



SUNYMEU 2023 ALTERNATIVE AGENDA PROPOSALS

Proposed by Member States, submitted by the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, and finalised by the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, European Council President, European Commission President, and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

22 March 2023

Table of Contents

1. Proposal for addressing the 'Nation First Reflex' During Supranational Crises	2
Proposed by The Netherlands	2
Background	2
Recommendations	2
Suggested Sources	3
2. Two Unions with a Joint Vision:	4
Proposal to further strengthen African Union and European Union Relations	4
Proposed by Italy	4
Background	4
Recommendations	6
Suggested Sources	7
3. Proposal for Democratic Reform in the European Union focusing on the European Parliament	8
Proposed by Germany	8
Background	8
Recommendations	9
4. Proposal for coordinating an action plan with regards to the Enlargement region, particularly concerning Kosovo, Ukraine and Turkey	10
Proposed by Italy	10
Background	10
Recommendations	11
Suggested Sources	13

1. Proposal for addressing the ‘Nation First Reflex’ During Supranational Crises

Proposed by The Netherlands

Background

The phrase ‘Nation First Reflex’ describes the growing tendency among some European Union (EU) members to put their national interests ahead of the interests of the EU as a whole. The global economic crisis, the migration crisis, and the emergence of populist and nationalist movements across Europe have all contributed to this tendency. The economic crisis that started in 2008 is one of the main causes of the Country First Reaction. Some EU Member States, particularly those in southern Europe such as Greece, have battled with high debt and unemployment levels. Those who feel that their national governments are being pressured as a result are irritated by this. The Nation First Reaction has also been influenced by the refugee crisis that started in 2015. The acceptance of refugees and migrants has been resisted by many Member States, and some have even considered leaving the EU as a result. The continued refugee crisis has caused conflicts among the Member States, undermining the idea of unity on which the EU was founded. Overall, several Member States and their citizens are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the EU, as seen by the Nation First Reflex. It is unclear how this tendency will develop in the next few years or whether it will result in a renewed commitment to solidarity and cooperation among Member States rather than more internal fragmentation and differentiation.

Recommendations

1. The European Council shall have the power to declare a Union wide state of emergency.
 - a. Upon recognition of a state of emergency, the European Council must determine amongst themselves whether this issue shall be handled on a Member State basis or handled at the EU level.

- b. The European Council may be permitted to make different decisions on separate issues within the same emergency due to the uncertainties that may arise at the beginning of an emergency.
 - c. If 25% of the European Council or more vote against a proposal in an emergency, they may choose to opt out of the decisions. However, if this threshold is not met, then all Member States are required to abide by the European Council's decision.
2. The European Union will invest more time, money, and resources to prepare for national emergencies.
- a. The Council of the European Union shall work in conjunction with the European Commission, and any other necessary parties, to determine the costs, in regards both to the economy and human life, that could have been avoided during previous emergencies.
 - b. The proportion of the EU budget going to national intelligence and medical research shall increase to identify emerging/potential emergencies.
 - i. To assist with this objective, a Watch Party shall be established, which will report directly to the European Council. Members of this group will dedicate their time to searching for economic, social, and health crises that could soon become emergencies. They will submit formal recommendations to the Council of the European Union based on their research.

Suggested Sources

<https://carnegieeurope.eu/2022/10/18/eu-and-creative-and-destructive-impact-of-crises-pub-88145> <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/> <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/european-sovereign-debt-crisis.asp>
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/659385/EPRS_STU\(2020\)659385_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/659385/EPRS_STU(2020)659385_EN.pdf)

