



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2019)0098

The state of the debate on the Future of Europe

European Parliament resolution of 13 February 2019 on the state of the debate on the future of Europe (2018/2094(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter, the Additional Protocol thereto and the revised version thereof,
- having regard to Article 295 TFEU,
- having regard to the informal meeting of 27 heads of state or government of 29 June 2016,
- having regard to the Bratislava Declaration and Roadmap of 27 Member States of 16 September 2016,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2016 with recommendations to the Commission on the establishment of an EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2017 on a European Pillar of Social Rights²,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2017 on improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty³,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2017 on possible evolutions of and

¹ OJ C 215, 19.6.2018, p. 162.

² OJ C 242, 10.7.2018, p. 24.

³ OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 215.

adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union¹,

- having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2017 on budgetary capacity for the euro area²,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 March 2017 on constitutional, legal and institutional implications of a common security and defence policy: possibilities offered by the Lisbon Treaty³,
- having regard to the Commission white paper of 1 March 2017 and the five subsequent reflection papers (COM(2017)2025, COM(2017)0206, COM(2017)0240, COM(2017)0291, COM(2017)0315, COM(2017)0358),
- having regard to the Rome Declaration of 25 March 2017,
- having regard to the UK's notification of 29 March 2017 of its intention to leave the European Union,
- having regard to the resolution of the European Economic and Social Committee on the Commission's White Paper on the Future of Europe and beyond of 6 July 2017⁴,
- having regard to the resolution of the Committee of the Regions on the Commission's White Paper on the Future of Europe – Reflections and scenarios for the EU-27 by 2025 of 12 May 2017⁵,
- having regard to the various contributions from national parliaments on the Commission's white paper and reflection papers on the future of Europe,
- having regard to the 2018 State of the Union address of 12 September 2018 by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker,
- having regard to the 2017 State of the Union address of 13 September 2017 by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and to his roadmap for a more united, stronger and more democratic union of 24 October 2017 (COM(2017)0650),
- having regard to French President Emmanuel Macron's Sorbonne speech of 26 September 2017, entitled 'Initiative for Europe: A sovereign, united democratic Europe',
- having regard to the informal summit of EU heads of state or government of 29 September 2017 in Tallinn,
- having regard to the Leaders' Agenda adopted at the European Council meeting of 19-20 October 2017,
- having regard to the Interinstitutional Proclamation on the European Pillar of Social

¹ OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 201.

² OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 235.

³ OJ C 263, 25.7.2018, p. 125.

⁴ OJ C 345, 13.10.2017, p. 11.

⁵ OJ C 306, 15.9.2017, p. 1.

Rights of 17 November 2017 of the Council, Parliament and the Commission,

- having regard to the Commission’s roadmap for deepening Europe’s Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) of 6 December 2017 (COM(2017)0821) and in particular the proposal to establish a European Monetary Fund (EMF) (COM(2017)0827), the proposal to integrate the substance of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance into the Union legal framework (COM(2017)0824) and the communication on a European Minister of Economy and Finance (COM(2017)0823),
- having regard to the European Council meeting of 14-15 December 2017, and to the Leaders’ meeting and Euro Summit meetings taking place in the margins thereof,
- having regard to the letter of 20 December 2017 by 26 national parliaments from 20 Member States on the transparency of decision-making in the Council,
- having regard to the declaration of 10 January 2018 adopted at the Summit of the Southern European Union Countries (Cyprus, France, Greece, Malta, Portugal and Spain), entitled ‘Bringing the EU forward in 2018’, as well as to the statement on the Future of Europe made by the Visegrad Group countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) on 26 January 2018 and to the joint statement of European Finance Ministers from Finland, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden of 6 March 2018,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 13 February 2018 entitled ‘A Europe that delivers: Institutional options for making the European Union’s work more efficient’ (COM(2018)0095),
- having regard to Commission Recommendation (EU) 2018/234 of 14 February 2018 on enhancing the European nature and efficient conduct of the 2019 elections to the European Parliament¹,
- having regard to the informal meeting of the 27 heads of state or government of 23 February 2018,
- having regard to its resolution of 1 March 2018 on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU in 2016²,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 April 2018 on the implementation of the Treaty provisions concerning national parliaments³,
- having regard to the Commission proposal for a Council regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027 of 2 May 2018 (COM(2018)0322),
- having regard to the Commission proposal for a Council decision on the system of Own Resources of the European Union of 2 May 2018 (COM(2018)0325),
- having regard to the EU-Western Balkans Summit of 17 May 2018,

¹ OJ L 45, 17.2.2018, p. 40.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0056.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0186.

