I am pleased to introduce the 2020 Annual Report of the European Policy Centre (EPC).

The following pages present a comprehensive overview of the EPC’s activities in what was, by all measures, an extraordinary year.

This report showcases the many ways in which the EPC has had an impact on numerous policy debates in Brussels and beyond, how it advised and influenced decision-makers and provided quality analysis and fresh insights at a critical time. Despite the restrictions and changed circumstances, the EPC continued to do what it does best: bring people together to discuss new ideas and provide operational recommendations to EU policymakers.

Beyond the immediate response to the pandemic, the EPC organised events and conducted research on the final stages of the Brexit negotiations and the future EU–UK relationship, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, citizen engagement and the ongoing Conference on the Future of Europe, digital solutions to combat climate change, and fixing the EU budget and agreeing on a Recovery Fund as large as 5% of the Union’s GDP.

The work done by the EPC is very much necessary in an increasingly interdependent world, where the crisis of one is the crisis of the other. We have known this since the financial crisis and certainly witnessed it during the pandemic. Unity is now more important than ever. Without unity the EU cannot tackle current and future challenges. Without unity the Union and its members cannot defend their collective interests and enhance European sovereignty.

In the language of the Union, this is translated as “strategic autonomy”. Today’s world is governed less and less by rules and treaties and more by brute force instead, and globalisation has made us highly interdependent. In the corona crisis we discovered that we have become too dependent in certain strategic areas. In the future, we will have to rely more on ourselves.

At the same time, democracy is under pressure in the EU and in the West at large. The attack on Capitol Hill in early 2021 showed what happens when democracy is seen as an instrument to gain and keep power. But above power there is the law and above the law there are ethics and values. And democracy is an indispensable core value that we need to defend by opposing a culture of polarisation and demonisation.

In times of confusion, we must return to the core questions. Aristotle did this when he asked what the essence of life was. His answer was: “to serve others and to do good”. Is that a dream? Maybe. But without dreams, only wilderness and hell await us. In this quest, Europe should be the synthesis of the old and the new, of the best of the old and the new. A Europe that is rooted, has learned from history, and always remains hopeful. So, the EU and its members have a lot to do, and I am sure that the EPC will continue to do its best to help European integration progress in the right direction.
As we leave the worst of the pandemic behind us and slowly move into a new normal, the European Policy Centre can look back on a challenging, momentous, sometimes bewildering, but in the end, highly successful year.

2020 was defined by the global outbreak of COVID-19 and, in an effort to stop the spread of the disease, broad, unprecedented restrictions on public and private life, leaving people and organisations to try and cope as best they could. The EPC was no exception. In the early weeks of lockdown, we decided that the changing circumstances could not mean that we would shut down or even do less but that we would have to do things differently. Our staff responded magnificently to this challenge, going above and beyond. We managed to switch to online events quickly and re-focus a significant part of our work to look at the impact of COVID-19 on a range of policy areas.

We brought you analysis on all the big issues in 2020: we closely followed and assessed the negotiations on the new EU budget and recovery plan; outlined a draft blueprint for the Conference on the Future of Europe, and presented ideas on how to make it a success; were one of the leading voices to react to the New Pact on Migration and Asylum; and highlighted the importance of EU health and social policies in building a more sustainable, digital future. Besides this, we continued to deliver timely analysis and policy recommendations in the debates on the Green Deal, Brexit, rule of law, industrial strategy, geopolitics/geoeconomics and strategic autonomy.

Our output has been remarkable. Having invested in new technologies, the EPC carried out over 240 events online. Attendance has tripled, with new audiences from far beyond the immediate Brussels environment tuning in. Our analysts wrote over 100 publications, which were read widely and picked up by leading media, including POLITICO, The Economist, The Financial Times and numerous national news outlets. We also introduced new event formats such as the EPC Update, ably moderated by Jacki Davis, which continues to attract a large and faithful audience.

To improve our strategic thinking, we welcomed some excellent new additions to the EPC Strategic Council: Lionel Barber, former editor of The Financial Times; Shada Islam, a well-known and highly regarded, now independent, commentator on EU affairs; and Constanze Stelzenmüller, an expert on German, European and trans-Atlantic foreign and security policy and currently a senior fellow at Brookings.

In the spirit of wanting to not only adjust but also grow, we embarked on a broader restructuring exercise to strengthen our analytical capacity. This has already yielded results. In early 2021, Ricardo Borges de Castro and Georg Riekeles joined the team as Associate Directors. Their experience, insights and expertise will help us increase our impact on critical EU policy discussions in Brussels and the member states.

I have been greatly encouraged by our ability to adapt swiftly to the changing and, indeed, difficult circumstances. None of the remarkable successes over the past year could have been achieved without the commitment and professionalism of the EPC team, and I would like to thank them for all they have done. I would also like to thank our members, partners and all the organisations that have supported us during this period and for the confidence they have placed in EPC, particularly our strategic partner the King Baudouin Foundation (KBF).

Finally, I thank our President Herman Van Rompuy for his wise counsel and our Chairman David O’Sullivan and all the members of the Governing Board for their support.

With such a strong and dedicated team, I am confident about the prospects for EPC in 2021 and beyond. Whatever the future has in store, we will be ready.
EPC in numbers

- 240 events
- 101 publications
- 50,000 website views
- 45 projects

- 34 Analysts
- 28 Senior Advisers
- 13 Academic Fellows

EPC in the news

- 6.9k media mentions


Top 3 publications

- The Union and COVID-19: Is there future after failure? by Guy Verhofstadt 25/03/2020
- The circular economy: Going Digital by Annika Hedberg and Styfen Spie 17/03/2020
- No good Brexit by Fabian Zuleeg 31/01/2020

Flagship events

- EPC online
  - 627,879 page views
  - 33,867 followers +5,000
  - 23,398 followers +11,000
  - 13,451 followers +1,052

- EPC in the news
  - 6.9k media mentions
When I considered becoming Chairman of the EPC Governing Board, I could not have imagined I would be taking on the role in the middle of a global emergency. And yet, despite the many challenges the pandemic brought about, my first year as chair has been an exciting and engaging experience.

It has been a privilege to witness the EPC’s resilience, flexibility and analytical prowess up close. I have been impressed by the dedication and hard work of the EPC team, ably led by Chief Executive Fabian Zuleeg. And I am proud of how we have been able to continue to promote thinking about European integration through these difficult times.

Not only was the EPC able to carry on, but it managed to look towards the future. It has adopted new online technologies, and with the latest additions to its management team and the Strategic Council, is now markedly set to increase its impact on decision-making in Brussels and beyond.

