



www.Schuman2030.eu

Working Paper 6
A Post-Lisbon proposal

Project Schuman2030

Working Paper 6a

A Post-Lisbon proposal

Status: Work In Progress

Abstract:

The Schuman2030 initiative proposes a fundamental restructuring of the European Union, arguing that the post-Lisbon framework suffers from a dual failure: regulatory overreach in domains better left to Member States, and structural weakness in genuinely supra-national domains such as defence, diplomacy, and strategic infrastructure. Drawing inspiration from Swiss consensus democracy and Singaporean meritocratic governance, the proposal envisions a **bounded federal architecture**, strong where Europe must act as one, absent where it need not. Core institutional innovations include a Citizens' Parliament freed from transnational political blocs, a Senate of experienced statesmen and experts serving as a subsidiarity guardian, an independent Impact Office producing neutral legislative assessments, and domain-specific Federal Councils with operational autonomy and rotating leadership. The transition is designed to be politically viable: existing heads of state are converted from potential blockers into founding members of the new Senate, and the process is launched via Enhanced Cooperation (Article 20 TEU) with as few as six Member States, starting with defence. A comprehensive subsidiarity audit would return over-regulated competences to the national level while consolidating federal authority in eight strategic domains.

Note that the proposal is yet at the stage of a concept. The Schuman2030 proposal in its concept stage is strongest on the new things it wants to build (Federal Councils, Senate, Impact Office, defence and other Federal Council integration) and weakest on the existing things it needs to analyse (single market, euro, rule of law, migration, climate, trade, social policy). These are the daily substance of EU governance, affecting hundreds of millions of citizens directly and what works well should be kept and improved.

The proposal's next iteration should dedicate as much intellectual energy to the "what stays, what goes, and what transforms" question as it currently devotes to the new institutional architecture. The subsidiarity audit is the right concept, but it needs to be fleshed out with specific, domain-by-domain analysis. (see WP6b)

Note:

This is Work In progress. As feedback is collected, arguments raised and more data is discovered, we expect the project to evolve. And in the end, it will be up to national and EU parliaments to implement a concrete framework for 2030.

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This material is prepared with the help of Monica,, Claude 4.6 Opus, Gemini, and Euria AI assistants.

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2 A Comprehensive Analysis of Europe's Governance Crisis and a Structural Path Forward

See also Schuman2030 concept document (www.Schuman2030.eu)

Introduction

The European Union stands at a crossroads. Nearly two decades after the Lisbon Treaty entered into force, the structural shortcomings of Europe's governance framework have become impossible to ignore. The EU faces simultaneous crises, a competitiveness gap with the United States and China, a fragmented defence posture in an increasingly hostile geopolitical environment, a democratic deficit that erodes citizen trust, and a regulatory apparatus that has expanded far beyond what many Member States originally envisioned.

The **Schuman2030** initiative proposes a fundamental rethinking of the European project, not an incremental reform, but a structural transformation that returns to the founding vision of Robert Schuman while adapting it to 21st-century realities. The core thesis is that the EU must simultaneously become **stronger where it needs to be strong** (defence, international affairs, strategic infrastructure) and **lighter where it has overreached** (detailed regulation of national policy domains, democratic deficiency). This document elaborates on the Schuman2030 vision, its diagnosis of the current system's failures, its institutional proposals, and its transition roadmap.

An important note, much of the regulatory overreach has from the EU flowed over into most member states, partly because the treaties oblige them to implement the EU regulations into national laws but also because it installed a bureaucratic mindset. This issue is not addressed in the Schuman2030 concept but must clearly be addressed if a reform of the EU needs to bring fruit. While national and supra-national bodies can provide guidance, the active agents in any economy are still its citizens and its companies that generate the social and economic wealth of nations.

3 Part I: The Lisbon Treaty, A Flawed Foundation

3.1 From Constitutional Ambition to Democratic Shortcut

The story of the Lisbon Treaty begins with a failure. In 2004, EU leaders agreed on a "Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe", an ambitious attempt to consolidate the EU's legal framework into a single, readable document. The Constitutional Treaty was approved by the European Parliament and signed by all Member States in October 2004. However, it required unanimous ratification. On 29 May 2005, **55% of French voters rejected it**. On 1 June 2005, **61% of Dutch voters** followed suit. The Constitutional Treaty was dead.