- having regard to the Special Report of the European Ombudsman in strategic inquiry OI/2/2017/TE on the transparency of the Council legislative process of 16 May 2018,
 - having regard to the Meseberg Declaration of 19 June 2018,
 - having regard to the European Council meeting of 28-29 June 2018,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘Reflecting on Europe: the voice of local and regional authorities to rebuild trust in the European Union’ of 9 October 2018,
 - having regard to the Future of Europe debates with heads of state or government, hosted by the European Parliament,
 - having regard to the letter from the Committee on Legal Affairs,
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, the Committee on International Trade, the Committee on Budgetary Control and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (A8-0427/2018),
- A. whereas the European Union is an example of supranational integration without equal and has brought lasting peace, prosperity and welfare ever since the groundbreaking Schuman declaration of 9 May 1950; whereas shared security, respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights and the well-being of its peoples have been at the core of its aspirations and actions;
- B. whereas the free movement of goods, services, capital and people, the single currency, the Erasmus programme, regional, agricultural and cohesion policies, and Horizon 2020 are fundamental achievements of the Union, among many others, that contribute to the well-being of European citizens; whereas the Union needs to be endowed with the appropriate powers and resources to meet the challenges of the 21st century;
- C. whereas over the past few years the Union has faced multiple crises which have tested its resilience and capacity to act in a decisive and united manner;
- D. whereas the period from 2014 to 2017 has seen more socially balanced and effective monetary and macroeconomic policies, such as the non-standard policies of the European Central Bank, the flexibility of the Stability and Growth Pact and the Investment Plan for Europe, which have contributed to the EU’s economic and social recovery;
- E. whereas although Europe has managed to contain and partially overcome the most critical moments of the financial and economic crisis, important and urgent reforms still lie ahead at EU and Member State level in the area of economic governance in general and the euro area in particular, as well as in terms of further strengthening the single market and the recovery and development of the social standards of our welfare states;
- F. whereas in view of the multiple internal and external current and future challenges facing the Union in an unstable and complex global world, in particular those

concerning migration, demographic decline, terrorism, security, climate change, environmental issues, preserving the multilateral world order, completing the EMU, globalisation, free, fair and rules-based international trade, foreign affairs and defence, developing the social pillar, and combating anti-EU populism, intolerance and xenophobia, the EU should promote a renewed spirit of cooperation and solidarity among its Members based on Articles 2 and 3 of the TEU and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, while the objective enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe should continue to inspire the actions taken by the Union to further strengthen European integration and effectively address these challenges;

- G. whereas Parliament is very concerned about the rise of populist, xenophobic and anti-European movements all over Europe; whereas the Union and its Member States must strengthen their efforts to defend and promote the democratic values, founding principles and objectives of European integration;
- H. whereas the UK's referendum of June 2016 leading to its notification on 29 March 2017 of its intention to leave the European Union has intensified the debate on the future of the Union; whereas the negotiations on the envisaged withdrawal of the UK from the EU have revealed the high level of interdependence of the Member States, the degree to which we all rely on joint instruments and policies and the costs of any departure;
- I. whereas the intensification of the debate on the future of Europe is reflected, besides in Parliament's own resolutions on the future of Europe of 16 February 2017, in the Bratislava Declaration and Roadmap, the Commission White Paper on the Future of Europe, the Rome Declaration, the Leaders' Agenda adopted by the European Council in October 2017, and various contributions by individual Member States or groups of them, and by the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Region, as well as in plenary debates in the European Parliament on the 'Future of Europe' with heads of state or government, in interparliamentary committee meetings and in the organisation of citizens' dialogues and consultations by various institutions, bodies and Member States;
- J. whereas the Parlemeter survey, conducted between 8 and 26 September 2018, shows that 62 % of respondents believe that their countries' membership is a good thing and that 68 % consider that their country has benefited from its EU membership, the highest result measured since 1983;
- K. whereas the values and principles on which the Union is based define a sphere with which every European citizen can identify, irrespective of political or cultural differences linked to national identity;
- L. whereas the upcoming elections to the European Parliament present an opportunity to take stock of the debate on the future of Europe, also in view of the principal institutional priorities of the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council for the new term;
- M. whereas the EU is facing a particularly important period in its construction process, given the nature and dimension of its challenges, and whereas these can only be solved by working together and through greater and better integration and solidarity among Member States exploiting to the full extent the current provisions of the Lisbon Treaty

