

Final Report

# THE STATE OF THE UNION

*Building Europe in times  
of uncertainty*

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# Abstract

The 13th edition of **The State of the Union**, the **European University Institute's (EUI)** high-level annual event on global affairs, took place on 4-6 May 2023 in Florence, Italy. Under the title 'Building Europe in times of uncertainty', the flagship conference gathered **134 prestigious speakers**, including policymakers, top scholars, and world-renowned experts, to discuss the most pressing issues on the European agenda.

The debate unfolded across **35 sessions**, delving into issues including the war in Ukraine and its impact on the daily lives of citizens, sustainability and social inclusion, the rule of law, and the digital transition. It saw the participation of **Josep Borrell Fontelles**, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission. The Institute also welcomed **Nadia Calviño**, First Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister for Economic Affairs and Digitalisation, Spain, **Dita Charanzova**, Vice-President, European Parliament; **Sylvie Goulard**, Member of the French Diplomatic Service, Republic of France, **Ditte Juul Jørgensen**, Director-General for Energy, European Commission; **Mairead McGuinness**, Commissioner for Financial services, financial stability and Capital Markets Union, European Commission, **Borut Pahor**, Former President of the Republic of Slovenia; and **Norbert Röttgen**, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the German Bundestag.

The event opened at the EUI's Badia Fiesolana on 4 May and continued at Palazzo Vecchio, the historic seat of the Florence City Council, on 5 May. It welcomed more than 700 participants in person during the two days. All sessions were livestreamed, with approximately 10,000 people joining from around the world.

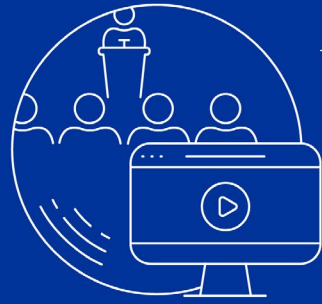
EUI President Renaud Dehousse, who opened the event, said,

*"The State of the Union is the key European event that puts top scholars in the room with policy makers to dig deep into the most pressing issues on the EU agenda. This year we will focus on the green and digital transitions, security, and global economics – all issues the EUI can contribute to through its outstanding research."*





**169** COUNTRIES REPRESENTED



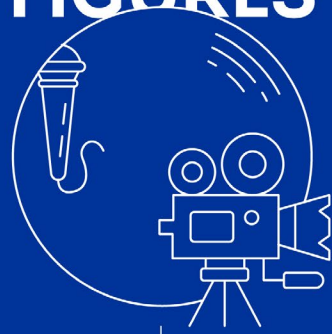
**35** PANELS, ADDRESSES AND CONVERSATIONS

**35+** NATIONALITIES

**46%** FEMALE

**54%** MALE

## PRESS FIGURES



**180+** CLIPPING IN TOP-TIER MEDIA

**70+** JOURNALISTS

# THE STATE OF THE UNION

*Building Europe in times of uncertainty*

04 - 06 MAY 2023



**134** TOTAL SPEAKERS



**10,000+** TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

**8,600+** VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS

**754** IN PERSON PARTICIPANTS

**2,500+** OPEN DAY PARTICIPANTS

**51** UNIQUE PARTNERS



**660,000+** IMPRESSIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**295** POSTS

**550+** TAGS

A number of foreign ministers from across the European Union also participated in the event, including **Rastislav Káčer**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Slovak Republic; **Tobias Billström**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sweden; **Alexander Schallenberg**, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs, Republic of Austria; and **Antonio Tajani**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Italy.

The timely discussions and high-level speakers attracted more than 70 journalists to attend the event in person. The State of the Union 2023 was featured in more than **180 press reports**, many in top tier national and international outlets, including prestigious media partners ANSA, Euronews, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Financial Times, Politico, and TgCom24.

The State of the Union was also highly followed on social media. In addition to EUI-wide campaigns that brought over three million impressions across four channels, the event was featured in influential posts by high-level speakers and partners.



A special feature in 2023 was **SOU4YOU, The State of the Union for Young European Citizens**, organised in continuity with the Festival of Europe on the afternoon of 5 May at Palazzo Vecchio. The event dedicated to young European citizens, and held in Italian, counted the presence of over 600 people.

On 6 May, the conference concluded with an **Open Day** at Villa Salviati, offering more than 2,500 visitors artistic activities, including musical performances, family entertainment, an art exhibition, and a historical enactment. Guided by EUI partner Fondo Ambiente Italiano (FAI), visitors discovered the villa and entered the state-of-the-art vaults of the Historical Archives of the European Union where Europe's memory is preserved.

The valuable contributions of **51 local and international partners** were the cornerstone of The State of the Union 2023 conference. This diverse range of partners worked closely with the EUI, in strong alignment with its values and mission, to ensure the event's success.

# 1.1

## Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee is composed of influential experts and academics representing all of the EUI's academic units. Drawing on their expertise, the Scientific Committee devises the programme and the content of the conference, focusing on topical issues. It also ensures the scientific quality of sessions and the delivery of engaging discussions.



**Deirdre Curtin**  
Dean, Graduate Studies  
and Professor,  
Department of Law, EUI



**Renaud Dehousse**  
President of EUI and Chair  
of the Scientific Committee



**Marco Del Panta**  
Secretary General of the EUI



**Franca Maria Feisel**  
PhD Researcher at the LAW  
Department and Co-Coordinator  
of Ponte Europa



**Stephanie Hofmann**  
Professor, Department of Political and  
Social Sciences and Robert Schuman  
Centre for Advanced Studies, EUI



**Marco Incerti**  
Director of the  
Communications Service



**Erik Jones**  
Director of the Robert  
Schuman Centre for  
Advanced Studies, EUI



**Ruth Rubio Marín**  
Professor, School of  
Transnational Governance, EUI



**Leonardo Meeus**  
Director, Florence School of  
Regulation, Robert Schuman  
Centre for Advanced Studies, EUI



**Nicolas Petit**  
Professor, Department of Law  
and Robert Schuman Centre  
for Advanced Studies, EUI



**Andrea Renda**  
Professor, School of Transnational  
Governance, EUI



**Waltraud Schelkle**  
Professor, Department of Political and  
Social Sciences and Robert Schuman  
Centre for Advanced Studies, EUI

# 1.2 Speakers

The State of the Union 2023 (SOU2023) counted **134 speakers**, including moderators, representatives of the private sector, government, national and EU institutions, academia, foundations, transnational organisations, national and international press. The diversity in the affiliation of the speakers guaranteed different opinions and dynamic discussions. Thirty-six nationalities were represented, resulting in a global meeting of minds and expertise rooted in different contexts. As for gender diversity, women constituted 46% of the speakers, while 54% were male. An improvement in the wealth of female policy expertise, often underrepresented at such high-level events, is highlighted by a comparison with previous editions.

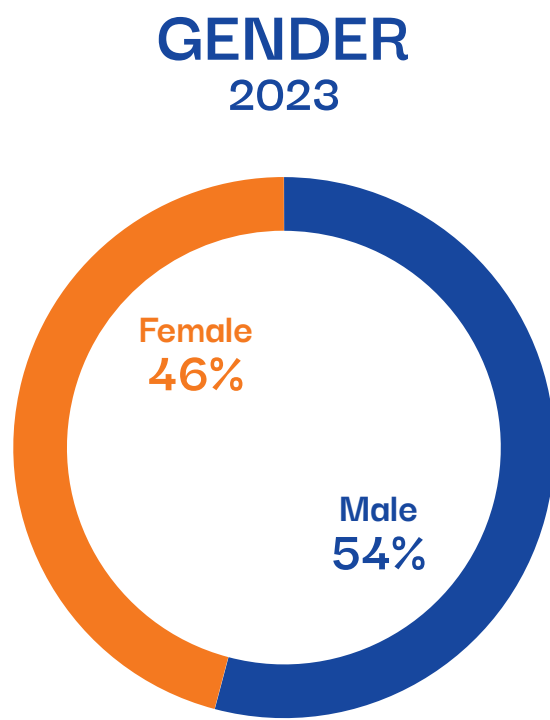


Fig. 1: Overall gender diversity among speakers, moderators and co-moderators (The State of the Union 2023)

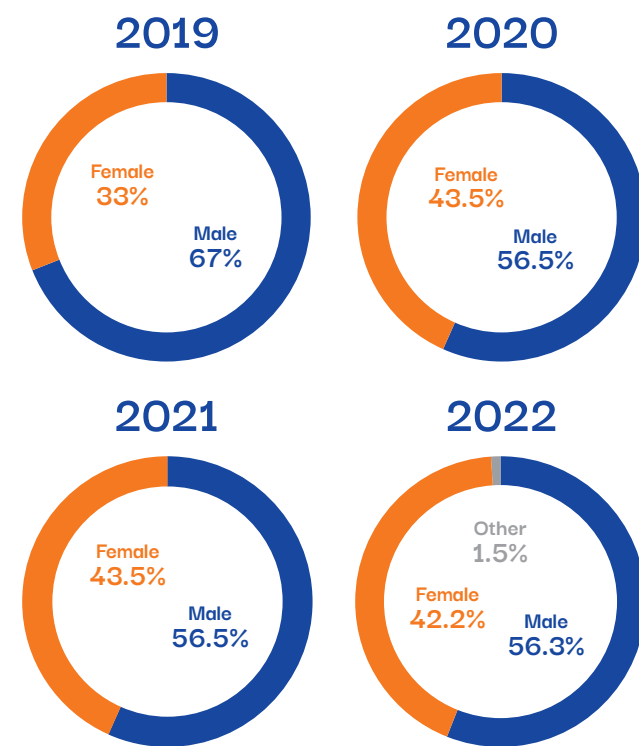


Fig. 2: Year-on-year comparison: gender diversity of speakers



**Tobias Billström**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden



**Josep Borrell Fontelles**  
High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President, European Commission



**Dita Charanzova**  
Vice-President, European Parliament



**Nadia Calviño**  
First Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister for Economic Affairs and Digitalisation, Spain



**Paolo Gentiloni**  
Commissioner for Economy, European Commission



**Sylvie Goulard**  
Member of the French Diplomatic Service, Republic of France



**Ditte Juul Jørgensen**  
Director-General for Energy, European Commission



**Mairead McGuinness**  
Commissioner for Financial services, financial stability and Capital Markets Union, European Commission



**Norbert Röttgen**  
Member, German Bundestag



**Alexander Schallenberg**  
Federal Minister for European and International Affairs, Republic of Austria



**Janusz Czesław Wojciechowski**  
Commissioner for Agriculture, European Commission



**Antonio Tajani**  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Italy

# 1.3 Programme

The 2023 edition of the conference, titled “**Building Europe in Times of Uncertainty**”, counted a total of **35 sessions**. In high-level addresses, panels and conversations, international leaders and experts focused on the most pressing issues on the European agenda, including the war in Ukraine and its complex geopolitical, economic, and legal ramifications, as well as its repercussions on the daily lives of citizens. Important EU objectives, such as the promotion of social sustainability and inclusion, the upholding of the rule of law, and the digital transition featured prominently in the programme.

Sessions fostered in-depth analysis from different perspectives and disciplines, and the interconnected nature of many of the issues shone through in the discussions. Throughout the engagement in conversations, along with powerful messages from high-profile personalities, insightful inputs on the overarching theme were welcomed. The format also included the **SOU Lecture** by Anton Hemerijck, Professor at the EUI Department of Political and Social Sciences.

More than **700 people** attended the event in person during the two days. The conference took place on **Thursday, 4 May** at the Badia Fiesolana (EUI premises) and on **Friday, 5 May** at Palazzo Vecchio, the historic seat of Florence's City Council.

All sessions were livestreamed and uploaded on the EUI's YouTube channel on the same day. Photos of all conference proceedings were also uploaded to the **SOU2023 website**. Approximately **10,000 people** connecting remotely from around the world participated in the event via the livestream and on the EUI's YouTube channel.



On the **afternoon of 5 May**, **SOU4YOU**, an initiative held in Palazzo Vecchio in Italian and dedicated to young European citizens, counted the presence of over **600 people**.

