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# Think Tank

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: 29-03-2024

## Implications of the Digital Transformation on Different Social Groups

25-03-2024

MAZZONI Leonardo, BOTTA Marco, CARLINI Roberta, FILISTRUCCHI Lapo, MENENDEZ GONZALEZ Natalia, PARCU Pier Luigi

This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the PETI Committee, analyses the impact of digitalization on vulnerable social groups in terms of lower income and education, age, people affected by disabilities, minority ethnic groups and people living in remote/isolated geographic areas. It includes a review of the relevant academic literature, secondary data analysis, as well as three case studies focused on digital inequality in e-commerce and digital financial services. The study reviews the EU legislations relevant in the policy areas that are the object of the case studies and elaborates some recommendations on the actions that the EU could undertake to tackle the digital divide affecting vulnerable social groups.

EN

## European Council: Facts and figures

Briefing

22-03-2024

DRACHENBERG Ralf

The European Council brings together the Heads of State or Government of the 27 EU Member States in regular meetings which seek to define the overall political direction and priorities of the European Union. This briefing offers a selection of key facts and figures about this institution, detailing its membership, role, activities, political composition and development over time.

Briefing EN

## The European Council and the economic governance review

Briefing

20-03-2024

PAPUNEN Annastiina

The update of the EU's fiscal rules is almost complete – in time to be adopted ahead of the legislative break for the 2024 European elections. There has been a long-standing need to update the EU economic governance framework to make it better suited to the current and future challenges the EU is facing. The existing rules have formed over time since the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 saw the activation of the 'general escape clause' in the rules, giving Member States flexibility with their national budgets at a time of crisis. The validity of the clause was extended owing to the start of the war in Ukraine, but it was finally deactivated at the end of 2023. Since the beginning of 2023, the European Council had been calling for work on the economic governance review to be concluded by the end of 2023, so that the new rules could apply from the start of 2024 without transitional arrangements. The Commission published a package of legislative proposals in April 2023, which upheld the key reference values limiting government decifits to 3 % of gross domestic product (GDP), and debt levels to 60 % of GDP, as defined in the Maastricht Treaty. The Swedish, Spanish and Belgian Presidencies of the Council of the EU have taken the work forward. There have, however, been differences of views on the review process among the EU Member States. Germany, the largest EU Member State by population and one of the EU's key economic engines, has led a more fiscally prudent grouping, with proposals such as quantitative benchmarks and safeguards. The other approach, pushed by countries such as France, has been to stress the need for investment and flexibility. The whole process was not finalised by the end of 2023, as the European Council had requested, but Parliament's Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) and the Council of the EU adopted their respective positions in December 2023, thus enabling interinstitutional negotiations to start in January, once Parliament had confirmed its negotiating mandate. A political agreement was reached in February 2024. The aim is to have the new framework in place before the European elections in June 2024 and to start applying the rules from 2025. The first national plans outlining expenditure, reforms and investment in line with these new rules are expected to be prepared by 20 September 2024. This briefing looks at the process that led to the political agreement on the new rules, and at how the European Council has contributed to it through the guidance given in its conclusions.

Briefing EN

## Key Issues in the European Council - State of play in March 2024

18-03-2024

DRACHENBERG Ralf | PAPUNEN Annastiina | TORPEY REBECCA MARY

This EPRS publication, 'Key issues in the European Council', which is updated every quarter to coincide with European Council meetings, seeks to provide an overview of the institution's activities on major EU issues. It analyses 12 broad policy areas, explaining the legal and political background, the main priorities and orientations defined by the European Council and the results of its involvement to date, as well as some of the future challenges in each policy field.

EN

## Outlook for the meetings of EU leaders, 21-22 March 2024

Briefing

18-03-2024

DRACHENBERG Ralf

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At the 21-22 March European Council meeting, discussions will focus on Ukraine, security and defence, the Middle East and enlargement. Concerning security and defence, EU leaders will consider the new European defence industrial strategy presented by the European Commission. On Ukraine, they are expected to reiterate their commitment to supporting the country, and welcome the establishment of a Ukraine Assistance Fund regarding military aid as well as the 13th package of sanctions against Russia. The leaders may also discuss anew the use of revenues from frozen Russian assets to help Ukraine. As the Middle East remains a delicate topic, with differing positions, concrete conclusions with clear positions are unlikely. On enlargement, EU leaders will probably welcome the Commission's recommendation to open negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina. As is usual in the spring, EU leaders will endorse the policy priorities of the annual sustainable growth survey, and meet in an inclusive Euro Summit format.

Briefing EN

## 'This is Europe' debate in the European Parliament: Speech by Petteri Orpo, Prime Minister of Finland, 13 March 2024

14-03-2024

DRACHENBERG Ralf

'This is Europe' – an initiative proposed by the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola – consists of a series of debates with EU leaders to discuss their visions for the future of the European Union. The trilogy of resilience, competitiveness and security was at the centre of the vision of Europe that the Prime Minister of Finland, Petteri Orpo, shared with the European Parliament on 13 March 2024. Regarding competitiveness, he mentioned the single market, State aid, trade and economic governance. On security, he argued that the concept not only included security and defence, but also border protection and preparedness to make the EU more resilient. Orpo also emphasised that, for Finland, 'the EU is the most important political and economic frame of reference and community of values', and stressed that EU leaders had to 'fight against any pessimism and show an example and leadership'.

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## The Role of the European Council in the EU Constitutional Structure

27-02-2024

AKBIK Adina, DAWSON Mark

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This study examines the evolving role of the European Council in the EU's constitutional structure. As the study demonstrates, the increasing tendency of the European Council to instruct other EU institutions and its limited accountability have established an increasing gap between its de jure role under the EU Treaties and its de facto power in the larger system of EU governance.
This study was commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee.

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## Commission's fourth annual rule of law report

22-02-2024

MAKO Rafa

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In July 2023, the Commission adopted its fourth annual rule of law report, covering judicial independence, the anti-corruption framework, media freedom and checks and balances in all Member States. As in previous years, the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) has tabled a motion for a resolution on the report, highlighting progress and identifying areas for possible further improvement.

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## Transparency and targeting of political advertising

21-02-2024

BARANÍK Kamil

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On 6 November 2023, the Parliament and Council reached a provisional political agreement on a draft regulation on transparency and targeting of political advertising. The Parliament is due to vote at first reading during its February II plenary session. The Council is then expected to finalise the legislative procedure at first reading. Following their formal adoption, the new rules will start applying 18 months after their entry into force. However, those on the non-discriminatory provision of cross-border political advertising (including for European political parties and political groups) will take effect in time for the forthcoming European Parliament elections.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## Supplementary protection certificates for plant protection products

21-02-2024

BARANÍK Kamil

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During the February II plenary session, the European Parliament is expected to adopt its first-reading positions on two legislative files – a proposed regulation on the unitary supplementary protection certificate for plant protection products and a proposed recast regulation on supplementary protection certificates for plant protection products. The proposals are part of a broader initiative to harmonise patent protection within the single market.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## Human rights and democracy in the world: Assessing EU action in 2022

21-02-2024

SHREEVES Rosamund

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The latest annual review of EU external action to promote human rights and democracy, covering 2022, highlights a worsening environment, marked by Russia's war on Ukraine, multiple conflicts and emerging challenges. During its February II plenary session, the European Parliament is due to vote on its own yearly report on human rights and democracy in the world, responding to the annual report from the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and recommending future EU action.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

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21-02-2024

ALBUQUERQUE ARENGA MARGARIDA | CENTRONE MARCO | CESNOVAR CHRISTOF ERICH | FERNANDES MEENAKSHI | HEFLICH ALEKSANDRA | JANCOVA LENKA | KAMMERHOFER-SCHLEGEL Christa | NAVARRA Cecilia | PANELLA Lauro | SAULNIER JEROME LEON

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BG, CS, DA, DE, EL, EN, ES, FI, FR, GA, HU, IT, LT, LV, NL, PT, RO, SV, ET, HR, MT, PL, SK, SL

Mapping the cost of non-Europe: Europe could offer more buying power

Mapping the cost of non-Europe: Europe could strengthen the single market

Mapping the cost of non-Europe: Europe could uphold citizens’ rights and equality

Mapping the cost of non-Europe: Europe could better ensure public goods for all

## 'This is Europe' debate in the European Parliament: Speech by Klaus Iohannis, President of Romania, 7 February 2024

09-02-2024

DRACHENBERG Ralf

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'This is Europe' – an initiative proposed by the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola – consists of a series of debates with EU leaders to discuss their visions for the future of the European Union. EU unity was a central theme in the address of the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis, to the European Parliament on 7 February 2024. Iohannis also emphasised the EU's values and model of democracy, pointing to the European elections as a key moment in the continent's democratic process. For the Romanian President, the EU must assume a leading global role in maintaining the international order, as a precondition for preserving our way of life and the EU's values. In that context, he sees the strengthening of the EU's internal resilience as a fundamental condition for a stronger Union and for its increased geopolitical role. Iohannis stressed the benefits of EU membership whilst outlining how enlargement makes the EU more attractive. Finally, he emphasised the need to streamline the EU's decision-making capacity and – without excluding changes to the Treaties eventually – to use all available possibilities under the existing Treaties to smooth decision-making.

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## European media freedom act

Briefing

06-02-2024

LAANINEN Tarja

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An independent media is a pillar of democracy and an important part of the economy, helping to shape public opinion and hold those in power to account. In recent years, however, there have been increasingly worrying trends across the European Union (EU), as documented in the annual rule of law reports by the European Commission, and by other tools such as the Media Pluralism Monitor. Tabled on 16 September 2022, the proposed European media freedom act (EMFA) would introduce a new set of rules to promote media pluralism and independence across the EU. The aim is to prevent political interference in editorial decisions and ensure transparency of media ownership. The proposed act seeks to protect journalists from having to disclose their sources and from the use of spyware against them. It also sets requirements for audience measurement systems and transparent allocation of state advertising. Media content would be better protected against online content removal, and a new European board for media services would be established. The Council and Parliament reached a political agreement on 15 December 2023. The Council (at Coreper level) endorsed the agreed text on 19 January 2024. Parliament's plenary vote is scheduled for March 2024. Fourth edition. The 'EU Legislation in Progress' briefings are updated at key stages in the legislative procedure.

Briefing EN

European media freedom act

## Outcome of the special European Council meeting of 1 February 2024

Briefing

02-02-2024

DRACHENBERG Ralf

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EU leaders reached a swift and unanimous decision on the long-term EU budget at the special European Council meeting of 1 February, sending a strong and united message on the EU's continued support for Ukraine. Altogether, the European Council agreed to reinforce new priorities by €64.6 billion in a revised EU multiannual financial framework (MFF). Next to the MFF, leaders discussed the EU's military support to Ukraine, calling on the Council to agree to a European Peace Facility top-up by March 2024, and welcomed the agreement on the use of profits from frozen Russian assets to support the reconstruction of Ukraine. Leaders also discussed the situation in the Middle East, but again no conclusions were issued.

Briefing EN

## Interaction between the European Council and the European Parliament: The European Parliament President at European Council meetings

Briefing

31-01-2024

DRACHENBERG Ralf

The European Parliament President's opening remarks at European Council meetings are one of the two most visible and frequent interactions between Parliament and the European Council. While the European Parliament President is not a member of the European Council and does not remain for the entirety of the meeting, his or her participation is significant nonetheless. Meetings of the European Council, which includes the 27 EU leaders and the presidents of the European Council and the European Commission, are the only regular occasion when the highest level representatives of the three main EU institutions come together on a cross party political basis. Through the intervention of its President, Parliament can communicate its views on critical topics early in the policy process and highlight topics important to the Parliament which are not on the European Council's agenda, thus reminding EU Heads of State or Government of their salience. Originally, the European Parliament President's intervention was an ad hoc and informal matter. Over time it became a regular feature and was eventually codified in the EU Treaties. Article 235(2) TFEU spells out that 'the President of the European Parliament may be invited to be heard by the European Council'. Each Parliament President has brought a personal approach to their interactions with the European Council, with some seeing their role as more ceremonial, and others as more political. On occasion, Presidents have stayed at meetings after delivering their speech, either for an entire working session or even a full meeting. Such exceptions were often related to debates on institutional issues. Today, the EU Heads of State or Government seem to appreciate the President of Parliament's participation, as indicated by the lively discussions that follow the President's intervention, with real exchanges of views taking place. Shorter interventions, as well as the Parliament President's investment in constructive bilateral relations with the members of the European Council can provide a partial explanation for this. Currently, the European Parliament President is not just a permanent guest at the European Council's meetings, but considered a peer (i.e. a leader in the EU's governance system) – revealing how relations between the European Council and the European Parliament have developed over the years.

Briefing EN

## Outlook for the special European Council meeting on 1 February 2024

26-01-2024

DRACHENBERG Ralf

The main objective of the special European Council meeting on 1 February 2024 is to finalise EU leaders' position on the revision of the multiannual financial framework (MFF). While the aim is to reach an agreement among all 27 Member States, alternatives could be used based on an agreement of 26 Member States. EU leaders may also use the meeting to raise other topics – notably, the war in Ukraine and the possible use of frozen Russian assets, next steps in the enlargement process, security and defence and external relations.

EN

## Outcome of the European Council meeting of 14-15 December 2023

Briefing

20-12-2023

DRACHENBERG Ralf | TORPEY REBECCA MARY

Despite predictions of a long and inconclusive meeting, EU leaders achieved a historic and highly symbolic agreement to open accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova, grant candidate status to Georgia, and open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, once the latter complies fully with the membership criteria. Even if the European Council did not finalise discussions on the revision of the multiannual financial framework – which includes, inter alia, an aid package for Ukraine – it has moved much further towards an agreement than expected ahead of the meeting, with 26 EU leaders supporting the current proposal. The European Council held a strategic debate on the situation in the Middle East, but did not issue conclusions due to a lack of unity. EU leaders also addressed Ukraine, security and defence, migration, COP28, EU–Türkiye relations, the 2024-2029 Strategic Agenda and the fight against anti-semitism, racism and xenophobia.

Briefing EN

## Generative AI and watermarking

Briefing

13-12-2023

MADIEGA Tambiama André

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Generative artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to transform industries and society by boosting innovation, empowering individuals and increasing productivity. One of the drawbacks of the adoption of this technology, however, is that it is becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate human-generated content from synthetic content generated by AI, potentially enabling illegal and harmful conduct. Policymakers around the globe are therefore pondering how to design and implement watermarking techniques to ensure a trustworthy AI environment. China has already taken steps to ban AI-generated images without watermarks. The US administration has been tasked with developing effective labelling and content provenance mechanisms so that end users are able to determine when content is generated using AI and when it is not. The G7 has asked companies to develop and deploy reliable content authentication and provenance mechanisms, such as watermarking, to enable users to identify AI-generated content. The EU's new AI act, provisionally agreed in December 2023, places a number of obligations on providers and users of AI systems to enable the detection and tracing of AI-generated content. Implementation of these obligations will likely require use of watermarking techniques. Current state-of-the-art AI watermarking techniques display strong technical limitations and drawbacks, however, in terms of technical implementation, accuracy and robustness. Generative AI developers and policymakers now face a number of issues, including how to ensure the development of robust watermarking tools and how to foster watermarking standardisation and implementation rules.

Briefing EN

## Outlook for the European Council meeting of 14-15 December 2023

Briefing

08-12-2023

DRACHENBERG Ralf | TORPEY REBECCA MARY

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The last regular European Council meeting in 2023, on 14 and 15 December, promises to be a very challenging one. All the salient topics of 2023 – notably the war in Ukraine, enlargement, revision of the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) and the conflict in the Middle East – are on the agenda; and on many of these, EU leaders are divided. Whereas the conclusions on the war in Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East will reiterate previous positions, the European Council will focus on seeking an agreement in principle on enlargement, in particular on the possible opening of EU accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova, and on granting candidate status to Georgia. It will also endeavour to find an agreement on the MFF revision. In both cases, it remains unclear whether an agreement can be found at this meeting or if it will have to be postponed until next year. The European Council meeting will be preceded by an EU-Western Balkans Summit.

Briefing EN

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07-12-2023

KASKINA RASMA

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C BG, CS, DA, DE, EL, EN, ES, FI, FR, GA, HU, IT, LT, LV, NL, PT, RO, SV, ET, HR, MT, PL, SK, SL

## Private international law: Parenthood

06-12-2023

DE GROOT DAVID ARMAND JACQUES GERA

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During the December plenary session, Parliament will vote its opinion on the proposal on jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition of decisions and acceptance of authentic instruments in matters of parenthood and on the creation of a European Certificate of Parenthood. The regulation would harmonise the rules of Member States on jurisdiction and applicable law to parenthood, and facilitate the recognition of parenthood within the EU.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## Youth participation in European elections

Briefing

04-12-2023

DEL MONTE Micaela

Between 6 and 9 June 2024, the 10th European elections will take place in the 27 EU Member States, and around 366 million EU citizens will be called to the polling stations. The elections to the European Parliament represent a crucial moment in EU democracy: they give citizens a say in the EU's political direction. After declining ever since the first European elections in 1979, electoral turnout in the 2019 elections reached an unprecedented 50.6 % (up 8 percentage points compared with 2014). This increase was largely the result of greater youth participation, demonstrating young people's desire for active political participation, including by casting their vote. This desire was also repeatedly expressed during the Conference on the Future of Europe, a major innovative exercise in participatory democracy. In 2024, four Member States (Belgium, Germany, Malta and Austria) will allow their citizens to vote from the age of 16, and in Greece the voting age is 17. Lowering the voting age is one way to increase youth participation in elections; other instruments include introducing youth quotas, providing for online or postal voting, decreasing the age to stand as candidate, or promoting civic education in school curricula. Some also argue that a higher eligibility age to stand as a candidate may be a key impediment to young people's participation. European democracy is about much more than just voting – it is also about civic engagement and participation in the democratic process. Over the years, what political participation looks like has evolved, especially among young people. Large-scale protests and rallies, engagement in the digital sphere, and the rise of non-conventional forms of activism – such as 'clicktivism', grassroots activities and boycots – have become commonplace.

Briefing EN

## European cross-border associations

Briefing

01-12-2023

FRIZBERG DIETER

The problem definition in the impact assessment (IA) appears to be well-supported by evidence. The IA provides a sufficient range and description of the policy options, albeit sometimes lacking in detail. The assessment of the options' impacts (economic, social, environmental, fundamental rights) is qualitative and quantitative. It appears to be based on sound research and analysis, with clear acknowledgement that the available data are limited. The IA provides a comprehensive summary of the preferred options' costs and benefits for the affected stakeholder groups (associations and Member States, and indirectly citizens and for-profit companies). It is transparent about data uncertainties and assumptions. It comprehensively describes stakeholder groups' views on the problem, the problem drivers, the objectives and the policy options. An SME test has been carried out. However, it appears that no targeted SME consultation was conducted.

Briefing EN

## Towards an EU-wide right to politically strike:  A constitutional perspective

01-12-2023

DE SCHUTTER Olivier

This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee, assesses the status of political strikes in the EU. While workers' strikes generally seek to pressure an employer, "political strikes" are aimed at the government. Even though such political strikes are often organised to defend and protect workers' interests, they can also have exclusively political objectives. Such "purely political" strikes are generally not protected as part of the right to striker under relevant international human rights law or the Member States national legislation.

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DE, EN, FR, IT

## Digitalisation of cross-border judicial cooperation

15-11-2023

MAKO Rafa

In December 2021, the Commission tabled a proposal for a regulation on digitalisation of cross-border judicial cooperation, applicable to both civil and criminal cases. The co-legislators arrived at a compromise text in July 2023, which was endorsed by the Council's Committee of Permanent Representatives (Coreper) and jointly by the Parliament's Committees on Legal Affairs (JURI) and on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) in September. Parliament is due to vote on the compromise text during its November II plenary session.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## Outcome of the meetings of EU leaders, 26-27 October 2023

Briefing

07-11-2023

DRACHENBERG Ralf | TORPEY REBECCA MARY

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At the European Council meeting of 26-27 October 2023, EU leaders sought to show unity on challenging issues on which consensual positions have proven difficult to find in the past, in particular on the Middle East. On that topic, the European Council reiterated its condemnation of Hamas for its brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks, emphasising Israel's right to defend itself in line with international law and international humanitarian law. At the same time, it called for 'pauses for humanitarian needs' and for an international conference to revive the peace process on the basis of a two-state solution. On Ukraine, EU leaders adopted deliberately long conclusions, reiterating their condemnation of Russia's war of aggression and their continued unwavering 'financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes'. The discussion on the multiannual financial framework highlighted increasing unwillingness among Member States to agree to the current Commission proposal for an increase in the EU's long term budget. In the absence of detailed conclusions on migration, European Council President Charles Michel pointed to the growing consensus among EU leaders on stronger cooperation with third countries. The European Council was followed by a Euro Summit, to discuss the EU's economic and financial situation, banking union, coordination of fiscal policies and the digital euro project.

Briefing EN

## Outcome of the meetings of EU leaders, 5-6 October 2023

Briefing

10-10-2023

DRACHENBERG Ralf

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EU leaders met on 5 and 6 October 2023 in Granada for an informal meeting of the European Council, preceded by a meeting of the European Political Community (EPC). On 5 October, leaders at the EPC issued messages of unity in support of Ukraine in the wake of Russia's war against it. On other topics, such as facilitating peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the EPC made little headway. At their informal meeting on 6 October, EU leaders adopted the Granada Declaration, taking stock of progress made in achieving the objectives set at Versailles in March 2022. This follow-up exercise was crucial, as EU leaders are starting a discussion process on two critical and intertwined topics: i) the future political priorities to underpin the 2024-2029 strategic agenda, and ii) the process of EU enlargement and its consequences for EU institutions and policies. Furthermore, EU leaders discussed migration, reference to which was excluded from the Granada Declaration on account of opposition from Poland and Hungary. The European Council President thus issued a declaration on migration in his own name for the second time in a row, with the support of the other 25 Member States.

Briefing EN

## The coup in Niger: Consequences for EU policies in the Sahel

Briefing

29-09-2023

BILQUIN Bruno | PICHON Eric

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Adding to a succession of coups in the Sahel region, the 26 July ousting of Niger's democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum is already having major consequences in the region and for the credibility of the African Union and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It also challenges the security architecture that the European Union (EU), France, other EU Member States, such as Germany and Italy, and the United States sought to build in the Sahel to fight terrorism. Jihadist attacks were already devastating before the coup, and have risen since. Russia and Wagner-affiliated media continue to exploit and exacerbate anti-French feeling. Although deemed risky by several analysts and third countries, ECOWAS is considering military intervention in Niger. The EU supports ECOWAS' efforts to secure a return to constitutional order, but has not taken a position on possible military intervention. The EU has also suspended development and military cooperation with the country, previously considered a stronghold of EU and US counter-terrorism in the Sahel. In addition, the EU is setting up autonomous sanctions against the junta leaders in Niger, while continuing its humanitarian assistance. Niger is one of the poorest countries on earth, with 40 % of its budget dependent on foreign aid, and one of the most severely hit by climate change and terrorism. The accumulated challenges highlight the need to rethink EU strategy in the Sahel region once more. During its September 2023 plenary meeting, the European Parliament called for a thorough revision of this strategy, while the situation in Niger and the broader Sahel remains volatile. This briefing analyses the situation in Niger up to 25 September 2023.

Briefing EN

## Germany's slow implementation of the 2018 EU electoral reform and unease over electoral thresholds

25-09-2023

MILDEBRATH Hendrik Alexander

On 15 June and 7 July 2023, the German Federal Parliament approved the 2018 reform of the EU rules on elections to the European Parliament, and that approval is now awaiting promulgation before it takes effect. Enacting the reform requires the approval of all EU Member States. All but two – Cyprus and Spain – have given their approval. Cyprus is preparing to finalise its approval procedure, but Spain has not yet launched its. Once all Member States have given their approval and the EU reform law becomes binding, those with constituencies of more than 35 seats must set therein a threshold of 2-5 % – but only as of the second set of European elections after the law has entered into force. The German Federal Parliament's lower house (Bundestag) rejected a proposal to set the threshold at 2 %, raising questions about Germany's ultimate choice.

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## Fiscal policy in times of crises - An analysis of EMU Constitutional Framework

20-09-2023

Federico FABBRINI

This study, commissioned by the European Parliament’s Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee, examines the fiscal responses of the EU to the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. It claims that the law & policy tools developed to address these crises have led to the establishment, and consolidation, of an EU fiscal capacity – contributing to overcoming the original imbalance of the EU’s Economic & Monetary Union. Nevertheless, the study claims that these developments now require appropriate institutional adjustments, and considers options to achieve them.

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DE, EN, FR, IT

## Artificial intelligence, democracy and elections

Briefing

19-09-2023

ADAM MICHAEL

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become a powerful tool thanks to technological advances, access to large amounts of data, machine learning and increased computing power. The release of ChatGPT at the end of 2022 was a new breakthrough in AI. It demonstrated the vast range of possibilities involved in adapting general-purpose AI to a wide array of tasks and in getting generative AI to generate synthetic content based on prompts entered by the user. In a just a few years' time, a very large share of online content may be generated synthetically. AI is an opportunity to improve the democratic process in our societies. For example, it can help citizens to gain a better understanding of politics and engage more easily in democratic debate. Likewise, politicians can get closer to citizens and eventually represent them more effectively. Such an alignment between citizens and politicians could change the face of electoral campaigns and considerably improve the policymaking process, making it more accurate and efficient. Although concerns over the use of AI in politics have been present since the late 2010s, those related to democracies and the election process in particular have grown with the recent evolution of AI. This emerging technology poses multiple risks to democracies, as it is also a powerful tool for disinformation and misinformation, both of which can trigger tensions resulting in electoral-related conflict and even violence. AI can, for example, generate false information, or spread a bias or opinions that do not represent the public sentiment. Altogether, despite its benefits AI has the potential to affect the democratic process in a negative way. Despite the above risks, AI can prove useful to democracies if proper safeguards are applied. For example, specific tools can be employed to detect the use of AI-generated content and techniques such as watermarking can be used to clearly indicate that content has been generated by AI. The EU is currently adapting its legal framework to address the dangers that come with AI and to promote the use of trustworthy, transparent and accountable AI systems.

Briefing EN

## The use of Article 122 TFEU - Institutional implications and impact on democratic accountability

11-09-2023

Merijn CHAMON

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This study, commissioned by the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee, looks into the peculiar nature of Article 122 TFEU as a non-legislative legal basis pursuant to which the European Parliament is not involved in the decision-making. It concludes that the recent recourse to Article 122 TFEU was legally defensible but that the Council does not sufficiently take into account the 'without prejudice to' clause in Article 122(1) TFEU. The analysis identifies different ways to bolster Parliament's position under the current Article 122 TFEU and makes suggestions for Treaty amendment.

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DE, EN, FR, IT

## Length of the election campaign and the electoral silence period in European Parliament elections

Briefing

08-09-2023

DEL MONTE Micaela | KOTANIDIS Silvia

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In May 2023, the Council of the EU confirmed that the next elections to the European Parliament – the tenth since the first direct elections in 1979 – will take place from 6 to 9 June 2024. Ahead of Election Day, candidates and political parties will carry out electoral activities throughout the European Union (EU) to explain their political programmes and vision for the future of the EU to the electorate. In the same context, debates will take place on national platforms and media. Currently, election campaigns are largely regulated at national level, which means that there are differences among the EU Member States as to the activities allowed during the election period. However, election campaigns across the EU share a number of traits in terms of prohibitions and limitations. For example, although not all Member States have rules on whether and as from when election silence applies, most of them restrict election canvassing or the publishing of election polls on Election Day or immediately before the opening of the ballots. Pending the adoption of an electoral reform intended to harmonise at least some of the aspects of the election campaign, such as its start (not earlier than 8 weeks before Election Day) and its end, as well as the start and the end of the election silence period (48 hours before Election Day), this briefing looks at the Member States' rules on the length of the election campaign period and the election silence period ahead of the European Parliament elections (European elections). This briefing is one in a series published in the run-up to the 2024 European Parliament elections. It does not focus on election advertising, election funding or how election procedures are regulated in the individual Member States.

Briefing EN

## Question Time: Situation in west and central Africa in the light of the recent coups d'état

08-09-2023

BILQUIN Bruno | PICHON Eric

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On 26 July 2023, a coup by his military entourage overthrew President Bazoum in Niger. On 30 August, just after President Ali Bongo had been officially declared elected for a third term in Gabon, a group of military officers announced his removal from office and arrest, and suspended the constitution. These latest coups add to the growing list of unconstitutional changes of government in sub-Saharan Africa in recent years. During the September plenary, Question Time with the High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP), Josep Borrell, will focus on the challenges these coups bring to the EU strategies in the region.

EN

## The six policy priorities of the von der Leyen Commission: State of play in autumn 2023

07-09-2023

BASSOT Etienne

This EPRS paper analyses progress made in carrying through the policy agenda set by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, and her College of Commissioners when they took office in December 2019. It looks in particular at the state of play with respect to delivery of the agenda's six key priorities, as we enter the final months running up to the 2024 European elections. The von der Leyen Commission – either on taking office or more recently – has announced a total of 610 planned initiatives. In concrete terms, EPRS finds that more than two thirds (420) have now been submitted and, for those which are legislative proposals, the co-legislators have started work. Of the 420, more than half (221) have already been adopted by the co-legislators, or, for the non-legislative initiatives (such as strategies, action plans and other communications, amounting to nearly one fifth of the total), by the Commission itself. The vast majority of the remainder are either close to adoption (26) or proceeding normally through the legislative process (141). On the other hand, almost one sixth are moving slowly or are blocked (32). While the Commission's first priority – the European Green Deal – ranks highest in terms of the number of initiatives planned (154), the second, fourth and fifth priorities – 'A Europe fit for the digital age', 'A stronger Europe in the world', and 'Promoting our European way of life' – have higher rates of initiatives actually adopted so far (more than half for the second and fifth, almost three quarters for the fourth, largely due, for the latter, to its less legislative nature).

EN

## Lo Stato di diritto, una prospettiva di diritto comparato: Italia

20-07-2023

EPRS, Comparative Law

Questo studio fa parte di un progetto più ampio, il cui scopo è quello di analizzare, nella prospettiva del diritto comparato, lo Stato di diritto in diversi Stati e organizzazioni internazionali. Esso è dedicato allo Stato di diritto in Italia.

IT

## Unity and diversity in European Council media interactions

19-07-2023

DRACHENBERG Ralf | TORPEY REBECCA MARY

The European Council sets the long-term political priorities for the EU. These priorities, which are sometimes updated and fine-tuned in reaction to crises, need to be communicated to EU citizens, the other EU institutions, and the world. Beyond the central communication through the European Council's conclusions, EU leaders convey their own messages. But do they all do this in the same way? On the same topics? With the same messages? To answer these questions, this EPRS study provides an overview of the communication activities of all members of the European Council in the form of press conferences and doorstep statements at the European Council's regular meetings in 2022. The study identifies the types of media interaction used by EU leaders and the topics they speak about, and explores the nature and content of their messages. Particular attention is paid to developments in the EU leaders' communication on the war in Ukraine. The analysis also examines whether the messages reproduce or deviate from the European Council conclusions agreed by consensus.

EN

## La RDC, 6 mois avant les élections générales du 20 décembre 2023 : Un colosse aux pieds d'argile?

Briefing

19-07-2023

BILQUIN Bruno

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Le 20 décembre 2023, la République démocratique du Congo (RDC) devrait organiser des élections générales. Près de 44 millions d'électeurs – soit à peine un Congolais sur deux puisque dans ce pays très jeune, plus d'une personne sur deux n'a pas l'âge pour voter– seront appelés aux urnes pour élire, notamment, leur Président de la République. Le Président Tshisekedi est candidat à sa succession. D'ici au 20 décembre, les autorités semblent prêtes à utiliser toutes les cartes en leurs mains pour rester au pouvoir, y compris l'insécurité croissante et les tensions géopolitiques entre puissances régionales et mondiales, encore exacerbées par l'invasion russe de l'Ukraine et la compétition pour les ressources. Le cobalt extrait de RDC, qui en est de loin la première détentrice et productrice mondiale, est ainsi crucial pour la transition énergétique. La plupart des habitants du riche Congo restent pourtant pauvres. Le travail des enfants et le viol pratiqué comme arme de guerre sévissent toujours. Un génocide a aussi creusé son chemin de sang dans la région des grands lacs. Du Rwanda où il laissa un million de morts en 1994, il s'est exporté au Zaïre de l'époque, dans le riche est, où de nombreux Tutsi congolais furent tués ou chassés par les génocidaires Hutu rwandais y ayant reflué. Les autorités risquent de continuer à utiliser la carte ethnique et le conflit avec le Rwanda à des fins électorales, ce qui pourrait sonner le glas de tout espoir de paix véritable. Le rapport final de juin 2023 des Nations unies sur la RDC confirme et dénonce le soutien rwandais au groupe rebelle tutsi congolais M23, la présence de l'armée rwandaise en RDC, et le soutien congolais au groupe armé hutu rwandais FDLR en RDC – l'un des nombreux groupes armés. Les Nations unies ont en RDC une de leurs plus grandes missions de maintien de la paix, dont le retrait, programmé le jour des élections, pourrait faire craindre un vide sécuritaire. L'Union européenne s'efforce de garder avec la RDC des relations apaisées, proposant appui humanitaire, sécuritaire et en développement, ainsi qu'un partenariat sur les ressources minérales critiques extraites de son sol.

Briefing FR

## Peace and Security in 2023: Overview of EU action and outlook for the future

18-07-2023

BILQUIN Bruno | CAPRILE ANNA | CLAPP SEBASTIAN | DAMEN Mario | DELIVORIAS Angelos | IMMENKAMP Beatrix | LAZAROU Eleni | PICHON Eric | SHREEVES Rosamund | STANICEK BRANISLAV | SZCZEPANSKI Marcin

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Russia's war on Ukraine has caused the European Union (EU) to intensify its work for peace and security. The Peace and Security Outlook, produced by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), seeks to analyse and explain the European Union's contribution to the promotion and restoration of peace and security internationally, through its various external policies. This study provides an overview of the issues and current state of play. It looks first at the concept of peace and the changing nature of the geopolitical environment, as European security faces the most tangible military threat since the end of the Cold War. Linking the study to the Normandy Index, which measures threats to peace and democracy worldwide based on the EU Global Strategy, each chapter of the study analyses a specific threat to peace, and presents an overview of EU action to counter the related risks. The areas discussed include proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, democracy support, conflict prevention and mitigation in fragile contexts, the security impacts of climate change, cyber-attacks, disinformation, and terrorism, among other issues'. A parallel paper, published separately, focuses specifically on the state of play of the EU's relations with Iraq. EPRS has drafted this study as a contribution to the Normandy World Peace Forum, taking place in September 2023.

EN, FR

Peace and security in the world

## The Rule of Law, a comparative law perspective: United States of America

17-07-2023

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This study forms part of a larger comparative law project which seeks to present the rule of law in a broad range of legal orders around the world. The subject of this study is the United States federal legal system. It presents the main relevant sources regarding the rule of law (legislation in force, case law and literature) in the US. America's rule of law principles have origins in selected philosophies, legal histories, and lived experiences. With this background, America's Founders created a system, with separate government functions and checks and balances, to ensure that no government branch successfully usurped the power of the other branches, and to promote stability across the government while it adapts to society's changing needs.

EN

## Protection of journalists and human rights defenders from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings (SLAPPs)

05-07-2023

MAKO Rafa

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On 27 June 2023, the Legal Affairs Committee adopted its report on the proposal for a directive concerning the protection of journalists and human rights defenders from abusive cross-border civil proceedings, often referred to as SLAPPs. The Committee supports the proposal, and has put forward a number of amendments to strengthen it. Tabled for debate during the July plenary session, the report as adopted then will form the basis for trilogue negotiations with the Council, which adopted its general approach on 9 June.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## Policy departments Monthly Highlights - July 2023

04-07-2023

MANGINI ANNA | VERDINS Rudolfs

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## Outcome of the European Council meeting of 29-30 June 2023

Briefing

04-07-2023

DRACHENBERG Ralf

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EU leaders had a very full agenda for their June meeting. The war in Ukraine was again one of the focal points of the European Council, with EU leaders for the first time expressing readiness to contribute to a future 'security guarantee' to Ukraine. They also took stock of the Union's efforts to bolster joint defence procurement, and acknowledged that 'defence preparedness' was key in the current security context. With the adoption of conclusions on China, the European Council chose to display unity and stress its political will to forge a common approach based on the concept of 'de risking – not de-coupling from China'. As anticipated, migration became a very divisive point, with two countries, Hungary and Poland refusing to endorse joint conclusions, which were replaced by conclusions of the European Council President. In addition, EU leaders addressed a range of external relations topics, including the Western Balkans accession process, the situation in Kosovo, the Cyprus settlement and relations with Turkey following the re-election of President Erdogan, with the High Representative/VP and the Commission invited to report on the state of play. EU leaders also discussed relations with the Southern Neighbourhood, welcoming the partnership package with Tunisia, and prepared for the July 2023 EU-CELAC Summit aimed at renewing the EU partnership with Latin America, a priority for the incoming Spanish Council Presidency.

Briefing EN

## El Estado de Derecho, una perspectiva de Derecho Comparado: Argentina

30-06-2023

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Este documento se integra en una serie de estudios que, desde una perspectiva de Derecho Comparado, tienen como objeto analizar el Estado de Derecho en diferentes ordenamientos jurídicos. Tras la explicación de la normativa y la jurisprudencia de aplicación, se examinan el contenido, los límites y la posible evolución de dicho concepto. El presente estudio tiene por objeto el caso de Argentina. La fórmula Estado de Derecho no está inscrita en el texto constitucional argentino. Sin embargo, un conjunto de atributos propios de Estado de Derecho se hallan contenidos en la Constitución, en virtud de lo cual la jurisprudencia constitucional ha receptado al Estado de Derecho como un principio constitucional inmanente del que emanan elementos formales y materiales que revelan aquellos parámetros propios del Estado de Derecho, como democracia, república, separación de poderes, federalismo, principio de legalidad, derechos humanos, tutela judicial y control de constitucionalidad. Por su parte, la estructura estatal, orgánica y normativa argentina contiene los rasgos singulares de la categoría jurídico-política de Estado de Derecho.

ES

## L'État de droit, une perspective de droit comparé: Belgique

29-06-2023

EPRS, Comparative Law

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Ce document s'intègre dans une série d'études qui, avec une perspective de droit comparé, visent à faire une présentation du concept d'État de droit dans différents ordres juridiques. Après avoir expliqué le droit positif et la jurisprudence, le contenu, les limites et la possible évolution de ce concept sont examinés. La présente étude a pour objet le cas de la Belgique. L'ordre juridique belge ne dispose pas de norme spécifique qui définit la notion de l'État de droit. Il n'en demeure pas moins que l'expression « État de droit » apparaît fréquemment lors de débats qui ont trait aux prérogatives et pouvoirs d'acteurs institutionnels, et cela tant au sein du domaine juridique que de la sphère politique et médiatique. La notion d'État de droit regroupe de nombreux principes et mécanismes qui sont classiquement considérés comme essentiels à tout État respectueux des droits de l'homme et des principes démocratiques. La présente étude vise à identifier ces principes et mécanismes qui caractérisent l'ordre juridique belge en tant qu'État de droit.

FR

## Electoral thresholds in European Parliament elections

Briefing

07-06-2023

DEL MONTE Micaela | DIAZ CREGO Maria | KOTANIDIS Silvia

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An electoral threshold for the allocation of seats is the minimum percentage of votes that a political party or a coalition is required to collect in order to gain a seat in the legislative assembly. Thresholds are said to enable a better balance between governability and representativeness, by favouring the formation of stable majorities and avoiding excessive fragmentation of the legislative assembly. Thresholds are sometimes imposed by law, but in the absence of an explicit legal requirement, they can be the de facto result of the size of the constituency and the relevant electoral law determining the apportionment of seats between constituencies. Provisions for electoral thresholds are common in proportional electoral systems, which tend to favour multipartyism. Thresholds can, however, be problematic when they limit or impede the representation of regional parties and ethnic and linguistic minorities, for instance. The current European Electoral Act contains a set of common principles to be upheld by the different domestic laws applicable to the election of the European Parliament. The original act of 1976 did not contain any provisions on minimum thresholds. Following modifications introduced in 2002, Article 3 allows Member States to set a minimum threshold for the allocation of seats; this must not exceed 5 % of the votes cast. More recently, a draft legislative act, adopted by the European Parliament in May 2022 and seeking to repeal the 1976 Act, proposes to modify Article 3. Member States would remain free to establish an electoral threshold of no more than 5 % of the valid votes cast, but they would be obliged to establish a threshold – of no less than 3.5 % and no more than 5 % – for national constituencies comprising more than 60 seats. The electoral thresholds applied in the 2019 European elections ranged between 5 % of the valid votes cast, required in nine Member States (Czechia, France, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) and 1.8 %, required in Cyprus, while 14 Member States set no threshold. Italy, Austria and Sweden applied a 4 % threshold; and Greece 3 %. At the time of writing, it appears that these thresholds will still be applicable for the 2024 European elections.

Briefing EN

## Minimum age to stand as a candidate in European elections

06-06-2023

MAKO Rafa

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The European Electoral Act of 1976 allows the EU Member States to set the minimum age for standing as a candidate in European elections. While in May 2022 Parliament proposed a uniform minimum age of 18, the next round of elections – in 2024 – will be governed by the existing rules. The minimum age therefore varies among the Member States, ranging from 18 (in the majority of countries) to 25 (Italy and Greece).

EN

## Outcome of the European Political Community meeting in Bulboaca, Moldova, on 1 June 2023

Briefing

06-06-2023

ANGHEL Suzana Elena

On 1 June 2023, Moldova hosted the second meeting of the European Political Community (EPC) in Bulboaca, just a few kilometres from the Ukrainian border. The focus of this informal forum of 48 leaders from across the European continent was clearly more on peace and security – with all participants reiterating their unity in support of Ukraine – and less on energy and interconnectivity, the other topic on the agenda. Discussions took place in plenary and roundtable format, showing continuity in method with the inaugural EPC meeting held in Prague in 2022. Enlargement, although not officially a topic for discussion, was placed at the centre of the debates by the President of Moldova, Maia Sandu, and the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who this time attended the summit in person. The two leaders pleaded for the opening of EU accession negotiations by the end of this year. In addition, Zelenskyy advocated powerfully for a strong signal from NATO at the upcoming summit of the Alliance in Vilnius on 11 July 2023, both regarding Ukraine's accession and concerning security guarantees on the way to membership. This to some extent transformed the meeting into an informal preparatory meeting for the NATO and European Council meetings later this year, touching on and possibly easing potential sensitivities. No summit declaration was adopted, confirming the EPC's informal platform format. A series of side meetings allowed leaders to discuss issues of direct interest to their own countries. Side meetings were also used for mediation purposes in the case of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, and to attempt to put the Pristina-Belgrade dialogue back on track, after the recent spike in violence.

Briefing EN

## L'État de droit, une perspective de droit comparé: Canada

31-05-2023

EPRS, Comparative Law

Ce document s'intègre dans une série d'études qui, avec une perspective de droit comparé, visent à faire une présentation du concept d'État de droit dans différents États et organisations internationales. Après avoir expliqué le droit positif et la jurisprudence, le contenu, les limites et la possible évolution de ce concept sont examinés. La présente étude a pour objet le cas du Canada. Hérité du droit public anglais, le principe de primauté du droit au Canada adopte les éléments généralement associés à une conception formelle, alors que sa dimension substantielle demeure moins bien définie. De façon générale, le principal enjeu contemporain concernant la primauté du droit est sa relation avec la loi. Est proposée une conception substantielle « étroite » constituée des éléments essentiels de la primauté du droit, lesquels possèdent une capacité de contrôler l'action étatique, incluant la loi, qui y contreviendrait.

FR

## What if open strategic autonomy could break the cycle of recurring crises?

26-05-2023

GARCIA HIGUERA ANDRES

Open strategic autonomy is about ensuring that the EU has the capacity to cope alone if necessary but without ruling out cooperation whenever possible. It goes some steps beyond smart supply chain management by taking into account geopolitics as well as economic factors. It relies on foresight to identify threats and ensures resilience by anticipating the required responses. Could the resulting preparedness also prevent crises by normalising situations that would otherwise become emergencies?

EN

What if open strategic autonomy could break the cycle of recurring crises?

## Mapping best practices on transparency, integrity, accountability and anti-corruption: Case studies from selected parliaments

26-05-2023

Igor VIDAAK; Senada ŠELO ŠABI

This analysis explores examples of best practices from selected parliaments in the areas of transparency, integrity, accountability and anti-corruption, and reflects on the effectiveness of the analysed approaches and their possible applicability for the European Parliament (EP). Findings confirm the need for the establishment of an independent European Union (EU) ethics body, granted investigative and enforcement powers with full transparency of enquiries, decisions and/or proposals as a pre-condition for its effectiveness and regaining citizens' trust in the work of EU institutions. Stricter rules should be applied for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and EP staff regarding post-employment lobbying activities, along with more comprehensive and consistent disclosure of data on meetings with lobbyists, including foreign (third country) entities. In addition, mandatory training for all MEPs on integrity, transparency, accountability and anti-corruption standards should be introduced. Finally, more effective mechanisms of citizens and civil society engagement in the EP work should be introduced as a way of further strengthening the EP's accountability and improving its responsiveness to citizens' concerns.

EN

## Foreign interference in EU democratic processes: Second report

25-05-2023

CAPRILE ANNA

The European Parliament is due to vote in May II on the second report on external attempts to influence elections and other democratic processes in EU countries. The report, prepared by the second Special Committee on Foreign Interference (ING2), follows up on the work of the Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation (INGE), and makes recommendations to address institutional and normative gaps identified in the run-up to the 2024 European elections.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## L'État de droit, une perspective de droit comparé : Suisse

25-05-2023

EPRS, Comparative Law

Ce document s'intègre dans une série d'études qui, avec une perspective de droit comparé, visent à faire une présentation du concept d'État de droit dans différents ordres juridiques. Après avoir expliqué la normative et la jurisprudence d'application, le contenu, les limites et la possible évolution de ce concept sont examinés. La présente étude a pour objet le cas de la Suisse. Elle met en exergue les caractéristiques de l'État de droit en Suisse : une conception large et ouverte de ce concept, d'une part, et une prépondérance de l'élément démocratique par rapport aux principes de l'État de droit, d'autre part. Comparée à la plupart des autres États examinés dans la présente série, la préservation de l'État de droit repose davantage sur des garde-fous politiques, ancrés dans la culture politique, que sur des mécanismes institutionnels ou juridictionnels. L'absence du contrôle de constitutionnalité des lois fédérales, un contrôle très limité de la validité des initiatives populaires fédérales tendant à la révision de la Constitution, et des garanties institutionnelles relativement faibles de l'indépendance des juges fédéraux illustrent ce point.

FR

## A preparedness plan for Europe: Addressing food, energy and technological security

23-05-2023

This study has been written by Joanna Ejdys, Katarzyna Czerewacz-Filipowicz, Katarzyna Halicka, Anna Kononiuk, Andrzej Magruk, Julia Siderska, Danuta Szpilko of Bialystok University of Technology (Poland) at the request of the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) and managed by the Scientific Foresight Unit, within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament.

The current situation in Ukraine has led to severe supply chain disruptions, contributing to a sharp increase in food and commodity prices globally and the limitation of fossil fuel imports from Russia to the EU. Moreover, to end Europe's dependence on semiconductor suppliers from Asian countries, it is necessary to take immediate action of a structural nature, involving all EU Member States and all participants in regional supply markets. The overall aim of this study was to identify drivers of and barriers to building up open strategic autonomy at EU level, before recommending coordinated solutions and addressing supply chain resilience in four critical areas: food security, energy security, semiconductors and satellite communications. This research seeks to contribute to the European Parliament's future work by providing insights into how to protect the European agricultural sector, ensure energy security and the technological sovereignty of semiconductor production, and improve satellite communications.

EN

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## 'This is Europe' debate in the European Parliament: Speech by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of Germany, 9 May 2023

12-05-2023

DRACHENBERG Ralf

'This is Europe' – an initiative proposed by the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola – consists of a series of debates with EU leaders to discuss their visions for the future of the European Union. In his address to the European Parliament on Europe Day, 9 May 2023, a geopolitical EU was a central theme for the Chancellor of Germany, Olaf Scholz. He stressed that, in a multipolar world, the EU needed ‘a genuine partnership with the countries of Asia, Africa and South America, without Eurocentrism’. He called for an enlarged EU with an honest enlargement policy, also in the context of a geopolitical Europe. He supported Parliament’s calls for EU reforms, notably the use of qualified majority voting in the Council on foreign policy and taxes, and promised to promote such changes within the European Council.

EN

## Türkiye's high-stakes elections [What Think Tanks are thinking]

Briefing

03-05-2023

CESLUK-GRAJEWSKI Marcin

Türkiye holds presidential and parliamentary elections on 14 May 2023, which could mark a political turnaround after two decades of increasing autocratic rule of the conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its leader, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Erdogan faces an unprecedented challenge from the main opposition candidate Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the head of the Republican People’s Party (CHP) and presidential nominee for the six-party Nation Alliance bloc. The elections take place amid a serious economic crisis and what analysts say is democratic erosion under Erdogan’s government. Polls predict a record voter turnout, and a tight race between the incumbent president and Kilicdaroglu. Under the Erdogan party’s rule, the Muslim country has abandoned its secularist tradition and turned into an increasingly difficult partner for the West, including the European Union and NATO. This note gathers links to the recent publications and commentaries from many international think tanks on Türkiye’s election, its relations with the EU and its internal and foreign policies.

Briefing EN

## El Estado de Derecho, una perspectiva de Derecho Comparado: España

27-04-2023

DG, EPRS

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Este estudio se integra en una serie que, desde una perspectiva del Derecho Comparado, tienen como objeto analizar el Estado de Derecho en diferentes ordenamientos jurídicos. El presente estudio tiene por objeto el caso de España. Tras el examen de la normativa y de la jurisprudencia, mayoritariamente de índole constitucional, se detiene en su naturaleza, contenido, límites, evolución y futuro. El análisis parte de la particularizada atención a la Constitución de 1978 y a su legislación de desarrollo. En ella se consagra explícitamente, y de la forma más generosa, la regulación del Estado social y democrático de Derecho (art. 1.1 CE), que obedece a una configuración plenamente homologable, con las lógicas especificidades propias de cada país, a los regímenes constitucionales de nuestro entorno, y que posee un ámbito sustantivo que se erige, fundamentalmente, sobre el reconocimiento y paralela tutela del imperio de la ley, de la eficacia de los derechos fundamentales y del principio de división de poderes. Estos son los tres elementos que vertebran, en esencia, los fundamentos intangibles sobre los que se forja, asienta y desarrolla cualquier Estado de Derecho moderno. Un Estado de Derecho implica, prima faciae, la escrupulosa preservación de la Constitución, tanto de sus particulares preceptos, como de su espíritu, valores y procedimientos, así como la dinámica asunción de un complejo y depurado sistema de pesos y contrapesos, con la formalizada finalidad de evitar los peligros que toda conformación y actuación del ejercicio del poder político implica.

