, but more importantly after this year's European elections. Ultimately, this is a long-term project which, if pursued correctly, could make a substantial contribution to bringing European society closer together.

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¹<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20230714-1>

SCHUMAN TRAINEE PROGRAMME

SCHUMAN TRAINEESHIP AND MISSION TO STRASBOURG

During my European Parliament Schuman traineeship that I conducted in the Former Members Association (FMA) of the European Parliament, I had the incredible opportunity to participate in a mission to assist in the plenary session of the European Parliament in January 2024. Most trainees are given the opportunity to participate in an organised mission to Strasbourg, which helps us to better understand the functioning of the European Parliament in the context of its legislative process. The visit also made it possible to meet many fellow trainees that are not located in Brussels, but in Luxembourg or in one of the many EPLO offices across Europe. Thus, it was great to exchange experiences and views with these colleagues.

During this mission, trainees were given the opportunity to visit the European Parliament building in Strasbourg, where we were given a guided tour. The tour gave us many insights into the Strasbourg headquarters, its history and purpose, and it reiterated once again why it is important that the Parliament travels to Strasbourg once a month to strengthen European unity.



Former FMA Schuman Trainee Lisa Claire Reichert in Strasbourg © LCR



European Parliament in Strasbourg © LCR

In addition, during the mission we were given the incredible opportunity to visit both the European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe. These visits made it possible for us to better understand how these different and vital international organisations work together with the European Union. It was especially interesting to see the differences in the mode of operations between a supranational organisation such as the European Parliament, and a more intergovernmental organisation such as the Council of Europe. While both European, they work very differently and focus on different priorities so that they complement each other in that regard. We also had a meeting with representatives of the European Ombudsman who clarified the tasks and challenges of this particular institution. We were given insights in the process of investigation launched by the Ombudsman and how it contributes to the well-functioning of the European Union as a whole.

Lastly, I was able to observe multiple plenary debates in the Visitor's area in Strasbourg. It was particularly impressive to see the making and implementation of European politics in action. Plenary debates are always multi-faceted and treat many different policy areas, ranging from social issues, to foreign affairs. It is especially impressive to observe how politicians work together that come from many

different social, cultural, and nation backgrounds, and strive to find compromises and common solutions. I am very grateful that I was given this opportunity during my traineeship.

I would strongly encourage young citizens and young professionals to consider conducting a Schuman traineeship within the FMA. It has been an incredible opportunity, both on a professional and personal level. The FMA offers a unique perspective, granting both insights within the current work of the European Parliament, as well as the contributions of Former MEPs who continue to stay active and wish to contribute to the European project. To conclude, participating in the mission to Strasbourg was an incredible opportunity and honour and I would encourage everyone to visit the European Parliament premises in Strasbourg to experience the full spectrum of activities exercised by the Parliament.

Lisa Claire Reichert

*FMA Schuman Trainee from
September 2023 to January 2024*

EP TO CAMPUS PROGRAMME

TALKING TO STUDENTS IN MANIPAL

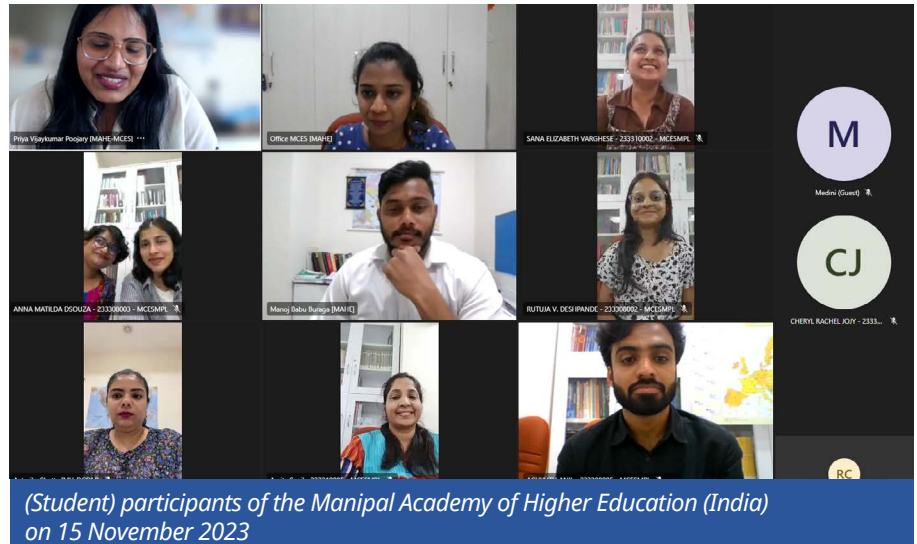
MANIPAL ACADEMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, INDIA | 15 NOVEMBER 2023 | ONLINE

On 15 November, 2023, I had the opportunity to give a talk as a former MEP for the first time when I met students at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education in India over Teams.

