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our eye on the EU



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THIN AIR

The fermentation around the new EU budget is in full swing. Choices, preferences, and priorities of all involved parties carry increased gravity and impact. With EU leadership edging the Union towards the brink of war, the positions of MEPs, civil society, and—of course—the European Commission demand greater scrutiny than ever.

For "Our Eye on the EU" transnational newsroom—and for citizens to have a seat at the table—positions and information need to be accessible and understandable. That is why, this month, Our Eye on the EU explores how the European Union is responding to a range of interconnected challenges: from poverty, disability rights, and public health preparedness to defence financing, cultural policy, and citizen participation.

Through articles, podcasts, and broadcasts, our contributors examine new EU initiatives, ongoing policy debates, and their implications for democracy, social cohesion, and the future of European cooperation. Essentially, we examine whether the latest EU decisions, regulations and recommendations in these crucial times reflect political will and democratic accountability or if they are nothing more than thin air.



inter alia
Inspiring social change



CIVIC SPACE

AGORAEU 2028–2034: THE NEW EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR CULTURE, MEDIA, AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Contribution by Foteini Katsampani is a Postgraduate Student at NKUA in Democratic Culture

This article explores the European Commission's proposed AgoraEU 2028–2034 programme and its implications for culture, media, and democratic participation in Europe. It examines the transition from Creative Europe and CERV to a unified framework, highlighting both the opportunities created by increased funding and stronger policy integration, and the concerns surrounding bureaucratic complexity, media pluralism, and access for smaller organisations. The article argues that AgoraEU's success will depend on its ability to support independent creators, civil society, and grassroots democratic engagement in an increasingly digital public sphere.



CIVIC SPACE

DISABILITY, POVERTY, AND THE COMMISSION: DO DIRECTIVES SERVE DIGNITY?

Contribution by Teana Gkermení, postgraduate student of the department of Media, Migration & Refugee Flows, NKUA

The following article examines the comprehensive social package—including the first-ever Anti-Poverty Strategy—launched by the European Commission on May 6th. It addresses the situation regarding poverty and disability in Europe, outlines the tactics included in the strategy to tackle these issues, presents several critical remarks on the initiative, and offers a brief conclusion on the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's directives.



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

FINANCING WITHOUT CAPACITY: THE EU DEFENCE READINESS AGENDA, THE SAFE MECHANISM, AND POLAND'S FIRST-MOVER EXPERIENCE

Contribution by Elpida Gkoutzoupa, International and European Studies student

The EU's Defence Readiness Agenda and its SAFE loan mechanism - the first pillar of the ReArm Europe Plan / Readiness 2030 - represent a significant shift toward integrated European defence financing. Both instruments address the demand side of European rearmament, while the supply-side constraints - industrial capacity, procurement standardisation, and sovereignty friction - remain only partially addressed, as Poland's first-mover experience in May 2026 illustrates.



YOUTH & EDUCATION

THE UK'S RETURN TO ERASMUS+ : A STEP TOWARD RENEWED EU-UK COOPERATION STARTING IN 2027

Contribution by Alexandre Hountomey, political science and law student

On 15 April 2026, the UK and the EU announced that the country would return to the Erasmus+ programme in 2027, but this deal has revived domestic political tensions linked to Brexit and the future of UK-EU relations.



SOCIAL AFFAIRS

A CRUISE, A VIRUS, NO VACCINE: THE EU ON THE BRINK OF THE NEXT PANDEMIC

A contribution by Afroditi Gkortsou, Political Scientist, International Security Expert

In May 2026, the European Union is facing a complex health reality. Recent developments—from the Hantavirus outbreak to the launch of the EU's Global Health Resilience Initiative—highlight that despite progress, Europe remains vulnerable. True resilience will require the full integration of a unified health system and a determined effort to address the root causes of health inequalities.



BROADCAST

EP28 & 29 | OUR EYE ON THE EU BROADCAST

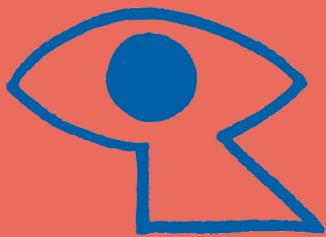
In Episodes 28 and 29 of the Our Eye on the EU Broadcast, Ioanna and Dionysis examine some of the most pressing issues shaping Europe today. From the UK's return to Erasmus+, the EU's Defence Readiness Agenda and SAFE mechanism, and the new Anti-Poverty Strategy, to the rise of the manosphere, the EU Gender Equality Plan, and the record-breaking Justice for Palestine European Citizens' Initiative, they exchange perspectives and challenge each other's views. Through debate and critical discussion, the episodes explore the future of democracy, social policy, citizen participation, and the role of the European Union in responding to today's political and societal challenges.



PODCAST

EP9 | “JUSTICE FOR PALESTINE” ECI CAMPAIGN | A DISCUSSION WITH TAMAM ABUSALAMA, CHIEF STRATEGIST OF THE ECI

In this month's episode of Our Eye on the EU, we were joined by Tamam Abusalama, chief strategist of the ECI “Justice for Palestine”. “Justice for Palestine” is the European Citizens Initiative (ECI) that reached the 1 million signature threshold the fastest in the ECI history. Tamam talks to Nikos Papakostas, co-founder of Inter Alia, about the background of the campaign and its prospects of bringing a true policy shift in the current institutional framework. Discussants debate the dual importance of the “Justice for Palestine” bringing tangible policy results – for the end of complicity of the EU in the war crimes committed in Palestine and for the future of democracy in the EU.



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