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## L'État de droit, une perspective de droit comparé - France

25-04-2023

Ponthoreau, Marie-Claire

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Ce document s'intègre dans une série d'études qui, avec une perspective de droit comparé, visent à faire une présentation du concept d'État de droit dans différents États et organisations internationales. Après avoir expliqué le droit positif et la jurisprudence, le contenu, les limites et la possible évolution de ce concept sont examinés. La présente étude a pour objet le cas de la France. Le trait spécifique du cas français est que la notion d'État de droit n'a jamais été reconnue expressément dans un texte constitutionnel ou tout autre texte juridique. La tradition française est, malgré tout, essentielle car la Révolution et surtout la Déclaration des droits de l'Homme et du citoyen de 1789 ont joué un rôle important en offrant notamment les bases à la construction d'un libéralisme juridique au fondement de la tradition allemande de Rechtsstaat. Si l'État de droit s'est indéniablement étoffé au fil de la Ve République, son développement a été non seulement tardif mais aussi complexe et reste inachevé. Très largement de nature jurisprudentielle, ses différentes ramifications sont parfois difficiles à saisir.

FR

## 'This is Europe' debate in the European Parliament: Speech by Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of Luxembourg, 19 April 2023

24-04-2023

DRACHENBERG Ralf

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'This is Europe' – an initiative proposed by the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola – consists of a series of debates with EU leaders to discuss their visions for the future of the European Union. In his address to the European Parliament on 19 April 2023, the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Xavier Bettel, emphasised three topics: i) democracy and the rule of law, ii) strategic autonomy, and iii) migration. He called for greater protection of minorities and respect for the rule of law and fundamental values. Openness was also an important point for him, both regarding internal borders within the European Union and on cooperation and trade with the world. Given the challenges – financial, climate, security, industrial and social – that lie ahead in the coming years, he called for more solidarity and greater means on which to build the EU's political action.

EN

## Question time: Legacy of the 2022 European Year of Youth

17-04-2023

BINDER Krisztina

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Wishing to highlight and mitigate the impact of the pandemic on young people, the European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, used her 2021 State of the Union address to name 2022 the European Year of Youth (EYY22). Following 12 months of varied youth-related activities, the thematic year concluded with a conference in December 2022. The European Parliament is committed to securing a lasting legacy for EYY22. In that context, Members will ask questions of the Commission on this topic during the April plenary session.

EN

## Der Rechtsstaat, eine rechtsvergleichende Perspektive: Deutschland

30-03-2023

Reimer, Franz

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Dieses Dokument ist Teil einer Reihe von Studien, mit denen der Rechtsstaat in verschiedenen Rechtsordnungen aus rechtsvergleichender Sicht dargestellt werden sollen. Nach einer Erklärung der einschlägigen Rechtsvorschriften und Rechtsprechung werden der Inhalt, die Grenzen und die mögliche Entwicklung des Rechtsstaates analysiert. Die vorliegende Studie hat den Fall Deutschland zum Gegenstand. Das Rechtsstaatsprinzip ist, obwohl im Verfassungstext nur angedeutet (Art. 16 Abs. 2 Satz 2 GG, Art. 23 Abs. 1 Satz 1 GG, Art. 28 Abs. 1 Satz 1 GG) ein zentraler Bestandteil des Grundgesetzes. Es ergibt sich aus einer Zusammenschau zahlreicher Einzelnormen der Verfassung (wie Art. 1 Abs. 3, Art. 19 Abs. 4 und 20 Abs. 3 GG) und ist über diese einzelnen Vorschriften hinaus gesamthaft verbürgt, kann also auch für neue Fragestellungen fruchtbar gemacht werden. Es zielt auf umfassende Rechts- und Verfassungsbindung aller öffentlichen Gewalt und auf effektive Rechtsschutzmöglichkeiten für Private.

DE

## Outcome of the meetings of EU leaders of 23-24 March 2023

Briefing

27-03-2023

PAPUNEN Annastiina | TORPEY REBECCA MARY

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Discussions at the European Council meeting of 23 March concentrated on Europe's long-term strategy for economic competitiveness, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and energy. Other topics mentioned in the European Council conclusions include migration, the donors' conference in support of the victims of the recent earthquake in Türkiye and Syria, the agreement on the path to normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, the sentencing of Belarusian democratic opposition leaders, and the Windsor Framework aimed at resetting EU-UK relations. With recent turbulence in the banking sector as the backdrop, EU leaders discussed the situation in the euro area during a Euro Summit meeting in inclusive format on 24 March, issuing a short statement underling their commitment to close coordination of economic policies. In addition, the new President of Cyprus, Nikos Christodoulides, outlined his proposal aimed at relaunching negotiations on the Cyprus issue. While not formally on the agenda nor discussed in the meeting itself, according to the Commission President, EU leaders also raised and commented – on the margins of the meeting – on the last-minute opposition by a group of Member States, led by Germany, to the politically agreed phasing out of vehicles with combustion engines by 2035.

Briefing EN

## The six policy priorities of the von der Leyen Commission: State of play in spring 2023

24-03-2023

BASSOT Etienne

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This EPRS paper analyses progress made in carrying through the policy agenda set by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, and her College of Commissioners when they took office in December 2019. It looks in particular at the state of play with respect to delivery of the agenda's six key priorities, as we enter the final year running up to the 2024 European elections. The von der Leyen Commission – either on taking office or more recently – has announced a total of 597 planned initiatives. In concrete terms, EPRS finds that almost two thirds (379) have now been submitted and, for those which are legislative proposals, the co-legislators have started work. Of the 379, almost half (188) have already been adopted by the co-legislators, or, for the non-legislative initiatives (such as strategies, action plans and other communications, amounting to nearly one fifth of the total), by the Commission itself. The vast majority of the remainder are either close to adoption (28) or proceeding normally through the legislative process (129). On the other hand, almost one fifth are moving slowly or are blocked (34). While the Commission's first priority – the European Green Deal – ranks highest in terms of the number of initiatives planned (148), the third, fourth and fifth priorities – 'An economy that works for people', 'A stronger Europe in the world', and 'Promoting our European way of life' – have higher numbers of initiatives actually adopted so far (38, 40 and 36 respectively).

DE, EN, FR, XL

## L'Etat de droit, une perspective de droit comparé - Conseil de l'Europe

23-03-2023

EPRS, Comparative Law

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Ce document s'intègre dans une série d'études qui, avec une perspective de droit comparé, visent à faire une présentation du concept d'État de droit dans différents États. Après avoir expliqué la réglementation et la jurisprudence applicables, le contenu, les limites et la possible évolution de ce concept son examinés. La présente étude a pour objet le cas du Conseil de l'Europe. L'expression prééminence du droit, seule utilisée dans le Statut du Conseil de l'Europe et la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme transmet, bien mieux qu' « État de droit », le concept selon lequel dans les sociétés démocratiques et protectrices des droits et libertés fondamentales d'Europe, ce sont les principes de sécurité juridique et de les institutions et règles de protection juridictionnelle qui garantissent les êtres humains contre l'arbitraire des détenteurs de pouvoir.

FR

## Outlook for the meetings of EU leaders on 23-24 March 2023

Briefing

20-03-2023

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

Europe's long-term strategy for the competitiveness of its economy, notably regarding investment, innovation and trade, will be at the centre of the European Council meeting on 23 and 24 March 2023. EU leaders will of course address Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and consider the multidimensional (political, financial, economic, humanitarian and military) assistance the EU and its Member States have been providing to Ukraine, particularly joint ammunition procurement. Regarding energy policy, EU leaders will continue their work on reducing energy demand, ensuring security of energy supply and lowering energy prices. Following up on the special European Council meeting in February, EU leaders will examine implementation of their conclusions on migration, in particular regarding external border management and returns. The European Council may also welcome the recent agreement in principle on the Windsor Framework, which will outline how the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol will function, notably as regards customs procedures. The European Council meeting will be followed by a Euro Summit meeting on 24 March.

Briefing EN

## Key Issues in the European Council - State of play in March 2023

17-03-2023

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf | PAPUNEN Annastiina | TORPEY REBECCA MARY

This EPRS publication, 'Key Issues in the European Council', which will be updated quarterly to coincide with European Council meetings, aims to provide an overview of the institution's activities on major EU issues. It analyses nine policy areas, explaining the legal and political background and the main priorities and orientations defined by the European Council. It also assesses the results of European Council involvement to date and identifies future challenges in the various policy fields.

EN

## Artificial intelligence in the agri-food sector: Applications, risks and impacts

17-03-2023

This study was written by Josse De Baerdemaeker, with the support of the following co-authors (for the chapters that appear in square brackets): S. Hemming [2 and 6], G. Polder [2], A. Chauhan [2 and 6], A. Petropoulou [2] (Wageningen University and Research), F. Rovira-Más [3] (UP Valencia), D. Moshou [3] (Aristotle University), G. Wyseure [4], T. Norton [5], B. Nicolai [6] (KU Leuven), F. Hennig-Possenti [7], I. Hostens [7] (CEMA).

There is growing interest in the applications of artificial intelligence (AI) in the agri-food sector, to extract or exploit the information in datasets resulting from the monitoring of products and processes. Artificial intelligence algorithms, and the models derived from them, are used as support systems for better decision making or, in some cases, are implemented in automatic control processes and robotics, to alleviate drudgery. In this study, sensing and data collection in different agri-food sectors are described, together with how the data can be curated to achieve better management and decision making in crop and animal production.

EN

## 'This is Europe' debate in the European Parliament: Speech by Gitanas Nausda, President of Lithuania, 14 March 2023

16-03-2023

DRACHENBERG Ralf

'This is Europe' – an initiative proposed by the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola – consists of a series of debates with EU leaders to discuss their visions for the future of the European Union. In his address to the European Parliament on 14 March 2023, the President of Lithuania, Gitanas Nausda, emphasised three topics: i) support for Ukraine and that country's place in Europe (i.e. enlargement); ii) the importance of historical memory; and iii) the challenges facing Europe today. Among the greatest challenges is maintaining an independent posture in EU relations with authoritarian regimes.

EN

## Strengthening the right to participate: legitimacy and resilience of electoral processes in illiberal political systems and authoritarian regimes

14-03-2023

Thomas DEMMELHUBER, Richard YOUNGS

In 2022, the Human Rights Subcommittee decided to prepare a Recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on how to respond to undemocratic elections by strengthening the human right to participate in public affairs. On 25 January 2023, a Workshop was organised on behalf of the Human Rights Subcommittee to discuss the challenge of elections in authoritarian countries from a human rights perspective. It focused on authoritarian leaders' strategies to enhance their legitimacy and undermine international democracy standards, as well as proposals for further refining the EU's human rights and democracy support toolbox. This report brings together the background briefings prepared for the workshop and a summary of the debate with Members, academics and EU representatives.

EN

## Interaction between the European Parliament and the European Council: Parliament's plenary debates on European Council conclusions

09-03-2023

DRACHENBERG Ralf

Plenary debates on the conclusions of European Council meetings with the president of the European Council are among the most visible and frequently recurring interactions between Parliament and the European Council. These debates are important because they are the only place at EU level where the results of European Council meetings are examined and scrutinised, and the institution is held accountable. By examining and assessing the reports made by Charles Michel to the European Parliament following European Council meetings in 2022, and the subsequent interventions of MEPs, this EPRS analysis provides a unique overview of these interactions. The research outlines the added value of the plenary reports and identifies potential ways to further increase the accountability of the European Council at EU level.

EN

## EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders

08-03-2023

SHREEVES Rosamund

The European Union guidelines on human rights defenders, adopted in 2004 and revised in 2008, establish a framework and instruments for protecting human rights activists in third countries. During the March I plenary session, Members will debate their implementation, on the basis of an own-initiative assessment report from Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs. Later in the session, the Council and Commission are due to make statements on the specific situation of human rights defenders working on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## In depth analysis for the PEGA Committee Mission to Spain

01-03-2023

MACIEJEWSKI Mariusz

This in depth-analysis contains background materials for PEGA Committee's mission to Spain. The in depth-analysis has been prepared by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the PEGA Committee.

EN

## Nigeria: Situation ahead of 2023 general election

22-02-2023

BILQUIN Bruno | DELIVORIAS Angelos

On 25 February 2023, after an electoral campaign held amidst rising insecurity and economic turmoil, Nigerians will elect their new president and federal legislature. The way this very competitive election is conducted, and its outcome, will have a sizeable effect on sub-Saharan Africa's largest economy, African democracy and the future of Africa's relations with the European Union (EU) and the rest of the Western world.

EN

## Study for the PEGA Committee Mission to Hungary

01-02-2023

MACIEJEWSKI Mariusz

This study contains background materials for PEGA Committee mission to Hungary. The briefing has been prepared by the European Parliament’s Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the PEGA Committee.

EN

## Revision of Council Directive 94/80/EC: Electoral rights of mobile Union citizens in municipal elections

Briefing

19-01-2023

DE GROOT DAVID ARMAND JACQUES GERA

On 25 November 2021, the European Commission put forward a proposal to modify Council Directive 94/80/EC on the right of mobile EU citizens to vote and stand as candidates in municipal elections. The proposal tied in with the Commission President's priority for a new push for European democracy. The proposal was presented together with three others: a proposal to modify Directive 93/109/EC on EU citizens' right to vote and stand as candidates in elections to the European Parliament; a proposal on transparency and targeting of political advertising; and a proposal to revise EU Regulation No 1141/2014 on the funding of European political parties and foundations. Although Directive 94/80/EC gave EU citizens living in another Member State the right to vote and stand in municipal elections under the same legal provisions and procedures as citizens of that Member State, the procedures under which these rights are exercised are subject to national legislation and procedures, which vary between Member States. The Commission's proposal has been designed to address some of the concerns raised during the years since the directive entered into force and, in particular, the fact that despite the measures in place, mobile EU citizens still face difficulties in exercising their electoral rights in municipal elections. First edition. The 'EU legislation in progress' briefings are updated at key stages throughout the legislative procedure.

Briefing EN

## Achieving the UN Agenda 2030: Overall actions for the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals before and after the 2030 deadline

22-12-2022

Kalterina SHULLA, Walter LEAL FILHO

The European Union (EU) has a strong leadership role, globally and regionally, in implementing the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development but as a matter of urgency its ambitions now need to be translated into strategies and actions. Major global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and climate change, have all effectively reversed progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and further exacerbated interrelated challenges relating to poverty, inequality, carbon emissions, education, health, economic growth and finance. The increasing likelihood of Agenda 2030 objectives not being met within the expected timeframe calls for major transformation in: SDGs’ financing; ecology and green recovery; citizens’ empowerment; political commitment to collective action; as well as cooperation between public, private and non-profit sectors. Achieving SDGs would be better served by adopting an overarching EU strategy for the Agenda 2030, to include: SDGs in the European Semester; the Green Deal; countries’ recovery processes; increased collaboration between EU and United Nations institutions; and support for other countries in levelling up SDG achievements globally. This would not only provide positive signals for reassuring Agenda 2030 but also enhance countries’ commitment to sustainability. This In-Depth Analysis aims to assist the European Parliament by contributing to policy and legislative debates ahead of the 2023 SDG Summit.

EN

## 'This is Europe' debate in the European Parliament: Speech by Robert Golob, Prime Minister of Slovenia, on 13 December 2022

20-12-2022

DRACHENBERG Ralf

'This is Europe' – an initiative proposed by the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola – consists of a series of debates with EU leaders to discuss their visions for the future of the European Union. On 13 December, the Prime Minister of Slovenia, Robert Golob, envisaged a European Union that believes in the power of integration, the power of cooperation and the power of unity. His main message was the importance of the energy transition. In the context of current high energy prices, he stressed the responsibility of the European Council to be more decisive.

EN

## Key issues in the European Council: State of play in December 2022

14-12-2022

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf | TORPEY REBECCA MARY

The role of the European Council is to 'provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development' and to define its 'general political directions and priorities'. Since its creation in 1975, the European Council has exercised considerable influence over the development of the European Union, a process enhanced by its designation as a formal institution of the Union under the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. The European Council Oversight Unit within the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) monitors and analyses the activities, commitments and impact of the European Council, so as to maximise parliamentary understanding of the political dynamics of this important institution. This EPRS publication, 'Key issues in the European Council', which is updated every quarter to coincide with European Council meetings, aims to provide an overview of the institution's activities on major EU issues. It analyses twelve broad policy areas, explaining the legal and political background, the main priorities and orientations defined by the European Council and the results of its involvement to date, as well as some of the future challenges in each policy field.

EN

## Tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine - a legal assessment

14-12-2022

Olivier CORTEN and Vaios KOUTROULIS

After examining the innovative character of the proposed tribunal, the paper analyses three main interconnected elements linked to the establishment and functioning of the tribunal: the legal basis for its creation; problems of immunity; and questions of enforcement and implementation of its decisions. In the end, taking into account legitimacy considerations which are of crucial importance in this case, the authors evoke two possibilities. A first option would be to ground the tribunal's creation in Ukrainian domestic law and on its right to self-defence, which would open the door to prosecute foreign nationals for the crime of aggression, complementing it with an agreement with the United Nations (UN) or another (regional) organisation: the tribunal would thus be 'established by law.' A second option, more legitimate as it would be based on the UN Charter, would be to interpret broadly existing legal mechanisms, especially the 'Uniting for Peace' resolution. Given the UN Security Council's inability to discharge its duties due to the veto of one of its permanent members (Russia), the UN General Assembly could exceptionally defer the crime of aggression against Ukraine to the International Criminal Court. In both cases, however, it must be kept in mind that significant problems of legality remain.

EN

## Current Membership of the European Council December 2022

13-12-2022

DRACHENBERG Ralf

The European Council consists of the 27 Heads of State or Government of the EU Member States, who are voting members, together with the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, who have no vote (Article 15(2) Treaty on European Union). The chart shows the current members, the national office they hold, their most recent European political affiliation, and the year their membership began.

EN

## Outlook for the European Council meeting of 15 December 2022

Briefing

13-12-2022

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

The last regular European Council meeting of 2022 is scheduled to take place on 15 December, and to deal with the main topics of this year: Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, security and defence, energy and the economy. On Russia's war on Ukraine, EU leaders are likely to reiterate their commitment to political and military support to Ukraine. Energy and the economy are purposely due to be dealt with together, to contain the discussion and to avoid a debate on setting up additional EU funding mechanisms. Moreover, EU leaders are set to hold a strategic discussion on relations with the Southern Neighbourhood, and review the outcome of the recent Western Balkans Summit. Both points are likely to include numerous migration related aspects, as the numbers of illegal border crossings into the European Union have again been rising significantly in the second half of 2022. Additionally, EU leaders will address transatlantic relations in light of rising concerns regarding the new United States Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), The anticipated possible addition of the rule of law conditionality mechanism to the official agenda seems to have been avoided at the last moment, with a deal struck between the Member States on 12 December. The government of Viktor Orbán agreed to unblock the various files it has been blocking in the Council, in particular the adoption of €18 billion in EU aid for Ukraine, in the context of changes agreed to the Commission's proposal to freeze the EU funds to Hungary.

Briefing EN

## Impact of COVID-19 measures on democracy and fundamental rights - Best practices and lessons learned in the Member States and third countries

12-12-2022

Joelle GROGAN, CEU Democracy Institute, Hungary

This research study examines the impact of COVID-19 measures on democracy and fundamental rights in the EU. It considers what best practices have been evidenced, and the lessons that can be learned from comparative experience within EU Member States as well as relevant third countries. It examines pandemic governance in the EU and its Member States during the COVID-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2022. It describes how the COVID-19 pandemic was addressed by EU Member States, either in terms of declaring a state of emergency or similar regimes, or using emergency powers or emergency health legislation, or normal legislation.
This study was provided by the Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies at the request of the special committee on the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons learned and recommendations for the future (COVI).

EN

## Young people's participation in European democratic processes - How to improve and facilitate youth involvement

01-12-2022

Tomaž DEŽELAN

This study, commissioned by the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee, examines young people's participation in democratic processes, with a special focus on the European elections. The study inspects the meaning of political participation for contemporary democracies and the dilemmas behind young people's participation and representation. It also assesses, from a youth perspective, the ongoing legislative proposals on European elections and the electoral participation of EU mobile citizens as well as the Citizens' Proposals adopted in the plenary of the Conference on the Future of Europe in May 2022.

EN

DE, EN, FR, IT

## European Commission work programme for 2023

Briefing

18-11-2022

HAHNKAMPER-VANDENBULCKE Nora | VETTORAZZI STEFANO

This briefing is intended as a background overview for parliamentary committees (and their secretariats) planning their activities in relation to the European Commission's 2023 work programme (CWP 2023), adopted on 18 October 2022. The CWP 2023 is shaped by the exceptional circumstances linked to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which triggered a vast humanitarian, human rights, displacement, food and energy crisis. As of 7 October 2022, the UN Refugee Agency reports that nearly a third of Ukrainians have been forced from their homes; Europe is hosting over 7.6 million refugees from Ukraine, and 6.2 million people remain displaced by the war within Ukraine. Skyrocketing gas and electricity prices, coupled with energy supply concerns, have also impacted the cost of living of European households as well as the post-pandemic recovery. Last but not least, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has shattered Europe's peace and altered its security situation, requiring EU foreign, security and defence policy, and the tools thereof, to adapt appropriately. In an unprecedented move, the EU has activated the European Peace Facility to provide military assistance to Ukraine, mobilising (up to September of this year) €3.1 billion, as well as providing €19 billion to strengthen Ukraine's economic, social and financial resilience. On the humanitarian front, the EU has provided aid through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, with over 70 000 tonnes of aid delivered to Ukraine so far, and has activated the Temporary Protection Directive, thus ensuring that Ukrainian refugees have access to jobs, housing, education and healthcare. Medical and specialised equipment for public health risks, such as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats, have been mobilised via the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) and rescEU emergency stockpiles. Through the Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE), and the FAST-CARE (Flexible Assistance for Territories) proposal, the Commission has made it easier for Member States and regions to mobilise cohesion funds to help people fleeing the war. On energy, the EU has taken a number of steps both to align its policies with more ambitious climate goals and to boost energy independence, including the REPowerEU plan for saving energy, producing clean energy, and diversifying EU energy supplies. As regards the food crisis caused by increasing prices, and aggravated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Commission has facilitated Ukraine's access to the single market and global supply chains through alternative routes ('solidarity lanes'), and continues to work closely with the Member States, its international partners and Ukraine to ensure access to fertilisers, food production and open trade to prevent food supply distortions. In line with its title, 'A Union standing firm and united', the CWP 2023 is set against the above background and framed, according to the Commission, by three complementary realities. The first is that challenges of such scale can only truly be tackled collectively. The second is that the aforementioned crises underline the need for Europe to continue to accelerate the radical (twin green and digital) transformation set out at the beginning of this Commission's mandate. The third reality is that these crises cannot be met with a business-as-usual approach.

Briefing EN

## Lord Henry Plumb (1925-2022): President of the European Parliament 1987-1989

Briefing

14-11-2022

O'BEARA FEARGHAS

Lord Henry Plumb was the only British national ever to be elected President of the European Parliament, during almost 50 years of United Kingdom (UK) membership of the European Union. He passed away on 15 April 2022 aged 97 and the Parliament paid tribute to him at the opening of its plenary session on 2 May 2022, including holding a minute of silence. Speaking on that occasion, Parliament's President, Roberta Metsola, described him as a 'great European and a passionate believer in the power of politics to improve lives'. She referred to his leadership in expanding the powers and prestige of the European Parliament, highlighting in particular that he was the first European Parliament President to address the European Council, and also the first to award the Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. Henry Plumb was first elected as an MEP at the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979, as a member of the Conservative Party, representing the Cotswolds constituency. A farmer by background, he served as president of the National Farmers' Union of England and Wales, and as chair of COPA, the European Association of Agricultural Producers. Building on this experience, he was elected chair of the Committee on Agriculture during the first term of the new Parliament. Plumb then served for five years as chair of one of the European Parliament's political groups, the European Democratic Group, following which he was elected President of Parliament in January 1987 and held the office for two and a half years. During his third and fourth terms, he became increasingly involved in development policy; he was chair of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States – European Union (ACP-EU) Joint Parliamentary Assembly for five years. Knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1973 and made a life peer in 1987, Plumb took the title Lord Plumb of Coleshill. After retiring from the European Parliament in 1999, he was an active member of the UK House of Lords until 2017. He continued his public work up to the end of his life, notably through the Henry Plumb Foundation, which he created in 2012 to help young people develop initiatives in the farming and food sectors.

Briefing EN, FR

## Democracy in America 2022: Current challenges to US democracy and first lessons for Europe

Briefing

08-11-2022

BENTZEN Naja

Ever since Alexis de Tocqueville's exploration of democracy in America during his travels in 1831 1832, Europe has followed the evolution of US democratic trends. Today, almost 200 years later, challenges to democracy in the USA offer important lessons for democracies across the world, including in Europe. The 2022 mid-term elections are widely seen as an inflection point at a time when the pressure on democracy worldwide is under mounting pressure. Simultaneously, geostrategic and systemic tension between democracy and authoritarianism has been further exacerbated by Russia's unprovoked war on Ukraine's territory, identity and young democracy. Challenges to democracy in America – which are expected to increase ahead of the November 2024 presidential election, the same year as the next European Parliament elections will be held – are interlinked with the ongoing pressure on the global information sphere. At the same time, developments in recent years have confirmed that the lines between domestic and foreign attempts to undermine democracy – including, but not exclusively through information manipulation – are increasingly blurred, and connections between foreign interference and domestic terrorism are under growing scrutiny. Ahead of the second Summit for Democracy, any real or perceived weaknesses in democratic systems, as well as any real or perceived transatlantic rifts risk benefiting authoritarian state actors. Potential repercussions of the challenges to US democracy will inevitably affect Europe and the rest of the world directly at a time of polycrisis.

Briefing EN

## Towards an International Anti-Corruption Court?

Briefing

10-10-2022

Cedric RYNGAERT

Momentum is building globally for the establishment of an International Anti-Corruption Court, which would have jurisdiction over acts of grand corruption and fill the domestic accountability vacuum in kleptocratic regimes. Before such an institution can become reality, though, a number of practical, political and legal concerns will have to be addressed, for instance in relation to state ratification and cooperation. Hence, this Briefing identifies key issues which the European Parliament should assess and consider when forming its position. However, irrespective of its support for an International Anti-Corruption Court, the European Parliament may also want to strengthen other mechanisms enhancing legal accountability, such as existing international courts or extraterritorial jurisdiction. It may also continue to promote more indirect tools for advancing the fight against impunity such as anti-corruption clauses in trade agreements, targeted sanctions, and global asset recovery.

Briefing EN

1 EN

## What if everyone spoke the same language?

06-10-2022

ANTUNES LUISA

One language disappears every two weeks, and up to 90 % of existing languages could be gone by the turn of the century. Globalisation, social and economic pressures and political options can determine whether a language survives. Multilingualism is a cornerstone of the European project, with 24 official and 60 minority languages. In a digital era, ensuring digital language equality can help preserve linguistic diversity.

EN

What if everyone spoke the same language?

## 'This is Europe' debate in the European Parliament: Speech by Sanna Marin, Prime Minister of Finland, on 13 September 2022

19-09-2022

DRACHENBERG Ralf

'This is Europe' – an initiative proposed by the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola – consists of a series of debates with EU leaders to discuss their visions for the future of the European Union. On 13 September, the Prime Minister of Finland, Sanna Marin, was the fifth EU leader to address the Parliament since its Conference of Presidents endorsed the initiative on 28 April 2022. Ms Marin stressed that the European Union was the most important political framework for each of its Member States, and that its unity was its greatest strength. She also emphasised that Europe's strategic autonomy was one of the most important discussions in the Union, regarding the EU's ability to meet external challenges and to safeguard the functioning of our societies in all circumstances.

EN

## The six policy priorities of the von der Leyen Commission: State of play in autumn 2022

09-09-2022

BASSOT Etienne

This EPRS paper analyses progress in attaining the policy agenda set out by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, and her College of Commissioners. It looks in particular at the state of play in respect of delivery on its six key priorities. Concretely, EPRS finds that, ahead of the 2022 State of the Union address, of the over 500 initiatives foreshadowed by the von der Leyen Commission on taking office or since (521), almost two thirds (330) have already been submitted and, on the legislative proposals, the co-legislators have started work. Of those 330, almost half (160) have already been adopted by the co-legislators, or, for the non-legislative ones (such as strategies, action plans and other communications, amounting to nearly one in five of the total), by the Commission itself. The great majority of the remainder are either proceeding normally through the legislative process (120) or are close to adoption (16). Conversely, a tenth of them are proceeding very slowly or are currently blocked (34). While the Commission's first priority, the European Green Deal, ranks highest in terms of the number of initiatives planned (130), its third priority, 'An economy that works for people', has seen the highest number of legislative proposals actually adopted so far (34).

DE, EN, FR

## Study for the PEGA Committee Mission to Poland

01-09-2022

MACIEJEWSKI Mariusz

This study contains background materials for PEGA Committee mission to Poland.
Materials collected in the briefing indicate at a large scale legislative overhaul, deep politicisation of executive branch and undermining of judicial independence that led to a paralysis in resolving flagrant violations of law due to illegal acquisition and use of Pegasus spyware in Poland.The study has been prepared by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the PEGA Committee.

EN

## The way forward for better regulation in the EU – better focus, synergies, data and technology

04-08-2022

Giovanni SARTOR

his in-depth analysis, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the JURI Committee, looks at the use of data for the purpose of regulatory assessment/evaluation. The author finds that data is needed to support evidence-based regulation, that information technologies, and in particular AI, can enable a more extensive and beneficial use of data, and that the use of data in ex-post evaluations can improve the regulatory process. The in-depth analysis offers policy recommendations.

EN

## Auditing the quality of datasets used in algorithmic decision-making systems

25-07-2022

This study has been written by Iñigo de Miguel Beriain, Pilar Nicolás Jiménez (UPV/EHU), María José Rementería, Davide Cirillo, Atia Cortés, Diego Saby (Barcelona Supercomputing Center), and Guillermo Lazcoz Moratinos (CIBERER - ISCIII) at the request of the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) and managed by the Scientific Foresight Unit, within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament

Biases are commonly considered one of the most detrimental effects of artificial intelligence (AI) use. The EU is therefore committed to reducing their incidence as much as possible. However, the existence of biases pre-dates the creation of AI tools. All human societies are biased – AI only reproduces what we are. Therefore, opposing this technology for this reason would simply hide discrimination and not prevent it. It is up to human supervision to use all available means – which are many – to mitigate its biases. It is likely that at some point in the future, recommendations made by an AI mechanism will contain less bias than those made by human beings. Unlike humans, AI can be reviewed and its flaws corrected on a consistent basis. Ultimately, AI could serve to build fairer, less biased societies. This study begins by providing an overview of biases in the context of artificial intelligence, and more specifically to machine-learning applications. The second part is devoted to the analysis of biases from a legal point of view. The analysis shows that shortcomings in this area call for the implementation of additional regulatory tools to adequately address the issue of bias. Finally, this study puts forward several policy options in response to the challenges identified.

EN

1 EN

## Ethical and societal challenges of the approaching technological storm

25-07-2022

This study has been written by Ibo van de Poel, Tristan de Wildt, Ilse Oosterlaken, and Jeroen van den Hoven of Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), at the request of the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) and managed by the Scientific Foresight Unit, within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament.
Contributions to specific chapters have been made by Wijnand IJsselsteijn (Eindhoven University of Technology), Dyami van Kooten Passaro (TU Delft), Olya Kudina (TU Delft), Michael Nagenborg (University of Twente), Madhumita Naik (TU Delft), and Filippo Santoni de Sio (TU Delft).

Supported by the arrival of 5G and, soon 6G, digital technologies are evolving towards an artificial intelligence-driven internet of robotic and bionano things. The merging of artificial intelligence (AI) with other technologies such as the internet of things (IoT) gives rise to acronyms such as 'AIoT', 'IoRT' (IoT and robotics) and 'IoBNT' (IoT and bionano technology). Blockchain, augmented reality and virtual reality add even more technological options to the mix. Smart bodies, smart homes, smart industries, smart cities and smart governments lie ahead, with the promise of many benefits and opportunities. However, unprecedented amounts of personal data will be collected, and digital technologies will affect the most intimate aspects of our life more than ever, including in the realms of love and friendship. This study offers a bird's eye perspective of the key societal and ethical challenges we can expect as a result of this convergence, and policy options that can be considered to address them effectively.

EN

1 EN

## Peace and Security in 2022: Overview of EU action and outlook for the future

14-07-2022

LAZAROU Eleni | ZAMFIR Ionel

This is the fifth Peace and Security Outlook produced by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). The series analyses and explains the European Union's contribution to the promotion of peace and security internationally, through its various external policies. The study provides an overview of the issues and current state of play. It looks first at the concept of peace and the changing nature of the geopolitical environment as European security faces the most tangible military threat since the end of the Cold War. Russia's war on Ukraine compounds the challenges to peace and security already accentuated by the coronavirus crisis. The study follows the logic of the annual series, by focusing on the promotion of peace and security in the EU's external action. Linking the study to the Normandy Index, which measures threats to peace and democracy worldwide based on the EU Global Strategy, each chapter of the study analyses a specific threat to peace and presents an overview of EU action to counter the related risks. The areas discussed include violent conflict, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, cyber-attacks, disinformation, and terrorism, among other issues. The EU's pursuit of peace is understood as a goal embodied in several EU policies, including development, democracy support, humanitarian assistance, security, and defence. The study concludes with an outlook for the future. A parallel study, published separately, focuses specifically on EU peace-building efforts in the Eastern Neighbourhood. The studies have been drafted as a contribution to the Normandy World Peace Forum scheduled for September 2022.

EN, FR

Peace and security interactive infographic

## 'This is Europe' debate in the European Parliament: Speech by Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of Greece, on 5 July 2022

12-07-2022

TORPEY REBECCA MARY

'This is Europe' – an initiative proposed by the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola – consists of a series of debates with EU leaders to discuss their visions for the future of the European Union. On 5 July 2022, the Prime Minister of Greece, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, was the fourth EU leader to address the Parliament since its Conference of Presidents endorsed the initiative on 28 April 2022. Mr Mitsotakis mentioned EU solidarity frequently, in terms of how it had helped Greece during the economic crisis, how Greece could contribute to energy security, and how the EU should support Greece when dealing with migration challenges and relations with Turkey, as well as of the effective impact of solidarity in dealing with the Covid 19 pandemic. Another key theme in the Prime Minister's speech was crisis, and how the EU can better deal with future challenges by learning lessons from its handling of previous crises. One of Mr Mitsotakis's concluding messages was that the EU needs an 'agenda for resilience and development' to respond to major challenges in defence, migration, banking union, energy, coordinated action based on the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the deepening of democracy, addressing fake news, and developing the EU's role in the Western Balkans.

EN

## 'Splinternets': Addressing the renewed debate on internet fragmentation

11-07-2022

This study has been written by Clément Perarnaud (Brussels School of Governance – Vrije Universiteit Brussel), Julien Rossi (COSTECH – Université de technologie de Compiègne and PREFICS – Université Rennes 2), Francesca Musiani (CIS – CNRS) and Lucien Castex (IRMECCEN – Université Sorbonne Nouvelle), at the request of the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) and managed by the Scientific Foresight Unit, within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament.

Recent events have multiplied concerns about potential fragmentation of the internet into a multitude of non-interoperable and disconnected 'splinternets'. Composed of thousands of compatible autonomous systems, the internet is by definition technically divided. Yet, the internet was also designed to be an open and global technical infrastructure. The unity and openness of the internet appear to be under great pressure from political, commercial and technological developments. This report explores the implications of the EU's recent policies in this field as well as the opportunities and challenges for EU Member States and institutions in addressing internet fragmentation. It underlines how recent EU legislative proposals – on the digital services act, digital markets act, artificial intelligence act, and NIS 2 Directive – could help to address patterns of fragmentation, but also have limitations and potentially unintended consequences. Four possible strategies emerge: stay with the status quo, embrace fragmentation, resist patterns of divergence, or frame discussions as a matter of fundamental rights.

EN

1 EN

Splinternets': Addressing the renewed debate on internet fragmentation

## Multilateralism and Democracy. A European Parliament perspective

30-06-2022

DAMEN Mario

This analysis looks into the complex relationship between two trends in international governance: an increase in multilateral arrangements between countries in order to govern internationally on the one hand, and a lack of democratic control over the decisions taken by multilateral organisations or conferences on the other. Multilateralism in the modern sense refers to an international mode of operation involving peaceful negotiations and diplomacy, also referred to as a ‘rules-based international order’ or ‘rules-based multilateralism’. Several European countries have recently launched initiatives in support of multilateralism, in reaction to the increasingly unilateral behaviour of states undermining the existing rules-based international order. Apart from the European Union, no other multilateral organisation has a parliamentary body with the competence to block or amend its decisions, which indicates that there is a democratic deficit in these multilateral organisations. An initial response to such a democratic deficit is the involvement of national parliaments in international decision-making. This is known as ‘parliamentary diplomacy’. Secondly, the involvement of civil society in international decision-making through protests, petitions, consultations or participation can also enhance democracy. Thirdly, the organisation of national referenda on international decisions can be used by national governments or citizens’ initiatives to increase democratic legitimacy. Fourthly, a lack of democracy at international level can also be countered by creating an ‘alliance of democracies’, aimed at multilateral cooperation between democratic countries rather than the democratisation of multilateral organisations. These are mostly alliances of Western countries, which risks emphasising the differences between West and East or North and South. Three short case studies of parliamentary diplomacy with the strong involvement of the European Parliament (the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO), delegations to the Conferences of Parties of climate change agreements and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly) show that enhancing multilateral democracy is not the only aim of parliamentary diplomacy and that each case reveals a different mix between the ‘parliamentary’ aspect of democratisation and the ‘diplomacy’ aspects of information exchange or influencing.

EN

## Policy Departments’ Monthly Highlights - July 2022

30-06-2022

The Monthly Highlights publication provides an overview, at a glance, of the on-going work of the policy departments, including a selection of the latest and forthcoming publications, and a list of future events.

EN

## European Council: facts and figures

Briefing

29-06-2022

DRACHENBERG Ralf

The European Council brings together the Heads of State or Government of the 27 EU Member States in regular 'summit' meetings which seek to define the overall political direction and priorities of the European Union. This Briefing offers a selection of key facts and figures about this institution, detailing its membership, role, work and development over time.

Briefing EN

## Outcome of the meetings of EU leaders on 23-24 June 2022

Briefing

28-06-2022

DRACHENBERG Ralf

The June 2022 European Council meeting marked a potentially historic moment: EU leaders granted Ukraine and Moldova candidate status and also confirmed Georgia's European perspective. Although highly anticipated, this major step was neither obvious nor uncontroversial, as for the first time it concerned a country still at war, generating intense discussions both within the European Council and with partner countries. On Ukraine, EU leaders took stock of the situation in the country, confirmed their commitment to increased military support and financial assistance, and called on like-minded partners to align with EU sanctions. Regarding relations with non-EU partners in Europe, the European Council had its first strategic discussion on the 'European political community' concept (EPC), with a possible first EPC summit to take place under the upcoming Czech Presidency. Turkey's assertiveness in the eastern Mediterranean and the Belarus people's right to 'free and fair elections' were also discussed. On other topics, however, not least on the Conference on the Future of Europe, the results were underwhelming, as EU leaders took no concrete follow-up decision, simply leaving it to each EU institution to do so within its own sphere of competence. Moreover, no breakthrough was possible regarding the Western Balkans – neither at the leaders' meeting nor at the European Council itself. The last component of the two days of meetings saw a Euro Summit in inclusive format. EU leaders discussed two major issues, the current economic situation, notably the rise in prices of energy, food and commodities, and the EU's financial architecture, reiterating their commitment to the completion of the banking and capital markets unions.

Briefing EN

## 'This is Europe' debate in the European Parliament: Speech by Andrej Plenkovi, Prime Minister of Croatia, on 22 June 2022

28-06-2022

DRACHENBERG Ralf

'This is Europe' – an initiative proposed by the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola – consists of a series of debates with EU leaders to discuss their visions for the future of the European Union. On 22 June, the Prime Minister of Croatia, Andrej Plenkovi, was the third EU leader to address the Parliament since its Conference of Presidents endorsed the initiative on 28 April. Mr Plenkovi considered Croatia to be at the centre of EU integration and expressed his support for more shared competences in the area of health cooperation as well as for EU enlargement to Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and the Western Balkans, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina.

EN

## Safety of journalists in non-EU countries: state and non-state protection mechanisms and the role of the EU

24-06-2022

Tamsin MITCHELL

The following is a qualitative, comparative analysis of international state and non-state mechanisms and tools aimed at protecting and ensuring the safety of journalists, and the extent to which they are used and valued in three non-EU countries: the Philippines, El Salvador and Tunisia. Emphasis is placed on the role of the EU in using and strengthening its own and other international instruments. The findings are based on 15 expert interviews and a literature review carried out between mid-February and late April 2022. The study concludes that while EU Delegations and other international actors in these countries are active in promoting journalist safety and freedom of expression to varying degrees and their presence and support is valued by civil society organisations (CSOs), there is considerable room for improvement. Across the three countries, certain protection mechanisms and tools were frequently mentioned by both EU/UN and CSO representatives, while others were not mentioned/used or appeared under-used. A series of recommendations are made, including to: continue and increase support of the most used mechanisms/tools; build awareness/capacity around using the full range of instruments; address the disconnect between the EU's preference for private action and CSOs' desire for more public action; and commission a full external evaluation into the implementation of the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Expression.

EN

## Outlook for the meetings of EU leaders on 23-24 June 2022

Briefing

22-06-2022

DRACHENBERG Ralf

A series of sensitive topics feature on the agenda of the last regular European Council meeting before the summer break, taking place on 23-24 June. Considering the magnitude of the issues at stake, this European Council meeting – if successful – could become a milestone summit. Notably, EU leaders are expected to consider granting candidate country status to Ukraine and Moldova, most probably with certain specific conditions, to reaffirm the Western Balkans' European perspective, and to consider the proposal put forward by the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, to create a European Political Community. They will also discuss developments in and support for Ukraine following Russia's military aggression, as well as the broader consequences of the war, including food security. As at past meetings since the outbreak of the war, the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, may once again address the European Council. EU leaders could also consider the situation in the eastern Mediterranean, a topic they last discussed at the request of the President of Cyprus, Nikos Anastasiades, at the special European Council meeting of 30-31 May 2022. To what extent EU leaders will discuss the follow-up to the Conference on the Future of Europe remains uncertain.

Briefing EN

## EU sanctions against Russia: alignment of the EU enlargement countries

20-06-2022

MALOVEC Michal | STASIUKEVYCH IRYNA

This in-depth analysis provides an overview of alignment of EU enlargement countries with EU sanctions against Russia due to its aggression against Ukraine. It analyses the legal and political basis for the alignment with the EU's Common and Foreign Policy, including the restrictive measures (sanctions). Furthermore, it provides a factual account of the main steps taken by the countries covered by the EU enlargement policy in the Western Balkans and Turkey (Türkiye), coupled by a brief assessment of the main reasons for their policies. Lastly, policy options for the EU and for its parliamentary dimension are laid out.

EN

## 'This is Europe' debate in the European Parliament: Speech by Micheál Martin, Taoiseach of Ireland, 8 June 2022

15-06-2022

DRACHENBERG Ralf

'This is Europe' – an initiative proposed by the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola – consists of a series of debates with EU leaders to discuss their visions for the future of the European Union. Following the first speech in this series by the Italian Prime Minister, Mario Draghi, on 3 May 2022, the Irish Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Micheál Martin, was the second EU leader to address the Parliament, on 8 June.1 Mr Martin suggested numerous ways to strengthen and further develop the Union, notably by increasing its budget. He also expressed his support for Treaty change, if necessary, as well as for Ukraine's application for EU membership, and stressed the need to protect EU values and apply EU laws.

EN

## The Conference on the Future of Europe and the European Council: How far is there a shared policy agenda for the future?

Briefing

09-06-2022

DRACHENBERG Ralf

After one year of deliberation, the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) delivered its first result in the form of 49 proposals, including concrete objectives, and more than 320 potential measures on ways of achieving them. As a follow up to the CoFoE, the European Parliament called on 4 May 2022 for the launch of a Convention under Article 48 TEU; this request has also received the support of some EU leaders, notably the French President, Emmanuel Macron, the Italian Prime Minister, Mario Draghi, and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen. The 23-24 June 2022 European Council meeting is expected to discuss the results of the CoFoE, and EU Heads of State or Government are likely to lay out their views on its possible follow-up. In this context, this EPRS Briefing addresses two complementary aspects of the discussions in the European Council. Firstly, it compares and analyses, based on the annexed table, the objectives set by the CoFoE in its proposals with the Strategic Agenda 2019-2024, as well as subsequent conclusions of the European Council, and identifies the areas of convergence and differences as well as 'blank spots'. It thereby locates the potential common ground for (inter-)institutional follow-up to the CoFoE. Secondly, it provides an overview of initial views on the possible follow-up to the CoFoE, by outlining recent positions of EU leaders and EU institutions on the need for Treaty change.

Briefing EN

## Safety of journalists and media freedom: trends in non-EU countries from a human rights perspective

Briefing

06-06-2022

Jackie HARRISON, Sara TORSNER

Since 2012 media freedom has been in general decline. While statistics for the 2002-2021 time-period show that the number of killings of journalists has declined somewhat in recent years (since 2013), there has been a marked erosion of legally enabling environments and an increase in other damaging forms of targeted attacks on the media. These include non-lethal physical violence; legal, digital, psycho-social, gender and identity-based intimidation; and state-led capture of the media landscape, often accompanied by politically-motivated denigration and exclusion of critical media voices. Our findings show: (i) political journalism remains most at risk; (ii) major social shocks or crisis (exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic) have been widely used as pretexts for intrusive government measures to constrain media freedom; and (iii) media pluralism and independence are declining. Impunity remains unacceptably high with most cases of killings remaining unresolved. Imprisonments are on the rise while online spaces are becoming increasingly hostile and replete with gender-based hate speech. Countering the wide range of overt and covert threats will require an unequivocal reversal of global trends towards authoritarian controls and suppression of independent media. To undertake this, the European Parliament and concerned institutions need access to reliable data which reflects the realities of the multiple threats that impede the work of journalists globally.

Briefing EN

## Gaining the right of legislative initiative for Parliament

01-06-2022

KOTANIDIS Silvia

During the June I plenary session, the European Parliament is expected to vote on a resolution dealing with a crucial issue for Parliament, that of acquiring the 'direct' right of legislative initiative, a prerogative that national parliaments in Member States already have. This discussion comes at a time when, in the wake of the conclusion of the Conference on the Future of Europe, the possibility of opening up to bigger, more far-reaching EU reforms is being contemplated.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## Policy Departments' Monthly Highlights - June 2022

31-05-2022

The Monthly Highlights publication provides an overview, at a glance, of the on-going work of the policy departments, including a selection of the latest and forthcoming publications, and a list of future events.

EN

## Outlook for the special European Council meeting of 30-31 May 2022

30-05-2022

ANGHEL Suzana Elena

On 30 and 31 May 2022, EU Heads of State or Government will meet for the fourth time since the outbreak of Russia's war on Ukraine, to discuss developments in and support for the invaded country. Three other inter-connected topics - security and defence, energy and food security - will also be on the agenda. EU leaders are expected to take stock of the defence investment gaps analysis presented by the European Commission and the High Representative/Vice President of the Commission (HR/VP), Josep Borrell, and to give further guidelines. Their debate on energy could be a heated one as Member States agree on the main principle – cutting off the EU's dependency on Russian fossil fuels – but disagree on the method and pace. With respect to food security, EU leaders are expected to consider the disruptive impact of Russia's war on Ukraine on food supply chains and on prices in the EU and its neighbourhood.

EN

## Right to health, a comparative law perspective - Canada

24-05-2022

Prof Dr Derek J. JONES, McGill University

This study forms part of a larger Comparative Law project which seeks to present the right to health in a broad range of legal systems around the world. After analyzing applicable constitutional sources, federal legislation and leading case law, the definition and content, scope and limits, and evolution of Canada's right to health are explored. The subject of this study is the Canadian legal system. This study begins with an overview of selected historic dangers to Canada's health, challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, and how such historic tragedies help contextualize and nurture national health needs and duties towards emergence of a right to health. It then explores leading constitutional, statutory and jurisprudential developments at the confluence of health law and human rights as sources of a right to health. While a right to health is not expressly enumerated in the Canadian Constitution, diverse fundamental rights of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms have been significant drivers of access to medically necessary services and a protectorate of health-related values. Many such rights have proved pivotal in Canada's early Covid litigation. As well, federal human rights law, federal legislation on health services and national public health and safety regulations, underscore the vital role that such laws play in accessing, protecting and promoting human health. The document concludes with an exploration of the contours of the right to health – its definitions, scope and breadth, and its interface with fundamental rights to liberty, security of the person, equality, bodily integrity, privacy, etc. Such Charter rights have reformed Canadian law on abortion, euthanasia, health information privacy, solitary confinement. The study suggests that Canada's right to health encompasses and transcends access to health care. The right is not static; but, dynamic and iterative. It continues to evolve on a spectrum from a narrow right to health services, to a right to health protection, towards a broader right to determinants of health. The right draws on and synergizes with correlative, health-related dignitary rights. Together, they comprise facets of a right to health in diverse contexts. As they advance, a more robust and developed right to health seems likely to emerge in Canadian law.

EN

## Key issues in the European Council: State of play in May 2022

20-05-2022

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf | TORPEY REBECCA MARY

The role of the European Council is to 'provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development' and to define its 'general political directions and priorities'. Since its creation in 1975, the European Council has exercised considerable influence over the development of the European Union, a process enhanced by its designation as a formal institution of the Union under the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. The European Council Oversight Unit within the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) monitors and analyses the activities, commitments and impact of the European Council, so as to maximise parliamentary understanding of the political dynamics of this important institution. This EPRS publication, 'Key issues in the European Council', which is updated every quarter to coincide with European Council meetings, aims to provide an overview of the institution's activities on major EU issues. It analyses twelve broad policy areas, explaining the legal and political background, the main priorities and orientations defined by the European Council and the results of its involvement to date, as well as some of the future challenges in each policy field.

EN

## Right-wing extremism in the EU

20-05-2022

Quentin LIGER, Asterisk Research and Analysis
Mirja GUTHEIL, Asterisk Research and Analysis

This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the LIBE Committee, provides a discussion on the distinctive features of right-wing extremism as well as of violent actions perpetrated by right-wing extremists in the EU. It gives an overview and analysis of definitions, recent trends and responses to these actions and concludes with recommendations. In particular, the study highlights the need to develop a working definition of right wing-extremism in order to provide a better framework for understanding, studying and measuring the phenomenon

EN

## European Commission follow-up to European Parliament requests 2019 - 2021

19-05-2022

BACIAN Izabela Cristina | BINDER ECKHARD | PASIK MAGDALENA | PÉREZ GUZMÁN Águeda

This study seeks to present a comprehensive overview of non-legislative resolutions adopted by the Parliament between July 2019 and December 2021 on the basis of own-initiative reports, in the light of the response provided by the Commission, the subsequent follow-up documents and related actions undertaken by the Commission up to 31 January 2022. The publication is part of Parliament's Strategic Execution Framework (2019-2021). The aim of this joint DG PRES and DG EPRS project on 'Improved reporting on European Commission follow-up to European Parliament resolutions' is to facilitate monitoring of the Commission's follow-up to those resolutions.