What followed was not a return to the drawing board to address citizens' concerns, but a political workaround. After a "period of reflection," EU leaders produced the **Treaty of Lisbon** (signed December 2007, entered into force December 2009). The Lisbon Treaty preserved the substance of the Constitutional Treaty, the institutional reforms, the

expanded competences, the new voting procedures, while stripping away the symbolic constitutional language (references to an EU flag, anthem, and the word "constitution" itself). The result was a document of over 300 pages consisting of more than 1,000 amendments to existing treaties, a text that was, by design, unreadable to ordinary citizens.

Critically, the Lisbon Treaty was ratified by national parliaments rather than by popular referendum in all but one Member State. Ireland, constitutionally required to hold a referendum, initially rejected the treaty in June 2008 before approving it in a second vote in October 2009 after receiving specific guarantees. The question that Schuman2030 raises is pointed: did the Members of Parliament who voted to ratify actually read and understand what they were approving? The deliberate complexity of the text, amendments to amendments, cross-references across multiple treaties, made genuine parliamentary scrutiny extremely difficult.

The result is a foundational document that transferred major competences to the EU level without clear, direct democratic consent from European citizens. This is the **original sin** of the current EU architecture, and it continues to undermine the legitimacy of European governance.

3.2 Competence Overreach: The Quiet Expansion

Since the Lisbon Treaty entered into force, the scope of EU regulation has expanded dramatically, not primarily through new treaties or headline legislation, but through the steady accumulation of regulatory activity across an ever-widening range of policy domains.

While the total number of EU legislative acts has remained relatively stable at approximately 2,000–2,500 per year, the **scope** of EU activity has expanded into roughly **40 new policy areas** post-Lisbon. More significantly, the use of **Delegated Acts**, which allow the European Commission to supplement or amend legislation without full parliamentary scrutiny, has grown to over 3,000 per year. These acts operate in a grey zone: they carry the force of law but bypass the full legislative procedure that applies to regulations and directives. While the European Parliament and Council retain a right of objection, the sheer volume makes meaningful oversight practically impossible.

The complexity of individual regulations has also increased enormously. Single legislative packages, such as the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**, the **European Green Deal**, and the **AI Act**, now span hundreds of pages and dictate national policy in extraordinary detail. In key domains such as environment, trade, and digital policy, **EU law constitutes more than 80% of applicable rules**, effectively marginalising national legislation. A UK government survey (conducted prior to Brexit) found that across other domains, the EU-origin share of applicable law ranged from 13% to 62%.

The cumulative effect is what Schuman2030 terms "**Eurocratic regulation overreach**", a situation where the volume, complexity, and reach of EU regulation has become a drag on economic dynamism rather than a facilitator of the single market. This diagnosis is shared, notably, by the **Draghi Report on European Competitiveness** (September 2024),

which found that more than half of EU SMEs cite regulatory burden as their greatest challenge, and that Europe is no longer globally competitive in key sectors.

3.3 Democratic Checks That Don't Check

The Lisbon Treaty introduced several mechanisms intended to address the democratic deficit. In practice, Schuman2030 argues, none of them work effectively:

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are elected by citizens but operate within **transnational political groups** (EPP, S&D, Renew, etc.) that impose bloc voting discipline. MEPs represent their political family's European agenda more than their national constituents' specific concerns. The Parliament's amendment power, while real, is structurally subordinate to the Council (representing national governments) and the Commission (which holds the exclusive right of legislative initiative).

The "Yellow Card" and "Orange Card" mechanisms allow national parliaments to flag EU legislative proposals that they believe violate the principle of subsidiarity. In theory, if one-third of national parliaments object (yellow card), the Commission must review its proposal; if a majority objects (orange card), the proposal can be blocked. In practice, these mechanisms are almost never used, the coordination required among 27 national parliaments within an eight-week window is impractical, and even when triggered, the Commission is **not legally bound** to withdraw or amend its proposal. The yellow card has been used only three times since 2009; the orange card has never been used.