There is much to do. After an initial stuttered response to the pandemic, the Union finally found its feet, both in terms of improved coordination of national measures and the vaccine roll-out. EU citizens are now looking to their political leaders and the European Union to guide them out of the pandemic and into a ‘new normal’. The recovery from COVID-19 and the long-standing problems in the EU’s economic governance will be a main focus. We will have to decide how to build a prosperous yet sustainable future while leaving no one behind. Democratic backsliding in several member states poses a fundamental threat to the Union’s founding values. Rapid technological advances will provide many opportunities, but also fundamentally challenge our way of working, communicating and making policy. And in an increasingly competitive and hostile world, the EU must recalibrate its position and discover how best to defend its own values.

All of this and more will be on the agenda of the EPC, which makes for a demanding, but ultimately rewarding assignment. I want to thank my fellow board members for their continued support and input. A special thanks to my predecessor, Poul Skjytte Christoffersen, for his tireless efforts and commitment. It will be my honour to continue his work and help EPC achieve its ambitions in the years to come.
The defining event of 2020 was the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. In late February, it became clear that the virus, which was first discovered in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019, had reached Europe. With people still travelling freely and little knowledge or preparation, cases surged quickly, turning the continent into a global hotspot.

Coordination and solidarity was in short supply in the early days of the pandemic. Despite the gravity of the situation and the obvious need for cooperation, the EU initially failed to produce much in the way of a unified response. Spooked by haunting images from overloaded hospitals in northern Italy, some governments even resorted to export bans and hoarding medicines and protective gear.

In an effort to stop the spread of the virus and ‘flatten the curve’, country after country imposed unprecedented restrictions on public life. Internal EU borders were slammed shut. Subsequent quarantines and lockdowns led to the most serious economic collapse in recent history.

It quickly became clear that this crisis would present an immense challenge for the European Union, one that could breathe new life into the European project or damage it irreparably.

EPC analysts, now working from home, immediately turned their attention to the pandemic, the Union’s response and the implications of the lockdowns for Europe’s economies and societies.

Through our Coalition for Health, Ethics & Society (CHES) programme, supported by Johnson & Johnson, the EPC already had a firm background in health-related policy research. Long before the pandemic hit, we had made a continuous effort to stress the importance of health, arguing that the EU and its member states need to recognise the centrality of people’s health and well-being and ensure it is a consideration in all policymaking.

In the face of the pandemic, EPC analysts doubled down on this message, arguing that the crisis revealed the decisive role social investment and the public sector play in making European societies and economies more resilient to external shocks. They also highlighted, once again, member states’ close interdependence and, consequently, the collective responsibility and joint interest to build a stronger Union together.

“The European Union needs to be more than a borderless market. It needs to be more than a club of countries still holding on to their national interests. It needs to be a Union of countries that share a unique vision of cohesiveness and solidarity, and are there for each other in times of need. Less than that is just not good enough.”

SIMONA GUAGLIARDO
Health Policy Analyst
We furthermore emphasised that EU solidarity should be more than an empty slogan and encouraged EU leaders to apply some of the lessons learned from previous EU crises.

We warned that some governments could take advantage of the crisis to crack down on democracy and civil liberties. Rather than answering with shallow statements, we called on the EU to take concrete action and ensure there is no trade-off between short-term crisis responses and the long-term safeguarding of democratic principles.

We also assessed the impact of the crisis on the EU neighbourhood and beyond, EU law, and on decision-making. MEP Guy Verhofstadt wrote a piece for the EPC in which he called for more streamlined EU governance and argued that the pandemic should serve as an opportunity to change how the Union works fundamentally.

When European leaders found a compromise on the EU budget and an emergency recovery package in early April, EPC President Herman Van Rompuy made a first assessment of the EU’s response and weighed up the lessons we should take away from the corona crisis.

As the immediate alarm of the first few weeks waned off and turned into protracted crisis management, EPC analysts looked at the possible long-term effects and consequences of the pandemic and how policymakers in Brussels see the future of the Union.

We also considered the other EU priorities that were still pressing despite COVID-19. The Green Deal still had to be legislated; the EU’s migration and asylum policies were slated for a major overhaul; negotiations on the EU budget needed to be re-started. And hovering over it all was the threat of a no-deal Brexit.

As public life in Brussels grounded to a holt, the EPC resolved to stay open, albeit it in a different way. Physical events were cancelled, our team started working remotely and operations moved entirely online. We experimented with and launched new formats. On 27 March, the first EPC Update featured Janis Emmanouilidis, Fabian Zaleeg and Jacki Davis and discussed the latest developments on COVID-19 and the implications for Europe’s economy, society and global role, and EU politics in general. The EPC Update series is still going strong today, drawing hundreds of viewers every two weeks.

“Old rivalries and national prejudices are rearing their heads again, and not only will it prevent the EU member states from finding a way out of the crisis but it could also be detrimental for the Union in the long run.”

HERMAN VAN ROMPUY
EPC President
Bouncing back: The EU budget and recovery plan

Early in the year, finding an agreement on the EU’s next seven-year long budget was at the top of European leaders’ agenda. They had failed to come to a consensus in 2019, and now time was running out. EPC analysts, having followed the discussions on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) closely for months, warned that EU leaders were dragging their feet. There was a real danger of ending up with an unambitious, uninspired deal and a budget that would be unable to deliver on the EU’s objectives in innovation and sustainability.

The EPC published regularly on the subject and organised timely events with high-level persons who could report directly from the negotiating table. One of them was European Commission Director-General for Budget Gert Jan Koopman, who spoke publically at the EPC about the prospects for a possible agreement before an extraordinary summit on the MFF in February. Other notable guests were Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank, and Margarida Marques, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Budgets and MFF co-rapporteur.

But the negotiations quickly took a backseat when the pandemic hit. As the economic fallout of the lockdowns and restrictions worsened, it became clear the scale of the crisis warranted an unprecedented EU response. EPC Chief Economist Fabian Zuleeg analysed the onset of the crisis and provided sound predictions of future economic impacts by applying lessons from previous recessions. Together with EPC Director of Studies Janis A. Emmanouelidis, he argued in favour of the member states setting up and financing a common COVID-19 recovery and growth fund.

The EU’s response to the economic developments and ongoing budget negotiations continued to be a major theme of our work. Following the agreement on Next Generation EU, the Union’s €750 billion economic recovery package, our focus will be on assessing the critical challenges facing the European economic recovery, and the implementation of the national recovery plans.

CONTINUED EFFORTS TO IMPROVE COHESION AND INDUSTRIAL POLICY...

We also continued our analysis of EU industrial and cohesion policy. Notably, EPC analysts conducted a study for the REGI Committee of the European Parliament on lagging regions. Their study proposes a revised typology to identify those regions that are most vulnerable and are most likely to lag behind in the ongoing economic, digital, and green transitions. It also explores the engagement of lagging regions in EU policies, including cohesion policy, and puts forward some recommendations on how to improve support for them at the EU level.