On **6 May**, the conference concluded with an **Open Day** at Villa Salviati, where artistic activities, including musical performances, family entertainment, an art exhibition, and a historical enactment were organised, counting the participation of more than **2,500 visitors**. Guided by EUI partner Fondo Ambiente Italiano (FAI), visitors discovered the villa and entered the state-of-the-art vaults of the Historical Archives of the European Union where Europe's memory is preserved.





# 1.4

## Partners programme

The conference also included **partner panels** that were intellectually independent and held in parallel to the institutional programme. These were shaped under the supervision of EUI scientific coordinators who were members of the Scientific Committee.

**Six panels** were organised on **4 May**, while **two panels** and **one training** took place on **5 May**. Both the panels and the training contributed with alternative perspectives to the overarching theme "**Building Europe in Times of Uncertainty**". Partner panels were organised by The State of the Union's contributing partners, and among the covered topics were:

### Organised by



BertelsmannStiftung

European  
MEDIA AND  
INFORMATION  
Fund

euiss European Union  
Institute for Security Studies

McKinsey  
Global Institute

OPEN SOCIETY  
FOUNDATIONS

pagopa

Posteitaliane

### 4 MAY

The future of European agriculture: sustainability, sufficiency, security  
**Bayer**

A human-centric digital transition: innovation and inclusiveness  
**Poste Italiane**

Are we on the cusp of a new era?  
**McKinsey Global Institute**

Technological capabilities for the twin transition:  
linking European regions for cohesion  
**Bertelsmann Stiftung**

Equality and its pivotal role in European democracies - 2023 and beyond  
**Open Society Foundations**

EU digital identity: How many bricks in the wallet?  
**PagoPA**

### 5 MAY

Countering foreign interference: challenges and opportunities for the EU  
**European Union Institute for Security Studies**

Europe's digital future: the opportunities and pitfalls of platform self-regulation  
of harmful content and disinformation  
**European Media and Information Fund**

The training was organised by PagoPA.

# PARTNERS

The State of the Union conference was possible in large part thanks to the contribution of long-standing and new partners. The 2023 edition counted on the support of **51 local and international partners** that ranged in diversity and were strongly aligned with the EUI's values and mission. Press, business and service sectors, research institutions and foundations contributed to the shaping of the conference in terms of active participation, engagement, and financial support, as well as promotion and planning.

## 2.1 Media partners

SOU2023 media partners, **ANSA**, **Euronews**, **Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung**, **Financial Times**, **Politico**, and **TgCom24**, supported the event through advertising, both printed and online, social media campaigns, as well as coverage in articles. Euronews Political Reporter and News Anchor **Méabh McMahon** acted as Master of Ceremony during the second day of the conference held at Palazzo Vecchio and led the high-level conversation with **Josep Borrell Fontelles**, **Arnaud Danjean**, **Norbert Röttgen**, and **Tobias Billström**. Politico and Financial Times journalists served as moderators and speakers in panels and conversations, including during the partner panel: **Ben Hall**, **Peggy Hollinger**, **Aoife White**, **Suzanne Lynch**, and **Florian Eder** participated during both days of the conference.

One television spot broadcasted on the **Euronews Live** channel and one episode of **Studio Aperto Mag – NEXT Generazione Europa** contributed to the promotion before and after the conference.



### OVERALL SOU2023 VALUE ESTIMATE

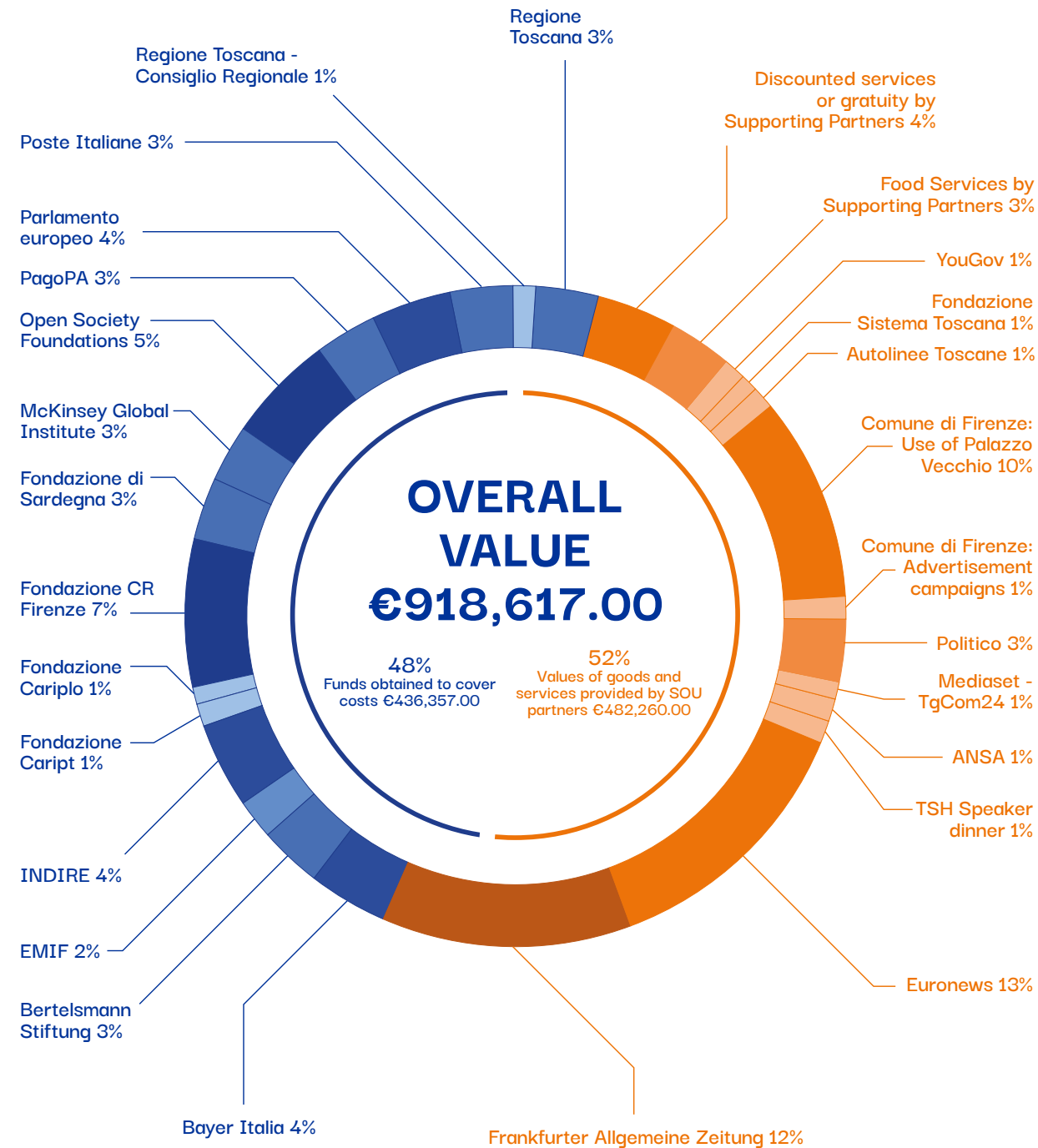


Fig. 3: Overall SOU2023 estimate value and SOU2023 Budget breakdown

## 2.2 Contributing partners

This 2023 edition included **17 contributing partners**. All were actively involved in the content, as well as in the promotion of the event.

Bayer, Bertelsmann Stiftung, European Media and Information Fund, European Union Institute for Security Studies, McKinsey Global Institute, Open Society Foundations, PagoPA, and Poste Italiane supported the event through promotion on their communication channels and organised a partner panel during the two days of the conference.

Comune di Firenze, Fondazione CR Firenze, Erasmus+INDIRE, Regione Toscana – Consiglio Regionale, Regione Toscana, Fondazione Cariplo, Fondazione Caript, Fondazione di Sardegna, Parlamento europeo financially contributed to the event and promoted the event through the publication of articles on their websites, social media posts, newsletters, and press releases.

YouGov contributed to the programme with a presentation of the *Solidarity in Europe Survey*.

## 2.3 Supporting partners

The realisation of the event was also possible thanks to the supporting partners. **Twenty-eight companies** collaborated with the SOU Secretariat on the logistical aspects of the conference, including the venue set up, social events and networking moments, as well as supplies of food and drinks. In addition to the long-standing supporting partners, 17 were welcomed during this edition for the first time.

Find out more on how to become a partner of the 2024 edition.

# 3.1

## Press and Advertising

The State of the Union 2023 was featured in more than **180 clippings**, many in top tier national, international media and local outlets, including online and printed articles, TV and video reports. **Three press releases** were published before, during and at the end of the event.

More than 70 journalists attended the conference in person, while more followed the livestreaming online.

A widespread presence of national and international policymakers attracted journalists from different countries, resulting in **73 articles** published in 11 languages by international outlets, and **108 articles** published by national and local outlets.

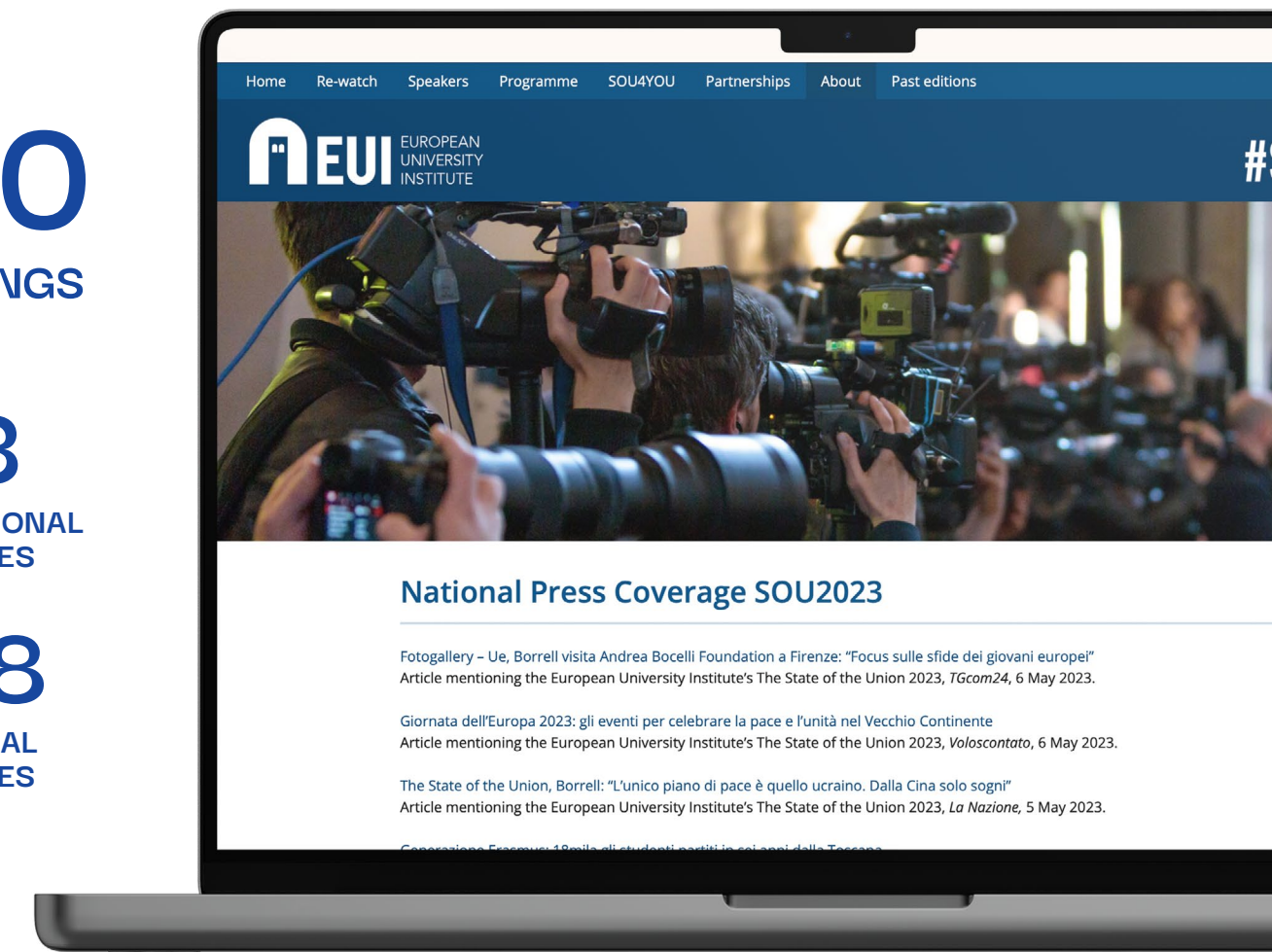
Among distinguished news headlines, many, such as POLITICO and Euronews, focused on security and defence, in light of the new geopolitical international situation. These pivotal themes were mainly highlighted in the panels with **Josep Borrell Fontelles**, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, and **Antonio Tajani**, Italian Foreign Minister. Articles covering these topics were published in several languages, including English, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, and Spanish.

