European Strategic Doctrine

Philosophy of the Series

Europe is entering an era in which its greatest challenges can no longer be understood or addressed through isolated sectoral policies. Ethical uncertainty, democratic fatigue, information disorder, cognitive dependency, technological disruption, financial vulnerability and strategic insecurity are not independent crises. They are interconnected manifestations of a deeper structural transformation affecting Europe's capacity to think independently, govern effectively and act strategically.

This series of strategic papers is based on a simple premise: durable solutions require an integrated framework rather than fragmented responses.

Each document therefore examines one fundamental dimension of European renewal while remaining connected to the broader architecture of strategic sovereignty. Together they form a coherent doctrine that links values, institutions, knowledge, economic capacity and security into a single strategic model.

The doctrine adopts a long-term civilizational perspective. It does not seek to replace existing democratic institutions or ideological traditions. Instead, it proposes a framework through which Europe can strengthen its capacity for ethical reflection, democratic legitimacy, independent judgement, technological leadership, strategic resilience and peaceful cooperation.

The series combines political philosophy, democratic theory, cognitive science, economics, information studies, security strategy and institutional design. It is intentionally interdisciplinary because the challenges facing Europe increasingly transcend traditional academic and political boundaries.

Throughout the series one principle remains constant: Europe's long-term freedom depends upon its capacity to think independently, decide democratically, act strategically and cooperate responsibly while preserving the civilizational foundations upon which its democratic legitimacy ultimately rests.

In this series, a doctrine is understood as a coherent framework of principles, evidence and strategic objectives that guides long-term policy development. Unlike a political programme or legislative proposal, it does not prescribe immediate actions but establishes a common intellectual and analytical foundation upon which practical strategies and institutional reforms can be developed.

Conceptual Map of the European Strategic Doctrine

Every strategic doctrine should answer a sequence of fundamental questions. The present framework is organised accordingly.

Fundamental Question	Strategic Domain	Core Objective
What is worth preserving?	Ethical Sovereignty	Define Europe's ethical foundations, public interest and civilizational responsibility.
Who should decide?	Integrated Democracy	Strengthen democratic legitimacy by integrating representative and direct democratic mechanisms.
On what information should decisions be based?	Information Integrity	Protect the quality, transparency and independence of Europe's information environment.
How can Europe think independently?	Cognitive Sovereignty	Develop cognitive resilience and protect democratic judgement from cognitive dependency and cognitive engineering.
How can Europe finance its future?	Financial Sovereignty	Align finance with productive investment, innovation, human capital and long-term strategic priorities.
How can Europe protect itself while preserving peace?	Strategic Resilience and Peace	Build comprehensive resilience capable of deterring threats while making peace the primary strategic objective.
How should Europe be institutionally organised?	Modular Federation	Create a flexible constitutional architecture that reconciles unity with diversity and allows differentiated integration.

The Strategic Logic

The sequence presented in this doctrine is intentional.

- Ethics defines purpose.
- Democracy provides legitimacy.
- Information enables informed public debate.
- Cognitive sovereignty safeguards independent judgement.
- Financial sovereignty creates the capacity to act.
- Strategic resilience protects the conditions necessary for freedom, prosperity and peace.
- Finally, institutional architecture translates these principles into a practical and sustainable model of European governance.

Each document therefore addresses one strategic dimension while contributing to a unified framework of European renewal. None should be interpreted in isolation. Their full meaning emerges only through their interaction within the broader doctrine.



The Logic of the Doctrine

European Civilization
(values, identity, culture)

↓

Ethical Sovereignty
(defines what should be preserved)

↓

Integrated Democracy
(provides legitimate decision-making)

↓

Information Integrity
(protects the quality of public knowledge)

↓

Cognitive Sovereignty
(enables independent judgement)

↓

Financial Sovereignty
(provides strategic capacity)

↓

Strategic Resilience and Peace
(protects society while preserving peace)

↓

Modular Federation
(provides institutional architecture)

↓

European Renewal



European Strategic Doctrine – Strategic Framework Overview

Strategic Domain	Central Question	Strategic Objective	Principal Instruments	Main Document
Ethical Sovereignty	Why do we act?	Restore Europe's ethical foundations and civilizational confidence	Human rights, public interest, civilizational responsibility, ethical renewal	*European Ethical Sovereignty*
Integrated Democracy	Who decides?	Increase democratic legitimacy through integrated representative and direct democracy	Referenda, citizens' participation, transparency, accountability, subsidiarity	*The European Model of Integrated Democracy*
Information Integrity	On what information do we decide?	Restore trustworthy public information ecosystems	Media pluralism, algorithm transparency, information integrity, public digital infrastructure	*Media Sovereignty and Information Integrity*
Cognitive Sovereignty	How do we think independently?	Strengthen Europe's capacity for independent judgement	Cognitive resilience, education, critical thinking, protection from cognitive engineering	*The European Doctrine of Cognitive Sovereignty*
Financial Sovereignty	How do we finance our future?	Align finance with Europe's long-term strategic interests	Productive investment, innovation, human capital, strategic finance	*Strategic Sovereignty of the European Financial System*
Strategic Resilience and Peace	How do we protect our civilization?	Build comprehensive resilience while preserving peace	Comprehensive security, strategic resilience, European security architecture, peaceful cooperation	*The European Model of Strategic Resilience and Peace*
Institutional Architecture	How should Europe be organised?	Create a flexible constitutional framework combining unity with diversity	Modular Federation, differentiated integration, constitutional architecture	*A Modular Federation*



Comprehensive Architecture of European Strategic Sovereignty

EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION
Values • Culture • Human Dignity • Freedom

▼

ETHICAL SOVEREIGNTY
Why do we exist? What is worth preserving?

▼

INTEGRATED DEMOCRACY
Who legitimately makes decisions?

▼

INFORMATION INTEGRITY
On what information are decisions based?

▼

COGNITIVE SOVEREIGNTY
How do Europeans think independently?

▼

FINANCIAL SOVEREIGNTY
How do we finance Europe's future?

▼

STRATEGIC RESILIENCE AND PEACE
How do we protect society while preserving peace?

▼

MODULAR FEDERATION
How should Europe be institutionally organised?

▼

EUROPEAN RENAISSANCE
Freedom • Prosperity • Resilience • Lasting Peace



Cross-cutting Strategic Priorities

These priorities appear throughout the entire doctrine and connect all strategic domains.

Cross-cutting Priority	Role within the Doctrine
Human dignity	Foundation of all public policy
Freedom with responsibility	Ethical basis of democratic society
Public interest	Democratic prioritisation of common goods
Civilizational competitiveness	Preservation and renewal of European civilization
Human capital	Europe's greatest strategic asset
Strategic sovereignty	Capacity for independent democratic action
Technological leadership	Foundation of future competitiveness
Economic competitiveness	Foundation of sustainable prosperity and quality of life
Information integrity	Condition for informed democratic decisions
Cognitive resilience	Protection against manipulation and dependency
Responsible solidarity	Social cohesion through reciprocity
Strategic resilience	Integrated protection of society
Lasting peace	Ultimate objective of the entire doctrine

Horizontal Strategic Priorities

The doctrine is supported by a number of cross-cutting priorities that permeate every document:

- Human rights and human dignity
- Public interest and civilizational responsibility
- Responsible solidarity
- Human capital and education
- Innovation and scientific excellence
- Technological sovereignty
- Strategic competitiveness
- Information integrity
- Cognitive resilience
- Democratic legitimacy
- Long-term governance
- Peaceful cooperation in a multipolar world

One-sentence summary of each document

Document	One-sentence strategic purpose
European Ethical Sovereignty	Defines the ethical foundations and long-term civilizational priorities of Europe.
The European Model of Integrated Democracy	Creates a democratic system combining representative institutions with meaningful citizen participation.
Media Sovereignty and Information Integrity	Protects the quality of information upon which democratic decisions depend.
The European Doctrine of Cognitive Sovereignty	Restores Europe's capacity for independent thinking and protection against cognitive dependency.
Strategic Sovereignty of the European Financial System	Aligns financial systems with Europe's strategic, technological and human development.
The European Model of Strategic Resilience and Peace	Builds comprehensive resilience to preserve peace, freedom and long-term security.
A Modular Federation	Provides a constitutional architecture that reconciles European unity with national diversity.

MASTER STRATEGIC EVIDENCE MATRIX

I. ETHICAL SOVEREIGNTY

Strategic Reflection

Has Europe's ethical and political development remained aligned with the values, priorities and long-term interests of its citizens and civilization?

