



SUNYMEU 2024 AGENDA

Proposed by Member States, submitted by the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, and finalised by the Belgian 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

5 April 2024

Contents

- EUROPEAN COUNCIL 5
- Proposal 1: A Convention for the Revision of the Treaties 5
 - Member State Proposing: France 5
 - Background 5
 - Recommendations 7
- Proposal 2: Revitalise the European and Allied Defence Initiative (READI) and the Ongoing Humanitarian Crisis in Ukraine 9
 - Member States Proposing: Denmark & Lithuania 9
 - Background 9
 - Common Defence 9
 - Humanitarian Assistance 9
 - Recommendations 9
- FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL 12
- Proposal 3: The Role of Space in the EU's Strategic Autonomy Strategy & Strengthening Security 12
 - Member State Proposing: Belgium 12
 - Background 12
 - Recommendations 13
- Proposal 4: Israel-Hamas-Palestine Conflict 15
 - Member States Proposing: France and Ireland 15
 - Background 15
- ECOFIN 18
- Proposal 5: Responsible Economic Growth in the Single Market 18
 - Member States Proposing: France & Ireland 18
 - Background 18
 - Recommendations 19
- Proposal 6: Union-wide Reforms to Address the Housing Crisis 22
 - Member States Proposing: Austria & the Netherlands 22
 - Background 22
 - Recommendations 23

COREPER II.....	25
Proposal 7: Addressing Climate Resilience in the European Union.....	25
Member State Proposing: Germany.....	25
Background.....	25
Recommendations.....	26
Proposal 8: Anti-Discrimination, Eliminating Violence Against Women, and Ensuring Reproduction Rights	28
Member State Proposing: France.....	28
Background.....	28
Recommendations.....	28
Proposal 9: Support for European Agriculture	30
Member State Proposing: France & Slovakia.....	30
Background.....	30
Recommendations.....	30
ALTERNATIVE AGENDA ITEMS	32
Alternative Proposal 1: Pax in Sanitas: Proposal for Bolstering Resilience Against Encroaching Global Health Crises	32
Member State Proposing: The Netherlands	32
Background.....	32
Recommendations.....	33
Alternative Proposal 2: Renegotiating the Windsor Framework to Include the Republic of Ireland and Align with the Belfast Agreement.....	35
Member State Proposing: Ireland	35
Background.....	35
Recommendations.....	36
Alternative Proposal 3: Migrant Crisis	37
Member States Proposing: Denmark & Italy.....	37
Background.....	37
Recommendations.....	38
Alternative Proposal 4: Energy Security.....	39
Member State Proposing: Bulgaria & Lithuania	39
Background.....	39
Recommendations.....	40

Alternative Proposal 5: Protection of the Digital World and Investment for Innovation and Security in the European Union 41

 Member State Proposing: France 41

 Background 41

 Recommendations 41

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

Proposal 1: A Convention for the Revision of the Treaties

Member State Proposing: France

Background

The current version of the Treaties entered into force on 1 December 2009 (Lisbon Treaty). Since 2009, the EU has faced a succession of crises, including a banking crisis, a sovereign debt crisis, a new ‘meltdown’ of the eurozone, the COVID-19 pandemic, and particularly Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. The Union also faces more complex geopolitical challenges since the Lisbon Treaty came into force. The European Council has agreed to admit nine additional states to the EU and is in various stages of chapter negotiations with these candidate states. Despite a gradual pattern of increased integration (‘ever closer union’) reflected in changes to the Treaties since the founding of the European Economic Community (Treaty of Rome, 1957), the increased integration has not been accompanied by substantial institutional change. The Conference on the Future of Europe, which concluded on 9 May 2022, included several conclusions that can only be implemented by changes to the Treaties. Therefore, it is proposed that the EU convene an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) to discuss Treaty changes.

Decision-making

The European Parliament has gradually been reformed to have many of the powers associated with a legislative body in democratic system, including being the only directly elected EU institution. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) were originally appointed rather than elected. The EP gradually gained equal power in more policy areas (as the ‘co-operation’ procedure in several policy areas was replaced by co-decision or the ordinary legislative procedure – OLP – as it was renamed in the Lisbon Treaty).

Nevertheless, the EP continues to be denied the key legislative power found in democratic systems: the right of initiation of legislation and the power to appoint and dismiss the executive. So, too, the EP has merely consultative power (rather than acts as a co-legislator) with the Council (of Ministers) on many issues of direct concern to European citizens including foreign affairs, defence, and EMU.

Due to many policy areas that continue to require unanimity (rather than QMV) in the Council and European Council, it is already very difficult to achieve consensus on matters of crucial importance to the Union. These include enlargement, the rule of law, foreign policy, defence policy, the MFF, and fiscal policies. This situation will be exacerbated with further enlargements and will lead to gridlock in the Council. With the increased use of QMV, the Council has become a more efficient decision-maker characterised by negotiations and compromise.

While the EP's decision-making is transparent, the Council's is not. The secrecy of Member State negotiations within the Council undermines transparency requirements in democratic systems and engenders mistrust of the Union among Europe's citizens.

The configuration of the Council is quite confusing to European citizens. Indeed, it is the only legislative body that sits in committee (Council configurations) rather than a complete body. Discussions should be opened as to how the Union might reform the Council to mirror that of an upper chamber in a legislative body. How might this work? Should representation be decided strictly on the basis of Member State (as in a federal system such as the US with two senators per state and, indeed, one Council member per Member State as it is now) or should Member State population be a consideration?

The Union's Institutional Framework

The Executive

The European Commission (heretofore, the 'Commission') acts as the EU's executive. In this respect, the Commission's institutional role has not changed since the EEC's founding. Prior to 2004 Nice Treaty (which focused on changes necessary prior to the 'Big Bang' enlargement admitting Central and Eastern European countries), the larger states (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK) each had two commissioners with the other Member States having just one commissioner each. In the Nice Summit, the heads of government had agreed that once the EU reached 27 states, the number of Commissioners would be reduced to 2/3 of the number of Member States. This provision, however, was removed to persuade the Irish citizens to vote in favour of the Nice Treaty (who had voted 'no' in the first Nice Treaty referendum). The Commission at 27 members is unwieldy and has too many portfolios. This situation will be exacerbated as the EU admits new Member States. Such a large Executive is less capable of action.

Another problem is that the term 'Commission' is an artefact of the European Coal and Steel Community. The Commission is the EU's executive body, but its current name confuses EU's citizens.

The Legislative Institutions: The Council and the Parliament

The system is not truly bicameral because there are several policy areas in which the Parliament is not permitted to act as a true co-legislator, despite being the only directly elected body in the Union. The Treaties require the Council to act in unanimity in too many policy areas, which stymies the ability of the Council to act expeditiously in adopting a common position. More qualified majority voting (QMV) should be used. So, too, in crucial areas the Parliament is only consulted (consultation procedure) rather than being given the opportunity to act as a co-legislator under the ordinary legislative procedure (OLP).

Furthermore, a Parliament should have the power to elect and remove the Executive. The EP should be permitted to elect the Head of the Executive (currently, the European Commission President).

Rule of Law

Article 7 TEU permits the suspension of certain rights from a Member State. Article 7 can be enacted when a Member State persistently breaches the EU's founding values (as outlined in Article 7). However, when the matter is referred by the Council to the European Council, the heads of government can vote to suspend any membership rights, such as voting and representation in the European Parliament but can only do so through unanimity (excluding the vote of the Member State considered to be in breach of Article 7). Due to the unanimity rule, it is more difficult to hold Member States in breach. Furthermore, the European Council has no obligation to act even when the Article 7 procedure is launched by the European Parliament or the European Commission. Finally, Article 7 is silent on a specification of time limits to remedy the breach of Union values as referred to in Article 7 and as enumerated in Article 2. (Article 2: 'The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.')