The most reported topics also included household prices and financial resources for a just and green transition, which were discussed by high-profile speakers such as **Frank Elderson**, Member of the Executive Board, European Central Bank, and **Ditte Juul Jørgensen**, Director-General for Energy, European Commission.

**180**  
CLIPPINGS

**73**  
INTERNATIONAL  
ARTICLES

**108**  
NATIONAL  
ARTICLES



Speakers such as **Sandra Wachter**, Professor at the Oxford Internet Institute at Oxford University, were mentioned examining opportunities and risks of new AI technologies.

National news outlets, namely **La Repubblica**, **Rai News**, and **Mediaset**, focused on the speech of **Paolo Gentiloni**, European Commissioner for Economic Affairs, in particular the statements on the implementation of EU's Recovery Plan.

SOU2023 was also mentioned in various local outlets – **Firenze Today**, **InToscana**, **Firenze Post**, **Corriere Fiorentino**, among others – which focused more on the statements of **Dario Nardella**, Mayor of Florence, and **Eugenio Giani**, President of the Tuscany Region.

# PRINT PROMOTION

## Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung published two printed ads: one on **11 April**, and one in the FAZ Sunday newspaper on **30 April**, reaching an average readership daily of **941,000**.

## POLITICO

Politico, a leading media outlet in Europe, was a partner of The State of the Union for the first time in 2023. Politico advertised SOU2023 in its printed edition on **26 April**.

Print Edition, 26 April (page 10) – Delivered to **11,000 subscribers**.

## Destination Florence

DF is the magazine of Destination Florence, a SOU supporting partner now for many editions. Among the various means of promotion implemented, DF published an article on SOU2023 in its March edition.



# DIGITAL PROMOTION

## Euronews

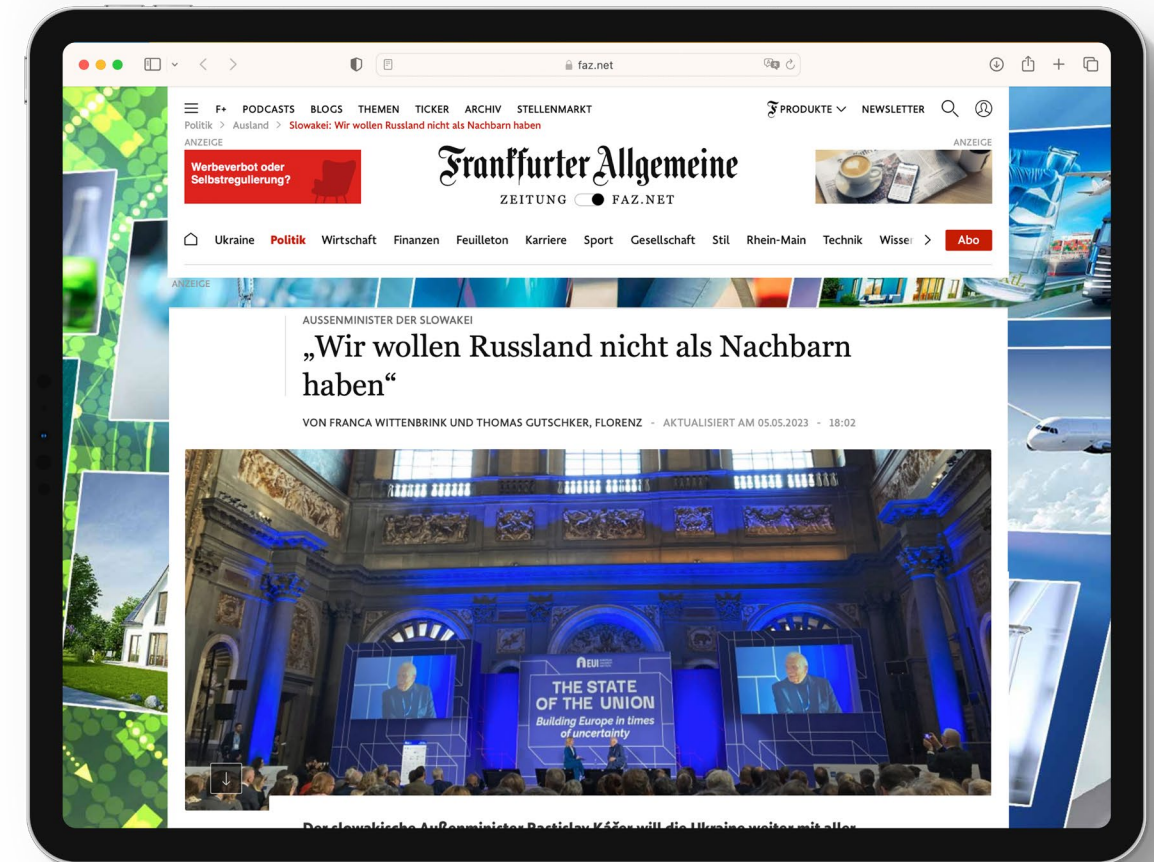
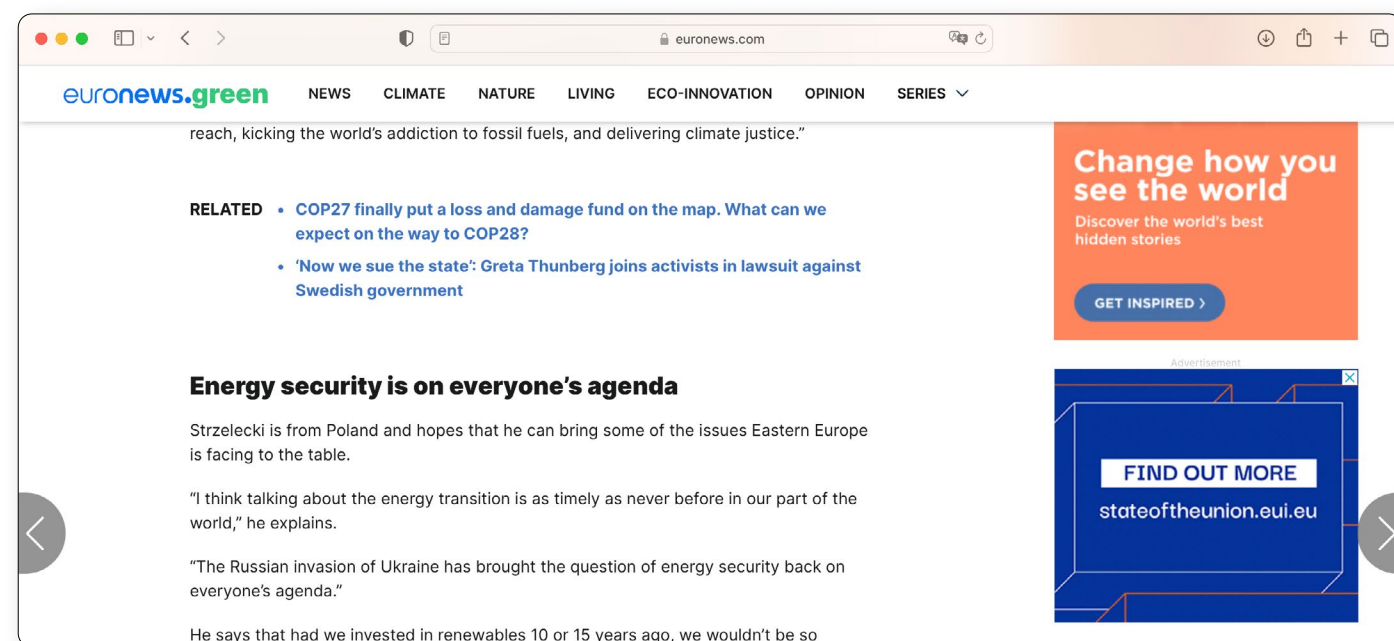
Euronews inserted banners linking to The State of the Union 2023 homepage from **11 April to 7 May** on all 12 editions of euronews.com (Arabic, English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish).

- 250,001 impressions
- 0,22 % CTR
- 74.8% delivered on smartphone
- 20.4% delivered on desktop

The media partner also sent a spot **44 times** on their livestreaming from **1 April to 5 May**. Finally, the media outlet promoted SOU2023 its newsletter "The Watch" on **Friday 28**.

117,589 impressions

Euronews provided news and television of the event in seven languages. On **6 May** it included the event in its daily coverage, and on **10 May** it reported on Josep Borrell's conversation with Euronews journalist Meab McMahon.



## Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung inserted banners linking to The State of the Union 2023 homepage from **3 April to 6 May** in three sections of its website: **FAZ.Net, FAZ.Net Society/Health, and FAZ.Net Mobile**.

## POLITICO

Politico advertised SOU2023 in its newsletters **Brussels Playbook** and **EU Influence** on **26 April**.

Brussels Playbook, 26 April  
**131,548** Subscribers  
**36%** Opening rate

EU Influence, 26 April  
**77,519** Subscribers  
**31%** Opening Rate

# NATIONAL MEDIA OUTLETS

## ANSA

ANSA is the Italian press agency and has been a media partner of The State of the Union for many editions. This year, it produced **seven articles** on SOU2023, including in its foreigner configurations, namely ANSA English and ANSA Latina. Moreover, ANSA inserted banners linking to The State of the Union 2023 homepage for nine weeks from **20 March to 6 May** in four of the most visible sections of the ANSA website: **ANSA Mondo**; **ANSA Europa**; **ANSA Mediterraneo**; **ANSA Nuova Europa**.

## TgCom24

TgCom24, a media partner, contributed to the digital promotion of the conference by publishing **eight articles** on the **TGcom24 website**, linking to The State of the Union 2023 homepage between **7 April and 14 May**. TgCom24 has also broadcasted the livestream of the event on its web pages. After the event, the partner produced an episode of MAG **“Generazione Europa”** dedicated to SOU2023, in collaboration with the Italian representation at the European Commission.

