

# The **EU** as a Peace Project

Scenarios for 2040



**PAX**

[www.paxforpeace.nl](http://www.paxforpeace.nl)

## **Colophon**

April 2019

ISBN: 978-94-92487-37-7

NUR: 689

Serial Number: PAX/2019/06

Author: Jair van der Lijn

Contribution: PAX Europe Programme Staff: Dion van den Berg, Andriy Korniychuk, Simone Remijnse

Cover photo: Marieke Hannen

Graphic design: Het IJzeren Gordijn

Animations: Marieke Hannen

Quotes: The quotes on peace in the text are not from actual people, but of fictive people.

PAX would like to thank experts who participated in the meetings in Utrecht, Belgrade and Kyiv as well as all those who found time to contribute through other means and platforms for their invaluable input.

PAX strives to achieve the highest level of accuracy in its reporting. This report reflects official information available in the public domain. We welcome comments, clarifications, and corrections from governments and others; if you believe you have found an inaccuracy in our report or if you can provide additional information, please contact us at: [korniychuk@paxforpeace.nl](mailto:korniychuk@paxforpeace.nl) or [vandenBerg@paxforpeace.nl](mailto:vandenBerg@paxforpeace.nl)

### **About PAX**

PAX works with committed citizens and partners to protect civilians against acts of war, to end armed violence and to build peace. PAX operates independently of political interests.

P.O. Box 19318  
3501DH Utrecht  
The Netherlands

[info@paxforpeace.nl](mailto:info@paxforpeace.nl)  
[www.paxforpeace.nl](http://www.paxforpeace.nl)

# Content

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>Paranoid Android</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>United States of Europe</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>East, West, North Best</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>All Against All</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>35</b>

# Foreword

PAX is a European peace organisation. Its headquarters are in the Netherlands and as it was formed through the merger of Pax Christi Netherlands and IKV, the Interchurch Peace Council, its very existence is closely related to war and peace in Europe. Pax Christi Netherlands was founded in 1948 to help rebuild a democratic Europe and prevent a World War III. IKV was set up in 1966 to stop the nuclear arms race and overcome the Cold War divide in Europe. This publication on Europe is only the latest in a long series of documents and campaigns on 'Europe as a peace project'.

The European Union is one of many European institutions, but it is the most important one, and we see the EU (and its predecessors, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Community (EC)) as a successful peace project. These bodies for European cooperation and integration have indeed stopped the cycle of wars that tormented the European continent for centuries.

The EU's values, such as respect for human dignity, solidarity, the rule of law and subsidiarity, are crucial to guiding the continued process of European integration. Over the last few decades we have seen that these values are easily forgotten; for many millions of Europeans, the EU is primarily about economic cooperation and economic growth. But we need to remember and revitalize these European values more than ever in these turbulent times, in which the relationship with the transatlantic partner, the United States of America, is under pressure, the principles of international law are flagrantly ignored in countries such as Syria and Yemen, more people than ever are adrift and populism is on the rise worldwide, including in many EU member states. The challenge is to find new ways to operationalise those values, within the EU as well as in its external relations.

Yet it seems that there is very little open debate about Europe. Quite often it looks like you are simply either for or against 'Europe'. This is a non-dialogue from entrenched positions and it will bring no good. We need to find ways to have a true dialogue in search of renewed common ground for a value-based EU that can continue to play its role in the promotion of human dignity, democracy, solidarity and the rule of law.

To that end, PAX undertook a scenario exercise. We pictured a few scenarios for Europe in the year 2040, precisely to get away from the current polarised non-debate on the EU, and to challenge ourselves and others to reflect on what the future might bring if we make certain choices today and in the next few years (or fail to make them).

These scenarios were developed in three two-day meetings, held in November and December 2018 in Utrecht (the Netherlands), Belgrade (Serbia) and Kyiv (Ukraine). The participants in the Utrecht meeting were from EU member states. In the other two meetings, we deliberately involved people from regions that are not EU members (at least, not yet) in order to get an 'outside' perspective. As it turned out, the participants focused mostly on the institutions and governments, and far less on the role the citizens of Europe (both in EU member states and non-EU states) can and should play. This is despite the fact that we at PAX feel strongly that citizens are crucial actors in the process

of securing and strengthening the EU as a peace project. Why and how can be read in a separate document, the PAX Position Paper on the Future of Europe (see our website: [www.paxforpeace.nl/EU2040](http://www.paxforpeace.nl/EU2040)).

The intention of this scenario report is to initiate and stir up the debate. For us at PAX, interestingly, none of the four scenarios fits fully with our wishes and ideas. We want the European values to be maintained and respected, and we feel that the integration process should continue, but even so we are not comfortable with the scenario entitled 'The United States of Europe', in particular because of its positioning of Europe in the world.

We are looking forward to discussions about the four scenarios, so please share your reflections and ideas with us!

Miriam Struyk,  
Director of Programmes at PAX

March 2019

# Executive Summary

The process of European integration that resulted in the European Union (EU) is often perceived as a 'peace project'. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) regulated under one central authority the production of two resources that were essential for warfare. And in 2012 the Nobel Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU, arguing that the integration of Central and Eastern Europe into the EU contributed to peace on the continent. However, over recent years the EU and its 'peace project' have increasingly come under pressure. This growing uncertainty about the future direction of the EU raises many questions about what the EU as a 'peace project' will look like, for instance in 2040, and what that will mean for Europe in that year.

Four scenarios were built for the EU as a 'peace project' in 2040 on the basis of scenario-building meetings in Utrecht (the Netherlands), Belgrade (Serbia) and Kyiv (Ukraine), plus desk-top research and extensive reviews. The scenario-building meetings were held in November and December 2018 and involved 52 people (30 men and 22 women). Two key uncertainties lie at the core of the four scenarios:

- ◆ Will respect for EU values (e.g. democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights) remain, or will they increasingly be disregarded?
- ◆ Will the EU integrate further or disintegrate?

## The Four Scenarios for 2040

**Paranoid Android:** The EU as a 'peace project' has been redefined as it now focuses on security and stability for its citizens. It does so at a high cost, prioritising security over civil liberties when necessary. It resembles a super-state and has the technological tools to be in full 'control' by means of internal surveillance and strict external border control. It is an inward-looking union, afraid of dangers from the outside world. To ensure stability at its borders and to keep migrants out, it supports illiberal regimes in the buffer of countries surrounding it.

**United States of Europe:** The EU as a 'peace project' thrives. Europe has come together in a federation of European states. Collaboration has not only deepened—EU armed forces, an EU government and EU taxes—but also broadened as the Western Balkans and countries like Ukraine have acceded, and the UK has returned. While internally the EU peace project has brought prosperity, security, democracy and rule of law to its member states, externally its soft-power approach means it prefers talks to the use of force. Consequently, a number of illiberal regimes in the Middle East and Africa are able to get away with human rights violations, oppression and conflict. Moreover, there are groups of citizens that continue to perceive the EU as an elite project.

**East, West, North Best:** The EU has been replaced by a number of light regional networks, of which the North European Union, the NEU, is the most prosperous and prominent. The fact that there is no longer an EU as an integrated 'peace project' does not mean that European values such as human rights and rule of law have evaporated. After all, they already existed before the EU. European governments have even enhanced democracy through the use of modern technology and brought decision-making closer to their populations. There is no longer structural EU collaboration on foreign, security or defence policies, or justice and home affairs. Apart from collaboration in NATO, countries, regions and cities seek flexible solutions to emerging challenges. Consequently, in the international arena European countries have lost relative power and influence to actors such as China and Russia. Moreover, this network experiment is vulnerable to internal social unrest and external manipulation and attacks.

**All Against All:** The EU and NATO have fallen apart. States pursue short-term security and economic interests and collaborate for that purpose on an ad hoc, opportunistic basis. State and majority-group security are the leading principles of governance, and oppression of minority groups and dissent are a government's principal tool. Nationally, social unrest, jihadism and separatism are frequent, but international tensions and conflict are also common. Countries therefore invest heavily in defence and security. The Western Balkans in particular face violent conflict and renewed genocide.

## The Main Messages

1. 'Peace projects' and peace as such should not be taken for granted and require continuous maintenance. The EU has great potential to remain a 'peace project' for the future, but the fact that there is an EU does not mean that it will also inevitably be a 'peace project'.
2. Four challenges seem to play a particular role in how the future of the EU as a 'peace project' will unfold and require attention, including from peacebuilders:
  - ◆ How to bring internal and external solidarity in line
  - ◆ How to ensure that technology is used as a force for good
  - ◆ How to ensure that liberal policies include solutions for those who lose out or feel they lose out from them
  - ◆ How to put citizens at the centre of all efforts

## Policy Implications

On the basis of the scenarios, the participants listed the following policy implications for the peacebuilding community:

1. Ensure that technology is used as a force for good
2. Better understand the motivations that drive people to support populism, and address their concerns
3. Think of modernising or redefining norms and values and updating the social contract
4. Continue to support peacebuilding outside the EU
5. Build civil-society and peacebuilding organisation networks across borders
6. Invest in environmentally friendly solutions
7. Embrace and integrate migrants
8. Involve citizens in general more in developing the EU of the future
9. Involve in particular more youth in developing the EU of the future



# Introduction

The process of European integration that resulted in the European Union (EU)<sup>1</sup> is often perceived as a 'peace project'. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), for example, was established in 1951 in order to have one central authority regulating the production of two resources that were essential for warfare. As Robert Schuman claimed, the ECSC would "make war not only unthinkable but materially impossible".<sup>2</sup> In 2012, the Nobel Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU, arguing that the integration of Central and Eastern Europe into the EU after the end of the Cold War contributed to peace on the continent, while the prospects for EU membership strengthened reconciliation in the Balkans.<sup>3</sup> However, regarding European integration as only a 'peace project' would be too one dimensional. The process of European integration was initiated during the Cold War in part to make Europe less vulnerable to a (perceived) Soviet threat, while from a Russian perspective EU enlargement to the East is often seen in terms of power politics.<sup>4</sup>

## The European 'Peace Project' at a Crossroads

Over recent years, the EU has faced a variety of challenges ranging from the financial and migration crises to Brexit. The global political environment has become more hostile towards the EU, not only externally—because of a deterioration in the relationship with Russia and with the United States (US) under the Trump administration—, but also internally—due to the rise of populist or nationalist parties. Moreover, EU institutions consider democratic values and rule of law in countries such as Hungary and Poland under threat.<sup>5</sup>

This increasing uncertainty about the direction of the EU raises many questions about what the EU as a 'peace project' will look like in the future, and what that will mean for Europe. Will EU enlargement continue or not? Will there be further deepening of EU integration or not? Will more nationalist or populist tendencies take over in Europe or not? It is perhaps even open to question whether the EU will still exist or not, and so on. And what will the answers to all those questions mean for Europe as a whole?

