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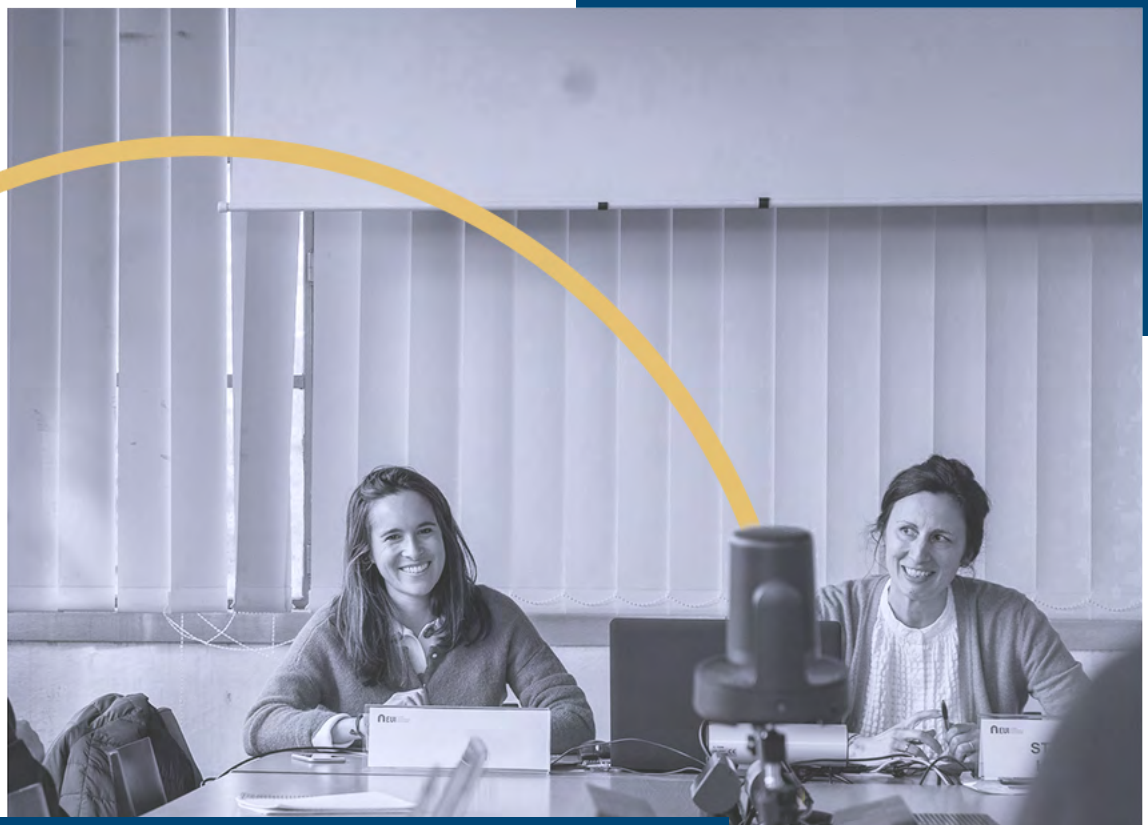

2023 / 24

Research Agenda

Robert Schuman Centre

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Content

Preface

I would like you to meet the 'Research Agenda,' which is a new form of annual report that we are experimenting with at the start of the Robert Schuman Centre's 30th year of operation. The idea is simple enough. We wanted to let people know what researchers working at the Robert Schuman Centre are doing on a range of issues that we think are important. We also wanted to make sure that whoever reads this report will absorb some of that information. And we figured that people are more likely to remember a story or argument than a long list of projects, events and publications. Most importantly, we wanted to show that the Robert Schuman Centre really is a problem-centred interdisciplinary research community where people with different skills and backgrounds look at similar challenges from a range of competing perspectives.

This collection of essays is our first attempt. It is a work in progress. We want your feedback. Please do not hold back. But it is also a collective effort involving many of the unsung heroes in our research community – those postdoctoral

research fellows who do the bulk of the heavy lifting in any project, often in the early stages of their careers. These research fellows crafted the stories that underpin this agenda. They created the mosaic of projects, events, and publications to illustrate the breadth and depth of what we have been doing. The results are not comprehensive in the way a catalogue might be, but they give a sense of interpretive meaning and intention that connects disparate strands of activity in ways that many of the researchers involved will not have anticipated. In this way we hope not only to give the outside world a better sense of what we have been doing but also to give each other a better sense of how we might work more closely together.

Inevitably, we will omit important topics, major achievements, and key individuals from this telling of the story. This is not a result of ill intent. And we can fix any grievous omission in the next iteration. That is a third reason for crafting our report in this way – to shake the tree a bit and find out from people what we have missed. The Robert Schuman Centre has grown enormously over the past three decades. If we have a hard time keeping track of everything that we are doing well, that is the price of our success. More important, some of the stories we want to tell are only just beginning. Monica Baar's work on disability activism is a good illustration, but I can only imagine there are many others.

My thanks go out to the research fellows who wrote and refereed these essays, the more senior colleagues who reviewed the initial drafts as part of our editorial committee, the communications team that coordinated this exercise, and the editorial and graphics team that put it into production. You will find a masthead listing everyone involved and the roles they played on the inside of the front cover. Having read the essays, I can only say I am impressed with the agenda they outline. The Robert Schuman Centre is an amazing collection of talent doing important work to strengthen our understanding of the major challenges we face and to craft new solutions to make the world a better place. Like this 'Research Agenda,' the Robert Schuman Centre is still a work in progress. We want your feedback there as well. Please do not hold back.

Erik Jones

Director

Florence, July 2023

01

Erik Jones

Russia's war against Ukraine as a *zeitenwende*

On 24 February 2022, the Russian government expanded its military action against Ukraine into a full-scale invasion. Military action had been underway for at least eight years. Nevertheless, most European policymakers chose to believe that the Russian government would be satisfied with its unlawful annexation of Crimea and a frozen conflict in the Donbas region. They failed to grasp that the build-up of Russian military forces on Ukraine's borders with Belarus and Russia was a prelude to violent conflict, and they refused to believe that their many forms of economic interdependence with Russia – particularly in terms of energy resources – would be used against them in a hostile manner. That complacency vanished when Russian troops crossed the borders of Ukraine and as Russian air and naval forces began shelling targets across the country. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced a sea change in German and European relations with Russia that would touch every aspect of policy. It was, he said, a *Zeitenwende* (turning point).

A new era

Scholz did not exaggerate. Russia's expanded war against Ukraine was transformative. The initial challenge for researchers at the Robert Schuman Centre was to assess the scale and scope of the change. Many of the initial efforts were spontaneous. They focused on the geopolitical dimension of the conflict, the impact of financial sanctions, the implications for energy consumption, the cost of the war for Europe, and the potential for the conflict to escalate into a clash of civilisations. Quickly, however, such spontaneous efforts became more systematic. The European Governance and Politics Programme initiated a series of seminars that involved representatives from across the Robert Schuman Centre. Speakers addressed topics ranging from finance and energy to identity and state-building, migration and citizenship, security and enlargement.

This series signalled the start of a new research agenda. Many of the issues raised in the conversations evolved into commentary, policy papers, research notes, refereed journal articles and longer-term research projects. A substantial part of the effort focused on how to understand events as they were unfolding, at times in the face of significant controversy over what the motivations of key actors were and, by implication, who is to blame. Since the Russian government clearly launched the invasion, such controversy reflected fundamental differences in beliefs about the norms and ethics of international relations and so fed into philosophical, theoretical, and empirical debate. The impact of this new research agenda can be found across the Robert Schuman Centre (RSC).

Nevertheless, it is perhaps easiest to illustrate in terms of EU enlargement, migration, and foreign policy.

Three illustrations

The discussion on EU enlargement started almost immediately after Russia's full-scale invasion. Importantly, the implications were not limited to Ukraine. Many countries in the Western Balkans have waited a long time to begin accession negotiations. Some, like Bosnia-Herzegovina, were not even official candidates. Therefore, it became necessary to reconsider the whole enlargement process, including both the procedures that could be used to create a prospect of membership for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia and the need to accelerate talks (and hence also to stabilise relationships) with Southeastern Europe. Some of this work was done as a scoping exercise within the recently-launched research area of the Global Governance Programme on Southeastern Europe. The initial aim was to understand how the European Union was adapting its enlargement processes in the light of new security imperatives, using the wars in former Yugoslavia as a comparative case. The aim was also to understand the implications of 'contested statehood.' However, the project soon expanded into a much wider collaborative effort to explore the impact of the war in Ukraine on the geopolitics of the Western Balkans. Now the aim is to explore how best to prepare the countries of eastern and Southeastern Europe for membership in the European Union and how best to prepare the European Union for the challenges that will come with a wider and more diverse membership.

This research agenda on enlargement runs alongside a more urgent need to tackle the challenges associated with the millions of people who have been displaced by the violence unleashed by the Russian government against the people of Ukraine. Some of these efforts are specific to the conflict, like the kidnapping of Ukrainian children to be adopted by Russian parents. Other topics are more common to conflicts in other contexts, like the weaponisation of citizenship. However, by far the most important one has been the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive and its implementation across the European Union. This directive determines how most displaced Ukrainians are treated, how long they remain welcome and what happens to them in the event that the policy (or its application) were to change. The Migration Policy Centre launched a major international research effort to track the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive at the start of the crisis. It did so alongside the creation of a more focused research network on Ukrainian migration. Such collaborative efforts involve everything from data collection to co-production of findings and joint dissemination. In this way, they have a major potential impact on how policy is shaped and how it is understood in Brussels and member states.

