

THINK TANKS' THOUGHTS

Europe's People's Forum has selected various think tanks' articles focused on themes that we find most current and interesting for the activists, politicians and connoisseurs engaged in the policies of the European Union. The articles were published in October.

EU's Future institutional Structure and Policies

The euro area continues to suffer from critical weaknesses but its members are divided on how to address the problems. Several authors in the column [How to reconcile risk sharing and market discipline in the euro area \(CEPR\)](#) propose six reforms which would improve the euro area's financial stability, political cohesion, and potential for delivering prosperity to its citizens, all while addressing the priorities and concerns of participating countries.

The digital transformation of our society brings about new opportunities for the healthcare sector to become more effective, sustainable and accessible. In [Digital health: How can the EU help make the most out of it? \(EPC\)](#), Simona Guagliardo discusses the benefits of and barriers to the deployment of digital solutions in health. She calls for the EU to develop a comprehensive approach that takes into account data protection and security, ICT infrastructure development and public support.

Sofia Fernandes and Thomas Pellerin-Carlin, propose in [EUROPE NEEDS A SOCIAL PACT FOR THE ENERGY TRANSITION \(Jacques Delors Institute\)](#) the adoption of a Social Pact for the Energy Transition to be agreed by the EU, the Member States, regions, cities and social partners. This is the best way to guarantee the "just transition" the Paris Agreement calls for, and to improve the living and working conditions for all Europeans as to achieve the "socially-fair energy transition" the European Commission promotes.

EU-policies on Social Dimension, Labour Market Protections and Trade Agreements

The use of blockchain, in general, would reduce trade costs, increase transparency, safeguard against fraud, and overall expedite trade by reducing customs clearance times. If the European Commission launched the 1st of February the EU Blockchain Observatory and Forum, customs regimes around the globe have done little to promote the technology, and firms have consequently been slow to adopt it. This may strike some as strange, given all of its potential benefits and the ostensible ubiquity of the word according to Nicolas Botton in [Blockchain and Trade: Not a Fix for Brexit, but Could Revolutionise Global Value Chains \(If Governments Let It\) \(ECIPE\)](#). The author explains what blockchain can (and cannot) do for trade and what the world should anticipate from it.

The economic context characterized by uncertainty and stagnation has created a blockage in the millennial life cycle, an adult purgatory, where key choices associated with moving onto the next phase of adulthood are made later than previous generations. There is the idea that today's young people cannot hope to achieve the same prosperity as older generations. The study of Kate Alexander Shaw [BABY BOOMERS VS MILLENNIALS AND THE NEW POLITICS OF INTERGENERATIONAL FAIRNESS \(FEPS\)](#) looks into the emergence of this intergenerational fairness discourse with a specific focus in the UK.

Democracy, Citizens, Human Rights and Independence of Media

In the paper [En Marche l'Europe? - A strategy to implement democratic conventions \(EPC\)](#), Corina Stratulat, Yann-Sven Rittelmeyer and Paul Butcher lay out a detailed and ambitious framework to ensure that the President Macron's idea of holding 'democratic conventions' across Europe delivers on its potential, while minding the pitfalls. At EPF we praises the CSO involvement and the national approach but are a bit critical because the model does not involve neutral, transparent and professional facilitation, no online consultations to reach all the citizens and no scientific collection and feedback possibility.

Rule of law is a persistent problem in Central Eastern and Southern EU member states. In [THE MISSING DIMENSION IN RULE OF LAW POLICY \(Cligendael\)](#), Adriaan Schout and Michiel Luining analyse the rule of law indicators across EU and distinguishes between the will to breach rule of law and the lack of compliance for other reasons. The entry of new member states is a political decision and not based on proven rule of law. The authors conclude that the EU now needs to move beyond naming and shaming instruments and to start building dedicated EU multilevel networks as a way forward.

With an American point of view the article [Liberal internationalism: historical trajectory and current prospects \(Chatman House\)](#) written by Beate Jahn offers a thorough analysis of international liberalism and the causes and consequences of its crisis in US and in EU. With the spread of democracy and human rights and with the increased globalization of trade the domestic populations in traditional liberal Western democracies feel threatened by export of jobs and investments instead of import of goods and by refugees and migrants arriving as a result of their freedoms at home. Those who engaged in the transformation of what was called the East European countries should indeed read this article – and maybe add new perspectives.

Policies on Migrants and Refugees, Schengen and Development Aid

Unaccompanied children in need of international protection represent at least 5.3% of the over one million migrants who have lodged first time asylum application in the EU in 2016. This numbers is constantly rising. However, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) still suffer in Europe which has negative consequences. According to Enza Roberta Petrillo in [Vulnerable and voiceless in the move: Unaccompanied child migrants in the EU \(FEPS\)](#), the European Union should overcome the Member States' increasing lack of solidarity and expand the EU regular migration package, starting from the family reunification procedures.

Immigration tops the list of challenges of greatest concern to European Union citizens but it is also one of the most divisive policy topics in today's Europe. EU countries face a challenge: they must integrate immigrants while managing often distorted public perceptions of immigration. In [People on the move: migration and mobility in the European Union \(Bruegel\)](#) Uuriintuya Batsaikhan, Zsolt Darvas and Inês Gonçalves Raposo assess the immigration challenge that the EU faces, analyse public perceptions, map migration patterns in the EU and review the literature on the economic impact of immigration. The authors finally set out twelve policy recommendations related to public dialogue, refugees, integration of immigrants and labour shortages.

Priorities and Values in EU Foreign and Security Policy

On 6th February, the European Commission will adopt its Western Balkans Strategy. After years of taking the Western Balkan region for granted, the EU has woken up to the dramatic deterioration of democratic standards in its nearest neighbourhood. Erwan Fouéré in his paper [A decisive year for the EU's re-engagement with the Western Balkans \(CEPS\)](#) explains how EU should support the democratic transformation in the region. He offers a number of policy recommendations for EU to reassert its leadership in the debate about the future of the Western Balkans.

In [Opportunities amid disorder: Europe and the world in 2018 \(ECFR\)](#), the ECFR staff take a view and identify the opportunities and threats that Europe will encounter in 2018. In this detailed and comprehensive report, the authors first address the question of economic trend, international security and technology. However, the key to understanding the future lies in not just identifying the most important trends but also assessing how purposeful behaviour by key actors might reverse these trends. Thus, they approach a regional overview of US, Russia, Turkey, Latin America, Asia and Middle East.

Brexit Negotiations and National Political Issues

In [Brexit: What if Britain changes its mind? \(EPC\)](#), even if the author admit that there is a lot of nonsense talked about the likelihood and consequences of Britain changing its mind on Brexit, Andrew Duff explores the new terms and conditions that would be likely to apply to the UK's renewed membership. This article aims to cast some helpful light on the question of 'what if?'.

Ukraine's youth has a very high political apathy, around 65 percent are "not interested at all" or "rather disinterested" in politics. According to Gwendolyn Sasse in [Ukraine's Youth: Politically Disinterested and Low Trust in the EU \(Carnegie Europe\)](#), it should come as a warning to all reform-oriented forces in Ukraine, especially at a moment when those in government are putting personal interests ahead of the country's reform agenda.