Recommendations

1. Parliament should gain the right of initiative for legislation, including the right to introduce, amend, or repeal Union law, and to become a co-legislator for the adoption of the multiannual financial framework (MFF).
2. The Parliament should elect the President of the Commission.
3. The Parliament should have the power to censure individual commissioners rather than just the Commission as a whole.
4. Enable the Commission President to choose members of the Commission based on parliamentary election results so that the Commission makeup reflects the political choices of the voters.
5. Rename the Commission to the 'Executive' to better reflect its role in the Union.
6. Fix the size of the Executive at 15 members. Members will be chosen based on a system of equal rotation of Member States. Undersecretaries will be appointed among nationals of those Member States that have no representation in the Executive's Cabinet (College of Commissioners).
7. In addition to the Union's exclusive competence of the Single Market, Common Commercial Policy, Competition Policy, Trade Policy, and Monetary Policy (for eurozone members), the Union should be given exclusive competence over the following policies:
 - a. Environment
 - b. Climate Change
8. Add the following policies to the Treaties as shared competences between the Union and Member States:

- a. Public Health & Promotion of Public Health
 - b. Civil Protection
 - c. Education involves mutual recognition of degrees, grades, competences, and qualifications.
9. Further develop existing shared competences between Member States and the Union in:
- a. Foreign Affairs
 - b. Energy
 - c. Defence
 - d. External border policy in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ)
 - e. Cross-border infrastructure
10. Strengthen and reform the procedure in Article 7 TEU with regard to the protection of the rule of law by ending unanimity in the Council, introduce a clear timeframe for Member State violations of Article 7, and establish the Court of Justice of the European Union as the arbiter of Member States that violate Article 7. If the Article 7 procedure is triggered, the Council will be obliged to respond within six months.
11. Foreign policy decisions, including sanctions and interim steps in the enlargement process be taken by QMV in the Council (instead of unanimity).
12. Establishment of a Defence Union including military units, a permanent deployment capacity, under the operational command of the Union; joint procurement and the development of armaments be financed by the Union through a dedicated budget under parliamentary co-decision and scrutiny and proposes that the competences of the European Defence Agency be adjusted accordingly with no prejudice to national traditions of neutrality and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership.
13. Require the publication of the Council of the European Union and Member State positions to enhance transparency and increase trust among Europe's citizens.

Proposal 2: Revitalise the European and Allied Defence Initiative (READI) and the Ongoing Humanitarian Crisis in Ukraine

Member States Proposing: Denmark & Lithuania

Background

Common Defence

The Union's prosperity and security, as well as the international status quo, are threatened by an increasingly hostile regional aggressor known as the Russian Federation. Russian President Vladimir Putin's imperial ambitions have decimated Eastern Ukraine. Russia's war economy demonstrates its ability to withstand Western sanctions and its commitment to fulfilling its imperial ambitions. With no end in sight, uncertainty and fears over security grows. To overcome this challenge to peace, the Union should take the following actions against the looming threat in the east.

Humanitarian Assistance

The European Union has been providing significant support to Ukraine in its ongoing conflict with Russia. This support includes diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict peacefully and economic and financial assistance to help Ukraine weather the crisis, and humanitarian aid for Ukrainians. Given Ukraine's immense need for medical supplies, the EU has deployed its strategic rescue reserves. The EU also coordinates medical evacuations of Ukrainian patients urgently needing treatment and has opened a dedicated medical hub in Rzeszów (Poland). The assistance provided via the EU civil protection mechanism is worth more than €796 million.

Between 2022 and 2023, the EU allocated €840 million in humanitarian assistance to help civilians affected by the war in Ukraine. This includes €785 million for Ukraine and €58 million for refugees and host families in Moldova. The EU mobilised €6.1 billion under the European Peace Facility (EPF) to support the Ukrainian armed forces. This amount includes seven sets of assistance measures of about €500 million each and two additional assistance measures of €1 billion each, explicitly aimed at the delivery and joint procurement of ammunition and missiles.

Recommendations

With respect to collective defence

1. Begin talks of the creation of a Baltic-Polish defence pact
 - a. Increase integration between the Baltic Battalion and the Polish Armed Forces
 - b. Remove all legal obstacles within the four nations that impede procedures for collective defence
2. Advancement of the European Sky Shield Initiative
 - a. Encourage all European states, especially coastal nations, to join the project
 - b. Expand partnerships beyond the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for increased funding
 - c. Diversify anti-ballistic missile arsenal to counter both Russian and non-Russian threats

- d. To achieve 2c, call for France and Italy to join the ESSI to supply SAMP-T missiles
- e. Increase budget for spending acquisitions
- f. Increase spending integration to cover weaknesses.

- 3. Encourage all EU and NATO Member States to reach the 2% defence spending requirement
 - a. Incentivize and persuade members who do not reach the 2% mark with packages of B. limited economic social aid and slightly discounted equipment
 - b. Impose annual charges (proportionate to their GDP) to those that spend <2%
 - c. Allocate the funds collected from these charges proposed in 3b will go toward purchasing military equipment

- 4. Proceed with discussions to send troops to Ukraine
 - a. Open dialogue on the possibility of sending troops to Ukraine
 - b. Define what “troops in Ukraine” will look like
 - c. Determine the regulations and ramifications of European aid to Ukraine

- 5. Prepare an agreement for Russia to cede control over Kaliningrad
 - a. Lay the framework for the Russian cession of Kaliningrad
 - b. Upon fulfilment of the agreement, Western nations will relieve sanctions, free political prisoners, and provide economic assistance for civilians in Kaliningrad, and logistical assistance for all Russian military assets in Kaliningrad

- 6. Begin large-scale production of a drone program
 - a. Prioritise manufacturing inexpensive offence and reconnaissance unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV)
 - b. Fund drone manufacturers to increase quality and production

- 7. Discuss additional funding and restructure budget to fund recommendations
 - a. Expand NextGen Program to include defence-related expenditures and operations
 - b. Frozen Russian assets in Western institutions will be repurposed for EU spending
 - c. Direct the European Commission to produce a White Paper on European defence initiatives, to be available for public comment no later than 1 January 2025.

With respect to humanitarian aid

- 8. Urgent humanitarian assistance for the people affected by the conflict
 - a. Promote residency and temporary aid for war refugees in Denmark.
 - b. Increase the potential use of cohesion policy funds for addressing the migration challenges and needs.
 - c. Fund and Support the service of healthcare and integrity protection to exile citizens.

9. Application of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)

- a. Strengthening the rule of law, including judicial reform, anti-corruption efforts, and the protection of human rights.
- b. Promoting sustainable economic growth, including support for small and medium-sized enterprises, innovation, and the development of infrastructure.

Refer to European Union (EU), Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)

10. Implementation of Financial Support for Ukraine

- a. Underline the need to ensure, together with partners, stable, predictable and sustainable financial support for Ukraine.
- b. Establish the sum of the overall resources made available from the Facility to be EUR 50 billion for the period 2024-2027.
- c. Encourage the Commission for constant annual reports on the implementation of the Ukraine Facility on controlling corruption.
- d. Increase to boost the defence investment capacity, additional EUR 1,5 billion will be allocated to the European Defence Fund (EDF)
- e. Underline the need to ensure, together with partners, stable, predictable and sustainable financial support for Ukraine.
- f. Establish the sum of the overall resources made available from the Facility to be EUR 50 billion for the period 2024-2027.
- g. Encourage the Commission for constant annual reports on the implementation of the Ukraine Facility on controlling corruption.
- h. Increase to boost the defence investment capacity, additional EUR 1,5 billion will be allocated to the European Defence Fund (EDF)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Proposal 3: The Role of Space in the EU's Strategic Autonomy Strategy & Strengthening Security

Member State Proposing: Belgium

Background

Belgium is assuming the rotating presidency of the EU for the thirteenth time. Belgium's presidential timing holds crucial importance amidst Russia's initiation of war against Ukraine, the energy crisis, and the ongoing and pressing issue of climate change. Belgium's presidency will focus on six thematic areas: Defending the rule of law, democracy and unity (priority 1); Strengthening EU competitiveness (priority 2); Pursuing a green and just transition (priority 3); Reinforcing Europe's social and health agenda (priority 4); Protecting people and borders (priority 5); and promoting a global Europe (priority 6).

Focusing on research, and innovation, specifically regarding space, is critical to achieving most of these priorities. This priority aligns with the motto of Belgium's Presidency: "Protect. Strengthen. Prepare." Belgium's Presidency will pursue space research and innovation to ensure that the EU is able to realise its goal of strategic autonomy, security and defence, and climate change mitigation.