1 In this project 'the EU' is used when referring to the European Union, while 'Europe' is used for the geographical area of the continent and is therefore broader than just the EU countries.

2 The Schuman Declaration – 9 May 1950, <[https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_en)>.

3 Norwegian Nobel Committee, 'The Nobel Peace Prize for 2012', Press Release, 12 October 2012, <<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2012/press-release/>>.

4 Maria Lipman, 'What Russia thinks of Europe', Commentary, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2 February 2016, <[https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_what\\_russia\\_thinks\\_of\\_europe5084](https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_what_russia_thinks_of_europe5084)>.

5 European Parliament, 'Rule of law in Hungary: Parliament calls on the EU to act', Press Release, 12 Sep. 2018, <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20180906IPR12104/rule-of-law-in-hungary-parliament-calls-on-the-eu-to-act>>; and European Commission, 'Rule of Law: European Commission refers Poland to the European Court of Justice to protect the independence of the Polish Supreme Court', Press Release, 24 Sep. 2018, <[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-18-5830\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-5830_en.htm)>.

## Scenarios and their Aim

When thinking through the answers to these questions and their implications for democracy, human rights and peace within the EU and the wider continent—the Western Balkans<sup>6</sup> and the Eastern Neighbourhood<sup>7</sup> – it is helpful to collect thoughts on possible long-term developments by identifying alternative futures in order to prepare and plan for what lies ahead. There are at least two reasons for this.

First, depictions of scenarios stimulate discussions about the topic under review. They allow for a more structured form of debate about what future developments may involve and hence how the current factors influencing these developments should be addressed and shaped. As such, discussions of scenarios strengthen dialogue and may lead to commonly agreed-upon or joint solutions.

Second, scenarios are an instrument for policy planning, as they constructively explore futures and realities that require forward thinking. Planning for alternative futures increases organisations' flexibility as it makes them think through what they aim to achieve and what will be required in each scenario. As Dwight D. Eisenhower once said: "Plans are worthless, but planning is everything".<sup>8</sup>

Scenario thinking has its origins in military planning but was embraced by the private and public sectors after the oil company Royal Dutch Shell proved to be better able to weather the 1970s oil crisis than its competitors. The reason why? It had thought through an alternative future of a potential oil crisis in advance, and as a consequence was much better prepared in terms of its policy and planning.<sup>9</sup>

In order to serve both purposes (i.e. stimulating discussions and being a policy planning instrument), scenarios need to fulfil a number of criteria. They should be creative but plausible. The scenarios have to think the unthinkable and even explore uncomfortable options. Their aim is to make the reader think about what may happen in the future and why. Yet they should not cross into the impossible because then they would lose their policy relevance and only serve as fiction. For this reason, each alternative future also has to be internally consistent.

The scenarios presented in this report are not intended to be predictions. Their aim is to depict what may happen by providing a 360-degree view of all alternative futures. For this reason, they try to cover the widest variety of potential futures in order to maximise the potential for discussion, enabling policymakers to embrace uncertainty and be prepared for the different futures that may arise. This paper presents four scenarios for the EU as a 'peace project' in 2040. As the future unfolds, it will not look exactly like any of the scenarios described below, but it is likely to include some features from some or all of them.

6 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

7 Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

8 'Speech to the National Defense Executive Reserve Conference in Washington, D.C.' (14 November 1957), in: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1957, National Archives and Records Service, Government Printing Office, p. 818.

9 Royal Dutch Shell, '40 years of Shell scenarios', NP: 2012, <[http://www.shell.com/promos/forty-years-of-shell-scenarios/\\_jcr\\_content.stream/1448557479375/703c8a8b176922ae312712b355706ce087652a860980d5ffecac769817903d88/shell-scenarios-40yearsbook080213.pdf](http://www.shell.com/promos/forty-years-of-shell-scenarios/_jcr_content.stream/1448557479375/703c8a8b176922ae312712b355706ce087652a860980d5ffecac769817903d88/shell-scenarios-40yearsbook080213.pdf)>.

## These Scenarios and PAX's Aim

In these times of uncertainty and growing fear about peace and security in the future, when policies are increasingly geared to short-term stability at the cost of long-term sustainable peace, PAX wants to stimulate discussion about the future. Do Europeans, governments and citizens alike, still dare to stand for peace? Does the EU stand for peace?

Given the current political dynamics, with Brexit, with liberal democracy being challenged even inside the EU, and with a changing international environment, PAX believes that the peacebuilding perspective deserves a seat at the table in upcoming discussions about European security and integration. Members of the peacebuilding community will have to be vocal on the importance of peace when some of the foundations of European integration may be at risk.

An effective response from the peacebuilding community to ongoing and future challenges requires a well-thought-through, comprehensive, balanced and long-term approach. For PAX, its efforts start with building these scenarios, both for planning and preparation and in order to start a broader discussion about the future of peace, security, democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe. The scenarios in this report are not the end goal for PAX's efforts; rather, they serve to continue the discussions, both with all PAX's partners that were involved in the development of these scenarios, and with others in the wider peacebuilding community, with policymakers and with the general public. With these scenarios in hand, in the weeks before the European Parliament elections (23-26 May 2019), PAX will hold several debates, workshops and public events, publish an animation about the future scenarios and launch a website<sup>10</sup> to discuss the future of the EU as a 'peace project' on the basis of these scenarios and their main messages. As such, these scenarios serve as the starting point for a broader initiative starting a bigger process of reflection on how to promote peace in the EU and beyond its borders in the future.

## Methodology

The scenarios presented in this paper were built using the Shell scenario methodology.<sup>11</sup> Their core elements are based on a scenario-building workshop held in Utrecht, Netherlands, on 22-23 November 2018, which involved academics, civil society and practitioners mainly from across the EU. Subsequent scenario workshops in Belgrade, on 17-18 December, and in Kyiv, on 20-21 December, provided additional input focusing particularly on the impact of the EU as a 'peace project' in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Neighbourhood respectively. Academics, civil society, politicians, journalists and practitioners participated in the meetings. In Belgrade, most participants were from the Western Balkans, while in Kyiv they came from the Eastern Neighbourhood. In total 52 people (30 men and 22 women) participated in the dialogue meetings. The inputs from these workshops, combined with additional desk research, resulted in draft scenarios, which were further tested and refined by reviewers.<sup>12</sup> A four-step scenario-building process was followed.

<sup>10</sup> [www.paxforpeace.nl/EU2040](http://www.paxforpeace.nl/EU2040)

<sup>11</sup> Shell International BV, 'Scenarios: an Explorer's Guide', The Hague, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> The author is grateful to all those who contributed to this process. The scenarios sketched in this paper are essentially theirs and without their input this paper would not have been possible.

The first step was to specify the temporal horizon for projecting the scenarios. The year 2040 was chosen because it allows for the development of sufficiently differentiated scenarios. However, it does not make the scenarios less relevant for the more immediate future. Once the first traits of a scenario have developed, these can be monitored with a view to potential policy adjustments.

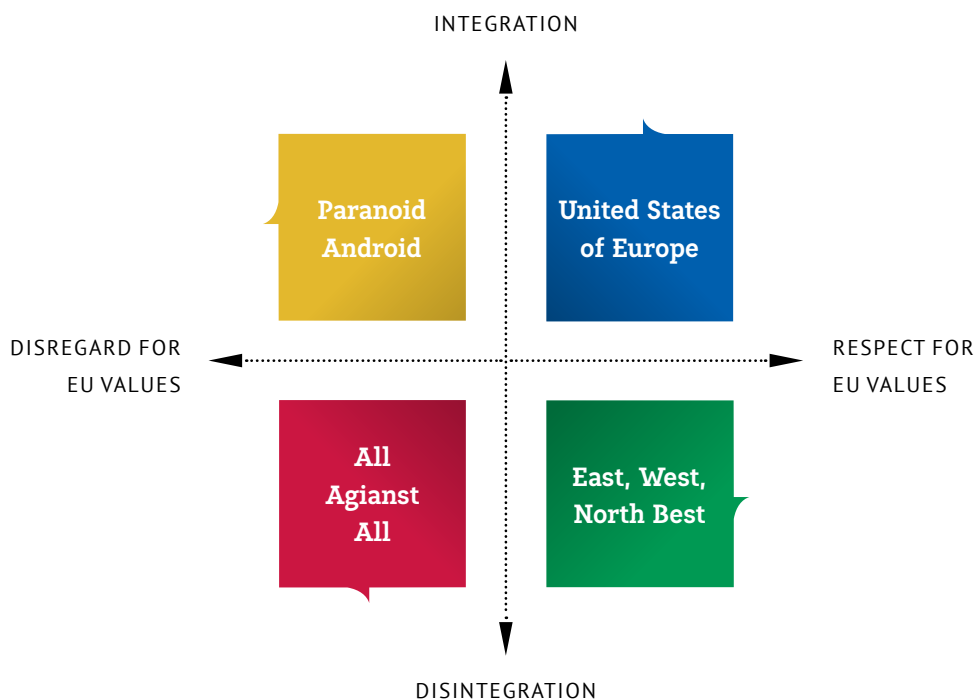
The second step was to identify trends and developments that might affect the EU as a 'peace project' in 2040, both those that are very likely to occur—'probabilities'—, and those that are uncertain—'uncertainties'. While the uncertainties determine the differences between scenarios, the probabilities determine what they have in common. The uncertainties and the probabilities are equally important for projecting the contents of the scenarios. Mistaken assumptions about the probabilities may lead to criticism that the scenarios are unrealistic.

