



## Basic information: EU in the world, migration

The Panel “**EU in the world / migration**” discusses the role of the EU in the world, including objectives and strategies for the EU’s security, defence, trade policy, humanitarian aid & development cooperation, foreign policy, and EU neighbourhood policy and enlargement. It is also related to how the EU should deal with migration.

This document provides you with background information on the different topics of the Panel. Most importantly, it lays out what the EU already does in these areas and what the users of the Multilingual Digital Platform (<https://futureu.europa.eu>) have expressed as their main concerns and wishes for the future. Lastly, the document also includes links for more information on many topics.

### Your task

In this panel, we will invite you to deliberate and to formulate a set of recommendations for the Union’s institutions to follow-up on for the future of Europe in the areas of the EU in the world and migration. For example, recommendations can state which general direction to follow or how to solve a specific problem.

Over the course of three sessions, you will discuss and collaborate directly with other citizens from all over Europe, together with whom you will draft the recommendations. At the third and last session, you will collectively vote on the recommendations, which will be presented and discussed with the other participants in the Conference Plenary.

## EU in the World: Reinforcing responsible global leadership

The coronavirus pandemic is a powerful reminder that Europe can only tackle global challenges through global cooperation. Together, we can address the critical issues such as peace and security, climate change, sustainable development and the global recovery.

### ***What does the EU do?***

The EU champions multilateralism and a rules-based global order. It seeks a coordinated approach to external action - from trade and international partnerships to foreign security and defence policy - that secures a stronger and more united voice for Europe in the world. We also work closely with neighbouring countries, introducing a comprehensive strategy for our relations with Africa and reaffirming the European perspective for the countries of the Western Balkans. Responsible global engagement also means that the EU invests in partnerships and alliances with third countries, multilateral and regional organisations, especially those with whom we share common values but also with all those with whom we share common global objectives such as a common global response to the COVID pandemic and the global climate ambitions.

### ***What comes out of the debate on the Multilingual Digital Platform so far?***

Ideas posted under the topic of 'EU in the world' cover a variety of themes related to foreign policy, ranging from trade, to the use of soft power and defence. Overall, contributors call for a stronger presence of the EU in the global political arena: in its neighbourhood policy as well as in relations with, for instance, African and Latin American countries. Contributors to the platform feel that the EU should be bolder in its exercise of both soft and hard power. Since the inception of the platform, this topic has gathered an overall number of 1,756 contributions, i.e. 541 ideas, 1,083 comments and 119 events. The various ideas can be grouped according to the following themes:

- **Overall objectives of EU foreign policy**
- **Trade Policies**
- **Defence**
- **Decision making**
- **Enlargement**
- **Neighbourhood policy and relations with others**

#### **Overall objectives of EU foreign policy**

Contributors express the opinion that the EU's role is changing amidst rising concerns over the climate emergency, a shifting economic and geopolitical power balance, major challenges to multilateralism and the global battle against COVID-19 (see example of [event](#), see example of [idea](#)). Hence several contributors express the opinion that the EU should be bolder in its exercise of both soft and hard power (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)).

When it comes to EU foreign policy, many ideas refer to the role the EU should play concerning human rights and democratic values worldwide. They call for a tougher stance towards and a call for action against those countries that repeatedly violate international human rights conventions and/or treaties (see example of [idea](#)). For instance, the EU is encouraged to play

a leading role in the peace-building process between Israel and Palestine (see example of [idea](#)). Related is a call for a common European arms export system with strict rules to ensure that weapons “made in EU” are not fueling conflicts around the world and leading to violations of human rights (see [idea](#)).

### Trade policies

A group of contributions within the topic EU in the world call to enhance trade policies and reform trade agreements in line with EU values, be it respecting human rights or environmental standards (see example of [idea](#)). A widely endorsed idea calls for a reform of EU trade and investment policy and a relaunch of global multilateralism, with at its core the creation of decent jobs and the protection of fundamental and human rights, including workers and trade union rights (see example of [idea](#)).