Reflection Area	Evidence	Strategic Reflection	Sources
Demographic sustainability	Fertility rate, ageing, family formation	Are Europe's declared priorities compatible with its long-term demographic survival?	Eurostat
Public priorities	Citizens' priorities (security, economy, health, family, cost of living…)	Do institutional priorities correspond to citizens' priorities?	Eurobarometer
Civilizational values	European Values Study / World Values Survey	Which values remain stable across European societies?	EVS, WVS
Institutional priorities	Green Deal, Equality Strategy, Digital Europe, etc.	Which priorities receive the greatest political attention and funding?	European Commission
Public expenditure	Budget allocation by policy area	Does financial commitment correspond to declared strategic priorities?	EU Budget

Reflection Area	Evidence	Strategic Reflection	Sources
Cultural continuity	Cultural participation, reading, heritage, language	Is Europe investing sufficiently in its own cultural continuity?	Eurostat, UNESCO
Education	Educational achievement and civic education	Does education strengthen civic responsibility and long-term resilience?	OECD

II. INTEGRATED DEMOCRACY

Strategic Reflection

Do European citizens possess sufficient influence over decisions that shape their future?

Reflection Area	Evidence	Strategic Reflection	Sources
Electoral participation	Turnout in European and national elections	Does participation strengthen or weaken democratic legitimacy?	European Parliament
Direct democracy	Referenda, initiatives, recall mechanisms	How much direct influence do citizens actually possess?	IDEA
European Citizens' Initiative	Number, success rate, legislative outcomes	Is participation consultative or genuinely influential?	European Commission
Trust	Trust in institutions	Is declining trust reflected in democratic structures?	Eurobarometer
Rule of Law	Rule of Law indicators	Is accountability applied consistently?	European Commission
Corruption	Corruption Perceptions Index	Does institutional integrity reinforce democratic confidence?	Transparency International
Democratic participation	Comparison among Member States	Which institutional models generate higher participation?	IDEA

III. INFORMATION INTEGRITY

Strategic Reflection

Can democratic societies remain sovereign if their information environment is externally dominated or systematically manipulated?

Reflection Area	Evidence	Strategic Reflection	Sources
Trust in media	Public confidence	Does information strengthen or weaken democracy?	Reuters Institute
Media ownership	Ownership concentration	Who controls public information?	Media Pluralism Monitor
News consumption	Main sources of information	Which actors shape public opinion?	Reuters Institute
Platform dominance	Google, Meta, YouTube, TikTok, X	How dependent is Europe on foreign digital ecosystems?	European Commission
Digital advertising	Market concentration	Who controls information distribution?	OECD
Disinformation	Public exposure	How resilient are citizens against manipulation?	Eurobarometer
Algorithms	Platform influence	How much of public discourse is algorithmically mediated?	OECD

IV. COGNITIVE SOVEREIGNTY

Strategic Reflection

Can Europe still think independently?

Reflection Area	Evidence	Strategic Reflection	Sources
Education	Programme for International Student Assessment	Is Europe strengthening independent thinking?	OECD
Scientific excellence	Publications, ERC grants	Does Europe remain a global knowledge leader?	European Commission
Innovation	Patents	Is knowledge converted into strategic capability?	WIPO
AI	AI investment and foundation models	Who develops Europe's future intelligence infrastructure?	OECD
ICT dependency	Cloud, operating systems, browsers, search	Can Europe think independently while relying on foreign digital infrastructure?	European Commission
Cultural influence	Film, streaming, publishing, music	Who shapes Europe's cultural imagination?	UNESCO
Lobbying	Registered lobbying organisations	Who shapes European policy formation?	EU Transparency Register

V. FINANCIAL SOVEREIGNTY

Strategic Reflection

Can Europe remain strategically autonomous while depending on external financial and technological systems?

Reflection Area	Evidence	Strategic Reflection	Sources
Reserve currencies	Euro vs USD	Financial autonomy	ECB
Payment systems	Visa, Mastercard, WERO	Payment sovereignty	ECB
Cloud infrastructure	AWS, Azure, Google Cloud	Strategic technological dependency	Synergy Research
Strategic ownership	Critical infrastructure ownership	Who owns Europe's strategic assets?	European Commission
Productive investment	R&D, venture capital	Does finance support long-term development?	OECD
Industrial competitiveness	Manufacturing and productivity	Can Europe sustain technological leadership?	Eurostat

VI. STRATEGIC RESILIENCE AND PEACE

Strategic Reflection

Is Europe building the capabilities required to preserve peace through resilience?

Reflection Area	Evidence	Strategic Reflection	Sources
Defence	Defence expenditure	Military capability as one pillar of resilience	NATO
Technology	AI, semiconductors, space	Security increasingly depends on technological leadership	OECD
Energy	Import dependency	Strategic autonomy requires energy resilience	Eurostat
Critical materials	Rare earths and supply chains	Industrial security depends on resilient supply chains	European Commission
Industry	Industrial production	Economic strength underpins strategic resilience	Eurostat
Public opinion	Peace, security, defence	Do citizens support the strategic direction?	Eurobarometer



VII. INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

Strategic Reflection

Is Europe's institutional architecture fit for democratic legitimacy, strategic effectiveness and long-term renewal?

Reflection Area	Evidence	Strategic Reflection	Sources
Institutional balance	Elected vs non-elected institutions	Where does democratic legitimacy originate?	EUR-Lex
Legislative process	Delegated and implementing acts	Is decision-making sufficiently transparent?	European Commission
Citizen influence	European Citizens' Initiative	Can citizens effectively shape European legislation?	European Commission
Transparency	Access to documents, lobbying	Is institutional power sufficiently accountable?	Transparency Register
Media freedom	Pluralism and freedom indicators	Can democratic debate remain open?	Media Pluralism Monitor
Rule of Law	Annual reports	Are common standards applied consistently?	European Commission

REFLECTION INDICATORS

Reflection	What should be examined?	Possible evidence
Politics of deception	Do public policies correspond to citizens' priorities and declared objectives?	Eurobarometer priorities, EU strategic documents, budget allocations.
Institutional hypocrisy	Are identical principles applied consistently across comparable situations?	Rule of Law Reports, sanctions, official documents, comparative case studies.
Systematic double standards	Are similar situations treated differently without objective justification?	Comparative legal analysis, sanctions, human rights reports, case law.
Perversion of language	Have key political concepts gradually changed meaning through legislation and institutional practice?	Comparative analysis of legal definitions, policy documents and institutional terminology.
Cognitive dependency	To what extent does Europe depend upon external technological and information ecosystems?	ICT platforms, AI models, cloud infrastructure, browsers, search engines, social media.
Cognitive engineering	How strongly do algorithmic systems influence perception and public judgement?	OECD AI reports, DSA reports, Reuters Institute, platform transparency reports.
Information manipulation	Is the public information environment sufficiently trustworthy?	Media trust, perceived disinformation, media pluralism indicators.
Strategic dependency	Which critical capabilities remain externally controlled?	Energy, semiconductors, rare earths, payment systems, cloud, defence technologies.
Institutional opacity	Can citizens effectively understand and oversee decision-making?	Transparency International, delegated acts, public access to documents.
Bureaucratic self-preservation	Do institutions increasingly serve their own continuity rather than public purpose?	Growth of agencies, delegated legislation, administrative expenditure.
Short-term political opportunism	Do political decisions favour immediate gains over long-term resilience?	Public debt, R&D investment, infrastructure, education, demographic indicators.
Radical individualism detached from responsibility	Has the balance between rights and responsibilities shifted?	EVS/WVS, volunteering, family indicators, social capital.
Fragmentation of the shared civic ethos	Does Europe still possess sufficient civic cohesion?	European identity, institutional trust, social cohesion indicators, EVS/WVS.

Reflection	What should be examined?	Possible evidence
Cultural nihilism and civilizational self-denigration	Does Europe sufficiently preserve confidence in its own civilization while remaining capable of self-criticism?	Cultural participation, heritage indicators, education, qualitative policy analysis.
Trivialisation of education, knowledge and culture	Is intellectual development receiving lower strategic priority?	PISA, reading habits, education expenditure, cultural participation.
Mediocrity replacing excellence	Does Europe continue to reward excellence, innovation and merit?	Innovation Scoreboard, ERC grants, patents, scientific excellence.
Unlimited greed and materialism	Does economic activity primarily serve human flourishing or financial accumulation?	Financial sector size, wealth distribution, productive vs speculative investment.
Financial speculation detached from productive value	Does capital adequately support innovation and long-term development?	Venture capital, productive investment, R&D expenditure, financial market indicators.
Demographic indifference	Are demographic decline and intergenerational continuity treated as strategic priorities?	Fertility, ageing, migration balance, demographic projections.
Superiority complexes and paternalistic international relations	Do European external policies consistently reflect the principle of sovereign equality?	Comparative analysis of external relations, trade agreements, development policies.
Ethical relativism preventing legitimate public priorities	Can democratic societies still distinguish between universal rights and legitimate public priorities?	EVS/WVS, Eurobarometer, comparison of citizens' priorities with institutional agendas.

