



# **Charlemagne Prize Academy Annual Report 2021 – on the Future of the Union**

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**Europe at the Crossroads –  
New Perceptions of Solidarity**



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New Perceptions of Solidarity**



## Table of Content

7	<b>Greeting</b> – Michelle Müntefering
8	<b>Introduction</b> – Jürgen Linden
12	<b>Europe at the Crossroads</b> Wolfgang Schäuble, Charlemagne Prize Laureate 2012
16	<b>Beyond Crisis</b> <b>How can the EU continue to ensure internal cohesion and solidarity?</b> Elisa Ferreira, Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, European Commission <b>Future perspectives on EU solidarity after the COVID-19 crisis: Moving from ‘second-order’ to ‘first order’ solidarity</b> Sophie Pornschlegel, Charlemagne Prize Fellow 2020/2021
26	<b>Migration</b> <b>The EU’s asylum system is outdated. Or is it?</b> Nina Gregori, Executive Director, European Asylum Support Office (EASO) <b>Between blackmail and pushbacks – European refugee policy at the brink and what to do now</b> Gerald Knaus, Chairman European Stability Initiative (ESI) <b>Solidarity across borders - solidarity beyond borders?</b> Hannah Pool, Charlemagne Prize Fellow 2020/2021
42	<b>Capability</b> <b>Europe’s digital sovereignty</b> Axel Voss, Member of the European Parliament <b>What would solidarity-based approaches mean for the creation of common European data spaces (CEDS)?</b> Photini Vrikki, Charlemagne Prize Fellow 2020/2021 <b>Knowledge sharing as a pivot to create new intellectual wealth</b> Mustapha Achoubane, Associate Director for International Relations, Florida Polytech University <b>How can shorter supply chains protect EU jobs, businesses and strengthen Europe’s economy?</b> Radu George Dumitrescu, Charlemagne Prize Fellow 2020/2021
60	<b>On a global stage</b> <b>Geopolitical challenges for the EU and the future of transatlantic relations</b> Jana Puglierin, Head of the European Council of Foreign Relations (ECFR), Berlin <b>How to achieve the EU’s strategic autonomy in security and defense while upholding the transatlantic alliance?</b> Iulian Romanyshyn, Charlemagne Prize Fellow 2020/2021 <b>Is Africa Europe’s Future?</b> Driss Guerraoui, President of Open University of Dakhla, Morocco
74	<b>Insights: Research Year 2020/2021</b>
78	<b>Insights: Karlspreis Europa Summit 2021</b>
86	<b>Outlook for 2022</b> – Thomas Prefi
90	<b>Acknowledgements</b>

## Greeting by the Minister of State for International Cultural Policy at the Federal Foreign Office (March 2018 - December 2021) Michelle Müntefering



We are currently facing what is probably the greatest transformation since the Industrial Revolution: climate, digitalisation, mobility - all of these major issues will shape Europe in the years to come.

In times like this, we need the courage to help shape this change, as well as the creativity and ideas from civil society, culture and science from Lisbon to Bucharest, so that we can meet the challenges that arise from it and successfully master them together.

The Charlemagne Prize Academy stands precisely for this: for a pan-European view that thinks ahead and helps to shape the future.

Over the past twelve months, five fellows have addressed the question of how we can advance European cooperation in these crucial times: from perspectives of European solidarity after the end of the Covid pandemic to the potential of shorter supply chains for business and employment in Europe.

I trust that all these contributions will reach many interested readers. They very much deserve it. And I hope that these impulses will not only receive wide attention, but spark new ideas and further research.

The achievements of European cooperation cannot be taken for granted. We must be open to discuss and consider different points of views, but also take a clear stand where our common values are called into question.

For our diversity and differences, it is our common values that unite us: democracy, the rule of law and solidarity.

I thank the Charlemagne Prize Academy for its work. I wish the young scholars continued success in their work and their future path, and I hope that you and all of us enjoy reading this annual research report and gain inspiring insights.

Yours,

Michelle Müntefering

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## Introduction: An urgent need for action

Dr. Jürgen Linden, Chairman of the Charlemagne Prize Board of Directors



If the European Union were to list the tasks it faces and the policies it is expected to pursue, this list would be very versatile.

Although frequently and strongly demanded, there will probably be no political majorities in the EU for far-reaching reforms and treaty changes in the near future. Therefore, it is necessary to accelerate the consolidation, especially with regard to the management of the current crises and the most important political task areas: focussing on geopolitics and foreign and trade relations with the US and China, adjusting to the realities to the Brexit treaties, clarifying potential sources of conflict in the Balkans, and insuring a quick and recognisable conversion of the Green Deal. Thus, above all, there is a need for internal clarification of the canon of values on which the EU stands, especially the principle of the rule of law.

With great interest, we're currently looking to the Conference on the Future of Europe, which wants to address institutional reforms in order to overcome democratic deficits and enhance the EU's capability to act. Citizens are encouraged to get involved in this process and take a stand on the reform of the EU, especially with regard to the strengthening of the Parliament, the formation of a second chamber, transnational lists in elections, the role of top candidates and also transparency registers. But the public discourse is also concerned with economic and financial policy, Europe's role in the world, a common security policy that resolves the relationships with our continental neighbours yet also tackles issues of migration arising and constantly increasing there. It addresses matters of civil defence, cyber defence, the EU's role in NATO, energy policy, the innovations in the field of ecology and direct measures of climate protection. Finally, it is about how people's lifestyles can better adapt to the constant changes brought by digitalisation or even climate change; how their work processes and everyday lives can adjust to advancements.

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**The EU needs a lot of courage to efficiently tackle the bundle of tasks that lie ahead, but it also needs ideas from a broad variety of fields and perspectives.**

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And it is always about education.

The EU needs a lot of courage to efficiently tackle the bundle of tasks that lie ahead, but it also needs ideas from a broad variety of fields and perspectives.

The Charlemagne Prize Academy was founded in 2019 to address the future questions of the EU and to offer policy-makers new solutions based on research and analysis.

The scope of the Academy's future work is as broad as the EU's remit. Every year, five fellowships are awarded for outstanding project ideas that work on an innovative question with European relevance for the duration of one year. In this framework, we can now - for the second time - successfully report on project results that provide new recommendations and directional proposals on how to tackle current and future challenges through studies and policy analyses. In order to consider and address the challenges of tomorrow already today.

Building on this will serve Europe's urgent need for action in the following years.

# Europe at the crossroads



**Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble**  
Charlemagne Prize Laureate 2012

The best that can be said about the state of the Union at the moment is that crises always offer opportunities.

The great challenges of our time - climate change and environmental sustainability, internal and external security, global power shifts in influence and power, to name but a few - affect us all, while at the same time no single EU member state can master them alone. And in this instance, Europe seems rather ponderous, over-regulated and often incapable of agreement and joint action. The causes are as often analysed as they are seemingly almost impossible to change. In essence, it is the different devotion of the democratic sovereign in the member states to bring national identity into a sustainable relationship with European unification. Thus, the principle of an "ever closer union" became the guiding principle of action for European institutions. Despite all its undeniable successes, the European primary law enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty is, from a realistic point of view, hardly amendable and not sufficient for the challenges mentioned above.

We need a more efficient capacity to act, and as long as European institutions - for whatever reason - are not able to do so, member states must lead the way. Increased cooperation, „coalitions of the willing“, the term is not important, but leadership is needed indeed - it is inherent in the Schengen system as well as in the European Monetary Union. And in the area of the European primary law the principle of unanimity must be replaced by majority decisions.

In foreign and security policy, Europe must develop common positions and strategies, and above all, provide common abilities that are relevant in close coordination and partnership with our allied partners. Germany and France could form the centre to which all others are equally invited. Without internal border checks for people, goods and services, a common administration for the control of our external borders is needed, i.e. a European asylum and migration policy that properly balances humanity and human dignity when dealing with refugees combating abuse and maintaining internal stability, and at the same time remain just in terms of European responsibility for neighbourhoods in the Southeast, the Mediterranean region, and for Africa. Robert Schuman, one of Europe's founding fathers had already pointed this out. This is possible,

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If we understand identity as a community of destiny, then we not only have regional and national commonalities from history and culture, but also European ones.

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for example, with reception centres on the periphery or outside of Europe, jointly operated and, if necessary, under the supervision of the UNHCR and secured by police and, if necessary, military presence, with rapid decisions on reception and, if necessary, distribution or repatriation.

And a common currency requires common rules for economic, financial and social policy to ensure its stability. As long as this is not possible through the transfer of corresponding responsibilities, conditionality is needed, with compliance that must be enforced. The monetary policy of the European Central Bank cannot replace this. What is decisive is the regulatory principle that decision-making and liability must not diverge. Under these conditions, everything points to more unity and solidarity, because in the end every union is as strong as its weakest link. And in a time of global financial markets, a currency also needs a banking union and common capital market rules.

As to data protection law, Europe has proven that it can set standards. This success advocates for a joint and therefore more effective usage of European data volumes while guaran-

teeing a proper level of data protection. It is hard to imagine what European research in medicine and biology, for example, could achieve if European data pools were used. We don't have to limit ourselves to a choice between the Silicon Valley oligopoly and the Chinese state monopoly.

As I said, much is possible if some lead the way and always remain open to all others - large or small, always fundamentally equal. Leadership is needed. As Winston Churchill once said: Never waste a good crisis.

Through challenges and crises that we overcome together we grow, and European identity and belonging can mature. If we understand identity as a community of destiny, then we not only have regional and national commonalities from history and culture, but also European ones. We can build on this. This also follows the realisation that sovereignty has long since ceased to belong undivided to the member states, but must increasingly be shared with Europe. In the 21st century, this is probably more necessary than ever.

# Beyond Crises



# How can the EU continue to ensure internal cohesion and solidarity?



Elisa Ferreira, Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, European Commission

### Solidarity through the ‘convergence machine’

Any union is as strong as its weakest link. This is why economic, social and territorial cohesion is not just an expression of the European Union’s solidarity towards its most vulnerable parts, but also a matter of self-interest for all Member States. Through its integration model, internal market and distributive policies, the European Union has been generating growth for all its citizens. The 2012 World Bank report “Golden Growth: Restoring the Lustre of the European Economic Model” dubbed the European Union a ‘convergence machine’. Cohesion policy has been one of the true engines of this machine by concentrating support on the regions where it is most needed, promoting job creation, innovation, environmental protection, access to public services, cooperation across borders, all of which directly impact people’s daily lives.

The aim of the EU structural funds has always been to support investments that contribute to sustainable structural changes to underpin long-term growth. Based on regional long-term development strategies, operational programmes are developed according to the partnership principle to ensure ownership with the local level and local stakeholders and tailoring to the needs on the ground.

The European Commission estimates that the 2014-2020 cohesion policy programmes will have a significant positive impact on European regions’ Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. By 2023, GDP per capita is projected to be 2.6% higher in less developed regions thanks to cohesion policy. As a result, these projections suggest that the gap between the top and bottom regions (each representing 10% of the EU population) will drop by 3.5%.

The convergence process is a common good that benefits the whole Union as its positive spill over effects spread to other countries and regions. It is estimated that 15 years after the end of the implementation period, each euro spent on Cohesion policy will have generated 2.7 euros of additional GDP at EU level. Beyond the tangible increases in GDP, cohesion policy

has also contributed to the narrowing of gaps in terms of employment, health, poverty and social exclusion.

Nonetheless, the convergence process has also faced some headwinds. On the one hand, new disparities have emerged following the 2008 economic crisis, on the other, the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic crisis are likely to have an uneven impact.

### The COVID-19 crisis and the EU’s reaction in the name of solidarity

The pandemic caused the biggest recession since 1945, with dramatic consequences on the health and wellbeing of people, as well as on the economy, throughout the entire Union. However, what was a symmetrical shock for all Member States, produced an asymmetrical impact with some Member States and regions. These were hit harder than others due to, among others, their economic specialisation, structure of labour market, heavy reliance on exposed sectors or pre-crisis vulnerabilities.

It was clear that an EU common reaction, based on solidarity and self-interest, was the optimal solution to ensure that the most vulnerable countries were not left alone. This led the European Union to put forward unprecedented measures to react to the health crisis and support the economic recovery. NextGenerationEU will invest up to EUR 800 billion to spur economic growth while transforming our economies towards a more sustainable and inclusive future.

Importantly, it is not the only instrument at work. Cohesion policy has been the frontrunner of the European response. Notwithstanding its long-term horizon in triggering structural changes and economic development, the policy has provided an agile and effective reaction to the crisis.

In spring 2020, two Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) packages were proposed and adopted in record time. Through these, cohesion policy became extremely flexible and simplified, to allow Member States to rapidly re-allocate cohesion policy funding to provide immediate relief and liquidity. So far, EUR 20 billion were mobilised in support to the most impacted sectors, businesses, workers and healthcare.

The Cohesion engine will remain crucial for the “convergence machine” to keep delivering.

The Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU) instrument was also swiftly put in place to bridge the gap between the immediate emergency response to the pandemic and long-term recovery. Providing EUR 50 billion of fresh resources to existing cohesion programmes, REACT-EU has been the first instrument to mobilise NextGenerationEU funding to be distributed among Member States, reflecting the economic and social impacts of the crisis.

These actions have provided a lifeline to Member States to face the health crisis, maintain employment and business activity, support investment, and pave the way for a green, digital and more resilient economic recovery.

### Repair and prepare the future

However, the crisis will have after-effects for the convergence process. Moreover, in the recovery phase, new drivers of disparities emerge. This is where cohesion policy needs to step in to avoid a K-shaped recovery, with some countries and regions prospering and others declining. Firstly, we need to strengthen the resilience of territories in response to unexpected shocks. Regions heavily dependent on a few narrow tradeable manufacturing or service sectors turned out to be particularly vulnerable. Secondly, it is crucial to provide new development opportunities for vulnerable regions, by further diversifying local economies, creating employment, and strengthening skills and social inclusion.

If the COVID-crisis will be known as the great accelerator, we have to avoid that one of the trends it accelerates is the consolidation of territorial divides, which could have dramatic social and political consequences. In fact, even before the crisis, an increasing number of middle-income regions had been experiencing stagnating growth. Often less innovative or productive than the best performers, their costs tend to be too high to compete with less developed regions and their innovation and education systems not strong enough to compete at the global level with more developed regions. This sub-par economic performance and lack of employment opportunities have social costs and can create a sense of being left behind by the economic model and policymakers. The territorial and participatory approach of cohesion policy is essential in these cases, to offer tailor-made solutions and restore citizens’ confidence in the future.

Moreover, to prevent the emergence of new territorial disparities, policies should anticipate the major green, digital and demographic transitions ahead, as not all regions are equally equipped to cope with them.

The shift to a climate-neutral, circular economy in line with the European Green Deal objectives can generate many benefits, leading to the development of new industries and new jobs, but adjustment costs will differ from one region to another and may be particularly challenging in areas relying on carbon intensive industries. Support from the Just Transition Mechanism will help mitigate the socioeconomic impacts in the most affected areas, by boosting economic diversification as well as supporting reskilling, training and job seeking assistance.

Completing the digital transition can also be a challenge. Digitalisation can improve access to services, create new jobs and enable firms to cope with a potentially shrinking labour force, increase productivity and reach larger markets. However, to be successful, the transition will require major investments to expand very-high-speed broadband, boost IT skills across generations and support the uptake of new technologies. EU investment and reform support, also from cohesion policy, can help close the digital gap.

Lastly, depopulation affects an increasing number of territories, with a risk of desertification, outmigration and impoverishment of the labour market and economic activities. This is notably the case in rural areas, where the remaining population has limited access to basic services and economic opportunities. Demographic ageing and depopulation will be among the key challenges for EU and national policies in the future.

The EU has worked hard to build and strengthen internal cohesion among its regions and citizens. It has supported sustainable growth, employment and wellbeing for decades, while reacting swiftly to the unprecedented challenge of the pandemic. In the future, it has to continue to do so by identifying and anticipating new challenges and tackling economic, social and territorial disparities. The Cohesion engine will remain crucial for the “convergence machine” to keep delivering. We need it out of solidarity, but also self-interest, because - quod erat demonstrandum - any union is only as strong as its weakest link.

## Beyond Crisis

### Future perspectives on EU solidarity after the COVID-19 crisis:

# Moving from ‘second-order’ to ‘first order’ solidarity



#### Sophie Pornschlegel

**Position:** Senior Policy Analyst  
**Institution:** European Policy Centre (EPC), Brussels  
**Year of Birth:** 1990  
**Citizenship:** France/Germany  
**Research Question:** What are the perspectives for EU solidarity after the COVID-19 crisis?  
**Academic Mentor:** Janis Emmanouilidis, Director of Studies, European Policy Centre (EPC)

European solidarity has become a widely used expression during the COVID-19 crisis. But what role does solidarity play in the EU? What does it entail in practice? This research project allowed to develop the notions of ‘first-order’ and ‘second-order’ solidarity to differentiate between the national and European level, to categorise various forms and dimensions of EU solidarity, and on that basis, suggests different options to foster EU solidarity in the future. In light of growing political and socioeconomic divides, the EU should invest in solidarity mechanisms to re-establish European cohesion.

It was one of Europe’s founding fathers, Robert Schuman, who first emphasised the role of solidarity in the process of European integration. In his historical speech on 9 May 1950,

which would become known as the ‘Schuman Declaration’, he explained: “Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which will create a de facto solidarity.”<sup>1</sup> Despite the fact that solidarity constitutes a core pillar of European cooperation, its conceptual understanding still remains somewhat vague, its translation into concrete actions at EU level is constrained to a few policy fields, and thus its application continues to be limited.

#### The COVID-19 crisis: Not enough solidarity?

Despite its ‘thin’ definition at EU level, solidarity is a concept that is often referred to in crisis situations – the COVID-19 crisis was no different than the euro crisis or the refugee cri-

sis in this matter. Solidarity was used to call for cooperation between EU member states as well as a rhetorical tool to legitimise joint decisions. At the height of the first wave of infections in April 2020, the Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez highlighted the role of solidarity for European cooperation – and the dangers of a lack thereof: “Without solidarity there can be no cohesion, without cohesion there will be disaffection and the credibility of the European project will be severely damaged.”<sup>2</sup>

The COVID-19 crisis provided favourable conditions to strengthen EU solidarity, as all member states were equally affected by the pandemic. Even if the lack of coordination between the EU27 during the COVID-19 crisis led to a patchwork of measures at the beginning, the exogenous nature of the crisis led to a different form of solidarity than during the ‘euro crisis’, when European countries were considered responsible for their own fate. Besides a range of initiatives to respond to the pandemic, two key measures were taken: The Next-GenerationEU (NGEU) recovery package and the joint vaccine procurement. While the latter enabled all EU member states to access the vaccine at the same price, the recovery package allowed to absorb the macroeconomic shock inflicted by the COVID-19 lockdowns. NGEU also had an important role to play in maintaining a certain level of European cohesion in the future, as all EU member states would benefit from the funds, with a special emphasis on those who have been hardest hit by the crisis.

If solidarity was translated into tangible policy action during the COVID-19 crisis, it was because of the willingness of national governments to agree to solidarity mechanisms with other European countries. The consequences of non-action – risking further fragmentation, growing inequalities as well as a potential destabilisation of individual member states – outweighed the risks of putting into place solidarity mechanisms.

While the measures will help counter the short-term consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, they will not tackle the growing divides within the EU in the long-term. For that, the Union requires a more comprehensive solidarity strategy that encompasses a clearer definition of EU solidarity and concrete ideas of the solidarity mechanisms it wishes to develop in the future. Rather than using solidarity as a mere catchphrase, European decision-makers should therefore give the concept more meaning and prioritise it in their political agenda. There is room to do so. Despite the relative ‘thinness’ of the concept, the broad interpretation of solidarity in the EU Treaties could be defined more precisely and include far more policy fields than what has been applied in practice so far (see fig. 1). The following paragraphs briefly outline the different forms of solidarity, before suggesting four options to foster EU solidarity in the future.

Even if the lack of coordination between the EU27 during the COVID-19 crisis led to a patchwork of measures at the beginning, the exogenous nature of the crisis led to a different form of solidarity than during the ‘euro crisis’, when European countries were considered responsible for their own fate.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Schuman Declaration, 1950. Full text available on the EU’s website.

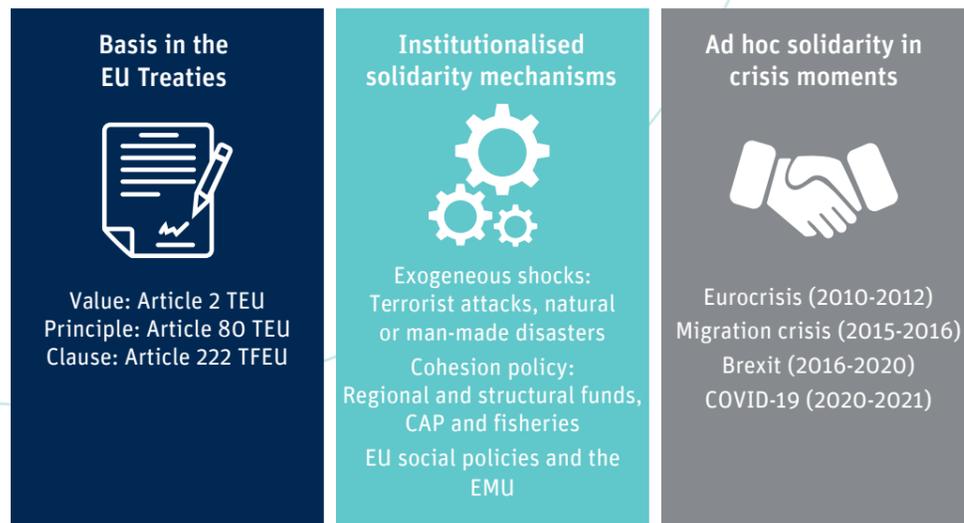
<sup>2</sup> Sánchez, Pedro, “Europe’s future is at stake in this war against coronavirus”, The Guardian, 5 April 2020.

**EU solidarity remains 'second order' after national solidarity**

Even if solidarity is mentioned in the EU Treaties in three aspects: as a value, a principle and a clause. However, it remains a rather vague concept in practice. Besides the EU Solidarity Fund, no other EU programme explicitly mentions solidarity. This is because EU solidarity remains 'second-order', while national solidarity is 'first-order' (fig. 2). In other words, the quality of solidarity-based relationships between European countries and between European citizens is poorer than at the national level. This is closely linked to the nature of the EU as a 'sui generis' polity. Traditionally, nation-states are close-knit political communities that have grown from a shared sense of belonging and purpose of their 'people', the citizens.<sup>3</sup> In the EU, there is greater diversity, and the grounds on which solidarity relies are different from the national level: they are more transactional in nature. For now, EU solidarity relies on the 'enlightened self-interest' of national governments, which have understood that it is in their own interest to

work together to tackle common challenges. However, there is still little understanding in net-contributor countries that EU solidarity could also create win-win situations for both poorer and richer member states. Currently, net-contributor countries tend to believe that more established solidarity mechanisms are against their national interests when the contrary could be the case in the long-term.