### Defence

When it comes to strengthening the EU's hard power - also seen as being of the utmost importance (see example of [event](#)) - contributors advocate the creation of a common European army (see example of [idea](#)). Contributors also suggest the creation of more specialized forces or institutions at EU level, such as for example a European Military Academy (see example of an [idea](#)).

### Decision-making

Contributors consider that it is pivotal for the EU to act as one solid and united entity in the international political arena, in order to maintain and further strengthen its role. Several contributions discuss the need for a common foreign policy. One of the most endorsed ideas within this topic proposes the need for a common foreign and security policy to ensure the safety of Europeans while promoting democracy, human rights, the rule of law and environmental protection in its neighbourhood and globally (see [idea](#)).

A second subtheme concerns a call for greater cooperation between Member States. Contributors highlight, to maintain credibility, the need to cease competition between the Member States at international level. Therefore, they suggest that the embassies of the EU Member States should be replaced by a single EU embassy that would represent and unite all EU Member States. This could also mean a single EU membership for any international institution such as the NATO (see example of [idea](#)). Additionally, another idea is the creation of a common EU passport for all European citizens (see example of [idea](#)).

Within the theme of decision-making, contributions call for the rethinking of the unanimity rule. A strand of ideas expresses the view that the current situation based on unanimity rule allows single Member States to block common foreign policy (see example of [idea](#) and [event](#)). This is considered problematic as it prevents the EU from having a credible, stable and strong voice in the world, as already highlighted under the previous theme. Therefore, according to the idea expressed, the EU should move towards a system of an “absolute” majority voting. One of the most endorsed ideas under this theme gives a detailed description of an absolute majority voting system for Member States, supported by a simple majority of Members of the European Parliament, for the EU to be able to take executive action and generate real, credible foreign policy (see [idea](#)). Similar to the discussions within the topic of European Democracy, the alternative of a qualified majority is also presented as an alternative for the current unanimity rule (see example of [idea](#)).

A last sub-theme, discusses the competences of the European Parliament. Contributors feel that, although the European Parliament has supported the concept of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) from its inception and has sought to extend its scope, the European Parliament still only has a peripheral role in EU foreign policy making. Therefore, it is deemed crucial by contributors to allocate more foreign policy competences to the European Parliament (see example of [idea](#)).

## Enlargement

A group of contributions discuss the need for enlargement and integration of Eastern neighbouring countries as way of protecting democracy in these countries (see example of [idea](#)), but also in order for economic stability within the EU (see example of [idea](#)). These ideas are equally expressed in one of the most endorsed ideas within this topic, which calls for a continued enlargement of the EU with the integration of the Western Balkan countries to ensure peace and stability in the region (see [idea](#)). Related, there is a call to fully recognise Kosovo (see example of [idea](#)).

## Neighbourhood policy and relations with others

A subtheme of ideas concern diplomatic representation of the EU with, in broad terms, contributors calling for the EU institutions to represent and defend their interests in the world more visibly (see example of [idea](#)).

While most ideas call for a more united and integrated EU, thereby reinforcing the EU's role as a global power of law and justice being open to interaction with various multilateral institutions, both at a global and regional level (see example of [idea](#) and [idea](#)), others want the EU to focus on its role as an economic actor, as initially envisaged. In this regard, they consider that the EU should not assume the role of a geopolitical actor, but rather maintain its primordial function of a common economic market. Participants consider that since the EU is not a sovereign state it cannot exercise a political role as a global actor (see example of [idea](#)).

Contributions under this theme refer particularly to the EU's political relations with Russia and China (see example of [event](#)). Contributors advance the need to fundamentally rethink and reconsider and move further in reforming the EU's foreign policy approach with the implementation of a bolder approach in line with what was discussed in earlier themes. Contributors on the platform discuss the opinion that, when it comes to China, the EU should not only develop a more unified and tougher stance in its diplomatic relations given the highly divergent systems of values, but should also develop a European Union's Foreign Investment Strategy to counter China's influence globally and in particular in developing countries (see [idea](#)).

