

Preface

1. Resilience and transformation in the European context

In an era of unprecedented global upheaval, the concepts of **resilience** and **transformation** have emerged as defining characteristics of Europe's response to contemporary challenges. Resilience, understood as “the capacity of a system to adapt successfully to significant challenges that threaten its function, viability, or development” (Masten, 2018), has become a cornerstone of European policy discourse. Building on decades of research across multiple disciplines (Southwick et al., 2014), resilience encompasses not only the ability to bounce back from crises but to emerge stronger, more adaptive, and better prepared for future challenges, which scholars term “adaptive resilience” (Bonanno, 2004; Norris et al., 2008).

Transformation, on the other hand, represents the fundamental restructuring of economic, social, and institutional systems to address long-term challenges and opportunities. Unlike incremental change, transformation involves paradigmatic shifts that reshape the very foundations of how societies operate, produce, consume, and govern. In the European context, transformation is intrinsically linked to the pursuit of sustainability, digitalisation, and enhanced competitiveness in a multipolar world.

2. Key challenges and disruptions shaping contemporary Europe

The past decade has witnessed an extraordinary confluence of crises that have tested Europe's resilience and accelerated its transformation. Since the onset of the eurozone crisis in 2009, the EU has faced numerous challenges, including a massive influx of refugees, Brexit, the coronavirus pandemic, and the Russian

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invasion of Ukraine (Jehne, 2022). The 2008 financial crisis further exposed structural weaknesses in the European Monetary Union, leading to prolonged sovereign debt crises that questioned the viability of European integration. The migration crisis of 2015–2016 also challenged the principles of solidarity and burden-sharing among Member States, while the Brexit referendum of 2016 marked the first instance of a member state choosing to leave the Union, fundamentally altering the EU's political landscape (Jones et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic, beginning in 2020, represented perhaps the most comprehensive test of European resilience in the Union's history. The health crisis quickly evolved into an economic and social catastrophe, forcing unprecedented policy responses, including the temporary suspension of fiscal rules, the creation of the Next Generation EU recovery fund, and the rapid development of common procurement mechanisms for vaccines and medical equipment (Boin et al., 2020; Schmidt, 2020).

The euro, migration, and COVID-19 crises originated in systemic failures, to which the EU responded by developing capacity – most extensively in the euro and COVID crises, in which the costs of disintegration were highest and national crisis management capability was most limited (Schimmelfenning, 2024). Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 further intensified these challenges, creating a geopolitical crisis that forced Europe to confront its strategic dependencies, particularly in the energy sector. Putin's war against Ukraine has already caused thousands of deaths and significant economic damage globally, representing what European leaders describe as the third asymmetric shock in 15 years (European External Action Service, 2022). The war has accelerated Europe's quest for strategic autonomy, reshaped supply chains, and prompted a fundamental reassessment of the continent's security architecture. At the same time, it has highlighted the urgent need for energy independence and an accelerated green transition.

The climate crisis represents perhaps the most fundamental long-term challenge, requiring nothing short of a complete transformation of Europe's economic model. The European Green Deal, launched in 2019, is the most ambitious attempt to decarbonise an advanced economy while maintaining competitiveness and social cohesion. However, the path to climate neutrality by 2050 requires navigating complex trade-offs between environmental imperatives, economic competitiveness, and social justice.

Technological disruption, driven by artificial intelligence, digitalisation, and the emergence of new industrial paradigms, presents both opportunities and challenges for European societies. While these technologies offer pathways to enhanced productivity and sustainability, they also raise concerns about job displacement, privacy, and the concentration of technological power in the hands of a few global players, many of whom are based outside Europe.

3. Structure and contributions of this volume

This volume brings together cutting-edge research and analysis from leading scholars to examine how Europe is building resilience while undergoing fundamental transformations across four key dimensions: geopolitical and institutional resilience, trade and global positioning, green and energy transformation, and economic and social resilience.

Part I: Geopolitical and institutional resilience

The volume opens with Adam A. Ambroziak's analysis of **The need for a common response from EU Member States to geopolitical challenges: Fair and open strategic autonomy**. This chapter introduces the concept of fair and open strategic autonomy as a framework for coordinating EU responses to global challenges while maintaining openness to trustworthy partners. The analysis examines the complex interdependencies between trade policy, competition policy, and industrial policy in building European strategic autonomy.

Agnieszka Kłos-Sosnowska explores **Fiscal policy coordination in the European Union and dilemmas in its enforcement**, examining the persistent challenges in implementing fiscal rules across Member States. The chapter reveals the dichotomy between theoretical frameworks and practical implementation, highlighting ongoing tensions in European economic governance.

The question of financial integration and risk-sharing is addressed by Joanna Bogołębska, Ewa Feder-Sempach, and Ewa Stawasz-Grabowska in their analysis of **Can debt mutualisation make the euro area more resilient? An overview of proposals for common safe asset creation**. This chapter provides a comprehensive review of proposals for creating common eurozone safe assets, in addition to examining their potential to strengthen monetary union resilience and enhance the international role of the euro.

Tomasz Dorożyński, Anetta Kuna-Marszałek, and Bogusława Dobrowolska contribute an empirical study on **Governance quality and investment attractiveness: Empirical evidence from OECD countries**. Their research demonstrates the critical relationship between institutional quality and foreign direct investment flows, with particular attention to differences between EU and non-EU OECD members.

