



This report is part of Friends of Europe's work on the Renewed Social Contract. Building upon our existing body of work, this paper draws on new foresight expertise to set out updated scenarios for where Europe may be headed. It brings together the reflections of Friends of Europe's European Young Leaders (EYL40) and senior experts. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the institutions they represent, nor of Friends of Europe's board of trustees, members or partners. Reproduction in whole or in part is permitted, provided that full credit is given to Friends of Europe and that any such reproduction, whether in whole or in part, is not sold unless incorporated in other works.

© Friends of Europe - November 2025

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.





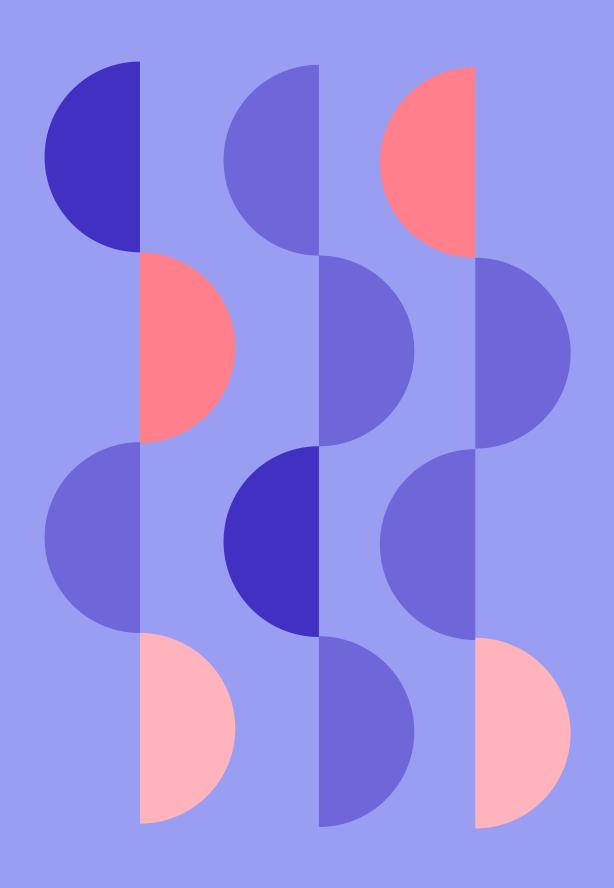
In cooperation with:



Contents

Renewing Europe's social	
contract cannot wait	4
The evolution of our thinking	6
The concept of the social contract	6
Past scenarios for a future Europe (today)	7
Trends and drivers of change in 2025	9
Climate and sustainability	10
Equity and prosperity	10
Polarisation and democracy	11
Security, defence and resilience	12
Six issues that demand our attention now to get to a better future	14
Europe in 2035: new foresight scenarios	16
Climate and sustainability: green synergy	17
Equity and prosperity: competitive Europe	19
Polarisation and democracy: democratic renaissance	22
Security, defence and resilience: collaborative horizons	24
What's at stake	30
Cast list	33
Further reading & endnotes	36

Renewing Europe's social contract cannot wait



2025 has been a year of upheaval. The best laid plans have been turned upside down, leaving actors the world over to adapt or risk being left behind.

In this new world, people are scared to talk about equality, development aid has gone out the window and the planet under our very feet risks being reduced to the role of resource – just another commodity. The progress for which countless people have worked tirelessly to create legal and protection frameworks has been written out and washed away.

And while outside actors chip away at hard-won progress across the world, the European Union finds itself confronted by internal actors who question its existence and purpose – actors who have forgotten and lost sight of the state of the world post-WWII, and the significance that the relative peace that followed truly holds.

Multilateralism is being challenged and questioned. A new way of thinking is pushing the world back into unilateralism – into a world that prioritises markets, lean governments and consolidated power as the keys to solving a country's problems. In this world, the individual comes first and owes nothing to anyone.

But that does not have to be the world we live in.

Multilateralism is a form of social contract – it creates an imperative for governments to work tirelessly to create better and fairer trading systems through the WTO, buttresses development and humanitarian aid through the United Nations, keeps people safe through NATO and fights against climate change through COP. The fabric of multilateralism and international institutions is funded through tax, and each represents a multinational attempt to iron out roles and responsibilities for restoring and protecting a planet where people can lead safe and happy lives.

But 'attempt' may, in many cases, be the key word. Citizens increasingly feel that these international institutions are unable to deliver on their promises and are difficult to hold to account.

To be able to thrive, adaptation will be required. But adaptation does not mean compliance or bending to the will of the loudest person in the room. It means building oneself up to be bolder, more assertive and more self-reliant, standing up for those who are too weak to do so themselves.

In the face of a multilevel attempt to dismantle the social contract, the EU will have to modernise to survive, being clearer with those who are working against it from the inside that business as usual cannot be sustained. It must take a radical, progressive approach to developing and strengthening its institutions, underpinning them effectively for success.

This will mean a thorough assessment of how the EU spends its money and works with and for citizens. This is the moment for action. We know what kind of Europe we want to be. The assignment now is to get down to business and build it.

The evolution of our thinking

We embarked on this journey years ago, using foresight and data to begin to understand what the future holds. In 2018, our foresight-driven #EuropeMatters report introduced the concept of a Renewed Social Contract, exploring key trends, drivers and uncertainties shaping Europe's future, and presented four possible 2030 scenarios to stimulate debate among policymakers and citizens.

Building on that foundation, <u>Vision for Europe</u>, released in 2019, surveyed and engaged policymakers, thinkers and experts across all sectors, to devise a policy toolbox for governing institutions in Europe, aiming to reinvigorate the bond between EU institutions and the public by mapping choices and their consequences.

Then in 2024, our sister reports <u>10 policy choices for a Renewed Social</u> <u>Contract for Europe</u> and <u>2024 voices: citizens speak up!</u> translated earlier conceptual dialogue into concrete policy proposals complemented by citizendriven data insights – from accelerating carbon reduction and reforming EU fiscal strategy to engaging the private sector for social good. This marked a transition from reflection to a call to action – addressing social problems, offering actionable policy choices and a dataset of citizen sentiments to leaders. The citizen dimension continued in 2025 with a follow-up report, <u>Voices for choices: data for decisions that matter</u>, deep-diving into the experiences of young people across Europe and setting out a roadmap of timely, evidence-based insights for policymakers.

The concept of the social contract

Our work on the European social contract began as a theoretical response to visible fractures in Europe's democratic and economic fabric. In #EuropeMatters, the social contract was framed as a philosophical and political necessity: a way to re-establish trust between citizens and the European project at a time when institutional legitimacy was faltering and the dream of integration appeared to be slipping. It asked hard questions about the EU's relevance in a rapidly shifting global order, where traditional models of governance no longer seemed fit for purpose. It also questioned the role of tax as the fundamental contract-builder between governments, citizens and the private sector. Because tax — both in concept and in literal terms of revenue — is the glue that holds societies together and makes them work. How we use it matters. Tax is not just an expenditure, it's a statement of intent and our vision of a society.

By 2019, Vision for Europe built on this urgency by proposing a more deliberate, structured reimagining of this contract. It advocated for power-sharing, citizen engagement and institutional reform – not as idealistic gestures, but as pragmatic tools to make governance participatory and policy more responsive. It made the case that trust would only be regained by embedding citizens into the policymaking process.

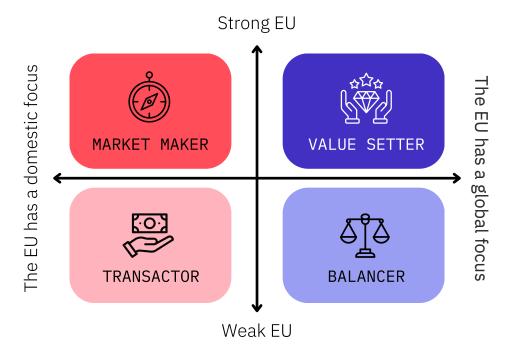
The 10 policy choices publication marked the next step of this evolution. Here, the social contract became a political and institutional imperative, embedded in ideas of equity, redistribution and co-production. This vision was amplified by 2024 Voices and Voices for choices, bringing a necessary emotional and civic dimension to the debate. Drawing on direct testimonies and insights from citizens across the continent, the reports ensured the social contract remained grounded in lived experience.