When it comes to the EU's relations with African and Latin American countries, contributors express the opinion that there should be an enhanced partnership and reworked trade relations (see example of [event](#)). Most contributors call for a stronger partnership between the EU and the African Union to strengthen regional multilateralism (see example of [idea](#)). Other citizens call for stronger bilateral partnerships between individual Member States and African countries bilaterally, in order to address migration and other security threats to the European Union. However, this can only work if relations move away from maintaining the economic and political heritage of former colonial systems (see [idea](#)). The same applies to relations with Latin America (see example of [idea](#)).

***For more information:***

- [\*\*A stronger Europe in the world\*\*](#)
- [\*\*EU Common Coronavirus response\*\*](#)
- [\*\*The EU's external relations\*\*](#)
- [\*\*How is the EU providing help? EU Civil protection\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Global Europe: the value of free and fair trade\*\*](#)
- [\*\*An open, sustainable and assertive EU trade policy\*\*](#)
- [\*\*European External Action Service\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Service for Foreign Policy Instruments\*\*](#)

**Migration: Managing migration through a predictable, balanced and reliable system**

Addressing migration requires a modern European Union migration and asylum system, border management, cooperation with partner countries and fighting migrant smuggling. It also means protecting those who are fleeing violence and integrating newcomers into our society.

***What does the EU do?***

For the EU to provide common solutions, migration requires a balanced and inclusive approach.

The Commission has proposed a number of legislative proposals under the umbrella of its "New Pact on Migration and Asylum", as part of a comprehensive approach to addressing migration. It looks at improving cooperation with the countries of origin and transit, ensuring effective procedures, safe legal pathways, successful integration of migrants who have the right to stay in the EU, and return of those who do not. The EU focus is also on the strengthening of the external border, improving border management, including by rolling-out new information systems, and fighting migrant smuggling.

***What comes out of the debate on the Multilingual Digital Platform so far?***

Since the launch of the platform, the migration topic has gathered a total of 1157 contributions, including 306 ideas, 827 comments and 24 events. The contributions under this topic reveal three general trends. On one hand, one group of interactions wants more action to control and reduce migration, while on the other hand, other contributions call for greater solidarity and better integration procedures. Taking an intermediate position, a group of participants would like to foster international mobility, but only between economically developed democracies. The following themes are analysed accordingly:

- **Unregulated non-EU migration as a threat**
- **Humanistic stance on migration**
- **Legal migration**
- **Addressing root causes of migration**
- **Border control**
- **Integration**
- **Facilitating and supporting the acquisition of the EU citizenship**

### Unregulated non-EU migration as a threat

Commentators are outspoken in their ideas and contributions on the topic of migration. One theme observed is the feeling that migration from non-EU countries is a threat to EU civilization, identity, values and culture (see example of [idea](#)). Contributions express opinions and views that non-EU migration contributes to terrorism and the creation of ghettos and no-go zones in the EU (see [idea](#)). These contributors call for measures to restrict non-EU migration, a stricter repatriation policy, and strategies hindering migrants' mobility, such as tougher border controls (see example of [idea](#)).

### Humanistic stance on migration

Contributors with an opposing view call for solutions to counter illegal migration and an EU immigration policy, with easier and more accessible asylum procedures in countries of origin, legal and safe migratory routes and a crackdown on human trafficking in order to avoid the deaths of refugees on the EU's borders (see example of [idea](#)). Lastly, some contributors want a legal framework to halt the deportation of integrated persons and families to unsafe countries of origin (see [idea](#)).

### Legal migration

Under the theme of legal migration, those advocating stricter migration policies call for a common EU policy of selective migration, with quotas, stricter selection and strict acceptance procedures (see example of [idea](#)). A European points-based immigration system is sometimes seen as necessary to regulate migration flows more efficiently (see [idea](#)).

Contributions that are more open to migration, similarly, call for a unified and more efficient approach, however more in line with human rights and (social) European values. For example, contributions specifically discuss a single and efficient EU asylum procedure (see [idea](#)), also pointing to the need to reform the Dublin Convention to prevent the unequal distribution of asylum seekers and migrants (see example of [idea](#)). An EU labour migration policy or EU recruitment strategies for students and qualified employees coming from third-world countries are also advocated by citizens. Related, one citizen highlights the need for increased competences on migration for the EU so that it can ensure management of migration in accordance with the principles and values of the Union (see [idea](#)).

