

Europe's strategic responses

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Europe's Strategic Responses

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Executive Summary

Europe has two faces. On the one hand, there was a time when Europeans were enchanted by the miracle of integration. After having experienced bitter centuries of war and enmity, imperial devastation, and outbursts of nationalism, the nations of Europe had begun to move in precisely the opposite direction. Yet, although the European success story continues to this day, it also resembles the description of a distant epoch. Perceptions of the European Union are increasingly characterized by a resurgence of national egoism and declining levels of public approval.

In this situation it is helpful to recall the problem at the heart of the issue of integration, which is the conceptual schism among the member states. Contradictory and irreconcilable attitudes toward the future of Europe confront each other. The arguments are ostensibly about treaty texts, though deep down it is a matter of antagonistic views of the shape of things to come. If it proves impossible to reach some kind of agreement about the future political order of the continent, the Europe of 25 and soon more member states may well go into decline, and may possibly even fall apart. This problem cannot be resolved until the issue has been openly discussed.

The principal strategic question concerning the future of the EU continues to remain unanswered. Why is there a need to undertake new efforts, why is it necessary to mobilize new powers? The answer to this question is linked to the new constellations and conditions of world politics. It has to do with Europe's ability to shape developments in a new global order. Europe's future is increasingly being determined by developments taking place beyond its borders. There is a danger that the old continent will gradually become marginalized. Europe must not only react to these developments, it also has the potential to inject its own ideas into the formulation of the rules governing the new economic and political world order. Both Europe's ability to exert its influence and the fate of the European continent depend on whether the Europeans will be able to renew the "European answer" in a manner that enables them to respond effectively to future challenges. Providing Europe with a new *raison d'être* requires the EU to assert itself both internally and externally, and to clearly communicate the reasons for further European integration to citizens. This tripartite task elicits three strategic responses:

- (1) If the EU wishes to assert itself internally it will need a "strategy of institutional efficiency" in order to ensure that an enlarged Europe is capable of acting and functioning effectively.

A task for the future will be to ensure the institutional efficiency of the European Union in the wake of further deepening and widening. In this respect two things will be particularly important: *the outcome of the EU's constitutional process and differentiation in Europe.*

The rejection of the European Constitution by the electorate in two EU founding states means that another historic attempt to provide Europe with a reliable political order has probably failed. Nonetheless, the EU-25+ still requires a new primary law. Numerous alternative proposals to the Constitutional Treaty have been put on the table in the aftermath of the negative referendum results. A pragmatic option would be to identify the principal constitutional innovations and to incorporate them into the primary law currently in force by means of a treaty amending

the current Treaties. A "Treaty Amending the Treaty of Nice" seems a realistic alternative, which would not contradict the vote of the French and Dutch electorates, yet at the same time would secure the implementation of the basic constitutional reforms.

However, the efficiency of an enlarged Europe will not merely be determined by the future political and structural organization of the EU. Increasingly diverse interests and the growing complexity of decision-making in the enlarged Union make it necessary, far more than in the past, to resort to the possibilities of differentiated integration. In political practice, using instruments of differentiation to solve technical questions will not lead to an exclusive core of states, but to divergent leadership coalitions. The sum total of the individual cooperation projects and the intersection of the participating countries will create an "open area of gravitation", that attracts other EU states to engage in a more intense level of cooperation. If differentiation is construed and applied in this way, a Europe of 30 and more member states will continue to be governable and ready to meet the challenges of the future.

(2) If the EU wishes to assert itself externally it will need a "strategy for shaping global politics" in order to strengthen the role of Europe, both in its immediate neighbourhood and in the global arena.

The global political situation is currently characterized by changed constellations involving new powers and unprecedented challenges. Europe cannot simply afford to stand on the sidelines at a historic moment when economic and political developments require the establishment of new forms of international order.

As a result of enlargement the EU borders on sensitive neighbouring regions that call for specific strategic responses. The EU has a special responsibility toward Southeastern Europe. The prospect of accession for the states of the Western Balkans promotes reforms and western-oriented and liberal political forces in the countries concerned, and is in the fundamental interests of the EU and its member states. The integration of the Western Balkans into the EU is not a question of whether or not, but of when and how.

However, the attractiveness of Europe does not end in the Balkans. Other states are pushing very hard to join the EU. The start of accession negotiations with Turkey means that Europe has finally come to a point where it no longer has definitive borders. Europe urgently needs to understand the strategic ramifications of the path on which it has embarked. In view of these prospects the EU (i) should not principally shut its doors to newcomers, (ii) should at the same time not grant any further binding accession offers beyond the Western Balkans and Turkey, (iii) should continue to deepen relations with neighbouring European states in the context of a differentiated policy toward Eastern Europe, and (iv) should intensify the partnership with Russia.

The European Union is a factor to be reckoned with in world politics on account alone of its sheer size and economic strength. However, Europe is a very vulnerable actor. And no member state acting on its own is in a position to master the new global challenges. The assertion of global interests requires a more determined effort to pool European defence capabilities by creating a European Army with the

appropriate organizational and command structures on the European level. The creation of integrated armed forces would enhance Europe's military capabilities and tie the states of Europe closer together in the field of security policy than at any time in their history. Interlinking national security and defence policies in this way would increase the pressure on EU member states to overcome the current deficit in strategic thinking and to speak with one voice regarding even the most sensitive foreign policy issues.

(3) The EU will have to adopt a "strategy for the promotion of European self-assurance" in order to regain popular support.

Europe is stuck in a mental crisis of orientation. The current lack of orientation is not a specifically European but a general phenomenon. In the age of globalization, established patterns of interpretation have begun to disintegrate everywhere in the world. A hitherto unparalleled degree of mobility, pluralism and flexibility has led to the breakdown of traditional types of identification. As a result there is a fundamental need for guidance. The European Union, as an evolving political system, must provide its citizens with a sense of orientation if it wishes to overcome its current crisis of legitimacy.

In order to strengthen European self-assurance, the EU should pursue two things: *a gradual politicization of European politics*, and *a new raison d'être underpinned by a new grand project*.