Principles of Interpretation

The purpose of this evidence framework is not to confirm predetermined political conclusions but to support transparent strategic reflection based on verifiable evidence, comparative analysis and democratic debate.

Individual indicators should not be interpreted in isolation. Strategic conclusions emerge only from the combined assessment of empirical evidence, institutional analysis, historical context and ethical reflection.

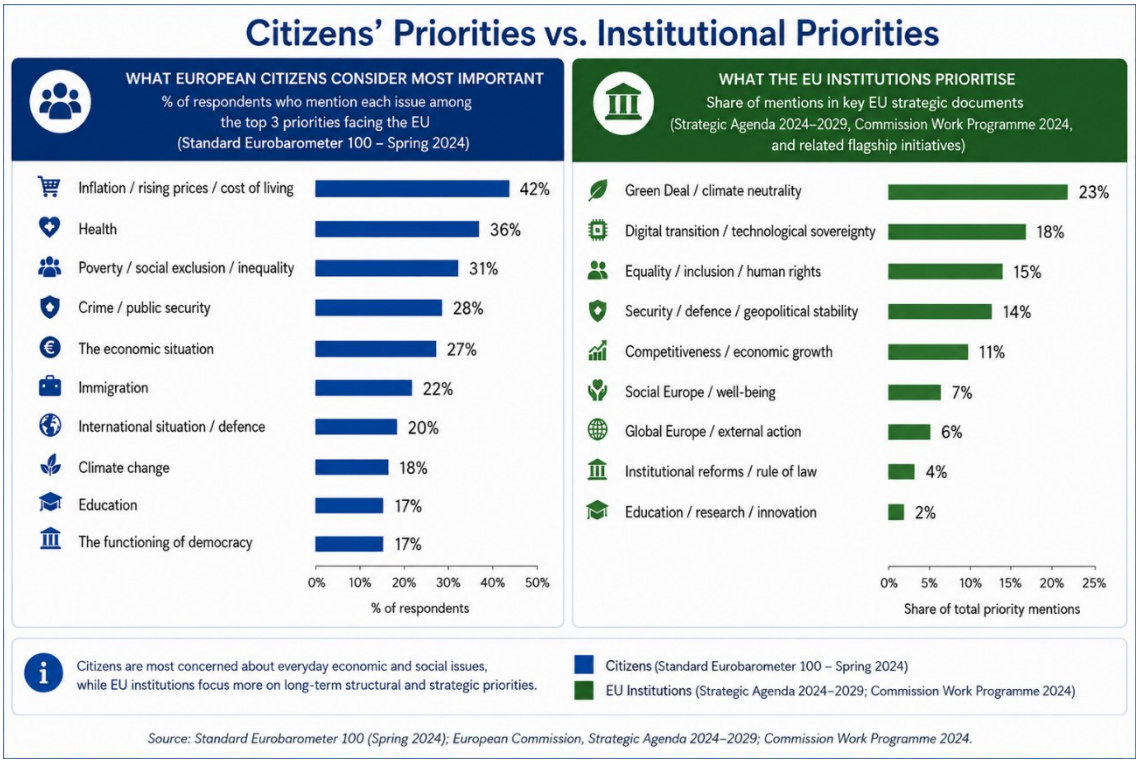
Throughout the series, descriptive evidence, normative reflection and strategic recommendations remain conceptually distinct. Facts describe reality, reflection evaluates its significance, while strategic proposals identify possible directions for Europe's future development.

The Strategic Reflection Cycle

Reality
↓
Evidence
↓
Strategic Reflection
↓
Diagnosis
↓
Strategic Doctrine
↓
Strategic Priorities
↓
Institutional Reform
↓
Implementation
↓
Evaluation
↓
Continuous Strategic Reflection

Strategic renewal begins with reality rather than ideology. Empirical evidence informs strategic reflection; reflection enables diagnosis; diagnosis guides doctrine; doctrine shapes priorities and institutional reform; implementation is continuously evaluated through evidence and renewed reflection.

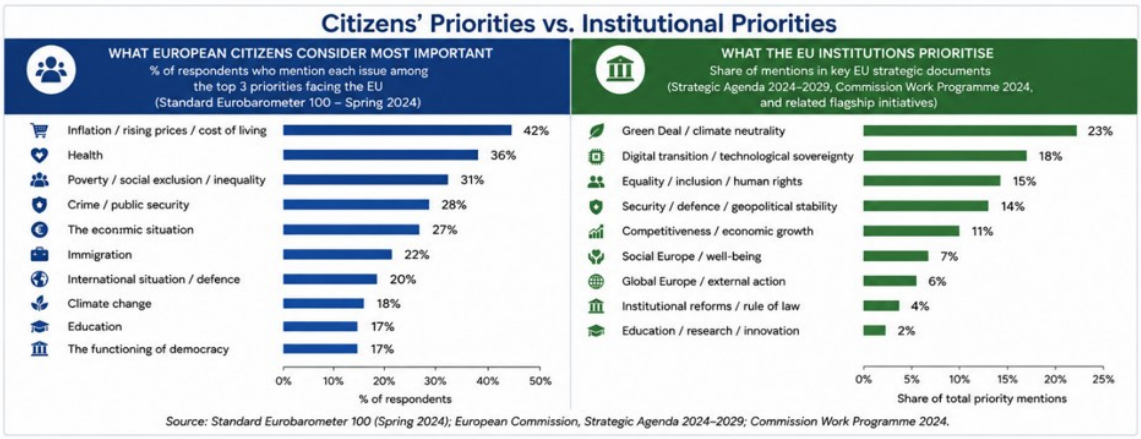
Facts and figures – the background for civilizational reflection

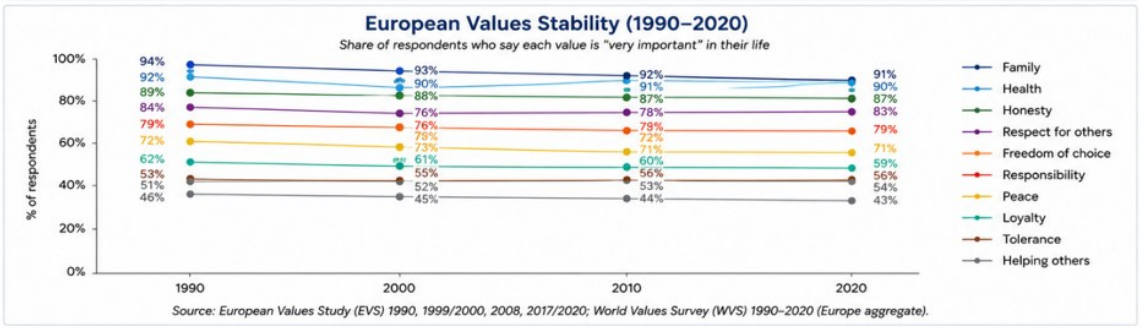


Strategic Reflection (Evolution of European Public Value Promotion)
Over the past three decades, European institutions have significantly expanded programmes and public funding promoting equality, inclusion and individual autonomy, while several value orientations have evolved in parallel. At the same time, Europe's most enduring civilizational values—family, health, honesty and responsibility—have remained remarkably stable. This raises a broader strategic question: to what extent should democratic institutions promote new normative frameworks, particularly those originating outside Europe's own civilizational tradition, rather than primarily strengthening the values that European societies have consistently preserved across generations?

European citizens consistently prioritise affordability, health, security and family, while EU institutions place greater emphasis on climate transition, digitalisation and equality. Education—foundational for long-term competitiveness, innovation and human capital—receives only 2% of institutional attention despite its strategic importance.

The divergence is unlikely to be accidental. It reflects an institutional agenda shaped not only by democratic preferences but also by regulatory frameworks, transnational policy networks, organised advocacy and long-term political programmes. Ethical sovereignty therefore requires continuous democratic scrutiny of how strategic priorities are defined, whose interests they ultimately serve, and whether they remain aligned with the long-term public interest of European citizens.