This transactional understanding of solidarity is reflected in the form of solidarity that is most developed at Union level: **interstate solidarity** between EU member states. For instance, most countries have accepted that it is in their own best interest to enter into solidarity-based relations when facing natural or man-made disasters. In the cases of terrorist attacks, they choose to support each other. In fiscal and economic policy, member states have agreed to enter into solidarity-based relationships. The decision over the COVID-19 recovery package emerged from most member states' recognition that they would all be



Current forms and dimensions of EU solidarity

	Forms	Explanation	Examples	Duration	Sources of legitimacy
<b>First-order solidarity</b> = National solidarity	Institutionalised	Between the state and citizens	Redistributive mechanisms of the welfare state (e.g. healthcare)	Permanent	National identity, historical social ties
	In civil society settings	Between citizens within the national borders	Labour movements	Ad hoc	Social ties between citizens
<b>Second-order solidarity</b> = EU solidarity	Interstate	Between EU member states	Assistance and mutual help in cases of terrorist attacks	Ad hoc	Transnational reciprocity, enlightened self-interest of EU member states
	Interterritorial	Between EU institutions and EU regions	Colvesion and structural funds, Common Agrcultural Policy	Permanent	Transnational reciprocity, enlightened self-interest of EU member states
	Interpersonal	Between EU citizens across national borders	Direct funding from the EU to citizens or EU taxes for mobile citizens	Not yet developed, but preferably permanent	Social ties between EU citizens, joint forward-looking objectives

Overview of the different forms of solidarity in the EU

better off with an extensive EU recovery package than if they went their own paths. This form of interstate solidarity is relatively well-developed at the EU level, but it should be extended further to include new policy fields or to enhance existing mechanisms.

On the other hand, **interpersonal solidarity** among EU citizens is less developed. For instance, there are no European

solidarity mechanisms that can compare to the ones existing in national welfare states. While some EU policies could be considered 'redistributive', such as cohesion and structural funds, these programmes are not framed as solidarity mechanisms. Instead, they are viewed as compensation schemes for potential losses created by the single market, thus focusing on the economic aspects of European integration. This framing is due to the perception that the EU's legitimacy in creating a

<sup>3</sup> Ferrera, Maurizio and Carlo Burelli (2019), "Cross-national solidarity and political sustainability in the EU after the crisis", Journal of Common Market Studies, Volume 57, Number 1, pp. 94-110.

single market is stronger than in the field of solidarity – and showcases how controversial EU solidarity still is. At the same time, there are weak social ties between EU citizens across borders, which would allow for interpersonal solidarity to grow.

While the EU should not replicate national solidarity mechanisms, the imbalance between interstate and interpersonal solidarity does not reflect the EU's nature as a "Union of states and citizens", which mixes intergovernmental and supranational modes of action. Reflecting these two sources of political legitimacy, both forms of solidarity should be present in the EU: solidarity between member states and solidarity between citizens.

If the EU decides to take the necessary steps to establish more ambitious solidarity mechanisms, in particular those initiatives directed at supporting citizens rather than national governments, several elements will be relevant in the process. First, decision-makers should consider the subsidiarity principle, assessing at which level of decision-making the solidarity mechanisms should be implemented. This will be necessary so that the new mechanisms stand on solid grounds in terms of legitimacy. In addition, the distribution of competences for those new solidarity mechanisms is also a question that should be thoroughly debated. Finally, the current EU budgetary rules would potentially have to be changed to enable more ambitious solidarity mechanisms to be established at EU level. The process of establishing a more comprehensive solidarity agenda is likely to entail lengthy debates but should nevertheless not be avoided by European decision-makers, as solidarity is a fundamental aspect of the future stability and cohesion of the EU.

More EU solidarity will be necessary at the Union level to counter the growing divides within Europe – not only when political circumstances force member states to enter into solidarity-

based relationships. There has been no economic convergence in the eurozone in the past ten years; the inequalities between European regions remain, as do the income gaps between European countries, which create vastly different living conditions across the EU.<sup>4</sup> And those divides are not only visible in socioeconomic terms – the political divides have also increased over the past years, hindering the Union's capacity to act. Finally, EU solidarity has become even more relevant when the social ties at the national level are increasingly contested, and national solidarity mechanisms are not as solid and comprehensive as they were in the past.

#### Future options for EU solidarity

- Option 0: Reducing EU solidarity**
- Option 1: Maintaining the status quo**
- Option 2: Developing interstate solidarity**
- Option 3: Developing interpersonal solidarity**

There are several questions for the EU to consider if it wishes to foster more solidarity. Which kind of solidarity should be developed? What are actionable policies that solidarity could be translated into? Which political and legal basis is there to develop EU solidarity?

While there is no straightforward answer to those questions, there are different directions in which the EU could move. While for the purpose of clarity, the following options are separated from one another, in practice, elements from each option could be mixed and further developed, depending on decision-makers' and citizens' preferences. As the COVID-19 crisis has shown, solidarity is not a fixed concept; it can arise and abate in particular moments. Depending on the political context, one or the other option might become more relevant in the future.

**Option 0 proposes no further development of EU solidarity and, potentially, the dismantling of existing solidarity mechanisms at the Union level.** The objective would be to reduce the EU's competences in every policy field that would be considered solidarity-based, out of the belief that the Union is not the right framework for solidarity to be developed. This is, for instance, the view of nationalists, who believe that the EU lacks the features available within the Nation-State (such as a common identity, a shared sense of belonging, etc.) and as a result the common ground for solidarity is missing at Union level. This could also be the view of progressives who believe that the EU would undermine national solidarity mechanisms through its 'neoliberal' outlook and therefore prefer to protect national solidarity from a potential 'race to the bottom'. In any case, both permanent and ad hoc solidarity mechanisms would be rejected. However, this option allows for two further positions towards national solidarity: advocates of 'option 0' could either want to further develop or reduce national solidarity, depending on their political leanings. All of them are likely to support intergovernmentalism and reject further integration steps at Union level. The more radical defenders of such a position would even try to undo existing solidarity mechanisms at EU level – thus pushing for EU disintegration. In the long run, such a position is likely to lead to further fragmentation in the Union, as each member state would have to individually decide whether they invest in solidarity mechanisms or not. This option has several limitations and downsides. As Brexit has shown in a spectacular way, it is incredibly difficult to undo EU integration. Deconstructing European solidarity mechanisms would also create potential spill-over effects that could prove to be much costlier than assumed. For instance, 'opting out' of the NGEU recovery package would also affect the EU budget and the European semester. In addition, such a scenario would reduce EU member states' ability to manage interdependencies, and therefore inevitably diminish the Union's overall resilience when facing global challenges.

**Option 1 proposes keeping the status quo after the COVID-19 crisis.** This approach considers that the solidarity mechanisms implemented until now should be retained, but not further developed. Advocates of 'option 1' are defenders of the status quo: whatever has been decided until now is sufficient to respond to the crises and to ensure cohesion in the EU. For example, they would agree with European measures taken during the COVID-19 crisis to respond to the challenges the EU is facing but favour a return to 'business as usual' as soon as possible – including, for instance, a return to a stricter interpretation of the Stability and Growth Pact rules. They would also prefer to keep the NGEU recovery package as a temporary instrument rather than support its more permanent implementation. The reluctance to further develop solidarity mechanisms at EU level is likely to follow a similar rationale or reasoning as the one outlined in Option 0 – in particular, that the EU lacks the legitimacy to develop a more ambitious solidarity agenda. However, this option is also likely to be advocated by realists, who consider that the current political landscape does not allow for further solidarity in the EU, and as a result, there is no window of opportunity to push for such an agenda. In this option, interstate solidarity between national governments is supported in its current transactional and reciprocal form, but should not be further developed, that is, by enhancing existing solidarity mechanisms or by including new policy areas. Interpersonal solidarity mechanisms are not supported at all. In the long-term, this could lead to a further erosion of cohesion and potential disintegration of the EU, as the preservation of the status quo might not be sufficient to fight centrifugal forces. The consequences could therefore be similar to the ones outlined in Option 0, even if the erosion process were slower.

While options 0 and 1 would retain EU solidarity 'second-order', options 2 and 3 would allow for EU solidarity to take a more prominent role, ultimately making EU solidarity 'first order'

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**There has been no economic convergence in the eurozone in the past ten years; the inequalities between European regions remain, as do the income gaps between European countries, which create vastly different living conditions across the EU.**

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<sup>4</sup> Goecke, Henry and Michael Hütter (2016), "Regional Convergence in Europe", *Intereconomics*, Volume 51, Number 3, p.166.

and therefore levelling it with national solidarity. This would not mean that national solidarity takes a backseat. On the contrary, increasing EU solidarity would complement and sustain national solidarity mechanisms. Options 2 and 3 mostly consider institutional forms of solidarity rather than ad hoc mechanisms.

**Option 2 proposes developing interstate solidarity.** In this scenario, decision-makers would agree that further solidarity is required at Union level to ensure cohesion among member states. They would support interstate solidarity mechanisms, both in their temporary and more permanent forms. Advocates of the ‘interstate option’ would favour the NGEU package as an ad hoc mechanism, but also advocate for its more permanent implementation. However, they would defend an intergovernmentalist position, believing that the legitimacy for EU solidarity rests with the national governments, and remaining sceptical of interpersonal solidarity at Union level. Such an option would be legally feasible, as the EU Treaties provide an adequate legal basis for more interstate solidarity. But the consolidation of interstate solidarity will depend on numerous factors. National governments will have to consider whether enhanced cooperation with other European countries is in their own interests. And the political circumstances would have to be the ‘right’ ones for governments to call for more interstate solidarity, as was the case during the pandemic. This option would allow the EU to move towards more ‘positive integration’, e.g., integrating further policy areas, rather than focusing on the reduction of trade barriers and liberalisation (‘negative integration’). While this option would already help to move EU solidarity from ‘second’ to ‘first order’, it also has limits. The lack of focus on interpersonal solidarity means that there will be no deepened social ties between citizens across national borders.

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**Option 3 proposes developing interpersonal solidarity.**

This is the most ambitious scenario, which would advocate for solidarity mechanisms aimed at EU citizens directly. Advocates of such an option are likely to be federalists or advocates of supranationalism. They could either prefer to develop both interstate and interpersonal solidarity or decide to focus solely on interpersonal solidarity, considering that citizens, rather than national governments, should have a say as to how solidarity should be developed at Union level. This option would lead to the creation of more substantial redistributive mechanisms, effectively creating a ‘European social contract’. For instance, a redistributive mechanism for ‘transnationals’, such as citizens that make use of their right of free movement within the EU, could be implemented. This would in turn generate mechanisms with direct links between the EU institutions and citizens. The erosion of national welfare provisions could provide a window of opportunity to develop such forms of solidarity, for instance, by building interpersonal solidarity mechanisms for certain groups, such as workers in the tech industry. As in option 2, the EU Treaties provide the legal basis for such solidarity to be developed. However, the likelihood of this option being implemented in the foreseeable future is relatively low. It would require a changed narrative from decision-makers, abandoning a purely transactional understanding of solidarity. In addition, national governments and national political parties are unlikely to advocate for such an ambitious integration project: by fostering interpersonal solidarity, citizens would create social ties and be able to unite beyond their borders, potentially circumventing the national political sphere. This could lead to a loss of power for national decision-makers. Finally, this option could also be misinterpreted and used as an excuse to undermine national solidarity mechanisms.

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**The wider European public already supports solidarity to a larger extent than decision-makers might assume.**

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**Conclusion: Moving from ‘second order’ to ‘first order’ solidarity**

Those opposed to a more ambitious European solidarity agenda might argue that the Union should first develop a ‘European demos’ with a ‘pan-European political sphere’ before the EU takes on further competences. However, this argument is mostly used to block or delay progress, despite the urgency of strengthening solidarity in view of future challenges. Solidarity should not be reserved for mature political systems built on a strong political community, demos or common identity. Solidarity should be fostered and encouraged when political circumstances call for it, social provisions are insufficient, or economic integration creates divergences that need to be addressed. Therefore, the EU should not wait to reform its institutional architecture to foster EU solidarity. The wider European public already supports solidarity to a larger extent than decision-makers might assume. For instance, citizens support more permanent mechanisms of solidarity over ad hoc solutions; they also prefer a “Europe that protects” over a “market Europe.”<sup>5</sup>

There are a few steps that the EU could take immediately to foster solidarity. First, the Union should clarify and widen the concept of EU solidarity by giving the concept as much weight as the other values listed in Article 2 TEU.<sup>6</sup> Second, the EU could establish a comprehensive cohesion agenda, which would ensure the coherence of the Union’s *acquis communautaire* in its support for social cohesion. And finally, it should

strengthen national solidarity mechanisms. Only if the EU supports national cohesion, will it be able to establish a more resilient and sustainable European solidarity.

In the longer term, member states wishing to foster EU solidarity should not refrain from moving forward with a more ambitious agenda, without necessarily including more reluctant countries. They could use instruments of differentiated integration or even decide to cooperate outside the EU Treaties, aiming to integrate the new initiatives into the EU framework at a later stage. A more ambitious solidarity agenda is unlikely to progress with the EU27 in view of the current political landscape. Yet, countries and citizens should not wait until the political cards have been reshuffled to move forward – the growing divides in the EU demand urgent action.

At the same time, the EU should try to re-establish the common basis necessary for solidarity within the EU27. In the past decades, joint cooperation in Europe has become more difficult, as the ‘minimum common denominator’ – basic EU values – are increasingly undermined. A particularly striking example was the threat of the Polish and Hungarian vetoes on the NGEU package over the rule of law conditionality clause in December 2020. Therefore, the EU should take divergences on common values much more seriously and address them accordingly. Only by safeguarding European fundamental values will there be sufficient mutual trust between national governments to progress towards ‘first order’ solidarity in the EU.



<sup>5</sup> Cicchi, Lorenzo, Philipp Genschel, Anton Hemerijck, and Mohamed Nasr (2020), “EU Solidarity in times of Covid-19”, Florence: European University Institute.

<sup>6</sup> Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, Article 2

# Migration



# The EU's asylum system is outdated. Or is it?

Nina Gregori, Executive Director, European Asylum Support Office (EASO)



Solidarity is dead. Europe has abandoned its common values, replacing them with nationalism and extremism. We are experiencing a never-ending 'migration crisis'. A two, or even three-speed Europe will replace a once united approach. These types of statements have become all too common in the media, amongst political and policy commentators, and even amongst academia.

Yet, a detached look at the past decade reveals a more nuanced state of solidarity in the European Union. This applies to many policy areas, including that of migration and asylum. It is arguably thanks to the solidarity of Member States with each other that the EU successfully navigated the financial crisis. It is thanks to the pooling of resources that smaller Member States have been able to secure Covid-19 vaccines so quickly, and it is again through tangible solidarity that Member States deploy aircraft and trucks every summer to combat increasingly aggressive fires.

It is easy to critique and point out failures, while overlooking the progress that has been recorded. It is much harder, yet far more constructive, to both recognise where we have got it right, while always recognising the many challenges which we certainly face in terms of overcoming the hurdles which, absolutely, the European project faces.

In many ways, the contrast of success versus challenges when it comes to European solidarity is no more evident than in the politically-charged area of migration and asylum. Indeed, the project to create the world's only multinational asylum system – the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) – is a story of both incredible and rapid achievement, but also one of prolonged frustration and evident examples of lagging action.

### Wake-up call

Images from 2016 of thousands of people walking through the Western Balkans in deplorable conditions in a bid to reach safety in the EU, or of overcrowded reception centres, are seared into our collective memory. It was a wake-up call for all of us, from

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policy makers in Brussels, to asylum practitioners in national capitals, to the then-still-small European Asylum Support Office (EASO) in Malta. A CEAS which was just 16 years old was exposed as having been lacking. Or is it?

The CEAS, while still relatively young having been born in 1999 through the Tampere Council Conclusions, was designed in an era when the EU was composed of significantly less Member States. As with all policy areas, this meant that 'solidarity' was a much easier concept to discuss, elaborate, negotiate and put into practice. More importantly, however, asylum and migration trends just 20 years ago were very different from today. It was a time when the Balkan War was still fresh in everyone's minds, and when asylum in Europe was thought about on a much more regional scale than it is today.

The first phase of the CEAS saw several legislative instruments adopted between 1999 and 2005, establishing minimum standards on asylum procedures, reception conditions and qualification. Since then, efforts have continued in order to develop this system and achieve a greater level of convergence amongst Member States. The second phase, which was completed in 2013, saw these minimum standards replaced by common asylum and reception standards, while the Dublin Regulation and Eurodac were also strengthened.

However, the national implementation of asylum procedures and reception conditions continues to vary amongst Member States. There are many reasons for this, but a basic one stands out in particular. The EU's legislative directives allow for differences in how Member States transpose them into their national law or practices. The legislation on its own is thus not sufficient

to achieve convergence. It is also about implementation and how the legislation is actually applied in practice. This became painfully evident with the 2015-2016 'migration crisis'.

The European Commission quickly reacted to the 'crisis' and published a series of legislative proposals aimed at addressing the weaknesses in the CEAS and its application that had become evident. Almost all remain on the negotiating table. The most controversial of these is the reform of the Dublin Regulation, whereby the Member State in which an applicant for international protection enters the EU is responsible for that case. This inevitably places an unequal administrative burden on those Member States at the periphery of the EU, especially those on the Mediterranean. The reform, which EASO fully supports, aims to address this unfair system based on the principle of solidarity between all Member States. As is well-known, it has proven to be the primary stumbling block in the reform of the CEAS due to its divisive political nature in many countries.

### EASO an example of practical solidarity

This is where taking a step back to look at what has been achieved, and in what context, is a worthwhile exercise, including when assessing the role of solidarity in the CEAS as it is applied. EASO is indeed a notable success story. Just a decade old, the Agency has gone from strength to strength in helping Member States harmonise their application of the CEAS. Demands for its technical and operational support have ballooned in the past three years, to the extent where it is operating at the very limits of its current mandate and resources.

EASO now has almost 2,000 personnel active in operations in over 100 locations in seven Member States, with the number of

operations likely to grow in the coming months. These personnel come from all over the EU, including those few deployed directly by Member States in solidarity with countries of first arrival.

The agency supports Dublin units, provides information activities and training, assists with disembarkations, facilitates relocations to other Member States, carries out registrations, conducts asylum interviews, drafts decision opinions, assists second instance decision makers and works with authorities to improve asylum and reception systems. Every day, the work of EASO on-the-ground is a tangible example of EU and Member State solidarity which has a very significant impact. On the Aegean islands, for example, the backlog of almost 20,000 asylum interviews stemming from 2016-2017 has been cleared.

Over the past few months, EASO – together with Frontex and Europol – deployed operational support to both Latvia and Lithuania within a matter of weeks upon receiving the respective requests for assistance due to the situation on the borders with Belarus. Again, this was evidence that when there is a serious situation, political posturing is placed on the backburner and the EU steps up in solidarity.

Coincidentally, the proposal to enhance the mandate of EASO and transform it into the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA) is the only one from the reform package to have been approved by co-legislators in Brussels. It is a watershed moment which will also have an inevitable impact on solidarity within the field of asy-

um and migration. An example is that the new Regulation establishes a new EUAA Asylum Reserve Pool of 500 Member State officials which can be drawn on by the Agency to deploy to support countries facing pressures on their asylum and reception systems. Thus, automatically, Member States will be acting in solidarity with each other in a very practical manner. Such progress is often lost in the political debate on reforming the Dublin system. The hope is that the success of the EUAA Regulation will also act as a catalyst for progress on other CEAS files.

#### **The success of the CEAS is also about implementing what is already in place**

The proposals of the European Commission to reform and modernise the CEAS are absolutely necessary. They will adapt the system to the current geo-political realities of the world, while both alleviating the pressures on some Member States through fairer mechanisms and more efficient and accurate procedures. They will also ensure that those who truly merit international protection are afforded such rights without being left in limbo for months or years.

The reform will also help in quickly identifying those who wish to abuse the system to the detriment of those who are really in need. It will mean that fewer financial resources are required through effective and harmonised practices, thus also benefiting public finances. EASO is vehemently in favour of the European Commission's proposals. Many of the less controversial

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**Upgrading the system to the extent that it will be resilient and crisis-proof, ultimately allowing for the better management of migration, will require a lot of flexibility and positive political will.**

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elements, as also highlighted above with regard to the EUAA Regulation, will enable more solidarity and lead to a snowball effect that could ultimately unblock elements – such as the Dublin Regulation principles – which remain controversial.

At the same time, the reality is that even the current legal framework of the CEAS has a lot of potential which remains untapped. The EU already has a world-leading asylum system. The key to continuing to build on the results of what is in place is, in fact, implementation. If fully applied, the harmonisation in practices will continue to strengthen, asylum systems will already be fast, efficient and fair, while reception conditions will be amongst the best in the world. All of this – and more – is already prescribed under EU law.

And indeed, the improvements continue to happen within the current application of the CEAS framework. Many nationalities of asylum seekers are already treated in a harmonised manner by most Member States, in turn leading to a reduction in so-called 'asylum shopping' and secondary movements, while alleviating political pressures. EASO has conducted over 50,000 training sessions for asylum and reception officials across Europe, and provides a broad range of specialised tools and guidance which

are having a concrete impact. The Agency is working around the clock to make the most of the legal instruments already in place. Context is also important. A Member State which suddenly receives thousands of applications cannot be expected to process them all fairly within six months. National governments must also ensure security and have social obligations to citizens. Pragmatism is an important ingredient. Again, the current CEAS accounts for these realities. It is perhaps what makes the CEAS so unique when considering that it brings together over 27 countries and was originally formulated in a different time.

Europe needs to remain an area of protection for those in need. We can be proud of a unique common asylum system that has been built in a relatively short timeframe, but there is also very evident room for improvement. The challenges facing this ongoing ambitious project are certainly many and are further complicated by the politicised and divisive nature of migration. Upgrading the system to the extent that it will be resilient and crisis-proof, ultimately allowing for the better management of migration, will require a lot of flexibility and positive political will. Only such solidarity will overcome the unilateral, populist actions and rhetoric of certain actors.

## Migration

### Between blackmail and pushbacks –

# European refugee policy at the brink and what to do now

Gerald Knaus, Chairman of the European Stability Initiative (ESI)



The EU urgently needs an alternative and humane policy for controlling irregular migration, which does not break legal principles by resorting to force or illegal refoulement. In recent years, a number of governments saw their options as only either losing control of borders or regaining it by breaking EU law and pushing back irregular migrants. But there is a third option, involving diplomacy, strategic returns and resettlement of refugees.

2021 saw the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Refugee Convention which introduced a radical new idea: that states should give protection to anyone who has “a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.” Any person meeting these universal criteria is a refugee and should never be “pushed back” – in French: *refoulé* – into a situation of potential persecution and serious harm.

2021 also saw the deep crisis of this idea in Europe, with refugees and migrants routinely and violently being pushed back at the Greek-Turkish and Bosnian-Croatian borders, with the EU having largely withdrawn from sea rescues in the Central Mediterranean and relying on Libyan militias, and with Poland pushing back refugees at its borders with Belarus. The images reaching us from that border are shocking: thousands of Polish border troops, drones and helicopters, Belarusian military and in between freezing migrants who were lured there by a criminal regime and are now trapped. It also became clear this year: for policies to change it does not suffice that media and non-governmental organisations describe suffering at borders. They have been doing so for years decrying the terrible conditions of irregular migration from Libya. Nothing changed.