The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), also introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, allows one million EU citizens to invite the Commission to propose legislation. The threshold is extremely high, the procedural requirements are burdensome, and, crucially, the Commission is **not obligated to act** on a successful initiative. Of over 100 ECIs registered, only a handful have reached the required signatures, and the Commission has taken meaningful legislative action on approximately **3%** of them.

The result is a system where democratic feedback loops exist on paper but fail in practice. Major EU policy initiatives, the Green Deal, GDPR, the AI Act, the Sustainable Development Goals framework, are driven by **Commission initiative** with limited bottom-up citizen input. The EU's institutional structure, with two "Presidents" (Commission and European Council), two "Councils" (European Council and Council of the EU), and overlapping competences, creates confusion that further distances citizens from decision-making.

3.4 Structural Weakness at the Federal Level

Paradoxically, while the EU over-regulates in many domains, it is **too weak** in the areas where supranational action is most needed. The EU has no effective common defence, no unified foreign policy voice, no integrated energy security strategy, and no single capital market. National heads of state dominate high-profile decision-making through the European Council, while the Commission, which is supposed to represent the common European interest, is increasingly sidelined on strategic matters.

The **unanimity requirement** for treaty changes and for decisions in sensitive policy areas (taxation, foreign policy, defence, social security) creates persistent deadlock. In a union of 27 Member States, unanimity is a recipe for paralysis, any single country can block progress. This has led to the increasing use of **loopholes and exception clauses** (enhanced cooperation, opt-outs, intergovernmental agreements outside the treaty framework) that fragment the EU's legal order and create a patchwork of variable geometry.

Schuman2030's diagnosis is clear: **extrapolating the current structure will make things worse, not better**. Incremental reform within the existing treaty framework cannot resolve the fundamental tension between an EU that regulates too much in some areas and governs too little in others.

4 Part II: Inspirations for Reform

4.1 Switzerland: Heterogeneous Yet Democratic and Prosperous

Schuman2030 draws significant inspiration from the **Swiss federal model**, a country that, like Europe, is characterised by deep linguistic, cultural, and regional diversity, yet has achieved remarkable democratic legitimacy and economic prosperity.

Switzerland comprises **26 cantons**, each with its own constitution, government, parliament, and courts. Four official languages are spoken (German, French, Italian, and Romansh). Cantonal sovereignty is the default: the federal government acts only where the constitution explicitly grants it competence, and **subsidiarity is legally enforced**, higher levels of government may act only if lower levels demonstrably cannot.

The Swiss political system operates on the principle of **consensus democracy**, fundamentally different from the adversarial, winner-take-all model that characterises most EU Member States (and the EU institutions themselves). The Federal Council (executive) is composed according to the "**Magic Formula**", a power-sharing arrangement where the major parties govern together in a broad coalition (representing 80% of the voters), rather than competing for total control. No single party seeks to dominate; governance is built on compromise and inclusion. And ultimately referenda are the mechanism that keeps all political players in line. Political parties have their specific goals but an important role is not just to collect votes but to coach and support the citizens when their opinion is at stake.

Two Swiss practices are particularly relevant to EU reform:

- **Voting Booklets:** Before every referendum, the Swiss government distributes neutral, state-funded guides that explain complex issues in accessible language, presenting arguments for and against. This practice is a powerful antidote to populism and misinformation, citizens vote based on facts, not rhetoric.
- **Bottom-up subsidiarity:** The presumption is always that decisions should be made at the lowest possible level. Federal action requires explicit justification. This is not merely a political principle but a **legally enforceable constitutional norm**.

4.2 Singapore: Meritocratic and Prosperous

Schuman2030 also draws inspiration from **Singapore's governance model**, particularly its emphasis on:

- **Meritocratic leadership selection:** Senior government positions are filled based on proven competence and track record, not merely popularity or party loyalty. Ministers are often recruited from the private sector, military, or civil service based on demonstrated excellence.
- **Long-term planning horizons:** Singapore's government plans on 20 to 50 year timescales, insulated from the short-term pressures of electoral cycles. Strategic land use, infrastructure, education, and economic development are planned decades in advance.
- **High ethical standards:** Independent bodies enforce strict anti-corruption rules and ethical standards for public officials.