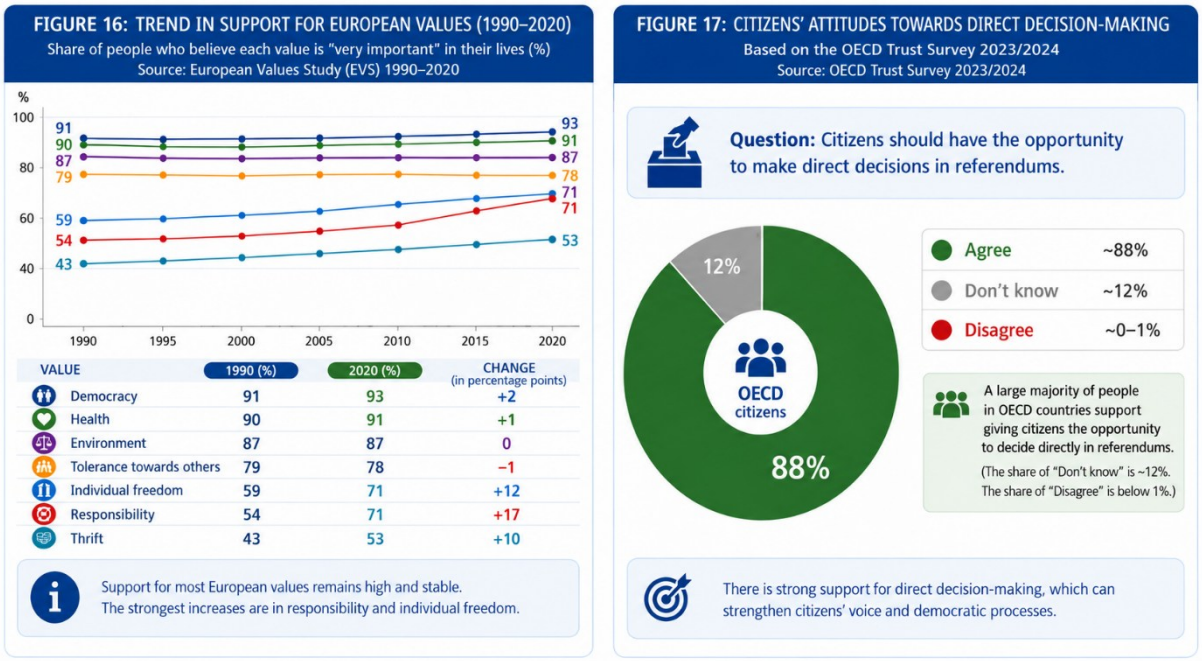


Strategic Reflection (European Values Stability)

Over three decades, European citizens have consistently ranked family, health, honesty, peace and respect for others among their most important values. These priorities have remained remarkably stable across generations, national borders and political changes.

Equally significant is what does not appear among these values. Identity-based political agendas, institutional identity promotion and other contemporary ideological themes are absent from the values that Europeans themselves regard as fundamental. The data do not show a European public demanding institutional focus on gender identity, sexual orientation or other identity markers. These priorities originate elsewhere—from activist networks, institutional bureaucracies and transnational policy communities—rather than from citizens themselves.

If family and health remain Europe's strongest social values while demographic decline continues, and if peace remains a core value while defence expenditure rises, the evidence requires us to ask: in whose interest are institutional priorities defined? Ethical sovereignty demands that public policy reflect the values citizens actually hold, not those imposed by institutional or ideological agendas.



Strategic Reflection (European Values Stability)

Europe's core civilizational values have remained remarkably stable despite profound political, social and technological change. The growing emphasis on newer normative agendas therefore reflects institutional and cultural evolution more than a spontaneous transformation of society itself. Democratic legitimacy depends upon strengthening enduring civilizational values rather than gradually replacing them through political and cultural engineering.

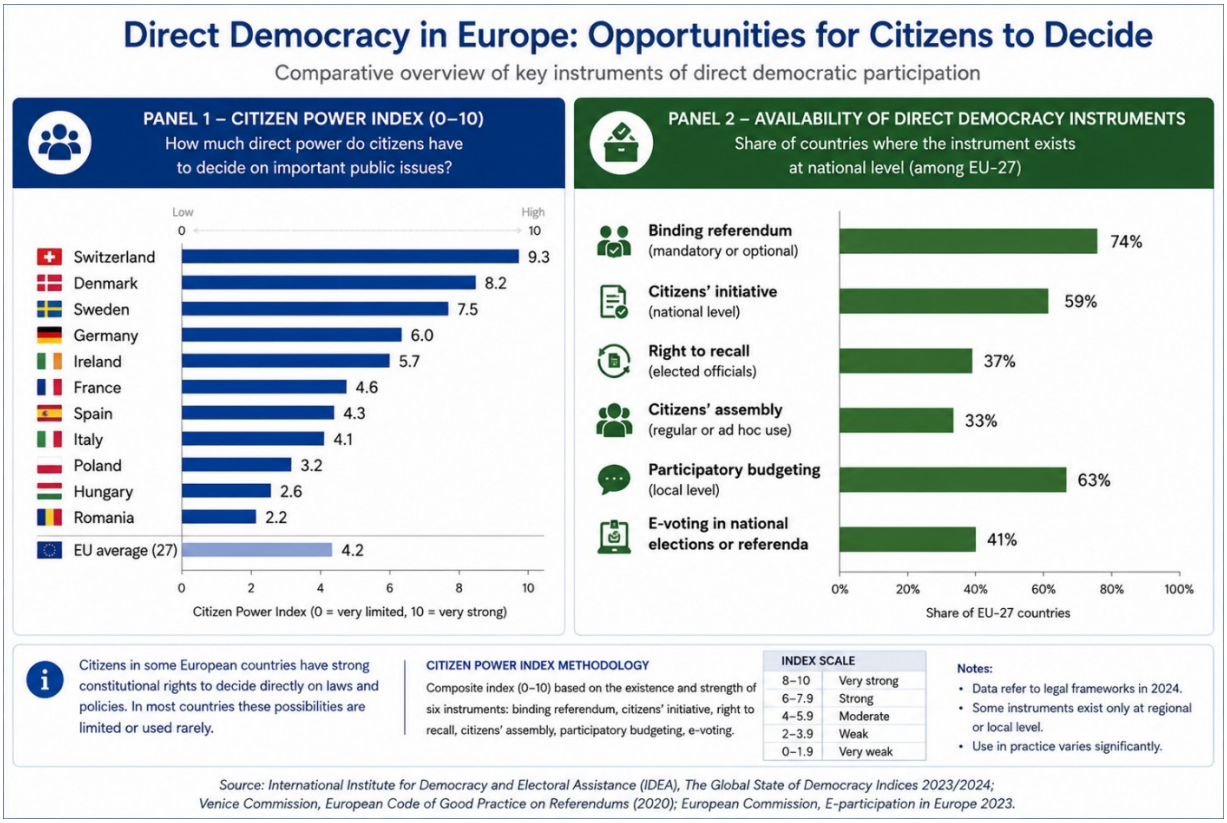
For three decades, Europeans have consistently ranked family, health, honesty, peace and responsibility as their core values. These priorities transcend national borders, generations and political changes.

Equally significant is what does **not** appear: identity-based political agendas, gender ideology, institutional identity promotion. These are not citizen-driven priorities. They originate from activist networks, institutional bureaucracies and transnational policy communities.

If family remains Europe's strongest value while demographic decline continues, and peace remains central while defence spending surges, democratic societies must ask: whose interests are served by ignoring what citizens actually value?

Strategic Reflection (Support for Direct Democracy)

Strong public support for direct participation demonstrates that representative democracy alone is increasingly perceived as insufficient. Citizens seek not only representation but meaningful influence over decisions that shape their future. Democratic renewal therefore requires institutions that share responsibility with citizens rather than concentrating decision-making within political and administrative elites.