The students had chosen the upcoming EU elections as the subject of my talk. This is a tricky topic, as election results are always difficult to predict. I began by explaining how the elections are organised and talking about the impact that EU elections have on so many aspects of life.

The students were already knowledgeable about the EU and asked well-informed questions. They were even able to name candidates for President of the European Commission, and much of the discussion revolved around how the Commission President is elected.

At the end of the discussion, I wondered why the election for this particular post had particularly captured their interest. The reason might be because India is made up of 36 states and union territories.



The students were thinking about and comparing how these influence the election of India's government and Prime Minister. With a population of 1 428 billion, India is the world's largest democracy. India's Parliament is smaller than the European Parliament, with only 543 members.

These kinds of mini-lectures create a good basis for cooperation between India and the EU.

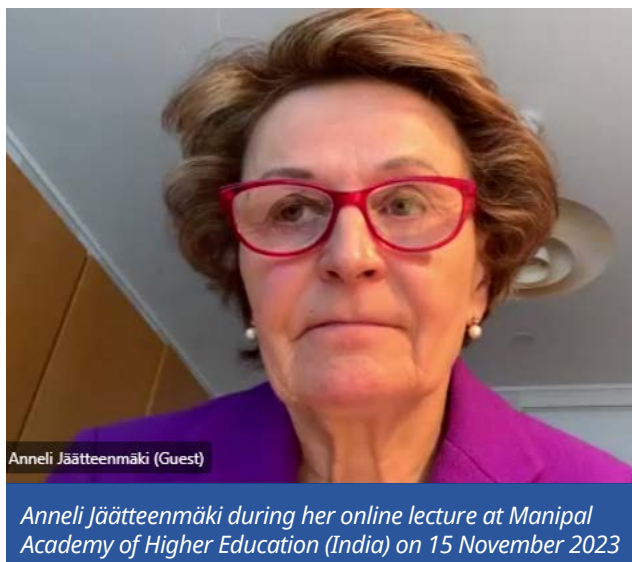
But do we know the names of the 36 states and union territories that go to make up India?

It is essential to prepare for your talk in advance and try to predict the questions you might be asked. I found the discussion with the young people rewarding, and it deepened my interest in India and its democracy.

"I found the discussion with the young people rewarding, and it deepened my interest in India and its democracy."

Not all democracies are the same: India's huge general elections take place over five weeks and involve more than 10 million election officials. In India, everything is big.

Anneli Jäätteenmäki
ALDE, Finland (2004-2019)



I wondered whether EU residents would be as interested in Indian elections and how things work there. We Europeans tend to be more inward-looking and self-centred.

We expect people in India to know the names of EU Member States, or at least that of our own country.

EU ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY SEEN FROM OUTSIDE: AN ONLINE-SEMINAR WITH STUDENTS FROM MACAU

UNIVERSITY OF MACAU, CHINA | 23 NOVEMBER 2023 | ONLINE

Prof. Paulo Canelas de Porto, Director of the Institute for European Studies of the University of Macau organized this Jean Monnet Seminar as occasion for Chinese graduate Students interested in global legal affairs to come to learn on EU Climate Policy, its historical development, the main goals pursued, the different key actions in which it translates and how the EU relates with other global partners in fighting against climate change.

The thirty participants, most of them already PhDs and Masters, participate in programs on European, International, and comparative Law. Therefore, we could expect a high-level debate.

Here my short introduction and some key-steps in history. EU environmental policy started in 1974 with the NGO-Forum "European Environmental Bureau" was founded, which today includes 160 Environmental NGOs from 35 countries. This was just after the first UN-Environmental-Conference 1972 in Stockholm. 1994 the European Environmental Agency was founded as part of the EU-Institutions. One decisive step was the Directive on clean water which started in 1998 and developed meanwhile is a complex framework Directive.

After the UN-Conference on Climate-Change 2015 in Paris the EU decided to become climate neutral until 2050. An essential step towards climate-neutrality is the European Green Deal from 2019. Actually, new laws on clean air, re-naturation of agricultural ground and noise pollution are discussed.

The debate with the participants was very lively. One of the first questions was, why environmental laws are so split into different policy fields and less compact. My only comment on this question is: EU as institutional system is much more complex than national systems and compromising is fundamental to find common decisions.

