

European Federalists' Manifesto for the European Parliament election

For a Federal Europe: Sovereign, Democratic and Social

We want a Europe that does justice to its promises and to its past achievements by moving forward at this seminal moment. A Europe that masters the courage to break the political deadlock and to overcome the political drag of egoisms and nationalism. A Europe that allows member states to integrate at their pace, to lead rather than wait, or to sit out rather than block. A Europe which says No to national vetoes and Yes to freedom of choice of each people and state. A Europe that gives itself the means required to live up to its peoples' expectations.

More than six decades from its foundation, the European Union remains a paramount ambition of peace and welfare, based on liberal democracy, human rights, solidarity and the rule of law. It remains the product of a bitter past and the promise of a better future. A promise that must hold true for future generations, too. In a Europe adrift, we need to break the cycle of crises and tinkered responses. We need a wind of change that guides a stalling Europe to new horizons. And we need to react, because that ambition of liberal democracy and solidarity is challenged from outside and from inside our Union. And the new challenges and the new divisions shake our common project at its basis and call upon us to take new and bold initiatives.

The challenge. The European Union today finds itself in an unprecedented crisis situation. Out of an openly illiberal political agenda, growing nationalist and anti-democratic forces strive to undermine and to dismantle the structures created over decades of European unification and to return to the delusion of national sovereignty. External powers are actively committed and working to weaken European cohesion to sow division and discontent in our societies and governing bodies.

The opportunity. Democratic politics must now acknowledge, confront and live up to this existential challenge. If the European Union was and still is a guarantee for its citizens' peace and welfare, its competences and structures remain incomplete and put into question its long-term viability. The next European elections must therefore become the moment to win back citizens' hearts and minds, by heralding the political project of a sovereign, united and democratic Europe.

The response. Time is ripe for a European refoundation. For strong powers to develop the policies necessary to meet citizens' needs: to provide Europeans with new protections, new securities and new opportunities. Strong powers to make the European institutions democratically more legitimate, more autonomous and more effective in its fields of competences. All political forces committed to the founders' ideals should form a 'coalition of the willing' and take a next step towards a Federal Europe. A Federal Europe means a strong, united, democratic and social Europe, that delivers and lives up to its citizens' expectations of a better future. A Federal Europe is a Europe tailor-made to the hopes, the fears and the needs of its citizens.

A Europe which respects national identities and cultural diversity but that has the powers and instruments necessary to defend and promote our interests and our values in an unstable world.

A Federal Europe is a Europe which:

- commits to new and more effective policies to defend and promote rule of law and human rights
- develops a more effective, democratic and transparent governance of the Eurozone
- implements a coherent and effective immigration and asylum policy
- fights against social inequalities and promotes new social and youth initiatives
- leads globally in the fight against climate change and promoting sustainability
- promotes a real common foreign and security policy in key areas and issues
- provides itself with financial means proportional to its ambitions and duties
- decides in a more effective, simple and democratic way

The next step. In the next European Parliament, pro-European forces must commit to this new agenda for a European refoundation. They must also prepare to trigger the process of reforming the European Union treaties. If not all member states prove ready to take the qualitative step towards a federal union, those who are should pave the way for a new treaty providing different levels of integration inside the EU, under clear conditions and while upholding the European Union's current framework, avoiding a 'Europe à la carte' and always remaining open for others to join. A Europe of free and democratic choice for peoples and states.

The UEF calls on all political forces who recognise the necessity to act and who share the vision of moving to a Federal union to include these guiding principles into their political programmes.

PROPOSALS FOR THE EUROPEAN REFOUNDATION

We ask a strong commitment by the members of the newly elected European Parliament to support these proposals and engage on a swift reform on the European Union treaties.

1. Completing the Economic Monetary Union

The Eurozone celebrates 20 years of existence. While its markets integrate, the predicted convergence of our economies fails to materialise. The Eurozone must become more resilient and democratic. We ask for:

- the completion of the Banking Union to ensure financial stability, including a European Deposit Insurance Scheme and a democratically-governed European Monetary Fund;
- a Eurozone budget, run by a Eurozone Treasury, financed by genuine own resources and large enough to contribute to macroeconomic stabilisation;
- the introduction of stabilisation and solidarity tools, such as a European Unemployment Reinsurance Scheme;
- effective rules avoiding overspending in boom times, while at the same time introducing solidarity tools;
- a strong executive role for the Commission and full co-decisional power for the European Parliament also on the definition of such a Eurozone budget and its funding;
- after a decade of mostly ad hoc improvements, the Eurozone urgently needs new tools to contribute to its macro-economic stabilisation, convergence and solidarity. The Eurozone needs to become the core of a strong, united, democratic and social Europe able to act as a global economic power on the international stage.