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year against an obviously rigged presidential election. Thousands were beaten up, arrested, tortured. An opposition leader was found hanged in a park in Kiev. The Belarusian air force forced a passenger plane to land because an opposition blogger was on board, who later, with torture marks on his face, said in a trembling voice on Belarusian television that Lukashenko was doing “the right thing”.

Neither should it rely on inhumane treatment of migrants and on illegal pushbacks between Poland and Belarus. This is already happening and is being exploited by the Belarusian ruler Alexander Lukashenko and his propaganda. It is “working” but at a high price: the EU suspends legality and breaks not only its own laws (on reception, asylum, border management) but also key human rights conventions.

This crisis takes place against the background of a troubling global trend. Government after government in the democratic world is sacrificing the non-refoulement (no push-back) principle. It happened in Australia, the USA, Greece, Croatia, Poland. During the election campaign, US President Joe Biden criticised the approach taken by his predecessor Donald Trump. Once in office, he continued the policy of deporting irregular migrants without any asylum procedure. Most were sent to Mexico, some directly to Haiti. In fact, no US administration has ever sent more people back across the border without granting them any access to asylum procedures than the Biden administration. In September 2021 alone, 100,000 people were deported to Mexico without and asylum procedure. As many democracies are embracing such policies, the principle of non-refoulement is being violated around the world. A principle that is at the core of the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Governments are of course entitled to control their borders. They are also entitled to deport people who have no right to stay. However, democracies also decided decades ago that they would only do so by following legal procedures. They adopted conventions: on refugees, on anti-torture, on the rights of children. Europe has the European Convention on Human Rights and a Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Under public pressure, governments feel that they need to choose between losing control or ignoring these rights. This is a false choice. Democracies need humane ways of controlling borders without breaching fundamental rights. What is needed are tangible proposals for reducing irregular migration without pushbacks and human-rights breaches as well as convincing democratic majorities that achieving this is a worthwhile goal.

This requires a broader foreign policy vision. When dealing with irregular migration governments have three options: They can keep borders open without trying to reduce irregular migration, as happened in some months of 2015. They can rely on border pushbacks, violence or bad treatment as a deterrent, as is happening in Poland right now. Or they can conclude agreements with third countries to where migrants can be transferred after a cut-off date and where they will be treated in a humane way and can apply for asylum. That was what the EU-Turkey statement in March 2016 deal was about.

The goal of such agreements is to reduce deadly irregular migration without violating human dignity or suspending the non-refoulement principle. There is no human right to migration, but there is a human right for people in need of protection

not to be sent back into potential danger. However, there is no right to choose the country offering protection. Lukashenko's strategy would have failed immediately had the EU reached an agreement with a country outside the EU which would have allowed it to bring even a small number of refugees there. It would have become impossible to lure refugees to Belarus. However, why would any third country want to help the EU? Consider Ukraine, a country with ample problems of its own. When German politicians started talking about it as a potential partner, obvious questions arose immediately: Why us? What is our interest? The starting point for serious negotiations would be to consider what the EU can offer a partner country as a strong incentive to help.

So, what is the interest of a country like Ukraine? It is in Ukraine's interest that the EU cannot be blackmailed. After all, should the current example set a precedent, what would stop Russia from renewed aggression against Ukraine if only a few thousand migrants had to be brought to the border with, for example, the Baltic states in order to let threats of sanctions fizzle out and silence the EU? This is no longer a hypothetical scenario with more than a hundred thousand Russian troops massing at the Ukrainian border. This crisis offers Ukraine the chance to position itself as a strategic partner of the EU without great cost. To do so, it must make clear what it wants from the EU. The content of an EU-Ukraine declaration should be closer cooperation in the

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face of Russian pressure to do the opposite: opening access to the common market, offering a prospect of EU cohesion funds, financial support for its 1.5 million internally displaced persons. A confirmation of the importance of cooperation with neighbouring democracies: an anti-blackmail pact against Minsk and Moscow. And of the importance of human dignity even at borders.

Moving towards a humane border policy requires clear thinking on the basis of facts. Europeans need to cast aside the myths of mass immigration from Africa and growing "migration pressure". In fact, regular and irregular immigration figures have barely increased at all in recent years – despite Africa's population growth. Between 2014 and 2018, more people crossed the Mediterranean to reach Europe than ever before: 1.9 million in total. However, more than half of them arrived in one country in the space of a single year; one million people reached Greece between April 2015 and March 2016. Except for this short period, there has been no irregular mass migration to the EU, including from the Middle East. In the 12 months following the EU-Turkey Statement, fewer than 27,000 people reached the Greek islands irregularly from Turkey. In the first six months of 2021, just 5,000 people reached Greece irregularly from Turkey – by land and by sea, including only 600 Afghans and fewer than 100 Syrians.

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**While discouraging irregular migration through agreements with third countries and thereby reducing numbers of irregular arrivals, democracies should commit to directly resettling refugees in need thus reversing the trend of falling resettlement numbers which has started well before the Covid pandemic.**

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It is increasingly difficult for young Africans to get a visa or work permit. Europe ought to increase regular migration, including for exchanges of students and scholars. At the same time, limited but deadly irregular migration to the EU should be further reduced through agreements safeguarding human rights. Obstructing rescues at sea, as is happening in the Central Mediterranean, is not acceptable. 2021 has been a horrible year in this regard. A huge number of people have drowned, and horrific human-rights violations occur in camps in Libya. The number of refugees from Africa who reach the EU is very small. The decisive factor determining how many people manage to cross borders are governments' border policies. When states abandon human rights and use force – as is happening around the world – refugees are shut out and irregular migration drops. In the past four years, the number of refugees who managed to cross borders around the globe was very small. This trend must be reversed, and the Mediterranean must not remain the world's deadliest border. Germany's incoming coalition government has spelled out this goal. It is feasible if real efforts are made. Reversing current trends would be a historic achievement. With partners and determination, policymakers can make it happen.

European leaders should develop a positive vision of global refugee protection in the 21st century. While discouraging irregular migration through agreements with third countries and thereby reducing numbers of irregular arrivals, democracies should commit to directly resettling refugees in need thus reversing the trend of falling resettlement numbers which has started well

before the Covid pandemic. In 2021, only around 30,000 people were resettled by UNHCR – worldwide.

A key to this is to open safe routes to increase resettlement programmes. That is being discussed, including in Germany. The outgoing Federal Government set up a commission to assess causes of displacement. It recommended that Germany should take in and resettle at least as many people per capita as Sweden. That would mean 40,000 in Germany annually. These people would be spared dangerous journeys at the hands of people smugglers. Instead, they would have the prospect of a regular status as residents. If France and others would join Germany in such an effort there would be 100,000 legal routes for refugees per year. If Canada and the US joined as well, the resettlement of 250,000 refugees a year would be perfectly feasible – and that would be a big step towards a humane refugee regime. This would be a concrete form of assistance for vulnerable people and countries of first admission, without placing too great a burden on any single country.

After the EU-Turkey Declaration in March 2016, Turkey received six billion euros to provide better care for millions of Syrian refugees there. In return, it took back about 2,000 people from Greece in the first five years and around 28,000 Syrians were resettled to the EU. That was all it took to remove the incentive of a potentially deadly boat trip across the Aegean. The number of deaths fell. That must be the EU's goal for 2022 across the Mediterranean. It can be done.

# Solidarity across borders – Solidarity beyond borders?



**Hannah Pool**

**Position:** Visiting Fellow  
**Institution:** University of Oxford  
**Year of Birth:** 1992  
**Citizenship:** Germany  
**Research Question:** 'How has movement shaped solidarity within the European Union? How does the inability to move alter perceptions of European solidarity?'  
**Academic Mentor:** Dr. Amanda Alencar, Erasmus University Rotterdam

### Introduction

As mobility across EU borders came to a standstill due to the Covid-19 pandemic, demands for European solidarity grew stronger, and when national borders between EU member states were closed in March 2020, the relationship between mobility and solidarity within the EU once again became apparent. This Charlemagne Prize Academy research project explored how perceptions of solidarity are shaped, nurtured, deepened, or ruptured by the physical act of movement in and around the EU. It uses cross-border mobility as an entry point to discuss the current state and the future of solidarity in the EU, raising questions about how mobility has shaped solidarity within the European Union and how the inability to move may alter perceptions of European solidarity?

Solidarity is a guiding value and principle of the EU.<sup>1</sup> From a legal perspective, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) defines solidarity as a fundamental value of the EU in Art. 2 and as a guiding principle in Art. 80. Title VII TFEU contains the solidarity clause, which calls for a “spirit of solidarity” in the event of natural or man-made

disasters (Art. 222). With regard to borders and migration, Article 67 (2) TFEU states that the Union “shall ensure the absence of internal border controls for persons and shall frame a common policy on asylum, immigration and external border control, based on solidarity between Member States”. Despite its prominent positioning in the TFEU, European solidarity remains rather vaguely defined.

Solidarity in the EU takes place in a triangular relationship: between the EU member states, between member states and EU institutions, and between the people living within the EU. In this context, interpersonal solidarity between people in the EU is the fundamental basis from which deeper ties of EU solidarity are derived. Solidarity between people emerges and is fostered when people encounter each other. The free movement of persons, along with the free movement of goods, services, and capital [2], is one of the four freedoms in the EU, allowing cross-border mobility for tourism, work, education, and other purposes. It is thus, through this movement across national borders, that people foster and strengthen interpersonal solidarity in the EU. 3,3 % of EU citizens

The pandemic-related border closures made existing boundaries glaringly visible. It revealed how perceptions of borders are redefined during and after periods of partial immobility, and how they in turn influence the way European solidarity is defined and perceived.

are residing permanently in an EU country other than that of their citizenship.<sup>3</sup> Since mobile people often have direct encounters with other nationals of the EU, their experiences and perceptions can serve as a heartbeat for the state of perceived interpersonal solidarity in the EU.

Within the EU's Schengen area, crossing borders has become an almost incidental act. With the externalization of the EU's outer borders, internal borders have gradually become less visible. Unlike many other countries in the world, borders within the EU are not physical borders separated by walls or barbed wire. Thus, the closure of national borders within the EU in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 outbreak meant a sudden realization of the physicality of borders within the EU for many people. This sudden awareness of the limitation of movement was especially felt by mobile people within the EU.<sup>4</sup>

To examine the relationship between mobility and solidarity, this research project focuses on three different groups of mobile people selected for their contrastive experiences of EU borders and modes of mobility during the Covid-19 pandemic: Erasmus students, seasonal workers, and asylum seekers.

Seasonal migrant workers in agriculture are “employed by a country other than their own for only part of a year because the work they perform depends on seasonal conditions”.<sup>5</sup> While exact numbers do not exist, around 360,000 seasonal workers are estimated to work in Italy and 200,000 in France.<sup>6</sup> In Germany more than 286,300 seasonal workers are estimated to be employed in agriculture.<sup>7</sup> Since the EU Eastern Enlargement in 2004 and 2007, most seasonal agricultural workers have come from Romania, Poland, and Bulgaria.<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of the Covid crisis, EU citizens working as seasonal migrant workers were encouraged to return to their home countries. But soon their labour was urgently needed to maintain the productivity of the agricultural market and 40,000 seasonal migrant workers were allowed to enter the closed borders to Germany between April 2 and May 30, 2020.<sup>9</sup> This group of individuals is frequently exposed to epidemiological health risks in often crowded work and living spaces.<sup>10</sup> On July 16, 2020, the EU Commission had urged member states to “take all necessary measures to ensure decent working and living conditions for seasonal workers”.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Montaldo, S. (2020). The COVID-19 Emergency and the Reintroduction of Internal Border Controls in the Schengen Area: Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste. *European Papers*, 5(1), 523–531.

<sup>5</sup> OECD. (2001). *Glossary of Statistical Terms: Seasonal Worker*. Retrieved June 1, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Mitaritonna, C., & Ragot, L. (2020). Policy Brief: After Covid-19, will seasonal migrant agricultural workers in Europe be replaced by robots? *Policy Brief*, 33, 14., p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Deutscher Bundestag. (2020). *Schriftliche Fragen mit den in der Woche vom 13. April 2020 eingegangenen Antworten der Bundesregierung (Drucksache 19/18555)*, p. 82.

<sup>8</sup> Paul, R. (2020). Europe's essential workers: Migration and pandemic politics in Central and Eastern Europe during COVID-19. *European Policy Analysis*, 6(2), 238–263.

<sup>9</sup> Initiative Faire Landarbeit. (2020). *Bericht 2020: Saisonarbeit in der Landwirtschaft*, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> See Neef, A. (2020). Legal and social protection for migrant farm workers: lessons from COVID-19. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 37(3), 641–642.

<sup>11</sup> European Commission. (2020). *Coronavirus: European Commission calls for action in protecting seasonal workers- Press Release*, (July).

<sup>1</sup> See: Sangiovanni, A. (2013). Solidarity in the European Union. *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 33(2), 213–241; Steinvorth, U. (2017). Applying the Idea of Solidarity to Europe. In A. Grimmel & S. M. Giang (Eds.), *Solidarity in the European Union: A Fundamental Value in Crisis* (pp. 9–19). Cham: Springer International Publishing; Genschel, P., Studies, A., & Hemerijck, A. (2018). *Solidarity in Europe* (Policy Brief No. Issue 2018/01).

<sup>2</sup> Barnard, C. (2019). *The Substantive Law of the EU: The Four Freedoms* (6th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>3</sup> EuroStat (2020). *EU citizens living in another Member State - statistical overview*. Retrieved August 30, 2021

Erasmus students receive a monthly stipend from the EU to study abroad. This mobility is facilitated by a network of partner universities aiming to promote international dialogue. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students had to face course cancellations, difficulties staying or returning to their country of origin, and increased discrimination against foreign students. At the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, the Erasmus Student Network published a survey of 20,000 Erasmus students that found that 43% of students stayed in the destination while 40% returned to their home country.<sup>12</sup> Though Erasmus students represent a privileged and highly educated group of migrants who receive financial support to move across borders, the ESN study disclosed a sharp increase in experiences of racism and discrimination among exchange students during the crisis.<sup>13</sup>

The third group are asylum seekers and recently admitted refugees who have experienced movement to and within the EU. The EU defines an asylum seeker as a “third-country national or stateless person who has made an application for protection under the Geneva Refugee Convention and Protocol in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken”.<sup>14</sup> Due to the pandemic asylum procedures and hearings were postponed, community shelters and asylum camps were placed under confinement, and integrative services were put on hold.<sup>15</sup>

The qualitative research design consisted of online interviews as the pandemic and closed borders prevented face-to-

face research. In the first phase of the research (November to February 2021), the questionnaire was developed with the help of experts and members of each focus group. In the second phase (March to August 2021), interviews were conducted with twelve people from each group, or a total of 36 people. While Erasmus students and asylum seekers were directly interviewed, seasonal migrant workers could only be reached secondarily through social workers, union representatives, and legal experts. Through qualitative interviews, the three groups defined how their different mobility experiences shaped their perceptions of EU borders, and how their sudden immobilisation due to the Corona crisis affected their understanding of European solidarity.

#### Overview of the project findings

Comparing three different migratory movements within the EU for labour, education, and protection purposes sheds light on the relationship between border mobility and solidarity. Doing so in a period of border closures due to Covid, allowed to trace how immobilization changes perceptions of solidarity once encounters across borders within the EU are no longer possible. The pandemic-related border closures made existing boundaries glaringly visible. It revealed how perceptions of borders are redefined during and after periods of partial immobility, and how they in turn influence the way European solidarity is defined and perceived. The findings of this project are twofold: First, mobile people in the EU experience borders differently. Even during pandemic border closures, forms of mobility did not change but exacerbated pre-existing inequalities in movement. Second, inter-

Since mobile people often have direct encounters with other nationals of the EU, their experiences and perceptions can serve as a heartbeat for the state of perceived interpersonal solidarity in the EU.

personal European solidarity is shaped by the physical act of movement through the space of the EU, and thus immobility changes the perceptions of European solidarity.

In the following, a more nuanced account of the complex and diverse ways in which solidarity is understood by the three different research groups will be presented.

#### Defining borders through immobility

The three focus groups - Erasmus students, seasonal workers, and asylum seekers - experience borders differently depending on their passports, legal status, or reasons for mobility. Legal, social, political, and financial capacities create hierarchies and privileges in mobility. Border closures during the pandemic further demonstrated that freedom of movement across EU borders is divided along these lines. Rather than creating the same immobility for all, the border closures intensified and accelerated already existing inequalities in movement within the EU.

To claim asylum in the EU, borders must be physically crossed on the way to EU territory. Like all refugees and asylum seekers interviewed, Bahman, a 41-year-old man from Iran who is now housed in an asylum seeker shelter in Germany, described how his trajectory to the EU had already taught him the power that borders can have: “Because of my homeland, I know very well what borders mean. One can say that only for people from Germany it [the Covid-19 border closure] was terrible. Now, Germans understand very well what borders mean. Borders are very powerful.” In his reply, Bahman compares the different effects that the pandemic-related border closures had on him and other groups of mobile people.

Indeed, ten of the twelve Erasmus students interviewed emphasized that this was the first time they had experienced borders as impassable. Simon, a German Erasmus student in Greece, described how he suddenly became aware of EU borders during Covid-19. “I can enter almost everywhere without problems with my German passport, especially

within the EU. That's why I didn't really perceive borders, because it's not really a hurdle that I have to overcome. But especially through Covid, I have a different awareness of what national borders mean to other people.” Before the border closures, and much like most Erasmus students, Simon had been mostly unaware of the EU borders. It was only through the external restriction of his freedom of movement that he became mindful of the existing barriers and inequalities.

For seasonal workers who are EU citizens, the borders are usually no hurdle, as they benefit equally from the freedom of movement. While they are legally entitled to work in another EU country, their social and labour rights may however be limited abroad. After an initial pause due to border closures in March 2020, by late spring, they became selectively mobilised to uphold productivity in the respective economic sectors. Seasonal workers were invited to cross borders because of their economic importance, but their work became increasingly precarious as health risks increased and insurance days, for example in Germany, diminished.<sup>16</sup>

The border closures had very distinct consequences for the three focus groups, depending on their status, legal rights, and ease of border crossing: While seasonal workers continuously crossed closed borders because their work was deemed “essential”, asylum seekers were further immobilized, and Erasmus students entered a transnationalised digital space of online studying.

#### Defining European solidarity through movement

During the Covid-19 pandemic, European solidarity was repeatedly invoked. The pandemic highlighted the challenges of transnational solidarity in the triangular relationship between the EU as an institution, its member states, and third-country nationals, particularly in reference to migration.<sup>17</sup> When asked about the drivers of European solidarity, respondents to the EUI-YouGov survey on Solidarity in Europe named reciprocity first (40%), morality second (24%), and European identity only to a lesser extent (13%).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Erasmus Student Network. (2020). Student Exchanges in Times of Crisis: Research Report on the Impact of Covid-19 on Student Exchanges in Europe, p.4.

<sup>13</sup> See Erasmus Student Network, p. 26

<sup>14</sup> Derived by EMN from Art. 2(b) of Council Directive 2005/85/EC Asylum Procedures Directive.

<sup>15</sup> See Kluge, H. H. P., Jakab, Z., Bartovic, J., D'Anna, V., & Severoni, S. (2020). Refugee and migrant health in the COVID-19 response. *The Lancet*, 395(10232), 1237–1239; Kondilis, E., Puchner, K., Veizis, A., Papatheodorou, C., & Benos, A. (2020). Covid-19 and refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in Greece. *The BMJ*, 369(June), 2168.; Veizis, A. (2020). Commentary: “Leave No One Behind” and Access to Protection in the Greek Islands in the COVID-19 Era. *International Migration*, 58(3), 264–266.

<sup>16</sup> Bejan, R. (2020). COVID-19 and Disposable Migrant Workers. *VerfBlog*, 22(April). Retrieved from <https://verfassungsblog.de/covid-19-and-disposable-migrant-workers/>; Weisskircher, M. (2021). Arbeitsmigration während der Corona-Pandemie: Saisonarbeitskräfte aus Mittel- und Osteuropa in der deutschen Landwirtschaft (MIDEM-Policy Paper No. 01/21). Dresden.

<sup>17</sup> Marin, L. (2020). The COVID-19 Crisis and the Closure of External Borders: Another Stress-test for the Challenging Construction of Solidarity Within the EU? *European Papers*, 5(2), 1071–1086, p. 1085.

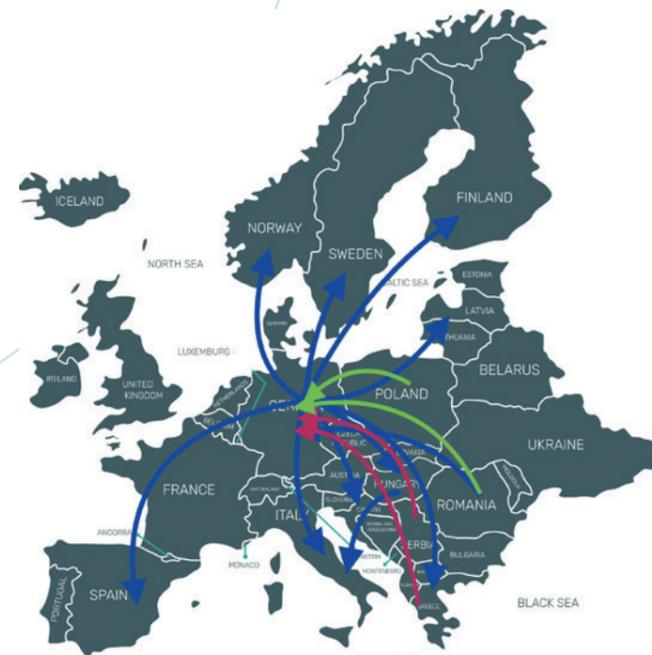
<sup>18</sup> Cicchi, L., Genschel, P., Hemerijck, A., & Nasr, M. (2020). EU Solidarity in Times of Covid-19. Policy Brief, 2020/34, European Governance and Politics Programme, European University Institute, p. 8. The YouGov survey sampled 21,779 respondents from 13 EU member states and the UK in April 2020.

In this research project, all interviewees were asked first how they would personally define solidarity, and then, from that, European solidarity. Interviewees were then invited to reflect on their perception and evaluation of European solidarity and how it has changed as a result of their own mobility and immobility. European solidarity was thus defined through the lens of individual forms of mobility across EU borders. How solidarity is understood by each of the three groups researched here reflects their mobility allowances and constraints.

For the Erasmus students, who became mobilised because of a funded exchange program, solidarity was defined through meeting other students. Thus, border closures evoked changes in perceptions of European solidarity. Lin, a German Erasmus student in Greece, described it this way: "I think that many people in the EU are now experiencing for the first time what it is like when other countries are not so accessible to them. It's a shock for many, because the EU, news and politicians always focus on European solidarity. Many people are surprised at how powerful a nation state can be and how quickly you can be cut off from other countries. I think that can have an impact on perceptions of, especially young people, who wanted to have their first real experience abroad and are now being denied that."