We also assessed the European Commission’s much-awaited plan for a New Industrial Strategy. After the presentation of the European Green Deal a few months before and the digital package, the Industrial Strategy was the last puzzle piece of the strategic roadmap the von der Leyen Commission had set out for itself. In a widely read commentary, EPC analysts said the strategy was a solid attempt to harmonise a variety of EU policies and instruments, but that it lacked concrete measures. They also noted that it failed to explain how the Single Market could be strengthened and overlooked the potentially unequal impacts of the twin transition to a green and digital economy.

AND COMPLETING THE SINGLE MARKET

Since 2015, the EPC has had a special roundtable series dedicated to the EU Single Market. This year, the main subject was the impact of COVID-19. On one hand, we underlined the crucial role the Single Market played in the EU’s response to the crisis, and how it therefore must be strengthened further to support Europe’s recovery.

On the other hand, we found that widespread and unprecedented government interventions across the EU exposed the pre-existing limitations of the Single Market. In another popular commentary, Chief Economist Fabian Zuleeg argued that it was time to go beyond the Single Market. The level playing field – the idea that all economic actors should be bound by the same set of rules to ensure that there is fair competition between them – had come under severe strain in the wake of the pandemic. But instead of abandoning the idea of an open and fair economy where everyone plays by the same rules, the Single Market must upgrade to a Single Economic Territory (SET) that incorporates a common microeconomic approach.
ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Project Presidency

Germany took over the EU Council Presidency in extraordinary times. The economic, social and political consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic were posing a severe stress test to the EU’s cohesion and capacity to act. And yet expectations were sky-high. The country was under a lot of pressure to turn this ‘Corona Presidency’ into a success and lay the groundwork for the EU to come back stronger and more united after the health crisis.

The German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) and the EPC joined forces to look at the role of Germany and the future of the EU in the framework of the German Presidency of the Council, and aimed at connecting the EU policy debate in Berlin and Brussels. Throughout the German Presidency, we carefully assessed its impact in several concrete policy fields and, at crucial stages, gave concrete recommendations on its direction and execution.

In what was one of our most watched event of the year (over 500 live viewers, and additional 300 online views), Michael Roth, German Minister of State for Europe, discussed Germany’s leadership and responsibility in this crucial period for the EU. Ambassador Michael Claß, Permanent Representative of Germany to the EU, also previewed Germany’s Presidency priorities, as part of our longstanding EPC format. Later, in an event with DGAP Director Daniele Schwarzer, he took the stock of the Presidency before the country handed over the baton to Portugal.

Brexit: Endgame

The EPC continued to be the reference point for think tank analysis on Brexit in Brussels, producing a steady flow of analysis, events and publications on the subject.

The final stages of Brexit proved to be as laborious as what had preceded. Matters were further complicated by the coronavirus pandemic, making it impossible for negotiators to meet face to face at a crucial stage in the negotiations.

Our analysts continued to study the implications of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU. With our timely and widely read publications, the EPC was able to demonstrate its unique, in-depth understanding of the legal and institutional aspects of the negotiations, and thereby influence the debate in a meaningful way. As the prospects for a deal worsened, we also considered what a no-deal Brexit might mean for the EU.

Not long before the start of the pandemic, Scottish PM Nicola Sturgeon visited the EPC to publically make a case for Scottish EU membership, while Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Europe Dr Joseph Garcia delivered a speech on Brexit’s other land border, Gibraltar, and the UK-EU relationship.

The EPC also continued to organise expert roundtables under its Brexit Forum and Brexit Think Tank Group monikers. The latter was set up by the EPC in the immediate aftermath of the 2016 referendum. Through this format, the EPC facilitated a continuous exchange between the European Commission’s Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom and the policy community. The Group provided analysis and insight at crucial moments in the negotiations, including on the level playing field issue.

The debates held as part of the Group provided inspiration for the the multi-authored book, Towards an ambitious, broad, deep and flexible EU-UK partnership?. This publication examined the political, economic, social and institutional implications of the UK’s departure from the EU in different policy fields, including trade, defence and security, foreign policy, judicial cooperation, migration and mobility, as well as its impact on UK politics and EU integration.

Besides thinking through the consequences of Brexit, the authors considered the then-ongoing negotiations and the possibility of the EU and UK failing to agree on a deal before 31 December 2020, the foreseen end of the transition period. They also looked at the dramatic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and argued that, given the related health, economic and social crises, the transition period had to be extended.

The publication also holds a few lessons on what the EU could and should take away from the Brexit experience. In the book’s foreword, EU’s chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier, writes: “We must take the time to listen to our citizens, to understand them, and to provide answers for their concerns. It is too late for the British regions, but it is not too late for the rest of Europe.”

Finally, with the EU-UK Track 2 project, we aimed to keep an informal line of communication open between different stakeholders on both sides of the Channel. The first high-level conference was held in November 2020.
As the COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated existing social inequalities, the call for a more humane, more caring and more social Europe became louder than ever. EPC analysts in the Social Europe and Well-being programme called on European leaders to learn the lessons of the last crisis. People's well-being must be at the core of the EU's recovery efforts; reducing inequalities its guiding principle. Investing in more accessible, affordable and higher quality services for all – whether through early years care, education, health, long-term care or any other public service – will lead to better productivity, employment rates, health outcomes, social inclusion, political stability, and ultimately, well-being.

Following in-depth research into the future of work in 2019, EPC analysts turned their attention to the ongoing policy discussions on a possible European minimum wage. Once deemed a pipe dream, a concrete plan for a European framework on minimum wages was announced by the European Commission. The Discussion Paper "Minimum wage and the EU: Happily ever after?" posited that such a framework will have to be ambitious enough to deliver progress for low-wage workers, but also flexible enough to accommodate the very diverse wage-setting regimes present across the EU. On top of that, the Commission must deal with the opposition to EU interventions in determining wages, and convince sceptics of the economic, social and political benefits of having a European framework. The Commission should, therefore, strive for the creation of an egalitarian wage structure that supports decent living standards; and build broad political consensus.

To bring some clarity to the debate, the EPC, in cooperation with the Brussels Office of the Swedish Trade Unions, organised a Policy Dialogue. It brought together trade union representatives, employers, and labour market experts to discuss the proposal for an EU minimum wage instrument. The Social Europe and Well-being programme also continued work on a number of projects, including "Fair Energy Transition for All" (together with the Sustainable Prosperity for Europe programme) and "Affordable and decent housing solutions", and was part of the consortium on the Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV).

