

Green book in view of the tenth European elections 6-9 June 2024



Introduction:

The **Green book** is strategic and visionary document that explores the future of the European Union at a pivotal moment marked by complex challenges and transformative opportunities. As Europe prepares for its tenth parliamentary elections, the **green book**

calls for renewed sense of purpose and political will to reshape the **EU** into a more **cohesive, democratic, and resilient union**.

Far from being technical or bureaucratic analysis, this document is a call to action arguing that only by embracing deeper integration, shared values, and cultural identity can the EU effectively respond to crises and reassert its role on the global stage. It stresses the urgent need for institutional reform, including the development of the **European constitution** built through both parliamentary and participatory democratic methods.

In essence, the **Green book** serves not just as a policy framework, but as political and cultural manifesto for a more united, empowered, and forward-looking **European Union**.

Chapter I: What is at stake in the tenth European Elections?

The opening section presents the **2024** elections as a critical moment for the **European Union** a time not just to select representatives, but to reflect on the **political, institutional, and ethical direction** of the union itself. It sets out a thoughtful and urgent tone, arguing that choices made in this period could determine whether the **EU** continues to evolve into a more united and democratic project or becomes paralyzed by division and inertia. For instance, Italy should stop being trapped in ideological debates and move toward a strategic, onward-looking foreign policy.

At the heart of the argument is a belief in **Europe's ability to turn crises into opportunities**, a trait that has defined its history. From its **post-war reconstruction**¹ to its handling of recent economic and public health emergencies, the **EU** has often emerged stronger in the face of adversity. However, the text emphasizes that this resilience will only continue if there is the political courage to make clear, forward-looking decisions. These include **forming a common political will, reinforcing the EU's financial and institutional capacities, and moving beyond reactive governance to proactive leadership**.

One of the most compelling ideas is **the call for a renewed European identity**², one that is built **not on uniformity**, but on **diversity, solidarity, and shared values**. **Culture** is highlighted as a key element in this identity, serving as both a unifying force and a means

¹ Post-war reconstruction refers to the process of rebuilding and restoring a nation or region after a period of conflict.

² European identity refers to the sense of belonging and shared cultural consciousness that individuals within Europe, particularly those within the European Union, may develop, potentially alongside their national identities

of civic expression. In this view, cultural diversity is not a challenge to overcome, but the very basis of a vibrant, democratic Europe.

The section also challenges the **resurgence of nationalist and confederal approaches that prioritize national sovereignty at the expense of collective action**. These tendencies are seen as serious obstacles to meaningful progress, especially in addressing complex transnational issues like **climate change, migration, and digital governance**. Instead, it advocates for a federal model³ of shared sovereignty, one in which member states retain their identities while contributing to a stronger, more coherent **European whole**.

Another significant proposal is the transformation of the current **EU Treaties** into a proper **European Constitution**. This would not only clarify the institutional structure of the **Union** but also enshrine **democratic participation and fundamental rights** at its core. Inspired by the **Charter of Fundamental Rights**, such a Constitution would establish a legal and ethical foundation for a Europe that is **democratic, social, and sustainable**. The vision here is **not technocratic reform**⁴, but a foundational shift toward a more **accountable and values-based Union**.

Importantly, the future of Europe is framed not as a single destination but **as an ongoing process, one that must be inclusive, participatory, and responsive** to its citizens. Planning for the future of the Union involves more than **institutional design**; it requires **re-engagement with the people of Europe**, a shared sense of **ownership**, and a **commitment to dialogue and collaboration** across all levels of society.

Chapter II: the legacy of the ninth European legislature

The second section provides a critical assessment of the **European Union's** recent legislative cycle from 2019-2024. It takes stock of the EU's responses to a series of overlapping crises and evaluates both the successes and shortcomings of its institutions during this period. While the Union demonstrated notable resilience, the Analysis makes it clear that this era was marked more by reactive measures than by forward-looking structural reforms.

The **European Union** faced several unforeseen challenges during this five-year period, including the **COVID-19 pandemic, spiraling inflation, the war in Ukraine, and accelerating climate emergencies**. In many ways, the EU showed an impressive capacity to adapt and respond under pressure. Emergency instruments like the recovery

³ A federal model is a system of government where power is divided between a national (federal) government and regional (state, provincial, etc.) governments.