Politicization means (i) ensuring that the principle of opposition, which is the lifeblood of any political system, becomes firmly entrenched in the EU, (ii) discussing publicly differences of opinion concerning specific European policy issues, (iii) Europeanizing national political debates, (iv) personalizing European politics, and (v) dramatizing European elections by enabling EU citizens to exert a direct influence on the appointment of the Commission President. In sum, the gradual politicization of the EU would constitute a decisive step toward a more mature political system.

Moreover, Europe needs a convincing and plain answer to a simple question. What do we need the EU for in the future – beyond the preservation of what has already been achieved? The European Union as a dynamic economic, political and security policy project that is able to shape both internal and external developments in a dynamic global environment: Putting this abstract formula in concrete terms is a prerequisite for conveying the necessity of future integration steps. The art of European politics will be to combine the new *raison d'être* with an ambitious yet realistic grand project that reflects the principal idea of a new Europe.

Europe's internal and external vulnerability underscores the need to pursue a grand project in the area of security. Greater security policy integration can procure benefits for the member states and their citizens that the individual countries can no longer provide on their own. If policymakers succeed in making the European Union a coherent actor in all aspects of internal and external security, Europe will be in a position to make a decisive contribution toward shaping the future international order. The epochal decision to embark on the unification project once brought peace and prosperity to the European continent. It is now time to view the success of the European project from a global perspective.

Europe's Strategic Responses

Europe has two faces. On the one hand, there was a time when Europeans were enchanted by the miracle of integration. After having experienced bitter centuries of war and enmity, imperial devastation, and outbursts of nationalism, the nations of Europe had begun to move in precisely the opposite direction. The establishment of a European community became the main driving force of the post-war era. Two important sources of vitality provided unsuspected reserves of power for this historic revolution: on the one hand the hope for peace among the former enemies in Europe and security in view of the threat from the East, and on the other expectations of economic prosperity through a common market. Both visions became reality. Europe began to be seen as a model of peace and prosperity that was admired throughout the world. In the early 1980s, when there were nascent signs of fatigue and talk of "eurosclerosis", the strategic thinking of Jacques Delors helped to give a new impetus to the integration project. The establishment of the single market, the disappearance of border controls in the Schengen area, and the introduction of the euro provide impressive evidence of the European success story.

This success story is ongoing. After the historic enlargement round of 1 May 2004, when ten new countries joined the EU, the reunification of the continent will continue with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania. On 1 January 2007 Slovenia will become the first new member state to adopt the euro; at the same time the Eurozone strengthens its political profile. The important role of the EU in the negotiations leading to the Ohrid Agreement in Macedonia constitutes a good example of its stabilizing power in its immediate neighbourhood. Global EU civilian and military crisis management missions, the establishment of the European Defence Agency, and the formation of battle groups provide evidence of the ongoing development of European Security and Defence Policy. Agreement on the EU Financial Perspective for 2007-2013, the adoption of the Services Directive, the start of a debate about energy security, the progress concerning the development of the European Galileo satellite navigation system and the enduring external attractiveness of the integration project are further evidence for the continuing vitality of the European Union.

Ongoing success story

Yet at the same time the European success story nowadays resembles the description of a distant epoch. Perceptions of the European Union are increasingly characterized by national egoism and declining levels of public approval. Joint attempts to modernize the European economic area as part of the Lisbon strategy have made little headway. In many member states the stability pact concerning the common currency is increasingly perceived as an obstacle to effective financial and monetary policy. Rising resistance to European mergers and takeover bids is a sign of a new economic nationalism. At the same time, enlargement fatigue and doubts about the compatibility between deepening and widening are increasingly widespread. Many politicians and sections of the public are increasingly beginning to cast doubt on the ability of the European Union to absorb further states. The constitutional process has come to a standstill, and reflections about the future of this process have failed to yield any tangible results. EU citizens and sections of the elites are losing confidence in the unification project. The erstwhile dynamism seems to have evaporated. Europe seems exhausted.

Symptoms of crisis: national egoism and declining approval ratings

In this situation it is helpful to recall the problem at the heart of the issue of integration, which is the conceptual schism among the member states. Contradictory

Heart of the problem:
a conceptual schism

and irreconcilable attitudes toward the future of Europe collide. Whereas some construe the idea of the "United States of Europe" as a survival strategy for the continent, others are keen to emphasize that they have merely joined an internal market. This profound disagreement over the EU's ultimate direction threatens to abruptly end the success story of European integration. The basic consensus over European integration policy is a thing of the past. The arguments are ostensibly about treaty texts, though deep down it is a matter of antagonistic views of the shape of things to come. If it proves impossible to reach some kind of agreement about the future political order of the continent, the Europe of 25 and soon more member states may well go into decline, and may possibly even fall apart. This problem cannot be resolved until the issue has been openly discussed.

The principal strategic question continues to remain unanswered. Why is there a need to undertake new efforts, why is it necessary to mobilize new powers?

Europe's ability to
shape developments
in a new world order

The answer to this question is linked to the new constellations and conditions of world politics. It has to do with Europe's ability to shape developments in a new global order. After the end of the Cold War, the rise of new economic and political powers in Asia and South America, and the globalization of economy and security, Europe's future is increasingly being determined by developments taking place beyond its borders. There is a danger that the European continent will gradually become marginalized. Europe must not only react to these developments, it has the potential to inject its own ideas into the formulation of the rules governing the new economic and political world order.

Three strategic responses

European unification was and continues to be Europe's response to a rapidly changing world. Europe's ability to exert its influence depends on whether the Europeans are able to renew the "European answer" in a manner that enables them to respond effectively to future challenges. This does not require the reinvention of the wheel. The future European Union will to a significant extent be based on its historical achievements and structures. The cornerstone of the European house continues to be the fact that it is a project dedicated to peace. However, other aspects now deserve greater attention: A Europe whose transnational governmental structures need to be improved. A Europe that takes on global responsibilities. A Europe that is not merely a project of the elites, but that includes citizens in its decision-making processes. These cornerstones must be pieced together to establish a foundation for the future. Providing Europe with a new *raison d'être* requires the EU to assert itself both internally and externally, and to clearly communicate the reasons for further European integration to citizens. This tripartite task elicits three strategic responses:

- (1) If the EU wishes to assert itself internally it will need a "*strategy of institutional efficiency*" in order to ensure that an enlarged Europe is capable of acting and functioning effectively.
- (2) If the EU wishes to assert itself externally it will need a "*strategy for shaping global politics*" in order to strengthen the role of Europe, both in its immediate neighbourhood and in the global arena.
- (3) Communicating the reasons for further integration to EU citizens requires a "*strategy for the promotion of European self-assurance*" in order to regain popular support.