Of course health took centre stage in the EPC’s work in 2020. We were able to build on our previous activities under our well-established Coalition for Health, Ethics and Society (CHES), and used our existing expertise in EU health policy to assess what could be the first building blocks for a European Health Union. EPC analysts were widely quoted in the media, and contributed several opinion pieces calling for more solidarity and more coordination on EU health policies. They demonstrated that European health systems might need to be re-thought from the ground up to not only better manage the current pandemic, but also be better prepared for future ones. They again encouraged European leaders to try and learn the lessons from the COVID-19 crisis to make Europe more resilient, and capable of assuming a bigger global role in preventing and fighting pandemics.

"The pandemic has brutally exposed the false economy of a decade of pursuing debt consolidation and strict budgetary discipline through cuts to social investment."

LAURA RAYNER
Policy Analyst

The Coalition for Health, Ethics and Society (CHES) is a joint initiative between the EPC and Johnson & Johnson that aims to promote a dialogue between health and non-health practitioners on topical health issues. CHES events and publications pay particular attention to the ethical aspects of health and issues regarding access to healthcare, affordability and patient choice. In 2020-2021, the overarching theme is “Investing in health and well-being – The cornerstone of an economy that works for people”. In this context, CHES activities will focus on how investment in people’s health and well-being can be a driver of social and economic progress and address the ongoing societal transformations, while also reflecting on the EU role in delivering on the promises of global sustainable development.
A New Pact on Migration and Asylum: Some answers, more questions

The biggest development in the field of EU migration policy in 2020 was the launch of the European Commission’s long-awaited proposal for the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. Its main aim was to force a breakthrough in the discussion on EU migration policy between the member states and deliver real progress on EU migration reform.

Ahead of the announcement, the European Migration and Diversity programme outlined the main challenges for the Pact to succeed in a widely read publication. After, together with the partners of the MEDAM project, EPC analysts assessed the New Pact’s strengths and weaknesses, and explored what exactly was “new” about the proposal in an EPC podcast.

Besides the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, our analysis focused on the external dimension of EU migration policy, and possible ways to work together with countries of origin on a more even keel. We also looked at the impact of the pandemic on migration patterns, migrants’ rights, and the prospect for returns and readmissions post-COVID-19.

In one of our flagship publications of 2020, “Fear and lying in the EU: Fighting disinformation on migration with alternative narratives”, EPC analysts from the European Migration and Diversity and the European Politics and Institutions programme teamed up to investigate disinformation about migrants in on- and offline media outlets. Based on their extensive research, they concluded that rather than trying to counter disinformation stories about migrants directly, communication professionals and policymakers must instead promote alternative narratives that undermine the appeal of messages that incite fear and rage, and reframe the debate on migration entirely.

Finally, following the widespread Black Lives Matter protests in the US in the spring and summer, and subsequent demonstrations across Europe, the EPC organised a Policy Dialogue on the subject in an attempt to kick-start the long-overdue debate about diversity, racism, and the legacies of colonialism in the EU.

“The overemphasis on strengthening border controls and increasing returns is misplaced.”

ALBERTO-HORST NEIDHARDT
and OLIVIA SUNDBERG DIEZ
Policy Analysts
Realising the European Green Deal

At the end of 2019, the European Commission launched the much-anticipated European Green Deal, a set of legislative initiatives that are meant to make the EU climate-neutral by 2050. This goal, however, came under growing pressure following the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to address its economic and social impact.

Shortly after the EU presented its recovery plan, Frans Timmermans, the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, spoke at the EPC to reflect on the role of the European Green Deal in underpinning the EU’s response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Another major theme was climate adaptation. Widespread wildfires and the increasing frequency of abnormal and intense storms have made it clear that, besides attempting to stop global temperatures from rising further, Europe and the rest of the world will have to prepare and start dealing with the impacts of climate change now.

The EPC project “Building a climate-resilient Europe” brought together climate experts, NGOs, policymakers and businesses to talk about their expectations and needs, and also share ideas on how to best prepare for the effects of climate change. Their insights were collected and served as inspiration for the Issue Paper “Adapting to change: Time for climate resilience and a new adaptation strategy”, which was published ahead of the launch of the new EU Adaptation Strategy.

Climate adaptation was also the topic of debate at several public events, including with Mauro Petriccione, Director-General, and Clara de la Torre, Deputy Director-General for Climate Action at the European Commission, and with Hans Bruyninckx, Executive Director of the European Environment Agency (EEA).

The EPC followed the debate closely and argued that the Union cannot afford to lose its resolve to face climate change head-on, despite European leaders having to deal with the coronavirus crisis and its fallout first. EPC analysts furthermore emphasised how crucial it was for the EU’s recovery plan to encourage investments in projects that help in the fight against climate change, ultimately resulting in the development of a more sustainable, competitive and resilient Europe.

The book The Circular Economy: Going digital was one of the EPC’s flagship publications of 2020 and presented the results of the EPC Task Force on the Digital Roadmap to a Circular Economy. Building on years of research and consultation, the main finding was that combining the circular and digital agendas carries enormous potential. If managed well, and in unison, the circular economy and the digital revolution could help the EU address its greatest challenge yet: to build a sustainable, green economy that is competitive on the global stage.

We also warned that digitalisation will not automatically lead to greater sustainability, nor is the inclusion of cutting-edge technologies in the circular economy a given. But with the right encouragement and incentives from the EU, data and digitally-enabled solutions can accelerate and boost the transition to a sustainable circular economy.

This can, in turn, ensure access to critical materials, create new jobs, raise the EU’s GDP and curb Europe’s dependence on foreign markets. It would also reduce pollution, waste and the EU’s greenhouse gas emissions significantly.

The publication was one of our most successful papers of 2020, and was presented to multiple EU institutions and national governments, parliaments and leaders, including Sveinung Rotevatn, Minister of Climate and Environment of Norway, who spoke about his country’s experience with building a more circular economy at a public EPC event.
Digitalisation and the shift towards web-based media platforms have dramatically altered the media landscape in the EU and around the world. The digitalisation of the public sphere has also created immense challenges for public debate and media pluralism, while the growing reliance on big tech gatekeepers and their algorithms are testing the boundaries of public discourse in liberal societies.

In 2020, the European Commission presented its proposals for new legislation to govern the digital space. The Digital Services Act (DSA) and Digital Markets Act (DMA) attempt to set clear rules for online platforms and the services they provide, in the hopes of making them more accountable and subject to public scrutiny and oversight.

In the months leading up to and following the launch, the EPC, together with various partners, assessed the potential impact of the proposed measures, investigated how they could be enforced, and how the package would be or was being received in the member states.

One of our main projects covering digital issues, the Governing Platforms Project, also came to a successful close in 2020. Following a series of roundtables and public events, and ahead of the Commission’s announcement of the DSA and DMA, we presented our main findings and recommendations in a public event to Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age and Competition. Our main message to her was, if internet platforms are to be held accountable, the new rules for web platforms like Google and Facebook must enable journalists and researchers to gain access to data that will allow them to dissect the algorithmic systems that govern what users get to see on their screens.