Research and innovation are critical to ensuring that the EU remains a competitive actor on the global stage. Research and innovation, pertaining to the realm of space, allow the EU to address:

(1) Strategic Dependency concerns and bolster strategic autonomy. Strategic dependencies and autonomy are defined as the elimination of reliance on foreign states for resources. This aligns with Belgium's second priority of strengthening EU competitiveness. The EU has been excessively dependent on single supplier countries for critical raw materials, rendering the EU vulnerable to supply chain disruptions. Furthermore, the war between Russia and Ukraine, causing an energy crisis, has highlighted the EU's dependency on Russian oil and gas.

(2) Space Research and Innovation will assist the EU in climate change mitigation and sustainable use of space (the Belgian Presidency's Priority No.3 (pursuing a green and just transition). The EU Space Program can collect and disseminate the data needed to monitor climate change and provide weather-related alerts.

(3) Security and Defence concern (the fifth priority) includes cybersecurity. Space research and development. While Europe's Governmental Satellite Communications program, GOVSATCOM, is used for the EU's foreign and security policy, enhancing capabilities will provide improved border surveillance, including to track irregular migration.

(4) Promoting a Global Europe (the sixth priority) will be facilitated by investing in space policy. Space research and development is a growth sector at all levels—intelligence, defence, weather, and communication. The EU has fallen behind China and the US. The Member States and the EU must work together to build a more competitive space sector. This sector will also benefit from more transatlantic cooperation.

Recommendations

1. Address Strategic Dependency Concerns and Bolster Strategic Autonomy

- a. Ensure diversification of imports of critical raw materials from different states and regions through the development of strategic international partnerships
- b. Increase domestic capacity for the production of critical raw materials through the launching of an industry-driven European Raw Materials Alliance
- c. Begin research and development programs to find environmentally friendly substitutions for critical raw materials
- d. Deploy Earth-observation programs through the European Space Agency (ESA) to ensure that the extraction and/or development of EU sources of energy are aligned with environmental management goals

2. Develop the Copernicus Security Strategies Research Agenda (CSS-SRA) for Earth Observation (EO) based and AI-enabled security and defence in space

- a. Automate the CSS-SRA for land-based and maritime migration and Support to EU External and Security Actions (SEA)
 - i. Develop open-source datasets from satellite surveillance for AI-automated predictive analytics of migration causes, trends, and patterns
 1. Develop a mechanism for reporting results and findings to the EU Council through the ESA
- b. Bolster public and private cooperation in AI and space research and development (R&D)
 - i. Develop a ‘Cybersecurity, AI, and Space’ Board as part of the ESA to foster collaboration between Member State agencies, private corporations, educational institutions, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
 - ii. Launch public state-sponsored programs for intensified AI, cybersecurity, and space education and experience-based learning for EU citizens
- c. Increase AI and space surveillance of trade imports and transportation networks
 - i. Automate and intensify satellite surveillance of trade imports, including container ships; customs management; cyber networks; and intermodal and surface transportation networks
- d. Develop AI-enabled military swarm satellites, space navigation operators, and missile defence systems
 - i. Automate and develop AI-enabled ‘rapid-reaction’ satellites for the surveillance of task zones in areas of high risk for preemptive and preventive military strikes with near real-time information processing and delivery
 1. Develop a mechanism to convey satellite data to existing agencies, autonomous weapons

systems (AWS), or the EU Council

- ii. Build AI-enabled systems comparable to HERA for autonomous ESA satellite navigation
- e. Develop AI-enabled space markets in accordance with the ESA Agenda

3. Continue to Adopt Initiatives Regarding Space Research to Ensure Socio-Economic Stability and Growth

- a. Develop a comprehensive long-term plan for international collaboration when it comes to space exploration for space diplomacy efforts
 - i. Foster relationships with states and organisations to enhance Europe's alliances and R&D position
- b. Create a Public Interest Economic Returns Research Executive Committee (or PIERRE Committee) to anticipate and preempt social and economic imbalances before they develop into crises
- c. Create a blueprint to better unify customs and taxation policy across the EU and address tax abuse in line with the OECD's Two Pillars
 - i. Address Customs issues that arise as a result of cross-border investments and the mobile workforce
- d. Ensure that technological advancements made in space research are applicable to other fields such as technology and navigation.

4. Utilise Space Technologies to Monitor and Mitigate the Effects of Climate Change

- a. Increase funding for the ESA by a factor of twenty percent to ensure the Copernicus, Galileo, and EGNOS programs can continuously and accurately gather data that allows the EU to monitor the state of climate
- b. Work with the ESA in order to develop a new satellite constellation with the purpose of monitoring changes in greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, urban expansion, and ice melting
 - i. This data can identify traffic to optimise travel routes, enable renewable energy infrastructure, and target concentration of population/congestion to improve urban planning and mitigate detrimental environmental effects
- c. Develop early warning systems to provide warnings for climate-related natural disasters
- d. Create a program focused on advancing renewable energy by monitoring solar radiation and wind power to locate the most productive areas for renewable energy installations.

5. Draw up a Common Space Strategy and work towards a framework for space activities.

Proposal 4: Israel-Hamas-Palestine Conflict

Member States Proposing: France and Ireland

Background

The Arab-Israeli Conflict has a nuanced tradition from before the Christian era (BCE). Though it was not always a conflict as Muslim-Jewish relations were typically amiable, it became increasingly conflictual in the 19th century, deriving from nationalist movements. It has been a conflict in which the Palestinian identity has been suppressed and forcibly displaced from land in which they are indigenous to.

The root of the conflict lies within disagreements about the rightful claim of land following the first wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine in the late 1880s because of the Zionist movement. Violence had ensued following the great number of migrations to Palestine and the subsequent occupation of the land. While Palestinian wants, needs, and identity were often overlooked leading up to the UN Partition Plan in 1947 in which an Arab state and a Jewish state were established. Palestinians did not recognize this partition, as a result violence ensued. With Israel breaking this plan, they began to capture and occupy more territory of Palestine, leaving Palestinians oppressed and facing a grave humanitarian crisis because of Israel's actions. The oppression of the Palestinians continued for decades causing thousands of casualties.

On October 7, 2023, terrorist group Hamas attacked Israel, killing around 1,200 people. As a result, Israel declared war on Hamas. The EU stands in solidarity with Israel, which has the right to defend itself in line with international law, in the face of such violent and indiscriminate acts. However, Israel's retaliation has been disproportionate deaths of over 30,000 innocent civilians and international aid workers in the Gaza Strip. The actions of Israel blatantly violate international humanitarian law and have caused the massacre of the Palestinian people.

The EU reiterates its condemnation of acts of terrorism and its unwavering commitment to Israel's security, as well as to the protection of civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The EU recalls the importance of working towards a lasting and sustainable peace through reinvigorated efforts in the Middle East Peace Process. 6 The EU reiterates that we live in a multipolar world and the EU has a special responsibility, a special role to play in this new global order.

No substantial progress has been made in achieving the Two-State Solution, including a viable sovereign independent and contiguous Palestinian state based on the 4 June 1967 lines. Signed agreements, including the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords – which itself was anticipated as a temporary measure to provide space for negotiations for a permanent agreement – have not been honoured. On 18 September 2023, the EU, Saudi Arabia, the League of Arab States, Republic of Egypt, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan launched a 'Peace Day Effort' on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. 'Peace Day' refers to the day when the parties reach a peace agreement based on the Two-State Solution. This represents a new and promising approach to encouraging Israel and Palestine to agree to a permanent Two-State solution.

A successful mediation role in achieving a ceasefire and a lasting peace would further solidify the Union's stance as an advocate for peace and cooperation on a global scale.