In the case of seasonal migrant workers, their economic mobility continued despite the border closures. Consequently, solidarity was perceived through unequal economic realities within the EU. Solidarity was not considered as the primary reason for movement, but was demanded for the treatment of workers once they worked abroad. In the interview, a political scientist argued "That seasonal workers were brought to Germany has in my opinion nothing to do with solidarity, but with mere economic interests". A social worker supporting seasonal workers stressed that the treatment of seasonal workers in the destination country must be based on solidarity: "I would like to see much more solidarity at the European level, (...) since the overall balance of migration is an added value within Europe, you have the responsibility that when people exercise their right to free movement and work within the EU, receiving countries have to support seasonal workers."

Since asylum seekers are not granted the right to free movement within the EU, none of the interviewees discussed European solidarity with regard to the state. Instead, all of them immediately brought it down to the level of interpersonal solidarity. Afran, an asylum seeker from Syria who has since settled in Germany, describes his experiences during Covid and highlights the importance of solidarity. He emphasises that people need to interact with each other in order to feel solidarity. "Solidarity, it's a big word. We are human beings; we need each other and we cannot live alone. We need contact with many cultures and to meet other people. And if we do not have contact, we cannot understand another's culture. Then life becomes hard for the soul. That is why I want solidarity." Covid restrictions have made him and all other asylum seekers more immobile: Asylum procedures were prolonged, camps were closed, family reunification programs within the EU were put on hold, and language courses were cancelled.<sup>19</sup>



Blue: Erasmus students  
Green: Seasonal workers  
Red: Asylum seekers

## Solidarity is an open concept with constantly adapting definitions reflecting that it is neither fixed nor predetermined by institutional ideals.

### Conclusion and recommendations

This year's motto 'Europe's Future at the Crossroads – New Perspectives of Solidarity?' invites us to reflect on the image of a European crossroads, as well as whose perspectives on European solidarity are included in navigating the future. Solidarity is an open concept with constantly adapting definitions, reflecting that it is neither fixed nor predetermined by institutional ideals. Taking up the image of this European crossroad, it becomes evident that the routes take on different forms depending on who is asked about European solidarity. For Erasmus students, this crossroad leads to deeper exchange and career opportunities through education sought across borders. For seasonal migrant workers, the crossroads underscore the demand and supply requirements of the EU's still unequal economies. For asylum seekers, the crossroads are too often surrounded by walls that restrict safe passage that can lead to safety and protection.

Perceptions of European solidarity are thus strongly shaped by people's experiences of mobility. Mobility in the EU depends on different legal, social, and financial abilities. Cross-border mobility influences how people encounter each other and how they relate to the idea of European solidarity. In this, all participants agreed that solidarity is the roadmap to navigate through this crossroads. The experiences of mobile people in the EU provide a highly sensitive lens through which to question and conceptualize the status of perceived solidarity within the EU. In this regard, the border closures during the covid pandemic serve as an indication for potential developments. As Hruschka summarizes: "[O]nce European solidarity as a concept and as a practical solution has been compromised, it will not be long before the sense of the EU as a whole is called into question."<sup>20</sup> Consequently, a constant examination of how people moving in and through

the EU perceive and experience European solidarity is fundamental.

Based on this research, the main policy recommendations that can be used to develop targeted interventions aimed at promoting solidarity across and beyond borders at the EU are the following:

European solidarity is fostered through movement across EU borders. Continuous initiatives to ensure safe passage should be a core issue in the building of migration policies both at the national and EU level.

Seasonal migrant workers must have the same right to insurance and freedom of movement as other workers. Ensuring appropriate systems, social services, and secure labour conditions for seasonal migrant workers should be a priority for complying with the same standards of work within the EU. Asylum seekers must be guaranteed the right to a fair and equal asylum process, with the right to family reunification and timely procedures. A key policy priority should therefore be to plan for the long-term protection and settlement of displaced people as a result of crisis situations, instead of deterrent approaches.

Erasmus students must further be supported in their pursuit to engage in their studies abroad as a fundamental experience of educational European exchange. Greater efforts are needed to ensure equal access and opportunities for mobile students. Management of crises requires a progressive approach towards mobility that allows for the enhancement of cooperation, the sharing of resources, and the reduction of uncertainties.

<sup>19</sup> See Bruzelius, C., & Ratzmann, N. (2020). Extended solidarity? The social consequences of Covid-19 for marginalised migrant groups in Germany. Retrieved January 12, 2021, from <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2020/10/05/extended-solidarity/>; Dimitriadi, A. (2020). The Future of European Migration and Asylum Policy Post Covid-19 (FEPS Covid Response Papers No. July 2020 No. 7); Jauhainen, J. S. (2020). Biogeopolitics of COVID-19: Asylum-Related Migrants at the European Union Borderlands. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, 111(3), 260–274;

<sup>20</sup> Hruschka, C. (2020). The pandemic kills also the European solidarity. Retrieved June 1, 2021, from <https://eumigrationlawblog.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Max-planck.png>

# Capability



# Europe's Digital Sovereignty

Axel Voss, Member of the European Parliament



Our growing dependence on foreign software, hardware and cloud services is deeply worrying. Given how strongly the digital transformation is currently driven by these three sectors as well as by leading digital platforms, there is a strong risk that

the next decisive technological stage may be entirely shaped by non-European actors, which often do not share our core values, traditions and standards or even try to undermine them. The potential consequences in terms of prosperity, privacy and security cannot be underestimated. Nonetheless, our response to this challenge has so far been a wide range of incoherent, fragmented interim solutions following lengthy decision-making processes. Not only will this approach prevent us from ever catching up with a rapidly changing technological environment – it may also give our citizens the impression that the European political class has lost control – a perception that could ultimately result in a significant loss of trust in our democratic system.

This scenario urgently calls for a comprehensive, consistent and horizontal digital policy agenda. At its heart should be the concept of 'digital sovereignty' – a European way of digitization,

which contrasts with the US-American or Chinese approach and is human-centered, value-oriented and based on the concept of the social market economy. It would create a digital environment for individual self-determination and legally guaranteed personal freedom, while at the same time reducing our dependency on foreign hardware, software and services.

However, striving for digital sovereignty does not mean that the European Union should become protectionist. We are and should always be a champion of international cooperation, free data flow and trade. We also have to acknowledge that many digital innovations rely on complex value chains, collaborative ecosystems and well-functioning relations with our international partners. Therefore, digital sovereignty should rather mean that we increase our ability to take independent decisions on the parameters we want to use for digital technologies. Instead of excluding all non-European companies from the Digital Single Market, we should even increase the cooperation with our trustworthy international partners that share our values. At the same time, we should make decisive long-term investments in key sectors to give us more options to choose from and to enable European businesses to compete and grow - both across the EU and in the global market.

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**Instead of excluding all non-European companies from the Digital Single Market, we should even increase the cooperation with our trustworthy international partners that share our values.**

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**Our objective should be to become less dependent on non-European technologies and services, while establishing sound ethical, technological and security standards for those that we cannot produce ourselves or where purchasing makes more sense for the time being.**

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**The key components of a European digital agenda should be the following:**

- Europe needs to achieve digital sovereignty by introducing a 'European way' towards digitalisation, with maximised investments as well as close cooperation with the private sector in a range of digital flagship areas. Our objective should be to become less dependent on non-European technologies and services, while establishing sound ethical, technological and security standards for those that we cannot produce ourselves or where purchasing makes more sense for the time being. Sensitive digital technologies should only be procured from trustworthy international partners and cooperation should exclusively take place with partners that share our values or at least respect them.
- Europe needs to advance the Digital Single Market by updating its competition policy, by pushing for a fair and effective taxation system for digital companies, by improving our digital infrastructure, by increasing our cyber security resilience and by facilitating investment as well as access to public funding. Our objective should be to prevent abuses of market power in the digital economy more effectively and to better enable European companies to scale up. Moreover, we should strive to introduce a 'Digitized in the EU' brand that is based on our high ethical and data protection standards and which offers our

citizens (and consumers from outside the EU) digital products and services they can genuinely trust.

- Europe needs to change the way its political processes and governmental systems work by making legislative procedures more effective, by introducing e-governance services on a large scale and by better safeguarding our citizens and democratic systems. Our objective should be to adopt principle-based and tech-neutral legislation while making our political system more resilient against cyber-attacks and our political responses more effective in a rapidly changing digital world. Regular impact assessments and immediate adjustments to new developments should become a default feature in all areas.
- Europe needs to ensure that the digital life of our citizens is based on a fair, safe and sustainable foundation by avoiding gaps in digital connectivity, by improving digital literacy, skills and critical thinking about the use of new digital tools, by promoting sustainable digital technologies and by establishing legal frameworks that prevent data or consumer protection violations. Our overall objective should be to find the right balance between the necessary protective measures on the one hand, while on the other hand providing our citizens, businesses and universities with the space to enjoy their digital freedom, to grow their business or to innovate.

# A Solidarity Framework for the creation of Common European Data Spaces



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'What would solidarity-based approaches mean for the creation of common European data spaces (CEDs)?

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## Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic has revealed the ever-increasing need for data flows within the EU and across sectors for economic and health recovery. The European Strategy for Data has outlined plans to develop an agile EU data governance structure that includes the launch of Common European Data Spaces (CEDs) to build strong foundations for a European digital transformation that will benefit everyone. Data spaces, or 'data trusts'<sup>1</sup> as they are best known in the legal field, have been widely lauded in the EU<sup>2</sup> as a progressive alternative to traditional data exchange infrastructures, which have been proprietary and were often built for commercial reasons with no oversight. However, proprietary datasets have faced heavy criticism in the last decade for their discriminatory character, misuse of personal data, data sharing scandals, and data breaches.<sup>3</sup> Building on the conceptualisation of more progressive EU-wide data mechanisms that are yet to be deployed, this research explored the links between the future CEDs and policy development to offer an understanding of how data in public hands and for the public good, that is built on a solidarity

framework, can advance transparent and trustworthy data governance. The findings suggest that current and future EU policy should exceed legal frameworks and incorporate socially inclusive mechanisms in data strategies and infrastructures.

Recent advances in data technology, including machine learning and AI, have opened up new possibilities for data exchange that have revealed the societal role of data in the political and social sphere. Indeed, data needs to be understood more than ever, not just as an economic opportunity, but as a democratic one that can advance European values of inclusion, tolerance, justice, solidarity, and non-discrimination. Examining the social and cultural dimensions of CEDs can contribute to a growing body of literature that seeks to re-politicise the collection, storing, processing, and use of data for the public good.<sup>4</sup> Such research stresses the collective value of data and calls for revisiting the principles of data governance, i.e., the processes that manage the availability, usability, and security of data, and incorporate democratic values within them. Aiming to add to these discussions, this report proposes a soli-

Examining the social and cultural dimensions of CEDs can contribute to a growing body of literature that seeks to re-politicise the collection, storing, processing, and use of data for the public good.

arity framework for common European data spaces that will help restore public trust in the concept of data sharing that was once lost because of data misuses,<sup>5</sup> and thus no longer hinder the positive use of data for the public's benefit. It argues that good data governance practices for CEDs may only be achieved if the collection, management, and use of data is guided by principles of solidarity, collaboration, fairness, altruism, trust, and accountability.

## Common European Data Spaces in Practice

Between a series of changes and acts, nine common European data spaces were announced in February 2020 with their establishment focusing on various sectors of public, industrial, and scientific interest:

1. The **Industrial** (manufacturing) data space will support the competitiveness and performance of the industry sector.
2. The **Green Deal** data space is focused on using data to support actions against climate change, circular economy, zero-pollution, biodiversity, deforestation and compliance assurance.
3. The **Mobility** data space will facilitate access, pool, and share data that will advance intelligent transport systems, connected cars, and smart cities.
4. The **Health** data space centres on both the advanced prevention, detection, and curing of diseases as well as supporting informed, evidence-based decisions to benefit the accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability of the healthcare systems.

5. The **Financial** data space aims to stimulate innovation, market transparency, sustainable finance, and access to finance for European businesses and a more integrated market.
6. The **Energy** data space will address the decarbonisation of the energy system.
7. The **Agriculture** data space, will process and analyse production and other data for the agricultural sector as well as to offer solutions at farm level.
8. The **Public Administration** data space aims to improve transparency and accountability for public spending and spending quality, fight corruption (at EU and national level), and address law enforcement needs. At the same time, it will support the effective application of EU law and enable innovative 'gov tech', 'reg tech' and 'legal tech' applications supporting practitioners as well as other services of the public interest.
9. The **Skills** data space intends to reduce the gap between the education and training system and manage the labour market needs.

All CEDs will be safeguarded by the Data Governance Act (DGA), a negotiated, multi-stakeholder act of binding data governance that should be considered as a progressive move towards a common European and international data infrastructure. These spaces are undoubtedly the groundwork of the contemporary economy and much needed mechanisms for data exchange. CEDs are expected to foster collaborations among

<sup>1</sup> Delacroix, Sylvie, and Neil D. Lawrence. "Bottom-up data Trusts: disturbing the 'one size fits all' approach to data governance." *International data privacy law* 9, no. 4 (2019): 236-252.

<sup>2</sup> Data sharing in the EU – common European data spaces (new rules) <<https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12491-Legislative-framework-for-the-governance-of-common-European-data-spaces>>, 2020 [Accessed December 2020]

<sup>3</sup> Broussard, Meredith. *Artificial unintelligence: How computers misunderstand the world*. MIT Press, 2018.

Perez, Caroline Criado. *Invisible women: Exposing data bias in a world designed for men*. Random House, 2019.

Vallor, Shannon. *Technology and the virtues: A philosophical guide to a future worth wanting*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Isaak, Jim, and Mina J. Hanna. "User data privacy: Facebook, Cambridge Analytica, and privacy protection." *Computer* 51, no. 8 (2018): 56-59.

<sup>4</sup> Viljoen, Salomé. "Democratic data: A relational theory for data governance." (2020). Available at: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3727562> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3727562>

<sup>5</sup> Shaping Europe's digital future <<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/strategy-data>>, 2020 [Accessed September 2021]

If we want to shape a European data future that builds an open and transparent environment in which citizens are empowered in their interactions, and the data they provide both online and offline, we need to support a European way to digital transformation that produces a data blueprint that counters any challenges between different State Members, cultures, values, and technology infrastructures.

local, national, and digital actors in order to advance access to publicly held data, develop mechanisms for dealing with data ownership from the service level to the market, and estimate liability types. It is also envisaged that CEDS will deal with responsibilities for institutions that act as brokers for public data, necessary consent practices, digital rights, and, in some instances, offer individuals the control of their data. These are some of the positive and innovation-led propositions that will benefit direct accountability parameters and allow for a steady and reliable governance transformation for data held commercially as well as publicly. But beyond the analysis of these policies, there is a need to consider the social impact and significance of this innovation, which has been the focus of this project.

The wider European population is increasingly distrusting of technological innovation<sup>6</sup> because of the scandals that have surfaced in the public eye during the past decade, rather than not because they recognise the limited extent to which their commercial data rights are carried out within these structures. CEDS must be complemented by a transparent framework that fosters public trust and confidence while also involving the people and their communities in the processing of their data. Solidarity can function as the bond that generates this common ground between CEDS, people, governments, and private

companies by manifesting core traits of justice, openness, and common values.

#### Solidarity as a framework of data processes

Solidarity has functioned as a key principle in democratic struggles of the past, such as the labour union Polish Solidarność of the 1980s<sup>7</sup>, the mid-19th century French workers' fight against oppression,<sup>7</sup> and in the most recent past, in social movements such as Occupy.<sup>8</sup> In social movements, solidarity materialises values such as trust, openness, and justice.<sup>9</sup> However, in the present data era, the networked construction of our societies has given solidarity a new and wider role that, besides its traditional political importance, can be perceived as a form of caring and protecting others.<sup>10</sup> The proposition of this report, then, is to understand solidarity as an alternative to current hierarchical and commercial data structures (that give power to the big players, such as tech and health giants) that can serve as a tool to overcome the latent processes of the neoliberal market superiority, personal responsibility, and individual agency.<sup>11</sup> Developing solidarity from a citizen's perspective, aiming to empower them as well as the EU market, will benefit the development of the next stages of CEDS.

This report's proposed solidarity framework (FIG 1) is important for the conceptualisation of data processes as a set of demo-

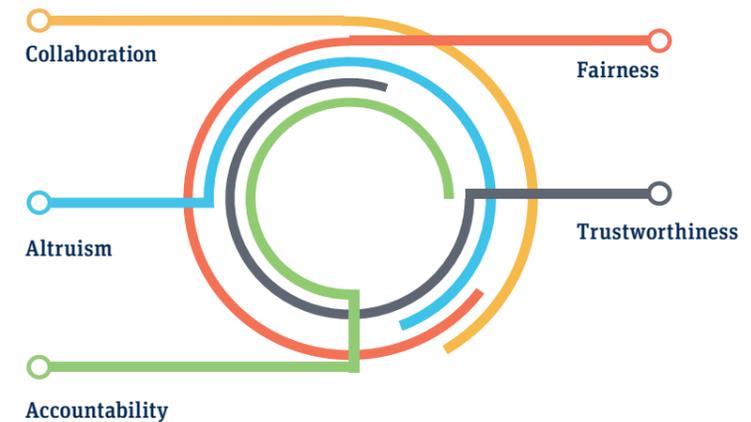


FIG 1: Solidarity as a Framework for CEDS

cratic norms that together reinforce the capacity of European communities to produce collective goods for the public benefit.<sup>12</sup> Embedding solidarity in the processes of data production, collection, sharing, etc. can help us answer questions such as: Which norms do we need to strengthen for Europeans to consider data as collective goods? And which conditions do we need to cultivate to strengthen these norms? To begin answering these questions, we must first take a look at how inherent solidarity is in our social, political, and cultural lives, where it is oftentimes portrayed as support for the vulnerable, as acts of public care through education, welfare, and healthcare, or primary care relations we build and sustain through friendships, households, and families.<sup>13</sup> Social theory differentiates between two schools of thought: the first perceives solidarity as a sum of norms contributing to social cohesion and is usually based on the works of Emile Durkheim;<sup>14</sup> the second, deduces solidarity as a relationship between members of a group with common interests, and refers to the works of Marx<sup>15</sup> and Weber.<sup>16</sup> Beyond social theory, political philosopher Scholz<sup>17</sup> identifies three kinds of solidarity: social solidarity (describing the relationship between a group), civic solidarity (referring to the relationship between citizens and the state) and political solidarity (expressing the commitment and morals of an individual). This project builds on these interpretati-

ons, as well as on Siegwart Lindenberg's<sup>18</sup> framing approach to solidarity,<sup>17</sup> depicting at least five kinds of conditions that can result in building solidary relationships: cooperation, fairness, altruism, trustworthiness, considerateness.

The framework approach I construct here first shows how **collaboration** can initiate a process in which the exchange of data can be considered as a public good across Member States. At this point, all EU members should act as part of a participatory community that assists one another in the production of public goods even if the process is complex or for some members find it easier, manageable, or less rewarding task. **Fairness** advocates for fair mechanisms of data sharing between companies and individuals and vice versa. This should be a process through which similar amounts of benefits and drawbacks are accepted by all parties; instead of one pursuing to gain more benefits than the other. Fairness is inseparably linked to the democratic values of the EU and should be central to the deployment of CEDS across the union. Similarly, **altruism** is needed to help Member States, individuals, and businesses that are less fortunate. The importance of altruism is already evident in the EU's use of the term 'data altruism' in the Data Governance Act,<sup>19</sup> where it describes "data that is made available without reward for purely non-commercial usage that be-

<sup>6</sup> 20th Annual Edelman Trust Barometer, Special Report: Trust in Technology <[https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2020-02/2020%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer%20Tech%20Sector%20Report\\_1.pdf](https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2020-02/2020%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer%20Tech%20Sector%20Report_1.pdf)> [Accessed September 2020]

<sup>7</sup> Wilde, Lawrence. Global solidarity. Edinburgh University Press, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Vrikki, Photini. "The beginning of the end: Telling the story of Occupy Wall Street's eviction on Twitter." In *Protest Public Relations*, pp. 222-247. Routledge, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Pavan, Elena, and Donatella della Porta. "Social movements, communication, and media." In *Routledge Handbook of Digital Media and Communication*, pp. 307-318. Routledge, 2020.

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<sup>11</sup> Cohen, Cathy J. *Democracy remixed: Black youth and the future of American politics*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

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<sup>14</sup> Durkheim, Emile. *The division of labor in society*. Simon and Schuster, 2014.

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<sup>18</sup> Lindenberg, Siegwart. "Solidarity: Its microfoundations and macro-dependence. A framing approach." *The problem of solidarity: Theories and models* (1998): 61-112

<sup>19</sup> Proposal for a Regulation of the European parliament and of the Council on European data governance (Data Governance Act) <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020PC0767>> [Accessed September 2021]

nefits communities or society at large” (Chapter IV & Article 2, 10). The different relationships that will be built within and for CEDS, such as between businesses and citizens, governments and businesses, businesses, and institutions, will create tiers of altruism. These tiers will be implemented “to create the right conditions for individuals and companies to trust that when they share their data, it will be handled by trusted organisations based on EU values and principles”,<sup>20</sup> and need to be a concrete condition for CEDS. Altruistic data governance structures will not only produce community networks and data sharing processes, but also embolden equitable approaches that will benefit everyone across Europe. The framework suggests that **trustworthiness** refers to the protection of everyone through open processes that ensure the reliability of CEDS, whereas **accountability** refers to the ways in which CEDS account for any unintended consequences that arise from the availability of data via data spaces. Both solidarity conditions can ensure people’s and businesses’ rights to privacy, security, consent and ownership of data bolstered by the values of openness and transparency.

Solidarity functions as a key principle of European culture, as all the signatories of the Treaty on the European Union expressed their desire “to deepen the solidarity between their peoples while respecting their history, their culture, and their traditions”.<sup>21</sup> Extending solidarity between EU Member States and their ‘peoples’ to include data will facilitate the data sharing culture needed to benefit society and the European market simultaneously. If we want to shape a European data future that builds an open and transparent environment in which citizens are empowered in their interactions, and the data they provide both online and offline, we need to support a European way to digital transformation<sup>22</sup> that produces a data blueprint that counters any challenges between different State Members, cultures, values, and technology infrastructures.

The present research and framework have been conducted and developed through a mixed-methods approach that includes:

- Open-structure interviews with data experts across academia and industry

- A literature review of the concept and processes of solidarity
- A desk-based review and synthesis of grey and academic literature on data trusts and data infrastructures
- The reports, acts and announcements of the European Commission referring to Common European Data Spaces

#### Principles and Recommendations for a Solidarity Framework

The data infrastructures we currently shape, will shape us in return. In the same ways that our political and financial systems have influenced our behaviours and societies, these technologies and institutions will further complicate our cultures and economies. Only by implementing solidarity principles from the beginning, can we ensure that CEDS will be trustworthy and beneficial to all. Technical and cultural coherence is crucial as well, as we need to develop the new infrastructure through shared cultural dimensions among State Members, which will hopefully in turn lead us to trust this new technical/data infrastructure. In the absence of techno-cultural coherence, no common spaces will ever be achieved. As argued in this report, clarifying the conditions upon which these new data infrastructures of CEDS are being constructed, is pivotal to the success of Europe’s digital transformation. Explaining the relationships between the different stakeholders of CEDS and between EU citizens, businesses and CEDS will also advance participation, all of which are essential to the development of these ambitious European-wide spaces.

