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The European Union and national sovereignty: a new democratic challenge?

"A quarter of a century ago, most citizens were proud to live in a liberal democracy and strongly rejected authoritarian alternatives to their system of government. Now, many have gradually become hostile to democracy."

"A quarter of a century ago, political opponents were united in their shared respect for basic democratic rules and norms. Now, candidates who violate the most basic norms of liberal democracy have gained great power and influence."

Yasha Mounk, The People vs. Democracy, 2018

Democracy, as a political system, has a longstanding and multifaceted intellectual and institutional history, shaped by enduring divergences in interpretation and, consequently, in institutional design. Central to these divergences is the contested understanding of what constitutes "the power of the people".

As both an ideal and a system, democracy has undergone periods of ascendancy and decline, revealing a paradoxical combination of fragility and resilience. The 2010s stand as a testament to this duality: despite systemic failures, repression, and dire prognostications, a series of democratic uprisings emerged with considerable force across multiple regions.

In recent years, however, democracy appears to be facing a renewed crisis of legitimacy, even as it achieved widely recognition at the international level. Notably, this crisis is not driven solely by external adversaries but increasingly emanates from within long-standing democratic states. In these contexts, liberal democracy is being discredited by political actors who once positioned themselves as its defenders. Under a second Trump administration, the United States has

unexpectedly and forcefully repositioned itself as the vanguard of a radically diminished vision of democracy[1]. This alternative model, often articulated in populist and authoritarian terms, is characterized by rhetorical attacks on democratic institutions, accusations of illegitimacy directed at senior officials, and open support for political networks that seek to undermine democratic norms and structures. These actors frequently portray liberal democracy as an exclusionary and coercive system—an opaque elite apparatus imposing quasi-totalitarian decisions on national populations.

In light of the growing appeal of this reductive conception of democracy, a pressing question emerges: does the European Union retain the normative and institutional capacity to assert itself as a credible, distinct, and potentially restorative model of democratic governance? While a definitive answer remains elusive, it is evident that the European Union must undertake more concerted and strategic efforts to articulate, defend, and promote its democratic values and institutional frameworks—both within its borders and on the global stage.

[1] Speech by J.D. Vance at the Munich Security Conference, 15 February 2025.

THE INTERDEPENDENT PILLARS OF
DEMOCRACY

From a geopolitical standpoint, it would be inaccurate to assert that democracy is undergoing a general decline. Despite the serious concerns raised by contemporary political scientists—particularly in North America[2]—democracy remains a vital and globally resonant form of governance. In fact, it currently enjoys an unprecedented level of support, as citizens across diverse regions continue to express demands for political systems grounded in principles of justice, freedom, security, and shared prosperity[3].

Nevertheless, there exists a widespread perception of democratic regression. This perception is frequently attributed to the phenomenon of democratic fatigue or disaffection, which has been observed and documented by numerous scholars since the early 2000s[4]. This trend was further exacerbated by two major global crises: the financial collapse of 2008 and the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in 2020. Both events exposed institutional vulnerabilities and deepened public scepticism toward democratic efficacy and responsiveness.

In addition to these structural pressures, the impression of regression can be linked to the global proliferation—since the 1990s—of hybrid regimes often referred to as “illiberal democracies”[5] or “democratures”[6]. These regimes, while retaining democratic façades such as elections and formal institutions, undermine core democratic norms including judicial independence, civil liberties, and media freedom. Their persistence and recurrence have contributed significantly to the erosion of public trust in liberal democratic models.

Most notably, this sense of backsliding must be understood in the context of a more recent surge in nationalist and populist movements. These movements actively seek to redefine democracy, often framing it in majoritarian or exclusionary terms, at a moment when liberal democracy had seemingly achieved a level of broad international consensus. In doing so, they challenge the normative foundations

of democratic governance and threaten to destabilize the institutional equilibrium that has underpinned global democratic development in recent decades.

A consensual definition of democracy

Admittedly, neither the United Nations Charter nor the [UDHR](#) ventured after the war to address the relationship between human rights and political regimes, nor did they list the foundations of the best possible political regime. They did not dwell much on political rights, except for the founding article on the right of citizens to participate actively in government (Article 21). This article remained the only ‘international’ reference for a long time. It was taken up and clarified in Article 25 of the [ICCPR](#) of 1966, recognising that ‘*everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives*’, adding that ‘*voting shall be based on universal and equal suffrage and shall be free*’.