The third step was to define key uncertainties—the most important and most uncertain variables that form the basis of the axis grid of the scenarios.

The final step was to build scenarios based on how the remaining variables—uncertainties and probabilities, the driving forces and the actors—develop in each scenario quadrant (see Figure 1 below).

**Figure 1**

Scenarios for the EU as a 'peace project' in 2040



## Probabilities and Uncertainties

When imagining the EU as a 'peace project' in 2040, it is important to be aware of what is probable. Participants in the Utrecht workshop clustered a number of issues, trends and developments as probable. The most commonly accepted probabilities that were deemed relevant were: that climate change will affect the EU and Europe; that nation states in one form or another will remain important units of governance; that forms of violent and non-violent nationalism will remain; that non-European players such as China, Russia and the US will be more dominant than the EU, and perhaps become its rivals; that the mobility of people will increase; that populations will become increasingly culturally diverse; that cities will increase in importance relative to rural areas; that populations will be greying; that technological progress will continue; and that the complexity of society will increase.

A number of uncertainties were identified as well. Can the EU prevent internal conflict? Will the EU remain a major global actor? Will it be inclusive or exclusive? Will EU enlargement continue? Will the EU have friendly or unfriendly relations with neighbouring countries and regions? Will the EU cooperate more closely with Russia? Will China's influence on Europe continue to grow? Will economic growth continue and will it be evenly distributed? Will the euro survive? Will the EU be able to deal with external migration and the internal mobility of populations? Will European societies be sufficiently resilient to overcome the challenges of globalisation and technological progress? Will climate change promote confrontation or cooperation? Will the current polarisation between the 'left' and the 'right' in politics and the collapse of the centre parties continue? And will democracy be able to reinvent itself and innovate, or will we increasingly see illiberal governance?

## Key Uncertainties

In the Utrecht workshop, participants identified two developments that are highly important for the future of the EU as a 'peace project' in 2040 but are also very uncertain in terms of the direction they will take in the future. These are the two key uncertainties:

### 1) Will respect for EU values remain, or will they increasingly be disregarded?

This first key uncertainty concerns the extent to which the EU will continue to respect the values it was founded on and which were formulated in the EU Treaty as: "respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail."<sup>13</sup>

### 2) Will the EU integrate further or disintegrate?

This second key uncertainty is the extent of integration in the EU, or in Europe as a whole in scenarios where the EU no longer exists. If the EU integrates further, more state competencies will be transferred to the EU level and more European countries will become EU members. If the EU fragments, EU competencies will be shifted to lower levels—e.g. regions, national states, sub-state units and cities—

<sup>13</sup> Article 2 of the EU Treaty.

and the number of member states will decrease. Ultimately this will mean the end of the EU, and beyond that a decrease in the cohesiveness of its constituting parts—the member states.

On the basis of these two key uncertainties, a grid was constructed in which the x and y axes represent the above two key uncertainties. Each quadrant represents one scenario (see Figure 1).

This report discusses the four scenarios represented in the quadrants of the grid. These scenarios are:

1. Paranoid Android—increasing disregard of EU values and further EU integration;
2. The United States of Europe—more respect for EU values and further EU integration;
3. East, West, North Best—more respect for EU values and further disintegration of the EU;
4. All Against All—increasing disregard for EU values and further disintegration of the EU.

## Guide for the Reader

Each description of the four scenarios starts with a future history of the period from 2019 to 2040. These are written in the past tense to emphasise that they present a retrospective view from 2040. They are followed by a description in the present tense, showing in broad strokes what the scenario in 2040 looks like: (a) in general; (b) with regard to peace and security in Europe; and (c) with regard to the state of the EU as a 'peace project'. Each scenario is also accompanied by a box outlining its main characteristics, and quotes from fictitious people living in these scenarios. The paper ends with a number of conclusions regarding the scenarios, as well as policy implications that follow from the exercise.

# Paranoid Android



## A Future History

After the migration crisis of 2015, the fear of migrants and ‘terrorism’ never disappeared, and xenophobia was not only used by right-wing extremist parties, but also increasingly accepted by the public as part of the mainstream political discourse. This escalated following the dramatic 2023 simultaneous attacks on parliaments in Rome, Stockholm and Warsaw, in which 578 people including members of parliament were killed. Some of the ‘terrorists’ had a migrant background, while others had entered Europe as asylum seekers. The EU responded by announcing that these attacks constituted an attack on all, requiring drastic if not draconian action. Pushed by public outrage, member states decided that stopping ‘terrorism’ and the killing of more innocent civilians required a joint EU effort to ensure watertight external border protection, combined with the removal of internal security threats by means of intense monitoring and surveillance.

In the heat of the moment, increasingly assertive popular calls made even the most liberal countries feel the pressure to introduce more conservative and stricter rules. Legitimised by the need to defend European values against an external threat, the first steps were taken on a road that would eventually lead to many of these EU values being neglected. Immediately after the attacks, all EU member states jointly declared martial law. This was soon followed by the decision that only migrants from a limited number of developed and Christian countries (Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant) were welcome, as well as refugees from inside the EU. Effectively a ‘ban’ on Muslim migration was put in place. Later on, EU laws were made that allowed increasingly tight monitoring and surveillance of migrants and all EU citizens, in essence making martial law permanent. The

incarceration of suspects without regular forms of justice, overriding civil rights, also became accepted if deemed essential for the physical security of the EU population.

In fear of the outside world, euro-nationalism among the population started to transcend nationalism at the member-state level, which meant that member states became more open to centralising some important governance tasks at the EU level. In 2029, following the establishment of the political and digital union under the European Commission, these monitoring and surveillance tasks were added to the mandate of the European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (eu-LISA). Whilst keeping its headquarters in Tallinn, it was renamed the European Agency for Internal Security and Counter-Terrorism (eu-ACT) and tasked with leading all EU actions on these issues.

Obviously these steps were not taken lightly. Many more liberal-minded people wondered whether being lax on many civil rights and liberties in favour of security was the right approach. Some had been very vocal, e.g. against the 'Muslim ban'. However, the majority of the EU population saw the right to security and life as superseding all other rights and liberties. They were willing to accept the many false alarms the new surveillance system initially generated as teething problems. Consequently, the liberal demonstrations and social protests opposing the changes were to no avail. They even led to violent responses from right-wing groups that wanted to silence the 'traitors'.

---

#### MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCENARIO PARANOID ANDROID

<b>MAIN ACTOR(S)</b>	Increasingly centralised EU.
<b>IMPORTANT DRIVERS</b>	Fear of terrorism and migration; and EU-controlled technological development.
<b>SOURCES OF INSECURITY FOR EUROPE</b>	Government abuses or repression.

---

## The Scenario in 2040

In 2040, the EU consists of the EU-27, which is a relatively prosperous region. Many of its policies are based on and legitimised by the popular fear that people from Africa and the Middle East, pushed by climate change and resource conflicts—e.g. over water and land—dream of a better life in the EU. The predominant assumption is that such migrants would not only change the European way of life but would also bring insecurity and 'terrorism'. This fear of 'terrorism' and migration is pervasive and has changed the character of the EU completely. As it is virtually impossible to enter the EU unregulated, and possibilities for legal migration have been severely cut back, migration to the EU has almost completely ceased. Consequently, in order to tackle the problem of its greying populations, this true Fortress Europe has to promote fertility (financial incentives for bigger families), develop a robot workforce and stimulate research into cloning. The Christian populations of the countries in the Western Balkans and Eastern Neighbourhood provide additional labour-force reserves where robotisation and artificial intelligence are insufficient.

In addition to the internal market and common currency, the EU has further centralised its internal and external security and defence policy. It has EU armed forces, an EU police force, EU internal security apparatus and EU border control. The Union is much more agile than before—a global



economic and geopolitical force to be reckoned with. It recognises climate change and dependence on external fossil fuels as security threats and has therefore also invested heavily in greening its economy. It is a world leader in (green) technology, cyber intelligence and artificial intelligence. 'Silicon Ireland' in particular is a driver of new developments. These tech developments result from the gigantic EU investments in the tech sector and tech education, ensuring that Brussels is always ahead of non-state and external actors. These public investments in technology, defence and security lead to continuous economic growth, as technology is the main global resource. Moreover, as the EU has forced European companies to repatriate their production to EU territory, it is independent of outside powers such as China.