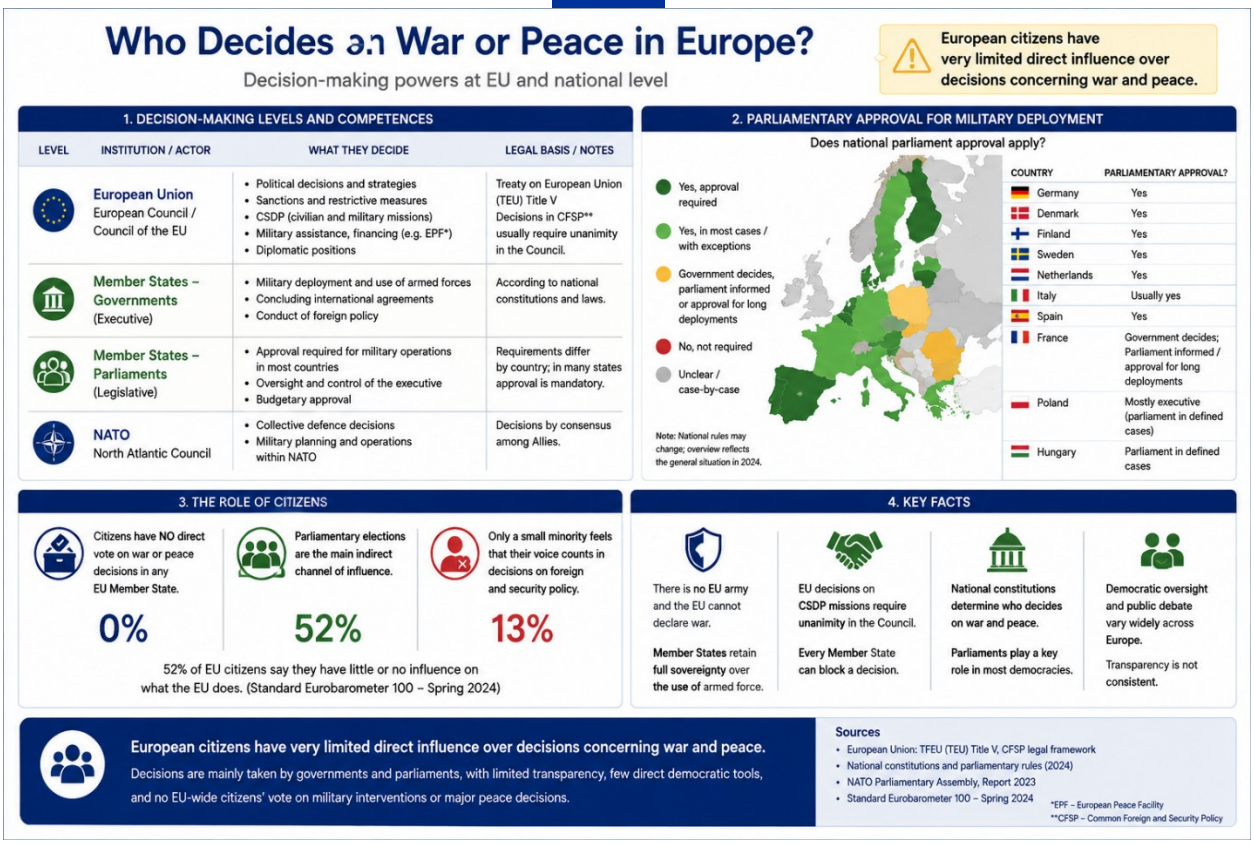


Strategic Reflection (Direct Democracy in Europe)

Opportunities for direct democratic participation vary considerably across Europe, while many countries still provide citizens with only limited influence over major public decisions. This diversity demonstrates that stronger citizen participation is both feasible and compatible with stable democratic governance. Integrated democracy therefore seeks not to replace representative institutions, but to strengthen their legitimacy by expanding meaningful opportunities for responsible citizen participation.

88 % of Europeans believe citizens should have the right to decide directly on important issues. This overwhelming mandate is ignored by institutional actors who benefit from limited citizen participation.

The limited scope of the European Citizens' Initiative is not an accident—it reflects institutional resistance to sharing power. Expanding direct democracy is not merely desirable; it is democratically necessary.

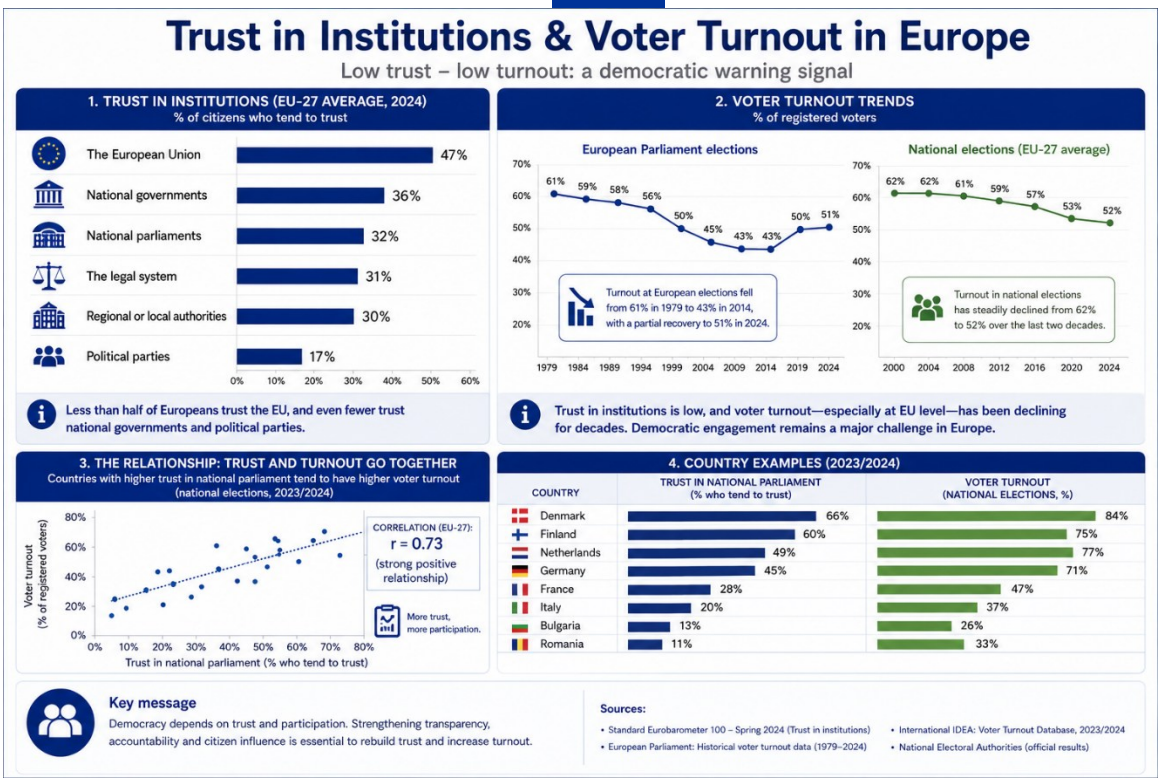


Strategic Reflection (Who Decides on War and Peace?)

Decisions concerning war, peace and military interventions remain primarily in the hands of governments and parliaments, while citizens have only limited direct influence over such choices. Although constitutional arrangements differ across Europe, the democratic legitimacy of decisions with potentially irreversible consequences deserves continuous public reflection. Integrated democracy therefore asks whether existing mechanisms provide citizens with sufficient oversight and accountability in matters of peace, security and the use of armed force.

European citizens have no direct vote on war or peace. Only 13 % feel their voice counts in foreign and security policy. Decisions affecting millions—military deployments, sanctions, alliances—are taken by governments with limited transparency and almost no democratic accountability.

This deficit is not constitutional necessity. It is executive preference. As defence expenditure rises, the absence of democratic oversight becomes increasingly indefensible. The question is not whether security matters—it does. The question is why decisions of war and peace remain exempt from democratic scrutiny.



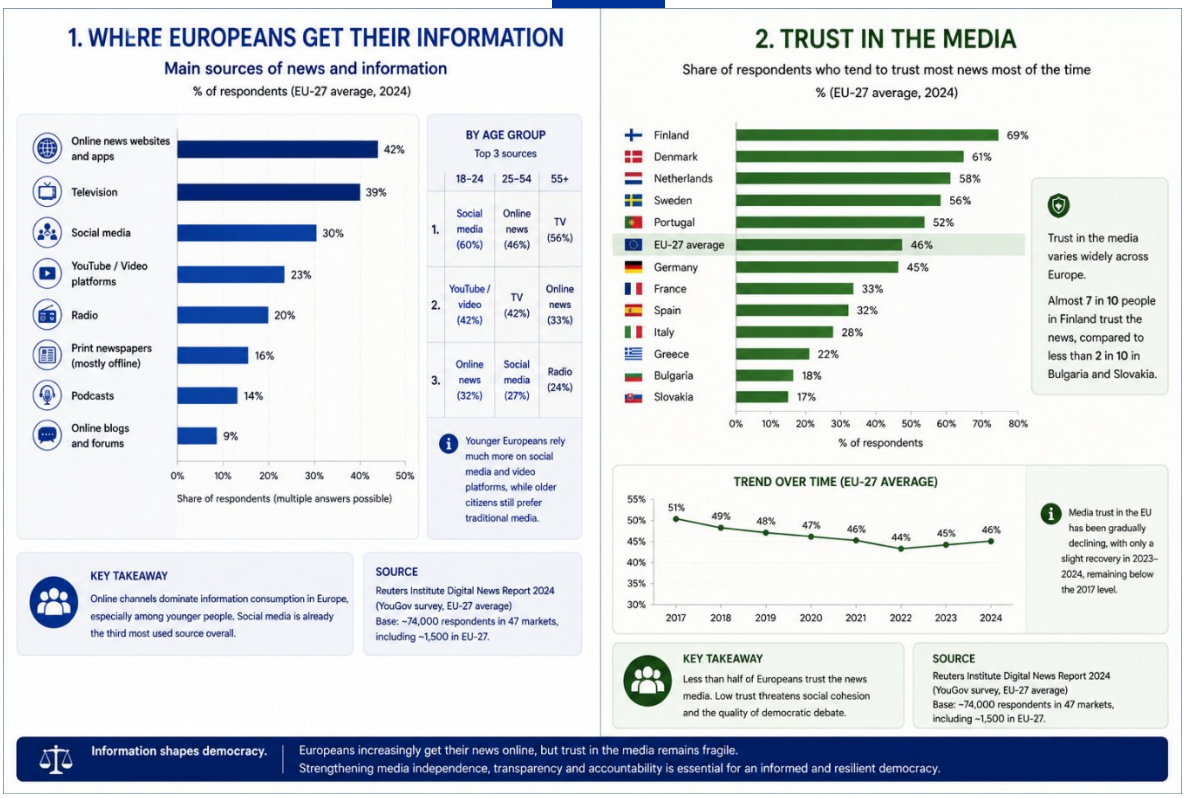
Strategic Reflection (Trust in Institutions and Democratic Participation)

Democratic legitimacy depends not only on elections but also on sustained public confidence in institutions and meaningful opportunities for participation. Trends in electoral turnout and institutional trust therefore provide important indicators of democratic resilience. Where participation weakens or trust declines, democratic societies should ask whether existing institutional arrangements continue to provide citizens with sufficient influence over decisions that shape their future.