⁴ Technocratic reform refers to a shift in governance where experts or specialists, rather than elected politicians, play a dominant role in decision-making.

and resilience facility were deployed swiftly, and solidarity between member states was visible in key moments. These responses showcased a union capable of acting decisively in a crisis.

Yet, it underscores a major limitation: these responses were largely short-term and lacked a coherent strategic vision. Despite the depth and breadth of the crises, the **EU institutions**, particularly the **European Parliament and Commission** did not seize the opportunity to implement deeper structural changes. One of the clearest examples of this shortfall is the failure to significantly revise **the multiannual financial framework⁵ (MFF)** to prepare for the end of the **Next Generation EU program⁶**. This missed opportunity leaves the **EU vulnerable** as temporary funding measures wind down without a sustainable financial strategy in place.

Furthermore, long-standing projects such as the **Banking Union⁷** and **Capital Markets Union⁸** remain incomplete. Their stagnation continues to undermine the resilience and integration of the eurozone. These financial structures are essential for the EU to better withstand economic shocks and foster cross-border investment, yet political deadlock and lack of ambition have stalled their progress.

Migration policy remains another area of concern. While reforms were made particularly regarding the **Dublin Regulation⁹**, these were primarily focused on border control and deportation measures. The text raises serious concerns about whether such an approach respects **fundamental rights** and aligns with the **Union's humanitarian** and legal commitments. The emphasis on security over solidarity reflects a broader shift that, while politically expedient, may erode core European values.

Environmental policy also experienced setbacks. **The European Green Deal¹⁰**, a flagship initiative of the legislature, suffered from **rollbacks** and **watered-down** commitments due to **political compromises**. Although it laid important groundwork, its

⁵ The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) is the European Union's long-term budget, typically spanning seven years, which sets ceilings for EU spending across different policy areas and ensures predictable and disciplined EU spending.

⁶ also known as NextGenEU, is a temporary €750 billion (approximately \$806 billion USD) recovery instrument created by the European Union to help repair the economic and social damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to build a greener, more digital, and more resilient future.

⁷ The banking union ensures that EU banks are stronger and better supervised.

⁸ The Capital Markets Union (CMU) is an EU initiative aimed at creating a single market for capital across all 27 member states. This means making it easier for investments and savings to flow freely throughout the EU, benefiting consumers, investors, and companies regardless of their location.

⁹ The Dublin Regulation, also known as Dublin III, is an EU law that determines which country is responsible for examining an asylum application within the European Union. It essentially dictates that only one country should handle an asylum claim from an individual, and that country is usually the one where the applicant first entered the EU.

¹⁰ The European Green Deal is a comprehensive set of policy initiatives by the European Commission with the overarching goal of making the European Union climate neutral by 2050.

implementation revealed the **fragility of climate ambitions** when confronted with **economic and electoral pressures**.

In contrast, **digital and AI regulation** emerged as areas where the EU made notable strides. Frameworks for **artificial intelligence** and **digital services** began to take shape. However, the coordination remains weak, and **protections for fundamental rights** in these domains are **still insufficient**. The **digital transition** is progressing, but not yet with the **coherence** or **safeguards** necessary for it to serve the **public interest fully**.

On the social front, the legislature took steps toward **reinforcing rights related to minimum wages, platform work, and corporate due diligence**. Nevertheless, these achievements remain fragile, and youth employment especially in southern and eastern Europe continues to lack robust, targeted policies.

The concluding reflection argues that the **EU** must transition from a **mindset of emergency management to one of proactive and integrated policymaking**. The potential for deeper integration exists even within current Treaty frameworks, through tools such as the **passerelle clauses**¹¹, **Article 352 TFEU**¹², and **enhanced cooperation mechanisms**. These should be employed more ambitively by the next Parliament to advance **social, economic, and political union** even before full treaty reform is possible.

Chapter III: European Public Goods

The third section presents a bold and future-oriented vision for the European Union, centered around the idea that certain key challenges and policy areas can only be effectively addressed at the European level. It introduces the concept of European Public Goods (EPGs) as a framework for both practical integration and renewed legitimacy, offering a powerful rationale for why deeper EU cooperation is not only necessary but desirable.