The implications of the war for European foreign policy are fundamentally different. The focus is less on the transposition of a common regulation or the lives of individuals than in the migration case. It is also less on the

countries of eastern and Southeastern Europe as a collection of potential member states and the use of enlargement as a policy instrument to achieve transformative ambitions. Instead the focus is on building the necessary fiscal capacity and decision-making procedures within the European Union to make and implement strategic choices; it is on building the strategic culture within which such choices are made; and it is about understanding the wider institutional environment within which the European Union operates. This work builds on an understanding of the kind of ad hoc coalitions that form around discrete foreign policy crises. It also builds on notions of differentiated cooperation. In moments of intense security threats, however, much of the variation in popular support for security and defence integration tends to diminish, opening a new window for cooperation.

Anticipating the implications of the Russian war in Ukraine for European foreign policy also involves understanding wider trends in the evolution of warfare, and in the coercive instruments used to pursue objectives in such war contexts. The Robert Schuman Centre has led the development of a network of researchers working on the rise of security assistance as a global practice. Drawing on research also from other contexts where security assistance has been deployed extensively, such as the Middle East, Robert Schuman Centre researchers are now involved in discussions on how the EU can revise its long-term Security Sector Reform and governance policy. Key to this engagement is a grounded approach to how international actors produce knowledge about local realties in intervention spaces, and attention to lessons (not) learned from such 'glocal' processes.

Unity under pressure

Certainly, there is evidence for greater unity than expected. The European Union was quick to agree on sanctions against Russia, to redeploy the 'European Peace Facility' to finance the purchase of weapons, and to look for ways to strengthen support for the people of Ukraine. This kind of solidarity is not the same as the solidarity experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the degree of institutional innovation is less dramatic. But it is consistent with the notion that a *Zeitenwende* has taken place. The open question is whether Europeans are ready to adapt to that much change. Research supported by YouGov on solidarity in Europe shows some evidence of a fundamental transformation but also suggests reasons for caution. Not all Europeans are equally committed to supporting Ukraine or to adapting to a changed geopolitical environment. In some countries there is not even a majority that is inclined to embrace this new conception of Europe. Such public opinion requires further monitoring to determine how much can be extrapolated from the data. As the war drags on, European unity may diminish in the face of other pressures.

And these pressures are intense. The cost of the energy transition away from reliance on Russian oil and gas is only part of the problem. Indeed, it is possible that stopping imports of Russian hydrocarbons will facilitate Europe's green transition. But there is clear evidence that high energy prices added momentum to European price inflation. There is also good reason to believe that this supply-shock exacerbated by the war forced the hands of European monetary policymakers and so caused them to accelerate their efforts to raise interest rates and remove other types of support introduced during the pandemic.

The open question is whether these policymakers responded quickly and decisively enough to prevent price increases from changing underlying inflation expectations in ways that will be harder to reverse looking ahead. Certainly, the pace of inflation accelerated beyond what the standard models anticipated, it has slowed down much less quickly and there are signs that it is passing through into wage bargaining. These are all indications that the economic consequences of the war will be both important and enduring, and that is without talking about the debts governments have incurred to blunt the cost-of-living crisis and to subsidise the introduction of new more energy-efficient technology. Looking ahead, it will be important to find ways to finance European public goods with European resources if the costs of this situation are not to fall disproportionately across countries in ways that are damaging to both the European Union and its member states.

Looking ahead

The research agenda for the coming years – not just at the Robert Schuman Centre but across the EUI – builds on these themes but adds a new concern for what it will mean to restore peace in the European continent. This concern necessarily requires understanding of how Russia's war in Ukraine will end, what it will mean for the people of Ukraine and what it will mean for relations between the European Union and Russia. The end of the war is a difficult question. The Russian government is clearly culpable for starting the war and the Ukrainian people have legitimate ambitions to recover their territory and population, and to extract reparations from Russia for damages. But the facts on the ground are more complicated, and not just because the Russian government is determined not to be humiliated. The Russian people also believe in the 'legitimacy' of their government's actions because they have been steeped in a political narrative in which Ukraine has no right to exist. Hence it is vital to study these narratives and to look for ways to engage with them. Without such engagement, the aims (and worldviews) of the Ukrainian and Russian people will be fundamentally incompatible, and the stability of their shared border will be difficult to ensure. In this sense, understanding Russia is essential to make a credible security guarantee for Ukraine (and Moldova). It is also important to understand how peace mediation and facilitation actors are involved in shaping conditions on the ground. A focus on the secrecy practices of these actors will aid our understanding of which kinds of deals take

place behind closed doors, and with what effect on inclusivity in peace processes.

At the same time, Europe's commitment to extend membership to Ukraine and Moldova must also be credible even if their accession is not imminent. This credibility is important to support these countries in the painful task of rebuilding their economies and social services after the conflict. It is also important to support them through the painful reforms that will be necessary for them to qualify for accession. The experience of Europe's historic enlargement to central and eastern Europe is not edifying in this respect. The problem is not just that countries that joined before they qualified formally never completed the reform process, it is also that many of those countries that rushed through reforms to qualify experienced significant backsliding after they joined. Hence, it is important to create an environment in which the governments of Ukraine and Moldova are able to achieve lasting progress. And what is true for these countries is also true for governments in the Western Balkans.

A final point concerns the interaction between the European Union's aspirations for 'open' strategic autonomy and its dependence on the transatlantic relationship for security. This interaction suggests a *Zeitenwende* of a very different sort from what Chancellor Scholz intended. Before Russia launched its full-scale invasion, the European Commission could underscore its geopolitical ambitions. Now it is more likely to be accused of leaning too close to American policy – particularly with respect to sanctions, but also looking at China. This is an area where the Robert Schuman Centre will necessarily devote increasing attention. Russia's unjustified war against Ukraine has revealed deep fractures in the structure of geopolitics more generally. Whether or not the European Commission is geopolitical, the Robert Schuman Centre will have to be. This geopolitical turn will build on the strength of the EU-Asia project and strategic partnerships with other scholars and institutions. It will also build on recent successes in supporting research on security governance and research deepening our understanding of American domestic politics.

02

James Kneebone

Toward a just green transition

One of the first examples of Europe's climate leadership was the '20-20-20' goals agreed by the EU in 2007. A 20 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions relative to 1990 levels, 20 percent of final energy consumption from renewables and a 20 percent improvement in energy efficiency – all by the year 2020. At the time, the international community considered them incredibly ambitious targets, but the EU achieved all three, albeit narrowly. Just a few years on and we are facing the much more daunting challenge of cutting emissions by 55 percent relative to 1990 levels in the next seven years and delivering a totally net-zero economy by mid-century. Achieving these aims would probably make the EU the first major economy on the planet to decarbonise.

Major societal challenges like this require radical thinking and engender big questions about the capacity of our systems to deliver such changes. Innovation in the prevailing governance model delivered 20-20-20 but largely taking advantage of the low-hanging fruit of decarbonisation. However, progress towards net-zero is already requiring much deeper and more costly transformation, and it certainly sets a tougher test for Europe's institutions and governance framework.

Broadly speaking, the EU and many of its member states appear increasingly willing and able to shift and deliver policy more quickly and radically than has historically been the case, particularly since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in early 2022. There are examples of this in the fields of climate, energy, enlargement, defence, and other areas besides. However, there are also great challenges to the establishment concerning major societal issues, such as climate change, which suggest that action is insufficient and that perhaps path dependencies and other entrenched positions make the incumbent systems of governance incapable of delivering on agreed aims. In some cases, critiques hold that new models are required.

Evolution or revolution?

The work of the Robert Schuman Centre addresses complex governance issues, and as such our research and wider work reflects this underlying tension. We focus primarily on contributing to rigorous evidence-based policy-making and working on market mechanisms that allow the existing framework to deliver on our major societal goals. We also explore how academics, policy makers and stakeholders in the private sector can come together – and, as Glenda Sluga has shown, have come together since the early 1970s – to shape the agenda for positive change. However, in parallel we keep one eye on systems-level thinking that contextualises our efforts and forces us to reconcile the work we do in our individual silos with the wider aim: to deliver a just, inclusive, and sustainable Europe. Accepting this vision and working towards it brings a tension between a desire to evolve, something which is palatable to incumbent stakeholders and ultimately easier to rationalise, and a nagging thought that sometimes something more dramatic and disruptive – revolution – is required.

On the side of evolution, arguably one of the central notions of 'justice' in Europe's green transition was defined in the aims of the EU's 'Just Transition Mechanism. This scheme looks at economic justice for regions in Europe that could be adversely affected by the green transition, for example through a switch away from coal. Anna Sobczak works explicitly on this subject at the Florence School of Regulation (FSR). Her work helps European regions develop a sustainable economic model, fostering social buy-in for the transition and avoiding social resistance and economic disruption. At the level of the individual consumer, the work of Lucila de Almeida examines the integrity of procedural justice for energy consumers in the transition, ensuring that the poorest in society are not disproportionately burdened. This is particularly important as the EU expands its emissions trading system (ETS) from industry into the residential and road transport sectors.

The explicit inclusion of the concept of 'justice' in legislation and strategy inevitably raises questions about the relationship between its now rationalised technical scope in policy and its wider moral and ethical roots. Now we must consider the boundaries of justice when we define a policy as 'just' or 'inclusive.' The 'Just Transition Mechanism' defines geographical regions in the EU and defines compensation in terms of finance and capacity-building, while the 'Social Climate Fund' defines an economic class of 'vulnerable households' in the EU and financially compensates them. Are these reasonable boundaries for (in)justice and fair means of correcting them? For example, our climate-motivated push for electrification in the transport sector requires raw materials that we are scarcely willing to extract in Europe for risk of environmental pollution or hazardous working conditions for our citizens, but we incentivise extraction and processing of them in third countries and import the finished products.

Global commons

The obvious question is whether 'justice' should be a goal only for Europe and applying only to Europeans. This question is obvious but at the same time hidden by the assumption that 'Europe' is an appropriate frame of reference for European policymaking. As Glenda Sluga reminds us in an essay on nationalism as a historical method, we are still unused to thinking methodically and systematically in more inclusive, cosmopolitan terms.