A group of respondents advances the idea of fostering a selective type of immigration. This type of participants usually sees migration in a positive light because of the economic advantages it creates. They propose targeting specific countries to attract their talents (see [idea](#)), or to easing the mobility criteria between economically advanced democracies, in the West and in Asia alike notably in the context of Free Trade Agreements (see [idea](#)).

Some contributions also reflect on issues of inequality affecting the existing asylum seeking process. For example, they highlight the fact that the share of male asylum seekers is significantly higher than that of female asylum seekers or families (see [idea](#)). Others report the difficulties faced by LGBTI asylum seekers, calling for greater protection and better translation support for this group (see [idea](#)).

### Addressing root causes of migration

Thinking about the Future of Europe, contributors highlight the need to address the root causes of migration to tackle the migration issues the EU is currently facing.

Suggestions in this regard range from establishing equal trade relations, investing in more development aid plans and academic training, and the professional development of people living in third-world countries (see [idea](#)).

A particular group of contributions takes the EU to task on the basis that it has played a part in regional destabilisation through, for example, European military involvement or by destabilising subsidised agricultural exports to developing countries (see [idea](#)).

### Border control

The theme of border control again represents the two opposing stances on migration.

In general there is support for more organised and coordinated efforts when it comes to border control, with calls for more comprehensive border controls, including push-back authority (see example of [idea](#)), greater support for Frontex, with a better definition of its functions (see [idea](#)), and a legally binding approach to Search and Rescue (SAR) efforts in the Mediterranean (see [idea](#)).

Other contributions call for more solidarity and respect for human rights. The ideas discussed here are, for example, a centralised EU distribution system based on solidarity, funding to improve border reception infrastructures (housing and food) or a supranational agency managing European refugee camps, co-managed by different countries and funded by EU resources (see example of [idea](#)).

### Integration

Another theme under the migration topic concerns ideas discussing integration with calls for a monitored follow-up pathway for migrants in order to ensure full integration in the EU Member State. One idea sees great potential in recognising and further activating migrants and members of receiving communities as change-makers (see [idea](#)). Education is felt to be key to integration, with language and European values playing a central role. In this connection, contributors feel that there is a need for sufficiently funded programmes to support the inclusion of school-age migrant children in the public education system (see [idea](#)). Contributors express the opinion that a geographical distribution of migrants is key in order to achieve integration (see example of [idea](#)) and avoid the formation of ghettos (see [idea](#)). There are calls for information campaigns and programmes to sensitise EU citizens to counter racism in order to move towards a truly inclusive society. In connection with the opinions regarding racism and labour market exclusion, there are calls for equal and fair treatment of legally residing third-country nationals (see [idea](#)).

### Facilitating and supporting the acquisition of the EU citizenship

Some participants lament the lack of rights of permanent residents in the EU. They observe that the Union does not grant the right to vote to its permanent residents who had been living in the EU for a long time, or other advantages which could make it more attractive for them to apply for EU citizenship (see [idea](#)).

This issue is considered by some contributors to be particularly pressing when it comes to UK citizens who had been living in the EU before Brexit. One idea leading to controversial discussions puts forward is to introduce a fast-track procedure to get EU-wide rights for British citizens who had been living in the EU before Brexit (see [idea](#)).



***For more information:***

- [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#)
- [Migration](#)
- [Asylum and migration: facts and figures](#)
- [Asylum and Migration - EU migration policy](#)
- [Strengthening the external borders](#)
- [IT systems supporting Asylum and Migration policies](#)

***Find out more about all EU policies and activities:***

- [European Parliament website](#)
- [Council of the EU website](#)
- [European Commission website](#)

This document was prepared by the Common Secretariat of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Please follow the digital platform on the Conference on the Future of Europe ([www.futureu.europa.eu](http://www.futureu.europa.eu)) to see more information and to read the posts of other citizens who have already posted their ideas and thoughts. **To find out more about the ideas submitted so far, please also consult the [first interim report from the Platform](#).**