

Building civic friendship in the European Union

Introduction

This chapter addresses the following question: How can civic friendship be strengthened in the EU? I claim that EU citizens will only be willing to mobilise ample resources and endorse significant sacrifices for the common good of the whole EU if they develop extensive bonds of “civic friendship”. However, I argue that this goal is within the reach of the EU institutions and national governments. Civic friendship, I claim, should be regarded as the outcome of certain public choices rather than as a stable feature of political communities to be taken as given. Accordingly, I argue that civic friendship could be boosted in the EU if adequate public policies were adopted.

More specifically, I present the following proposals to strengthen transnational bonds: (i) establishing a robust social level playing field to moderate competition among EU workers, notably by launching an EU labour code; (ii) reducing socioeconomic inequalities in the EU; (iii) increasing the opportunities for participation by EU citizens in shared political institutions, namely through the EU Citizens’ Assembly previously discussed; (iv) reducing pervasive administrative, legal and economic barriers against freedom of movement; (v) launching a transnational curriculum on EU citizenship education to be offered in all EU schools; and (vi) increasing defence cooperation in the EU, notably by upgrading the EU mutual defence clause and scaling up the Permanent Structured Cooperation and the European Defence Fund.

I begin by defining the notion of civic friendship and explaining the sense in which it shapes the prospects of the common good in the EU. Subsequently, I challenge two assumptions frequently held by the existing literature on this topic – namely, that (i) civic friendship is closely or even intrinsically linked to *national* communities and that (ii) civic friendship is a *stable* feature of these political communities. Then, I sketch the ways in which EU institutions have attempted to promote civic friendship and present reasons why their efforts have been unfruitful. Subsequently, I discuss

the six policy proposals mentioned above in depth, explaining what specific problems they aim to address and how they could contribute to strengthening civic friendship in the EU. I also explore ways in which their feasibility could be increased.

The problem of civic friendship in the EU

Civic friendship defined

The preamble of the TEU famously set the goal of “creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe”.¹ This purpose has been equated with a telos of ever-increasing economic and political integration. In anticipation of Francis Fukuyama’s influential “end of history” thesis, many EU leaders seemed to conceive the future of Europe as a one-way road towards a transnational democracy.² According to the Schuman Declaration of 1950, a “united Europe” would not be achieved “all at once” but through “concrete achievements”, notably the construction of a common market.³ This gradual integration process, we were told, would bring about a “de facto solidarity” between Europeans.⁴ Moreover, the successive and increasingly far-reaching EU treaties, as well as several rounds of enlargement that extended the original group of six member states to 28 (before Brexit), seemed to corroborate the optimism of the EU’s founders. While the Union has faced a number of crises and political deadlocks since its founding, these have generally been regarded as opportunities to expand EU competences and to upgrade the EU supranational apparatus.⁵

However, as Chapter 2 has discussed, critical developments such as Brexit and the consolidation of nationalist platforms in several member states have challenged this narrative. This process of fragmentation – the so-called “return of history” – has called into question Robert Schuman’s prediction that by committing to the construction of a shared institutional setting, Europeans would develop social and civic bonds.⁶ Despite decades of “Europeanisation” of domestic institutions and policies, as well as continued efforts to promote socioeconomic convergence, notably through the launch of EU structural funds, the social and civic bonds between EU citizens seem to remain weak. Among other episodes, this became particularly apparent in the intra-EU cleavages regarding the concession of financial assistance to distressed Eurozone countries and the coordinated response to the refugee crisis. In these cases, the sharp divides within the EU suggest that many EU citizens regard these as national rather than common challenges. This apparent lack of willingness to share the burdens of European integration casts doubt on whether they would be ready to mobilise for the common good of the EU.

This issue is particularly relevant for our discussion since the adoption of ambitious policies for the common good of the EU may, indeed, imply significant sacrifices for certain groups of EU citizens and member states. As I claimed in Chapter 3, given that the EU political system consists of a two-level game, national governments will only be willing to accept the potentially high costs of these policies if their constituencies accept them as well. However, such agreement may be difficult to secure in the face of the current levels of Euroscepticism. Indeed, even if most EU citizens support EU membership, large swathes of national electorates regard the EU integration process with much distrust. For instance, in Italy, Greece, France and Sweden, approximately 30% of the citizens believe their countries would better face the future outside the EU.⁷ In six member states – Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Austria, Slovenia and Romania – this figure is close to 40%.⁸ While the institutional reforms proposed in Chapter 4 could improve this landscape by boosting the perceived effectiveness and legitimacy of EU institutions, it remains unclear whether EU citizens would be willing to accept the costs of more ambitious EU policies. What, if anything, could motivate EU citizens to bear the burdens of the common good?

A way to approach this problem is to think of strategies that could strengthen civic friendship in the EU, understood as “a bond of reciprocal good-will between fellow citizens, expressed through norms of civic behaviour, such as mutual recognition of moral equality, mutual concern and mutual defence and support”.⁹ How are the common good and civic friendship linked? In a nutshell, individuals bound by civic friendship are more willing to act on “a concern for the whole, a dedication to the common good”.¹⁰ Civic friendship creates a background in which citizens “wish one other well for their own sake, do things for fellow citizens both individually and as a citizen body”.¹¹ This willingness to sacrifice one’s individual interest for the sake of others facilitates the adoption of demanding policies for the common good. To illustrate the point, consider the launch of the Beveridge welfare programme in the UK. Against what rational choice theory would have predicted, this very costly scheme recruited widespread support even among those not expected to become its beneficiaries.¹² As it has been argued, the collective war effort during World War II led British citizens to recognise one another as equal members of the demos and to care about one another’s fate.¹³ This collective wartime spirit prompted overwhelming support for the welfare programme after the war, regardless of the distribution of costs and benefits at stake.

This example, to which others could be added, suggests that the adoption of policies for the common good is likely more feasible in the presence of civic friendship. Accordingly, “[a]mong the tasks of modern political philosophy is to develop a favoured conception of the relations among modern

citizens, among people who can know little or nothing of one another individually and yet are reciprocally dependent".¹⁴ Despite the significance of this research agenda, the conditions that trigger civic friendship have received limited attention in the specialised literature. While some conceptual research has been conducted to investigate the meaning and significance of civic friendship, little has been said about *how* this bond develops in the first place.¹⁵ Therefore, the following questions remain to be addressed: What are the preconditions of civic friendship? What, if anything, can a given polity do to increase civic friendship? This lack of answers has led Mihaela Georgieva to conclude that civic friendship is "a forgotten ideal" in modern political theory.¹⁶ Yet, the relevance of these questions for this book cannot be understated. If civic friendship and the common good are closely linked, then the question of how EU citizens could develop stronger civic bonds deserves careful treatment.¹⁷

Is civic friendship feasible in the EU?

In recent years, a few authors have suggested that the EU polity does not offer an appropriate context for civic friendship to emerge. Since Aristotle's pioneering account came to light, the notion of civic friendship has typically been linked to clearly delimited sovereign communities, notably the city-state and the nation-state. Accordingly, scholars such as Martha Nussbaum and Michael Sandel have suggested that the limited levels of social interaction and political participation at the supranational level are incompatible with the development of thick civic bonds beyond borders.¹⁸ In the words of Kerry Hoods, "[i]f we consider the practicalities of civic friendship, we find that cosmopolitan friendship is an even more difficult and demanding project than we might have imagined".¹⁹ Although a few scholarly accounts have identified a range of emerging citizenship practices at the European level, EU citizenship is frequently regarded as a somewhat empty legal status.²⁰ Hence, David Miller has concluded that large conglomerates such as the EU "are divided in such a way that citizens' primary loyalties are *inevitably* directed toward their compatriots".²¹ The primacy of national loyalty casts doubt on whether any strategy to increase civic friendship in the EU would be effective.

Yet is the arguably low level of civic citizenship in the EU indeed *inevitable*, as Miller claims? This view neglects the role of public policy in shaping the nature and quality of civic relations within any political community. Indeed, many nation-states and federations have adopted policies specifically aimed at enriching civic life and building a sense of community at some stage in their history.²² Note that these measures did not always imply morally objectionable forms of social engineering. In fact, a few political

institutions have *democratically* enacted policies that have created favourable conditions for individuals to recognise one another as fellow citizens and to seek the common good. Consider, for example, the redistributive policies adopted after German reunification, which allowed individuals with highly contrasting economic resources to become citizens on equal footing in the new demos.²³ In the opposite direction, certain policies may jeopardise civic bonds or prevent them from emerging. For example, Michael Sandel has argued that a set of governmental policies dramatically increasing socio-economic inequalities has put civic life in the United States at risk.²⁴ This outcome suggests that public policies have the potential to either enhance or jeopardise civic friendship.

This connection between certain types of public policies and the quality of civic relations also applies to the EU. For example, it has been argued that freedom of movement has had a positive impact on citizens' attitudes towards the EU and their fellow EU citizens.²⁵ Therefore, increasing the financial support to mobility and student exchange programmes, such as Erasmus, and reducing the administrative barriers against working abroad has the potential to strengthen civic friendship in the EU polity. In opposition, the failure to promote a constructive democratic dialogue about social cohesion and to pursue effective strategies to achieve this goal may compromise the civic relations between Europeans. For instance, Jean Tirole has argued that the "bitterness" of the talks between the Greek and the German governments in the context of the sovereign debt crisis is incompatible with the pursuit of the common good.²⁶ Along the same lines, Claudia Sternberg, Kira Gartzou-Katsouyanni and Kalypso Nicolaidis have argued that the demanding conditions imposed on the Greek people as a precondition to receiving financial assistance have eroded the mutual recognition of Europeans as fellow citizens.²⁷ The persistence of such impediments raises the question: What specific policies could boost civic friendship in the EU polity?