The muted status of democracy within the international order is also rooted in the geopolitical dynamics of the Cold War, during which its ideological defense became a domain of intense and often contradictory contestation. From 1945 to 1990, democracy was the object of a protracted struggle for influence between the so-called “free world,” led by Western liberal democracies, and the Soviet Chinese communist bloc. Within this context, the recognition of the centrality of human rights as a foundational component of democratic governance was significantly delayed. Core democratic principles—particularly universal suffrage and the implications of the right to vote—were vigorously contested and frequently subverted for strategic purposes.

A tentative convergence between the competing blocs did not emerge until the 1970s, notably with the signing of the [Helsinki Accords](#) in 1975. Even then, fundamental rights remained largely absent or explicitly prohibited in the so-called “people’s democracies” of the Eastern bloc. In parallel, many states within the Western alliance, as well as those aligned with the Non-Aligned Movement, offered only limited endorsement

[2] Daniel Ziblatt & Steven Levitsky *How Democracies Die* (Crow, 2018)

[3] See, for example, the uprisings and protests in Iran (1997, 2009, 2016-2018, 2019, 2022-2023), the Arab Spring of 2011, the Russian Winter of 2012, the Maidan Revolution of 2014, the Belarusian protests of 2020, and the African anti-corruption protests (Senegal 2011, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Gabon, Chad, 2013). In 2019, pro-democracy protests took place in Colombia, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Iraq, Lebanon, Algeria, Sudan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, among others.

[4] Pascal Perrineau, *Le désenchantement démocratique* (l’Aube, 2003) or Marcel Gauchet, *Vers une démocratie désenchantée ?* (Fides, 2013).

[5] Democratically elected regimes that ignore their constitutional limits and eliminate them along with the fundamental rights of their citizens: see the analyses by Fareed Zakaria, in [The Rise of Illiberal Democracy](#), *Foreign Affairs*, 1997 ; [The Future of Democracy: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad](#), (WW Norton & Company, 2007)

[6] Dictatorships disguised as democracies through the organisation of unfree, methodically fraudulent elections, cf Max Liniger-Gounaz, *La démocratie: Dictature camouflée, démocratie truquée*, L’Harmattan, 1992.

or implementation of these rights. Consequently, the global discourse on democracy during this period was often marked by inconsistency, instrumentalization, and ideological distortion.

Despite persistent critiques and efforts to undermine the liberal democratic model, it continued to expand and eventually gave rise to a coherent set of normative principles that came to define "good" democracy in international discourse. A significant contribution to this conceptual consolidation came from the political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset (1922–2006), who, in the early 1960s, articulated a framework of seven essential characteristics that he regarded as constitutive of democracy. Lipset metaphorically described these features as the "seven pillars" of democracy, emphasizing the interdependence and systemic coherence necessary for its stability and legitimacy[7]. Modelling their symbolic figure on the famous verse from the Book of Proverbs (IX, 1-6): *'Wisdom has built herself a house; she has hewn out seven pillars,'* Lipset considered the pillars of his ideal democracy as:

1. Access to power through open elections.
2. The regular, competitive, free and fair nature of the electoral process.
3. Competition between parties/ideas and the protection of the rights and legitimate place of the opposition.
3. The prior organisation, through a constitutional contract, of the separation of powers, their respective competences and independence.
4. A set of prior and shared values, which are set out in the fundamental text.
5. A set of rights and freedoms that express these values and must be protected and promoted.
6. Regulated economic development, characterised by high average income and good general living conditions.
7. A constantly monitored rule of law and specific attention to respect for minorities, understood as ethnic, racial and religious minorities.