I. A Strategy of Institutional Efficiency

A structural feature of Europe's institutional architecture is the fact that it is constantly changing. Deepening and geographical widening make it necessary to establish a system which is both stable and able to adapt. Criticizing the slow pace of the reforms may in fact be justified, but one should always remember that in the end the member states have always managed to agree on and to implement reforms. From this point of view the European Union seems far more capable of reform than many other political systems. A task for the future will be to guarantee institutional efficiency in the event of further deepening and widening. In this connection two things will be particularly important: the outcome of the EU's constitutional process and differentiation in Europe.

Europe's Constitutional Process

The European Union is no longer a relatively insignificant political entity. On account of its interwoven structures and the competences that have been conferred upon it, it has become the centre of political power on the European continent. The extent of European integration has reached a level that inevitably leads to questions about the internal structure of the European Union. Europe, which like a magnet has attracted an increasing number of tasks and members, longs for more institutionalized reliability. It is no longer an entity that merely elicits emotions and visions, but a provider of public goods and thus the focal point of high expectations.

Following the rejection of the Constitution by the electorate in two of the EU's founding member states another historic attempt to provide a reliable political order for Europe appears to have failed. But the EU must nonetheless optimize its procedures in order to act effectively in the future. The European Union needs faces in order to make it more visible to citizens, and in order to better assign responsibilities. It also needs improved opportunities for involving both national parliaments and citizens. A number of alternatives to the Constitutional Treaty have been suggested:

- *The retention of the Treaty of Nice* currently in force is to all intents and purposes not a viable option. The EU-25+ cannot be governed on the basis of a set of rules and regulations that in essence was originally conceived for six states. Without meaningful amendments to the Treaty of Nice the European Union will sooner or later experience a dramatic crisis of legitimacy. The massive distortion that results from the current weighting of votes in the Council of Ministers is no longer tenable from a democratic point of view. The number of citizens and the number of states, which are taken into account in the Constitution's "double majority" decision-making procedure, are the only categories of legitimacy in the age of democracy.
- The option of *holding on to the original Constitutional Treaty* presupposes that the new primary law will be presented unaltered to the French and Dutch electorates in another referendum. However, the chances that a second referendum will lead to the desired result seem rather slim.

Alternatives to the
Constitutional Treaty

Retention of Treaty of Nice
not a feasible option

Little chance of retaining
Constitutional Treaty

- “Cherry-picking” parts of the Constitution impossible due to the opposition of individual member states
- The option of “*making the most of Nice*” is not sufficient to ensure the enlarged EU’s future efficiency or to enhance its democratic legitimacy. The implementation of constitutional innovations on the basis of the existing Treaties and thus beneath the level of formal amendments to primary law – for example, in the shape of inter-institutional agreements or modified rules of procedure – is unlikely to be achieved in many important cases. Attempts to unravel the package as a whole and to “cherry-pick” individual elements of the Constitutional Treaty will come up against opposition from certain member states and thus fail.
- Combining Parts I and II of Constitution difficult to communicate and a time-consuming process
- Another option would be to present the electorate with a “*shortened constitution*” using the terminology of a “basic treaty” and combining Parts I and II of the Constitutional Treaty. This alternative is also rather problematic. On the one hand, the opponents of the Constitution will argue that it is simply duplicitous. On the other hand, this alternative would also require a revision of Part III of the constitutional text. This would definitely be an extremely time-consuming process that could not be completed without calling yet another Convention.
- Pragmatic option: Treaty Amending the Treaty of Nice
- A pragmatic option would be to transfer the core of the constitutional innovations into primary law in the shape of a treaty amending the Treaty of Nice. The provocatively titled “Constitution” would be transformed into a modest revision of the Treaty of Nice, thereby making it possible to incorporate the core of the constitutional innovations into the existing Treaties. To do this, it would be necessary to identify the central reforms of the Constitution and combine them in the shape of a treaty amending the primary law currently in force.
- Arguments for an amendment treaty
- A “Treaty Amending the Treaty of Nice” represents a realistic option that respects the vote of the French and Dutch electorates, and at the same time allows the implementation of the central elements laid down in the Constitutional Treaty. None of the controversies in the member states were sparked off by the core of the Constitution. The considerable improvements made by the Constitution with regard to the EU’s efficiency, transparency and democratic legitimation have not been called into question. However, the Constitution was badly flawed from the very beginning. The text is too long, too complicated, and incomprehensible. For this reason the opponents of the Constitution were able to insinuate all sorts of things about the document with impunity. Furthermore, the text was simply crying out to be a vehicle for the expression of domestic frustrations. The ‘No’ votes amounted to a rejection of the national governments concerned, and were the result of unfounded mythological fears.
- Principal innovations in a “Treaty Amending the Treaty of Nice”
- A “Treaty Amending the Treaty of Nice” should include the following constitutional innovations:
- (1) the reform of the EU’s institutional system,
 - (2) the development of the decision-making and voting procedures,
 - (3) the reform and enhancement of the instruments of differentiated integration and
 - (4) other constitutional innovations.

(1) Reform of the institutional system

The Constitution's central institutional reforms should be incorporated into the current Treaties. They primarily comprise the appointment of an elected President of the European Council, the introduction of a European Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the reduction in the size of the European Commission and the strengthening of its President. The personalization of the architecture of European leadership makes it possible to achieve a clear assignment of responsibilities on the EU level and strengthens the continuity, visibility and consistency of European policymaking.

Personalization as basis for more continuity, visibility and consistency

(2) The development of the decision-making and voting procedures

If the EU wishes to keep its ability to take action and to enhance its democratic legitimacy, it needs to reform the decision-making procedures in the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament, and assign a more prominent role to the national parliaments. The introduction of the "double majority" procedure constitutes a milestone in the history of the European Union. Using the number of citizens and the number of states as a basis for decision-making in the Council of Ministers reflects the two strands of legitimacy in the EU. The double majority rule makes it more difficult for member states to form blocking coalitions and promotes the ability to form constructive majorities. Furthermore, the extension of majority decisions in the Council of Ministers is essential for the problem-solving competence of an enlarged EU. Finally, the rights of national parliaments should be enhanced, (early warning mechanism), elements of direct democracy should be introduced (citizens' initiative), and the European Parliament should be given greater budgetary powers and co-decision rights in the legislative process.