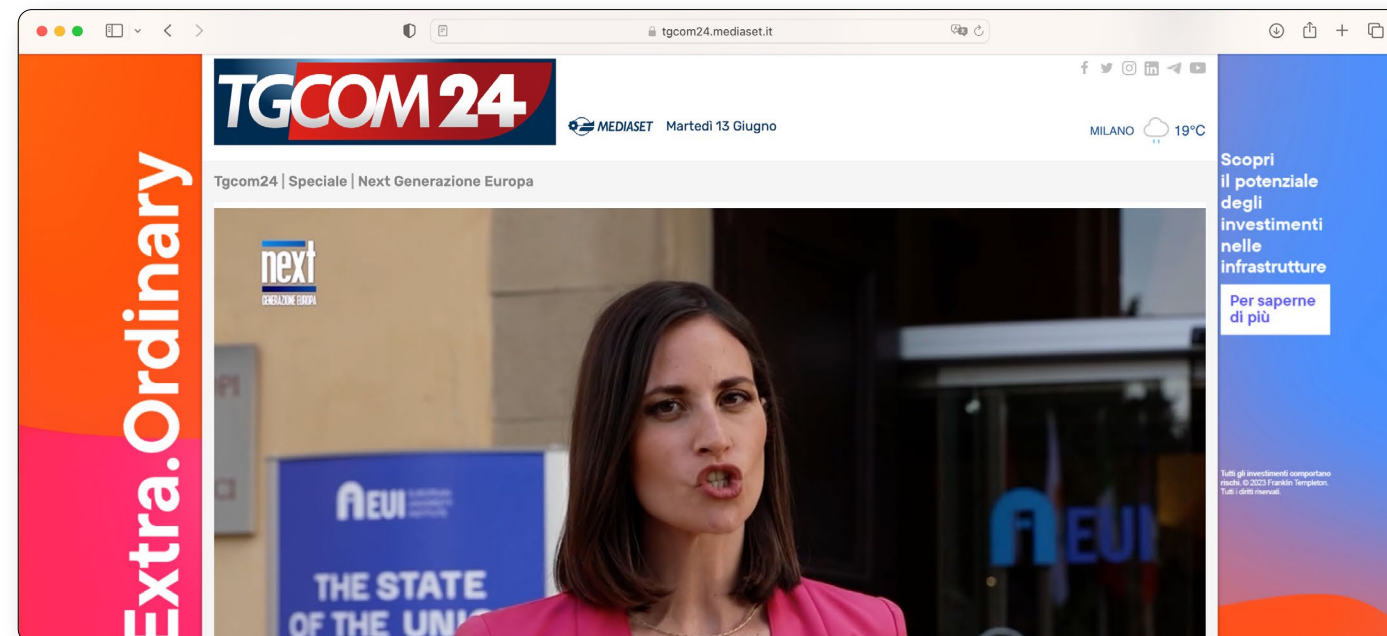


**ANSA MONDO**  
10.388.166 page views

**ANSA EUROPA**  
360.626 page views

**ANSA NUOVA EUROPA**  
110.519 page views

**AnsaMED**  
2.052 Page views



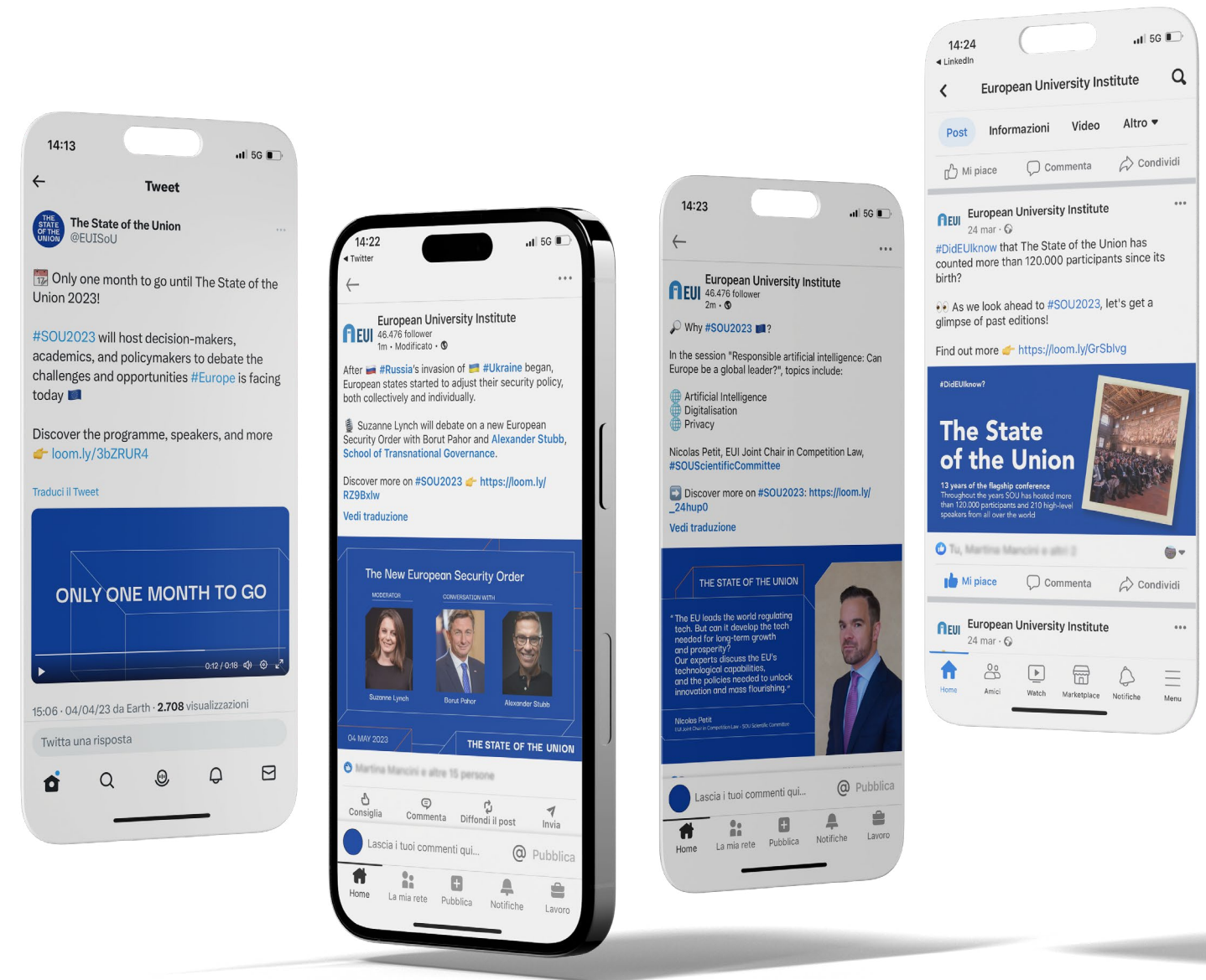
# 3.2 Social media

## ORGANIC CAMPAIGN

The organic SOU2023 social media promotion, consisting of 295 posts and resulting in more than 661,570 impressions, ran between 12 October 2022 and 5 May 2023 on the following five channels:

- Twitter @EUI\_EU
- Twitter @EUISoU
- Facebook @European University Institute
- Instagram @europeanuniversityinstitute
- LinkedIn @European University Institute

The conference's social media promotion was launched with the "Save the Date" post announcing SOU2023 across all social media channels of the European University Institute. The first posts provided followers with general information. More detailed information about the speakers, the programme, and the format of the event was shared as the conference approached.



The pre-conference campaign centred around four main post formats:

**COUNTDOWN:** Six posts – from “2 months to go” to “1 day to go” – to maintain attention and interest.

**PANELS PROGRAMME:** A post for each of the 35 sessions of SOU2023, briefly introducing the topic and listing the speakers.

**QUOTECARDS:** A post with each of the SOU Scientific Committee members,

running throughout April 2023. High-profile speakers were posted on the EUI central channels, while all the others appeared on the dedicated SOU Twitter channel.

**DidEUIKnow:** Four posts, one every two weeks in March and April, recalling SOU curiosities from the past. Instagram quizzes and polls were used to make it more engaging to the audience.





# GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Twitter campaign brought **156 new followers** to the **SOU Twitter** account in the months leading up to the event, with a peak in April. The account was tagged 566 times in the months of April and May 2023.

**661,570** TOTAL IMPRESSIONS\*



\*excluding paid campaign; 4,064,944 with paid campaign



## EUI TWITTER 43.2K FOLLOWERS

Tweets	85
Impressions	223,824
Retweets	436
Likes	1,072
Engagements	5,727

## SOU TWITTER 3,445 FOLLOWERS

Tweets	100
Impressions	121,540
Retweets	286
Likes	728
Engagements	3,003



## EUI LINKEDIN 46,005 FOLLOWERS

Posts	47
Impressions	137,290
Reactions	1,961
Engagements	5,854



## EUI FACEBOOK 72,078 FOLLOWERS

Posts	47
Reactions	508
Reach	41,905
Engaged users	1,504



## EUI INSTAGRAM 7,718 FOLLOWERS

Posts	16
Impressions	24,885
Engagements	933
Likes	885

Stories	140
Reach	505,839
Impressions	63,805



## RSC TWITTER 13.4K FOLLOWERS

Tweets	55
Impressions	89,700
Reactions	515
Engagements	2,500



## SPS TWITTER 1,931 FOLLOWERS

Tweets	3
Reach	1,966
Retweets	286
Likes	728
Eng. rate	7%



## STG all channels

Posts	13
Impressions	21,379
Reactions	327
Engagements	968

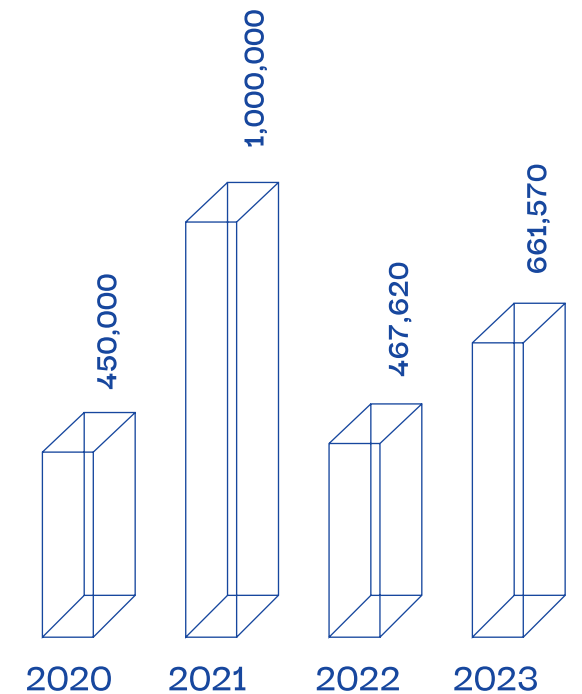


Fig. 4: Trend of impressions over last 4 editions of "The State of the Union"

\*2021 edition was held in a hybrid format

# PAID CAMPAIGN

SOU2023 was also promoted through paid campaigns on Meta, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google Search. Overall, the paid campaigns produced over **three million impressions**.

## META

**From 5 April to 6 May**

Reach **1,157,425**  
 Link clicks **21,067**  
 Impressions **2,365,392**

**From 28 April to 6 May**

Reach **75,938**  
 Link clicks **1,100**  
 Impressions **116,805**

### TOTAL

Reach **1,233,363** | Link clicks **22,167** | Impressions **2,482,197**



## TWITTER

**From 6 April to 22 April**

Link clicks **5,798**  
 Impressions **838,204**

## GOOGLE SEARCH

**From 28 April to 6 May**

Link clicks **1,249**  
 Impressions **24,398**  
 CTR **5.12%**

## LINKEDIN

Tot. Impressions **82,973** | Tot. clicks **376**

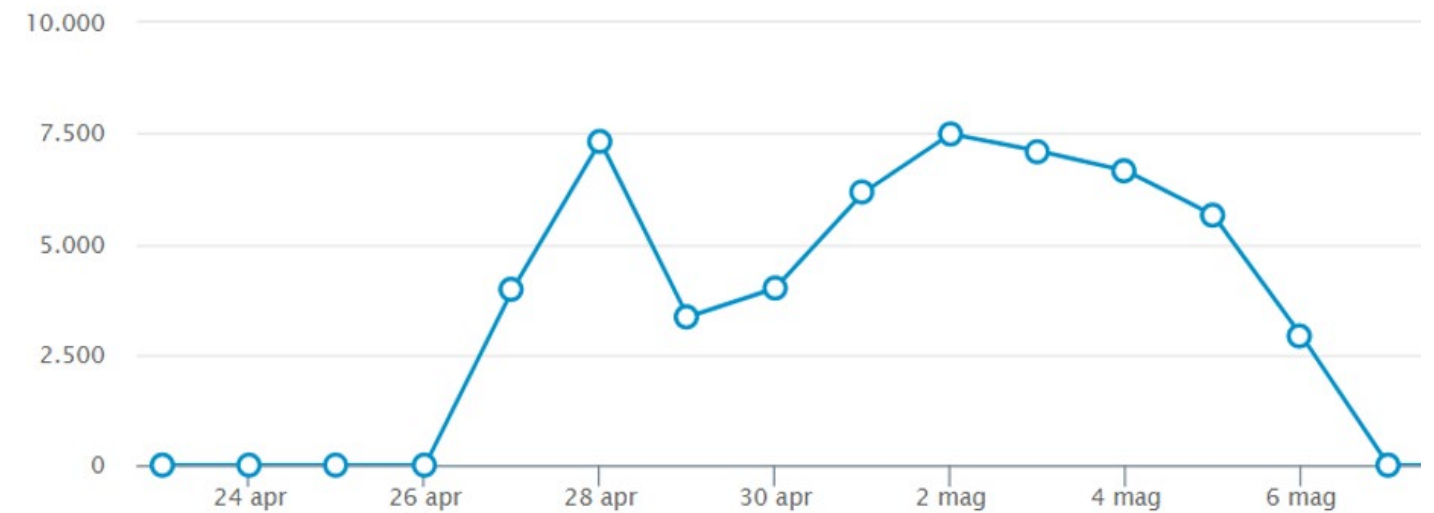


Fig. 5: SOU2023 Paid campaign - Performance on LinkedIn (26 April - 6 May)

## HASHTAGS

The hashtag #SOU2023 was used over 1,115 times across Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook between 1 January 2023 and 14 May 2023.