Why civic friendship remains limited in the EU

Before addressing this question, it should be noted that throughout its history, the EU has taken some measures to increase civic friendship, albeit with limited success. For example, the EU has launched a few symbolic actions intended to create a sense of membership in a shared political community, including the standardisation of EU passports and the proclamation of Europe Day (9 May). A more substantive step towards making an EU demos in a proper sense was the creation of the EU citizenship status by the Maastricht Treaty. Despite being acquired through the citizenship of any of the member states, EU citizenship translates into a distinctive set

of citizenship practices, including the right to participate in the elections for the European Parliament to move and reside freely within the EU territory. Furthermore, in line with the strategy put forward by the Schuman Declaration, EU policymakers expected that a wide range of measures targeting the completion of the single market would help connect EU citizens to one another.²⁸ Consider, for instance, the abolition of border controls and the launch of the single currency. However, these efforts seem to have achieved limited success, at least if we consider the current levels of Euroscepticism.²⁹

Why have EU institutions so far failed to promote a stronger civic friendship in the EU, then? One reason may be the apparent failure to agree on a long-term strategy to pursue this goal. Indeed, the strategies to bring EU citizens “ever closer” have changed significantly according to the political priorities of the different leaderships of the European Commission. For instance, the Barroso Commission called for the implementation of a “Plan D for Democracy”, which included visits by the commissioners to the member states and national parliaments and more openness over meetings of the Council.³⁰ However, this plan has been mostly forgotten in the EU policy circles. In turn, the Juncker Commission strongly emphasised increasing the number of citizens’ consultations about EU legislative proposals. Yet, this instrument lost much of its earlier prominence once the Von der Leyen Commission prioritised its new deliberative conference concerning the future of Europe. While each of these initiatives had its merits, they were rather short-lived and implemented at the expense of a more stable approach to constructing thicker civic bonds in the EU. In this regard, the Conference on the Future of Europe is telling. From the outset, this initiative sought to conduct a deliberative experiment in a limited time span rather than build the deliberative infrastructure that would allow for permanent citizen participation in shaping the EU’s future.³¹

Another reason behind the lack of more satisfactory results may be the limited political will of the national governments to adopt a systemic, rather than modular, approach to transnational civic bonds. As I will claim below, civic friendship is not contingent on a single, miraculous policy but on a cross-cutting policy package that covers a variety of areas and is potentially very ambitious. Undoubtedly, the limited political appetite to engage with this type of programme is at least partially linked to recent developments in the domestic politics of the member states. Given that the nationalist platforms have recruited a high number of voters in several member states, the mainstream political parties increasingly have incentives to seek to recover some of the lost votes by making concessions in their European and global agendas.³² This development has jeopardised the much-needed support to certain common policies that have the potential to enhance civic friendship

from a wide range of policy areas, namely social, education and defence policy, where, as I shall claim below, a systemic approach and an intensified political commitment by the member states are crucial to enhance civic friendship in the EU. While this may be difficult to change in the current political context, a few nuanced policy proposals could enable more effective political action, as I will argue in the following sections.

Measures to increase civic friendship in the EU

In what follows, I shall discuss a few social, economic and political conditions that could strengthen civic friendship in the EU, as well as a set of EU policies to bring them forward. My goal is to apply a systemic approach to address this problem. Accordingly, my proposals should be regarded as a policy package to promote civic friendship in the EU in multiple but complementary ways. Given the obstacles listed above, I will explore ways of improving the feasibility prospects of my proposals. While the measures which will unfold cover several dimensions, ranging from distributive justice to education to defence cooperation, they do not intend to be exhaustive. I shall explain below why I deem these policies particularly important, but there may be others worth considering. Furthermore, note that I do not claim that my proposals would *necessarily* give rise to civic friendship. While I rely on normative and empirical arguments to claim that certain social, economic and political environments are more conducive to civic friendship than others, my proposals are not comparable to the laws of natural science. Finally, I should underscore that each of the proposals presented below merits much more extensive discussion than the space here allows. Therefore, I can only hope to provide a few plausible and feasible *guidelines* on how the problem of civic friendship in the EU could be addressed.

Strengthening the social level playing field in the EU

My first proposal is the creation of a stronger social level playing field in the EU, understood as a set of common rules and practices concerning the social protection of workers. The key insight behind this proposal is that individuals embedded in extremely competitive environments may fail to connect to one another and lose sight of the common good. Indeed, research in the field of social psychology has shown that the high level of competition resulting from neoliberal policies has created a sense of social disconnection between individuals.³³ This fragmentation arises from policies of market liberalisation that place a disproportional emphasis on individual performance at the expense of the collective achievements of social groups

and political institutions. As self-reliance and entrepreneurship became a widespread ethos of the “homo neoliberalus”, the concern for the community gradually erodes.³⁴ This “neoliberal incitement to manage oneself as an enterprise” and to prioritise individual rather than collective interests is hardly a background in which bonds of civic friendship will emerge.³⁵ Therefore, pursuing comprehensive liberalisation agendas comes with a cost in terms of social and civic bonds.

This recent tendency to regard “competition as the defining characteristic of human relations” and to treat any attempts to restrain it as “inimical to freedom” is not exclusive to any state or region.³⁶ Yet, it is particularly visible in the EU because the common market actively encourages competition between member states. While the EU has effectively reduced barriers against international trade and investment (through the so-called “negative integration”), it has created very few mechanisms to contain (through “positive integration”) the imbalances that liberalisation brings about.³⁷ As a result, firms can readily relocate within the EU to wherever production costs are lower without considering the social dimension.³⁸ Given this competitive pressure, it should not come as surprise that many Europeans regard one other as rivals rather than fellow citizens. Indeed, fierce competition undermines social empathy and generates fear and anxiety.³⁹ This cross-border distrust is apparent in the attitudes of certain groups of EU workers towards each other. For example, it is telling that an arguable influx of Polish plumbers into the United Kingdom became one of the main themes of the Brexit debates.

The key question is whether these negative social impacts of competition could be contained without fundamentally changing the economic and political system of the EU.⁴⁰ As a few authors have argued, it would be feasible to temper the developments described above by creating a fair transnational competitive environment, particularly in domains such as taxation, labour conditions and social rights.⁴¹ However, it should be noted that the EU has had a dual face in this regard. On the one hand, EU competition policy is “perhaps the most supranational of all EU policies and has become something of a flagship for the EU”.⁴² Competition policy’s prominence has translated into extensive efforts to create a *level playing field* – that is, “a set of common rules and standards that are used primarily to prevent businesses in one country undercutting their rivals in other countries”.⁴³ On the other hand, the EU’s understanding of a level playing field has failed to include a robust social dimension. While in areas such as state aid monitoring, cartel prohibition and environment protection, the EU has set common principles that effectively regulate interstate competition, national governments are still allowed to independently adopt their labour laws, including minimum wages and severance payments. This prerogative leaves room for

the member states to seek to increase their competitiveness by cutting social rights and benefits, thus reinforcing the competitive behaviour of workers within the common market.

Now, if the EU aims at comprehensively levelling the playing field, it should bring the social dimension into play. This step would be fundamental in creating a fair competitive environment among member states with contrasting fiscal capacities and different competitive advantages in the global value chain. A *social* level playing field, understood as a set of common standards in the domains of labour and social policy, would significantly contribute to alleviating the competitive pressure within the EU. For example, establishing this “social minimum” across the EU would no longer allow transnational companies “to playoff member states against each other when it comes to their investment decisions”.⁴⁴ By containing predatory behaviour between member states, the EU would leave its citizens less exposed to the volatility of trade and investment, potentially making them less distrustful of one other.⁴⁵ Prioritising the development of more cooperative economic relations (rather than competitive ones) could also help address the resentment of those who feel left behind by the processes of economic integration.⁴⁶ If combined with appropriate measures to reduce socioeconomic inequalities, as described in the next section, such developments could pave the way to the creation of stronger social bonds between EU citizens.

How, then, do we create such a level playing field? As I have argued elsewhere, a key instrument to serve this purpose would be an EU labour code.⁴⁷ An EU labour code would set minimum standards regarding the working conditions in the common market, including a coordinated minimum wage and minimum severance payments. To ensure contrasting price levels across the Union are accommodated, the minimum wage could be defined as a percentage of the median national income, and minimum severance payments could be set in terms of a given number of monthly salaries. Despite being significant, the challenges linked to the harmonisation of labour rules would not be markedly more substantial than in other policy areas, such as trade policy, where cross-border diversity had been high before the Europeanisation of policies took place. In fact, other multilevel polities, including Germany and Belgium, have federal labour rules. The current diversity of national labour markets and social welfare regimes within the EU could be accommodated by allowing member states to grant additional rights and benefits to their workers, provided that the common minimum standards are fulfilled. This regulatory diversity suggests that the EU labour code is feasible, depending mainly on political will. In this regard, member states have shown encouraging signs of openness to advance the debate on a coordinated minimum wage.⁴⁸

This policy proposal could strengthen civic friendship in the EU by mitigating the social effects of international competitive pressure.⁴⁹ Indeed, an EU labour code would allow member states and their citizens to develop more cooperative economic and social relations instead of taking fierce competition for granted. More specifically, an EU labour code would prevent member states from competing against each other on minimum wages and ease to fire workers, thereby setting moral boundaries to the logic of competition that currently invades “almost all domains of our existence”.⁵⁰ This proposal would not necessarily adversely affect the productivity in the member states, given that it would likely prompt them to compete on other dimensions beyond labour costs, including innovation and product quality. By acknowledging that competitiveness and human well-being are “rival orders of worth”, the EU would step towards creating a socioeconomic environment more akin to developing bonds between citizens and pursuing the common good.⁵¹

Reducing socioeconomic inequalities in the EU

Creating a social level playing field is crucial, yet insufficient to strengthen the bonds of civic friendship within the EU. To achieve this goal, the EU needs to improve not only the rules of the common market but also its outcomes, notably by reducing socioeconomic inequalities among EU citizens. As has been reported extensively, inequalities have been increasing steadily in several Western democracies.⁵² While EU membership has contributed significantly to improving the socioeconomic outlook of the member states, the path towards socioeconomic convergence has slowed since the early 2000s.⁵³ Thus, according to the Eurostat, “[t]he dispersion in GDP per capita across the EU Member States is quite remarkable”.⁵⁴ For example, in 2020, Denmark’s GDP per capita was twice that of Slovakia.⁵⁵ Larger still was the gap between Bulgaria and Luxembourg, the latter’s GDP per capita being four times that of the former.⁵⁶ At the same time, in 2019, “[s]evere material deprivation rates ranged from 1.3 % in Luxembourg, 1.8 % in Sweden and 2.4 % in Finland, to 14.5 % in Romania, 16.2 % in Greece and 19.9 % in Bulgaria”.⁵⁷ While the period of economic growth following the sovereign debt crisis has generally improved the welfare indicators within the EU, “the rising tide of the post-crisis recovery has not lifted all citizens equally”.⁵⁸

This evolution is not entirely surprising. Since the pioneering works of David Ricardo, most economists have argued that free trade and investment increase the *aggregate wealth* of nations compared to a scenario of protectionism.⁵⁹ However, it has also been highlighted that liberalisation has adversely affected income and wealth distributions where it has not been

combined with appropriate redistributive policies.⁶⁰ While many individuals find new and better jobs in the flourishing sectors of an open economy, others lose theirs since their old businesses struggled in the global markets. This distributional pattern mainly tends to harm the most vulnerable individuals, namely low-skilled workers.⁶¹ To ensure a smooth transition to an increasingly open economy, governments need to invest large sums in assisting unemployed citizens and equipping them with new skills. However, the budgetary capacity to perform this task is highly unequal among member states. This imbalance has only been worsened by the sovereign debt crisis, which affected member states asymmetrically. While it is true that the distressed member states have received structural funds to address these imbalances, it is now clear that the EU convergence instruments will need to be scaled up if they are to temper socioeconomic inequalities.