The following practical recommendations and suggestions for the implementation of a solidarity framework can be concluded:

- Data governance for CEDS needs to be collaborative/participatory in nature, and thus needs to involve the public, private, and civic stakeholders. There is value in sharing and collaborating. That value needs to be pointed out to people, governments, and businesses. This may be achieved through citizen, group, or population committees. Collaboration will advance processes of sharing and exchanging while it can also initiate the conceptualisation and realisation of perceiving ‘data for the public good’ across Member States.

Oftentimes cultural coherence is taken for granted in the European Union, as something that organically springs from the union. In efforts of this scale, however, we need to return to the basics and do the work that brings us socially and culturally together.

- Discussing data as a public good is valuable for assessment and fairness, and for those controls data and their resulting power. Redistributing datasets from individuals, intermediaries, and organisations should ensure that both citizens and businesses equally surrender their data in order to participate in the decision-making processes, so they can both benefit from the availability of data.

- Despite the value of considering data as a public good, power imbalances and corporate influence in the decision-making processes have to be carefully evaluated so as to secure not just fair data control between individuals-intermediaries-corporations-EU, but also to ensure that the current institutional proposal for CEDS audits is to be handled by independent bodies. Current proposals in the DSA, for independent auditing of digital services and platforms does not go far enough. The solidary framework that recognises data as a public good, promotes the need to create a public sector audit regime that will not be taken over by private entities.

- There is an urgency for public awareness campaigns highlighting the benefits of data exchange, while also informing the public about risks and challenges related to data sharing, as well as requirements regarding data literacy across state members. This can be achieved through storytelling approaches<sup>23</sup> that will tell valuable and beneficial to the cause stories – a very recent example is the usefulness of open datasets in countering the pandemic.<sup>24</sup> Communicating the importance of CEDS through creative and visual storytelling will afford their smooth deployment and allow people

to understand, accept, and extract value from them, as well as circulate them to their others.

- These spaces need to account for transparency and trust in the collection, management, and use of data. This will help develop data governance that ensures the trustworthiness of data collection, exchange, management, and its use. Private companies tend to refuse to collaborate through open structures, as they often consider their data as part of their competitive advantage, intellectual property, and corporate interest. CEDS can function as a bond between people, governments, and private companies by manifesting the benefits of trust, openness, and common values. By thinking of CEDS as the way in which we improve how we collect, store, and share data we can advance their deployment as fair, transparent governance mechanisms for European data. The more open and transparent CEDS are, the easier and faster people and commerce will accept them as part and parcel of their European lives.

Oftentimes, cultural coherence is taken for granted in the European Union, as something that organically springs from the union. In efforts of this scale, however, we need to return to the basics and do the work that brings us socially and culturally together. As the Commission pushes for a Europe fit for the digital age,<sup>25</sup> there is an opportunity for a steady refocus on how data, data platforms, and infrastructure can support inclusion, and democracy. To secure digital sovereignty, the EU needs to deploy solidary approaches to digital infrastructure and data sovereignty that can potentially position them at the forefront of the global digital ecology, through both policy and technological solutions.

<sup>20</sup> Summary report of the public consultation on the European strategy for data < <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/summary-report-public-consultation-european-strategy-data> > [Accessed September 2021]

<sup>21</sup> Consolidated version on the Treaty on European Union'. (09-05-2008). Online PDF. 05-05-04-2013. (C115/28) <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12008M/TXT&rid=2>> [Accessed January 2021]

<sup>22</sup> Shaping Europe’s digital future <<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/>> [Accessed November 2020]

<sup>23</sup> D’Ignazio, Catherine, and Rahul Bhargava. "Approaches to building big data literacy." In Proceedings of the Bloomberg data for good exchange conference. 2015

<sup>24</sup> UNESCO: Open access to facilitate research and information on COVID-19 < <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/communicationinformationresponse/opensolutions> > [Accessed September 2021]

<sup>25</sup> A Europe fit for the digital age: Empowering people with a new generation of technologies <[https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age_en)> [Accessed September 2021]

# Knowledge sharing as a pivot to create new intellectual wealth

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The COVID-19 pandemic has put nations on a disruptive change, creating a chaotic situation in which human security is at stake. This event has served as a wakeup call to leaders to move from a focus on leadership theory to taking immediate action in order to better serve their citizens. As a result, these decisions and actions have reshaped strategic thinking to deal with this unprecedented crisis. Building a safe global ecosystem requires global engagement of several actors in different spheres such as policy makers, decision makers, industry, and academia to promote a positive spirit of a solid foundation for knowledge sharing and the creation of an adequate environment where building a learning organization to produce new knowledge can play a pivotal role in bringing a convergent vision of the world toward the greater good of nations with collaboration being the key element to achieve such an outcomes.

According to an article published by the World Economic Forum, the average life span of multinational corporations is 40 to 50 years. Leaders should be aware that the life cycle of Fortune 500's, according to the record, is subjected to several changes that may affect those entities such as disappearance, acquiesce, splitting or merging with other corporations. However, the common dominator of the dysfunctionality of those entities often remains the same "Status Quo".

The status quo is a result of a non-ambition mindset characterized by a fear of change or a fear of taking decisions that might allow the teams within the organization to scale up the productivity of new ideas. Such a status can create a downright shift in the future performance of the organization. Thus, it is required that we redefine a new business module of collaboration which will allow individuals, international organizations, academia, and multinationals to establish a strategic alliance based on TRUST: transparency, respect, unity, sustainability, and tolerance. Also, it is a call for the decision makers to enact new policies that can serve as a catalyst for a win-win scenario, fostering the importance of building a learning organization, the impact of creating a positive culture of collaboration, and the benefit of science-industry knowledge sharing in creating sustainable and inclusive societies.

## The importance of building a learning organization

Learning organizations adopt an innovative centric approach focused on the participation of its people as a driving force for decision making. Such an approach requires a continuous collaboration between all the team members to achieve the vision and the mission of the organization. Yet, within the learning organization space, it is normal to witness the empowerment of people to think differently and design new scenarios of collaboration that will lead to positive impact. In addition, generating new ideas can help with performance and the achievement of goals. Peter Senge, the author of "The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization" defines "learning organization" as "organizations that encourage adaptive and generative learning, encouraging their employees to think outside the box and work in conjunction with other employees to find best answer to any problem" (Seng, 2006).

According to this definition, we can witness that the key element for innovative thinking is based on strong will from the top down in the hierarchies to decentralize decisions. Allowing people to be part of a constructive system process to provide their input and contribute to crafting the successful story of the organization. Indeed, several companies adopted the same approach such as GE, Apple, and Google.

## The impact of creating a positive culture of collaboration.

As mentioned, building a positive culture within research groups at the level of university systems plays a pivotal role to fuel creativity which will ultimately lead to the creation of new knowledge. This path demands a framework that combines the positive will of the administrations and adequate policies that can provide a favourable environment where new intellectual properties can come to life. Given the cultural inhomogeneous of the European Union countries, the decision makers are required to be more innovative in dealing with demographics, resources, and ideology challenges that remain as road blocks in front of the prosperity and the ambitions of European Union citizens. Indeed, to alleviate such challenges the European Union should redefine its global policies on a win-win approach with its traditional and strategic allies such as United States and U.K from one hand, and Africa from another hand in order to abort the hegemony communist of China in the European continent at large.

Based on the research framework programs enacted by the European Union, a budget was allocated of nearly Euro 80 billion to foster collaboration amongst it states (Gouarderes, 2021., 1). As a result, the creation of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology as a strategic vehicle for economic growth and job creation within Europe remains with a budget of EUR 2.4 billion between the period of 2014 and 2020, which is extremely humble if we compare it to research and development global spending (What is the EIT's budget?, 1).

The graph below illustrates the trends of the global R&D share between 2000 and 2019. The United States public and private investment in research is ranked number one in the world, followed by China, Japan, then Germany according to OECD database (Global Research and Development Expenditures: Fact Sheet, 1).

Yet, the international comparisons have positioned United States as a leading country in applied research to improve the economic competitiveness. Given the historical and bilateral ties between Europe and United States of America, there is vast room for collective collaboration between both continents to reach new horizon in terms of economic performance, government alliances, industry collaboration, and cultural prosperity.

## Benefit of science-industry knowledge sharing in generating new wealth modules.

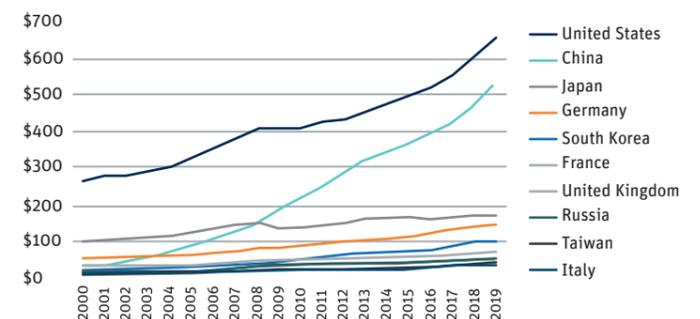
Economic efficiency is the backbone of the prosperity of nations. The private and public sectors are called to work together in order to encourage business innovation to create jobs that can respond to the challenges of the new era. According to OECD, there are remarkable efforts of the country members to support innovation within universities, research organizations, and companies to foster research and development collaboration. However, intellectual property regulations remain a roadblock in front of a solid and efficient collaboration that will help with knowledge transfer. The creation of an innovative set of laws and policies that will help facilitate a positive environment of investment in building trust among the collaborative agencies and individuals is necessary. For instance, the scientific collaboration of several Nobel

laureates such as the French scientist Esther Duflo alongside Dr. Abhijit Banerjee and Dr. Michaela Kremer from the United States to alleviate global poverty is a prime example of positive collaboration. Their work can serve as a shining example that can inspire decision and policy makers to enact new regulations that serve humankind at large. Such a model can serve also as a framework for international universities to encourage their researchers to develop collaborative research proposals with their peers in other countries including the involvement of students.

## Conclusion

The emergence of a new societal call and the mobilization of new visionary elites will serve as a positive ecosystem for a global renaissance that will nourish a new paradigm to enhance the human civilization, a civilization where relationships are built on power to instead of power over. Collaboration across all disciplines is key, and the only way forward through challenges that human kind is facing. As we work together for the common good of humanity, we should utilize collective human intelligence to serve mankind.

R&D Expenditures of Selected Countries, 2000-2019 (in billions of current PPP dollars)



Source: CRS analysis of Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD.Stat database, [https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=MSTI\\_PUB](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=MSTI_PUB). Notes: PPP= Purchasing Power Parity. PPP is used to determine the relative value of different currencies and to adjust data from different countries to a common currency allowing direct comparisons among them.

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# The Petit Supply Chain

## Manufacturing in Central and Eastern Europe



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**Institution:** University of Bucharest

**Year of Birth:** 1995

**Citizenship:** Romania

**Research Question:** 'How can shorter supply chains protect EU jobs, businesses and strengthen Europe's economy?'

**Academic Mentor:** Dr. Suci Oana, University of Bucharest

The aim of my project was to investigate whether Central and Eastern European (CEE) manufacturers can compete in the European market with producers based in “traditional” manufacturing centres. The present project comes in support of demands for increased post-pandemic economic resilience and argues that shortened – petit – supply chains that stretch from Berlin and Paris to Bucharest and Warsaw, rather than to Beijing, are a viable way to attain such resilience.

The project argues that companies manufacturing goods in the CEE would benefit by increasing their resilience while maintaining their international competitiveness. To substantiate such claims, the project draws on twenty product case studies placed in comparison – ten products manufactured by European brands which are producing in the CEE and ten similar, competing products made by European manufacturers in Asia, mainly China, thus forming ten pairs. The findings suggest that while six out of the ten pairs favored the Asian-made products in terms of price, the differences were small. Moreover, companies continually invested in their CEE locations. The project concludes that CEE-based manufacturers can be competitive internationally and that they can, as they did in almost half of the cases, beat the prices of Asian manufacturers.

### Introduction

Starting with the turn of the century, Europe's share of global manufacturing has been dropping<sup>1</sup> – while that of China has continuously risen. Since its opening up to the world, China has become a crucial part of the global economy. Its integration into global trade, however, occurred gradually, as increasing amounts of foreign direct investments (FDI) entered the country. Most of the FDIs in China went into manufacturing – 70% by 2001.<sup>2</sup> The constant inflow of FDI into China strengthened its capacity to be a production base for manufacturing exports. A domino effect occurred: the competition boosted the development of some supporting industries, and essentially established important industrial clusters.

FDI are only part of the story. China's manufacturing growth in the last two decades of the 20th century occurred on the back of hundreds of millions of rural workers who moved to the cities to take relatively low-paying manufacturing jobs. As the supply of labor increased, wages in the sector were kept low. Starting with the 2000s, however, rising wages, not just in manufacturing, “began to be a defining feature of China's economy.”<sup>3</sup>

Offshoring and outsourcing, the process by which Western companies arrived in China, are strategies that increase competitiveness by decreasing production costs through relocation, either directly or through a supplier, to lower-cost countries. Offshoring makes a certain product more competitive by decreasing its production – and therefore final – price. It is the form in which FDI came to China. The literature on China's economic rise notes that the drivers of attracting FDI into China were the population, natural resources, “cheap labor, quality infrastructure, open trade policies, regulatory reforms, easy access to foreign markets, foreign investors protection, favorable tax policies and the depreciation of the Yuan.”<sup>4</sup> Reshoring is the opposite of offshoring. It is the relocation of production back to the company's home country or a country in the same region (nearshoring). Relocation is a complex process, whether it is offshoring or reshoring, and involves consideration regarding the advantages offered by a certain location.

According to the wider definition, a company relocates because of “three distinct supply chain-related aspects: operational, tactical, and strategic.”<sup>5</sup> The first aspect regards cost-efficiency, the second considers the long-term advantages of a location, while the third centers on the global competitiveness resulting from the move. Europe must offer advantages in all three to convince firms to reshore. A Western company can obviously benefit strategically and tactically from being closer to its markets, in a familiar cultural context, and under the EU's legislative and regulatory watch, in a solid, liberal democratic setting where transparency is the rule and corruption is lower than in other parts of the world. Studies have shown that “defect rates are higher when the upstream and downstream factories are farther apart.”<sup>6</sup> Others have shown that in the clothing industry, proximity manufacturing can lead to “short lead time, high product

quality, innovation, and high profits either through cost reductions or sales and price improvement.<sup>7</sup> In this, clusters of producers and suppliers worked best, facilitated by governments through favorable trade policies that make raw and intermediate materials available. Carbon footprint taxation, making the country of origin clear in advertising and tax credits for domestic producers also may also enhance the success of proximity manufacturing.

There are clear long-term and competitive advantages. However, the pure cost-efficiency side of the argument has long been a strong obstacle to reshoring – and the primary reason why firms offshored. Even though when it comes to reshoring the cost argument loses its primacy in favor of multiple other considerations.<sup>8</sup> In order to convince European manufacturers to once again produce in Europe, their costs must be decreased. This can best be achieved in the CEE, with lowered labor costs as a prime motivator.

To recapitulate, one of the primary reasons why FDI flowed to China up to 2001 was its low wages, but for the past two decades those wages have been rising. This creates an opportunity for Europe to regain its manufacturing base by placing it in the CEE.

The pandemic only accelerated the same process. In the summer of 2020, McKinsey reported that 93% of firms are looking to make supply chains more resilient. As a result, 16-26% of goods could change location in the next few years.<sup>9</sup> Resilience and solidarity are connected when it comes to supply chains. The pandemic brought this principle to the fore, along with concepts such as strategic, digital and technological autonomy or sovereignty. Throughout 2020, such ideas could be heard from European policymakers and political leaders, such as Commission President von der Leyen. Self-determination and independence

<sup>1</sup> David Martinez Turegano, Robert Marschinski, “Electronics lead concerns over the EU's declining share in global manufacturing value chains,” VoxEU, August 11th, 2020, <https://voxeu.org/article/eu-s-declining-share-global-manufacturing-value-chains>.

<sup>2</sup> Guoqiang Long, “China's Policies on FDI: Review and Evaluation” in Theodore H. Moran, Edward M. Graham, Magnus Blomstrom (eds.), Does foreign direct investment promote development? (Washington DC: Institute for National Economics, 2005): p. 318.

<sup>3</sup> Scott Rozelle, Yiran Xia, Dimitris Friesen, Bronson Vanderjack, Nourya Cohen, “Moving Beyond Lewis: Employment and Wage Trends in China's High- and Low-Skilled Industries and the Emergence of an Era of Polarization,” Comparative Economic Studies 62, 4 (October 2020): p. 556.

<sup>4</sup> M. Asim Fasheem, M. Khyzer Bin Dost, Answer Hussnain, Syed Usman Izhar, Ali Raza, Amber Shakeel, “Factors Attracting FDI Inflow in China,” Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review 1, 4 (December 2011) 135. Sunil Chopra and Peter Meindl, Supply Chain Management Strategy and Operation (Boston: Pearson, 2015): pp. 13–17.

<sup>5</sup> Pourya Pourhejazy, Alison Ashby, “Reshoring Decisions for Adjusting Supply Chains in a Changing World: A Case Study from the Apparel Industry,” International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 18, 9 (May 2021): p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Bray, Ahmet Colak, Juan Camilo Serpa, “Supply Chain Proximity and Product Quality,” Management Science 65, 9 (May 2019): p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Petchprakai Sirilertsuwan, Daniel Ekwall, Daniel Hjelmgren, “Proximity manufacturing for enhancing clothing supply chain sustainability,” The International Journal of Logistics Management 29, 33 (June 2018), p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Malin Johansson and Jan Olhager, “Comparing offshoring and backshoring: The role of manufacturing site location factors and their impact on post-relocation performance,” International Journal of Production Economics, 205 (August 2018): pp. 37-46 as cited in Pourhejazy and Ashby, “Reshoring Decisions,” p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Knut Alicke, Richa Gupta & Vera Trautwein. “Resetting supply chains for the next normal”. McKinsey. 2020. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/operations/our-insights/resetting-supply-chains-for-the-next-normal>

are tied into Europe's ability to thrive on its own if necessary. Logically, ensuring access to resources and capabilities means considering the relocation of supply chains vital to European firms. A report by the policy department of the EU's DG Internal Policies correctly argues that "protectionist policies could in the long run hurt Europe's resilience and threaten access to crucial technologies, especially for smaller Member States that rely more on access to foreign technologies"<sup>10</sup> and warns that reshoring has not yet proven to be effective on a large scale. Being cut off from global suppliers and competition was never a successful recipe for economic growth, but diversification of production is another matter entirely. The same report admits that "global value chains will remain vulnerable to exogenous shocks" and that "industries, in general, are not looking for ways to move their complete value chains back but rather focus on diversifying their sourcing."<sup>11</sup>

### Manufacturing and Solidarity: Issues at stake

If a CEE-based manufacturer manages to be competitive in the highly-competitive EU market, then its case can prove instructive for policymakers looking to revitalize European manufacturing. They can begin by encouraging European companies to relocate their factories to Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) within the EU. Businesses will have more resilient supply chains, consumers will not fear shortages or price hikes and national states will benefit from the creation of jobs. To that end, a database has been compiled as part of this project, bringing together ten European manufacturers producing in the CEE and ten of their European competitors producing in Asia, mainly China. Each CEE-based manufacturer's product price is compared to that of a similar product – that is also marketed in Europe – made in Asia. In this way, competitiveness is measured. In total, six out of the ten CEE-based European manufacturers offered products that were more expensive than those made by their competitors in Asia, mainly China. Their continued presence in the highly-competitive European market alongside these competitors, however, shows that it is possible to manufacture in the CEE and remain competitive in Europe and globally. Continental and Assa Abloy, among others, have continually invested in their plants in the CEE precisely to minimize supply chain risks. More than any-

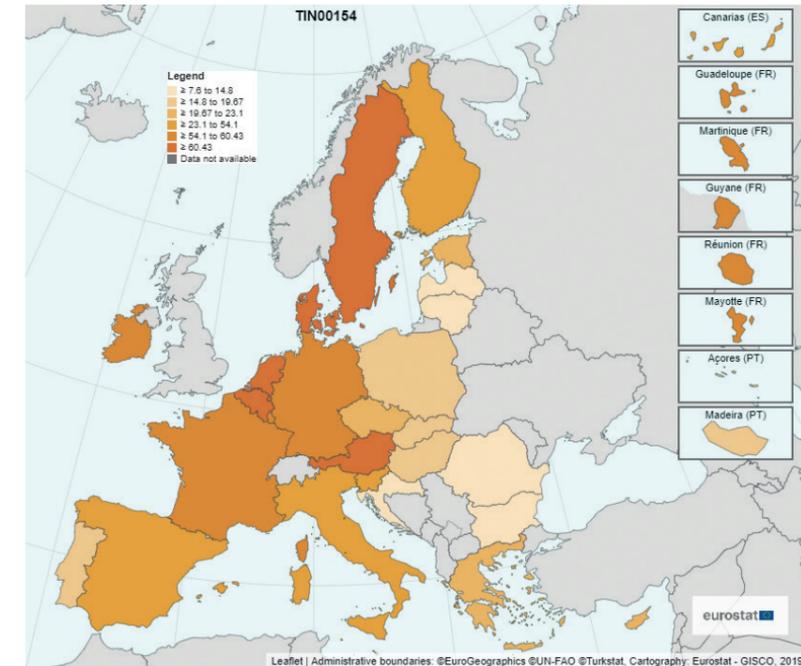
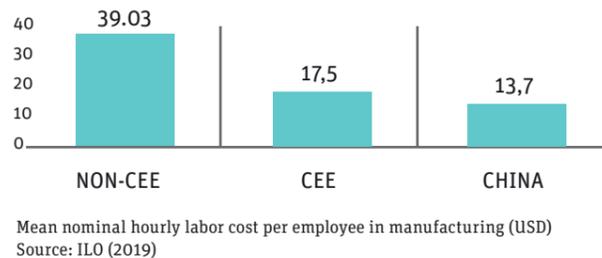
hing, producing in the region has allowed these manufacturers and others like them to proudly state that they are doing so when they market their products.

The wholesale relocation of supply chains and the reliance entirely on domestic capabilities will render European companies uncompetitive. However, the strengthening of domestic sourcing, along with stockpiling, can guard against supply shocks. The EU should not look to be 100% autonomous, as that is not possible, while becoming strategically autonomous is feasible.