A belated, low-key international consensus

On this fundamental basis, international recognition of democracy was affirmed in the 1990s. [The Inter-](#)

[Parliamentary Union](#), created in 1889 comprising 181 members, issued two pioneering texts: [a Declaration on the criteria for free and fair elections](#) (1994), in which it affirmed that, in every State, the authority of public powers can only be based on the will of the people, expressed through sincere, free and fair elections; a [Universal Declaration on Democracy](#) (1997), skilfully referring to the Agenda for Democratisation, presented by the UN Secretary-General to the General Assembly on 20 December 1996. It states that *"democracy is a universally recognized ideal as well as a goal, which is based on common values shared by peoples throughout the world community irrespective of cultural, political, social and economic differences. It is thus a basic right of citizenship to be exercised under conditions of freedom, equality, transparency and responsibility, with due respect for the plurality of views, and in the interest of the polity."*

Taking advantage of dual growth in the number of States in the world and the ever-increasing number of parliaments in those States, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, a permanent observer at the United Nations, provided the framework for an unprecedented resolution: during the [New York World Summit in 2005](#), States recognise democracy as a universal goal. In an article, they commit to *'actively defend and promote (with all the rights that go with it) the rule of law and democracy,'* because *'democracy is a universal value that comes from the freely expressed will of people to define their own political, economic, social, and cultural systems, and is based on their full participation in all aspects of their lives.'* Although the resolution takes the precaution of recognising that *'there is no single model of democracy'* and that *'democracy is not the preserve of any one country or region'*, it concludes with a statement that has never been so clearly articulated: *'democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing'.*

Recent efforts by regional organisations

At the same time, the conditions for 'good' democracy found their way into other founding and later texts of regional intergovernmental organisations dedicated to

[7] Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (Doubleday, 1960)

human rights. Hence the Council of Europe's [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (1950), stated that the preservation of fundamental freedoms '*depends essentially on a genuine democratic political system*'. Although the Convention remained silent on political rights, its 1952 Additional Protocol established an '*obligation*' on signatory states to '*hold free elections at reasonable intervals*', a requirement linked to the context of the Cold War and the distortion of the electoral principle in communist regimes. However, this protocol did not proclaim the corresponding rights to vote and stand for election. It was not until the end of the Cold War that the States meeting at the Copenhagen Summit (1990) recognised that '*pluralist democracy and the rule of law are essential for the full respect of all human rights and fundamental freedoms*'.

The Council of Europe's democratic bias has spread to other regional organisations, whether or not they are dedicated to human rights. For example, the Organisation of American States, founded in 1948, adopted an [Interamerican Democratic Charter](#), on the day of the attacks on the World Trade Centre. The Charter established a set of values and rights, including human rights and fundamental freedoms; the holding of periodic, free and fair elections; transparency, probity and respect for social rights; the exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law; a pluralistic system of political parties and organisations; the separation and independence of public authorities; and the right and duty of all citizens to participate in decision-making.

In turn, the Organisation of African Unity - which became the African Union in 2002- adopted the [Declaration on the principles governing democratic elections](#) (2002), before preparing, from 2003 onwards, the [African Charter on democracy, elections and governance](#), (2006 -2007). Finally, ASEAN, originally an economic community that was reorganised at the beginning of the 21st century, adopted the [Asean Charter](#). The Organisation undertakes to promote fundamental rights and freedoms in the institutions of each member country (Art. 1.7). These countries must also respect democratic principles (Art. 2.2 h and i), including the alternation of power and electoral processes, which led to an unprecedented wave of electoral battles in

the 2010s, although unfortunately the results of the polls were not always respected (Indonesia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines).

THE UNIQUE DEMOCRATIC TRAJECTORY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

In this context of an increasingly globalised normative environment—characterised by a broad trend toward the diffusion of democratic norms and convergence around shared criteria—it is evident that the international recognition of democracy has advanced progressively over time. This evolution has been closely tied to foundational texts, institutional objectives, and procedural frameworks articulated and promoted by regional organisations, which have played a pivotal role in codifying and disseminating democratic principles.

It is therefore not surprising to find democratic values as a structuring element of the European Union. The EU has maintained and continues to maintain a unique relationship with democracy: like other regional organisations (now), it refers to a democratic foundation made up of interdependent principles (Article 2 of the TEU). Much more boldly than ASEAN, it requires that states applying for membership, as well as existing member states, conduct themselves within their sovereign territory in accordance with the explicit and implicit criteria of these principles, on pain of non-membership for the former (Article 49 TEU and the 1993 Copenhagen criteria) or sanctions for the latter (Article 7 TEU). The only option for a State that refuses to accept these criteria, which are declared principles of the Union, would be to leave the said Union through a withdrawal agreement (Article 50 TEU). Unless the call is made for a boycott and a 'rewrite'— a scenario which is not so far-fetched.