Trust and participation are inseparable (r = 0.73). Where trust is high, turnout is high; where trust collapses, citizens withdraw from democratic life. Trust in national parliaments ranges from 66 % (Denmark) to 11 % (Romania); turnout follows accordingly.

Citizens do not withdraw accidentally—they withdraw when they perceive that their voices do not matter. Institutional self-preservation, bureaucratic inertia and the capture of policymaking by organised interests have gradually alienated citizens.

The recovery of European Parliament turnout to 51 % in 2024 offers limited comfort. It remains significantly below national election turnout. Restoring trust requires genuine institutional reform, not communication campaigns.



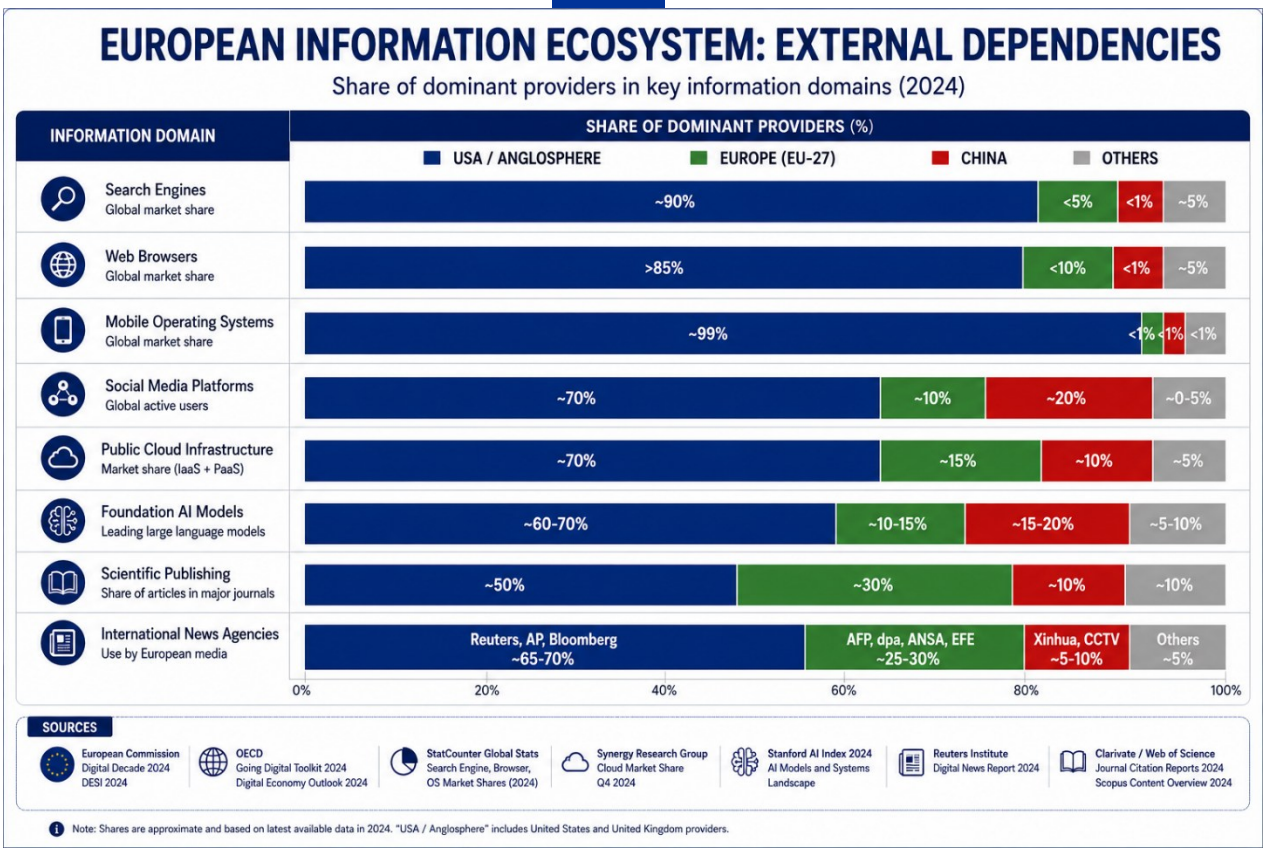
Strategic Reflection (Information Sources and Media Trust)

Europeans increasingly rely on digital platforms as their primary source of news and information, while fewer than half express general trust in the media. This combination highlights the growing importance of information integrity, media transparency and digital resilience. Democratic societies should therefore continuously examine whether their information ecosystem enables citizens to make informed, independent and evidence-based judgements.

Trust in media has declined from 50 % in 2016 to approximately 30 % in 2026. Young Europeans rely primarily on social media and video platforms—sources where algorithms prioritise engagement over accuracy, polarisation over pluralism.

The decline is not evenly distributed: trust ranges from 69 % (Finland) to 17 % (Slovakia). Media concentration, commercial pressures and algorithmic curation have eroded public confidence.

Restoring trust requires investment in public service media, independent journalism and civic education. Regulation alone cannot replace what has been lost.



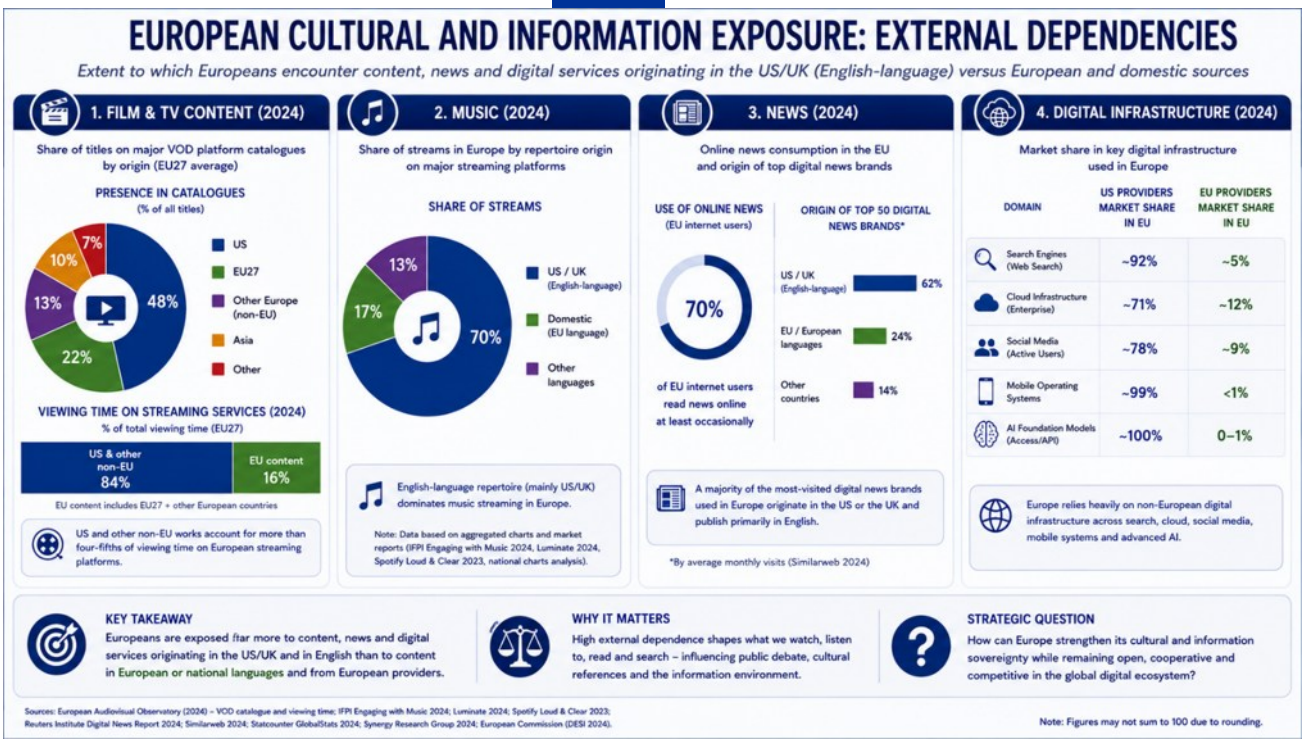
Strategic Reflection (European Information Ecosystem: External Dependencies)

Europe possesses world-class universities, researchers and innovative industries, yet many of the digital infrastructures through which information is created, distributed and consumed remain dominated by non-European actors. Such dependence does not preclude international cooperation, but it may gradually limit Europe's capacity to define its own technological standards, information environment and strategic priorities. Information integrity therefore increasingly requires not isolation, but competitive European capabilities in critical digital domains.