4.3 The Takeaway for Europe

The EU's current approach is **incremental, crisis-driven, and regulation-driven**. It lurches from emergency to emergency (financial crisis, migration crisis, COVID-19, energy crisis, Ukraine war) without a coherent long-term strategic vision. Correction mechanisms are too slow, by the time the EU recognises a problem and legislates a response, the world has moved on. What is missing is a view on **long-term impact and planning**, combined with genuine democratic accountability and enforced subsidiarity.

5 Part III: The Schuman2030 Reform Framework

5.1 Core Requirements

Schuman2030's reform framework rests on five pillars:

1. Restore bottom-up subsidiarity. Competences should be exercised at the most local level possible. The default is the Member State level (confederal) but nothing prevents member states from applying the same principle within their boundaries. The EU level handles only those competences that are genuinely supranational (federal). For shared competences, the EU issues only guidelines and norms, **not binding legislation**, unless there is a demonstrable cross-border impact that requires binding rules.

2. Drop unanimity. The current unanimity requirement for treaty changes and sensitive policy areas is replaced by a **Qualified Majority of 80%** of participating members. The current QMV threshold (55% of states representing 65% of population) is too low for truly consequential decisions, it risks dominance rather than consensus. An 80% threshold forces broad agreement while preventing single-state vetoes. It also should lead to less but more essential decisions and regulations.

3. Improve democratic control. The European Citizens' Initiative and the yellow/orange card mechanisms must be made genuinely workable and binding. Citizens and national

parliaments must have real power to check EU overreach. In a digital Europe this can be swift with immediate open access to data and information.

4. Reduce power concentration in political blocs. The current system, where transnational party groups dominate the European Parliament and the Commission presidency is allocated through inter-party deals, must be reformed to prioritise substance over political allegiance.

5. Enforce strong cohesion at the federal level. Where the EU does act, defence, international affairs, strategic infrastructure, it must act with real authority and unified command, not the current patchwork of intergovernmental coordination.

5.2 Federal Competences: Limited but Strong

Schuman2030's most distinctive proposal is that **federalism should be limited to genuinely supranational competences**. This is not top-down federalism (where the federal level accumulates ever more power) but **bounded federalism**, the federal level is powerful within its defined domain and absent outside it.

The proposed federal competences include:

- **Defence** (including the path toward a single EU seat in NATO)
- **Space sector**
- **International Affairs** (diplomacy, economic relations, the EU as a trade bloc)
- **Physical Infrastructure** (roads, ports, transport corridors)
- **Digital Infrastructure** (secure IT backbone, cybersecurity, AI)
- **Energy & Economy** (strategic reserves, energy security, raw materials)
- **Innovation** (R&D, breakthrough technologies)
- **Long-term Planning** (geopolitics, demographic trends, strategic foresight)

Everything else, education, healthcare, social policy, culture, taxation, criminal law (except cross-border), environmental regulation (except cross-border), housing, urban planning, and the vast majority of economic regulation, **returns to or remains at the Member State level**. Note however that some domains can have supra-national components but the EU should then only provide guidelines and norms, not binding regulations.

5.3 Institutional Architecture

Schuman2030 proposes a complete restructuring of EU institutions around three bodies with an independent judicial level.

5.3.1 The Parliament (Chamber of Citizens)

The reformed EU Parliament restores genuine democratic representation:

- **Composition:** Proportional to population (degressive proportionality, as today), but MEPs represent **citizens and nations**, not political blocs.