*"Peace is physical security for the people"*

ULRICH STEIN (GERMANY)

However, the common norms and values have also been redefined, as the original EU values have been redirected towards order, predictability, physical security and internal-EU solidarity. The EU 'state' and physical security for its citizens is perceived to be far more important than civil liberties. Tight security measures and regulations, and the monitoring and surveillance of citizens means that civil liberties have been severely curtailed. Freedom of speech and freedom of press are suspended where 'national interests' are deemed to be at stake. Camera, cyber and space surveillance have been perfected with facial recognition and artificial intelligence, meaning that eu-ACT is aware of the whereabouts and activities of all people on EU territory. It is even largely able to predict and pre-empt future security threats, which has led to the near-absence of crime. The technological progress allows for near-absolute control and near-absolute control ensures near-absolute security. Most people do not mind such limits to their rights and freedoms, as they feel it is justified to ensure security, and they argue that "if you have no ill intentions, you are not bothered by the security agencies".

*"Peace is the absence of war"*

ANASTASIIA MELNYK (UKRAINE)

The Union is inward looking. It focuses on strengthening internal cohesion by creating an EU identity, using common historical and cultural symbols. It is also othering the outside world by perceiving and portraying Africa, the Arab world, China and Russia in particular as fundamentally different and alien. Society has slowly turned more conservative. The European Parliament is dominated by right-wing Euro-nationalist conservatives. Liberal media, critical thinking and civil society organisations have lost influence, and opposition to the mainstream of securitised conservatism is side-lined. A side effect of this homogenization process has been that vulnerable groups, like the LGBTQ community, are being silenced and their rights are regressing.

## **Peace and Security in Europe in 2040**

With the exception of the UK, which is a close ally of the EU and has one foot in the Union, in the international arena the EU sees itself surrounded by enemies and rivals. These geopolitical tensions are in part self-inflicted as the EU's self-interested policies have not contributed to a collaborative international atmosphere. Russia has grown considerably weaker over the years, particularly as its economy has been unable to adapt to the substitution of oil and gas by solar, wind and nuclear power. It is politically unstable as it has lost control over a number of breakaway regions that seek independence. Nonetheless, it remains a force to be reckoned with, particularly because of

its nuclear weapons. After six US administrations that followed Trump's legacy, the EU and the US have grown apart. Both have focused too long on short-term transactional relationships: having a structural transatlantic bond no longer serves that purpose and has therefore not been maintained. The EU has drastically increased its defence spending and adopted its own common nuclear deterrence strategy to stay self-reliant. NATO has been disbanded. In fact, China, the US and to a lesser extent Russia are competitors for resources and are frequent sources of cyberattacks on the EU. In part due to the EU's great experience in surveillance and monitoring its own population, its cybercommand is effective in cyberprotection, staving off external enemies. Other EU defence capabilities also lead the field due to its enormous increase in defence spending and state of the art solutions.

The EU ensures stability at its borders by keeping friendly regimes in power, 'stabilocracies' in the Western Balkans, Eastern Neighbourhood and Northern Africa. These serve as a 'soft belly', a buffer. The kleptocratic autocratic regimes in this modern 'borderland' have considerable power as the gatekeepers of the EU. They benefit from a patron-client relationship, in which they receive military and financial support in exchange for stability and ensuring that migration from the Middle East and Africa is kept at bay. They also benefit from being the testing ground for new technologies, and they have access to the EU market. The EU dictates their economic and migration standards and regulations, but they can also hold the EU hostage and demand a high price for their loyalty. On the other hand, if these stabilocracies breed insecurity for the EU or witness insurrection, the EU does not hesitate to intervene militarily if required.

Although Christian populations in this soft belly often have dual nationality and an EU passport, those who do not are still in a privileged position regarding travel and migration. There is no longer much support for joining the EU in the soft belly, as it is much easier to migrate there. Due to the outflow, in particular of highly educated and female groups, from the Western Balkans and the Eastern Neighbourhood, countries like Belarus, Serbia and Ukraine are seeing population numbers decline further and increasingly struggle with a brain drain. While Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine serve as the granary of the EU, deals with African regimes guarantee resources. The biggest long-term challenge for the EU with these transactional relationships is that they are not cemented in solidarity and EU values, and that the 'stabilocracies' can shift allegiances if a better offer is on the table.

## State of the 'Peace Project' in 2040

The state of the EU as a 'peace project' depends on the definition of peace. There is no war, armed conflict or social unrest in or around the EU, but this Pax Europæana does not go beyond the absence of violence. It brings security and stability, but comes at a high price in terms of oppression and squandering of human and civil rights and liberties. The EU keeps the 'peace', particularly inside and near its borders, but does not build long-term peace, and at times even contributes to long-term (geopolitical) tensions. In its soft belly, stability and security override EU values from the past. Although humanitarian and development assistance is still provided, it is completely conditional and transactional: "aid for resources, aid for stability, and aid for keeping migrants out of Europe". Despite, or perhaps because of, the changed definition of human rights and security, the EU is still the model to follow for many countries in the world, including the Western Balkans and the Eastern Neighbourhood.

# United States of Europe



## A Future History

The wave of populism of the second half of the 2010s continued further into the 2020s. Large groups of citizens in Europe felt globalisation was not on their side and that a way back to 'how it used to be' was required. The results of the 'populists' they elected in power were, however, not very positive. Increasing protectionism and fearmongering meant that those countries that joined the 'Trumpian' tide did not flourish, but instead suffered relatively more than other countries from trade wars and the resulting economic crisis of 2024. Brexit also turned out to be a disaster.

In addition to these developments underlining the importance of economic collaboration, the 2025 Russian-Polish Crisis showed the relevance of political integration. Border skirmishes around Kaliningrad, due to a series of misunderstandings and miscommunications, nearly turned into a nuclear war. The US argued the Europeans had neglected their own security for too long and should now take responsibility for the consequences, effectively forcing the EU to get its act together. The EU did indeed reunite and rally against its common enemy, Russia, after which the conflict was quickly de-escalated at the negotiating table. Subsequently, the EU grew ever closer due to continuing pressure from China and rising India. Simply said, European countries

realised that if they wanted to remain relevant on the global stage, they needed to work together. Eventually the choice was between sharing sovereignty with Brussels or handing it over to Beijing.

By the end of the late 2020s populism had lost its attractiveness and federalist thinkers became more popular among European citizens. Drought, other extreme weather events and rising sea levels, as well as the resulting famine and migration, meant that climate change could no longer be ignored. It was clear that national solutions would not suffice to tackle its transboundary consequences. In 2029 the UK re-joined the EU, and in 2033 a treaty was signed, effectively providing the EU with a federal constitution, completing the defence and security, financial, fiscal and political union. The treaty was signed in Warsaw, to underline Poland's symbolic importance as the starting point where the EU stood together again, and was ratified shortly after by all EU member states. In 2039, in view of their geopolitical importance to the EU and following civic reforms, the countries in the Western Balkans, Moldova and Ukraine acceded to the EU.

---

#### MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCENARIO UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

<b>MAIN ACTOR(S)</b>	Member states and federal EU institutions.
<b>IMPORTANT DRIVERS</b>	Failing populism; external threats; climate change; and technological development.
<b>SOURCES OF INSECURITY FOR EUROPE</b>	Social unrest; cyber-attacks and information warfare.

---

## The Scenario in 2040

In 2040, the EU consists of 38 members—the 27 members that remained after Brexit, plus the UK, which returned, and the new member states Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia and Ukraine. Sanctions against Russia forced its political elites to reform the Russian economy, making it more competitive, slowly leading to more efficient governance and more civic participation and more democracy. After the previous political elite passed away, a younger generation took over and this democratic Russia has grown increasingly allied to the EU. Negotiations have even started with Russia and Georgia about membership and Turkey's accession process to the EU is in an advanced stage.

The Union's institutional setup has changed on the basis of the Warsaw Treaty—the EU's constitution—and is similar to the German federal system. As such the EU's 'democratic deficit', as it is termed, has been resolved, and transparency and accountability of decision-making and governance are guaranteed. The European Parliament, now with two Chambers including a Federal Council, is the sole legislator in the EU in charge of such areas as foreign affairs, defence, customs, international trade and matters affecting citizenship. The power of the European Parliament is balanced against the power of the national parliaments of the member states, which are free to act in areas where they are not expressly prohibited from doing so by the Warsaw Treaty, specifically in areas such as education, health and law enforcement. The EU Commission is the official EU government and is led by the Chancellor. The EU Court of Justice has a strong and independent position, particularly as it has the right to void national and European laws by declaring them unconstitutional. The whole EU has the euro as its common currency, and the Union has Common Armed Forces and a Common Police Force. At the same time, many other institutional powers have remained with the member

states. As such, the EU is not post-national, but has given nationality a place in its bigger federal structures. The general perception in the EU is that governance has become more legitimate.

The EU prospers in a multipolar world and is on a trajectory of stable economic growth. It is ahead of the curve in terms of the benefits of technology for human security. Due to technological progress the 2015 Paris climate goals have been reached by the EU, and transport, electricity, agriculture and industry in the Union are even climate neutral. Technological progress in areas such as artificial intelligence also ensures that financial streams can be regulated and controlled, making tax evasion and financial crime next to impossible. The extra tax income resulting from this allows the EU to provide its population with more and better services. The welfare state provides opportunities for all, and a universal basic income ensures that poverty has been eradicated. The resulting lower income disparities, combined with the internal mobility of citizens, has increased cohesion in the Union. Regulated external immigration ensures that greying populations are complemented with a new labour force, which is an accomplishment as other global centres are also attracting migrants.