and, subsequently, reforming the Treaties in order to improve institutional decision-making and ensure the appropriate balance of competences;

- N. whereas institutional reforms should aim at making decision-making processes more democratic and enhancing the transparency of decision-making and the accountability of the Union and its institutions; whereas, in view of these aims, it is an appropriate and opportune time to promote meaningful civic participation in the European project and organise consultations and encourage regular dialogue with citizens and representative associations, in line with the requirements of Article 11 of the TEU;
 - O. whereas the Union needs a stronger government structure, with enhanced democratic control by Parliament, to face the challenges of today and the future; whereas transparency and integrity on the part of the EU institutions and bodies are essential to build trust and confidence of citizens;
 - P. whereas the joint Franco-German Meseberg Declaration contains a series of reflections and proposals to strengthen European cooperation, in particular in the field of economic governance;
 - Q. whereas the promotion of a European dimension of culture and education is vital for reinforcing European citizenship, taking into account that the Union suffers from a knowledge deficit that means that the Union's achievements tend to be taken for granted by younger generations;
1. Recalls that Parliament's resolutions on the future of Europe of 16 February 2017 emphasised the importance of the single institutional framework and the Community method and suggested several proposals and initiatives of particular importance for European integration that can contribute to building Europe's future;
 2. Underlines that the Union must tackle the challenges of its future with greater and better political integration, with full respect for and promotion of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the democratic principles and by working together; highlights that citizens want a Europe that protects their rights, welfare and social model on the basis of shared sovereignty, which requires appropriate political integration; invites the heads of state or government to pursue this path in a renewed spirit of solidarity and collaboration;
 3. Points out that the heads of state or government who addressed Parliament in plenary during the debates on the future of Europe all acknowledged that there is a need to face the challenges of the future together and to do better what can only be achieved together;
 4. Reiterates its belief that differentiated integration must remain open to all Member States and continue to act as a method of deeper European integration and solidarity, which should not be confused with the idea of a Europe *à la carte*; insists on the need to avoid any perception of the creation of first-class and second-class membership within the Union in the current debate on differentiated integration;
 5. Recalls that differentiated integration should not be a way to reduce political integration;
 6. Stresses that the crisis has produced an imbalance between the main institutions of the Union, and that the European Council is exercising its own political initiative to the

detriment of the Commission's right of initiative and is reinforcing the intergovernmental method; considers, however, that the Community method is best suited for the functioning of the Union; recalls the numerous resolutions adopted by Parliament in this regard and reiterates its call on the European Council to fully respect the boundaries of its competences as enshrined, in particular, in Article 15 of the TEU;

