

FOR A  
**FEDERAL  
EUROPE**  
THE URGENCY OF  
OVERCOMING THE  
CURRENT TREATIES



THE POLITICAL MANIFESTO OF THE  
UNION OF THE EUROPEAN FEDERALISTS

Brussels, 26 November, 2023



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# Introduction

The European elections in 2024 are destined to be of extraordinary importance for the European Union and its citizens. At stake is the future of the EU, and the direction to be given to the unification process. The design of a political Europe - directly legitimized by the citizens of Europe and capable of acting with political standing on the international stage and of successfully realizing the profound ecological and digital transitions on an industrial, economic and social level - stands in contrast to the design of nationalist forces, which believe that politics should be the exclusive prerogative of the member states, the sole owners of sovereignty, even with regard to the rule of law.

The reality we live in, however, clearly indicates the urgent need to build a common European sovereignty. In the world, we are witnessing the return of imperial powers, democracy is in the balance even in the United States - which is no longer able to guarantee the continuity of its foreign policy and alliances - and we are confronted with the challenge of climate change, wars, financial instability and uncontrolled people mobility; in this framework, the sovereignty of European states and their capacity for political action is more insignificant than ever.

In addition, Russia's aggression against Ukraine has opened a new chapter in our history. The attempt to annihilate a democratic country that had already chosen its future in Europe, and to wipe out its people through a brutal invasion, is a challenge to the very existence of the European Union and its peace project. All this makes it all the more necessary and urgent to complete the building of the European Union, to make it strong and authoritative in its actions and capable of leading the democratic world, also thanks to the political and social model it embodies. The European unification process is the real enemy of autocracies, which are based on aggressive nationalism, tyranny, disregard for human life and freedom, contempt of human rights and corruption; and it is a process that must now be completed, going back to the roots of the Ventotene Manifesto. The threat is similar, and at the same level must be the response, finally implementing the reforms that will give life to a federal Europe.



**We must not only complete our unity, by creating appropriate institutional mechanisms, to strengthen the convergence of our economic and geopolitical interests and promote our values and freedoms; but we must first of all politically defeat nationalism, which has returned to bring war to our continent, by creating democratic institutions that are untouched by this disease and, conversely, represent an alternative model, also for the rest of the world.**

# Building a federal Europe: where do we stand?

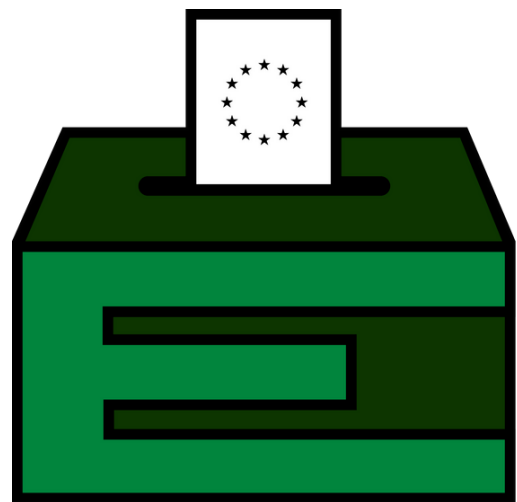
The pandemic and Europe's ability to react in unity and solidarity have opened up the possibility of a virtuous path, which the Conference on the Future of Europe has translated, through an unprecedented democratic participatory process, into concrete requests and proposals from citizens. These can be summed up in the demand for a Europe that is more capable to act and more democratic and close to its citizens, especially through the strengthening of the powers of the European Parliament to represent them.

All the EU institutions have committed themselves to following up on the results of the conference, but it is above all the European Parliament that has taken it upon itself to request the opening of a Convention for the revision of the Treaties and to draw up in the Constitutional Affairs Commission an organic and profound proposal for reform, which was approved on November 22.

These are proposals capable of opening a debate on the founding of a true democratically legitimized European sovereignty and of laying the conditions for the development of a European political power and for a substantial emancipation of the Union from the member states.

We are convinced, as UEF, that the need to initiate these reforms, in order to provide the European Union with the appropriate competences, resources and powers to implement the common policies necessary to defend the values, security and interests of European citizens, must be at the heart of the European election campaign debate.