We also published a podcast episode in which AlgorithmWatch and the EPC explored why data access matters; what makes it so difficult for journalists and researchers to get their hands on data from internet platforms; and how EU policymakers can take the decision-making on internet governance out of the private boardroom.

By engaging with diverse stakeholders in a participatory design process, the Governing Platforms Project’s aim was to put forward innovative, evidence-based proposals for platform governance that address systemic problems while protecting fundamental rights and strengthening public discourse. This project was coordinated by AlgorithmWatch in cooperation with the EPC and the Mainzer Medieninstitut. It is supported by Civitates, a philanthropic initiative for democracy and solidarity in Europe.
Strategic autonomy: What’s in a name?

With the return of realpolitik and zero-sum thinking on the international stage, the increasingly assertive behaviour of countries such as Russia and China, and the worsening relations with the US, there is a strong case for the EU to build up its own defence capabilities.

Since the election of former President Donald Trump, and the US’ pivot to Asia, EU policymakers have emphasised the need for more ‘strategic autonomy’. The concept has become central in the debate about the EU’s foreign policy, but it is either interpreted in too broad terms, or in a very superficial way. That is why we teamed up with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) for the “Fostering Europe’s strategic autonomy: Priorities for action” project. Through this project, our aim was to outline a concrete agenda to strengthen Europe’s role in the world and its sovereignty.

Together with KAS, we published a series of papers, looking at strategic autonomy from different angles: digital, geostrategic and energy policy. Our main message was that strategic autonomy is about empowering Europe, not disengaging from partnerships, globalisation or multilateralism. The core of strategic autonomy is not that Europeans should act alone, but that they should have a purpose of their own, and a stronger power base to fulfil that purpose through cooperation with others whenever possible, or on their own, if needed.

US–EU RELATIONS

The state of the transatlantic relationship was another important area of focus for the EPC. In partnership with the United States Mission to the EU, the EPC organised a number of events throughout the year on various aspects of importance to EU–US relations, what to expect from the presidential elections, and the prospects for a possible renewal of the transatlantic relationship following the election of Joe Biden. One such event featured David O’Sullivan, Chair of the EPC Governing Board in conversation with H. E. Anthony Gardner, Former Ambassador of the United States to the European Union.

EU neighbourhood

EPC analysts continued to track developments in the EU’s neighbourhood and beyond, and provided analysis on its increasingly strained relationships with Turkey, Russia and Iran.

We managed to engage with many high-level decision-makers, including Turkish Deputy Minister Faruk Kaymakcı; Presidential Spokesman and chief adviser to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Ibrahim Kalın; and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif.

We also set out to take a closer look at China’s, Russia’s, and Turkey’s objectives and economic and political interests in Africa. In a project run together with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung’s (FES) EU Office in Brussels, we conducted an in-depth analysis of the three countries’ ties to the continent. The results of this research project were presented in a book entitled Eurasia goes to Africa.

COUNTERTERRORISM

Since the wave of violent terrorist attacks across Europe in 2015-2016, the EPC has been looking at the root causes of radicalisation and violent extremism in Europe and beyond.

For the 4th time, it organised a high-level conference on the subject, this time focusing on the changing dynamics of Islamist, far-right and far-left terrorism, along with the threat posed by returning foreign fighters. Speakers included Didier Reynders, European Commissioner for Justice; Catherine De Bolle, Executive Director at Europol; Christiane Hoehn, Principal Advisor to the EU Counter-terrorism coordinator at the EU Council; Irfan Saeed, Director of the Office of Countering Violent Extremism at the US Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism; and Philippe Vansteenkiste, President of V-Europe, Association pour les victimes de terrorisme in Belgium.
Since its inception in 2017, Connecting Europe’s main objective has been to connect and transnationalise policy debates across Europe, in order to counter the growing mistrust of citizens with the EU. More concretely, it aims to bring together civil society organisations funded by Stiftung Mercator with the EPC and the wider Brussels policy community.

In 2020, Connecting Europe continued to build and strengthen its network of 20+ organisations and connected them with the EU policy sphere, working closely with the different EPC programmes. The joint projects covered a wide range of policy fields: the impact of COVID-19, youth and democracy, as well as the digital transformation and job prospects for young people.

In order to support its network members, the initiative also offered capacity-building measures and tailor-made advice on advocacy and lobbying in Brussels.

Rule of law was another major focus. Connecting Europe put together several public events to address democratic backsliding in several member states, with relevant speakers such as Sergey Lagodinsky, MEP, and Věra Jourová, Vice-President for Values and Transparency of the European Commission.

In November, the project organised a Policy Dialogue on DiscoverEU, the European Commission’s project to enhance youth mobility, with the initiators of FreeInterrail.

In 2019, Connecting Europe was extended until the end of 2021, as both the EPC and Stiftung Mercator wish to continue to build this unique network, which allows for civil society organisations to actively engage with the Brussels policy community and to bring new perspectives to EU debates.
One of the core missions of the EPC is to promote and support the rule of law in the EU, and think of ways to make the Union more transparent, democratic and inclusive. In 2020, we engaged in several projects and organised several events and workshops to address rule-of-law concerns and democratic backsliding in Europe.

European Commission Vice-President for Values and Transparency Věra Jourová spoke at a Policy Dialogue organised as part of the Connecting Europe project and in cooperation with Democracy Reporting International. She gave an update on the current state of rule-of-law proceedings and elaborated on the new Commission’s plans to counter anti-democratic practices in the member states.

Later in the year, we discussed the Commission’s first Annual Rule of Law Report with Didier Reynders, European Commissioner for Justice, Katalin Cseh, MEP, and Roger Daniel Kelemen, Professor of Political Science and Law and Jean Monnet Chair in European Union Politics at Rutgers University.

Connecting Europe’s Sophie Pornschlegel, and Susanne Zels, published “Safeguarding European values: The case for a European Agency for Citizenship Education”, as part of their Values Unite initiative. With this new project, they advocate setting up a European Agency for Citizenship Education, accessible to everyone living and working in the EU.

They argue that the best way to counter democratic backsliding in the Union and safeguard European values is to equip EU citizens with the knowledge and skills they need to exercise their political rights.

Based on the conviction that a healthy democracy cannot function without sound, ethical and independent academic and policy research, the EPC is an active part of the consortium of the PRO-RES project (PROmoting integrity in the use of RESearch results).

It aims to set up a framework that lays down some ground rules for non-medical research and offers practical solutions for researchers and funders alike to comply with the highest standards of research ethics and integrity. In the context of the project, we published a paper on how to build an ethical research framework for think tanks, which was picked up widely.

Shortly after her appointment as the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen proposed the organisation of a two-year Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE). She envisioned that European citizens would “play a leading and active” role in this endeavour.

