CONNECT

DEBATE

CHANGE

The think tank for a more inclusive, sustainable and forward-looking Europe
WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

#EUROPEMATTERS

In 2018, Friends of Europe launched its flagship initiative #EuropeMatters, bringing together business leaders, policymakers, civil society representatives and citizens to co-design a Europe that still matters in 2030, within the framework of a renewed European social contract. The initiative serves as the guiding principle across Friends of Europe’s current activities.

Since initiating the #EuropeMatters project, a vast network of stakeholders and citizens have contributed to the development of four scenarios setting out plausible futures for Europe in 2030. These were debated at the 15th edition of our annual flagship high-level roundtable, the State of Europe. We also conducted a poll of 11,000 EU citizens, which revealed striking insights across regions, gender and age – including the general belief that the EU is mostly irrelevant in their lives. It made clear, however, that what matters to citizens and what they want from Europe is security, jobs, and tackling climate change. Citizens also want more say in the decision-making process and better transparency.

We set out a vision for the Europe we want in our #EuropeMatters report, one that is based on input from our multi-stakeholder engagement and the messages we heard from citizens. This vision became a set of concrete recommendations for the 2019 European leadership on security, prosperity and sustainability. By focusing on the policy areas that matter most to people, these can help reinvigorate the relationship between citizens and the European project.

Our objective is to mobilise a coalition of the willing, united by their belief that #EuropeMatters and to together ensure that Europe is better prepared to take strategic action to align the future we face with the future we want.
HOW WE DO IT

CONNECT. DEBATE. IT’S IN OUR DNA
Europe matters. It matters to its citizens. It matters to its neighbours. And in a rapidly-changing world marked by geopolitical volatility and re-ordering, Europe matters to the world.

Reviving Europe, reconnecting it to citizens and making Europe count on the global stage require a concerted effort by all those who believe that a united Europe is better than a fragmented one.

This means synergies and cooperation among European leaders, politicians, policymakers, business leaders, civil society representatives and citizens. It means coming up with fresh and innovative ideas but also the vision to turn these ideas into practice. It means working together for the benefit of European citizens.

Friends of Europe is a think tank with a difference. We’re fiercely independent, curious and critical. We speak truth to power. We have no national or party political bias and ensure that all viewpoints are represented in our activities and publications.

Diversity and inclusion stand at the heart of our work. We practice what we preach. We ensure a balance of gender, age, political affiliation, nationality, ethnic background and institutional representation across all our activities. Our engagement on gender in particular is central to our values: Friends of Europe believes in showcasing female expertise on the various issues we work on, at debates and conferences as well as in its publications.
After 20 years of negotiations, 195 countries signed the Paris agreement to limit global warming well below 2°C above pre-industrial level by the end of the century. The focus now moves to design and implementation, and success will depend on the support and contribution of all — including industries, member states, regions, cities and citizens.

We look at the evolving role of innovation, regulation, competition, and the impact of consumption and production in various sectors including mobility, buildings, agriculture, industry and finance among others. Achieving a just transition and a net zero carbon emissions economy by 2050 will require relevant stakeholders to upscale their activities and increase global climate ambition. Friends of Europe’s role will be to stimulate and provoke these discussions to debate how to improve policy thinking and take preventative action.

We support knowledge and innovation, businesses, entrepreneurs, forward-looking policies and local actors and activists in acting transparently and collectively to develop cost-effective measures addressing the joint challenge of climate change and sustainable economic development. We aim at bringing together fresh ideas on viable climate and energy subjects to lead the transition and demonstrate Europe can lead by example in areas as diverse as nature-based solutions, the future of food, sustainable consumption, reducing waste and recycling.

Friends of Europe’s focus in this debate is to engage cross-sector stakeholders on a sustainable energy transition, its cost and financing. In doing so, we will explore how to accelerate its momentum through experimentation and innovation. Taking a whole economy, whole society approach to decarbonisation underpins our overall approach in this area of expertise.
Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General, United Nations

Christiana Figueres, former UNFCCC Executive Secretary and Distinguished Fellow at Conservation International
Health is an economic and social driver for Europe. Demographic shifts, greater demand and ongoing financial restrictions are putting European health systems under extreme pressure.

