



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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## Commission presents White Paper on the future of Europe: Avenues for unity for the EU at 27

As announced in President Juncker's 2016 State of the Union speech, the European Commission today presented a White Paper on the Future of Europe, which forms the Commission's contribution to the Rome Summit of 25 March 2017. As we prepare to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the EU, we look back on a peace spanning seven decades and on an enlarged Union of 500 million citizens living in freedom in one of the world's most prosperous economies. At the same time, the EU has to look forward at how it will carve a vision for its own future at 27. The White Paper sets out the main challenges and opportunities for Europe in the coming decade. It presents **five scenarios** for how the Union could evolve **by 2025** depending on how it chooses to respond.

European Commission President **Jean-Claude Juncker** said: *"60 years ago, Europe's founding fathers chose to unite the continent with the force of the law rather than with armed forces. We can be proud of what we have achieved since then. Our darkest day in 2017 will still be far brighter than any spent by our forefathers on the battlefield. As we mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, it is time for a united Europe of 27 to shape a vision for its future. It's time for leadership, unity and common resolve. The Commission's White Paper presents a series of different paths this united EU at 27 could choose to follow. It is the start of the process, not the end, and I hope that now an honest and wide-ranging debate will take place. The form will then follow the function. We have Europe's future in our own hands."*

The White Paper looks at how Europe will change in the next decade, from the impact of new technologies on society and jobs, to doubts about globalisation, security concerns and the rise of populism. It spells out the choice we face: being swept along by those trends, or embracing them and seizing the new opportunities they bring. Europe's population and economic weight is falling as other parts of the world grow. By 2060, none of our Member States will account for even 1% of the world's population – a compelling reason for sticking together to achieve more. A positive global force, Europe's prosperity will continue to depend on its openness and strong links with its partners.

The White Paper sets out **five scenarios**, each offering a glimpse into the potential state of the Union **by 2025** depending on the choices Europe will make (**see Annex**). The scenarios cover a range of possibilities and are illustrative in nature. They are neither mutually exclusive, nor exhaustive.

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- **Scenario 1: Carrying On** - The EU27 focuses on delivering its positive reform agenda in the spirit of the Commission's [New Start for Europe](#) from 2014 and of the [Bratislava Declaration](#) agreed by all 27 Member States in 2016. By 2025 this could mean:
  - Europeans can drive automated and connected cars but can encounter problems when crossing borders as some legal and technical obstacles persist.
  - Europeans mostly travel across borders without having to stop for checks. Reinforced security controls mean having to arrive at airports and train stations well in advance of departure.
- **Scenario 2: Nothing but the Single Market** – The EU27 is gradually re-centred on the single market as the 27 Member States are not able to find common ground on an increasing number of policy areas. By 2025 this could mean:
  - Crossing borders for business or tourism becomes difficult due to regular checks. Finding a job abroad is harder and the transfer of pension rights to another country not guaranteed. Those falling ill abroad face expensive medical bills.
  - Europeans are reluctant to use connected cars due to the absence of EU-wide rules and technical standards.
- **Scenario 3: Those Who Want More Do More** – The EU27 proceeds as today but allows willing Member States to do more together in specific areas such as defence, internal security or social matters. One or several "coalitions of the willing" emerge. By 2025 this could mean that:
  - 15 Member States set up a police and magistrates corps to tackle cross-border criminal activities. Security information is immediately exchanged as national databases are fully interconnected.
  - Connected cars are used widely in 12 Member States which have agreed to harmonise their liability rules and technical standards.
- **Scenario 4: Doing Less More Efficiently** - The EU27 focuses on delivering more and faster in selected policy areas, while doing less where it is perceived not to have an added value. Attention and limited resources are focused on selected policy areas. By 2025 this could mean
  - A European Telecoms Authority will have the power to free up frequencies for cross-border communication services, such as the ones used by connected cars. It will also protect the rights of mobile and Internet users wherever they are in the EU.
  - A new European Counter-terrorism Agency helps to deter and prevent serious attacks through a systematic tracking and flagging of suspects...
- **Scenario 5: Doing Much More Together** – Member States decide to share more power, resources and decision-making across the board. Decisions are agreed faster at European level and rapidly enforced. By 2025 this could mean:
  - Europeans who want to complain about a proposed EU-funded wind turbine project in their local area cannot reach the responsible authority as they are told to contact the competent European authorities.
  - Connected cars drive seamlessly across Europe as clear EU-wide rules exist. Drivers can rely on an EU agency to enforce the rules.