- **Selection:** Direct election via **open lists** (voters choose individual candidates, not party slates) or delegation from national parliaments. The function is **exclusive**, no dual mandates.
- **Anti-Bloc Mechanism:** This is one of Schuman2030's most radical proposals:
 - EU-wide political groups in the Parliament are **dissolved**. There is no EPP, no S&D, no Renew.
 - **Randomised seating and committee assignments** reduce the formation of ideological silos.
 - All votes are **recorded by individual MEP**, not by bloc. Citizens can see exactly how their representative voted on every issue.
- **Mandate:** 5 years, **non-renewable**, eliminating re-election pressure and the incentive to prioritise party loyalty over constituent interests.
- **Role:** First reading of all legislation, budget approval, proposal of laws, election and oversight of Federal Council Directors.

5.3.2 *The Senate (Chamber of Statesmen and Nations)*

The Senate is an entirely new institution, inspired by the Swiss Council of States and designed to bring experience, wisdom, and national perspective to EU governance. It is also a return to the original intention of have-in a bi-cameral system:

- **Composition:** 2 Senators per Member State, regardless of population size, ensuring equal national representation.
- **Selection:** Appointed by national parliaments via **Qualified Majority (80%)**, forcing cross-party consensus. Parties must agree on candidates respected across the political spectrum.
- **Eligibility:**
 - Former Heads of State, Prime Ministers, and Senior Commissioners ("Statesmen")
 - Non-partisan **experts:** judges, scientists, civil society leaders, ...
 - **Excluded:** Active party officials or sitting MPs, preventing current political interference
- **Mandate:** 6 years, **non-renewable**, insulating Senators from electoral pressure.
- **Career Pathway:** Senate service is the **primary prerequisite** for nomination as a Federal Council Director or EU Chairman. This creates a powerful incentive for Europe's most capable leaders to serve in the Senate, and ensures that those who lead federal institutions have demonstrated "**European competence**" beyond national interests.
- **Role:** Second reading on all legislation, with a specific focus on:
 - **Subsidiarity compliance**, does this law belong at the EU level?
 - **National impact assessment**, how will this affect individual Member States?
 - **Constitutional compliance**, does this respect the federal treaties?
- **Power:** Can return laws to Parliament for revision. Holds an **absolute veto** only on treaty violations.

5.3.3 *The Independent Impact Office*

Attached to the Senate, the Impact Office is a **non-partisan, permanent body** of technical and legal experts. Its function is to produce:

- Neutral "**Legislative Impact Guides**" for every legislative proposal
- **Cost analyses**, what will this law actually cost, and who bears the burden?
- **Subsidiarity compliance assessments**, does this genuinely require EU-level action?
- **National effects analyses**, differential impacts across Member States

The Impact Office is inspired by the Swiss voting booklet tradition: its purpose is to ensure that Senators and Citizens' representatives **vote based on facts, not rhetoric**. It serves as a structural brake on over-regulation, every proposal must survive rigorous, independent scrutiny before it can become law.

EU judicial courts remain as the **final arbiter** on constitutional and legal questions.

5.4 **Federal Councils: Operational Autonomy with Democratic Oversight**

Each supranational competence domain is governed by a **Federal Council**, a dedicated executive body with operational autonomy:

- **Structure:** Each Federal Council has its own staff, budget, and operational capacity.
- **Leadership:** 4 Directors per Council:
 - 2 appointed by the EU Parliament
 - 2 appointed by the EU Senate
- All Directors must have **minimum 3 years of service in the EU Senate** or equivalent federal executive experience, ensuring leaders understand the system before running it
- **Exclusive mandate**, maximum 6 years
- **Presidency:** The Council President (CEO) **rotates** among the 4 Directors every 18 months. The President also represents the Council in international contexts.
- **Accountability:** Federal Councils report to both Parliament and Senate. Published accounts and freedom of information access for all MEPs and Senators.
- **Operational authority:** Within its competence domain, a Federal Council **directly commands and controls** all assigned components, whether nationally located or EU-origin. This is critical for domains like defence, where unified command is essential.
- **Flexible membership:** Not all EU Member States need to participate in every Council. The minimum is **6 members**, and participation is **open to non-EU states**. Non-participating states can acquire observer status but have no voting rights. Access to federal resources (e.g., the defence umbrella) requires financial contribution or reciprocal service.