*“Peace is rule of law”*

KACPER NOWAK (POLAND)

All that glitters is not gold; while most people are better off and support the federalisation, these people predominantly live in the cities. Although the continent has further urbanised and economic growth is more equally distributed, people living in rural areas that are prone to depopulation in particular do not perceive the benefits of the policies made in Brussels. For them, Brussels is too far away and pays too little attention to their needs. They also feel that they are unfairly hit hard by climate measures. In spite of all the objective progress, the EU as such still struggles to overcome negative perceptions amongst some of its citizens and to adjust democracy to the modern needs of absolute transparency and flexibility. Occasional referenda do not satisfy those citizens who feel disgruntled, and disadvantaged groups often do not reap the benefits of the improved e-democracy. Consequently, the debate about the benefits of EU membership continues, particularly in rural areas. Just as there are ‘red’ and ‘blue’ states in the US, so there are Eurosceptic and pro-EU states in Europe. However, as long as economic growth enables chequebook federalism, which buys the loyalty of the periphery, stability is guaranteed.

## **Peace and Security in Europe in 2040**

After the Trumpian era and the Russian-Polish Crisis, the US has reengaged again under leadership of the Democratic Party. However, although the EU and the US are still both NATO members, mutual trust and particularly faith in each other’s commitment to Article 5—collective self-defence whereby an attack against one is considered an attack against all—has received a severe blow. Globally, a democratic renaissance means the EU is not the only democratic great power around, but different democratic great powers may still have very different interests. The EU follows a policy of restraint. In addition to the democratic developments in Russia, Brazil has returned to liberal values after the Bolsonaro presidency, and in India and South Africa democracy has been reinforced with further consolidation of liberal values and minority rights. Liberal values are also on the rise in China due to the rising middle class and incremental democratic liberalisation. However, there is still a lot of autocracy, conflict and instability in Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East. This means that for the EU, war and peace have been largely redefined.

Armed violence around Europe is rare, but cyber-attacks and information warfare are frequent and can have devastating and destabilising effects. These attacks generally find their origins in the world's trouble spots and are generally criminal or 'terrorist' in origin, as the major powers are too connected to risk global conflict.

## State of the 'Peace Project' in 2040

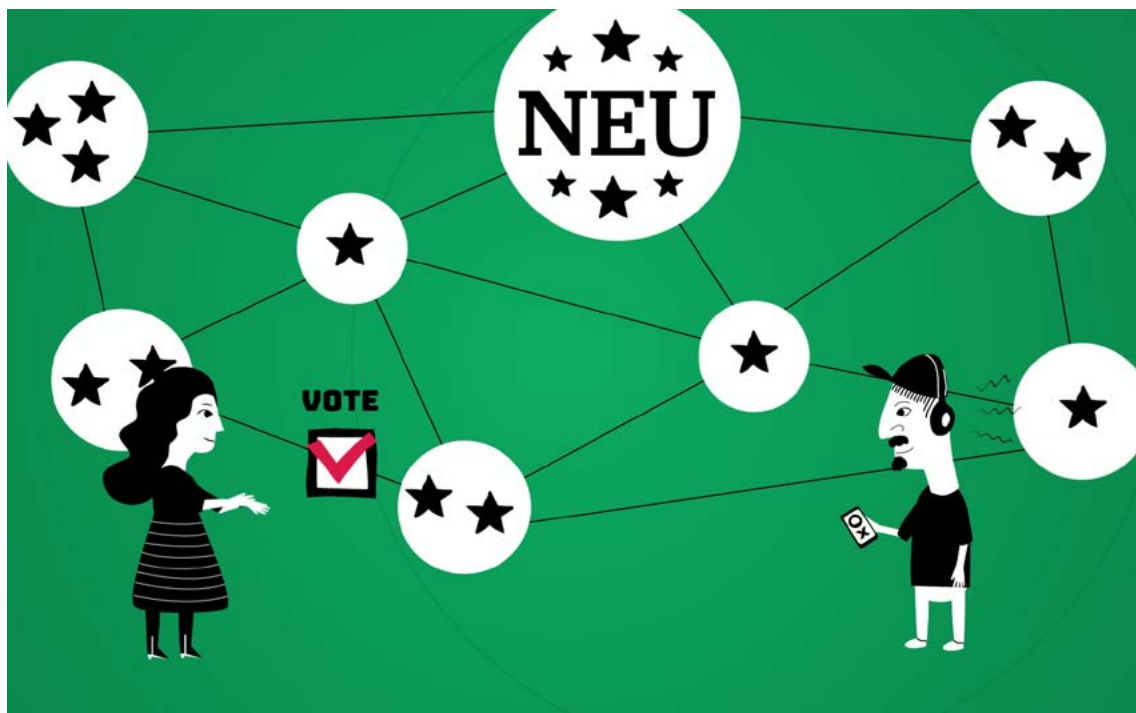
The biggest achievement of the EU as a 'peace project' is the rapid de-escalation of tensions after the Russian-Polish Crisis; following its democratisation, Russia is now even on the path to accession to the EU. Another great achievement is how once within reach, the process of joint accession led Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia to resolve long-standing conflicts and embrace democracy and human rights. Thanks to politically savvy Brussels diplomats, persistent civil society lobbying, and the skilful statesmanship of leaders in the Western Balkans, the required constitutional and political changes were made to move from bilateral disputes to regional cooperation. Remittances from migrants who left the Western Balkans, as well as the capital invested by returnees, provide the necessary additional economic stimuli for peace.

*"Peace is harmony of interests"*

AJKUNA LEKA (KOSOVO)

As such the EU as a 'peace project' thrives. It is a haven of prosperity, security, democracy and rule of law. Although internal tensions—in and between EU member states—still exist every once in a while, these generally do not turn violent. Externally, the EU is both a strong soft power and a defensive hard power. It is very capable of defending itself but does not go on external 'crusades'. It speaks with one voice, as a normative beacon of rule of law, human rights and democracy and it is a global advocate of environmental policies. The Union aims to contribute to peace by supporting civil society on development and governance in trouble spots. Apart from that, its relationships with the outside world are based on setting standards, in particular on human rights (including environmental and future-generation rights). It portrays itself as a 'better listener than before', leading to more equitable trade deals, for example with Africa. In the face of resistance, however, the EU follows a policy of restraint. It supports non-EU governments with crisis management missions but does not get involved in military interventions in the way it did in the Western Balkans, Iraq and Libya. At the same time, this policy of restraint means that its support of third parties (in particular of civil society) and its humanitarian aid are limited in scope and impact, and at times made impossible by rogue regimes. Some illiberal and ethnonationalist governments continue to inflict harm on their populations, in part because they do not fear more forceful measures, such as international prosecution or humanitarian intervention as part of the EU's commitment to the Responsibility to Protect.

# East, West, North Best



## A Future History

After Brexit, the UK did remarkably well once the initial political uncertainty and domestic turbulence had passed. After an economic dip, the British economy grew at a much faster pace than that of the Eurozone. Seeing the benefits of Brexit, public calls grew for Frexit, Nexit, Swexit and other exits. Particularly during the financial crisis of 2024, solidarity evaporated between the Nordics+—Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Sweden—and other member states. After frequent protests and growing discontent of many citizen groups about the direction of European integration, governments in the Nordics+ felt they no longer had the popular support to continue to pay for the ‘problems’ of the southern and eastern member states. They also felt that the free movement of persons had led them to ‘suffer’ from migrants coming from these countries. Moreover, from a Nordics+ perspective the continuing autocratisation of countries such as Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Romania meant that many southern and eastern member states no longer sufficiently respected EU values. All in all, the asymmetry of power and economic and political divergence between east and west, and north and south in the EU had become too great, and therefore the Union no longer worked for all.



In 2026, a wave of referenda across the Nordics+ countries saw a convincing win for those citizens who wanted to leave the EU. As a result, the governments of the Nordics+ created their own common market in the intergovernmental North European Union (NEU), which adopted the Northern Euro (Neuro) as its common currency. Although Germany had initially fought hard to maintain the unity of the EU, when faced with the choice, Berlin joined the NEU. It did so because it preferred joining the NEU to being a member of an autocratic and financially weak EU, or becoming a buffer state in between the NEU and less stable regions. In 2027 the remaining EU members liquidated the organisation, as it no longer made sense to continue. For a number of Mediterranean countries, like Italy, not being part of the NEU was not all that bad as they were able to readopt their respective currencies and follow their own fiscal policies and rules. Many of the countries of the NEU, on the other hand, went through an economic crisis as the Neuro became an extremely strong currency and therefore North European products initially became relatively expensive. It now became clear that North European countries had benefitted greatly from having South European countries on board, as they kept the euro at a lower rate, making Northern European products relatively cheap, which in turn had increased exports.

---

#### MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCENARIO EAST, WEST, NORTH BEST

<b>MAIN ACTOR(S)</b>	Networks of, or individual, cities, regions, states.
<b>IMPORTANT DRIVERS</b>	Success of EU 'exits'; evaporating EU solidarity after economic and financial crises; increasing divergence between EU member states; and, autocratisation of EU member states.
<b>SOURCES OF INSECURITY FOR EUROPE</b>	Social unrest; occasional separatism; vulnerability of network governance and security; and relative loss of global power.

---

## The Scenario in 2040

In 2040, international relations in Europe are an exponent of a global non-polar world, in which former EU members are primarily non-players. European actors continue to collaborate frequently and intensely with each other, but in a much more flexible, networked, light and fast fashion, without what might be perceived as unwieldy institutions. Close interest-based cooperation and sometimes even further integration has continued on individual topics, but European actors do so only if and when they see fit. As they pick and choose what cooperation they wish to be part of, decisions are only taken on the basis of consensus by those that participate.

Such cooperation does not limit itself to states, as other levels of government—countries, regions and cities—are also part of the network, e.g. the close cooperation between Austria and the regions of Bavaria and Northern Italy, and the close interaction on common interests between large cities such as London, Berlin and Paris. Furthermore, regions that have never been part of the EU, such as regions and cities in North Africa, Ukraine and the Western Balkans, are part of this loose network. For example, towns on the Adriatic coast also frequently collaborate.