2. Two Unions with a Joint Vision: Proposal to further strengthen African Union and European Union Relations

Proposed by Italy

Background

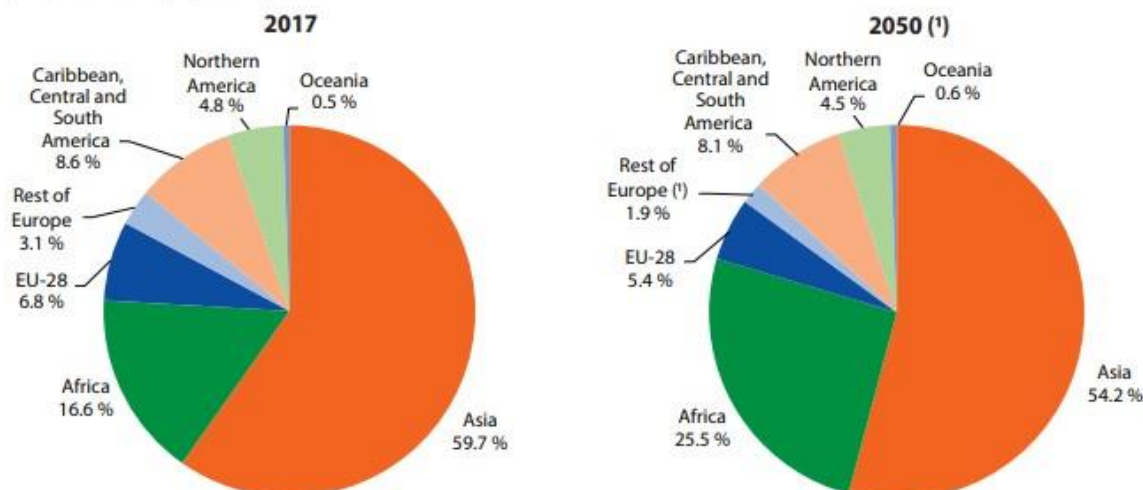
Africa and Europe have a deep and wide-ranging relationship. At its narrowest point, only 15 kilometres separate Europe and Africa in the Strait of Gibraltar and Italy's island of Lampedusa at about 113 kilometres from Tunisia is closer to North Africa than to the Italian mainland. Indeed, all Europeans have their origins in Africa. Europeans also have a special relationship and obligation related to European colonialism that have continued since mid-20th century independence. The continent of Africa, with over 50 sovereign countries, is experiencing a 'demographic dividend' (2 of every 5 children will be born in Africa by 2050). Africa also has one-third of the world's mineral reserve and 60% of the world's uncultivated arable land (The Centre for Africa-Europe Relations, 2023). The EU is heavily invested in Africa, with foreign direct investment of €222 billion, compared to €42 billion from the US and €30 billion from China (2017). Europe is also the most important donor of official development aid (ODA). Irregular migration from African countries to the EU has become increasingly controversial and strained domestic politics in almost every EU member state. But migration pressures will not end given the population imbalances between the two continents. In the EU, the share of the population aged 65 and over is projected to reach 30 per cent by 2060, compared to 19 per cent in 2017, with the median ages highest in Germany and Italy (Eurostat, 2019). By 2050 the countries of Africa will account for 25.5 percent of the world's population and the EU's only about 5 percent. (See Figure 1.1 from Eurostat 2019, below.)

Irregular African migration to Europe will continue so long as Europe's ageing population requires more labour (pull) and so long as there are limited economic opportunities for a relatively youthful population in African countries (push).

The EU's regional relationships with African countries take place bilaterally and through two international governmental organisations: the 79-member Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific (OACP) and with the African Union (AU) (founded in 2002, 55 Member States). Since the AU's establishment, the AU and the EU have focused on agreeing a comprehensive

strategic partnership. Over the past decades, the AU-EU strategic partnership has become the most comprehensive partnership the AU has with any non-African actor (Rein, 2017).

Figure 1.1: World population by regions, 2017 and 2050
(% of total world population)



EU funding to support the AU-EU partnership is through two facilities: the Pan-African Programme and the European Peace Facility (EPF). The EU also provides funding to ACP countries through the European Development Fund (EDF) to finance immediate humanitarian food aid and food production and resilience of food systems. Another EU programme, The Global Gateway, is a partnership between EU Member States, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) focusing on the digital sector, climate and energy, transport, health, and education and research. The fund is authorised to invest up to EUR 300 billion until 2027.

AU-EU relations also need to be reinvigorated and reshaped in a post-Brexit world. France and the UK have been the major voices advocating closer engagement in Africa. With the UK's exit from the EU, there have been questions as to whether the EU Member States collectively appreciate the importance of African-European relations. The rethinking of AU-EU relations in the post-Brexit era is still in its early stages, with major dialogue delayed by the unsettled nature of Brexit negotiations, the COVID-19 pandemic, China's 'no-strings attached' approach to relations with African countries, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Despite these challenges, in its February 2022 AU-EU summit, African and European leaders agreed on a joint vision for a renewed partnership. The aims of the partnership are solidarity, security, peace and sustainable and sustained economic development, and prosperity for AU and EU citizens.