EN

## Le droit à la santé, une perspective de droit comparé - Suisse

12-05-2022

EPRS, Comparative Law

Ce document s'intègre dans une série d'études qui, avec une perspective de droit comparé, visent à faire une présentation du droit à la santé dans différents ordres juridiques. Après avoir expliqué la réglementation et la jurisprudence d'application, le contenu, les limites et la possible évolution de ce droit sont examinés. La présente étude a pour objet le cas de la Suisse. Elle présente les tensions idéologiques qui peuvent naître de la rencontre de l'impératif de santé publique d'une part et d'une conception résolument libérale de l'État, qui érige la responsabilité individuelle en valeur cardinale, et l'obstacle qu'elles représentent pour l'émergence et la consécration législative d'un droit à la santé. L'abondante jurisprudence rendue par les tribunaux suisses, dont la portée est parfois très politique, offre toutefois quelques pistes solides pour envisager une telle perspective.

FR

## Democracy and authoritarianism: Perspectives from the 2021 ESPAS Conference

10-05-2022

NOONAN EAMONN

'Speak up for democracy.' That was one of the conclusions of a wide-ranging discussion on threats to democracy at the 2021 ESPAS conference. Insecurity about rapid changes has undermined trust, and inequalities – also across generations – have been further accelerated by the pandemic. Remedies discussed include stronger civic education, efforts to reinforce the social contract and improve social cohesion, and measures to protect the integrity of elections. There were also calls to strengthen the democratic acquis of the European Union, in which the European Parliament has a central role.

EN

## Right to health, a comparative law perspective - United States of America

06-05-2022

EPRS, Comparative Law

This study forms part of a larger comparative law project which seeks to present the right to health in a broad range of legal systems around the world. After analysing the legislation in force and the most relevant case law, the content, limits, and possible evolution of this right are examined. The subject of this study is the United States federal legal system. The United States does not recognize a right to health. Governments are responsible for providing a healthy environment for individuals who are in their custody, such as prisoners, but there is no overall recognized right. The United States is a party to certain international conventions, such as the constitution of the World Health Organization and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; however, these instruments play no real role in determining U.S. domestic health policy. Instead, domestic policy is grounded upon the federal system, which assigns certain duties to the central government and the state governments. In addition, individuals have strong rights under the U.S. Constitution, which governments must respect. Courts must balance these rights against the needs of the public.

EN

## Policy Departments' Monthly Highlights - May 2022

29-04-2022

The Monthly Highlights publication provides an overview, at a glance, of the on-going work of the policy departments, including a selection of the latest and forthcoming publications, and a list of future events.

EN

## The future of data protection and privacy: How the European Parliament is responding to citizens' expectations

Briefing

27-04-2022

MILDEBRATH Hendrik Alexander

This is the fifth briefing within a series benchmarking Parliament's activities against citizens' expectations submitted to the Conference on the Future of Europe. In a number of different ways, citizens seized the opportunity to call for a high level of data protection and privacy, as well as their rigorous implementation. They recommend measures promoting industry compliance, increasing citizens' control over data, enhancing enforcement and limiting the monitoring, profiling and manipulation of citizens by private and public actors. As this briefing demonstrates, Parliament has largely kept pace with citizens' concerns by taking initiatives in areas where contributing citizens identified a need for action.

Briefing EN

## Multilateral initiatives for upholding human rights in digital technologies: A task for the UN or for liberal democracies?

Briefing

21-04-2022

ZAMFIR Ionel

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With their rapid advancement in recent times, digital technologies have undeniably had major positive and also negative impacts on human rights. They have offered people better opportunities to communicate and exchange information, thereby empowering them to exercise their right to freedom of expression and association, among others, and to draw public attention to human rights violations. On the other hand, they have enabled disinformation, cyber-surveillance and abusive behaviour, such as hate speech, cyber-crime and misuse of personal data. There is a broad consensus that the same human rights and human rights obligations that apply offline also apply in the digital environment. However, new technologies are creating a fundamentally different paradigm for human interaction, and the current international human rights framework has conceptual gaps. The main question for the international debate is how to fill these gaps. Through soft ethical standards or binding rules? What is the best forum for this? While the UN is best placed, given its universal scope, it has been weakened by the actions of authoritarian states. Multilateral coalitions of democratic states are an alternative avenue, but they bring a risk of fragmentation of the global space for digital technologies. When looking at how human rights play out in the digital context, it is important to carefully balance the benefits and risks of new technologies, to apply a multi-stakeholder approach, and to bear in mind that human rights obligations, while still incumbent on states as the main duty bearers, also apply to businesses, particularly those behind new technological developments. The EU is involved in the discussions on the above issues, both in the UN and in coalitions of liberal democracies. In parallel, the EU is working on developing guidance and binding norms on how human rights obligations apply at EU and national level with respect to the digital environment.

Briefing EN

## Russia’s war on Ukraine in international law and human rights bodies: Bringing institutions back in

Briefing

08-04-2022

LERCH Marika

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In the midst of war, human rights and international law institutions have responded with unprecedented speed to the unfolding crisis, not least due to the strong engagement of the Ukraine government in multilateral fora. While these institutions can deliver little immediate relief for Ukraine citizens, the initiatives have important political functions: they show the political and legal alternatives to the logic of war chosen by the Russian government; they contribute to formalising international consensus and providing independent legal assessments of the attack; and, most importantly, they prepare the ground to ensure accountability for crimes committed in the context of the war. .

Briefing EN

## Strengthening citizens' participation: How the European Parliament is responding to citizens' expectations

Briefing

08-04-2022

DEL MONTE Micaela | KOTANIDIS Silvia

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Aiming to forge a closer relationship between EU citizens and the EU integration project, the Conference on the Future of Europe gave 800 citizens gathered in four panels the opportunity to discuss and formulate recommendations for the EU institutions to follow up. Debated in both the conference plenary and the conference working groups, these recommendations are intended to permeate the whole discussion within the conference. With Panel 2 having issued the first set of recommendations in December 2021, the debate has begun, with a focus on how to meet citizens' expectations. It will also discuss how to take the EU project forward in a way that is supported by the various institutions involved in the conference, including representatives of Member States and EU institutions, and members of national parliaments. A closer look at these recommendations reveals that some of the citizens' panel recommendations address matters that have already been tackled by European Parliament resolutions. Others are quite close to positions and ideas expressed by Parliament in other ways. This briefing focuses on recommendations which propose enhanced public participation in the European project, through consultations, petitions, European citizens' initiatives and referendums. This is the second in a series of briefings looking at citizens' recommendations in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe. The first looked at recommendations with an institutional impact, i.e. ways to reform the EU's institutional set-up, improve the EU decision-making process, achieve closer cooperation among Member States and strengthen Parliament's prerogatives.

Briefing EN

## [European political parties and the European Council: A pattern of ever closer coordination?]

08-04-2022

DRACHENBERG Ralf

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The role of the European political parties, often under-estimated in the past, has increased significantly over the years. Today, they are important coordinators within the EU political system, carrying out a variety of activities that can be classified conceptually as 'vertical', 'horizontal' and 'diagonal' coordination. This EPRS study explores the growing 'politicisation' of the European Council and the increased coordination role which European political parties appear to play in the context of the European Council. The parties' main coordination activities are clearly their respective 'pre-summits', held just ahead of European Council meetings. These pre-summits serve multiple purposes for the parties – including coordinating positions for the imminent European Council discussions, long-term strategising, communication, socialising and networking – with the importance of each varying between the different parties. A case study looking at the nomination of the EU's new institutional leadership in 2019 illustrates the importance of the European political parties' role in coordinating between EU leaders in the European Council.

EN

## The European Council in 2020

04-04-2022

DG, EPRS; Dinan, Desmond

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The onset of the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020 affected the work of the European Council in many ways. One was operational. The European Council switched in March from in-person meetings to video-conferencing. During the year, the European Council held eight video-conferences and met five times in person. Meeting via video-conference, notably in March-April, during the first wave of the pandemic, and in October-November, during the second wave, allowed the European Council to apply itself immediately to damage control and crisis management. Going beyond immediate concerns, the European Council addressed the immense challenge of socio-economic recovery. In what was by far the most consequential development for the EU in 2020, the Union's Heads of State or Government negotiated a momentous agreement for an ambitious recovery fund linked to the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027. The complex and contentious negotiations on the MFF and the recovery fund, culminating in an epic special summit in July, will forever be remembered in the history of the European Council. So will the lingering dispute over rule of law conditionality, which, although in principle resolved by the end of the year with respect to the financial package, remained a deeply divisive issue among EU leaders. Despite the pressure of Covid-19 related business, EU leaders had to address other issues in 2020, such as climate change and external affairs. Relations with China, Russia and Turkey, in particular, required the European Council's attention. So did relations with the United Kingdom, which became a third country after it left the Union at the end of January.

EN

## Improving urgency procedures and crisis preparedness within the European Parliament and EU institutions

31-03-2022

MAURER Andreas

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This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee, analyses the obstacles to democratic, transparent and efficient decision-making in urgency situations at the EU level, with a specific focus on the European Parliament. It provides a systematic overview of Parliament's role and functions as well as the interinstitutional cooperation during recent crisis situations and concludes with proposals on how to improve the existing set-up and Parliament's internal procedures.

EN

DE, EN, FR, IT

## The six policy priorities of the von der Leyen Commission: State of play as the Commission approaches mid-term

31-03-2022

BASSOT Etienne

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This EPRS paper analyses progress in attaining the policy agenda set out by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, and her College of Commissioners when they took office in December 2019. It looks in particular at the state of play in respect of delivery on the six key priorities asserted at that time. Concretely, EPRS finds that, following the March 2022 EP plenary sessions and European Council meeting, of the over 500 initiatives foreshadowed by the von der Leyen Commission on taking office or since (504), more than half have already been submitted (288). Of these, almost half have already been adopted (135), while the great majority of the remainder are either proceeding normally through the legislative process (113) or are close to adoption (11). Conversely, a certain number are proceeding very slowly or are currently blocked (29).

DE, EN, FR

## Values on the retreat? The role of values in the EU's external policies

31-03-2022

DAMEN Mario

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There is a general perception in Western countries that the role of values as a foreign policy driver is currently on the decline. This study in the series 'global trends in external policies' seeks to contribute to the debate by investigating what is meant by 'values', whether their importance is on the wane and, if so, how this manifests itself, and how the European Union (EU) can respond to these trends. The broad concept of values has therefore been split into five categories. Socio-cultural values are implicit drivers of foreign policy. In the case of the EU, these are characterised by diversity. 'Political values' is used as a term to describe the fundamental principles of political and public action, defining the relationship between the state and its citizens. For the EU, these are often referred to as the triad of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Economic values characterise the nature of the prevailing economic system in a country. The EU advocates a social market economy. The term 'Earth values' refers to the inclusion of environmental considerations in external policies. The EU has become a leader in promoting sustainability. Resulting from the preceding four are 'international order values', which characterise the overall international outlook of actors. The EU's international order value is 'principled pragmatism'. This study compares the EU's values with those of four reference countries: the US, Turkey, Russia and China. The US in the West comes closest to many of the EU's values, but does not overlap completely. Turkey and Russia are in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood and increasingly disagree with the EU on values. Chinese values overlap least with the EU's values. The study confirms a decline in the influence of the political values preferred by the EU. This decline appears to correspond to a clear West-East spectrum. However, the study also notes an opposite trend of increasing influence of Earth values. For these, a Eurocentric spectrum appears more adequate. For economic values, the definition of trends depends on benchmarks and methodology. The international order notion of 'principled pragmatism' has been extended to 'EU strategic autonomy'. Values are often considered as part of EU strategic autonomy and some policies, such as EU accession or trade policy, incorporate them. A values-based approach to external policies should differentiate according to the partner country and the value category concerned. Whereas cooperation on political values does not appear to be fruitful with certain countries, continued efforts on economic or Earth values may still be possible. The study explores what such a differentiated approach could mean for the four reference countries in the near future. Such an approach should also take into account the differing perceptions of partner countries. Although positive avenues of cooperation on, for example, Earth values are still possible, geopolitical tensions, partly rooted in differing values, are overshadowing this path.

EN

## Le droit à la santé, une perspective de droit comparé - Belgique

29-03-2022

Prof. Dr Christian BEHRENDT, professeur ordinaire à l'Université de Liège et à la Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

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Ce document s'intègre dans une série d'études visant à présenter le droit à la santé dans différents ordres juridiques, et ce dans une perspective de droit comparé. La présente étude est pour sa part consacrée à la protection de la santé en Belgique. Le droit à la protection de la santé a été introduit dans la Constitution belge en 1994 et, à l'heure actuelle, ses contours ne sont pas encore précisément déterminés – à ceci près qu'il est clair qu'il s'agit d'un droit à la protection de la santé, et non un droit à la santé à proprement parler. Il revêt une dimension collective (c'est la protection de la santé publique) ainsi qu'une dimension individuelle (chacun a droit à la protection de la meilleure santé possible). Dans le contexte de la crise sanitaire lié au COVID-19, la protection de la santé (en particulier dans sa dimension collective) a justifié des restrictions à d'autres droits. Après une brève introduction consacrée aux premières occurrences de législations relatives à la protection de la santé, sont analysées la législation et la jurisprudence actuelles en la matière. Nous terminons cette étude par une présentation de certains conflits normatifs qui peuvent surgir entre la protection de la santé et d'autres droits fondamentaux.

FR

## The Economic Reconstruction of Belarus: Next Steps after a Democratic Transition

28-03-2022

Christopher A. HARTWELL; Kateryna BORNUKOVA; Dzmitry KRUK; Benedikt ZOLLER-RYDZEK

The economic performance of Belarus has been unimpressive ever since the fall of the Soviet Union, due mainly to the country's lack of serious structural reforms. This study examines the consequences of this benign neglect should a democratic transition occur and attempts to understand the assistance that may be required to help Belarus successfully transform. Unlike the transformations which began in Central Europe during 1989, though, Belarus' potential transition is complicated by immense Russian pressure. Hence, the provision of much needed assistance will be highly dependent upon Russia's stance towards a democratic transfer of power. This study examines its possible responses to understand how the EU can best be involved in the long-delayed Belarusian transformation and also how much assistance may be required.

EN

## What if machines made fairer decisions than humans?

23-03-2022

GARCIA HIGUERA ANDRES

Automated decision-making by systems that use machine learning to dynamically improve performance are still seen as lacking the 'human perspective' and flexibility to adapt to the particular nuances of specific cases. But perhaps, as they lack the 'cunning' to hide their biases, automated systems actually make fairer decisions than do humans, when these decisions are based on data that have been properly curated.

EN

What if machines made fairer decisions than humans?

## Charles Michel as President of the European Council

Briefing

22-03-2022

DRACHENBERG Ralf

Charles Michel's (first) term as European Council President comes to an end on 30 May 2022. In advance of his potential re-election by EU Heads of State or Government to that function, this paper looks at his activities during the course of his 30-month mandate to date, with a special focus on the institutional and inter-institutional dimension of his role. In practice, the coronavirus pandemic has dictated the agenda of the European Council from almost the beginning of Mr Michel's time in office. The resulting need to concentrate on 'crisis management' provided him, as it had his predecessors, with the opportunity to show leadership, applying a careful balance between the role of facilitator and that of agenda-setter. Despite the challenging circumstances he has faced, Mr Michel has managed to make his mark on the European Council's agenda, notably on external relations, championing the concept of 'strategic autonomy'. He demonstrated strong activism both prior to and after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, playing an important role in European Union mobilisation to support the country. He has also adjusted the European Council's working methods, in particular with the use of video-conferences of small groups of EU leaders to better prepare full European Council meetings. Cooperation between the European Council President and the European Parliament has increased in comparison to previous years, particularly regarding activities not required of the President by the Treaties. Mr Michel has also innovated in communications, notably through a newsletter aimed at EU citizens.

Briefing EN

## EU in the world / Migration Citizens' recommendations and the EU context: Panel 4 of the Conference on the Future of Europe

22-03-2022

AMANATIDIS Georgios | APICELLA CAROLINA | CIUCCI MATTEO | HEEZEN JOHANNES | IGLER WOLFGANG | ISKRA Katarzyna Anna | KONLE-SEIDL REGINA ANNA | KURRER CHRISTIAN MARTIN | LEGRAND Jérôme | MALOVEC Michal | MARTINELLO BARBARA | MARZOCCHI Ottavio | PADURARIU Claudia-Amelia | PAVY Eeva | RIEDER ANNA-SABINE | SOFSKY FABIAN | SOKOLSKA INA

As part of the Conference on the Future of Europe, 800 citizens debated their ideas for the European Union in four thematic panels.
The citizens involved in Panel 4 considered the possibilities for two related themes: the EU in the world and migration. This publication presents their recommendations, as well as a selection of related European Parliament resolutions and EU legislation, funding programmes and other activities. These background elements are not exhaustive, but have been selected to provide contextual material. For some wide-ranging recommendations, the background material focuses on the most prominent aspects of the proposal.
This paper was requested by Guy Verhofstadt, the Chair of the European Parliament's delegation to the Conference on the Future of Europe, on behalf of the delegation.

EN

## Les principes d'égalité et de non-discrimination, une perspective de droit comparé - Suisse

15-03-2022

Dr. Nula FREI, Universität Freiburg

Ce document fait partie d'une série d'études qui, sous l'angle du droit comparé, entend présenter les principes d'égalité et de non-discrimination dans différents États. Après avoir présenté la législation et la jurisprudence applicables, l'auteure examine le contenu, les limites et la possible évolution de ces principes. La présente étude porte sur la Suisse. La Suisse a inscrit l'égalité juridique et la non-discrimination dans la Constitution fédérale ainsi que dans plusieurs lois spéciales, qui se concentrent chacune sur des motifs de discrimination et des domaines juridiques spécifiques. Ceux-ci sont étudiés dans le présent document. La troisième section reprend l'importante jurisprudence du Tribunal fédéral suisse. La quatrième section analyse le cadre juridique suisse de manière critique et présente ses lacunes ainsi que les réformes actuelles et à venir. Le présent document est la version en français de l'étude originairement publiée par la Bibliothèque de droit comparé en allemand en octobre 2020. Cette version met à jour la version antérieure par le biais des notes de l'éditeur.

FR

## Role and election of the President of the European Council: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Briefing

10-03-2022

DRACHENBERG Ralf

The first term of Charles Michel, the incumbent European Council President comes to an end on 31 May 2022. Based on previous examples, the (re-)election of the European Council President for the period July 2022 to November 2024 is expected to be taken at the last formal European Council meeting before the end of the current mandate. This briefing provides answers to some of the most Frequently Asked Questions regarding the office of European Council President, notably the role of the position and the election process. It also provides concrete examples from the mandates of the three different office holders to date.

Briefing EN

## Les principes d'égalité et de non-discrimination, une perspective de droit comparé - Allemagne

08-03-2022

Prof. Dr. Franz REIMER, Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen

Ce document s'intègre dans une série d'études qui, en adoptant une perspective de droit comparé, visant à faire une présentation des principes d'égalité et de non-discrimination dans différents ordres juridiques. Après une explication de la législation et de la jurisprudence d'application, le contenu, les limites et la possible évolution de ces principes y sont examinés. La présente étude a pour objet le cas de l'Allemagne. En Allemagne, les principes d'égalité et de non-discrimination sont principalement inscrits dans l'article 3 de la Loi fondamentale (Grundgesetz), en tant que droits fondamentaux, sous la forme du principe général d'égalité (paragraphe 1) et de deux garanties spécifiques (paragraphes 2 et 3). La Cour constitutionnelle fédérale a progressivement concrétisé et appliqué ces droits. Depuis lors de nombreuses lois ont détaillé les principes d'égalité de façon conforme à la Constitution, par exemple en droit privé la loi générale sur l'égalité de traitement (AGG, l'Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz). Le présent document est la version en français de l'étude originairement publiée par la Bibliothèque de droit comparé en allemand en octobre 2020. Cette version met à jour la version antérieure par le biais des notes de l'éditeur.

FR

## Policy Departments’ Monthly Highlights - March 2022

03-03-2022

The Monthly Highlights publication provides an overview, at a glance, of the on-going work of the policy departments, including a selection of the latest and forthcoming publications, and a list of future events.

EN

## European democracy / Values and rights, rule of law, security - Citizens' recommendations and the EU context: Panel 2 of the Conference on the Future of Europe

28-02-2022

In the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe, four European citizens' panels have discussed the development of European integration in broad subject areas. For each of the 39 recommendations put forward by European Citizens' Panel 2: European democracy / Values and rights, rule of law, security, the present paper sets out a selection of the most recent and relevant European Parliament resolutions on the matter and looks at existing EU legislation and other EU funding programmes, supporting and coordinating actions. However, this paper is not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of all European Parliament resolutions and EU-level action in the area, but rather aims at feeding debate and discussion during the Conference plenary.

EN

## Les principes d’égalité et de non-discrimination, une perspective de droit comparé - Canada

25-02-2022

Professor Colleen SHEPPARD, Faculty of Law, McGill University

Ce document s’intègre dans une série d’études qui, avec une perspective de droit comparé, visent à faire une présentation des principes d’égalité et de non-discrimination dans différents États. La présente étude a pour objet l’examen des sources de droit, ainsi que la jurisprudence en matière d’égalité et de non-discrimination au Canada. Le droit contemporain en matière d’égalité est le résultat de l’histoire des discriminations tant publiques que privées au Canada. Les lois protégeant l’égalité et la non-discrimination sont apparues après la Seconde Guerre mondiale et ont été étendues et consolidées dans les années 1960 et 1970. Les réformes constitutionnelles entreprises dans les années 1980 ont permis d’inscrire l’égalité dans la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés. Depuis lors, la jurisprudence en matière d’égalité a élargi l’interprétation de la discrimination pour inclure les discriminations directes, indirectes et systémiques. Les tribunaux ont rejeté l’égalité formelle afin d’englober des notions plus larges liées à l’égalité réelle dans l’interprétation des protections constitutionnelles. Malgré les progrès accomplis pour renforcer les principes et protections en matière d’égalité et de non-discrimination au cours des dernières décennies, la mise en œuvre juste et efficace de leurs promesses reste un défi pressant pour le Canada. Le présent document est la version en français de l’étude originairement publiée par la Bibliothèque de droit comparé en anglais en novembre 2020. Cette version met à jour la version antérieure par le biais des notes de l’éditeur.

FR

## Les principes d’égalité et de non-discrimination, une perspective de droit comparé - États-Unis d’Amérique

24-02-2022

Elizabeth L. OSBORNE, Law Library of Congress, United States Library of Congress

Ce document fait partie d'une série d’études qui vise à examiner, dans une perspective de droit comparé, la manière dont les principes d’égalité et de non-discrimination ont été établis et sont appliqués dans un grand nombre de systèmes juridiques du monde entier. La présente étude porte sur les principes d’égalité et de non-discrimination dans le système juridique fédéral des États-Unis. Elle présente un bref historique de l’évolution des principes d’égalité et de non-discrimination dans le droit fédéral des États-Unis et les événements majeurs qui ont renforcé ces principes. Elle analyse de manière détaillée le droit constitutionnel, législatif et jurisprudentiel en ce qui concerne ces principes et met en lumière les limites actuelles des principes d’égalité et de non-discrimination et celles qui pourraient apparaître à l'avenir à partir de trois exemples : 1) l'action positive dans l’enseignement supérieur ; 2) le « charcutage électoral » à visée raciale et à visée partisane ; et 3) la discrimination fondée sur l’orientation sexuelle et l’identité de genre dans les lieux publics. Le présent document est la version en français de l’étude originairement publiée par la Bibliothèque de droit comparé en anglais en mars 2021. Cette version met à jour la version antérieure par le biais des notes de l’éditeur.

FR

## Policy Departments' Monthly Highlights - February 2022

11-02-2022

The Monthly Highlights publication provides an overview, at a glance, of the on-going work of the policy departments, including a selection of the latest and forthcoming publications, and a list of future events.

EN

## A statute for European cross-border associations and non-profit organisations

10-02-2022

DEL MONTE Micaela

During the February 2022 plenary session, Parliament is due to vote on a legislative-initiative report calling on the Commission to put forward a directive on common measures for non-profit organisations (NPOs) and also a regulation establishing a statute for European cross-border associations and non-profit organisations. The proposal recognises that while NPOs are an integral part of the EU economy, they face multiple legal and administrative challenges when attempting to operate across borders. It maintains that minimum EU standards and the possibility to acquire a legal personality would help NPOs overcome these barriers.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## Ensuring the rights of EU citizens against politically motivated Red Notices

01-02-2022

Rasmus H. Wandall

This paper, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, analyses Interpol's system of Red Notices and the EU-based mechanisms to safeguard citizens against political abuse of Interpol's system. Recent reforms of Interpol are significant but many problems remain unaddressed. The paper discusses existing and possible platforms, including the European Search Portal, as ways to ensure a more effective enforcement of EU-based legal limits and fundamental rights on a European level.

EN

## Democracy and human rights in Latin America: Is democratic erosion gathering pace?

Briefing

11-01-2022

GOMEZ RAMIREZ Enrique

Since the mid-1980s, Latin America has enjoyed long and broad democratic expansion, and has made considerable progress with regard to free and fair elections and respect for human rights. As the 'most democratic emerging-market region in the world', over 80 % of the Latin American population enjoy democracy, a proportion surpassed only in western Europe and North America. Standards vary widely however: while Costa Rica, Uruguay and Chile stand out in all classifications as the most free and democratic, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Cuba remain at the bottom of the table. However, the tide may be turning for this successful 'third democratic wave' in Latin America, as many countries suffer democratic erosion or even backsliding. The progressive decline of democratic indicators in the region has been exacerbated by factors such as the self-interest of the ruling elites or rampant corruption in some countries, and may have been accelerated by the Covid 19 pandemic, which has justified the implementation of freedom-restricting measures and has facilitated human rights abuses. The human rights situation in Latin America and the Caribbean has indeed deteriorated more generally, with an increase in poverty, inequality, violence, and rising migration from the worst affected countries. The EU has contributed to democracy and human rights in the region by sending election observation missions, participating in initiatives such as the Colombia peace process and its implementation or in the creation of the International Contact Group on Venezuela, and financing projects. The European Parliament has meanwhile accompanied democratic developments and crises closely through its resolutions, the Sakharov Prize and other initiatives.

Briefing EN

## Summit for Democracy

20-12-2021

ZAMFIR Ionel

The Summit for Democracy, a pledge of US President Joe Biden's 2020 electoral campaign, came to fruition on 9 10 December 2021. The first-ever global summit dedicated to harnessing international support for democratic renewal launched the 2022 'year of action', aimed at fostering resilient democracies worldwide.

EN

## Outcome of the meetings of EU leaders of 16 December 2021

Briefing

20-12-2021

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

'The European Council will revert to the issue' or 'reiterates' its view, were probably the most used sentences in the conclusions issued following the 16 December 2021 meeting of the Heads of State or Government. For many of the issues on the agenda, such as energy, where the geopolitical stakes are high, differences in position remain in the European Council; achieving consensus is therefore part of a longer process. On security and defence, no big decisions, but specific guidelines and targeted requests, defined this summit. As regards the discussions on both Covid-19 and migration, the conclusions mainly include reiterations of previous commitments. Within the broad bouquet of external relations topics, EU leaders warned Russia of 'massive consequences' in case of further military escalation in Ukraine. They also denounced the instrumentalisation of migrants and refugees by the Belarusian regime for political purposes, and called for 'the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners'. EU leaders also reaffirmed the Union's commitment to cooperation with the Southern Neighbourhood, calling to speed up work on the new Agenda for the Mediterranean, praised the mediation efforts of the African Union (AU) in Ethiopia, calling for 'an unconditional ceasefire' and dialogue, and prepared for the 17-18 February 2022 EU-AU Summit. President Charles Michel recalled EU Member States' solidarity when mentioning the unacceptable pressure exerted by China on Lithuania. As for the Euro Summit, it called again for the completion of Banking Union and the Capital Markets Union.

Briefing EN

## Key issues in the European Council: State of play in December 2021

16-12-2021

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf | KROZSER Anna | TORPEY REBECCA MARY

The role of the European Council is to 'provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development' and to define its 'general political directions and priorities'. Since its creation in 1975, the European Council has exercised considerable influence over the development of the European Union, a process enhanced by its designation as a formal institution of the Union under the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. The European Council Oversight Unit within the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) monitors and analyses the activities, commitments and impact of the European Council, so as to maximise parliamentary understanding of the political dynamics of this important institution. This EPRS publication, 'Key issues in the European Council', which is updated every quarter to coincide with European Council meetings, aims to provide an overview of the institution's activities on major EU issues. It analyses twelve broad policy areas, explaining the legal and political background, the main priorities and orientations defined by the European Council and the results of its involvement to date, as well as some of the future challenges in each policy field.

EN

## Key social media risks to democracy: Risks from surveillance, personalisation, disinformation, moderation and microtargeting

13-12-2021

DUMBRAVA Costica

Whereas social media provide individuals with new opportunities to access information, express opinions, and participate in democratic processes, they can also undermine democracy by distorting information, promoting false stories and facilitating political manipulation. This EPRS paper provides an overview of the key risks social media pose to democracy related to surveillance, personalisation, disinformation, moderation and microtargeting. It also discusses key approaches to tackling social media risks to democracy in the context of EU policy.

DE, EN, FR

## Outlook for the meeting of EU leaders on 16 December 2021

Briefing

10-12-2021

DRACHENBERG Ralf

The last regular European Council meeting of 2021, on 16 December, will discuss a broad range of topics, notably the coronavirus pandemic, crisis management and resilience, energy prices, security and defence, migration, and external relations. In the context of the worsening epidemiological situation and the emergence of the Omicron variant, EU leaders will address progress in vaccination across the EU and the impact of new restrictions on the single market. They will also discuss international solidarity and ways of ensuring global vaccine coverage. Their debate on security and defence will probably focus on two intertwined outstanding issues, the Strategic Compass and the forthcoming cooperation declaration with NATO. On migration, EU leaders are expected to review the follow-up to their previous commitments and address the migration situation in the English Channel. In the external relations field, they will most likely discuss the situation in Ukraine and at the Belarus border, the developments in Ethiopia as well as preparations for the EU-African Union summit. As the European Council meeting will take place back to back with the Eastern Partnership Summit, EU leaders could take stock of the outcome of the latter. The Euro Summit directly after the European Council meeting will focus on the Covid recovery and review progress on the Banking and Capital Markets Unions

Briefing EN

## Policy Departments' Monthly Highlights - December 2021

09-12-2021

The Monthly Highlights publication provides an overview, at a glance, of the on-going work of the policy departments, including a selection of the latest and forthcoming publications, and a list of future events.

EN

## The misuse of social media platforms and other communication channels by authoritarian regimes: Lessons learned

01-12-2021

Lukas ANDRIUKAITIS, Jakub KALENSKY, Simin KARGAR, Elene PANCHULIDZE, Joanna SMTEK, Anastas VANGELI

Disinformation has continued to spread in recent years, receiving a significant boost during the COVID-19 pandemic and constituting one of the most pressing threats for democratic countries. Authoritarian regimes have played their part in the proliferation of manipulated content, particularly disinformation. This paper analyses recent instances of the misuse of social media platforms and other communication channels perpetrated by authoritarian regimes in Iran, China, and Russia to influence the public opinion and democratic processes in Yemen and Syria, Taiwan, and Georgia, respectively, focusing on disinformation in particular. The authors draw lessons for the EU in relation to the actors involved, highlighting the impact of disinformation, the disparity of resources between perpetrators and responders, and the importance of independent media and a whole-of-society approach. By juxtaposing local experiences with analysis of EU instruments, the authors arrive at a set of recommendations, which highlight the need to: focus on various disinformation perpetrators beyond Russia; support independent media and civil society initiatives; collect comparable data within the EU; develop mechanisms targeting perpetrators and increasing the cost of engaging in disinformation; develop proactive and pre-emptive campaigns against disinformation; and increase coordination and cooperation within the EU around the issue of disinformation.

EN

## The European Council in 2019

30-11-2021

WORUM ASTRID

Dinan, Desmond

The year 2019 provided a respite for the European Council from crisis management, but was not without major challenges. Three stood out: the Spitzenkandidaten process for selecting the next President of the European Commission; Brexit, which unexpectedly remained on the agenda of the European Council throughout the year; and policy towards climate change. The European Council had mixed feelings about the Spitzenkandidaten process, with one of its leading members being adamantly opposed. That set the stage for a bruising battle, which culminated in an epic special summit, lasting from 30 June to 2 July. None of the transnational parties' lead candidates received the European Council's nomination. Instead, the European Council nominated a relative outsider, Ursula von der Leyen, as part of a package of appointments to leading EU positions, the cleverness of which managed to overcome differences among national leaders. Meanwhile, the inability of the UK government to win parliamentary support for the Withdrawal Agreement obliged the UK to request extensions of the deadline. Much to its surprise, the European Council met in the Article 50 format on four occasions in 2019, the last one being on 13 December, to discuss preparations for the negotiations on future EU-UK relations after the UK's eventual departure, which happened on 31 January 2020. Climate was another issue to the fore in 2019, as the European Council sought to reach unanimity on a commitment by the EU to cut net carbon emissions to zero by 2050. Failure to reach unanimity, during difficult negotiations at the December summit, was seen as a setback for the new President of the European Council, Charles Michel, who was attending his first meeting of the institution in that capacity.

EN

## Policy Departments' Monthly Highlights - November 2021

17-11-2021

The Monthly Highlights publication provides an overview, at a glance, of the on-going work of the policy departments, including a selection of the latest and forthcoming publications, and a list of future events.

EN

## New political dialogue and 2021 elections in Venezuela

17-11-2021

GOMEZ RAMIREZ Enrique

The Mexico dialogue between the Venezuelan government and opposition, as well as the latter's decision to run in the 21 November 2021 local and regional elections, have revived hopes for a peaceful and negotiated solution to the country's political conflict. Nevertheless, the Maduro government has suspended the third round of negotiations, dimming prospects for a successful outcome of the dialogue. The EU is observing the elections.

EN

## Promoting gender equality through parliamentary diplomacy

15-11-2021

Davor JANCIC; Magorzata DRUCIAREK, Aleksandra NIZYNSKA; Veronika KUBEKOVÁ, Roland BLOMEYER

The purpose of this study is to support the European Parliament (EP), in particular its standing delegations, in implementing the commitment made in the EP resolution of 23 October 2020 on gender equality in EU foreign and security policy. Based on desk research as well as quantitative and qualitative empirical analysis, the study describes the existing EP practices of gender equality promotion, analyses whether the current practices deliver on the commitment, and presents what can be learned both from the bottlenecks identified in the EP's existing institutional arrangements and from the practices of other national parliaments and international parliamentary institutions. The study concludes that while the EP is highly advanced when it comes to gender mainstreaming in external relations, there are a number of aspects that need improvement or fine-tuning. To facilitate the implementation of the overarching EP gender action plan, the study provides a set of policy recommendations aimed at increasing the effectiveness of gender equality promotion through parliamentary diplomacy. The recommendations comprise proposals to strengthen the institutional framework, clarify the roles of gender focal points, increase access to gender-specific information and training, maximise the use of interparliamentary meetings and DEG activities for gender mainstreaming abroad, streamline the links with civil society and other external stakeholders, and improve the gender dimension of oversight over EP external relations.

EN

DE, EN, ES, FR, PL

## Addressing abusive legal actions aimed at silencing journalists

08-11-2021

DEL MONTE Micaela

During the November I plenary session, Parliament is due to vote a resolution aimed at strengthening democracy, media freedom and pluralism in the European Union. The resolution calls for immediate action, both legislative and non-legislative, to address the issue of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs).

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## Voting and candidacy rights of mobile EU citizens in municipal elections under Directive 94/80/EC

Briefing

29-10-2021

ANGLMAYER Irmgard

An estimated 13.3 million European Union (EU) citizens live in an EU Member State that is not their country of origin. Of these, over 11 million are of voting age. Under Council Directives 93/109/EC and 94/80/EC, these 'mobile' Europeans are entitled to participate in European and municipal elections in their country of residence. While Member States have successfully transposed both directives, voter turnout among mobile citizens remains low compared to nationals. In its 2020 citizenship report, the European Commission announced a strengthening of electoral rights in European and municipal elections. According to the Commission's 2021 work programme (Annex II), amending proposals are envisaged for the fourth quarter of 2021, as part of the 'Transparency and democracy package'. This briefing explores the operation of Council Directive 94/80/EC on the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections and discusses obstacles to citizens' effective exercise of their rights. It also analyses the implications of Brexit on local election rights for both United Kingdom (UK) citizens residing in the EU 27 and EU citizens living in the UK. The resulting post-Brexit status quo is a complex patchwork governed by national law and bilateral agreements. A separate briefing examines the implementation of Directive 93/109/EC regarding European elections.

Briefing EN

## Voting and candidacy rights of mobile EU citizens in European elections under Council Directive 93/109/EC

Briefing

29-10-2021

ANGLMAYER Irmgard

Under the arrangements set out in Council Directives 93/109/EC and 94/80/EC, EU nationals who live in a Member State other than their own are entitled to participate in European and municipal elections, respectively, in their country of residence. This concerns an estimated 11 million EU citizens of voting age (post-Brexit data). Even if Member States have successfully transposed both directives, voter turnout among mobile citizens remains low compared to nationals. Similarly, only a fraction of candidates standing for European elections is made up of non-nationals (slightly over 1 % in the 2019 elections). The European Commission has announced its intention to update both directives; according to its 2021 work programme (Annex II), amending proposals are envisaged for the fourth quarter of 2021, forming part of the 'transparency and democracy package'. This briefing looks into the operation of Council Directive 93/109/EC on the right to vote and stand as candidate in European elections. It discusses obstacles that hinder mobile EU citizens from effectively exercising their electoral rights, such as registration and communication issues, and looks into the problem of double voting. The implementation of Directive 94/80/EC regarding municipal elections is examined in a separate briefing.

Briefing EN

## Outcome of the European Council meeting of 21-22 October 2021

Briefing

25-10-2021

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

The regular European Council meeting of 21-22 October 2021 dedicated significant time to discussing the rule of law and the rise in energy prices – which have become particularly salient topics at national and European level – as well as to migration. On the rule of law, EU leaders had a political discussion, underlining the importance of the rule of law for the EU, but did not adopt concrete conclusions. Regarding the recent spike in energy prices, they agreed on pursuing short-term, tailored and targeted national measures, and will continue to look for a consensus on long-term measures at the next European Council meeting. Leaders also took stock of the coronavirus pandemic, reviewed progress on the digital agenda and related key legislative files, and held a strategic debate on trade.

Briefing EN

## The Parliaments of Europe: full part actors or powerless spectators? – A state of play 2010–2020

30-09-2021

BRACK Nathalie

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Since the Lisbon Treaty, EU national Parliaments have been recognized as relevant and legitimate players at the supranational level and given tools to be involved beyond the scrutiny of their national government. However, the last decade brought new challenges to the Europeanisation of national Parliaments, with several crises boosting intergovernmentalism. This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee, examines how EU national Parliaments have adapted to all these challenges and assesses their involvement in EU affairs over the past decade.

EN

DE, EN, FR, IT

## Key issues in the European Council: State of play in September 2021

29-09-2021

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf | KROZSER Anna | TORPEY REBECCA MARY

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This EPRS publication, 'Key issues in the European Council', is updated quarterly to coincide with European Council meetings. It aims to provide an overview of the institution's activities on major EU issues, by analysing twelve broad policy areas, explaining the legal and political background and the main priorities and orientations defined by the European Council in each field. It also assesses the results of European Council involvement in these policy areas to date, and identifies future challenges in the various policy fields.

EN

## Citizens' engagement and expectations of the Conference on the Future of Europe

Briefing

17-09-2021

KOTANIDIS Silvia

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What sort of European Union do we want to see in the future? What is working well in the EU and what could be improved? These are just two examples of the kind of questions that the European citizens' panels, part of the Conference on the Future of Europe, will have to answer. The Conference on the Future of Europe marks the first time in the history of the EU that citizens have been included in a consultative process in such a structural and innovative manner. The conference, first announced by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in 2019, is now entering its key phase, with the first European citizens' panel meeting taking place on 17 September 2021. The widening gap between citizens and institutions is a known pattern, not only at EU level but also at national level in many countries. Against this backdrop, some forms of participatory democracy – such as citizens' assemblies – already successful in Ireland and elsewhere in recent years, promise to provide a format that allows an open exchange of views in a collaborative environment. The citizens' panels were proposed and designed to give a voice to citizens in the most inclusive way possible. As such, the panels' key requirement is that they represent the EU population faithfully. The result is that 800 EU citizens, equally distributed into four citizens' panels, will be called upon to discuss issues and concerns that they may themselves identify. The debate is supported by a multilingual digital platform, the main hub of the conference. The citizens' panels are not meant to replace representative democracy however, but rather to complement it. The Conference on the Future of Europe is a complex democratic exercise in which the multilingual digital platform gathers ideas from citizens and civil society, citizens' panels give recommendations, and the conference plenary makes proposals on the basis of which the executive board of the Conference will draft the final report. The contribution of the citizens' panels will feed into the proposals of the conference plenary and, ultimately, into the final report of the conference that the executive board will present at the end of the conference for the institutions to follow up.

Briefing EN

## Nutzung von SLAPP-Klagen zur Einschüchterung von Journalisten, nichtstaatlichen Organisationen und der Zivilgesellschaft

15-09-2021

Justin BORG-BARTHET Benedetta LOBINA Magdalena ZABROCKA.

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Diese Studie, die von der Politischen Abteilung für Bürgerrechte und konstitutionelle Angelegenheiten des Europäischen Parlaments auf Ersuchen des JURI-Ausschusses in Auftrag gegeben wurde, analysiert Rechtsdefinitionen von strategischen Klagen gegen öffentliche Beteiligung (SLAPP) und bewertet die Vereinbarkeit einer Anti-SLAPP-Gesetzgebung mit EU-Recht. Es wird empfohlen, eine Anti-SLAPP-Richtlinie zu verabschieden sowie die Brüssel-Ia-Verordnung und die Rom-II-Verordnung neu zu fassen, um das Auftreten von SLAPP-Klagen zu begrenzen.

DE

## L’utilisation des poursuites-bâillons pour réduire au silence les journalistes, les ONG et la société civile

15-09-2021

Justin BORG-BARTHET Benedetta LOBINA Magdalena ZABROCKA.

La présente étude, commandée par le département thématique des droits des citoyens et des affaires constitutionnelles du Parlement européen à la demande de la commission des affaires juridiques (JURI), analyse les définitions juridiques des poursuites stratégiques altérant le débat public (poursuites-bâillons) et évalue la compatibilité de la législation contre les poursuites-bâillons dans le droit européen. Il est recommandé l’adoption d’une directive contre les poursuites-bâillons et la refonte des règlements Bruxelles I bis et Rome II en vue de limiter l’incidence des poursuites-bâillons.

FR

## The von der Leyen Commission's six priorities: State of play in Autumn 2021

09-09-2021

BASSOT Etienne

This EPRS paper analyses progress in attaining the policy agenda set out by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, and her College of Commissioners when they took office in December 2019. It looks in particular at the state of play in respect of delivery on the six key priorities asserted at that time. Concretely, EPRS finds that, following the July 2021 plenary session, of the nearly 400 initiatives foreshadowed by the von der Leyen Commission on taking office or since (406), just over half have already been submitted (212). Of these, almost half have already been adopted (101), while the great majority of the remainder are either proceeding normally in the legislative process (76) or are close to adoption (10). Conversely, a certain number are proceeding very slowly or are currently blocked (25). While the Commission's first priority, the European Green Deal, ranks highest in the number of initiatives announced (90), its third priority, 'An economy that works for people', has the highest number so far actually adopted (29). Further details of the state of play on the various EU legislative proposals tabled by the Commission, including all those mentioned in this paper, can be found in the European Parliament's 'Legislative Train Schedule' website, which has also been developed by EPRS.

DE, EN, FR

## Ten composite indices for policy-making

08-09-2021

DOBREVA Alina | JENSEN LISELOTTE | PICHON Eric | WIDUTO Agnieszka

Evidence and data are key to good policy-making, in particular when it comes to setting priorities, mitigating negative impacts and finding optimum trade-offs. The information provided in this publication is designed to help policy-makers by providing sources of data and identifying possible bias in their use. EPRS has selected 10 composite indices in a range of policy areas from reliable sources; indices already used as references by policy-makers. For each index, a chapter presents the producers and describes their objectives in publishing the index, the data compiled, and how that data is or could be used by policy-makers. The chapters also highlight each index's limitations.

DE, EN, FR

## What if deepfakes made us doubt everything we see and hear?

07-09-2021

BOUCHER Philip Nicholas

Deepfakes are hyper-realistic media products created through artificial intelligence (AI) techniques that manipulate how people look and the things that they appear to say or do. They hit the headlines in 2018 with a deepfake video of Barack Obama, which was designed to raise awareness of their challenges. The accessibility and outputs of deepfake generation tools are improving rapidly, and their use is increasing exponentially. A wide range of malicious uses have been identified, including fraud, extortion and political disinformation. The impacts of such misuse can be financial, psychological and reputational. However, the most widespread use so far has been the production of non-consensual pornographic videos, with negative impacts that overwhelmingly affect women. Deepfakes may also contribute to worrying trends in our media, as well as in our social and democratic systems. While the technology itself is legal, some malicious uses are not, and a combination of legal and technical measures may be mobilised to limit their production and dissemination.

EN

What if deepfakes made us doubt everything we see and hear?

The deepfake menace: a gendered issue

Can we protect society from the deepfake menace?

## Corruption and human rights in third countries: developments in EU external action since 2017

Briefing

02-09-2021

Rosana GARCIANDIA

In 2017, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on corruption and human rights in third countries (hereinafter ‘EP 2017 Resolution’) which included a set of practical recommendations on corruption and human rights in EU external relations. This briefing analyses the progress made by EU actors in implementing those recommendations. It focuses on development and human rights tools addressed in the EP 2017 Resolution, including EU funded projects and programmes, technical cooperation, EU human rights dialogues and public diplomacy, as well as support for whistle-blowers and civil society organisations exposing corruption. It concludes that, while action has been taken on various fronts to support anti-corruption efforts in third countries following the recommendations, a more systematic approach to corruption and human rights could be taken in some areas. Cooperation between EU actors and enhanced capacity building on corruption and human rights are also key elements for a successful anti-corruption strategy in EU external action.

Briefing EN

## Regulating targeted and behavioural advertising in digital services. How to ensure users’ informed consent

Briefing

31-08-2021

Giovanni SARTOR, Francesca LAGIOIA, Federico GALLI,

The study addresses the regulation of targeted and behavioural advertising in the context of digital services. Marketing methods and technologies deployed in behavioural and target advertising are presented. The EU law on consent to the processing of personal data is analysed, in connection with advertising practices. Ways of improving the quality of consent are discussed as well as ways of restricting its scope as a legal basis for the processing of personal data. This study is commissioned by the European Parliament’s Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the JURI Committee...

Briefing EN

## Regulating targeted and behavioural advertising in digital services. How to ensure users’ informed consent

30-08-2021

Giovanni SARTOR,
Francesca LAGIOIA, Federico GALLI

The study addresses the regulation of targeted and behavioural advertising in the context of digital services. Marketing methods and technologies deployed in behavioural and target advertising are presented. The EU law on consent to the processing of personal data is analysed, in connection with advertising practices. Ways of improving the quality of consent are discussed as well as ways of restricting its scope as a legal basis for the processing of personal data. This study is commissioned by the European Parliament’s Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the JURI Committee.

EN

## Implementation of citizenship education actions in the EU

03-08-2021

ZYGIEREWICZ Anna

Part I: In-house introductory analysis was prepared by Dr Anna Zygierewicz, Ex-Post Evaluation Unit (EVAL), European Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS).
This paper has been drawn up by the Ex-post Evaluation Unit of the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value, within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament.
Part II: A research paper on the implementation of the citizenship education in the EU was written by Prof. Wiel Veugelers of the University of Humanistic Studies Utrecht at the request of the Ex-Post Evaluation Unit of the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value, within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament.

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In December 2020, the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) requested the drawing up of an own-initiative report on the implementation of the citizenship education actions (2021/2008(INI)). Mr Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D, Spain) was appointed rapporteur. This European implementation assessment (EIA) has been prepared to accompany the CULT committee in its scrutiny work on the implementation of citizenship education actions in the European Union. The first part of the EIA presents an overview of the EU policy framework for citizenship education, while the second part presents actions in the field of citizenship education supported by EU funding programmes, in particular the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programmes. The second part also presents citizenship education policies and practices in 10 EU Member States.

EN

## The European Commission's legislative proposals in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum

30-07-2021

Evelien BROUWER; Giuseppe CAMPESI ; Sergio CARRERA, Roberto CORTINOVIS, Eleni KARAGEORGIOU, Jens VEDSTED-HANSEN, Lina VOSYLIT

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This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs on request of the Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties and Justice, aims to provide a detailed mapping and analysis of the central legal changes and issues characterising the five main legislative proposals accompanying the Pact on Migration and Asylum, presented by the Commission in September 2020. The legislative instruments under consideration include a new Screening Regulation, an amended proposal for an Asylum Procedures Regulation, an amended proposal revising the Eurodac Regulation, a new Asylum and Migration Management Regulation, and a new Crisis and Force Majeure Regulation. As a second step, the study provides a critical assessment of the five proposals as to their legal coherence, fundamental rights compliance, and application of the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility enshrined in Article 80 TFEU.

EN

## Peace and security in 2021: The EU's evolving relations with Turkey

Briefing

28-07-2021

AHAMAD MADATALI HANNAH NAFIZE

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Turkey first sought cooperation with the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1959 (European Union (EU) as of 1992), and has since been key partner of the EU on matters relating to migration, counter-terrorism and trade. The EU and Turkey have been linked by an Association Agreement since 1964, and a Customs Union Agreement since 1995. However, in recent years, EU-Turkey relations have been suffered from Turkey's lukewarm adoption of EU standards and democratic principles and Ankara's actions in the EU neighbourhood..

Briefing DE, EN, FR

## Advancing democracy in the world: EU-US Explainer

28-07-2021

BENTZEN Naja

European Parliament Liaison Office in Washington DC

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As the pandemic adds to the pressure on democracy worldwide, there is a growing sense of the urgent need to protect democracy and its institutions in a concerted and coordinated manner. On both sides of the Atlantic, growing domestic threats to democracy have added to the external challenges, but also offer global momentum for stronger democratic alliances. In their June 2021 joint summit statement, the EU and the US pledged to support democracy across the globe. As international flagships of democracy, meanwhile, both the European Parliament and the US Congress are strongly engaged in advancing democracy in third countries.

EN

## Regulation of the digital sector: EU-US Explainer

28-07-2021

BENTZEN Naja

European Parliament Liaison Office in Washington DC

With online platforms and markets enmeshed in our societies and economies, the need to revisit and update existing digital regulations is becoming increasingly apparent. The debate around these reforms in the US, the EU and elsewhere touches on fundamental questions of privacy, transparency and free speech and the dynamic between private firms and governmental oversight is complex. While online platforms play a salient role in daily life, both the US and the EU continue to operate with regulations dating back over a generation. As significant challenges regarding illegal and harmful online content and moderation liability continue to have real world effects today, both the EU and the US are currently considering precedent-setting updates.