The NEU is the largest European common market and customs union and although not members, the Baltic states, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and the UK are associated. However, it is but one of a variety of loose networks of states and other actors in Europe. In a Mediterranean Community, countries such as Cyprus, Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain collaborate economically with other



states, regions and cities, including in the Middle East and Northern Africa. The former Visegrad countries and Ukraine collaborate loosely as well. Moreover, in this networked environment the countries of the Western Balkans are also collaborating with their neighbours and the broader region, including Bulgaria, Greece, Moldova and Romania. In the Western Balkans, cooperation initially started when crime syndicates needed improved infrastructure to sustain their shady trade levels and pushed corrupt governments to deliver. Slowly, however, international cooperation grew beyond infrastructure and trade into other sectors and to the benefit of ordinary citizens. This loosely tied League of South East European Countries portrays itself as a bridge between Central Europe, Russia and Turkey.

*“Peace is sharing”*

ROSA ROSSI (ITALY)

The disintegration of the EU into the NEU and other groups does not mean an end to European values. Those already existed before the EU. In fact, the NEU countries reinvigorated democracy. Modern technology is used to bring governance closer to, and under better guidance of, local communities. In a ‘glocalised’ world, not having a ‘Brussels’ decide on issues in localities far away makes decision-making much more flexible and agile. Hence, rather than centralising decision-making, countries have often decentralised decision-making even further. As a consequence, the legitimacy of governance in the NEU has generally increased. Populations genuinely feel they are in charge. Technology has also enabled the introduction of sectoral voting in which only relevant stakeholders vote on certain topics – e.g. professions and interest groups, such as by farmers, nurses, construction workers, teachers and the youth. Voting is also easier for migrants as they can choose to vote in their country of residence or country of origin. States are porous as multiple identities for individual citizens are increasingly becoming the norm. It is possible for many people to choose where they want to live, work, vote and pay taxes. In this ‘glocalised’ world, democratic governance and its main instruments, such as elections and voting, are no longer bound by current understandings of state sovereignty and citizenship.

*“Peace is governance directly by the people”*

BERNARD MARTIN (FRANCE)

Following the success of the NEU countries, those countries that flirted with autocracy have also returned to liberal values. Only in the Western Balkans are civil rights and freedoms often restricted by elite interests, coupled with the powerful warlords and unrepentant war criminals occupying the public sphere. Although these countries pay lip service to European values and adhere to them on paper, practice in the Western Balkans is substandard. The other countries on the continent are still strongly committed to European values. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe are strong organisations that are committed to strive for good governance, rule of law, democracy and human rights in the region.

Many former EU members are doing economically well again. The NEU in particular has recovered from the economic crisis and has benefitted a lot from opening the northern sea route. The private sector is flourishing. Only in the Western Balkans are economies stagnating, while Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Georgia have not been able to bank on their buffer position with Russia. These economies have not been able to develop beyond the provision of raw materials and agricultural products and cheap labour. There, most private economic activity is integrated in the state–elite-dominated–sector, with ‘oligarchs’ dominating politics. This blurring of state and

private activities, or 'state capture', allows elites to avoid paying taxes and to hide profits offshore.

The NEU countries provide economic and peacebuilding assistance to countries in the Eastern Neighbourhood, Western Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and elsewhere, as stability in their backyard is in their own interest, but they do so bilaterally. Individual NEU countries also function as model countries on environmental policy, leading the energy transformation through technological progress. This is in part possible because they are less resource dependent and have a knowledge economy in an information age. They have also introduced environmental conditionality for the provision of economic cooperation and development aid. Migration is no longer an issue as former EU members have recognised they have a population deficit. Moreover, European actors pay Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Spain and Greece, as well as the ruler of Tripoli and the private security firm Mediterraniseq, to ensure security in the Mediterranean Sea.

## Peace and Security in Europe in 2040

The continent is not free of conflict. Separatism turns violent at times in places such as Slovakia, Catalonia and Transylvania. A more frequent problem, however, is social unrest. Groups of citizens mobilise in cyberspace and may have very little in common except for their joint frustration. They do not require a lot of structure and leadership, but they can organise near-instant massive protests leading to violence and can generate social unrest in the physical world. Some of the conflicts are also intergenerational and urban versus rural, as the rural and the elderly have a much more difficult time adjusting to modernity. They resent the global urban elites. At the same time young people and urban Europeans are very much aware of what happens abroad, and organise private initiatives supporting human rights and democratisation movements, strengthening development and providing humanitarian assistance, as well as environmental relief. All these internal dividing lines make the European network experiment vulnerable to those who want to do harm. More cohesive and closed global powers in particular—such as China and Russia—are consequently in a relatively more powerful position than Europe.

Although the end of the EU also brought an end to structural European cooperation on foreign, security and defence policy, as well as justice and home affairs, international military cooperation between NATO member states in Europe and North America has not disappeared. In fact, NATO has expanded to include the whole of the Western Balkans. In the global arena European countries have clearly lost influence and power. Russia and China are two important players in the international system whose interests do not always align with those of NATO members. Both are strong and cohesive, but their power is in creeping decline. Nonetheless, in the absence of the EU umbrella, countries in Eastern Europe are more vulnerable to assertive powers at the edges of the continent that try to ensure their own interests.

Hence, Russia is actively trying to reassert itself in the Western Balkans, Belarus and Georgia. The Baltic states are not a 'battleground' due to their association with the NEU and Moscow's satisfaction with the minority rights granted to the Russian populations living there. Turkey is another major power at the edge of the European system. It is a NATO member, but has one foot in the alliance and one foot out. It continues its slow return as a major power, in part because it skilfully uses Turkish diasporas in Europe, and it exerts economic influence over many of the members of the League of South East European Countries. It competes with Russia for influence

in the Western Balkans, the Middle East and in particular the South Caucasus. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Georgia are a buffer between NATO and Russia.

## State of the 'Peace Project' in 2040

The EU as a 'peace project' may no longer exist; it has morphed from that of the old EU, which was a small-time global policeman always in the shadow of the US, to a custom-made network of organisations. The NEU is a technology-based influence leader in regional security. Globally, the modern technology-enhanced North European democracy is seen as a shining example of how government can be closer to the people. This role for the NEU is characterised by a security architecture that is networked and agile in facing new threats. Part of the networking profile is its support for the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the new reformed and enlarged NATO and the League of South East European countries. The evolution in this role means that instead of trying to be able to act worldwide on every issue, the NEU targets local and regional issues of concern and facilitates a coalition of interested actors to address practical concerns. By looking after its own neighbourhood, the NEU indirectly contributes to a larger, global 'peace project'. At the same time, while the NEU has a good reputation, it is also often perceived as a distant actor.

The OSCE and the Council of Europe might be considered the most relevant pan-European 'peace projects' left. To some extent NATO could be considered as such as well, as it manages conflicting interests between Europe, Turkey and the US. However, NATO does not include Russia. Furthermore, the League of South East European Countries should be considered a 'peace project' in its own right, as through it the countries of former Yugoslavia are cooperating again. Moreover, it serves as a bridge between east and west, and north and south.

# All Against All



## A Future History

The EU was increasingly losing relevance. Many of its citizens thought it lacked leadership and a joint strategy on major challenges, such as climate change, irregular migration, transnational organised crime and the fragmentation of society. Moreover, the Eurozone economy stagnated while Brexit seemed a great success—the British economy did not collapse during the 2020s and even started to grow again. Consequently, popular support for EU membership dropped dramatically as politicians and public opinion increasingly wondered why one would stay in the Union if countries are better off outside it. In particular, member states such as France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden now openly began to consider following the UK’s example, albeit contemplating a more orderly exit.

The inability to reform and adapt in line with the constant pressure for effective policies gradually led more and more member states to pursue their own short-term political gains rather than their long-term common interest. Moreover, they were blind to the continuing destabilisation of the Middle East and the increasing instability of China and tensions in North East Asia that would eventually contribute to the collapse of the EU. It began in 2022, when in response to the second migration crisis—when three million refugees from the crisis in Egypt fled to Europe—and the public outcry, the Schengen zone was dismantled and border controls were reintroduced. The economic and financial crises—that resulted from the Chinese economic collapse and political instability in 2029—led to a dramatic increase in poverty and inequality in the EU. This in turn caused the political crisis that would end in the EU’s demise in the following years.

Particularly after 2029, increasing popular fear and uncertainty in an environment of growing inequality and poverty led to increasing polarisation and distrust among the public. Populism had easy answers and simple solutions that went down well with large parts of the electorate. Member states increasingly moved towards more illiberal solutions. Particularly in Northern Europe, right-wing populist political parties fared well in the resulting atmosphere of fear about migration and economic uncertainty. They made Frexit, Dexit, Italexit, Nexit and Swexit happen during the early 2030s.

In 2036 the remaining EU member states decided to dismantle the Union after it had become hollowed out and irrelevant. One year later, NATO was also abolished as it had become obsolete following the disengagement of the US. Consecutive US administrations had seen their relationship with European countries primarily in transactional terms, and felt that better deals could be made with individual countries than with the EU. At the same time NATO had been construed as “an expensive strategy to police the security of a group of European free-riders”. Therefore, Washington DC welcomed the end of both organisations. The increasing number of squabbles among European member states and between European member states and Turkey were only seen as unfortunate side effects of the decision that the US could no longer be a global security provider.

On the bright side, Russia slowly developed in the opposite direction. Following the argument that Russia needed to increase its efficiency and in the absence of serious threats from the West, its leadership embarked on a set of governance reforms that would eventually lead to democratisation. These reforms were enthusiastically supported by local governments and the population. In this slow process, the civil rights and liberties of its population were also further strengthened. By the end of the 2030s, while much of Europe was governed by illiberal right-wing governments, Russia had become one of the few more democratic countries in Europe, albeit conservative and focusing on its own national sovereignty.