Recommendations

1. The AU and EU need to work together to ensure more sustainable farming practices in African countries and provide an outlet for sustainable products in the EU market. The EU should also phase out import tariffs on foodstuffs from African countries. Finally, the EU should work with the AU in supporting efforts to strengthen regional supply chains to increase intra-Africa trade in foodstuffs and fertilisers.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council and the Commission: work together to build a permanent EU corps of sustainable farming experts to be situated in EU and member state offices/embassies throughout Africa.

2. At the 27th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 27), the EU led the way for agreement to a ‘loss and damage’ (L&D) fund to compensate developing countries suffering from climate change damage. The EU now needs to take leadership in the UN to ensure that this fund is developed and that the developed countries pay their fair share into this fund.

Commission: Instruct Frans Timmermans, Commissioner for the Green Deal, to act expeditiously in ensuring that this fund is in place prior to COP 28’s 2023 meeting.

3. Debt cancellation. The multiple crises African countries have faced in recent years has created untenable debt in many countries. The EU should work with the IMF to arrange debt cancellation.

Council: Ecofin Council to work on a plan with the IMF.

4. It is time that the AU be given a place in the G-20.

FAC: Prepare a report for the G-20 advocating for the AU’s (full voting) membership in the G-20.

5. There have been occasional Africa-Europe Youth Summit planned as part of the AU-EU efforts to build people-to-people links. This summit should become an annual event that is hosted alternatively in an EU and AU city. Funding can be allocated from an existing EU programme to provide scholarships for youth participation.

Commission: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) issue a CFP for an INGO to develop and manage this event.

6. Establish a ‘diversity lottery’ for AU Member States. This lottery will include nationals of those AU Member States that have negotiated return agreements with the EU to accept the return of irregular migrants. The first year of the lottery will permit 50,000 randomly selected people

from a list of AU countries to obtain permanent residency in an EU member state. Each EU member state will take a certain percentage based on a population key.

Commission: The Commission is asked to deliver a White Paper (no later than 1 September 2023) outlining how the Diversity Lottery will function.

7. The EU should support the removal of tariffs on textiles and garments manufactured in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The factories must be under either African or European ownership to qualify for tariff-free importing into the EU.

Commission: The Commission will deliver a White Paper assessing whether this is doable within WTO rules for developing countries and provide a schedule for decreasing tariffs over a ten-year period.

Suggested Sources

Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/667 of 21 April 2022, (2021). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32022D0667&from=EN>

European Union. (2021). *European Peace Facility*. https://fpi.ec.europa.eu/what-we-do/european-peace-facility_en

EuroStat. (2019). *The European Union and the African Union*. A Statistical Portrait. 2019 Edition.

Holder, J., Leatherby, L., Troianovski, A., & Cai, W. (2023). The West Tried to Isolate Russia. It Didn't Work. *The New York Times*.

IMF. (2022). *Africa Food Prices Soaring Amid High Import Reliance*. <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/09/26/africa-food-prices-are-soaring-amid-high-import-reliance>

Rein, C. (2017). The Prospects for the Future of European Union–African Union Relations in Uncertain Times. *European Review*, 25(4), 550-559. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1062798717000217>

reliefweb. (2022). *MobileRemit Africa Report*. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/mobileremit-africa-report-enar>

The Centre for Africa-Europe Relations. (2023). *Europe-Africa Relations in a Multi-Crisis World*. https://ettg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/ETTg-Report_Europe-%E2%80%93Africa-relations-in-a-multi-crisis-world.pdf

3. Proposal for Democratic Reform in the European Union focusing on the European Parliament

Proposed by Germany

Background

Democracy is integral to the European Union's functioning. The Treaty of Lisbon declares that 'The functioning of the Union shall be founded on representative democracy'.¹ The same treaty also states that 'Citizens are directly represented at Union level in the European Parliament'.² With over seven-hundred members, the European Parliament is one of the largest democratically-elected legislatures in the world. It plays an important role in the EU's legislative process. However, some feel that the European Parliament does not do enough to address the Union's stated aims of promoting democracy.

In 2009, the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany noted that despite reforms implemented through the Treaty of Lisbon, EU Member States 'remain the decisive holders of public authority, including Union authority'.³ The EU's emphasis on the state, rather than the citizen, has complicated the democratic process. For instance, while members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are directly elected by European citizens, how they are elected is determined by the Member States themselves. There are twenty-seven electoral laws governing elections to the European Parliament, corresponding to the twenty-seven EU Member States. The lack of a single electoral code, or the harmonisation of national electoral codes for MEP elections, complicates the management of parliamentary affairs. Therefore, it is necessary for the Union to consider how Parliament's electoral system can be reformed to ensure consistency.