7. Reiterates that unanimity, which the Treaties require in some fundamental matters, is an almost insurmountable obstacle in important moments and decisions, and advocates therefore, with regard to decision-making procedures, the principle of qualified majority voting (QMV) in the Council and, for legislation, the use of the ordinary legislative procedure in all areas where this is possible; recalls that under the current Treaties this can be achieved by using the various *passerelle* clauses or, in the case of enhanced cooperation, by using Article 333 of the TFEU;
8. Welcomes in this regard the announcement by President Juncker in his State of the Union addresses of 13 September 2017 and 12 September 2018 of the intention to propose using QMV in the Council in certain specific policy areas, but regrets that the multiannual financial framework (MFF) regulation is not among the subjects listed;
9. Welcomes in particular the fact that the Commission has proposed using QMV in the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) as regards positions on human rights questions in international fora, decisions to establish sanctions regimes, and decisions to launch or implement civilian missions in response to crises abroad, given the importance of speeding up decision-making and making it more effective, and the need for the Union to speak more with one voice;
10. Reiterates its suggestion to transform the Council into a true legislative chamber on equal footing with Parliament, as outlined in its resolution of 16 February 2017 on improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty, and to improve the transparency of its decision-making process; points in this context to the special report by the Ombudsman on the transparency of the Council's legislative process and to the letter of COSAC delegations of 20 December 2017 calling for more transparency in political decision-making, in particular from the Council and informal bodies such as the Eurogroup, in line with similar requests made by Parliament in this respect;
11. Considers that there are different options to render the Commission more agile by adapting the structure and working methods of the College of Commissioners, for example with the appointment of Vice-Presidents responsible for a cluster of policies or the appointment of senior and junior Commissioners;
12. Recalls that, although Parliament does not have a formal right of legislative initiative under the current Treaties, it may request that the Commission submit any appropriate proposal on matters that, in its view, require a Union act for the purpose of implementing the Treaties, and reminds the Commission, in accordance with Article 10 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 13 April 2016 on Better Law-Making¹, of its obligation to give prompt and detailed consideration to requests for proposals for Union acts; recalls furthermore that this interinstitutional agreement also contains provisions on interinstitutional annual and multiannual programming, which provide an additional

¹ OJ L 123, 12.5.2016, p. 1.

tool for Parliament to steer the legislative agenda;

13. Recalls its proposal according to which, in the event of a possible future revision of the Treaties, the right of legislative initiative could also be attributed to Parliament as the direct representative of EU citizens;
14. Insists that Parliament's power of scrutiny and in particular its right of inquiry should be reinforced and that it should be granted specific, genuine and clearly delimited powers;
15. Takes note of the report of the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and 'Doing Less More Efficiently' of 10 July 2018, presenting recommendations on a new way of working on subsidiarity and proportionality; considers that many of these recommendations, particularly regarding the role of national parliaments within the Union and the advisability of reforming the early warning system, have already been highlighted by Parliament; recalls that the Task Force found that there is EU added value in all existing areas of EU activity and therefore did not identify any Treaty competences or policy areas that should be re-delegated definitively, in whole or in part, to the Member States;
16. Welcomes the recommendations of the different institutions calling for a more active role for national parliaments, especially in controlling the action of their governments in the European institutions; recalls also the fundamental role of local authorities and especially regional parliaments with legislative powers;
17. Stresses the importance of cooperation at interinstitutional level, while respecting each institution's prerogatives as enshrined in the Treaties, this cooperation having been given a new framework with the Interinstitutional Agreement of 13 April 2016 on Better Law-Making, and underlines that simplification is an ongoing exercise which aims at making the processes and procedures at EU level easier to understand, ensuring that views from all relevant stakeholders are taken into account and ultimately facilitating the participation of citizens in the work of the European Union;
18. Welcomes the joint proclamation endorsing the European Pillar of Social Rights signed by the Council, Parliament and the Commission during the Gothenburg Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth; points out that the competences and tools required to deliver on the pillar are mainly in the hands of local, regional and national authorities, as well as social partners and civil society, while the European Semester offers a framework to keep track of the performance of the Member States in this respect; recalls, furthermore, in this context that social dialogue has proven to be an indispensable instrument to improve EU policy- and law-making and strengthen the social legitimacy thereof;
19. Notes the non-binding nature of the Social Pillar, which is unable as such to shift the EU focus from economic, internal market and fiscal policies to social targets; points out that the horizontal social clause enshrined in Article 9 of the TFEU requires the Union to give careful consideration to the impact of EU legislation on social standards and employment and with due consultation of social stakeholders;
20. Stresses that environmental protection must be a high priority for the EU in light of the current environmental degradation, and must be mainstreamed in all policies and actions of the Union; underlines that the EU should take effective action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the share of renewables in the energy mix and

energy savings to the levels necessary to meet the objectives set in the Paris Agreement;