At the same time health inequalities are widening between and within member states. Research suggests that spending more on health does not necessarily result in better health outcomes. It is becoming increasingly clear that it is not how much money that matters but how that money is spent. Intelligence and evidence-based health care provision is key to transforming health systems.

Aligned to this is the investment model underpinning a transition to a 21st century model of healthcare – the two points of leverage the EU has – is its R&D capacity and its ability to innovate. Friends of Europe will spotlight the opportunities that lie ahead to incentivise system change through demonstration of innovation and alternative models of healthcare. Prevention is key to balancing budgets with better health outcomes, yet the majority of EU member states spend their money on the consequences of poor health and not the causes. This requires a paradigm shift.

Waste is an obvious but complex area to tackle. Inertia in the system, bureaucracy and a focus on cost containment add to the problem. This limits the resilience of health systems to cope with future challenges like climate change and pandemics.

A core facet for the 21st century healthcare system is harnessing the potential of digital with a citizen and patient-centred approach. Friends of Europe will also aim to address the brave new world of health by reflecting on and debating the implications of AI, gene editing, 3D printing and big data. Our role will be to provoke thinking on the importance of innovation and disruption as an accelerator for healthier societies.

Health is dear to the hearts of citizens, ranking highly in Eurobarometer surveys of personal priorities. Despite not being an EU competency, health is an opportunity for Europe to connect with its citizens and demonstrate its added value to their lives.
“I hope that the Commission will prioritise global health research and development for the developing world”

Bill Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Europe’s relationship with Asia and Africa has expanded beyond the traditional focus on development, trade and security. Reflecting the changed geopolitical landscape and the increased global role of emerging economies, the focus of the EU and Friends of Europe is now also on Europe’s interaction with its global partners on climate change, connectivity and implementation of Agenda 2030 as well as terrorism and radicalisation. Our programmes and activities track these conversations – and foresee new ones – through publications and events that aim to make sense of our changing world.

Our Asia Programme, including the Europe-China Forum, looks at the political, economic and social facets of the ‘Asian century’ and provides a high-level platform for dialogue between policymakers, academics, civil society and business leaders. With interdependence between Asia and Europe set to grow even further, our ground-breaking work is contributing to a new interaction between the two regions and between the EU and individual countries including China, India, Japan and members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). We are also closely engaged in the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM).
“The world is turning inward now and multilateralism seems to be under pressure. The answer should be more ASEAN because we can’t rely on what is happening around the world”

Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of the Association of South East Asian Nations (2008-2012)
Our work on international development issues is led by the Development Policy Forum (DPF), which was set up by Friends of Europe in partnership with development actors such as Germany’s Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), France’s Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the United Nations and the World Bank. Through its activities and publications, the DPF encourages fresh thinking on issues such as the future of the EU-Africa partnership, women’s role in development as well as the role of the private sector in implementing the Agenda 2030. We do this partially through our work with a high-level group of personalities on EU-Africa relations, organised in partnership with the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and the ONE Campaign. In a world distracted by myriad challenges, we aim to raise awareness of development issues and to encourage new ideas and recommendations for tackling global challenges.
“We need a reset in the relationship between Europe and Africa”

Mo Ibrahim, Chairman and Founder of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation
The pace of digital transformation and innovation taking place globally is far outpacing the ability of governments and international institutions to prepare, adapt and plan ahead for the situations that will face our societies. This transformation is also raising questions about ethics; how to regulate to protect the rights of people whilst not damaging innovation and growth; about the future of work – the future of skills that will be required to adapt to a digital society; it is also changing consumption habits which are shifting business models, supply chains and distribution infrastructure; and the ways in which people are conducting their lives.

Whilst the pace of technological change can be a force for good, it also has the potential to reinforce and widen inequalities and reduce the social ability of those who are furthest from the job market and most disadvantaged in our societies.