Yet, we might ask, why is inequality problematic from the standpoint of civic friendship? As has rightly been pointed out, economic inequalities undermine social cohesion.⁶² An enlightening explanation of this link can already be found in ancient Greek political theory. For example, Plato illustrated the disruptive effects of inequality by referring to a city-state with sharp class divides. As he put it, “[s]uch a city should of necessity be not one, but two, a city of the rich and a city of the poor, dwelling together, and always plotting against one another”.⁶³ Indeed, the widening gap between the rich and the poor may generate sub-groups in the demos with irreconcilable interests and goals. This fragmentation of civil society makes it harder for citizens to develop a concern for the common good. As inequalities continue to rise, a civic ethos according to which citizens were bound to take care of each other – particularly the most vulnerable – has been replaced by a merit-based paradigm whereby individuals are presented as solely responsible for their own fates.⁶⁴ Hence, failing to redistribute may erode the spirit of mutual concern and assistance between the members of the polity. While the issue of how much socioeconomic inequality should be tolerated in an egalitarian society has been a matter of much controversy, there is a growing consensus that the dramatic effects of inequality ought to be addressed.⁶⁵

Another undesirable outcome which has been associated with high levels of inequality is a decline in democratic life. A key explanation for this link is that economic inequality translates into political inequality in a variety of ways.⁶⁶ First, privileged citizens have better access to those tools that are instrumental to effective democratic participation. For instance, they typically benefit from better access to education and high-quality sources of information. Second, unequal resources lead to contrasting abilities to influence policymaking. For instance, well-funded interest groups can hire well-connected strategists and lobbyists to shape impactfully the political agenda. Third, wealthy citizens have better chances of exercising fully their democratic rights. For instance,

they can hire an experienced lawyer to ensure the fulfilment of a particular civil or social right. In these and similar ways, wealthy citizens are usually in a better position to make their voices heard and to shape the outcomes of the decision-making processes. These contrasting opportunities to take part in democratic life have generated disillusionment and distrust in democratic institutions across the Western world and have prevented citizens from recognising one another as equal members of the demos.⁶⁷

The impact of economic inequality on civic relations is particularly apparent in the EU polity. An extreme but quite revealing case is the inter-state negotiations regarding the Greek bailouts between 2010 and 2015. Given the lack of economic resources to address the sovereign debt crisis, the Greek government was forced to accept the harsh conditions imposed by the other member states in exchange for financial assistance. The austerity measures included dramatic cuts in pensions, unemployment benefits and healthcare provision. As a result, material deprivation in Greece skyrocketed “at a time when other countries like Germany continued to prosper”.⁶⁸ Facing a “humiliating deal” and a “humanitarian crisis”, many Greek citizens felt that the EU had left them behind.⁶⁹ Furthermore, they thought that they did not have a voice in EU decision-making. Indeed, despite the efforts of the Greek government to negotiate a more balanced deal, most EU governments showed a lack of flexibility to engage with the Greek concerns.⁷⁰ Thus, Greece was part of “what is perhaps the most intrusive and demanding contract between an advanced nation and its creditors since the Second World War”.⁷¹ Given the pervasive disparities within the EU, both socio-economic and political inequalities may continue to set EU citizens apart.

How, then, can inequality be addressed in the EU? As I have suggested, the existing instruments of cohesion policy are insufficient. Indeed, the dynamics of “creative destruction”, which are inherent to contexts of free trade and investment, recurrently generate a need to assist large groups of workers through demanding economic transitions.⁷² Such sectoral restructuring requires policymakers to develop policy instruments with sufficient firepower to act quickly and decisively on emerging inequalities. In recent years, a few promising proposals have been put forward, offering alternative (and possibly complementary) paths to reduce inequalities in the EU. Consider, for example, the following proposals: (i) creating a universal basic income for all EU citizens; (ii) launching a sizeable social investment programme to upgrade EU workers’ skills; and (iii) creating an autonomous European Monetary Fund to assist member states in need, which would replace the existing intergovernmental European Stability Mechanism.⁷³ Despite their relative advantages and shortcomings, which cannot be discussed here, each of these proposals has the potential to promote socio-economic equality among EU citizens.⁷⁴

How might one (or several) of these proposals be implemented? Perhaps the most critical feasibility question at stake is how to obtain the large sums required to finance proposals of this size. In Chapter 3, I argued that an EU corporate tax should be launched to boost the financial resources available to the Union. An EU corporate tax would give the EU an appropriate budgetary capacity to fight inequalities.⁷⁵ Part of the funds collected could be allocated to redistributive programmes at the EU level. Moreover, it would be normatively desirable because it would be linked to the wealth generated by the common market.⁷⁶ Furthermore, an EU corporate tax would seem more politically feasible than other alternatives that imply direct taxation of EU citizens. The prospects of the proposal would likely be boosted if the tax were initially set at a very low rate (it could always be increased at a later stage, political conditions permitting). In sum, with enhanced fiscal autonomy, EU institutions would have the means to engage with ambitious policies to promote social cohesion and ensure that all EU citizens stand on equal footing. Policy in this direction would strengthen the bonds of civic friendship within the Union.

Creating more opportunities for citizens' participation

Redistributing the gains of the common market is crucial to equip citizens with the necessary resources to be equal members of the EU demos. However, citizens will only be able to take part in the governing of the Union if EU institutions are open to civil society. In this regard, the EU democracy faces at least two structural challenges. First, as I suggested in Chapter 4, the opportunities for citizens to participate in EU institutions are scarce. Except for the European Parliament, none of the EU institutions is directly elected by EU citizens. The instruments to collect the input of citizens throughout the EU policymaking process are equally limited, thus creating a widespread feeling that EU institutions are detached from EU citizens.⁷⁷ Second, the opportunities to participate at the EU level that do exist have little effect. For instance, the European Citizens Initiatives (ECI) – an instrument created by the Treaty of Lisbon that allows citizens to present policy proposals to EU institutions – has achieved minimal policy impact. Indeed, by 2018, only four out of the 67 ECIs launched had been successful.⁷⁸ These limited chances to be meaningfully involved in shared political institutions translate into a lack of an appropriate context where civic bonds could emerge.

Note that strengthening the opportunities for political participation may foster civic friendship in a variety of ways. First, political participation allows citizens to perceive themselves as equal members of a self-governing demos. For example, many citizens have described the act of voting as an

impactful experience that generates a sense of belonging to a political community.⁷⁹ Second, participation creates much-needed platforms for citizens to engage with one another and form a common will, particularly when translated into initiatives of deliberative democracy. Indeed, by exchanging ideas and concerns and discussing alternative proposals, citizens frequently develop an understanding of one another's needs as well as mutual concern. To illustrate the point, consider the famous charette (community meeting) organised by the local government in Durham, North Carolina, in 1971, in which a group of black and white citizens agreed on measures to tackle segregation in local schools after ten days of intense discussions, which later became the subject of a book and major motion picture *The Best of Enemies* (2019).⁸⁰ Third, participatory initiatives that have a visible follow-up (i.e., that are translated into concrete policy outcomes) empower citizens to achieve real change by acting together as a body of citizens. Consider, for instance, the impact of the participatory budget of Paris on the daily lives of many citizens.⁸¹

In opposition, the scarcity of opportunities to participate meaningfully may generate two types of political behaviour that undermine civic friendship. On the one hand, the disconnection of citizens from political institutions may produce *political apathy*, understood as a lack of interest in political matters. Indeed, if citizens develop a perception that their preferences and views are recurrently overlooked – either because they lack the chance to express them in the public sphere or because their participation does not impact policymaking in any meaningful way – they may give up on getting involved in public affairs. Any prolonged attenuation in citizen participation will lead steadily to a decline in democratic life and the erosion of civic bonds.⁸² At the other extreme, civic disengagement may generate *political radicalism*. Indeed, “there is growing anger among people who feel excluded from influence and decision making”.⁸³ This feeling of disempowerment may lead citizens to adopt radical views and to support extremist political parties that challenge civic and political rights on the grounds of building a “true democracy”.⁸⁴ Facing an increasingly polarised public sphere, citizens may become increasingly unable to engage with one another and bridge their different positions and worldviews. Both types of behaviour – apathy and radicalism – clearly jeopardise civic friendship.

While participatory citizenship has become a recurrent topic in the discourse of EU officials in recent years, the concrete measures to increase participation in EU institutions have been somewhat disappointing. For example, in 2013, the EU launched the European Year of Citizens, which aimed at raising awareness about “the rights linked to moving to and living in other EU countries”.⁸⁵ However, the issue of how EU citizens could play a more active role in EU policymaking remained largely unaddressed. In

turn, the Juncker Commission put forward new rules for the functioning of the ECIs to increase their impact. Yet the fundamental principle underlying this consultation mechanism, according to which the Commission has discretionary power to decide on whether to follow up on the citizens' proposals, remained unchanged. A few years later, as I mentioned above, the Von der Leyen Commission launched the Conference on the Future of Europe, presenting it as a tool that would turn the EU into a deliberative democracy. However, this initiative committed to achieving a limited degree of policy impact – namely, producing “a report with recommendations for EU institutions”.⁸⁶ These developments suggest that the rhetoric regarding the improvement of political participation at the EU level has not been matched with appropriate opportunities to participate in EU policymaking.

How could this state of affairs be remedied? Three proposals presented in Chapter 4 could empower EU citizens to participate more actively in the governing of EU institutions. First, by directly electing the presidents of the European Commission and the European Council, EU citizens would have a chance to choose between alternative political visions for the EU polity. While more frequent elections will not be enough to create a vibrant EU democracy, they are certainly one of its indispensable components. Second, upgrading the role of the Commission Representations in the EU capitals could trigger a more engaging debate about EU policies at the local level. Under my proposal, the Representations would regularly launch participatory initiatives aimed at collecting citizens' input regarding the Commission's legislative proposals, and they would be responsible for providing citizens with follow-ups. Third, the creation of an EU Citizens' Assembly would offer EU citizens an opportunity to shape the political debate at the supranational level. This assembly would have significant agenda-setting competences, notably the power to insert discussion points in the agenda of the ministerial meetings of the Council of the European Union. Subsequently, the Council could decide to ask the Commission to present concrete legislative proposals following the citizens' suggestions, and it would be required to report to the Citizens' Assembly on the outcome of its discussions.