EN

## Mapping threats to peace and democracy worldwide: Normandy Index 2021

06-07-2021

LAZAROU Eleni | STANICEK BRANISLAV

The Normandy Index, now in its third year, aims at measuring the level of threat to peace, security and democracy around the world. It was presented for the first time on the occasion of the Normandy Peace Forum in June 2019, as a result of a partnership between the European Parliament and the Region of Normandy. The Index has been designed and prepared by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), in conjunction with and on the basis of data provided by the Institute for Economics and Peace. This paper sets out the findings of the 2021 exercise, and explains how the index can be used to compare peace – defined on the basis of a given country's performance against a range of predetermined threats – across countries and regions. It is complemented by 51 individual country case studies, derived from the Index. The paper forms part of the EPRS contribution to the Normandy World Peace Forum 2021. It is accompanied by two papers, one on the EU's contribution to peace and security in 2021, the other on the EU's relations with Turkey.

DE, EN, FR

Peace and Security: Non-traditional threats

Peace and Security animated infographic

Normandy Index, 2021

## Disinformation campaigns about LGBTI+ people in the EU and foreign influence

Briefing

02-07-2021

Cecilia STRAND, Jakob SVENSSON, Roland BLOMEYER, Margarita SANZ

The purpose of this briefing is to give a concise overview of disinformation, misinformation and propaganda campaigns about LGBTI+ persons and rights, originating from or being supported and/or multiplied by actors outside the EU. Based on a review of existing literature, the briefing examines the main narratives used, supported and circulated, as well as which actors or group of actors are involved. Where available, information on methods, funding and impacts on European values is provided. The main narratives identified include negative othering, opposing a ‘gender ideology’, ‘heteroactivism’, restoring a ‘natural’ order, ‘colonialism’ and child safety. The briefing concludes that there is a need for more research, further harmonisation of legal frameworks, the scrutiny of financial flows and strengthened capacity to detect disinformation, misinformation, propaganda and hate speech.

Briefing EN

## The Use of SLAPPs to Silence Journalists, NGOs and Civil Society

30-06-2021

Justin BORG-BARTHET Benedetta LOBINA Magdalena ZABROCKA.

This At a glance of the study with the same title, commissioned by the European Parliament’s Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the JURI Committee, analyses legal definitions of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP) and assesses the compatibility of anti-SLAPP legislation with EU law. It is recommended that an anti-SLAPP Directive should be adopted, and that the Brussels Ia Regulation and Rome II Regulation should be recast to limit the incidence of SLAPPs.

EN

## Outcome of the meetings of EU leaders, 24-25 June 2021

Briefing

30-06-2021

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

The regular European Council meeting of 24-25 June 2021 was noteworthy on several fronts. First, there was an extensive discussion on the rule of law and European values, a topic rarely discussed at the level of EU leaders. It took place in the context of a new Hungarian law on child protection, which includes provisions considered by many as discriminatory against LGBTQI+ people. Second, following a Franco-German proposal, there was an intense debate about the EU approach to relations with Russia, with apparent disagreement on whether it is currently worthwhile engaging in high-level dialogue with the country. Among the other topics considered were coordination efforts in response to the coronavirus pandemic and economic recovery after the crisis. On migration, EU leaders quickly reviewed the situation on migration routes, mainly reiterating previous commitments. In the field of external policy, alongside Russia, EU leaders also discussed EU-Turkey relations, the situations in Belarus, Libya, Ethiopia and the Sahel, and cybersecurity. EU leaders were also presented with the 2021-22 Leaders' Agenda. In the framework of the Euro Summit, EU leaders addressed the future of the euro area, inviting the Eurogroup to continue its work towards the completion of Banking Union and to move quickly to implement the capital markets action plan.

Briefing EN

## The impact of disinformation campaigns about migrants and minority groups in the EU

24-06-2021

Judit SZAKÁCS, Éva BOGNÁR

This analysis, commissioned by the European Parliament's Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation (INGE), aims to explore the impact of disinformation activity originated or amplified from abroad targeting minorities in the EU over the years 2018-2021. While disinformation has become all-pervasive, it can be considered as yet another tool being used to target vulnerable groups in society. Looking at recent disinformation campaigns that ethnic, religious and cultural minorities have been subjected to, this study finds both direct and indirect links between disinformation and fundamental rights, such as human dignity or physical and mental integrity, along with core European values, including equality, the rule of law and solidarity. The Roma are found to be victims of domestic disinformation, while migrants and the Jewish community are targeted by the Kremlin. The research found that disinformation by foreign and domestic actors as well as disinformation and organic content are increasingly merging, rendering measures to stop foreign disinformation more difficult.

EN

## Peace and Security in 2021: Overview of EU action and outlook for the future

15-06-2021

LATICI Tania | LAZAROU Eleni

This is the fourth Peace and Security Outlook produced by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). The series is designed to analyse and explain the contribution of the European Union to the promotion of peace and security internationally, through its various external policies. The study provides an overview of the issues and current state of play. It looks first at the concept of peace and the changing nature of the geopolitical environment, in light of global shifts of power and of the impact of the coronavirus crisis. It then follows the logic of the annual series, by focusing on the promotion of peace and security in the EU's external action. Linking the study to the Normandy Index, which measures threats to peace and democracy worldwide based on the EU Global Strategy, each chapter of the study analyses a specific threat to peace and presents an overview of EU action to counter the related risks. The areas discussed include violent conflict, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, cyber-attacks, disinformation, and terrorism, among others. The EU's pursuit of peace is understood as a goal embodied in several EU policies, including development, democracy support, humanitarian assistance, security, and defence. The study concludes with an outlook for the future. A parallel study, to be published separately, focuses specifically on EU peace-building efforts in the eastern Mediterranean. The studies have been drafted as a contribution to the Normandy World Peace Forum scheduled for September 2021.

EN, FR

Peace and Security animated infographic

Normandy Index, 2021

EU Strategic Compass process

## The Use of SLAPPs to Silence Journalists, NGOs and Civil Society

14-06-2021

Justin BORG-BARTHET Benedetta LOBINA Magdalena ZABROCKA.

This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the JURI Committee, analyses legal definitions of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP) and assesses the compatibility of anti-SLAPP legislation with EU law. It is recommended that an anti-SLAPP Directive should be adopted, and that the Brussels Ia Regulation and Rome II Regulation should be recast to limit the incidence of SLAPPs.

EN

DE, EN, ES, FR, HU, IT, HR, MT, PL, SK

## Harnessing the new momentum in transatlantic relations: Potential areas for common action during the Biden presidency

10-06-2021

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | BAKOWSKI Piotr | FERNANDES MEENAKSHI | JENSEN LISELOTTE | LATICI Tania | PARRY Matthew | SZCZEPANSKI Marcin

The transatlantic relationship has been witnessing a significant injection of renewed enthusiasm and policy activity since Joe Biden became President of the United States in January 2021. This paper focuses on three important issues on the rapidly evolving transatlantic policy agenda, exploring their potential for generating, in effect, new 'common global goods' during the Biden presidency. First, it looks at pathways towards developing some kind of 'transatlantic green deal', taking climate action, trade and climate diplomacy in the round. Second, it analyses the comparative fabrics of US and European societies through the triple lens of violent extremism, the rule of law and technological disruption. Third, the prospects for 'crisis-proofing' the transatlantic space for the future are examined by looking at defence, health security and multilateralism. The paper also explores some potential avenues for closer transatlantic parliamentary cooperation, building on the already strong relationship between the European Parliament and the US Congress.

DE, EN, FR

Climate diplomacy: pooling transatlantic resources

EU-USA: a transatlantic technology alliance

EU-USA: a transatlantic climate alliance

## Policy Departments' Monthly Highlights - June 2021

04-06-2021

The Monthly Highlights publication provides an overview, at a glance, of the on-going work of the policy departments, including a selection of the latest and forthcoming publications, and a list of future events.

EN

## What if objects around us flocked together and became intelligent?

01-06-2021

GARCIA HIGUERA ANDRES

- Artificial Intelligence: the real driving force of IoT. - Artificial Intelligence of Things (AIoT) incorporates all the possibilities of AI and IoT, but also all ethical and legal concerns. - Potential advantages and possibilities for EU of Artificial Intelligence of Things.

EN

What if objects around us flocked together to become intelligent?

What if objects around us flocked together to become intelligent?

## Outcome of the special European Council meeting of 24-25 May 2021

Briefing

27-05-2021

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

Following the forced landing of a Ryanair flight by Belarusian authorities on 23 May, Belarus became the central topic on the first day of the special European Council meeting of 24-25 May 2021. EU leaders strongly condemned the 'unprecedented and unacceptable incident', and were united in imposing further sanctions on Belarus. As regards Russia, the European Council reconfirmed the five principles guiding the EU's policy since 2016 and asked the High Representative and the European Commission to present a 'report with policy options' by June 2021. On EU-UK relations, EU leaders called on the European Commission to continue to monitor closely the implementation of the two agreements concluded with the UK. On foreign affairs, they also discussed the situations in the Middle East and in Mali, as well as the forthcoming EU-US summit. The leaders' primary focus on the second day was the fight against the coronavirus pandemic, with the European Council calling for rapid implementation of the EU Digital Covid Certificate, the revision of the Council Recommendation on travel within the EU by mid-June 2021 and accelerated global access to coronavirus vaccines. Finally, regarding climate policy, despite renewed support for the 2030 and 2050 climate targets, diverging views on national efforts to achieve the objectives set remained apparent.

Briefing EN

## Digital technologies as a means of repression and social control

18-05-2021

Dorota GOWACKA, Richard YOUNGS, Adela PINTEA, Ewelina WOOSIK

The proliferation of new and emerging technologies over the past two decades has significantly expanded states' toolkit for repression and social control, deepening human rights problems. While these technologies still have the potential to positively enhance democratic values and human rights, they are now also actively deployed and shaped by many repressive regimes to their own strategic advantage. Globally and regionally, efforts have been made to tackle the challenges that digital technologies pose to human rights, but a lot remains to be done. The EU must enrich global legal and standard-setting efforts, as well as improve its own core foreign policy instruments. The EU's foreign policy toolbox has become more comprehensive in the last several years, with the addition of a number of different strands to its efforts against 'digital authoritarianism'. The challenge related to the use of digital technologies by authoritarian regimes has continued to deepen, however. The EU must therefore continue to find ways to fine-tune and add to this toolbox. A core finding that runs through this report is that the EU has undertaken many valuable and well-designed policy initiatives in this field, but still has to decide whether tackling digital repression is a core geopolitical interest at the highest political level.

EN

## Outcome of the meetings of EU leaders in Porto on 7-8 May 2021

Briefing

18-05-2021

ANGHEL Suzana Elena

On 8 May 2021, EU Heads of State or Government met in Porto for an informal European Council, preceded on 7 May by a social summit, organised by the Portuguese Presidency. The informal European Council was followed by an EU–India leaders' meeting, attended remotely by the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. At their informal meeting, EU leaders discussed social policy and, without formally endorsing the Commission action plan, adopted the Porto Declaration, welcoming 'the new EU headline targets on jobs, skills and poverty reduction' for 2030. They also assessed the EU Covid-19 situation, focusing on vaccine production and delivery, the future EU digital green certificate, and international solidarity in the fight against the pandemic. They also prepared for the EU–India leaders' meeting, agreeing to resume talks on a free trade agreement (FTA) and start negotiations on a stand-alone investment protection agreement, and on an agreement on geographical indications that, depending on the pace of negotiations, could either stand alone or be built into the FTA.

Briefing EN

## Policy Departments' Monthly Highlihts - May 2021

12-05-2021

The Monthly Highlights publication provides an overview, at a glance, of the on-going work of the policy departments, including a selection of the latest and forthcoming publications, and a list of future events.

EN

## Best Practices in the whole-of-society approach in countering hybrid threats

06-05-2021

Mikael WIGELL;Harri MIKKOLA;Tapio JUNTUNEN

Over recent years, the European Union has increased efforts to strengthen its resilience to hybrid threats. A model of preparedness based on the notions of ‘whole-of-society’, ‘whole-of-government’ and ‘societal resilience’ has gained ground in the EU’s policy work. Although some progress has been made, many obstacles and challenges remain. The EU needs to address conceptual questions involved with the mapping of hybrid threats to facilitate targeted and effective countermeasures, as well as initiatives to improve societal resilience. Although the EU recognises the strategic value of resilience, the concept’s precise meaning and level of added value remain vague. Its exact relationship to national preparedness and hybrid threats, as well as the whole-of-society approach requires clarification. In addition to addressing these issues, this study analyses some best practices from the whole-of-society approach by examining action taken by Finland, Sweden and Australia in this regard. The study also provides recommendations for further actions.

EN

## Investing in destabilisation: How foreign money is used to undermine democracy in the EU

06-05-2021

Edoardo BRESSANELLI

Foreign interference has become a major security threat for democracies. The European Union (EU) provides no exception and, in the last few years, has significantly stepped up its efforts to counter this threat. A specific type of foreign interference is the foreign funding of political parties. At the national level, regulations banning or limiting foreign funding are currently in place in most member states, but there is still significant variation across them. At the EU level, the recent reforms of the regulation on the funding of the Europarties and their associated foundations have banned contributions from abroad. Notwithstanding such welcome changes to party regulations, cases of foreign funding are still being reported in several member states, with foreign actors exploiting regulatory loopholes to channel funds or provide other types of support. To tackle this issue more effectively, regulatory convergence at the national level should be promoted, the transparency of party accounts should be enhanced, and the monitoring and sanctioning powers of the relevant control authorities strengthened.

EN

## The six policy priorities of the von der Leyen Commission: State of play in spring 2021

03-05-2021

BASSOT Etienne

This EPRS paper analyses progress in attaining the policy agenda set out by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, and her College of Commissioners when they took office in December 2019. It looks in particular at the state of play in respect of delivery on the six key priorities asserted at that time and at how they have since been affected by the impact of the coronavirus crisis. The evidence so far suggests that, rather than undermine their original agenda or knock it badly off course, the Commission has been able to use the momentum of events to assert the increased relevance of their priorities – especially in the climate action and digital fields – and to operationalise them further through the €750 billion 'Next Generation EU' (NGEU) recovery fund. Concretely, EPRS finds that of the nearly 400 legislative and non-legislative initiatives foreshadowed by the von der Leyen Commission on taking office or since (397), almost half have already been submitted (192). Of these, one in five has already been adopted (43), while the great majority of the remainder are either proceeding normally in the legislative process (97) or are close to adoption (26). Conversely, a certain number of proposals are proceeding very slowly or are currently blocked (26).

DE, EN, FR

## Access to medicinal products

01-05-2021

Thyra de Jongh, Lennart Velten, Lonneke Schrijver

There are many factors that can prevent a patient from being able to obtain the medicine they need, ranging from selective marketing decisions by companies to products being too expensive or pharmacy stock-outs. Because of national differences in health systems and market characteristics, access to medicine is not evenly distributed across the European Union.
In response to observed problems with access to medicine, in 2017 the European Parliament adopted a resolution containing 58 recommendations for action to the European Commission and Member States. This In-Depth Analysis reviews the main actions taken at the Union level since then that could improve access to medicine. It also includes illustrative examples of actions taken by Member States and other actors.
The analysis concludes that the Commission has proposed or taken a combination of legislative and non-legislative actions with the potential to improve access to medicine in the Union and beyond, but that it will take time for the effects of these to become clear.

EN

## The impact of disinformation on democratic processes and human rights in the world

22-04-2021

Carme COLOMINA, Héctor SÁNCHEZ MARGALEF, Richard YOUNGS

Around the world, disinformation is spreading and becoming a more complex phenomenon based on emerging techniques of deception. Disinformation undermines human rights and many elements of good quality democracy; but counter-disinformation measures can also have a prejudicial impact on human rights and democracy. COVID-19 compounds both these dynamics and has unleashed more intense waves of disinformation, allied to human rights and democracy setbacks. Effective responses to disinformation are needed at multiple levels, including formal laws and regulations, corporate measures and civil society action. While the EU has begun to tackle disinformation in its external actions, it has scope to place greater stress on the human rights dimension of this challenge. In doing so, the EU can draw upon best practice examples from around the world that tackle disinformation through a human rights lens. This study proposes steps the EU can take to build counter-disinformation more seamlessly into its global human rights and democracy policies.

EN

## Cohesion, resilience and values: Heading 2 of the 2021-2027 MFF

Briefing

14-04-2021

SAPALA Magdalena

Heading 2 – Cohesion, resilience and values – is the biggest of the seven headings in the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the 2021-2027 period in terms of budget. Since about 87 % of the heading falls under shared management and will be distributed to national envelopes, for the Member States it is a particularly important part of the MFF. It is also the most diverse heading in terms of the types of programme and fund included. It encompasses expenditure on cohesion, one of the EU's long-standing policies, on an entirely new budgetary instrument supporting economic recovery and resilience, and on other increasingly important goals, including youth, the creative sector, values, equality and the rule of law. Moreover, the bulk of the Next Generation EU instrument will be channelled through programmes under Heading 2. This briefing presents Heading 2 in detail. It aims to provide some clarity on its structure and allocation, and is structured around three spending areas: cohesion; recovery; and citizens and values. In the 2021-2027 MFF, the allocation on economic, social and territorial cohesion (subheading 2a) – the budget for cohesion policy – is about 10 % lower than its equivalent, subheading 1b, in the 2014-2020 MFF. Additional resources from REACT-EU, a temporary instrument financed under the Next Generation EU instrument (NGEU), will lift the cohesion policy budget to a level comparable with the allocation under the previous MFF. This is an update of a briefing from January 2019.

Briefing EN

## Outcome of the video-conferences of EU leaders on 25 March 2021

Briefing

30-03-2021

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

Due to the worsening epidemiological situation, EU leaders met on 25 March 2021 in a series of video-conferences instead of a two-day physical meeting. The top priority was the fight against the coronavirus pandemic, notably through increasing production, delivery and deployment of vaccines. Another highlight of the European Council meeting was the exchange of views with the President of the United States, Joe Biden – the first such meeting for 11 years – which focused on the coronavirus pandemic and common challenges. In addition, EU leaders reviewed recent work in the area of the single market, industrial policy and digital, and discussed the situation in the eastern Mediterranean and relations with Turkey. The Euro Summit video-conference discussed the international role of the euro.

Briefing EN

## Interpretation and implementation of Article 50 TEU Legal and institutional assessment

24-03-2021

PAPAGEORGIOU Ioannis

This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee, looks into the constitutional and institutional challenges that the European Union faced during the Brexit negotiations, and analyses whether the current wording of Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union was applied in an adequate manner and allowed for an efficient and properly organised withdrawal procedure.

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DE, EN, FR, IT

## Outlook for the meetings of EU leaders on 25-26 March 2021

Briefing

22-03-2021

DRACHENBERG Ralf

One year after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, the fight against the virus will again top the agenda of the European Council meeting on 25-26 March 2021. EU leaders are expected to focus their discussions on 'digital green certificates' (providing proof of vaccination and/or Covid-19 test results) and progress on production, delivery and deployment of vaccines. They will work further on developing a common EU approach to the gradual lifting of restrictions and refer to global solidarity. Other agenda points are digitalisation, including digital taxation, the single market and industrial policy. In respect of external relations, EU leaders will review the situation in the eastern Mediterranean and hold a strategic discussion on Russia. The subsequent Euro Summit will discuss the international role of the euro.

Briefing EN

## Strategic communications as a key factor in countering hybrid threats

10-03-2021

DG, EPRS_This study has been written by Juan Pablo Villar García, Carlota Tarín Quirós and Julio Blázquez Soria of Iclaves S.L., Carlos Galán Pascual of the University Carlos III of Madrid, and Carlos Galán Cordero of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya at the request of the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) and managed by the Scientific Foresight Unit, within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament.

This report describes the key features, technologies and processes of strategic communications to counter hybrid threats and their components. The theoretical description of hybrid threats is complemented by the analysis of diverse case studies, describing the geopolitical context in which the hybrid threat took place, its main features, the mechanisms related to strategic communications used by the victim to counter the hybrid threat and its impact and consequences. A comprehensive set of policy options aimed at improving the EU response to hybrid threats is also provided.

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## Outcome of the European Council video-conference of 26 February 2021

03-03-2021

ANGHEL Suzana Elena

On 26 February 2021, EU leaders met for a second videoconference session to discuss security and defence and the southern neighbourhood. They reaffirmed their commitment to implement the 2019-2024 Strategic Agenda by increasing the EU's ability to act autonomously and strengthening its resilience by taking 'more responsibility for its security'. They also expressed their wish to deepen the transatlantic bond with the US and through NATO. In line with past meetings dedicated to security and defence, the Secretary General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg, joined the EU leaders to discuss EU-NATO cooperation.

EN

## Outcome of the European Council video-conference of 25 February 2021

26-02-2021

DRACHENBERG Ralf

For the tenth time since the outbreak of the coronavirus crisis, the European Council met by video-conference, however this time in two separate sessions. The first, on 25 February, dealing with the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and ways of increasing the EU's health resilience, is covered in this paper, while the second, the following morning, addressed security and defence as well as the southern neighbourhood, and is covered by a separate paper. Regarding the pandemic, EU leaders called for acceleration in the authorisation, production and distribution of vaccines, reiterated their solidarity with third countries, and acknowledged that non-essential travel still needed to be restricted while ensuring the unhindered flow of goods and services within the single market. To strengthen the EU's resilience to future health emergencies, EU leaders will seek to improve coordination to ensure better prevention, preparedness and response. However, further EU integration in health policy was excluded, with the conclusions stressing that these actions should be carried out 'in line with the Union competences under the Treaties'. EU leaders also called on the Commission to draw up a report on the lessons learned from this crisis, to take forward the work on the European health union, and underlined the need for a global approach, including an international treaty on pandemics.

EN

## Mapping Fake News and Disinformation in the Western Balkans and Identifying Ways to Effectively Counter Them

23-02-2021

Samuel GREENE, Gregory ASMOLOV, Adam FAGAN, Ofer FRIDMAN, Borjan GJUZELOV

Disinformation is an endemic and ubiquitous part of politics throughout the Western Balkans, without exception. A mapping of the disinformation and counter-disinformation landscapes in the region in the period from 2018 through 2020 reveals three key disinformation challenges: external challenges to EU credibility; disinformation related to the COVID-19 pandemic; and the impact of disinformation on elections and referenda. While foreign actors feature prominently – chiefly Russia, but also China, Turkey, and other countries in and near the region – the bulk of disinformation in the Western Balkans is produced and disseminated by domestic actors for domestic purposes. Further, disinformation (and information disorder more broadly) is a symptom of social and political disorder, rather than the cause. As a result, the European Union should focus on the role that it can play in bolstering the quality of democracy and governance in the Western Balkans, as the most powerful potential bulwark against disinformation.

EN

## Digital automation and the future of work

29-01-2021

DG, EPRS_This study has been written by David Spencer, Matt Cole, Simon Joyce, Xanthe Whittaker and Mark Stuart of the Leeds University Business School, University of Leeds, UK, at the request of the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) and managed by the Scientific Foresight Unit, within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament.

This report addresses the nature, scope and possible effects of digital automation. It reviews relevant literature and situates modern debates on technological change in historical context. It also offers some policy options that, if implemented, would help to harness technology for positive economic and social ends. The report recognises that technological change can affect not just the volume of work but also its quality. It identifies threats to job quality and an unequal distribution of the risks and benefits associated with digital automation. In response, it recommends a number of policy options – ones that aim to go beyond the provision of skills and training and which seek a human-centred approach to digital transformations of work based on industrial democracy and social partnership. Overall, the report pushes for a new Digital Social Contract and a future of work that works for all

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## Holocaust education: 'Never, never be a bystander'

Briefing

26-01-2021

PASIKOWSKA-SCHNASS Magdalena

This year, 27 January, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, marks the 76th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp. One focus of this annual day of commemoration is the responsibility borne by those who remain indifferent in the face of intolerance and discrimination. This places the Holocaust in the context of human rights, broadening Holocaust education to issues of tolerance, respect for human dignity, and democracy. Holocaust education, which traditionally centres on the human and historical dimension, is also a vehicle for reflection on ethical and legal issues, and promotes critical thinking and open-mindedness. In contrast with ethical aspects and critical thinking, the legal dimension adds a new perspective to school education that can put additional pressure on the teachers responsible for Holocaust education, extending beyond their usual subject areas. Moreover, many European countries host immigrant populations whose collective history does not include this particular experience. Pupils and students meanwhile use social media, a potential source of conspiracy theories, Holocaust denial, antisemitism and xenophobia. In this context, teachers need to be ready to deal with this subject in a difficult social environment. They also need adequate resources and tools to address inconvenient truths of the period. International institutions, and the European Union and its bodies, encourage dialogue and research on these issues, recognising the importance of Holocaust education and its human rights aspects for democracy and tolerant societies. The European Union provides funds, expert bodies and agencies to address the history, education, pedagogy and rights aspects of Holocaust education in all its dimensions of discrimination, persecution and extermination of Jewish, Roma and Sinti populations, as well as other minorities.

Briefing EN

## Outcome of the European Council video-conference of 21 January 2021

25-01-2021

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | BACIAN Izabela Cristina

Discussions at the 21 January video-conference meeting of EU leaders largely focused on a coordinated response to the coronavirus pandemic, including the evolving public health situation with the spread of new virus variants coming from the UK and South Africa, vaccination strategies and international solidarity. While agreeing to further restrictive measures to limit non-essential travel, keeping borders open to ensure the functioning of the EU's single market was emphasised as essential. At the meeting, EU leaders also raised the issue of the detention of Alexei Navalny, condemning it and calling on the Russian authorities to release him.

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## Brazil's Parliament and other political institutions

Briefing

14-01-2021

GOMEZ RAMIREZ Enrique

With an area of nearly 8.5 million km2 and a population of around 212 million (approximately twice the size of the EU with half the population), Brazil is Latin America's largest and most populated country, the biggest democracy (and, despite many observers' concerns over the current state of democracy) one of the freest countries) in the region. It is politically organised as a Federative Republic, formed by the Union, 26 states, 5 570 municipalities and the Federal District (Brasilia). The Brazilian Constitution establishes the principle of the separation of powers of the Union into legislative, executive and judiciary. The executive power is vested in the president of the Republic, who is both head of state and head of the government. The president is elected by universal suffrage, together with the vice-president, for a four-year mandate, and can be re-elected only once. The judicial power is exerted by different organs and courts at national and state level. Finally, the legislative power is vested in the National Congress, a bicameral Parliament with a chamber of deputies and a federal senate. Following the 2018 legislative elections, there are 30 different parties represented in the Chamber of Deputies and 21 in the Senate. Currently, the proportion of women deputies is 14.6 %, and senators is 13.6 %, one of the lowest in the region. Due to its history and its continental dimensions, Brazil is a very diverse country in terms of culture, population and religion. It has assumed a leadership role in the region, and has been firm in its commitment in multilateral world fora and South-South cooperation. Brazil is a strategic partner of the EU. The European Parliament maintains a regular bilateral dialogue with the Brazilian National Congress through its Delegation for Relations with Brazil, as well at a multilateral level through its Delegation for the Relations with Mercosur and the EuroLat Parliamentary Assembly.

Briefing EN

## The Twitter activity of members of the European Council

07-01-2021

DRACHENBERG Ralf

Over recent years, the members of the European Council have, in a number of landmark declarations such as the Bratislava Declaration, pointed to the need to improve communication with citizens, as part of the process of building greater trust and confidence in the European Union and its institutions. As social media, and notably Twitter, have become an important part of politicians' communication strategy generally, this study looks specifically at how EU leaders in the European Council communicate on Europe via Twitter. This EPRS study explores provides an overview of the activity on Twitter of all members of the European Council over an 18-month period – in just over 31 000 tweets posted between January 2019 and June 2020 – covering a very wide range of issues. The study identifies the European topics that EU-27 leaders tweet about – their own interactions, external relations and the EU budget – and it explores the ways in which they communicate and engage with their target audiences, as well as pointing to differences of approach between them. EU-related tweets represent on average about a fifth of all EU leaders' tweets, with a greater emphasis on meetings as such than on substantive policy issues.

EN

## Outcome of the meetings of EU leaders on 10 and 11 December 2020

Briefing

15-12-2020

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

On Thursday 10 and Friday 11 December 2020, the European Council agreed on clarifications to the rule-of-law conditionality mechanism, which pave the way for the adoption of the Multiannual Financial Framework and the Next Generation EU recovery fund. The language used by EU leaders in their conclusions satisfied all actors involved, and avoided triggering renegotiation of the compromise reached between the co-legislators on the proposed regulation on rule-of-law conditionality. EU leaders also achieved a significant breakthrough in combating climate change, by committing to a binding EU reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 55 % by 2030. Moreover, the European Council discussed the development, purchase and the EU-wide distribution of effective vaccines against Covid-19 and stressed the need to take forward proposals for a health union. EU leaders also agreed to step up the fight against radicalisation, terrorism and violent extremism.

Briefing EN

## What future for democracy?

11-12-2020

NOONAN EAMONN

A panel at the 2020 ESPAS conference discussed the future of democracy in the light of the coronavirus pandemic. Participatory democracy was seen as a potential remedy for polarisation, while digitisation brings a need for careful governance. Misinformation and disinformation needs to be addressed through education. A poll of attendees identified tax equity as a key innovation for successfully rebuilding democracy.

EN

## Sustainable economic recovery

11-12-2020

NOONAN EAMONN

A panel at the 2020 ESPAS conference discussed how to create a sustainable economic recovery after the coronavirus pandemic. Robust governance is needed to get the most out of the new resources created at EU level. Both public funding and private capital are needed for the green transition. Public access to big data sets was identified as a critical issue, to prevent harmful monopolies. A poll of attendees identified dependence on fossil fuels as a key obstacle to a sustainable recovery.

EN

## Outlook for the meetings of EU leaders on 10-11 December 2020

Briefing

09-12-2020

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

On 10 and 11 December, EU leaders will meet for their 13th meeting of 2020, bringing to a close a year of exceptionally intensive activity for the European Council. EU Heads of State or Government will address a packed agenda, covering most of 2020's key issues: the coronavirus pandemic, climate change – notably the new EU greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for 2030 – and the fight against terrorism, as well as various external relations issues, such as relations with the US and with Turkey. Two crucial issues, which are not on the formal agenda but could dominate discussions, are rule-of-law conditionality for the 2021-27 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the EU-UK negotiations. EU leaders are also expected to appoint a new member of the European Central Bank's executive board. The Euro Summit on 11 December will focus on the revision of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) treaty and on progress towards a banking union.

Briefing EN

## Strengthening media freedom in the EU

19-11-2020

SGUEO Gianluca

The EU is actively engaged in protecting the independence and safety of journalists as crucial components of the proper democratic functioning of its institutions and Member States. Media freedom, however, has been deteriorating in recent years. Threats, harassment, public shaming and even assassinations of media actors are on the rise. At its November II plenary session, the European Parliament is due to vote on an own-initiative report concerned with strengthening media freedom. The report emphasises that combating media capture, hate speech and misinformation is fundamental when it comes to defending the rule of law and democracy in the EU.

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31-10-2020

FRISCHHUT Markus

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BG, DE, EN, FR, IT, NL

## Outcome of the European Council meeting of 15-16 October 2020

Briefing

19-10-2020

DRACHENBERG Ralf

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Without reaching any new decisions, the European Council meeting of 15-16 October 2020 addressed a series of important issues, including the coronavirus pandemic, EU-United Kingdom relations and climate change. It also discussed numerous external relations issues, notably relations with Africa, the EU's southern neighbourhood, Belarus and Turkey. In the context of rising Covid-19 infections across all Member States, the European Council expressed its very serious concern about the developing pandemic situation and agreed to intensify overall coordination at EU level and between Member States. Regarding the negotiations on future EU-UK relations, EU leaders expressed their concern about the lack of progress and called on the UK to make the necessary moves. They stressed that the Withdrawal Agreement and its Protocols needed to be implemented in a full and timely manner.

Briefing EN

## Key issues in the European Council: State of play in October 2020

15-10-2020

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | BACIAN Izabela Cristina | DRACHENBERG Ralf | PAPUNEN Annastiina

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This EPRS publication, 'Key issues in the European Council', is updated quarterly to coincide with European Council meetings. It aims to provide an overview of the institution’s activities on major EU issues, by analysing twelve broad policy areas, explaining the legal and political background and the main priorities and orientations defined by the European Council in each field. It also assesses the results of European Council involvement in these policy areas to date, and identifies future challenges in the various policy fields.

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## Outlook for the European Council meeting of 15-16 October 2020

Briefing

09-10-2020

DRACHENBERG Ralf

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Only two weeks after the last European Council meeting, EU Heads of State or Government gather again on 15-16 October 2020, to address future EU-UK relations, EU-Africa relations and climate change. On climate, EU leaders will evaluate the progress on the EU’s objective of climate neutrality by 2050 and hold an orientation debate. Regarding EU-UK relations, they will assess the implementation of the withdrawal agreement, receive an update on the negotiations on the future EU-UK partnership and discuss the preparatory work for all scenarios after 1 January 2021. In addition to EU-Africa relations, other external relations issues are likely to be discussed, notably the poisoning of Alexei Navalny. EU leaders will also return to the handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

Briefing EN

## Foresight for resilience: The European Commission's first annual Foresight Report

08-10-2020

NOONAN EAMONN

The first Annual Foresight Report sets out how foresight will be used in the EU's work towards a sustainable recovery and open strategic autonomy, Horizon scanning can identify emerging risks and opportunities. Scenario development can tease out potential synergies, for example between green and digital objectives. Dashboards can be used to measure progress towards agreed goals, while a European Foresight Network can enhance the interaction between different levels of governance.

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## European Council Leaders' Agenda 2020-21

05-10-2020

DRACHENBERG Ralf

At the special European Council meeting of 1-2 October 2020, Charles Michel, President of the European Council, presented a new Leaders' Agenda outlining his view of 'the key challenges confronting the Union' and setting a timetable for the Heads of State or Government to address these issues at meetings between October 2020 and June 2021. The new Leaders' Agenda puts strong focus on the 'green transition and digital transformation', as well as on 'Europe's role in the world', two core priorities in the EU Strategic Agenda 2019-24. Mr Michel intends to structure the approach to external relations discussions, notably through a series of strategic debates on relations with key partners. A number of EU priority topics are however missing, notably migration, the rule of law and the Conference on the Future of Europe. Mr Michel has, however, stated that the Leaders' Agenda is a flexible tool, which can be updated as circumstances require.

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## Outcome of the special European Council meeting, 1-2 October 2020

Briefing

05-10-2020

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

The European Council meeting of 1-2 October 2020 was largely dedicated to external relations. EU leaders discussed a wide range of foreign policy issues, including relations with China, Nagorno-Karabakh and the Navalny poisoning attempt. Particular attention was paid to the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean, with EU leaders extending an offer to cooperate with Turkey – provided the current path to dialogue was maintained – while envisaging all options otherwise. On Belarus, the leaders agreed on restrictive measures against officials responsible for repression and election falsification. Also on the agenda were the single market, industrial policy and digital transformation, notably in the context of EU strategic autonomy. There was also an in-depth discussion on coordination of the coronavirus pandemic response. Finally, the President presented the new Leaders' Agenda 2020-21, foreseeing the main topics for discussion up to June 2021.

Briefing EN

## Geopolitical implications of the COVID-19 pandemic

29-09-2020

Florence GAUB, Lotje BOSWINKEL; EUISS

Since the Coronavirus began its spread across the world, many analysts have speculated about its impact: would it merely accelerate previously-existing trends, or would it prove to be a geopolitical 'game-changer', creating a world profoundly different than before? The answer is much more complex than either or: the world during and after COVID-19 will have elements of both, the old and the new, the known and the unknown. This study explores both dimensions of the pandemic's impact: how does it affect the geopolitical context it erupted into, and what possibility space does it open up? The first section assesses the geopolitical trends antedating the pandemic and measures its present and expected impact on them, while the second section lays out the space for action and change created by the disruption. In the third section, the interplay of trends and uncertainties is explored in three scenarios set in 2025: Strategic Distancing; Europe in Self-isolation; and Lockdown World.
The study finds that European foreign policy is entering an era of re-definition in which the European Parliament should play a crucial role. This means outlining the elements of strategic autonomy, but also streamlining them with each other. As such, classical foreign policy needs to join forces with other policy areas such as environmental and technological matters, trade, strategic communication – and of course, health. In that sense alone, the pandemic is already proving to be a game-changer.

EN

## Outlook for the special European Council meeting of 1-2 October 2020

Briefing

28-09-2020

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

At the special European Council meeting of 1-2 October 2020, postponed from 24-25 September, EU Heads of State or Government are expected to dedicate much of their time to external relations issues, notably to a strategic discussion on Turkey and a debate on relations with China. Continuing illegal Turkish drilling activities in the eastern Mediterranean have made the former more urgent, while the latter is long overdue. The European Council is also likely to adopt extensive conclusions regarding the single market, industrial and digital policy, reiterating the key objective of achieving strategic autonomy, whilst maintaining an open economy. EU leaders are expected to call for development of EU autonomy in the space sector, a more integrated defence industrial base, and for the presentation of a 'digital compass' setting out the EU's digital ambitions for 2030 in its move towards digital sovereignty. EU leaders will also take stock of the coronavirus situation and review the coordination of national and European measures. Finally, the President, Charles Michel, is expected to set out his vision of the main issues to be dealt with by the leaders in the coming year, and to propose a work-plan for the European Council, similar to the Leaders' Agenda which guided the work of the European Council during Donald Tusk's second mandate as President.

Briefing EN

## Outlook for the special European Council meeting of 1-2 October 2020

Briefing

28-09-2020

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

At the special European Council meeting of 1-2 October 2020, postponed from 24-25 September, EU Heads of State or Government are expected to dedicate much of their time to external relations issues, notably to a strategic discussion on Turkey and a debate on relations with China. Continuing illegal Turkish drilling activities in the eastern Mediterranean have made the former more urgent, while the latter is long overdue. The European Council is also likely to adopt extensive conclusions regarding the single market, industrial and digital policy, reiterating the key objective of achieving strategic autonomy, whilst maintaining an open economy. EU leaders are expected to call for development of EU autonomy in the space sector, a more integrated defence industrial base, and for the presentation of a 'digital compass' setting out the EU's digital ambitions for 2030 in its move towards digital sovereignty. EU leaders will also take stock of the coronavirus situation and review the coordination of national and European measures. Finally, the President, Charles Michel, is expected to set out his vision of the main issues to be dealt with by the leaders in the coming year, and to propose a work-plan for the European Council, similar to the Leaders' Agenda which guided the work of the European Council during Donald Tusk's second mandate as President.

Briefing EN

## Protecting EU common values within the Member States: An overview of monitoring, prevention and enforcement mechanisms at EU level

25-09-2020

DIAZ CREGO Maria | MAKO Rafa | VAN BALLEGOOIJ Wouter

This study analyses the existing and proposed mechanisms available to the institutions of the EU that may be deployed in order to monitor and enforce the observance of EU values by the Member States. More specifically, the study addresses the status and meaning of EU values (Article 2 TEU) and also discusses existing monitoring and preventive mechanisms (European Semester, EU Justice Scoreboard, Commission's rule of law framework, the Council's dialogues on the rule of law, and the preventive arm of Article 7 TEU) and enforcement mechanisms (preliminary reference rulings, infringement procedures and the sanctions arm of Article 7 TEU)). It also analyses a number of proposed mechanisms: the pact on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights; rule of law review cycle; reviewed Council dialogues on the rule of law; and the rule of law budgetary conditionality.

DE, EN, FR

Protecting EU common values within the Member States

## Disruption by technology: Impacts on politics, economics and society

21-09-2020

BENTZEN Naja | BOUCHER Philip Nicholas | LATICI Tania | MADIEGA Tambiama André | SCHMERTZING Leopold | SZCZEPANSKI Marcin

Technological development has long been considered as a disruptive force, provoking change at many levels, from the routine daily activities of individuals to dramatic competition between global superpowers. This analysis examines disruption caused by technologies in a series of key areas of politics, economics and society. It focuses on seven fields: the economic system, the military and defence, democratic debates and the 'infosphere', social norms, values and identities, international relations, and the legal and regulatory system. It also presents surveillance as an example of how technological disruption across these domains can converge to propel other phenomena. The key disruptive force of 2020 is non-technological, namely coronavirus. The pandemic is used here as an opportunity to examine how technological disruption interacts with other forms of disruption.

DE, EN, FR

Disruption by technology

## The poisoning of Alexey Navalny

21-09-2020

RUSSELL Martin

EU-Russia relations hit a new low in August 2020, after Alexey Navalny, one of Russia's leading opposition activists, was poisoned by a banned nerve agent. Although the perpetrators have not yet been identified, the attack has to be seen in the context of repression and growing discontent against Putin. In response to this clear breach of international law and human rights, the EU is considering additional sanctions against Moscow.

EN

## Obstacles to participation in local and European elections, inside the E.U.

15-09-2020

Aalt Willem HERINGA, Professor of Comparative Constitutional and Administrative Law, Maastricht University, NL; Hoai-Thu NGUYEN, Policy Fellow for EU Institutions and Democracy, Jacques Delors Centre, Berlin, DE."

This study, commissioned by the European Parliament’s Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the PETI Committee, addresses some major issues of obstacles to elections in general and of obstacles to participation inside the EU more specifically. This is done by focusing on Member States and examples with regard to municipal elections, and European elections, but also in general on de-facto access to the exercise of the right to vote. Various recommendations are formulated.

EN

## Addressing violations of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights

Briefing

11-09-2020

VAN BALLEGOOIJ Wouter

The common values of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights (DRF) lie at the heart of the European integration process and are central to the values of the European Union (EU). In practice, however, individual and collective (lack of) Member State action can undermine these common values. This situation applied before the outbreak of the coronavirus crisis, but some of the national measures taken since the outbreak of the pandemic have tested the resilience of these values further. More generally, the EU's response to DRF violations has so far not comprehensively tackled the problem. The status quo can result in impunity for criminal activities, as prosecutors are unwilling or unable to take on certain cases, as well as violations of human dignity and fundamental rights. It also denies opportunities for individuals to live out their human potential, and take advantage of economic opportunities, as well as eroding the basis for mutual trust among national administrative and judicial authorities. This Briefing puts forward a set of proposals aimed at enhancing the EU's resilience to DRF violations. It focuses in particular on possibilities for the European Parliament and national parliaments, with their dual mandate from EU citizens, to jointly strengthen their monitoring and investigative capabilities. In particular, they could build on their general resources to evaluate the implementation of (EU) law and further coordinate their tools to ensure the democratic accountability of Member State governments.

Briefing EN

## Frieden und Sicherheit 2020: Überblick über die Maßnahmen der EU und Aussichten für die Zukunft

10-09-2020

LAZAROU Eleni

Dies ist der dritte Ausblick zu Frieden und Sicherheit, der vom Wissenschaftlichen Dienst des Europäischen Parlaments (EPRS) ausgearbeitet wurde. Die Reihe ist dazu gedacht, den Beitrag zu untersuchen und zu erläutern, den die Europäische Union durch ihre verschiedenen außenpolitischen Maßnahmen auf internationaler Ebene zur Förderung von Frieden und Sicherheit leistet. Die Studie bietet einen Überblick über den Themenbereich und den gegenwärtigen Stand der Dinge. Zunächst werden das Konzept des Friedens und das sich wandelnde geopolitische Umfeld vor dem Hintergrund von Veränderungen im weltweiten Machtgefüge und der Auswirkungen der Coronavirus-Krise in Augenschein genom¬men. Danach wird wie in den vergangenen Jahren der Schwerpunkt auf die Förderung des Friedens und der Sicherheit im Rahmen des auswärtigen Handelns der EU gelegt. Unter Bezugnahme auf den Normandie-Index, der die Bedrohungen für Frieden und Demokratie ausgehend von der Globalen Strategie der EU weltweit misst, wird in jedem Kapitel der Studie eine spezifische Bedrohung für den Frieden untersucht und ein Überblick über die Maßnahmen der EU zur Zurückdrängung der damit einhergehenden Risiken präsentiert. Zu den behandelten Themen zählen unter anderem gewaltsame Konflikte, die Verbreitung von Massenvernichtungswaffen, der Klimawandel, Cyberangriffe, Desinformation und Terrorismus. Das Bestreben der EU zur Herbeiführung von Frieden wird als ein in verschiedenen EU-Politikbereichen wie Entwicklung, Demokratie¬förderung, humanitäre Hilfe, Sicherheit und Verteidigung enthal¬tenes Ziel verstanden. Die Studie schließt mit einem Ausblick auf die Zukunft. Im Mittelpunkt einer getrennt veröffentlichten Parallelstudie stehen insbesondere die Bemühungen der EU um eine Konsolidierung des Friedens in der Sahelzone. Die Studien wurden als Beitrag zum Normandy World Peace Forum im Oktober 2020 verfasst.

DE

Peace and security in the world

Peace and security in the world

## Outcome of the European Council video-conference of 19 August 2020

25-08-2020

DRACHENBERG Ralf

The European Council video-conference meeting of 19 August 2020 was called by the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, due to the increasingly worrying situation in Belarus after the recent national elections. As Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, summarised, the European Council decided to convey three clear messages from the meeting: i) the EU stands with the Belarussian people; ii) the EU will place sanctions on all those responsible for violence, repression and the falsification of election results; and iii) the EU is ready to accompany the peaceful democratic transition of power in Belarus. While mainly focusing on Belarus, the Heads of State or Government also discussed two further issues during the video-conference meeting. First, as regards the tense situation in the eastern Mediterranean as a result of increasingly hostile Turkish activity, the European Council expressed its full solidarity with Greece and Cyprus, recalling and reaffirming its previous conclusions on the illegal drilling activities, and called for de-escalation. Second, on the situation in Mali, EU leaders expressed their deep concern over the events in the country, which have a destabilising impact on the entire region and on the fight against terrorism, and called for an immediate release of prisoners and restoration of the rule of law.

EN

## Scenarios for geo-politics after coronavirus: A recent Atlantic Council analysis

16-07-2020

SCHMERTZING Leopold

The Atlantic Council report, 'What World Post-Covid-19? Three Scenarios', has two main takeaways: first, Chinese-US rivalry could get worse and go global, destabilising an increasingly divided EU and endangering the United States' alliances system in Asia. Second, there is no way around the US, Europe and China cooperating to develop a positive, global 'new normal'.

EN

## 2019 report on human rights and democracy

06-07-2020

ZAMFIR Ionel

Parliament's July plenary session is scheduled to feature a statement by Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union, and a debate on the recently published 'EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2019'. The report takes stock of all EU action in 2019 in support of democracy and human rights in the world. Parliament will subsequently respond with its own report issuing recommendations for the future.

EN

## Artificial intelligence: How does it work, why does it matter, and what can we do about it?

28-06-2020

BOUCHER Philip Nicholas

Artificial intelligence (AI) is probably the defining technology of the last decade, and perhaps also the next. The aim of this report is to support meaningful reflection and productive debate about AI by providing accessible information about the full range of current and speculative techniques and their associated impacts, and setting out a wide range of regulatory, technological and societal measures that could be mobilised in response.

EN

## A Comprehensive EU Strategy for Africa - Political Dialogue: Governance, Security and Migration

Briefing

25-06-2020

Morten BØÅS

Much has changed since the creation of the Joint Africa-European Union (EU) Strategy in 2007. The developing world has been changing fast. Development policy and practices are also transforming, albeit at a slower pace. The divide between emerging economies and 'fragile states' is increasing. This is also the case in Africa. As not only Africa, but also the EU-Africa relationship is changing and evolving into new dimensions, there is clearly a need to develop a new European strategy, constructed on the basis of an emerging continent. Africa is home to the youngest population in the world and some of the world's most fragile states. However, it is also a continent with emerging markets and more effective governments. This brief aims to clarify how well the new Strategy must manage to mainstream a European approach to Africa that considers both the inter-continental dialogue and the diversity of development on this emerging continent within the fields of governance, security and migration. As the COVID-19 has turned into a pandemic, the brief also suggests that the new European strategy must reflect this development and the European Parliament should closely monitor the situation as it discusses the Strategy.

Briefing EN

## A Comprehensive EU Strategy for Africa

Briefing

25-06-2020

Morten BØÅS, Ondej HORKÝ-HLUCHÁ,Ainhoa MARIN-EGOSCOZABAL

The new EU-Africa Strategy presented by the Commission on 9 March puts a reinforced emphasis on the creation of a real partnership with a continent whose relevance for Europe is growing by the day. The three briefings focus on different aspects of this new partnership, the first one dealing with the implications for the political dialogue with a focus on (good) governance and the even bigger challenge of security and migration. The second briefing has a look at more 'traditional' aspects of this relationship, development and humanitarian aid, complemented with the rising challenge of climate change. The new approach is also illustrated by the emphasis put on the promotion of bilateral trade and investment relations, the topic of the third briefing. All these briefings also try to incorporate first elements on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the bilateral relationship.

Briefing EN

## Key issues in the European Council: State of play in June 2020

17-06-2020

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | BACIAN Izabela Cristina | DRACHENBERG Ralf | PAPUNEN Annastiina

This EPRS publication, 'Key issues in the European Council', is updated quarterly to coincide with European Council meetings. It aims to provide an overview of the institution's activities on major EU issues, by analysing twelve broad policy areas, explaining the legal and political background and the main priorities and orientations defined by the European Council in each field. It also assesses the results of European Council involvement in these policy areas to date, and identifies future challenges in the various policy fields.

EN

## Europeanising European Public Spheres

15-06-2020

Katrin AUEL, Guido TIEMANN

This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee, provides a brief overview of the academic debates on Europeanisation as well as contestation and politicisation of the EU and European integration. Against this background, it focuses on the European public sphere(s), in particular those based on the media and parliaments. The study further discusses current reform proposals aiming to Europeanise the European elections and concludes with recommendations on increasing the legitimacy of the European Union.

EN

DE, EN, FR

## Outlook for the European Council video-conference of 19 June 2020

Briefing

12-06-2020

DRACHENBERG Ralf

The European Council meeting on 19 June, to be held by video-conference, will be almost exclusively dedicated to the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the proposed new EU recovery fund, dubbed 'Next Generation EU'. The two European Commission proposals are now to be considered as one package for the purpose of negotiation, since the recovery fund is in effect embedded within the revamped EU long-term budget. This has increased the pressure on Member States to reach a political agreement on the MFF, but also multiplied the issues of disagreement among the EU leaders. In addition to the MFF-specific issues, on which divergences could not be overcome at the special European Council meeting in February 2020 – namely the overall size of the EU budget, the use of rebates and the funding allocation per policy area – the proposal for the recovery fund raises sensitive new questions, notably on the balance between loans and grants, the allocation criteria for funding and the modalities for repayment.

