THE EPIC EUROPE MANIFESTO
A Sustainable, secure and social union.

WE ARE EPIC

A THINKING MOVEMENT

1 | The Geopolitical Necessity of a United Europe

In an increasingly interconnected and volatile global landscape, the necessity of a united Europe hasnever been more evident. No single European nation can effectively address the myriad challenges we face alone. From global trade tensions and climate change to security threats and technological advancements, only a cohesive and strong European Union can safeguard our shared values and interests. A united Europe amplifies our collective voice on the global stage, ensuring that we remaininfluential and capable of shaping the future in accordance with our principles of democracy, human rights, and sustainable development.

2 | Unity in Diversity

Regardless of our linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic differences, Europeans share the continent's arts, architecture, religions, and the intertwined threads of our national histories. The European Union is not a melting pot designed to smother these differences; rather, it is our common home where diversity can coexist, differences can be resolved, and conflicts can be transformed into negotiations and compromises that lead to progress. This union provides a framework within which we can celebrate our rich heritage, address our challenges collectively, and build a future that respects and embraces the uniqueness of each member state while fostering a shared sense of identity and purpose.

3 | Embracing Liberal Democracy and Humanism

Europe has a long and dark history of both illiberal (totalitarian and autocratic) and undemocratic regimes. We affirm our unwavering belief in liberal democracy as the best system of governance—democracy because it empowers the people to decide their future, and liberalism because it ensures that executive powers are limited so that not even democratic decisions can infringe upon the inviolable rights of the individual. This balance safeguards our fundamental freedoms and upholds the dignity of every person. Our commitment to these principles has given us the most peaceful and prosperous 70 years of European history. We have succeeded in rebuilding our continent and achieving unprecedented levels of growth, technological advancement, political stability, and social solidarity. Our dedication to these values has transformed Europe into a beacon of peace and prosperity, and it is this legacy we must continue to uphold and advance for future generations.

4 | Our First Priority: A Sustainable Union

Our foremost priority is sustainability. We aim to make Europe the first fully sustainable and carbon- neutral society within our lifetime. We can achieve this. However, sustainability does not mean de- industrializing the continent. Our sustainability goals must keep the human being at the center and should not be detached from technological and economic realities. We will transform Europe into a carbon-neutral society without devastating the livelihoods of millions or creating a new social classification of privileged and underprivileged people. Sustainable development must enhance the quality of life for all Europeans, ensuring inclusive growth and shared prosperity.

5 | Technology Agnostic Policies

Technology is our crucial ally in achieving sustainability goals. Our policies should be technology-agnostic, free from biases that favor one technological solution over another. There are many paths to a carbon-neutral society, and we must choose the most feasible ones given current technological and economic circumstances. By embracing a variety of technological solutions—whether in renewable energy, energy efficiency, or sustainable transport—we can create a resilient and adaptive approach to sustainability. Our focus should be on pragmatic, effective strategies that harness the best available technologies to achieve our environmental goals without compromising economic growth or social equity.

6 | Our Second Priority: A Secure Union

There is no sovereign political entity without the ability to defend itself. Building a truly European security and defence policy is essential for the EU's autonomy and protection. This requires common defence structures and unified security decision-making processes. There should be no incompatibility between European and national interests; in fact, these interests have never been so aligned. A robust European defence policy and industry ensure that Europe can independently safeguard its freedoms, maintain peace, and protect its citizens from emerging threats. We need a Europe that is free and secure, capable of defending its values and interests on the global stage. By integrating our defence capabilities, we can create a more resilient and capable Union that stands ready to face any challenge.

7 | European Strategic Autonomy and Transatlantic Relations

As the EU searches for its role on the global stage, it is natural that it also seeks to build the capacity to act independently, free from dependencies on third countries. European strategic autonomy is crucial, but it does not equate to protectionism or isolationism. Rather, it embodies the capability of Europe to make autonomous decisions and take actions that reflect our collective interests and values. It is about ensuring Europe can stand on its own while recognizing that the transatlantic partnership with the United States remains a cornerstone of the values-based order. The US is, and will continue to be, our most indispensable ally, and the transatlantic partnership will always be a pillar supporting global stability, democracy, and shared prosperity.

8 | Our Third Priority: A Social Union

Social policy has been a pillar of European societies and will remain so. It is a foundation for social cohesion and social peace, rooted in humanist values and the intrinsic rights of individuals to equal opportunities and support to live fulfilling lives. Europe has been undergoing an industrial and economic transformation based on sustainability and digitalization principles. The Union is obliged to provide the safety nets necessary to safeguard social unity and peace. This commitment ensures that no one is left behind during times of change, fostering a resilient and inclusive society.

9 | Europeans will live longer and healthier

In the spirit of social unity and peace, we are also obliged to support EU health policies that cater to an aging population while offering the best prospects for a healthy and long life to our youth. Prolonging the lifespan of human beings is a perennial quest for humankind, and more than ever it is within our grasp. By advancing healthcare innovation, enhancing cross-border medical cooperation, and ensuring equitable access to healthcare services, we can build a healthier Europe for all generations.

10 | Subsidiarity and Multi-Level Governance

The European level of governance complements existing levels of governance rather than superseding them. From the local to the regional, and from the national to the European, the subsidiarity principle should continue guiding our efforts to build a more secure and prosperous continent. There are no fundamental conflicts or incompatibilities between the different levels of governance. Instead, there is an evolution driven by internal factors (e.g., creating a single market) and external factors (e.g., responding to geopolitical pressures) that necessitate the addition of the European level. This does not mean that all EU regulation is good regulation. Balancing the different governance levels is a constant exercise that we should be mindful of to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

11 | The Need for EU Reforms

The EU needs reforms. No conference and no political statement can replace the reality of a Union that is not fully prepared to deal with our common problems, as its institutions and treaties were created for a different world. We need to reform the EU to make it more agile, responsive, and capable of addressing contemporary vchallenges. This includes streamlining decision-making processes, enhancing democratic accountability, and ensuring that EU policies are fit for purpose in today's rapidly changing global landscape. Only through continuous improvement and adaptation can the EU remain relevant and effective in meeting the needs and aspirations of its citizens.