**We call on the political forces and candidates to be equal to the historical and political moment and to have the capacity to present to the citizens what is really at stake in these elections, giving rise to a real transnational debate to strengthen the formation of an ever deeper common European consciousness.**



FOR A  
**STRONGER  
EUROPE**  
WHICH ACTS  
AND PROTECTS

# The challenges ahead

## Enlargement

The brutal aggression against Ukraine by Russia has created the need for accelerating the new enlargement, first of all to the Western Balkan countries, Ukraine and also Moldova and Georgia.

The challenge of including a further large number of members on the basis of a new, much more, geopolitical oriented and security-related vision implies the need to proceed in parallel with important institutional changes to make the decision-making mechanisms and structure of the European bodies adequate to ensure effective functioning with 35 or more members, without the risk of being paralyzed or weakened.

The European Union owes it first and foremost to the candidate countries - and once again first and foremost to Ukraine because of the tragedy it is experiencing - not to betray expectations with regard to EU membership and to offer participation in a solid project.

**In this respect, the extension of the ordinary legislative procedure (which also implies the overcoming of unanimity and the right of veto) and the strengthening of the European Parliament and the European Commission, - indicate the indispensable conditions for making the Union work and being able to build a structure on several concentric levels of integration around the nucleus of the countries that form a political union.**



# The challenges ahead

## The necessary policies

The European Union faces a multiplicity of challenges in the field:

- Economics
- Social policies
- Environment
- Industrial policy
- Digitalization and AI
- Energy
- Health
- Education
- Foreign and security policy
- Real common Asylum and Migration policy
- Defense

The development of common policies in all these areas is necessary to promote inclusive societies and sustainable growth in Europe to maintain the European way of life and its standards. It is also necessary for the development of the strategic autonomy which is a material condition for the exercise of political sovereignty.

They include, among many others, the ability to develop a public investment policy to support the reconversion of many manufacturing sectors, the expansion of research and innovation in strategic sectors, and to intervene in the territorial areas and segments of the population most affected by the transitions taking place; in the field of external action, they imply the capacity to create new partnerships starting with Mediterranean and African countries, and to contribute to the creation of a wider space of security, exchange and cooperation that reflects also the legitimate aspirations of the global South, and the emergence of new supranational international institutions that can foster constructive dialogue and cooperation, favoring international trade and sustainable growth.

All these policies need to be developed first at European level, even if they can be articulated where necessary on different levels, whether national or regional/local, according to the principle of subsidiarity in line with basic principles of federalism.

For this it is necessary to endow the EU first of all with the power to autonomously find the resources to pursue them, to implement them when they have a European dimension, and thus with a democratic decision-making structure and an effective governance capacity.

*Let's support*  
**TREATY  
REFORM  
NOW!**

**Your vote matters.**

**Let's move the European project  
forward.**

# The challenges ahead

A number of changes to this end are necessary, which were also at the heart of the debate during the elaboration of the amendment proposals by the European Parliament:

## **1) the extension of competences and thus the possibility of political autonomy for the Union:**

- a) exclusive competences in the field of environmental policy and the protection of biodiversity - a very important step because environmental protection has cross-cutting applications over a vast number of other policies;*
- b) competing competences in energy, industry, civil protection, health and education;*
- c) strengthening foreign and security policy through the extension of majority voting in the Council;*
- d) creation of an initial core of the Defense Union through the creation of military rapid intervention units under a single integrated command;*
- e) extension of majority voting for the adoption of the decision on own resources and the multiannual financial framework to enable the Union to become the master of its own budget, which can be used to pursue its objectives and condition the actions of the Member States through conditionality policies along the lines of the NGEU;*
- f) introduction of majority voting in the Council to activate the flexibility clause under Article 352 TFEU in order to provide the Union with a subsidiary legal basis for the adoption of acts necessary for the pursuit of its objectives;*

## **2) the consolidation of an essentially bicameral model and the strengthening of the European Commission (renamed 'Executive'):**