The section concludes with Piotr Idczak and Ida Musiałkowska's examination of **EU support for the recovery process and developing the economic and business environment in Ukraine after the large-scale conflict with Russia in 2022**. This chapter analyses the unprecedented €84.6 billion EU support

package for Ukraine, examining how crisis response mechanisms have evolved to address complex geopolitical challenges while building long-term resilience.

Part II: Trade, cooperation and global positioning

The second part begins with Małgorzata Czermińska, Joanna Garlińska-Bielawska, and Marta Ulbrych's analysis of **The potential for trade cooperation between the European Union and selected countries of the Southern African Development Community in light of the provisions of the Economic Partnership Agreement**. This chapter examines how trade liberalisation through Economic Partnership Agreements contributes to both trade creation and economic development in partner regions.

This section includes a chapter by Justyna Majewska, Szymon Truskolaski, and Łukasz Bryl entitled **Resilience of the Polish and German economies to external shocks in the context of Polish accession to the EU**. The authors analyse the impact of the 2004 EU enlargement on Poland's and Germany's ability to withstand external shocks, including the financial crisis, the sovereign debt crisis, and the ongoing effects of the pandemic.

Łukasz D. Wróblewski provides insights into **Cross-border cooperation in the EU in light of economic fluctuations: The case of the Polish-German borderland**. His analysis reveals important lessons about the relationship between formal cooperation frameworks and actual economic integration, showing how territorial cooperation initiatives may not always align with real economic linkages.

Marcin Jurczak's chapter on **Polish transport in a changing Europe – 20 years of change** offers a comprehensive assessment of how EU investment has transformed Poland's transport infrastructure over two decades, providing insights into the long-term effects of European integration on national development.

The section concludes with Piotr Trąpczyński, Łukasz Puślecki, and Zuzanna Maleszewska's examination of **Development of post-transition country firms' legitimization strategies in advanced economies: A mixed-method study of Polish subsidiaries in Germany**. This chapter provides novel insights into how firms from emerging economies build legitimacy in advanced markets, contributing to our understanding of contemporary patterns of European economic integration.

Part III: Green and energy transformation

The third part addresses Europe's green transformation, beginning with Agata Kwiatkowska, Letycja Józefczak, and Olga Jankowska's analysis of **Green growth**

vs. degrowth: Implications for climate neutrality and socio-economic stability in Europe. This chapter examines one of the most fundamental debates in sustainability discourse and explores whether traditional growth paradigms can be reconciled with environmental imperatives.

Kamilla Marchewka-Bartkowiak, Iustina Alina Boitan, and Filip Teodor Iorgulescu contribute empirical research on **Climate transition policies and non-household electricity prices – impact assessment across the European Union.** Their analysis provides crucial insights into how carbon pricing and climate policies affect electricity markets, with important implications for industrial competitiveness.

Zuzanna Puwł examines **The European Union's energy security based on renewables,** analysing whether renewable energy sources can serve as Europe's shield against external energy dependencies. This chapter is particularly relevant in light of the energy crisis triggered by the war in Ukraine.

Grzegorz Mazur contributes an analysis of **Defining environmental goods in international trade,** reviewing the definitions of environmental goods developed by organisations such as the World Trade Organisation and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Mazur highlights the key challenges involved, including differing approaches to classification, dual-use products and the dynamic nature of environmental technologies.

Magdalena Śliwińska explores **The role of Fair Trade in sustainable transition of Europe.** This latter chapter examines how the Fair Trade movement contributes to sustainable transformation across social, market, and regulatory dimensions.

Part IV: Economic and social resilience in transforming Europe

The final section addresses the social and economic dimensions of European transformation. Dorota Czyżewska-Misztal analyses **EDIHs in Poland as intermediaries supporting digital transformation of SMEs,** examining how European Digital Innovation Hubs facilitate the digital transformation of small and medium enterprises, which form the backbone of the European economy.

Marceli Hązła provides a forward-looking analysis of **Implications of selected digital solutions for the globalisation process,** which explores how artificial intelligence, automation, and other digital technologies may reshape global economic relationships and contribute to emerging “techno-geopolitics.”

Zbigniew Bentyn, Sylwia Konecka, and Maciej Szymczak examine **The cold chain as a resilience feature of the supply chain,** analysing how specialised logistics technologies can enhance supply chain resilience while navigating sustainability challenges.

Judyta Cabańska, in her chapter **Labour migration and workforce short-ages: Building resilience in post-pandemic Europe**, examines how post-pandemic labour shortages, driven by demographic ageing and structural weaknesses, have increased the importance of labour migration in building resilient European labour markets, while also highlighting challenges related to integration and skills recognition.

The volume concludes with Alicja Hadryś, Monika Guzek, and Agata Linkiewicz, whose chapter **Preliminary research findings on the impact of gender diversity in boards on sustainable development policies** demonstrates that gender diversity on corporate boards facilitates the effective implementation of sustainable development policies.

Conclusions

Together, these contributions provide a comprehensive examination of how Europe is navigating the complex intersection of resilience-building and transformation in an era of multiple, interconnected crises. The volume, which is an effect of research coordinated by the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence “Resilient and transforming Europe” TRANSFORM EU, demonstrates that European resilience is not simply a matter of returning to previous states of equilibrium but about building adaptive capacity for continuous transformation in response to evolving challenges. As Jean Monnet famously observed, “Europe will be forged in crises, and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for those crises” (Monnet, 1978). As Europe faces an uncertain future marked by climate change, geopolitical competition, technological disruption, and social change, the insights provided in this volume offer valuable guidance for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners working to build a more resilient and sustainable European future.

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