The argument begins with a clear premise: many of today's most urgent issues such as **energy security, artificial intelligence, defense, and climate change transcend national borders and capacities**. These are challenges no individual member states can tackle alone, regardless of their size or resources. The **EPG** concept responds to this reality by asserting that only coordinated action at the EU level can produce **effective,**

¹¹ The passerelle clauses (from French: "*passerelle*" meaning "bridge") are special legal provisions in the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) that allow for simplified treaty revision or changes in legislative procedures within the EU framework *without requiring a full treaty amendment* or the convening of an intergovernmental conference.

¹² Article 352 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) is a legal provision that grants the European Union (EU) a kind of "flexibility clause". It allows the EU to take action in areas where it does not have explicit competence under the treaties, but where such action is necessary to achieve the objectives of the EU.

sustainable solutions. This transnational logic forms the first of four key justifications for **European Public Goods.**

The second justification concerns the political and **emotional bond between the EU and its citizens.** By demonstrating how collective **EU** action delivers tangible benefits such as **cleaner air, better healthcare systems, or more secure digital environments,** EPGs can reinforce a sense of belonging and shared purpose. In this way, EPGs are not only technical policy tools but also vehicles for building a more democratic and connected European identity.

The third rationale links **EPGs to the development of a European fiscal capacity.** By pooling resources and generating new forms of EU-level revenue, EPGs offer a path toward a **more autonomous and effective Union.** This financial dimension is not about replacing national budgets but about equipping the EU to act in areas where collective investments yield greater impact and efficiency. Shared interests thus become the basis for shared funding and joint action.

Finally, the fourth justification is rooted in **long-term stability.** While national responses to crises are often short-term and reactive, **EPGs** promote resilience through **integrated, forward-looking strategies.** This approach enables the Union to anticipate rather than merely respond, strengthening its macroeconomic and social foundations for decades to come.

To make the concept of European Public Goods more concrete, the text outlines twelve policy domains referred to as “**Unions**” that embody the EPG logic. These include:

- Health
- Energy
- AI and digital
- Environmental sustainability
- Shared prosperity
- Youth
- Culture science and research
- Internal security (Inc. Defense)
- Migration and inclusion
- Industrial innovation

Each of these areas represents a space where collective European actions are not only more effective, but in many cases, indispensable.

Importantly, the realization of these public goods also requires changes in how the EU makes decisions. The current institutional setup often stifles ambition due to the

overreach of national governments and the complexity of consensus-based mechanisms. This section critiques the “false promise” of merely abolishing national vetoes, pointing out that deeper reform is needed. Specifically, it calls for curbing the influence of national permanent representatives (**COREPER**¹³), enhancing the role of the European Parliament through stronger co-decision powers, and increasing transparency in EU governance.

A key institutional innovation proposed is the clarification of shared competences: once the EU chooses to legislate in an area of shared responsibility, that competence should become exclusive to the EU. This principle, originally outlined in the **1984 Spinelli draft treaty**¹⁴, would create legal certainty and operational clarity, reducing overlap and fragmentation between national and European actions.

To conclude, this chapter offers not just a list of policy priorities but a coherent vision for a more capable, cohesive, and citizen-centered Europe. **European Public Goods** provide a blueprint for how the Union can meet today’s challenges while building a sustainable and democratic future. By focusing on common needs, shared benefits, and long-term stability, this vision reaffirms the purpose of European integration in a rapidly changing world.

Chapter IV: The fiscal Capacity of the European Union¹⁵

The fourth section addresses one of the most fundamental questions for the future of European integration: **how to finance common goods and policies in a sustainable, autonomous, and democratic way**. It argues that in order to realize the vision of **European public goods** and meet growing expectations from citizens, the EU must

¹³ stands for Comité des représentants permanents, or Committee of Permanent Representatives, is a crucial body within the European Union's Council. It is responsible for preparing the work of the Council of the European Union, essentially acting as a bridge between the national interests of member states and the EU's decision-making process.

¹⁴ The 1984 Spinelli draft treaty, officially titled "Draft Treaty Establishing the European Union," was a proposal by the European Parliament, spearheaded by Altiero Spinelli, to reform the European Community's (EC) institutional structure and move towards a more unified European political entity. It aimed to create a "European Union" with enhanced powers for the European Parliament and a more federal structure.

