

A Reform Agenda for a Future-Proof Europe

The European Movement International's Policy Priorities for 2024-2026

Recent crises, ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic to Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine and instability in the MENA region, have underlined the necessity for a united and effective response at the European level and the need for the European Union (EU) to process the competences and institutional means to provide solutions to the challenges Member States and citizens face.

For this reason, a reform process aimed at strengthening the EU is crucial, to allow for an improvement of the functioning of the EU, especially considering the next enlargement. The reform process will be aimed at improving the way our Union makes decisions, the areas where it has competence to act and the means at its disposal to do so.

Therefore, in the coming years the European Movement will renew its efforts in advocating for reform, strengthening the EU's capacity to act and enhancing its role in the world, in protecting European democracy and upholding the rule of law, as well as in tackling the climate and environmental crisis while fostering sustainable development and adapting socioeconomically to the digital transition.

The European Movement will continue to advocate that the EU must address these multifaceted crises through collective action and solidarity based on shared European values. Moreover, we will continue to work with our network to provide thought leadership and constructive input to the policies that can allow the EU to reform and emerge stronger from current and future crises, at the same time enhancing citizens' trust and engagement in the European project. Citizens' voices must be heard at all times in the debates that shape the future of Europe. By promoting our network's views, we will strive to connect Europeans' priorities and bridge the gap between citizens and the EU, while ensuring that Europe's social and economic development leave no one behind.

The Conference on the Future of Europe has provided European citizens with the opportunity to take part in the decision-making process and express their views on the EU and how it should be improved. This innovative process demonstrated that our democracy can only be strengthened by fusing the work of elected representatives with the contributions of citizens, organised civil society and social partners. As the final recommendations from the Conference show, citizens see that only a truly common European response can solve the challenges they are facing and that they want to play an active role in shaping the decisions that affect them. For this reason, the EU needs to deliver on the issues that lie at the heart of citizens' proposals and turn the conclusions of the Conference into reality.

With the results of the 2024 European elections in mind, we will continue to work with our network on connecting citizens across countries, sectors and interests. We will strive to

amplify citizens' voices on the key issues that shape Europe's future, such as climate action, equality and human rights, social justice, sustainable development and upskilling and reskilling, and will promote citizen participation at the local, national and European level. We will also continue pushing for a comprehensive and harmonised approach to migration and asylum. Moreover, we will highlight the multiple benefits of our shared culture and heritage for our society, economy and environment and for the much-needed sense of togetherness in Europe. As we work to increase transparency and accountability of decision-making processes and EU institutions, we continue to prioritise the protection of our rights, values and freedoms, and promote a vibrant and healthy civil society across Europe.

Last but not least, in response to the ongoing war in Ukraine and the geopolitical shift in Europe's neighbourhood and on the world stage, we will connect our network's views and expertise to produce thinking on Europe's place in the world and its role in promoting peace, cooperation, citizen engagement and fundamental rights beyond its borders.

To influence the debate on Europe's future, to involve citizens and stakeholders in the decisions that will shape the EU for the years to come and to find common solutions to today's challenges, the European Movement International will dedicate its work to the following priorities during the years 2024-2026:

Democracy, citizen participation and fundamental values

Bridging the gap between citizens, representative associations, and the EU

- Supporting Treaty reform to innovate the EU's governance, enhance its democratic legitimacy and improve its institutional functioning;
- Fostering citizen participation in EU decision-making at the local, regional, national and EU level and bringing forward the consolidation of a European public sphere;
- Promoting civil society organisations and civil dialogue at all levels in line with Article 11 TEU;
- Promoting the formalisation of national and European citizens' panels as constructive tools for engagement and for the development of a closer dialogue between citizens and political institutions with a clear follow-up;
- Turning the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe into reality to deliver on the issues that lie at the heart of citizens' proposals;
- Fostering involvement of youth in EU decision-making at local, regional, national and EU level, and providing opportunities for debate and serving as a bridge between youth and stakeholders on all levels;
- Fostering responsible citizenship and civic education and history education about the EU in a wider European context and by taking into account current events.