"The debate with the participants was very lively. One of the first questions was, why environmental laws are so split into different policy fields and less compact."



Birgit Daiber during her online lecture.

Apart from direct environmental laws and practice the participants were interested to know, how EU is supporting the transition of economy to reach the climate goals. To reduce CO2 emissions the EU introduced 2005 the "Emission Trading System" (ETS) which is the first and still largest carbon market and a policy instrument to combat climate change. Furthermore, and besides the structural Funds there are new Funds set up: The "Just transition" and the "Next Generation EU" Fund try to mobilize about 17.5 Billion Euro by public and private investments to help the Grand Transition of our societies are in.

Birgit Daiber

V, Germany (1989-1994)
bir.dai@hotmail.com



(Student) participants asking questions to Birgit Daiber during the online guest lecture at University of Macau, China

EXERCISING THE RIGHT TO VOTE: WHY DO WE VOTE?

UNIVERSITY OF VALLADOLID, SPAIN | 1 DECEMBER 2023 | IN PERSON



Beatriz Becerra during her lecture at University of Valladolid on 1 December 2023
© University of Valladolid, Spain

A political representative's purpose is to serve, in both senses of the word: serving people and being of service. I truly believe that speaking in front of 50 university students and academics at a workshop held in the University of Valladolid on the 2024 European elections was a valuable opportunity for me to do just that.

I believe this because we had the opportunity to debate how the political landscape has evolved since the 2019 European elections – in which the impact of the youth vote on the record increase in participation (50.9 % vs 42.6 % in [2014]) was crucial – and explore the youth vote's fundamental role in decision-making as well. The percentage of voters aged between 18 and 24 increased considerably, contributing significantly to the general increase in voting participation.

This demographic demonstrated renewed interest in European decision-making, marking a positive change in the way young people's political engagement is perceived.

It is important to highlight and remember that, although the specific figures vary between countries, the general trend suggests that there was an increase in political awareness and commitment among Europe's youth in the 2019 elections. This phenomenon brings to the fore the importance of involving young people in democratic processes and recognising that they can have a significant influence on Europe's political direction.

Thanks to a very engaged audience, I had the privilege of exploring the wide range of laws that exist across Member States on mandatory voting and the minimum voting age. These differences highlight the importance of creating common criteria to strengthen European democracy. Austria, Malta, Belgium and four federal states in Germany already allow people to vote in the European elections from the age of 16 (everyone aged 17 and over can vote in Greece). There are laws in Luxembourg, Belgium, Bulgaria and Greece that impose penalties or fines on anyone who does not vote in the elections.

Sharing up-to-date information about this allows us to form an opinion on the legal changes that affect our voting rights and debunk the myths and lies about the impact of voting on politics. At the same time, we reflected on the substantial reforms that are planned under the proposal for new rules for European elections, such as implementing a single constituency, strengthening EU parties, making adjustments to the minimum age for voting and running as a candidate and fixing 9 May as the only date for holding European elections from 2029.

"Thanks to a very engaged audience, I had the privilege of exploring the wide range of laws that exist across Member States on mandatory voting and the minimum voting age."

We European citizens will face decisive challenges during the next term, from consolidating European unity to managing the crisis and encouraging citizen engagement. These challenges require a collaborative and visionary focus to ensure the EU has a strong future. Of course, they also require the youth's civic commitment and continued interest in European politics, because it is young people who are going to make the difference, who are going to follow up on the (modest) commitments that were made at the Conference on the Future of Europe and go further still and create the new European Convention we all need.

Beatriz Becerra

ALDE, Spain (2014-2019)

beatrizbecerra66@gmail.com

THE EU-JAPAN COOPERATION IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER

SETSUNAN UNIVERSITY, JAPAN | 11 DECEMBER 2023 | ONLINE

While the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement is still in progress, the long-lasting Scientific cooperation between the EU and Japan never stops. One example is that of the Setsunan University, located in Osaka that has around 9500 students. The Faculty of Economics under the EP to Campus programme recently organised a lecture with the title "The Best Energy Mix for the EU". As an Active member of the FMA, a former member of the ITRE committee for a decade, and as a member of the ACER Administrative Board elected by the EP, I was honoured to be one of the speakers at the online event on the 11th December.