Past scenarios for a future Europe (today)

Through #EuropeMatters, we worked with top foresight experts drawn from across the world to do exactly what we want others to do: use foresight and data to anticipate future scenarios and be better prepared to manage emerging and future risks.

In doing so, we set out a foresight matrix, offering four scenarios for where the EU might find itself by 2030. Would the Union be strong, making it a market maker as it fortified the economy, or a value setter with a stronger emphasis on its global ambitions to play a leading role in the world? Or would its member states insist on ever greater sovereignty, weakening the EU and leaving it to act only as a transactor internally or as a balancer on the geopolitical scene?

We have applied these same archetypes in this paper, but following a new methodology.



Europe in 2025: Value Setter and Market Maker

In 2025, we have an EU which works primarily as a Value Setter and Market Maker: it uses its regulatory power to spread European values and standards worldwide – for example through data, competition, AI and climate – while also mobilising EU funding and industrial policy tools to further integrate the internal market and increase its strategic capacity. This approach has been strengthened since January 2025, as tariff threats motivated the EU to move towards derisking and protecting its strategic industries.

In both of these scenarios, the EU has found that it must be more foresightand data-driven, and that it will need to improve its situational awareness to avoid being caught off-guard in the future.

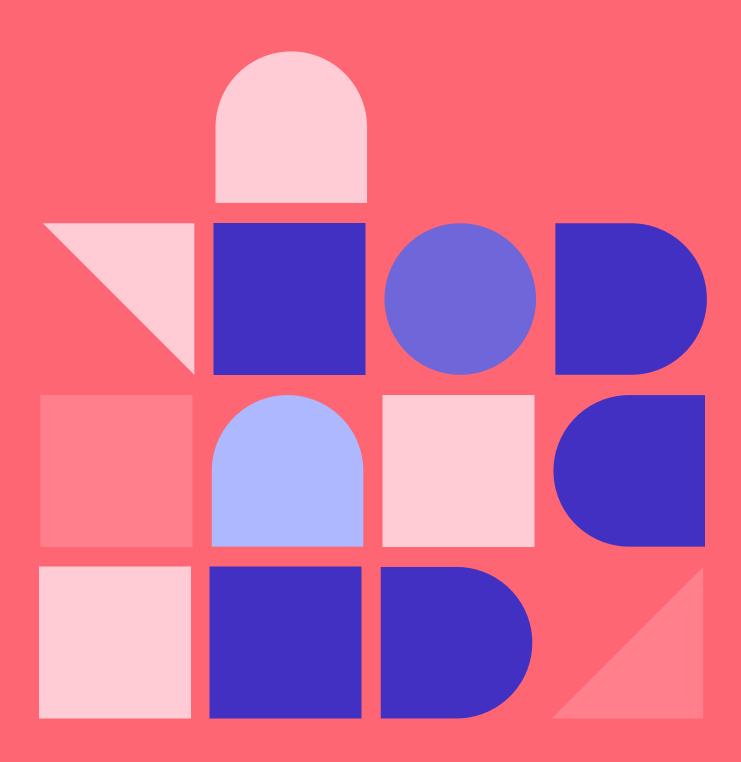
It has also often fallen into the role of a Balancer, as internal divisions and the limits of the EU's foreign policy power have prevented it from taking sufficiently strong stances on the global stage. Indeed, this has been the case when it comes to taking sufficient action on the climate agenda and in its late condemnation of Israel's actions in Gaza.

But the EU's ultimate path depends on whether it can maintain centralised momentum – in the form of funding, regulation and strategic investments – and sustain political unity in the face of crises. It will also have to ensure the trust of citizens – which will require reminding them of why the Union really matters and rethinking modalities for citizens to be more directly involved in its work, better understand it and feel that they have a role to play.

The choices Europe makes today to respond to the challenges it faces will determine its direction over the next decade.

This paper aims to provide an overview of some of the key drivers and metatrends driving change in Europe today, and to reflect on how they will influence future scenarios for Europe. It is a waypoint along the path to renewing Europe's social contract, looking at how our 10 policy choices sit alongside and within the foresight archetypes of #EuropeMatters, and setting out new and updated scenarios for where Europe may be headed based on latest data and developments.

Trends and drivers of change in 2025



Climate and sustainability

The pace of the climate crisis is accelerating and Europe is feeling the pressure. The continent is now warming at roughly twice the global average, making it a frontline region in the climate crisis. Scientists agree: to keep global warming below the long-term average of 1.5°C and avoid the most devastating impacts, global emissions must fall by 43% by 2030 compared to 2019 levels, and by 84% by mid-century.

Europe is at a historic turning point, not just confronting decarbonisation, but determining how to do so in a way that strengthens the shared social fabric. In 2023, the EU reduced greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 8% – a record annual drop outside of the pandemic era – and now stands at 37% below 1990 levels, even as GDP has grown by nearly 70%.³

But despite the urgency and progress made, citizens are still struggling. Many doubt that national or EU leaders take their climate views seriously: 32% of young Italians surveyed in *Voices for Choices* say their government ignores their needs on climate issues, followed by France (27%) and Poland (23%). They are also sceptical of the private sector's commitment to greener practices (40-50% of respondents in France, Germany, Poland and Italy say corporate actors completely ignore their voices).

Many want to live more eco-friendly lives but face structural and economic barriers, especially the high cost of green alternatives (across four of the five countries surveyed, 71% to 82% say eco-friendly products or services are too expensive).

Europe has the potential to lead not only through emissions cuts but by rethinking prosperity itself in ways that are inclusive and regenerative. The path forward is uneven. Without strong public and private investments and real cooperation between governments and citizens, there is a risk of creating a transition that is technologically advanced, but socially brittle.

Equity and prosperity

Europe's prosperity has long rested on a simple promise: that each generation would be better off than the last. That promise now feels uncertain. As of 1 January 2024, the EU's median age reached 44.7 years, with over one in five Europeans aged 65 or older. By 2030, many member states face shrinking working-age populations, pushing welfare systems beyond their breaking points.

Meanwhile, social inequality remains painfully tangible. In 2024, approximately 93.3 million EU residents were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. 5 Children and young adults are particularly affected: nearly 24% of under-18s live in precarious conditions, often in households with low educational levels or unstable work. 6 The rise in low-paid, low-skilled occupations, the rise of

automation and reduced collective bargaining power further increase the risk of in-work poverty.

Amongst citizens, financial pessimism is widespread, with young people across all five countries surveyed reporting a worsening financial situation over the previous year – particularly in France. And many anticipate tougher times ahead, especially in France, Italy, Germany and Poland, where about half believed life would become harder. Danes were the most optimistic about the future, with 47% expressing a positive outlook – significantly higher than in Italy (25%), France (28%) and Poland (31%).

At the same time, what we mean by 'equity' is evolving. As artificial intelligence (AI) enters classrooms, clinics and courtrooms, and as demographic change accelerates, the concerns of equity and prosperity intertwine with those of agency and control.

But support for the idea that AI will improve living standards is mixed across Europe, with Germans and Danes showing the most optimism, while the French are the most sceptical. Using AI to boost jobs, skills and competitiveness is seen as the least important approach to balancing economic growth with social welfare in all countries.

Polarisation and democracy

Party politics and the political behaviour of politicians form one of the key building blocks of the social contract. Since releasing #EuropeMatters in 2018, a new political narrative, ideology and behaviour has emerged, both in the EU and elsewhere. It is more self-serving, less collaborative and has a greater confidence to tear apart conventions established over the past 80 years. It calls into question the fundamentals of how a society works, should be governed and looks after itself. And it is prepared to take greater risk by applying a 'mefirst' model that undermines democratic values and institutions, the global order, societal norms and the basics of how governments should work.

In the past 10 years, populism has surged across Europe, contributing to growing political polarisation. Fuelled by economic uncertainty, the erosion of welfare and community, the rise of (algorithm-driven) social media and more, societies have become vulnerable. Citizens feel left behind, ignored and dismissed – ultimately making them more susceptible to buying into populist narratives.

Once again, asylum, migration and human rights have become the leitmotif of the political right and the excuse for things going wrong in society. As in previous generations, these issues have been embedded into a larger narrative about identity politics, serving to create division and fuel hate, and giving rise to a nationalism and a patriotism that seek to divide rather than unite.