A space in which to make democratic demands

For the time being, the European Union strikes a balance between setting an example and experimenting. Setting an example comes first, because through its [two consolidated treaties](#), (TEU and TFEU), It clearly sets out the foundations that must also be accepted by those who wish to join: '*The European Union is founded*

on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights (as set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union), including the rights of persons belonging to minorities (2, TEU).'

Article 49, which specifies the conditions for accession to the European Union, does not contain any explicit procedure for verifying that the applicant countries respect human rights, democracy and the rule of law in their constitutions. However, the criteria for accession were quickly set out on paper at the Copenhagen European Council (1993), the first requirement of which remains institutional stability '*guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for minorities*'. These minimum political criteria are based on the same foundation identified by Lipset and other contemporary political scientists — free and regular elections, separation of powers and competences, control and monitoring mechanisms, political pluralism and competition, and the centrality of fundamental freedoms.

An original democratic space

The European Union, which was established as an institutional entity, also comprises a dynamic dimension of democratic experimentation, parallel to national constitutional systems. It is not a federal republic, although it borrows some of its characteristics. Nor is it a simple inter-state organisation that pools or creates competences for functional reasons. As a specific democratic entity, it is imbued in all its workings with the experience of 'democratic wisdom' and the long-standing practice of deliberation, negotiation and consensus. Its institutions and mechanisms can be analysed in the light of fundamental principles: electoral legitimacy, representation, separation of powers, citizen participation and the rule of law.

It has a body of policy listed in Article 20 of the TFEU and the Charter of Fundamental Rights^[8], which supplements national law. Its 450 million citizens vote at regular intervals to send their representatives to the European Parliament in elections held by universal suffrage at national level, through the parties in power,

which then form political groups. Thus, '*the functioning of the Union shall be founded on representative democracy*' (Article 10 TEU).

The body of representative democracy has shared legislative power^[9], substantial budgetary powers and powers of control over the Commission. The Parliament elects the President of the Commission, who is nominated by the European Council, on the basis of the results of the European elections. The Parliament may also censure the Commission and dismiss it as a whole (Article 234 TFEU) in the event of a major crisis.

The European Union also has a three-dimensional, multilateral executive body whose democratic legitimacy derives, on the one hand, from the sovereign nature of its decision-making members, who are the heads of the Member States and ministers of the governments in office (European Council, Council of the European Union). On the other hand, its democratic legitimacy derives from the elective mechanisms for appointing the Commission (Article 17 TFEU) and the electoral approval of its actions.

Finally, the European Union has its own judiciary, whose judges are appointed by common agreement of the Member States, with one judge per Member State for the Court of Justice and two per Member State for the General Court. This judicial body merges in spirit and in its functioning a set of separate courts within the national systems. It ensures that EU law is interpreted uniformly in all Member States. It can also check that the European institutions comply with the Treaties and do not exceed their powers. The Court of Justice is primarily referred to by the Commission when it wishes to take action against a Member State that is not complying with EU law or its own democratic procedures (Article 7 TEU, Article 258 TFEU), but it may also be referred to by Member States, EU institutions or citizens to request the annulment of an EU legal act or to compel an institution to take a decision. Finally, the European Court of Justice is consulted by national courts on its own interpretations.

^[8] Right to move and reside freely (Article 21 TFEU and Article 45 of the Charter), right to vote and stand as a candidate in European and local elections (Article 22 TFEU), consular protection from a Member State in the event of non-representation by one's own country (Article 23 TFEU), right to petition the Parliament (Article 24 TEU, Article 44 of the Charter) Right to refer matters to the European Ombudsman in the event of administrative failure or irregularity in the EU (Article 228 TFEU), right of reply (Article 24), right to launch or support a European initiative (Article 11 TEU)

^[9] with the Council. Parliament does not initiate legislation, which is the responsibility of the Commission, but debates and adopts (or rejects) the Commission's legislative proposals (directives, regulations, decisions).