Recommendations

1. The European Union proposes a call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza with the release of all hostages. Call for Israel to open additional crossings besides the Cyprus maritime corridor to allow more aid to reach Gaza.
2. As the largest trading partner to Israel, the Union should consider removal of the favourable trade agreements currently in place between the Union and Israel if Israel continues to attack and kill civilians.
3. The Union recognizes the inability of Hamas to be a negotiating partner in the peace process and directs the High Representative to work with the Palestinian Authority.
4. The Union directs the High Representative and the EEAS's Special Envoy for the Middle East Peace Process to act urgently to prepare a proposal for an EU incentive package to encourage the Palestinian Authority and Israel to re-engage in the peace process.
5. The Union urges the parties to act urgently to accelerate negotiations for the 'Peace Supporting Package', which the parties agreed to be presented no later than September 2024. The Union directs the European Commission, led by the High Representative to present a detailed package to both parties, including liberalizing trade, visa normalization, and financial packages that would come into immediate effect after 'Peace Day'.
6. Because achieving peace between the two parties is predicated on accepting the Two-State Solution with Jerusalem the capital of both Israel and Palestine, the Union urges Israel to immediately end its illegal settlement activities, land confiscation, and house evictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
7. The European Commission should engage in a program to better educate the European public about the need for a Two-State Solution. As part of this process, the EU should create a programme to improve European/Israeli/Palestinian people-to-people links among students, business leaders, journalists, and government officials. This includes EU support for state level, and local religious based education programmes.
8. The EU should strengthen its efforts to combat Antisemitism and foster Jewish life in Europe. To this end, the European Commission is asked to continue progress in meeting the goals of the Working Groups on the Implementation of the EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life. Additionally, the EU should promote policies that protect the rights of people practicing Islam inside the European Union. This is especially important considering the recent rise in violence against Islamic populations. EU Member States are urged to adopt organizational, national, and locally ran strategies for combating Antisemitism and Islamophobia inside their respective countries.

9. Continue to implement aid to the Palestinian people through trusted international partners e.g., the Red Cross and the Red Crescent. If further funding is required for humanitarian efforts, it will be provided via Bond issue (Euro Bonds).

ECOFIN

Proposal 5: Responsible Economic Growth in the Single Market

Member States Proposing: France & Ireland

Background

Member State economies and the single market had not fully recovered from a succession of financial crises (the Great Recession, the Eurozone crisis, the banking crisis, the sovereign debt crisis) when the COVID-19 pandemic plunged the single market into another economic downturn. These crises reduced tax receipts and resulted in Member States incurring additional debt to stave off economic catastrophe. Today, many EU Member States are facing significant challenges in meeting the Maastricht EMU Criteria ('Maastricht 2.0'), particularly the debt-to-GDP ratio (debt/GDP), which is undermining the capacity of many Member States to realise consistent economic growth. Furthermore, the rise in Far Right/anti-system political parties is the direct result of Maastricht 2.0 imposed fiscal austerity due to cuts in essential services, higher unemployment, and a weakening of the European Social Model. Finally, the European Council's decision to enlarge the Union to include many new members, each with per capita GDP lower than the EU average, will further place stress on the EU's budget and competitiveness of current Member States. The EU is in desperate need of new income streams prior to the European Parliament elections in June 2024 in which there is great concern that anti-system, anti-EU Far Right parties may gain many seats in the European Parliament. Our recommendations are forward looking and lay the foundation for negotiations for the 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

Growth, not austerity

Ours is a Union of democracies and market economies. Our respect for democratic values and human rights is grounded in the ability of our economies to provide the "good life" to all our European citizens. Our now 30-year-old single market is the largest single democratic market in the world with 500 million consumers.

This proposal asks the European Council to de-emphasize austerity (debt/GDP) and focus on establishing an EU built on fiscal solidarity, particularly with respect to Own Resources in the EU's next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and an emphasis on investing in the EU's growth industries, particularly (Green) renewable energy, space, digital transformation, AI, financial service, and a European defence sector with the goal of a clean and circular economy. The EU must also help Member State efforts to procure and sustain a supply of critical raw materials.

Making European industry more competitive

An EU strategy backed by substantial financial backing has been crucial since the 2022 passage in the US of the €891 billion Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which focuses on investments in roads, railways, bridges, port facilities, airports, broadband internet, power transmission, public transit, and electric vehicles informed by renewable energy goals and achieving net zero GHG

emissions. Many of the US's expenditures, particularly in renewable energy and electric vehicles, are tied to 'Buy American'. The Biden Administration further expanded US involvement in industrial policy with the CHIPS and Science Act (2022), authorizing €280 billion in new funding for domestic-based research and manufacturing of semiconductors in the US. To compete with China and the US, the EU must build a truly European industrial policy and not fall in the trap of competing national policies at the Member State level. EU industry accounts for 20% of the EU economy, 35 million jobs, and 80% of the EU's goods exports. We must keep our leading position in pharmaceuticals, mechanical engineering, fashion, and green technology. We must be the leaders in climate neutrality and digital transformation. This proposal considers, especially, the role of fashion in the EU's trade portfolio.

Europe is the global leader in fashion innovation with an industry valued at over €41 billion and is considered a growth industry. The Fast Fashion trend – 'high volumes of lower quality garments at low price levels' – undermines the values about which we as Europeans care most. Fast Fashion undermines human, social, labour rights and animal welfare at all points in the supply chain. Fast fashion, which is responsible for 10% of the world's global emissions, also harms the environment and contributes to global warming. Sustainable fashion, on the other hand, is made from textile products that last longer and are more conducive to reuse, repair and recycle. takes environmental and socio-economic factors into consideration when clothing, shoes, and accessories are manufactured. There are many ways to combat this from the classrooms to textile warehouses and economic restrictions. The EU has taken steps to limit the millions of pounds of waste left by fast fashion companies, but more work is needed to promote sustainable fashion.

A level-playing field

Our Union must work together to ensure that US public procurement does not discriminate against EU-based manufacturers and that European industries have an equal opportunity to compete in public procurement tender offers.

Recommendations

1. Transform the European Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) into a permanent facility dedicated to transforming the Union's economy.

The [RRF](#) was established as a temporary facility authorising the European Commission, on behalf of the European Union, to borrow up to €800.6 billion on markets, which the Commission can do so at more favourable rates than most Member States. The RRF is set to expire at the end of 2026. The RRF should become a permanent source of income and integrated into the next MFF (2028-34). The name of the RRF should be changed to reflect the permanent nature of collective EU borrowing in bond markets. Borrowing levels should be increased to €1 trillion for the 2028-2034 MFF.

Reference: European Commission

2. Identify new "Own Resources"

The Commission, Member States, and stakeholders proposed various schemes for new Own Resources as part of the 2021-2027 MFF negotiations. The European Council commends the Commission on its successful implementation of one new revenue source in the 2021-2027 MFF “Plastics Own Resource,” which is national contribution based on the amount of non-recycled plastic packaging waste. The European Council now calls on the Council and the European Parliament to agree to the Commission’s proposal (put forth June 2023) for new Own Resources as follows:

a. Implement a **temporary** “statistical own resource” based on company profits in the EU. The European Council agrees that this own resource should be calculated at 0,5% of the notional EU company profit base. It is essential to ensure that corporations pay their fair share for the privilege of operating in the world’s most dynamic and wealthiest consumer market. These funds are needed immediately to ensure distribution among the Member States in most need.

b. Convene a “Wise Person” Group that will produce a White Paper laying out how a system of EU Corporate Taxation could be implemented. This EU Corporate Tax would replace the temporary Statistical Own Resource on Corporate Profits in the 2028-20 MFF.

3. The MFF for 2028-2034 should be increased from the current MFF (2021-2027) of €2.02 trillion to €2.5 trillion to take account of the increased spending needs associated with enlargement, particularly with respect to agriculture, rural development, digital transformation, microchip production, biotechnology, and Greening the single market.

4. Adjust “lump sums” (rebates) to Member States based on a fixed deflator of 2% per year.

5. Targeted investments in the Member States to promote new and promising industries, including a European-wide defence sector.

a. Working with the European Investment Bank (EIB) to continue the establishment of European dominance of key growth industries.

6. Debt restructuring.

Member States should seek possibilities of implementing debt restructuring measures fitting Ireland’s specific needs and circumstances by early Q4 2024. Such measures may include extending repayment schedules, renegotiating interest rates, or exploring debt forgiveness options.

7. Collaboration among Member States for joint investments.

The European Council urges the EcoFin Council to accelerate collaborations among Member States for joint projects to maximise investment.

8. BEFIT

a. National tax laws should be harmonised under the BEFIT directive (Business in Europe: Framework for Income Taxation)

9. Value-Added Tax

a. The European Council should work with EcoFin to reach agreement on the Commission's package for VAT in the Digital Age.

10. European Stability Mechanism (ESM).

a. Discuss expanding its mission to help reduce the sovereign debt of Member States.