Populist parties on both the left and right have risen in influence, challenging established political institutions and altering the traditional political order. These movements often position themselves as defenders of the people

against corrupt elites, promoting a divisive 'us versus them' rhetoric. Although populism has long existed in Europe, its recent revival has intensified social and political tensions, further deepening divides and putting democratic principles under strain.⁷

According to *Voices for Choices*, politicians and both traditional and social media are seen by citizens as the top drivers of societal polarisation, with strong majorities across countries surveyed pointing to them as central culprits – especially in France, Germany and Poland. National governments are also widely blamed, with responsibility levels ranging from 41% in Denmark to 65% in France, suggesting disillusionment with domestic leadership across Europe.

Indeed, trust in national governments varies widely. At the same time, however, trust in EU institutions remains moderate to high across all countries surveyed. Experts and national health systems are the most trusted sources across all countries – with consistently high levels of public confidence – while traditional and online media are met largely with scepticism.

As AI becomes more integrated into governance and daily life, transparency, inclusivity and ethical safeguards are essential. Balancing innovation with responsible oversight requires collaboration across sectors. At the same time, democratic norms are under strain from rising authoritarian populism and the erosion of civic trust. Understanding and addressing both AI risks and democratic backsliding is critical to ensuring resilient, inclusive societies.

Citizens across all countries surveyed did not see AI as a priority tool for countering societal divisions. Many respondents see AI as having a limited effect on social polarisation, but sizable knowledge gaps persist. Participants across all countries expressed disagreement with the idea that they were likely to be influenced by AI-generated political content. In the months since this survey was conducted, however, both Irish and Dutch elections were affected by AI-generated deepfakes.

Security, defence and resilience

In 2025, security is now a driver of Europe's transformation – via cohesion, resilience, competition, economic growth and more.

The advent of the latest US administration has put into doubt the country's commitments to NATO, raising questions about the reliability of US security guarantees, which have formed the foundation of Europe's defence strategy for decades. Although Article 5 of the NATO treaty was recently reaffirmed, signals coming out of Washington vary and thus ambiguity remains. This changes the geopolitical terrain and adds up to the challenges of the transatlantic relationship.

While the United States considers China to be its main competitor (driving its defence planning and modernisation), the strength of the transatlantic economy is a critical reminder of how important a secure and stable Europe is to the United States and vice versa. Unwavering US support for NATO – together with Europe's substantially increased military spending – are prerequisites for the Alliance to be able to fulfil its obligations.

Despite this, allies remain nervous regarding the future US force posture in Europe, as underscored by the recent announcement of the withdrawal of a rotational US brigade combat team from eastern Europe, which could be followed by other US force reductions in the future and points to the need for European allies to reinforce their own presence along NATO's eastern flank. Russia's ongoing aggression and the realisation that Europe is ill-prepared to face Russia alone have contributed further, leading Europe to reprioritise defence – resulting in a steep increase in defence spending, the launch of ReArm Europe and Readiness 2030 with common funding, better financing options, and giving priority to resilience and total defence. To protect NATO's borders in the east, Europeans are deploying more troops, aircraft and equipment.

While US pressure has persuaded allies to agree to a new, highly ambitious defence spending target of 5% of GDP up to 2035, it will be extremely difficult for many to meet this target without major cuts in social welfare spending. Populist and left-wing parties will campaign against higher defence spending, making this a difficult issue for mainstream politics.

US support for Ukraine has undoubtedly declined and been placed on a more commercial basis (sales rather than donations) – though it remains the source of the most lethal weapons employed by Ukraine. Europe has been forced to step up its financial and military contributions to Ukraine and attempt to gain greater diplomatic leverage on US-Russia-Ukraine potential peace talks. That said, Europe continues to struggle with its own internal dynamics when it comes to the matter of support for Ukraine. Ukrainians and Europeans must remain vigilant to ensure their full participation in peace talks should the US and Russia return to the table in the foreseeable future.

Russian threats to Europe have been evident for some time already, but over the last year Russia's hybrid warfare tactics have become more kinetic, risky and potentially destructive (e.g., drones appearing over EU soil, GPS jamming of civilian aircraft, severance of undersea cables, sabotage operations against commercial properties, cyberattacks against dams, and so on). This has raised the importance of critical infrastructure protection and societal resilience for both NATO and the EU. The various incidents committed or sponsored by Russia in Europe have remained below critical thresholds, if considered in isolation – however, taken together they might have reached levels requiring different, more robust responses.

Meanwhile, China, Russia, North Korea and Iran have drawn closer together strategically as shown by the recent Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit and meetings in Beijing. Increased military and technology support, as well as buying Russian fossil fuels, help Moscow to keep fighting in Ukraine. The Iranian nuclear gambit is also coming to a head, and Israel's domination (but not elimination) of Hamas and Hezbollah, as well as their success against

Iran, have all drastically changed the dynamic in the Middle East. The Houthi menace in the Red Sea is still having an outsized impact, and the possible rise of the BRICS countries as a potential rival to the traditional Western-dominated global institutions is also a point of observation. Simultaneously, Europe and the Western world more broadly have been losing important positions across the developing world, ceding their place to competing countries and coalitions, including China and Russia, who can expand their influence and secure privileged access to critical minerals and supplies.

As Europe has realised that Putin will not stop and that Ukraine's survival is not a distant problem, but a key factor in its own security, it has become clear that keeping Ukraine strong and effective can buy both precious time for Europe to prepare itself and to build hope for better times in the transatlantic relationship – and a potential change of Putin's calculus.

Six issues that demand our attention now to get to a better future

While much has changed in the year since we first published *10 policy choices*, there is still unfinished business to be addressed. Many problems remain the same, as do the solutions.

In other cases, recent developments have made some things abundantly clear:

- **Digitalisation:** tech and AI can no longer be treated as a sector, but have become indistinguishable parts of the geopolitical terrain.
- Security, defence and resilience: European security and defence has transformed into a €150bn policy objective.
- Foreign policy: while maintaining its role as a Value Setter and Market Maker, the EU must play a stronger role as a balancer on the world stage. The fate of the Western Balkans, as well as Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Belarus, is more important than ever before.
- Climate and sustainability: backlash against pro-climate actions
 has made even more urgent the need to address climate change and
 reduce carbon emissions. Climate fatigue and the attraction of hyperindividualism and self-interest have become a new narrative
- Tax: tax and how to manage debt is driving everything.
- **Democracy:** the fundamentals of democracy are being questioned. Cynicism in party politics and politicians is at its highest. Disinformation, misinformation and propaganda are shaping what we understand to be truth. And people and communities feel left behind, less in control and more vulnerable.

At this pivotal moment, when so much is at stake, there is an imperative for Europe to reassess and renew its social contract, strengthening ties within and beyond the continent and seizing the moment to become a true leader on the global stage.

EU reform in focus

Dreamed up and built in different times, the EU and its structures were not designed for agility, nimble decision-making or cross-silo policy thinking.

But the times in which we find ourselves today require a re-imagination and reset of this institution into one that is able to stand up and adapt to the extreme challenges and choices this era presents.

Without doing so, the EU will fall to the margins of the history books – a bystander, criticised for the chances it didn't take, and an institution that could have done better and been more if only it had been bolder, more ambitious and less risk averse.

While the Draghi and Letta reports contain a range of important actions that the EU should take, they are numerous and to take them all at once would be foolhardy. Bold change will require top leadership to take the helm and strategically identify the top five successes that Europe will need over the next 20 years – five things that will help to shift change.

Completing the single market must top the list. Easier said than done, perhaps, as this encompasses many layers and dimensions that are not achievable in one fell swoop.