# LIVE CAMPAIGN

SOU2023 was live posting from @EUISoU and @EUI\_EU, as well as the others EUI channels. The live tweeting focused on the promotion of key concepts in each session and the retweeting of relevant tweets from internal and external stakeholders.

**167.3K**  
IMPRESSIONS  
@EUI\_EU



**39.3K**  
IMPRESSIONS  
@EUI\_SOU



  
@EUI\_EU

**Top tweet**  
Impressions  
16,564  
Total engagements  
754

  
@EUISoU

**Top tweet**  
Impressions  
6,968  
Total engagements  
57

# Top Mentions

**Alexander Schallenberg** @a\_schallenberg · 5 mag  
 Real pleasure to attend #SOU2023 in #Florence. Inspiring talk with FM @RastislavKacer on #Europe's unity in light of #Russia's unprecedented war in #Ukraine. Now we must not lose sight of the #WesternBalkans - enlargement is our most important geopolitical tool.



Josep Borrell Fontelles e altri 2

2 7 21 2.146

**Janusz Wojciechowski** @jwojc  
 Great to have a few words with my fellow former MEP @AntonioTajani.

We agreed on the increasing importance of food and agriculture for geopolitical stability and international relations, from both an Italian and EU perspective.

#SOU2023




12:40 PM · 4 mag 2023 · 1.697 visualizzazioni

**Frank Elderson** @FrankElderson  
 I see three gaps in the financial system that are holding back the green transition.

In my speech at the @EUIsoU in Florence last week, I explained why we cannot ignore them in our work to deliver on price stability and safe banks.

Read the full speech [ecb.europa.eu/press/key/date...](https://ecb.europa.eu/press/key/date...)



I'm here at the State of the Union conference organised

The State of the Union

8:20 AM · 9 mag 2023 · 16.759 visualizzazioni

**Josep Borrell Fontelles** @JosepBorrellF  
 The more united we are, the more power we will have.

In session at #SOU2023, I discussed with @MeabhMcMahon the EU's global responsibilities in times of uncertainty, our work to end the war in Ukraine and to build a just peace, and how to deal with a full range of global crises.

Follow LIVE | HR/VP @JosepBorrellF in conversation with Méabh McMahon (@euronews) at the #SOU2023 Conference 'Building Europe in times of uncertainty', in Florence -with @EUI\_EU [twitter.com/i/broadcasts/1...](https://twitter.com/i/broadcasts/1...)



11:08 AM · 5 mag 2023 · 15.474 visualizzazioni

**Mairead McGuinness** @McGuinnessEU  
 Discussing future of globalisation at #SOU2023 with @gpapak

Changes in financial & political systems = reconfiguration not fragmentation.

EU is thinking strategically but our economy remains open.

Great panel to be part of @Algarciaherrer @MishaGlenny @hallbenjamin Jan Mischke



EU Finance e altri 3

6:54 PM · 4 mag 2023 · 4.932 visualizzazioni

**Eva Maydell (Paunova)** @EvaMaydell  
 Insightful conversations both on and off stage at #SOU2023

Great to discuss the priorities for Europe in the year ahead.

Bravo to @EUI\_EU @alexstubb @Fatassinari for the excellent organisation as always.



European University Institute e altri 7

3:16 PM · 5 mag 2023 · 11.252 visualizzazioni

**Emanuela C. Del Re** @ecdelre  
 Rich discussion at #SOU2023 @EUIsoU in Fiesole on #GlobalGateway and EU-Africa partnership. Thank you @stefanomanservi for your introductory remarks and for moderating a great session with @RBissoonauth @pilvitorsti @etfeuropa @REAmadottir @OECD\_Centre



@EUI\_EU

3:18 PM · 4 mag 2023 da Firenze, Toscana · 1.297 visualizzazioni

**Timothy Garton Ash** @fromTGA  
 Join me and others at #SOU2023 @EUI\_EU on livestream to discuss where Europe stands in a changing world ....1630 Italian time today- The State of the Union 2023



stateoftheunion.eui.eu

THE STATE OF THE UNION 2023 - The State of the Union 2023

The 13th edition of The State of the Union conference will take place in-person in Florence on 4-6 May 2023.

11:40 AM · 4 mag 2023 · 4.441 visualizzazioni

**European Media & Information Fund** @EMIF\_Fund  
Speaker: Alex Engler - The Brookings Institution  
@AlexCEngler is a fellow at @BrookingsInst & an associate fellow at @CEPS\_thinktank where he studies the implications of #AI on society and governance. Engler also teaches classes on data science and AI policy at @McCourtSchool

**EMIF PANEL AT #SOU2023**

**EUROPE'S DIGITAL FUTURE**

**Open Society Foundations** @OpenSociety  
Starting today: the State of the Union @EUISoU explores EU challenges & opportunities. Watch live, including:  
14:10 CEST: Are We on the Cusp of a New Era? w/ @heather...  
16:30 CEST: Equality & Its Pivotal Role in European Democracy w/ @CFieschi

**Bayer Italia** @BayerItalia  
#Bayer is partner of #SOU2023! On 4-5 May 2023 in Florence, global leaders and experts will gather to share their views and inspire change on the most pressing issues on the #EUagenda, including the future of #agriculture. Join us #4maggio from 09.45 bit.ly/40YlOyY

**THE STATE OF THE UNION**  
Bayer  
The Future of European Agriculture: Sustainability, Sufficiency, Security  
04 MAY 2023

**THE STATE OF THE UNION**  
Building Europe in times of uncertainty  
04 - 06 MAY 2023

## SUPPORTING PARTNERS

The 2023 edition of SOU has seen the collaboration of 28 supporting partners, which provided support in promoting the event on their social media channels, as shown below.

This type of partnership supports The State of the Union in organising logistics of the conference and in providing the social events. Sixteen of these partners made the "Tuscany tasting" possible on the evening of 4 May, allowing international participants to try the flavours of the territory.



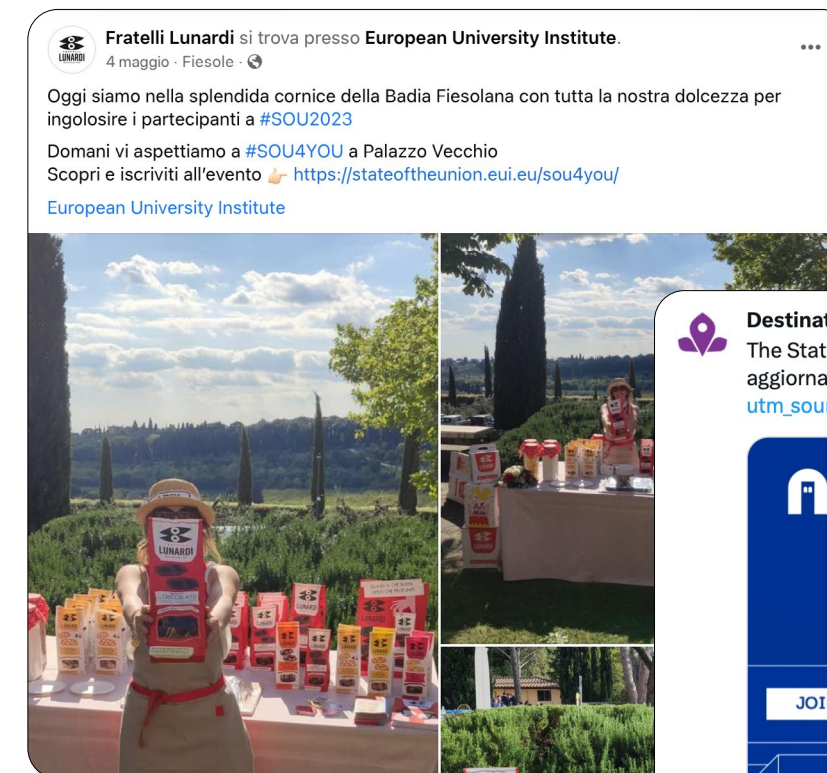
**Parlamento europeo** @Europarl\_IT  
Oggi e domani siamo a #SOU2023 @EUISoU a Badia Fiesolana e Palazzo Vecchio!

Intervengono  
@charanzova  
@CristianSBusoi  
@ArnaudDanjean  
@salv\_de\_meo  
@EvaMaydell  
@brandobenifei  
@BeatriceCovassi  
@katka\_cseh  
@karmel80  
@DantiNicola  
e @CorazzaEP

europarl.europa.eu/italy/it/succe...

**THE STATE OF THE UNION**  
Building Europe in times of uncertainty

Twitta una risposta



**Destination Florence** @destinationflo · 4 mag

The State of the Union inizia oggi! Seguite l'hashtag #SOU2023 per essere aggiornati! Unitevi alla conversazione online su stateoftheunion.eui.eu/?utm\_source=pa...=sou2023&utm\_id=SOU2023@EUISoU

**THE STATE OF THE UNION**  
Building Europe in times of uncertainty

JOIN ONLINE

**THE STATE OF THE UNION**

## PARTNERS

#SOU2023 social media campaign succeed thanks to the active promotion ran by partners.

Impressions **127,238**

Interactions **5,530**

# 4.1 In-person participants

Throughout the first two days of the conference there were **754 in-person participants**, representing 84% of those registered (903 pre-event registrations). As for gender diversity, women represented 47.82% of participants, while 51.53% were male and 0.65% represented diverse gender identities.

**754** IN-PERSON PARTICIPANTS

**84%** SHOW-UP RATE

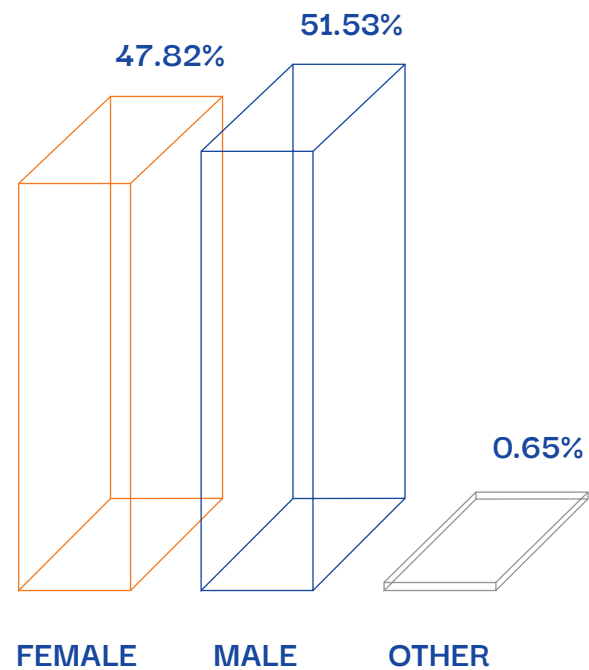


Fig. 6: Gender diversity among SOU2023 participants

The 2023 edition saw a 2.92% increase in the female representation compared to the 2022 edition.