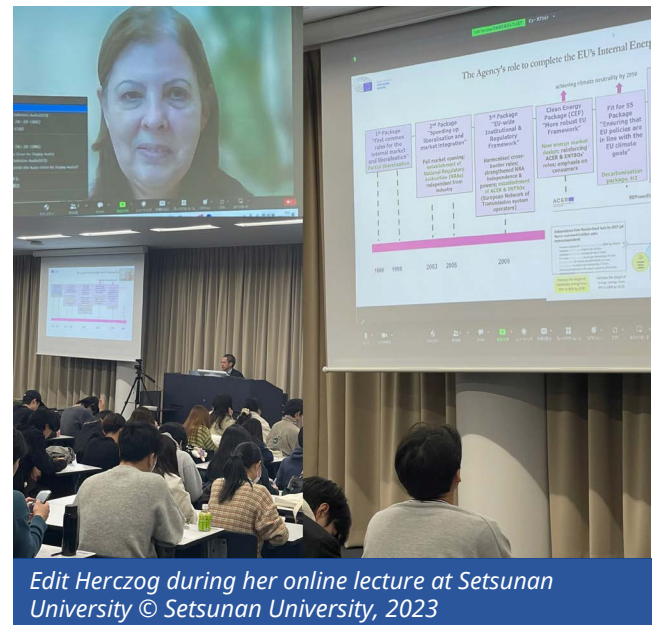
At the beginning of the lecture, Prof. Dr. Takashi Yanagawa, Dean of the Faculty, made an introduction stating that it is always good to see politicians and policies from other countries. The faculty aims to be open to the world and their website clearly demonstrates that; "We offer three professional courses, i.e., "International economy", "Regional economy" and "Tourism economy" and encourage students to analyse economy from both local and global perspectives. Students are expected to become professional economists through these courses." (<http://www.setsunan.ac.jp/english/faculty/keizai/>)

The lecture explained the progress of the European Energy Union from 2007- the first SET Plan and 2008 when the EU experienced its first interruption of the gas flow. Since that time, the EU Energy Policy and the Energy sector have changed a lot. The reverse flow of gas has been achieved and it has proved to be a critical success factor, especially last winter. The EU's global commitment to green the energy sector and change from fossil to renewable sources is ongoing and more or less on track.

The original trilemma (Sustainable, Affordable, and Diverse) is still there, but it can be achieved. While the mission impossible was made possible, the EU economy, especially the SME sector, suffered from the high prices. On the other hand, investment in the energy sector is necessary, but not an obvious choice for the investors.

The fast-moving technology sectors, such as Digitalisation and Data sectors are strong competitors to attract investment. Legislators have a role to play. The EU and Japan, as members of the G7, have a role to play and should prove that we are part of the solution and leaders in action. It was amazing to see over 130 students listening and making notes. I experienced interest and recognition that the EU could face the very fast transition from Russian gas to alternative sources and continue a mass-greening of the sector. The university has more male than female students, and therefore it was good to have a question from the female students asking about the complex and lengthy decision-making. I explained the nature of the EU decision-making and quoted my favourite African proverb: "If you wish to go fast, go alone; if you wish to go far, go together". Some students commented after that "The lecture was very clear and informative".

The success of EU to Campus depends on the teams behind. In this case, it was a cooperation of three teams:



From Japan: Professor Kubo Hiromasa who has a lengthy cooperation with Europe, is a member and former chair of the EUSA-JAPAN (European Union Studies Association in Japan) an academic membership organisation for academics, students, and practitioners who are interested in all aspects of the European Union. He is a co-author of the book "EU-Japan Security Relations: Trends and Prospects" (2018). Furthermore, the interpreter complemented the experience of the students.

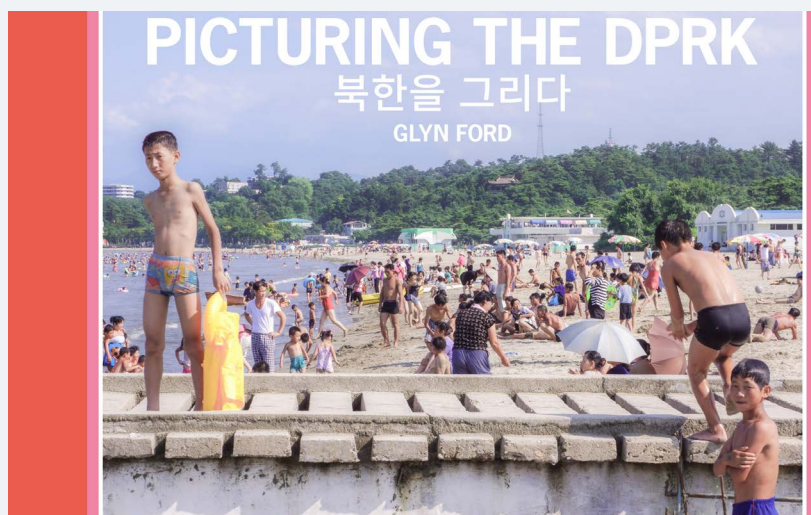
From EU: I received some very recent literature and slides from the ACER team and Director Mr Christian Zinglensen, and of course, I would like to thank the FMA team for continuing the EP to Campus programme over the years.

