

**PRESS RELEASE 5 May 2022 – for immediate release**

## **European leaders call for more unity in times of multi-crises**

### **Day one of The State of the Union 2022**

The first day of the 12th edition of [The State of The Union](#) conference gathered policymakers, academics and private sector representatives in Florence to discuss ‘A Europe Fit for the Next Generation?’

The theme of this year’s edition “is an invitation for everyone to adopt a long-term perspective in their thinking about the problems we face,” said **Professor Renaud Dehousse**, President of the European University Institute, during the event’s opening session.

Quoting John Adams, the second US President, who said ‘Facts are stubborn things’, Dehousse stressed that “our task as a knowledge producer is to identify those ‘stubborn things’ and remind our interlocutors that no matter what they will have to be addressed.”

Speakers did just this, addressing the post-pandemic recovery, climate change, the energy transition and the war in Ukraine, among other topics, and reflecting on the crucial question: Are we fit for the next generation?

“Yes, we have all of the elements, all of the instruments, all of the intelligence,” said **Vincenzo Amendola**, Italian Under-Secretary of State for European Affairs.

Noting that Europe has been “united, brave, and effective over the past three years”, Amendola stressed that Europe needs to focus on furthering integration.

“Unity is our today, it is what helped us to bring the European continent out of the biggest crisis. Unity is the cornerstone to achieve peace and negotiations all over the continent, but the ‘united states of Europe’ is our tomorrow and we have to pursue, we have to work, we have to analyse, we have to be united to change our integration process.”

In a session analysing whether the Ukraine crisis will weaken Europe’s climate and energy policy, **Petra De Sutter**, Belgian Deputy Prime Minister said while member states are adjusting their climate and energy goals, “it is an opportunity also to accelerate towards independence. We all need to move from Russian gas and oil towards renewables.”

When asked about what the EU can do to address the issue of member states being impacted differently by the immediate energy crisis, De Sutter said, “We have to take into account that some member states will have more difficulties (...) so there must be mechanisms that play on solidarity, financial mechanisms, also mechanisms that look at the people.”

In a session on achieving Europe's great energy challenge, **Fatih Birol**, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency (IEA) said that we are in a “new energy world”, one that opens the door to opportunity. “The world is facing its first truly global energy crisis. There are huge risks that the global energy markets are facing today but I also believe that there is a realistic chance to make this a historic turning point towards a cleaner and more secure energy system.”

In the same session, **Teresa Ribera Rodríguez**, Spanish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Ecological Transition, shared this optimism, “We need to stress unity, we need to stress solidarity, we need to stress a much bigger cooperation and these are things that are important in the construction of the European project and I think there is an opportunity to do much more because of this crisis.”

On day one, approximately 300 people participated in the conference in person and more than 5,000 participated online.

The State of the Union continues on Friday, 6 May from 9:00 CEST from Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. Day two speakers include European Parliament EU High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy **Josep Borrell-Fontelles**, European Parliament President **Roberta Metsola** and WHO Director-General **Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**.

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## **ACCESS TO PHOTOS AND FOOTAGE**

[A selection of photos from day one](#)

[Rewatch the sessions from day one](#)

## **PROGRAMME**

[The State of The Union 2022 programme](#)

## **ACCESS TO THE SESSIONS**

The livestream is available at [stateoftheunion.eui.eu](https://stateoftheunion.eui.eu).

## **ABOUT THE STATE OF THE UNION**

Since 2011, [The State of the Union Conference](#) has been the annual summit for high-level reflection on the EU. With [more than 100 speakers on the programme](#), the 12th edition is the largest to date. Organised by the European University Institute in Florence each May, The State of the Union has become a key reference point for EU policymakers, civil society representatives, diplomats, business and opinion leaders, and academics. Previous speakers include presidents, prime ministers, and the heads of the European Institutions. The State of the Union is a unique forum where a diverse group of key actors gather to debate and reflect on Europe's most pressing issues. In times of crisis or instability, such a nuanced understanding of the EU's successes, failures and challenges is crucial.

The organisation of The State of the Union is made possible thanks to the support of its [partners](#).

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## CONTACTS

**Soraya Binetti**

E-mail: [SoUPress@eui.eu](mailto:SoUPress@eui.eu)

M: +39 345 141 5585

**Roeland Scholtalbers**

E-mail: [SoUPress@eui.eu](mailto:SoUPress@eui.eu)

M: +39 351 644 1013

**Elena Torta**

E-mail: [SoUPress@eui.eu](mailto:SoUPress@eui.eu)

M: +39 349 520 23