

Draft Declaration of the Representatives of 27 Member States and of the EU institutions

The Rome Declaration

(16 March)

We, the representatives of 27 Member States and the Institutions of the EU, take pride in the achievements of the European Union: the construction of European unity is a bold, far-sighted endeavour. Sixty years ago, recovering from the tragedy of two world wars, we decided to bond together and rebuild our continent from its ashes. We have built a Union with common institutions and strong values, a unique community of peace, democratic rights and the rule of law.

European unity started as the dream of a few, it became the hope of the many. Then Europe became one again. Today, we are united and stronger: hundreds of millions of people across Europe benefit from living in an enlarged Union that has overcome the old divides.

The European Union is facing unprecedented challenges, both global and domestic: regional conflicts, terrorism, growing migratory pressures, protectionism and social and economic inequalities. We are confident that the EU is capable of addressing these challenges of a rapidly changing world and offers to its citizens both security and new opportunities.

We are determined to make the EU stronger and more resilient, through even greater unity and solidarity amongst us. Unity is both a necessity and our free choice. Taken individually, we would be sidelined by global dynamics. Standing together is our best chance to influence them, and to defend our common interests and values. We will act together whenever possible, at different paces and intensity where necessary, as we have done in the past within the treaty framework and leaving the door open to those who want to join later. Our Union is undivided and indivisible.

In the 10 years to come we want a Union that is safe and secure, prosperous and sustainable, with an enhanced social dimension, and with the will and capacity of playing a key role in the global world. We want a Union where citizens have new opportunities for cultural, social development and economic growth. We want a Union which remains open to those European Countries that fully share our values.

In these times of change, we commit to the Rome Agenda, and pledge to work towards:

1. A safe and secure Europe: a Union where all citizens feel safe and can move freely, where our external borders are secured and where migration is managed effectively, humanely and in respect of international norms; a Europe determined to fight terrorism and organised crime.
2. A prosperous and sustainable Europe: a Union which creates growth, where a vast and developing Single Market and a stable and further strengthened single currency opens avenues for growth, competitiveness, innovation and exchange; a Union promoting sustained and sustainable growth, through investment, structural reforms and the completion of the Economic and Monetary Union; a Union where economies converge; a Union where energy is secure and affordable and the environment clean and safe.

3. A social Europe: a Union which promotes economic and social progress as well as cohesion and convergence, taking into account the variety of social models and the key role of social partners; a Union which promotes gender equality and rights and equal opportunities for all; a Union which fights discrimination, social exclusion and poverty; a Union where young people receive the best education and training and can study and find jobs across the continent; a Union which preserves cultural diversity and promotes our cultural heritage.

4. A stronger Europe on the global scene: a Union building new partnerships and promoting stability and prosperity in its immediate neighbourhood to the east and south, but also in the Middle east and across Africa and globally; a Union ready to take more responsibilities and to assist in creating a more integrated defence industry, a Union committed to strengthening its common security and defence, ensuring complementarity and avoiding duplications with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; a Union protecting a rule-based multilateral system, proud of its values and protective of its people, promoting free and fair trade and a positive global climate policy.

We will pursue these objectives, firm in the belief that Europe's future lies in our own hands and that the European Union is the best tool to achieve our objectives. We pledge to listen to the concerns expressed by our citizens. We will work together at the level that makes a real difference, be it the EU, national, regional, or local, and in a spirit of loyal and close cooperation, both among Members States and between them and the EU Institutions. We will allow for the necessary room of manoeuvre at the various levels to strengthen Europe's innovation and growth potential. We want the Union to be big on big issues and small on small ones, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. We will promote a more effective and transparent decision-making process and better delivery.

We as leaders, working together within the European Council and among the Institutions, will ensure that today's agenda is implemented, so to become tomorrow's reality. We have united for the better. Europe is our common future.