These and similar instruments could create a background of civic engagement in which civic friendship and a concern for the common good of the whole EU could more easily flourish. As I have suggested, the EU should explore ambitious democratic innovations, understood as “institutions that have been specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process”.⁸⁷ By participating in EU institutions more actively, EU citizens might more easily connect to one another and might feel that they have a real say in EU policymaking. Enhanced participation would also give citizens a chance to engage with different perspectives on EU integration and to develop a better understanding of

each other's needs and concerns. This engagement could make the EU more resilient towards the challenges against EU values discussed in Chapter 2. Indeed, "by involving people and empowering them to shape their own futures, we can share responsibility and rediscover the value and pleasure of working and learning together, cooperating in mutual organisations and renewing the bonds of solidarity which make us all stronger".⁸⁸ This path could make the idea of a "Citizens' Union" a reality.⁸⁹

Reducing barriers to freedom of movement

As I have argued, a critical condition for civic friendship to flourish in the EU is that citizens interact with each other. Yet this refers not only to political participation through shared institutions but also to daily life. Citizens who live abroad for at least a certain period have the chance to interact regularly with citizens from another nationality and to build transnational ties. As has been pointed out, learning from and engaging with the "Other" reduces the fear of the unknown and generates mutual trust.⁹⁰

Experience of mobility and regular time spent in other European countries is therefore critical for an EU in which a significant degree of prejudice and mistrust exists across borders, undermining the emergence of stronger civic bonds.⁹¹ While the digital transformation has allowed for new forms of remote interaction, studying and working abroad remain unique ways to experience how much individuals have in common. Indeed, interstate mobility contributes to the construction of shared social imaginaries, and it impacts the way in which citizens perceive their own identities. Accordingly, "people who tend to think of themselves as Europeans are people who are more likely to interact with others across Europe".⁹² Furthermore, living abroad allows for the development of language skills, which facilitates communication between fellow EU citizens. For these reasons, free movers have been rightly described as "pioneers of European integration".⁹³

While the European Commission has made significant efforts to facilitate the mobility of people within the EU in the last decades, the share of mobile EU citizens remains relatively low.⁹⁴ Indeed, in 2020, only 3.3 % of EU citizens of working age resided in a member state other than that of their primary citizenship.⁹⁵ These figures compare poorly to other multilevel polities, such as the United States, where interstate mobility of workers remains higher than 10% despite the recent downward trend.⁹⁶ It should be noted that geographical mobility is considerably higher among university students, where an average of 10% of the students enrolled in degree-awarding programmes of tertiary education in the EU are from another member state.⁹⁷ However, the majority of young EU citizens do not pursue a degree in higher education, which reduces the impact of the previous figure.⁹⁸ In turn,

the renowned Erasmus exchange programme, which Kristine Mitchel has rightly dubbed “a civic experience”, covers just 1.1% of tertiary students in the EU.⁹⁹ This limited degree of mobility of EU workers and students is somewhat striking, particularly if we take into account that “Europeans consistently rate (in Eurobarometer surveys) their rights of free movement as the most important benefit of EU membership ... and around a third claim to be ready to move abroad if the opportunity and demand arose”.¹⁰⁰

Why is mobility relatively low in a Union where physical borders have for long been removed? There may be strong sociological and psychological reasons, including family ties, cultural distance and language barriers. However, it should also be emphasised that many administrative barriers make the establishment of EU citizens in other member states potentially difficult. For instance, a recent study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has concluded that “courts in different countries vary in the interpretation of the key EU’s provisions regulating EU citizens’ rights”.¹⁰¹ For example, narrow interpretations by the national courts of concepts in the EU directives, such as “family member” and “sufficient resources”, may hinder workers and their families from moving abroad. Regarding students, several scholarships from national authorities are only available to those pursuing studies in national institutions. Furthermore, there are heavy administrative burdens linked to steps as basic as opening a bank account abroad, enrolling in a local employment centre and registering a foreign car. This is due to demanding legal and evidentiary requirements, inefficient communication between national administrations and lack of information. These barriers seriously restrict free movement.

Many of these barriers could be eliminated, or at least reduced, if appropriate public policies were set in place. In this regard, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights has listed a number of proposals that could lead to a more consistent implementation of EU legislation on freedom of movement. First, an official and regularly updated handbook on freedom of movement for legal practitioners would help to disseminate significant developments concerning the case law of the CJEU and would provide clear guidance regarding interpretation. Having this information to hand would be crucial given that “the interpretation of certain provisions and terms by national courts differs not only across member states, but sometimes also within the same jurisdiction”.¹⁰² Second, the Commission could create a community of practice that shares difficult challenges and workable solutions related to freedom of movement. This policy could be complemented by “strengthening the assistance provided to member states to exchange information on national jurisprudence and approaches between courts and public administration”.¹⁰³ Finally, in cooperation with the national administrations, the Commission could organise

“more intensive and systematic training of legal professionals, in particular judges and public officials responsible for the directive’s application in EU member states”.¹⁰⁴

In turn, an EU-wide programme of administrative simplification concerning information exchange could significantly reduce the existing barriers against freedom of movement. For instance, the launch of an EU citizen identification card backed by shared information systems and accepted everywhere in the EU would allow for a swift exchange of data between national administrations. By presenting this ID card, EU citizens could easily demonstrate in any member state that, for example, they are single or married, have a clean criminal record, and have paid taxes in another member state. This policy move would shift the administrative burden from the mobile EU citizen – who presently moves from shop to shop to obtain and validate a variety of documents – to the national administrations, which would communicate directly with one other. An EU citizen card along these lines could be created by an intergovernmental agreement and implemented by the European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. To increase the feasibility of this proposal, national administrations could foresee different stages of information sharing, starting with basic personal data and gradually covering critical areas related to free movement such as taxation, social security coordination, registry of vehicles and criminal records. While this would be a challenging project, successful experiences such as the EU driver’s licence and the COVID-19 vaccination pass suggest that it could be realised.

Regarding the mobility of students, a significant step to increase interstate mobility would be granting more financial resources to the European Education Area (EEA). Through effective instruments such as the Bologna process and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, the EEA has contributed significantly to increasing coordination across national educational systems and reducing technical barriers against the mobility of students. However, the resources of the EEA are currently limited. While the overall funding for the Erasmus Plus programme, which provides financial support to mobile students, has increased under the Multiannual Framework 2021–2027, the amount of its individual grants is clearly insufficient to cover the living expenses in many of the destination countries.¹⁰⁵ This shortfall is problematic given that studying abroad is typically a costly endeavour. In addition, the promising “Erasmus Plus Master Degree Loans” – EU-guaranteed loans to pursue a master’s degree abroad with favourable repayment terms – are only available to citizens residing in four member states.¹⁰⁶ This limitation means that many students do not have access to appropriate financial resources to study abroad. Hence, increasing the value of Erasmus grants and expanding the scope of the Master Degree

Loans programme would create better conditions for the mobility of students in the EU.

While a few scholars have also drawn attention to some disintegrative effects of freedom of movement, the latter could be remedied by strengthening of the social level playing field and reducing socioeconomic inequalities in the EU, as discussed above. Drawing on the key role played by freedom of movement in the Brexit debates, it has been argued that citizens who do not travel regularly nor emigrate may feel left behind in their countries of origin and may regard free movers as competitors for jobs and social benefits.¹⁰⁷ Yet it should be noted that, according to a 2023 Eurobarometer survey, this segment of citizens is currently relatively small. In fact, 89% of the EU citizens claim to personally benefit from free movement, and 83% recognise its overall benefits for the economy.¹⁰⁸ Regarding the 15% of the EU citizens that consider that free movement is economically harmful, their perception could be changed if appropriate measures were taken to better distribute its benefits. As suggested above, equipping the EU with a stronger social dimension could help address the resentment of those who feel let down by the process of economic integration. Therefore, improving the standards of freedom of movement is certainly preferable than curtailing it.

The potential impact of these measures on the level of civic friendship in the EU should not be underestimated. As Jacques Delors has famously put it, “nobody can fall in love with the single market”.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, “cognitive mobilisation” towards the EU, understood as a “rational” endorsement of the process of EU integration on the grounds of the mutual benefits that it generates, is hardly sufficient to enhance transnational bonds.¹¹⁰ In this regard, the mobility of people has the potential to promote gradually the “Europeanisation of everyday life”.¹¹¹ It has a transformational effect not only on those who cross national borders but also on their families and friends who indirectly share their experiences. Furthermore, free movement impacts all those who “may have seriously considered the matter, plan to do so in the future or see mobility as an option for their children”.¹¹² As has been noted, “[t]he impact of such a high share of individuals potentially imagining futures that transcend national borders should not be underestimated as a factor influencing what EU citizenship currently is and what it will be in the future”.¹¹³ Combined with enhanced participation in EU institutions, free movement could make the experience of being an EU citizen essentially about engaging with social and civic relations beyond member states borders.

Launching a common curriculum on EU citizenship

An additional strategy to promote civic friendship in the EU would be launching a transnational course on EU citizenship to be offered in every

school in the EU. To understand the logic behind this proposal, I should begin by mentioning that many EU citizens possess limited knowledge of the functioning of EU institutions and the opportunities to participate in EU decision-making. For example, some EU citizens have never heard of the European Council or the European Commission.¹¹⁴ More strikingly, nearly half (44%) of Europeans claim not to understand how the EU works.¹¹⁵ Undoubtedly, such a state of affairs is at least partially explained by the complexity of the EU political system. The constellation of institutional arrangements at the supranational and intergovernmental level is not always easy to grasp, even for experts. Consider, for instance, the diversity of rules and procedures underpinning the single market, the Eurozone and the Schengen Area. However, the fact that what member states “teach about Europe continues to vary” and that “this variation is not just superficial” but rather “fundamental” undermines the development of a shared and solid understanding of EU citizenship and interest among citizens to participate jointly in EU institutions.¹¹⁶

This state of affairs is only aggravated by the “menace of nationalism in education”.¹¹⁷ While all EU member states “provide some level of education about Europe and European integration”, it has been argued that the existing educational materials have a bias towards nationalist narratives.¹¹⁸ For example, many history textbooks glorify national heroes and achievements at the expense of adopting a transnational or global approach to historical developments.¹¹⁹ Similarly, in the field of citizenship education, “the way in which citizenship in and of Europe is portrayed in educational texts tends to reflect *national* priorities and *national* understandings of citizenship”.¹²⁰ Thus, the predominance of nation-states vis-à-vis other political communities is presented in many schools not simply as a significant historical fact but as an ultimate telos which is not to be challenged. This social reproduction of a Westphalian imaginary whereby EU citizens are led to regard one another as reluctant “friends” (or even as potential “enemies”) seems to be incompatible with the development of transnational civic bonds.¹²¹ Therefore, in the absence of a suitable environment where EU students can discuss their civic links with the citizens of other member states, they may remain detached from one another and from EU institutions.

Note that a common curriculum on EU citizenship might contribute to the emergence of bonds of civic friendship in the EU in at least two ways. First, it would enable citizens to acquire knowledge and develop competences which are crucial for being politically engaged members of the EU polity.¹²² For instance, EU citizenship education would allow EU citizens to understand better how EU institutions work and to be aware of their rights as EU citizens. Such deep awareness could, in turn, generate a greater interest in EU policy debates at all levels of government while empowering EU

citizens to stand up for crucial rights linked to EU citizenship status, such as freedom of movement and non-discrimination.

Second, EU citizenship education might boost civic friendship by promoting the mutual recognition of individuals from different member states as fellow citizens and by encouraging them to shape the future of the Union collaboratively.¹²³ For instance, the common curriculum could include a simulation of a session of the EU Citizens' Assembly in which each student would be asked to present the policy perspective of a citizen from a given member state.¹²⁴ This and similar activities would allow individuals to put themselves in one another's shoes, thus experiencing the diversity of standpoints within the EU and the need to compromise for the sake of the common good.