Aside from European Parliamentary elections, concerns have been raised over Parliament's powers. Parliament cannot initiate legislation, as that is a power chiefly exercised by the European Commission. Parliament can approve European Commissioners (and, of particular

¹ European Union, "Treaty of Lisbon" (2007), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:12007L/TXT>.

² Ibid.

³ Federal Constitutional Court of Germany, "Act Approving the Treaty of Lisbon Compatible with the Basic Law; Accompanying Law Unconstitutional to the Extent That Legislative Bodies Have Not Been Accorded Sufficient Rights of Participation," *Federal Constitutional Court of Germany* (Karlsruhe: Federal Constitutional Court of Germany, June 30, 2009), <https://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/EN/2009/bvg09-072.html>.

importance, the President of the European Commission), but it cannot nominate individuals to the Commission. That privilege is held by the European Council. Although Parliament is more influential today than it was at its inception many decades ago, present-day limitations on parliamentary authority deter many from voting in parliamentary elections. According to France 24, most Europeans prefer voting during national elections than during parliamentary elections because they feel that national elections are more important.⁴ France 24 also reported that many Europeans feel disconnected from Union politics, contributing to low voter turnout.⁵ The lack of voter participation weakens the EU's democratic mandate, necessitating reform to Parliament's role in the legislative process.

Recommendations

1. The European Council should consider the harmonisation of national electoral laws concerning European Parliamentary elections.
2. The European Council should consider initiatives to increase voter turnout for European Parliamentary elections.
3. The European Commission should propose legislation for the European Parliament – or amendments to the Treaties of the European Union provided that normal legislation is incompatible with the treaties – on providing Parliament with the power of initiative. What matters Parliament has initiative over is left to the Commission to decide.

⁴ France 24, “Why Turnout Has Dropped in European Elections,” France 24, May 19, 2019, <https://www.france24.com/en/20190519-why-turnout-has-dropped-european-elections>.

⁵ Ibid.

4. Proposal for coordinating an action plan with regards to the Enlargement region, particularly concerning Kosovo, Ukraine and Turkey

Proposed by Italy

Background

Certain criteria must be met for accession. These criteria - known as the Copenhagen criteria - were established by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993. The Copenhagen criteria includes stable and democratic governance, adherence to a stringent human rights regime which includes the rights of persons belonging to minorities, a functioning, stable market economy, and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces must be in place before the candidate state can join the European Union. A candidate state must also have the administrative and legislative capability to implement the EU *acquis communautaire* (or the aggregate body of all currently existing EU legislation, legal acts, and court decisions), and to continue to respect and promote the EU's values. In order for an applicant to begin the accession process, the request for candidate status must be agreed by all EU Member States, after which the screening stage of negotiations can begin in order to enable applicants to focus on implementing all 35 chapters of the *acquis*.

These chapters cover issues such as human rights, justice systems, environmental policy, taxation, the customs union. In order for candidate states to adopt these chapters, they require a great deal of economic aid.

The Western Balkan applicants are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and North Macedonia. Bosnia and Herzegovina has been granted candidate status as of December 2022, and it will soon enter the screening stage of the negotiations process. Despite being granted candidate status in 2005, tensions between North Macedonia with both Greece and Bulgaria stalled the opening of the negotiations process until 2022. Montenegro was granted candidate status in 2010, and has been in the negotiations process since 2012. Serbia was granted candidate status in 2012 and has been in the negotiations process since 2013. Albania was granted candidate status in 2014 and has been in the negotiations process since 2018. In response to the February 2022 invasion by Russia, Ukraine and Moldova were granted candidate status on 23 June 2022. Georgia applied for candidate status alongside Ukraine and Moldova on 3 March

2022, although their candidacy was denied pending the achievement of certain requisite criteria. However, due to ongoing tensions with Serbia and the refusal of Serbia, Greece, Spain, Romania, Slovakia, and Cyprus to recognize their sovereignty and independence, Kosovo has not and foreseeably will not be granted candidate status. Similarly, Turkey has been negotiating with the Commission since 2005, although due to their refusal to accept the Additional Protocol of the Ankara Association Agreement to Cyprus along with rule of law concerns, negotiations have stalled.