"Double majority", extension of majority voting, rights of national parliaments

(3) Reform and enhancement of the instruments of differentiated integration

In the enlarged EU the interests of the member states are becoming more and more diverse. For this reason strategies of differentiated integration are particularly important. Blockades or the lack of political will in certain member states in the fields of monetary, internal and social policy were already in the past overcome with the help of differentiation, thereby promoting the process of integration. The amendment of the current Treaties should include the reforms of the existing flexibility instruments laid down in the Constitution (enhanced cooperation) and adopt the new instruments especially in the area of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

Reform of enhanced cooperation, new differentiation instruments in ESDP

(4) Other constitutional innovations

Finally, a series of central provisions of the European Constitution should be adopted as part of a reform of the current Treaties. These include the legally binding incorporation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the introduction of competence categories, the adoption of the so-called "passerelle" or "bridging clauses", which aim to make it easier to reform the European Treaties, the adoption of the solidarity clause, and the introduction of the mutual defence clause. It is also of fundamental importance to reform the procedure for future revisions of EU primary law. Here the Constitutional Treaty does not go far enough. The European Union needs a binding procedure for the eventuality that the new primary law cannot

Incorporation of Charter of Fundamental Rights, competence categories, passerelle clauses, treaty amendment procedure

enter into force on account of non-ratification by a small number of member states. Ever since the “No” votes in France and the Netherlands it has become evident that the agreed procedure whereby such matters are referred to the European Council is insufficient.

A “slimmed down”
constitutional text
in two parts

The modesty of a “Treaty Amending the Treaty of Nice” offers a realistic solution for the current constitutional crisis. In this way the failure of one project might provide the impetus for a decisive spurt ahead. The next step would be to elaborate and adopt a less voluminous text that contains only the principal constitutional provisions while relegating the detailed non-constitutional provisions to a text below the constitutional level. Such a “division of the treaties” would provide the grounds for a readable constitutional document that corresponds both to the requirements of European governance and to the expectations of citizens.

Directing strategic
development at EU-30+

Basically the European Union needs to prepare for the likely scenario that in the medium to long term it will comprise far more than 30 member states. Instead of wringing their hands over the possibility that the integration process in an enlarging Europe might grind to a standstill, decision-makers must not allow reforms to be deferred indefinitely. The strategic development of the EU must be directed toward preparing the Union for the membership of far more countries than it has today.

Differentiation in Europe

Diversity of interests and
decision-making complexity
require different speeds

The efficiency of Europe will not only be determined by the future political and structural organization of the EU. The increasing diversity of interests and the growing complexity of decision-making call for a greater degree of active and visible political management. More than ever before Europe needs various speeds in order to remain effective. Citizens expect the EU to provide state-like services in areas as diverse as justice and home affairs, foreign, security, defence, tax, environmental, and social policy. However, not all of the member states can or may wish to provide such services at the same time and with the same intensity. As was the case in the past with the common currency, the Schengen accords, or social policy, closer cooperation among a small group of countries can help to overcome a situation of stalemate and improve the way in which the European Union functions.

Islands of differentiated
integration not tantamount
to a closed core Europe

However, the formation of islands of differentiated integration should not be equated with the creation of a closed core Europe in which a small group of states determines the nature and fate of integration. Discussions about a Europe of triumvirates, directorates or pioneer groups – which some demand and others fear – are unrealistic and counter-productive. They are unrealistic because the idea of a closed core Europe in which a small group of countries continues to develop the unification process is unfeasible. The vast majority of the member states will want to belong to the group moving ahead – if only in order to prevent the establishment of a small leadership circle. Thus the creation of an exclusive core Europe presupposes that a small number of states would openly reject the wish of its EU partners to participate. None of the potential core countries would have any such intention.

Debates about the establishment of a core Europe are also counter-productive. Threats and conceptual misunderstandings overshadow the fact that differentia-

tion provides a key strategic opportunity. Bringing the whole notion of differentiated integration into disrepute makes it impossible to utilize its formative potential to the full. Equating differentiation with a core Europe misses the key point that differentiated integration constitutes an opportunity to implement sensible proposals for cooperation even if the support and participation of all EU member states is not forthcoming. As a result, the ensuing climate of mistrust causes promising projects to remain tucked away in a drawer.

Counter-productive debate
over a core Europe

The real potential of increased differentiation in Europe will be revealed only in practice. In the years ahead greater use should be made of the various kinds of differentiated integration than has hitherto been the case. It will be particularly important that the EU institutions and the member states become familiar with the instrument of enhanced cooperation that was introduced in the Treaty of Amsterdam and modified by the Treaty of Nice and the Constitutional Treaty. The instrument, which has not been employed yet, should initially be used in the context of smaller differentiation projects in various policy areas. Only then will it be possible to ascertain how well the current legal provisions concerning enhanced cooperation work in practice and where improvements are needed in order to increase the usefulness of this key instrument of differentiation.

Using the instrument of
enhanced cooperation

In political practice, using instruments of differentiation to solve technical questions will not lead to an exclusive core of states, but to divergent leadership coalitions. The sum total of the individual cooperation projects and the intersection of the participating countries will create an "open area of gravitation" that attracts other EU states to engage in a more intense level of cooperation. While all member states enjoy the basic right to participate in differentiation schemes, this right should not be allowed to jeopardize the success of individual differentiation projects. As a result, participation in specific projects must be linked to the fulfillment of certain prerequisites. Thus, the open area of gravitation will, for a certain length of time and in certain policy areas, lead to a Europe of different speeds.

Open area of gravitation

The transformation in the logic of integration will change the face of the European Union, which has hitherto been dominated by the logic of joint action taken simultaneously by all member states and by legal uniformity. Such a step also entails risks. The transition to a differentiated Europe should thus be pursued cautiously, and certain core components of integration must remain binding for all member states. If differentiation is conceived of and implemented in this way, Europe of eventually 30 and more member states will continue to be governable and capable of mastering future challenges.