5.5 The EU Chairman

The EU Chairman serves as the **diplomatic spokesperson** for all Federal Councils, a single voice for Europe on the world stage. The Chairman is selected from among current or former Federal Council Directors or Senators, ensuring deep institutional experience.

5.6 The Federal Kick-Start: Converting Blockers into Beneficiaries

One of the most politically astute elements of the Schuman2030 proposal is its strategy for overcoming resistance from current power-holders. The greatest obstacle to EU reform has always been that those with the power to change the system, national heads of state and government, are precisely those who would lose power under a more federal arrangement.

Schuman2030 addresses this directly:

- Current Heads of State and the Commission President are invited to become Founding Members of the Interim Senate.
- They retain diplomatic visibility and gain a direct role in shaping the new Federal Councils.
- The first EU Chairman and the first Federal Council Directors will be selected from this founding Senate group.
- Goal: Convert potential blockers (who fear losing power) into key beneficiaries (who gain a higher, lasting European legacy).

This is a classic institutional design insight: reform succeeds not by defeating vested interests but by **redirecting them** toward the new structure.

6 Part IV: Transition Roadmap

6.1 Phase 1: Review and Launch (Years 1–3)

Preamble: Review all current EU reform proposals and their status (Conference on the Future of Europe outcomes, European Parliament's treaty revision proposals, etc.).

6.1.1 Step 1: Launch the first Federal Council

Using **Article 20 TEU** (Enhanced Cooperation), a minimum of 6 Member States establish the first Federal Council, the **Federal Council for EU Defence**. Each Council operates under its own specific treaty but follows the same institutional structure (4 Directors, rotating presidency, Parliament/Senate oversight).

- **First:** Federal Council for EU Defence
- **Next:** International Affairs, Energy & Economy, Infrastructure, and others
- Non-participating states can acquire **observer status** without voting rights
- Access to federal resources requires financial contribution or reciprocal service
- The door remains open for **non-EU states** (e.g., the UK, Norway, Switzerland) to participate in specific Councils

- One could consider speaking of “Europe” and not of “European Union”.

6.1.2 Step 2: Bottom-up subsidiarity audit

This is the critical counterbalance to federalisation, and the element that distinguishes Schuman2030 from conventional federalist proposals:

- Moratorium on new EU regulations and laws (unless urgent) during the audit period
- Clear separation between EU-level and national-level competences
- Clear separation between **guidelines** (non-binding, EU level for shared competences) and **laws** (binding, national level unless cross-border impact is demonstrated)
- Treaties amended to reflect the new subsidiarity division (Article 48 TEU)
- **Key first amendment:** the 80% voting rule, which then enables all subsequent treaty amendments by 80% majority rather than unanimity
- **Political benefit:** This step is designed to win the support of **sovereignty-minded advocates** who have historically opposed deeper integration. By offering a genuine return of competences to the national level, Schuman2030 creates a grand bargain: more integration where it matters (defence, foreign policy), less integration where it doesn't (detailed economic and social regulation).

6.2 Phase 2: Integration & Treaty Consolidation (Years 3–8)

Step 3: EU treaties integrate the Council-specific treaties

- Federal Councils operate initially based on their individual treaties and gentlemen's agreements
- A new consolidated EU treaty makes the new structure official and formally introduces the 80% decision rule across all domains
- The Parliament and Senate are formally constituted

6.2.1 Phase 3: Defence Integration Example (Years 1–12)

The Federal Defence Council serves as the flagship example of how transition works in practice:

- **NATO relationship:** Federated states remain individual NATO members during transition. The long-term objective is for the EU Defence Council to become a **single NATO member**, dramatically simplifying the Alliance's decision-making.
- **Building on existing foundations:** PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation) and the EDF (European Defence Fund) provide groundwork.
- Phased integration over approximately 12 years:
- **Years 1–4:** Joint planning, appointment of Directors, build-up of Federal Staff, establishment of secure communications
- **Years 5–8:** Integrated command structures, distributed and redundant Command and Control (Operations, Intelligence, Logistics)