And yet once we do think through a broader, more inclusive frame, the answer is obviously 'no'. The climate is a global 'commons' and as such the green transition is a matter for global governance beyond the scope of a European or US Green Deal alone. Founder of the FSR, Ignacio Pérez-Arriaga, is now leveraging his experience to establish an 'African School of Regulation,' an organisation that aims to be a centre of excellence for education, applied research, independent discussion and knowledge exchange, with the purpose of supporting African energy regulation and policy. Furthermore, Pérez-Arriaga and head of the 'Florence School of Regulation Global' Swetha Ravikumar also run a course on the role of energy regulation in reaching the UN's

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 of achieving equal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy.

Remaining with the Sustainable Development Goals, the School's Water & Waste area works towards the aims of SDG 6 (access to clean water and sanitation), for example through technical reports on the role of utilities and regulators. Area Director Maria Salvetti is passionate about the intersection between water policy and SDG 5 (gender equality), given the gap between the key role of women in providing, managing, and using water and their lowly representation among policymakers, technical experts and managers in the sector. The same is true of the energy sector, and the RSC hosts one of the leading platforms for promoting female experts: the School's 'Lights on Women' initiative, and the adjacent 'Luce Award' introduced this year to recognise exceptional female contributions to the sector. The first Luce Award winners were Clara Poletti of ACER and Onyinye Anene-Nzelu of Engie Energy Access Nigeria.

Back in Europe, the capacity of energy regulation was seriously tested during the energy crisis of 2022, following the Russian war against Ukraine. Record high prices gave rise to populists calling for re-opening of oil, gas and coal fields in Europe, together with elimination of climate taxes. The Florence School of Regulation-Energy and the Global Governance Programme were very active and prominent voices of reason and calm throughout this period, including on energy dependency, security, market design, diversification to renewable gases and consumer protection. As well as being clean, renewable energy is often the cheapest and most secure source of energy. The drive to decarbonise the energy sector is at the centre of all the FSR's outputs, including a dedicated course on 'clean molecules' and another on 'regulation and integration of renewable energy.'

Among the sectors most difficult to decarbonise is transport. The School's Transport area goes into the details of what can be done in hard to abate areas of the sector, for example aviation, and how to deliver on a systems change for intra-European transport, namely through an integrated and competitive rail network.

Challenging convention

Then again, maybe a more cosmopolitan approach is still not inclusive enough. We may need to raise more unconventional considerations about the just transition. Should our boundaries of justice include the rights of citizens in third countries in addition to their material welfare? What about animals? Or the integrity of the natural environment to itself? The work of environmental historian Troy Vettese, a Max Weber Fellow at the Schuman Centre, challenges our preconceptions on many of these questions and more besides. A recent article on animal rights published on *The Guardian* posits that people who purchase animals as pets are not really 'animal lovers.' He highlights the cruelty and suffering caused by the industry, the cognitive dissonance of caring for a dog but paying for other animals to be slaughtered. This lack of empathy or 'justice' for

animals is arguably one of the biggest reasons why a 'green transition' is needed in the first place and a major reason why we may struggle to deliver on it.

In his book 'Half Earth Socialism' Vettese outlines how animal agriculture is directly at odds with our climate and ecological vision, given that it is by far the biggest consumer of land and water, and also one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions. The 77 percent of agricultural land used for livestock produces just 18 percent of our calories, a ratio which is clearly at odds with a vision for the planet that needs huge amounts of space for renewable energy, forest for carbon sequestration and many more protected natural reserves for biodiversity. Vettese argues that while our current framework of governance and economic incentives would be likely to try and 'tech fix' our way out of trouble through abstract ideas like spraying sulphur dioxide into the atmosphere to reflect back sunlight, there is a fundamental systems-level incompatibility that will probably only be resolved with revolution. His vision for a plant-based socialist world is arguably much more comprehensively 'just' in a moral and ethical sense but is scarcely reflected in the scope of 'justice' in the policies of our existing governance framework.

Although not revolutionary or utopian, European policy is arguably already working towards a more morally and ethically 'just' vision in its existing governance framework. The comprehensive 'European Green Deal' of 2020 and the accompanying 2050 net-zero goal gave all sectors a clear and overriding mandate and vision, one which has endured through a global pandemic and a war on the European continent. The flagship 'Green Deal' course and accompanying book by the FSR is helping to communicate this vision and empower stakeholders to act on it, drawing also on the expertise of another programme of the Centre: the Florence School of Banking and Finance.

Making markets work

If Vettese's vision for climate socialism is not realised and we remain within the boundaries of market capitalism, we will have to try and make markets work towards a 'just green transition'. The Florence School of Banking and Finance have produced an extensive course on green bonds and the sustainable bond market, and have put on debates and conferences covering the Environmental Social and Governance paradigm.

This market approach is ambitious even if it does not spark a revolution in how we perceive the world. To date, carbon markets have been one of the strongest levers for decarbonisation of the EU economy. And there is more to be done. In the past year, the Climate area of the Florence School of Regulation has expanded its focus to including the integration of compliance markets and improving the quality and integrity of voluntary markets. These subjects are highly topical as the EU continues to expand the scope of the Emission Trading System and maximise the effective potential of voluntary markets to realise net-zero. The Climate area has also expanded its team to strengthen research on the environmental, economic, and social evaluation of EU climate policies.

03

Iva Nenadić

Making democracies work

If the last half of the twentieth century was an era of democratic triumph, democracies in the early twenty-first century are facing tremendous and mutually reinforcing challenges such as the rise of populism with authoritarian tendencies, illiberal turns in both advanced and recent democracies, declining trust in democratic institutions and a proliferation of disinformation. Processes of backsliding are now widely observed, with the global level of democracy back where it was in 1986 according to the researchers who compile the 'Varieties of Democracy,' or V-Dem, indexes.

If anything, these developments underline that democracy cannot be taken for granted. It requires effort to make democracy work, every day. At the Robert Schuman Centre, several teams of researchers focus on the core features of democracy. They study how people and institutions operate to create democratic societies in which citizens have informed participation and the ability to influence decision-making processes. They explore this beyond elections. Nevertheless, elections remain the most visible manifestation of democracy and indicators of the level of democracy in a country or a political union.

In 2024, more than two billion voters are set to go to the polls around the world. Among them will be the citizens of the European Union and the United States. For the first time in two decades elections to the European Parliament and the US presidential election will coincide in the same year. This may be seen as just a calendar coincidence. However, these elections will be framed, informed, and decided in a post-pandemic world, with the ongoing war in Ukraine, climate crisis and a boom in generative and general artificial intelligence, which all raise global concerns around the potential to effectively manipulate public opinion and further undermine democracies. The last time when important votes coincided on both sides of the Atlantic was in 2016 when the US citizens elected Donald Trump as president and the United Kingdom referendum on European Union membership in Brexit. These outcomes, and the campaigns that preceded them, were a turning point in reaffirming the importance of accurate and complete information in forming voters' opinions. The results of the UK's referendum on departing the EU opened the question of what future awaits the European project.

Democracies need citizens to participate

The European Governance and Politics Programme is a central place at the Robert Schuman Centre, where research and conversations on the past, present and future of the European project and representative democracies take place. The EU is the world's most advanced case study in transnational integration of diverse political and civic cultures. As such, it provides a fruitful setting for analysis of multi-level governance, new modes of governance, and governance tools employed by the EU to address societal challenges. The Programme is at the forefront of theoretical and empirical

research on Europe's politics and governance, including the dynamics and tensions between European integration and national politics. This is further nuanced by research on citizens' behaviour and by examining the roles of elites, political parties, social movements, and the media in electoral and policy-making processes. Current projects include analysis of cleavages in global politics, opportunities for rebuilding governance and resilience coming out of the pandemic, a longitudinal overview of how representative democracies in Europe have been evolving and reforming over the past 30 years, and annual monitoring of the level of support for transnational solidarity in Europe. The Programme curates a comprehensive data repository on European elections since the first direct election in 1979, with results at the level of single constituencies for all member states, including a full documentation of party names, electoral systems and changes in constituencies.

Another key project is *euandi*, a voting advice application first designed for European Parliament elections (2009, 2014, 2019) and more recently adapted for national elections too (Germany 2021; France and Italy 2022; Estonia 2023). This tool assists citizens in finding which party best matches their preferences in their country and across Europe. In addition to informing and mobilising citizens, and to increasing the legitimacy of EP elections by making them more relevant and transnational, *euandi* also constitutes a valuable dataset underpinning academic research on parties' ideological and policy positioning in the European political landscape. *Euandi* will be implemented again for the 2024 European Parliament elections. Before the 2019 EP elections it was completed by 1.2 million citizens across the European Union.

The political options and candidates that emerge and the extent to which citizens are active or passive and are included or excluded in the upcoming election will strengthen or weaken democracies further. Citizenship is a political status, but it is also a dichotomous legal concept. One either is or is not a citizen and so one enjoys the rights of citizenship or does not. Access to citizenship and electoral rights vary across different state systems and regimes but these rights are crucial to how democracies work in practice. The Global Citizenship Observatory (GLOBALCIT) is an online observatory and research network based at the Robert Schuman Centre which conducts systematic analysis of citizenship laws and electoral rights around the globe. Democracies are prone to challenges by electoral engineering through gerrymandering, including expanding electorates abroad (as, for example, in the case of Hungary or Turkey) and limiting access to eligible voters such as minorities or migrants. GLOBALCIT therefore also examines the relationship between citizenship boundary-setting and democratic governance. Along with an enabling political and institutional environment and a legal status that allows them to vote, citizens need complete and accurate information about the choice they have to make.

