

## INFOCUS

**New ideas and plans about the reform of the European Union**

C4EP analysis on the subject – *Plans or dreams about the future of the EU – by an independent experts' group with a visible political support*

“Reform of the European Union and its institutions is an evergreen subject – it is always on the table, put there either by politicians, governments, agents of the EU or representatives of academia. Or by interesting mixtures of the abovementioned. During this September, a conclusive policy document has surfaced, which had been authored by well-established experts on various fields related to the EU – but what is more important is that not only it has reflected well on actual questions of the EU, but also has produced some well visible political support. It was taken for discussion to the highest level of the EU decision-making level by the German and the French government – even if the title page clearly states: “The opinions expressed are those of the authors only and should not be considered as representative of the French and/or German official position”.

The [document](#) titled “Report of the Franco-German Working Group on EU Institutional Reform – Sailing on High Seas: Reforming and Enlarging the EU for the 21st Century / Paris-Berlin - 18 September 2023” sets out a clear collection of ideas and proposals which are well worthy of analysis and discussion not only by governments but also by the wider public and professional audience.”

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## C4REPORT

*European Movement International – Reviving Democracy: Modernising European Institutions for a More Participatory Europe – 19 September 2023*

“The event was based on the recently adopted report on Parliamentarism, European Citizenship and Democracy with the elephant in the room: participation.”

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*Exploring the Insights and Discussions from the European Policy Centre's 'EU-Asia Economic Future: Growth, Innovation and Trade' Conference – 28 September 2023*

“In conclusion, the panel's insights shed light on the complexities and nuances of the EU-Asia economic relationship. While there are evident challenges, such as economic concentration and environmental concerns, the discussions underscored the importance of finding pragmatic solutions and fostering collaboration. By focusing on digitalization, sustainable innovation, and green technologies, both regions can overtake these challenges and tap into the immense growth potential offered by Asia, ensuring a mutually beneficial partnership that aligns with evolving global dynamics. Is it a significant challenge? Yes, it

is, but as a well-known saying by John F. Kennedy goes: “We choose to go to the moon not because it is easy, but because it is hard.”

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*EPC: Neurorights: Protecting Fundamental Rights in the Era of Neurotechnology – 29 September 2023*

“The aim of the conference organized by EPC was to explore the nature of neurotechnologies, their evolution, and how to safeguard individuals’ fundamental rights amidst these technological advancements. This conference aimed to strike a balance between the imperative to regulate and the necessity to promote these new technologies.”

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## C4EPOSITION

**Phaedon Angelopoulos, Senior Research Analyst, London Politica**

The proposed reforms on the EU’s structure, put forth by officials of Germany and France, seek to address the pressing issue of reform and enlargement. The elephant in the room, however, remains unaddressed. The haphazard pile of bureaucracy, thrown together by subsequent treaties and held together by veteran Eurocrats in a manner reminiscent of an art nouveau building that has endured several modernist additions, is getting yet another one, should this plan go ahead as it is.

Reforms are indeed much needed. The authors have identified, correctly in my opinion, the most pressing issues that must be addressed. At the same time, their stance represents that of the two biggest and most populous states, giving it proportionate yet inequitable weight. This is especially evident when it comes to stripping veto powers from smaller members, whose representation in parliament does not suffice alone to effectively push issues important to them. Un-evening the playing field in one direction in order to even it in another, still leaves one with an uneven field.

In other words, the intention is positive and sorely needed at this moment in time. We should not be speaking of enlargement, in a time when internal and external crises like populism, the rule of law and the migration crises are threatening cohesion. Reforms should be focussed primarily on resolving these initial hurdles, which will in turn create a landscape where expansion is naturally easier, with new members being incorporated in a straightforward manner.

Nevertheless, the fact would remain that the EU’s internal processes would still be far too complicated for the average citizen to grasp, let alone follow, which directly defeats the purpose of democratisation. One should be supported in understanding how these processes unfold and how they are interconnected in order to make informed choices when voting for national and European elections, something that is left unaddressed in the report.