- **Years 9–12:** Permanent assignment of national military components to federal command, full operational integration
- **Budget:** 2% of each participating Member State's GNP, with 1% remaining under national control
- Working language: English
- **Impact on defence industry:** Consolidation of procurement, standardisation of equipment, and integration of supply chains, addressing the fragmentation that currently sees Europe operate 12 types of battle tanks (versus 1 in the US) and 29 types of destroyers/frigates (versus 4 in the US)

6.2.2 Phase 4: Full Federal Architecture (Years 8–15)

The complete federal architecture encompasses all supranational domains:

Federal Council	Domain
Defence	Military, security, NATO integration
Space	Launch, satellites, Earth observation
International Affairs	Diplomacy, trade bloc, economic relations
Physical Infrastructure	Roads, ports, transport corridors
Digital Infrastructure	Secure IT backbone, cybersecurity, AI
Energy & Economy	Strategic reserves, energy security, raw materials
Innovation	R&D, breakthrough technologies
Long-term Planning	Geopolitics, demographics, strategic foresight

Each Council follows the same structure: 4 Directors (2 Parliament-appointed, 2 Senate-appointed), rotating presidency, operational autonomy, democratic oversight, and the support of the Independent Impact Office.

7 Part V: How Schuman2030 Addresses the Draghi Report's Gaps

The Draghi Report on European Competitiveness (September 2024) provides a broad and detailed diagnosis of Europe's economic challenges and proposes sector-by-sector solutions requiring €750–800 billion per year in additional investment. However, the Draghi Report has significant structural blind spots that the Schuman2030 framework directly addresses:

1. **Subsidiarity audit.** The Draghi Report never asks whether the EU is the right level for a given action. Every recommendation adds EU-level coordination, spending, or regulation. Schuman2030's mandatory subsidiarity audit, with a moratorium on new regulation during the review, provides the missing counterbalance.
2. **Competence rebalancing.** Draghi proposes deeper integration across the board but offers nothing in return to sovereignty-minded Member States. Schuman2030's grand bargain, more federal power in supranational domains, less EU regulation in national domains, creates the political space for reform.
3. **Democratic legitimacy.** Draghi's governance chapter focuses on speed and efficiency. Schuman2030 focuses on accountability, the Citizens' Parliament, the Statesmen's Senate, the Impact Office, and the dissolution of political blocs all serve to reconnect EU governance with citizen consent.
4. **Regulation as part of the problem.** Draghi notes that SMEs cite regulatory burden as their greatest challenge but frames the solution as "better regulation." Schuman2030 goes further: in domains where the EU has overreached, the solution is **less regulation**, not merely better regulation.
5. **Institutional structure.** Draghi works within the existing institutional framework. Schuman2030 recognises that the existing framework, designed for 6 Member States in the 1950s and patched repeatedly since, is no longer fit for purpose. A new architecture is needed.

8 Conclusion: A Europe That Is Both Stronger and Freer

The Schuman2030 vision is neither federalist nor sovereigntist in the conventional sense. It is **both simultaneously**, federal where Europe must speak and act as one (defence, diplomacy, strategic infrastructure, innovation), and confederal where diversity, identity, and democratic proximity matter most (everything else).

This is not a utopian proposal. It is grounded in:

- **Proven models** (Swiss consensus democracy, Singaporean meritocratic governance)
- **Existing legal mechanisms** (Article 20 TEU Enhanced Cooperation, Article 48 TEU treaty revision)
- **Political realism** (the Federal Kick-Start converts potential blockers into beneficiaries)
- **Phased implementation** (12–15 year transition, starting with defence)

The name "Schuman2030" is deliberate. Robert Schuman's original vision was not of a centralised European super-state, but of a Europe where specific, limited domains of sovereignty were pooled for the common good, starting with coal and steel, the strategic resources of his era. Schuman2030 applies the same logic to the strategic resources of our era: defence, digital infrastructure, energy security, space, and innovation.

The question is not whether Europe needs reform, on that, virtually everyone agrees. The question is whether Europe's leaders have the courage to pursue structural change rather than incremental patches. Schuman2030 offers a path. The clock is ticking.

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