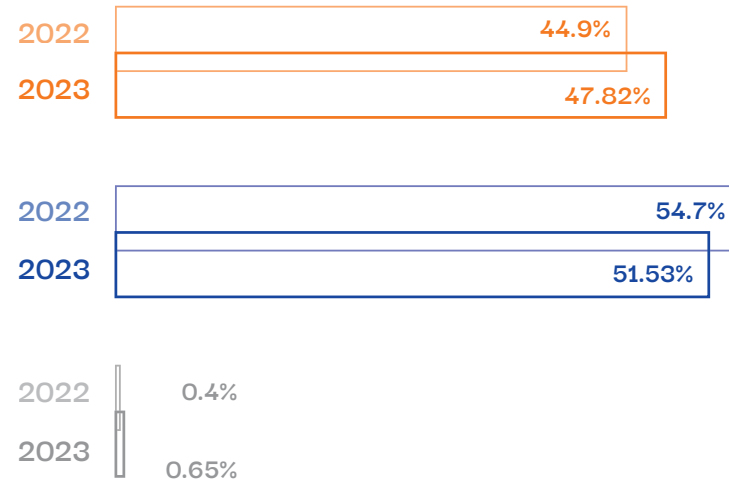


Fig. 7: 2022-2023 gender diversity comparison



**Fifty-six nationalities** were represented resulting in a global conference in which people from different cultures could meet and engage. This is compared to 46 in 2022. SOU2023 aimed to influence international debates concerning topics that are key to the EU, addressing a specialised audience at the local, national, and international levels.

Below is a picture of the top 10 nationalities represented:

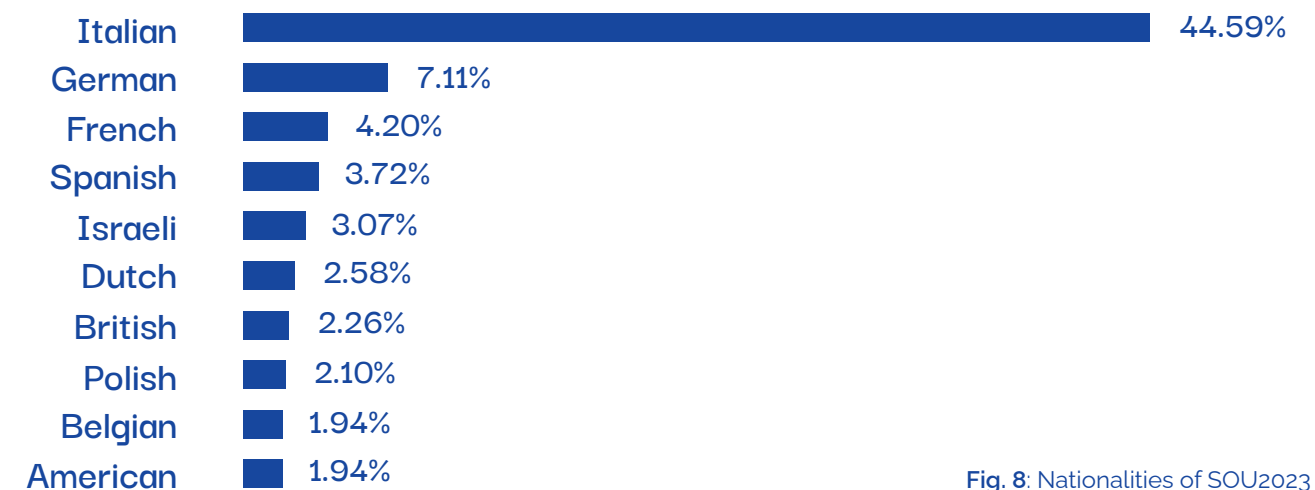


Fig. 8: Nationalities of SOU2023 participants

Inclusion played a crucial role in the 2023 edition, which aimed at ensuring generational diversity – notably the representation of the younger generation – among participants.

In particular, people aged between 20 and 29 represented 26% of in-person participants, with a 12% increase compared to the previous edition.

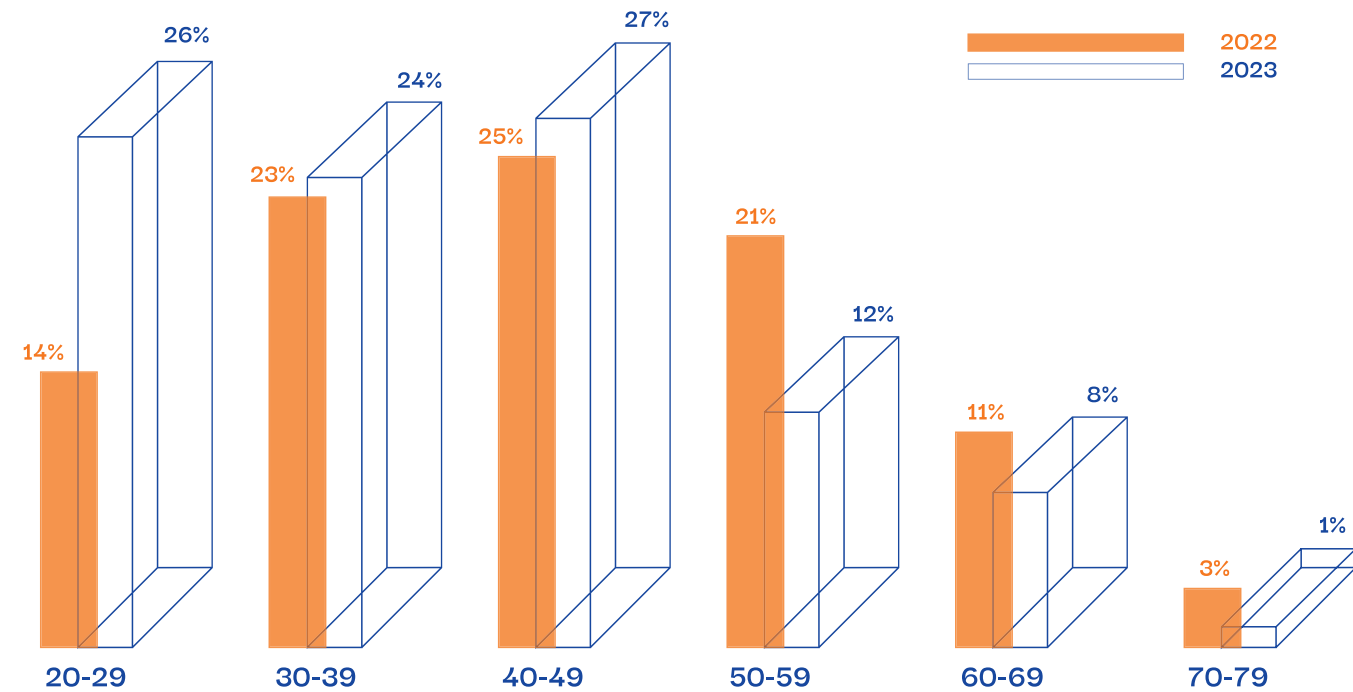


Fig. 9: Age range of SOU2023 participants in comparison with 2022

The objective of the event was to welcome guests of great institutional and academic relevance, as well as representatives of the private sector.

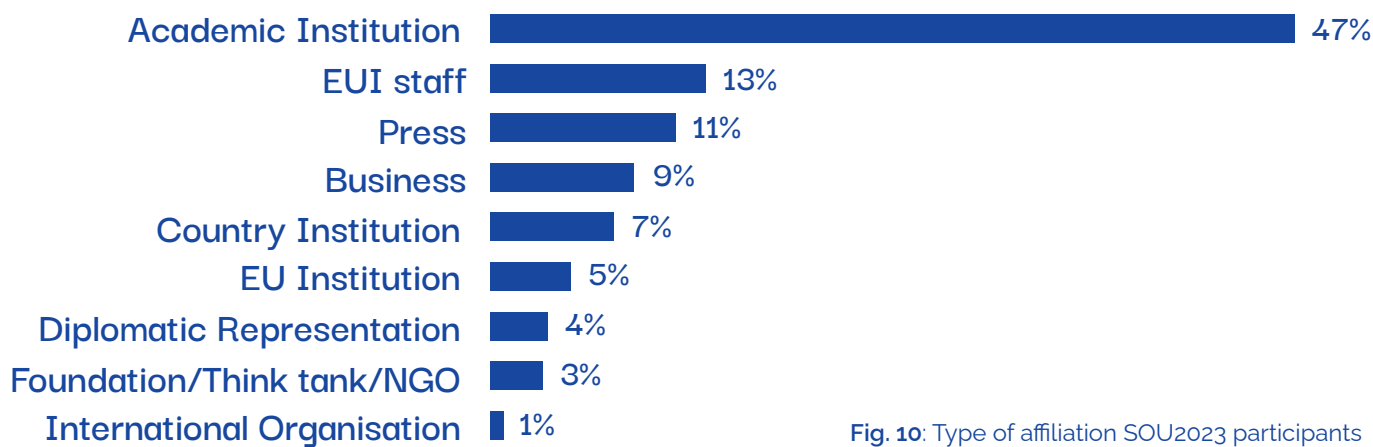
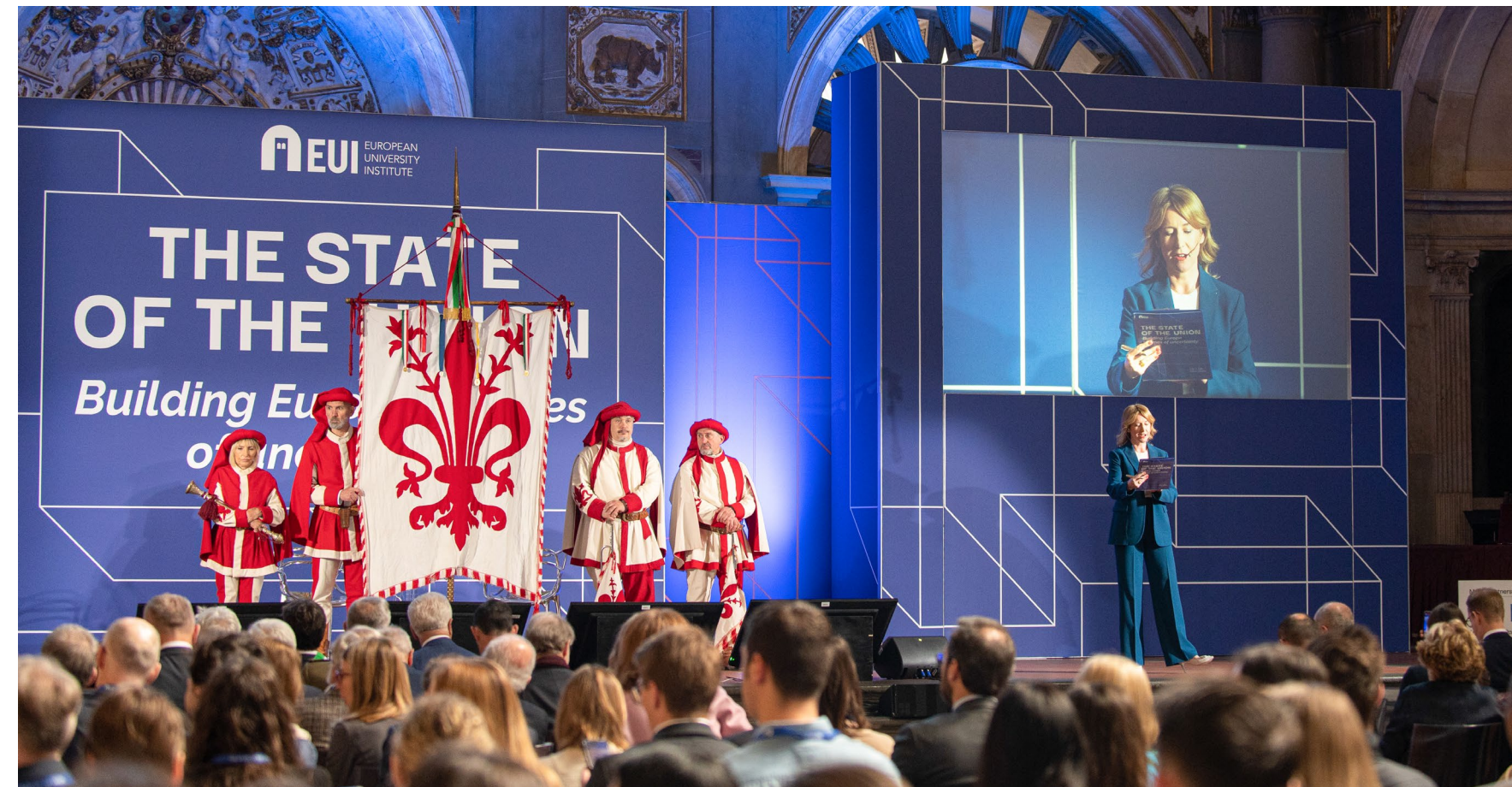