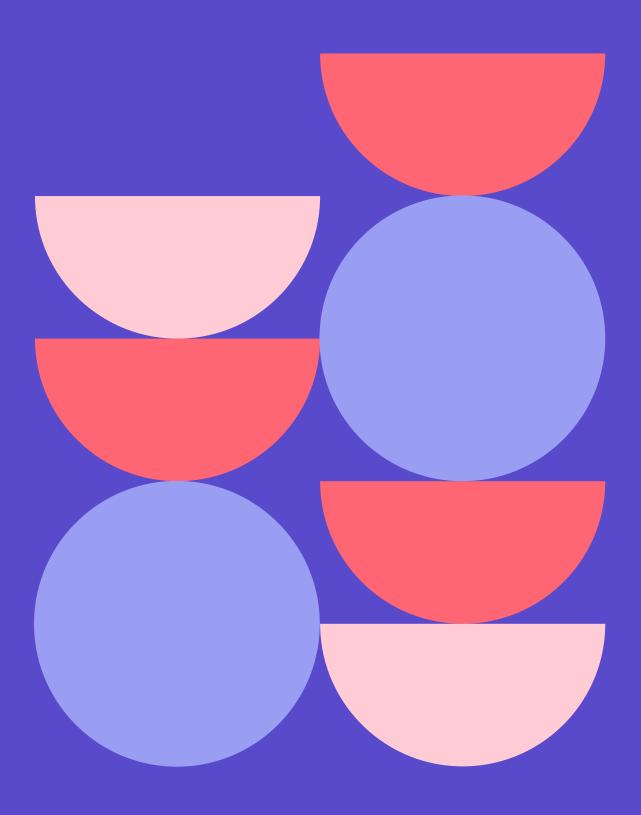
So to make a start, those in the know must make a critical evaluation: which aspects of the market will boost connectivity and the competitiveness of SMEs; how defence and security procurement and policymaking must be sharpened and attuned with a more collective approach; which aspects of the market are stalling progress on climate action; and how to build a regionalised or thematic focus on digitalisation in a way that primes the ecosystem within Europe, transforms public services, and makes Europe more prevention-based and cognisant of emerging threats.

For this to succeed, the EU must become a more agile decision-making authority. As we said in *10 policy choices*:

- There must be greater coherence and alignment of large-scale EU funding streams, especially on innovation and sandboxing.
- There should be a pan-European Commission function that pulls in the best assets across the institutions and within Europe and allows for greater cross-silo working.
- The EU should take a more collective approach by tapping into networks of thinkers and doers across sectors to truly achieve these five actions in a way that is attuned to what stakeholders, consumers and citizens want and need.
- Member states and the institutions must make better use of the enhanced cooperation procedure to allow a small group of member states to make progress on sticky issues where unanimity creates a block.
- They must be vigorous about activating new forms of decision-making, including by doubling down on qualified majority voting and looking at what is possible within the realm of the EU's legal and technical toolbox.
- They must establish a new style of leadership that suits not just the now, but the near future.

Europe in 2035: new foresight scenarios

(same approach, different mix of experts and issues)



With these trends and drivers in mind, we took our *10 policy choices* and latest citizen data to our European Young Leaders (EYL40) during our 2025 spring seminar, asking them to engage in a foresight exercise that looked with fresh eyes at the policy choices Europe should make to be safe, strong, and a solid and reliable partner on the world stage. While *#EuropeMatters* looked at Europe from a holistic perspective, this exercise took a deep dive into specific policy areas.

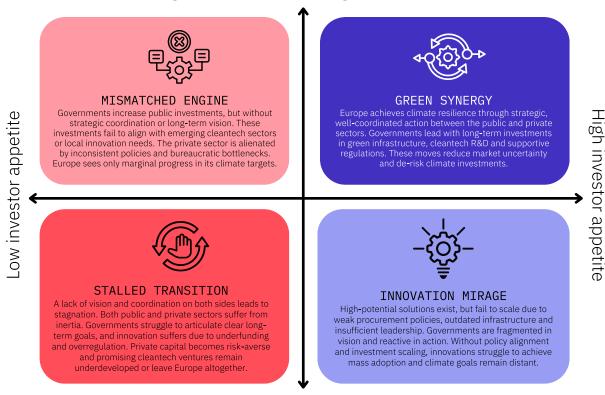
Our EYL40 were engaged to answer the questions: What does an inclusive, resilient and sustainable Europe look like in 2035? How do we get there – through what choices? What are the risks or alternative outcomes if we don't make those choices?

The outcome of this exercise is a set of foresight scenarios that we have mapped against our 2018 matrix and 10 policy choices, to show what steps Europe will have to take to reach the best possible outcomes. These insights have been complemented by additional expertise and input received from our network and in-house experts.

Climate and sustainability: green synergy

A Europe where public leadership and private initiative amplify one another and

High political will in the green transition



Low political will

In this scenario, the European Union focuses inward as a Market Maker, demonstrating strong cohesion, while becoming a Value Setter as an aftereffect by developing internationally recognised standards for the green transition. Public leadership and private initiative amplify one another, creating a self-reinforcing ecosystem that accelerates climate resilience and technological leadership.

The EU makes bold, strategic public investments in clean energy, bioeconomy, circular economy infrastructure, sustainable transport systems and cuttingedge R&D. Clear, stable policies and reduced bureaucracy make it easier for green innovators to scale. These factors increase investor confidence and mobilise a wave of private capital toward green and cleantech sectors.

Startups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and large enterprises are met with matching funds and streamlined permitting processes. Public-private partnerships flourish, leading to rapid deployment of climate technologies at scale. The ecosystem, then, becomes self-reinforcing: public support de-risks investment, innovation becomes commercially viable and successful models inspire further replication and funding.

Citizens feel the impact: energy bills stabilise thanks to renewables, cities become greener and more liveable and new industries drive employment growth.

Along the way, Europe's global credibility as a climate leader grows, not through protectionism or mandates, but through inclusive co-creation across governments, businesses and civil society. The continent is able to achieve full carbon neutrality by 2050, influencing international norms and inspiring similar transitions worldwide.

How to get there

At the EU level, tackling climate innovation must become a central thread running through all major policy agendas. This means not only boosting public investments in clean energy and green technologies but also expanding blended finance mechanisms to attract private capital, particularly for startups and scale-ups working across borders. Regulatory frameworks should provide clear, long-term incentives and remove unnecessary hurdles, enabling innovators to grow rapidly while encouraging member states to have the fiscal flexibility needed to co-invest alongside the private sector. Coordinated funding models will be crucial to leverage public and private resources at scale, ensuring investments are strategically aligned with Europe's carbon neutrality ambitions.

At the national level, governments must create fiscal space dedicated to climate investments, actively supporting green companies through accelerators, startup funding and fast-track regulatory processes. Clear and predictable policies will be key to building trust with private investors, removing uncertainty, and accelerating the deployment of climate solutions. This requires a shift away from short-termism toward long-term economic

planning that recognises the economic growth potential of green industries and workforce development.

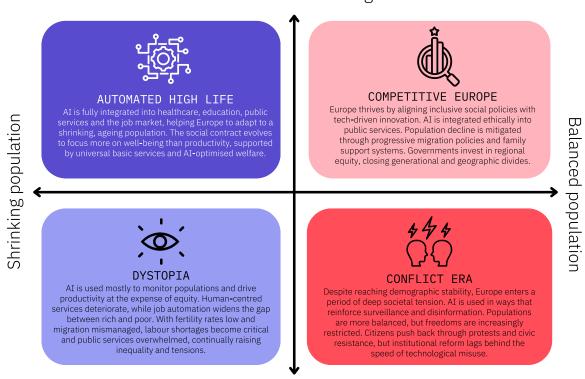
Citizens and civil society also have a vital role to play. Supporting local startups, participating in energy communities and engaging in community-driven sustainability initiatives are practical ways individuals can contribute. Moreover, civil society must remain a watchdog and a driving force demanding transparency and ambition from both public authorities and businesses. By taking part in policy consultations and climate assemblies, citizens can ensure the transition is inclusive and that no one is left behind, helping to shape policies that respond to diverse local needs and realities.

Looking ahead to 2035, participants in the foresight exercise highlighted the need for bold, coordinated investments today. This includes large-scale public-private funding for renewables, cross-border infrastructure like hydrogen corridors and offshore wind grids, and serious R&D in battery storage, synthetic fuels and carbon-negative technologies. Equally important is investing in people through extensive reskilling and upskilling programs, preparing the workforce for emerging opportunities in green sectors and care economies, ensuring that the green transition embeds sustainability into the social fabric.

Equity and prosperity: competitive Europe

A socially inclusive, economically strong Europe where innovation and equality go hand in hand.