11. Capital Markets Union (CMU).

a. There has been increased recognition of the lack of [financial literacy and inclusion of EU citizens](#). Proposals should be made for ways to increase financial literacy among EU citizens and a competitive grant program overseen by the European Education and Cultural Executive Agency (EACEA) to build demonstration projects.

12. Put Fast Fashion Out of Fashion

The European Council directs the European Commission to produce a White Paper no later than 1 September 2024, specifically considering, but not limited to, the following proposals:

a. Establish a committee comprised of European fashion experts from industry and the academy to propose a definition of 'Fast Fashion'

b. Ban advertising for the most inexpensive textiles.

c. Substantial increase in the VAT on fast fashion.

d. Impose a 50% tariff on imported clothes classified as Fast Fashion.

e. Import quotas for fast fashion.

f. Fast fashion companies must disclose their products' environmental impact with a tag and a QR code.

g. Impose a ban on the export of used clothing, which has contributed to textile waste.

h. Mandatory recycling of fast fashion.

i. Support efforts by Member States to undertake research and development in circular economy technologies.

j. Penalties for manufacturers violating sustainable fashion rules.

Proposal 6: Union-wide Reforms to Address the Housing Crisis

Member States Proposing: Austria & the Netherlands

Background

The phrase “Housing crisis” is today synonymous with unaffordable rising real estate prices in almost every Member State of the European Union (EU). This crisis currently affects millions of its citizens, from urban to rural areas. Caused primarily by an overwhelming housing shortage with an unending demand for tenants, the crisis has been exacerbated by the migrant crisis. Throughout the past two decades, there has been an increasing number of migrants and refugees entering the EU annually. These flows have thus heavily increased the demand for housing in urban areas, causing the current high housing prices across the continent. The Russia-Ukraine War has also caused a domino effect that has exacerbated the housing crisis due to a heavy rise in oil prices, causing high economic volatility worldwide. As these issues have put significant chokeholds in national economies, it has become progressively more difficult for citizens to obtain affordable housing. Rent prices have increased by more than 22% from 2010 to 2023, while housing prices have increased by 48 percent in the same period. Furthermore, this crisis has been particularly affecting young people, preventing them from moving out of their family homes, as the average age at which people in the EU moved out of their parental homes increased from 26 to 28 between 2007 and 2019.

The EU must also ensure smooth implementation for new rules for a responsible and transparent short-term rental sector. Short-term rentals represent approximately 25% of tourist accommodation in the EU. Divergent local rules lead to fragmentation of the internal market. Quality data about short-term rental platforms will lead to better enforcement and fewer illegal listings. A simple online registration procedure will now allow the relevant local authorities to identify the host and their unit, and verify the information. The lack of appropriate rules has contributed to problems like higher housing prices, the displacement of permanent residents, over-tourism, and unfair competition. As EP Rapporteur Kim Van Sparrentak (GreensEFA, NL) said when the EP was considering this regulation, “Cities are experiencing a spike in illegal short-term holiday rentals. This is making cities across Europe harder to live in and less affordable. This law will require platforms to share their data with local authorities, allowing them to better enforce rules for vacation rentals so housing remains accessible for residents.” With the Council’s approval (18 March, 2023) of the EP’s position on Regulation on Short-term Rentals, local authorities will need assistance with implementing this regulation. But this Regulation is just the beginning. The EU needs to implement an EU bed tax on short-term rentals that will be collected and used for a Housing Solidarity Fund.

Many citizens claim that the inaction by Member States and the EU on the housing crisis is because the national governments and the EU recognize housing as a problem that every person must solve in the public free market. However, the EU’s and Member States’ governments’ housing policies have prevented more than 82 billion euros of investment in the housing market by private institutions. If realised, such an investment could have relieved the crisis in several

Member States. The lack of solutions offered by the EU and national governments has caused uprisings between Member States and the EU, undermining the basic idea of unity upon which the Union was founded. Overall, citizens have become increasingly dissatisfied with the EU and Member States' national governments' lack of solutions for the housing crisis.

Recommendations

1. The European Commission will establish a new Task Force to create and embrace a new housing paradigm through EU policy making.
 - a. This task force shall focus on easing housing policies in Member States to develop the necessary levels of private investment in the housing market to satisfy the current demand.
 - b. The task force shall be led by the European Commission Executive Vice-President responsible for an Economy that Works for People, the European Commissioner for Economy, or the European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights to allow seamless communication between the task force and other social programs in the Union.
 - c. The task force shall urgently address the impact of higher interest rates and high construction costs to create a friendlier environment for housing investment.
 - d. The task force shall ensure that at least 10% of new housing investments focus on providing affordable housing with long-term contracts.
2. The European Union shall endeavour to invest more funds into affordable housing for Member States.
 - a. The Council of the European Union shall work with the European Parliament and other interested parties to create a new agency to oversee this new program.
 - b. This agency shall work closely with local partners to create housing that is accessible specifically for people under the age of 28 to decrease the number of youth living in their parental homes.
 - c. The agency shall work with the European Commission and the European Parliament to increase the availability of affordable housing for EU citizens in all Member States.
 - I. To assist with this objective, the agency shall have an observational component focused on tracking immigration data to ensure that new immigrants/refugees are not heavily impacting the housing crisis and act accordingly.
3. Member States will reduce homelessness in the EU by 25% by 2030, as a core element and protection of any housing policy.
4. Implement regulation for an online system collecting a bed tax on all short-term rentals. The tax will be used for a new "Housing Solidarity Fund" to assist Europeans in obtaining affordable housing.

a. The Commission will convene a reflection group of housing experts (builders, renters, local authorities, housing experts, etc.) to produce a Green Paper with their recommendations as to how this tax could be implemented.

b. The Housing Solidarity Fund will distribute funds to local communities that are experiencing housing shortages due to an excess of short-term rentals.

COREPER II

Proposal 7: Addressing Climate Resilience in the European Union

Member State Proposing: Germany

Background

In February 2024, the Copernicus Climate Change Service reported that the global average temperature for the preceding 12 months has surpassed the threshold of 1.4 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels. The European Environmental Agency's (EEA) first-ever European Climate Risk Assessment predicted that in the best-case scenario (limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels), Europe (heating twice the global rate) will need to adjust to a climate that is 3 degrees warmer and characterised by more heatwaves and other weather extremes. 77% of the EU public sees climate change as a very serious problem. Following the most recent UN Climate Summit (COP28), adaptation and resilience must be a crucial component of the EU's climate change mitigation strategy.

The Green Deal is grounded in the concept of climate resilience. Implementing major changes in climate regulation in natural gas-dependent states will cause economic distress. Likewise, the EU loses billions of euros annually from increasing climate temperatures and extreme weather events. To combat these issues, the EU has sought to foster a greener and more sustainable future by continuously improving existing environmental legislation and adopting new 'green' legislation. The EU plans to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and achieve net zero GHG emissions by the year 2050 (relative to 1990), all while increasing economic growth spurred by green technologies.

This European Green Deal plan is costly; many EU countries have difficulty paying for the transition. For instance, among others, Italy's current government opposes an array of European Union initiatives aimed at making the economy greener, claiming that local businesses cannot meet the cost demands of transition goals. Complaints from Member States are likely to become more urgent as we move closer to 2050. So, too, enlargement will further stretch the ability of the EU's annual and MFF budget to finance the Green Deal. Additionally, Germany's support for the Green Deal and Digital Transformation has spurred considerable opposition in its three-party coalition. Support for anti-EU/anti-system parties has gained support because of Germany's attempts to meet Green Deal priorities. A bill to reduce carbon footprint by changing the heating of homes and buildings, for example, has spurred opposition to responsible governmental action. The costs of clean energy heating systems are raising living costs and, therefore, are unpopular among many Europeans. The opposition surfacing in Germany and Italy are just the beginning of irresponsible actors taking advantage of consumer satisfaction with Green Deal policies being transposed into law at the Member State level. The Union needs to subsidise green energy alternatives and raise the direct costs to produce and utilise resource-

dependent sources to make green energy desirable and beneficial in the short and long term. The Green Deal cannot become an unfunded mandate to cash-strapped EU Member State governments.

The adoption of Green Deal policies among Member States is mixed, with variation among Member States with respect to adaptation, governance, awareness raising, fairness and just resilience, financing, and nature-based solutions.