How could the proposal for a common curriculum on EU citizenship be implemented? A number of practical concerns and objections would undoubtedly be raised. First, it should be noted that education is mainly a national and, in some cases, regional competence.¹²⁵ How, then, could a common curriculum be adopted in the current configuration of competences of the EU multilevel polity? Second, how could 27 member states with diverse educational systems and different perspectives on European integration agree on a common curriculum? What body should be responsible for deciding its content and format? Third, what if it were impossible to reach an agreement on this between *all* member states? For instance, the fact that the notion of EU citizenship is contested casts doubt on whether member states would be willing to agree on the content of a transnational curriculum. Should member states nonetheless be forced to adopt the EU curriculum? Finally, it may be argued that a common curriculum would be perceived as social engineering imposed by Brussels seeking to inculcate an attachment to EU institutions among young generations. How could this initiative avoid the charge of arbitrarily replacing the ideology of nationalism with that of federalism?

These are important questions, which I can only address by providing a few general guidelines. To begin with, I should note that the feasibility prospects of this proposal would certainly be higher if member states were allowed to retain control of education policy, as opposed to a scenario which would require delegation of powers to the Commission.¹²⁶ Accordingly, this curriculum should be designed and adopted in an intergovernmental format without the need to change the distribution of competences currently foreseen in the EU treaties. Regarding the development of concrete proposals, national governments could jointly set up a panel of teachers, experts, activists and other relevant profiles that would include representatives of all member states.¹²⁷ The proposals issued by the panel would be discussed between the national authorities and eventually agreed upon at an intergovernmental

conference. Given the intergovernmental character of this process, member states would retain an option to opt out of the common curriculum. In the event of a small group of member states strongly opposing this initiative, it could still be adopted by a majority of the member states, similarly to what has applied to the Schengen area and the Eurozone. The remaining member states would be allowed to join at a later stage if they so wished. Member states would retain full autonomy regarding the contents and format of all other subjects of their curricula.

The question of whether an EU curriculum would recruit a sufficient level of support among national governments and EU citizens would most likely depend on its specific shape. To begin with, the idea of citizenship education should not be controversial as such. While curricula feature much diversity within the Union, most member states already offer some sort of citizenship education, even if not in the specific format of a compulsory separate subject.¹²⁸ In turn, the fact that the meaning of EU citizenship has not been crystallised would not necessarily raise a challenge, at least if the common curriculum aimed at stimulating an open debate among students. In this sense, EU citizenship education should not be merely informative; rather, it should allow for critical approaches.¹²⁹ Indeed, a curriculum fostering critical thinking about EU affairs could not be fairly charged with merely fabricating support for the EU. In fact, if framed as part of a broader agenda to address the democratic deficit in the EU, this initiative could recruit support from a broad range of national stakeholders. While this proposal would not automatically bring EU citizens closer to one another, it would constitute a step forward, particularly if it could be linked to other relevant experiences for young citizens, such as the European Solidarity Corps and the Erasmus programme.

Increasing defence cooperation in the EU

The last proposal presented in this chapter consists of increasing defence cooperation in the EU, more specifically by developing a legal framework and military capabilities which would allow member states to react together effectively to an attack against any member state. Yet, in what sense can readiness for battle be regarded as a component of civic friendship? Recall that the definition of civic friendship that I presented at the beginning of this chapter included a reference to “mutual defence and support”. This link between civic ties and the defence domain might raise justifiable concerns if we conceive “defence” broadly to include, for instance, military operations aimed at expanding a country’s territory. Yet the connection seems far more apparent when we narrow it down to cases of “defence from external aggression”. Consider, for example, an unjust military strike against

an EU member state.¹³⁰ If EU citizens care about one another's fate, they will perceive an attack against any member state as an offensive against the whole EU polity. They would not be mere bystanders of such aggression but promptly assist their fellow citizens. This observation suggests that civic friendship and collective security are connected.¹³¹

Yet how exactly is this link generated? What seems to trigger civic friendship is not so much the experience of taking up arms together, which hardly takes place in a politically stable region, but the (more or less explicit) commitment by citizens to defend one another from hypothetical threats.¹³² While early nationalist movements drew heavily on warfare and national defence rituals such as military conscription to advance their agenda, modern democracies tend to regard the bond of mutual assistance rather as a pledge to act together in difficult times.¹³³ This *willingness* to assist others and the *expectation* of receiving assistance may indeed create mutual trust and a sense of reciprocity between fellow citizens. Note that the fact that a particular region is politically stable and that citizens do not perceive security threats as imminent does not imply that they are indifferent to the prospect of being assisted in case of need. While there has been some scepticism in the West regarding the pursuit of defence activities since the end of the Cold War, public support for security tends to increase whenever a serious threat presents itself. Such a concern with security is clear in the EU, where Eurobarometer surveys have shown that "the majority of the EU's citizens want more security, stability and a coordinated EU response to current threats".¹³⁴

Yet would bonds of mutual assistance along these lines be feasible in the EU polity? In fact, this variety of transnational solidarity has been recurrent in European history. Unlike other policy domains where the resistance against multilateralism has been strong, nations have frequently sought military alliances beyond national borders. Indeed, the creation of "security communities" preceded that of many other forms of regional integration.¹³⁵ While it is true that many presumable allies behave opportunistically, several alliances have remained remarkably stable in time.¹³⁶ Note that the belief that a given group of states will stand united in dangerous times may create lasting bonds between peoples, even if they are politically and culturally very diverse. Consider, for instance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which has been the main framework to promote security in Europe in the last decades. Incidentally, the formation of alliances such as NATO has proved to be an effective deterrent to armed conflict.¹³⁷ While a commitment to mutual assistance may not be enough to generate civic friendship between EU citizens, it seems hard to conceive of civic friendship in the EU in the absence of such a reciprocal commitment, particularly given the security challenges faced by the Union.

Indeed, the EU faces “multiple security threats”.¹³⁸ To begin with, the unpredictable behaviour of Russia in recent years has cast a shadow of uncertainty along the EU’s eastern border. Despite the diplomatic efforts by the EU institutions and its member states, Russia unlawfully occupied large parts of the Donbas region and annexed Crimea in 2014, and it launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Furthermore, its armed forces have conducted large-scale military drills next to the borders of the Baltic states and Poland. This activity has raised the fear that one or a few of these member states could be Russia’s next target.¹³⁹ At the same time, the political instability in northern Africa and the Middle East, particularly in Libya and Syria, has triggered not only a dramatic migration crisis but also a pervasive terrorist threat against the EU. In fact, in 2019, the EU was the target of 21 jihadist attacks, after 24 attacks in 2018 and 33 attacks in 2017.¹⁴⁰ Several member states have suffered significant civilian casualties, which generated a climate of fear and insecurity among citizens. Furthermore, the steady militarisation of several non-EU states and the emergence of new forms of warfare, notably cyberterrorism, has only increased the level of uncertainty. Therefore, “[t]he evolving international stage spells worrying scenarios for the EU, with dark clouds of insecurity and geostrategic competition building on many fronts”.¹⁴¹

While NATO has been a critical framework to address security challenges in Europe, this key defence alliance is not enough to ensure that EU citizens mutually assist one other in case of need. First, it should be noted that, at the time of writing, five EU member states are not NATO members.¹⁴² This means that millions of EU citizens are not formally bound to aid one other. Second, the retreat of the United States from global security during Donald Trump’s presidency revealed the extent of the EU’s exposure to policy shifts in Washington. While President Biden has restored close cooperation with America’s Western allies, the fact that the security of EU citizens relies to a large extent on the armed forces of the United States remains a serious liability. Third, not all non-EU NATO members have good relations with the EU member states. Consider, for instance, the tensions between Turkey and Cyprus. Conflict between them could lead to a scenario in which NATO would not be able to provide a military response or even in which EU states would find themselves on opposite sides of a conflict.¹⁴³ It should be added that EU enlargement in the Balkans may further complicate this puzzle. All this suggests that, even if the NATO framework is crucial to ensure Europe’s security, the member states should enhance defence cooperation at the EU level.

How, then, could EU defence cooperation be increased? This goal could be achieved in two ways: (i) by adopting a more ambitious EU legal framework for mutual defence and (ii) by strengthening the joint capabilities of

the armed forces of the member states, enabling them to respond together to serious threats. Regarding the EU legal framework, it should be acknowledged that a clause of the TEU asserts that member states are obliged to assist a fellow member state that has been “a victim of armed aggression on its territory”.¹⁴⁴ However, the article does not specify that *military* assistance is required in such cases. More strikingly, the EU lacks a formal procedure to activate this article, meaning that any assistance would need to be agreed bilaterally between member states. Therefore, creating a formal procedure to implement the mutual defence clause provides the guarantee that EU citizens will assist one another in the event of external aggression. While this proposal would likely face resistance from the traditionally “neutral” member states, the efforts to bring it to light would have a chance to succeed given the deteriorating context of EU security mentioned above and the increasing openness expressed by key EU security actors to work together in the field of defence.¹⁴⁵

In terms of enhancing the joint defence capabilities, an essential step forward would be reducing the fragmentation of the EU defence landscape, thus allowing national armed forces to work together more effectively. This point can be illustrated by comparing a few figures concerning the equipment of the US armed forces to that of the EU polity as a whole. For example, while the US Army operates only one main type of battle tank, the EU operates 17; while the US Navy uses four types of destroyers and frigates, the EU uses 29; while the US Air Force employs six types of fighter planes, the EU employs 20.¹⁴⁶ This wide range of equipment in the EU limits dramatically interoperability – that is, the ability of the armed forces of the member states to operate together on the battlefield in case of need. This state of affairs not only reflects the lack of alignment of strategic priorities but is also linked to the fact that “around 80% of defence procurement is run on a purely national basis”.¹⁴⁷ Note that the inefficiency resulting from the “lack of cooperation between member states in the field of security and defence is estimated to cost between €25 billion and €100 billion every year”.¹⁴⁸ These resources should be allocated to joint initiatives, thus promoting higher efficiency of the defence budgets.

These challenges could be at least partially addressed by scaling up the existing EU programmes in defence cooperation. To begin with, the Permanent Structured Cooperation programme (PESCO) has set 20 binding commitments for participatory member states, which include coordinating the levels and categories of defence investments, developing joint defence capabilities, promoting the interoperability of their armed forces and conducting military procurement jointly.¹⁴⁹ While the implementation of these commitments is reviewed on a yearly basis, there has been a “lack of compliance with binding commitments and a limited embedding of PESCO in

national defence-planning processes”.¹⁵⁰ This gap has emerged because the level of transnational cooperation envisioned by PESCO implies a significant change in the organisational culture of the national administrations and armed forces. Therefore, the move towards a more collaborative defence landscape requires a close and constant involvement of the political leadership at the national and EU levels. This requirement suggests that “PESCO implementation will falter unless the agenda of the European Council regularly addresses security and defence issues”.¹⁵¹

In turn, the budget of the European Defence Fund (EDF) could be expanded to support defence cooperation projects at a much higher scale. The main purpose of the EDF is to support research and development of defence technology and equipment to be used jointly by the armed forces of several member states, boosting their ability to operate together in case of need. Accordingly, projects to be funded under the EDF should be highly collaborative and must involve several member states. While the architecture of the EDF creates good incentives for defence cooperation, its current budget is rather limited. Indeed, the EDF’s budget for the period 2021–2027 is only €8 billion – that is, an average of approximately €1 billion per year. This sum is the equivalent of the defence budget of Lithuania in 2020 and is almost 60 times less than Russia’s budget in the same year.¹⁵² By pooling resources at the EU level and increasing the firepower of the EDF, member states would have a stronger incentive to collaborate and strengthen their defence capabilities. Altogether, the measures presented in this section would allow EU citizens to regard themselves as part of an emerging “defence Union”.