21. Calls once again on the Member States to sign and ratify the revised European Social Charter and the European Convention on Social Security (ETS No 78);
22. Underlines the importance of continuing the process of deepening and completing the EMU in order to contribute to preserving the stability of the single currency and enhancing the convergence of economic, fiscal and labour market policies and social standards among the Member States; reiterates that, with the exception of Denmark's opt-out, every single Member State is bound to adopt the euro; supports further steps in the development of the ESM;
23. Stresses in this regard the need for strong political commitment, efficient governance and democratic accountability at European and national level, in particular parliamentary scrutiny at the various stages of the European Semester by both the European Parliament and national parliaments, in order to provide the economic and financial governance of the euro area with enhanced social, economic and democratic legitimacy and improve the follow-up of Union recommendations;
24. Recalls its view, in its resolution of 16 February 2017 on possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union, that fiscal and economic policy should become a 'shared competence' between the Union and the Member States;
25. Notes the convergence of positions taken by France and Germany on the idea of a budgetary capacity for the euro area; reiterates its view that such a capacity should be developed within the EU framework;
26. Takes note of the Commission proposal for a European Investment Stabilisation Function and is discussing new budgetary tools aimed at stabilisation;
27. Takes note of the Commission proposal for a Reform Support Programme; stresses the importance of not weakening Parliament's co-decision and oversight powers in the spending of EU funds; is concerned that in the period 2011-2017 only 9 % of country-specific recommendations (CSRs) were fully implemented; takes note of the convergence facility, which will provide an incentive and help Member States outside the euro area with sustainable fiscal and economic policies to implement reforms and fulfil the criteria for introducing the euro;
28. Welcomes the future InvestEU programme and stresses that the fund should continue to reduce the investment gap in the EU; supports investments in tangible and intangible assets, including cultural heritage, in order to foster growth, investment and employment, with a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), small- and mid-cap companies and social enterprises, and thereby contribute to improved well-being and fairer income distribution and economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Union;
29. Notes the Commission communication on a European Minister of Economy and Finance; points out that merging the positions of Commission Vice-President for Economic Affairs and Chair of the Eurogroup could improve parliamentary accountability at European level;

30. Is of the view that the future EU budget should promote European added value in terms of socio-economic impact, support the modernisation of EU policies, ensure finances for new challenges and continue contributing towards economic and social convergence and cohesion between and within Member States so as to enhance European solidarity, stability, equality and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, including in light of the EU's commitments under the Paris Agreement, secure respect for and promotion of fundamental values as stated in Articles 2 and 3 of the TEU and be endowed with new own resources, taking into account the work of the High Level Group on Own Resources;
31. Welcomes the fact that the Commission proposal on own resources introduces new real own resources, as requested by Parliament, but regrets that no other possible sources of revenue were introduced; expresses concern at the Commission proposal for the MFF for 2021-2027, because it lacks a financial commitment to face the current challenges for the EU as well as those that lie ahead; regrets the position taken by some Member States that refuse to provide more resources to the EU, despite unanimous recognition of the need to face new challenges and responsibilities, and therefore the need for more financial resources; points out that spending at EU level can save money at national level by avoiding duplication and through economies of scale;
32. Underlines the importance of ensuring upward economic and social convergence in the European Semester process; recognises the importance of the establishment of the European Pillar of Social Rights; notes that the European Semester has been strengthened and streamlined but highlights that better involvement of national parliaments would help to improve national ownership, which would lead to better implementation of CSRs, thus improving the European Semester process; notes that it is first and foremost the responsibility of the Member States to choose adequate and sustainable fiscal and economic policies;
33. Regrets that, to date, there has been no practical follow-up to its call for a convergence code – to be adopted by co-decision – in order to have a more effective framework for economic policy coordination; recalls furthermore that, while acknowledging that the European Semester has already been streamlined, Parliament called for an interinstitutional agreement to be concluded to give Parliament a more substantial role in the European Semester; recalls in this context its suggestion, specifically in line with its resolution on the implementation of the Treaty provisions concerning national parliaments, that budgetary calendars at national and European level need to be better coordinated throughout the process in order to better involve both the European Parliament and national parliaments in the European Semester;
34. Underlines the importance of commitment to the process of completing the Banking Union and the need to ensure openness and equal treatment of all Member States participating in the Banking Union; recalls that the completion of the Banking Union, including a European Deposit Insurance Scheme and a fiscal backstop for the Single Resolution Fund, must continue, as must measures to achieve risk reduction;
35. Welcomes the anti-money laundering proposals presented by the Commission in the context of the European System of Financial Supervision (ESFS) review; encourages the Council to complete with Parliament the legislative negotiations before the end of this legislative term, as anti-money laundering policies need to be strengthened in order to avoid future situations whereby financial institutions are actively facilitating money

laundering;

