



DRAFT PROPOSALS - VALUES AND RIGHTS, RULE OF LAW, SECURITY

Proposal I: Rule of Law, Democratic values and European identity¹

Objective: Systematically uphold the rule of Law across all Member States, in particular by:

1. Ensuring that the values and principles enshrined in the EU Treaties and in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights are non-negotiable, irreversible and sine qua non conditions for EU membership and accession. EU values should be fully upheld in all Member States also so they can act as an international standard and pole of attraction through diplomacy and dialogue. When evaluating the enlargement of the EU, consideration should be given, in combination with a short-term economic cost-benefit analysis, to the added value for long-term political and economic stability in Europe;²
2. Making European values tangible for EU citizens, especially through more interactive and direct involvement. To this end, the European citizenship should be strengthened for instance through a European citizenship statute providing citizen-specific rights and freedoms, as well as a statute for European cross-border associations and non-profit organisations. Didactic elements on European values should also be promoted, by providing information material and by means of a new EU media hub including audiovisual and online media;³
3. Annual conferences on the rule of law (following the Commission' Rule of law Report) with delegations from all Member States involving randomly selected and diverse citizens, civil servants, parliamentarians, civil society and other stakeholders should be organised, and the EU Charter of Fundamental rights made more applicable and enforceable;⁴
4. Effectively applying and evaluating the scope of the 'Conditionality Regulation' and other rule of law instruments, and considering possible extensions to new areas regardless of their relevance for the EU budget. Any necessary legal avenues, including Treaty changes, should be considered to punish breaches of the rule of law;⁵
5. Fostering educational and media programmes that make EU values part of migrants' integration process and encourage interactions between migrants and EU citizens, with a view to ensuring their successful integration within EU societies and to create awareness among EU citizens about migration-related issues.⁶

¹ Citizens' recommendations on which the proposal is mainly based: European Citizens' Panel 2 (ECP2): 10, 11, 14, 30; Belgium National Citizens' Panel (NCP): 1.3.1, 1.4.2, 1.4.3; Germany NCP: 5.1, 5.2; The Netherlands NCP: 1.2.

² ECP2 recommendation number 14. Belgian NCP recommendation number 1.3.1, 1.4.2, 1.4.3. Dutch NCP recommendation 1.2.

³ ECP2 recommendation number 11. German NCP recommendation number 5.1, 5.2.

⁴ ECP2 recommendation number 11.

⁵ ECP2 recommendation number 10.

⁶ ECP2 recommendation number 30.

Proposal II: Data Protection⁷

Objective: Guarantee a more protective and citizen-oriented data treatment policy, in particular by:

1. Implementing in full the existing data privacy legislation and reviewing it to evaluate, if necessary, the establishment of an EU license for entities processing personal data, currently under competence of independent national data protection authorities. Such entities should be sanctioned in a stricter way than in the current implementation of the regulation, in proportion to their annual turnover (up to 4%), and be subject to annual independent audit. Violations should lead to the EU license being lifted;⁸
2. Giving more effect to the principle of privacy by design and default, e.g. by evaluating and introducing easily understandable, concise and user-friendly harmonised data processing consent forms that clearly indicate what is necessary and what not. Users must be able to give or withdraw their consent to data processing in an easy, fast and permanent manner;⁹
3. Evaluating and introducing clearer and more protective rules about the processing of minors' data, possibly in the EU GDPR, including through the creation of a special category for sensitive minors' data and the harmonization of age consent threshold within the EU Member States. While the bulk of privacy rules implementation and awareness raising should remain within Member States' remit, including through higher investment and further resources at national level, the EU should also have stronger role e.g. by creating EU competences on civic education concerning data protection;¹⁰
4. Better enforcing eligibility criteria for the European and national Data Protection Authorities, in terms of qualifications and suitability, to ensure the highest level of independence of their members.¹¹

Proposal III: Media, Fake news, Disinformation, Fact-checking, Cybersecurity¹²

Objective: Tackle disinformation by further promoting media independence and pluralism as well as media literacy, in particular by:

1. Introducing a legislation addressing threats to media independence through EU-wide minimum standards, including a review of the media business model to ensure the integrity and independence of the EU media market;¹³
2. Strictly enforcing EU competition rules in the media sector, in order to prevent large media monopolies and ensure media pluralism and independence from undue political and/or foreign

⁷ Citizens' recommendations on which the proposal is mainly based: ECP2: 7, 8, 9; The Netherlands NCP: 1.3, 4.3.

⁸ ECP2 recommendation number 7.

⁹ ECP2 recommendation number 9.

¹⁰ ECP2 recommendation number 8. Dutch NCP recommendation number 1.3, 4.3.

¹¹ ECP2 recommendation number 7, 8.

¹² Citizens' recommendations on which the proposal is mainly based: ECP2: 5, 12, 13, 17, 28; Belgium NCP: 1.5.1, 2.1.1 up to 2.4.3; The Netherlands NCP: 3.1.