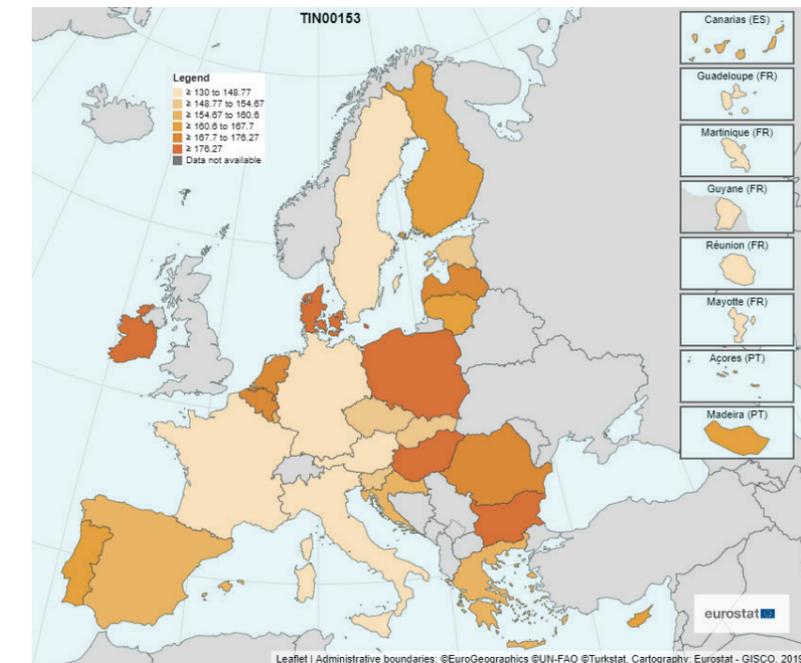
### Recommendations

Cooperation between member states or action at the level of the EU must be taken to encourage post-pandemic investments in the manufacturing sector. Complementarity and coordination are vital principles in the regional CEE manufacturing industry. A series of policies are crucial if European manufacturing is to be most cost-effective in the CEE and if governments seek to aid manufacturers' investment in the region.

**a) Immigration.** Up until the early 2000s, China attracted FDI with its low-cost, young, educated workforce. The EU's population, by comparison, is an aging one, and that of the CEE is no exception.<sup>12</sup> Migration into the region must be encouraged for the region to become more attractive as a consumer market and to be able to offer the workforce necessary for manufacturing clusters. At the moment, the CEE EU members score higher than China on the overall Migrant Integration Policy index, but lower than Western European countries.<sup>13</sup> Policies geared toward welcoming legal, educated and younger migrants and supporting their integration can only aid CEE's economic development.



Average personnel costs in manufacturing 2018



Wage-adjusted labor productivity in manufacturing 2018

**b) Labor costs.** The literature on development and FDI highlights low labor cost and high unemployment as attractive to FDI, and China's case was no exception.<sup>14</sup> The importance of low-cost labor cannot be overstated. In this respect, the CEE can compete with China. The mean nominal hourly labor costs per employee in manufacturing in the CEE is \$17.5, higher than China's

\$13.7, but only 44.8% of that in non-CEE EU member states. Salaries in the CEE are expected to rise in the future, as are those in China. Wage-adjusted productivity is also higher in the CEE than in the western half of Europe.<sup>15</sup> Major government-mandated wage increases should be avoided precisely to preserve the regional advantage in terms of wages.

<sup>10</sup> Jan Maarten De Vet, Daniel Nigohosyan, Jorge Nunez Ferrer, Ann-Kristin Gross, Silvia Kuehl, Michael Flickenschild, "Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on EU industries," Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies. DG Internal Policies (March 2021): p. 50.

<sup>11</sup> De Vet, Nigohosyan, Ferrer, Gross, Kuehl, Flickenschild, "Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on EU industries," 50.

<sup>12</sup> Eurostat, "Population structure and ageing," accessed July 1st 2021, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Population\\_structure\\_and\\_ageing#:~:text=The%20median%20age%20of%20the,years%2C%20while%20half%20was%20younger.](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Population_structure_and_ageing#:~:text=The%20median%20age%20of%20the,years%2C%20while%20half%20was%20younger.)

<sup>13</sup> Migration Integration Policy Index 2020, "Migrant Integration Policy – Overall score," accessed June 5th, 2021, <https://www.mipex.eu/play/>.

<sup>14</sup> M. Asim Fasheem et al., "Factors Attracting FDI Inflow in China," 131.

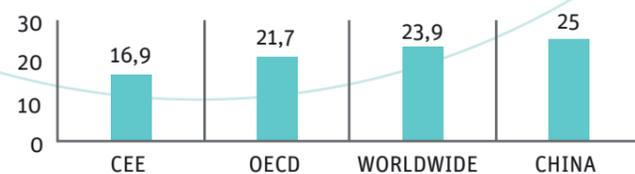
<sup>15</sup> Manufacturing statistics – NACE Rev. 2, Statistics Explained. Eurostat. 2020. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Manufacturing\\_statistics\\_-\\_NACE\\_Rev\\_2](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Manufacturing_statistics_-_NACE_Rev_2)

The EU should not look to be 100% autonomous, as that is not possible, while becoming strategically autonomous is feasible.

**c) Infrastructure.** The same development literature that highlights labor costs also demonstrates that physical and technological infrastructure attracts more FDI.<sup>16</sup> The CEE, however, presents gaps in its infrastructure. A better link between lagging regions and leading regions, from an economic standpoint, will take place if the former are to become a manufacturing center for the latter. For such industrial clusters to form, “transport links, access to finance, and cooperation with universities and research centres”<sup>17</sup> are necessary. CEE can easily gain the upper hand in this respect. In early January 2021, global demand for Chinese products – computers meant for working at home, but also masks and other medical equipment – created a shortage of containers and therefore increased shipping costs. Due to the shortage and port congestion, prices for shipping a 40-foot container to Rotterdam from China quadrupled.<sup>18</sup>

**d) Taxes.** Treated as a single country, the eleven CEE countries have an average combined corporate tax rate of 16.9%, lower than the OECD average of 21.7%, the worldwide average of 23.9%<sup>19</sup> or China’s rate of 25%. A regional, uniform tax rate across the member states around this average value would maintain the competitive edge of all CEE countries in attracting investments and avoiding fragmentation. Tax hikes are not recommended.

**e) Trade Barriers.** If we consider the CEE region as a singular country, adding up and averaging its scores in the 2021 Ease of Doing Business index compiled by the World Bank, we note its strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis to China in particular. The differences between the CEE countries, however, are not to be ignored. The creation of a CEE Industry Best Practices and Policies Office would aid the economy of the region as a whole.



Combined corporate tax rate (%) Source: OECD

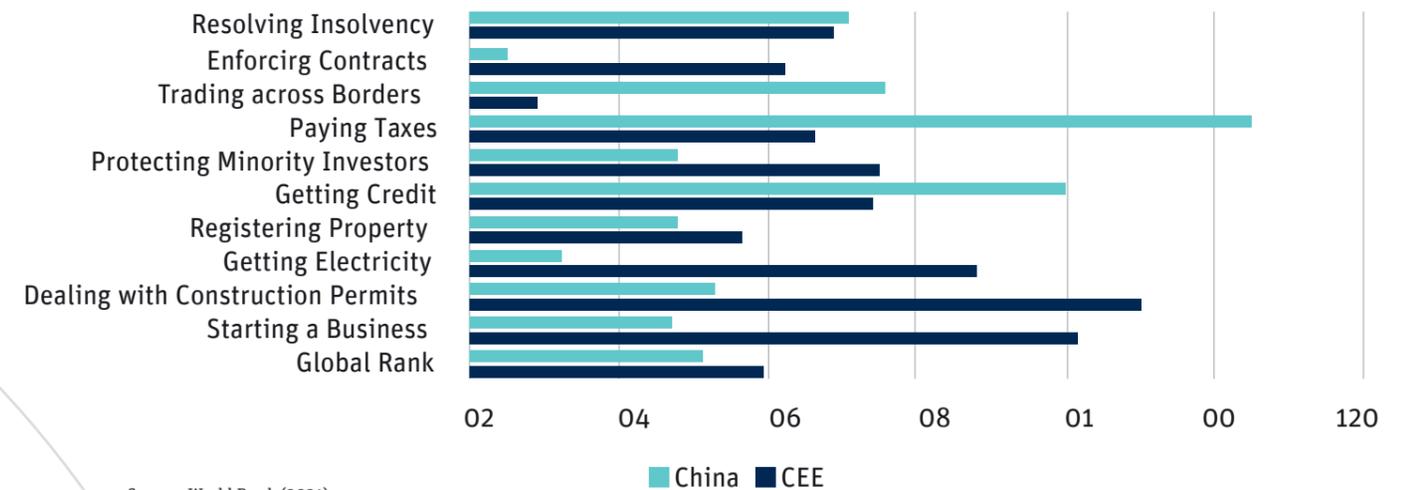
<sup>16</sup> M. Asim Fasheem et al., “Factors Attracting FDI Inflow in China,” 132.

<sup>17</sup> Gergely Hudecz, Rolf Strauch, Thomas Wieser, “Addressing the risk of regional disparities,” European Stability Mechanism, September 22th, 2020, <https://www.esm.europa.eu/blog/addressing-the-risk-of-regional-disparities>

<sup>18</sup> “Are You A Robot?” Bloomberg, January 7th, 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-01-07/soaring-shipping-costs-could-curb-china-s-export-boom>.

<sup>19</sup> Elke Asen, “Corporate Income Tax Rates in Europe,” Tax Foundation, April 8th, 2021, <https://taxfoundation.org/2021-corporate-tax-rates-in-europe/>.

### Ease of doing business: CEE vs China



Source: World Bank (2021)

**f) Debureaucratization.** The way China attracted FDI was in a highly decentralized way. This could entail red tape and corruption from local governments. The solution was “one stop” facilities made for investors to conduct all bureaucratic procedures in one place. The EU and the CEE need to follow suit. What is needed is one authority, one office, for opening a factory in any EU state, simplifying and homogenizing procedures.

**g) Investments.** The main obstacle to firms’ reshoring remains the necessary large investments in the construction of plants. A combination of policies can aid companies overcome such a challenge. Grants, tax reductions or reimbursements, government-backed loans, and the creation of a special status for industrial clusters are all viable options. The EU should follow the US in setting up increased access to capital for domestic manufacturers. This can be done through a venture capital fund that would support small and medium manufacturers.

**h) Stockpiling.** Where reshoring is not a viable option due to natural scarcity, economies of scale, or prohibitive initial investment costs, stockpiling can prove to be a solution. The EU needs to ensure the availability of raw materials, even at a higher price.

#### Conclusion

This project has argued that European manufacturing can be most cost-effectively developed in Central and Eastern Europe, as labor costs and taxes are much lower in the region and can compete with those in traditional manufacturing centers. The case studies taken into consideration have clearly supported this thesis, as the price differences between similar products made in the CEE and in Asia, mainly China, were small, allowing for competition. Further research and larger data sets are required to clarify the issue and the impact of the proposed recommendations.

# On a global stage



# Geopolitical challenges for the EU and the future of transatlantic relations

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At the turn of the year 2021/2022, the EU finds itself in a world dominated by great power rivalry, in which the EU's "business model," based on multilateralism and the rules-based international order, is increasingly under pressure, even within Europe. Over the past decade, the EU's security environment has continued to deteriorate, and its immediate neighbourhood has transformed into a ring of instability. Ten years ago, there was still hope that the EU, through the European enlargement process and the neighbourhood policy, would gradually transform its periphery along its own lines. Today, Europeans are weary of enlargement and worried that the crises, conflicts and autocratic tendencies of the neighbourhood will be swept into the EU.

For years, European foreign policy was shaped by the idea that the globalised international system created a network of dependencies through which state and non-state actors were intertwined in many ways: These interdependencies generated common interests, made countries like-minded partners and prevented conflicts. This was also the background for the EU's "strategic partnerships" with third countries such as China or Russia, which were built up in the expectation that intertwined economic relations would ultimately lead to a rapprochement with the European model and an opening towards the West. But in recent years, Europeans have had to learn the hard way that "strategic partners" can also turn into system rivals or even opponents - and that dependencies not only have a stabilising and de-escalating effect, but also make them vulnerable and open to blackmail. Everything can get weaponized, from medical equipment to natural gas supplies, over SWIFT to 5G networks.

The Chinese leadership, for example, is making massive attempts to use economic interdependencies as leverage to achieve political goals - for example, through initiatives such

as the 16+1 (formerly 17+1) format, through commodity agreements and the acquisition of critical infrastructure in EU member states. On several occasions, Beijing has already successfully used a "divide and rule" strategy, through which it has divided Europeans and prevented a unified European position. Only slowly is the EU beginning to see its relationship with China in a new light and to defend itself against China's economic coercion. In the conflict with Belarus the Lukashenko's regime instrumentalizes migrants as weapons on the border with Poland and Lithuania, in order to fight the EU sanctions and to dissuade the EU from further questioning Lukashenko's legitimacy.

Yet at the same time, means of "traditional" warfare are in no way receding. On the contrary, countries around the world are acquiring advanced conventional, cyber, and space capabilities at a rapid pace, and in some cases increasing the size and diversity of their nuclear arsenal, risking the entanglement of the conventional and the nuclear domain and creating new instabilities and escalation risks. The Russian troop deployment on the border with Ukraine illustrated the precarious and contested security situation in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood. Russia itself, with the poisoning of opposition activist Alexey Navalny and the recent Duma elections, has transformed into a fully-fledged authoritarian state and the relationship with the EU is openly hostile. Simultaneously, great power competition between the US and China is increasing, and China is expanding and diversifying its nuclear arsenal while continuing its military build-up in the Indo Pacific. In the southern neighbourhood, efforts to project stability in Mali and the Sahel have not met with the hoped-for success. In the crises in Syria and Libya the EU is no relevant actor. The Afghanistan mission has failed. The situation in the Western Balkans is worsening and a renewed military confrontation cannot be excluded.

For Europeans, the gap between their actual capacity to act and the need to do more has ever more widened in recent years.

Europeans need to adjust to the fact that the United States will be less involved in international crisis management in the future, that it will continue downgrading European security on its priority list, and that its strategic interests clearly lie in the Indo-Pacific.

On the positive side, the election of Joe Biden as US President has brought much more predictability and reliability to the transatlantic alliance. The new government has emphasised that it sees the EU as a partner again and has a great interest in constructive cooperation. The administration's request to join a European PESCO project (alongside Canada and Norway) on military mobility as a third country was a positive sign for constructive future EU-US and EU-NATO co-operation. However, the lack of coordination with European allies during the Afghanistan withdrawal and the AUKUS deal have shown that the US is aligning its security and defence policy with a narrowly understood national interest. Europeans need to adjust to the fact that the United States will be less involved in international crisis management in the future, that it will continue downgrading European security on its priority list, and that its strategic interests clearly lie in the Indo-Pacific.

The deterioration of the security environment and the erosion of the transatlantic relationship in the years of the Trump administration have led Europeans to develop a new sense of urgency. They clearly see the need to become a more capable actor in international security. The term "strategic autonomy", however, remains toxic. Some EU member states, especially in central, eastern, and partly northern Europe, perceive it as an attempt to decouple, and hence as a threat. The European countries at NATO's Eastern flank still trust the American security guarantees more than anything that Europeans have on offer - despite the Trump years and the irritations around the Afghanistan withdrawal and AUKUS. Nevertheless, member states seemed to have realized that meta-debates about terminology will not bring the EU closer to the goal of greater European capacity to act, which is shared by all. Many member states can rally behind the narrative that greater European capacity to act at the same time makes the EU a better partner in the transatlantic alliance. The biggest obstacle on the way to more European sovereignty in the field of security and defence policy is still that there is little consensus on how to get there and what the overall ambition of the EU should be - especially in relation to NATO. Member states differ in their judgement of which organisation should form the central framework for European sovereignty. For France, this

is not NATO, while the more Atlantic member states want to precisely strengthen its European pillar.

To finally take a joint step towards convergence, the Strategic Compass process was initiated under the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union and will conclude under the French Presidency in March 2022. For the first time, EU member states agreed to have a joint threat assessment. The Strategic Compass, with its four baskets on crisis management, resilience, capabilities, and partnerships, has the potential to provide the EU with a decisive boost in terms of joint strategic thinking, defining the EU's priorities and level of ambition. The fact that the EU's Strategic Compass and NATO's Strategic Concept processes are written partly at the same time presents a unique opportunity to sync up European efforts in both organizations.

Taking stock of the recent European defence initiatives shows that military-technical cooperation between 25 EU member states has been gradually developed in recent years within the 47 PESCO projects, but the 2020 PESCO Strategic Review showed the results to be unsatisfactory. The European Defence Fund was officially launched on 30 June 2021 and has released its first annual round of calls for proposals, worth a total of EUR1.2 billion. However, it is still too early to evaluate the results. The big European armament projects take place outside of the EU initiatives. Here, too, it remains to be seen how these projects will develop. European capabilities are currently still insufficient to fulfil the contribution to NATO that all allies are already committed to making. EU member states lack strategic enablers, mainly transport and communication as well as area denial facilities. Europeans are still being called upon to make greater contributions to NATO's forward deployment.

In summary, Europeans are still far from becoming more equal partners in the transatlantic alliance and making a greater contribution to their own security and stability in the neighbourhood. So far, both political will and the necessary capabilities have been lacking to address the growing gap between aspiration and reality.

# How to achieve the EU's strategic autonomy in security and defense while upholding the transatlantic alliance?



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## Introduction

Over the last years, EU member states have taken significant steps towards strengthening their security and defence cooperation. Security and defense policy – traditionally viewed as the least promising area of European integration – have become a priority for European leaders who started promoting the notion of an 'EU army'<sup>1</sup> and are calling on the EU to learn the 'language of power'<sup>2</sup>. Meanwhile, European countries continue to rely on NATO, and even the 2016 EU Global Strategy, which advocates the goal of EU strategic autonomy, states that 'NATO remains the primary framework'<sup>3</sup> in matters of collective defense. The commitment and contribution by the United States to the transatlantic alliance, however, can no longer be taken for granted. President Donald Trump's initial refusal to uphold American security

agreements and his decision to reduce the number of US troops in Germany left many European allies confused and worried about the future of European security.

Europe is confronted with a fundamental dilemma. The EU cannot claim the mantle of independent leadership and project the image of a serious global player, when at the same time it continues to outsource its security to the US, even when it comes to dealing with threats in Europe's immediate neighbourhood. Addressing the power asymmetry in the transatlantic partnership is a sensible response to the perceived hesitancy of Washington's commitment to its European allies, but it risks triggering a US withdrawal from Europe altogether – the very scenario most European leaders wish to avoid. The aim of this project

In the post-Brexit era, the convergence of preferences among France, Germany and Poland holds the key to the prospect of achieving EU strategic autonomy in security and defense.

was therefore to investigate how the EU can proceed to achieve strategic autonomy in security and defense while upholding the transatlantic alliance.

## Solidarity in EU security and defense policy

While EU integration in terms of security and defense policy is shaped by a variety of factors – supranational bureaucrats<sup>4</sup>, domestic politics<sup>5</sup>, decision-making rules<sup>6</sup>, structural power shifts,<sup>7</sup> historical legacies<sup>8</sup> – this project was driven by the assumption that the ability of the EU to establish itself as a strong defense actor depends on the degree of inner-European solidarity among its member states. 'Solidarity' is a commonly used expression in European discourse, especially when it comes to recent debates on the Eurozone crisis and EU asylum policy<sup>9</sup>, yet it remains a neglected concept in political and academic debates on the EU as a security and defense actor<sup>10</sup>. In this project, member states' solidarity regarding their security and defense approaches was examined across three inter-connected dimensions: (1) solidarity as 'mutualization' of threats; (2) solidarity as a common sense of purpose; (3) solidarity as a shared external dependence.

In the post-Brexit era, the convergence of preferences among France, Germany and Poland holds the key to the prospect of achieving EU strategic autonomy in security and defense. These three EU and NATO members – also known as the 'Weimar Triangle' – were selected for analysis in this project due to their relative weight in the EU and their representation of a wide spectrum of positions on key aspects of European security debates. France and Germany are the EU's two most powerful military powers, while Poland is the only one of the three to long spend 2% of GDP on defense in accordance with NATO commitments. France and Poland represent Europeanist and Atlanticist foreign policy traditions respectively, while Germany wavers between the European and Transatlantic defense solutions.

## Solidarity as 'mutualization' of threats

The perception of security threats is the single most important point of departure on the path towards any security policy. Policy makers and defense planners need an accurate analysis of their strategic environment to make sensible decisions about security matters. In the European context, diverging or loosely aligned

<sup>1</sup> Juncker calls for an EU army. Politico, 9 March 2015, <https://www.politico.eu/article/juncker-calls-for-an-eu-army/>

<sup>2</sup> Von der Leyen: "Europe must learn the language of power". Deutsche Welle, 8 November 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/von-der-leyen-europe-must-learn-the-language-of-power/a-51172902>

<sup>3</sup> European Union (2016) Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. European Union Global Strategy. Brussels, 20.

<sup>4</sup> Dijkstra, H. (2014) Agenda-Setting in the Common Security and Defence Policy: An Institutionalist Perspective, *Cooperation and Conflict*, 47 (4), 454-472; Riddervold, M. (2016) (Not) in the hands of the member states: How the European Commission influences EU security and defence policies, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 54 (2), 353-69; Haroche, P. (2020) Supranationalism strikes back: a neofunctionalist account of the European Defence Fund, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27 (6), 853-872.

<sup>5</sup> Hofmann, S. (2013). *European Security in NATO's Shadow: Party Ideologies and Institution Building*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Pohl, B. (2014) *EU Foreign Policy and Crisis Management Operations: Power, Purpose and Domestic Politics*, Abingdon: Routledge.

<sup>6</sup> Howorth, J. (2012) Decision-Making in Security and Defense Policy: Towards Supranational Inter-Governmentalism?, *Cooperation and Conflict*, 47 (4), 433-453.

<sup>7</sup> Posen, B. (2006) European Union Security and Defense Policy: Response to Unipolarity?, *Security Studies*, 15 (2), 149-186; Hyde-Price, A. (2008) A 'Tragic Actor'? A Realist Perspective on 'Ethical Power Europe', *International Affairs*, 84 (1), 29-44; Rosato, S. (2011) Europe's Troubles: Power Politics and the State of the European Project, *International Security*, 35 (4), 45-86.

<sup>8</sup> Tardy, T. (2018) Does European defence really matter? Fortunes and misfortunes of the Common Security and Defence Policy, *European Security*, 27 (2), 119-137.

<sup>9</sup> Goldner Lang, I. (2018) The EU financial and migration crises: two crises – many facets of EU solidarity. In: A. Biondi, E. Dagilyte and E. Küçük, *Solidarity in EU Law: A Legal Principle in the Making*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 133-160.

<sup>10</sup> Ferreira-Pereira, L. and Groom, A.J.R. (2010) 'Mutual solidarity' within the EU common foreign and security policy: What is the name of the game?, *International Politics*, 47 (6), 596-616.

threat perceptions are viewed as a major obstacle towards the formulation of a common foreign and security policy, as well as Europe's ability to defend itself. By contrast, shared assessment of security threats can lead to more trust and solidarity among European countries paving the way to a common European strategic culture.