Transforming the logic
of integration

II. A Strategy for Shaping Global Politics

The individual European states do not possess sufficient power to have a significant influence on global politics. Yet even the European Union, which for a long period of time appeared to compensate for the loss of national influence, has reached its limits. In global terms the significance of Europe has relatively declined. As the fundamental decision "in favour of Europe" was taken decades ago, it is now in the vital interest of its members to provide the European Union with the resources and instruments it needs in order to effectively compensate for the loss of influence on the national level.

Europe: a vulnerable continent

The global political landscape is characterized by changed constellations involving new powers and unprecedented challenges. Global interdependence especially in the field of security requires the European Union to improve its abilities. The situation is characterized by a new quality of conflicts that range from the professionalization of international terror and asymmetrical warfare via the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to regional crises and the negative consequences of state failure. These new risks and threats combined with energy dependency, growing migration pressure, the geographic proximity to future crisis regions, and the vital significance of unimpeded world trade for the EU economies, make Europe a particularly vulnerable continent. For this reason Europe cannot simply afford to stand on the sidelines when economic and political developments require the establishment of new forms of order.

The international responsibilities of the European Union begin in its immediate geographic vicinity. However, Europe also needs to have at its disposal sufficient resources to protect its interests and project its power in the global arena.

Stabilizing the Neighbourhood

The accession of ten new countries to the European Union in May 2004 was a major contribution to the stabilization of Europe. With eastern enlargement the European Union has overcome the division of the continent and laid the foundations for the unification of Europe.

Sensitive neighbourhood

However, as a result of enlargement the EU borders on sensitive neighbourhoods. The EU adjoins the post-Soviet space in the east, from the Barents Sea in the far north to the Black Sea in the south, the Middle East to the southeast and the states of northern Africa to the south. The stabilization of these areas is not only in Europe's interests, but at the same time constitutes a crucial contribution to the maintenance of world peace.

Special responsibility for
Southeastern Europe

The European Union has special responsibilities in the southeast of the continent. On account of its potential and its own historical experiences, an enlarged Europe is now in a position to make an effective contribution to the solution of the cluster of problems in Southeastern Europe. The failure of European crisis management at the beginning of the 1990s taught European states the necessity of working together and served to align their interests.

Accession of Western Balkans
in the interests of EU and
member states

The prospect of EU membership for the countries of the Western Balkans promotes not only reforms and western-oriented and liberal political forces in the countries concerned, it is also in the fundamental interest of the Union and its member states. Being linked to the European Union provides numerous opportunities for both the Balkan countries and the EU. The positive economic development of the region, which is underpinned by the prospect of EU membership, is indubitably in the economic interests of the Union. Participation in the area of freedom, security and justice ensures that the same standards apply, and reduces mutual mistrust in sensitive areas of inter-state cooperation such as border security, combating organized crime, as well as immigration, refugee and asylum policy. To assess the costs of Southeastern enlargement, it is imperative to take into account the costs of non-enlargement or long-term delays in accession. A receding prospect of EU membership could cause the status quo that has already been attained in the region to

be called into question. Disappointment and the lack of a perspective might lead to new outbursts of violence among the various ethnic groups, the costs of which would have to be borne not only by the region, but also by the EU and its member states. A relapse into authoritarian practices, that could inflict long-term damage on democratization efforts, cannot be ruled out in certain states.

In view of such prospects it seems clear that only the full and equal integration of the Balkan countries into the Union at some specific point in the future can secure the strategic advantages that the EU already derives from association and gradual convergence. The European Council gave all states of the Western Balkans – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro – a specific prospect of EU membership as early as 1999, and has confirmed this offer on numerous occasions. Accession negotiations are currently in progress with Croatia, and Macedonia has been granted candidate status. After the accession of Bulgaria and Romania there will be even greater pressure to close the “black hole” on the map of Europe. Southeastern enlargement – which is not comparable to the 2004 enlargement round in terms of either size or political and economic consequences – is thus not a question of whether or not, but of when and how.

However, the attractiveness of Europe does not end in the Balkans. Certain other states are pushing very hard to join the EU. While the 2004 enlargement constituted a decisive step toward completing the vision of a united Europe organized politically in the European Union, the next historic milestone is already around the corner. The start of accession negotiations with Turkey means that Europe has finally come to a point where it no longer has definitive borders. In essence the decision concerning Turkey marks the start of a large-scale process of enlargement reaching far beyond the Balkans, and where this will end is currently impossible to say. Europe urgently needs to understand the strategic ramifications of the path on which it has embarked. In the context of a European Union that is continuously enlarging, the following must be taken into account:

- (1) *The European Union, which will soon comprise 27 member states, should not shut its doors to newcomers.* The possibility of joining the EU must remain open in principle to all European states even if the prospect of membership is distant. For most of the countries in the geographic vicinity of the European Union the prospect of EU membership provides an important impetus for the initiation or continuation of the process of political and economic transformation. Without the long-term perspective of enlarging beyond the Western Balkans, the EU would not be in a position to strongly influence the transformation process in neighbouring European states. The success of individual national reforms has a profound impact on the development of other states in the EU's direct neighbourhood. Thus the success and sustainability of internal reforms in Ukraine and Georgia are crucially important for transformation processes in other former Soviet republics. In this context the autocratic government of Belarus remains a special challenge for democratic Europe.
- (2) *The EU should however not grant any further binding accession offers beyond the Western Balkans and Turkey.* In many EU countries this would unnecessarily exacerbate the popular dissatisfaction with the EU's enlargement policy. Taking into account the increasing enlargement fatigue in the EU-25, enlargement beyond the Balkans and Turkey should be forestalled for a specific period – for

Ending the “black hole” on the map of Europe not a question of whether or not, but of when and how

Consequences of a Europe with no definitive borders

EU-27 should not shut its doors to newcomers

No binding offers of prospective membership beyond the Balkans and Turkey

example, until 2015 or 2020. Moreover, granting a binding prospect of EU membership would rob the European Union of one of its principal means of exerting pressure on states in its immediate neighbourhood at an unnecessarily early stage. Furthermore, the concrete prospect of EU membership might well lead to exaggerated expectations in neighbouring states. Unfulfilled promises might raise the level of frustration in the countries concerned and retard the transformation process.