36. Invites the Commission, with the help of the European supervisory authorities, to identify and remove obstacles to the internal market and help to ensure consumer protection; is of the opinion that one of the main priorities of the Commission should be to effectively enforce EU legislation;
37. Calls on the Commission to prioritise regulations over directives as the legislative tool for the Banking Union and financial services legislation, where appropriate and on a case-by-case basis, in order to avoid creating fragmentation and a situation whereby supervisors have to deal with different national regimes;
38. Emphasises the urgent need to complete the Capital Markets Union; stresses that deep and well-integrated capital markets are complementary to the Banking Union, due to their contribution to private risk-sharing, increasing economic convergence, helping to cushion future shocks and potentially leading to a better allocation of funds where needed; calls for a comprehensive study on the most appropriate framework in order to better take into account the rapidly evolving nature of financial services; highlights the fact that better access to additional sources of financing would be especially helpful for start-ups and SMEs, promoting their solid growth and sustainable development;
39. Welcomes the work done so far and deems it necessary to continue the comprehensive review of existing VAT legislation; urges the need to step up the fight against tax fraud, tax avoidance and tax evasion; notes the Commission's work on fair taxation of the digital economy;
40. Invites all EU institutions and bodies, including the Commission, the European Central Bank, the European Investment Bank and the Single Supervisory Mechanism, to enhance to an even greater extent their communication efforts in order to better explain their work and to improve the information available to EU citizens;
41. Stresses that Europe is a positive force in the world and should continue to be, by upholding its values, multilateralism and international law; recalls that the Union and its Member States are the largest contributor to international development aid;
42. Welcomes the Council decision establishing permanent structured cooperation (PESCO), the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and the European Defence Fund (EDF) as important steps towards a common defence policy, and notes proposals by certain Member States for an EU Security Council and a European Intervention Initiative; recalls its call for the establishment of a permanent Council of Defence Ministers chaired by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), and underlines the importance of appropriate democratic accountability of decisions taken in this area and the need for reinforced cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments in this regard;
43. Welcomes the strengthening of the European Civil Protection Mechanism and calls once again for the creation of a European Civil Protection Corps, given that the existing Treaties provide a good basis for this;
44. Recalls the Union's pending accession to the European Convention on Human Rights;

and calls for the incorporation of the Euratom Treaty's provisions in the TEU and the TFEU;

45. Deplores the absence of an agreement among the Member States on the priorities and implementation of an EU-level comprehensive immigration policy, which would make it possible to organise and regulate migratory flows, control the EU's external borders more effectively, cooperate with countries of origin and transit, and guarantee respect for the fundamental rights of migrants and asylum seekers, among other objectives; underlines that the obvious contradictions in interests exposed by Member States, as well as the discontent voiced by citizens, need to be overcome in order not to jeopardise the European integration project, which suffers as a direct result of an instrumentalisation of the migration issue by the Eurosceptic parties;
46. Recalls its position on the revision of the Dublin system; underlines furthermore the importance of strengthening its partnership with Africa and takes note of the Commission communication of 12 September 2018 on 'Enhancing legal pathways to Europe: an indispensable part of a balanced and comprehensive migration policy establishing legal channels for migration' (COM(2018)0635);
47. Stresses the importance of a common agricultural policy (CAP) supported by a well-funded budget; recalls the CAP's central importance to the history of the Union; notes the fundamental role that it plays in ensuring vibrant rural regions and a secure supply of food; notes that the upcoming reform of the CAP is an opportunity to strengthen the delivery of its objectives; highlights that the CAP is one of the oldest policies, and must continue to be one of the most important and most integrated policies, and that it will continue to contribute to building Europe's future through greater integration, preservation of the environment and food security and safety for the EU's citizens; notes that agricultural and rural development policies have great potential in terms of providing public goods; stresses that European farming plays a vital role in feeding the planet and providing jobs for 46 million people; highlights the role played by the CAP in maintaining the state and quality of soil, water and other natural resources; stresses the crucial role of agriculture in the Union's priorities to mitigate the effect of climate change and promote sustainable development; underlines the importance of a well-funded and reformed CAP to tackle the many challenges the Union will have to face in the future; underlines that the CAP is not simply about farming and farmers but is also about helping and developing the wider rural communities in which they operate;
48. Stresses that the common commercial policy must remain a fundamental pillar of the Union's external policy, given that it has direct implications for the lives of citizens, and that it must help the Union to adapt to its new role in a world of multiple leading players on the international stage; urges the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service to cooperate in the following areas:
 - a) strengthening the common commercial policy by integrating it into the wider policy framework; taking the lead on the world's trade policy at multilateral and bilateral level;
 - b) leading the defence of an open, rules-based, fair and sustainable development-oriented global trading system, ensuring that EU companies can operate globally within a framework of equal conditions, predictable rules, fair competition and defined obligations, which should include working constructively on a common