Conclusion

I have claimed that civic friendship could be boosted in the EU if appropriate public policies are adopted. I presented six proposals to achieve this end: (i) strengthening the social level playing field in the EU, namely by launching an EU labour code; (ii) reducing socioeconomic inequalities in the EU by distributing more fairly the gains of European integration; (iii) improving the opportunities for citizens’ political participation, through the creation of an EU Citizens Assembly, the launch of direct elections for the presidency of the European Commission and the European Council and by enhancing the role of the Representations of the Commission; (iv) reducing barriers against freedom of movement by eliminating significant administrative, legal and economic burdens; (v) launching a transnational curriculum on EU citizenship education, which would be offered in all EU schools; and (vi) increasing defence cooperation, notably by upgrading the

mutual defence clause between member states and scaling up the Permanent Structured Cooperation and the EDF. These “concrete achievements”, to apply Robert Schuman’s words, could generate a “de facto solidarity between EU citizens”.¹⁵³

Notes

- 1 *Treaty on European Union*, Preamble.
- 2 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York, 1992).
- 3 Robert Schuman, *The Schuman Declaration* (9 May 1950).
- 4 Schuman, *The Schuman Declaration* (9 May 1950).
- 5 In her discussion of how crisis can be regarded as an opportunity to expand EU competences, Paola Gosio cites West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt’s observation in the 1970s that the European Community thrives on crises. See Paola Gosio, “Covid-19 Crisis: An Opportunity for the EU to Expand its Competences in Public Health?”, *The Euroculturer: European Culture, Politics and Society in Focus* (25 February 2021), <https://euroculturer.eu/2021/02/25/covid-19-crisis-an-opportunity-for-the-eu-to-expand-its-competences-in-public-health/> (accessed 5 November 2021).
- 6 See Jennifer Welsh, *The Return of History: Conflict, Migration and Geopolitics in the Twenty-First Century* (Toronto, 2016).
- 7 European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 94: Public Opinion in the European Union* (2021), p. 88.
- 8 European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 94: Public Opinion in the European Union* (2021), p. 88.
- 9 Jason A. Scorza, “Civic Friendship”, *The International Encyclopaedia of Ethics* (2013).
- 10 Michael J. Sandel, *Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?* (London, 2010), p. 263.
- 11 Sibyl A. Schwarzenbach, “On Civic Friendship”, *Ethics* 107 (1996), p. 97.
- 12 Note that standard models of rational choice theory would typically portray this setting as a conflict of interests between prospective net beneficiaries and net funders in which citizens would support whatever option maximises their individual utility. Against this view, I claim that citizens also take into account motives other than self-interest when deciding which policy option they wish to support. For a study that discusses the role of altruism in voting behaviour, see James H. Fowler, “Altruism and Turnout”, *The Journal of Politics* 68 (2006), pp. 674–683.
- 13 As has been argued, the launch of the comprehensive welfare programme in the United Kingdom following the Beveridge Report was only possible due to the spirit of mutual recognition and concern that participation in World War II generated among British citizens. Before the war, such a programme would likely have been politically unfeasible. For a detailed discussion of the context and development of the Beveridge Report, see Jose Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford, 1997).

- 14 Daniel Brudney, “Two Types of Civic Friendship”, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 16 (2013), p. 730.
- 15 Contemporary discussions of civic friendship have typically taken Aristotle’s seminal account as a starting point, seeking either to revive, modernise or emulate it. For Aristotle’s original account, see Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Lesley Brown (Oxford, 2009). For a contemporary theory of civic friendship drawing heavily on Aristotle’s, see Sibyl A. Schwarzenbach, *On Civic Friendship: Including Women in the State* (New York, 2009). For the view that any contemporary conception of civic friendship should break with Aristotle’s account to avoid licensing “illiberal interventions in the lives of citizens in service of some idea of moral improvement”, see R.K. Bentley, “Civic Friendship and Thin Citizenship”, *Res Publica* 19 (2013), pp. 5–19.
- 16 Mihaela Georgieva, “The Forgotten Ideal of Friendship in Modern Political Theory”, *Res Publica* 19 (2013), pp. 95–102.
- 17 Note that, in this chapter I assume that it is preferable to think of civic friendship as a matter of degree (i.e., citizens may have *stronger* or *weaker* bonds of civic friendship), rather than in “either-or” terms (i.e., citizens either have or do not have at all bonds of civic friendship). This is consistent with empirical evidence that certain polities have a more vibrant civic life than others. For an influential discussion, see Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, 1994).
- 18 See, for instance, Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal* (Cambridge MA, 2019) and Michael Sandel, “The Energy of the Brexiteers and Trump Is Born of the Failure of the Elites”, *New Statesman* (13 June 2016), www.newstatesman.com/politics/2016/06/michael-sandel-the-energy-of-the-brexiteers-and-trump-is-born-of-the-failure-of-elites (accessed 3 March 2022).
- 19 Kerry Hoods, “Civic and Cosmopolitan Friendship”, *Res Publica* (2013), p. 81. While cosmopolitan ideals have forcefully challenged the statist conception of civic friendship, many of the existing cosmopolitan accounts leave the critical question of *how* transnational bonds of civic friendship could be created largely unaddressed. A remarkable exception is Hauke Brunkhorst, *Solidarity: From Civic Friendship to a Global Legal Community* (Cambridge MA, 2005).
- 20 For example, Antje Wiener has argued that EU citizenship is a status under construction, in line with the “historical variability of context and contents of citizenship”. However, as William Maas has rightly pointed out, the view that citizenship is “a unitary and homogeneous legal status granted to an individual by a sovereign state” remains dominant. See Antje Wiener, “Assessing the Constructive Potential of Union Citizenship: A Socio-Historical Perspective”, *European Integration Online Papers* 1 (1997) and Willem Maas, “Varieties of Multilevel Citizenship”, in William Maas (ed.), *Multilevel Citizenship* (Philadelphia, 2013).
- 21 David Miller, “Republicanism, National Identity and Europe”, in Cécile Laborde and John Maynor (eds), *Republicanism and Political Theory* (Malden, 2008) p. 155. Italics added.

- 22 For an illustrative discussion focused on the French case, see Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976).
- 23 As I will claim below, socioeconomic inequality may jeopardise democratic life because it usually translates into power inequality.
- 24 See Michael Sandel, *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good?* (New York, 2020).
- 25 Neil Fligstein, “Who are the Europeans and How Does this Matter for Politics”, in Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein (eds), *European Identity* (Cambridge, 2009). As I will explain below, a few scholars have also made a case for certain disintegrative effects of freedom of movement. However, as I will argue, these effects could be remedied through appropriate social policies.
- 26 Jean Tirole, *Economics for the Common Good* (Princeton, 2017), p. 282.
- 27 Claudia Sternberg, Kira Gartzou-Katsouyanni and Kalypso Nicolaidis, *The Greco-German Affair in the Eurocrisis: Mutual Recognition Lost?* (London, 2018).
- 28 It has indeed been argued that a sense of membership of a people is typically built by sharing common everyday life experiences. See Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London, 2014).
- 29 This raises the important question of what an appropriate test for the degree of civic friendship would be. I claim that, in the EU case, indicators of Euroscepticism are acceptable proxies to assess whether EU citizens meet a basic standard of civic friendship. By definition, citizens who do not want to be part of the EU polity clearly lack bonds of civic friendship with one other.
- 30 European Commission, *Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The Commission’s Contribution to the Period of Reflection and Beyond: Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate* (2005).
- 31 See Alberto Alemanno, “EU Citizen Participation ‘in the Union’s Democratic Life’: A Policy and Legal Analysis”, in O. Costa and S. Van Hecke (eds), *The EU Political System After the 2019 European Elections* (Cham, 2023).
- 32 Consider, for instance, Emmanuel Macron’s veto against the opening of EU accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia, clearly targeting the support of conservative voters in France. Macron’s decision has been described as “a historic mistake” from a European perspective. See Financial Times Editorial Board, “Emmanuel Macron’s EU Accession Veto Is a Historic Mistake”, *Financial Times* (21 October 2019), www.ft.com/content/eda39e1e-f3eb-11e9-b018-3ef8794b17c6 (accessed 17 November 2012).
- 33 For an overview, see Julia C. Becker, Lea Hartwich and S. Alexander Haslam, “Neoliberalism Can Reduce Well-Being by Promoting a Sense of Social Disconnection, Competition, and Loneliness”, *British Journal of Social Psychology* 60 (2021), pp. 947–965.
- 34 Thomas Teo, “Homo Neoliberalus: From Personality to Forms of Subjectivity”, *Theory & Psychology* 28 (2018), pp. 581–599.
- 35 Christina Scharff, “The Psychic Life of Neoliberalism: Mapping the Contours of Entrepreneurial Subjectivity”, *Theory, Culture & Society* 33 (2016), p. 109.

- 36 George Monbiot, “Neoliberalism – The Ideology at the Root of All Our Problems”, *The Guardian* (15 April 2016), www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/15/neoliberalism-ideology-problem-george-monbiot (accessed 1 December 2021).
- 37 See F.W. Scharpf, “The European Social Model: Coping with the Challenges of Diversity”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40 (2002), pp. 645–670.
- 38 The effects of business relocation are hardly covered by public programmes. While the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers and the European Social Fund aim to address this problem, they have limited resources and they face serious constraints in the types of assistance that can be provided to distressed firms and workers.
- 39 Richard Sennet, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (New York, 1998).
- 40 As I explained in the introduction, this book follows a practice-dependence approach – that is, it takes the EU *as it is* as its starting point with the purpose of providing practical guidance to policymakers and increasing the feasibility of its proposals. Accordingly, in this section I discuss strategies to promote *incremental change* (e.g., how to reform capitalism in the EU), as opposed to more *radical alternatives* (e.g., how to replace capitalism by a better system). Of course, an argument could also be made to promote such fundamental transformation.
- 41 See, for instance, Mathias Risse and Gabriel Wollner, *On Trade Justice: A Philosophical Plea for a New Global Deal* (Oxford, 2019) and Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work* (London, 2006).
- 42 Michelle Cini and Lee McGowan, *Competition Policy in the European Union* (Basingstoke, 2009), p. 1.
- 43 Institute for Government, “UK–EU Future Relationship: Level Playing Field” (16 December 2020), www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/future-relationship-level-playing-field (accessed 29 October 2021).
- 44 Dorothee Bohle, “Race to the Bottom? Transnational Companies and Reinforced Competition in the Enlarged European Union”, in B. van Apeldoorn, J. Drahokoupil and L. Horn (eds), *Contradictions and Limits of Neoliberal European Governance* (London, 2009), p. 163.
- 45 One could rightly point out that a social level playing field at EU level would not be enough to protect EU citizens from the harmful impacts of fierce global competition (i.e., from non-EU states). In this regard, as I argued in Chapter 2, the EU institutions should adopt a stronger stance in global markets with a view to ensuring the necessary conditions to realise EU values. For example, as I have claimed, robust provisions regarding the rights of workers should be included in the EU’s trade and investment agreements with the rest of the world and should be duly enforced by a new European Agency for Fair Trade. Therefore, a combination of internal and external EU policies could at least partially contain the competitive pressure facing EU citizens.
- 46 It should be noted that this resentment is not only linked to EU integration, but also to globalisation more broadly. For an influential study on widespread disenchantment with globalisation, see Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump* (London, 2017).