Based on our experience in monitoring and evaluating the European Citizens’ Consultations (ECC) and our commitment to safeguarding and improving democracy and promoting citizen participation, we resolved to invest time and resources to ensure the lessons learned from the ECCs would be applied to the design and implementation of the Conference. In 2019, the EPC was the first think tank to propose a detailed, concrete draft outline for the process, putting European citizens front and centre.

We followed up in 2020 with a second detailed draft blueprint, reflecting the progression of our thinking at the EPC, while also taking into account the then positions of the European Parliament and Commission, as well as the Council. The second draft blueprint went beyond what was on the table at the time and advocated both strong citizen and representative dimensions. It also aimed to closely link the two at the national and transnational levels.

The EPC furthermore brought together experts on citizen participation and deliberative democracy in a series of roundtables to provide input for the set-up of the Conference. In a series of well-received commentaries, our analysts also warned of the many possible pitfalls in the process, especially if the results would not be taken on board by European decision-makers, and argued strongly in favour of involving future EU members, most notably the Western Balkans.

In 2021, as the Conference finally took off, we will continue to closely monitor, comment on and analyse the process.
Will the Union manage to pull through this unprecedented moment in its history and build an efficient recovery plan? Or will the coronavirus spell the end of European cooperation? What is fundamentally holding back the Union and what are the main risks of disunity? How can the full potential of European cooperation be unleashed?

Those were the questions at the centre of a lively and interactive debate at our high-level Annual Conference on 15 November called "European integration in the light of COVID-19: United in adversity or my country first?"

Speakers included new EPC Governing Board members Lionel Barber, former Editor of The Financial Times; Daniela Schwerzer, Director, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP); and Nathalie Tocci, Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali. Other speakers were Loukas Tsoukalas, Professor at the Paris School of International Affairs in Sciences Po and President of the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP); Lord John Kerr, Member of the House of Lords; Rosa Balfour, Director Carnegie Europe; Gaby Bischoff, MEP and Vice-Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs; and Enrico Letta, Dean of the Paris School of International Affairs (PSIA) at Sciences Po in Paris and President of the Jacques Delors Institute.

Just before our Annual Conference, the EPC’s Strategic Council convened to assess the most pressing issues for the Union in the short and long terms, and to map out what, as a result, should be the main focus of the EPC’s activities in the coming year and beyond. Beyond that, the EPC presented its research priorities for 2021: the economic recovery from the pandemic; German leadership in Europe after Merkel; more foresight in foreign policy; the European Green Deal and the importance of the link between climate action policies and the digital transition; building an economy of well-being; and the Conference on the Future of Europe.

The EPC also organised two Thought Leadership Forums. The first one was with Ivan Krastev, Chairman of the Centre for Liberal Strategies in Bulgaria, and Permanent Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Austria. He spoke about the larger implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for not only the EU but also the global society. The second featured Christine Lagarde, President of the European Central Bank, who shared her assessment of the prospects for recovery, as well as her vision for a strengthened EU economic and fiscal governance that can weather future storms.

Together with KAS and ifok, the EPC also published a report detailing the Brussels community’s views on the EU’s handling of the pandemic and the future of Europe after COVID-19, titled "High hopes, low expectations: Brussels’ perspective on the future of Europe after COVID-19".

The transformative leverage of the EU enlargement strategy and the German Presidency’s enlargement agenda were the overarching research themes in 2020.

The spotlight was put on Albania and North Macedonia, which received the green light to start accession negotiations in March. The EPC engaged with many high-level political actors from the region, including North Macedonia’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for European Affairs, Bujar Osmani, who spoke about his country’s progress towards EU membership; and European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Olivier Várhelyi. EPC analysts also continued to work closely with organisations in the Balkan region, such as CEP Belgrade, as part of our efforts to promote the development of the rule of law and public administration reform in the region.

Together with The Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group (BiEPAG), we also presented and the debated the results of the Ipsos Strategic Marketing public opinion survey across the Balkans, which asked people about their views on European integration.
TEAM

We aspire to provide a safe, healthy and rewarding working environment for our team, and exceptional research and analysis for our members and the broader public.
The EPC is also grateful for the contributions of the following former team members:

**Analysts**
- **FILIEATAIDE LAMPE**  
  Programme Assistant
- **DANIELLE BRADY**  
  Programme Assistant
- **FRANCESCO DE ANGELIS**  
  Programme Assistant
- **THEODORA FAMPRKEZI**  
  Programme Assistant
- **RÉKA KOLESZARN**  
  Programme Assistant
- **IANA MAISURADZE**  
  Programme Assistant
- **SVENJA NIEDERFRANKE**  
  Programme Assistant
- **PERLE PETIT**  
  Programme Assistant

**Administration**
- **IVANIVA VALEVA**  
  Project Management Executive
- **NATHALIE HENRY**  
  Events Executive
- **CLAUDIA REDONO**  
  Events Coordinator
- **GAETANA MANGANELLO**  
  Project & Administrative Assistant

**Communications**
- **REBECCA CASTERMANS**  
  Head of Communications
- **EMIL VERGELS**  
  Executive Editor
- **VICTORIA KAROLEVA**  
  Digital Communications Officer

**Membership**
- **KERSTIN BORN-SIRKEL**  
  Senior Associate, Partnerships, External and Member Relations

The EPC is also grateful for the contributions of the following former team members:

**Analysts**
- **IONELA CIOLAN**  
  Visiting Research Fellow
- **THEODORA FAMPRKEZI**  
  Programme Assistant
- **RÉKA KOLESZARN**  
  Programme Assistant
- **IANA MAISURADZE**  
  Programme Assistant
- **SVENJA NIEDERFRANKE**  
  Programme Assistant
- **PERLE PETIT**  
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- **VICTORIA KAROLEVA**  
  Digital Communications Officer

**Membership**
- **KERSTIN BORN-SIRKEL**  
  Senior Associate, Partnerships, External and Member Relations
The EPC is committed to transparency, independence and drawing from a multitude of perspectives and nationalities in its governance model.
The Governing Board is responsible for the management of the EPC. Its main function, is to provide strategic direction to the EPC and to monitor and evaluate its operations and the implementation of its strategic plan. However, powers relating to the day-to-day management of the EPC are delegated to the Chief Executive, who acts as the EPC’s Legal Representative.

The Governing Board meets three to four times a year. Members are appointed by the General Assembly. The current Chair of the Board is David O’Sullivan. Board members also sit on the General Assembly, which meets once a year to formally approve the annual accounts and adopt the budget for the year ahead, in line with Belgian law.