¹⁵ This chapter is the result of collaboration between the European Movement and the Centre for Studies on Federalism, particularly the research contributions of Olimpia Fontana and Luca Gasbarro within a working group coordinated by the vice president of the European Movement, Giampiero Auletta Armenise, and involving Pier Virgilio Dastoli, Alberto Majocchi, Paolo Ponzano, and Anna Maria Villa. Libro verde p.14

develop a genuine **fiscal capacity**¹⁶. This means moving beyond dependence on national contributions embracing new forms of own resources that reflect common values and shared economic interests.

The starting point for this vision is the precedent set by the **Next Generation EU (NGEU)**¹⁷ recovery plan. This historic initiative demonstrated that the Union could issue common debt to support strategic investment, particularly in response to crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the success of **NGEU** now presents a new challenge: debt repayments are set to begin in 2028, and they must be covered by new, reliable sources of **EU revenue**. Without these, the burden may fall back on national budgets, undermining the very purpose of the initiative and risking political backlash.

The EU must no longer rely solely on the “**goodwill**” of member states to fund its priorities. Instead, it must equip itself with independent stabilization and investment tools that reflect the scale and scope of its responsibilities. A credible fiscal capacity is essential not only to repay debt but to finance long-term public goods such as climate transition, digital infrastructure, public health, and defense that serve the collective interest of all Europeans.

To that end, the section reviews both existing and proposed sources of EU own resources. The European commission has already put forward several mechanisms, including revenue from the **Emissions Trading System (ETS)**¹⁸, the **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)**¹⁹, and **taxes on corporate profits**. These instruments link revenue generation to policy goals, such as environmental sustainability and fair taxation, and represent important steps toward financial sovereignty.

In addition to this, it proposes a broader and more ambitious portfolio of new revenue sources. These include a **European gambling tax** estimated to generate **€50 billion annually**, a tobacco surtax worth **€20 billion**, and a **Financial Transaction Tax (FTT)** expected to raise €23 billion. Further proposals include statistical penalties for the gender pay gap (**€4.8 billion**) and **food waste (€5.2 billion)**, which would not only raise funds but also incentivize social and environmental responsibility across the Union. Together, these potential sources amount to approximately **€150 billion per year**

¹⁶ Fiscal policy refers to the use of government spending and taxation to influence a country's economic activity.

¹⁷ Next Generation EU (NGEU) is a European commission economic recovery package to support the EU member states to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly those that have been particularly hard hit.

¹⁸ is the European union's main instrument for tackling climate change and cost-effectively reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

¹⁹ is a European union policy that aims to put a price on carbon emissions from certain imported goods, aligning with the EU's climate goals and preventing “carbon leakage”

equivalent to around 1% of EU GDP²⁰, providing a stable foundation for a true fiscal union.

But the discussion goes beyond numbers. This section also makes institutional proposals that aim to democratize **EU budget-making**. It calls for an interparliamentary debate similar to the **1990 Rome Assizes²¹**, a moment when national and European representatives gathered to deliberate on the future of integration. Alongside this, it advocates for the creation of citizens' panels to deliberate on EU budget priorities, enhancing transparency and participation in what is often seen as a technocratic process.

Finally, reframing the **multiannual financial framework (MFF)** not just as a planning tool, but as an expression of transnational economic democracy. In other words, the EU budget should no longer be treated as an **administrative exercise** in balancing accounts, but as a **political instrument** that reflects collective priorities, long-term planning, and democratic legitimacy.

Chapter V: The Unfinished Europe

The fifth section is a deep examination of where the **European union** remains incomplete **legally, socially, economically**. Far from offering abstract reflections, it identifies specific areas where integration has stalled or proven insufficient and presents actionable proposals to advance the Union toward a more cohesive, it argues that Europe must finish what it has started if it want to remain credible and capable in the face of 21st century challenges.