Recommendations

Climate Change

1. Agree to the Commission's interim target of reducing GHG emissions by 90% by 2040 relative to 1990. This is an important interim target between our initial 2030 and long-range target for 2050 (the legally binding objective of the European Climate Law, which entered into force 9 July 2021).
2. Agree a post-2030 framework to deliver the 2040 GHG emission reductions in a fair and cost-efficient manner.
3. In the MFF 2021-2027, the EU set aside EUR 118 billion in Cohesion investments. Accordingly, the Commission is directed to convene a 'Climate Resilience Financing Reflection Group' (CRFRG) to consider ways to facilitate climate resilience finance. The CRFRG will be comprised of key industrial players and representatives of public and private financial institutions, including EU institutions such as the European Investment Bank and the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority.
 - a. The CRFRG will consider reallocation of a portion of cohesion funds to support climate projects and assist territories facing challenges in transitioning to green energy. The guiding principle will be 'do no significant harm'.
 - b. The CRFRG will consider 'The Just Transition Mechanism,' which ensures that the transition towards a climate-neutral economy happens in a fair way.
 - c. The CRFRG will consider the uneven risks of climate change borne by various groups, particularly Europeans living in poorer urban areas or low-lying areas and workers in such sectors as emergency services, tourism, agriculture, and construction and explore financing options to protect these groups.
4. The European Commission shall begin talks to renew NextGen funds to ensure funding for renewable energy projects and technologies will continue in the MFF 2028-2024.
 - a. Subsidies shall be aimed for companies developing and integrating renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydroelectric power.

b. Additional funds shall be made available to boost public-private partnerships to leverage the expertise and resources of both sectors to drive innovation, scale up renewable energy projects, and create new job opportunities in the green economy.

5. The European Council shall establish a Climate Policy Coordination Committee (CPCC) under the auspices of the European Environment Agency. The CPCC will coordinate climate change action among the EU and the Member States. The CPCC will endeavour to include those Europeans who will be most negatively affected by climate change in dialogues.

6. Undertake an assessment of critical infrastructure under the Critical Entities Resilience Directive. Ensure that the findings are considered in Member State budgets and in the MFF 2028-2034.

7. Ensure support of those Europeans who will be most negatively affected by climate change

8. Ensure widespread availability of the Galileo Emergency Warning Satellite Service (EWSS) with the objective of being able to communicate alerts to people, businesses, and public authorities throughout Europe.

9. Build Forest Monitoring (Wildfires) and Soil Monitoring at the EU level to ensure accurate monitoring and alerts.

10. The Commission should build a single online platform for Europe (Climate-ADAPT) for information on climate resilience that will be available to individuals, public authorities, and businesses.

11. Authorises the EEA to work within the Digital Services Act to combat disinformation, especially with respect to climate change deniers.

12. Public procurement, accounting for 14% of EU GDP must take climate risks into account. The Commission is asked to propose a Directive requiring all Member States to take into consideration climate resilience in its CFPs/RFPs for procurement.

13. Direct the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the European Agency for Safety and Health (OSHA), and European Medicines Agency to set up an interagency working group to examine the European exposure to diseases that have now become epidemic in Europe due to the warmer climate (e.g., West Nile virus, Dengue and chikungunya), fungi, and bacteria that often do not have effective medical countermeasures available.

14. Include responding to climate-related health threats to the responsibilities of the new EU Health Task Force, which is a unit of the ECDC.

Proposal 8: Anti-Discrimination, Eliminating Violence Against Women, and Ensuring Reproduction Rights

Member State Proposing: France

Background

On International Women's Day, France highlighted their stand on the global significance of women's rights and reaffirms its dedication to promoting gender equity and reproductive justice when it enshrines the guaranteed right to abortion in its constitution. The EU seeks to eliminate all forms of violence against women such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and harassment, by recognizing the urgent need to address these challenges, the EU aims to create a coordinated and unified approach. This proposal emphasizes the importance of stopping all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment, and discrimination. The EU should advocate for and protect women's reproductive rights, including ensuring access to safe and legal abortion services for women across all Member States. To effectively implement and monitor these efforts, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is expected to play an important role. EIGE, as an EU agency specialising in gender equality, would provide the necessary expertise, data, and support to advance policies aimed at ending violence against women and promoting reproductive rights. By leveraging EIGE's resources, Member States can benefit from evidence-based approaches and collaborative efforts, ultimately leading to a safer and more equitable society for women throughout the EU.

Article 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union includes a list of protected grounds based on gender, racial or ethnic origins, religion or belief, disability, age, and sexual orientation. Discrimination, however, is a serious problem in the EU. The latest Eurobarometer indicated that over half of respondent's report discrimination as widespread in their country. The percentage of Europeans that believe discrimination is widespread in their country do so on the following grounds: 65% being Roma, 61% skin colour, 60% ethnic origin, and 57% transgender.

Recommendations

Eliminating Violence against Women/Promoting Reproductive Rights

1. Legislative and Policy Reform:

- a. Advocate for robust laws and policies aimed at preventing and addressing all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and harassment.
- b. Champion the legalisation of abortion and ensure access to safe and legal abortion services, recognizing women's reproductive rights and bodily autonomy.
- c. Strengthen legal frameworks to provide comprehensive support and protection for survivors of gender-based violence, while holding perpetrators accountable for their actions.

2. Education and Awareness:

- a. Implement gender-sensitive education programs and awareness campaigns to challenge

harmful stereotypes and attitudes that perpetuate violence against women.

b. Conduct public outreach initiatives to educate society about women's rights, including the right to access safe and legal abortion, and to combat stigma and discrimination associated with abortion services.

c. Promote healthy relationships, consent, and gender equality through targeted educational efforts, fostering a culture of respect and empowerment.

3. Access to Justice and Support Services:

a. Enhance access to justice and support services for survivors of gender-based violence, including legal assistance, counselling, healthcare, and shelter, ensuring survivors' rights are upheld throughout the legal process.

b. Foster collaboration between law enforcement, healthcare providers, and civil society organisations to ensure a coordinated response to violence against women and effective support for survivors.

c. Ensure the availability of comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including contraception and post-abortion care, to safeguard women's health and well-being.

4. International Cooperation and Solidarity:

a. Strengthen partnerships with international organisations and civil society networks to share best practices, resources, and advocacy efforts aimed at advancing women's rights and gender equality globally.

b. Support initiatives addressing the root causes of violence against women, including gender inequality and harmful social norms, through international cooperation and solidarity.

c. Advocate for the inclusion of women's rights and gender equality in EU external relations, promoting dialogue and collaboration with other regions facing similar challenges.

Anti Discrimination

5. The Union should develop a definition of hate speech. The Commission is directed to draft a directive against hate speech, which should be presented to the Council no later than 1 December 2024.

6. The Commission should continue its work in developing a Legal Framework to combat Antisemitism.

Proposal 9: Support for European Agriculture

Member State Proposing: France & Slovakia

Background

Agriculture is an essential sector of the economies of the EU Member States. Strong European farms guarantee the quality and quantity of food that are vital to maintaining the health of the EU. Current policy regarding Environmental regulations within the European Green Deal and a lack of protections for the wages and sale prices to supermarkets and food giants has kneecapped the European farmer. This failure is evidenced by the mass protests across the continent this year. Farmers in Greece, Germany, Portugal, Poland, France, and Slovakia have taken to the streets. To solve this problem the EU must commit money to the agricultural sector as well as changing regulations and enacting real reform to better support the industry.

In the 2023-2027 period, there will be EUR 264 billion distributed across Europe, and EUR 45 billion to France alone, through the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. For Member States such as Ireland, this money represents over 60% of the financial aid they receive from the EU each year. This investment will be wasted if it does not come along with much needed market reforms to begin the process of lessening the inequality between large and small farmers in Europe. Right now, 20% of the companies farming in Europe own 83% of lands and receive 81% of the public funds distributed for agriculture.

In Slovakia, there are 25,660 farms, constituting over 47% of Slovak land use. They provide products like cereals, oilseeds, industrial crops, milk, cattle, and pigs to Europe. In its 2023-2027 CAP plan, over EUR 4 billion are being invested in agriculture and rural development. For this plan to facilitate growth and stability in agriculture, certain regulations must be changed.