**Governing Board**

- **David O’Sullivan**
  - Former EU Ambassador to the United States

- **RACHEL BARLOW**
  - Associate Director, Public Affairs Europe, Oxford HR

- **Franziska Brantner**
  - Spokeswoman for European politics for the Green Party in the German Bundestag

- **Jim Clos**
  - Former Director-General, General and institutional policy, Council of the European Union

- **Philippe De Buck**
  - Senior Executive Advisor H&M/Novartis

- **Françoise Le BAIL**
  - Former Director-General, DG Justice, European Commission

- **Susan Danger**
  - CEO, American Chamber of Commerce to the EU

- **Brigid Laffan**
  - Director, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute

- **Stefan Schäfers**
  - Head of European Affairs, King Blaudouin Foundation

- **Alexander Stubb**
  - Director, School of Transnational Governance, European University Institute

- **Nathalie Tocci**
  - Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali, Special Advisor to HRVP Mogherini and Honorary Professor at the University of Tübingen

- **Secretary to the Board**
  - Fabian Zuleeg, Chief Executive, European Policy Centre

**Strategic Council**

The Strategic Council brings together thought leaders and experts from diverse background and nationalities. They bring fresh insights and forward-looking perspectives on the major challenges facing the European Union. Once a year, they meet with our analysts to reflect on the strategic priorities of the Union and their implications for the work and strategic direction of the EPC.

**Members**

- **Herman van Rompuy**
  - President Emeritus of the European Council

- **Joaquin Almunia**
  - Former European Commission Vice-President for Competition

- **Lionel Barber**
  - Former editor of The Financial Times

- **Hendrik Bourgeois**
  - Head of Government Affairs for Europe and Russia at Apple

- **Elizabeth Collett**
  - Special Advisor to the Director-General, International Organization for Migration

- **Marta Dassù**
  - Senior Director of European Affairs at the Aspen Institute and editor-in-chief of Aspenio

- **Catherine Day**
  - Former Secretary General of European Commission

- **Monica Frassoni**
  - President of the European Alliance to Save Energy; President of the European Centre for Electoral Support

- **Anthony L. Gardner**
  - Former United States Ambassador of Belgium and former Ambassador of the United States to Europe

- **Shada Islam**
  - EPC Senior Adviser on Asia, Africa and international trade

- **Hywel Ceri Jones**
  - Former Chairman of the EPC, Member of the Welsh Government’s European Advisory Group

- **Jean-Claude Juncker**
  - Former President of the European Commission

- **Lord Kerr of Kinlochard**
  - Member of the House of Lords

- **Conny Reuter**
  - Global Coordinator, Progressive Alliance

- **Verena Ringler**
  - Founder and Director, Open Society European Policy Institute

- **Daniela Schwarzer**
  - Former Political Director, European Parliament

- **Joaquin Almunia**
  - Former European Commissioner for Environment

- **Janez Potočnik**
  - Former Political Director, European Parliament

- **Almut Möller**
  - Former Head of European Council of Foreign Relations, Berlin office & Senior Policy Fellow

- **John Palmer**
  - Former Political Director, European Policy Centre

- **Kristina Persson**
  - Founder of Global Challenge, former Swedish Minister and former Member of the European Parliament

- **Jean-Claude Piris**
  - Former Director General, Legal Service of the Council of the European Union

- **János Pogličar**
  - Head of European Council on Foreign Relations, Berlin office & Senior Policy Fellow

- **Conny Reuter**
  - Global Coordinator, Progressive Alliance

- **Verena Ringler**
  - Founder and Director, Open Society European Policy Institute

- **Alfredo Thorne**
  - Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali, Special Advisor to HRVP Mogherini and Honorary Professor at the University of Tübingen

- **Federica Mogherini**
  - Former High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

- **Maltese President**
  - Former President of the Maltese Parliament

- **Liz Sussmuth**
  - Former President of the German Bundestag

- **Pavel Svejda**
  - CEO of EBRARIS, Human Brain Project

- **Nathalie Tocci**
  - Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali, Special Advisor to HRVP Mogherini and Honorary Professor at the University of Tübingen

- **Daniel Štětina**
  - Former Head of Cabinet to the King of Belgium and former Ambassador of Belgium to the EU

- **Jean-Charles van den Branden**
  - Partner at Bain & Company

- **Jordi Vaquer**
  - Regional Director for Europe, Open Society Foundations

- **Zeger Verwaest**
  - Vice President Government Affairs & Policy EMEA, Europe, Johnson & Johnson
The EPC’s total income in 2020 was €3,357,376. We ended the financial year 2020 with a surplus of €508,751, bringing the equity capital to €686,240. The pie chart shows the breakdown of funding sources.

Approximately 36.5% of the EPC’s funding in 2020 came from grants from the following sources:

- The King Baudouin Foundation, the EPC’s strategic partner, awarded the EPC a grant of €350,000.
- The Stiftung Mercator awarded the EPC a grant of €380,000 for the Connecting Europe project.
- The EPC received an operating grant of €240,765 for 2020 under the “Europe for Citizens” programme, alongside other similar think tanks and civil society organisations.
- The EPC received €200,000 in 2020 from the Adessium Foundation to support two of its programmes: European Politics & Institutions and European Migration and Diversity.
- A donation of €50,000 was awarded from Cariplo for the year 2020.

Another 21% of the EPC’s funding came from membership fees. In 2020, the total income from membership fees was €711,302.

The remaining funds came mainly from contributions from a wide range of organisations for its programmes in the form of support for EPC events and publications.

**Financing**

**BALANCE SHEET**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>As of 31 December 2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Assets</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intangible Fixed Assets</td>
<td>78 679</td>
<td>93 840</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tangible Fixed Assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Fixed Assets</td>
<td>101 112</td>
<td>133 100</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>As of 31 December 2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Assets</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Debitors</td>
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<td>Banks</td>
<td>1 163 197</td>
<td>556 715</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accruals</td>
<td>173 543</td>
<td>97 951</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Current Assets</td>
<td>1 529 306</td>
<td>857 369</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>As of 31 December 2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Liabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</td>
<td>508 752</td>
<td>82 405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus/(deficit) brought forward</td>
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<td>84 658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve for social liabilities</td>
<td>200 000</td>
<td>20 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>As of 31 December 2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members’ subscriptions</td>
<td>711 302</td>
<td>658 113</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants and donations</td>
<td>1 220 765</td>
<td>1 195 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmes &amp; other</td>
<td>1 423 309</td>
<td>1 145 879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>3 357 376</td>
<td>2 998 992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office expenses</td>
<td>-552 895</td>
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<tr>
<td>HR expenses</td>
<td>-2 295 729</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
<td>-2 848 624</td>
<td>-2 916 587</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

The King Baudouin Foundation is a Belgian public benefit foundation that seeks to change society for the better by investing in inspiring projects and individuals. One of its aims is to foster cohesion and build bridges within Europe. With that objective in mind, it established a strategic partnership with the EPC in 2002.