2. Implementing a coherent European immigration and asylum policy

Continued discord on immigration policies along with their ineffective and unfair implementation question Europe's ability to manage the migration flows at its doorstep, but even more so its ability to honour its shared values and international obligations. We advocate a European immigration and asylum policy based on solidarity, fair sharing of responsibility and respect for human rights and ask for:

- the replacement of the Dublin regulation with a fair European Asylum System along with the creation of a European refugee status and a European Humanitarian Visa;
- the establishment of legal ways for economic migration and the development of effective integration policies;
- the reform of the European Union Visa policy in order to ensure effective reciprocity and facilitate legal movements of people;
- the development of a strong common European migration policy promoting global solutions on migration, focusing on pathways for regular migration and shared responsibility, ensuring the respect for human rights and shared responsibilities;
- a European border management authority set up to manage the European Union's external borders effectively;
- a European return policy in accordance with human rights obligations and accompanied by concrete reintegration measures;
- adequate European resources to fund the above instruments.

Since immigration remains a cause of major concern to citizens in all member states, Europe will emerge stronger through a common response.

3. Establishing a resilient European foreign and security policy.

Foreign and security affairs remain intergovernmental policy areas, in which government representatives and heads of state decide collectively and individually retain a veto right on every matter. Considering Europe's fading alliances and the world's multiplying threats, this must change. We advocate a resilient foreign and security policy and ask for:

- a European Union that takes the steps necessary to lead the recently established permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) towards a European Defence and Security Union;
- a European Union that promotes its values in today's globalised world, that further develops its role in civilian conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict stabilisation, letting the Commission take over responsibilities to engage in civil protection, rescue and aid in cases of international natural disasters;
- common procurement and research investment for defence products and equipment to foster the convergence and competitiveness of the technological and industrial base of European defense industry;
- a democratic and transparent system in the Common Security and Defence Policy decision-making by introducing majority voting, by nominating a Commissioner for Defence and Security and by allowing the Parliament to co-legislate on all aspects of security and defence policy on an equal footing with a Council of Defence ministers (chaired by the High Representative) on proposals made by the European Commission.

Moving from the current intergovernmental system to a self-reliant European Defence and Security Union, Europe will find a common voice to stem the tide of powerlessness, inaction, isolation and instability.

4. Funding a European budget through European resources.

The European budget entirely depends on the contributions of each member state. We advocate moving to a largely independent European budget funded by European resources.

The EU should hold the right to raise taxes on trans-border activities affecting all Europeans and in areas where only Europe can achieve efficient and fair taxation, such as on multinational companies, digital products, financial transactions, carbon-dioxide emissions or the use of plastic.

Raising European resources for a European budget will allow the EU to turn costs suffered by all into resources benefiting everyone.

5. Fight against climate change

A new European Pact against climate change can be the new, limited and decisive project for a European refoundation which can play the same role played by coal and steel in the last century. We support the project of developing a European Bank for Climate, as a branch of the European Investment Bank (EIB), to support the European ecological transition, building upon previous experiences of the EIB in other sectors and open to national and private funding. To promote the transition towards a sustainable and fully environment-friendly economy, we ask for the European Union to:

- develop a plan to phase-out fossil fuels, including stopping subsidies to the fossil industry in line with the obligations of the Paris Agreement;

- introduce a carbon tax;
- orientate investments towards sustainable renewable energies;
- promote energy efficiency;
- impose binding emission reduction targets;
- impose measures to minimise plastic waste;
- promote a Europe-wide public debate to introduce new rules for the ecological transition;
- promote “green jobs”.

6. **Democratic and effective European decision-making: a Federal Europe.**

Currently, member states remain the ‘the masters of the treaties’ by retaining a veto right and most decisions must be or are taken by consensus. The unanimity voting system, combined with the absence of separation and lack of powers, impedes responsive, transparent, legitimate and accountable decision-making. We advocate a shift to a federal system, which implies that:

- the Commission - with a reduced number of members – should become the only executive body, in fact the Government of the European Union;
- the Parliament should be on an equal footing with the Council of Ministers in all matters, thereby acting together as the legislative branch of the European Union;
- at least a part of members of the European Parliament from 2024 should be elected in transnational lists in a single European constituency, to promote real European political parties and movements and strengthen the democratic choice of the citizens;
- the European Council should only have high-level representative and political guidance functions.

Facing a global rise in protectionism and a decline in democratic values, only a Federal Europe has the leveraging power to lead the way in an increasingly interdependent world.