Democracies need informed citizens

There is no democracy without informed citizenship, which has never been more challenging to ensure. The information environment has been changing profoundly and rapidly in recent years. As Philippe Van Parijs said at one of his Conversations for the Future of Europe in Spring 2023: 'in one generation we came from news shortage, with only a few TV channels and daily newspapers available to citizens, to news abundance.' Technological advances and the rise of online platforms at first seemed to promise an increase in the diversity of voices and perspectives. Instead, they largely resulted in information disorder making it difficult for citizens to distinguish credible from misleading and manipulated information, with citizens increasingly replacing direct access to news outlets with algorithmic news recommenders and actively avoiding news, and with young people in particular being alienated from news brands and largely relying on social media for opinion-forming information.

The Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom has been operating in the Robert Schuman Centre for more than a decade and has been running a Media Pluralism Monitor project, a research instrument implemented by a network of researchers in all the member states of the European Union and in candidate countries. The Monitor conducts holistic comparative analysis of the potential for citizens to fully enjoy accurate, impartial, and complete information and diverse qualified viewpoints. To this end it provides regular assessments of key conditions and institutions in the media and information systems in the dimensions of fundamental protection, market plurality, political independence and social inclusiveness. The design of the Monitor has a normative approach. It aims to capture all the possible variables and features that may represent a risk to media pluralism, including a lack of certain legal safeguards, media market concentration and socio-political shortcomings in the media and information ecosystem. Over the years it has evolved to increasingly consider conditions for media plurality and diversity online in the algorithmic and AI-driven environments. Its sound holistic methodology has made the Monitor a key information source for the media freedom part of the European Commission's annual rule of law reports and a basis for the process of initiating and drafting the European Media Freedom Act.

The Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom is also among the core consortium partners of the European Digital Media Observatory, which coordinates research on European, global, and industry policies to tackle disinformation, a phenomenon that is complex and so requires systems-based thinking and interdisciplinary perspectives to unpack it. Disinformation is a problem that intersects various institutions and processes important for the preservation of democracy. It is a phenomenon that reflects the dual role that various political institutions and actors may play. For instance, when the news media lack professionalism and

independence, they contribute to the problem of disinformation rather than counterbalancing it. Likewise, politicians, especially those in power, who should tackle the problem of disinformation are frequently strategically spreading it themselves.

Information integrity has become even more of a concern as many processes relevant to democracy have shifted online, in an environment shaped and controlled by technology companies with no or very little responsibility for the impact they create. Leading online platforms, predominantly based in the US and China, offer new avenues along which political campaigns can reach and engage with voters, which can be used but also abused by means of data-based techniques of persuasion and manipulation. These concerns are further amplified with the rapid development and adoption of generative artificial intelligence. Every technology has its social impact.

Digital democracy, or understanding of how democracy changes and is being challenged by emerging technologies and their use is the area in which the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom meets the Centre for a Digital Society. The Centre may be the newest component of the Schuman Centre but it in fact builds on the experience of the Florence School of Regulation's Communications and Media programme and the Florence Competition Programme. With its establishment, the two projects merged into a unique programme and broadened their focus beyond regulation of the media sector and competition policy.

Digitalisation holds immense potential in shaping the evolution of civic participation, good governance, and the protection of fundamental rights - essentially molding the very essence of democracy. The Centre for a Digital Society is actively working to establish this line of research as a core area of activity. The Centre for Judicial Cooperation is working in this area as well, with a focus on the relationship between law and the digital world. In 2022, this research strand produced a book on 'Data at the boundaries of European law'.

Democracies need understanding of both global and local dynamics

Many challenges that people and democratic institutions face today are global, but the extent to which they become risks or opportunities is largely shaped by the regional or local context in which they arise. Being part of the European University Institute (EUI), the Robert Schuman Centre's research naturally directs its focus towards Europe and the European Union, but it places it in the ever-changing global context amid US-China dynamics.

The longest-running programme at the Robert Schuman Centre is the Global Governance Programme. It was launched in 2010 and since then it has been examining major international and global developments and disruptions, their impact on the EU and the EU's positioning in global governance. Recently, major disruptions have occurred within the EU itself and some are

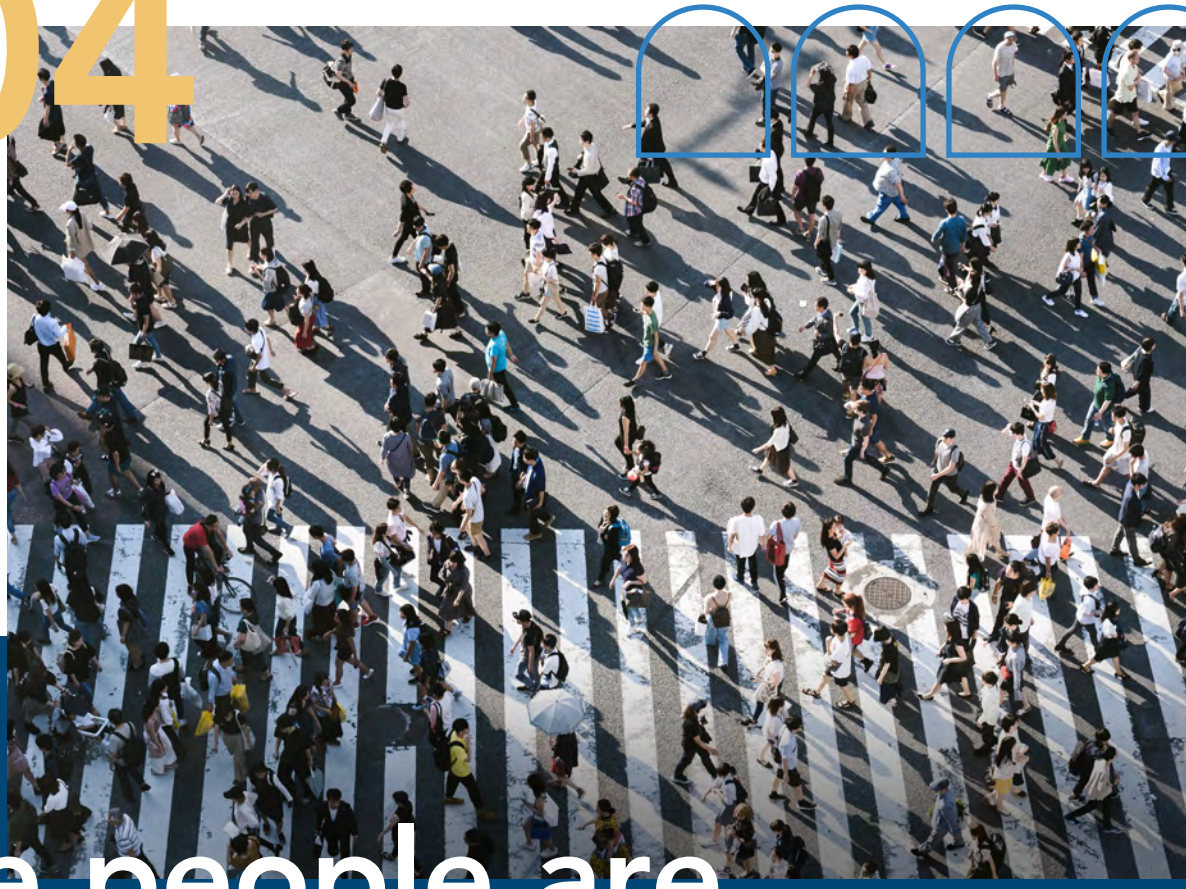
still occurring in its immediate neighbourhood. The United Kingdom left the EU on 31 January 2020. On 24 February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine. Both have had profound and immediate effects on the European Union. Brexit and the war in Ukraine are extensively studied and have become cross cutting topics across several programmes of the Schuman Centre as well as of the whole EUI.

As much as it is important for the sustainability and positioning of the European Union to understand global powers, dynamics, and movements, it is also important to understand its own regions and neighbours. Southeastern Europe is a new research line at the Robert Schuman Centre that works at the crossroad of several programmes and individual scholars' interests. It is a particularly interesting region with complex historical and cultural trajectories, including strong influences of leading world religions and geopolitical interests that meet there. This makes adoption of democracy and learning about it, and the paths towards European integration significantly different in this region from others. A growing amount of research in the Robert Schuman Centre on Southeastern Europe delves into political, economic, and public administration reforms, the impact of foreign actors, including foreign information manipulation and interference in political processes, media freedom, fundamental rights, democratic backsliding and the prospects for European integration.

Democracy is complex. It faces many challenges nowadays, as it has throughout its history. The way to make it work is to understand, in a comparative and comprehensive manner, what weakens it, what strengthens it and what it means to people in a certain time and place. Therefore, the main contribution of research done at the Robert Schuman Centre is unpacking and explaining elements and dynamics affecting people, institutions and processes that are at the core of well-functioning democracies. This builds knowledge about how democracy functions that can inspire policies and practices to strengthen it.

04

Stephanie Acker



The people are not the problem: researching migration and citizenship

Migration policy has largely become more than anything else a political issue, but at its core migration is about people. At the Robert Schuman Centre, in the work of the Migration Policy Centre, the Global Citizenship Observatory and researchers across the Centre, people are at the heart of the research agenda. Researchers work to understand and inform governance, policy, and law because they create the conditions that impact movement, reception and belonging, conditions that impact real people with unique histories and hopes. This people-centred research agenda, informed by rigorous academic study, is transforming the way we understand problems and the policies needed to address them.

Why people move, what people think and where they belong

Our world is more mobile, and more people are moving, by choice or by force, than ever before. Each person who moves has a story about why they move and what they hope will happen as a result of it. The reasons people move are manifold and interconnected – they can be the result of labour markets, health access, social services, education, and family. They also increasingly result from war, violence, natural disaster, and persecution.