Promoting and protecting values, civic space and European unity

- Defending EU's fundamental values including the rule of law, democracy, fundamental rights and equality across the European continent and connecting these issues with the EU's long-term budget;
- Protecting our borderless Union by ensuring the freedom of movement and the reinforcement of the Schengen agreement;
- Promoting civil society, diversifying civic space and strengthening pluralistic and diverse societies in which fundamental rights are protected against all forms of discrimination as well as nationalist and populist movements, while paying particular attention to the needs and rights of historically underrepresented groups and minorities;
- Prioritising the defence of gender rights and the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in all policy reforms and ensuring that gender equality is a central component of the European project;
- Protecting sovereign parliaments, fair elections, independent courts and free press in the EU and beyond;
- Supporting a long-term, sustainable and multi-dimensional approach when it comes to the integration of migrants and refugees by boosting their potential in all the aspects of society and ensuring their representation;
- Enhancing the regulation, transparency and accountability of online platforms and shaping the digital sphere to accommodate inclusive, democratic dialogues;
- Highlighting the cultural considerations and cultural dimensions of Europe, promoting cultural heritage as a key vector for achieving all policies in Europe, promoting investment in the cultural sector, and emphasising the crucial role of our shared cultural heritage for the promotion of our shared European values.

Strengthening democracy

- Reforming the way the EU makes decisions by moving from unanimity to qualified majority voting (QMV) in all those policy areas to which competences have been conferred by the Treaties to the EU;
- Increasing transparency of decision-making procedures and of lobbying activities at all levels;
- Strengthening deliberative democracy and its participatory tools to promote civil dialogue and to ensure that citizens can participate and influence decision-making;
- Reforming policies to actively support and include historically underrepresented groups and minorities, ensuring their equal participation and representation in all aspects of the European life in order to create a more diverse, inclusive, and representative Europe;
- Tackling discrimination, fake news, hate speech and violence online through comprehensive measures to combat their dissemination.

- **A social, sustainable, creative and prosperous Europe**

Promoting a green, digital and just transition

- Prioritising the reform of EU policies to ensure the full implementation of the European Green Deal (EGD), the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by involving stakeholders at all levels and from all relevant sectors with these frameworks and setting an example globally;
- Ensuring that the EU implements the European Climate Law in its effort towards full carbon neutrality by mid-century;
- Promoting effective climate and environmental action in the EU and its neighbourhood;
- Strengthening the EU's strategic autonomy by decoupling its energy needs from regimes that violate the EU's fundamental values and by consolidating the EU's energy policy towards an Energy Union and a low-carbon economy based on efficiency and fully renewable energy sources;
- Ensure rapid progress towards a circular economy through concrete targets to reduce material use covering both extractives and biomaterial;
- Making sure that all citizens, businesses, sectors, local governments, and Member States are part of the just transition;
- Broaden out the EU's definition of the just transition including environmental and climate justice, and fully integrating environmental and social policies;
- Continuing to invest in health and promoting a common health policy towards a Health Union to tackle future health crises, to ensure self-sufficiency on medication and sanitary goods, while fostering European research and cooperation on medication.

Transforming Education, Skills, Innovation, and Job Creation Through Reform

- Advocating for a stronger European social dimension through the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan;
- Enhancing social dialogue to improve European governance and deepen European integration;
- Introducing a strong EU-wide strategy to effectively tackle inequalities, to reduce poverty and to ensure adequate minimum income;
- Promoting the creation of a wellbeing economy including a valuation of unpaid and underpaid care work and services;
- Putting in place reforms that promote sustainable growth in sectors crucial for the future (such as sustainable food production, sustainable mobility, better social services, quality health and education, repair and refurbishment services) and tackling long-term unemployment;
- Enhancing labour rights by introducing transformative measures such as a European unemployment insurance system and a standardised European employment contract;
- Addressing labour challenges such as the gender pay gap and the need to promote inclusive policies, and ensuring that the transition sectors (such as food production,

transport, construction and energy production) create jobs that increase gender equality;

- Fostering European competitiveness and innovation by investing in up-to-date and technical skills, vocational education, lifelong learning and digital solutions;
- Advocating for technology democratisation through policy reforms that protect citizens' fundamental online rights and uphold environmental standards, while balancing regulation and innovation when it comes to managing digital platforms to strengthen businesses and empower and protect citizens;
- Managing the digital transition, with adapted frameworks for teleworking and ensuring protection of workers, and with solid investment in new technologies and artificial intelligence (AI);
- Continuing the development of the EU's system of own resources and the EU's capacity to issue common debt, with the aim of deepening the Economic and Monetary Union and the Banking Union.

Empowering Europe with Culture and Youth Reforms

- Recognising the significance of culture and cultural heritage as pivotal assets for the future of Europe. Through reforms, it is crucial to highlight their role in fostering a shared sense of belonging, unity, and the advancement of Europe's collective values and identity;
- Addressing the unique needs and aspirations of the youth population, making them key partners in building a more resilient and forward-looking Europe;
- Empowering youth through more investment in quality education, paid internships and jobs;
- Implementing reforms that empower and engage young people in shaping the future of Europe.