Union position in the UN intergovernmental negotiations on liability for human rights violations and promoting corporate accountability and binding due diligence obligations with regard to supply and production chains;

- c) keeping Parliament fully and immediately informed about the negotiations and the Council's mandate, and throughout the implementation of international agreements, with the aim of ensuring that it is able to exercise its powers and prerogatives; simplifying and shortening the negotiation processes and reinforcing Parliament's scrutiny throughout; increasing transparency towards EU citizens by publishing the negotiating directives (mandates) for trade agreements before the start of the negotiations; fully respecting Treaty provisions and recent EU case-law that establish the common commercial policy as an exclusive competence of the Union;
 - d) systematically including chapters on digital trade, SMEs, binding and enforceable trade and sustainable development in addition to gender-equality provisions in trade agreements and taking a lead on these topics in multilateral discussions; defending the data privacy of EU citizens;
 - e) strengthening the coherence of the common commercial policy with the CFSP, European development policy and climate policy in order to guarantee the values and objectives set out in Article 3(5) of the TEU and Articles 21, 207 and 208 of the TFEU, with full adherence to the European Consensus on Development;
49. Considers that the Union should continue to advance international trade while defending social, labour and environmental standards; warns against trade wars, which only produce losers and increase political and security tensions;
50. Recalls that according to Article 17(7) of the TEU, 'taking into account the elections to the European Parliament and after having held the appropriate consultations, the European Council, acting by a qualified majority, shall propose to the European Parliament a candidate for President of the Commission'; underlines its determination to continue with the *Spitzenkandidaten* process for the election of the next Commission President in line with the Lisbon Treaty, and welcomes the support of the Commission and certain Member States in this respect; stresses that in the process of the investiture of the President of the Commission, proper consultations with Parliament are of paramount importance, as, after the elections, it will determine the candidate which can be backed by a majority of its component Members and will transmit the result of its internal deliberations to the European Council; recalls that the candidate must have been designated as a *Spitzenkandidat* by one of the European political parties and must have campaigned for the post of President of the Commission in the run-up to the European elections; considers that this practice has amply proved its worth, strengthening the societal legitimacy of the European elections and the supranational role of the European Parliament as an exponent of European citizenship and European democracy; warns once again that Parliament will be ready to reject any candidate in the investiture procedure of the President of the Commission who was not appointed as a *Spitzenkandidat* in the run-up to the European elections;
51. Regrets the frequent and widespread temptation to attribute unpopular decisions to 'Brussels' and to free national authorities of their responsibilities and politics, given that this unjust and opportunistic attitude damages Europe, promotes anti-European

sentiments and nationalism and discredits the EU institutions; considers furthermore that false attributions are contrary to the imperative of accountability of governmental action; stresses that proper implementation and application of EU law is essential for delivering on Union policies and for fostering mutual trust between the Union, Member States and citizens and expresses concern at the actions of Member States that willingly fail to do so;