At a macro level, the revolution precipitated by digital has an impact on current and future models of economics and the traditional relationships between supply and demand, as capital flows, services, goods and wider industries transition towards a digital operational and societal environment. Friends of Europe thinks through the implications of these changes, taking the widest possible stakeholder and community perspectives and experiences to bear upon the policy thinking and developments that will be required. Our focus is to link the policy implications for skills development and preparedness, the role of education and digital literacy and inequalities. We work across policy areas taking a whole society, whole economy approach – to enable policy thinking and developments to be fit for a digital 21st century.
“People need to feel that they can cope with the challenges ahead”

Andrus Ansip, European Commission Vice-President for the Digital Single Market
AREA OF EXPERTISE

PEACE, SECURITY & DEFENCE

The global security landscape is in flux. From increased tensions between NATO and Russia and ongoing difficult Brexit negotiations to China’s more assertive global stand under the consolidated leadership of President Xi Jinping, new challenges are continuously putting into question global security frameworks and approaches. Rapid technological developments and changes in the nature of warfare are creating an environment characterised by complex, global and interconnected challenges ranging from cyber-threats, climate change, global terrorism, mass migration and nuclear proliferation that cross and blur borders.

In this globalised but also more confrontational and complex world, we put peacebuilding as a core aim of our work, which can only been achieved through stronger cooperation at European, transatlantic and global level. This cooperation must be encouraged at all levels of government and society, fostering resilience to ensure constant adaptation to new vulnerabilities and emerging threats.

The overall objectives of our Peace, Security & Defence Programme is to make sense of changes in the global landscape; reinforce the importance of transatlantic relations; assess Europe’s cooperative, preventative and peacebuilding agenda, especially in relations to its southern and eastern neighbourhood; improve diversity in perspectives, particularly of women as leaders and peacebuilders, and of the value of involving younger generations; further a whole-of-society approach that engages citizens, experts and policymakers; and mainstream our peace, security and defence agenda across all our activities, recognising the interconnectedness of the world we live in.
Recommendations from Debating Security Plus found their way into NATO’s Strategic Concept and the EU’s Global Strategy
Migration is a global phenomenon which needs to be tackled on international level but also by national governments, local authorities and an empowered civil society. In Europe, while the focus tends to be on migration and the political tensions it continues to provoke, governments are also responding to the longer term challenge of integrating migrants and refugees in order to build more inclusive and resilient societies.

Friends of Europe is contributing to the discussion with its sustained work – including publications, roundtables and conferences – on migration and integration. We engage with all relevant stakeholders, including EU institutions and national governments but also refugee and migrant groups, European civil society representatives as well as business leaders and local authorities. We believe that refugees and migrants must have the opportunity to play an active role in designing their own paths to integration and inclusion.

Through our work, we want to spotlight that well-managed migration is an asset for Europe. As such, all those who believe in an open and multicultural Europe must work harder to change the current negative narrative on migration through facts and figures but also a stronger emotional story on the many benefits of inclusion. It is also important to have more realistic and comprehensive policies that address both the challenges and opportunities posed by migration and integration.
“As far as the future is concerned, the only way forward is through getting to know each other”

HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal, Chairman of the WANA Institute
Brussels is not Europe, and the discussions that take place here are far from representative of the issues that concern many of Europe’s citizens. Governments across the world are struggling with this disconnect as citizens show an increasing lack of trust in politics and politicians.

Much of this disconnect is to do with matters of poor governance, increasing inequalities and bad management. It is also to do with how governments and policymakers make decisions, craft policy and share power with citizens. Power-sharing involves using the principles and methods of coproduction, co-creation and being more transparent and accountable. In this area of expertise, Friends of Europe provokes debate, discussion and challenge current thinking on citizen engagement — its purpose, outcome and process. By involving and engaging citizens directly with practitioners from NGOs, governments, entrepreneurs and tech savvy communities, we aim to improve and develop thinking, debate and policymaking to devise better and more meaningful citizen involvement and engagement to improve their trust and the stake citizens have in their future and in the work of the EU.

The pace of change in this early part of 21st century demands a paradigm shift in the approach to the relationship between the state and citizen.

Friends of Europe works to foster discussion on the full range of grassroots issues facing Europe, and to challenge traditional ‘top-down’ thinking with a citizen-driven ‘bottom-up’ approach. We do this by hosting citizen meet ups in cities across Europe and via Debating Europe, our online debating platform.
Friends of Europe held citizen consultations in Warsaw and Malta in 2018.
OUR FLAGSHIP

We aim to be catalysts for change and believe that real solutions come from transforming mindsets through the confrontation of ideas and the breaking down of silos.