Black Sea Dimension and
Central Asia Strategy

(3) *The EU should continue to deepen its relations with neighbouring European states within the framework of a differentiated policy toward Eastern Europe.* In this context, the EU must take into account the different levels of democratization as well as varying pro-European attitudes in the countries concerned. The EU needs a genuine strategy for Belarus and the Black Sea region, an area that will become even more strategically important after the accession of Bulgaria and Romania. The European Union should initiate a Black Sea Dimension analogous to the Nordic Dimension for the Baltic region. Furthermore, the EU should also focus on Central Asia, which is becoming ever more important for Europe in terms of security and energy policy.

Active partnership with Russia

(4) Cooperation with the EU's immediate neighbours in Eastern Europe, the Black Sea region and Central Asia requires *an active partnership with Russia.* The Russian Federation continues to be an indispensable actor in Europe. Up to now relations between Russia and the EU have been based primarily on economically defined interests between the government in Moscow and individual EU member states. In future these relations should become increasingly Europeanized. The relationship between the EU and Russia should be reformulated with regard to both form and content by 2007 at the latest, when the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement expires. Both sides will for the first time be faced with the challenge of jointly shaping overlapping spheres of interest. Strategically, the West must take Russia seriously and secure its involvement in key policy issues. At the same time the EU must emphasize the values and principles on which cooperation is based, and the necessity of democratic reforms in Russia. The European Neighbourhood Policy and EU policy toward Russia should be aligned and coordinated on this basis in the course of renegotiating the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Such an approach will enable the EU and Russia to pursue coordinated policies in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Promoting World Peace and Asserting Global Interests

Europe as magnet and model

The European Union is a factor to be reckoned with in world politics on account alone of its sheer size and economic strength. But the EU's international significance derives also from the fact that the voluntary pooling of sovereignty provides a model that radiates not only to the periphery of Europe but far beyond. Integration is not only a survival strategy for a continent composed of relatively small states, but is also one of the principal concepts for shaping international order in an increasingly interdependent world. The European Union attracts states as if it were a magnet, it enlarges, it manages to promote transformation through the prospect of membership, and as a result it exports stability to both the European continent and to neighbouring regions.

At the same time, Europe is also a very exposed actor. Contrary to the expectations of many Europeans, and in contrast to their intuition that the end of heavily armed superpower confrontation would free them from insecurity, world affairs are experiencing a period of disorder, risks, crises and unprecedented dangers. It is thus in Europe's best interests to assume more global responsibility.

Europe as an exposed actor

No member state acting on its own is in a position to provide the resources and instruments necessary to master these complex challenges. For this reason Europeans must act jointly to create a viable foreign, security and defence policy. A number of important steps have been taken since the establishment of the ESDP in 1999. The development of operational capabilities and the establishment of institutional structures for civilian and military crisis management, the establishment of a European Defence Agency, the global deployment of civilian and military EU missions, and the adoption of the European Security Strategy reflect the European will to establish the EU as a credible and reliable actor in international affairs.

Successes of European Security and Defence Policy

But despite numerous advances in recent years, security and defence policy in Europe is still characterized by divergent national approaches and perceptions and by persisting claims to national sovereignty. Insufficient use is made of the potential synergies of closer defence policy cooperation. Europe cannot successfully represent its interests on the global stage if it continues to merely follow an approach of selective cooperation. The provision of limited capabilities for civilian and military crisis management on the European level is not enough. The assertion of global interests requires a more determined effort to pool European defence capabilities by creating a European Army with the appropriate organizational and command structures on the European level.

Creation of a European Army

The establishment of integrated armed forces would enhance Europe's military capabilities and promote a much more efficient use of increasingly constrained national defence budgets. The pressure on the participating states to establish a common market for defence equipment would increase. The creation of a European Army would tie the states of Europe closer together in the field of security policy than at any time in their history. Interlinking national security and defence policies in this way would increase the pressure on EU member states to overcome the current deficit in strategic thinking. This would promote a common European culture of strategic thinking and planning, both regionally and globally. The pressure on the EU and its member states to speak with one voice also on sensitive security policy issues would grow. This would strengthen the profile of the European Union on the international stage. Europe would be enabled to engage responsibly and self-confidently in the concert of international powers and to play a more active and relevant role in shaping global developments. A decision to establish a common defence will also have far-reaching consequences for transatlantic security structures. Europe's ability to pursue common goals with the United States will be greatest if it is able to function as an equal partner in the transatlantic alliance.

Enhanced military capabilities, overcoming the strategic deficit, ability to shape global developments

It may well be that the idea of a European Army is asking too much considering the current level of consensus on security and defence policy among the EU-25. In this case, it should be possible for states that are willing and able to engage in cooperation to move ahead even if not all EU countries are prepared to participate. In this regard the possibility of a structured military cooperation as envisaged in

Special responsibility of Germany, France and the United Kingdom

the European Constitutional Treaty points in the right direction. Germany, France and the United Kingdom bear particular responsibility. Based on the size of their defence expenditures, the existence of national headquarters and the ability to pursue crisis diplomacy on the highest level, the “Big Three” possess means and capabilities without which a European Army cannot be established.

III. A Strategy for the Promotion of European Self-Assurance

Europe is stuck in a mental crisis of orientation. European identity has always been rather complicated and relatively weak, and has often been obscured by national and regional allegiances. Yet in the course of the past decades a greater sense of what it means to be European has emerged – as a result of common suffering and subsequently of a common success story. Both constitute the basis for common European values.

Europe as our common
fate and future

However, the certitudes of the past have given way to uncertainty. Calls to strengthen European identity have become more audible. So far the response has consisted largely of illustrious conferences on European culture that make feeble attempts to pin down the soul of Europe while ultimately producing little more than material for satirical remarks. The strategic indecision about the future of Europe on the part of policymakers has led to confusion in the minds of EU citizens. As a result there is an elementary need for orientation regarding the question of Europe as our common fate and future. If it proves impossible to inspire a new European self-assurance that is capable of forging a European identity, Europe will not be able to surmount its current crisis of orientation and legitimacy.