---

#### MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCENARIO ALL AGAINST ALL

<b>MAIN ACTOR(S)</b>	Nation states and identity groups.
<b>IMPORTANT DRIVERS</b>	Success of Brexit; lack of EU leadership and strategy; economic and financial crises; migration crises; fear and uncertainty in an environment of growing inequality and poverty, leading to polarisation and distrust.
<b>SOURCES OF INSECURITY FOR EUROPE</b>	Oppression of minority groups and dissent; social unrest; jihadist, right-wing and left-wing extremist terrorism; separatism; ethnic conflict; international conflict; and genocide.

---

## The Scenario in 2040

In 2040, the EU no longer exists. National states and ethnic, religious and other groups living in them are the major actors on the European continent. Germany is the strongest European economic, political and military power, and its relationship with its neighbouring countries is primarily one of indifference about anything beyond its own interests. France, the UK, Italy and Spain are second-order powers. Small states, like the Benelux and Central European countries, have lost out in a struggle of all against all.

European governments are generally populist, corrupt, saturated by transnational organised crime and led by charismatic leaders. Southern European governments are generally controlled by left-

wing populists who have used socialism as legitimisation, but whose economic politics have had devastating effects on all their citizens. Northern Europe is mainly governed by inward-looking right-wing populists who use identity politics to win the support of their populations. They dance to the tune of corporations, which support their grip on power.

*“Peace is security for the nation”*

OSCAR SJÖBLAD (SWEDEN)

As Russia is now democratic and governed by rule of law, where just two decades ago it would have been inconceivable that the Baltic states and Ukraine would have teamed up with Russia, now the situation has reversed and Moscow has become more attractive than the populists of Northern Europe.

The gap between rich and poor is enormous in most places. In Western Europe, the elites own most of the wealth. While most of the masses are economically sufficiently well off – e.g. have food, a house, a car and go on holiday – about a fifth of the population live outside the system and struggle to get by in deep poverty. Many of those at the bottom are there either because they were unable to adjust to technological progress, or because they are still considered migrants even though their families arrived in their home countries generations ago. This has led to radicalisation among many such ‘migrants’. In Eastern Europe the gap between the elites and the rest is much wider, as there is no longer a middle class to bridge the divide. Only in Southern Europe is there more income equality, but that is mainly because the population lives in shared ‘poverty’.

In Europe, the law of the jungle is overshadowing the rule of law, including an independent media and judiciary, as illiberal leaders have slowly adapted democratic institutions to suit their own interests. In proportional representation parliamentary systems, the once mainstream parties have shifted toward the populist right or left. Internal security apparatuses, ranging from police to intelligence organisations, have grown in size and importance, while legal institutions have been undermined. Both have been politicised, as they have to serve their political masters who claim they implement what the people want. Only Russia and some of its partners can still be considered democracies that have freedom, and civil liberties and rights. Russia is conservative on a strong religious basis and focused on national sovereignty, with Christian Orthodox Democratic parties in government. Public opinion in Russia often looks down on the rest of Europe, as if the others have gone back to the Middle Ages, “but with gadgets”.

*“Peace is ethnic homogeneity”*

MIHAELA POPESCU (ROMANIA)

All European states pursue their own short-term security and economic interests. For that purpose, they may collaborate with others on security matters on an ad hoc, opportunistic basis, but generally do so bilaterally and without any form of structural European collaboration. For example, at times intelligence is shared between temporary allies. Furthermore, while it is no longer institutionalised, collaboration in dealing with jihadist ‘terrorism’ is still common, particularly to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons to non-state actors. Similarly, all of the European states have opportunistic relationships with the governments in China, India, Russia and the US.

Migration flows show the essence of how the situation has changed on the continent. Large flows are coming from the Western Balkans and less substantive movements originate from Eastern

Europe—fleeing the violence (see below). Substantial migration also originates from Southern Europe—due to poverty. Western Europe is no longer a net receiver of migrants, as it produces more people seeking political asylum and migrant populations leaving, sometimes even from the fourth and fifth generations, than it receives as refugees from outside the region. Political asylum seekers and refugees often seek hospitality in Turkey and Russia. For migrants from the MENA and sub-Saharan Africa, Europe is no longer attractive as a destination as India, the Gulf and South East Asia are far more appealing.

## Peace and Security in Europe in 2040

Peace on the continent is in shambles. State and majority-group security are the leading principles of governance, which has led to the oppression of minority groups and dissent, and frequent social unrest. In most European countries, human rights, civil rights and liberties are subordinate to 'survival' and 'security'. While in Northern Europe jihadist, right-wing and left-wing extremist terrorism are the dominant internal security challenges, separatism has escalated in Northern Ireland and Scotland. In Southern and Eastern European countries, ethnic conflict and separatism are more common and intense than 'terrorism'. Low-level violent conflicts are ongoing in such places as the Basque Country and Catalonia, and between the government and Hungarian nationalists in Slovakia and Romania (Transylvania).

Apart from the fight against these internal security challenges, European countries also invest large shares of their national budgets in defence and security to stave off external security threats. The continent is witnessing increasing international tensions over old territorial disputes, and arms races between countries and between great powers. Apart from France and the UK, a number of other countries, such as Germany, Italy and Sweden, have chosen to go nuclear. Internal conflicts also affect international relations, for example in the case of the UK and Ireland. In Slovakia and Romania, the ethnic conflicts and the position of the Hungarian minorities have also led to tensions between Hungary and both these countries.

These internal and international conflicts are often fuelled by the conflicts between Russia and West European countries. Eastern Europe is a grey zone, the battleground where a number of Western European countries and Russia engage politically. Russia and other still democratic countries support the liberal democratic resistance in Eastern Europe, and to some extent in Southern and Western Europe; this resistance is responsible for 'terrorist' or small-scale guerrilla attacks against their populist governments.

The tragic recent and ongoing events in the Western Balkans deserve particular attention, given their magnitude. This is the region that has become the 'hottest' because of the Russia versus Western Europe divide, the overlapping rivalry between Russia and Turkey, and the absence of the EU's quenching influence on the conflicts. It is hotter than the South Caucasus, where Russia, Turkey and Iran fight over influence. A tragic war has been ongoing since 2038 that started after Republika Srpska joined Serbia, and Kosovo and Albanian-dominated regions in Macedonia joined Albania. With the rapid collapse of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia came in to protect its Croatian kin. The remaining Bosnian-Herzegovinian rump state and its population are currently fighting for their survival as many Bosniaks are being slaughtered, while many refugees are also turning to Albanian-held areas and to Turkey.

## State of the 'Peace Project' in 2040

The EU as a peace project no longer exists, but it serves as an example of how European integration fails. The closest there is to a 'peace project' might be Russia and its partner countries. Russia supports democracy and human rights with the aim of building peace and creating stability at its borders. As such, in spite of its conservative character, Russia has become the beacon of hope for the last liberal democrats remaining on the continent. However, whether support for liberal democratic resistance really equals a 'peace project' is questionable.



# Conclusions

The four scenarios described above are intended to give a picture of what the EU as a peace project might look like in 2040 in four quadrants of the scenario grid (see Figure 2) determined by two key uncertainties:

- ◆ Will respect for EU values remain, or will they increasingly be disregarded?
- ◆ Will the EU integrate further or disintegrate?

## Reflecting on the Scenarios

Of the four scenarios, the United States of Europe scenario was seen by participants in the meetings as having the most positive and desired elements in the context of preserving a 'peace project'. However, it was also perceived as being almost Utopian.

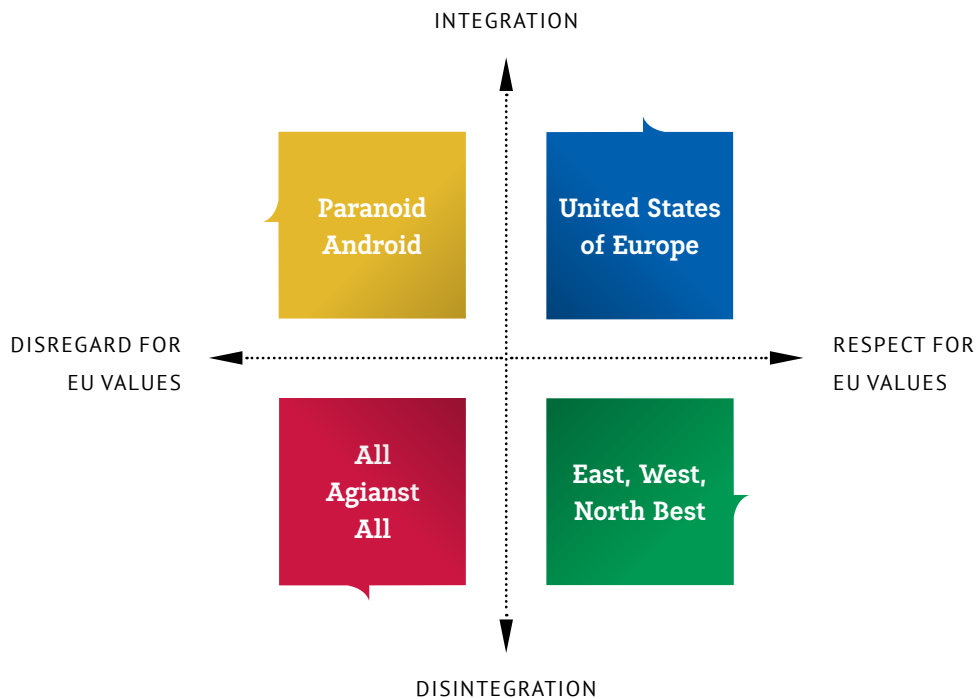
While East, West, North Best looks an attractive alternative to some, particularly as EU values remain, this preference is to a certain extent determined by geography and personal faith in the stability of networks. Particularly in the Belgrade and Kyiv meetings, participants also feared for the stability of this scenario and how it plays out in their region. Typically, it is also often difficult to imagine that EU values can survive the demise of the EU, even though EU values actually preceded the EU.