- 47 João Labareda, *Towards a Just Europe: A Theory of Distributive Justice for the European Union* (Manchester, 2021).
- 48 European Commission, *European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan* (2021).
- 49 Note that a few additional measures could help contain intrastate competition by creating a more robust level playing field in the common market. Consider, for instance, the launch of minimum corporate tax rates. My focus on the EU labour code has to do with its strong impact on the labour relations between EU citizens.
- 50 William Davies, *The Limits of Neoliberalism: Authority, Sovereignty and the Logic of Competition* (London, 2014).
- 51 William Davies, “Spirits of Neoliberalism: ‘Competitiveness’ and ‘Wellbeing’ Indicators as Rival Orders of Worth”, in Richard Rottenburg, Sally E. Merry, Sung-Joon Park and Johanna Mugler (eds), *The World of Indicators: The Making of Governmental Knowledge through Quantification* (Cambridge, 2015).
- 52 See, for instance, Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge MA, 2014).
- 53 Cristobal Riddao-Cano and Christian Bodewig, *Growing United: Upgrading Europe’s Convergence Machine* (Washington, 2018).
- 54 Eurostat, “GDP per Capita, Consumption per Capita and Price Level Indices” (2020) https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=GDP_per_capita_consumption_per_capita_and_price_level_indices#Relative_volumes_of_GDP_per_capita (accessed 25 November 2021).
- 55 Eurostat, “GDP per Capita, Consumption per Capita and Price Level Indices”. These figures are already adjusted to the different level of prices.
- 56 “GDP per Capita, Consumption per Capita and Price Level Indices”.
- 57 Eurostat, “Living Conditions In Europe – Material Deprivation and Economic Strain” (2019), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Living_conditions_in_Europe_-_material_deprivation_and_economic_strain#Material_deprivation (accessed 25 November 2021).
- 58 Eurofund, “Inequality” (23 November 2021), www.eurofound.europa.eu/topic/inequality#:~:text=Reducing%20inequalities%20for%20EU%20citizens%20and%20promoting%20upward,income%2C%20access%20to%20welfare%2C%20health%20and%20education%20services (accessed 25 November 2021).
- 59 David Ricardo, *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (Indianapolis, 2004).
- 60 See Paul R. Krugman, Maurice Obstfeld and Marc J. Melitz, *International Economics: Theory and Policy* (Essex, 2015), pp. 83–115.
- 61 This result has originally been derived by the Stolper-Samuelson Theorem, which examines the impact of trade liberalisation on the prices of each factor of production. For an overview, see Alan V. Deardorff and Robert M. Stern (eds), *The Stolper-Samuelson Theorem: A Golden Jubilee* (Ann Arbor, 1994).
- 62 See Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson, *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better* (New York, 2009).
- 63 Plato, *Republic*, ed. Robin Waterfield (Oxford, 2008), Book VIII 551d.

- 64 This point is forcefully made by Michael Sandel, *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good?* (London, 2021).
- 65 Indeed, egalitarian accounts vary significantly regarding the scope of inequalities that they consider permissible. For instance, John Rawls claims that inequalities are justified as long as they benefit the least advantaged individuals in a given society. In turn, Robert Dworkin argues that inequalities are permissible only if they are the outcome of one's choices ("option luck"), but not if they result from factors beyond one's choices ("brute luck"). Gerald Cohen, for his part, claims that inequalities are not acceptable *on principle*. These disagreements cannot be resolved here. See, respectively, John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice: Revised Edition* (Cambridge MA, 1999); Robert Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality* (Cambridge MA, 2002); and G.A. Cohen, *Rescuing Justice and Equality* (Cambridge MA, 2008).
- 66 See David Casassas and Jurgen De Wispelaere, "Republicanism and the Political Economy of Democracy", *European Journal of Social Theory* 19 (2016), pp. 283–300.
- 67 Joseph E. Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future* (New York, 2013), pp. 149–182.
- 68 Marina Prentoulis, "Greece May Still Be Europe's Sick Patient, but the EU is at Death's Door", *The Guardian* (21 August 2018), www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/21/greece-europe-eu-austerity (accessed 27 November 2021).
- 69 See John Cassidy, "A Humiliating Deal for Greece", *The New Yorker* (13 July 2015), www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/a-humiliating-deal-for-greece (accessed 29 November 2021); and Alex Politaki, "Greece is Facing a Humanitarian Crisis", *The Guardian* (11 February 2013), www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/feb/11/greece-humanitarian-crisis-eu (accessed 29 November 2021).
- 70 For a detailed description of the discussions between EU leaders regarding one of the Greek bailouts, see Yanis Varoufakis, *Adults in the Room: My Battle with Europe's Deep Establishment* (London, 2017).
- 71 Cassidy, "A Humiliating Deal for Greece".
- 72 Note that EU structural funds were conceived to last for a limited period (i.e., until the member state achieved a certain GDP per capita level) and to cover limited categories of public expenditure (i.e., notably the development of infrastructure). This makes them unfit to deal with the current challenges facing many EU member states. For instance, structural funds can be used to fund the modernisation of the building of a given school, but not pay the salaries of teachers in the field of digital skills. For the classical statement of the concept of "creative destruction", see Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York, 2008).
- 73 See, respectively, Philippe Van Parijs and Yannick Vanderborght, *Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy* (Cambridge MA, 2017); Frank Vandenbroucke, Anton Hemerijck and Bruno Palier, "The EU Needs a Social Investment Pack", *OSE Opinion Paper 5* (2011); and Daniel

- Gros and Thomas Mayer, “A European Monetary Fund: How and Why?”, *CEPS Working Document* (2017).
- 74 An extended exercise in comparative public policy is beyond the scope of this book. My goal is simply to emphasise that a few promising strategies to address socioeconomic inequality in the EU are *already available*. All that is lacking is the political will to implement them.
- 75 Currently, most EU programmes are funded through direct contributions to the EU budget by the member states. This means that the availability of resources at the EU level depends entirely on the good will of national governments.
- 76 Note that European firms derive extraordinary benefits from the system of economic cooperation underpinning the common market. Specifically, they may sell freely across a single market of some 450 million consumers without the burden of border checks, tariffs or other customs duties. Additionally, they can leverage the cost advantages and economies of scale that arise in procurement across the vast pool of European suppliers.
- 77 This has led a few authors to speak of a “democratic deficit” in the EU. See, for instance, Andreas Follesdal and Simon Hix, “Why There is a Democratic Deficit in the EU: A Response to Majone and Moravcsik”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 44 (2006), pp. 533–562. While this concept has been contested, it captures the widespread view that the EU lacks sufficiently robust mechanisms of democratic participation. For an overview of this debate, see Christine Neuhold, “Democratic Deficit in the European Union”, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (2020), <https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-1141> (accessed 10 March 2023).
- 78 Martin Banks, “New Report Highlights Limited Success of Europe Citizens’ Initiative”, *The Parliament Magazine* (23 April 2018), www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/news/article/new-report-highlights-limited-of-success-of-europe-citizens-initiative#:~:text=Since%20the%20European%20Citizens'%20Initiative,only%20four%20have%20been%20successful (accessed 29 October 2021).
- 79 Consider, for instance, the well-documented case of citizens voting for the first time. See, for instance, John Harris and Erica Buist, *The Guardian* (27 May 2017), www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/may/27/strangely-optimistic-first-time-voters-8-june (accessed 7 March 2022).
- 80 For the context and the main lessons of this meeting, see Osha Gray Davidson, *The Best of Enemies: Race and Redemption in the New South* (Chapel Hill, 2007).
- 81 Mairie de Paris, “Budget Participatif”, <https://budgetparticipatif.paris.fr/bp/jsp/site/Portal.jsp#> (accessed 16 December 2021).
- 82 Note that the phenomenon of apathy has the character of a vicious circle: the less citizens feel involved in public matters, the less eager they are to participate. This may explain why the turnout in general elections in many western democracies has steadily declined in recent years, despite the call for more opportunities to participate. For a discussion, see Richard Dagger, *Civic Virtues* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 132–153.

- 83 Hazel Blears and David Blunkett, “The Road to Empowerment”, in Henry Tam (ed.), *Whose Government Is It? The Renewal of State–Citizen Cooperation* (Bristol, 2019), p. 74.
- 84 Indeed, several political parties in the EU which have been charged of challenging basic democratic principles such as the rule of law and equality of status have claimed to give back the voice to the people. For a mapping of these arguments, see Roger Eatwell and Matthew Goodwin, *National Populism: The Revolt Against Liberal Democracy* (London, 2020).
- 85 European Parliament, “European Year of Citizens: Raising Awareness of EU Citizens’ Rights” (23 October 2012), www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20121019IPR54022/european-year-of-citizens-raising-awareness-of-eu-citizens-rights#:~:text=The%20activities%20organised%20for%20the%20European%20Year%20of,programme%2C%20which%20enables%20young%20people%20to%20study%20abroad (accessed 17 August 2023).
- 86 This arguably low level of ambition is mentioned in the conference’s website. See Conference on the Future of Europe, <https://futureu.europa.eu/pages/about> (accessed 16 December 2021).
- 87 Graham Smith, *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 1.
- 88 Blears and Blunkett, “The Road to Empowerment”, p. 74.
- 89 Steven Blockmans and Sophia Russack (eds), *Direct Democracy in the EU: The Myth of a Citizens’ Union* (London, 2018).
- 90 The point that European nation-states have been dominated by fear of the “Other” and of the loss of a national identity is forcefully made by Dominique Moisi, *The Geopolitics of Emotion: How Cultures of Fear, Humiliation, and Hope are Reshaping the World* (New York, 2009).
- 91 Note that misrepresentation of one another may hinder EU citizens from developing bonds of civic friendship, or from adopting measures that could facilitate its emergence. To illustrate the point, consider the distrust between many northern and southern Europeans throughout the sovereign debt crisis. Jeroen Dijsselbloem, then president of the Eurogroup, made this point clear when he stated that financially distressed member states should not expect to be assisted after having spent all their money “on drinks and women”. See Mehreen Khan and Paul McClean, “Dijsselbloem Under Fire after Saying Eurozone Countries Wasted Money on ‘Alcohol and Women’”, *Financial Times* (21 March 2017), www.ft.com/content/2498740e-b911-3dbf-942d-ecce511a351e (accessed 31 January 2022).
- 92 Fligstein, “Who are the Europeans and How Does this Matter for Politics”, p. 145.
- 93 Ettore Recchi and Adrian Favell (eds), *Pioneers of European Integration: Citizenship and Mobility in the EU* (Cheltenham, 2009).
- 94 In this section, I focus on two large categories of free movers: (i) workers (broadly understood as to include job seekers) and (ii) students. For simplicity, I leave aside other important but less specified categories, such as pensioners and tourists. Indeed, the data for pensioners residing in other member states that that of their citizenship is currently limited. In turn, the extent to