- g) extension of the ordinary legislative procedure to the majority of decisions, whereby Parliament will permanently exercise the role of political co-decider of the Union alongside the Council, which will have to take decisions by majority vote;*
- h) granting Parliament the power of legislative initiative and the right to initiate infringement proceedings before the Court of Justice if a Member State violates EU law;*
- i) reform of the appointment procedure of the President of the Executive, who becomes 'President of the Union';*
- l) selection of the President by the Parliament to be confirmed by a majority of the European Council;*
- m) decrease in the number of members making up the Executive chosen on a political basis by the President himself, taking into account demographic and geographical balance;*
- n) reform of the European Council, consisting only of the Heads of state or government and the President of the Union (i.e. the European Executive).*



# The challenges ahead

## Sovereignty, democracy and the rule of law

Under the current system, political sovereignty remains a prerogative - in the last resort - exclusively of the Member states; democracy (understood as citizens' control of the institutions exercising political power over decisions on issues that affect their lives) is essentially exercised at national level. It is the national parliaments that decide on matters at the heart of sovereignty (and the lives of citizens).

As it is often pointed out by the German Constitutional Court - but not only - the fact that sovereignty is exercised democratically only at the national level sets the limits not only of the European institutions, but also of the possibility to have a true European democracy in the current system.

This means that, in order to find effective ways of strengthening democracy and democratic participation at European level, the only possibility is to revise the current European political-institutional system introducing core fundamental reforms in order to set some federal mechanisms within the EU, making the direct relationship between citizens and European institutions effective (see A. Hamilton, *The Federalist*, n. 15) and thus realizing an institutional change that is constitutional in nature.

This request is also what emerged from the CoFoE. Citizens are aware that some of the key issues at the heart of sovereignty can no longer be adequately governed by Member states and ask for a stronger EU, with more political powers, but also call for a deeper reform of the governance that enable citizens to control and influence the functioning of the European institutions that would regulate and affect their lives.

It is also necessary to stress that, at a time of deep crisis in democratic systems that are challenged by citizens' growing mistrust in democratic institutions - a mistrust also exploited by external autocratic powers interested in weakening Europe -, it is necessary to effectively increase the European citizens' political participation.

In this respect, a key contribution in terms of increasing democracy and the "European feeling" among citizens may be the introduction of the new electoral law approved by the European Parliament in May 2022.

The fundamental choice for a true European democracy therefore remains that of building a common European sovereignty, which, while enabling Europeans to deal effectively with the challenges on which their future depends creates the institutional mechanisms to give citizens the power to choose the policies they want to see developed and to control the work of the European institutions responsible for deciding and implementing those policies.

This is also the real way to counter the illiberal governments' claim to have no restraint in intervening in their own domestic legal and institutional system by questioning the respect for the rule of law, the respect of fundamental rights and the founding values of the European Union.

**In this respect, the proposals for the amendments of the Treaties adopted by the European Parliament (which indeed is triggering the process of Treaty reform as the legitimate representative of all European citizens) are a first step aimed to achieve this goal in concrete terms by giving direct powers to the European Parliament and the European Commission under control of the EP.**

**Furthermore, the Court of Justice under these proposals would have its supervisory powers over the Member States increased. The new procedure under Art. 7 TEU would provide for the possibility for the Council to denounce by a majority vote a violation of the rule of law in a member state, on which the Court of Justice would have to rule, imposing substantial fines if necessary. The Court will also be able to hear preliminary appeals on the conformity of draft laws with the Treaties on the initiative of Parliament.**