Multiple security crises at the EU's borders have brought Germany, France and Poland closer together in terms of their strategic outlook. There is greater overlap in how the three European partners assess their security environment today, as opposed to how they did so before Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the rise of the Islamic State. In the past, only three security concerns – international terrorism, weapons proliferation, failed states – were shared within the Weimar Triangle, whereas the range of shared assessments grew to include a total of nine security threats after 2014. A comparison of the current strategy documents<sup>11</sup> shows that Berlin, Paris and Warsaw are generally like-minded in their perception of non-traditional transnational threats – energy security, climate change, uncontrolled migration, hybrid and cyber threats – and conventional military threats associated with interstate conflicts.

At the same time, not all of the identified threats and risks are perceived with the same sense of urgency and priority among the Triangle members. French leaders unambiguously claim that 'jihadist terrorism is the most immediate and significant

threat'<sup>12</sup> to the country. This sentiment is largely shared by the French public.<sup>13</sup> In Germany, transnational terrorism also tops the strategic agenda, although the majority of the German public perceives climate change as the most important security challenge.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, Polish defense planners leave no doubt that Russia's 'aggressive policy' constitutes the existential security threat for Poland, and more than three quarters of the Polish people agree with that assessment.<sup>15</sup> It is true that Berlin and Paris have no illusions about the negative implications of the Kremlin's military assertiveness for European security, but their strategic documents carefully avoid classifying Russia as a security threat to the countries' fundamental interests.

It has become a commonplace to claim that Europeans are divided by geography in their threat perceptions. The established wisdom says that Eastern and Northern members of the EU look to the East (and 'see' Russia), while Western and Southern Europeans look to the South (and 'see' terrorism and migration).<sup>16</sup> Geography continues to play a role in determining what Europeans fear most, but the growing complexity and inter-connections among security threats increasingly render 'East vs South' a false dichotomy. In the last years, Russia has significantly increased its military footprint beyond the post-Soviet space to engulf the Southern Mediterranean, while the EU's Eastern periphery has been exposed to a growing pressure from non-state challenges and hybrid threats.<sup>17</sup> As the security landscape becomes more blurred, convergence of threat assessment among

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### Geography continues to play a role in determining what Europeans fear most, but the growing complexity and inter-connections among security threats increasingly render 'East vs South' a false dichotomy.

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<sup>11</sup> French Republic, Defence and National Security Strategic Review 2017, Paris; Ministry of National Defence, The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland, Warsaw, May 2017; The Federal Government, White Paper 2016 on German Security Policy and the Future of Bundeswehr, Berlin.

<sup>12</sup> French Republic, Defence and National Security Strategic Review 2017, Paris, p. 29.

<sup>13</sup> Transatlantic Trends 2020. Transatlantic opinion on global challenges before and after COVID-19, p. 16. <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/ressources/pdfs/publications/transatlantic-trends-2020.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Security Radar 2019. [https://www.fes-vienna.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/documents/Security\\_Radar\\_2019\\_Booklet.pdf](https://www.fes-vienna.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Security_Radar_2019_Booklet.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Wallace, W. (2017) European foreign policy since the Cold War: How ambitious, how inhibited?, The British Journal of Politics and International Relations, 19 (1), 77-90.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with a French official, 7 July 2021.

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### Germany's active stance in both contexts – as a framework nation for the NATO battalion in Lithuania and an active member of the anti-IS coalition of the willing – is emblematic for Europe's forward-looking strategic outlook.

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the three EU members opens the door to greater 'mutualization' of threats that is an understanding that in order to make progress on the European security agenda in the East, one needs to contribute to security provision in the South and vice versa.<sup>18</sup>

This renewed sense of collective interdependence among Europeans is more than just rhetoric. By sending a military contingent to the Baltic states as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in the region, France signalled that it 'has begun re-engaging with the countries of Northern and Eastern Europe'.<sup>19</sup> French military planners now underline the need to prepare its armed forces for a high intensity, state-to-state military conflict.<sup>20</sup> Breaking with the previous strategy, Poland has admitted the need to keep NATO's unstable southern neighbourhood high on its agenda 'to support Allies in various endeavours'.<sup>21</sup> Even though for Poland southern neighborhood often implies the Black Sea region, Warsaw did recently deploy troops and assets to military missions in Lebanon and off the coast of Libya.<sup>22</sup> Germany's active stance in both contexts – as a framework nation for the NATO battalion in Lithuania and an active member of the anti-IS coalition of the willing – is emblematic for Europe's forward-looking strategic outlook. In the current strategic environment, where a shared understanding of security threats is an indispensable element of trust and solidarity, there is no need to choose between threats coming from the East and threats emanating from the South.<sup>23</sup> Instead, Europeans need to be capable of addressing both, whether through the EU or NATO, otherwise there can be no common European defense worthy of its name.

#### Solidarity as a common sense of purpose

The notion of strategic autonomy has become an indispensable part of the EU's narrative of a stronger global actor. 'Effective strategic autonomy', 'smart strategic autonomy', 'open strategic autonomy' – the conceptual proliferation is now fully underway in EU discourse and documents stretching to cover policy areas well beyond security and defense. While this expansion is symptomatic for the EU's drive towards a more self-sufficient standing in a growing number of policy fields – from industry and trade to energy and health – the various adjectives actually reflect the absence of a joint understanding of what strategic autonomy means, as well as the lack of established boundaries of where it starts and where it ends.

The notion of strategic autonomy originated from the field of defense dating back to the launch of the European Security and Defense Policy in the end of the 1990s. Back then, the idea was tied to the area of crisis management where the EU was expected to launch a military mission in cases when the United States or NATO were unwilling or unable to provide support for such action. The 1998 British-French Declaration of Saint-Malo that kickstarted the nascent EU defense policy has referred to 'the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, [...], in order to respond to international crises'.<sup>24</sup> Strategic autonomy was also explicitly mentioned in the 2016 EU Global Strategy as the EU's 'ambition', while the Council of the EU later in same year defined it as 'capacity to act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible'.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Interview with a German official, 11 May 2021.

<sup>19</sup> French Republic, Defence and National Security Strategic Review 2017, Paris, p. 60.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with a French official, 31 August 2021; Armée de Terre, Strategic Vision of the Chief of the French Army: 2030 Operational Superiority, April 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Ministry of National Defence, The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland, Warsaw, May 2017, p. 28.

<sup>22</sup> Interviews with a Polish expert and an official, 20 August 2021 and 21 September 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Haroche, P. (2018) Retour sur l'échec de l' "armée européenne" (1950-1954) : quelles leçons pour demain?, Les Champs de Mars, 30 (1), 47-72.

<sup>24</sup> Saint Malo Declaration, 1998. [https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2008/3/31/f3cd16fb-fc37-4d52-936f-c8e9bc80f24f/publishable\\_en.pdf](https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2008/3/31/f3cd16fb-fc37-4d52-936f-c8e9bc80f24f/publishable_en.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> EU Global Strategy, 2016. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10715-2016-INIT/en/pdf>; Conclusions of the Council of the EU, November 2016. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/22459/eugs-conclusions-st14149en16.pdf>

It is acknowledged, also in Poland, that non-executive training missions, which have become something of a golden standard of late for EU operational engagement, are no longer sufficient for ensuring stability in the neighborhood.

Even though in the area of security and defense strategic autonomy seems to be an agreed purpose among EU member states, it is here that the concept remains most contested compared to other policy fields. As the substance of EU Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) expanded over the last two decades from crisis management to protection of the Union and external capacity building, the meaning of strategic autonomy has become less clear-cut. In a narrow sense, strategic autonomy implies developing material and institutional capabilities to better protect European interests and values. In a broad sense, strategic autonomy is about managing interdependence and reducing vulnerability to external influence. Maintaining a degree of ambiguity about the substance of strategic autonomy is not negative per se, as long as it helps EU member states to move forward on European defence agenda, but it does create additional space for frictions and misunderstandings.

To provide more clarity, EU member states started to work on a 'Strategic Compass', a new political military document to be adopted in 2022 during the French EU Presidency. The document intends to refine operational goals of EU security and defence policy based on a common analysis of threats and challenges. There is a broad understanding that Europe alone cannot defend itself against a conventional military attack from a peer adversary, therefore collective defense remains, at least for the time being, off-limits for the EU.<sup>26</sup> Yet, France and Germany – the main drivers of the Strategic Compass – agree on a need for a

more ambitious and credible EU role in crisis management and for the CSDP to be the major tool to generate stability in the EU neighbourhood. It is acknowledged, also in Poland, that non-executive training missions, which have become something of a golden standard of late for EU operational engagement, are no longer sufficient for ensuring stability in the neighborhood.<sup>27</sup> At the time when military power is the currency of many regional actors, the EU is expected to be capable of launching robust peace enforcement operations with a military component, similar to the French-led coalition effort in the Sahel.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, Paris and Berlin push for a greater EU role in securing access to the global commons, in particular through the increased maritime presence in the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Guinea. EU member states, including Poland, are also eager to explore the remits of the Lisbon Treaty's 'mutual assistance clause' (Article 42.7) by regularly simulating hybrid and cyber-attacks on their territories.<sup>29</sup> Finally, in 2017, EU member states launched permanent structured cooperation (PESCO), which has been widely perceived as a watershed moment for EU defense cooperation.<sup>30</sup> Together with the nearly €8 billion European Defense Fund (EDF), PESCO aims at enhancing joint development of EU defense capabilities, increasing investment in defense research and technology and improving the availability of deployable armed forces. At present, PESCO includes 60 collaborative projects, with more than twenty reaching operational capacity by 2025. While the precise meaning of EU

strategic autonomy remains disputed, these practical steps and aspirations speak for themselves. As one interviewee put it, 'strategic autonomy is what you make of it'.<sup>31</sup>

Yet, the EU faces difficulties in putting into effect even the moderated level of ambition. The EDF was significantly downsized from the original €13 billion envelope proposed by the European Commission, PESCO projects experience significant delays, while the European defense landscape continues to be plagued with capability shortfalls and national approaches to capability development.<sup>32</sup> In addition, diverging attitudes towards security and defense integration in the EU further exacerbate the problems. For France, for instance, it is clear that it wishes to preserve its own autonomy and flexibility by forging coalitions of member states outside of the EU rather than 'taking the risk' of acting through the CSDP.<sup>33</sup> Mindful of the CSDP's cumbersome decision-making, France launched the European Intervention Initiative that includes selected EU partners and non-EU countries, such as the UK and Norway.<sup>34</sup> This contrasts with Germany, which typically favours an inclusive approach with EU institutions and a broadest number of member states on board.<sup>35</sup> Polish position is somewhat close to that of France, but Warsaw's lack of enthusiasm in security and defense cooperation through the institutional channels in Brussels is better explained by a fear of losing national sovereignty and a general lack of confidence in the EU.<sup>36</sup>

#### Solidarity as shared external dependence

The Biden administration has pursued an extensive diplomatic engagement with Europe aiming at resetting the transatlantic alliance after the turbulent Trump years. During the Trump presidency, Europeans faced unpredictable and erratic Washington that snubbed the EU's new defense initiatives, exploited Europe's vulnerabilities and pursued bilateral deals with member states at the EU's collective expense. President Biden, by contrast, was quick to endorse the importance that the US traditionally attaches to strong and united European allies. The new administration, for instance, reversed the Trump's administration plan to with-

draw 12,000 US troops from Germany and instead committed to deploy 500 additional military personnel. At the same time, the US abrupt exit from Afghanistan and Washington's proactive efforts in forging new defense partnerships in Asia signal that the US primary focus lies squarely at China and the Indo-Pacific region. The US domestic politics will likely remain volatile casting a significant constraining effect on the US engagement abroad. Indeed, the notion of 'a foreign policy for the middle class',<sup>37</sup> introduced by Biden and his team, provides a glimpse of a future in which the US will exercise its power on the world stage judiciously and selectively, and Europe might not be on its top priority list.

In the context of a geopolitical power shift, the top concern for European and especially German policy-makers remains the need to re-commit the US to European security. The EU needs to amplify its own defense efforts, especially in regard to conflict resolution and crisis management in the Western Balkans, Southern Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa. A successful defense against Russia, however, is impossible without relying on the US' nuclear capabilities and NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements.<sup>38</sup> Europeans tend to neglect the nuclear dimension of strategic autonomy, but, as Thomas de Maizière put it, 'defense without nuclear deterrence is useless'.<sup>39</sup> While French President Macron has recently invited European partners to a strategic dialogue about the role of nuclear weapons in Europe, experts are skeptical about the likelihood of France extending its nuclear deterrent to the rest of Europe.<sup>40</sup> French officials themselves admit that the 'Europeanization' of the French nuclear forces – if it eventually unfolds – is a long-term project and, until then, Europe will remain dependent on the US nuclear capabilities.<sup>41</sup>

For France, therefore, the imperative of keeping Americans engaged in European security is just as relevant as for Germany: French-led counter-terrorist and stabilization efforts in the Sahel would not be feasible without the American provision of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities. Yet, French policy makers are more conscious about the likelihood of the

<sup>26</sup> Interviews with Heinrich Brauß, former assistant secretary general of NATO, and Erhard Bühler, former director general of the German Ministry of Defence.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with a German official, 11 May 2021; Interview with a French official, 30 August 2021; Interview with a Polish official, 21 September 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with a German official, 11 May 2021; Interview with a French official, 31 August 2021.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with a French official, 30 August 2021.

<sup>30</sup> Sven Biscop, 'European Defence: Give PESCO a Chance', *Survival*, vol. 60, no. 3, June-July 2018, pp. 161-180; Petar Petrov and Iulian Romanysyn, 'Capability development in Europe: how can the EU defense push benefit the transatlantic partnership?', *Atlantisch Perspektif*, vol. 44, no. 3, 2020, pp. 54-58.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with a French official, 20 July 2021.

<sup>32</sup> EU military projects face delays, leaked document shows, Politico, 12 July 2021, <https://www.politico.eu/article/leaked-document-shows-delays-in-eu-military-pact/>; European Defence Agency, Results of First Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, 20 November 2020.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with a French official, 7 July 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Pannier, A. and Schmitt, O. (2019) To fight another day: France between the fight against terrorism and future warfare, *International Affairs*, 95 (4), 897-916.9

<sup>35</sup> Bunde, T. (2021) Defending European integration by (symbolically) integrating European defence? Germany and its ambivalent role in European security and defence policy, *Journal of European Integration*, 43 (2), 245-261.

<sup>36</sup> Interviews with a Polish expert and an official, 2 September and 15 September 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Remarks by President Biden on America's Place in the World, 4 February 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/02/04/remarks-by-president-biden-on-americas-place-in-the-world>.

<sup>38</sup> Multiple interviews with German officials and experts, April-May 2021.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Thomas de Maizière, former German Minister of Defence.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with a German official, 9 April 2021.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with a French official, 12 August 2021.

US disengagement from the continent given the US long-term pivot towards Asia.<sup>42</sup> From a Polish perspective, maintaining the US' foothold in Europe is imperative, even when it comes at the expense of the relations with its European partners. But unlike German leaders, Polish policy-makers view the EU-NATO relationship in zero-sum terms, where a more strategically autonomous EU chips away from NATO. In addition, the US' presence in Europe is also instrumental in counter-balancing Franco-German power on the continent, especially after the UK's exit from the EU.<sup>43</sup>

#### **The way forward for the Euro-Atlantic security and defense**

The future of the transatlantic security and defense relations should be based on the assertion that there is no contradiction between Europe's capacity to act and Europe's be a good partner and ally. Both need to go hand in hand, just like both EU and NATO are necessary for the defense of Europe. In order to achieve EU strategic autonomy and uphold the transatlantic partnership at the same time, Europe needs to redefine its place in the relationship by making it more balanced and equal. Several practical steps would help to rebalance the transatlantic relations in security and defense.<sup>44</sup>

#### **Endorsing the goal of EU strategic autonomy.**

The Biden administration should avoid following the footsteps of previous administrations' erratic approach to European defence: simultaneously complaining that Europeans do not do enough and do too much. The US would be well-advised to

embrace PESCO and explicitly endorse the goal of European strategic autonomy. This would send a powerful message to sceptics within the EU, such as Poland, that a less dependent and more self-reliant Europe is not incompatible with NATO, but rather is a precondition for a revitalized transatlantic alliance. Today, senior members of the US defence establishment prudently acknowledge that America cannot protect itself or all of its interests entirely without the help of others.<sup>45</sup> US allies, Europe included, are a part of America's calculus in terms of its geopolitical competition with China and Russia. It is therefore in America's interest to have more capable European armed forces supported by a more consolidated European industrial base, even though this may imply a certain loss of export markets for US defence companies. The new US approach should be guided by a principled belief that Europeans doing less presents a higher risk than Europeans doing more.

#### **Strengthening the European pillar within NATO.**

Europeans should consider forward deployment of troops and equipment in the Baltic region on their own with the aim to eventually replace US conventional forces along the Eastern flank. Complementary to NATO efforts, boosting the conventional military presence (troops, battle tanks, armoured vehicles) of Europe on the Eastern flank would arguably be the most direct and effective demonstration of European defence solidarity. Similar steps should also follow in the Black Sea basin, where allies need a regular year-round naval presence in the form of a Black Sea maritime patrol mission, in addition to ongoing air policing. France, Germany and the UK, three countries with significant

**As the withdrawal from Afghanistan shows, the US is no longer willing to defend those who are not willing to defend themselves.**

interests in the region, can take a lead in assembling a multinational European naval force that together with a limited American and Canadian contribution would support Romania and other NATO littoral states and partners in training, exercising and capacity building at sea. In addition, France should consider taking over Canada's role as a framework nation for NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Latvia. France's upgraded profile, as for the only continental nuclear power, would send a strong message of reassurance to the Eastern allies, foremost Poland, and would signal to Kremlin that Paris is serious about allied deterrence posture.

#### **Improving EU defense actorness.**

Poland and other Eastern flank nations should fully commit to the development of the EU Strategic Compass, especially its crisis management and resilience baskets. Improving the EU's ability to launch and sustain

military operations with executive mandates and without US involvement is essential. Central and Eastern European countries need to show a constructive stance with regard to the need to activate Article 44 of the Lisbon Treaty which allows a group of member states to decide – possibly with a vote – and undertake a military mission on behalf of the EU. Greater EU role in stabilizing its Southern neighbourhood would bode well with NATO, for which projecting stability in the South has been a lower priority since 2014. Just as boosting European conventional capabilities at the Eastern flank, taking over crisis management tasks in the Southern Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa – regions of little strategic value for American interests – is likely to be welcomed in Washington as an active measure of transatlantic burden-sharing. As the withdrawal from Afghanistan shows, the US is no longer willing to defend those who are not willing to defend themselves.

**In order to achieve EU strategic autonomy and uphold the transatlantic partnership at the same time, Europe needs to redefine its place in the relationship by making it more balanced and equal.**

<sup>42</sup> Multiple interviews with French officials and experts, June-August 2021.

<sup>43</sup> Multiple interviews with Polish officials and experts, July-September 2021.

<sup>44</sup> Romanyshyn, I. (2021) Breaking the Law of Opposite Effects: Europe's Strategic Autonomy and the Revived Transatlantic Partnership, Egmont Security Policy Brief, no. 140, March.

<sup>45</sup> Schake, K., Mattis, J., Ellis and Felter, J. (2020) Defense in Depth: Why U.S. Security Depends on Alliances – Now More Than Ever, Foreign Affairs, 23 November.



# Is Africa Europe's future?

Prof. Driss Guerraoui  
President of Open University of Dakhla, Kingdom of Morocco



The acute and unprecedented crisis, caused by the outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic, has uncovered many facts for scientists, politicians, UN agencies and citizens all over the world. These include vulnerable human conditions, a complex understanding of new generations of crises, precarious global security, and consequently restricted chances of existence.

Discussing Africa as the future of Europe and vice versa raises a core issue: can we currently shape the future of both continents, and act for their common future and destiny in an uncertain world, such as the one generated by the acute crisis?

The change has affected all the essential demographic, socio-economic, political, cultural, military, security and geostrategic dimensions of African and European communities. It also affects values, social cohesion and coexistence within cultural and civilizational contexts in search for the reasons of surviving. We therefore have to rethink our vision and our governance of all development issues via a radical change of the paradigm.

There are five reasons that account for the imperative construction of a common destiny between Africa and Europe, including:

## 1. The new global strategy

As part of the global geostrategy of the 21st century, it is true to stress that the nations, which involved themselves in the dynamic movements led by large regional groups, determine the future chances of development. Indeed, if no country or zone can manage to do it by itself, then their affiliation to a large co-development zone will enable them to gain many benefits such as acceding a larger market, guaranteeing a global security, benefiting from a collective defense, and achieving economies of scale in many areas that require significant human and financial resources. It will also enable them to strengthen their presence all over the world, consolidate their international influence, and increase their bargaining, negotiation and advocacy power as well as join a common cultural and civilizational space to ensure a community of destiny in an uncertain world.

Aware of the challenges of this dynamic macro-regional integration, some countries and regions have gone much further. The latter signed, on November 2020, the Global Regional Economic Partnership, which brings together the countries of the large Asia-Pacific zone ranging from China to Australia and New Zealand via India, Japan and South Korea. All these nations make up a third of the world's population and the wealth produced throughout the world.

**If no country or zone can manage to do it by itself, then their affiliation to a large co-development zone will enable them to gain many benefits such as acceding a larger market, guaranteeing a global security, benefiting from a collective defense, and achieving economies of scale in many areas that require significant human and financial resources.**

Africa, whose population will already reach 2,478 billion inhabitants by 2050 prospectively, comprises 54 states with an area of 30 221 532 km<sup>2</sup>, that is, 20,1% of the world's land area. This will make the continent one of the most important consumer markets worldwide and the new hotbed of future global growth.

The common history, the geographical close borders, the prerequisites of the major transformation of economic models, the requirements of solidarity, stability, security, the controlled management of people's movements, and the coordination to fight radical ideologies, terrorism and the crime economy foreshadow a common destiny for Africa and Europe. Such major considerations, dictated by the new global strategy, encourage both continent to start establishing ties that go beyond the current traditional forms of partnership, and shape their future common destiny.

## 2. The demographic order and the future realities of migratory movements

By 2050, the world population is expected to reach around 9.6 billion inhabitants, compared to 7.3 billion inhabitants in 2015. It will continue to grow to reach 11.2 billion inhabitants by 2100. Africa will assume a significant role in this new geographical transformation of the world population. In fact, the population of this continent, estimated at 1,186 billion inhabitants in 2015, that is 16% of the world population, will increase by 39, 1% worldwide, with 4.386 billion inhabitants in 2100. Put it differently, out of four new births worldwide, three will be African by 2100.

In contrast, Europe's population will drop by 646 million inhabitants by 2100 compared to 738 million inhabitants in 2010, which is equivalent to less than the total population of Nigeria, which will be estimated, at that time, at 752 million inhabitants compared to 182 million in 2015.

In fact, forecasts show, in this context, that active population (in Europe) will not exceed 242 million inhabitants by 2050, that is, 90 million less than today. Consequently, it will need 30 million immigrants within thirty years to balance the share of the active and non-active populations. Such situation will definitely influence the future realities of migratory movement towards Europe. Given all these trends, it is no surprise that the rate of migratory movement towards Europe will certainly be significant. It will take new forms and will have real impacts on the geo-economic, geo-political and geo-strategic relations between Europe and the rest of the world.