AI used as a source for good



AI used as a tool for control and division

In this scenario, the EU demonstrates its role as a Market Maker, through both cohesion and vision, leveraging AI as a positive force for social inclusion, economic competitiveness and demographic renewal. Europe addresses its ageing population challenge through progressive migration policies, investments in early childhood care and supportive work-life balance measures.

AI is embedded ethically and transparently in education, healthcare and housing, expanding access and reducing inequalities. Local industries are supported through regional investment funds and reformed ownership models. A more integrated capital market helps fund SMEs and innovators.

Citizens experience tangible improvements in their daily lives: affordable healthcare, strong public services, fair work conditions and equitable access to education. Populism declines as democratic institutions deliver on promises, trust deepens and younger generations see opportunity in a green, digital economy.

How to get there

At the EU level, guaranteeing a clear and enforceable Basic Standard of Living for all citizens would strengthen the social contract, ensuring universal access to essential services like housing, healthcare, education and connectivity. A European Taskforce on AI and Social Wellbeing could be established to help ensure that the digital transformation serves people, applying AI in ways that close inequalities, safeguard jobs and enhance quality of life rather than eroding it. The EU must treat food and water as critical infrastructure – on par with energy security – developing EU-wide resilience strategies, including coordinated storage, diversified sourcing and the capacity for targeted interventions to guarantee affordability. A 4-day work week could also be piloted in key sectors, supporting work-life balance, promoting productivity and reducing stress-related healthcare costs, thereby aligning economic performance with social well-being.

At the national level, governments should rethink what constitutes economic value by reforming tax systems to shift the burden away from labour and toward wealth, high-carbon activities and those which cause environmental harm. Allocating dedicated social innovation budgets would allow local authorities to experiment with new solutions in housing, youth engagement, care infrastructure and community entrepreneurship. Education systems should be reframed to develop both employability and civic capacity, equipping people with the skills for democratic participation, climate adaptation and critical thinking in an AI-driven future.

To build a stronger and fairer Europe, investing in local communities is key. Supporting small-scale factories, hospitals and schools in integrating sustainable technologies and smart infrastructure would help regions become more self-reliant while boosting green innovation. By targeting smaller towns and rural areas, such policies can reverse regional inequalities and ensure the benefits of innovation are shared across the continent. This would complement

EU-level programmes by ensuring prosperity is embedded locally rather than concentrated in a few urban hubs.

For individuals and civil society, rebuilding social trust and collective agency is essential. While formal elections remain the preferred method of expressing opinions amongst citizens surveyed, this will mean going beyond the ballot box and taking active ownership of shared institutions and local economies. Cooperative models – whether in housing, renewable energy or food production – can provide tangible social and economic security, especially when linked into cross-border networks that amplify their impact.

Fiscal policy in focus⁸

In April 2024, the EU launched a comprehensive reform of fiscal rules, representing the most substantial such effort since the post-financial crisis era. Aiming to rein in national debt and deficits during uncertain times, the rules aim for member states to reduce their fiscal deficits to below 3% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and their public-debt-to-GDP ratios to below 60% of GDP. Responding to the geopolitical context, a temporary flexibility under the national escape clause allows EU member states to increase defence spending by up to 1.5% of GDP between 2025 and 2028, without sanction under the fiscal rules.

As of early 2025, the average debt-to-GDP ratio in the EU was 81.8%, with only 14 countries falling below the 60% threshold.

In order for member states to have the option to commit to investment and reform measures extending their fiscal adjustment period to seven years rather than four, their proposed packages must incorporate spending on the green, digital transition – but as they must also demonstrate that the measures are both conducive to growth and compatible with sustainable debt levels, they will have to make a trade-off by reducing expenditures elsewhere. In a world of changing priorities and populist backlash against the green transition, public expenditure into these areas is likely to be under both pressure and scrutiny.

This increase in defence spending and pressure for fiscal consolidation will, as a result, make it difficult for governments to boost investment into the green and digital transitions to the necessary levels to meet EU targets.

With public debt levels reaching all-time highs, dealing with these issues will undoubtedly drive political choices and what actions governments consider to be affordable.

In light of the risks which the current geopolitical context and latest EU fiscal reforms may pose to the success of the green and digital transitions, policymakers may wish to:

• Revise the technical assumptions underpinning the rules to incorporate the anticipated benefits of increased investment and structural reforms to public debt ratio trajectories over time;

- Expand national co-financing for EU programmes related to the green and digital transitions, which will be exempted from government expenditure calculations; and/or
- Establish an EU investment fund for climate and digitalisation, drawing on the experiences of the pandemic-era Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), which would issue bonds to raise capital for a new EU investment fund specifically targeted at fostering the green and digital transition.

Polarisation and democracy: democratic renaissance

A world where civic tech thrives and AI is used for boosting productivity, education, healthcare and governance; polarisation is reduced and democracy revitalsed.

Empowering & inclusive AI



DEMOCRATIC RENAISSANCE

AI is deployed transparently and ethically, boosting productivity, education, healthcare and public services. It's governed by open-source standards and citizen oversight, becoming a trusted ally rather than a threat. Redistributive policies and inclusive civic tech reduce inequality and polarisation, revitalising democratic participation.



ELITE TECHNOCRACY

AI is widely used to improve public services, but the benefits largely go to the wealthy and well-connected. Governments rely on AI to manage complexity and maintain stability, but decision-making becomes increasingly technical and less democratic. Political participation declines as citizens feel their voices have little influence.



Decentralised wealth & power

WIRED SOLIDARITY

AI reshapes the job market, causing disruption and uncertainty. However, robust social protections and community-led innovation help ease the transition. People turn to local networks, cooperatives and digital tools to adapt and create new opportunities. Social movements use AI to organise, advocate and build alternatives.



DIGITAL DYSTOPIA

AI has automated many jobs and concentrated power among large tech companies and state actors. Governments and corporations deploy AI for surveillance and control, while misinformation and algorithmic manipulation fuel distrust, division and radicalisation. Social cohesion unravels as facts are contested and public debate breaks down.

Disempowering & exclusive AI

The EU takes up its mantle as a Value Setter, leading a global wave of democratic renewal, powered by open-source, auditable, citizen-controlled AI systems. Technology becomes a transparent, trusted partner in governance, healthcare, education and public services, guided by strong ethical standards and inclusive oversight.

Communities use AI to customise education, predict public health risks and streamline bureaucracy, building trust and unlocking human potential. Redistributive policies such as universal basic services, progressive taxation and cooperative digital platforms, help bridge rural-urban and digital divides. As people feel heard and represented, polarisation declines and diverse voices gain space in public discourse.

Europe also champions climate resilience: its AI optimises energy use, addresses the environmental concerns around data centres, accelerates decarbonisation and supports green job creation. Global cooperation thrives, driven by digital diplomacy and open innovation.

The EU expands, welcoming countries that meet high democratic and environmental standards. Citizens feel the future is once again theirs to shape, not despite technology, but because of it. Civic participation becomes mainstream. A once-disengaged generation now leads deliberative assemblies and drafts policy in virtual town halls.

How to get there

To safeguard Europe's democratic values while embracing technological progress, EU institutions should focus on the implementation of the AI Act, adopted in June 2024, ensuring that complementary guidelines and legislation ensure transparency, fairness and accountability in AI systems, protecting human rights and preventing misuse across all member states. Harmonised regulations and cross-border cooperation must ensure that technology standards reinforce equality and avoid creating new divides. In line with a more inclusive vision for Europe, this also involves enforcing anti-discrimination laws, supporting equality programmes and fostering cultural initiatives that promote social cohesion.

At the national level, governments have a dual responsibility. First, they must invest in AI literacy and digital education from an early age through to adult learning, ensuring every citizen has the skills to understand and benefit from new technologies. Second, they must protect the democratic institutions that underpin trust in governance – reinforcing judicial independence, media freedom, inclusive curricula and minority protections. Budget allocations should directly support these priorities, aligning domestic standards with shared EU frameworks.

Individuals and civil society are essential co-creators. By engaging with participatory platforms, citizens can help shape policies and hold institutions accountable for how AI and digital technologies are deployed. This requires a commitment to digital literacy, responsible media consumption and sustained

involvement in democratic life through voting, advocacy and grassroots action against discrimination.

A coordinated approach across EU, national, and civic levels will ensure that AI and other digital transformations strengthen, rather than weaken, Europe's social contract — making technology a driver of equality, trust and shared prosperity.