52. Underlines the need for a stronger assessment of the social and environmental consequences of EU policies, by keeping in mind also the cost of non-legislation at European level (the so-called ‘cost of non Europe’);
53. Underlines the need to give particular focus to EU administrative law, as indicated in its resolution of 9 June 2016 calling for an open, efficient and independent European Union administration¹;
54. Underlines the need to strengthen the European public space as a supranational democratic space; stresses that the major challenges Europe is facing must be addressed and discussed from a European perspective and not from a national perspective only, and by giving full effect to the provisions enshrined in Articles 10 and 11 of the TEU; points out that, for this reason, European democracy needs to strengthen the transnational dimension of its objectives and challenges, while promoting a European citizenship based on the common values in the European Union and with more European institutional education and a deliberative, more participatory societal framework as well as a more European and less nationally focused campaign for the upcoming European elections in 2019;
55. Welcomes the Union’s approach taken to the negotiations on the United Kingdom’s orderly withdrawal from the European Union, and underlines the remarkable unity displayed by the EU institutions and Member States; notes that experience in the negotiations has shown the enormous complexities of such decisions;
56. Underlines once more that neither national sovereignty nor subsidiarity can justify or legitimise the systematic refusal on the part of a Member State to comply with the fundamental values of the European Union which inspired the introductory articles of the European Treaties, which every Member State has willingly endorsed and committed to respect; underlines furthermore that upholding these values is fundamental for the cohesion of the European project, the rights of all Europeans and the mutual trust needed among the Member States; asks the Commission once again to swiftly submit a proposal giving effect to its resolution of 25 October 2016 with recommendations to the Commission on the establishment of an EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights;
57. Recalls that, according to the Court of Justice (Joined Cases C-8/15 P to C-10/15 P²), the European institutions are bound to respect and uphold the provisions of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights even when they act outside the EU legal framework;

¹ OJ C 86, 6.3.2018, p. 126.

² Judgment of the Court (Grand Chamber) of 20 September 2016, *Ledra Advertising Ltd and Others v European Commission and European Central Bank*, ECLI:EU:C:2016:701.

58. Reiterates that, in the context of the debate on the future of Europe, consideration must be given to the issue of how the Union budgetary system could be reformed to provide an adequate budget to guarantee the funding of planned policies, a better balance between predictability and responsiveness and how to ensure that overall funding arrangements are no more complex than necessary to achieve Union policy goals and ensure accountability; is of the opinion that the pre-conditionality of policies must be reinforced, where necessary and without jeopardising the functionality of programmes, so as to ensure effective sound financial management in the implementation of the Union's spending;
59. Stresses the importance of focusing in particular on more efficient use of funding and on democratic EU budget control mechanisms; calls for all the EU institutions to enhance their procedures and practices aimed at safeguarding the financial interests of the Union, and to actively contribute to a results-oriented discharge process; believes, in this context, that the discharge procedure is an indispensable instrument of democratic accountability towards the citizens of the Union and recalls the difficulties repeatedly encountered owing to a lack of cooperation on the part of the Council; insists that the Council must be accountable and transparent, as are the other institutions; stresses that there should be no exceptions to this;
60. Draws attention to the phenomenon of corruption, which has significant financial consequences and poses a serious threat to democracy, the rule of law and public investment; points out the importance of safeguarding EU taxpayers' money against fraud and other illegal activities affecting the financial interests of the Union;
61. Reiterates that taking into account the present state of the integration project, the EU must exhaust every possible avenue to ensure the full implementation of the Lisbon Treaty; points out that a subsequent revision of the Treaties should be based on a Convention being convened – guaranteeing inclusiveness through its composition of representatives and providing a platform for reflection and engagement with stakeholders and citizens – with a view to discussing and drawing conclusions from the various contributions to the reflection process on the future of Europe by the institutions and other bodies of the Union and the proposals put forward by heads of state or government, national parliaments and civil society and in citizen consultations;
62. Stresses that the process of reflecting on the future of Europe has already started on the basis of the various positions on EU reform taken by Parliament, the European Council and the Commission; regrets that, despite these positions, only marginal reforms have been envisaged; emphasises that, once the new Parliament and Commission are established they should capitalise on the work done in the previous legislature and start working on the proposals made;
63. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.