## 3. The comparative economic benefits and natural resources of Africa

Africa, whose population will already reach 2,478 billion inhabitants by 2050 prospectively, comprises 54 states with an area of 30 221 532 km<sup>2</sup>, that is, 20,1% of the world's land area. This will make the continent one of the most important consumer markets worldwide and the new hotbed of future global growth.

Despite these potentialities, Africa continues recording the lowest share in world trade, estimated at around 2%. It only benefits from 3 to 5% of foreign direct investment flows, and only counts for 5% in world GDP.

This state of affairs has led to the development of an incomplete and non-endogenous continent, which internationally positions it in a place that is far from being able to measure its demographic weight, potentials in terms of natural, mining and energetic resources, and intangible heritage as well as its invaluable contribution to human civilisation.

#### 4. The shared challenges of climatic, energetic and digital transition

The comparative natural and economic benefits mean that Africa can and should constitute the true geo-economic and geo-strategic future of Europe and vice versa, namely in light of the shared challenges of climatic, energetic and digital transition. Both Africa and Europe face major challenges pertaining to climatic, energetic and digital transformation, which are central to the strategic choices of African and European communities to build a new generation of development models.

**As far as the climate challenge is concerned**, the World Organization for Migration believes that there would be around 200 million climatic migrants all over the world by 2050. By this time, 45 out of 100 people will leave their homelands because of climate change impacts. Currently, if six African countries are among the ten nations that are most affected by climate change, then 65% of African population are affected by its changes. Africa already has more than 10 million climate refugees.

In addition, more than 500 million hectares of land in Africa have disappeared because of climate change, thus exacerbating desertification and consequently food insecurity. What makes it worse is that 30% of the continent's coast infrastructure will be submerged unless actions are not taken by 2050.

**In terms of energetic transition**, it should first be noted that the structure of global energy production, according to the International Energy Agency, indicates the continued dependence of our 21st century communities and economies of fossil fuels. The common challenge that Africa and Europe need to take up,

at this level, lies in the development of a concerted strategy to prepare for their energy future based on the urgent achievement of technological and managerial shortcuts in terms of energy transition.

**As for the digital transition**, the digital revolution is producing new kind of gaps and injustice that are caused by the emergence and development of a growing phenomenon in society, referred to as "digital illiteracy". The latter has worsened inequalities in the use of Information and Communication Technologies by different regions worldwide.

The most direct consequences of digital inequalities lie in the prevention of the entire African population from access to a wide range of services provided by digital technologies. Everything now evolves in the economies and societies of the 21st century in such a way that access to this new-generation and fundamental human right depends now on citizens' ability to incorporate digital tools in their socio-economic and cultural life.

#### 5. The challenges of managing new generation of crises and wars

Exploring the development of international relations show that the world is about to undergo a new generation of crises and wars. Africa and Europe will prospectively face new common threats in the future, imbued with real conditions of destabilization and instability of regional security.

All these phenomena may happen against the backdrop of an unpredicted development of extreme forms of radicalism in Africa, fueled by growing religious fundamentalism occurring

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Both Africa and Europe face major challenges pertaining to climatic, energetic and digital transformation, which are central to the strategic choices of African and European communities to build a new generation of development models.

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Given data above, the future relations between Africa and Europe should be based on common pillars that will enable them to develop together a new, bolder and more ambitious partnership that responds better to the realities of global geo-strategy and meets the challenges of current risks.

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not only among the neediest, but also among the whole population.

Given data above, the future relations between Africa and Europe should be based on common pillars that will enable them to develop together a new, bolder and more ambitious partnership that responds better to the realities of global geo-strategy and meets the challenges of current risks.

**These pillars can be fourfold:**

- **Developing a new coordinated and shared vision that focuses on the co-construction of a new generation of regional integration**, which aims at creating a Greater Europe-Africa zone, whose guiding principle could be "less than union and more than free trade". In this respect, Europe and Africa have to draw up a new generation of co-development, co-contracting and co-localization, which would stimulate the creation of common platforms for production, sharing and innovation. These platforms could benefit from the comparative, competitive and strategic advantages of different countries and sub-regions of the Euro-African space.

- **Mobilizing Euro-African intelligence and ingenuity of States, territorial groups**, scientific elites, businesses, operators and vital sparks of civil societies in both continents to win together the impressive battle of the great future transitions. These are concerned with the huge, climatic, energetic, water,

digital, economic and societal challenges of these transitions. This mobilization is dictated both by the necessary African and European contribution to meet the objectives set by the UN global agendas, and the pressing need to change 20th century development models, which sentenced societies and economies in both continents to a real deadlock.

- **Joining voluntarily, responsibly and unitively the African Migration Strategy**, as set out by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted by the UN Intergovernmental Conference on the Global Compact for Migration, held in December 2018 in Marrakech. This commitment requires that Europe should join Africa's effort to develop in-depth knowledge of future realities of migratory movements in the Greater Europe-Africa-Arab World Zone, and draw up a concerted, controlled and united strategy to tackle migration issues. The latter should be driven by a strong commitment to a real co-development policy.

- **Finally, helping the new African and European generations get ready for this possible common future through education, culture and review of common history**. This societal dimension raises the core issue of the common base of values that peoples and citizens of this Zone shall share. It also questions the choices of societies, the nature of development and democracy models that the World must promote, share and defend, in particular, in the Greater Africa-Europe Zone.



# Insights: Research Year 2020/21

Karlspreis Europa Forum, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021  
Towards New Economic Growth



“Currently, we do not know how many and what kind of crises the current situation will bring about. In recent months, we have seen a rapid deterioration in many areas, including the energy crisis, the continuous pressures on our health systems, the accumulation of debt, the bursting of the housing bubble in China - although we cannot yet assess their impact on Europe. Yet, they all suggest that we are in the midst of a new situation, for which we can only calculate prospective countermeasures.

So, our recovery should be: green, digital, social, and secure – secure, with regard to energy and resources, to security and defence, and in terms of securing investment and the provision of financial resources for recovery.”

**Dalia Grybauskaitė,**  
Charlemagne Prize Laureate 2013



“If we don't realize that we need to build Europe's future in a bottom-up approach, involving citizens in the Europe of tomorrow and giving them the chance to feel part of the decision-making process of the EU, we will fail – not only the recovery – but the Union, as today it needs to show more than ever that it can connect with citizens. And the regions and cities are the actors who can play this role through the work they do and by including voices of concern of citizens in the discussion on either the recovery or the future of Europe.”

**Apostolos Tzitzikostas,**  
President of the European Committee of the Regions

## Towards More Sustainability - The European Green Deal



“The beauty of the Green Deal lies in the fact that it builds on Europe's strengths [...]. In Europe we have a political determination and the democratic support to do our part for the climate and environment. No other global economic power has committed to cutting its net emissions as quickly and as extensively as Europe, and no other global economic power has the same degree of regress to environmental protections. We also have the financial power and we're using it.”

**Kris Peeters, Vice-President  
of the European Investment Bank**



“We need a social transformation that is not monothematic, that does not only rely on innovation and technology, but that also considers social and cultural dimensions. I believe it is important that we not only prepare for the future in depoliticising ourselves through certain goals that prevail in the debate, but that the principle of sustainability and the climate challenges must be approached in a completely new way.”

**Diana Kinnert,**  
Entrepreneur and Publicist



Charlemagne Prize Award Ceremony to President Klaus Iohannis in 2021

## Digital events during the research year



12<sup>th</sup> April: An Economy that Works for the People: Beyond Brexit & Covid-19!

Organised by the DCU Brexit Institute



17<sup>th</sup> June: A digital Europe fit for all!

Organised by Brightlands Institute for Smart Society (BISS) & RELAY



13<sup>th</sup> July: The Weimar Triangle at 30 Prospects for Cooperation among France, Germany and Poland in foreign, security and defense policy.

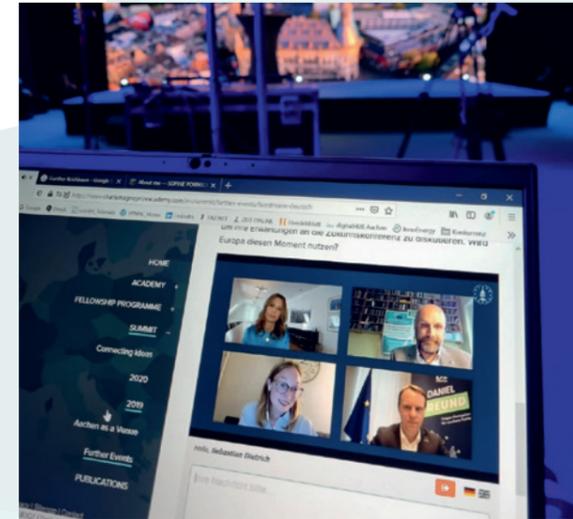
Organised by the Center for Advanced Security, Strategic and Integration Studies, University Bonn



23<sup>th</sup> June: Mein Europa - Romania

Organised by Europe Direct Aachen and partners

## 6<sup>th</sup> Mai: Seize the Moment! What to expect from the Conference on the Future of Europe?



“Imagine what Robert Schuman, who received the Charlemagne Prize in 1958, might say about today's European Union and the impact his vision had on our everyday lives. Today, it is not politicians alone who are shaping the future. From Cyprus to Portugal, from Finland to Spain to Aachen, through the Conference on the future of Europe, Europeans everywhere are deliberating and engaging with each other and decision-makers to shape the European Union they want. [...] Democracy itself is not static and constantly evolves. Politicians and decision-makers must evolve along with it. We all must make our democracy fit for the future.”

Dubravka Šuica,  
Vice-President of the European Commission

“Illiberal democracy of returning threats and populist temptations, chauvinism and the nationalist backlash are threatening the European way of life and hence its future. Therefore, the Conference on the Future of Europe must be more than a mere consultative exercise with no tangible results. It's about time for decisions that strengthen the European way of life. Europe's citizens need to regain trust in the European method and its institutions or otherwise they're doomed to witness the slow but steady decay of the order established after WWII.”

Christian Moos, Member of the European Social and Economic Committee

“Where there is no common course of action and solutions – where integration has stalled in the past – that is where crises have developed. The Conference on the Future of Europe could serve as a new step towards further integration.”

Daniel Freund,  
Member of the European Parliament

Have a look at the discussions again:



# Insights: Karlspreis Europa Summit 2021



"Throughout crises and uncertainties, we are too often busy reacting instead of acting. A crisis is never an orderly event.

It is, therefore, all the more important that we focus on scenario analysis and scenario planning ahead of a crisis so as to mitigate the effects of a crisis."

"The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. The growth in support for various kinds of populist and illiberal parties and movements in Europe is a reason to be concerned about our liberal democracies. We must resolutely defend the European Union as a community of values. In this regard, the Karlspreis Europa Summit is an important platform for interdisciplinary, cross-generational and cross-border exchange. The Charlemagne Prize Fellows bring creative ideas to the table."

**Dr. Stephan Holthoff-Pförtner, Minister for Federal, European and International Affairs of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia**



## The Return of Great Power Politics and the Role of the European Union



"I think that in five to ten years' time we'll see the EU and the UK come closer and run further part on security cooperation. I think inevitably – sadly – the pain of the process of leading the ideological commitment to the Brexit course that was necessary to drive the process through after a 40 year membership, means that the political dynamics now are such that its almost impossible for the UK to reach out and take what people think of as the traditional British pragmatic approach to its relationships with the EU, which should include the security dimension, as there's no issue on why the UK government should disagree on foreign politics."

**Robin Niblett, Director and Chief Executive of Chatham House**

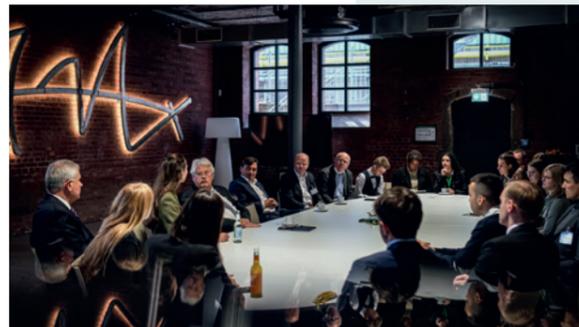
"Based on my political experience, I can say that if you have a political goal, you can reach this goal if you want to reach it, and I think that Europeans now need a very strong political will to build a European defense by strengthening the sovereignty of the European Union, remaining close to our partners."

**Hans-Gert Pöttering, Former President of the European Parliament**

"The tough part of politics, is to create a new agenda [...]. Talking about strategic autonomy will not create a new agenda. The EU needs one that comprises the responsibility of the next generation to think laterally, to think in a way that may look quizzical but may produce a way more ambiguous Europe."

**Anne Deighton, Emeritus Professor of European International Politics and Fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford**

## Europe's Digital Sovereignty



"I see a strong need for finding our own European approach to digitalization, using global technology, but within a construct of rules and regulations that mirror the values we're based on. This applies to individuals, companies and state institutions, and we should come up with a very clear understanding of what this digital European set-up should look like."

**Christoph Schmallenbach,**  
Board Member of Generali Deutschland

"Europe's governance of emerging technologies lies at the core of strengthening its strategic non-dependence in the years to come. This will not be easy, given the rising geopolitical tensions between the US and China. Long-term planning and investments in the indigenous technology industrial base, or in material and immaterial infrastructure, such as safe data clouds, will be key to reach that goal. However, preserving the openness of the international liberal trade order for enabling, among others, access to key raw materials, will require a balancing act with regard to export control of critical technologies, particularly of those with a "dual-use" (civil and military) application, such as Artificial Intelligence, in order to mitigate the risk of their weaponization."

**Georgios Kolliarakis, Advisor for Research,  
Technology Security Defence at the German Council  
on Foreign Relations (DGAP), Berlin**

## „Fit for 55” - An Equitable Path towards Climate Neutrality?

"We need to set our economy on a new path, and this has already started with the announcement of the Green Deal, which has led to a massive rethink in the economy and in companies. Business areas that are based on fossil fuels are being questioned and attempts are being made to identify alternatives. Of course, there are new challenges of a technical nature, as old goals will no longer be achieved with the original measures - so we are at the beginning of a transformation that will permeate practically all sectors of the economy."

**Veronika Grimm, Professor of Economics,  
University of Erlangen-Nuremberg & Director  
of the Energy Campus Nuremberg (EnCN)**

"The EU has further tightened the targets for reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. This decision is not conditioned on the behaviour of other world regions. It thus creates new geopolitical and industrial policy risks. Consequently, so-called carbon border adjustment mechanisms are being discussed, which, however, pose a variety of challenges. Internally, the Fit for 55 package proposed by the EU Commission would impose significant regulatory interventions across economic sectors. At the same time, the member states, including the Federal Republic of Germany, retain a great deal of leeway in shaping energy policy at the national level. Conflicts, therefore, seem inevitable, for example regarding the taxonomy. The political pressure from the currently high energy prices will certainly not simplify these negotiation processes. Against this background, it is foreseeable that potential economic synergies between the member states will continue to be only partially leveraged."

**Prof. Dr. Marc Oliver Bettzüge, University of Cologne & Director of the Institute of Energy Economics (EWI)**



# New Fellows 2021/2022



Vincent-Immanuel Herr & Martin Speer (GER), Berlin-based activists & authors

How to make European democracy and institutions stronger, more inclusive and resilient in a world of transformation?



Dr. Max Jacobs (GER), Fellow of the Weatherhead Scholars Program at Harvard University

How to use framing methods to protect our environmental resources?



Miriam Mona Mukalazi (GER), Researcher at the University of Stirling

Mind the Gap: How does the EU Gender Action Plan embrace diversity and intersectionality?



Nadina Iacob & Dr. Alexandra Campmas (RO/FR), Associate Research Fellows at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Brussels

Seizing opportunities, mitigating risks: How can the digital euro foster a resilient and innovative future for the EU?



Justinas Lingevičius (LT), PhD Candidate at Vilnius University

How is the EU shaping its AI governance for global competition?

# Outlook for 2022

Prof. Dr. Thomas Prefi, Chairman of the Charlemagne Prize Foundation



The results and statements in this year's report are to be placed in the decisive context of the global pandemic, which has also clearly shifted priorities, habits, working methods and focal points in the research year 2020/2021. It was already possible to foresee specific challenges last year, but uncertainty about the extent and the coming months still dominated.

At this point in time, the world has become accustomed to a certain degree of unpredictability, some steps have already been restarted, others have to be scaled back as incidences increase again. And while new challenges have moved into the focus of public discourse, issues that had been side-lined for a while are coming to the fore again. For example, the worsening situation at the EU's external borders, intra-European differences over joint action in the context of the rule of law and common, democratic and cosmopolitan values that seem to divide the middle of the EU, and public uncertainty about rising prices, rising inflation rates and the impact of measures to combat climate change also hovers over the public mood.

Although this is countered by various policy programmes, subsidies and initiatives, a complete mitigation of the current hurdles seems unlikely. Europe must therefore position itself well prepared even in difficult times in order to remain competitive and significant, focusing not only on the current issues but on those of tomorrow.

In this report, we have focused on different approaches to deepen European solidarity, where the incisions of the pandemic may serve as crossroads from which moving

forward together seems inevitable. We have addressed internal efforts for greater cohesion, but also Europe's responsibility beyond its own borders, be it with regard to the migration issue, its own sovereignty in the area of digitalisation or foreign and security policy, but also the more effective design of European trade routes - all aspects that have come to the fore in the wake of the crisis.

Therefore, we dared to take a look at how to invest in solidarity mechanisms which, as a lesson of the current crisis, could also ensure a more resilient Europe post-Covid, by looking at the EU's current aspirations and by shifting the focus from solidarity aspects created on a national level towards a more European perspective, pictured to benefit all.

In order to be inclusive, political and economic progress in the EU should also take into account some aspects of implementation. Especially within technological and digital change, this needs to be considered aside from the economic and competitive benefits and must go hand in hand with its perception as an opportunity to strengthen and consolidate common European values and cohesion. In this context, we have looked at the use of data and data infrastructure in the EU, with the premise that the things we are shaping now will in turn shape us in the future.

This applies equally to decisions that reach beyond the EU's external borders. While the struggle to establish a regulated system of migration still remains a crucial challenge for the EU, border traffic and future migration movements are part of the sheer reality for countless people. As a snapshot and in the wake of different crises, it was therefore important for us to demonstrate how borders are perceived in different popula-

tion groups and what influences can be deduced from this for solidarity in Europe.

The theme of solidarity is thus reflected in a wide variety of (future) issues, as well as in the context of international dependencies that have become apparent through COVID-19-related lockdowns, and at the economic level. We still face supply bottlenecks and trade uncertainties, whereby shorter supply chains and intra-European support could be a possible way to respond more robustly to future crises.

At the same time, the question also arises as to how Europe wants to position itself in the future in view of the shifting geopolitical tides. Although the election of a new US government last year has improved transatlantic relations, the question of trust and cohesion - both internally and externally - remains at stake in the context of EU security policy and simultaneously on the global stage.

So, while this year we have put forward proposals for stronger cohesion in a wide variety of sectors and broad context to illustrate the benefits of European unity, next year we will be examining how Europe may continue to succeed sustainably in the transformation processes that lie ahead.

This again includes the consideration of structural transformations within the EU, possibly triggered by the results of the Conference on the Future of Europe, but also by far-reaching demands for more effective and parity-based institutions and agendas, questions regarding AI-governance or in the perspective of a digital European currency, as well as the framing of our natural capital in the envisioned climate policies.

Even though these topics merely cover a fraction of the range of future European issues, they offer a glimpse of what lies beyond current matters of the status quo. While for a long time Europe's urge for innovations and changes had rather been inhibited by steady economic growth and successful integration, it has increased enormously with sequences of so far unforeseeable crises and challenges. There is however a sense of optimism that must now be utilised to prepare Europe for the times ahead. This optimism has even more enhanced since the European Commission has announced the European Year of Youth for 2022. We are delighted and hopeful that the new Charlemagne Prize Academy research projects of our young scholars throughout Europe, will serve as fruitful ideas and valuable contributions in the process of forming Europe's future.

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# Outlook from the Academy's Advisory Committee

"Europe's biggest challenge in the 21st century is to ensure a good life and prosperity for all while respecting the ecological limits of the planet. To succeed in this effort, the EU must ensure equal opportunities and equity within while establishing itself as a strong global leader in demonstrating how long-term sustainability and upholding human rights go hand in hand with an economic model delivering wellbeing. Our strength must be based on a healthy and consolidated European democracy. The Charlemagne Prize Academy encourages and supports young researchers based in Europe to explore questions around these key challenges for the future of the Union and makes an important contribution in linking academic innovation to political practices."

**Patrizia Heidegger, Director of Global Policies and Sustainability, European Environmental Bureau**



"If the EU is to successfully meet the great challenges of our time, it must reposition itself and fundamentally reform the way it functions. The conference on the future of Europe offers the opportunity to do so. The citizens' dialogue taking place within the framework of this conference gets the discussion moving. Now it is important to bundle the ideas and suggestions into clear objectives and develop strategies of action from these. These must be implemented purposefully and consistently. The future viability of the EU depends on it."

**Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the Parliament of the German-speaking Community of Belgium**



"The most important internal challenge for the EU in the next decade will be to better integrate the perspectives of all EU member states while at the same time upholding its own values. This includes defending European values and the rule of law even more fiercely than it has been the case so far. Externally, the EU will have to deal with a changing world order in which the US is increasingly pivoting towards Asia with a rising role of China both as an economic partner and adversary. Despite its internal challenges, the EU will have to strengthen its foreign policy and increase its sovereignty. The accession of the Western Balkan countries could be a crucial test for this."

**Dr. Katrin Böttger, Director, Institut für Europäische Politik e.V.**



"Like other parts of the world, Europe is subject to profound change. Especially the developments in the areas of digitization and automation as well as the pursuit of sustainability pose great challenges to our society and economy. Therefore, it is imperative to develop innovative ideas and future-proof solutions as well as to reconcile economic, ecological and social interests. To this end, it will largely depend on scientific progress, for which the success of European research collaborations will also play a decisive role."

**Isabel Pfeiffer-Poensgen, Minister for Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia**

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## Initiators:

The idea of establishing the Charlemagne Prize Academy has been provided by Dr. Jürgen Linden, Chairman of the Charlemagne Prize Board of Directors and Prof. Dr. Thomas Prefi, Chairman of the Charlemagne Prize Foundation, comprising the vision of supporting an outlook into the future of Europe with young, scientific eyes. The Academy's operative office is located at the Charlemagne Prize Foundation in Aachen, while the goals are set to expand the network of the Fellow's working locations throughout Europe in the coming years.

**Report Team:** Christine Dietrich (Project Management Academy), Miriam Elze (Layout & Graphic Design)

## Disclaimer:

This report includes the research findings of the projects implemented by independent researchers in course of a one-year Charlemagne Prize Fellowship, contributions of partners and supporters, as well as extracts from the Karlspreis Europa Summit, which took place 30 September 2021. The aim of this report is to illustrate possible challenges for Europe's future, as well as current proposals and approaches to solving them. The contents are based exclusively on the authors' thoughts, corresponding to the circumstances between October 2020 and November 2021, and have been formulated for public discussion on the relevant issues. We consequently do not endorse aspect of analysis in this report.

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