The Global Mobilities Project maps the rapidly increasing movement of people that is taking place worldwide. Previous research has been compartmentalised to a certain field or region, but in this project the team has been able to collect and keep comprehensive up-to-date global data on mobility. They have created four open access databases and with them they can continue to describe the world we live in and the trends that shape its transformation: the interaction between different forms of mobility, the association between mobility trends and other social, economic and cultural trends, and the causes and consequences of human mobility.

In addition to understanding who is moving, why they are moving and what impact it has, researchers at the Migration Policy Centre also seek to understand what people think about migration, what influences it and what impact it has on policy. The Observatory of Public Attitudes to Migration provides an open access and interactive database and resources to describe and analyse attitudes to migration globally and to explain key elements of variation that occur within and between countries and over time. In 2022, their analysis identified robust causal explanations for variations in individual-level attitudes to migration and tracked how EU preferences regarding Ukrainian refugees differed from those regarding Syrian refugees. Because the research continues to find that peoples' attitudes to migration are stable over time, the focus is on strengthening evidence on how to communicate effectively about migration – by identifying the impact of appealing to values and emotions and documenting and analysing successful migration communication campaigns.

Increased mobility within and across borders is challenging legal frameworks, beliefs, and rights. It poses new questions to our entire system of international governance, a system which hinges on citizenship. Citizenship is the right to have rights. It is a fundamental status in the world we live in and is significantly changing. One trend identified in the most recently released Global Citizenship Observatory dataset is an overwhelming increase in dual citizenship. This is a significant shift from historic practice, and one with possibly an untenable future.

That shift from historic practice raises further questions. If people can have citizenship in two places, could they also have it in three? How long will non-resident citizens and their descendants be able to vote in their country of citizenship? How long does a non-citizen resident have to reside in a country before they can vote to influence that country? These are things the Observatory will continue to analyse and tease out, and it does not require close inquiry as there is no international or regional law on citizenship. It is nationally regulated, which creates endless variation and scenarios for who becomes a citizen of a place and legally belongs there and how.

Why people's rights cannot easily cross borders

Regardless of the story that led someone to move or whether they are a citizen of the new country in which they live, their moving is not the wholeness of who they are. Every person wants to and deserves to be treated with dignity. But what the basic rights of migrants are and how to ensure they are protected remain contested theoretically and challenging practically. This is especially true for irregular migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees, who can be subject to discrimination and can lack legal protection in all parts of their mobility journey.

One reason that the rights of certain groups, such as irregular migrants, have not been protected or improved, is because previous attempts have in many ways been too simplistic and have ignored the different experiences and backgrounds of irregular migrants, the differences in the institutional context between different European countries, and the competing interests between different groups of stakeholders. A new EU-Horizons research project on Protecting Irregular Migrants in Europe will help to fill this void by conducting thousands of in-person interviews with irregular migrants, industry leaders and institutional actors to identify contextualised policy tools that respond to complexity, instead of ignoring it.

An additional reason why migration policy has become increasingly politicised is because there are tangible and felt policy dilemmas at play, many of which centre on conflicting moral goals. The work on these ethical dilemmas has expanded the focus of existing research on the ethics of migration and has focused on bringing all these issues to the foreground and bringing the perspectives of a broader group of actors into the debate. The Dilemmas Project

has created a repository of articles that tackle a range of issues, including the tension between humanitarian protection and border control in maritime rescue operations, whether social and economic concerns can factor into asylum policy and the competing interests in labour migration. The project is thus working to make dialogue about ethical dilemmas the norm, not the exception, and grappling with competing priorities.

One area of increasing concern is the use of new technologies, complex machine learning, and artificial intelligence, which is gradually rising in governments' management of their migration and asylum policies. The Algorithmic Fairness for Asylum Seekers and Refugees project investigates the use of new tools and finds that so far they been used primarily with state interests in mind but without thoroughly evaluating their impact on people. Without this knowledge there is a great risk of exasperating inequity and discrimination. The project is helping to identity who these tools benefit, who they harm and what transparency exists in their use and the outcomes.

People will keep moving and states must keep adapting

States and societies are already struggling in their responses to migration and the challenge to adapt to future migration trends will only continue to increase. High-income countries' migration policies are increasingly expressed through walls, reception centres, check points and visa applications, and increasingly implemented earlier in the journeys of migrants, as they pay other countries to help control flows to themselves. These racialised policies can have dire and at times deadly effects. Europe's policies, which target migrants from African and Middle Eastern countries, have led to thousands dying at sea.

We can see other negative consequences of the ways that countries are adapting. The Global Citizenship Law project has documented the first comprehensive global survey of legislative provisions removing citizenship based on security or counter-terrorism concerns, and has found that at least 80 percent of the countries studied have implemented as least one – more than one in many cases – security-related provision on citizenship loss since 11 September 2001. This is an alarming trend in an international governance system that is built on a belief that everyone should be a citizen in at least one place. Through this research, we will work to understand what happens when and why someone loses citizenship and how the acquisition of citizenship can be used negatively. Russia's practices in Crimea are just one example of the weaponisation of citizenship.

It is also possible to start seeing a global trend of democratic backsliding, as highlighted in Chapter 3 of this *Research Agenda*. We do not yet know what effect a democratic decline will have on citizenship, but we do know that we need a dynamic longitudinal way of evaluating this. The 2022 Global Citizenship Annual Conference anchored the importance of this and cast a vision for the Observatory's network to begin to connect this work on citizenship more directly to work on democracy. We far too often view democracy as static with people having a defined set of unchanging rights, but the increasing mobility in the world means that citizens and states continually find themselves in different contexts. The team will therefore be launching a new database that covers all democratic countries around the world tracking the electoral rights of non-resident citizens and of non-citizen residents.

One way that could help adapt effectively is to have better information on expected arrivals of migrants and asylum seekers at EU borders to ensure better allocation of resources, mitigate emergency and crisis responses, and reduce the possible tensions receiving countries might experience. Currently, despite all the advances in technology, there are no accurate large-scale studies that can reliably predict new migrants arriving in Europe. In the Information Technology Flows project researchers worked to understand how accurate forecasting and prediction could make policy responses more effective. This work focused on the drivers of attitudes to migration to propose solutions for practitioners and policymakers to better manage migration by identifying risks of tension ahead of time.

Connecting with people to produce research that reflects people

What underpins and facilitates the work done at the Robert Schuman Centre is the wide array of collaborative partnerships that form over time. The research carried out is about interconnected issues and interconnected places, and so the way of working has to follow suit. This past year the Migration Policy Centre

convened more than 50 webinars and events, which provide early and midcareer researchers and academics opportunities to share their work and bring together established scholars to talk about the most cross-cutting issues. Based on the research conducted, the Centre has continued to offer robust training and teaching that serve as a form of exchange with policymakers, diplomats, members of civil society organisations, the media and the private sector. In collaboration with the Uganda Council of Foreign Relations and the EUI's School of Transnational Governance, the Migration Policy Centre held its first executive education training in Africa. The annual Migration Summer School, in its 19th year in 2023, has trained about 500 practitioners, policymakers and mid-career professionals from around the world.

This strength in collaboration allows the Centre to quickly pivot to respond to emerging issues. This has included launching a Research Network on Ukrainian Migration which looks at displacement and mobility from and within Ukraine and issues such as reception, integration, remittances, return and reintegration, recovery and development. It has also included launching a collaboration with UNICEF Innocenti's Global Office of Research and Foresight, the International Rescue Committee and the University of Virginia's Global Policy Center to identify how to advance the extremely limited research that exists on child migration and displacement.

Finally, while research continues to advance evidence on migration and citizenship, there are gaps in how the evidence is built and the impact it has in practice. Too often the rhetoric in migration policy and research depicts migration and displacement as a condition. Specifically, for forced or irregular migrants, their existence often becomes synonymous with the injustices they have experienced. Through emerging work with children in armed conflicts, local government actors, refugees and asylum-seekers, and smuggling networks, this academic community is working to shift this trend, designing with and building research on the voices of those with lived experience. Furthermore, while the Centre's researchers have been called on by political leaders and UN organisations to provide information and analysis, there is much more work to be done to increase the presence, relevance and accessibility of the research produced to policymakers and practitioners. The Migration Policy Centre is working to do this by building broader collaborations, finding creative ways to communicate, and co-designing research and initiatives to answer policy questions.

The work carried out at the Schuman Centre is academic, and the focus is on the policy and the governance of migration and citizenship. But at their core these subjects are deeply personal; they affect you and me and everyone in between. They are at the end of the day about people. And this research agenda aims to answer the questions that move and connect us as people.

05

Costanza Hermanin

Helping policymakers make better decisions in moments of crisis

Scrutinising the decisions made by policymakers is an essential element of democracy. Criticism can be political, suggesting that choices based on different values and interests would be more appropriate than others. However, especially in times of crisis, political choices frequently face another type of criticism focused on their technical 'substance' rather than their political 'direction'. This is a time when experts are, on the one hand, conveniently brought to the forefront as the only reliable source of decisions and, on the other hand, decried with anti-elitist allegations that evidence is fabricated. COVID-19 and climate change are two outstanding examples of this dichotomy.

The work of the Robert Schuman Centre addresses the effectiveness of political responses and the resilience of political institutions to recent concurrent global crises: the war in Ukraine, rising inflation, food and energy shortages, financial and trade downturns, climate change, COVID-19 and migration, a combination that in recent times has been frequently dubbed a 'polycrisis'. This work aims to promote an understanding of how to decrease uncertainty in various fields and to strengthen collaboration between academic experts and policymakers, including with increased reliance on rigorous data as a basis for political decisions. While we pursue this approach with conviction, we do not stop researching the fundamental questions at the basis of this vision. Where and how does expert knowledge contribute to developing policies enhancing resilience? Why do politicians decide not to rely on evidence? How does public opinion respond to global risks of various kinds? Do global crises reinforce or instead weaken political organisations such as the EU?