Security, defence and resilience: collaborative horizons

A world where major powers are working together for a stable AI economy. Climate change is still a threat because of energy usage, but major powers peacefully coexist and work constructively on shared problems.

Rising nationalism FRACTURED FRONTIERS AI disrupting social models AI improving social models COLLABORATIVE HORIZONS Rapid AI advancements disrupt global systems, prompting major powers to cooperate in managing Major powers work together to build a stable AI economy, emerging risks. Despite this, national divisions deepen capturing its benefits for growth and innovation. Despite ongoing climate challenges, especially from AI's energy and populations grow increasingly alienated. Superempowered private actors, including corporations, use, they peacefully cooperate for sustainable energy and climate action. This brings global resilience and a stable exploit AI for strategic and cyber operations Geopolitical stability is fragile with ongoing tensions. geopolitical environment focused on risk management. CYBERNETIC COLD WAR THE AI-POWERED CRUCIBLE Amidst a rise of distinct AI ecosystems, major security crises persist, driven by a global scramble for energy and critical resources. AI itself is a double-edged sword: it Intense geopolitical competition is fuelled by rapid AI advancements that disrupt established social and security models. AI introduces new vulnerabilities, exacerbates rivalries and creates new cyber vulnerabilities, but also offers unprecedented tools for crisis management leading to strategic decoupling, especially around critical technology minerals and supply chains. Staterun offensive cyber operations grow more frequent as they are targeting key networks.

Moderated nationalism

The EU acts as a major Value Setter on the world stage, a central actor in a cooperative global order where major powers work together to manage AI's benefits and risks. AI-driven economies are stable, with shared ethical and governance standards supporting innovation, scientific progress and economic growth. Europe plays a leading role in setting norms, fostering global stability and advancing multilateral initiatives.

Climate challenges persist due to the high energy demands of AI infrastructure. While AI contributes to advances in green technology and energy efficiency, its scale continues to strain global efforts to curb warming, even as coordination improves.

The shift to renewable energy is accelerating with AI support, but challenges persist around the sourcing of lithium, cobalt and rare earths essential for batteries and solar panels. These pressures create localised competition and supply risks, though they are mitigated by cooperative international frameworks.

AI-enhanced diplomacy helps support more informed negotiations. Regional security issues, though not resolved, are managed through joint peacekeeping and conflict resolution tools enhanced by AI. A shared belief that AI's promise depends on global stability drives collaboration on health, poverty and space exploration.

How to get there

At the EU level, building a more resilient and strategically autonomous Europe requires investment frameworks that align climate, technology and security goals. This means creating unified mechanisms to coordinate large-scale public and private funding for clean energy, dual-use technologies and strategic raw materials – not only to strengthen Europe's innovation and manufacturing base but to reduce dependency on external powers. Drawing on the EU's experience with projects like REPowerEU and the Chips Act, such frameworks should also establish common strategic stockpiles and harmonised supply chains for critical resources, ensuring that Europe can withstand geopolitical shocks. Scaling the European Innovation Ecosystem is essential, with targeted funding for deep-tech startups, stronger cross-border research collaborations and support mechanisms that help innovators bring breakthrough technologies to market faster.

At the national level, governments need to accelerate public-private partnerships that deliver clean energy infrastructure, decentralised renewables and industrial decarbonisation. At the same time, strengthening domestic defence capabilities should go hand in hand with building local industrial capacity and skilled talent pipelines in engineering, cybersecurity and advanced manufacturing. Education and vocational training reforms must prioritise future-ready skills — from critical thinking and systems design to digital entrepreneurship — ensuring that both the green and security transitions have the human capital they need.

Individuals and civil society must advocate for responsible innovation and transparency in AI, energy and defence investments, ensuring that technological progress aligns with democratic values and sustainability goals. Civic participation, from community dialogues to European Citizens' Panels, can counter misinformation and polarisation, reinforcing a culture of cooperation that underpins both security and sustainability.

Security, defence and resilience in focus

Underpinning the success of any of these scenarios are safe and secure societies. And with this comes the resurgence and primacy of security, defence and resilience in a world that is now as much online as off, where the climate crisis is quite literally changing the terrain, and where all the multilateral conventions and systems that have kept us sane and safe are being questioned.

For Europe to achieve the level of security required, it must make the right choices:

Invest jointly in defence..

Europe needs to think and act jointly on defence. That means pooling investments in procurement, production and research – across military, civilian and dual-use technologies – while keeping funding flexible, from public budgets to private borrowing.

While European solutions must be encouraged and supported, the priority must be real security, not preserving legacy industries at any cost. Europe's defence sector remains too fragmented, and jobs alone cannot dictate spending decisions. A balanced approach is needed: building a strong European industrial base while securing the most effective capabilities, fast.

In the end, resilience and citizens' safety should drive investment – not industrial prestige.

... and spend the money right

As investments increase, decisionmakers will have to think carefully as to what they want to spend the money on and how they want to spend it. Lack of clarity regarding sufficiently coordinated and coherent spending goals risks missing the opportunity to use the resources efficiently and build a stronger, more united and better protected Europe. It requires important decisions in many areas, e.g., legacy versus modern capabilities, or advanced technology versus affordable, mass-produced solutions. In particular, as NATO allies devote a large portion of their defence investment pledge from The Hague summit to infrastructure upgrades – for instance ports connecting to rail networks, fuel delivery and storage and pre-positioned equipment warehouses – they will assess when and where to spend on common goals as opposed to national ones. In this, it will be essential for member states to coordinate closely with EU funds and programmes (e.g., Next Generation EU) to avoid duplication. Adaptability as conditions and priorities change will also be a critical consideration.

Well-defined defence and resilience objectives and expenditure must be synchronised for optimal effect. While the NATO Defence Planning Process has identified the main priorities on defence side, significant work remains to be done on the resilience front.

Work better, together

EU member states need to work more closely – both with each other and together with key partners like the UK, Norway, Canada and Türkiye. In recent months, many flexible formats with willing and capable partners have emerged to facilitate pragmatic cooperation (e.g., Coalition of the Willing, E5, Enlarged Weimar Triangle, Nordic and Baltic framework, JEF mechanism and so on). These are useful but they must focus on actual output, and the question remains as to how they will relate to the EU institutions that are the paymaster for the bulk of European military capability programmes.

Seeking clarification from the US on its future force posture in Europe, as well as its reinforcement plans and commitments is essential.

The EU and its member states must also seize the moment to reach out to lowand middle-income countries to counter potential anti-Western alliances.

Don't waver on support to Ukraine

Using the Coalition of the Willing, Europe must agree on the shape and composition of a Reassurance Force for Ukraine, including integrated air and missile defence from NATO territory, and be ready to deploy it at short notice. It is essential to provide the Force with a clear mandate and sufficiently robust Rules of Engagement, in case of any rapid deterioration of the situation. Adequate US involvement for support and deterrence effect needs to be secured. The impact on NATO force contributions could be severe particularly for small land forces like UK.

The EU and individual member states need to increase their technology sharing and investments in domestic Ukrainian military production drawing on the Danish model where possible. Joint ventures should be located in Ukraine and in EU member states.

The EU must meanwhile include Ukraine in its multinational investment and capability development programmes (i.e., SAFE, PESCO, EDF) and establish a joint zone of missile and drone defence along Ukraine's western borders with the EU and NATO allies.

NATO needs to implement the PURL (Prioritised List of Military Requirements) mechanism for arms transfers to Ukraine to ensure flow of US systems and components and encourage more allies to make financial contributions to build upon the US \$2bn in offers made thus far.

EU needs to restock its European Peace Facility to share financial burden of national arms transfers to Ukraine with contributing member states. At the same time, a balance is necessary between systems sent to help Ukraine to defend itself and systems deployed to defend NATO member states.

Complete the EU project

Enlargement will be essential. The Western Balkans has the power to not only support Europe's economic growth, but also to act as a security shield for Europe – and vice versa, as the EU has the responsibility to be a guarantor to the reason against malign actors who view the region as an opportunity. The Balkans must be treated as an asset for Europe's future, not a drain or deficit. Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Belarus must be included in this effort.