Edit Herczog
S&D, Hungary (2004-2014)
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PICTURING THE DPRK

by **Glyn Ford**, published by Spokesman Books (December 2023)



Asked to picture North Korea in your mind you might visualise Kim Jong Un watching the launch of a test nuclear missile, a military parade in Pyongyang, or you might recall footage of the Korea war. Beyond these images and scaremongering tales of political opponents being fed to dogs very few Europeans have much knowledge of North Korea and even fewer have visited.

Glyn Ford understands North Korea, or as it prefers to be known the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), better than most and has a more than a reasonable claim to be regarded among a handful of experts worldwide on the subject. As he points out in this fascinating bilingual (English and Korean) book, he has been visiting for over 25 years and has made around fifty visits.

Since its establishment in 1948 the DPRK has been ruled by the Kim family descending from the country's first leader Kim Il Sung through his son Kim Jong Il with

his grandson Kim Jong UN now the supreme leader. Much has been written about the Kim family often to do with the harsh treatment of dissidents, human rights abuses, and military adventurism. This book is not about them it is about the ordinary people of the DPRK. Glyn himself has written extensively on the DPRK in newspapers, academic journals and in a previous book "Talking to North Korea" he outlined a potential way out of the perpetual crisis the West and North Korea appear trapped in.

In this book Glyn allows the pictures talk for themselves. With little commentary he presents a fascinating insight into life North of the 38th parallel. Children at the zoo, playing on the beach, and on a visit to Kumgang Mountains is the stuff of everyday life taking place in the so-called hermit kingdom. The importance of education is captured in numerous photos showing modern facilities and one showing smartly attired University students clearly sweltering in the Korean heat.

The book does not shy away from the problems the DPRK faces, which depending on whose view you take, is the result of Western sanctions or economic mismanagement by the three generations of the Kim family. Beer bottles being used for makeshift drips in a hospital demonstrate a severe lack of medical equipment, men pushing an out of fuel car is a nod to the fact that petrol stations are few and far between, the reception area of the unfinished Ryugyong Hotel started in 1987 with work suspended between 1992 and 2008 with the exterior finished in 2011 and as yet unopened highlights the shortage of building material. So, the DPRK is not without its major challenges and not least among them is adequately feeding their twenty-six million men, women, and children poignantly illustrated by the malnourished children hungry in orphanages during the famine. Nevertheless, Glyn sets out to demonstrate that life in the hermit kingdom is not that much different from life in countless other parts of the world. If the West overreacts to Pyongyang's recent bellicose language or the nuclear standoff leads to open confrontation it is the ordinary people of the DPRK pictured going about their daily lives who will suffer.

After browsing this book, the next time an image of the DPRK comes to mind it might just be a Dolphinarium in Pyongyang, the Masikryong Ski Resort, or the Munsu Water Park.

David Martin

S&D, United Kingdom (1984-2019)
dmartinmep@yahoo.co.uk

UPCOMING EVENTS



ACTIVITIES

3
JULY 2024

Librorum (online)

On Wednesday 3 July 2024, FMA Member Andrea Manzella will present his newest publication 'Il Parlamento europeo', co-written with Nicola Lupo. Interpretation will be available in English, French and Italian. More information about this event and how to register will soon be available.

24-25
OCTOBER 2024

FMA Visit to Hungary

From 24 to 25 October 2024, the FMA will visit Hungary on the occasion of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Delegation will be led by FMA President Hänsch. More information about the programme and registrations will be communicated via mail and the FMA communication channels.

3-4
DECEMBER 2024

FMA Annual Events

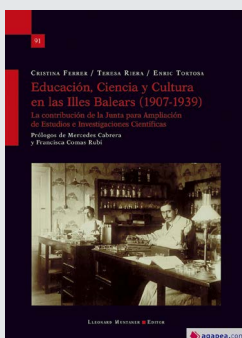
On Tuesday 3 December the FMA Cocktail Reception and Annual Dinner will take place in the Members' Restaurant of the European Parliament. The following day, the Annual Seminar will be preceded by Librorum. The Get-Together Lunch will close the FMA Annual Events on Wednesday 4 December.

