



[Crossroads Europe Project](#) - Policy recommendations formulated during the event organised in partnership with **UEF Bulgaria**:

*How to Achieve a Strategic Autonomy in Order to Make Europe a Global Player*

The training was organised by the Union of European Federalists together with its Bulgarian section on May 15, 2021, in the framework of the event *Crossroads Europe - How to Achieve a Strategic Autonomy in Order to Make Europe a Global Player*.

The event was divided into two online discussions, online training on how to use the CoFoE digital platform and a participatory workshop to elaborate policy recommendations.

Participants: 66 - first session; 32 - second session

Countries: Belgium, Italy, Spain, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Greece, Austria, Germany, Czechia, Switzerland, France, Hungary, USA

Genders: 44% F - 56% M

Average age: 41 years old

In the first session, "Time to Enhance the European Democracy and Build a Union Fit for the Future", participants listened to experts and policymakers.

Their main ideas were:

- MEP & UEF President Sandro Gozi recalled the importance of federalism: "Federalism is respect of diversity, it is respect of different levels of government and democracy, it is the will of building up a new level where it is needed, where the cities, the regions, and the nation-states are not enough."
- Professor & former MEP Svetoslav Malinov: "So what should be done? My experience tells me that to improve and increase the sense of belonging to the EU is to go back to teaching and explaining why the EU is important and what the alternatives would be. And what you win and lose by leaving and/or joining the EU."
- MEP Tsvetelina Penkova called for facing change and transformation in an increasingly digitized world. Agreeing to go forward together towards progress, because alone would be much more expensive, much slower, and more difficult.
- Prof. Ingrid Shikova pointed out that Europe suffers from an emotional deficit, and that Europe should not only persuade the brains, but it should also win the hearts. European integration is like love to stay long and strong and love needs two basic things: trust and compromise. The same applies to European integration.
- Senior editor Euractiv Georgi Gotev emphasized the role of the EU in this pandemic and argued that "In Europe, crises come one after another, like waves crashing against the beach. Hot on



the heels of Brexit came COVID-19. We can criticize the EU's response, but it's difficult to imagine what epidemiological situation the continent would be in if the Union didn't exist."

The debate, moderated by UEF Austria Vice-President Philip Agathonos, was followed by a training on the use of the CoFoE platform on the Future of Europe led by UEF Communication Officer, [Mariona Espín Onieva](#). A guide of what was explained during the event was sent to all participants.

During the second session, "How to Achieve a Strategic Autonomy in Order to Make Europe a Global Player", participants again listened to different panelists.

Their relevant ideas on the topic were:

- Director of the Economics and International Relations Institute, Lyubomir Kyuchukov emphasized the need for the EU to regain its role as a global player, especially in today's multipolar world.
- MEP & President of UEF Bulgaria Andrey Kovatchev: stressed the importance of increasing digitalization, available to all. But above all, he highlighted the risks, calling for greater attention to what is illegal in real life and what is not online.
- Civil activist & President of the Bulgarian Green Party Borislav Sandov stressed the Greens' historical proximity to federalism and highlighted the need for the EU to change the management of resources, such as food and water, at the EU level. Not just because they are running out, but to prevent environmental disasters.
- Prof. Mariya Trifonova highlighted that the Union needs common policies, an approach to sustainability and to go against the particularism and selfishness of countries, as the citizens want.

The debate was followed by contributions from several people in the audience and moderated by UEF Austria Vice-President Eva Lichtenberger. The conversation was focused on a few issues, in particular the need for a New Green Deal that is citizen-centered, more democratic, and inclusive digitalisation as well as the need for an affirmation of the EU's role as a global player.

After the debate, participants joined a workshop facilitated by Alejandro Cordero, former UEF Advocacy and Policy Officer.

The session "The Conference on the Future of Europe as an inclusive initiative to discuss security challenges from the citizens' perspective?" aimed at formulating policy recommendations. To do that, participants had at their disposal a working document summarizing the legal bases enshrined in the EU treaties in regard to Common Foreign and Security Policy.

The participants, students, local and international policymakers, and scholars were divided into breakout rooms. At the end of their group discussions, they cooperated to produce policy recommendations for different European policy fields, including European Security.



Group one - **Simone Veil**

**Topic:** Energy Sovereignty

*Problem assessment:*

- Formulation of energy policies is a restricted area for experts in most EU countries, especially the one characterised by centralised energy generation capacities (research shows that higher rate of energy generation's decentralization plus higher participation through private small-scale generation capacities are positively correlated with higher knowledge of citizens' knowledge/understanding of energy policies).
- The European Green Deal should be "translated" into something. In fact, for the time being, it presents elements of abstractness to properly engage with policy-making processes and its implementation.
- Energy cooperatives/communities remain outside the framework of effective interaction with the broader national energy sector.
- Nuclear phase-out/Fossil fuel phase-out and transition to other energy-producing sources.

Policy Recommendations:

- Energy communities to get access to the electric grid (on a national level).
- The phase-out or replacement of previous generation reactors.
- Organisation of citizens' participation in energy policy formulation and implementation.
- A consistent foreign energy policy - much better coordinated (see North Stream, South Stream, etc.) - better focus on diversification, smaller dependence on fossil fuel energy.
- The integration of Central and Eastern European countries, fostering a common framework of cooperation to overcome past and current challenges by implementing national and regional measures and facilitating dialogue.
- Knowledge sharing.

Group two - **Altiero Spinelli:**

**Topic:** EU Decision-making process within the European Council - Unanimity principle.

Decision-making in the European Council lacks agility in terms of bureaucracy. It can be considered an obstacle to resolve major global challenges in the field of the common foreign and security policy, citizenship (granting new rights to EU citizens), EU membership, harmonisation of national legislation on indirect taxation, EU finances (own resources, Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)), certain provisions in the field of justice and home affairs (the European prosecutor, family law, operational police cooperation, etc.), harmonisation of national legislation in the field of social security and social protection. The threat of a veto allows recalcitrant Member States to water down agreements, delay decision-making, or thwart a common policy altogether. The greater the number of states, the more

the unanimity risks paralysing decision-making. Moreover, public opinion across the EU is also in favour of a stronger common foreign and security policy.

1. *Policy recommendation:*

The abolition of the unanimity principle and the introduction of a qualified majority voting system (QMV). A qualified majority is reached if a proposal is supported by at least 55% of EU Member states (i.e., 15 out of 27) and if the supporting Member states collectively represent at least 65% of the Union's population.

According to the latest Eurobarometer polls, a strong majority of EU citizens, including those of countries with Eurosceptical governments, supports a common EU foreign policy, common defense, and security policy, joint EU action.