Reduce critical vulnerabilities and fill the gaps with homegrown capabilities

The EU must develop an assessment of the risks and vulnerabilities of critical supply chains (e.g., raw materials, rare earths and minerals, chemicals, electronics, medical equipment and supplies, and so on), as well as critical infrastructure necessary for military mobility across Europe.

NATO and the EU need to focus on the most urgent military gaps and capabilities, notably military mobility across Europe, air and missile defence, a multilayered drone defence system, intelligence and data fusion and enhanced border defences (Baltic Shield and Eastern Shield). Ports, railways, bridges and road networks need to be better connected for more rapid military logistics and better protected against drone and missile attacks and sabotage. This will require a joint NATO-EU endeavour, working together with major, private sector logistics companies, to respond to the aggregate demand for military logistics across the continent.

While the EU has launched important initiatives to upgrade European military forces and to promote multinational cooperation and joint investments (SAFE, REARM Europe, EDIP and so on), these now must be turned into greater European industrial production of key military items at speed and at pace – capable of supplying both Ukraine and the needs of European forces.

The EU must foster industrial consolidation, lift obstacles to state and private investment in defence companies (ESG rules, bank capital and venture capital) and create a Single Market for defence trade and components. A key challenge for EU investment projects and government defence budgets will be to find the right balance between regenerating old but still relevant capabilities (like tanks and 155mm artillery shells) and boosting civilian and military research and technology and creating the scientists and engineers capable of producing the defence capabilities Europe will need in the future. That said, the size of the European market implies that exports will be necessary if Europe is to produce weapons systems at a price it can afford – which will mean avoiding overcorrecting into protectionism.

The EU, NATO and member states must also step up tracking and intelligence gathering on Russian hybrid warfare operations in Europe to improve early warning, situational awareness and intelligence sharing. The EU should also review plans for civil protection and civilian crisis information and advice across Europe particularly against air attacks based on current efforts of Germany, Poland and the Baltic states.

In tandem with assessing the vulnerabilities, the EU must devote infrastructure and transport funds (such as for the TEN trans-European networks) to enhancing protection and seeking backup routes. Cyber and communications security has to be part of this effort, including by integrating and drawing on emerging technologies (e.g., AI, space, cyber). It must then aim to diversify and carry out as much home sourcing and production as possible. The baseline needs to be a definition of wartime requirements and the EU's capacity to surge critical supplies and components and withstand the economic coercion of adversaries. This strengthening of autonomy must extend to developing capabilities, research and skills.

Make total defence the norm

A total defence approach must be established and implemented as the norm and should be treated as a culture at the national and European levels – from education to transparency and exercises. This must start with involving and preparing the public to secure their buy-in.

The EU should promote proposals for improving resilience through a whole-of-society approach as outlined in the 2024 Report on EU Resilience prepared by former Finnish President Sauli Niinistö. An EU civilian protection force based on specialist national components (police, firefighters, medical teams and so on) should be established for rapid response and support to national authorities in crisis situations.

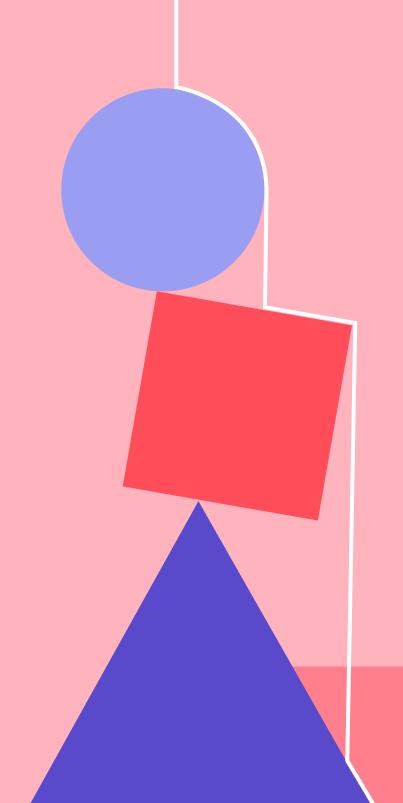
Increase flexibility to enhance decision-making

The need for unanimity in decision-making creates a massive stumbling block to solving real-time problems. Quick and effective decision-making must be enabled in order to ensure timely and good decisions. A departure from unanimity, enabling groups of countries to move ahead and take action is called for to avoid paralysis and intolerable delays. Such flexible solutions, enabling a sort of variable geometry arrangement, would unleash the EU's potential while keeping actions under its umbrella.

This will require understanding the 'decision space' – the time it takes to make a decision versus the time by which the decision must be made. In the case of impending danger, the time available is based on how long it takes to generate military response – e.g., to move forces from where they are to where they need to be. This is a finite number, usually a few days to several hours at best, which gives little time at the political level for debate. Decision-making must therefore be guided by ongoing tabletop exercises and wargames so that decision-makers, and the process, are habituated to the demands of the tasks before them.

Europe must also be able to rely on secure, effective and flexible command and control and planning arrangements, ideally through a more 'European' NATO, in which NATO forces are separable but not separate – so that when the US as a whole is not engaged, Europeans are able to use NATO assets and capabilities, supported by those strategic enablers that only the US can provide, and pursue operations in the European interest.

What's at stake



The scenarios and policy choices set out in this document offer Europe concrete steps and direction, pointing it down the road towards a safe and secure future for its denizens.

But what is at stake? What are the alternatives if Europe fails to make the right choices and allows itself to be torn apart?

In a worst-case scenario exercise, Europe could find itself trapped in a tangle of disconnected futures: led by passive governments, fragmented by nationalism, fractured by scarcity and dominated by digital feudalism. As political will weakens, collective European action erodes. In this vacuum, nationalist agendas harden borders and identities alike, making cooperation nearly impossible.

Resource scarcity pushes member states into zero-sum competition, replacing solidarity with survivalism. Climate shocks go unanswered and crumbling systems fail the most vulnerable, and numerous, groups. Meanwhile, powerful actors exploit the vacuum. AI, once seen as a tool for progress, becomes a mechanism of control. Education, healthcare and public services are mediated by black-box algorithms, accessible only to a privileged few.

The continent descends into a fragmented, fragile state best described as 'Nation First, Europe Last.' This dystopian future sees EU member states turning inward, eroding collective governance and trust in shared institutions. Nationalist agendas dominate security discourse, feeding xenophobia and dismantling regional cohesion. Climate inaction and escalating resource conflicts leave vulnerable populations exposed, while elite-controlled AI systems entrench inequality and strip citizens of agency. With governments paralysed by self-interest and digital power concentrated in the hands of the few, Europe faces a silent collapse – an interconnected crisis of legitimacy, sustainability and solidarity that leaves its people divided, disempowered and unprotected.

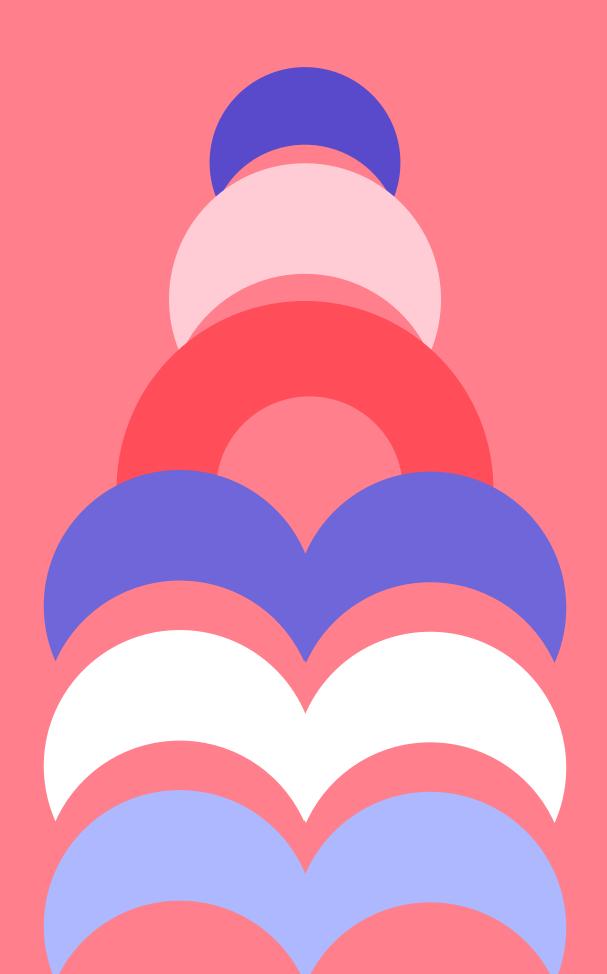
Here are four possible futures that lie at the intersection of four negative drivers of change: low political will on climate issues, political and trade wars over resources, rising nationalism and centralised wealth and power:

- 1. Nation first, Europe last: a fragmented Europe, driven by nationalism and weakened cooperation. The EU member states prioritise national agendas over collective action. Cross-border cooperation on security, climate and economic policy deteriorates, leaving the continent vulnerable to external threats and internal divisions. Rising nationalism fuels protectionism and xenophobia while the erosion of shared values undermines Europe's capacity to respond to crises.
- 2. Disconnected futures: technology borders harden; not just on maps, but in minds. AI no longer feels like a tool for people; it feels like a tool used against them. Controlled by powerful interests, systems deepen inequality, exclude entire communities and replace human judgment with unaccountable algorithms. We see more rising fear and distrust, both between countries and within them. Many feel powerless, unheard and left behind.