FMA MEMBERS' PUBLICATIONS



TURKISH CENTENARIES ANNIVERSARY (1923-2023) BY ANNA KARAMANOU

The centenary of the Turkish Republic (29 October 1923-2023) motivated me to embark on a historical and political journey to research and understand the culture and politics of Turkey. The book examines the genesis and decline of the Ottoman Empire, the interaction with Europe, the establishment of the nation-state by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the great reforms, the politics of secularism and westernization, and the socio-political conditions of the rise of Political Islam and the hegemony of the "invincible" Recep Tayyip Erdogan from 2002 to the 2023 elections. My research summarizes the most important historical and political events, offering straightforward and unbiased knowledge, fodder for critical thinking, further research and a clear view of history. The element that gives it originality and uniqueness is that, along with the historical milestones, it also highlights women's struggles for rights and dignity, which official history often glosses over. I draw a lot of factual evidence from my time in the EP and my interventions in favour of human rights (1997-2004).



EDUCACIÓN, CIENCIA Y CULTURA EN LAS ILLES BALEARS (1907-1939) BY TERESA RIERA MADURELL

The Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas -JAE- (Board for the Extension of Studies and Scientific Research), created in 1907, was the melting pot of what has come to be called the "silver age" of our science, which ended with the defeat of the Spanish II Republic in 1939. One of the instruments used by the JAE was the granting of the so-called 'pensions', so that the research and teaching staff of our country could stay in centres of excellence or study trips outside Spain, and thus learn first-hand about the pedagogical renovation movements and the most relevant lines and methodologies of research of the time. This book presents the results of a research project aimed at describing the actions of the JAE in the Balearic Islands, its protagonists, results, consequences and impacts.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome
to the FMA



Peter Van DALEN
ECR, EPP, Netherlands
(2009 - 2019, 2019 - 2023)



Jeppe KOFOD
S&D, Denmark
(2014 - 2019)



Edvard KOŽUŠNÍK
ECR, Czechia
(2009 - 2014)



Catiuscia MARINI
SOC, Italy
(2008 - 2008)

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.



Brussels, 10 April 2024

Dear Member,

Re: RESULTS OF THE VOTES

Please find below the detailed results of the votes which took place at the Annual General Assembly of the Association on 10 April 2024:

1) The election for five members of the FMA Management Committee:

The following members were elected in the order below and will now serve on the Management Committee for a period of two years until the Annual General Assembly meeting of 2026:

1. Monica BALDI
2. Jean-Pierre AUDY
3. Paul RÜBIG
4. Edward McMILLAN-SCOTT
5. Klaus HÄNSCH

There were 170 votes cast, of which one was ruled invalid, leaving a total valid poll of 169.

2) The vote on the Annual Report 2023:

	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
To approve the Annual Report	169	0	1

There were 170 votes cast, of which none was ruled invalid, leaving a total valid poll of 170.

3) The vote on the Annual Accounts 2023:

	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
To approve the Annual Accounts	169	0	1

There were 170 votes cast, of which none was ruled invalid, leaving a total valid poll of 170.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took part in these elections.

Yours sincerely,

Françoise GROSSETÊTE

Scrutineer

Malcolm HARBOUR

Scrutineer

FMA AT WORK

A LEGACY OF EXPERIENCES TO CONTINUE BUILDING THE EUROPEAN UNION

At the end of this parliamentary term the Association published a handbook entitled *'Handbook for outgoing and former MEPs - A legacy of experiences to continue building the EU'* with practical assistance to those Members who leave the Parliament and former MEPs.

The purpose of the European Parliament Former Members Association is, among others, to bring former Members together and to provide them with a forum for meetings, discussions and cultural, scientific and social events.

Annual Seminar and policy events on current EU topics are organised, also in partnership with the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) or the European University Institute in Florence (EUI). Eminent speakers are invited to engage with current and former MEPs in a constructive dialogue and exchange on developments in the EU and future challenges.

Dinner debates with eminent speakers mainly from the European institutions. The aim of both events is to organise an informative and stimulating debate on developments and progress made in relation to priority issues on the European agenda in the presence of distinguished former and current MEPs. Further information is available at <https://www.formermembers.eu/annual-events/dinner-debates/>

Annual Memorial Service under the auspices of the European Parliament. The event pays tribute to all deceased former Members of the European Parliament.