¹³ ECP2 recommendation number 5. Belgian NCP recommendation number 2.1.1. Dutch NCP recommendation 3.1.

interference. Quality journalism, with established high ethical and self-regulatory standards, should also be promoted;¹⁴

3. Setting up an EU body in charge of addressing and tackling targeted disinformation and interference, increasing situational awareness and strengthening fact-checking organisations as well as independent media. ‘Hotlines’ and websites, such as Europe Direct, where citizens as well as national media can request and be provided with fact-checked information on European politics and policies, should also be further supported and promoted more actively;¹⁵
4. Promoting citizens’ media literacy and awareness about disinformation and unintentional dissemination of fake news, including through mandatory school trainings. Member States should also be encouraged to provide adequate human and financial resources to this end;¹⁶
5. Building on existing initiatives, such as the Code of Practice on Disinformation and the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO), to require online platforms to issue clear statements about the algorithms they use (leaving users to decide whether they consent to be subjected to them) and the disinformation risks users are exposed to, while safeguarding the right for legal free speech and right to privacy.¹⁷

Objective: A stronger role for the EU in countering cybersecurity threats, in particular by:

1. Reinforcing the EU agency for cybersecurity (ENISA) in order to further protect individuals, organisations and institutions against cybersecurity breaches and the use of artificial intelligence for criminal purposes. Data privacy and protection of personal data should, at the same time, be safeguarded;¹⁸
2. Enhancing the coordination of national cybersecurity authorities and making additional efforts in ensuring that EU-level rules are well implemented at national level.¹⁹

Proposal IV: Anti-discrimination, Equality and Quality of life²⁰

Objective: Take action to harmonize living conditions across the EU and improve EU citizens’ socio-economic quality of life, in particular by:

1. After defining a set of economic and quality of life indicators in consultation with experts and social partners, developing quality of life measurements as well as public information on them, in order to establish a clear and realistic timeline for achieving a common EU socio-economic structure. These should be integrated in the economic governance framework and the European semester process;²¹

¹⁴ ECP2 recommendation number 12. Belgian NCP recommendation 2.1.4.

¹⁵ ECP2 recommendation number 17 and 28. Belgian NCP recommendation number 1.5.1, 2.1.3, 2.2.1., 2.2.2.

¹⁶ ECP2 recommendation number 5 and 28. Belgian NCP recommendation 2.3.2, 2.3.3.

¹⁷ ECP 2 recommendation number 28. Belgian NPC recommendation 2.3.1., 2.4.1., 2.4.2.

¹⁸ ECP2 recommendation number 13.

¹⁹ ECP2 recommendation number 13.

²⁰ Citizens’ recommendations on which the proposal is mainly based: ECP2: 1, 2, 21, 22, 23; The Netherlands NCP: 1.1.

²¹ ECP2 recommendation number 22.

2. Increasing direct public investment in education, health, housing, physical infrastructures, care for the elderly and people with disabilities. Additional investment should also aim to guarantee appropriate work/life balance for citizens. Such investment should be carried out in a fully transparent manner, allowing to track the entire process;²²
3. Encouraging taxing large corporations, fighting access to tax havens and eliminating their existence in the EU with a view to increasing public investment in priority areas such as education (scholarships, Erasmus) and research. EU-wide fight against tax evasion should be also a mean to raise funds for publically financed initiatives;²³
4. Providing EU-wide criteria on anti-discrimination in the labour market and beyond and incentivizing the hiring by private companies of people that are usually most subject to discrimination (e.g. youth, elders, women, minorities), including through subsidies, and, as a second step, temporary quotas. Trade unions and other social partners should be closely associated in this regard;²⁴
5. Creating a mandatory promotion and facilitation of affordable kindergartens within companies.²⁵

Proposal V: Animal rights, Agriculture²⁶

Objective: Take decisive measures to promote and guarantee a more ecological and climate-oriented agriculture, in particular by:

1. Setting detailed, measurable and time-bound minimum criteria for the protection of farming animals, with a view to ensuring higher animal wellbeing standards in line with the introduction of sustainability objectives and on the basis of an integrated food system approach;²⁷
2. Introducing financial penalties for negative externalities of agricultural activity (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions, use of pesticides, water overuse, long-haul transport, etc.) based on their environmental impact. Agricultural goods imported into the EU should also be gauged on that basis, including through custom duties, as a way to iron out any competitive advantage arising from lower environmental standards;²⁸
3. Reducing subsidies for agricultural mass production where it does not contribute to a sustainable transition and redirect those resources to support an environmentally sustainable agriculture, whilst ensuring affordable food products.²⁹

²² ECP2 recommendation number 21. Dutch NCP recommendation number 1.1.

²³ ECP2 recommendation number 23.

²⁴ ECP2 recommendation number 1.

²⁵ ECP2 recommendation number 2.

²⁶ Citizens' recommendations on which the proposal is mainly based: ECP2: 3, 4, 6.

²⁷ ECP2 recommendation number 3.

²⁸ ECP2 recommendation number 4.

²⁹ ECP2 recommendation number 6.