- 3. Silent collapse: governments stall while crises accelerate beneath the surface. Governments delay action while climate and resource crises escalate. Systems hold together just enough to avoid chaos yet fail to protect the vulnerable or plan for the future. As natural resources become scarcer, competition intensifies both within and between member states. Resource hoarding replaces solidarity and Europe is fighting for what little remains.
- **4. Digital feudalism: citizens are data points in systems they can't challenge**. The resource crisis collides with a new digital elite. As competition for food, water and energy grows more desperate, a handful of tech giants and authoritarian regimes seize control of advanced AI systems and services like healthcare or education. The majority of citizens are left dependent on minimal digital services, subject to opaque decision-making algorithms with no path for appeal.

The futures outlined here are signals, reminders that even when choices feel abstract, their consequences are deeply human. And in a world that risks narrowing what is possible, keeping space open for vision is its own form of resilience.

Cast list



This publication has benefited from a wide range of expert input and would not be possible without the support of all those involved. Particular thanks goes to Social Innovation Solutions (SIS), the facilitator of the foresight exercise that drove the production of this report.

Ahmed Abdirahman

Founder and CEO, Järvaveckan, Sweden

Ūla Ambrasaitė

Founder and Chief Executive Officer, LAPAS Books, Lithuania

Rebecca Buttigieg

Parliamentary Secretary for Equality and Reforms, House of Representatives Malta Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, Malta

Malcolm Byrne

Teachta Dála, Chair of the Ireland's Parliamentary Committee on Artificial Intelligence, Ireland

Alessandra Cardaci

Head of Programming and Operations, Debating Europe

Maria Nefeli Chatziioannidou

Member of the Hellenic Parliament, Greece

Mary Fitzgerald

MENA-focused researcher and Trustee of Friends of Europe

Nathalie Furrer

Director, Friends of Europe

Luke Graham

Chief Operating Officer, The Blakeney Group, United Kingdom

Jasminko Halilovic

Founder and Director-General, War Childhood Museum, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Marek Hattas

Mayor of the Municipality of Nitra, Slovakia

Philipp Heimberger

Economist, Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (WIIW), Austria

Aslak Holmberg

Member, Saami Council, Norway

Gábor Iklódy

Senior Fellow for Peace, Security and Defence at Friends of Europe and former Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Kaoru Inoue

Programmes and Membership Manager, Friends of Europe

Sarah Jones

Emmy Award Winning Journalist/ Strategist, Sarah Jones Reports LLC, United States

Daria Kaleniuk

Executive Director, Anti-Corruption Action Center, Ukraine

Djarah Kan

Writer, feminist and cultural activist, Italy

Dharmendra Kanani

Chief Operating Officer and Chief Spokesperson, Friends of Europe

Kosta Karakashyan

Director and Producer, Studio Karakashyan, Bulgaria

Min-Sung Sean Kim

General Partner, NGS Capital, Germany

Hajdana Kostic

Painter and Illustrator, www.hajdi.art, Montenegro

Ivan Lesay

Senior Advisor for Climate Finance, National Bank of Slovakia

Francisco Lopewz

Programme Executive, Friends of Europe

Dorothée Louis

Multimedia Manager, Friends of Europe

Liel Maghen

Co-Founder, Elham - The Day After, Italy

Vladimira Marcinkova

Member of National Council of the Slovak Republic, National Parliament Slovakia Committee on European Affairs, Slovakia

Bora Muzhagi

Member of the National Parliament of Albania

Katarzyna Nawrot

Associate Professor; Deputy Chair, Polish Academy of Sciences Committee of Future Studies Poland 2000 Plus, Poland

Uk Nihad

Prime Minister, Government of the Canton of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sophie Nivelle-Cardinale

Journalist, Kheops Prod

Adam Nyman

Director of Citizen Outreach and Engagement, Friends of Europe

Hana Ostan-Ožbolt-Haas

Art historian, independent curator and writer, Slovenia

Joanna Patsalis

Cofounder and Chief Operating Officer, Direct Kinetic Solutions

Peter Peto

Editor-in-Chief, 24.hu, Hungary

Andrei Popoviciu

Investigative journalist and foreign correspondent, Romania

Arthur Riffaud

Communications Executive, Friends of Europe

Amanda Rohde-Stadler

Head of Evaluation, Learning & Programme Performance, Friends of Europe

Michael Ryan

Former deputy assistant Secretary of Defence for European and NATO policy at the United States Department of Defense, Trustee of Friends of Europe and lecturer on world affairs and Russian history

Jamie Shea

Senior Fellow for Peace, Security and Defence at Friends of Europe and former Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Jakub Skrzywanek

Curator and Artistic Director, The National Stary Theatre in Kraków, Poland

Eliška Soffer Podzimek

Animator, illustrator and artist, Czech Republic

Davide Sofia

Programme Executive, Friends of Europe

Ciprian Stanescu

President, Social Innovation Solutions, Romania

Alexandra Stefan

Diplomat at the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romania

Vasilisa Stepanenko

Journalist, The Associated Press, Ukraine

Natalija Stojmenovic

Member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia

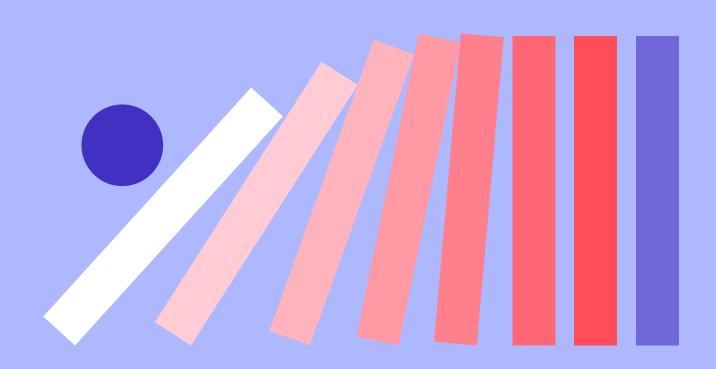
Jan-Willem van Putten

Co-Founder and Fellowship Director, The School for Moral Ambition, Netherlands

Darya Yegorina

Chief Executive Officer, CleverBooks, Ireland

Further reading & endnotes



Further reading

Voices for choices: data for decisions that matter

10 policy choices for a Renewed Social Contract for Europe

2024 voices: citizens speak up!

Vision for Europe

#EuropeMatters

Endnotes

- ¹ <u>European state of the climate: summary 2023</u>, Copernicus Climate Change Service
- ² <u>Climate change 2023: synthesis report</u>, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- ³ Progress report 2024: climate action, European Commission
- ⁴Population structure and ageing, Eurostat
- ⁵Living conditions in Europe poverty and social exclusion, Eurostat
- ⁶ Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, Eurostat
- ⁷ The populist wave and polarization in Europe, Modern Diplomacy
- ⁸ <u>Advancing the green and digital transition despite budget constraints,</u> Friends of Europe
- ⁹ Government debt at 88.0% of GDP in euro area, Eurostat

Friends of Europe

Connect. Debate. Change.

info@friendsofeurope.org friendsofeurope.org

Friends of Europe is a leading think tank that connects people, stimulates debate and triggers change to create a more inclusive, sustainable and forward-looking Europe.