Briefing EN

## The impact of coronavirus on media freedom

Briefing

08-05-2020

BENTZEN Naja

Media freedom has increasingly come under the spotlight in recent years. In its 2019 report on media freedom, Freedom House argued that media freedom around the world was coming under growing threat both in democratic and non-democratic countries, whilst in its 2020 edition of the World Press Freedom Index, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) argue that the next decade will be pivotal in ensuring the preservation of media freedom. This threat to media freedom is often attributed to the recent rise of populist and authoritarian governments, with many world-leaders – including leaders of major democracies – increasingly seeming to view free media as an opponent, rather than a fundamental aspect of a free society. The knock-on effects of such actions can be grave, particularly given the important role that a free media plays in upholding democracy and democratic freedoms. Media freedom and pluralism are part of the rights and principles enshrined in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and in the European Convention on Human Rights. As the coronavirus pandemic continues to have significant ramifications for public health, social welfare and the economy, the crisis also presents a significant threat to media freedom. Media freedom proponents have warned that governments across the world could use the coronavirus emergency as a pretext for the implementation of new, draconian restrictions on free expression, as well as to increase press censorship. In many countries, the crisis has been exploited for just such reasons, with political leaders using it as a justification for additional restrictions on media freedom. In its 2020 World Press Freedom Index, RSF argues that certain governments have used the crisis to impose media restrictions that in ordinary times would be impossible. The Council of Europe (CoE) Platform for the Protection of Journalists has warned that the fresh assault on media freedom amid the Covid 19 pandemic has worsened an already gloomy media freedom outlook.

Briefing EN

The impact of coronavirus on media freedom

## Outcome of the European Council video-conference of 23 April 2020

Briefing

29-04-2020

DRACHENBERG Ralf | PAPUNEN Annastiina

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At the European Council's video-conference meeting on 23 April, EU leaders demonstrated greater willingness to achieve a coordinated response at EU-level to face the coronavirus crisis than had previously been the case. Although concrete decisions were postponed, Heads of State or Government adopted a more united approach and took decisive steps towards collective action. Notably, they welcomed both the 'Joint European Roadmap towards Lifting Covid-19 Containment Measures' and the 'Roadmap for Recovery', but also agreed to 'work towards establishing' an urgently needed recovery fund 'dedicated to dealing with this unprecedented crisis'. However, whilst asking the European Commission to shape the recovery strategy and to clarify the link between the Recovery Fund and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), EU leaders gave little guidance on specific details, such as the total amount, whether it would provide loans or grants, or on a precise timetable. Furthermore, EU leaders called on Turkey to end its illegal drilling activities off Cyprus in the island's Exclusive Economic Zone. They also announced a video-conference between EU Heads of State or Government and their counterparts from the Western Balkans, on 6 May 2020, date of the previously planned EU-Western Balkans Summit.

Briefing EN

## Outlook for the European Council video-conference of 23 April 2020

Briefing

21-04-2020

DRACHENBERG Ralf

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The European Council video-conference meeting on 23 April 2020 is expected to shift EU leaders' attention away from immediate and short-term priorities, such as limiting the spread of the coronavirus, to a longer-term strategic approach focused on a recovery strategy for the European Union, and the financing thereof. The recovery strategy could be based on four pillars: 1) the internal market, including the Green Deal, the digital agenda and the EU's strategic autonomy; 2) an investment strategy, to be included in the next seven-year EU budget and reflected in the work programme of the European Investment Bank; 3) a global recovery strategy reinforcing the external responsibility of the EU and promoting multilateralism; and 4) strengthening resilience and governance for a stronger EU after the crisis. As the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the seven years from 2021 to 2027, which has yet to be agreed, touches upon all four pillars of the recovery strategy, EU leaders will engage in a strategic discussion on the MFF during their video-conference.

Briefing EN

## Countering the health 'infodemic'

07-04-2020

BENTZEN Naja

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The dissemination of mis- and disinformation in traditional media and on social media has surged in recent years, with wide-ranging consequences in various policy areas – from elections to geopolitics to healthcare. The prevalence of false information regarding health issues threatens to undermine trust in official health advice and institutions responsible for countering threats to public health, potentially posing a serious threat to the health and wellbeing of individuals, a threat exacerbated in the current COVID-19 pandemic.

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## Western Balkans on the European Council agenda: Overview of discussions since the Lisbon Treaty

Briefing

02-04-2020

ANGHEL Suzana Elena

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The European Council to endorse the 24 March 2020 Council political agreement on the opening of negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia.

Briefing EN

## Charles Michel as President of the European Council: The first 100+ days

Briefing

30-03-2020

DRACHENBERG Ralf

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On 1 December 2019, Charles Michel, previously prime minister of Belgium, became the third President of the European Council. He began his term in dynamic mode, aiming to make his mark in foreign affairs and develop the EU's interinstitutional relations. While pursuing his predecessors' efforts to secure unity between EU leaders, Michel has applied his own style, visible notably in his discourse, social media presence and transparency efforts. An analysis of the President's Twitter activities shows his strong focus on EU-Africa relations, climate and, most recently, COVID-19.

Briefing EN

## Outcome of European Council video-conference of 26 March 2020

Briefing

30-03-2020

DRACHENBERG Ralf

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On 26 March, EU Heads of State or Government continued their joint coordination efforts to address the COVID-19 outbreak and held a six hour long video conference on this subject, but failed to agree on the adequate financing instruments to help countries in fiscal difficulty due to the crisis, The President of the European Parliament President, David Sassoli, strongly criticised the results of the European Council and 'the short-sightedness and selfishness of some governments'.EU leaders asked the President of the Commission and the President of the European Council to start working on a Roadmap accompanied by an Action Plan to prepare an exit strategy and a comprehensive recovery plan, including unprecedented investment.

Briefing EN

## The European Council as COVID-19 crisis manager: A comparison with previous crises

Briefing

27-03-2020

ANGHEL Suzana Elena

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The COVID-19 outbreak confronts the European Union with a severe crisis, affecting both individual EU citizens' lives and society as a whole. Due to its role and centrality in the EU's institutional framework, the European Council is once again called upon to exercise its crisis-management role. Similarities can be drawn with past crises as regards both short and long-term responses. The main difference to previous crises, for instance, in the economy or on migration, which impacted a limited number of EU policies, is that the COVID-19 crisis touches the entire spectrum of policies at both European and national level, making a common response more challenging, as competences are divided between the different strata of the EU's multi-level governance system. Ultimately, this crisis has the potential to reshape EU policies, leading to increased cross-policy cooperation and possibly a centrally coordinated response mechanism.

Briefing EN

## The European Council, health policy and pandemics

27-03-2020

BACIAN Izabela Cristina

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The European Council (of EU Heads of State or Government) has been active in its response to the coronavirus crisis. So far it has held three video-conference calls of national leaders on the subject, with a view to seeking to develop a coordinated response both among the Member States and collectively at EU level. This note sketches the context, describes some of the instruments available to the Union, and compares responses to the outbreaks of Ebola in the past and COVID-19 today.

EN

## The ethics of artificial intelligence: Issues and initiatives

11-03-2020

DG, EPRS This study has been drafted by Eleanor Bird, Jasmin Fox-Skelly, Nicola Jenner, Ruth Larbey, Emma Weitkamp and Alan Winfield from the Science Communication Unit at the University of the West of England, at the request of the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA), and managed by the Scientific Foresight Unit, within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament.

This study deals with the ethical implications and moral questions that arise from the development and implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. It also reviews the guidelines and frameworks that countries and regions around the world have created to address these. It presents a comparison between the current main frameworks and the main ethical issues, and highlights gaps around mechanisms of fair benefit sharing; assigning of responsibility; exploitation of workers; energy demands in the context of environmental and climate changes; and more complex and less certain implications of AI, such as those regarding human relationships.

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## European arrest warrant

19-02-2020

KIENDL KRISTO IVANA | VAN BALLEGOOIJ Wouter

The European Arrest Warrant has led to simplified and faster surrender procedures for suspects and sentenced persons. However, trust in the system needs to be enhanced through proper implementation and further harmonisation of substantive and procedural criminal law.

EN

## European Commission Work Programme for 2020

Briefing

11-02-2020

REMAC Milan | VETTORAZZI STEFANO

This briefing is intended as a background overview for parliamentary committees planning their activities in relation to the European Commission's 2020 work programme (CWP 2020). It offers a brief description of the work programme's content and of related publications provided by the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit (IMPA) and the Ex-Post Evaluation Unit (EVAL) of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), in particular initial appraisals of Commission impact assessments and implementation appraisals.

Briefing EN

## Ten issues to watch in 2020

06-01-2020

BASSOT Etienne

This is the fourth edition of an annual EPRS publication designed to identify and frame some of the key issues and policy areas that are likely to feature prominently on the political agenda of the European Union over the coming year. The topics analysed are biodiversity, EU policies for children, the 5G era, the price for energy transition, 'gamification' of EU democracy, finding solutions for asylum policy, the EU's long-term budget, climate action, the US elections, and the Arctic.

DE, EN, FR

Ten issues to watch in 2020

## Global Trendometer 2019

18-12-2019

KONONENKO Vadim | NOONAN EAMONN | RECHARD Daniele | SALM Christian | SCHMERTZING Leopold | WINDLE-WEHRLE Jessica Freya

The new Global Trendometer examines topics ranging from deliberative democracy and the future of social policy in Europe, to scenarios for Northern Africa, China's social credit system, the auditing of algorithms and space as a new frontier.

EN

Global Trendometer

## Political Culture and Dynamics of the European Parliament, 1979-1989

05-12-2019

Schirmann, Sylvain; Wassenberg, Birte

The election of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage in 1979 was a groundbreaking democratic event in that it profoundly changed the character, composition and functioning of the Assembly and its political influence in the institutional set-up of the European Community. The impact of this change extended to areas as diverse as the organisation of parliamentary business, the workings of parliamentary committees and intergroups, increased budgetary powers, the socio-professional profile of MEPs, the role of political groups, relations between MEPs and the Administration, changes in the Secretariat's establishment plan, relations with lobbyists, communication policy, the Assembly's activities in the context of the European Community's values and interinstitutional relations.

DE, EN, FR

## The European Council under the Lisbon Treaty: How has the institution evolved since 2009?

04-12-2019

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

On 1 December 2009, with the coming into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Council became a formal EU institution. Ten years later, the European Council is seen by many as representing the centre of gravity of the EU's institutional framework. However, was this development purely the result of the changes to the Treaties made with Lisbon or did it happen naturally over time? This study analyses both the formal changes brought about by the Lisbon Treaty and the incremental evolution resulting from the institution's day-to-day practice, including the European Council's behaviour during the various crises of the last decade. It outlines the responsibilities envisaged for the European Council in the Treaty and the informal roles it has taken on over time. It explores the extent to which the Lisbon Treaty changed the functioning of the European Council, and how EU leaders themselves tried to optimise the working methods of their institution. Special attention is to the new position of full-time European Council President and the way in which the first two incumbents have interpreted their office. The analysis concludes that, while the EU's various crises strongly contributed to the rise of the European Council, the Lisbon Treaty united two previously separate dimensions – the political and the legal, formally adding new competences to the role already performed by the EU Heads of State or Government. Many of these competences have yet to be fully exploited and represent a rich seam of unused Treaty potential for the future.

EN

## Parliamentary hearings of the Commissioners-designate: An analysis of the portfolios of the von der Leyen Commission

Briefing

22-11-2019

This compendium brings together a set of Briefings prepared by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) to assist Members of the European Parliament in gaining an overview of the parliamentary hearings of Commissioners-designate, which took place in early October 2019, as well as additional hearings in November. These public hearings form the backdrop to Parliament's confirmation vote on the College of Commissioners put forward by Ursula von der Leyen, following her own election as Commission President by the European Parliament in July 2019. In addition to an overview of the process, setting it in its historical and political context, this volume contains a briefing on each of the Commissioners-designate and their portfolios. Each of these briefings highlights some of the key issues and recent developments in the portfolio, as well as recalling the Parliament's activity in the area in the last parliamentary term.

Briefing EN

## Commitments made at the hearing of Ylva JOHANSSON, Commissioner-designate - Home Affairs

Briefing

22-11-2019

BUX Udo

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The commissioner-designate, Ylva Johansson, appeared before the European Parliament on 01 October 2019 to answer MEPs' questions. During the hearing, she made a number of commitments which are highlighted in this document. These commitments refer to her portfolio, as described in the mission letter sent to her by Ursula von der Leyen, President-elect of the European Commission, including: General approach, Common European values, A fresh start on migration and Internal security.

Briefing EN

## Commitments made at the hearing of Margaritis SCHINAS, Vice-President-designate - Promoting the European Way of Life

Briefing

22-11-2019

HERIARD PIERRE MARIE | ISKRA Katarzyna Anna | SOKOLSKA INA

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The Vice President-designate, Margaritis Schinas, appeared before the European Parliament on 03 October 2019 to answer questions from MEPs in the Committees on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Culture and Education, Employment and Social Affairs. During the hearing, he made a number of commitments which are highlighted in this document. These commitments refer to his portfolio, as described in the mission letter sent to him by Ursula von der Leyen, President-elect of the European Commission, including:

- Skills, education and integration;
- Finding common ground on migration; and
- Security Union.

Briefing EN

## Commitments made at the hearing of Dubravka ŠUICA, Vice-President-designate - Democracy and Demography

Briefing

22-11-2019

PAVY Eeva

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The Vice President-designate, Dubravka Šuica, appeared before the European Parliament on 03 October 2019 to answer questions from MEPs in the Committees on Constitutional affairs and Employment and social affairs. During the hearing, she made a number of commitments which are highlighted in this document. These commitments refer to her portfolio, as described in the mission letter sent to her by Ursula von der Leyen, President-elect of the European Commission, including:

- Conference on the Future of Europe; and
- Supporting Europe through the demographic transition.

Briefing EN

## Commitments made at the hearing of Jutta URPILAINEN, Commissioner-designate - International Partnerships

Briefing

22-11-2019

BERNARDINI FLAVIA

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The Commissioner-designate, Jutta Urpilainen, appeared before the European Parliament on 01 October 2019 to answer MEPs' questions. During the hearing, she made a number of commitments which are highlighted in this document. These commitments refer to her portfolio, as described in the mission letter sent to her by Ursula von der Leyen, President-elect of the European Commission, including:
Building sustainable partnerships.

Briefing EN

## Commitments made at the hearing of Didier REYNDERS, Commissioner-designate - Justice

Briefing

22-11-2019

BUX Udo | MARZOCCHI Ottavio

The commissioner-designate, Didier Reynders, appeared before the European Parliament on 02 October 2019 to answer questions from MEPs in the Committees on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection. During the hearing, he made a number of commitments which are highlighted in this document. These commitments refer to his portfolio, as described in the mission letter sent to him by Ursula von der Leyen, President-elect of the European Commission, including: Upholding the rule of law; and Justice and consumer protection.

Briefing EN

## Western Balkans: State of play in the European Council

Briefing

17-10-2019

ANGHEL Suzana Elena

The Western Balkans have regularly featured on the agenda of the European Council since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009. Three dimensions – enlargement, counter-terrorism and migration – have been at the centre of the EU leaders' discussion of the subject. The European Commission recommended twice in the last two years the opening of accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia. In the absence of an agreement at the 15 October 2019 General Affairs Council, the decision on whether to open accession negotiations with the two countries now lies with the European Council.

Briefing EN

## What next for Europe? A strategic foresight perspective

10-10-2019

NOONAN EAMONN

The ESPAS report examines the challenges posed for the European Union by megatrends such as digitisation, demographic change and the climate crisis. It emphasises the need for judicious responses, arguing that inaction heightens the risk of bad outcomes. It also notes that the more equal our societies are, the better prepared we are to face the future. Topics examined The report is the fruit of an inter-institutional strategic foresight exercise.

EN

## Ukraine: Navigating multiple challenges

07-10-2019

BENTZEN Naja

Five years after the 'revolution of dignity', in which Ukrainians demanded a functioning democracy and an end to kleptocracy, the country elected a new President in April 2019 and a new Parliament in July. The new leaders in Kyiv are facing a wide range of persistent challenges. Russia's ongoing hybrid war against the country, including the illegal occupation of Crimea and the war in eastern Ukraine, as well as the continued reform process dominate the agenda. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission is expected to make a statement on the situation in Ukraine during the October I plenary session.

EN

## The European Parliament's evolving soft power - From back-door diplomacy to agenda-setting: Democracy support and mediation

Briefing

27-09-2019

BENTZEN Naja | IMMENKAMP Beatrix

For the past 40 years, Members of the European Parliament have been working at boosting Parliament's role in EU foreign policy. These efforts have continued to be stepped up since the launch of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) in 1993. Over recent decades, the European Parliament has significantly raised its profile as a credible moral force with strong focus on strengthening human rights, supporting democracy and enhancing the rule of law worldwide. Perhaps less visible than the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought, the European Parliament's democracy support activities are part of its 'soft-power' approach to international relations. Moreover, Parliament can convey messages through channels that are different from, and complementary to, those employed by the EU's traditional diplomatic players; for example, through its parliamentary networks. Parliament also enjoys Treaty-based information and consultation rights, which allow its Members to shape the EU's external policies. In addition, the European Parliament has become a public forum for debating with representatives of partner countries and international organisations, as well as influential non-state actors. MEPs pro-actively engage in inter-parliamentary delegations and missions to third countries as well as joint parliamentary assemblies. Moreover, parties in different countries often share strong links via their political families.

Briefing EN

## EU policies – Delivering for citizens: EU support for democracy and peace in the world

Briefing

28-06-2019

ZAMFIR Ionel

From the outset, the European Union (EU) has been an integration project directed at preserving peace among its Member States – a fundamental objective that it has succeeded in achieving for over 60 years. As a community of like-minded states, the EU is also based on certain fundamental values, such as democracy and the rule of law, which the Union aspires to promote, both internally and externally, and which guide all its policies. In line with this vision, the EU has developed specific policies to support democracy and peace in the world. It also aims to integrate the pursuit of peace and democracy with all its other external actions in areas such as trade, development, enlargement and neighbourhood policies, its common foreign and security policy, and political and diplomatic relations with third countries and multilateral institutions. The EU has established a reputation as a soft power organisation guided by a normative vision and as an effective actor for peace and democracy. Strengthening peace and democracy globally has never been an easy task, however, and today's geopolitical context poses new challenges. The proliferation and increasing gravity and duration of conflicts – some in the EU's immediate neighbourhood, the emergence of new threats, such as terrorism or nuclear proliferation, and the crisis of liberal systems have driven the EU to widen and intensify its efforts. They have also led to a new vision for action revolving around the concept of 'resilient societies' based on the mutually reinforcing pillars of peace and democracy, and a special emphasis on fragile states. Against this background, recent surveys have shown that citizens expect the EU to be even more active in promoting peace and democracy externally – something that should surely strengthen its resolve to make further progress in this crucial area. This is an update of an earlier briefing issued in advance of the 2019 European elections.

Briefing DE, EN, FR

EU policies – Delivering for citizens: EU support for democracy and peace in the world

## Mapping threats to peace and democracy worldwide: Introduction to the Normandy Index

03-06-2019

The 'Normandy Index' aims to measure the level of conflict in the world. It is to be presented for the first time on the occasion of the Normandy Global Peace Forum in June 2019, as a result of the partnership between the European Parliament and the region of Normandy. The Index has been designed and prepared by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) and developed by the Institute for Economics and Peace. This paper sets out the initial findings of the 2019 exercise and explains how the index can be used to compare peace – defined on the basis of a given country's performance against a range of predetermined threats – across countries and regions. It is complemented by 25 individual country case studies, derived from the Index. The paper is part of the EPRS contribution to the Normandy Global Peace Forum, alongside two studies: on the EU's contribution to peace and security in 2019, and on the EU's support for peace in Colombia.

DE, EN, FR

Mapping threats to peace and democracy worldwide: Introduction to the Normandy Index

## Peace and Security in 2019: Evaluating EU efforts to support peace in Colombia

03-06-2019

IOANNIDES Isabelle

This second thematic study in the Peace and Security series focuses on European Union (EU) peace support efforts in Colombia. The series will make an annual evaluation of EU performance in the field of peace and security in a specific geographical region. This study evaluates EU engagement during the 50-year conflict in Colombia, and focuses on peacebuilding since the historic 2016 final agreement between the government and the main armed group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP). This is a country where the EU has mobilised a large spectrum of civilian instruments: bilateral and multilateral diplomacy; humanitarian and development aid; and trade relations. After placing the conflict in its geopolitical context, this evaluation analyses the EU approach to and implementation of support to peace in Colombia, the European Parliament's contribution, risks since the signature of the peace agreement, and ways to mitigate them. A parallel study, published separately, provides an overview of current EU action on peace and security and introduces the 2019 Normandy Index. The studies have been drafted with a view to their presentation at the Normandy World Peace Forum, in June 2019.

EN, ES, FR

## Peace and Security in 2019: Overview of EU action and outlook for the future

03-06-2019

LAZAROU Eleni

This is the second EU Peace and Security Outlook produced by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). The series is designed to analyse and explain the contribution of the European Union to the promotion of peace and security internationally through its various external policies. The study provides an overview of the issues and current state of play. It looks first at the concept of peace and the changing nature of the geopolitical environment. It then focuses on the centrality of the promotion of peace and security in the EU's external action and proceeds to an analysis of the practical pursuit of these principles in three main areas of EU policy: development, democracy support, and security and defence, as well as in the increasingly relevant area of disinformation and foreign influence. It concludes with the outlook for the future. A parallel study, published separately, focuses specifically on EU peacebuilding efforts in Colombia. The studies have been drafted with a view to their presentation at the Normandy World Peace Forum, in June 2019.

DE, EN, FR

Peace and Security in 2019: Overview of EU action and outlook for the future

## Living in the EU: European Elections and Democracy

30-04-2019

SABBATI Giulio

The concept of participation lies at the heart of the European project, however recent years have seen a decrease in electoral turnout in contrast to the broader feelings of EU citizens of being part of a wider project promoting prosperity, social cohesion, unity and tolerance. Participation differs among different groups, and among the most explored is the gender gap in political participation, even though progress has been achieved over the years. Nowadays many European citizens show an increasing attachment to the EU, and its democracy, despite the perception of corruption and the challenges to press freedom affecting Member States to different degrees.

EN

## Indonesia's April 2019 elections

09-04-2019

RUSSELL Martin

On 17 April 2019, Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country and third largest democracy (190 million voters), will hold presidential, parliamentary, regional and local elections. Incumbent President, Joko Widodo, is expected to win comfortably and retain a parliamentary majority. The only other presidential candidate is 2014 runner-up Prabowo Subianto, forecast to lose by a bigger margin than in 2014.

EN

## Nepal, Bhutan and their neighbours: Two Himalayan countries landlocked between India and China

Briefing

05-04-2019

D'AMBROGIO Enrico

Nepal and Bhutan are two poor landlocked Himalayan countries, sandwiched between a democracy and an authoritarian one-party state: India and China. After an authoritarian past, during the last decade, they have begun reforms in order to switch towards a democratic model. After a long and complicated path, Nepal succeeded in adopting a new constitution in 2015. Its first post-constitution government is run by an alliance of communist parties. In Bhutan, the king has successfully steered the country towards democratisation, as confirmed by the October 2018 general elections. While historically the two countries have nurtured solid relations with India, in recent years Beijing has expanded its footprint in the region considerably, challenging Delhi's traditional sphere of influence and increasing its sense of encirclement. In 2017 this led to a crisis referred to as the 'Doklam Plateau standoff'. There is currently a window of opportunity for Nepal and Bhutan to diversify their economic and security partnership and to rebalance their foreign policies between their two big neighbours. The EU has been supporting the two countries on their democratic journey and tripled resources for both countries' development for the 2014-2020 period. As they are among the world's poorest countries, Nepal and Bhutan benefit from the EU's 'Everything But Arms' scheme, which grants full duty free and quota free access to the EU single market for all products.

Briefing EN

## A governance framework for algorithmic accountability and transparency

04-04-2019

DG, EPRS

Transparency and accountability are both tools to promote fair algorithmic decisions by providing the foundations for obtaining recourse to meaningful explanation, correction, or ways to ascertain faults that could bring about compensatory processes. The study develops policy options for the governance of algorithmic transparency and accountability, based on an analysis of the social, technical and regulatory challenges posed by algorithmic systems. Based on an extensive review and analysis of existing proposals for governance of algorithmic systems, the authors propose a set of four policy options each of which addresses a different aspect of algorithmic transparency and accountability. 1. Awareness raising: education, watchdogs and whistleblowers. 2. Accountability in public sector use of algorithmic decision-making. 3. Regulatory oversight and Legal liability. 4. Global coordination for algorithmic governance.

EN

1 EN

## Parliamentary scrutiny of trade policies across the western world

25-03-2019

Bart KERREMANS, Johan ADRIAENSEN, Francesca COLLI, Evelyn COREMANS

The Lisbon Treaty increased the European Parliament’s powers over EU trade policy. Ten years after its entry into force it is timely to take stock of how the EP has made use of this leverage in shaping the EU’s trade negotiations. Such an exercise benefits from a comparison with other well-established parliamentary democracies, particularly the key partners with whom the EU has recently negotiated or has started to negotiate a comprehensive trade agreement. This study compares parliamentary scrutiny of trade policy in the EU with the United States, Canada and Australia. It concludes that the European Parliament has become powerful and active in trade policy, on a comparable level to the US Congress. Its powers exceed those of other Western democracies, such as Australia and Canada. From the latter the European Parliament may conclude that it is important to codify some of its informal oversight practices, before they may get lost over time again. This may also help to encourage its trading partners to increase their parliamentary involvement during negotiations with the EU. As regards the implementation of trade agreements however, the EU has very few competences in comparison to all other three countries analysed.

EN

## Outlook for the meetings  of EU leaders, 21-22 March 2019

Briefing

20-03-2019

DRACHENBERG Ralf | VUKOVIC MARKO

The European Council of 21-22 March 2019, is expected to discuss the future development of the single market, the capital markets union, industrial policy and European digital policy, in preparation for the next strategic agenda. In the external relations field, the focus will be on the forthcoming EU-China summit. EU leaders will also look at developments on fighting disinformation and will give guidance on the future EU climate policy. However, Brexit will again take centre stage following recent developments in the House of Commons.

Briefing EN

## Artificial Intelligence ante portas: Legal & ethical reflections

Briefing

14-03-2019

KRITIKOS Michail

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This briefing provides accessible introductions to some of the major legal, regulatory and ethical debates surrounding the deployment and use of AI systems. It focuses on the challenges that the sui generis features of AI may pose on the current legal framework and argues that as AI systems become more autonomous, a doctrinal paradigm swift may be needed. Given the foreseeable pervasiveness of AI, the briefing poses the question about how this new technology should be defined and classified in legal and ethical terms. By providing an analysis of the key legal initiatives in this field in Europe, the briefing aims to equip the reader with the understanding they need to engage in clear-headed reflection about AI's legal and socio-ethical challenges, and meaningful debates about how the current EU acquis may need to be adjusted to the new technological realities.

Briefing EN

Artificial Intelligence ante portas: Legal & ethical reflections

## How artificial intelligence works

Briefing

14-03-2019

BOUCHER Philip Nicholas

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This briefing provides accessible introductions to some of the key techniques that come under the AI banner, grouped into three sections to give a sense the chronology of its development. The first describes early techniques, described as 'symbolic AI' while the second focusses on the 'data driven' approaches that currently dominate and the third looks towards possible future developments. By explaining what is 'deep' about deep learning and showing that AI is more maths than magic, the briefing aims to equip the reader with the understanding they need to engage in clear-headed reflection about AI's opportunities and challenges, and meaningful debates about its development.

Briefing EN

## Why artificial intelligence matters

Briefing

14-03-2019

BOUCHER Philip Nicholas

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This briefing explains why AI matters by reviewing some of the key opportunities and challenges it presents, but it does so with reference to the functionality and readiness of the technology. The first section focuses on the opportunities and challenges presented by today's AI while the second explores longer-term speculative opportunities and challenges that are contingent upon future developments that may never happen.

Briefing EN

## Regulating disinformation with artificial intelligence

13-03-2019

DG, EPRS

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In this study, we examine the consequences of the increasingly prevalent use of artificial intelligence (AI) disinformation initiatives upon freedom of expression, pluralism and the functioning of a democratic polity. The study examines the trade-offs in using automated technology to limit the spread of disinformation online. It presents (self-regulatory to legislative) options to regulate automated content recognition (ACR) technologies in this context. Special attention is paid to the opportunities for the European Union as a whole to take the lead in setting the framework for designing these technologies in a way that enhances accountability and transparency and respects free speech. The present project reviews some of the key academic and policy ideas on technology and disinformation and highlights their relevance to European policy.

EN

1 EN

## Technology and social polarisation

Briefing

07-03-2019

BOUCHER Philip Nicholas

With the Cambridge Analytica scandal, it became clear how technologies such as social media and techniques such as psychological profiling can be combined in election campaigns with worrying effects. Personalised political messaging is highly automated. It starts and ends with social media, which provides both the data for categorising users and the medium for targeting them with personalised messages. Messages might be designed to favour a particular candidate or to encourage widespread discord and mistrust. In either case, it could lead to more polarised societies in which citizens share less common ground and are less understanding of those with different political ideologies, attitudes to populism, or perspectives on specific topics such as immigration. These same technologies and techniques also shape trends in news production and consumption. As newspaper sales dwindle, outlets increasingly rely upon ad-revenue generated by clicks, making extensive use of social media platforms and user profiling. Public debate increasingly occurs via these social media platforms in which citizens, politicians, companies and bots communicate directly to each other without the traditional filters of journalistic standards and editorial oversight. It has been suggested that, where citizens increasingly rely on such platforms for news, they risk entering so-called 'filter bubbles' in which they are exposed to a narrow range of perspectives oriented around their own profiles, shielded from contrasting views, in a broad trend that could also lead to more polarised societies. In this context, STOA launched two studies to explore the mechanisms by which these technologies and techniques may foster polarisation in Europe. One study approached the question with reference to trends in the production and consumption of news media, while the other focussed on trends in political campaigning and communication strategies.

Briefing EN

## Polarisation and the news media in Europe

07-03-2019

DG, EPRS

• Across Europe there is as yet little evidence to support the idea that increased exposure to news featuring like-minded or opposing views leads to the widespread polarisation of attitudes. Though some studies have found that both can strengthen the attitudes of a minority who already hold strong views. • Most studies of news use on social media have failed to find evidence of echo chambers and/or filter bubbles, where people are over-exposed to like-minded views. Some studies even find evidence that it increases the likelihood of exposure to opposing views. • The extent to which people self-select news sources in Europe based on their political preferences, as well as the extent to which news outlets produce partisan coverage, still varies greatly by country. • In addition to differences between European countries, comparative research often tends to show that the US has much higher levels of partisan news consumption and polarisation, making it difficult to generalise from these findings. • There are large gaps in our understanding of the relationship between the news media and polarisation, particularly outside of Western and Northern Europe, and particularly concerning our knowledge of new, more partisan digital-born news sources.

EN

## Polarisation and the use of technology in political campaigns and communication

07-03-2019

DG, EPRS

This report offers a comprehensive overview of the relationship between technology, democracy and the polarisation of public discourse. Technology is inherently political, and the ways in which it is designed and used have ongoing implications for participation, deliberation, and democracy. Algorithms, automation, big data analytics and artificial intelligence are becoming increasingly embedded in everyday life in democratic societies; this report provides an in-depth analysis of the technological affordances that enhance and undermine political decision-making, both now and in the future. To conclude, we formulate principles and policy options for fostering a better relationship between digital technology and public life.

EN

## Special Reports of the European Court of Auditors - A Rolling Check-list of recent findings

28-02-2019

KORVER RONNIE JOHANNES | ZANA-SZABO Gabriella

This rolling checklist presents an overview of the European Court of Auditors' (ECA) special reports, concentrating on those relevant for the 2017 discharge procedure. It strives to link the research topics of the special reports to the relevant debates and positions within the European Parliament, including the working documents of the Committee on Budgetary Control, the work of the specialised parliamentary committees, plenary resolutions and individual questions by Members.

EN

## Women's rights in Western Balkans

29-01-2019

Dasa Duhacek and Milica Mirazic University of Belgrade; Biljana Brankovic, GREVIO member

This study commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the FEMM Committee, entitled Women's rights in Western Balkans, analyzes the countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo* Montenegro and Serbia and is executed so as to address the following issues: 1. Economic-social factors relevant to women's rights, 2. Violence against women (VAW), including membership of the Istanbul convention and 3. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and LGBTI rights.

EN

## EP democracy support activities and their follow-up, and prospects for the future

18-01-2019

Holly Ruthrauff, Hannah Roberts, Sarah Crozier

The Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) is responsible for coordinating the democracy support activities of the European Parliament (EP). Over the course of the eighth legislature, the DEG has aimed to bring strategic focus to its democracy support activities through the introduction of a Comprehensive Democracy Support Approach (CDSA). While the introduction of the CDSA has outlined a vision for more focused and strategic interventions around the electoral cycle, the implementation remains a 'work in progress'. There have been some innovative and long-term activities that bring coherence with EU policies, notably in Ukraine, but also there continue to be some cases of one-off actions without clear objectives. The comparative advantage of the EP in democracy support is its political perspective and ability to work 'peer to peer' with other parliamentarians, which has been demonstrated in its capacity building and mediation and dialogue activities. Overall the EP should continue to strive to be innovative and strategic in its democracy support, working where it has influence and bringing policy coherence with broader EU priorities. Election observation remains relevant, and follow-up to observer recommendations could be enhanced. The Sakharov Prize and the activities around it, which are also coordinated by the DEG, are consistent with EU values, including through support for human rights defenders and civil society.

EN

## The Generalised Scheme of Preferences Regulation (No 978/2012): European Implementation Assessment

19-12-2018

IOANNIDES Isabelle

This evaluation of the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) focuses on the incentives in the GSP provisions that aim to push beneficiaries to comply with human rights and the extent to which these have been implemented and have had an impact on poverty reduction and good governance. The annexed economic evaluation of the GSP Regulation examines three inter-related questions: how beneficiaries have graduated from the GSP and what role preferences have played; how trade relations between the countries that have recently graduated from the GSP and those that still benefit from it are affected; and what the impact of changes in the rules of origin has been.

EN

## Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world in 2017

05-12-2018

APAP Joanna

Every year, the European Parliament debates human rights and democracy in the world overall and the European Union's policy on the matter. In 2017, human rights were very much at the heart of the EU's external action. However, 2017 also saw a continued backlash, worldwide, against civil society, and particularly journalists, a rise in misinformation and growing populism. The European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) report calls for the continuous mainstreaming of human rights throughout EU action both internally and externally. Parliament is expected to debate it during the December plenary session.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## Relations between the European Council and the European Parliament

23-11-2018

EPRS, DG

This study explores the development of relations between the European Council (of Heads of State or Government) and the European Parliament, two institutions that have become increasingly central to the operation of the European Union political system, especially since the 2009 Lisbon Treaty. It explains the Treaty framework for relations between the two institutions and traces their practical evolution over time, including an analysis of the roles of the presidents of each institution in such interaction. It also examines points of contention in the relationship to date, including in relation to 'legislative trespassing' by the European Council and the Spitzenkandidaten process

EN

## Creative Europe Programme (2014 to 2020)

26-10-2018

ZYGIEREWICZ Anna

The study provides an up-to-date evaluation of the implementation of the selected smaller and bigger actions within the Creative Europe programme (2014 to 2020) with focus on the European dimension and European added value of the undertaken actions as well as their visibility.

EN

## From post-truth to post-trust?

25-10-2018

BENTZEN Naja

Is the 'very concept of objective truth' fading out of the world, as George Orwell wrote in his Homage to Catalonia in the 1930s? Or is truth even 'dead', as Time magazine asked in 2017? Can we draw clear lines between objective facts, spin and lies? What are the consequences of 'truth decay' for trust, democracy and multilateralism?

EN

From post-truth to post-trust?

## Madagascar: vers une sortie des crises politiques à répétition?

Briefing

19-10-2018

LATEK Marta

Depuis l'indépendance de Madagascar, malgré l'absence de conflit majeur et sa richesse en ressources tant humaines que naturelles, sa population continue de s'appauvrir. Cette 'énigme malgache' s'accompagne d'un paradoxe: chaque fois qu'une reprise économique s'amorce, une crise politique vient l'interrompre. La clef de l'énigme réside dans les jeux de pouvoir entres les réseaux des élites, qui se créent au gré des circonstances autour des leaders aspirant au poste du chef d'État. La culture politique, tout en gardant une apparence démocratique, soutient implicitement les institutions informelles fondées sur la personnalisation du pouvoir, au détriment des institutions formelles, dont l'équilibre est censé stabiliser le système politique. Les institutions étatiques sont constamment (re)façonnées au profit des réseaux au pouvoir pour ne pas menacer la mainmise de l'exécutif. La déception de la population, dont le pouvoir d'achat ne cesse de diminuer depuis des décennies, se confirme dans les enquêtes d'opinion et dans la baisse constante de la participation électorale. En effet, il existe un clivage profond entre les élites, prises dans l'auto-préservation, et la population, désabusée et tiraillée entre les aspirations démocratiques et une soumission fataliste, dérivée des valeurs ancestrales. L'aide internationale, bien que vitale pour la population, vivant en majorité dans une grande pauvreté, est insuffisante pour un développement durable du pays. Au-delà du renforcement des institutions démocratiques et du développement de corps intermédiaires qui pourraient mieux répondre aux aspirations populaires, un sursaut plus profond est nécessaire pour bâtir une démocratie au-delà de la façade. Son fondement: un nouveau contrat social entre la population et les élites du pays, basé sur une reformulation commune de la culture politique malgache, entre tradition et modernité.

Briefing FR

## Computational propaganda techniques

18-10-2018

BENTZEN Naja

The techniques used by anti-democratic state and non-state actors to disrupt or influence democratic processes are constantly evolving. The use of algorithms, automation and artificial intelligence is boosting the scope and the efficiency of disinformation campaigns and related cyber-activities. In response, the EU is stepping up its efforts to protect its democratic processes from manipulation ahead of the European elections in May 2019.

EN

Computational propaganda techniques

## Brazil ahead of the 2018 elections

Briefing

05-10-2018

GRIEGER Gisela

On 7 October 2018, about 147 million Brazilians will go to the polls to choose a new president, new governors and new members of the bicameral National Congress and state legislatures. If, as expected, none of the presidential candidates gains over 50 % of votes, a run-off between the two best-performing presidential candidates is scheduled to take place on 28 October 2018. Brazil's severe and protracted political, economic, social and public-security crisis has created a complex and polarised political climate that makes the election outcome highly unpredictable. Pollsters show that voters have lost faith in a discredited political elite and that only anti-establishment outsiders not embroiled in large-scale corruption scandals and entrenched clientelism would truly match voters' preferences. However, there is a huge gap between voters' strong demand for a radical political renewal based on new faces, and the dramatic shortage of political newcomers among the candidates. Voters' disillusionment with conventional politics and political institutions has fuelled nostalgic preferences and is likely to prompt part of the electorate to shift away from centrist candidates associated with policy continuity to candidates at the opposite sides of the party spectrum. Many less well-off voters would have welcomed a return to office of former left-wing President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010), who due to a then booming economy, could run social programmes that lifted millions out of extreme poverty and who, barred by Brazil's judiciary from running in 2018, has tried to transfer his high popularity to his much less-known replacement. Another part of the electorate, appalled by growing public-security issues and endemic corruption, but also disappointed with democracy more broadly, appears to be strongly attracted by the simple and unconventional answers to complex challenges posed by far-right populist rhetoric. The latter – worryingly – glorifies Brazil's dictatorship (1964-1985). As candidates with unorthodox political approaches appear to be an emerging norm, Brazilians may opt for a populist turn as well. If so, EU-Brazil relations may become more complex in the future.

Briefing EN

## European Union – Council of Europe cooperation and joint programmes

Briefing

28-09-2018

ZAMFIR Ionel

The Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Union (EU) are to a significant extent based on shared values, and have overlapping membership. This has led them over time to develop a strategic partnership and joint actions beyond the EU's and, more recently, the CoE's borders, making use of the latter's longstanding technical expertise on human rights, the rule of law and democracy. For the EU, the CoE convention system and the European Court of Human Rights remain central instruments for defending human rights in Europe, as stated in the EU's 2017 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World. The relationship between the CoE and the EU is generally seen as mutually beneficial and thriving, each partner contributing according to its own strengths and capabilities. In 2011 the CoE launched a new approach towards the EU's neighbourhood regions, endorsed by the EU. Cooperation has become more structured, with the Council of the EU agreeing and adopting the EU's priorities for cooperation with the Council of Europe on a biannual basis, in cooperation with the CoE. The EU-CoE relationship has not escaped some criticism, however, namely that the CoE acts as a political consultancy or a junior partner to the EU owing to the latter's budgetary clout and its disproportionate and larger contribution to joint activities. There is arguably room to improve the partnership. According to some, the EU countries (which are all CoE members) need to develop a strategic and long-term vision regarding future cooperation with the CoE.

Briefing EN

## What if blockchain offered a way to reconcile privacy with transparency?

27-09-2018

KRITIKOS Michail

One of the most appealing aspects of blockchain technology is the degree of transparency that it can provide. Blockchain has the potential to improve supply chains and clinical trials, enforce the law, enable responsible consumption and enhance democratic governance through a traceability of information as a means of ensuring that nothing is unduly modified. The level of transparency that blockchain brings forward adds a degree of accountability that has not existed to date. At the same time, one of the most appealing aspects of blockchain technology is the degree of privacy that it can provide. How could blockchain safeguard the rights to privacy and control over one's data, whilst promoting data transparency?

EN

What if blockchain were to be truly decentralised?

## What if blockchain were to be truly decentralised?

27-09-2018

KRITIKOS Michail

Technological systems, once introduced in a particular socio-economic context, often evolve in unforeseen ways and may fall prey to unexpected power relations. Blockchain, as a technology that relies on decentralisation to enable storing and securing data-based transactions without central administration, is currently facing significant centralisation pressures that may undermine the purpose of operating a decentralised blockchain network. But what if blockchain fulfilled its promise to be truly decentralised?

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What if blockchain were to be truly decentralised?

## The Development of an Institutional Framework for the Implementation of the Association Agreements in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine: a comparative perspective

19-09-2018

Kataryna WOLCZUK, Professor of East European Politics, University of Birmingham and Associate Fellow, Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House, United Kingdom

In recent years the EU concluded Association Agreements, including the creation of a Comprehensive Free Trade Areas with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. These are amongst the most complex and comprehensive legal treaties concluded by the EU with third countries. The treaties place a profound obligation on the partner countries of legal approximation, that is, to undertake extensive, binding commitments to adopt vast swathes of the acquis in order to stimulate political and economic development and institutional modernisation. This study shows that creating the institutional framework for implementation is a challenging and drawn-out process. While all countries have made some progress with devising these mechanisms, they are short of the necessary political leadership, policy planning, administrative capacity and there is a dearth of budgetary planning to enable effective implementation. There is also a notable need to embed implementation into wider reform strategies. While these issues are being addressed on the part of the countries, the EU can assist them by providing the necessary systemic support in an integrated, sequenced and long-term way.

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## EP-EUI Roundtable on Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Europe

14-09-2018

MACIEJEWSKI Mariusz

Luis Carlos Matos

Proceedings summarise the EP-EUI roundtable on the Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Europe. The roundtable with academics from European University Institute involved MEP Róa THUN (Chair of the Digital Single Market Working Group of the Committee for the Internal Market and Consumer Protection), MEP Mady DELVAUX (MEP), Mr Riccardo RIBERA D'ALCALA, Director-General of DG IPOL, European Parliament, Ms Catelijne MULLER (European Economic and Social Committee), and Dr Cecile HUET, the Deputy Head of Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Unit in DG CNECT
This document was prepared by Policy Department A in the framework of scientific cooperation between European Parliament and European University Institute.

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## Zimbabwe's post-electoral challenges

Briefing

13-09-2018

LATEK Marta

As international isolation is no longer economically bearable, Zimbabwe has been searching for legitimacy on the global stage. The post-Mugabe transition government, from a ruling party fraction, committed itself to free and fair elections and invited international observers for first time in 16 years. But much-awaited change in Zimbabwe needs much more than a newly elected president and legislature. The country suffers from institutional dysfunction driven by years of a de facto one-party, military-backed regime, characterised by rampant corruption and systematic patronage, securing the capture of key economic areas and political institutions by party elites. The victory of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), in both the legislative and presidential elections, and the deadly crackdown on the opposition that followed, seriously undermine the prospects for genuine Zimbabwean democracy. Although international observers assessed the electoral process as relatively free and competitive, it took place on an uneven playing field due to years of ZANU-PF domination. EU observers, in particular, expressed strong concern regarding the intimidation of voters, the pro-state bias of the media, and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission's (ZEC) lack of transparency. Some observers have indeed warned that the ousting of Robert Mugabe, which had raised so many hopes, was just part of a power reshuffle inside Zimbabwe's authoritarian regime, meant to protect the interests of the governing elites. Indeed, powerful forces obstruct change in Zimbabwe, seeking the sole preservation of their economic interests in the renewed political context. It is likely that the newly-elected President, Emmerson Mnangagwa, will pursue some economic reform, especially to attract foreign investors, while maintaining political control from above. In this situation, the EU, having declared its readiness to fully re-engage with Zimbabwe, has to use every lever to induce structural changes and to support civil society in this deeply corrupt and dysfunctional state.

Briefing EN

## What if technologies challenged our ethical norms?

06-09-2018

KRITIKOS Michail

Exploring the relationship between ethics and technological innovation has always been a challenging task for policy-makers. Ethical considerations concerning the impact of research and innovation (R&I) are increasingly important owing to the quickening pace of technological innovation and the transformative potential and complexity of contemporary advances in science and technology. The multiplication of legal references to ethical principles and the mushrooming of ad hoc ethics committees indicate the institutional embedding of ethics into the scientific research process as such, but also into an increasing array of technological trajectories. Yet the rapid development of disruptive technologies means that social and ethical norms often struggle to keep up with technological development. But what if disruptive technologies were to challenge traditional ethical norms and structures?

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What if technologies challenged our ethical norms?

## What if technologies had their own ethical standards?

06-09-2018

KRITIKOS Michail

Technologies are often seen either as objects of ethical scrutiny or as challenging traditional ethical norms. The advent of autonomous machines, deep learning and big data techniques, blockchain applications and 'smart' technological products raises the need to introduce ethical norms into these devices. The very act of building new and emerging technologies has also become the act of creating specific moral systems within which human and artificial agents will interact through transactions with moral implications. But what if technologies introduced and defined their own ethical standards?

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What if technologies had their own ethical standards?

## Trade agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru

07-08-2018

ZYGIEREWICZ Anna

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This European Implementation Assessment consists of two parts. The in-house opening analysis (part I) presents briefly the signature of the trade agreement between the EU and Colombia and Peru. It also presents the socio-economic situation in Colombia and Peru and the relations between the EU and Colombia and Peru as well as the relations between the EU and Andean Community. The research paper prepared by external experts (part II) presents detail analysis of trade in goods and services and foreign direct investments. The paper also evaluated in detail the implementation of the trade and sustainable development chapter of the agreement in both Colombia and Peru. They are followed by the presentation of the international cooperation of Colombia and Peru. Finally, the paper provides recommendation for the improvement of the implementation of the trade agreement.

EN, ES

## Global Trendometer - Essays on medium- and long-term global trends - July 2018

18-07-2018

CESLUK-GRAJEWSKI Marcin | NOONAN EAMONN | RECHARD Daniele | SCHMERTZING Leopold | WINDLE-WEHRLE Jessica Freya

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The EU faces challenges from the outside and the inside. Most of those are the symptoms of big underlying trends, and handling them needs foresight. The Global Trendometer tries to provide foresight for decision makers in the EU by analysing the changes in these long-term trends. This publication does not offer answers or make recommendations. It presents summarised information derived from a range of carefully selected sources. This issue of the Global Trendometer analyses long-term trends on India, the labour-share of income, and democracy and artificial intelligence. It also features two-pagers on geoengineering, remittances, food security in China, economic waves, the US after Trump, public procurement and deep fakes.

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## Pakistan ahead of the 2018 elections

Briefing

17-07-2018

D'AMBROGIO Enrico

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Pakistan will hold general elections on 25 July 2018. This event deserves attention for several reasons. With around 200 million inhabitants, Pakistan has the sixth-largest population in the world. One of the world's nine nuclear powers, it is the only Muslim country among them. It is strategically located between India, China, Afghanistan and Iran. It plays a major role with regard to Afghanistan's stability and the fight against terrorism, for which it has often been accused of connivance with militant groups. Finally, it is home to the world's second-largest Muslim population. The election is set to secure the second consecutive democratic transition of power in a country marked by chronic dualism between political and military power. The event is particularly important, given the current political turmoil following the removal of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from office. Pakistan is accused of giving support to terrorist groups. However, after the Taliban massacred 132 children at an army-run school in 2014, the authorities adopted a number of provisions to curtail terrorism. Nevertheless, the US administration, which considers Pakistan one of its key allies in the Afghanistan war, is unsatisfied with its record of fighting terrorism. The resultant US freeze on military aid to Islamabad may force the latter to switch allegiance to China and Russia, which could jeopardise Washington's efforts in Afghanistan. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) of infrastructure projects is an example of the already flourishing relations with Beijing. An EU election observation mission is monitoring the electoral process. Since 2014, Pakistan has benefitted from the EU's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), which has boosted the country's exports to the EU. A new EU-Pakistan strategic engagement plan is to be signed in 2018. The European Parliament has expressed concern over the country's human rights situation on several occasions, with special reference to the persecution of religious minorities.

Briefing EN

## Human Rights in Cambodia

16-07-2018

RUSSELL Martin

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Ravaged by genocide and armed conflict in the 1970s and 1980s, since 1985 Cambodia has been under the stable but repressive rule of Prime Minister Hun Sen. Nominally a multi-party democracy, the country has long been in effect a one-party state. Repression has intensified since the results of the 2013 election showed growing support for the opposition. With the next parliamentary election scheduled for July 2018, the government decided to ban the country's main opposition party, a move which drew international condemnation.

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## The further development of the Common Position 944/2008/CFSP on arms exports control

16-07-2018

Dr. Sibylle BAUER, Mark BROMLEY, Giovanna MALETTA – Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

In view of the upcoming review of the EU Common Position 944/2008/CFSP on arms exports, the aim of the workshop was to provide an overview of the context in which this process will take place together with a set of possible outcomes the review could produce. The speakers from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), first defined the context by describing how, since the EU Common Position was adopted in 2008, EU member states performed in terms of military expenditure, arms production and arms transfers. Recent measures adopted at the EU level to boost defence industrial cooperation were also indicated as part of this framework. The speakers also highlighted the divergences in member states' export policies which emerged in the last decade, most recently during the conflict in Yemen. They then provided a number of options that could be taken into consideration during the 2018 review, covering both adjustments to the language of the criteria and the user's guide and measures to improve the implementation of the EU Common Position, the quality of reporting and to increase coherence and coordination of the EU export control regime.