Reacting to
lack of orientation

The current lack of orientation is not a specifically European phenomenon, yet it affects Europe more than others. In the age of globalization traditional patterns of interpretation have begun to disintegrate everywhere in the world. A hitherto unparalleled degree of mobility, pluralism and flexibility has led to the breakdown of traditional types of identification. Modern man suffers from a dearth of economic, social and political orientation. There is a great need for shared descriptions and understandings of our contemporary material and ideational environment. Under these circumstances the European Union, as an evolving political system, has a particular responsibility to fill the gap left by this lack of orientation.

Loss of confidence in
policymakers particularly
dramatic for Europe

However, this task is complicated by the fact that EU citizens have lost their confidence in the abilities of policymakers. Declining trust is not a problem specific to European institutions, but a widespread phenomenon in all areas of political life. Yet this lack of confidence has particularly drastic consequences for the European project, which is still primarily dominated by political elites. The European Union enjoys a much smaller benefit of the doubt than the nation-states, and is called into question more quickly and fundamentally than its members. Whereas the lack of trust in policymakers has led to a renaissance of the national and above all the regional levels, the European level has been increasingly weakened.

In order to strengthen European self-assurance Europe should pursue two things: a gradual politicization of European politics, and a new *raison d'être* underpinned by a new grand project.

Politicization as a Step toward Maturity

A dynamic transnational democracy presupposes that citizens identify with the political system of the European Union and that European politics receive democratic legitimation. To enhance its legitimacy, the EU must ensure that citizens enjoy greater democratic participation. The key to this is the progressive politicization of European policymaking as a decisive step toward a more mature political system.

Although the institutional architecture of the European Union has developed considerably in recent years, a weak point of the system is becoming ever more apparent. Europe lacks resilient political debates about the content of EU policy. In large sections of the population "Brussels" is deemed to be a bureaucratic centre, not a centre of political activity. This perception springs above all from the fact that the principle of opposition, the dialectics of political discourse, and the personalization of conflicts play a minimal role in the EU's political system.

Europe lacks political debates

European political life lacks the lifeblood of a thriving democracy. A political system lives from the clash of colliding arguments, which is the essence of politics. In contrast, the EU is structurally oriented toward consensus. Competing ideas and concepts are not sufficiently presented and discussed on either the European or the national level. As a result there is neither a public nor a media-driven opinion-forming process about European issues.

What can be done to redress this deficit? First of all, this will require a change in the minds of people. The exaggerated craving for harmony when it comes to Europe is out-dated. Disagreement is a constituent element of every political process and as such should not be dramatized on the European level either. In contrast to internal national debates, European policy disagreements still cause politicians and representatives of the media to proclaim a fundamental crisis of integration. After 50 years the EU has reached a degree of inner maturity that makes it possible to view differences of opinion, divergent interests and conflicting goals as evidence of the vitality of the European policymaking process and not as an existential threat. The credibility of attempts to popularize the EU was in the past undermined by the fact that the European Union was exclusively portrayed in a positive light. In the public sphere one should paint a realistic and differentiated picture of the European Union and portray also critical aspects concerning the integration process.

Disagreement as a normal feature of European politics

Politicization on the European level should emulate what succeeds on the national level. Politics is made by people, not by a collection of soulless machines. Those who wish to make policymaking comprehensible must ensure that it is associated with identifiable individuals. Europe requires a higher level of personalization. Numerous innovations in the European Constitutional Treaty point in the right direction. The envisaged appointment of a President of the European Council, the proposed creation of a European Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the strengthening of the President of the Commission would give the EU identifiable faces that would be the focus of trust and distrust, approval and rejection. These political innovations should enter EU political practice even if the Constitutional Treaty ultimately fails.

Personalization of European leadership structure

Europeanization of national political debates

The politicization of the European Union must also ensure that citizens enjoy greater democratic participation in European politics. European issues must become a self-evident feature of political debates at all levels. Up to now European citizens rarely interact directly with the European Union; their perceptions of the EU rather tend to be filtered through national, regional or local perspectives. Whilst European policymaking influences the internal affairs of the member states, the EU remains largely invisible as a political entity in people's daily lives. Europe continues to be an artificial sideshow. If issues related to the EU are to play more than a minor role, they must become an integral part of political debates in the member states. The strict separation of national and European level issues in political discourse needs to be eliminated; in the EU's complex multi-tier system, this separation no longer corresponds to reality. Otherwise there is a danger that policymaking will increasingly take place on the European level, uncoupled from popular legitimacy. To put it in other words: the electorate must give politicians on the national level also a mandate for their policymaking in the EU. And citizens can only do so if more time is allotted to European politics in the course of day-to-day political debates. There must be space for the discussion of controversies that in turn provides citizens a choice between political alternatives.

Dramatizing European election campaign

Finally, a greater degree of politicization makes it imperative to dramatize European elections. By voting for MEPs of their choice, citizens should be able to exert a direct influence on the appointment of the President of the Commission. In order to increase the importance of the vote of EU citizens in European elections, the procedure for electing the Commission President should be reversed. The Commission President should not be nominated and appointed by the Heads of State and Government. Instead, the President should be nominated by European parties in the run-up to European Parliament elections on the basis of a common election manifesto, and elected by the new parliament. The President of the Commission duly elected by the European Parliament would then have to be confirmed by the Heads of State and Government on the basis of a qualified majority vote. This procedure would upgrade the importance of European elections as an act of electoral control. In addition, it would strengthen the legitimacy and power base of the Commission and its President, while simultaneously enhancing the significance of the European Parliament.

Effects of increased politicization

A higher degree of politicization will rekindle the interest of the electorate in Europe as a political entity. Politicians on the national and European levels would be forced to conduct debates on European policy with their voters. A greater degree of politicization would also stimulate competition in the development of policy innovations. Debates on competing solutions to European policy issues will increase the pressure to form stable cross-sectoral and cross-institutional coalitions. The formation of cross-institutional alliances and durable majority and minority coalitions would help to overcome blockades in an EU of 25 and more member states. In the final analysis a greater degree of politicization would enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of supranational actors. This would be especially important in the case of the European Commission, which in recent years has forfeited a large part of its strategic effectiveness and influence. In sum, increased politicization in the European Union would constitute a decisive step toward a more mature political system.