Europe's information environment is dominated by non-European providers: search (90 %), browsers (85 %), mobile operating systems (99 %), social media (70 %), cloud (70 %), AI (60-70 %). European citizens increasingly receive information through algorithms developed in California, governed by corporate interests.

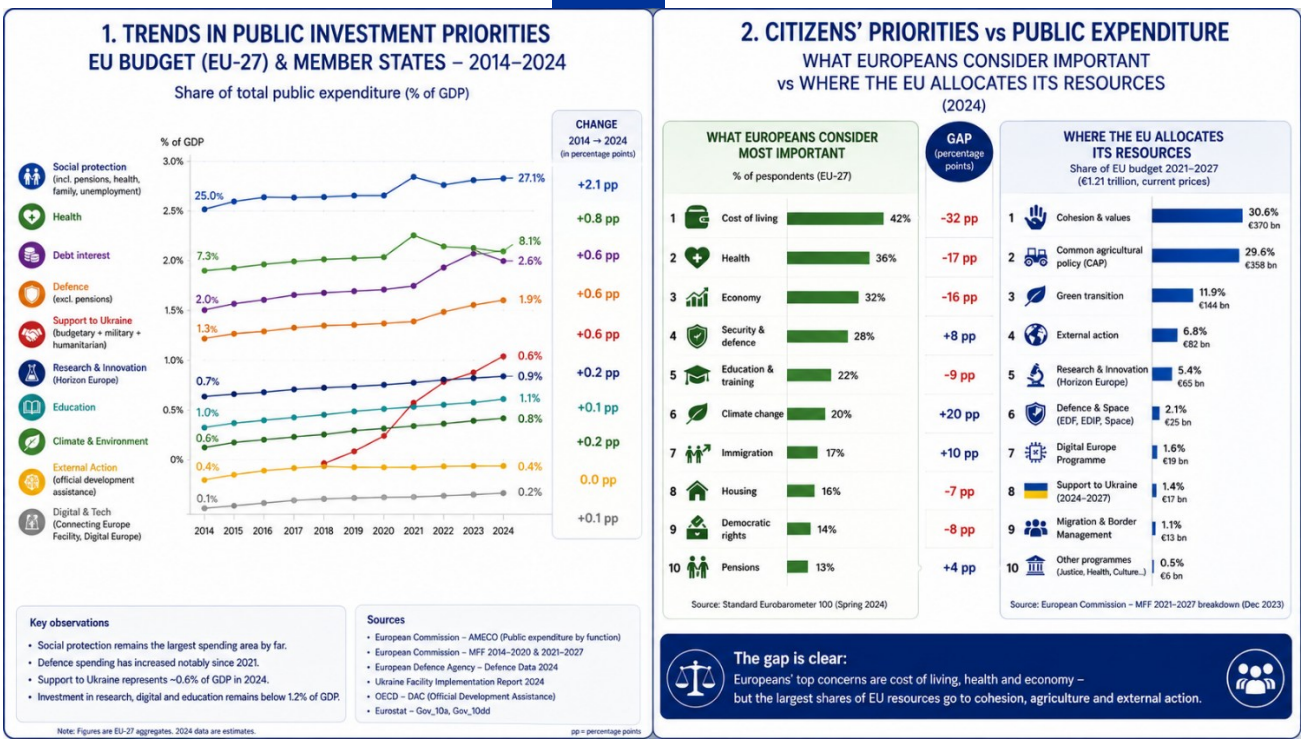
This is not economic dependency—it is cognitive dependency. The absence of European alternatives reflects a strategic failure: Europe has chosen regulation over innovation, protection over competition, dependency over sovereignty.

The question is not whether Europe should regulate platforms—it already does. The question is whether Europe will invest in its own digital infrastructure or continue outsourcing its cognitive environment to foreign corporations.



Strategic Reflection (European Cultural and Information Exposure)

Europeans consume a large share of their digital content, news and online services through non-European platforms and predominantly English-language ecosystems. While international openness remains a strength, high external dependence in strategic cultural, informational and digital domains may gradually reduce Europe's capacity to shape its own narratives, technological standards and public discourse. Cognitive sovereignty therefore requires not isolation, but stronger European capabilities that complement global cooperation while preserving Europe's cultural diversity and strategic autonomy.

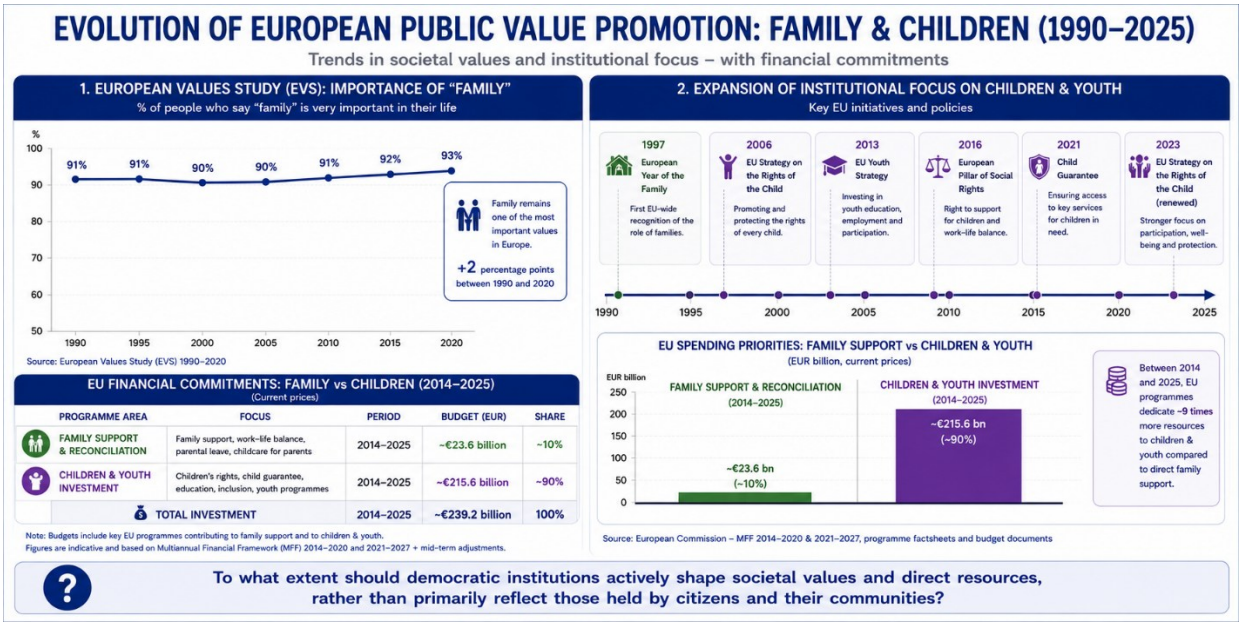


Strategic Reflection (Public Investment Priorities)

Public budgets represent one of the clearest expressions of political priorities. Comparing long-term expenditure with citizens' declared concerns does not determine which priorities are inherently right or wrong. It does, however, provide a transparent basis for democratic reflection on whether public resources remain aligned with the long-term public interest, strategic resilience, technological competitiveness and the well-being of future generations.

Declining trust and uneven electoral participation indicate not only political dissatisfaction but a weakening relationship between citizens and public institutions. Democratic resilience depends less on electoral procedures alone than on the continuous perception that institutions genuinely serve the public interest rather than institutional or partisan objectives.