## Next Steps

The White Paper is the European's Commission contribution to the Rome Summit, the moment when the EU will discuss its achievements of the past 60 years but also its future at 27. The White Paper marks the beginning of a process for the EU27 to decide on the

future of their Union. To encourage this debate, the European Commission, together with the European Parliament and interested Member States, will host a series of 'Future of Europe Debates' across Europe's cities and regions.

The European Commission will contribute to the debate in the months to come with a series of reflection papers on:

- developing the social dimension of Europe;
- deepening the Economic and Monetary Union, on the basis of the Five Presidents' Report of June 2015;
- harnessing globalisation;
- the future of Europe's defence ;
- the future of EU finances.

Like the White Paper, the reflection papers will offer different ideas, proposals, options or scenarios for Europe in 2025 without presenting definitive decisions at this stage.

**President Juncker's State of the Union speech** in September 2017 will take these ideas forward before first conclusions could be drawn at the December 2017 European Council. This will help to decide on a course of action to be rolled out in time for the **European Parliament elections in June 2019**.

## Background

Sixty years ago, inspired by a dream of a peaceful, common future, the EU's founding members embarked on an ambitious journey of European integration, with the signing of the Treaties of Rome. They agreed to settle their conflicts around a table rather than in battlefields. As a result, the painful experience of Europe's troubled past has given way to a peace spanning seven decades and to a Union of 500 million citizens living in freedom and opportunity in one of the world's most prosperous economies.

The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaties of Rome on 25 March 2017 will be an important occasion for EU27 leaders to reflect on the state of play of our European project, to consider its achievements and strengths as well as areas for further improvement, and to show common resolve to shape a stronger future together at 27.

As announced by President Juncker in his [State of the Union speech of 14 September 2016](#), which was welcomed by the EU-27 leaders at the [Bratislava Summit of 16 September 2016](#), the Commission has today presented a White Paper on the future of Europe in order to launch the debate ahead of the Rome Summit.

The White Paper will serve to steer the debate among the 27 Heads of State or Government and help structure the discussion at the Rome Summit and well beyond. It will also be used by the Commission as the starting point for a wider public debate on the future of our continent.

## For More Information

European Commission White Paper on the future of Europe

[Webpage: The EU at 60](#)

The European Story: 60 years of shared progress

[President Juncker's 2016 State of the Union address: Towards a better Europe – a Europe that protects, empowers and defends](#)

## ANNEX: Five scenarios offering a glimpse into the potential state of the Union by 2025



### Carrying On

*The EU27 focuses on delivering its positive reform agenda*

- + The positive agenda of action continues to deliver concrete results
- + The unity of the EU at 27 is preserved
- The unity of the 27 may still be tested in the event of major disputes
- The gap between promise and delivery will only progressively be closed if there is collective resolve to deliver jointly



### Nothing but the Single Market

*The EU27 cannot agree to do more in many policy areas beyond key aspects of the single market*

- + Decision-making may be simpler to understand
- It becomes harder to address issues of concern to more than one Member State and therefore the gap between expectations and delivery widens on common challenges
- Citizens' rights guaranteed under EU law may become restricted over time



### Those Who Want More Do More

*The EU27 proceeds as today but allows willing Member States to do more together in specific areas*

- + The unity of the EU at 27 is preserved while progress is made possible for those who want more
- + The gap between expectation and delivery closes in countries who want and choose to do more
- Questions arise about the transparency and accountability of the different layers of decision-making
- Citizens' rights guaranteed under EU law vary depending on where people live



### Doing Less More Efficiently

*The EU27 focuses on delivering more and faster in selected policy areas not acting in where it is perceived not to have an added value*

- + European citizens feel that the EU is only acting where it has real added value
- + A clearer focus of resources and attention on a number of selected domains helps the EU27 to act faster
- The EU at first has difficulty in agreeing which areas it should prioritise



### Doing Much More Together

*Member States decide to do much more together across all policy areas*

- + There is far greater and quicker decision-making at EU level
- + Citizens have more rights under EU law
- Parts of society which feel that the EU lacks legitimacy or has taken too much power away from national authorities risk being alienated