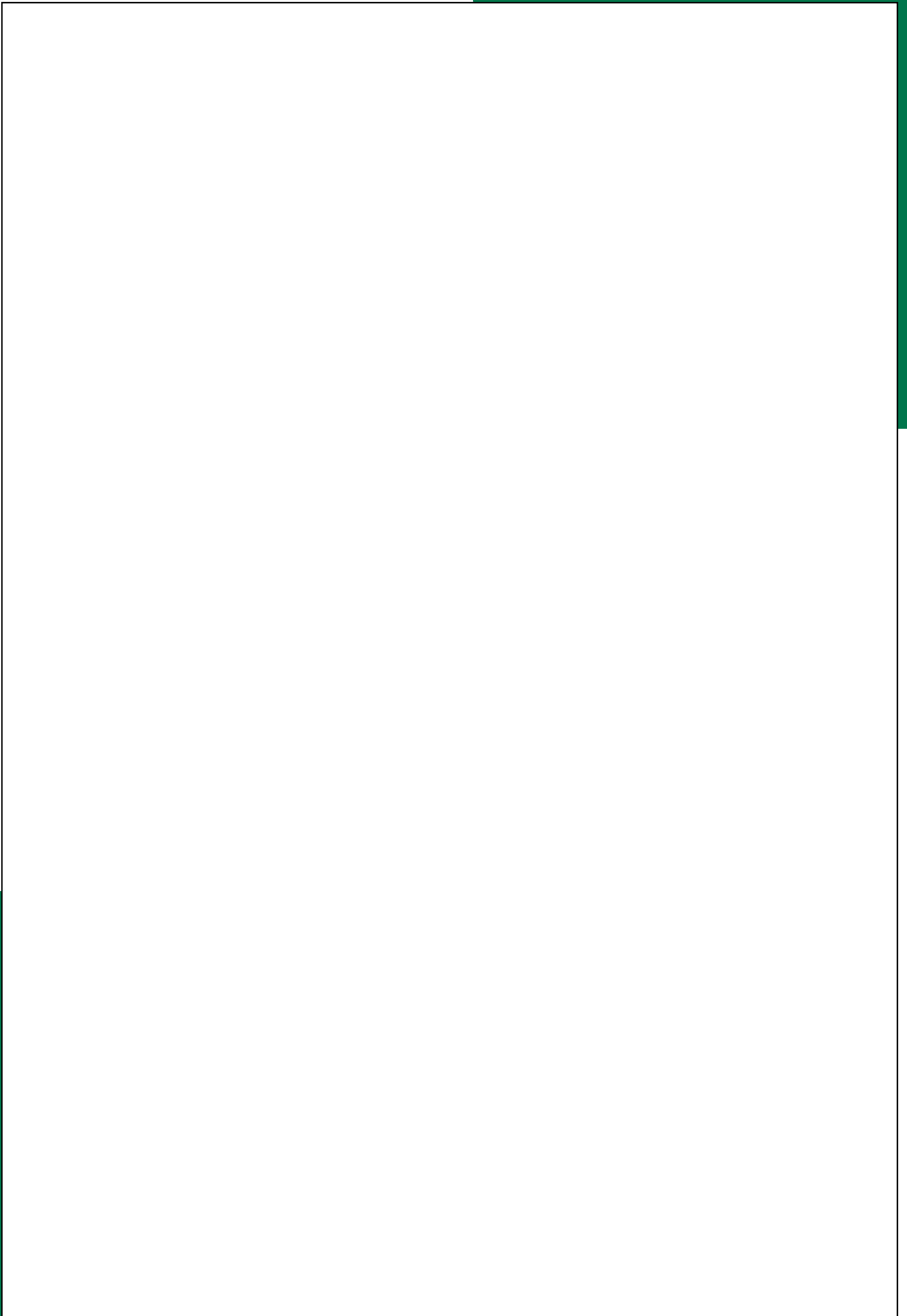
# A Commitment to a Federal Europe

**UEF** therefore reaffirms its commitment to support the proposal made by the European Parliament for opening the revision of the existing Treaties, in order to meet the need to deepen the democratic capacity of the European Union and strengthen it in its power to act.

**In this regard, UEF**

- *appeals first of all to the Spanish Presidency to forward the European Parliament's request for the launch of a Convention for the Reform of the Treaties;*
- *urges the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, to make every effort to put the decision by the EUCO on the EP's request on the agenda of the next meeting;*
- *urges national governments to give the green light for the preparation of the Convention, as requested by the EP;*
- *invites the European Parliament and the Council to reconvene a meeting of the Conference on the Future of Europe in order to share with the Citizens who participated in the work of the CoFoE the proposals elaborated to reform the treaties, as contained in the conclusions and final requests of the CoFoE.*

Finally, in view of the European elections, **UEF** calls on all political forces and candidates to subscribe to the commitment to a deep reform of the European Union in order to implement European policies that can guarantee citizens respect for their political, civil and social rights and contribute to the construction of a more stable, more peaceful, more cooperative and more solidarity-based world order.





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