❖ Rule of law:

The first area of concern is the **rule of law**. Existing enforcement mechanisms, particularly **Article 7²² of the Treaty on European Union (TEU)**, have proven ineffective due to the requirement for unanimity and the vague thresholds for determining violations. This has allowed persistent democratic backsliding in some member states to go largely unchecked. To address this, by giving the **European Court of Justice (CJEU)** a more central and decisive role in sanctioning breaches, creating a Commission of

²⁰ Gross domestic product

²¹ The European assizes was a one-time assembly of the European Parliament and the national parliaments of the member states of the European union in Rome 1990. It took place just before the governments of the member states embarked on the negotiations that resulted in the treaty of Maastricht. It was therefore the first time in history that the parliaments, which would eventually have to ratify a treaty, met in advance of the negotiations to discuss what should go into that treaty.

²² Article 7 of the treaty on the European union is aa key provision designed to protect the fundamental values of the European union, such as democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights.

Experts modeled on the **Venice Commission**²³, and granting the EU's **Fundamental Rights Agency**²⁴ (FRA) real inspection powers. These changes aim to shift enforcement from political negotiation to legal clarity and institutional authority.

❖ **European social model:**

Turning to the **European Social model**, the **COVID-19** pandemic revealed the potential of EU-level solidarity through programs like **SURE**²⁵, which helped protect jobs and incomes. Building on this precedent, to fully implement the European Pillar of Social Rights with concrete measures. These include establishing **EU-wide minimum income schemes and wage floors**, ensuring fair labor conditions especially platform and precarious workers allowing workers to carry rights across borders, and adopting a directive focused on social inclusion. This directive, importantly, would be supportive rather than punitive, reflecting a shift toward a more protective and empowering **European welfare model**.

❖ **Migration policy:**

Migration policy is addressed as another domain where current approaches fall far short. The present system is reactive, overly focused on security, and unable to handle the scale or complexity of contemporary migration. It calls for reframing migration as a social and developmental issue rather than a matter of internal security. It proposes opening legal migration pathways, establishing asylum protection and humanitarian corridors, and reassigning responsibility from interior to welfare ministries reflecting the need for a more humane and integrated approach. Additionally, it suggests modernizing the **1951 Geneva Convention** to account for current drivers of displacement, such as climate change and land grabbing. A Euro-Mediterranean partnership for mobility, particularly in education and research, is also advocated as a long-term strategy for cooperation and integration.

❖ **Cohesion policy:**

When it comes to **cohesion policy**, it acknowledges the EU's substantial investment in regional development but calls out the complexity and limited visibility of its results. It proposes simplifying the policy framework, improving communication of its impact, and

²³ The European Commission for democracy through law is an advisory body of the Council of Europe, composed of independent experts in the field of constitutional law. It was created in 1990 after the fall of the Berlin Wall, at a time of urgent need for constitutional assistance in central and eastern Europe

²⁴ The European agency for fundamental rights is an interesting and dynamic workplace offering a range of career opportunities not only for fundamental rights experts, but also professionals in the administrative, HR and ICT related areas.

²⁵ The temporary support to mitigate unemployment risks in an emergency (SURE) mobilized significant financial means to fight the negative economic and social consequences of the coronavirus outbreak on their territory.

encouraging greater local and regional ownership of EU funds. Financial instruments should be flexible and adapted to the specific needs of diverse territories, ensuring that no region is left behind.

❖ **Green pact:**

The **Green Pact**, while remaining central to the EU's long-term vision, is increasingly vulnerable to political resistance. Nonetheless, it affirms its core climate targets: phasing out coal by 2030, ending fossil fuel use by 2035, and reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. It supports strong legislation on biodiversity, air quality, and the circular economy. These environmental ambitions are presented not just as policy goals but as moral imperatives, with the understanding that failure to act decisively risks undermining the Union's credibility and sustainability.

❖ **Industrial policy:**

Finally, **industrial policy** calls for a coordinated European strategy to drive economic transformation. This strategy should focus on **fostering innovation, scaling up green technologies, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and advancing fields like AI and robotics**. Central to this vision is the need for lifelong education and workforce retraining, ensuring that citizens are equipped to navigate economic transitions. This section envisions the EU acting as a “**facilitating state**”, a proactive, strategic player that supports and steers industrial change on a continental scale.

Altogether, it offers a comprehensive map of where the **EU** still falls short and how to close those gaps. Its proposals are grounded in institutional realism but driven by transformative vision. Rather than merely defending the status, it challenges the EU to become a more democratic, socially inclusive, and forward-looking political union. In doing so, it reaffirms that a truly united Europe remains a project in the making unfinished, but not unachievable.