Acceleration in the progressive erosion of citizens' trust in experts and institutions has coincided with the rise of populist movements rejecting expert knowledge on a range of issues, for example financial stability, migration and vaccines. This has become an even more legitimate research agenda in itself, which the Centre pursues, for instance, via its participation in a research cluster on the Crisis of Expert Knowledge and Authority. Assessing these dynamics in conjunction with the resilience to recent crises of various organisations is among the core contributions that the Robert Schuman Centre aims to provide in terms of both academic understanding and actionable political advice.

Crises without political dismemberment: can the EU keep up with its unexpected resilience?

The European Union (EU) has faced a string of major challenges, starting with the global economic and financial crisis in 2008, and continuing with high migration inflows, Brexit, COVID-19 and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Moreover, these challenges are unlikely to be the last, with perhaps even greater threats looming on the horizon. This

is why scholars at the Robert Schuman Centre have invested in understanding the drivers behind the EU's responses to crises and, most importantly, the durability of its resilience. Most of our work assessing the impact of the various crises, such as the Solid project, finds a point of agreement in the observation that, even though the EU is still fragile, it has proved more resilient than many had anticipated. New capacities in the realms of monetary and fiscal solidarity, joint action on medical supplies, funds for post-COVID recovery and common initiatives have emerged during times of crisis. So far, these developments have stopped the escalation of a 'policy crisis' into a 'polity crisis' capable of undermining the EU's institutional foundations.

The most unexpected response is perhaps the one researched by Waltraud Schelkle in the realm of inter-state fiscal solidarity, culminating in risk-pooling public debt in contingent credit lines for health care costs in the NextGeneration EU programme, which disbursed substantial loans and grants to recover from the COVID-generated recession. As Schelkle and her co-authors Maurizio Ferrera and Hans-Peter Kriesi put it: 'it is still not clear how robust these institutions will be and whether developing them further will encounter insurmountable obstacles, including resentment among citizens.'

Other research conducted at the Robert Schuman Centre has contributed to answering this question. Multiple survey rounds in the framework of the European University Institute (EUI) YouGov 'Solidarity in Europe' (SiE) project have defied the pessimistic expectation that citizens' support for European solidarity would shrink in times of crisis: 'A willingness to engage collectively in the sharing of risks and resources against adversity' persists though crises. Most Europeans favour a social and solidarity model of Europe, inclined towards fairness and welfare. For instance, in response to the question 'Did COVID-19 enhance or reduce citizens' trust in European solidarity?' SiE data show that from the onset of the pandemic, citizens had a self-reinforcing preference for EU-led solidarity instruments to be at the helm of crisis management. Further research by the Global Governance Programme focusing on Next Generation EU and social equity also found that after COVID-19 solidarity and inter-generational equity concerns were acknowledged at the policy level.

Whereas crises may have prompted some positive developments, they should not be seen as 'a blessing in disguise.' For this reason, the Robert Schuman Centre is starting other projects that map the social divides that occurred during lockdown and recovery policies to understand their further possible implications, including for mobility restrictions and conflict events worldwide. Post-pandemic governance needs to be rebuilt not only in an effective way but also in a democratic way, particularly as political actors exploit the health-economy divide in decisions taken to deal with COVID and capitalise on the dispute over linking financial relief to structural

reforms. The Robert Schuman Centre is therefore mobilising more academic expertise to supply the European Union's decisionmakers with a body of actionable advice on how to foster resilience further, enhancing constructive change within the EU and globally via the launch of the Regroup project.

Global governance in times of crisis

The consequences of multiple global crises could be more disruptive to the international architecture than they were to the EU itself. For example, Giulio Pugliese shows how COVID-19 is among the factors that have widened the rift between the United States and China. US-China economic, technological, and political relations have spiralled down since 2020, with major consequences for global trade. Competition in the development of AI has opened new fractures among global powers with a 'weaponisation of the information space' in the absence of international organisations formally tasked with overseeing progress on AI.

Last in the order of events, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine may have reunited public support for European solidarity with Kyiv and prompted the enlargement of NATO, but it has also shown some of the limits of both the EU's foreign and defence construction and the Atlantic Alliance's – starting with Turkey's blackmailing power – beyond the full-blown stalemate of the UN. In this context, Stephanie Hoffman and scholars invited to the Robert Schuman Centre have sought to answer questions that are crucial to guide policymakers to a clearer understanding of how to deal with the most recent global evolutions. For example, are international organisations still of use? Should we instead rely on other forms of international cooperation? And if the EU's institutions have survived recent crises better than anticipated, what are the chances for the EU as a global player?

Research on forms and dynamics of global governance highlights how states increasingly use international organisations for their unilateral purposes, whereas informal fora like the G7, the G20, the Quad and even the D-10 often represent better venues for *real* multilateral conversations. Increasingly, this is where 'shadow negotiators' prepare for crucial decisions that fail to come through in formal meetings of intergovernmental organisations like the UNFCCC and the WTO. Ad hoc coalitions complement and compete with international organisations in responses to crises. It is therefore time to ask whether decision-makers *should* favour formal multilateral organisations as fora in which to seek solutions over other available options.

To this end, the TRIGGER dataset monitors trends in global governance and Europe's role in it, especially in areas such as climate change, sustainable development, data regulation and EU-Africa partnerships. This work aims to provide knowledge and tools to enhance EU actorness, effectiveness, and influence, and shows a varying degree of credibility, cohesion, recognition, and opportunity for the EU at the

global level, in contrast with the dimensions of its authority, autonomy and attractiveness, which are more stable.

In international security, analysis of differentiation and differentiated cooperation shows that EU foreign policy has remained predominantly dependent on distinctive national priorities. Member states engage in consensus-seeking through informal and voluntary policy coordination, frequently lacking central guidance and accountability mechanisms.

Research at the Centre has also revealed this lack of central guidance in relation to the military threat posed by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. The war has triggered little EU institutional capacity-building so far. Instead, the member states of the EU have reacted by cooperating together more and strengthening national powers '*with the support* of EU institutions,' not reinforcing the latter. Similarly, investigations on the Asia-Pacific region show conflicting dynamics, with national mercantilist interests prompting a more disjointed European foreign and security policy in the region.

The Centre's research on global and European governance feeds directly into discussions on the transnational political community, for instance via participation of its members at the Munich Security Conference and in the Academia Europea, and in the realisation of innovative databases with international partners. In collaboration with the World Bank, the Schuman Centre has set up a Global Trade Alert project to collect information on policy measures for food and medical products since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the European Parliamentary Research Service, it has developed various regular data science publication series, among them 'At a Glance: Economic indicators and Trade with the EU,' which focuses on comparative analysis of recent trends.

These studies and projects are the foundations on which anticipatory capacity can be built and shared with decision-makers, to help improve their decisions in the likely and unlucky case the polycrisis unfolds further.

Uncertainty, crisis management and informed policymaking

Work at the Robert Schuman Centre relies on the tenet that scientific knowledge informs better choices. However, this functional approach to evidence has come under fire in the politics of recent times to such an extent that it seems legitimate to ask ourselves whether we should reassert the role of scientific knowledge in policymaking, and how. Inauguration of a research area focused on 'Knowledge, Governance, Transformation' is a structural reaction to this reflection.

Some of the projects at the Robert Schuman Centre focus on the role that trustworthy data play in evidence-informed policymaking, data-driven innovation and future-oriented governance, for instance to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This work builds, among other sources, on the GlobalStat database, a public information tool that contri-

butes to understanding of the interrelations between human living conditions and globalisation trends.

Projects enhancing evidence and data literacy for policymaking are among the tools that can make expertise more accessible, not only to decisionmakers sitting in political institutions but also to citizens participating in deliberative decision-making. For instance, research and training on gender impact assessment and gender budgeting inform policymakers on how to address the adverse impact that the COVID crisis had on progress towards gender equality. This change in awareness includes anticipating the effects on job markets of concentrating resources – such as the bulk of the EU Recovery and Resilience package – on male-dominated economic sectors, such as construction and energy infrastructure relevant to the green transition and the digital or information and communications technology sector. Innovative perspectives on budgeting that underscore the contribution of evidence for better policymaking can be combined with innovative deliberative methodologies such as participatory budgeting.

Another way to the same end is through systematic involvement of experts in future-oriented and evidence-informed policymaking processes. Anticipatory governance and strategic foresight indicate a way forward to more systemic resilience through science-policy engagement. For example, Gaby Umbach plays a leading role in a strategic foresight group called 'Berlin Futures', which helps to shape German European Policy in order to strengthen its capacity to respond to crisis. Another tool in preparation is a 'Politicisation of Statistics database' which will reveal episodes of political manipulation as a safeguard for the public, on the one hand, and for the scientific community, on the other.

Scientific evidence and science advice in policymaking are valuable assets for democracy. By contributing to the futureproofing of political decisions, active engagement with the world of politics has a special place on the Robert Schuman Centre's research agenda. Pushing for scientific evidence to play a bigger role in anticipatory governance ahead of crises, rather than concentrating on evaluating crises ex-post, will help defy some of the un-founded criticism driven by populist agendas which has been a strong feature of public debate in recent times.

06

Morshed Mannan and Rohit Ticku

Confronting globalisation and technological change

Globalisation has succeeded in reducing inequality between the poor and rich parts of the world since the end of the twentieth century. This aggregate pattern is driven by an outflow of relatively lower-skill jobs from the rich world to labour-abundant low-wage countries, the gains from which have mostly accrued to a few emerging Asian economies. The skewed benefits from globalisation for a few developing countries are compounded by an ongoing economic transformation in many low-income countries, which is driven by the reallocation of labour from the agricultural sector to services, while the manufacturing sector has remained stagnant.

