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## THE EU'S 4 PERSISTENT PROBLEMS STILL DOGGING THE BLOC

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Bernd Riegert

Each year, the European Commission takes stock of the state of the EU, and the president delivers a speech to parliament. The main issues this year are the same as in 2020. Bernd Riegert has an overview from Brussels.

The findings of a recent Eurobarometer survey, commissioned by the European Union itself, are clear: Citizens in the bloc believe that the main issues it should be addressing are climate change, the COVID pandemic, health care, the economic situation and social inequality. These are thus the themes that European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will broach in her second State of the Union address before the European Parliament this coming Wednesday as she takes stock of the achievements of the past year and announces new measures.

### *Pandemic*

There are now enough COVID-19 vaccines in Europe, but ☐☐☐☐ the fall rapidly approaches ☐☐☐☐ vaccination rate is still too low. The goal of ensuring that 70% of adults were vaccinated has been achieved, but this is not enough in view of the highly contagious delta variant. Moreover, vaccination rates vary widely among EU member states, from only 20% in Bulgaria to almost 90% in Malta.

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