Chapter VI: Why and how to change the European Union

The sixth section sets out the most ambitious and philosophical argument of the entire book. It calls not for incremental reform or technical adjustments, but for a foundational transformation of the European Union, one that rethinks its institutional architecture, democratic legitimacy, and political purpose. This section makes the case for federal Europe, conceived not as a distant super-state, but as a democratic community capable of governing effectively where national frameworks fall short.

The analysis begins with a diagnosis of the current system's internal contradictions. The EU was built through **intergovernmental compromises**, resulting in a hybrid structure where national governments dominate key decisions, even in areas of shared interest. This model has led to confusion over competences, uneven implementation of EU law, and growing public skepticism about who holds power and accountability. **Piecemeal Treaty**²⁶ amendments over the years have failed to resolve these structural inconsistencies, leaving the Union vulnerable to political inertia and democratic fatigue.

The urgency of change is underscored by recent crises that have exposed the limits of the current model. The EU has had to confront overlapping economic, health, social, and geopolitical emergencies, each of which has revealed shortcomings in institutional coordination, legal clarity, and public trust. While emergency responses such as the Recovery and Resilience Facility have sometimes been effective, they have often relied on ad hoc mechanisms rather than durable governance structures. The Union, the section argues, cannot afford to remain stuck in this reactive mode.

Traditional approaches to reform are also criticized. The intergovernmental method, which privileges unanimity and backroom negotiation among national leaders, is seen as lacking transparency and democratic legitimacy. The convention model, previously used to draft the constitutional treaty, is viewed as too distant from citizens and too beholden to national interests. Both methods are described as inadequate for the kind of transformation the EU now requires.

In place of these outdated frameworks, the section proposes a new federal path inspired by the legacy of the **Ventotene manifesto**²⁷ and the pioneering work of *Altiero Spinelli*. This approach envisions a reform process that is democratic from the outset and inclusive at every stage. It suggests a two-phase *constituent process*. The **first phase** would be dedicated to drafting a foundational charter for a new constitutional framework for Europe. The **second phase** would involve a **deliberative phase**, culminating in a pan-European referendum, allowing all citizens of the Union to participate directly in shaping its future.

The ultimate goal is the establishment of a **European Federation**. This would not mean a hyper-centralized entity that overrides national identities and institutions. Rather, it would be a **federal community**, in which the EU holds genuine and democratically legitimate authority over policy areas that are clearly beyond the reach of individual

²⁶ refers to the gradual erosion of treaty rights through a series of incremental actions, rather than a single, large-scale infringement. This approach can make it difficult for the affected party, often the first nation, to challenge the infringements effectively.

²⁷ is a political Statement written by Altiero Spinelli, Ernesto Rossi, and Eugenio Colorni, while they were imprisoned on the Italian islet *Santo Stefano* off the island of Ventotene during World War II. Completed in June 1941, the manifesto was circulated within the Italian Resistance, and it soon became the programme of the Movimento Federalista Europeo.

member states such as climate change, digital governance, migration, defense, and global economic strategy. National sovereignty would not be erased, but pooled and exercised jointly where it is most effective and accountable.

By grounding this vision in a democratic and participatory process, the proposal avoids the trap of top-down institutionalism. It reflects a deeper understanding that the legitimacy of the union must rest not only on efficiency or crisis management, but on the will of its citizens. A European federation, as envisioned here, would not be an elite-driven project but the result of a collective decision to share sovereignty in the pursuit of common goals.

Chapter VII: the future of Europe as written by the youth

The seventh section brings forward a vital and often underrepresented voice in the debate over European integration: that of young people. Rather than treating youth as passive beneficiaries of EU policies, the section represents them as active agents of transformation. It reflects both their critique of the present and their aspirations for a more just, inclusive, and forward-looking union, one capable of living up to the values it claims to embody.

The central message is that Europe's youth do not want to inherit a union that is simply functional; they want to shape one that is **meaningful**. They seek real influence over the policies that affect their lives and the future of the planet. Young Europeans are deeply engaged with the defining challenges of our time **climate change, digital governance, social justice, and they bring not only urgency, but innovation to these debates**. Their perspective combines idealism with pragmatism: they are ready to act, but they demand structures that allow their voices to matter.