One challenge in the structural transformation currently underway in low-income countries is that it does not guarantee sustained and inclusive growth if services offer fewer prospects for productivity gains than manufacturing and a lower potential for positive spillovers. Increasingly, there is a clamour for protectionism among developed countries to limit the outflow of lower-skilled jobs, which implies that low-income countries cannot rely unconditionally on an export-led growth strategy. Moreover, modern technological innovations may also exacerbate inequality in low-income countries if they make workers redundant or weaken their bargaining power.

The redistributive effects of globalisation, emerging patterns of economic transformation and access to global markets, and technological change are vexing issues for the global economy. Researchers at the Robert Schuman Centre strive to understand these challenges and to propose innovative solutions.

Service-led growth

One question is whether service-led growth can be a harbinger of sustainable development. Researchers, working on global economics as part of the the Global Governance Programme have collected administrative data that covers 56 million individuals in 13 countries in Africa to identify a ubiquitous trend of structural transformation toward services and service-related occupations. They have further found that the growth in high-skill services is positively associated with overall economic growth. Their analysis highlights the important role of services in employment, skills, and overall development in Africa.

To understand the mechanisms with which services can foster economic growth, the global economics team has used labour force surveys and firm-level tax data from Rwanda to identify whether the switch to services can induce economic growth through a compositional change in the workforce and help increase firm productivity through greater use of services as inputs. What they find is that service industries employ a more educated workforce than manufacturing, which indicates that a service-led economic transformation is accompanied by greater human capital accumulation in Rwanda. They also find weak evidence against service inputs enhancing the productivity of firms in Rwanda. The effect is non-linear, and

it is differentiated by sector and the size of firms that use services as inputs.

The absence of a positive impact of service inputs on firm productivity might be due to the (low) quality of services. To understand whether the quality of services might be a potential mechanism, researchers in the global economics team have combined firm-level tax returns with customs data from Uganda to identify the effect of the use of service inputs on productivity in exporting firms. The focus on exporting firms is relevant since they particularly rely on availability of high-quality service inputs. Again, the authors find that among exporters firms that spend more on service inputs have lower productivity. The results are sobering as they indicate that the quality of services in low-income countries like Uganda and Rwanda might not be up to the mark to boost firm productivity.

Alternative growth models

Recent events have compounded threats to global integration. Supply-chain disruptions due to the Covid pandemic, the expanded Russian war in Ukraine, and the growing tensions between the United States and China foster uncertainty and therefore impact the design of global value chains (GVCs), technological collaboration, and globalisation more generally. These disruptions, however, offer an opportunity for low-income countries to reassess their participation in global value chains and to make their growth strategies more inclusive.

The African free trade agreement (AfCFTA) is likely to enhance foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa and enable foreign firms to access its common market. micro-level FDI data and firm-level tax data from Rwanda, it is possible to show that FDI not only creates better-quality jobs, but it also has a significant job-multiplier effect in the local economy. However, FDI is concentrated in areas with relatively higher levels of development. To the extent that this pattern is evident in other low-income African countries, one can infer that the marginal benefit of FDI in creating inclusive growth is potentially larger in the poorer regions of Africa. Creating special economic zones in the poorer regions, which will offer higher quality infrastructure and human capital inputs, could alleviate the lopsided concentration of FDI and improve the capacity of foreign investment to create inclusive growth.

Yet another opportunity is for the low-income countries in Africa to identify strategies to maximise the domestic added value embedded in exports. This approach is conceptually different to strategies that maximise exports, which may contribute little to the domestic economy if the share of foreign inputs used by the exporters is also high. For instance, it is well known that lower tariffs on intermediate inputs used by exporters and lax rules of origin in preferential trade agreements boost overall exports. However, it is not clear whether lower tariffs on intermediate inputs or lax rules of origin increase the domestic added value embedded in exports. This is because lowering import tariffs

and lax rules of origin can potentially incentivise exporters to import cheaper inputs from third countries and therefore potentially lower the domestic content in exports.

In a new project, the global economics team is collaborating with economists based in Geneva and Uganda to amass a database on firms and customs transactions in Rwanda and Uganda. The research project aims to identify and recommend an optimal tariff structure for inputs used by exporters that would maximise the domestic added value embedded in exports and the restrictiveness of rules of origin that Rwanda and Uganda should aim to obtain in generalised preferential schemes.

Another strand of work assesses the alternatives to export-led growth strategies for low-income countries in Africa. The 2021 agreement establishing the AfCFTA integrating markets across 54 African economies is potentially transformative. Depending on how it is implemented, AfCFTA can facilitate regional trade and therefore minimise exposure to market and political uncertainty in the rest of the world.

Fiscal spending is another policy tool that low-income countries in Africa can independently employ to stimulate growth. Government procurement is one such mechanism with which a country can encourage the growth of private-sector firms by stabilising demand for their output. The role of government procurement in Africa is especially critical since many African countries like Botswana, Kenya, Angola, South Africa, and Egypt spend over 20 percent of their gross domestic product on procurement. That role is also problematic. While firms that participate in procure tend to gain in sales and productivity, they also tend to tend to withdraw from participating in private markets.

Technological change

One of the most prominent areas in which we observe the challenges of globalisation is the digital economy. The digital economy – ranging from global trade in ICT goods and e-commerce to the 'gig' economy, the metaverse and blockchain-based businesses – has been heralded as the driver of industrial growth and the future of work. This has driven an interest in both understanding the global regulatory and policy environment in which the digital economy operates and exploring mechanisms to enhance this large sector.

The Digital Trade Integration Database of regulatory policies on digital trade in around 100 countries is an example of this interest. The database seeks to identify the broadest range of restrictions applied to digital trade and, where possible, demonstrate that a better integration of digital trade policies is possible. A number of indicators are used to assess whether a country's trade policies are conducive to global digital trade integration, from restrictive tariffs and foreign equity ownership to legal frameworks to protect the personal data of users, foreign direct investment and intellectual property rights.

Countries in Asia, Africa and South America have divergent approaches, with some being notable for their openness to digital trade and others being restrictive. This regulatory fragmentation may be due to emerging and developing economies being concerned that deeper integration in global digital trade may have an adverse impact on the local economy.

This concern is in part due to the ambiguous impact of the digital economy on low-income countries. On the one hand, engagement and investment in the digital economy is seen as a core part of poverty reduction strategies, as it creates new employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, particularly for the more marginalised members of society, such as persons with disabilities, migrants and rural residents. However, on the other hand, labour exploitation and invasive extractive data collection practices have been widely reported in the platform economy, with particularly pernicious effects on economies with weak labour and data protection frameworks.

Beyond digital trade, there is a significant trend of digitalisation of finance. The invention of Bitcoin and the subsequent emergence of other cryptocurrencies and blockchain-based decentralised finance products have not only accelerated the de-territorialisation of financial products and services but have also fragmented authority over who can provide these products and services. Decentralised exchanges, for instance, seek to enable people to engage in peer-to-peer trade in digital assets (not just cryptocurrencies) without being able to trust a centralised party (like a stock exchange) to oversee transactions.

For many users, however, engagement with these products and services is intermediated by third parties like crypto-custodians. This has fundamentally required people to have confidence in the technical and game-theoretic operation of blockchain-based systems, and also to trust the (new) institutions that have been created to support the operation of these systems. While confidence arises from the predictability and seeming invulnerability of a process, such as the production of a block on a blockchain, trust entails risk-taking and making oneself vulnerable to third parties. The need to understand the interplay between trust and confidence is a core element in their forthcoming book on Blockchain Governance.

New challenges

In the digital domain, there have been calls for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how new technologies and business models operate and the impacts they have on markets and societies. A working paper on the metaverse explains the origins of the term and how it came to be mythologised in business literature, before unpacking the patents and financial investments made in this technology by various market actors. When comparing the more immersive experience offered by the metaverse to the existing 'Internet 2.0,' they highlight the limitations and possible adverse consequences presented by this technology – from exacerbated privacy concerns to extensive content moderation problems – and the commercial and societal benefits it offers, such as in remote education or telemedicine.

In theoretical terms, it is possible to clarify the concept of 'market power' and gain a richer understanding of 'market competition' by applying complexity science, which is a particularly salient concept in relation to discourse on regulation of the digital economy. In empirical terms, it is important to identify the type of economic rents that large tech firms enjoy, and whether they are mostly returns on innovation investments or, on the contrary, monopoly profits. In addition, an ex post study on Mergers & Acquisitions transactions by large tech firms shows that concerns about 'killer acquisitions' seen in pharmaceutical markets do not translate equally to digital industries. Acquisitions of startups to limit competition and innovation appear to be exceptions rather than the rule, tempering activists' calls for a stricter merger policy in digital markets. The provocative claim that blockchain technologies are somehow 'alegal', unpacks those aspects of the technology that are difficult to regulate with legal penalties and sanctions, and those which are not.

There have also been more bold proposals to grapple with the challenges posed by the fast-evolving digital economy. One suggestion is for lawyers and law-makers to draw lessons from Isaac Asimov's science fiction, including a need for expert and rational human agency to address the shortcomings of regulation by design. Another is to support the emergence of cooperatively owned businesses in the digital economy to redistribute the financial and governance control of digital platforms. A third to ensure that the transition from industrial citizenship to digital citizenship should not derogate from citizens' social rights but should instead be restructured so as to acknowledge the economic value of the data they provide.

Of course, none of these solutions is comprehensive. There are limits to how much we can encourage democratic participation in the governance of the digital economy, for example. There are also limits to how much we can control how firms harvest and use personal data.

Looking ahead

Recent developments in globalisation and technological change have both contributed to and been affected by the world's many ongoing challenges. Research at the Robert Schuman Centre helps us understand these dynamics, particularly in the context of low-income countries. By learning about the productivity shortcomings in the service-led economic development of Rwanda and Uganda and how many businesses across Africa are unable to realise the full benefits of government procurement, and the limitations of foreign direct investment and free trade agreements in attracting financial capital to the regions that most need it, we appreciate some of the causes of the lopsided growth patterns across the developing world. Through research on digital markets and the integration of digital trade we gain a deeper appreciation of why – and the extent to which – people in low-income countries are adversely incorporated in the digital economy.