All these areas of competence mean that the Court 'creates' its own case law, which is binding throughout the European Union: thus, the case law [Google v. Casteja Gonzalez](#) of 13 May 2014 established a right to be forgotten online, strengthening European citizens' rights over their personal data. This case law preceded and inspired certain principles of the GDPR (2018).

IS THE EUROPEAN UNION ANTI-DEMOCRATIC? THE ARGUMENTS OF MINIMALIST DEMOCRATS

It is precisely the dynamic, evolving, and institutionally complex nature of the European Union that has rendered it a target for critique by the emerging coalition of so-called 'minimalist neo-democrats', who are increasingly coordinating their efforts on both sides of the Atlantic. This ideological alignment, sometimes referred to as a "reactionary international," frames liberal democracy not as a legitimate political model, but as a disingenuous or coercive construct—a so-called "liberal scam." In response, these actors promote a counter-model grounded in notions of national sovereignty, cultural homogeneity, and executive centralism. Their objective is twofold: to dismantle the liberal democratic order in the Western hemisphere and to delegitimize the European Union's vision of a multilevel, decentralised, and normatively balanced democratic system. The EU, in their discourse, is frequently portrayed not as a supranational expression of democratic cooperation, but rather as a technocratic vehicle for Franco-German hegemony.

In place of the seven pillars of democratic wisdom, the Trump II team has forged an alternative consensus, with much narrower, reduced and, frankly, simplistic replacement pillars. The nation and its sovereignty are confused with an organic community, a singular *demos* whose collective will be a kind of preconceived identity-based unanimity, linked to the genius of a culture, language, memory, customs and local institutions, and above all accepting to submit to the command of a charismatic leader who expresses them in a superior manner.

By dint of replacement, the 'anti-democratic model' proposed to peoples described as being denied their right to express themselves or deprived of their own voice could very well cease to be democratic at all, because it would lead both to a challenge to freedoms, divided into true and false freedoms, and to a challenge to the elements of democratic order. Once again, the great wheel of modern fortune is turning, offering our complex regimes, with all their fatigue and flaws, the comfort of authoritarian and quickly repressive leadership. Once again, a form of enlightened despotism claims to save endangered peoples and nations from inevitable decline.

The shift in political gravity in the United States is in fact exposing a fracture in the Western consensus that has been at work for some fifteen years. On the one hand, nationalist and populist movements have methodically chiselled away at the resentment of populations disenfranchised by globalisation, accusing their elites of sacrificing them for their own interests and selfishness and shamelessly replacing them with outsiders, foreigners, conquerors and criminals. On the other, the liberal democratic cause has been subverted by its lack of collective project. The defence of rights and freedoms has focused on the defence of oppressed minorities and their social exclusion as a new political horizon, incorporating sexual minorities, and soon even gender minorities, into an amalgam with religious minorities as the ideal type of the discriminated[10]. At the same time, the revisionist powers, Russia and China, have echoed these internal debates, expressing contemptuous rejection. The 'Westerners' have been accused of decadence and impudence, of disorder and interference, and in both cases of cultural colonialism. The revisionist empires have spread their repressive counterculture through propaganda and disinformation as desirable models of cohesion and stability.

BREAKING DOWN THE DEMOCRATIC BARRIERS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The European elections in June 2024 showed that citizens had not yet decided to throw out their freedoms along with the democratic bathwater. However, it is not insignificant to see a project emerging in Europe that is

[10] Daniel Ziblatt, Steven Levitsky, *Tyranny of the Minorities: Why The American Democracy Reached the Break Point* (Crown 2023).

equivalent to the Heritage Foundation's [Project 2025](#), whose 900 pages has served as a handbook for Donald Trump and his teams. This text represents a practical and ideological distillation of democratic destruction, with a view to eradicating liberal progressivism. Methodically applied by Donald Trump II, this project seeks to dismantle the entire institutional apparatus of the federal system and its administrative waste, with the aim of eradicating the woke, ecological and social 'ideology' that has supposedly infected the entire political regime. It is nothing less than the removal of rights and freedoms (except those that it is decided should be retained) unless they are seriously restricted (excluding, for example, the idea that sexuality and reproduction should be understood as freedoms). It is nothing less than abandoning the rule of law and subjecting the legislative and judicial powers to the primacy of the executive, both Leviathan and the armed wing of its people. In short, it is a proto-fascist project, whose slippery slope has been vehemently denounced by historian Timothy Snyder, now exiled in Canada[11].