- which tourism can meaningfully impact European integration is a matter of dispute. As Adrian Favell puts it, “if mobility consists primarily of holidaying with co-nationals in the Costa del Sol, or going on the rampage as a hooligan at a European football championship, European identity will not be the result”. For the quote, see Adrian Favell, “Immigration, Migration, and Free Movement”, in Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein (eds), *European Identity* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 181. For a typology of free movers in the EU, see Mikkel Barslund and Matthias Busse, “Labour Mobility in the EU: Addressing Challenges and Ensuring Fair Mobility”, *CEPS Special Report* 139 (2016).
- 95 Eurostat, “EU Citizens Living in Another Member State”, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_citizens_living_in_another_Member_State_-_statistical_overview#Key_messages (accessed 25 January 2022).
- 96 See OECD, “The Decline in Labour Mobility in the United States: Insights from New Administrative Data”, *Economics Department Working Papers* 1644 (2020).
- 97 Mabel Sánchez Barrioluengo and Sara Flisi, *JRC Science for Policy Report: Student Mobility in Tertiary Education: Institutional Factors and Regional Attractiveness* (Luxembourg, 2017), p. 18.
- 98 In 2020, nearly 40% of the citizens between 25 and 34 years old in the EU had completed tertiary education (i.e., they possess a bachelor, a master and/or PhD degree). It should be noted that this share varies considerably across member states. See Eurostat, “Educational attainment Statistics”, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Educational_attainment_statistics (accessed 26 January 2021).
- 99 For the quote, see Kristine Mitchell, “Student Mobility and European Identity: Erasmus Study as a Civic Experience”, *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 8 (2012), pp. 491–518. For the figure on Erasmus students, see Mabel Sánchez Barrioluengo and Sara Flisi, *JRC Science for Policy Report*, p. 19.
- 100 Adrian Favell, “Immigration, Migration, and Free Movement”, in Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein (eds), *European Identity* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 181.
- 101 European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, *Making EU Citizens’ Rights a Reality: National Courts Enforcing Freedom of Movement and Related Rights* (Luxembourg, 2018).
- 102 European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, *Making EU Citizens’ Rights a Reality*, p. 49.
- 103 European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, *Making EU Citizens’ Rights a Reality*, p. 49.
- 104 European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, *Making EU Citizens’ Rights a Reality*, p. 49.
- 105 For instance, in the academic year 2020–2021 a Portuguese student undertaking Erasmus in Sweden, Luxembourg or Ireland received a monthly grant of €390, while the monthly grant for Germany, Austria or France was €340. See Caixa Geral de Depósitos, “Quanto Custa Fazer Erasmus? Faça Face às Despesas”, www.cgd.pt/Site/Saldo-Positivo/formacao-e-tecnologia/Pages/quanto-custa-fazer-erasmus.aspx (accessed 28 January 2022).

- 106 These are Spain, Italy, Croatia and Romania. See European Commission, “Erasmus Master Degree Loans”, <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/opportunities/individuals/students/erasmus-master-degree-loans> (accessed 28 January 2022).
- 107 See, for instance, Stephen Holmes and Ivan Krastev, *The Light That Failed: Why the West Is Losing the Fight for Democracy* (London, 2020).
- 108 European Commission, *Flash Eurobarometer 528: Citizenship and Democracy* (2023), p. 19.
- 109 Jacques Delors, quoted by The Economist, “Why Europe’s Single Market Is at Risk” (14 September 2019).
- 110 See Ronald Inglehart, “Cognitive Mobilization and European Identity”, *Comparative Politics* 3 (1970), pp. 45–70.
- 111 Ettore Recchi (ed.), *The Europeanisation of Everyday Life: Cross-Border Practices and Transnational Identifications among EU and Third-Country Citizens: Final Report* (2014). Available at www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/39526.
- 112 Saara Koikkalainen, “Free Movement and EU Citizenship from the Perspective of Intra-European Mobility”, in Rainer Bauböck (ed.), *Debating European Citizenship* (Cham, 2018), p. 124.
- 113 Koikkalainen, “Free Movement and EU Citizenship from the Perspective of Intra-European Mobility”, p. 124.
- 114 European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 94: Public Opinion in the European Union* (2021), p. 91.
- 115 European Parliament, “Teaching about the EU: 44% of Europeans Don’t Understand How the EU Works”, 11 April 2016, www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20160408STO22170/teaching-about-the-eu-44-of-europeans-don-t-understand-how-the-eu-works (accessed 14 February 2022).
- 116 Avril Keating, *Education for Citizenship in Europe: European Policies, National Adaptations and Young People’s Attitudes* (London, 2014), p. 93.
- 117 As early as in 1926, Jonathan French Scott analysed how the portrayal of England, France, Germany and the United States in one another’s textbooks shaped the prospects of nationalism or world peace. See Jonathan French Scott, *The Menace of Nationalism in Education* (New York, 2012).
- 118 Keating, *Education for Citizenship in Europe*, p. 93.
- 119 See, for instance, Rachel D. Hutchins, *Nationalism and History Education: Curricula and Textbooks in the United States and France* (London, 2016). On the meaning of a transnational or global approach to history, see Sebastien Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton, 2017).
- 120 Keating, *Education for Citizenship in Europe*, p. 93.
- 121 In this regard, it is telling that ancient military victories against neighbouring member states continue to be celebrated in many schools. For an influential discussion of the notions of “friend” and “enemy” in the context of international relations, see Carl Schmidt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago, 2007).
- 122 A study by the Council of Europe has identified 20 competences that are required to create a “culture of democracy” in polities which feature a high level of diversity. These competences can be developed at school through

- appropriate curricula. See Council of Europe, *Competences for Democratic Culture: Living Together as Equals in Culturally Diverse Democratic Societies* (Strasbourg, 2016).
- 123 Indeed, it has been demonstrated that citizenship education in an “open classroom climate” (i.e., where “students are provided with opportunities to wrestle with political and social issues”) has a positive impact on the level of political engagement of young citizens. This effect could be replicated at the EU level. See David E. Campbell, “Voice in the Classroom: How an Open Classroom Climate Fosters Political Engagement among Adolescents”, *Political Behaviour* 30 (2008), pp. 437–454.
- 124 A similar initiative – the so-called “Model UN” – has been successfully conducted by the United Nations. See United Nations, “Model United Nations”, www.un.org/en/mun (accessed 10 February 2022).
- 125 According to article 6 of the TFEU, in the field of education, the European Commission’s competences are limited to supporting, coordinating and supplementing the actions of the member states.
- 126 National administrations have indeed evinced a concerted lack of appetite for delegating competences in the field of education. While this may change in the future, it suggests that successful proposals will need to be built in a decentralised manner.
- 127 This panel would discuss different possible formats for the course, alternative content to be covered and desirable pedagogical approaches. Therefore, it would address questions such as the following: Should the course be taught at primary, elementary and/or secondary level? Should it be mandatory or elective? Should it be a separate subject, or could it be a flexible module to be plugged into other existing courses at the national level? How many hours of weekly teaching should it entail? What specific topics, problems and questions should it cover? What supporting materials would be required? What knowledge, skills and competences should a student have developed by the end of the course?
- 128 For instance, the curricula of a few member states cover citizenship education as a cross-curricular theme or integrated into other compulsory subjects/learning areas. See European Commission, *Citizenship and Education at School in Europe 2017: Eurydice Report* (Luxembourg, 2017).
- 129 Laura Johnson and Paul Morris, “Towards a Framework for Critical Citizenship Education”, *The Curriculum Journal* 21 (2010), pp. 77–96.
- 130 The concept of just and unjust wars has been a subject of much debate in the specialised literature. For simplicity, I assume that, in the absence of any compelling self-defence or humanitarian grounds, invading a sovereign state would be unjust. For an influential discussion, see Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York, 2015).
- 131 Authors affiliated with the school of pacifism might object that responding to violence by employing violent means would be morally impermissible. However, it may be argued that a swift and coordinated response to an aggression against a member state would be the best means to promote peace in Europe. In fact,

- the current territorial configuration and institutional apparatus of the EU and its member states have been able to secure an unprecedentedly long period of peace after centuries of bloodshed. This suggests that defending the current international order is instrumental to achieving a lasting peace. For an overview of the pacifist argument, see Robert Holmes, *Pacifism: A Philosophy of Nonviolence* (London, 2017).
- 132 The degree to which the bonds of mutual defence have been institutionalised varies across countries. For instance, a few constitutions include provisions regarding the duty to perform military service.
- 133 See John Hutchinson, *War and Nationalism* (Oxford, 2017).
- 134 European External Action Service, “A Stronger EU on Security and Defence” (19 November 2018), https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-home_page_en/35285/A%20stronger%20EU%20on%20security%20and%20defence (accessed 18 February 2022).
- 135 See Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds), *Security Communities* (Cambridge, 1998).
- 136 As an illustrative example, consider the Anglo-Portuguese alliance created by the Treaty of Windsor which has been in force since 1386. This alliance has been used to call for assistance a number of times ever since and it has never been revoked.
- 137 A study comprising data from 1816 to 2000 has concluded that deterrent alliances contingent upon the adversary’s attack decrease the likelihood that a third party will initiate a conflict with an alliance member. See Brett V. Benson, “Unpacking Alliances: Deterrent and Compellent Alliances and Their Relationship with Conflict, 1816–2000”, *The Journal of Politics* 73 (2011), pp. 1111–1127.
- 138 Antonina Bakardjieva Engelbrekt, Anna Michalski, Niklas Nilsson and Lars Oxelheim (eds), *The European Union: Facing the Challenge of Multiple Security Threats* (Cheltenham, 2018).
- 139 Reuters, “Russian Military in Belarus Threatens Baltics and Poland, Says Lithuanian President” (17 January 2022), www.reuters.com/world/europe/russian-military-belarus-threatens-baltics-poland-says-lithuanian-president-2022-02-17/ (accessed 18 February 2022).
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- 143 In the event of a conflict between Turkey and Cyprus, there could be different readings within the EU of what the legal and political obligations of the member states would be. While some member states might be prompt to assist their fellow member state, others might prioritise their commitment to the NATO framework.
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- 145 An illustrative example is the recent accession to NATO by Finland, which had historically positioned itself as a neutral state. This major policy shift was linked to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia.
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