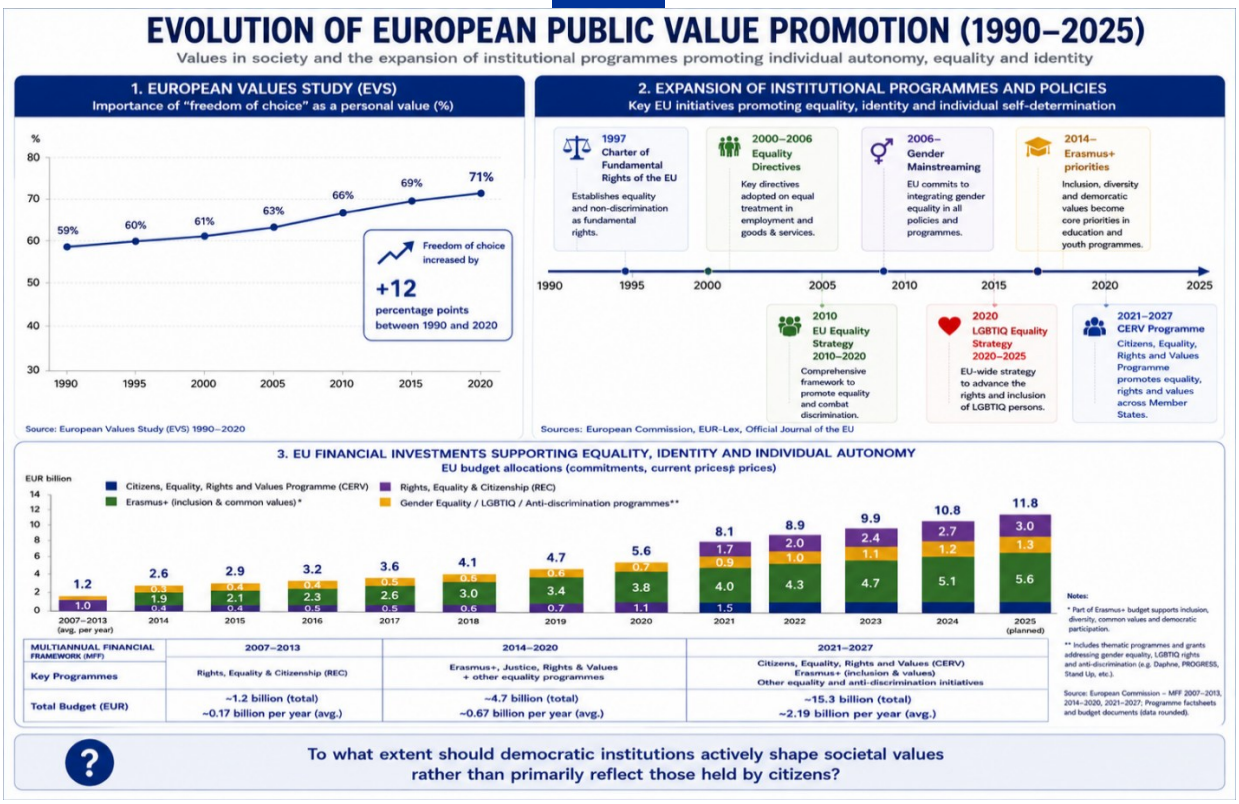
Budgets reveal political priorities more clearly than declarations. Long-term expenditure patterns show where institutions choose to concentrate strategic resources and which objectives receive sustained support. Democratic accountability therefore requires continuous assessment of whether public investment strengthens Europe's competitiveness, resilience and civilizational continuity, or primarily reinforces institutional agendas.



Strategic Reflection (Family, Children and Public Investment)

Family has remained one of the most stable and widely shared values across European societies for more than three decades. At the same time, institutional programmes and public investment have increasingly focused on broader child, youth and rights-based policies rather than direct support for family formation. This comparison invites democratic reflection on whether current policy priorities and financial commitments sufficiently address Europe's long-term demographic sustainability and intergenerational continuity.

While family remains Europe's strongest and most stable value, public investment has increasingly shifted towards broader regulatory and identity-related agendas. This imbalance does not diminish the legitimacy of individual rights, but it raises fundamental questions about strategic priorities. Civilizational continuity ultimately depends upon supporting the institutions that sustain future generations.



Strategic Reflection (Evolution of European Public Value Promotion)

Over the past three decades, European institutions have progressively expanded programmes and financial commitments promoting equality, inclusion and individual autonomy, while public surveys show a simultaneous increase in the importance attached to freedom of choice. These parallel developments do not by themselves establish causation, but they invite democratic reflection on the appropriate relationship between public institutions, public funding and the evolution of societal values. Ethical sovereignty requires that such influence remain transparent, proportionate and democratically accountable.



Common References for the Series

Volume 0 provides the common intellectual, empirical and institutional foundation for the *European Strategic Doctrine* series. Rather than repeating references throughout subsequent volumes, it consolidates the principal literature, legal sources, institutional documents and empirical indicators on which the doctrine is based. This common reference framework ensures methodological consistency, transparency and academic credibility across the entire series while allowing each subsequent volume to focus on its specific strategic theme.

Key References

Foundational Legal Sources

- Treaty on European Union (Consolidated Version, 2016).
- Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Consolidated Version, 2016).
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2016/C 202/02).
- European Convention on Human Rights.

Institutional Sources

- European Commission.
- European Parliament.
- European Council.
- Eurostat.
- Standard Eurobarometer.
- OECD.
- Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
- NATO.
- United Nations.
- UNESCO.
- World Bank.
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

Methodological Principle

Unless otherwise stated, all empirical evidence used throughout the series is derived from the latest publicly available datasets issued by the above institutions.

2. Intellectual Foundations

Intellectual Foundations

The European Strategic Doctrine is grounded in established traditions of political philosophy, democratic theory, strategic studies, economics, cognitive science and European integration. Rather than advocating a single ideological perspective, it draws upon diverse schools of thought to develop a balanced framework for analysing Europe's long-term challenges and institutional evolution.

The selected literature reflects six complementary dimensions:

The doctrine deliberately combines classical political philosophy with contemporary empirical research. The selected works are intended to provide conceptual diversity rather than ideological uniformity, reflecting different intellectual traditions relevant to Europe's strategic development.

- **Normative and philosophical foundations** (Aristotle, Burke, Tocqueville, Arendt, Rawls, MacIntyre, Havel);
- **European integration and sovereignty** (Weiler, Majone, Nicolaïdis, Schmitter, Bradford, Manners);
- **Democracy and institutional legitimacy** (Dahl, Barber, Pateman, Gutmann, Habermas);
- **Cognitive science, media and information** (Kahneman, Lippmann, Herman & Chomsky, Postman, Zuboff, Sunstein, Gigerenzer);
- **Economics, competitiveness and innovation** (Smith, Keynes, Hayek, Porter, Acemoglu & Robinson, Rodrik, Mazzucato);
- **Security, strategy and resilience** (Clausewitz, Schelling, Liddell Hart, Gray, Freedman, Mearsheimer, Waltz).

Together, these works provide the conceptual basis for analysing strategic sovereignty, democratic renewal, institutional resilience, economic competitiveness and Europe's capacity for independent long-term decision-making.

Political Philosophy

- Aristotle – *Politics*
- Burke – *Reflections on the Revolution in France*
- Tocqueville – *Democracy in America*
- Arendt – *The Human Condition*
- Rawls – *A Theory of Justice*

European Integration

- Weiler – *The Constitution of Europe*
- Majone – *Dilemmas of European Integration*
- Bradford – *The Brussels Effect*

Democracy

- Dahl – *Democracy and Its Critics*
- Habermas – *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*

Cognitive Science

- Kahneman – *Thinking, Fast and Slow*
- Herman & Chomsky – *Manufacturing Consent*
- Postman – *Amusing Ourselves to Death*
- Zuboff – *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*

Economics

- Smith – *The Wealth of Nations*
- Porter – *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*
- Acemoglu & Robinson – *Why Nations Fail*

Strategy

- Clausewitz – *On War*
- Schelling – *Arms and Influence*
- Freedman – *Strategy: A History*

3. Institutional and Empirical Sources

Institutional and Empirical Sources

The doctrine is supported by authoritative legal, institutional and statistical sources to ensure that its conclusions rest on verifiable evidence rather than opinion. Core legal references include the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the European Convention on Human Rights and major EU regulatory acts, including the AI Act, Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act.

Empirical analysis relies primarily on data published by Eurostat, Standard Eurobarometer, the European Commission, the OECD, Reuters Institute, NATO, the United Nations and other internationally recognised institutions. These sources provide consistent indicators on demography, economic performance, technological development, education, public trust, security, competitiveness and social resilience.

Whenever possible, the most recent publicly available data have been used. Subsequent volumes reference these common sources, ensuring consistency across the entire European Strategic Doctrine series.

Principal Sources

- European Commission.
- Eurostat.
- Standard Eurobarometer.
- OECD.
- Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, *Digital News Report*.
- NATO.
- United Nations.
- UNESCO.
- World Bank.
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).