In Europe, in March 2025, a project tinged with narrow ideas of national conservatism[12] — democracy is subordinate to the rights of the Nation — [The Great Reset](#), aims to undermine the foundations of the European Union, either by modifying it or by dismantling it outright, while using the argument that it is not democratic as its main argument. The authors are not isolated and disconnected from decision-making centres. On the Hungarian side, the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) is Viktor Orbán's mouthpiece in the world of strategic thinking and education. Led by the Prime Minister's chief adviser, it has received the equivalent of \$1.3 billion from the Hungarian state and is actively seeking to establish itself in Brussels. On the Polish side, the ultra-conservative Ordo Iuris centre has worked on behalf of the PiS, (in power in Poland until 2023) which several former ministers have already said was a source of inspiration.

Rhetorically, the report does not advocate revolution but rather a 'return to fundamentals' — rewriting the history of European integration in the process, sweeping

aside the figures and beliefs of its founding fathers in favour of a little-known 'federalist-communist' dynamic (the [Manifesto of Ventotene \(1941\)](#)), recently exhumed by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. The core argument of the *Great Reset* — not to be confused with the eponymous book by the World Economic Forum (2020) — can be summed up in one sentence: *'The essence of democracy is expressed in the principle of national representation: elected officials acting on behalf of the citizens of a distinct community that shares a common culture, history and interests. There is no representation without a political community, and there is no real political community without a nation.'* Since the European Union is not a nation, it cannot be a political community. All its democratic parameters are a farce, because not only are its institutions not all elected by the people (which is also the case in national democracies), but its decision-making system is opaque: neither the states, 'reduced' by the principle of majority decision-making, nor the citizens, *'who do not know what is going on'*, are respected in their will, their sovereignty being flouted. In forty pages, we slide from an anti-democratic Union to an illegitimate Union, because only the nation state, through its sovereignty, possesses the conditions for democracy, i.e. limits, its own territory and a specific people who vote for their own interests.

This project proposes a new European treaty of 'non-Union' — without specifying how it would be ratified — *'where there should be an explicit provision stipulating that it has no competence in political matters (...)'* and that *'the constitutional system, the legal order, the protection of civil rights and freedoms, social affairs, the family, education, culture and moral issues shall be the exclusive competence of the nation states (with the proviso that) neither the European Economic Union (EEU) nor individual states shall be permitted to interfere in the internal affairs of other Member States'*. With this draft, we see the emergence of a planned objective to remove references to European liberal democracy and break its entanglement in the political systems of European nations.

[11] Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny*, (Ten Speed Graphic, 2021), *The Road to Unfreedom* (Random House, 2018), *On Freedom*, (Crown, 2024)

[12] Yoram Hazony, *The Virtue of Nationalism*, (Basic Books, 2018). *Conservatism, A Rediscovery* (Regnery Gateway, 2022)

It is therefore incumbent upon the European Union to consolidate, for the benefit of its citizens, the objectives of its international action, which, according to Article 21 of the TEU, is based on '*the principles which have inspired its own creation, namely democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights (...)*'. The most recent [Eurobarometer](#) shows that support for the European Union has never been stronger. The EU should therefore decide to provide massive support for domestic democratic think-tanks and further improve the democratic transparency of funding and communication in election campaigns in Member States – something it has already begun to do through the fight against online and media disinformation and the [foreign interference](#). Finally, it should spearhead a massive and ongoing campaign to

raise awareness of the 'great awakening' of democracy, including by funding European news and entertainment 'channels' that shall be much better funded than the current Franco-German channel ARTE, or by promoting 'new democratic ideas'[13], to shake it out of its torpor and the relative disaffection of the electorate. In short, the European Union should (once again) become a serious reservoir and laboratory for democratic experimentation.

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[13] As does this collective book
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