The EU aid for candidate countries includes the 2021-2027 Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) III budgetary envelope of €14.162 billion. In 2021 alone, the European Investment Bank invested €853 million in the Western Balkans for infrastructural development, bringing the total number of investment loans in the region to just under €3 billion since 2000. The Western Balkans currently receive a great deal of financial support toward stabilising their economies, developing adequate healthcare policies, implementing green energy and climate change resilience measures per the Stabilisation and Association process. However, financial support alone is insufficient. More dialogue is needed.

Recommendations

1. The Council should increase dialogue between EU Member States and candidate states with the intent to advise candidate states on adopting the 35 *acquis* chapters. Therefore, the EU should organise an intergovernmental conference of all candidate and potential candidate states, to be held on an annual basis to more effectively track and record progress and to prioritise communication among all actors.
2. Candidate states making progress toward Green Deal (GD) targets will receive special acknowledgement and potential funding to adopt these measures pending accession into the EU.
 - a. Coordinate with the World Bank to fund infrastructural development in candidate states to fast track the implementation of nuclear energy in compliance with the Green Deal.
 - b. Incentivise increases in private sector investments via the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) Strategy toward green energy, with the aim of making it more competitive in the global economy.
3. In order to incentivise progress toward adoption of the *acquis* chapters, as well as to make the transition into the European market more seamless and less disruptive to both candidate state economies and the European market as a whole, the the European Commission should consider a tiered trade negotiations timetable,

wherein when candidate states accomplish clearly articulated certain milestones, they will be granted participation in designated EU programmes.

4. The Commission should actively make steps toward recommending candidate status to Kosovo.
 - a. Referencing the European Parliament resolution of 8 July 2010 on the European integration process of Kosovo, the European Council calls on all EU Member States to recognise the Republic of Kosovo's independence and advise them on furthering the development of democratic norms to adopt best European practices.
 - b. The Council should act on EULEX Mission's Operations Pillar and continue to offer aid in the development of Kosovo Police's capabilities, in conjunction with the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), to enable Kosovo to meet the Copenhagen criteria regarding rule of law and administrative functions.
 - i. The Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) should enact the EULEX Mission's Operations Pillar and engage in peacekeeping actions in the region to mediate violent protests in Northern Kosovo.
 - ii. Considering the ongoing tensions in the region, the Council should adopt a decision to extend the EULEX Mission until 14 June 2025.
 - c. Following the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Agreement on the path to normalisation between Kosovo and Serbia of 27 February 2023, the EU and all Member States should offer any support needed to enable the parties to adhere to the roadmap for implementation of the agreement, which both have agreed as of 18 March 2023, in keeping with the EU's stated goals of international peace and cooperation.
 - d. As of 18 July 2018, Kosovo has achieved all visa liberalisation requirements per the 'Schengen *acquis*'. The Council, in conjunction with the European Parliament, should promote Kosovo's acceptance into the Schengen area.

5. Recognising the European Council's June 2022 decision to grant Ukraine candidate status and reflecting on the considerable efforts that Ukraine has demonstrated towards meeting the objectives underpinning its candidate status for EU membership.
 - a. The European Union will continue to strengthen the Deep and Comprehensive Trade Area in preparation for Ukraine's entrance into the EU's Single Market
 - b. The European Council acknowledges the considerable efforts that Ukraine has demonstrated in recent months towards meeting the

objectives underpinning candidate status for EU membership. It welcomes Ukraine's reform efforts in such difficult times and encourages Ukraine to continue on this path and to fulfil the conditions specified in the Commission's opinion on its membership application in order to advance towards future EU membership.

- c. The Commission is directed to report by the end of the Swedish Presidency the remaining requirements Ukraine must meet to satisfy the Copenhagen criteria.
6. Continue to strive to break the negotiation impasse with Turkey by pursuing three distinct tracks:
- a. Track 1: The Commission to explore a bespoke agreement along similar lines with EU agreements with Norway and Switzerland.
 - b. Track 2: Building on the security partnership between many EU Member States, Turkey, and NATO, explore the integration of Turkey into Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).
 - c. Track 2: Focus on modernising and strengthening the EU-Turkey Customs Union, especially with respect to building on the one provisionally closed chapter (Science and Research) by prioritising the following chapters: Free Movement of Capital, Taxation, Environment; Consumer & Health Protection; Food Safety, Veterinary & Phytosanitary Policy; and Trans-European Networks.
 - d. Continue to dialogue with Turkey regarding human rights issues (especially with respect to the treatment of Kurds), strengthening the separation of powers (particularly re-balancing and democratising with respect to the legislative and judicial governing institutions, and rule of law challenges).

Suggested Sources

The European Council. EU Enlargement Policy
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/>