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## Foreign influence operations in the EU

Briefing

10-07-2018

BENTZEN Naja

Attempting to influence political decision-making beyond one's own political sphere is not a new phenomenon – it is an integral part of the history of geopolitics. Whereas hard power relies on military and economic force, the soft power of a state involves public diplomacy and dialogue on values, cultures and ideas, which should normally correspond with its behaviour abroad. Although the extent is hard to measure, democratic states whose values match the prevailing global norms – pluralism, fundamental rights and freedoms, the rule of law as a principle within states and in international relations – and exert this influence by contributing to the prevention and resolution of conflicts, traditionally appear more attractive, thus having more soft power leverage. However, influence can also serve purposes of interference and destabilisation. Authoritarian state actors struggle to project soft power while engaging in disruptive or destructive behaviour. Instead, some state actors see a means of reaching their goals by making democratic actors, systems and values appear less attractive, through a number of overt and covert instruments. The tools are constantly evolving. Today, social media combines the oral tradition with new electronic means of dissemination, enabling (potentially disruptive) messages to spread instantaneously. Disinformation can be, and is being, combined with other instruments in an increasingly diverse, hybrid 'toolbox' that authoritarian state actors have at their disposal. In recent years, awareness in the research community of online disinformation by state actors has increased around the world, not least in the context of the United Kingdom referendum on EU membership and the US presidential election in 2016. Although their visibility increases in the context of elections and referendums, influence campaigns are not limited to democratic processes.

Briefing EN

Foreign influence operations in the EU

## Review Clauses in EU Legislation: A Rolling Check-List (6th edition)

29-06-2018

KIENDL KRISTO IVANA

This study provides an overview of review clauses (reviews, evaluations, implementation reports) contained in EU legislation during the sixth, seventh and the current, eighth parliamentary term. Drawing on information publicly available across several sources, it provides in a single, comprehensive repository an analytical overview of acts that contain a review clause. The study puts a special focus on (and the analysis of) review clauses in EU legislative acts adopted during the current parliamentary term (with a total of 147 legislative acts with a review clause adopted through the ordinary legislative procedure up until end of December 2017).

EN

## Association agreements between the EU and Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine

28-06-2018

ZYGIEREWICZ Anna

The study presents the successes and shortcomings of the implementation of three association agreements singed by the EU with Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine. The study is composed of four papers: the first presents the opinions of the EU monitoring and supervising bodies on the implementation of the three agreements; the second evaluates in detail the implementation of the agreement in Moldova, the third - in Georgia and the fourth - in Ukraine. The recommendations on how to improve the implementation processes form part of the evaluation.

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## The fight against terrorism

25-05-2018

BAKOWSKI Piotr | VAN BALLEGOOIJ Wouter

Significant benefits could be achieved by the EU and its Member States by addressing the gaps and barriers in the area of the fight against terrorism, notably by developing an evidence-based EU criminal policy cycle involving the European Parliament and national parliaments. In this context, EU institutions should conduct comprehensive ex-ante assessments and ex-post evaluations of counterterrorism measures, in line with better law-making principles. The effectiveness and fundamental rights compliance of counter-radicalisation programmes should continue to be monitored. The framework for countering terrorism requires further refinement. A European law enforcement culture with full respect for fundamental rights needs to be fostered in which relevant information is shared and analysed, judicial cooperation tools are properly utilised and seeking the support of EU agencies becomes a natural reflex. This also requires the allocation of significant resources aimed at training and exchanges. Beyond resulting in more relevant, coherent, effective and efficient action in the fight against terrorism, such measures could increase the wellbeing of the population, reduce the material and immaterial impacts of terrorism, and ensure protection of fundamental rights when impacted by counterterrorism measures.

EN

## Peace and Security in 2018: An evaluation of EU peacebuilding in the Western Balkans

22-05-2018

IOANNIDES Isabelle

This first thematic study of the Peace and Security series focuses on European Union (EU) peacebuilding efforts in the Western Balkans. The series will make an annual evaluation of EU performance in the field of peace and security in a specific geographical region. Examining EU engagement in the Western Balkans, the study assesses the extent to which the Union has been able to transform and strengthen the region's governance, economy and resilience. The study is organised around three key inter-connected (and at times overlapping) phases in EU post-conflict peacebuilding  stabilisation, state-building and EU enlargement  to explain the strengths, weaknesses and limits of EU engagement. It ends with an assessment of the new EU strategy for the Western Balkans and analyses the potential to remedy past deficiencies and help move the region towards genuine, inclusive and sustainable peace. A parallel study, published separately, provides an overview of current EU action on peace and security and of the outlook for the future. The studies have been drafted with a view to their presentation at the Normandy World Peace Forum, in June 2018.

EN, FR

## EYE event - Free speech in the digital era

16-05-2018

BENTZEN Naja

Are the business models of the big social media companies compatible with the principles of democracy? Can we protect free speech and at the same time ensure that social media companies take more responsibility for the content they spread, including hate speech? Can we turn the challenges into opportunities?

EN

## Malaysia's 2018 general election

26-04-2018

RUSSELL Martin

On 9 May 2018, Malaysians go to the polls to elect federal and state parliaments. Although a financial scandal and rising living costs have dented the popularity of the government, the opposition faces an uphill battle to end the governing Barisan Nasional coalition's six-decade rule, and it is not widely expected to win.

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## Adapting to new digital realities: Main issues and policy responses

Briefing

19-04-2018

BENTZEN Naja | NEGREIRO ACHIAGA Maria Del Mar | REILLON Vincent | SAJN Nikolina | SZCZEPANSKI Marcin

Digital technologies have changed the way we live and transformed the world around us at unprecedented speed. They have affected all important aspects of life, both at work and at home, and have influenced almost everything from human relations to the economy, to the extent that access to the internet has now become a basic human right recognised by the United Nations. This profound change presents both opportunities and threats to our society. Citizens need specific skills and access to be able to meaningfully take part in society and work. European businesses need an adequate policy framework and infrastructure to capture the enormous value created by the digital economy. Supporting innovation, removing barriers in the digital single market, and effectively managing and using data are the necessary tools to assist them and boost economic growth in Europe. The European Union takes an active part in shaping the digital economy and society, with cross policy initiatives that range from boosting investment, through reforms of copyright and e privacy, to removal of geo-blocking and development of e-government. This multifaceted approach is necessary to facilitate adaptation to complex new realities. The European Parliament, as co legislator, is involved in shaping the policy framework which will help citizens and businesses fully utilise the potential of digital technologies.

Briefing EN, FR

## Special Reports of the European Court of Auditors - A Rolling Check-List of recent findings

13-03-2018

KORVER RONNIE JOHANNES | ZANA-SZABO Gabriella

This rolling check-list presents an overview of the Special Reports of the European Court of Auditors (ECA), concentrating on those relevant for the 2016 discharge procedure. It strives to link the research topics of the Special Reports to relevant debates and positions within the European Parliament, including the working documents of the Committee on Budgetary Control, the work of the specialised parliamentary committees, forthcoming plenary resolutions and individual questions by Members. This check-list has been prepared by the Ex-Post Evaluation Unit of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), the EP's in-house research service and think-tank, as part of its on-going support for parliamentary committees and individual Members in scrutinising the executive in its implementation of EU law, policies and programmes. The European Parliament is strongly committed to Better Law-Making, and particularly to the effective use of ex-ante impact assessment and ex-post evaluation throughout the entire legislative cycle. It is in this spirit that the Parliament has a particular interest in following the transposition, implementation and enforcement of EU law, and, more generally, monitoring the impact, operation, effectiveness and delivery of policy and programmes in practice.

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## United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

02-03-2018

APAP Joanna

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which set out a universal core of human rights and fundamental freedoms for the first time. The Universal Declaration, together with other measures which followed, constitute the International Bill of Human Rights. In the 12 years of its existence, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has actively defended human rights worldwide. Its robust mandate and unique set of mechanisms, such as universal periodic review and special procedures, provide a system for prevention, technical assistance and capacity-building, as well as a mechanism to respond to cases of grave violations of human rights. The 12th anniversary of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) will be celebrated during its 37th session, from 26 February to 23 March 2018.

EN

## What if all technologies were inherently social?

02-03-2018

BOUCHER Philip Nicholas

How technology has shaped society and how future technologies might affect it in the years to come are subjects for frequent debate. It can be tempting in this context to think of technologies as neutral 'things' that can be used for good or bad depending on the user's intentions and skills. But what if technologies were social objects that reflected and reinforced human activities or even political values? In fact, while mechanisms, effects and implications remain open to debate, experts on the relationship between technology and society broadly agree that technologies are indeed social in this way. By scripting, restricting and enabling different human behaviours, technologies can influence our lives in much the same way that policy programmes do. A number of key ideas have emerged from this field over the last five decades, with various implications for European policy-making.

EN

What if all technologies were inherently social?

## Democracy support in EU external policy

Briefing

27-02-2018

ZAMFIR Ionel

The EU's policy of external democracy support has gained momentum, particularly after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which defined democracy as a fundamental principle of the Union, to be enshrined in all policies of external significance. Subsequently, several policy documents have outlined strategic orientations and sought ways to enhance implementation and policy coherence and effectiveness, a need often recognised by EU stakeholders and other players. The EU has deployed all the tools at its disposal in order to support democracy and democratisation processes across the world. These tools range from political and diplomatic efforts, including political and human rights dialogues, to development aid instruments and extensive support for civil society and human rights defenders. As a result, democracy support has become better integrated into the EU's external policies, particularly in the area of development, and better inter-linked with measures to protect human rights and the space needed for civil society to thrive. The EU is the biggest commercial bloc and development aid donor in the world, and therefore has considerable leverage over its partner countries. However, as the EU does not want to use its power in a coercive manner, it has sought to move away from a classical relationship of donor conditionality to one of equal partnership, recognising that domestic dynamics and local ownership in third countries are essential for democratic progress. It has used sanctions mechanisms in its bilateral agreements and unilateral trade preferences mainly as a constructive tool to open dialogue and find solutions based on consultation and cooperation.

Briefing EN

## Senegal: bastion of democracy, migration priority for the EU

06-02-2018

BERNARDINI FLAVIA

Senegal is one of the most politically stable countries in Africa. Free and fair presidential elections in March 2012, for which the EU deployed an Election Expert Mission (EEM), brought Macky Sall to the presidency. The regular organisation of legislative elections, political pluralism, a free press, and a vibrant civil society are all proof of Senegal's democratic culture.
Senegal has a long tradition of migration to the EU and other African countries, and today 5 % of its population live abroad. Remittances account for more than 10 % of GDP. As a priority partner in the Migration Partnership Framework, Senegal has been constructive in the political dialogue on migration, while maintaining its position that more should be done on legal migration into the EU. Senegal is one of the main benificiaries of the EU Trust Fund. Development cooperation, still at the core of relations with Senegal, has been structured to ensure increased coordination between the EU, Member States, and the Senegalese authorities. The challenge going forward will be to ensure that Senegal honours its commitments on the readmission of irregular migrants, and encourage progress on human rights.

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## Prospects for e-democracy in Europe

02-02-2018

EPRS, DG

Digital tools could create stronger connections between European citizens and the EU decision-making process and, by doing so, might contribute to reducing the EU democratic deficit. This report investigates what lessons can be drawn from local, national and European experiences of the use of digital tools for the functioning of EU decision-making procedures and institutions. For that purpose, a review of current literature on e-democracy and the European public sphere has been carried out; 22 local, national and EU experiences with existing digital tools have been investigated and evaluated; and an analysis has been made of the suitability of the most promising digital tools for implementation and use at EU level. The most important factors for successful e-participation identified in the report are: a close and clear link between e-participation processes and a concrete formal decision-making process; the participatory process and the contribution of its outputs to the overall decision-making process have to be clear to participants from the start; feedback to the participants about what has been done with their contributions is an indispensable feature of the process; a participative process should not be limited to one event but should be imbedded in an institutional 'culture of participation'; e-participation must be accompanied by an effective mobilisation and engagement strategy, involving communication instruments tailored for different target groups.

EN, IT, NL

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## Ten issues to watch in 2018

08-01-2018

BASSOT Etienne

This is the second edition of an annual EPRS publication designed to identify key issues and policy areas that are likely to feature prominently on the political agenda of the European Union over the coming year. Topics presented include: the implications for the EU of the terrorism threat, the North Korean issue, the security challenges posed by disinformation, fake news and cyber-crime, the ongoing migration crisis and rising inequalities. Other important policy areas covered are youth empowerment, the EU budget, the future of the euro area, the European elections in 2019 and, last but not least, Brexit.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## European Council Conclusions: A Rolling Check-List of Commitments to Date

18-12-2017

BACIAN Izabela Cristina | DRACHENBERG Ralf | TENHUNEN Susanna

The European Council's role – to 'provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development' and to define its 'general political directions and priorities' - has developed rapidly over the past eight years. Since June 2014, the European Council Oversight Unit within the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), the European Parliament's in-house research service and think-tank, has been monitoring and analysing the European Council's delivery of the various commitments made in the conclusions of its meetings. This overview, presented in the form of a regularly updated Rolling Check-List of Commitments to Date, is designed to review the degree of progress in realising the goals which the European Council has set itself since January 2010 and to assist the Parliament in exercising its important oversight role in this field.

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## EU support to democracy and good governance in Africa

Briefing

17-11-2017

ZAMFIR Ionel

Support to democracy, good governance and human rights is a central component of EU cooperation with Africa, and of EU development aid to the continent, under the different frameworks shaping relations with African countries, such as the ACP framework for Sub-Saharan Africa, the Neighbourhood Policy for North Africa, and the Africa-EU Joint Strategy for cooperation at continental level. EU support is all the more important as democracy in many African countries is recent and still fragile. Democratic progress has had its ups and downs on the African continent since the 1990s wave of democratisation. On the whole, the number of free countries has stagnated, and progress on good governance indicators has been slow. Popular support for democratic systems in African countries remains however high, justifying EU efforts to promote democracy. The EU has a vast array of tools at its disposal. It has used the conditionality enshrined in its bilateral agreements to respond to serious political crises, particularly in Africa. EU budget support, which is vital to several African countries, has been subject to similar democratic and human rights conditionality. EU development aid includes an important component supporting good governance and rule of law. The EU has become an important partner in election observation and democracy assistance, and most of Africa has received EU missions. However, whether these tools of democracy support can make a significant difference remains a complicated issue. Much depends on conditions on the ground and the willingness of the partner governments to make progress. As the EU is about to redefine its priorities for cooperation with the African continent, democracy and good governance are acknowledged as a central pillar of resilience, strongly interlinked with peace and stability.

Briefing EN

## The settlement of disputes arising from the United Kingdom's Withdrawal from the European Union

17-11-2017

Antonio Francisco FERNÁNDEZ TOMÁS

This study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee, analyses the various jurisdiction options, under EU law and under public international law, in settling disputes arising from the Withdrawal Agreement of the UK from the EU and in the context of the Future Relationship Agreement with the UK. It examines in particular the continued involvement of the CJEU in the new context of the EU-UK relations and, based on CJEU case-law and previous international agreements, presents the various governance possibilities for these agreements.

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## The Pan-African Parliament: getting ready for the 2017 AU-EU Summit

Briefing

16-11-2017

PICHON Eric | RAMET Valérie

Nearly three years have passed since the adoption of a revised protocol that will grant the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) legislative powers and considerably strengthen the institution within the overall African governance system. While very few countries have ratified the protocol so far, the acceleration of its ratification procedures is a priority for the recently elected PAP president. The EP and the PAP enjoy a long-standing partnership and both of them have an important role to play in monitoring the Joint Africa EU Strategy (JAES) and its roadmap for 2014-2017. The fifth EU-Africa Summit, which will be held in Côte d'Ivoire in November 2017, will assess the implementation of the road map and identify new priorities for the future. Thematic priorities for the upcoming summit include youth, peace and security and migration, which are now at the heart of the relationship between the two continents.

Briefing EN

## The Joint Africa-EU Strategy

15-11-2017

Nicoletta PIROZZI, Institutional Relations Manager & Head of Programme, Istituto Affari Internazional, Italy, Nicoló SARTORI, Senior Fellow & Head of Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Italy, Bernardo VENTURI, Researcher, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Italy

Implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) has taken place in a rapidly evolving political scenario at the global level and specifically within Europe and Africa. The overarching objectives identified in 2007 still remain valid, but concrete priorities now need to be adapted to the new reality. At the strategic level, a refinement of the Africa-EU partnership has become urgent following the adoption of Agenda 2063 and the EU Global Strategy. At policy level, lessons learned from the implementation of the Roadmap 2014-17 and the way ahead indicated in the Joint Communication of May 2017 should be taken into account. Ten years after its adoption and with a view to the next AU-EU Summit, being held in Abidjan on 29-30 November 2017, it is crucial to re-assess the strategy's validity on the basis of achievements and shortfalls, also in its parliamentary dimension, with regard to the fulfilment of its objectives in an evolving context.

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## Effective access to justice

15-11-2017

Ms Nathy Rass-Masson, Ms Virginie Rouas (Milieu)

This study, commissioned by the European Parliament Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs upon request by PETI Committee, aims to identify and understand the issues affecting effective access to justice raised by the EU citizens and residents in some Member States with the main aim to frame the analysis and obtain a fair representation of recurring issues pertaining to access to justice across the EU.
It seeks to understand why citizens have turned to the EU institutions to seek access to justice, and looks at a large range of factors, including legal and procedural issues as well as practical, social, historical and political factors that underpin the issues raised in these petitions.
More broadly, the study intends to assess the relevance of the petitions system to address access to justice issues experienced by citizens at national level.

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## EU relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan

30-10-2017

Leila ALIEVA, Senior Common Room Member at St. Antony's College, University of Oxford
Laure DELCOUR Research Fellow, Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme (FMSH);
Hrant KOSTANYAN, Researcher, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

The EU is currently reshaping its relationship with Armenia and Azerbaijan through new agreements for which the negotiations ended (Armenia) or started (Azerbaijan) in February 2017.
After Yerevan's decision to join the EAEU (thereby renouncing to sign an AA/DCFTA), the initialling of the CEPA provides a new impetus to EU-Armenia relations. It highlights Armenia's lingering interest in developing closer ties with the EU and provides a vivid illustration of the EU's readiness to respond to EaP countries' specific needs and circumstances. The CEPA is also a clear indication that the EU has not engaged in a zero-sum game with Russia and is willing to exploit any opportunity to further its links with EaP countries.
The launch of negotiations on a new EU-Azerbaijan agreement – in spite of serious political and human rights problems in the country – results from several intertwined factors, including the EU's energy security needs and Baku's increasing bargaining power. At this stage, Azerbaijan is interested only in forms of cooperation that are not challenging the political status quo. However, the decline in both world oil prices and domestic oil production in this country is creating bargaining opportunities for the EU in what promises to be a difficult negotiation.

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## The electoral reforms in three association countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood - Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova and their impact on political developments in these countries

26-10-2017

Holly RUTHRAUFF

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This study focuses on electoral reform in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, which have all concluded Association Agreements with the EU. Recent experience in all three countries has shown that political elites are changing (or not changing) the electoral system to hold onto power. Beyond the choice of electoral system, changes have often been introduced in a rush, without a genuinely inclusive, thorough and public debate. Frequent changes to legal frameworks, often made just prior to elections, have also not contributed to stability of law. Issues identified during elections are symptomatic of deeper weaknesses that must be addressed, including: lack of an independent judiciary, insufficient rule of law, non-functioning or selective use of oversight mechanisms, weak government institutions, concentration of media ownership, political corruption and misuse of state resources. All three countries are also experiencing widespread public discontent with the political elite, and political renewal is much needed. While electoral reform can play a role, efforts should be made to promote internal party democracy and overcome barriers to entry for new political actors.

EN

## Brexit Literature Update 10/2017

13-10-2017

HULME BENJAMIN | PAPAGEORGIOU IOANNIS

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Following a relevant request by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs has been compiling, on a regular basis, academic and scholarly material related to the process of, and the negotiations on, the withdrawal of the UK from the EU. Since the June 2016 referendum in the UK, Brexit-related literature has grown significantly and it is probably going to expand further in the future. Thus, this compilation is far from exhaustive; rather, it identifies some of the more useful articles, taking into account, in particular, the following elements:

• Scholarly rather than a journalistic character of the publication
• Originality and interest
• Recent publication
• Be of interest for the EU
• Constitutional or institutional relevance.

EN

## Iraqi Kurdistan's independence referendum

Briefing

11-10-2017

PICHON Eric

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On 25 September 2017, the government of the autonomous Region of Kurdistan in Iraq, under its president, Masoud Barzani, organised a referendum on independence, disregarding calls by the Iraqi central government and the international community to postpone it. The referendum was held in the Kurdistan Region's constituencies and also in the neighbouring 'disputed' territories, in particular the oil-rich area of Kirkuk, which have de facto if not legally been governed by the Kurdish authorities since the moment they were recaptured from ISIL/Da'esh. Even though the 'yes' side has won, it is by no means certain that a Kurdish state will emerge in the near future. Such a state would be weakened by internal divisions and poor economic conditions. In addition, Syria, Turkey and Iran strongly condemned the referendum and have taken retaliatory action. Among other considerations, they are worried that an independent Kurdish state would encourage their own Kurdish populations to seek greater autonomy. However, the prospect of a Greater Kurdistan is remote, since the regional Kurdish landscape is dominated by the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and its affiliate parties, which do not share the Iraqi Kurdish leaders' ideology or strategic alliances. Concerned by the fragmentation of the Middle East, the EU, the USA, Russia, and most of the region's powers other than Israel, disapproved of the referendum, which took place in the context of the ongoing fight against ISIL/Da'esh, and called for negotiations within the existing Iraqi borders. This briefing updates Regional implications of Iraqi Kurdistan's quest for independence, EPRS, December 2016.

Briefing EN

## Kyrgyzstan's 2017 presidential election

09-10-2017

RUSSELL Martin

On 15 October 2017, Kyrgyz voters go to the polls. Despite worrying signs of backsliding into authoritarianism, the country is still the most democratic in Central Asia and the result is far from a foregone conclusion. The two main candidates are Sooronbai Jeenbekov, an ally of incumbent president Almazbek Atambayev, and his younger rival, Omurbek Babanov.

EN

## Global Trendometer: Essays on medium- and long-term global trends - Summer 2017

06-09-2017

ALTMAYER Anne | CESLUK-GRAJEWSKI Marcin | NOONAN EAMONN | RECHARD Daniele | WIDUTO Agnieszka | WINDLE-WEHRLE Jessica Freya

With the publication of the "Global Trendometer" the EPRS Global Trends Unit seeks to contribute to the process of identifying and addressing medium- and long-term trends, and their possible implications for policy-making in the European Union. In this latest edition, three essays and seven two-page vignettes on different geopolitical, economic, technological and social issues paint a broad-ranging picture of some developments that may shape Europe's future.

EN

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01-09-2017

LERCH Marika

C BG, CS, DA, DE, EL, EN, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, LT, LV, NL, PT, RO, SV, ET, HR, MT, PL, SK, SL

## The EU-Latin American Strategic Partnership: state of play and ways forward

30-08-2017

Gustavo G. MÜLLER (Senior Researcher, Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, University of Leuven, Belgium); Jan WOUTERS (Professor and Director, Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, University of Leuven, Belgium); Jean-Christophe DEFRAIGNE (Professor, Institute for European Studies, University Saint-Louis Brussels, Belgium); Sebastian SANTANDER (Professor, Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Liege, Belgium); Kolja RAUBE (Senior Researcher, Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, University of Leuven, Belgium)

By looking at the current social, economic and political trends in Latin America and the Caribbean and at recent developments in the EU's relation with the region, this study explores windows of opportunity for advancing the EU-Latin American strategic partnership. It is argued that, although asymmetries between Europe and Latin America might impact and diminish the bi-regional relationship, the EU is well-positioned to play a more active role in Latin America by strengthening existing institutional links, such as the strategic bi-regional partnership between the EU and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Euro-Latin America Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat). The study concludes with tailor-made recommendations in order to advance the EU's engagement and cooperation with individual Latin American countries and with the region as a whole, both through traditional cooperative channels and through closer parliamentary links within the framework of EuroLat.

EN, ES

## Legal Implications of Brexit: Customs Union, Internal Market Acquis for Goods and Services, Consumer Protection Law, Public Procurement

09-08-2017

Fabian AMTENBRINK, Menelaos MARKAKIS and René REPASI
Erasmus School of Law, Erasmus University Rotterdam /
European Research Centre for Economic and Financial Governance (EURO-CEFG)
Erasmus University Rotterdam

This in-depth analysis addresses the implications of several scenarios of the UK withdrawing from the EU in relation to the EU Customs Union, the Internal Market law for Goods and Services, and on Consumer Protection law, identifying the main cross-cutting challenges that have to be addressed irrespective of the policy choices that will be made in due course. The analysis takes the fully-fledged EU membership as a point of departure and compares this baseline scenario to a membership of the UK in the European Economic Area (EEA), the application of tailor-made arrangements, as well as the fall-back scenario, in which the mutual relationship is governed by WTO law. Following an analysis of the EU legal framework defining the withdrawal of a Member State from the EU the study develops an analytical framework that allows for the identification of the legal impact of different Brexit scenarios on policy fields falling within the ambit of the IMCO Committee. In this context, the general impact of the EEA model, the tailor-made model and the WTO model on key pieces of the currently existing acquis communautaire in these policy areas are highlighted.

EN

## European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)

14-07-2017

ATANASSOV Nikolai

The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) was introduced in 2009 with the Lisbon Treaty. It is a key element of participatory democracy, allowing citizens to play an active role in the EU's democratic life, by addressing requests to the European Commission for legislative proposals. The procedure and conditions for ECIs are governed by Regulation (EU) No 211/2011, in force since April 2012. This has been considered in debate on the ECI's effectiveness, leading to some suggestions for improvement, in particular under the Commission’s planned review of the ECI Regulation in 2017.

EN

## European Council Conclusions: A Rolling Check-List of Commitments to Date (12th edition)

20-06-2017

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | BACIAN Izabela Cristina | DRACHENBERG Ralf | TENHUNEN Susanna

The European Council's role – to 'provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development' and to define its 'general political directions and priorities' - has developed rapidly over the past seven years. Since June 2014, the European Council Oversight Unit within the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), the European Parliament's in-house research service and think-tank, has been monitoring and analysing the European Council's delivery of the various commitments made in the conclusions of its meetings. This overview, presented in the form of a regularly updated Rolling Check-List of Commitments to Date, is designed to review the degree of progress in realising the goals which the European Council has set itself since January 2010 and to assist the Parliament in exercising its important oversight role in this field.

EN

## Outlook for the European Council meeting on 22-23 June 2017 and the European Council (Article 50) meeting on 22 June 2017

Briefing

20-06-2017

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | TENHUNEN Susanna

At their meeting on 22-23 June 2017, EU leaders will focus on internal security, including, most probably, the fight against terrorism, as well as external security, when they will assess progress made in European defence cooperation. They will also review progress on deepening and modernising the Single Market, and endorse the country-specific recommendations under the European Semester process. In addition, migration, external relations and the Paris Agreement on climate change are to be discussed. Although not on the draft agenda, EU leaders will probably address current issues related to trade. Finally, EU-27 leaders will meet in a separate formal European Council (Article 50) without the United Kingdom, to discuss the latest developments following the UK's formal notification of its withdrawal from the EU.

Briefing EN

## Value for money of EU programme funding in the field of democracy and rule of law

02-06-2017

Rand Europe Community Int.Co.: Ben Baruch, Jirka Taylor, Elma Dujso, Matteo Barberi, Jeremy Lonsdale, Tom Ling

This study explores the extent to which processes are in place to enable the delivery of value for money through EU programme funding in the field of democracy and rule of law. It includes a review of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and the Instrument for Stability and Peace. It considers current ways of working and the potential for improvement. Analysis is based on interviews with EU programme officials and EU delegations, and related documentary evidence.

EN

## The implementation of the EU arms export control system

30-05-2017

Sibylle BAUER, Mark BROMLEY and Giovanna MALETTA, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

The aim of the workshop was to provide an overview of the EU arms export control system as well as options for improvement. The main speaker, Dr Sibylle Bauer, Director of the Dual-Use and Arms Trade Control Programme at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), provided a brief overview of the main elements of the EU Common Position 2008/944/CFSP and then focused on aspects related to strengthening implementation of the eight criteria of the Common Position, the enhancement of compliance with the reporting obligation by Member States, possible ways to increase the transparency and public scrutiny of the export control framework and the development of the EU's institutional framework in this context. Her presentation was followed by a debate involving members of the Security and Defence Committee of the European Parliament, the outcome of which may feed into the EP Annual Report on Arms Export.

EN

## Outcome of the special European Council (Article 50) meeting of 29 April 2017

09-05-2017

DRACHENBERG Ralf

At their first formal meeting as the European Council of the EU-27 on 29 April 2017, EU leaders took a united stance on the main priorities of the EU-27 for the Article 50 negotiations, namely to guarantee EU and UK citizens' rights, settle the UK's financial obligations to the EU, and avoid a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. They also agreed on a phased approach for the negotiations, i.e. the negotiations on the future relationship with the UK can only start once sufficient progress has been made on the three priority issues. EU leaders were also informally updated on the process for the relocation of EU agencies, which should be decided upon in the autumn of 2017.

EN

## The future of EU - ASEAN relations

20-04-2017

NUTTIN Xavier

ACEAH

Marking the 40th anniversary of the start of their dialogue ASEAN and the EU have agreed to work towards establishing a strategic partnership. While trade has always been the cornerstone of the relationship - ASEAN is the EU's third largest trade partner - the EU's ambition to expand its role as a global actor demand increased engagement. Both sides face common challenges that can only be addressed through joint responses that involve all stakeholders. To be strategic the partnership must embrace all aspects, from trade to energy, from climate change to security issues, from human rights to sustainable development. Deepening and enhancing relations between one of the most dynamic region in the world and the largest and most affluent market will bring important benefits to both European and ASEAN citizens. The last years have seen an increase in contacts but the many challenges faced today by the EU, internally and in its close neighbourhood, risk to require all attention and put the EU-ASEAN relations at risk. Finally the study argues that strengthening the parliamentary dimension of the relationship would, besides supporting representative democracy in Southeast Asia, contribute to maintaining the momentum launched in 2012.

EN

## From Bratislava to Rome: The European Council's role in shaping a common future for EU-27

18-04-2017

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | DRACHENBERG Ralf

The Rome Declaration of 25 March 2017, issued by the Heads of State or Government of the EU-27 on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, marked the end of a process that started after the UK referendum on EU membership on 23 June 2016. The aim of this In-depth Analysis is to assess the outcomes of the various EU-27 and European Council meetings in the period between the Bratislava summit of 16 September 2016 and the Rome summit of 25 March 2017, in relation to the objectives laid out in the Bratislava Declaration and Roadmap. The analysis shows that substantial progress has been made on the Bratislava commitments for all three policy priorities listed – migration, security, and the economy. It also reflects on how the Rome Declaration and Bratislava process were shaped by the overall context of the growing concerns of EU citizens and their attitude towards the EU and demonstrates how the views of the different EU institutions and the various Member States have converged during this process, leading to a consensual Rome Declaration.

EN

## Shrinking space for civil society: the EU response

12-04-2017

Richard YOUNGS (Senior Fellow at Carnegie Europe, Belgium and Professor at the University of Warwick, United Kingdom) and Ana ECHAGÜE (independent consultant)

The EU has developed an impressive range of policy tools for pushing back against restrictions on civil society across the world. It has gradually improved the way it deploys these instruments and has helped protect many activists at risk. Notwithstanding this, the EU needs to sharpen its 'shrinking space' strategy. This study suggests a range of precise policy changes it should contemplate to this end. It advocates a number of strategic guidelines that could help make the EU's responses more proactive; better able to tackle the broad structural elements of the shrinking space; fully balanced between political and development approaches; and geared towards building more inclusive alliances against new restrictions on civil society.

EN

## Morocco's new political landscape

11-04-2017

APAP Joanna

On 7 October 2016, Morocco went to the polls for national parliamentary elections. This was the second time that Morocco had held national elections since being touched by the Arab Spring in February 2011. Since the 2011 public protests, a number of constitutional reforms, introduced by King Mohammed VI, have made significant changes to electoral and administrative law. Morocco's Islamic Justice and Development Party (PJD) re-emerged as the winner, with the Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM) in second position. Since 25 March 2017, Morocco has a new coalition government.

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## European Citizens' Initiative

10-04-2017

ATANASSOV Nikolai

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The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) was introduced in 2009 with the Lisbon Treaty. It is a key element of participatory democracy, allowing citizens to play an active role in the EU's democratic life, by addressing requests to the European Commission for legislative proposals. The procedure and conditions for ECIs are governed by Regulation (EU) No 211/2011, in force since April 2012. This was the subject of a first three-yearly review by the Commission in 2015, leading to a debate on the ECI's effectiveness and some suggestions for improvement.

DE, EN, FR, NL

## Anti-corruption efforts in the Western Balkans

Briefing

10-04-2017

LILYANOVA Velina

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Widespread corruption is a major shared challenge for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia. It is a phenomenon that poses a threat to the EU's core values, such as democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, and undermines good governance and economic development. For these reasons, anti-corruption reform is among the key requirements for EU accession. The prospect of EU integration has proven to be a strong incentive for undertaking reform. The Western Balkan countries have taken a number of anti-corruption steps, such as adapting legislation and establishing dedicated anti-corruption institutions with both preventative and repressive competences. They are also parties to all relevant international conventions. The Commission, as well as various international organisations, has measured annual progress in that respect, and the EU has supported anti-corruption efforts financially and through sharing expertise. Yet, the latest 2016 assessments show that corruption continues to permeate the region. Although the legal and institutional framework is largely in place, and the EU has prioritised good governance reforms in the pre-accession process, the concrete results achieved on the ground are disproportionally low, and political will to improve them is to a great extent insufficient. Addressing corruption requires long-term work at many levels (regional, national and local) and involves multiple stakeholders. A more informed and demanding public, a civil society with a strengthened role in monitoring policies in corruption-prone areas, as well as visible economic progress and improved business environment are other necessary elements for achieving sustainable results.

Briefing EN

## Workshop on EU-Turkmenistan Relations

27-03-2017

Sébastien Peyrouse and Luca Ancheschi

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EU-Turkmenistan relations are in a position to be redefined by the proposed EU-Turkmenistan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which will require the consent of the European Parliament (and of the national parliaments of the EU member states). This workshop served as a debate platform with the intention of clarifying the understanding of the current political and societal dynamics in Turkmenistan. Such an agreement should represent a basis to enforce better standards of human rights, rule of law, and democracy in Turkmenistan, as well as for more intensive economic cooperation between the EU and Turkmenistan, which currently faces an economic crisis. The two concepts are apparently complementary but deciding which one constituted the more useful approach for engagement was the central point that structured the discussion. Regardless of the angle from which they approached the issue, however, a majority of participants in the workshop debate expressed support for adoption of the treaty, while some NGO representatives took a more cautious view.

EN

## Human Rights Provisions in Economic Partnership Agreements in Light of the Expiry of the Cotonou Agreement in 2020

23-03-2017

Lorand BARTELS

The study considers the options for suspending obligations under the EU-ACP Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) in connection with violations of human rights, democratic principles or the rule of law following the expiry of the Cotonou Agreement in 2020. It outlines the functioning of the human rights clause in the Cotonou Agreement, before considering the possibilities for suspending the EPAs under their own provisions, or for other reasons in international law, such as countermeasures. Next, it discusses how any post-2020 arrangements can best continue the existing mechanisms for human rights conditionality set out in the Cotonou Agreement. In connection with this, this study proposes certain suggestions for improving future versions of human rights clauses, and considers whether there are legal obstacles to the invocation of this clause under general international law, principally under WTO law. The study concludes with a set of comments and recommendations.

EN, FR

## Communicating Europe in third countries

Briefing

15-03-2017

PAWLAK Patryk

Work on implementing the EU's global strategy for 2016-2017 includes stepping up public diplomacy efforts as one of the priority areas. A number of factors motivated this move. Firstly, the substantial resources committed for relief and recovery assistance to Syrian refugees and their host communities in neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt have had little impact on public awareness of the existing European cooperation programmes. The visibility of EU funds has also been limited in the 10 EU strategic partner countries, where the profile of EU programmes is still low. Secondly, the need for a strategic EU approach to communication also results from intensified propaganda and disinformation campaigns seeking to discredit the EU and eventually undermine its position. Thirdly, effective EU communication in third countries plays a key role in countering jihadist propaganda in the EU's neighbourhood and its spilling over into EU territory.

This briefing has been adapted from an earlier one prepared for the annual meeting of EU Ambassadors and Members of the European Parliament on 'Support to democracy in third countries: the EU's added value', held in September 2016.

Briefing EN

## Human Rights in Iran after the Nuclear Deal Business as Usual or Time for Change?

13-03-2017

Firouzeh NAHAVANDI (Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium - chapter 2.1) ; Nazila GHANEA (University of Oxford, the UK - chapter 2.2) and Giulia BONACQUISTI (Trans European Policy Studies Association - TEPSA, Belgium - workshop report)

This report summarises the proceedings of a workshop organised jointly by the European Parliament’s Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) and the Delegation for relations with Iran (D-IR). The purpose of the workshop was to analyse the most recent developments regarding human rights in Iran since the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed in July 2015 and to explore the options available to the EU in seeking to help improve the situation. Experts and human rights defenders pointed to the gaps between law and practice in Iran and raised continuing concerns about the death penalty, political prisoners, prison conditions, arrests of dual nationals, minority rights and restrictions to internet access. They identified Iran’s dual power structure of elected and non-elected institutions and corruption as some of the chief constraints to any reform efforts. They said the EU should keep human rights — including support for the relevant UN mechanisms and efforts — high on its agenda. They said the key factors for engaging successfully with Iran on human rights in future were clear criteria and benchmarks, detailed knowledge of the human rights issues at stake and interaction with Iranian civil society both inside and outside Iran.

EN

## Special Reports of the European Court of Auditors: A Rolling Check-List of recent findings

10-03-2017

TZARNORETCHKA Biliana | ZANA-SZABO Gabriella

This rolling check-list presents a comprehensive overview of the European Court of Auditors' (ECA) special reports, concentrating on those relevant for the 2015 EU discharge procedure. The document seeks to link the topics discussed by the special reports to the relevant debates and positions within the European Parliament, including notably the working documents of the Budgetary Control Committee, to the work of the various specialised parliamentary committees, and to individual Members' questions. It is produced by the Policy Cycle Unit of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), the Parliament's in-house research service and think-tank, as part of its on-going support for parliamentary committees and individual Members, helping them to scrutinise the executive in its implementation of EU law, policies and programmes. The European Parliament is strongly committed to the concept of better law-making, and particularly to the effective use of ex-ante impact assessment and ex-post evaluation throughout the whole legislative cycle. It is in this spirit that the Parliament has a particular interest in following the transposition, implementation and enforcement of EU law, and, more generally, in monitoring the impact, operation, effectiveness and delivery of policy and programmes in practice.

EN

## The Legisprudential Role of National Parliaments in the European Union

Briefing

10-03-2017

Luís Heleno TERRINHA

National parliaments' contribution to the law-making process at European level should focus on the overall rationality of the draft legislative proposals. The Early Warning Mechanism must not be limited to considerations regarding the breach of the principle of subsidiarity, but also encompass the principle of conferral and the principle of proportionality. The Political Dialogue could be enhanced to acknowledge the legisprudential role assigned to national parliaments, encompassing configurations akin to the green or red card without the need to amend the Treaties.

Briefing EN

## European Council Conclusions: A Rolling Check-List of Commitments to Date (11th edition)

10-03-2017

ANGHEL Suzana Elena | BACIAN Izabela Cristina | DRACHENBERG Ralf | TENHUNEN Susanna

The European Council's role - to 'provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development' and to define its 'general political directions and priorities' - has developed rapidly over the past seven years. Since June 2014, the European Council Oversight Unit within the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), the European Parliament's in-house research service and think-tank, has been monitoring and analysing the European Council's delivery of the various commitments made in the conclusions of its meetings. This overview, presented in the form of a regularly updated Rolling Check-List of Commitments to Date, is designed to review the degree of progress in realising the goals which the European Council has set itself since January 2010 and to assist the Parliament in exercising its important oversight role in this field.

EN

## Subsidiarity as a Means to Enhance Cooperation between EU Institutions and National Parliaments

Briefing

08-03-2017

Diane Fromage

The Treaty of Lisbon has entrusted national parliaments with the responsibility to monitor the respect of the principle of subsidiarity in new EU legislative proposals adopted in areas of non-exclusive EU competence (so-called Early Warning System). The Commission has been the primary interlocutor of parliaments in this framework, although Parliament also receives and follows-up on national parliaments' reasoned opinions. Despite positive developments visible both at EU and national level, important challenges remain, in particular in relation to the limited scope offered by the Early Warning System for more political engagement.

Briefing EN

## The Role of National Parliaments in the EU after Lisbon: Potentialities and Challenges

06-03-2017

Olivier Rozenberg

This study was commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament. It assesses the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon provisions on national parliaments as well as other related developments since 2009. The issues that are specifically investigated include the treaty provisions regarding national parliaments, Early Warning Mechanism, dialogue between national parliaments and the European Commission, the extending networks of inter-parliamentary cooperation, the parliamentary dimension of the budgetary and economic coordination and finally, the challenges raised by the on-going developments of the European legislative procedure.

EN

## Europe for Citizens: Ambitions and limits

24-02-2017

PASIKOWSKA-SCHNASS Magdalena

Engaging EU citizens with remembrance and European integration processes lies at the core of the Europe for Citizens programme. An assessment of the programme's implementation at its midway point suggests a discrepancy between its ambitions and its means. The March I plenary will discuss the European Parliament's own-initiative report on the programme's implementation.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## State of Play of EU-Mauritania Relations

23-02-2017

Morten Bøås

Mauritania, an important ally of the EU in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel, faces several inter-related development challenges: ensuring an efficient use of the revenue derived from natural resources, economic diversification and improved governance. The severity of these development challenges is increased by difficult political relations between the three main ethnic groups in the country, the dominant group being the Arab-Berber Bidhan. They constitute less than one-third of the country's population, but dominate economically and politically. The Haratin, the largest group in the country, is made up of descendants of black Africans enslaved by the Bidhan (freed or still enslaved). The third group in the country is the West Africans or Black Mauritanians. Mauritania's post-independence history is marked by repeated attempts by this group to assert its non-Arab identity and claim for a more equitable share of political and economic power. The tension that these divisions create is a problem in itself, but they can also be appropriated by violent Islamist insurgencies in the region. The urgency of this challenge is further complicated by the likelihood of increased climate change effects that the country is currently not adequately prepared for. This study therefore discusses the main political, economic and development challenges that contemporary Mauritania is faced with, illustrating how these challenges can only be properly grasped with consideration to their historical evolution. Based on this, the study investigates the current basis for EU-Mauritania relations and suggests a select number of policy areas for consideration, as this relationship continues to evolve around issues of mutual concern such as security and development.

EN, FR

## How blockchain technology could change our lives

20-02-2017

BOUCHER Philip Nicholas

Blockchain technology is of increasing interest to citizens, businesses and legislators across the European Union. This report is aimed at providing a point of entry for those curious about blockchain technology, so as to stimulate interest and provoke discussion around its potential impact. A general introduction is followed by a closer look at eight areas in which blockchain has been described as having a substantial potential impact. For each of these, an explanation is given of how the technology could be developed in that particular area, the possible impacts this development might have, and what potential policy issues are to be anticipated.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PT, PL

How blockchain technology could change our lives

## The effects of human rights related clauses in the EU-Mexico Global Agreement and the EU-Chile Association Agreement

10-02-2017

IOANNIDES Isabelle

The democracy clause in the EU-Mexico Global Agreement and by extension the EU-Mexico Free Trade Agreement calls for respect for fundamental human rights. If these are breached, a sanctioning clause can be invoked. The widely reported violations of human rights in Mexico are tackled through political dialogue. The agreement includes cooperation articles on social policy, the results of which are non-binding. Against this background, it is difficult to make a clear link between the potential effects of human rights related clauses in the Global Agreement on the human rights situation in Mexico. The EU-Chile Association Agreement (AA) also includes a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, which is subject to the democracy clause. More developed than that in the Global Agreement, this clause calls for respect for fundamental human rights; sustainable economic and social development; and commits parties to good governance. The AA also includes a suspension clause in case of breach of the democracy clause, and cooperation provisions, the results of which are non-binding. While these are more detailed than the ones in the Global Agreement, the impact of the EU-Chile AA on the human rights situation in Chile has been limited in its extent and to specific aspects of the social policy agenda. In both cases, the monitoring mechanisms of the EU agreements have generally been implemented properly – even if civil society participation in Chile was institutionalised late. These mechanisms have played an important role in nurturing cooperation, but the incentives created have not translated into sufficient pressure for the implementation of human rights related reforms. Rather than the EU FTAs per se impacting on ensuring the respect of human rights in Mexico and Chile, it is the cumulative effect of the liberalisation of trade in the two countries, the EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership, the role of all global players, and cooperation with international donors that have encouraged reform. Ultimately, whether or not reforms in favour of respect of human rights have been adopted and implemented was the result of domestic politics in Mexico and Chile.

EN, ES

## Russia’s National Security Strategy and Military Doctrine and their Implications for the EU

01-02-2017

Isabelle FACON (Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique - FRS, Paris, France)

The European Union sees its relationship with Russia as a ‘key strategic challenge’. Its members are alarmed by Russia’s violations of international commitments and increased military activity in Europe. Russian recently updated basic strategic documents are full of indications about Moscow’s world vision and security concerns. They indirectly point to a tension between Russia’s internal (economic, demographic, societal) weaknesses and its claim to be recognized as one of the ‘centers of influence’ in the emerging multipolar world order. The West, including the EU, is clearly perceived as the major challenger to both Russia’s great power ambition and security. At the same time, various indicators suggest that Moscow is probably not fully confident that it will obtain a gratifying role in the emerging new international landscape. All this has led Russia to rely massively on its restored military capabilities, while pursuing a very active diplomacy, in which the relative importance of the EU has declined in recent years. The EU nonetheless has an important role to play in promoting the second engine of the ‘double-track Russia strategy’ that the West (the EU, NATO, the United States) has been pursuing — strengthening defenses on the one hand, pursuing dialogue and cooperative engagement on the other hand.

EN

## Ten issues to watch in 2017

26-01-2017

BASSOT Etienne

This is the first edition of a new EPRS publication designed to identify key issues and policy areas that are likely to feature prominently on the agenda of Members of the European Parliament over the coming year. Key issues presented include: the implications for the EU of the new US administration, the withdrawal of the UK from the EU, the migration crisis, rising inequalities, and the EU's external security challenges, with a more specific examination of the situation in Ukraine. Other important policy areas covered are the budget, agriculture, climate and transport and, last but not least, the outlook for economic and monetary union.

DE, EN, FR

Ten issues to watch in 2017

## US President Donald Trump [What Think Tanks are thinking]

Briefing

25-01-2017

CESLUK-GRAJEWSKI Marcin

Donald Trump has begun his four-year term as the US President by moving to deliver on some of his campaign promises, such on Obamacare, the Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement and the North American Free Trade Agreement. Analysts and politicians agree that the Trump presidency will have wide-ranging implications for trade, international relations and security. This note offers links to recent commentaries and reports published by major international think tanks and other research centres on Trump's presidency. Earlier analyse can be found in a previous edition of 'What Think Tanks are thinking.'

Briefing EN

## The 2016 Elections in the United States: Effects on the EU-US Relationship

17-01-2017

Nicolas BOUCHET (The German Marshall Fund of the United States, USA)

Despite (or because of) Donald Trump's various campaign statements, it is hard to predict confidently what path his administration will take in a wide range of foreign-policy areas. It is however possible to identify key issues and challenges in EU-US relations during his presidency. This briefing provides an overview of issues where US policy may change sharply during the next four years and what this may mean for the EU. Less interventionism, less commitment to NATO and a retreat from trade liberalization could be central to Trump's presidency. Transatlantic relations would be affected by US actions such as rapprochement with Russia and a softer line on the Ukraine conflict, alignment with Assad and Putin in Syria, extreme counterterrorism measures, abandoning the Iran nuclear deal, and unconditional support for Israel. Confrontation with China over trade and regional security, and reversal of environmental policies will also have repercussions for the EU. In order to mitigate all these risks, the EU must at least entrench existing cooperation with the US before trying to enhance it. It can The do so by reaffirming European unity and solving threats to its integration, by becoming a better security "producer" and by "thickening" interparliamentary exchanges.

EN

## European Citizens' Initiative

22-12-2016

ATANASSOV Nikolai

The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) was introduced as a major innovation in the 2009 Lisbon Treaty. It is a key element of participatory democracy, allowing citizens to play an active role in the EU's democratic life through addressing requests for legislative proposals to the European Commission. Notwithstanding the Commission's right of initiative, the European Parliament and the Council, under Articles 225 and 241 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) respectively, also have the ability to request the Commission submit a legislative proposal. The procedure and conditions for ECIs are governed by Regulation (EU) No 211/2011, in force since April 2012. This was the subject of a first three-yearly review by the Commission in 2015, leading to a debate on the ECI's effectiveness and some suggestions for improvement.

EN

## Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world in 2015

07-12-2016

APAP Joanna

Just a few days after the UN's Human Rights Day, marked annually on 10 December, the European Parliament (EP) will debate its annual resolution on human rights and democracy at the December 2016 plenary session. Addressing the numerous pressures on human rights encountered in 2015, in its report, Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) calls on all the EU institutions and the Member States to place human rights at the centre of EU relations with all third countries. It calls upon the Member States to lead by example, by speaking with one voice in support of the indivisibility, interdependence, interrelation and universality of human rights and, in particular, by ratifying all UN international human rights instruments.

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## Regional implications of Iraqi Kurdistan's quest for independence

Briefing

06-12-2016

PICHON Eric

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Strengthened by its victories over ISIL/Da'esh, the government of the autonomous region of Kurdistan in Iraq has announced that it plans to organise a referendum on independence. The deadline is still unclear, as political divisions have led the region to an institutional stalemate. Negotiations with the federal Iraqi government will focus on the territorial scope of the referendum. The Kurdish leaders want to include the 'disputed areas', in particular Kirkuk, in the poll. However, Iraq is not keen to be cut off from this oil-rich region, which is already at the heart of a dispute on the sharing of oil revenues. The status of Mosul after it is recaptured from ISIL/Da'esh is also under discussion. Even if the referendum were to take place and the 'yes' side won, it is not certain that a Kurdish state would emerge. Such a state would be weakened by internal divisions and poor economic conditions. In addition, Syria, Turkey and Iran, neighbouring countries that have complex relations with Iraqi Kurdistan, are worried that an independent Kurdish state would encourage their own Kurdish populations to seek greater autonomy. Yet, the perspective of a Greater Kurdistan is remote, since the regional Kurdish landscape is dominated by the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and its affiliates, which do not share Iraqi Kurdish leaders' ideology or strategic alliances. As for the EU and the great world powers, although they consider Iraqi Kurdistan to be a reliable ally in the fight against ISIL/Da'esh (again recently in the battle for Mosul), they do not want to openly back the fragmentation of the Middle-East.

Briefing EN

## Nicaragua's post-electoral situation

06-12-2016

GOMEZ RAMIREZ Enrique

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The landslide victory of Daniel Ortega and his Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua's 6 November presidential and legislative elections came as no surprise, after the main opposition alliance – whose presidential team had been disqualified by the Supreme Court of Justice – withdrew from the contest. Both the opposition and the international community are worried that the country could drift towards an authoritarian regime.