The Paranoid Android scenario was often seen in near-dystopian terms, almost Orwellian. It is therefore all the more surprising that elements of this scenario received quite some support in the Belgrade and Kyiv meetings. Participants explained this popularity mainly by the fact that physical security was seen as its great value. Many participants in all three meetings saw key aspects of this scenario, such as increasing fear for migration and terrorism or securitisation, as current trends that would be likely to continue in the future.

Most participants found the scenario All Against All most dystopian and maybe therefore also the most difficult to imagine. It raised questions such as why would the countries that are relatively well off and that have influence over events and developments allow this scenario to happen. After all, it would not be to their benefit? But will Brexit benefit the UK? Particularly in the Belgrade and Kyiv meetings, this scenario also generated low spirits and depressed feelings. If the EU were to fall apart and lose interest in EU values, like in this scenario, some participants felt the populations of these regions would lose an important lifeline, leaving them powerless to improve their own situation. On a more positive note, some participants argued this scenario could only be a transitional stage, as new forms of collaboration could be expected to develop afterwards.

**Figure 2**

Scenarios for the EU as a 'peace project' in 2040



Each scenario presents its own dilemma:

- ◆ **Paranoid Android:** Absolute physical security may come at the cost of civil rights and liberties. How far is one willing to go for physical security?
- ◆ **United States of Europe:** Relying only on dialogue and reaching compromises in external relations may come at a cost of not stopping crimes against humanity or genocide. When are words no longer enough when dealing with evil-doers? What would it take for the EU to make use of its improved military capabilities?
- ◆ **East, West, North Best:** Flexible and localised solutions come at the cost of regional disparities, and lack of cohesion may lead to vulnerability. How much regional disparity is acceptable and when does standing united make more sense?
- ◆ **All Against All:** Protecting one's own group comes at the cost of being perceived as a danger to others. This is the classic security dilemma. At what point does security benefit more from vulnerability and cooperation?

## Main Findings

On the basis of the above scenarios, a number of messages come to the fore. The first main message from the scenarios is that ‘peace projects’ and peace as such should not be taken for granted. Future scenarios in which Europe does not know peace, and in which neither the EU nor any other organisation is in a position to take on the role of ‘peace project’, are not entirely unlikely. The All Against All scenario in particular shows that peace and ‘peace projects’ are not a given and require continuous maintenance.

The second main message is that the EU has great potential to remain a ‘peace project’ for the future and that EU values are best anchored in EU integration, but the fact that there is an EU does not mean that it will also inevitably be a ‘peace project’. An EU that integrates further but also increasingly disregards its own values—as in the Paranoid Android scenario—might in the end no longer be considered a ‘peace project’. The EU could turn into an organisation that focuses primarily on the majority of its own citizens, whilst mistreating internal minorities—such as migrant populations. Or it could show no solidarity with those in need elsewhere—such as people without access to Fortress Europe. On a more optimistic note, the EU is not the only potential ‘peace project’, as NATO and the OSCE for example might also play similar roles, at least to some extent.

Our analysis of these scenarios reveals four challenges that play an important role in how the future will unfold and require attention, including from peacebuilders:

1. **How to bring internal and external solidarity in line:** Both forms of solidarity and EU values are not always aligned and may at times even conflict. A perceived excessive emphasis of liberal politics on external solidarity may lead to a bigger demand for internal solidarity through populism. Similarly, an internal ‘peace project’ does not necessarily imply an external ‘peace project’.
2. **How to ensure that technology is used as a force for good:** Technology can be both a force for good and for evil, a tool for peace as well as for harm and even oppression. Moreover, not only state actors but also non-state actors can wield the power of technology. ‘Terrorist’ or ‘Big Brother’-like dystopias are easily imaginable. While governments often focus on hedging against technological threats from non-state actors and other governments, civil society in particular has a major role to play in monitoring governments and using technology in support of dialogue.
3. **How to ensure that liberal policies include solutions for those who lose out or feel they lose out from them:** The divide between elites and those they claim to represent, between experts and laypeople, between highly educated and less educated citizens, and between urban and rural populations may, if unmanaged, lead to social unrest and populism. The less educated and rural populations in particular may not necessarily benefit directly from globalisation or climate policies, for example. Transparent and inclusive decision-making is a minimum requirement.
4. **How to put citizens at the centre of all efforts:** From the scenario descriptions it appears that the participants in the scenario-building meetings who helped to develop them felt that citizens alone and their civic activity would not suffice to change the outlook of the EU as a ‘peace project’. In the scenarios, citizens do not play a major role and groups often do not feel represented by the EU or their governments.

## Policy Implications

On the basis of the scenarios, participants in the workshops listed the following policy implications

- ◆ **Ensure that technology is used as a force for good:** The internet can be used for manipulating democratic processes and destabilising social structure, as well as for creating linkages for cooperation, strengthening government transparency and enabling online referenda. Establishing facts and countering fake news will become increasingly important to prevent destabilisation and build peace. The peacebuilding community could focus more on cyber-peacebuilding and oppose the use of the internet for undemocratic means.
- ◆ **Better understand the motivations that drive people to support populism, and address their concerns:** People who vote for populist parties and politicians have legitimate concerns and make rational calculations. Therefore, voters should not be set aside as 'deplorables'. Decision-makers and the peacebuilding community could draw people towards more liberal solutions by better understanding the attractiveness of populist alternatives and offering concrete solutions to legitimate concerns and rational calculations.
- ◆ **Think of modernising or redefining norms and values and updating the social contract:** Technology, globalisation and increasing mobility open up all sorts of opportunities for state and non-state actors, but they also have their challenges, and the accompanying changes also create fear. For example, data protection will require a rethinking of values on a global level. Also, the increasing opportunities for surveillance will require debate on the boundaries to state interference in private life. Furthermore, increasing mobility and consequently more heterogeneous populations will increase the importance of values such as compassion, tolerance and respect. These challenges will require a debate about updating norms and values, to prevent the neglect of values such as privacy and compassion. The peacebuilding community could play a role in encouraging new thinking, monitoring and evaluating developments, and stimulating dialogue.
- ◆ **Continue to support peacebuilding outside the EU:** Supporting peacebuilding outside the EU is in the EU's own interests as the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, and isolation and withdrawal come at a high cost for the EU. Moreover, continued investments and closer economic cooperation with places such as the Western Balkans and the Eastern Neighbourhood are important to ensure regional peace and stability. Given the conflict-preventive effect of EU accession, the perspective of integrating the Western Balkans and Eastern Neighbourhood into the EU also remains important. While it is vital not to give in on EU values, it is also clear that governments particularly in the Western Balkans are losing interest and civil society is becoming increasingly exhausted. The EU and the peacebuilding community could develop a plan that outlines more concrete expectations and timelines, and offers a credible perspective for countries in the Western Balkans and Eastern Neighbourhood. Strengthening support for civil society organisations that are under pressure in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Neighbourhood could also be valuable.

- ◆ **Build civil-society and peacebuilding organisation networks across borders:** As governments inside the EU might turn to more illiberal means, civil society organisations inside the EU may learn a lot from those outside the EU that have experience with illiberal regimes. At the same time, civil society organisations outside the EU could learn from those inside the EU on engaging with and better understanding governments, so that their monitoring and advocacy becomes more relevant and effective. Civil society organisations could build networks across borders as organisations can learn from each other.
- ◆ **Invest in environmentally friendly solutions:** The rich and technologically advanced countries in particular have a responsibility to develop more environmentally friendly technological alternatives to reverse climate change. Moreover, once developed, such technologies could be shared with poorer and less technologically advanced countries. The peacebuilding community could stimulate environmental thinking in its own peacebuilding efforts.
- ◆ **Embrace and integrate migrants:** Whether welcomed or not, in many places migrants are a fact of life and are there to stay. In fact, migrant populations are increasingly of the third generation. Turning large migrant communities into outcasts may anger them and cause national cohesion to crumble, which may eventually lead to future conflicts. The peacebuilding community could play a role in encouraging dialogue and building bridges between different communities.
- ◆ **Involve citizens in general more in developing the EU of the future:** Without sufficient backing by European citizens, the European institutions are bound to fail and European values will be subject to decay and collapse. A citizen-centred approach demands new orientations, both within the EU and in its external relations. Brussels is often perceived to be too 'far away' and 'unresponsive'. A truly citizen-centred EU needs to be a joint effort by many in which the EU bodies, the EU member states, but also civil society organisations, local governments and local citizens' initiatives should play a part. The peacebuilding community and civil society could consider how best to strengthen their bridging function and contribute to this effort.
- ◆ **Involve in particular more youth in developing the EU of the future:** One of the main societal divides at present is generational. Giving more weight to young people in grand discussions about the future of the EU, climate change, and technology is important as these questions are mainly about their future. The peacebuilding community could aim more to include the young, and decision-makers could open channels for better interaction with young people.







Sint Jacobsstraat 12  
3511 BS Utrecht  
The Netherlands

[www.paxforpeace.nl](http://www.paxforpeace.nl)  
[info@paxforpeace.nl](mailto:info@paxforpeace.nl)  
+31 (0)30 233 33 46

P.O. Box 19318  
3501 DH Utrecht  
The Netherlands