Recommendations

1. Lessen the restrictions of the European Green Deal
 - a. Lessen the restriction on fertiliser use, which currently compels farmers to use 20% less fertiliser
 - b. Postpone the requirement to reserve 4% of farmland for non-productive purposes for 10 years
2. Regulate Agricultural Markets
 - a. Create minimum prices that distributors pay fair prices for agricultural products and limit the profit margins for supermarkets and food giants
 - b. Guarantee the minimum wages for farmworkers and small, independent farmers
3. Encourage more people, especially young adults, to become farmers
4. Build a Union guest worker program to attract more migrant workers to agriculture that provides a path towards permanent residency

5. Subsidise European farmers whose profits are lowered through competition with Ukraine farm products

ALTERNATIVE AGENDA ITEMS

Alternative Proposal 1: Pax in Sanitas: Proposal for Bolstering Resilience Against Encroaching Global Health Crises

Member State Proposing: The Netherlands

Background

In Latin, pax in sanitas means peace in health. With the threat of pandemics on the rise, peace in health must be on the forefront of our minds. As we saw with COVID-19, these pandemics can result in global health, economic, and civil crises. If we are ill-prepared there will be unnecessary lives lost and damage done that we cannot resolve easily. European citizens have suffered through unprepared hospitals and unsatisfactory health crisis measures: in 2021, 45% of citizens were not satisfied with how the EU handled the pandemic causing distrust in the EU.

Countries like Bulgaria have experienced sharp and excessively high increases in mortality rates due to issues in vaccine coverage, impacting government functioning and livelihood of citizens. As climate change worsens, the likelihood of epidemics and pandemics is increasing. Rising temperatures cause species to move closer to the poles, causing species that have never interacted before to meet and spread pathogens.

Many known causes of climate change such as deforestation and industrial agriculture also contribute to an increase in disease spreading. And these diseases are only growing more and more resistant to the vaccines and antibiotics modern medicine has given us.

We cannot sit around and wait for the next pandemic to hit. We must prepare now to save humanity from unnecessary loss of life and wellness. It is the EU's responsibility to facilitate appropriate pandemic control measures to preserve peace in Europe and the world. Despite the immense challenges posed by the COVID-19 epidemic, the European Union (EU) exhibited great resilience and solidarity through rapidly deploying its resources to combat the crisis. At a critical moment, the EU successfully developed NextGenerationEU, commonly known as the EU recovery fund, an estimated €750 billion initiative to relaunch economic recovery throughout Member States. The EU's proactive reaction to the epidemic demonstrates the value of collective action and cooperation in times of catastrophe.

As the globe faces continuous problems and potential future crises, the EU's capacity to mobilize resources and execute effective policies demonstrates the significance of keeping vigilant and proactive in ensuring the well-being and resilience of its Member States. Structures such as the

EU Recovery Fund have succeeded, but that alone is not enough. Unsubstantial public health preparation affects government proceedings and ripples throughout EU legislation. Therefore, it is necessary to continue protecting existing pandemic measures and enforce new ones.

Recommendations

1. The European Council must consistently promote health initiatives globally and within EU policy in upcoming years, not just when a crisis is at the forefront of concern.
 - a. The European Council shall adopt an action programme specifically against pandemics and work with the Health Emergency preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) to predict when countries will not be able to react to a pandemic immediately, then transfer resources to the appropriate level of operation.
 - b. The European Council must maintain protocol to keep health initiatives maintained in EU policy as a consistent issue and create outreach groups to promote and enforce these standards in member countries in need.
 - c. The European Union shall continue allocating financial resources to the EU Recovery Fund and maintain a set amount of funds dedicated to future pandemics which can be distributed throughout necessary branches of the EU.
2. The European Council must make improvements to the general healthcare system that serves its people.
 - a. The European Union must expand the area and populations that its healthcare system reaches, a higher coverage of healthcare will reach more of those in need.
 - b. Additionally, the European Union must increase its support for healthcare workers, including those on the front lines battling epidemics like the 2020 Coronavirus outbreak.
3. The European Union shall standardise pandemic responses across Member States and maintain an easy transfer of information between organisations involved in disease research and management.
 - a. The European Union shall communicate across international public health departments to implement cooperative development of prevention and treatment strategies with standardised baseline rules in place so that citizens know the EU is prepared.
 - b. The European Union shall require an open exchange of research and information sharing regarding disease: members must be in direct communication with multiple laboratories through a rapid communication system and this must be mandated even when pandemics do not necessitate a state of emergency.
4. The European Union shall increase deployment and spread of informational campaigns to create a common standard of health understanding in citizens.
 - a. The European Union shall implement stronger regulations on spreading health information in countries with significantly less evidence of pandemic resilience, such as

lower vaccination rates, and deploy ambassadors or other necessary parties to work with municipal governments to disenfranchise misinformation. Once these ambassadors are in place, they may remain in contact with municipal governments and review their implementations.

Alternative Proposal 2: Renegotiating the Windsor Framework to Include the Republic of Ireland and Align with the Belfast Agreement

Member State Proposing: Ireland

Background

The citizens of the United Kingdom (UK) voted in a referendum in 2016 to leave the European Union (EU). The UK government and the EU negotiated exit terms over several years, with the exit terms eventually agreed at the end of 2019 and the UK leaving the EU on 31 January 2020. While Brexit's impacts on both the UK and the EU have yet to be fully understood and realised it is generally agreed that this withdrawal has brought about hardship to many individuals living in Northern Ireland. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which brought about the end of The Troubles in Northern Ireland, included the prohibition of a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Yet, the UK's withdrawal from the EU posed a problem because goods leaving Northern Ireland needed to undergo Irish customs inspection on behalf of the EU. Once goods enter Ireland, they can circulate freely among the other 26 Member States.

The Windsor Framework, negotiated between the UK and the EU, established Northern Ireland as being present in both the EU market, so as not to erect a border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and the UK market so as not to expel Northern Ireland from the UK. In essence, the border was placed in the Irish Sea.

These "safeguards" such as the red lane and the green lane will do little to prevent goods that have not cleared EU inspections from entering the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore, many of the accommodations granted to the UK will place the Republic of Ireland at a disadvantage. Of particular concern is the Commission's belief that simply regulating that packaging include "for UK only" on goods coming from the UK market to Northern Ireland would be enough to prevent the movement of UK market goods into the EU market. Smuggling is a real concern.

Lastly, it cannot be emphasised enough how delicate a situation the territory of Northern Ireland is in. Without the Good Friday Agreement there are serious concerns about reigniting The Troubles or something like it. A reconstituted IRA is an ever-present concern. Any negotiations, including the Windsor Framework and whatever changes would be made to it, must be undertaken with the spirit of the Good Friday Agreement in mind. They also must continue to advance or maintain the procedures established in the agreement, and it is rather clear that the current version of the Windsor Framework fails to do so.

Recommendations

1. The European Commission should evaluate the economic impact of including or excluding the Republic of Ireland from this economic opportunity.
2. The European Commission should evaluate whether the economic potential and whether the Windsor Framework honours the aims of the Good Friday Agreement and what reforms must be made.
3. The European Commission should renegotiate the Windsor Framework to include the Republic of Ireland in the joint economic zone and ensure agreement with the Good Friday Agreement.
4. The European Commission should establish a joint committee with the relevant stakeholders to monitor the economic area and the alignment with the Good Friday Agreement.

Alternative Proposal 3: Migrant Crisis

Member States Proposing: Denmark & Italy

Background

Closing the Mediterranean Route for Irregular Migration

While the number of migrants (both economic and from conflict zones) attempting to cross the Mediterranean to Europe has declined from over one million in 2015, it is now on the increase from a low of 95,800 in 2020.¹ Tragically 3,231 people died in 2021 in attempting to cross by boat.²

There is resistance among some EU Member States to equitably share the burden of dealing with this migration. It is a divisive issue at a time when EU unity is essential in confronting Russian aggression in Ukraine and Russian threats to EU countries bordering the Russian Federation.

Tunisia has signed a deal to curb boat migration across the Mediterranean. Egypt and the EU have just announced a deal to curb migration. Egypt's ongoing financial crisis has prompted an increasing number of Egyptians to try to cross to Europe, mainly via Libya, since the authorities have largely closed down the route from Egypt's north coast. Egypt has committed itself to curbing irregular migration to Europe. "This deal shall encompass tackling the root-causes through development-focused solutions and improving regular migration routes," Egypt's President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi said.³

Libya lacks an effective central government with two groups in conflict (in the west the GNA backed by Turkey and in the east the LNA backed by Egypt Russia and the UAE) Libya is the departure point for many migrants by boat. The recommendation below deals with this particular problem.