EN

## Die Rolle der Verfassungsgerichte in der „Multi-Level-Governance" - Italien: Der Verfassungsgerichtshof

30-11-2016

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Der Verfassungsgerichtshof ist eine der bedeutendsten Neuerungen der republikanischen Verfassung, die am 1. Januar 1948 in Kraft trat. Im Wesentlichen gab es drei Gründe für die Entscheidung zugunsten eines Verfassungsgerichtshofs: der Übergang von einer flexiblen zu einer starren Verfassung; der große Umfang und der komplexe Inhalt der verfassungsrechtlichen Vorschriften; die Einführung der regionalen Autonomie. Die Lösung einer Kontrolle nach dem Trennungsmodell wurde aus einschlägigen politischen Gründen einer Kontrolle nach dem Einheitsmodell vorgezogen – auch weil sie den traditionellen Vorrang des Gesetzes weniger infrage stellte. Diese Studie wurde von Prof. Dr. Massimo Luciani von der Universität von Rom „La Sapienza" (Italien) verfasst, im Auftrag des Referats Bibliothek der Rechtsvergleichung in der Generaldirektion des wissenschaftlichen Dienstes des Europäischen Parlaments (GD EPRS), Generalsekretariat des Europäischen Parlaments.

DE, IT

## Le rôle des cours constitutionnelles dans la gouvernance à plusieurs niveaux - Allemagne : la Cour constitutionnelle fédérale

30-11-2016

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La place de la Cour constitutionnelle fédérale allemande (Bundesverfassungsgericht), qui est unique dans l'histoire comme en droit comparé, se comprend et s'explique dès lors que l'on examine les conditions de sa composition et son organisation, ses compétences et ses pouvoirs décisionnels. La base juridique de son activité est, d'une part, la Loi fondamentale (Grundgesetz), qui définit les grandes caractéristiques institutionnelles et procédurales de la juridiction constitutionnelle allemande, et, d'autre part, la loi sur la Cour constitutionnelle fédérale (Bundesverfassungsgerichtsgesetz), dans laquelle le législateur fixe certaines règles de procédure générales ainsi que les conditions essentielles des nombreuses procédures relevant de la compétence de la Cour. La présente étude a été rédigée par Prof. Dr. Bettina Schöndorf-Haubold, professeur à l'Université de Giessen (Allemagne), à la demande de l'unité Bibliothèque de droit comparé de la direction générale des services de recherche parlementaire (DG EPRS) du Secrétariat général du Parlement européen.

DE, ES, FR

## Le rôle des Cours Constitutionnelles dans la gouvernance à plusieurs niveaux - Suisse: Le Tribunal fédéral

30-11-2016

DG, EPRS;

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La Suisse ne dispose pas de Cour constitutionnelle. Sa juridiction constitutionnelle est exercée par le Tribunal fédéral, l'autorité judiciaire suprême, selon des modalités plutôt complexes et qui sont d'ailleurs caractérisées d'un part par la structure fédéraliste de notre Pays et, d'autre part, par une conception de la séparation des pouvoirs qui reconnaît au Parlement, en vertu de sa plus forte légitimité démocratique, une suprématie sur le pouvoir judiciaire. Ce document a été rédigé par Dr. Federica De Rossa Gisimundo de l'Università della Svizzera italiana, Institute of Law (IDUSI), Lugano - Suisse, à la demande de l'Unité Bibliothèque de droit comparée de la Direction générale des services de recherche parlementaire (DG EPRS) du secrétariat général du Parlement européen.

DE, FR, IT

## Le rôle des Cours constitutionnelles dans la gouvernance à plusieurs niveaux - Belgique : La Cour constitutionnelle

30-11-2016

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La Cour constitutionnelle belge a une histoire assez récente. Suite à la fédéralisation du Royaume, jusque-là unitaire, il fut décidé de créer au début des années 1980 une « Cour d'arbitrage », destinée à assurer l'équilibre et l'harmonie entre les entités fédérale et fédérées du pays. Cette juridiction paraissait alors indispensable afin de pallier les conséquences potentiellement fâcheuses de la principale caractéristique du fédéralisme belge : l'absence de hiérarchie entre ses entités fédérale et fédérées et l'équipollence des différentes normes de rang législatif. La principale raison qui a présidé à la création de la Cour constitutionnelle belge n'est donc pas celle d'assurer une protection des droits de l'homme mais de faire fonctionner le système (à ce moment-là nouvellement installé) de coexistence de plusieurs normes de nature législative. Ce document a été rédigé par le Prof. Christian Behrendt de l'Université de Liège, à la demande de l'Unité Bibliothèque de droit comparée, Direction générale des services de recherche parlementaire (DG EPRS), Secrétariat général du Parlement européen.

DE, FR, IT

## Die Rolle der Verfassungsgerichte in der „Multi-Level-Governance" - Spanien: Das Verfassungsgericht

30-11-2016

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Das Verfassungsgericht (Tribunal Constitucional) ist die höchste Instanz zur Auslegung der spanischen Verfassung von 1978 und stellt ein Verfassungsorgan mit Rechtsprechungscharakter dar. Ihm gehören zwölf Richter (Magistrados) an, die als Voraussetzung für die Ernennung anerkannte juristische Kompetenz und mehr als 15 Jahre Berufserfahrung vorweisen müssen und deren Amtszeit in der Regel neun Jahre beträgt. Die Richter sind unabhängig und müssen ihre Tätigkeit nach dem Grundsatz der Unparteilichkeit ausüben, wobei verschiedene Garantien vorgesehen sind, damit diese Anforderungen erfüllt werden. Diese Studie wurde von Prof. Dr. Francisco de Asís Pérez de los Cobos Orihuel von der Universidad Complutense de Madrid im Auftrag des Referats Bibliothek der Rechtsvergleichung in der Generaldirektion des wissenschaftlichen Dienstes (DG EPRS) des Generalsekretariats des Europäischen Parlaments verfasst.

DE, ES

## Political parties in Morocco's 10th parliament

28-11-2016

APAP Joanna

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On 7 October 2016, Morocco went to the polls for national parliamentary elections. This was the second time that Morocco had held national elections since the 'Arab Spring' had touched it in February 2011. Since the 2011 public protests, a number of constitutional reforms, introduced by King Mohammed VI, have made significant changes to electoral and administrative law. Morocco's Islamic Justice and Development Party (PJD), which won the national elections in 2011, lost to the Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM) in municipal elections in 2015. On 7 October 2016, the PJD re-emerged as the winner, with PAM in second position. This is an updated version of a note published in June 2015.

EN

## The Implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU institutional Framework

22-11-2016

Olivier DE SCHUTTER

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Frontex | | | | | | | | () | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

The EU institutions are required take into account the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the design and implementation of legislation or of policies, both within law- and policymaking internal to the Union and in the external relations of the EU. This study was commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament, to examine how they discharge this duty: it looks into the role of the Charter in the legislative process; in the economic governance of the Union; in the work of EU agencies; in the implementation of EU law by EU Member States; and, in the external relations of the Union, both in trade and investment policies and in the Common Foreign and Security Policy. It also analyses certain gaps in the judicial protection of the Charter and identifies measures through which the potential of the Charter could be further realized.

EN, IT

## Does the EU Have the Right Instruments to Finance Assistance in Protracted Crises and the Needs of Upper Middle Income Countries?

14-11-2016

Matthieu BURNAY (University of Leuven, Belgium), Matthias DENECKERE (European Centre for Development Policy Management, Maastricht, the Netherlands), Kolja RAUBE (University of Leuven, Belgium) and Volker HAUCK (European Centre for Development Policy Management, Maastricht, the Netherlands)

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This study pays critical attention to two specific issue areas, which the financing instruments ought to be concerned with: First, the EU has developed tools and instruments to react to and prevent ‘protracted crises’. The results of this study show that the current set of instruments forms a good basis to the challenges associated with protracted crisis. In fact, no new instrument is needed to specifically address protracted crises. However, the operationalisation of instruments should be optimised. There is a clear need to find more sophisticated approaches that can establish a more holistic response to the various dimensions of protracted crises throughout the conflict cycle. In light of this, substantial improvements should be made to the responsiveness, flexibility, coherence and complementarity of the EU response in support of resilience. A critical point is that better incentives should be provided for long-term instruments to flexibly engage in protracted crises, including through support to peacebuilding, conflict prevention, post-crisis reconstruction and resilience. Second, the study focuses on the specific case of Upper Middle Income Countries (UMICs). The study acknowledges the importance and relevance of the ‘differentiated approach’ while also identifying some of the many problems which concern UMICs: first, the study shows that the Partnership Instrument has so far mainly targeted EU Strategic Partners, while thematic and regional programmes of the DCI hardly fill in the gap left following the graduation of some countries from bilateral aid programmes. The analysis also notes that exceptions which have been granted to some UMICs are strongly problematic. The analysis, however, also points to the fact that the question remains whether these exceptions will be extended to the period 2017-2020. While there is a clear need for a better coherence and coordination, the study argues that there is currently no need for the creation of a new instrument which would exclusively target UMICs.

EN

## US elections [What Think Tanks are thinking]

Briefing

04-11-2016

CESLUK-GRAJEWSKI Marcin

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The United States choses its next president on 8 November, with implications for international relations, security, trade and fight against climate change. The vote follows an acrimonious campaign, which analysts say points to a deeply divided nation on issues such as the US international role, immigration, social protection, taxation as well as trade and industrial policies. This note offers links to recent commentaries and reports published by major international think tanks and other research centres on the US elections.

Briefing EN

## Congressional oversight of the US Administration: Tools and agencies

Briefing

31-10-2016

KLUGMAN-VUTZ Cornelia

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The committees and individual members of the US Congress conduct oversight of the executive (Administration), in order, inter alia, to pursue legislative objectives, support efficiency in government and/or expose failures or achievements of an Administration. Congress uses formal and informal instruments to oversee the executive. When informal instruments such as talks with executive employees or letters written by Representatives and Senators do not lead to results, Congress can use official oversight techniques such as investigations and hearings. The US Administration is overseen internally and externally. Each government department and most agencies have an internal review function, an Office of the Inspector General. For external oversight, Congress has several non-partisan agencies at its disposal, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Congressional Research Service (CRS). Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) is the instrument for ex-ante assessment of the major potential effects of regulation. Government departments and agencies carry these out themselves, in part under scrutiny of a branch of the White House, the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA). Ex-post analysis is done through retrospective review, which takes a variety of formats. If Congress deems a rule (regulation) dissatisfactory, it can repeal it, change the underlying legislation or use its power of the purse to withhold funding. The European Parliament's involvement in ex-ante analysis is stronger than that of Congress, as it considers European Commission impact assessments at the same time as proposed legislation. Ex-post, the European Court of Auditors is roughly equivalent to the GAO, but independent of Parliament. The EP also conducts its own implementation appraisals of EU legislation in force. See also the parallel analysis 'Oversight of the US executive' for further discussion of the topic and, in particular, comparison with the EU system.

Briefing DE, EN, FR

## An EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights

27-10-2016

EVAS Tatjana | VAN BALLEGOOIJ Wouter

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European Parliament legislative initiative reports drawn up on the basis of Article 225 of the Treaty on the Functioning on the European Union are automatically accompanied by a European Added Value Assessment (EAVA). Such assessments are aimed at evaluating the potential impacts, and identifying the advantages, of proposals made in legislative initiative reports. This EAVA accompanies a resolution based on a legislative initiative report prepared by Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) (rapporteur: Sophie in 't Veld (ALDE, the Netherlands), presenting recommendations to the Commission on an EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights (P8_TA-PROV (2016) 0409). The main conclusion of the EAVA is that there is a gap between the proclamation of the rights and values listed in Article 2 TEU and actual compliance by EU institutions and Member States, resulting in significant economic, social and political costs. The root causes of this lack of compliance are to be found in certain weaknesses in the existing EU legal and policy framework on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights. These weaknesses could be overcome by the conclusion of an EU Pact for Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights (DRF) in the form of an interinstitutional agreement (IIA). This IIA should lay down arrangements for (i) the development of an annual European report on the state of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in the Member States with country-specific recommendations assessing compliance with DRF, and (ii) a policy cycle for DRF, involving EU institutions and national parliaments, with country-specific recommendations aimed at monitoring and enforcing Member State compliance, including a DRF policy cycle within the institutions of the Union.  This could be done at relatively low cost, particularly if the right synergies are found with international organisations, whilst at the same time having significant benefits, notably fostering mutual trust and recognition, attracting more investment, and providing higher welfare standards.

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## Iceland ahead of the parliamentary elections

26-10-2016

BENTZEN Naja

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The financial storm that swept Iceland in 2008 has had long-lasting effects on the country's domestic political climate. Despite the remarkably speedy economic recovery, the post-crash political crisis has continued to evolve. New, alternative political movements have mushroomed, and the anti-establishment Pirate Party is expecting a big boost in the 29 October snap elections.

EN

## Indonesia: Security threats to a stable democracy

24-10-2016

RUSSELL Martin

Indonesia is a stable country which has undergone a successful transition to civilian democracy. However, there are still concerns about the military's continuing strong influence. There are also a number of internal and external threats to stability, although these remain fairly low-level, for now.

EN

## Moldova ahead of the presidential election

20-10-2016

BENTZEN Naja

Moldova is facing tough internal and external challenges. The domestic political situation is characterised by chronic instability and massive public protests, which have prompted the decision to hold direct presidential elections on 30 October 2016, the first in more than a decade. Most candidates represent Moldova's main political parties, reflecting the growing pro-Europe and pro-Russia divide that mirrors the geopolitical tensions in the region, inflamed by the Ukraine crisis. Please click here for the full publication in PDF format

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## EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights

19-10-2016

RADJENOVIC Anja

The European Union is founded on values, including democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights, laid down in Article 2 TEU. Those values are common to all Member States and a precondition for a well-functioning Union based on mutual trust. In recent years, events in some Member States revealed systemic threats to the rule of law. A lack of coherent and effective action to protect those values revealed need for a new and more effective EU mechanism. The Parliament is due to vote during the October II plenary session on a legislative-initiative report to create an interinstitutional 'Pact on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights'.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights

## Montenegro ahead of the 2016 elections

13-10-2016

LILYANOVA Velina

On 11 July 2016, Montenegro's President Filip Vujanovi announced that the next parliamentary elections would be held on 16 October. They would be the tenth such elections since the introduction of the multiparty system in Montenegro and the fourth since the country regained independence in 2006. Unlike the 2012 elections, those of 2016 will be held in a polarised political context following a series of events that have shaken up the political dynamics since late 2015. For the first time in almost two decades, the ruling party has decided to run alone in the elections.

EN

## Global Trendometer

06-10-2016

CESLUK-GRAJEWSKI Marcin | NOONAN EAMONN | RECHARD Daniele | SCHMERTZING Leopold | WINDLE-WEHRLE Jessica Freya

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With the publication of this inaugural edition of the "Global Trendometer," the EPRS Global Trends Unit seeks to contribute to the process of identifying and addressing medium- and long-term trends, and their possible implications for policy-making in the European Union. Three essays and eight two-page vignettes on different geopolitical, economic, technological and social issues paint a broad-ranging picture of developments that may shape Europe's future.

EN

## What if blockchain technology revolutionised voting?

29-09-2016

BOUCHER Philip Nicholas

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Is blockchain the revolution in security and transparency that is needed to enable e-voting and, if so, what are the implications for the future of democracy? Despite the digitalisation of several important aspects of modern life, elections are still largely conducted offline, on paper. Since the turn of the century, e-voting has been considered a promising and (eventually) inevitable development, which could speed up, simplify and reduce the cost of elections, and might even lead to higher voter turnouts and the development of stronger democracies. E-voting could take many forms: using the internet or a dedicated, isolated network; requiring voters to attend a polling station or allowing unsupervised voting; using existing devices, such as mobile phones and laptops, or requiring specialist equipment. Now we have a further choice; to continue trusting central authorities to manage elections or to use blockchain technology to distribute an open voting record among citizens. Many experts agree that e-voting would require revolutionary developments in security systems. The debate is whether blockchain will represent a transformative or merely incremental development, and what its implications could be for the future of democracy.

EN

What if we used blockchain for elections?

Briefing

21-09-2016

LUGARINI Renato

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Briefing BG, CS, DA, DE, EL, EN, ES, FI, FR, GA, HU, IT, LT, LV, NL, PT, RO, SV, ET, HR, MT, PL, SK, SL

## Turkey since the failed July 2016 coup

Briefing

19-09-2016

PERCHOC Philippe

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For the last two decades Turkey has faced a highly destabilised regional environment: to the north with recent conflicts around the Black Sea; to the east with the frozen southern Caucasus conflicts, and United States-led intervention followed by civil war in Iraq; and to the south with the civil war in Syria and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The civil war in Syria has prompted a huge influx of refugees into Turkey. With more than 2.7 million refugees, Turkey is the country with the biggest refugee population in the world. After a brilliant period of growth over the past 15 years, the externally dependent Turkish economy now has external and internal challenges to face, including the recent fall in foreign direct investment, difficulties with refugee integration and higher unemployment. The leading Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi or AKP), in power since late 2002, faced its first difficulties in the June 2015 general election, in the wake of a struggle to impose control on a highly politicised civil service. After the failed military coup of July 2016, in which the opposition parties mobilised with the AKP to preserve democracy, the government launched a major purge on civil servants affiliated with the Gülen movement, which it blames for the coup. The failed coup has prompted a more rapid rapprochement with Russia and an apparent shift in Turkey's foreign policy. In recent years, and especially since July 2016, the relationship between Turkey, a candidate country, and the EU has been challenging, but remains crucial to both sides.

Briefing EN

## India and China: Too Close for Comfort?

15-07-2016

DATTA SHALENE | LEGRAND Jérôme | MENDONCA Susana | VANDEWALLE Laurence | VIILUP Elina

India and China — two emerging Asian giants — have historically been polar opposites in many ways and relations between them have been tense. In recent years, however, their co-operation has been improving and they have signed numerous bilateral agreements. From the EU's perspective, it is crucial to monitor the relationship between these strategic partners. Not only do these two emerging countries have the two largest populations in the world, but projections suggest that they will together account for a significant share of the world economy by the middle of the century. The EU must be able to meet the regional and even global challenges presented by the rise of China and India.

EN

## Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020: European Implementation Assessment

14-07-2016

EISELE Katharina

The Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020 is an EUfunded programme that aims at contributing to a better understanding of the EU among citizens, as well as promoting European remembrance and civic participation in Europe. This programme is the third of its kind, following the 2004-2006 Active European Citizenship programme and the 2007-2013 Europe for Citizens Programme. As the current programme underwent a number of changes and adjustments, including a reduction in funding, a first examination of its functioning and implementation seems appropriate. Against this background, this EuropeanImplementation Assessment therefore seeks to provide an initial assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020 under the new structure, and presents some preliminary findings and recommendations in this context.

DE, EN, FR

## Public opinion and EU policies: Exploring the expectations gap

Briefing

07-07-2016

EPRS, DG

The Eurobarometer survey of the European Parliament 'Europeans in 2016: Perceptions and expectations, fight against terrorism and radicalisation' aimed to identify, across a range of different policy fields, the level of awareness of citizens of EU action in that field, and to assess how content they were with EU involvement in each field. This compendium brings together a set of short briefings by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) following up the survey. Taking each of those policy fields in turn, they look at what the Union is already doing, identify gaps between citizens' expectations and current EU activity, and possible areas for additional EU action. The full survey can be accessed on the European Parliament website, including a series of infographics presenting the differences in public opinion by policy area in each Member State.

Briefing DE, EN, FR

## Good Governance in EU External Relations: What Role for Development Policy in a Changing International Context?

04-07-2016

Christine HACKENESCH

EU support for governance reforms has gained prominence in the EU's external relations and particularly in the EU's development policy. However, the EU's engagement in this field has come under considerable pressure in recent years. It is by no means automatic that the EU will continue and further increase its engagement in supporting governance reforms. In this context, the objective of this study is to summarise evidence from academic research on why the EU and other donors should support governance reforms and under which conditions EU support positively contributes to governance reforms. Moreover, the study analyses how the EU has aimed at contributing to governance reforms during the past decade, focusing in particular on the Development Cooperation Instrument and the European Development Fund. The study puts emphasis on EU development policy, but places the analysis of governance support through development policy in the broader context of EU external relations. The study makes recommendations related to EU good governance support, to good governance support through the DCI and EDF, to ongoing strategy processes in EU external relations, and also in regard to the future of the EU's relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

EN

## Public expectations and EU policies - Promotion of democracy and peace in the world

Briefing

30-06-2016

DOBREVA Alina | SGUEO Gianluca | ZAMFIR Ionel

According to a new Eurobarometer survey, two thirds of European Union citizens would like to see even stronger EU involvement in the promotion of democracy and peace in the world. Democracy and peace are the fundamental values on which the EU is based and the guiding principles for its external action. The EU has at its disposal a vast array of tools to promote democracy and peace in the world, including its own diplomatic body, development aid and trade conditionality that it can leverage to this purpose. The EU finances a variety of actions that directly or indirectly promote democracy, such as support for governance, elections, civil society and free media, while a specific instrument is dedicated to peace and stability.

Briefing EN

## Tunisia: Democracy in transition

13-06-2016

APAP Joanna

Tunisia has taken key steps toward democracy since its Jasmine Revolution, and has so far avoided the violent chaos and/or return to authoritarian government seen in other Arab Spring countries. Tunisians adopted a new constitution in January 2014 and held national elections between October and December 2014, marking the completion of a four-year transition period.

EN

## Egypt: A failed revolution?

13-06-2016

IMMENKAMP Beatrix

The most populous of the Arab countries, situated at the crossroads between Africa and the Middle East, Egypt is an important partner for Europe. Since 2004, bilateral EU-Egypt trade has almost tripled, from €11.8 billion to €27.7 billion in 2015. At the same time, the EU and Egypt share many foreign policy concerns, including the Middle East peace process, migration and the fight against terrorism. Under the revised European Neighbourhood Policy, the challenge will be to reconcile growing EU concerns over the deteriorating human-rights situation in post-revolutionary Egypt with the importance of enhancing cooperation with Egypt as a partner for stability in the region.

EN

## Libya after Gaddafi: A challenging transition

13-06-2016

APAP Joanna

Five years after the uprising against Muammar Gaddafi, Libya has finally made a breakthrough towards ending the two-year conflict that has seen the country divided between two rival governments and parliaments, each allied with loose coalitions of armed militias fighting each other. The resulting power vacuum has led, not least, to the rise of ISIL/Da'esh in Libya and, to the country's increasing role as a departure point for migrants hoping to reach Europe. A political solution to reduce the instability in Libya is critical, both for Libya and for its neighbours.

EN

## Syria: Turning commitments into action

13-06-2016

PAWLAK Patryk

What started as local anti-government protests in the city of Daraa in 2011 quickly evolved into a popular uprising. The conflict has since cost the lives of 470 000 people and resulted in the displacement of almost 11 million. This is no longer a revolution but an internationalised conflict hijacked by big-power politics, and Syrians and their neighbouring countries are paying the price.

EN

## Jordan: A protest movement eclipsed

13-06-2016

IMMENKAMP Beatrix

Low-level protests in Jordan throughout 2011 were met by offers of reform from the King, and subsided as neighbouring countries descended into chaos and civil war. The Syrian refugee crisis has diverted attention away from the causes of the unrest in 2011, but has given rise to new grievances that have the potential to undermine the stability of the country once more.

EN

## Parliament's committees of inquiry and special committees

02-06-2016

POPTCHEVA Eva-Maria Alexandrova

The European Parliament has recently been making increasing use of its investigative instruments – special and inquiry committees. The TAXE Committee, established in the aftermath of the 'LuxLeaks' scandal to look into unfair tax practices in the EU, was followed by the TAXE 2 special committee on tax rulings. The EMIS committee of inquiry is looking into emission measurements in the automotive sector. The recently revealed 'Panama papers' prompted a new committee of inquiry on tax havens. Parliament's right of inquiry is an important instrument for the exercise of its control functions. Its investigative powers, however, fall short of the powers of committees of inquiry in national parliaments, which have quasi-judicial investigative tools at their disposal. Committees of inquiry are limited to examinations of alleged contraventions and maladministration in the implementation of EU law, thus excluding evidence-gathering about general subjects and inquiries into actions by third-country authorities. 'Special committees', on the other hand, can be set up for any parliamentary inquiry and have thus been used more often by Parliament. Although they are not equipped with formal powers, special committees conduct their work using the same investigative mechanisms as committees of inquiry. The Lisbon Treaty conferred on Parliament the power to propose and adopt a binding regulation on the inquiry rules.

DE, EN, FR

## Social Economy

16-05-2016

Quentin LIGER

This study assesses the important role the social economy plays in the EU. Priority policies identified to reach its full potential include: 1) digital transformation of social economy, 2) enabling EU cross-sectorial regulatory and financial frameworks, and 3) improving definitions and developing indicators - alternatives to GDP - to focus policies on EU added-value.
This document has been commissioned by Policy Department A on behalf of European Parliament´s Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection.

EN

## Workshop on "Human rights in North Korea: Accountability vs. Engagement?"

12-05-2016

Mariam KHOTENASHVILI (Trans European Policy Studies Association - TEPSA, Belgium)

Workshop on "Human rights in North Korea: accountability vs. engagement?", held on 20 April 2016 in the European Parliament.

EN

## Policy Departments’ Monthly Highlights - May 2016

09-05-2016

The Monthly Highlights publication provides an overview, at a glance, of the on-going work of the policy departments, including a selection of the latest and forthcoming publications, and a list of future events.

EN

## Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA on combating terrorism: Implementation Appraisal

Briefing

04-05-2016

KIENDL KRISTO IVANA

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EU-level reports available on the implementation of the Framework Decision on Terrorism suggest that the FD provisions have been implemented in the Member States in a broadly satisfactory way. Several concerns remain, however, notably in relation to the adequacy of the current framework in ensuring prosecutions of individual foreign fighters who are self-motivated and travel by themselves. The changing security situation, and developments on the international stage (adoption of UNSCR 2178 (2014) and the CoE Additional Protocol), appear to call for amendments to the Framework Decision. The Commission proposal for a new directive would bring EU legislation in line with the provisions of the above-mentioned UN and CoE documents by broadening the scope of criminalised acts to include inter alia travelling abroad for terrorism and receiving training for terrorism. It is important to note in this context that recent reports stress that Member States have to a large degree already introduced further criminal offenses in their legislation, or are in the process of doing so (especially those Member States from which the majority of FFs originate). The proposal would also go further by requiring Member States to ensure that victims of terrorism are offered protection and assistance. The Commission proposal for a new Directive is not accompanied by an impact assessment. The Commission said this was justified by 'the urgent need to improve the EU framework to increase security in the light of recent terrorist attacks'. As noted earlier, this approach has been met with criticism. The proposal contains a review clause (Article 26(2)) obliging the Commission to assess the impact and added value of the directive four years after the implementation deadline, and to report on this to the Council and the Parliament. It is to be hoped that this ex-post evaluation will address some of the questions that would have been tackled in an impact assessment. In this light, a more precise wording of Article 26(2) may contribute to a genuine evaluation of the proposed directive along the pre-determined criteria.

Briefing DE, EN, FR

## EU Policies in Tunisia before and after the Revolution

21-04-2016

Rym AYADI (International Institute for Cooperatives at HEC Montreal and Founding President of the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association - EMEA) and Emanuele SESSA (Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association)

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This study investigates the evolution and potential impacts of EU policies in Tunisia before and after the Revolution using an innovative analytical framework. To do that, the most important milestones in the frameworks of cooperation agreed between the EU and Tunisia and the policies implemented, are described. The impact of such policies before the Revolution and their subsequent evolution, are analysed to highlight the causes and the consequences of the shifting approach of the EU towards Tunisia. Finally, the analysis is complemented with inputs collected via a consultation from key participants across the Tunisian political and civil society landscape. In the pre-Revolution period, EU relations with Tunisia were narrowed down to an exchange of commercial, financial and strategic interests, in line with most development aid programmes across the world. The Tunisian Revolution brought two fundamental dynamics – democratisation and destabilisation – which had broad repercussions on the relations between Tunisia and the EU. These dynamics enhanced the probability of more synergies and complementarities between the two partners' political projects and the necessity to strengthen financial support, providing the EU with a window of opportunity for enhanced cooperation, underlined in a win-win philosophy, co-development and deeper integration.

EN, FR

## EU-Turkey relations [What Think Tanks are thinking]

19-04-2016

CESLUK-GRAJEWSKI Marcin

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Relations between the European Union and Turkey gained new momentum last month with an agreement aimed at addressing the migration crisis. One element of the deal is that Turkey shall take back migrants who cross to Greece illegally. The EU would accept Syrian refugees directly from Turkey and compensate it with financial aid, early visa-free travel and further progress in accession talks. The intention of the agreement is to ease pressure on the borderless Schengen area. Yet some critics say the EU should not be forging closer ties with Turkey at a time when its regime seems to be becoming increasingly authoritarian in the areas of freedom of expression and assembly. The European Commission's recent report on Turkey, discussed by the European Parliament on 13 April, calls on Turkey to lift restrictions on media freedom and to stop political interference with the judiciary. This note offers links to recent commentaries and reports from major international think tanks on relations between the EU and Turkey, as well as on political developments in that country. More studies on the topic can be found in a previous edition of 'What Think Tanks are thinking'.

EN

## Thailand in 2016: Restoring Democracy or Reversing it?

18-04-2016

BANDONE Anete | BARONE Barbara | MARTI DOMINGUEZ Carmen-Paz | VANDEWALLE Laurence

ACEAH

After staging a military coup against the Yingluck Shinawatra government, a junta has been ruling Thailand since 22 May 2014. It has drastically restricted political activities and freedom of speech. There have been numerous human rights abuses, including torture.
Under a 'roadmap to democracy', a referendum on a new constitution is planned for August 2017 and could be followed by elections at a later stage. However, the military might retain power until the king's successor accedes to the throne, in order to guarantee stability.
Despite close trade ties, the EU has suspended the signing of a partnership and cooperation agreement and negotiations on a free trade agreement until democracy is restored. In April 2015, Thailand received a 'yellow card' warning by the European Commission for problems relating to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

DE, EN, FR, IT

## The Situation of National Minorities in Crimea Following its Annexation by Russia

13-04-2016

Natalia SHAPOVALOVA (CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research, Poland), Olga BURLYUK (Centre for EU Studies, Ghent University in association with Policy Association for an Open Society, Czech Republic)

National minorities in Crimea have been subject to systematic violations of their rights since the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia on 18 March 2014. Documented violations have occurred in the areas of freedom of expression, conscience, and religion; the right to peaceful assembly and association; freedom of the media and access to information; the right to a fair trial and effective remedy; the right to education in one's native language; and linguistic and cultural rights. The de facto authorities in Crimea have neglected to investigate cases of grave violations of the rights to life, liberty, security, and physical integrity. The response of the international community has been limited. While Western countries pursue non-recognition policies towards Crimea, international sanctions introduced in response to the occupation of Crimea are weak, and there have been no measures taken to address the international humanitarian law and human rights violations in Crimea. Limited support is available to human rights organisations focused on or working in Crimea, and human rights monitors still cannot gain access to Crimea. The European Union, and the European Parliament, in particular, should actively advocate for the establishment of an international human rights monitoring presence in occupied Crimea. Tailor-made support programmes should be offered to Ukrainian government agencies and civil society working towards the protection of the rights of Ukrainian citizens in Crimea. The European Parliament should continue raising the issue of human rights violations in Crimea and monitor individual cases. Furthermore, the Council of the European Union should consider imposing sanctions for the violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in occupied Crimea.

EN

## The Frozen Conflicts of the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood and Their Impact on the Respect of Human Rights

08-04-2016

Andras RACZ (Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Finland)

The present study provides a detailed overview of the actual human rights situation in the frozen conflict regions of EU's Eastern neighbourhood, namely in Crimea, Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh. The focus of the analysis is on the access to the justice system, as well as on the abilities of the de jure or de facto authorities to administer justice. Particular attention is paid to Crimea because the rapidly worsening human rights situation there affects far more people than the population of the other four frozen conflicts combined. International community actions, as well as the role of civil society in protecting human rights are also analysed.

EN

## Democracy in Africa: Power alternation and presidential term limits

Briefing

04-04-2016

ZAMFIR Ionel

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The democratic landscape in Africa is complex, featuring a mixture of examples of progress, in some areas, and regression in others. While some countries have continuously come closer to high democratic standards, considerably strengthening their democratic systems, others have seen their democratic credentials worsen. A pervasive feature of political systems on the African continent has been the fact that the incumbent presidents and ruling parties tend to win elections, whether fair or not. Since independence, few African states have experienced transfer of presidential and parliamentary power as a result of elections. At the beginning of the 1990s, during the democratisation wave that swept the continent, most African countries introduced constitutional term limits for their presidents. However, ultimately many of these limits were short-lived, as the leaders who initiated them were often themselves later responsible for spearheading constitutional amendments in order to extend their position in power. In several cases, strong opposition from civil society, but also from political actors, was successful in upholding constitutional rules. In others, however, popular opposition was repressed and the will of the heads of state concerned prevailed, sometimes at the cost of prolonged turmoil. In this context the question arises: how essential and useful to democracy are presidential term limits? While the US under the Obama administration has been vocal in defending term limits in Africa, the EU has not taken sides on the issue as such, focusing instead on the respect of constitutional processes when revisions occur.

Briefing EN

## Review of European and National Election Results. Second update

26-02-2016

NANCY Jacques

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This document provides a second update of the Review of European and National Elections, published in November 2014 by the Public Opinion Monitoring Unit of DG Communication. The Review was dedicated to the results of the European elections of May 2014 and to the history of 35 years of direct elections to the European Parliament since 1979, as well as to the different national elections. This latest edition addresses the changes in the European Parliament since the first update, published in July 2015. The reader will also find the results of the elections held in Member States since July 2015: five legislative elections (EL, ES, HR, PL, and PT) and one direct presidential election (PT).

EN, FR

## Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world in 2014

08-12-2015

APAP Joanna

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Just a few days after the UN's Human Rights Day, on 14 December 2015, the European Parliament (EP) will discuss and vote its annual Resolution on Human Rights and Democracy. Addressing the numerous pressures on human rights encountered in 2014, in its report, Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) calls on all the EU institutions and the Member States to place human rights at the centre of EU relations with all third countries, including its strategic partners and in all high-level statements and meetings.

EN

## The European Year for Development: Human Rights

Briefing

01-12-2015

LERCH Marika

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Human rights have become an integral part of most donors' development cooperation. In addition to their intrinsic value, human rights are considered instrumental in achieving sustainable development. Implementing the international development goals related to civil and political rights and governance will be challenging. The EU has gradually refined its policy on integrating human rights into development cooperation. The EU approach includes imposing different forms of conditionality, supporting projects and programmes, and mainstreaming human rights across development actions. Aid to governance and civil society has increased in the last decade, reaching 9 % of the EU's sectorallocable aid in 2013. Implementing a rights-based approach to development will be decisive, but challenging. The European Parliament, a strong supporter of integrating human rights into development cooperation, has its own toolbox to support human rights abroad.

Briefing EN

## Electronic budgeting: Innovative approaches to budgeting

Briefing

27-11-2015

SGUEO Gianluca

There is scarcely any aspect of government activity that does not involve the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The EU has supported the building of digital infrastructures and the sharing of best practices on efficient delivery of e-government services for the last 15 years. One of the goals of the EU Digital Action Plan was to increase the take-up of e-government services by 50% of citizens and 80% of businesses by 2015. The introduction of digitalised procedures also affects the budgetary field. Scholars address ICT applications used for budgetary functions, procedures, or services across the budgetary cycle (planning, programming, budgeting, appropriations, control, and evaluation of financial resources), using the term 'e-budgeting'. e-budgeting refers to the digitalisation of budgetary procedures, the diffusion of Open Data (i.e. the diffusion of budgetary information to the public in an open format) and Big Data (i.e. the use of complex databases of budgetary information to inform policy-making). One of the most distinctive features of e-budgeting (and e-government in general) is that it promotes an active role for citizens and civil society organisations. A diffuse movement of activists and civil society organisations champions the use of digital technologies within public decision-making procedures to enhance citizens' participation and to control governmental activities. Please click here for the full publication in PDF format

Briefing EN

## Argentina: A Change of Course

Briefing

25-11-2015

TVEVAD Jesper

On 22 November 2015, Mauricio Macri, candidate of a coalition named 'Let's change' (Cambiemos), was elected president of Argentina. He will assume office on 10 December. Macri received 51.4 % of the vote in the second round of the presidential elections. His election ends 12 years of Peronist governments. Macri's victory owes much to the high number of votes he received in urban centres, particularly in the capital Buenos Aires and the second largest city, Córdoba. Despite Macri's final victory in the presidential elections, the 25 October parliamentary and provincial polls showed that the Peronist movement remains the principal political force. After the 25 October Congress elections, the Front for Victory (Frente para la Victoria, FpV), currently in government, remains the largest bloc in the new Congress, although it lost its absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies. Macri faces the challenge of mobilising support in Congress for the new government's legislative proposals. The most likely scenario is that he will try to establish a coalition with the Peronist factions opposed to President Cristina Fernández and the FpV. The new government is likely to take measures to liberalise and open up the economy. The new government will seek strengthened links with the USA and the EU, and may well push for trade liberalisation in Mercosur. Macri has announced that he will ask for Mercosur's 'democratic clause' to be invoked against Venezuela. Macri has stressed the need to advance towards a Mercosur-EU free trade agreement. Overall, the change of government appears an opportunity for renewed relations between the EU and Argentina.

Briefing EN, ES

## The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa

16-11-2015

Olivier DE SCHUTTER (University of Louvain - UCL, Centre for Philosophy of Law - CPDR, Institute for Interdisciplinary Research in Legal Sciences - JUR-I, Belgium)

The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa (NAFSN) launched in May 2012 under the auspices of the G8 aims to create the conditions that will allow the African countries concerned to improve agricultural productivity and develop their agrifood sector by attracting more private investment in agriculture. The participating countries (Burkina Faso, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal and Tanzania) adopted 'country cooperation frameworks' (CCFs) listing their policy commitments, and companies provided 'Letters of Intent' identifying intended investments. While the general objective of the NAFSN is sound, certain deficiencies remain: the CCFs are silent on the need to shift to sustainable modes of agricultural production and to support farmers' seed systems, on the dangers associated with the emergence of a market for land rights, or on the regulation of contract farming; and they are weak on nutrition as well as on the recognition of women's rights and gender empowerment.

EN

## A History of Budgetary Powers and Politics in the EU: The Role of the European Parliament - Part II: The non-elected Parliament 1957-1978

09-11-2015

DE FEO Alfredo

This study provides a history of budgetary powers and politics in the EU during the period 1957-1978, focusing on the role of what was then still a non-(or indirectly) elected European Parliament. It follows a timeline divided into three periods: (i) beginnings (1957-1964), (ii) preparations for modification of the Treaty (1965-1969), and (iii) the first phase of democratic control (1970-1978). The modifications to the Treaty of Rome, with the two budgetary treaties of 1970 and 1975, were the results of conflicts, diplomacy and compromises. After more than 20 years the balance of power between the institutions had changed; full democratic control had not been achieved, but important progress had been made, and Parliament, though still not directly elected, had gained in influence and respect. This study gives a detailed description of various elements of the budgetary powers shaped by the two treaties, in particular those which would enable the elected Parliament to continue its fight for more influence and greater powers, not only in the budgetary domain but also in legislative and institutional matters too. Please click here for the full publication in PDF format

EN

## Interoperability for a modern public sector

06-11-2015

DAVIES Ron

The electronic services of European public administrations need to interoperate to support citizens and businesses studying or working in other Member States, as well as to reduce costs and realise efficiencies for governments. A renewed EU programme for 2016-2020 proposes to continue support for interoperable e-government services, emphasising open data and the re-use of digital solutions.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## The European year for development: Sustainable development and climate action

Briefing

01-11-2015

LERCH Marika

Briefing EN

## Migrants in the Mediterranean: Protecting Human Rights

29-10-2015

Samuel COGOLATI; Nele VERLINDEN and Pierre SCHMITT, Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, Institute for International Law, KU Leuven, Belgium.

In reaction to recurrent tragedies in the Mediterranean Sea, the European Union (EU) has adopted a series of measures seeking to improve the protection of migrants trying to reach the borders of the EU by sea and to share responsibility among countries involved by increasing cooperation with transit countries. This study focuses on the existing and planned EU policies and actions to protect the human rights of migrants before entering the EU by sea or after they have left the territory of the EU. The picture that emerges from the evaluation of EU policies and actions is a mixed one. On the one hand, it cannot be denied that instruments of sea borders surveillance and instruments of cooperation with third countries have now generally included human rights safeguards. On the other hand, implementation, monitoring and control remain problematic. Furthermore, the primary aim of existing EU policies and actions still seems to be the protection of the external borders against so-called ‘illegal’ immigration and the return of illegally staying migrants, rather than the development of effective strategies to protect human rights of migrants and the saving of lives on the Mediterranean. The study therefore offers specific recommendations to ensure a coherent human rights-based EU approach to improve the protection of the rights of migrants aiming to reach the EU.

DE, EN, FR

## Vietnam: Despite Human Rights Concerns, a Promising Partner for the EU in Asia

14-10-2015

MENDONCA Susana | VANDEWALLE Laurence

The year 2015 – the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the EU and Vietnam – is likely to be a landmark one. Three years after the EU and Vietnam signed a framework agreement for a Comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), the European Parliament has been requested to decide whether to give its consent to the agreement. Separately, the European Commission announced on 4 August 2015 that an agreement had been reached on a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA), three years after negotiations were launched. For the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, deepening relations with the EU is a priority, a way of offsetting China's strong influence while maintaining independence from the United States. Within the country, the Communist Party maintains a firm grip on the state apparatus. Media and civil society are severely restricted, and the human rights record remains poor.

DE, EN, FR

## The Protection Role of the Committee on Petitions in the Context of the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

09-10-2015

Mark PRIESTLEY (University of Leeds, the UK) and Meredith RALEY (National University of Ireland Galway, Ireland) with advice from Gauthier de BECCO, Eilionoir FLYNN and Anna LAWSON (all from the University of Leeds, the UK)

This study was commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the PETI Committee. It explains the context of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) with reference to the PETI Committee's role in the EU Framework for its implementation. It considers the petitions received on disability issues and examples of CRPD protection mechanisms implemented at level of the UN, the EU and the Member States. Recommendations are made to assist the EP in deliberating on disability issues in its protection role.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT

## Cuba, the USA and the EU: Forging Closer Ties, Looking to the Future

30-09-2015

TVEVAD Jesper

On 1 July 2015, Cuba and the United States of America (USA) re-established formal diplomatic links, the culmination so far of the ground-breaking changes that have taken place in relations between the two countries since December 2014. At the same time, relations between Cuba and the EU are enjoying unprecedented momentum.
The change in Cuba-US relations and the strengthening of the EU's links with Cuba represent two processes that are different in nature and scope. Despite the changes in US-Cuba relations, full 'normalisation' remains a distant prospect, mostly due to the US economic embargo against Cuba which is likely to remain in place for the foreseeable future. In contrast, the EU and its Member States – which have full diplomatic, economic and cooperation relations with Cuba – have moved closer than at any time before to the conclusion of a Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) with Cuba.
Both the US government and the EU recognise that stronger links with Cuba will not spark any immediate transformation of the country or lead to rapid political changes or democratic opening. In this regard, the policies to promote closer relations with Cuba, including the conclusion of an EU-Cuba PDCA, could be characterised as an investment in the future.

EN

## The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: 17 Goals Agreed, Now for the Hard Part

Briefing

23-09-2015

LERCH Marika

After more than two years of consultations and negotiations, 193 UN member states agreed on 2 August 2015 to a new sustainable development agenda that is as ambitious as it is fraught with potential pitfalls. Titled ‘Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development‘, the agenda will be formally adopted at the UN summit on 25-27 September in New York. With 17 sustainable development goals (SGDs), it aims for an economic and societal transformation, integrating all three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. The sectorial scope of the new agenda is enormous, including areas such as migration, industrialisation and energy. The SDGs are universal in nature, creating responsibilities for all countries, spanning domestic development outcomes, assistance to other countries and global public goods. The EU has played a major role in the process and has fought hard for the inclusion of EU values such as human rights and good governance, and for effective implementation and review processes. The ambitious agenda creates implementation challenges at all levels, including indicators and data collection, communication and outreach, the financing challenge and the balance between universality and national ownership.

Briefing EN

## The Policy on Gender Equality in Netherlands

21-09-2015

Janneke PLANTENGA and Chantal REMERY

At the request of the FEMM Committee, this note provides an overview of the existing gender-equality legislation and policies in the Netherlands, focussing on their recent developments and achievements. It covers a range of topics including participation in decision making and labour market, reconciliation of work and family life, eradication of gender-based violence, and women’s well-being. The Netherlands has a long tradition in emancipation policies and equality legislation. Important policy issues are the high part-time rate which translates in a relatively low participation rate in full time equivalents and the low share of women in top positions.

EN, NL

## European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

Briefing

18-09-2015

DOBREVA Alina

The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) was established in 2006 to support projects in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to strengthen the rule of law and democratic reform in countries outside the EU. It provides assistance mainly to civil society organisations, and does not require the consent of national authorities.

Briefing EN

## The Policy on Gender Equality in Ireland - Update 2015

14-09-2015

Ursula Barry

Upon request by the FEMM Committee, this paper explores changes in gender equality legislation, policies and practices in Ireland with particular emphasis on the period from 2012-2015. Gender equality infrastructure, gender gaps in employment, unemployment, poverty and pay rates are analysed and women’s level of participation in political, economic and administrative decision-making in Ireland is detailed. Provision of childcare services, as well as the extent to which gender dimensions are taken into account in health and welfare policies, are also examined.

EN

## Workers' Rights, Working Conditions, Third Country and Member State Aspects

Briefing

09-09-2015

KRAATZ Susanne | SCHMID-DRÜNER Marion

The Employment and Social Affairs Committee (EMPL) in the European Parliament covers a broad range of topics. As regards employment, its competences include workers' rights and working conditions, health and safety at work, policies to increase labour market participation, vocational training, the free movement of workers and pensioners. Furthermore, it is responsible for all aspects of social policy comprising social protection and social inclusion as well as for the European Social Fund. This leaflet provides abstracts of a compilation of selected papers prepared by the European Parliament's Policy Department on Economic and Scientific Policy. Two other notes cover employment challenges and skills as well as social inclusion and protection.

Briefing EN

## Employment Challenges and Skills

Briefing

09-09-2015

KRAATZ Susanne | SCHMID-DRÜNER Marion

This leaflet provides abstracts of a compilation of selected papers on Employment challenges and skills prepared by the European Parliament's Policy Department on Economic and Scientific Policy. Two other notes cover Workers' rights, working conditions, third country aspects as well as Social inclusion and protection.

Briefing EN

## Social Inclusion and Protection

Briefing

09-09-2015

KRAATZ Susanne | SCHMID-DRÜNER Marion

This leaflet provides abstracts of a compilation of selected papers on Social inclusion and protection prepared by the European Parliament's Policy Department on Economic and Scientific Policy. Two other notes cover Employment challenges and skills as well as Workers' rights, working conditions, third country aspects.

Briefing EN

## Policy Departments' Monthly Highlights - September 2015

07-09-2015

The Monthly Highlights publication provides an overview, at a glance, of the on-going work of the policy departments, including a selection of the latest and forthcoming publications, and a list of future events.

EN

## Analysis of Political Parties' and Independent Candidates' Policies for Gender Balance in the European Parliament after the Elections of 2014

03-09-2015

Katie McCracken (Opcit Research, London, the UK), Joni Lovenduski (Birkbeck College, University of London, the UK), Sergio Marquez (Opcit Research, London, the UK), Will Parry (Opcit Research, London, the UK), Aleksandra Niyska (Gender Equality Observatory, Poland), Réka Várnagy (Corvinus University, Budapest, Hungary), Dalila Ghailani (European Social Observatory, Brussels, Belgium) and Virginija Šidlauskien (Siauliai University, Lithuania)

Upon request by the FEMM Committee, this study explores the results of the 2014 European Parliament elections in terms of gender balance of MEPs. The study uses case studies and statistical analyses of the election results to establish the main barriers to women being elected. The factors explored include the type of electoral system used, political parties' candidate list selection processes and strategies used by women political candidates. The study presents recommendations for improving gender balance in the European Parliament.

EN

## eGovernment: Using technology to improve public services and democratic participation

01-09-2015

DAVIES Ron

Governments implement eGovernment and digital government policies with the aim of introducing efficiencies, reducing administrative burdens on citizens and businesses, stimulating economic growth and fostering public participation in democratic public life. The European Union facilitates cross-border services for mobile citizens and businesses that offer services across the single market and encourages the exchange of best practices between national, regional and local authorities in Member States.

While Europe has made progress over the past 15 years, this has not been enough to meet its own targets for the uptake of digital government services. Much remains to be done, including building up security and trust, promoting interoperability for cross-border services, encouraging citizens to engage with governments through digital channels, exploiting open data, and ensuring the effective use of technologies such as cloud computing.

DE, EN, FR

## The European Year for Development: Demography and Migration

Briefing

27-08-2015

MANRIQUE GIL Manuel

If current trends continue, the world will have 9.7 billion inhabitants in 2050, but population growth will be unevenly distributed. The 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development was a milestone that focused on the well-being of individuals, rather than numerical targets. There has been progress promoting human rights, education, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, and reproductive rights, but rapid urbanisation and climate change represent new challenges. The international community has recognised the need to promote regular, safe and orderly international migration to harness the potential benefits of migration. Contrary to widespread views, emigration rates rise with economic development until countries reach an upper middle income status. The role migration plays in spurring development should be more widely recognised. Human mobility will be integrated in the post-2015 development agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals will include migrationrelated targets. The EU is addressing the migration-development nexus in its Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, which is implemented through policy dialogues and cooperation projects in third countries. The European Parliament has insisted that the rights of migrants – particularly women – be part of the post-2015 agenda.

Briefing EN

## The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA): A Privileged Interlocutor for the European Parliament in South East Asia

20-08-2015

VANDEWALLE Laurence

The mains aims of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) are the promotion of closer cooperation among parliaments of the association of South East Asian nations (ASEAN) member countries and the facilitation of the attainment of the objectives of ASEAN. AIPA is not the Parliament of ASEAN: it has no legislative powers, its resolutions are non-binding, and it does not vote on the budget of ASEAN. However, AIPA is significant in relation to the development of the political context in Southeast Asia, as the ASEAN Economic Community is about to enter into force: it provides a parliamentary forum where members from national parliaments can interact and exchange information on issues of common interest. The European Parliament's participation in the General Assembly of AIPA provides a unique opportunity for regional dialogue In South East Asia, both with the member countries and with the observer countries of ASEAN.

DE, EN, FR

## Review of European  and National Election Results. First update: Changes in the EP since November 2014

13-08-2015

NANCY Jacques

This document provides an update of the Review of European and National Elections, published in November 2014 by the Public Opinion Monitoring Unit of DG Communication. The Review was dedicated to the results of the European elections of May 2014 and to the history of 35 years of direct elections to the European Parliament since 1979, as well as to the different national elections. This update addresses the changes in the European Parliament since the first edition, notably the replacement of 14 MEPs and the creation of a new political group. It also takes into account the elections held in Member States since November 2014: five legislative elections (DK, EE, EL, FI and UK) and two direct presidential elections (HR, PL).