Change is achieved through inclusive policies – so we connect a wide network across Europe and the world. We foster open, insightful and provocative debates to stimulate fresh ideas and creative thinking. Through the recommendations that emerge from these, we provide bold and ambitious but practical solutions for a more inclusive, sustainable and forward-looking Europe.

65+ events
5000+ senior participants & speakers
100 publications a year
Sylvie Goulard, former Member of the European Parliament and Trustee of Friends of Europe with André Loesekrug-Pietri, Head of The Joint European Disruptive Initiative (J.E.D.I.) & EYL40

Lindsey Nefesh-Clarke, Founder & President, Women’s Worldwide Web (W4) & EYL40

Alexander Stubb, former Prime Minister of Finland
STATE OF EUROPE

State of Europe is a high-level brainstorm recognised as one of Europe’s most prestigious and innovative events. It brings together the best minds, global protagonists and decision-makers to brainstorm on Europe’s future.

From sitting and former (prime) ministers, to CEOs, NGO leaders, European Commissioners, members of Parliament, influencers and top journalists, discussants break out of their comfort zones and collaborate to develop and define Europe’s future. The event also engages our vibrant and diverse network of European Young Leaders and citizens through our citizen platform, Debating Europe.
Our EYL40 include BlaBlaCar founder Frédéric Mazzella, Lindsey Nefesh-Clarke Founder & President of Women’s Worldwide Web (W4), and the youngest self-made billionaire, John Collison of Stripe.
The European Young Leaders programme is one of a kind. It engages young and established leaders with fresh ideas and unique perspectives in initiatives that will shape Europe’s future.

From trailblazing biochemists to budding political leaders, and from dot.com entrepreneurs to NGO stars shaping the social and environmental policies of tomorrow, the European Young Leaders come together to discuss issues of common concern and develop concrete proposals and recommendations to tackle the challenges facing Europe and its citizens.
Public trust in the European Union has never been lower than it is today. The feeling that politicians are out of touch with the concerns of ordinary people, coupled with the migration crisis, uncertainty over the future and the rise of populism, have created a dangerous mix.

Rebuilding this trust cannot happen overnight, and the solution can only involve greater transparency, openness, and frank and honest dialogue between politicians and the citizens who elect them.

In a digital age, politicians must adapt to changing technologies and changing expectations, and therefore must be more reactive and accessible to citizens.

Friends of Europe fosters this dialogue via its online discussion platform Debating Europe, where ordinary citizens challenge traditional top-down thinking by taking their questions to the highest levels of European politics, and getting a response.

Debating Europe wants to get young people talking about the future. We want to introduce them to European political discourse and set out some of the biggest challenges facing the continent. If young people don’t vote or care about politics, then why should politicians address the issues that are important to them? On the other hand, if they are fired-up and politically engaged then they cannot be ignored.

3.9 MILLION strong community of citizens
OVER 2500 policymakers and experts interviewed
73% of users aged 18-35 years
The European Central Bank’s Mario Draghi and the World Bank’s Kristalina Georgieva answered questions from citizens with Debating Europe
CONNECTING WITH CITIZENS & THOUGHT LEADERS

THOUGHT-LEADERSHIP

EUROPE’S WORLD

Friends of Europe invites leaders in politics, business, the media, academia, think-tanks, NGOs and civil society from around the world to contribute thought-provoking articles on political, economic and social issues to our online journal, Europe’s World.

FRANKLY SPEAKING

Friends of Europe’s own in-house pundits publish Frankly Speaking, a weekly column offering fresh insights on the latest international and European news.

LEADING VIEWS

Our new podcast takes listeners outside the Brussels Bubble and into the minds of alternative leaders who have unique ideas on how to make Europe better.
A POWERFUL NETWORK

 Ministers, parliamentarians and mayors
 Chief Executive Officers
 World leading entrepreneurs & innovators
 Heads of international institutions
 Pivotal NGO influencers & citizens
 Ambassadors from every region
 Young Leaders
 Cultural stars
 Top journalists
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