

Vertical tensions



Novel and important signals to watch: threats

Democracy is for old people?

- Research suggests that some Europeans, especially young people, are increasingly questioning democratic values. [Carnegie Europe](#); [New York Times](#); [Aspen Institute](#)
- *What does young people potentially losing faith in democracy mean for liberal values in the future?*

Economic inequality within the E.U. is fueling Euroscepticism.

- In Italy and Spain, many people point to the E.U. (and the Eurozone) for domestic economic problems. [Stratfor\(1\)](#); [Stratfor\(2\)](#); [Polish Institute of International Affairs](#)
- Differences in economic prosperity create tensions within (and between) member states, leading to Euroscepticism. [EU Observer](#); [Harvard University](#); [Forbes](#)
- *How can the E.U. create trust even during changing economic conditions?*

The growing disconnect between E.U. citizens and E.U. elites remains largely unaddressed.

- The gap between politicians and ordinary citizens continues to exist, as policies are perceived to be failing to deliver in key areas. [Green European Journal](#); [GLOBSEC](#); [EUOBSERVER](#); [Carnegie Europe](#)
- *Where is the middle between these diverging views?*

The other side of the coin: optimism in the Netherlands is gradually recovering, but mistrust remains.

- Trust in the police, judges, civil servants, the House of Representatives, and the E.U. has gradually recovered in recent years. [SCP\(1\)](#) [NL]; [CBS](#) [NL]; [Verwey Jonker](#) [NL]
- Although trust in such institutions has been steadily growing recently, mistrust among certain segments of the population remains. [SCP\(2\)](#) [NL]
- *What can governments do to gain the trust of the remaining segments of society?*

Long term trends: vertical tensions (10-year timespan)

Multi-factor assessment

Relation	Indicator	Trend
Citizens National government	Levels of trust in three branches of government: government	—
	Levels of trust in three branches of government: judicial system	—
	Levels of trust in three branches of government: parliament	—
	Overall level of satisfaction in the way democracy works in the Netherlands	—
	Optimism for the future	▲
Citizens European Union	Levels of trust in three branches of government: European Commission	—
	Levels of trust in three branches of government: European Court of Justice	—
	Levels of trust in three branches of government: European Parliament	▲
	Support for EU Membership	—
	Optimism for the future of the EU	▼

■ Decreasing tension

■ Increasing tension

▲ Upward

▼ Downward

— Net-zero (stable/fluctuating)

Vertical tensions



Novel and important signals to watch: international order

The 2008 financial crisis has pushed politicians into a risk-averse mood.

- The 2008 financial crisis and subsequent slow recovery have pushed politicians “into a risk-averse mood”, stalling progress and fueling skepticism. [Friends of Europe](#)
- Long term trends point to slowing growth in the Eurozone. [Deutsche Welle](#); [Reuters](#)
- *How can leaders shift to more long-term thinking about growth?*

The balance of power within the E.U. is changing.

- The departure of Great Britain, the revival of the Visegrad Group, and the ‘northern alliance’ have changed the balance of power in the E.U. [POLITICO](#); [ECFR](#)
- This is not merely the result of Brexit, but is also a consequence of different ideas on Eurozone reform and the future of Europe. [Spiegel](#); [Financial Times](#)
- *What blocs in the E.U. are becoming more important? And what does that mean for the integrity of the E.U.?*

The rift between Northern and Central European member states on key issues is growing.

- Less economically well-off countries, especially in Central Europe, feel the 2030 clean energy targets are endangering their economies, while others, mainly Northern member states, think the current strategy is not ambitious enough. [POLITICO](#); [EURACTIV](#)
- Although the number of refugees coming to Europe has decreased significantly since 2015, migration is still a dividing issue. [EUOBSERVER](#); [Stratfor](#) [Worldview](#); [ISP](#)
- *Does the E.U.’s strength lie in its unity or diversity?*

Conflicting interests are driving a wedge between Northern and Southern European member states.

- The North and South fundamentally disagree on key matters, such as protectionist trade policies, increased spending, and risk sharing. [Stratfor Worldview](#)
- Within the E.U., different narratives exist on the same issue, impeding effective reform. [Bruegel \(1\)](#); [Bruegel \(2\)](#); [EURACTIV](#); [RUSI](#); [Berlin Policy Journal](#)
- *How can member states create a shared vision?*

Long term trends: International order (10-year timespan)

Norms	Trend
Ambition to achieve more far-reaching unification ('ever-closer union')	▼
Subsidiarity principle	—

Rules	Trend
Political criteria (Copenhagen Criteria): stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy	▼
Political criteria (Copenhagen Criteria): stability of institutions guaranteeing rule of law	▼
Economic criteria (Convergence Criteria): sound public finances	▼
Economic criteria (Convergence Criteria): sustainable public finances	▲

■ Decreasing tension ■ Increasing tension
▲ Upward ▼ Downward — Net-zero (stable/fluctuating)



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