The growing body of work on emerging technologies and decentralised finance reveals the potential and limitations of these new developments to realise proposed benefits like financial inclusion.

Going beyond diagnosing the causes of these challenges, our research also proposes numerous measures to address them. These include fiscal measures (such as optimising tariff structures), investment policy recommendations (such as forming special economic zones in poorer regions of Africa), significant legal reform proposals (such as recognising a right to a digital basic income) and innovative educational efforts (such as sharing lessons from science fiction with lawyers and lawmakers dealing with new technologies).

07

Tobias Pforr

Money, finance and inflation

Central banks faced a raft of challenges even before inflation suddenly and unexpectedly returned in the G7 countries at the beginning of 2022. At first, pressures stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic, a resulting array of supply chain disruptions, and opportunistic rises in profit margins in certain sectors resulted in overall increases in price levels not seen in decades. As central banks tried to respond, however, they had to face the possibility that their efforts at policy normalisation would trigger further financial distress as borrowers failed to adjust to higher interest rates.

The speed and size of rate increases have been some of the fastest on record and have created entirely new sets of volatility and fragility, not only in the financial sector but also for governments around the world. Moreover, rapid rate rises have been accompanied by policies aimed at reducing the size of the balance sheet of the European Central Bank (ECB) by letting emergency loans run down and allowing bonds held as assets to mature. Many initially worried that this combination of measures would prove unsustainable, and that either European banks or European sovereign debt markets would become unstable. Fortunately, these concerns did not come to pass.

Nevertheless, the threat of financial instability was real. One key issue has been contagion. Clearly some banks had business models that could not survive a swift monetary tightening. The question was whether their failure would bring down the rest. This question also extended to non-bank financial actors or 'shadow banks'. The first signs of trouble appeared in the United States, but Europe was also affected. What began with spectacular collapses of three essential players in the crypto space (Celcius, Terra, and FTX) soon spread to commercial banking. Within two months, the United States experienced three of the four largest bank failures in its history, and Switzerland was forced to instigate a merger between its two largest commercial banks. Fortunately, banks in the European Union (EU) proved to be resilient – in no small measure due to the success of the EU's 'banking union' and other forms of solidarity developed since the global economic and financial crisis.

Financial instability was not the only source of concern. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has put pressure on price inflation and government balances at the same time. Central bankers have struggled to interpret the macroeconomic implications as they relate to price stability. Meanwhile, national governments have sought to reconcile their support for Ukraine with other priorities. As mentioned in Chapter 1, that support for Ukraine has been unwavering in the North Atlantic region; in other parts of the world, however, other economic priorities have tended to predominate.

As central banks faced the challenge of inflation, governments around the world also had to face new and existing macroeconomic difficulties, most notably rising inequality, a cost-of-living crisis, and insufficient public investment, especially in the light of the climate emergency. While the Global Financial Crisis

saw an extension of central bank powers beyond what had previously seemed possible, or even desirable, the same expansion was not observed in the fiscal arena. This led to speculation about whether we are currently living in an era of monetary or fiscal dominance. Researchers at the Robert Schuman Centre have worked to address many aspects of these problems, focusing not only on the normalisation of monetary policy and the cost-of-living crisis but also on 'crisis management,' the digital transition, and climate change. Along the way, researchers were careful to highlight the contributions of women to the study of finance, energy, and the environment.

The policy mix

One challenge of normalising monetary policy while fighting inflation lies in the way that monetary and fiscal policy interact. Any reliable economic policy regime is necessarily built on a credible understanding between monetary and fiscal authorities. It also assumes that public debts will be sustainable, and that monetary tightening in one country will not undermine debt sustainability in another.

Both qualifications warrant attention. Domestic debt sustainability has become a major source of concern in the euro area. This is due in large measure to the massive borrowing that took place first during the global financial crisis and then again during the pandemic. It is also a question of economic governance. In the aftermath of the crisis, European governments sought to consolidate fiscal balances through strict rules on excessive deficits and debts. The result was not just painful austerity but also a lack of necessary public investment. Such investment is vital to foster a sustainable recovery – particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic. Hence, a recent report calls for a reform of the EU's fiscal rules to reconcile debt sustainability while preserving incentives for public investment.

Debt sustainability is also important when we think about how monetary tightening in the United States and Europe will impact on public finances in developing countries. Part of the challenge is theoretical. Put simply, we need to improve the ways in which debt sustainability is understood. But part is also connected with the underlying financial structures of a globalized economy. For example, one central factor in tackling problems with cross-country debt sustainability is the importance of the US dollar as the world's key currency. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the role of the US dollar as the world's key currency in terms of emergency liquidity. When the dollar becomes more expensive or less available, we need to find ways in which the IMF can provide it at low cost to struggling countries.

An open question is how closely monetary policymakers should coordinate their actions with fiscal policy, and whether such cooperation will be able to manifest itself politically. The global financial crisis, and those crises that followed, have raised important considerations about the way states and financial markets are entangled. As a result, we are unlikely to witness

a return to the type of central banking we had prior to the crisis. We may even have to accept that we are unable to return to pre-crisis levels of inflation. This will require us to think about new ways of understanding and practising fiscal and monetary cooperation both within advanced industrial economies and in cooperation with the wider world.

Solidarity and adjustment

The requirements for a just transition to a greener and more sustainable economy play an important role in this reconsideration of the policy mix. This is the kind of wicked problem that requires an interdisciplinary solution. This explains why the Florence School of Regulation has been active in exploring the reasons behind the headwind of inflation and its consequences. The energy crisis that befell Europe after Russia's attack on Ukraine is of particular relevance. Ditte Juul Jørgensen, Director General for Energy in the European Commission, spoke of a need for solidarity between the EU members states in order to migrate the worst effects of the energy crisis in an interview done under the Lights on Women initiative.

What is clear is that any stabilization of macroeconomic performance will have to accommodate the need for effective climate action. Indeed, reconciling the two policy imperatives is one of the main challenge Europe faces in the years to come. The problem is political as well as economic. Europeans need to be involved in decision making both in order to ensure they take ownership of any solution and to make it clear how the burdens of adjustment will (and should) be distributed. This complex challenge was the subject of a high-level policy discussion entitled 'Governing, fast and slow (and democratically)?' as part of the 2023 State of the Union 2023.

Clearly the European Union has a role to play in these efforts. Agreement on the recovery and resilience fund, Next Generation EU, marks a major innovation. But thinking about Europe's role needs to go further if it is to be effective. Specifically, the European budget needs to focus resources on 'important projects of European common interest' – which are essentially European public goods. This will require more money to be centralized at the European level. That means we will need to know more about what influences popular support in the European Union for greater centralization of fiscal policy or other forms of risk sharing. It will also require greater coordination between fiscal and monetary policy, and between the public and the private sector.

The role of the private sector is important in many respects. Public finances cannot solve every problem. The private sector needs to mobilise resources as well. For this to work effectively at the European level, however, it is essential that financial markets are integrated across national boundaries. This process of financial market integration has been uneven. The European sovereign debt crisis effectively reversed much of the progress that had been made in previous decades. Institutional

reform through the development of a European Banking Union and Capital Markets Union is only part of the solution. Building trust among national financial market regulators and supervisors is important as well.

It is also important to build a common understanding of why financial crises happen and how they can be addressed. This challenge is psychological and social as well as intellectual. There is a powerful relationship between how policymakers and practitioners experience financial crises, how they remember and draw lesson from that experience, and how they behave in their respective roles looking ahead. Unpacking this relationship is a major interdisciplinary undertaking that runs in parallel to a broader understanding of how policymakers and the people respond to crisis. But it is also essential if we are to foster lasting financial market integration in the European context.

Technology may be part of the solution as well. Much of the work in this area is discussed in Chapter 6. The two points to highlight here relate to the use of new technologies to make financial flows more efficient between central banks and commercial banks, on the one hand, and firms, consumers, and retailers, on the other hand. Such technologies are not without risks, but they open huge new opportunities. Helping policymakers understand their potential is an important first step.

Another important step is to help financial market regulators and supervisors recognize the implications of technological change for financial market stability. The Digital Currencies Academy, which is based at the Florence School of Banking and Finance and was launched in 2022, explores the potential of such central bank digital currencies and privately issued tokens to transform the monetary system. At the same time, the academy has highlighted the fast-changing regulatory landscape, in terms of both regulation of the EU's markets in crypto assets and the US Security and Exchange Commission's lawsuits against a number of established actors in the cryptocurrency field.

Looking ahead

The role of gender in analysis of questions in political economy remains a pressing issue. A recent workshop on how gender dimension in contemporary political economy is likely to evolve yielded further fruitful insights into how gender can be better integrated in existing debates in political economy. More broadly, the contribution of women can reshape how we understand the international system in matters of war and peace as well as international organisation – connecting this last chapter of our research agenda to the first one.

We also need to think about how best to prepare policymakers to adjust to the more turbulent environment. In this vein, the Florence School of Banking and Finance will continue to further increase its reach and influence. It has already served over 4400 course participants and 17,500 policy dialogue participants from over 370 institutions.

Its upcoming courses on climate risk, macro-prudential policy implantation and green bonds and other sustainable finance products will further strengthen its standing as a European forum for independent critical thought and informed debate by bringing together scholars and the world of practice, especially in the field of sustainable finance.

Finally, the Robert Schuman Centre will be celebrating its 30th anniversary in the coming academic year. A host of workshops and events are planned to commemorate this milestone and it can be expected that new collaborative ventures will be launched as a result of these initiatives.

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