Fig. 10: Type of affiliation SOU2023 participants



# 4.2 Webpages and live-streaming

The live-stream audience was made up of 8,792 users across **169 countries**. There was a strong increase in unique views, new users and total users between January and May 2023 (+28,213)

**+ 8,500** USERS

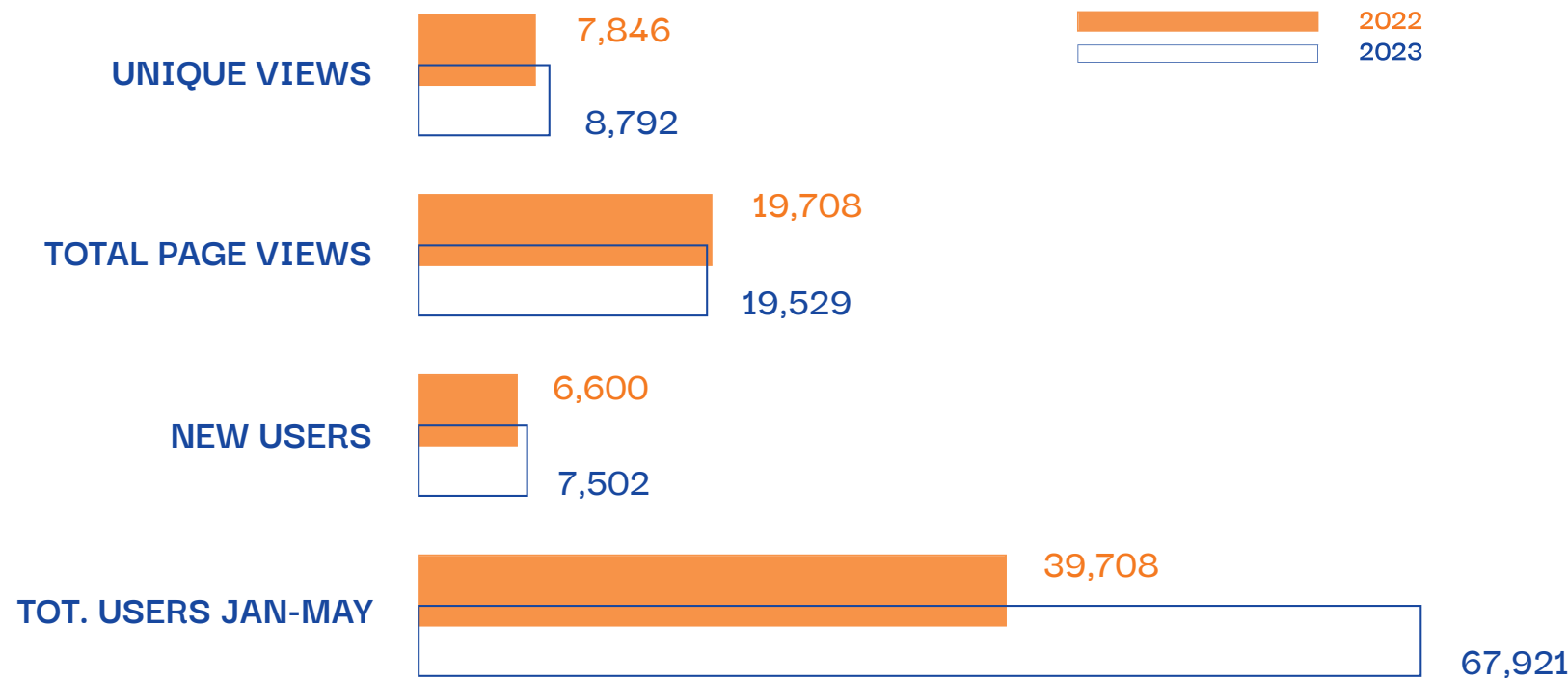


Fig. 11: 2022-2023 web data comparison



The top five countries that participated were: **Italy, Denmark, United States of America, Belgium, and Romania.**

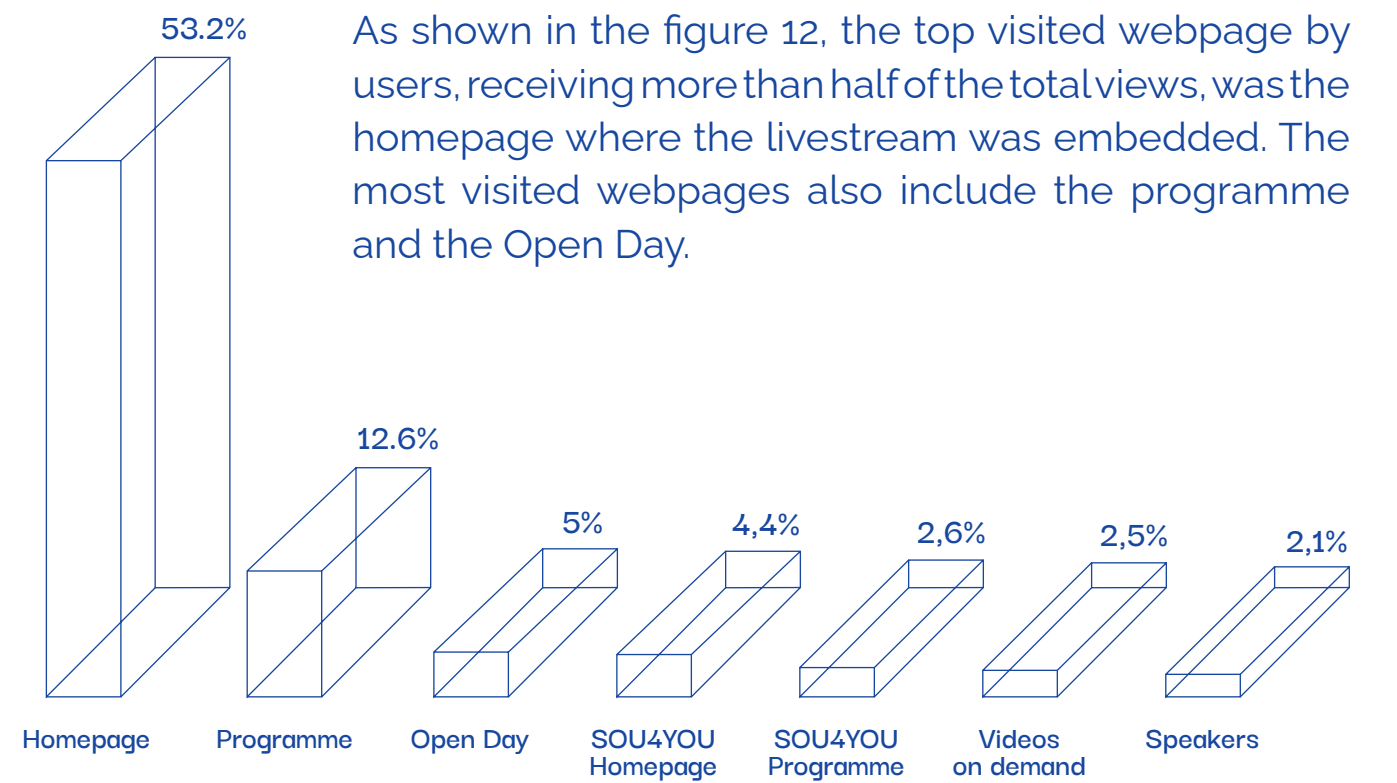


Fig. 12: Most visited webpages on 4/5 May



# 5.0

## Venues and format

The State of the Union 2023 took place in three different locations, which have become symbolic venues for the event over the past 13 years: Badia Fiesolana, Palazzo Vecchio, and Villa Salviati.

The conference kicked off at the EUI's hub, the Badia Fiesolana, on Thursday 4 May. This first day centred around an impressive programme of in-person sessions, which explored the conference themes from an array of academic and policy perspectives. A total of 22 (16 institutional sessions, 6 partner panels) sessions ran in parallel in three rooms: the Refettorio, the Teatro, and the Sala Buonsanti.

Each room was set up with outstanding technical and audiovisual equipment that aimed at enhancing the acoustics and lighting of the historic rooms, allowing a crowded audience of in-person participants to join the conference in optimal conditions.

The smooth running of the event was also possible thanks to the coordination of a team of EUI staff members who oversaw the various aspects involved in the broadcasting of the panels, liaising with the speakers and with the guests present in the room, allowing them to interact during the Q&A.

Every room was filled to its maximum capacity, counting over 150 participants in the Refettorio, over 140 in Teatro, while no seats - out of the 55 available in the room - were left in the Sala Buonsanti, which was reserved for the Partners programme.

On Friday, 5 May, the event moved to the splendid Salone dei Cinquecento of Palazzo Vecchio, home to the Florence City Council.



The first part of the day was dedicated to high-level conversations with EU leaders, heads of state, prime ministers, diplomats, academics, and journalists from Europe and beyond.

A state-of-the-art television style production setting, composed of a wide backdrop with two integrated rear widescreens on both sides, was built on the stage that welcomed the speakers of the event.

While 11 institutional sessions were running in the Salone dei Cinquecento, filling up the room with over 400 participants, two partners programme panels took place in the Sala Lorenzo il Magnifico, counting over 50 participants.

On the afternoon of 5 May, the entire graphic set up of the stage was entirely replaced, in order to welcome the dynamic and interactive SOU's spin-off event: **SOU4YOU - The State of the Union for Young European Citizens**.

The afternoon was dedicated to youth and civil society engagement featuring activities in the context of a series of initiatives aimed at inspiring young people and European citizens to act as protagonists within the European democratic process at the local and national level.

As a tradition, SOU concluded on Saturday, 6 May at the magnificent Villa Salviati, the home of the **Historical Archives of the European Union**, where the EUI opened its doors and gardens to the public. The Open Day was devoted to artistic discoveries and leisurely activities, including musical performances, family entertainment, art exhibitions, and historical enactments.



# 5.1

## Social events

In the context of SOU2023 a variety of social events took place.

On 3 May, all the speakers were invited to join a welcome cocktail at The Social Hub in Florence. The evening represented a unique networking opportunity for the invited guests to exchange their views on the content and key themes of the respective sessions of the conference.

On the first day of SOU, the Badia Fiesolana hosted the photographic exhibition of the anthropologist and documentary photographer Kostiantyn Polishchuk, curated by Olena Snigyr, Jean Monnet Fellow at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. The exhibition installed in the cloister was a collection of photos taken during the current war in Ukraine, showing how daily places and objects transform their meaning during the war, and how the role of the photographer changes in a warfare environment.

The EUI Library garden hosted the lunch buffet for all the participants, and at

the conclusion of the first day, a tasting of Tuscan products was organised in the same location, where, in a more relaxed atmosphere, producers of local food offered participants a taste the best of regional cuisine, km/0 delivered.

The evening was characterised by two additional performances: the first one in the lower loggia, where the EUI choir exhibited; the second one in the cloister, where Lucrecia Rubio Grundell, Researcher at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, interviewed Sara Santi, singer of the duo Queen of Saba, and Cori Chinnici, Mentor of Keychange. The interview focused on Sara and Cori's project "Music in the Gaps – a journey into the cracks of the music market" and was followed by a short concert.