Europe in the World

Building a stronger and more united Europe on the global stage

- Continuing to push back Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and to keep the sanctions active as long as the invasion continues, including support for the post-war reconstruction and social rehabilitation in view of the country's accession to the EU;
- Supporting the reform of the decision-making mechanisms in the areas of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) by shifting from unanimity to qualified majority voting (QMV);
- Enhancing via reform process the effective implementation of the Strategic Compass as a tool to strengthen EU's defence readiness and to make the EU a stronger and more capable security provider in Europe and beyond;
- Strengthening the EU-NATO relationship and positioning the EU as a European pillar of NATO while working towards achieving the strategic autonomy;
- Strengthening the partnership between the EU and the UK, with the intention of bringing them closer in the years ahead. That should not happen at the expense of

the continued improvement of the EU's environmental, social, labour, consumer and other standards;

- Combatting hybrid threats and warfare, energy blackmail, cyberthreats, disinformation campaigns and economic coercion by third countries;
- Enhance the role of women in the areas of security and defence;
- Establishing a fully-fledged European Defence Union (EDU), funded by the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) including through European own resources, that should feature integrated armed forces overseen by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union and capable of conducting peacekeeping, humanitarian, and peacebuilding operations globally;
- Supporting the enhancement of the European Parliament's role in the areas of security and defence by pushing for the transformation of the Security and Defence Subcommittee (SEDE) into a fully-fledged European Parliament's committee;
- Supporting the implementation of the European Defence Industrial Strategy to speed up the development of the Member States' defence capabilities, underpinned by a modern and resilient European defence technological and industrial base, enhancing the interoperability of the Member States' armed forces by coordinating military procurement and joint training;
- Ensuring that the principles and objectives of the European Green Deal (EGD) are fully reflected in the EU's relations with the rest of the world, notably in relation to trade and investment agreements and joint efforts to reduce any negative environmental and social impacts in other parts of the world;
- Enhancing the dialogue with US organisations and political and institutional actors that support transatlantic cooperation based on common values;
- Developing a coherent and robust policy on China that takes into account economic as well as military and human rights aspects;
- Ensuring the implementation of a human-centred European asylum and migration policy that protects those in need;
- Improving the joint management of Europe's outer borders and promoting safe migration channels;
- Supporting democracy developments in Belarus and across the EU neighbourhood;

Supporting the enlargement process

- Promoting a positive enlargement process as a tool to ensure geopolitical stability and security of the continent, while strengthening ties with our neighbours;
- Promoting a comprehensive reform of the EU institutional set-up, decision-making process, as well as the functioning and financing of the key policy areas e.g. Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Cohesion policy to enabling the enlargement process;
- Strengthening the role of the European Parliament in the enlargement process and the involvement of civil society and all spheres of governments in the negotiations with candidate and potential candidate countries;

- Enhancing European values and the importance of our shared heritage and history in the context of enlargement policy;
- Strengthening the Eastern Partnership and supporting democracy and economic and societal resilience in Western Balkan states, Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova with a credible enlargement perspective.

Contributing to a better world

- Strengthening Europe's role in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding and peacekeeping by shifting to qualified majority voting (QMV) in the areas of CFSP and CSDP;
- Promoting human rights, the rule of law and democracy all over the world, using the huge potential of culture and cultural heritage for fostering peace, trust and solidarity across the globe;
- Supporting the EU's role in championing a rules-based international order;
- Fostering open and transparent negotiations on international trade agreements conditional on upholding the fundamental values and global environmental standards;
- Championing the implementation of the Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) and of the Paris Agreement globally;
- Utilising the potential of the Global Gateway as a tool to contribute to the global efforts of the twin transition and combating the climate change;
- Developing EU-Africa relations in the context of the Cotonou Agreement and the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, EU-Latin America, EU-ASEAN relations, addressing political, economic and development dimensions and fostering exchange, security, the protection of shared values, sustainable development, and civil society dialogue;
- Supporting the Middle East peace process and promoting stability in the MENA region;
- Promoting stability in the Mediterranean region by advancing cooperation with Europe's Southern Neighbourhood in the framework of a renewed global Mediterranean policy based on our shared values, culture, heritage and common values and interests, including fundamental rights and democracy, migration, security, sustainable development, and trade;
- Bolstering a feminist approach to the EU's external action in the areas of diplomacy, defence, security, aid, trade, immigration, and climate policies to ensure the development of fair and inclusive policies that contribute to achieving gender equality.