A Former President of the European Parliament delivers the closing oration. The families of deceased former MEPs are invited to the service as well as to the cocktail and Dinner Debate of the Association as guests. Watch recordings of previous ceremonies: <https://www.formermembers.eu/annual-events/annual-memorial-service/>

The **Librorum event** is an opportunity for a member of our Association to present his or her book in the presence of prestigious guests in cooperation with FMA partners. The event takes place online with the participation of current and former parliamentarians. Watch recordings of previous editions: <https://www.formermembers.eu/annual-events-librorum/>. The Association informs the public of books published by former parliamentarians who are members of the Association via its website: <https://www.formermembers.eu/library/>

Twice a year, an FMA delegation **visits the country holding the presidency of the Council of the EU** to discuss relevant matters on the presidency's agenda with current and former members of parliament as well as government and local representatives. The FMA publishes a report of each visit in the Bulletin with the contribution of the delegation's members.

Further information is available at <https://www.formermembers.eu/political-dialogue/meeting-with-national-parliaments/>

EP to Campus programme

The aim of the programme is to enable universities all over Europe and beyond to utilise the expertise and experience of former MEPs who give freely of their time in order to assist in the work of promoting knowledge and understanding of the European Union and, in particular, the European Parliament. In addition to being able to explain the legislative process, former MEPs also address specialist policy areas.

If you are a (former) MEP and want to know more about the Association and play a full part in our activities, please visit FMA's dedicated webpage:

www.formermembers.eu/join-us



Cover of the Handbook for outgoing and former MEPs that was sent to all MEPs

IN MEMORIAM



Christos ZACHARAKIS

✝ 2 December 2023
EPP-ED, Greece (1999-2004)

He served as a Greek Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Zacharakis represented *Nea Dimokratia*.



Maria Lisa CINCIARI RODANO

✝ 2 December 2023
COM, Italy (1979-1989)

She served as an Italian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Ms Cinciari Rodano represented *Partito comunista italiano*.



Glenys KINNOCK

✝ 3 December 2023
PES, SOC, United Kingdom (1994-2004, 2004-2009)

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



Philip BUSHILL-MATTHEWS

✝ 10 December 2023
EPP-ED, United Kingdom (1999-2009)

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

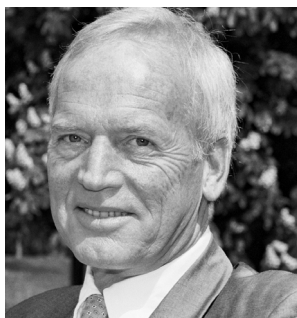


Jacques DELORS

✝ 27 December 2023
SOC, France (1979-1981)

He served as a French Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Delors represented *Parti socialiste*.

IN MEMORIAM



Doeke EISMA

☞ 29 December 2023

NA, LDR, The Netherlands (1981-1984, 1994-1999)

He served as a Dutch Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Eisma represented *Democraten 66*.



Karsten KNOLLE

☞ 3 January 2024

EPP-ED, Germany (1999-2004)

He served as a German Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Knolle represented *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*.



The Lord John E. TOMLINSON

☞ 20 January 2024

SOC, PES, United Kingdom (1984-1993, 1993-1999)

He served as a British Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Tomlinson represented the *Labour Party*.



Erik BERGKVIST

☞ 20 February 2024

S&D, Sweden (2019-2024)

He served as a Swedish Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Bergkvist represented *Arbetarepartiet - Socialdemokraterna*.



Nikola VULJANIĆ

☞ 2 March 2024

S&D, GUE/NGL, Croatia (2012-2014)

He served as a Croatian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Vuljanić represented *Hrvatski laburisti - stranka rada*.

FREEDOM OF POLITICIANS AND TRANSPARENCY



© Adobe Stock

TO RUSSIA WITHOUT LOVE

The decline of Russia from a reforming democracy to an autocratic, murderous regime under Putin is the tragedy of our times. But the European Parliament has always had a significant role during this period, and I was one of the players.

My first direct encounter with Russia was in 1972, while working as a young tour guide, taking US tourists to Leningrad. I visited former religious institutions in the city including the synagogue and various churches, as well as the Museum of Religions and Atheism. I was being watched and was later arrested, interrogated and held by the KGB for spying. This experience shaped my politics as an MEP from 1984-2014: in 2004 I was elected the last UK EP Vice-President, responsible for democracy and human rights. In 2015 I was one of nine British politicians – including Nick Clegg, UK deputy Prime Minister 2010-15 and Malcolm Rifkind, UK Foreign Secretary 1995-97 – on Putin's first visa blacklist.

After my election to the European Parliament in 1984, I founded what is now the Global Europe Human Rights and Democracy Programme - to facilitate democracy and civil society in the ex-Soviet bloc countries, with offices in Moscow, Prague and Warsaw. Today this €1.5 billion seven-year programme is the largest worldwide - and importantly the only EU programme to operate without a host country's consent, e.g. China or Cuba.