In the suggestive location of Palazzo Vecchio, a lunch buffet was organised in the Cortile della Dogana, while the stunning Sala degli Elementi and the Terrazza di Saturno were reserved for a restricted number of people, offering an intimate space for the exchange of opinions and considerations on the event.

During the two days of the conference, many high-level speakers had the chance to benefit from bilateral meetings to foster a more substantive conversation and exchange political views and establish diplomatic relations. On 4 May, at the Badia Fiesolana, four rooms were reserved for this purpose, where 20 bilateral meetings were held. On 5 May, in Palazzo Vecchio, Sala Cosimo il Vecchio and Sala Macconi hosted 10 bilateral meetings.



# 6.0

## Survey and feedbacks

Following the conference, participants comprising the in-person and online audience shared their opinions through a survey on The State of the Union 2023. The poll provided a significant opportunity to reflect on the lessons learnt and gain a better understanding of how the conference experience could be enhanced in future editions.

Among the participants, two people were selected as winners of a contest with special prizes: a free night at The Social Hub, renowned hotel located in Florence's city centre, and one monthly free subscription to Financial Times online newspaper.

Most of the participants attended the conference in presence, while 27.39% joined SOU2023 online through different channel.

### 1.1 Evaluate the following statements

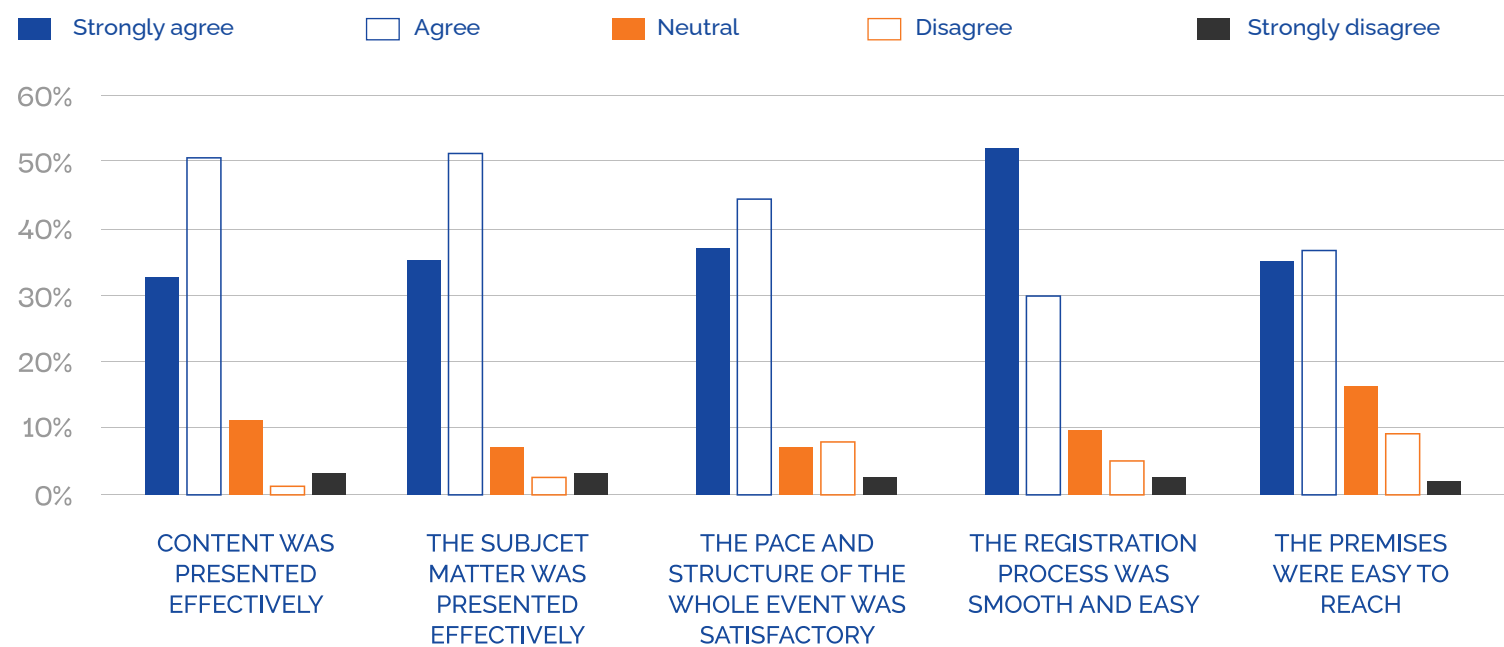
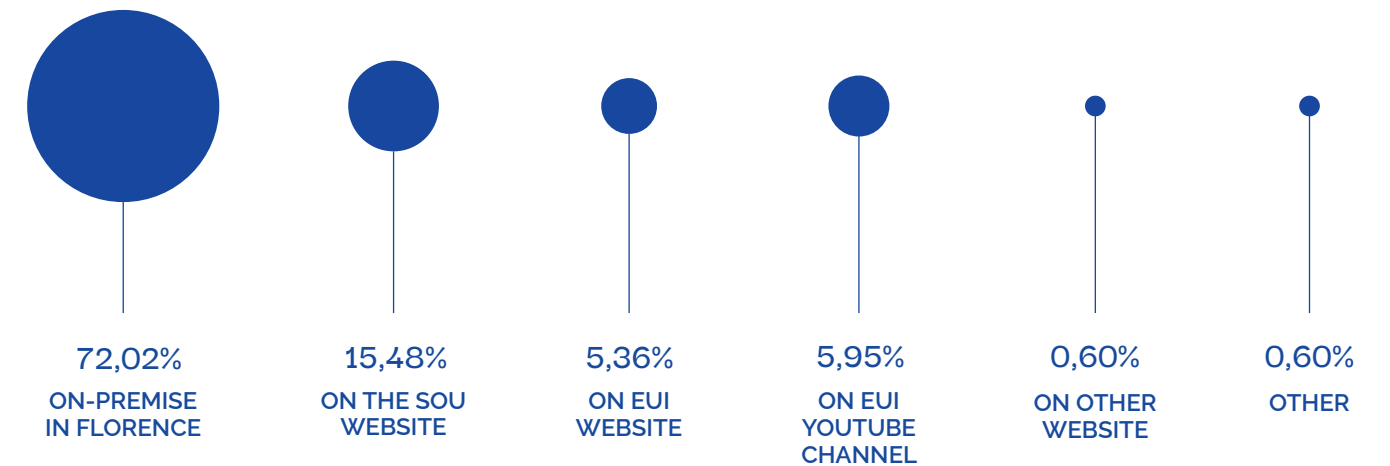


Fig. 13: Evaluation of statements from SOU2023 survey

### 1.2 Where did you follow this year's edition of SOU?

Fig. 14: SOU2023 participation modalities



### 1.3 How could your experience have been improved?

- Reduce the number of panels and shorten the programme
- More interaction with the audience
- More involvement of Faculty members / researchers
- No parallel panels
- More engagement between policy and academia
- Smaller and more dynamic panels in order to secure more time for actual debate and conversation
- Have less institutional content
- Greater role to EUI students and researchers in contributing to the definition of the SOU content
- Increase the networking opportunities
- Less speakers in a single panel

### 1.4 Which topics should feature in the next edition of The State of the Union?

- EP elections - Future of Europe
- The evaluation of the implementation of the Next Generation funds by European regions
- The future of AI and digital transition
- Climate crisis and climate changes management plan
- Migration and EU borders
- The enlargement of the EU
- Gender equality, LGTBQ+ and minorities rights
- Securing critical raw materials supply chains
- Europe's dependency on natural resources and critical raw material
- EU global relations and Anti-EU forces within the EU

# 7.0

## SOU4YOU

### in continuity with the Festival of Europe

**SOU4YOU: The State of the Union for Young European Citizens**, organised in continuity with the **Festival of Europe**, is the second edition of an initiative dedicated to young European citizens. SOU4YOU was held in Italian at Palazzo Vecchio on **5 May 2023**, in the broader context of The State of the Union conference.

The event started at 15:30 in Cortile della Dogana, where various stands of SOU4YOU partners were located to provide participants with **information**, **educational activities**, **tastings**, and **gadgets**. Moreover, two workshops were organised in Sala del Vuoto by INDIRE and Muse.

The second part of the event started at 16:45 in Salone dei Cinquecento, where various personalities took the stage to discuss issues relevant for the future of the new generations, including **sustainability**, **skills**, and **youth training**. A diverse range of speakers, such as representatives of European and local institutions and the European Space Agency (ESA), as well as musicians, actors, entrepreneurs, and influencers, engaged with over 600 participants that took part to the event.

SOU4YOU concluded with a musical performance by the **Erasmus Orchestra** and "Waiting for the Citizens", a theatrical performance held in English by actors of the European University Institute, who brought to the stage the democratic crisis in Europe, addressing, through a dialogue between Machiavelli and Ursula von der Leyen, the controversial relationship between people and power.

The entire event was livestreamed on the **homepage** of website.

The success of SOU4YOU was possible thanks to the Institute's collaboration with the **European Parliament** and local institutions, such as the **Metropolitan City of Florence**, the **Municipality**, **Erasmus+**, **INDIRE**, the **Region of Tuscany** and the **University of Florence**. **Ansa**, **TgCom24**, **VdNews** and **Edera** were media partners and contributed to the promotion of the initiative on their social media channels.

As the event was in continuity with the Festival of Europe, other initiatives were organised by the local institutions that collaborated with SOU4YOU around the city of Florence, which became a centre of reflection on the European Union.



# Conclusion

## SOU2023: taking stock and moving forward

The 13th edition of The State of the Union offered an extraordinary occasion to gather policymakers, top scholars, and world-renowned experts in Florence to discuss the most important issues on the European agenda. The debate, driven by 134 prestigious speakers – including high-level EU officials and European foreign ministers –, unfolded across 35 sessions and covered a range of topics, including the war in Ukraine and its impact on the daily lives of citizens, sustainability and social inclusion, the rule of law, and the digital transition.

The event, held at the EUI's Badia Fiesolana and at Palazzo Vecchio, the historic seat of the Florence City Council, welcomed more than 700 participants in person. All sessions were livestreamed, with approximately 10,000 people joining from around the world. The large number of participants, together with the calibre of the speakers, re-confirmed that The State of the Union is a key reference point in Europe for high-level debate among EU policymakers, academics, civil society and business representatives, diplomats, and opinion leaders.

The event's success was further reinforced by the in-person presence of more 70 journalists and by over 180 press reports mentioning The State of the Union – including those published by prestigious media partners ANSA, Euronews, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Financial Times, Politico, and TgCom24. It was also proven by social media outreach, with EUI-wide campaigns generating more than four million impressions across diverse channels and with strong engagement with the event's prestigious speakers.

A special feature in 2023 was SOU4YOU, The State of the Union for Young European Citizens, which gathered over 600 people. In addition, the Open Day at Villa Salviati, welcomed more than 2,500 visitors. This was all underpinned by the valuable contributions of 51 local and international partners who worked closely with the EUI, in strong alignment with its values and mission, to ensure the event's success.

Looking forward, the EUI aims to ensure that the State of the Union continues to be one of the most renowned events of its kind in Europe. Likewise from its very first edition in 2011, one of the main conference's objectives, consists in promoting an equal and inclusive environment, increasing the share of speakers and attendees from otherwise under-represented gender, age and geographical groups. Furthermore, the aim for 2024 is to give visibility to the research conducted at the Institute, including through its prestigious programmes, in order to inform policy debates. It also seeks to strengthen ties with the most important stakeholders, notably the Member States and the EU institutions, and to facilitate high-level networking with partners.

Finally, the EUI looks forward to giving the best visibility possible to The State of the Union in 2024, putting speakers in the spotlight and demonstrating that Florence is a key location for top-level EU policy debate.

## Media Partners



## Co-partner



## Institutional Partners



## Partners



The EC supports the EUI through the EU budget

With the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union

## Supporting Partners