This commitment goes far beyond what was described as “*banal cosmopolitanism*²⁸”, a superficial Europeanism based on low-cost travel and Erasmus experiences. While mobility remains important, young people are calling for something deeper: an engaged European identity rooted in shared responsibility, democratic participation, and solidarity across borders. Their vision is not entertainment-driven or consumerist but political, ethical, and generational.

To support this vision, it proposes concrete structural reforms. Chief among them is the creation of a **European Youth Council**, a permanent, institutionally recognized body that would represent youth voices at the EU level. This council would have a clear mandate:

²⁸ emphasizes how people interact with cultural diversity and cosmopolitan ideals through everyday activities such as food consumption, media consumption, and even their attitudes toward animals.

to draft and present recommendations on key issues such as education, employment, the environment, mental health, and digital rights. Importantly, it would be built to reflect the full diversity of European youth, ensuring representation from all regions and social backgrounds, not just urban centers or privileged groups.

Beyond the creation of this new body, the text calls for **institutionalizing youth consultation** across all levels of EU policymaking. Youth engagement should not be a symbolic gesture or occasional event, but a formal and mandatory component of how decisions are made. This proposal underscores a core principle: young people are not “the future” in an abstract sense they are present now, and their inclusion must be systemic, not tokenistic.

The section also speaks to the broader **societal role** of youth in revitalizing European democracy. It challenges young people to reclaim political idealism and reject both apathy and the reactionary pull of nationalist nostalgia that's called “**retrotopias**.” Instead, it urges them to imagine and build a new European social contract one based on sustainability, equality, and cooperation. In this vision, youth are not merely reacting to crises but leading the way in defining a post-crisis Europe.

Based on **Ventotene Manifesto**, the chapter frames this generational moment as a call to “*stir up new energies*” for a renewed European project. Just as the original authors of the Manifesto envisioned a united, peaceful, and democratic Europe rising from the ashes of war, today's youth are called to respond to environmental degradation, political fragmentation, and economic inequality with creativity, solidarity, and resolve.

Conclusion:

The Green Book is not merely a policy document; it is a profound political and cultural manifesto that confronts the European Union at a historic crossroads. As the tenth European elections mark a critical juncture, the Green Book calls for a bold reimagining of what the Union is and what it must become. It argues that incrementalism and crisis-driven governance are no longer sufficient in the face of escalating global challenges, democratic fatigue, and growing citizen disillusionment.

Instead, it proposes a **European Union** rooted in shared sovereignty, democratic legitimacy, and solidarity; a Union that is capable of acting decisively in areas where no individual member state can succeed alone. From climate change and artificial intelligence to migration, defense, and public health, the future of Europe depends on the ability to deliver *European Public Goods* through a coherent, accountable, and inclusive institutional framework.

At the heart of this vision is a call for a deeper and more democratic integration, one that culminates in a federal Europe. This is not imagined as a centralized superstate, but as a union of peoples and nations that choose to pool their sovereignty to address common challenges effectively and equitably. This transformation must be grounded in a renewed European Constitution, drafted through a participatory, two-phase constituent process that places citizens, not just governments, at the center of decision-making.

The Green Book also underscores that economic power and legitimacy must go hand in hand. A true fiscal capacity is essential not only for repaying shared debt, but also for financing the social, environmental, and digital transformations that the Union promises. A reformed EU budget transparent, participatory, and aligned with public priorities must become an instrument of European economic democracy, not an obscure technocratic process.

Importantly, this future must be shaped with and by Europe's youth. Their voices, concerns, and visions are not an accessory to policymaking but a core democratic imperative. A Union that fails to engage its younger generations risks not only losing its moral compass, but also its political vitality and long-term sustainability.

Throughout the Green Book, there is a consistent message: the European project remains unfinished, but not unachievable. The crises of recent years have revealed both the fragility and resilience of the Union. The choice now is between retreating into national silos or advancing toward a Europe that is stronger because it is more united, more just, and more democratic.

To succeed, this renewal must be driven by a shared political will, anchored in cultural belonging, and legitimized through citizen participation. It must be both pragmatic and visionary, institutional and emotional, legal, and ethical. In short, the future of Europe must be written not behind closed doors, but in the open; with all its peoples, in all their diversity, choosing to move forward together.

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