We set up election monitoring across Russia and trained Russian journalists in Ekaterinburg. We made important contacts across the new political hierarchy in Russia and the reforming countries within the former Soviet Union.

I visited most former Soviet Bloc countries and had many contacts with dissidents and was in Moscow during the October 1993 attempted coup d'état by old guard communists against President Boris Yeltsin and was the only outside politician to speak at

Garry Kasparov's July 2006 "Other Russia" rally, while Putin's young Nashi thugs rioted outside.

The parliament's Brussels press room was named after the journalist Anna Politkovskaya, murdered by Putin 2006.

With MEP colleagues like Nicholas Bethell and Guy Verhofstadt we engaged with the leaders of the mounting anti-Putin movement and initiated a range of debates, resolutions, conferences and other activities to draw attention to the collapse of the democratic system in Russia.

The culmination of these diplomatic activities was the visit by President Obama to Brussels in March 2014, when the reality of Putin's regime was becoming all too clear with its annexation of Crimea. In the same month the European Parliament passed the Magnitsky Sanctions – later Act – imposing a harsh regime on the corruption of Russian public officials (see picture).

Since then, Brussels has been persistent in its harder line against Putin's vengeful regime, with the degradation of politics across the EU financed by Moscow, including the corrupted Brexit vote in the UK in 2016, and then the rise of Putin's far- Right allies across Europe. The recent murders of Boris Nemtsov and Alexei Navalny have encouraged the EU and NATO to respond with renewed courage and conviction. In 2022 the European Parliament rightly condemned Russia as a state sponsor of terror.

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Edward McMillan-Scott (left) with Guy Verhofstadt and financier Bill Browder (right), author of *Red Notice*, as the European Parliament adopted the Magnitsky Sanctions in April 2014, aimed at corrupt Russian officials. Sergei Magnitsky, Browder's former accountant, was murdered in a Russian jail. Magnitsky's widow and son are also present.

KAILI, KURZ AND PENSIONS FUND

The typical division into three branches of government, sometimes called the trias politica model, includes a legislature, an executive, and a judiciary.

The freedom and protection for Politicians and the mechanisms for oversight process and responsibility. Freedom of press and high protection for the area of justice and the freedom of science and speech are core values of European Society.

Political immunity, also known as parliamentary immunity or legislative immunity, is a legal protection that shields government officials from being held personally liable for their decisions or statements made in the course of their official duties.

Protection from Political Persecution: Elected officials are safeguarded against politically motivated charges designed to hinder their legislative effectiveness or to silence dissent.

Representing the interests of their constituents and making decisions that affect the lives of many people. Without such protection, there is a risk that officials could be influenced in the performance of their duties, which will undermine the functioning of democratic governance.

Separation of Powers: Immunity upholds the division between the legislature, the judiciary, and the executive branches, ensuring that each operates within its jurisdiction without overstepping.

In many cases, political immunity is seen as a necessary safeguard to ensure the independence and effectiveness of politicians.

It allows them to engage in frank and open discussions, make difficult decisions, and represent diverse viewpoints without being unduly constrained by the fear of personal repercussions.

Freedom of Speech and Debate: It enables open and honest discussion within legislative chambers, considered essential for the democratic process. Lawmakers can express opinions and debate policies without the threat of legal recourse. The greatest privilege is to use the freedom of speech for those who have no voice.

Avoiding abuse of political immunity is important to strike a balance between protecting the rights of politicians in the exercise of their duties and their accountability. This requires clear legal frameworks and mechanisms for oversight and responsibility.

The term “rule of law” is a foundational principle of governance that suggests that all persons, institutions, and entities, public and private, are accountable to laws and to the statute of European Union, decided by parliament and council on the advice of commission and should be respected by all decisions makers (Immunity, Pensions, Social rights).

Careful consideration and a commitment to upholding the principles of transparency, accountability, and the rule of law is required.

The rule of law aims to protect individual rights, ensure justice, and prevent discrimination. Laws are subject to interpretation by the courts but respecting the



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intention and decision of law makers. The challenge is in creating and enforcing laws that respect and protect free expression without censorship.

Rules and laws are not used to suppress different peoples' protected expressions or to enforce conformity in a way that violates free speech protections and immunity or other human rights.

Political groups should not misuse the judiciary power against others.

Checks and Balances: In many systems, immunity is not absolute, and legislators can still be held accountable through specific processes, maintaining a balance between autonomy, tolerance, and responsibility.

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