The partnership contributes to the European integration process by setting the stage for informed debates about EU policies with a wide range of stakeholders.

The Foundation’s sustained support allows the EPC to have a long-term perspective whilst maintaining its independence.

The Europe for Citizens programme, funded by the EU budget, awarded the EPC an annual operating grant for several years (2017-21), alongside other similar think tanks and civil society organisations.

As a think tank engaged in European public policy research, the EPC contributed to the aims of the programme through its activities aimed at promoting citizens’ understanding of the EU policymaking process and their involvement in the European public policy debate, as well as through its work on the future of Europe.

In that context, the EPC focused on the causes and challenges of growing Euroscepticism and hostility of citizens towards the EU, as well as the impact on EU solidarity due to divisions in and among member states, not least as a result of the refugee crisis.

Our membership is drawn from a broad spectrum of organisations, representing the main stakeholders concerned with EU affairs at the local, regional national and international level.
Members as of 1 July 2020

Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU
Permanent Representation of Finland to the European Union
Permanent Representation of Greece to the European Union
Permanent Representation of Hungary to the European Union
Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union
Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the EU
Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU
Permanent Representation of Germany to the EU
Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the EU
Permanent Representation of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union
Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland to the European Union
Reprenentation Permanente de la France auprès de l’Union Européenne
Royal Norwegian Embassy
Royal Thai Embassy to Belgium and Luxembourg / Mission of Thailand to the EU
Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium
UK Mission to the European Union
U.S. Mission to the European Union

FOUNDATIONS (22)
Alliance for Childhood European Network Group
Bertelsmann Stiftung
British Council EU Office
EGMONT - The Royal Institute for International Relations
European Climate Foundation
European Cultural Foundation (CCF)
European Foundation Centre (EFC)
European Foundation for Democracy
Fondazione Cariplo Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom
Fundación Fórum Ambiental (Lab Ecoinova)
German Institute for International and Security Affairs
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)
Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung
King Baudouin Foundation
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
Open Society European Policy Institute Sítra
Finish Innovation Fund Software AG - Stiftung Stiftung Mercator
Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies

GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (4)
Bundesagentur für Arbeit Kammerskollegium
National Board of Trade Korean Institute for Advancement and Technology (KIAT Europe)
Representative Office of the Austrian National Bank
Unweltbundesamt Österreich / Environment Agency of Austria

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (12)
Council of Europe
EFTA Secretariat
EFTA Surveillance Authority (EZA)
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
European Investment Bank (EIB)
International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
NATO Parliamentary Assembly Regional Cooperation Council UNDP
UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency
World Bank EU Office

PLATFORM OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (1)
The Social Platform

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (49)
Amnesty International
European Association for the Co-ordination of Consumer Representation in Standardisation
Belgian Cystic Fibrosis Association (BCFA)
Carbon Market Watch
Caritas Catholica Vlaanderen
Caritas Europa
Central Europe Energy Partners
Circle Economy
Clean Europe Network
Confrontations Europe
Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)
Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
ELNET-EU
Equality and Human Rights Commission
EUF - Europa Union Frankfurt a. M.
EUROCITIES
European Academy of Sciences and Arts
European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD)
European Confederation of Junior Enterprises (ADES)
European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)
European Public Health Association (EUPHA)
European Stability Initiative
European Youth
Forum Fair Wear
FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless)
FOSTER EUROPE
Genio Trust Goethe-Institut Brüssel
Housing Europe
International Catholic Migration Commission - ISCM Europe
International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)
International Rescue Committee
Internet Society
Network of European Foundations for Innovative Cooperation (NEF)
Corporate Relations Research Center NRC Europe
ONE
Oxfam International EU Advocacy Office
Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)
Red Cross EU Office
RUSI Europe
Social Progress Imperative
Society Against Violent Extremism - Belgium
SOS Children’s Villages International
The ENERGY ACTION Project (EnAct)
The German Marshall Fund of the United States
Trademark Companies Association (ESMET)
Ukrainian Think Tanks Liaison Office in Brussels
Ukrainian World Congress (UWC)
VoteWatch Europe

REGIONAL BODIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES (16)
Balearic Islands Government
Central Denmark EU Office
Central Sweden EU Office
City of Vienna - Liaison Office der Deutschen Gemeindeverbände in Brüssel (DGMB)
Government of Catalonia – Representation to the EU
Hanse-Office
HM Government of Gibraltar – Representation to the European Union
Liaison Agency Flanders-Europe
Lombardy Region Government - EU Office
North Sweden EU Office
North Norway EU Office

ACADEMIC (2)
Coventry University
The Faculty of International Legal Relations, National University ‘Odessa Law Academy’

OTHERS (2)
International Committee of the Red Cross

INDIVIDUAL (3)
KfW
Ukrainian World Congress (UWC)
Turkish Cypriot Representation in Brussels
Welsh Government
West Finland European Office
West Norway Office
Events in 2020
per programme, chronological

**Connecting Europe**

**POLICY DIALOGUE**
Does the EU have what it takes to guard the rule of law?

**WEBINAR**
The Conference on the Future of Europe: State of affairs and what to expect

**EXPERT ROUNDTABLE**
Closing civic space in the CEE region: Current state of play and future challenges

**RULE OF LAW BREAKFAST BRIEFING**
Can the Slovak elections solve its rule of law problem?

**WEBINAR**
Squabbling over finances: Will the next EU budget support a future-oriented agenda in the upcoming years?

**WEBINAR**
COVID-19: The EU’s response to the pandemic

**WEBINAR**
Managing network and exchange projects during COVID-19: Digital formats

**POLICY DIALOGUE**
Civic tech to support EU civil society

**POLICY DIALOGUE**
What is the impact of COVID-19 on migration in Europe?

**THOUGHT LEADERSHIP FORUM**
The COVID-19 crisis: Doomsday or new dawn for European cooperation?

**ONLINE POLICY DIALOGUE**
The ‘corona presidency’: Testing German leadership in Europe

**PROJECT PRESIDENCY WORKSHOP 1**
The EU Recovery Instrument: Turning the Crisis into an Opportunity

**PRO-RES ROUNDTABLE**
Towards an ethical framework for think tanks

**WORKSHOP WITH EUROPEAN FORUM**
Alpbach on ‘Digitalisation for People and Planet’ +SPFE

**3RD DGAP-EPC ROUNDTABLE ON BREXIT**
Perspectives for the EU-UK relationship after 2020

**WEBINAR**
What is the impact of COVID-19 on privacy and data protection in the EU?

**STARTNET CONFERENCE**
A Bridge to Jobs: How to support young people’s TransitionToWork since COVID-19?

**WORKSHOP 3 WITH DGAP**
A Player, not a Playing Field: Refining the EU’s China Policy

**WORKSHOP WITH THE GOOD LOBBY**
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