EN, FR

## The EU's Trade Policy: From Gender-Blind to Gender-Sensitive?

09-07-2015

VIILUP Elina

The services of the European Commission are currently reflecting on the follow-up to the Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 (COM (2010) final). The EU's trade policy has not yet been fully integrated into this Strategy, providing an opportunity for the INTA committee to consider whether and how gender issues should be dealt with in the context of the EU's trade policies. Article 8 TFEU provides that “in all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality between men and women.” The trade policy issues that are discussed by the European Parliament's INTA committee can have differing gender impacts across the various sectors of the economy. Understanding the gender dimension of trade agreements better will therefore contribute to better policy making and to ensuring that both sexes can take advantage of the benefits of trade liberalisation and be protected from its negative effects.

EN, FR

## Major changes in European public opinion towards the EU since1973

08-07-2015

NANCY Jacques

This desk research focusses on the major shifts in European public opinion towards the European Union since 1973, when Eurobarometer was created by Jacques-René Rabier. The results are presented in a timeline and illustrate the evolution of citizens' opinion in the key phases the Union's institutional,
political, economic and social development. The main findings on the evolution of public opinion in the last 40 years - from 1973 to 2014 - show that it has gone up and down, notably in response to financial, economic and social crises. The
major institutional and political staging-posts in the EU's development have generally improved the perception of the EU. This is particularly true of enlargements and elections to the European Parliament. This analysis shows the overriding influence of the economic and social context on public opinion. This is very well illustrated by the financial and economic crisis which began in 2008, prompting a sharp decline in indicators of support for the EU. However, even in this context of crisis, results show that Europeans remain committed to Europe when it comes to basic EU values.

EN, FR

## The Policy on Gender Equality in Denmark

07-07-2015

Mrs Lise ROLANDSEN AGUSTÍN

Upon request of the FEMM committee, this in-depth analysis updates a previous note published in October 2011 and describes Danish policies, practices and legislation within the area of women's rights and gender equality, covering the period from October 2011, when the Social Democrat-led government took office, to April 2015. During this period, the focus has been put on gender-based violence, leave policies, pay statistics, gender segregation in the labour market and in education, as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights. Earmarked leave for fathers and gender quota on company boards have been on the agenda but not adopted.

DA, EN

## The European Year for Development:Children and Youth

Briefing

01-07-2015

MANRIQUE GIL Manuel

Nearly half of all people living in extreme poverty are aged 18 or under. Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion, violence and abuse. In 2014 the European Parliament called on the High Representative of the Union to report back to Parliament every year on the results of the EU's child-focused external action. The Parliament had also previously underlined the urgent need for the Union to pay special attention to the most vulnerable and socially excluded girls and boys. International commitments to improve the lives of children are reflected in various Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly the one on infant mortality. One in four children under five (162 million) remains stunted, risking diminished cognitive and physical development. The Parliament recently called on the Commission to scale up its nutrition-specific commitments. The proposed Sustainable Development Goals include numerous targets to improve the situation of children and youth and represent an important leap forward.

Briefing EN

## Conflict and Cooperation over Water - The Role of the EU in Ensuring the Realisation of Human Rights

18-06-2015

Inga WINKLER (NYU Center for Human Rights & Global Justice, the United States)

The human right to water has been firmly established and its implications for policy-making have been discussed in many fields. Thus far, this has hardly been the case for conflicts over water. This study discusses what it means to integrate human rights in the context of governing water and addressing conflicts over water. A human rights perspective on conflicts over water will help formulating equitable water governance strategies. To support such developments, the EU should integrate human rights in policies and other measures to address water conflicts at all levels. The EU’s activities should be guided by the human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality; participation and access to information; accountability and access to justice; and a priority for water uses as far as they are necessary for the realisation of human rights. This relates to internal legislation and policies, development cooperation, engagement in transboundary basins, political dialogues with partner countries, international fora such as the UN Human Rights Council, and the negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. The European Parliament, specifically, should support such initiatives with resolutions, engagement in UN and inter-parliamentary fora, and enhancement of public awareness.

EN

## EU-Turkey relations [What Think Tanks are thinking]

15-06-2015

CESLUK-GRAJEWSKI Marcin

Turkey's ruling AKP party won the 7 June parliamentary election, but lost its majority in the house, opening the way for talks on a coalition government and plunging the country into uncertainty. The vote ended more than a decade of single-party rule in the EU candidate country and dealt a blow to President Tayyip Erdogan's ambitions for a more powerful executive role. It is expected to have many implications, including on EU-Turkey relations. This note offers links to commentaries, studies and reports from major international think tanks on recent developments in Turkey, and the relations between the EU and Turkey. Please click here for the full publication in PDF format

EN

## Towards More Effective Global Humanitarian Action: How the EU Can Contribute

15-06-2015

Cristina Churruca Muguruza (Institute of Human Rights, University of Deusto, NOHA Network of Universities in Humanitarian Action, Spain)

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in May 2016 will be the culmination of a global consultation process. The three-year initiative responds to the need to adapt the humanitarian system in order to make humanitarian action more efficient and effective in keeping pace with the rapidly changing context of emergencies. Consultations leading up to the Summit have provided the opportunity to gain perspectives from different regions of the world. As a result, three main priorities have been highlighted: the need for humanitarians to protect and preserve the dignity of people affected by conflict and disaster; a call to find innovative and sustainable ways of meeting people's needs; and a demand from the global South to 'localise' humanitarian response by strengthening local, national and regional capacities to prevent, manage and respond to crisis. There is potential for the European Union (EU) to take a leadership role in the process and influence the WHS outcome. ECHO´s new need assessment tools and the Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) as well as Resilience approaches offer a framework for responding to the challenges posed by protracted crises. This study recommends that the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid should be applied as a model for a 'Global Consensus on Humanitarian Action' or a 'Global Compact' recognising the diversity of today's humanitarian response system while taking advantage of all actors' complementary role. Furthermore, the EU and member states must commit to placing protection at the centre of humanitarian action and ensure that the EU´s humanitarian aid is not regarded as a crisis management tool, and allowed to become an instrument of its foreign policy.

EN

## Bosnia and Herzegovina: The 'Sejdi-Finci' case

12-06-2015

LILYANOVA Velina

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) was identified as a potential candidate for EU membership in 2003. In order to join the EU, BiH has to meet the EU's human-rights criteria, among others. To this end, the execution of the Sejdi-Finci judgment of the European Court of Human Rights is a key prerequisite as it promotes equal political rights for all BiH citizens. Its implementation would not mean automatic accession to the EU, but would be a significant step in that direction. Since the judgment's delivery in 2009, however, little has been done to address this complex issue.

EN

## G7 Summit in Schloss Elmau: A Tighter Agenda, with Wider Impact?

10-06-2015

TROSZCZYNSKA VAN GENDEREN Wanda

The 7-8 June 2015 Group of Seven (G7) summit in Schloss Elmau (Germany) marked the second meeting of seven leading industrialised nations without Russia since the disbanding of the Group of Eight (G8). The group's smaller configuration – a response to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea – appears here to stay. The summit provided an opportunity for G7 leaders to discuss a number of topics pertaining to foreign policy, economy, health, energy, climate and sustainable development. Ukraine and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) featured prominently on the meeting’s agenda, as did discussions on to the post-2015 development and climate agendas. The revival of the G7 has served to ensure its members' unity on key policy files, shape joint policy responses and influence EU policies and global governance, particularly through its nexus with the Group of 20 (G20), the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The German presidency of G7 has been praised its inclusive approach ahead of the summit, with consultations conducted with non-governmental stakeholders.

EN

## TTIP Negotiations: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe - Compilation of 8 At a Glance Notes

09-06-2015

MACIEJEWSKI Mariusz | OZOLINA Iveta | PENGELLY Kendra

Compilation of 8 at-a-glance notes on 'TTIP: Opportunities and challenges', prepared by the Policy Department A for the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection cover 8 sectors:
- services,
- public procurement,
- technical barriers to trade, including standards,
- customs and trade facilitation,
- consumer protection,
- textiles and labelling,
- motor vehicles and
engineering, including machinery.
The analyses done on the opportunities and challenges Europe faces with regard to the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). They examine options of the TTIP from the point of view of EU offensive and defensive interests.

EN

## The European Year for Development: Sustainable Growth

Briefing

03-06-2015

LERCH Marika

Economic growth is a key driver of poverty reduction, but its impact on the poor depends on growth patterns and policies. It is increasingly accepted that economic growth that advances development must be both socially inclusive and ecologically sustainable. Unlike the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are expected to contain a goal on sustainable and inclusive growth. Some have challenged the revived focus on growth, both for ecological reasons and because they argue that wellbeing is not fully reflected in GDP figures. EU development policy has focused on sustainable and inclusive growth since 2011, with more attention devoted to trade, private sector engagement and promoting a favourable business environment. The European Parliament has recognised the role of growth in achieving development objectives, but insists on the need to include the most deprived and vulnerable, and on combatting inequality.

Briefing EN

## The European Year for Development: Peace and Stability

Briefing

07-05-2015

MANRIQUE GIL Manuel

Conflict and poverty have a circular relation: violence negatively affects development and vice versa – poverty is often one of the root causes of conflict. The EU has long recognised the need for conflict prevention, resolution and peace building, as well as for addressing the root causes of conflict, which include poverty, weak governance and human rights abuses. The EU increasingly works to better harmonise its security and development objectives, as well as to coordinate its external policy tools in a 'comprehensive approach'. The European Parliament (EP) has welcomed this coordination, while also asking that anti-poverty objectives not be marginalised, and that humanitarian aid not serve political ends. The EU has dedicated financial instruments for promoting peace; they include the African Peace Facility and the Instrument contributing to Security and Peace. The EP has also underscored the need for a long-term engagement with fragile states and for ensuring that women participate in resolving conflicts and building democracy.

Briefing EN

## The Policy on Gender Equality in the Czech Republic

04-05-2015

Kristina Koldinska

Upon request by the FEMM Committee, this report provides an overview of the existing gender-equality legislation and policies in the Czech Republic, focussing on the recent developments and achievements. It discusses gender equality in employment, reconciliation of work and family life, presence of women in decision-making positions, recent measures to fight violence against women, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Czech Republic is still far from reaching real equality between men and women, in spite of a quite satisfactory level of implementation of EU legislation. In practice and daily life, the country has still a long way to go.

CS, EN

## Press freedom in the EU: Legal framework and challenges

Briefing

30-04-2015

POPTCHEVA Eva-Maria Alexandrova

Freedom of expression and information, as well as the freedom of the press, which provides the most powerful platform for the first two, contribute significantly to the formation of public opinion, thus allowing people to make informed choices in their political decisions. These freedoms are therefore essential for democracy, which is one of the fundamental values common to all Member States, on which the European Union is founded (Article 2 TEU). Within the EU legal framework, press freedom is a fundamental right established in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, with its provision closely resembling that on press freedom in the European Convention on Human Rights.

At EU level media freedom was long dealt with purely relative to the Single Market, and thus from a rather economic point of view. However, the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU), for its part, started to see the importance of media pluralism very early, not only for the free movement of services across the EU but also in order to ensure a pluralism in views. The Court's rulings underlined the importance of media pluralism and media freedom not only for the internal market but also for democracy in the EU.

The European Parliament has repeatedly advocated press freedom and media pluralism in the EU and abroad. It has recently addressed the issue of the effectiveness of press freedom as an EU fundamental right and an objective EU value, in view of the scarce possibility for the EU institutions to act to enforce respect for EU fundamental rights and values by Member States.

Briefing EN

## Something New Out of Africa? Chinese, US and EU Strategies for the Continent

22-04-2015

MANRIQUE GIL Manuel

The seventh College-to-College meeting between the European Commission and the African Union Commission underscores the close cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Africa. Institutional and political relations have intensified in recent years, coinciding with a renewed international interest in an African continent whose economic growth in the past decade has been remarkably strong. The United States (US) and China have also recently strengthened their links with Africa. While these three actors frame their relations with Africa in different ways, their interests converge around two broad areas: i) Africa's economic potential and the need to intensify trade and investment to generate economic growth and development; and ii) concerns about peace and security – and notably the threats posed by armed conflict and terrorist groups.
In light of this renewed international interest and other important factors – including the expiry of the Cotonou Agreement in 2020 – the European Parliament should embark on an ambitious and strategic political reflection on the EU's relations with Africa. Parliament should recognise both the potential and vulnerabilities of the continent, as well as the EU's own varied interests across policy areas. Alongside other actors, including the US and China, Parliament should also work to ensure that Africa finds its due place in the changing international order.

EN

## Surveillance and Censorship: The Impact of Technologies on Human Rights

16-04-2015

Ben WAGNER, Joanna BRONOWICKA, Cathleen BERGER and Thomas BEHRNDT (Centre for Internet and Human Rights, European University Viadrina, Germany)

As human lives transition online, so do human rights. The main challenge for the European Union and other actors is to transition all human rights to the digital sphere. This report argues that the human rights-based approach can be helpful in focusing discussions about security on individuals rather than states. It provides an overview of countries and companies that pose risks to human rights in the digital sphere. It lists the most relevant international laws and standards, technical standards, business guidelines, Internet principles and policy initiatives that have been crucial in transitioning the human rights regime to the digital sphere. It also analyses the impact of recent EU actions related to Internet and human rights issues. It concludes that different elements of EU strategic policy on human rights and digital policy need be better integrated and coordinated to ensure that technologies have a positive impact on human rights. The report concludes that EU should promote digital rights in national legislation of the third countries, but also in its own digital strategies.

EN

## The Policy on Gender Equality in Germany

15-04-2015

Elisabeth Botsch

Upon request by the FEMM Committee, this note provides an overview of the gender-equality legislation and policies in Germany, focussing on their recent developments and achievements. It reviews gender equality in decision-making, in employment, reconciliation of private and professional life, strategies to combat violence against women and sexual and reproductive health rights. Germany has achieved some progress in gender equality, mainly in the area of employment. European legislation has acted as the main driver for legal improvements in equal treatment and anti-discrimination.

DE, EN

## Candidate Selection Procedures for the European Elections

15-04-2015

PILET Jean-Benoit, VAN HAUTE Emilie and KELBEL Camille

The Study provides a systematic and thorough account of candidate selection procedures for the European elections. It covers four aspects: (1) a general overview of candidate selection procedures in the major parties of all EU Member States; (2) a detailed account of the candidate selection procedures for a sample of countries/parties, based on an analysis of the formal and informal practices; (3) an investigation into the relations between national political parties, political groups in the EP, and the European political parties; and (4) the provision of recommendations as to how to improve the democratic quality of candidate selection for the European elections.

EN

## The European Citizens' Initiative: the experience of the first three years - European Implementation Assessment

15-04-2015

ANGLMAYER Irmgard

The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) has been in operation since April 2012. Observers have identified a number of shortcomings in its implementation, which impact negatively on the effectiveness and acceptance of this relatively new instrument of transnational participatory democracy. Against this background, stakeholders are calling for simplification and a substantial revision of the current ECI framework and its application, including its implementation in the EU Member States.

On 31 March 2015, the Commission presented its first report on the application of the ECI Regulation. While it concluded that it considered the ECI to be fully implemented, it however listed a few areas for improvement.

It is widely expected that this review, together with the European Ombudsman's recent recommendations, will prompt a revision of that regulation.

This paper seeks to provide a systematic overview of the current weaknesses in the ECI process and puts forward concrete recommendations for a better functioning ECI.

EN

## History of budgetary powers in the EU. Part I: European Coal and Steel Community 1952-2002

13-04-2015

DE FEO Alfredo

This study is the first part of a series which will analyse inter-institutional relations in the budgetary domain, with a particular focus on the evolution of the role of the European Parliament. The ECSC and its budget was a very interesting case with its specific features – autonomy of the executive, a fiscal mechanism, and the capacity to contract loans and lend money. Was this approach successful? Why were these mechanisms not replicated in the European Community? To what extent did the struggles of the Assembly of the ECSC influence the subsequent Treaties? Those are some of the questions that the study will try to answer. The study will also highlight how the ECSC was ahead of its time, as the solutions found for certain problems were, in some cases, similar to debates decades later. The various studies in the European Union History series are primarily based on documents preserved in, and made available to the public by, the Historical Archives of the European Parliament.

EN, FR

## Comparative Study on Access to Documents (and Confidentiality Rules) in International Trade Negotiations

10-04-2015

Andreas MAURER

It is extremely difficult to strengthen parliamentary oversight of the EU's trade policies without clear and predictable rules and procedures for the EP to access relevant information from the Commission and the Council. This study provides an overview on the rules guaranteeing access to information in international trade negotiations both in the EU and in selected third countries. It evaluates the existing arrangements on access to information by Parliament in view of the provisions included in the Treaty of Lisbon, international norms and agreements, EU case-law, and similar rules, arrangements and practices in a group of national parliaments.

EN

## Cost of Corruption in Developing Countries – How Effectively is Aid Being Spent?

07-04-2015

Jesper JOHNSØN, Nils TAXELL and Thor Olav IVERSEN (CMI, Norway)

Corruption undermines development and reduces the effectiveness of development aid. Illicit financial flows are a consequence of flourishing corrupt practices, often amongst the rich in society. Such flows, estimated at USD1 trillion a year, drain the resources that should be invested in improving developing countries, thus hurting poor people disproportionately.
The EU has invested much in curbing corruption in member-, candidate, accession- and to some extent neighbouring countries, but has so far had a strategic vacuum and minimal operational investments in anti-corruption initiatives in developing countries in general. Emphasis has been on safeguarding own funds, but as the EU often delegates implementation to other actors this is an inefficient and incomplete approach. The EU needs to strengthen national anti-corruption systems in developing countries, and those of its implementing partners.
This will require a renewed strategy process with a focus on the special characteristics of developing countries, as well as internal change management efforts to ensure that EU policies are aligned and that EU institutions are adequately resourced to implement their tasks.

EN

## Developing Operational Tools within the EU for a Comprehensive Approach to Prevent Electoral Violence

23-03-2015

Holly RUTHRAUFF and Andrew BRUCE

This paper discusses how EU institutions can better prevent electoral violence through a more coherent approach. Brief background on the root causes and triggers of electoral violence is provided and the role of early warning and conflict analysis in planning a strategic response is considered. The paper addresses the role of EU Election Observation Missions (EOMs) in conflict situations and the need to develop other tools for expressing political support for elections in conflict-affected states, where conditions for effective observation are lacking. The paper also considers the broad range of possible responses (political and technical) that EU institutions can implement to address both long-term structural causes of electoral violence as well as short-term triggers during the election period. The paper makes a number of recommendations including: (i) a more coherent approach across EU institutions to electoral violence; (ii) much earlier attention to elections that are at risk of violence; (iii) a wider range of tools to avoid over-reliance on EU EOMs; (iv) support for a broad range of stakeholders to address both root causes and triggers of electoral violence; and (v) strengthened capacity of EU Delegations to assess the risk of electoral violence and coordinate actions to prevent and mitigate it.

EN

## The Policy on Gender Equality in Poland - Update March 2015

16-03-2015

Dorota Szelewa (Institute of Social Policy, Warsaw University and ICRA Foundation, Warsaw, Poland)

Upon request of the FEMM committee, this in-depth analysis presents a review of the most important legislation, institutional arrangements and policy programs with regard to gender equality in Poland. In particular, the following policy fields are covered: women in political decision-making, reproductive rights, trafficking in human beings and domestic violence, access to different forms of employment, as well as the policies addressing the reconciliation of work and family life. The final section describes the problem of public attitudes towards gender and gives examples of programs aimed at counteracting gender stereotypes.

EN, PL

## Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world, 2013

06-03-2015

APAP Joanna

Human rights and the promotion of democracy worldwide are top priorities for the European Parliament. They fall under the remit of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and of its Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI), which discusses both topical and standing issues in this field in depth.

EN

## The Policy on Gender Equality in Sweden

05-03-2015

Ann Numhauser-Henning

Upon request of the FEMM committee, this note provides an overview of the situation of women's rights and gender equality in Sweden focussing on recent developments. It notably covers the areas of equal participation in decision-making, women in the labour market, reconciliation of private and professional life, eradication of gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender stereotypes and promotion of gender equality in external development policies.

EN, SV

## The Policy on Gender Equality in Slovenia

05-03-2015

Živa Humer and Saša Pani (Mirovni inštitut / Peace Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Upon request by the FEMM Committee, this analysis provides an overview of the existing Slovenian legislation and policies concerning gender equality. It looks into the situation as regards gender equality in several areas, including employment, reconciliation of work and private life, presence of women in decision-making positions, measures to combat gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings, as well as the area of sexual and reproductive rights. While progress in various areas can be noted, there are still gaps that need to be addressed.

EN, SL

## The European Year for Development: Women and Girls

Briefing

23-02-2015

LERCH Marika

Economic and political discrimination undermines women’s opportunity to break the cycle of poverty and marginalisation. International development cooperation recognises the importance of gender equality, to promote both human rights and sustainable development. Official aid focused on gender equality has tripled since 2002. The concrete situation of women and girls varies tremendously between countries and regions. Gender equality is a fundamental principle of European integration, and has been integrated in EU development cooperation. EU development aid focusing on gender equality doubled between 2009 and 2012. The EP has called for a strong focus on women and girls in the post-2015 development framework. Parliament has established internal structures to ensure that gender equality is 'mainstreamed' throughout its work.

Briefing EN

## Parliament's investigative powers - Committees of inquiry and special committees

Briefing

19-02-2015

POPTCHEVA Eva-Maria Alexandrova

In the aftermath of the 'LuxLeaks' scandal relating to tax evasion by multinational companies through Luxembourg, Ireland, Belgium and the Netherlands, Parliament decided to set up a 'special committee' to look into unfair tax practices in the EU. 188 MEPs had originally requested a committee of inquiry be established, but the Conference of Presidents found that the legal conditions to set up a committee of inquiry would not be met in this case. Parliament's right of inquiry is an important instrument for the exercise of its control functions. Parliament's investigative powers, however, fall short of the powers of committees of inquiry in national parliaments, which have quasi-judicial investigative tools at their disposal. Committees of inquiry are limited to examinations of alleged contraventions and maladministration in the implementation of EU law, thus excluding evidence-gathering about general subjects and inquiries into actions by third-country authorities. 'Special committees', on the other hand, can be set up for any parliamentary inquiry and have thus been used more often by Parliament. Although they are not equipped with formal powers, special committees conduct their inquiries using the same investigative mechanisms as committees of inquiry. The Lisbon Treaty conferred on Parliament the power to propose and adopt a binding regulation on the inquiry rules. A proposal put forward by Parliament during the last parliamentary term met with opposition from both Council and Commission, which claimed that Parliament sought to extend its right of inquiry excessively. The Committee on Constitutional Affairs has appointed a rapporteur to continue the trilogue negotiations in a bid to obtain the consent of the Council and the Commission.

Briefing EN

## Uzbekistan: human rights situation

18-02-2015

LECARTE Jacques

Uzbekistan's human rights record is widely decried. A UN report has described the use of torture as 'systematic'. An EP resolution calls on the EU High Representative, the EEAS and EU Member States to push Uzbekistan to make tangible human rights improvements.

EN

## Tajikistan: human rights situation

18-02-2015

LECARTE Jacques

The human rights situation in Tajikistan raises a number of concerns, especially regarding the use of torture and the violation of women's rights. The UN and the EU are closely monitoring the situation.

EN

## Kazakhstan: human rights situation

18-02-2015

LECARTE Jacques

PDF Version Kazakhstan has a poor human rights record which includes areas of concern such as freedom of expression, women's rights, the prevention of torture and ill-treatment of detainees, the regulatory framework for civil society organisations, and freedom of religion or belief. The European Parliament continues to call on the EU to closely monitor developments in the country.

EN

## Turkmenistan: human rights situation

18-02-2015

LECARTE Jacques

Since 2007, under the Government of President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, no significant improvements regarding human rights and civil liberties in Turkmenistan have been observed by international human rights organisations. The EU is concerned by the situation and closely monitors human rights issues through a permanent dialogue on human rights with Turkmenistan authorities.

EN

## Kyrgyzstan: human rights situation

18-02-2015

LECARTE Jacques

PDF Version In a region surrounded by authoritarian regimes, Kyrgyzstan is the only Central Asian country which appears relatively democratic. However, the United Nations (UN) and the EU are calling for further improvements to address human rights concerns such as the need for inter-ethnic reconciliation, and the significant role played by civil society and human rights defenders as key factors for the country's long-term development.

EN

## Afghanistan: human rights situation

18-02-2015

LECARTE Jacques

The human rights gains made over the past 12 years in Afghanistan are increasingly under threat with a resurgence of violence, and women's rights in particular being degraded. The EU is deeply concerned by the country's deteriorating situation.

EN

## The European Year for Development: Education

Briefing

12-02-2015

CLAROS GIMENO Eulalia | MANRIQUE GIL Manuel

Access to quality education is essential for development: estimates suggest global poverty could drop by 12 % if all children in low income countries could read. The European Parliament has called for gender equality in education and for providing vulnerable groups special attention. The percentage of aid devoted to education has remained constant. While amounts increased between 2002 and 2010, they have begun to decline since. Global net enrolment for primary education grew from 83 % to 90 % between 2000 and 2012. But progress is uneven: 58 million children are out of school, often because of poverty, location, gender or conflict. Half the children who do not attend school live in regions affected by conflict. The EU institutions spent EUR 4.2 billion on education in 2007-2013. The EP recognises the need to:
• guarantee education for women and girls,
• pay attention to emergency situations, and
• build 'knowledge-based' societies that encourage citizens to participate.

Briefing EN

## The European Year for Development: Europe in the World

Briefing

29-01-2015

MANRIQUE GIL Manuel

The world has changed in recent years, in ways that have undermined the traditional development model. The new 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) – to be agreed in September 2015 by the UN – will need to reflect these new realities and emerging challenges. A majority of the world's poorest people live in developing countries, where aid represents only a small percentage of all development financing. Aid remains important: its exclusive goal is promoting development, and it composes a large share of low income countries' development financing. The EU's new development policy aims to focus aid on the poorest countries. The European Parliament (EP) has welcomed this, while warning about the criteria used to judged countries' need. Together, the EU and its Member States remain the world's largest donor, although they contribute far less than the 0.7 % of gross national income (GNI) to which Member States committed. The EP has called on the EU to meet its commitments and adopt concrete measures to make internal policies coherent with development objectives.

Briefing EN

## Democratic Change in Central and Eastern Europe 1989-90

27-01-2015

Part of the new European Parliament History series, this study analyses the events that led to democratic change in Central and Eastern Europe in the years 1989-90, from the perspective of the Parliament, as detailed in materials to be found in its Historical Archives. It traces Parliament's discussions and positions during this crucial period, including its debates on Post-Communism and on Eastern enlargement. The studies in the European Parliament History Series are primarily based on documents preserved in, and made available to the public by, the Historical Archives of the European Parliament.  

EN

## European Commission's 2015 Work Programme

Briefing

23-01-2015

BASSOT Etienne | DEBYSER Ariane | POPTCHEVA Eva-Maria Alexandrova

On 16 December 2014 the newly appointed European Commission adopted its Work Programme for the year ahead (2015 CWP). Based on the political guidelines set out by its President, Jean-Claude Juncker, the Programme forms the basis for the Commission's work in putting these ten priorities into effect. The procedures and timetable governing the European Parliament's role in this annual exercise are well-established and are laid out in detail in the 2010 Framework Agreement between the European Parliament and Commission. Nonetheless, the current exercise takes place in a markedly different context to those in the past, notably as a result of the process by which the Commission President was nominated as candidate and elected to office being more transparent and political than before. This stemmed from the introduction of 'lead candidates' (Spitzenkandidaten) in the 2014 European election campaign, an innovation aimed at giving voters a more direct influence over the future political direction of the European executive. In comparison with previous years, the 2015 CWP contains relatively few new proposals (only 23), though it also lists a large number of pending proposals to be withdrawn or modified. This reflects the Commission's stated intention to concentrate its efforts on a smaller number of priorities such as jobs and growth, and to focus on initiatives where it feels that concrete results can be delivered in the near term. Initial reaction from within the EP to the 2015 CWP has been mixed. While a large number of Members have broadly welcomed the thrust towards a slimmed-down package focussing on essentials, concerns have been raised about various issues, notably the scope and content of proposed withdrawals. None of the resolutions tabled by the political groups on the 2015 CWP achieved the majority necessary for adoption at the January I part-session, so the EP has not adopted a formal position on the matter.

Briefing EN

## Ukraine: political parties and the EU

09-01-2015

BENTZEN Naja

Ukraine's political landscape mirrors the country's deep divide between the West and Russia. The main result of the parliamentary elections on 26 October 2014 was the victory of Ukraine's pro-European parties. The 'European Ukraine Coalition' took office amid mounting economic and (Russian) military pressure on one side, and urgent calls for reforms and 'lustration' on the other.

EN

## Yemen in Crises: What Role for the EU

05-01-2015

Ahmed A. Saif (Sheba Centre for Strategic Studies, Sanaa, Yemen)

This briefing scrutinises the status of the transitional process taking place in Yemen. It analyses the political, economic, humanitarian and security conditions in Yemen. This briefing aims at helping Members of the European Parliament to have a better understanding of the country's situation and the latest developments. The case of Yemen suggests that overthrowing a despotic regime could be relatively easy but building new democracy to replace it is much harder. Adding to these difficulties is the fact that Yemen remains one of the least developed countries in the region making the short-term socioeconomic impact of the transition pose further challenges. Moreover, the prevailed conflicts in various parts of the country and the absence of state institutions exacerbate the crisis. While the GCC initiative was successful in facilitating the appointment of a new president and forming a new transitional government, it fell short of providing solutions to the massive and intractable challenges threatening the unity and a sustainable peace in Yemen. This briefing provides a policy-oriented action plan to strengthen state building in Yemen, which is the core of many problems Yemen is suffering from. It is only through effective state building that an accountable and transparent state could be created. The EU, in the context of the GCC initiative, can play an important role to facilitate the process of state building in Yemen. This role varies from consultation, training, diffusing experience, to direct contribution to the process.

EN

## Stakeholder, Parliamentary and Third Country Concerns about the EU-Canada Comprehensive Trade and Economic Agreement (CETA)

16-12-2014

TROSZCZYNSKA VAN GENDEREN Wanda

The EU-Canada Comprehensive Trade and Economic Agreement (CETA) – covering a plethora of issues, including market access, tariffs and non-tariff barriers – has elicited varied reactions from stakeholders. Business associations on both sides of the Atlantic have strongly supported the deal and its aim to boost economic relations between the partners. On the other hand, some civil society groups, trade unions and agricultural associations have voiced hesitations about some of the deal’s provisions and its impact on the agricultural sector, the job market and quality of public services. CETA negotiations have also provided civil society an opportunity to discuss indirectly related issues, including visa policies, data privacy and the EU ban on the trade in seal products. Both the European and Canadian Parliaments have actively monitored the negotiations and provided opportunities for stakeholders to express their opinions. While consultation and public outreach now appears to have resolved most hurdles, criticism about the negotiations’ transparency and inclusiveness – as well as concerns about the inclusion of investment protection clauses – have not entirely abated. Turkey and Canada’s partners in the North American Free Trade Agreement (the US and Mexico) also have distinct reasons to fear the impact of CETA on their own economies.

EN

## EU-Georgia Association Agreement

05-12-2014

BENTZEN Naja

Since the 2003 Rose Revolution, Georgia has continually strengthened its ties with the EU. The June 2014 signature of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement sparked increasing Russian pressure on the beleaguered government in Tbilisi over its pro-European foreign policy course.

DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL

## ACP-EU Relations after 2020: State of Play

01-12-2014

MANRIQUE GIL Manuel

The question of the form of post-2020 relations between the EU and ACP countries will soon acquire political visibility. The ACP group of states has established an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to examine the options for the future of the ACP group and the post-Cotonou situation. The forthcoming EPG report aims to advance realistic, doable and reachable recommendations that will require political support from the highest level. The EU development Commissioner has noted the possibility of agreeing overarching principles with ACP countries, coupled with specific regional programmes. A public consultation will take place in 2015. A potential division exists between EU Member States favouring the status quo and those seeking to establish a new framework. The JPA should ensure that a strong parliamentary branch is part of the new framework – whatever form the framework takes. An ambitious JPA position could play a role in shaping future ACP-EU relations.

EN, FR

## Burkina: One Old Regime Down, More to Fall?

27-11-2014

BARNA Judit

The resignation of Burkina Faso's president Blaise Compaoré in October 2014 should not have come as a surprise. The interplay of several political and socioeconomic factors led to his fall. International actors followed the events closely and urged a consensual approach in the transition negotiations. The role of the military has been central to the changes; it should be watched carefully in the coming months. A civilian president, a prime minister hailing from the Presidential Guard, a 26-member government and a 90-member transitional council will steer the country until the elections, scheduled for November 2015. Events in Burkina Faso are followed in other African countries, where long-standing leaders are also likely to try to stay in power. Burkina, one of the world's poorest countries, needs a genuine transition to ensure a more inclusive and resilient future.

EN

## Commitments Made at the Hearings of the Commissioners-Designate, Juncker Commission (November 2014 - October 2019)

Briefing

14-11-2014

ANGERER Jost | BARNA Judit | CHATEAU Céline | DAVOLI Alessandro | DE MICCO Pasquale | FORGACS Annamaria | GARCES DE LOS FAYOS TOURNAN Fernando | GOUARDERES Frederic | GYORFFI Miklos Laszlo | HAUPTMAN Manica | HRADISKY Martin | KOLASSA Doris | KOODZIEJSKI Marek | MACIEJEWSKI Mariusz | MAGNUS Marcel | MANRIQUE GIL Manuel | MARZOCCHI Ottavio | MATHIS Alexandre | NEVILLE Darren | NOVAK Petr | OJAMAA Priit | PIAGUET Carine | RAGONNAUD Guillaume | SMAJDA Laurence | SOAVE Piero | STOERRING Dagmara | SY Sarah Salome | TEJEDOR DEL REAL Purificacion | TROSZCZYNSKA VAN GENDEREN Wanda | VERBEKEN Dirk

This compilation of briefings presents the most salient points and essential commitments made by the commissioners-designate during the hearings held in September/October 2014 before the parliamentary committees. These commitments concern the main on-going legislative procedures, the preparation of future legislative proposals as well as the scrutiny of the implementation of existing legislation. They also touch upon the crucial issue of inter-institutional cooperation.

Briefing EN

## Commitments Made at the Hearing of Federica Mogherini - High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Briefing

14-11-2014

TROSZCZYNSKA VAN GENDEREN Wanda

Federica Mogherini, the recently-confirmed High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission, appeared before the European Parliament on 6 October 2014 to answer MEPs' questions.
In that hearing and in her answers to the questionnaire prepared for the meeting, High Representative /Vice President Mogherini made a number of statements of interest to the European Parliament.
This document provides a summary of her most salient points.

Briefing EN

## Commitments Made at the Hearing of Johannes Hahn - Commissioner-Designate

Briefing

14-11-2014

GARCES DE LOS FAYOS TOURNAN Fernando

Johannes Hahn, the recently-confirmed European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations, appeared before the European Parliament's Committee for Foreign Affairs (AFET) on 30 September 2014 to answer MEPs' questions.
In that hearing and in his answers to the questionnaire prepared for the meeting in advance, Commissioner Hahn made a number of statements of interest to the European Parliament.
This document provides a summary of his most salient points.

Briefing EN

## A Comparative Study of EU and US Approaches to Human Rights in External Relations

10-11-2014

Jan WOUTERS, Laura BEKE, Anna-Luise CHANÉ, David D'HOLLANDER and Kolja RAUBE (University of Leuven, Belgium)

Both the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) emphasise the centrality of human rights in their domestic and external policies. Despite their common attachment to human rights and a potential affinity of seemingly common transatlantic approaches to human rights issues in external policies, the EU and the US have diverged considerably in their respective promotion of human rights abroad. Drawing on the historical and legal underpinnings of human rights promotion in the EU and the US, the purpose of the present study is to provide a comparative analysis of how human rights are integrated and mainstreamed into their respective external policies, thereby using case studies such as EU Special Representatives/US Special Envoys, Democracy Promotion, the Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court to contextualise the argument. To this end, the study outlines the intricacies behind the institutional set-up of EU and US external action, and delves into the specificities of human rights-related policy-making in the realm of traditional foreign policy, international trade and international development. The study concludes with the formulation of recommendations for the further integration of human rights in EU external policies, as well as to the future collaboration between the EU and the US on human rights.

EN

## The Modernisation of the European Union-Mexico 'Global Agreement'

23-10-2014

Roberto DOMINGUEZ (Suffolk University, Boston MA, USA - chapters 1-3, part of chapter 5) and Mónica VELASCO PUFLEAU (chapter 4 and section 5.1)

Signed in 1997 and in force since 2000, the Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement, known as the 'Global Agreement', is the cornerstone of the legal framework for relations between the European Union (EU) and Mexico. Currently, the EU and Mexico are exploring possible ways to update and modernise the Agreement, to factor in the transformations that have occurred in the past decade and half.
The study addresses how the EU-Mexico relationship has evolved since the entry into force of the Agreement in 2000 and evaluates the results achieved within each of its three main areas (political dialogue, cooperation and trade), as well as in the EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership from 2008. Against that background, it assesses the options for updating the Agreement and provides specific recommendations in this regard.
The study focuses in particular on the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC), the forum for institutionalised interparliamentary dialogue between the European Parliament and the Mexican Congress. The study examines the JPC's role in monitoring the implementation of the Global Agreement and EU-Mexico relations in general, and sets out recommendations to improve the Committee's performance and to strengthen its participation in the process of modernisation of the Agreement.

EN, ES

## Brazil: Promises of More Change – But in Which Direction?

22-10-2014

TVEVAD Jesper

On 26 October 2014, almost 142 million voters will elect Brazil's president for the next four years. The elections take place against a backdrop of economic stagnation and widespread discontent with inadequate public services and the political system, highlighted by social protests in 2013. After a decade of economic and social progress, and a parallel rise in the country's global stature, the sustainability of the country's last two decades of achievements is increasingly questioned. Facing these challenges, all major political forces have advocated 'change' in the run-up to the October elections. There are strong expectations that the government that takes over on 1 January 2015 will initiate a new phase in Brazil's social, economic and political development. The new government will have to address demands to renew the political system and to implement reforms to make the economy more competitive and capable of generating the growth needed to continue improving social conditions.

EN

## Will the Afghan Government Deal Provide the Country the Stability it Needs?

21-10-2014

GARCES DE LOS FAYOS TOURNAN Fernando

A dangerous political crisis ignited in Afghanistan this year – just months before the International Security Assistance Force was to be replaced by a reduced US and NATO force. Both presidential candidates, Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, alleged that the second, June round of the presidential elections had been marred by fraud. A power-sharing agreement was finally reached between President Ghani and 'CEO' Abdullah in September, following intense international pressure. The outcome has frustrated the Afghan people, whose high turnout at the poll, despite high security risks, demonstrated a real commitment to democracy. Turnout in the 2015 parliamentary elections will suggest whether voters' disappointment persists.
Providing a minimum of security to the population and to international agencies will be the new government's highest priority. Violent attacks are on the rise, though government camps may disagree on whether and how to negotiate with the Taliban insurgency. Disputes about the appointments of high officials from different political and ethnic groups may also distract Ghani from one of his principal goals: fighting corruption. The European Parliament could ask the EU to reinforce its support for the new government and reiterate its call that a new EU-Afghan agreement stress democracy and human rights – particularly those of women.

EN

## The Situation of Women in the Gulf States

17-10-2014

May Seikaly (Wayne State University), Rahil Roodsaz and Corine van Egten (Atria Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History)
Country experts:
Mona Abbass Fadhel (Bahrain), Philippa Winkler (Iran and Iraq), Wanda Krause (Kuwait and Qatar), Khalid M. Al-Azri (Oman), Sherifa Zuhur (Saudi Arabia) and Shahida El-Baz (United Arab Emirates)

Upon request by the FEMM Committee, this study examines the economic, political and socio-cultural changes which have affected the situation of women in the Gulf region over the last decades. Through an overall analysis and individual country reports, it notably sheds light on similarities and differences concerning women's emancipation in Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. Gender discrimination is discussed both in law and in practice, focusing on women's political and economic empowerment, education, migration, family and health.

EN, ES, FR

## India: the biggest democracy in the world

16-10-2014

D'AMBROGIO Enrico

With 1 267 million inhabitants, of which 834 million can vote, India is the largest democracy in the world. India is an authentic multicultural country: in Lok Sabha, the lower house, members can speak in 15 different languages!

EN

## Civil Society's Concerns about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

14-10-2014

ARMANOVICA Marika | BENDINI Roberto

When the EU and the US launched negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) in June 2013, civil society was invited to play ‘a constructive and engaged part in defining the content’ of this strategic deal. Interest in the TTIP has gone beyond its expected economic impact: the agreement has been seen by some as a way to strengthen the West’s weakening grip on the world economy, and by others as a tool for big multinationals to secure unfair advantages at the expense of the rest of society. Civil society groups have come forward with various conditions, demands (including stopping the negotiations) and concrete proposals – in most cases to ensure that the TTIP represents their interests.
The TTIP requires extremely complex international negotiations, and its final content is still not known. The result will depend on the outcome of the negotiations and the extent to which they respond to civil society's concerns. However, much will also depend on the way the European Parliament and the Council agree to transpose the provisions of the new deal – if concluded and approved – into existing EU legislation.

EN

## Appointment of the Commission: Parliament's role before 1995

Briefing

18-09-2014

DEVANTIER Alexandra

In September 2014, the Commissioners-designate for the Juncker Commission will be required to appear before the European Parliament’s committees as part of the procedure for the approval of the European Commission. This will be the fifth set of hearings to be held since 1995. But what about the Commissions prior to 1995? Did Parliament already have a role to play in the new Commission’s appointment in those days?
With this briefing we provide a short account of the procedure used before 1995 and the long road which Parliament had to take to have its say in the appointment of the Commission. It has always been the tradition for each President of the Commission, when taking office, to deliver a general policy statement before Parliament. Until 1981, when Parliament approved the appointment of the Thorn Commission with its resolution of 12 February, the newly nominated President of the Commission gave a speech to Parliament in plenary. However, no vote of approval or of confidence was taken until 15 January 1985, when the first vote of confidence was passed in the first Delors Commission.
Formal hearings of commissioners-designate were introduced as a result of the Maastricht Treaty. The first Commission to be subject to this new procedure was the Santer Commission in 1995.

Briefing DE, EN, FR

## Universal Suffrage in Hong Kong Acquires Chinese Characteristics

Briefing

15-09-2014

ARMANOVICA Marika

China's legislature, the People's National Congress (NPC), has made recommendations about the 2017 direct election of Hong Kong's Chief Executive, foreseen in Hong Kong's constitution. Hong Kong's legislature could reject the recommendations, although the NPC has final say. China's authorities have warned that civil disobedience and protestors' calls to respect international standards may have serious consequences. The European Parliament has called for 'international standards' to be respected in Hong Kong's politics. The selection of candidates will be less free. A candidate will now need to gain the support of at least 50 % of the nomination committee, instead of the 12.5 % required in 2012. During public consultations, a number of initiatives were proposed to make the nomination process more democratic. Beijing has insisted that Hong Kong's administrators respect their nation and support China's jurisdiction over Hong Kong. The events in Hong Kong have been echoed in Macao. Beijing sees its relations with Hong Kong as a model for Taiwan, which it also hopes to incorporate into a 'one China, two systems' arrangement. In the past, the European Parliament has adopted positions on electoral reform in Hong Kong. The EP has stated that 'respect for the full autonomy of Hong Kong is one of the key issues upon which to base the development of future relations between the EU and China'.

Briefing EN

## Policy Departments’ Monthly Highlights - July 2014

07-07-2014

The Monthly Highlights publication provides an overview, at a glance, of the on-going work of the policy departments, including a selection of the latest and forthcoming publications, and a list of future events.

EN

## Minorities in the South Caucasus: New Visibility amid Old Frustrations

27-06-2014

GARCES DE LOS FAYOS TOURNAN Fernando

One of the most multi-ethnic regions on Europe's periphery, the South Caucasus's bumpy path to democracy has often been accompanied by ethnic conflict, stoked by nationalism. Since acquiring independence from the Soviet Union, secessionist movements have grown among local minorities in the areas surrounding the countries' new, sovereign borders. The lack of state mechanisms to channel such sentiments has led to violent ethnic clashes with long-lasting consequences. Today still, a lack of experience in conflict resolution and powersharing between dominant and minority communities hinders the development of common ground and democratic co-existence. Mechanisms which promote parliamentary representation, law-making and the oversight of minority rights are still largely absent. Although reforms in the South Caucasus have pushed for new laws to create greater accountability, instruments promoting inclusive dialogue with the minorities require further development. For the minorities of the South Caucasus, the most pressing issues are a lack of respect and the protection of their rights. For the sake of state-building and democratic development of the region, inclusive policies must be implemented with respect to ethnic minorities, through their political participation, including them in the higher levels of decision-making.

EN

## India's 2014 Legislative Elections: The Lack of Economic Miracles Lands the Congress Party on the Opposition Benches

27-05-2014

BIERBRAUER Elfriede | VANDEWALLE Laurence

The EU's relationship with India and the floundering bilateral trade negotiations may be reinvigorated by the results of the country's elections for India's lower house of parliament – the Lok Sabha – held between 7 April and 12 May 2014. The landslide victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its leader, Narendra Modi, came at the expense of the Congress party; after being in power for all but 18 years since the country's independence in 1947, Congress obtained only 44 seats – less than 8 % of the total – in the recent ballot. The new Common People's Party, which performed well in 2013-regional elections in the capital, Delhi, obtained only four seats nationwide.
Modi, a Hindu nationalist who led the state of Gujarat, had been shunned by the EU and the US for many years for his part in the 2002 Gujarat riots. But between the recent elections and his investiture, on 26 May 2014, both transatlantic powers made friendly overtures to the new prime minister.
Negotiations within the BJP and with potential coalition partners are well underway, and the composition of the new Indian government should be known soon. As Modi's election campaign focussed on domestic issues, and in particular on the ailing Indian economy, the BJP-led government's stance on foreign relations – including on cross-border trade and investment and negotiations with the EU on the stalled free trade agreement – will soon crystallise.

EN

## Civil Society and Media in Myanmar/Burma's Political Transition

Briefing

22-05-2014

ARMANOVICA Marika

Since Myanmar/Burma launched its political transition began in 2011, civil society in the country has become more active and more visible. The parliament has opened its doors to voices from the outside – although hesitantly and on ad hoc basis. Non-state actors are now involved in revising the constitution, and the result will be pivotal for the credibility of the general elections in 2015 and, by extension, the fate of the country's democratic reforms.
The media in Myanmar/Burma have played an important role in making political processes more transparent. Yet journalists still work in climate of uncertainty and intimidation, while unclear legal provisions discourage the free expression of opinion, especially on the internet. In 2013, the EU adopted a comprehensive framework to support democracy, peace and development in Myanmar/Burma. To attain the policy's objectives, the country's diverse and dynamic civil society must be closely involved.

Briefing EN

## Regional Integration in the Mediterranean - Impact and Limits of Community and Bilateral Policies

25-04-2014

Cécile JOLLY (Commissariat général à la stratégie et à la prospective, sous l'Office du Premier ministre, France)

The economic integration of the south and east Mediterranean partner countries with Europe has made very little progress, just as relations between them are not showing signs of development. The immediate periphery of the Union has not yet become a dynamic area of trade with Europe, and Community aid, which is focused on the commercial aspects, has not managed to stimulate sufficient economic growth in its neighbours to absorb new entrants on to the labour market. This lack of regional economic dynamism is in contrast with the intensity of human relations which has developed over a long period due to the presence of an essentially North African and Turkish diaspora in Europe and the North-South tourist traffic to the Mediterranean, which are undervalued. While the Arab revolutions are a reminder that the movement of ideas and people goes hand in hand with a greater homogeneity of lifestyles and aspirations from a democratic and social viewpoint, little has been done in a Euro- Mediterranean context to encourage this movement, particularly from a social and political standpoint. We should therefore redirect the priorities of European aid from a commercial emphasis to a truly industrial policy and set out a politicial and social priority for the region.

EN, FR

## Comparative Analysis between the Constitutional Processes in Egypt and Tunisia - Lessons Learnt. Overview of the Constitutional Situation in Libya

15-04-2014

Jörg FEDTKE (Tulane University Law School, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA)

The 2014 Constitutions of Egypt and Tunisia, though enacted at the same time and as a consequence of very similar revolutionary forces, are different in style and content. Egypt has fallen back to the structures of the 1971 Constitution and will likely experience further restoration of the authoritarian presidentialism. The Armed Forces continue to play a dominant background role in the political and constitutional life of the country. Tunisia seems to have embraced a new constitutional paradigm that is based on a modern approach to human rights protection and a balanced institutional framework that provides for substantial checks and balances between the three branches of government.
The constitutional drafting process in Libya is overshadowed by a pronounced lack of security, the absence of functioning state institutions, societal fragmentation, and the uneven distribution of natural wealth. National reconciliation is a key precondition of successful political and constitutional transition but the process has to date been a very difficult one. There are indications, however, that stakeholders in Libya are trying to build consensus on important aspects of the process. The 1951 Constitution, based on a federal framework, offers the best conceptual framework for the recently elected Constituent Assembly. Unlike Egypt and Tunisia, Libya might opt for a parliamentary form of government rather than a semi-presidential system.

EN, FR

## Egypt: In-Depth Analysis of the Main Elements of the New Constitution

09-04-2014

Michael MEYER-RESENDE (Democracy Reporting International DRI, Germany)

Despite cautious liberalisation in a few limited areas, Egypt's new constitution of January 2014 does not represent a new democratic departure. The process of its adoption was not inclusive. Public consultations leading to the referendum were selective and weak. According to observation missions the referendum campaign was entirely skewed in favour of a 'yes' vote.
Key elements of Egypt's constitution are at odds with international legal obligations and standards. Human rights provisions are not specific in many aspects, leaving crucial aspects to be determined by laws. The military has a significant role; it is not only beyond democratic control, it has a say in civilian matters – an inverse relationship to democratic set-up. On a more positive note, the far-reaching Sharia provisions of the 2012 law have been abandoned and the article on equality of men and women has been strengthened.
On balance the constitution offers little hope for eventual democratisation. Amending its provisions will be extremely difficult, requiring 2/3 majority in the House of Representatives and a referendum.

EN

# Enhancing Cooperation between the European Parliament and EU National Parliaments on EU Human Rights Policy

11-03-2014

Jan WOUTERS, Laura BEKE, Anna-Luise CHANÉ, Nicolas HACHEZ and Kolja RAUBE (Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, KU Leuven, Belgium)

The Lisbon Treaty has rung in a new era of democratic and human rights governance. In an attempt to redress concerns about the EU's alleged democratic deficit and inability to speak with one voice on cross-cutting issues of human rights, both the empowered European Parliament (EP) and national parliaments (NPs) are meant to 'contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union' through inter-parliamentary cooperation (IPC). At the same time, the EU's action is also poised to systematically 'put human rights at the heart of all its policies'. Given the role of parliaments as 'guardians and promoters of human rights' at a time when their ability to influence the EU legislative process has significantly been enhanced, the question arises whether the EU's 'human rights turn' may act as a catalyst for IPC, and whether this collaboration may, in turn, strengthen the effectiveness and legitimacy of EU human rights policies. To that end, this study maps the increasingly complex network of formal and informal IPC channels in the realm of human rights, assesses their respective strengths and weaknesses, and formulates recommendations to enhance IPC in this regard.

EN