Asylum Processing

Immigration policies are forever changing even in places such as Denmark who were recognized to be 'most people friendly' for many decades. To Denmark the cultural values fall on the concept of security and welfare system. The viewpoint of immigrants as a threat, a way to drain on public resources and increase crime rates are being classified as anti-discrimination. According to the EU's Evolving Approach it had become apparent once irregular migrants arrive it is difficult to return them to their home countries'.

¹ UNHCR. No end in sight. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/07502a24ce0646bb9703ce96630b15fa>

² Ibid.

³ BBC. "EU and Egypt Sign \$8bn Deal to Curb Migration." *BBC News*, March 18, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/c302m85q5xzt/egypt>.

Recommendations

To a) save lives b) redirect migrants to safe and regular pathways and c) to dismantle criminal smuggling networks the following is proposed:

1. Intercept all migrant boats and return the migrants to their point of departure. This will prevent application for refugee status from within the EU. By closing off this avenue of migration lives will be saved.
2. Any boats intercepted should be seized to prevent future trafficking.
3. The EU open offices in Tripoli and Benghazi to accept applications from migrants for resettlement in Europe and further the EU seek agreements with member countries to accept some economic and political migrants annually.
4. Since the current migrant flow comes in large part via Egypt and Chad, we recommend that the EU work with states beyond the North African coast region (including financially assisting Egyptian border control with Sudan). Also, the EU should help Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia with stabilisation. Finally, the EU should help the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with stability and economic partnerships.
5. It is recommended that these policies be implemented for an initial period of three years subject to renewal if required.
6. Fair and nondiscriminatory distribution for asylum seekers and refugees among Member States.
 - a. Based on population size
 - b. GDP
 - c. Already existing reception capacity
 - d. Solidarity fund for financial assistance
7. Border Management.
 - a. Increase investment in security.
 - b. Technology improvement shortening the time for determination cases that can take up to years for refugees.
 - c. Strengthen cooperation with third countries.

Alternative Proposal 4: Energy Security

Member State Proposing: Bulgaria & Lithuania

Background

Prior to Putin's war in Ukraine, the European Union (EU) enjoyed abundant Russian gas, raw materials, and numerous other commodities with an inexpensive price tag. As relations have worsened in recent years, primarily due to Russian military action against Ukraine, energy dependence on Russia has become increasingly risky. Petrochemical fertiliser imports from Russia to the EU have decreased from 32% in 2021 to 25% in 2023. Russian energy exports to the EU plummeted from 27% in 2021 to 3% in 2023. Lastly, the value of EU imports from Russia has dropped from a staggering 82% in February 2022 to just 28% in December 2023 (Europa, 2023). The efforts of many EU Member States show that Europe is ready to forsake trade relations with Russia. However, some countries lag in transitioning from cheap Russian commodities. Austria has increased reliance on Russian energy at 98% dependence, while Hungary still imports a considerable amount of fuel from Russia. This makes the EU vulnerable to price fluctuations, which Russia dictates. Furthermore, European exports are making their way to Russia via regional allies, which minimises the effects of Western sanctions and embargoes. To prevent Russia from sowing discord and creating economic setbacks, the following actions should be taken.

Marking over the 2nd anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the need for Ukrainian support and European security remains of the utmost importance. Bulgaria has taken action and banned Russian imports of oil. In substitute, we're requesting the funds for the modernization of the Burgas refinery which Bulgaria has recently taken control of from the Russian-based company, LUKOIL. As Bulgaria has suffered from recent depopulation, the stabilisation of the economic sector is needed to contribute towards sectors such as tourism and infrastructure. Acknowledging the fact the EU can modernise the LUKOIL Neftohim Burgas refinery, we need additional action to support our energy security in a global and European-wide push to further pressure Russia. It is of European interest to take this action efficiently and accordingly.

The LUKOIL Neftohim Burgas is one of the largest employers in Bulgaria, providing one of the highest-paying jobs in Bulgaria, with more than 1,000 people. It is also the largest oil refinery in Bulgaria. The European Union, if they were to take action, could help the struggling economy of Bulgaria; the unemployment rate has increased as the population decreases, and the modernization of Burgas refineries will help to solve both of these problems by creating more job opportunities as well as boosting the economy placing money back into the European Union and more importantly Bulgaria.

The oil refinery is located on the coast of the Black Sea, which has become a hot spot for tourism; the modernization of the refinery will pull more funds into the area to help develop more options for tourism and small businesses within the region. Overall, the European Union will all benefit from the support of the modernization of Bulgaria's oil refineries. As a result, the EU will be able to have clean green energy from refineries and sanction Russia's oil imports.

Recommendations

1. Diversify Energy Sector
 - a. Explore alternative energy sources with stable, non-hostile partners
 - b. Probe alternative methods of energy such as wind, solar, and hydroelectric to gain self-sufficiency

2. Establish partnerships and trade agreements with South American, Asian, and African nations
 - a. Develop closer ties with underdeveloped nations to bolster trade relations
 - b. Introduce low-tariff or free-trade agreements for most favoured nations
 - c. Negotiate for decreased tariffs from African and South American port cities in exchange for decreased goods

3. Embargo Russia and fellow collaborators in Putin's war in Ukraine
 - a. Entirely suspend trade and business with nations, territories, and companies that supply weapons, logistical, intelligence, and cyber support to the military of the Russian Federation, Russia-affiliated paramilitary groups, and Russia-affiliated private military companies

4. Reinforce ban on Russian cargo ships from accessing EU-owned ports
 - a. Reject Russian-allied freighters access from critical EU-owned port cities (Port of Rotterdam, Antwerp-Bruges, and Hamburg)
 - b. Restrict movement of all Russian and Russia-affiliated ships through the Oresund, Skagerrak, Dover straits, and all other European waterways.
 - c. Stricter enforcement and oversight of the No Russia Clause

5. 5-year plan & funding for Bulgarian oil refiner
 - a. The European Commission will support Bulgaria in its efforts to modernise oil refineries by funding 50% of the total cost of refinery modernization; as a return for the beginning support, Bulgaria will offer a tax break on products created within the refineries, thus creating lower prices across the European Union
 - b. The European Commission will help fund 50% of contracts for labourers and 50% of materials. Bulgaria will pay for the remaining 50% of costs
 - c. After the five years conclude, lower tax offerings can be set up for the European Union countries that contributed to the funding of the oil refineries

6. Refinery optimization: The EU will collaborate with the office of the Ministry of Energy of Bulgaria and consult with engineers for the following
 - a. Optimising refinery processes to current up-to-date technology by upgrading equipment and implementing advanced control systems
 - b. Upgrading distillation towers, catalytic crackers, and hydrotreater equipment for streamlined processing
 - c. Upgrading infrastructure such as storage tanks, pipelines, and loading/unloading facilities to enhance reliability, throughput, and safety

Alternative Proposal 5: Protection of the Digital World and Investment for Innovation and Security in the European Union

Member State Proposing: France

Background

The 21st century introduced the digital world with its advantages but also its threats. Indeed, attacks from other countries outside of the European Union has multiplied these last few years. It is estimated that the average time to detect an attack is 190 days and according to European Commissioner Thierry Breton it is crucial to reduce this delay to a few hours. Moreover, the damages linked with a lack of cybersecurity might go up to 18 billion euros per minute in 2023 to 10 billion per year in 2025, confirming the need for more security. The European Union should not lose its high ambitions to still be a major player on the international scene. That's why the EU should not rely on other countries' innovations in the future. Yet the EU should develop its own Artificial Intelligence, this is a question of innovation, pride and security to avoid any foreign interference into what is about to become the basis of our lives just like the internet became 25 years ago.

Recommendations

1. Upgrade Cybersecurity in Europe
 - Raise more funds for cybersecurity in order to shorten the delay of treatment in case of an attack and also the cost per year of such attacks.
2. Promote the European Union Independence in terms of innovation.
 - Allocate more funds for the development of a homegrown AI in order to promote the European Union's independence and innovations.
3. Regulation of data.
 - Regulate Artificial intelligence in order to protect the life of our citizens.