A New *Raison d'être* and a Grand Project

In addition to gradual politicization, a strategy to enhance the significance of the European Union in the eyes of citizens must also involve the elaboration of a new rationale explaining the necessity of the integration project. The EU, far more than its constituent nation-states, must offer an autonomous reason that legitimizes its existence. There are many people who do not believe that the European project is an answer to the multifarious challenges of globalization. In the eyes of many of its citizens the European Union is the catalyst of unfettered globalization – this was demonstrated by the fact that in certain EU states the debate about the 2004 round of enlargement was dominated by diffuse anxieties. The European Union and its member states need to convince citizens that Europe is part of the response to global dynamism – they must do so not in abstract, but in concrete terms.

For this purpose the European Union does not have to be reinvented. It was built on a solid foundation: the peaceful unification of the continent as well as economic prosperity in a single market with a common currency remain important motives for the future. However, the old motivating factors are no longer enough to convince citizens of the future value-added of the integration project. The European Union should be re-interpreted in light of current challenges. What is needed is an innovative and future-oriented understanding of the European idea that combines the past and the future, stability and change, and the old and the new in equal terms. The redefinition of the European idea is an intellectual task that needs to be performed by European elites and communicated in the form of a new European *raison d'être*.

Reinterpreting Europe and not reinventing it anew

In order to unleash new dynamism it is not necessary to arrive at a common understanding of the ultimate finalité of the unification process. In view of the conceptual schism among EU member states, such a debate would currently be counter-productive. Mutual mistrust would further increase, and there would be paralysis instead of purposeful action. Furthermore, the continuous dynamism of globalization makes it difficult to reach agreement about a concept of the EU's finality: one cannot predict in which direction the world and Europe will develop. In view of the uncertainties within and outside the old continent it is currently impossible to define at what point enlargement or integration will actually come to an end.

New finality debate would be counter-productive

What Europe needs more urgently than finality debates is a convincing and comprehensible formula to explain the ongoing need for European integration in the future. Europe needs a plain answer to a simple question. What do we need the EU for in the future – beyond the preservation of what has already been achieved?

The European Union as a dynamic economic, political and security policy project that is able to shape both internal and external developments in a dynamic global environment: Putting this abstract formula in concrete terms is a prerequisite for conveying the necessity of future integration steps. Numerous examples confirm the global role that Europe already plays today, including the structuring of global economic relations through WTO negotiations, the significance of the enlarged EU in global trade, the role of Europe as a stabilizing force and supporter of peaceful transformation processes, the function of EU integration as a model for economic and political cooperation in other parts of the world and, finally, the "success story"

Europe as a success story

of a pluralistic EU, which not only permits diversity, but actually profits from it, and thereby constitutes a practical counterpoise to the “clash of civilizations”.

Legitimacy and dynamism
through a new grand project

However, it will not be enough to proclaim this new *raison d'être* in the form of a solemn declaration replete with group photo. Citizens and elites will begin to sense a new fascination with the European project if the latter provides convincing evidence in everyday reality. In contrast to nation-states, the Union is not stable enough to do without a grand project from which it can derive legitimacy.

“Europe of small projects”
not enough

Individual projects in different policy areas will not suffice to increase the EU's output legitimacy. Such projects fall short of the mark because, as far as citizens are concerned, they are either not visible enough, or, taken as a whole, resemble a patchwork of unrelated individual measures. In order to revitalize the integration project there is a need for a new grand project beyond a “Europe of small projects”. European policymaking has always been particularly dynamic and successful whenever it set its sights on a large-scale and ambitious goal. The most impressive example of this was the single market project “Europe '92”. Today the art of European politics will be to combine the new *raison d'être* with an ambitious yet realistic grand project that reflects the principal idea of a new Europe.

Two areas where there is both a considerable pressure for action and where citizens particularly want the EU to deliver seem appropriate for a new grand project: the field of *economic and social policy*, and the area of *security*.

Economic and social policy

Despite its undeniable significance for the citizens of Europe, the thematic cluster of *economic and social policy* seems not very suitable for a new European grand project for a variety of reasons. First, the European Union does not possess sufficient competences in these areas and it cannot be assumed that the member states will be prepared to centralize further responsibilities. Second, a grand project that pursues the economic and social modernization of Europe would almost certainly be accompanied by drastic cutbacks for a considerable number of people – this is hardly to generate “new enthusiasm” for Europe among citizens. Finally, further integration in the areas of economic and social policy that goes beyond (i) individual measures to complete the single market, (ii) mutual learning in the context of the Open Methods of Coordination, or (iii) a mere synchronization of national economic and social policies would be questionable from an economic point of view. Is not the competition between the divergent national systems and between the member states' economies a key reason for Europe's economic success?

Grand project in the
field of security

Europe's internal and external vulnerability underscores the need to develop a grand project in the area of security. Greater security policy integration can procure benefits for the member states and their citizens that the individual countries can no longer provide on their own. Through the pooling of security resources, common responses to transnational problems such as cross-border crime, illegal immigration, weapons proliferation, terrorism, and new regional and global risks would result in greater efficiency and financial benefits for member states.

EU member states have long ago recognized the value of cooperation. Since Maastricht the European Union has made considerable progress in the areas of justice and home affairs as well as foreign, security and defence policy. Yet many of the individual measures that have been initiated appear to be rather haphazard,

and the overall picture lacks coherence. Furthermore, there is a lack of conceptual interlinkage between the various aspects of internal and external security. Existing projects in the area of security should be embedded within a clear-cut framework with ambitious yet realistic goals. The creation of a European Army would be an appropriate goal in the area of external security, but this would have to be complemented by an equivalent project in the area of internal security. The successful implementation of a grand project in the area of security requires the elaboration of a coherent concept that defines European security interests in a comprehensive manner, aligns both internal and external as well as civilian and military aspects of security policy, identifies the specific measures that are required, and provides a timetable that is binding on the participants.

Europe as a coherent internal and external security actor

If policymakers succeed in making the European Union a coherent actor in all aspects of internal and external security, Europe will be in a position to make a decisive contribution toward shaping the future international order. The epochal decision to embark on the unification project once brought peace and prosperity to the European continent. It is now time to view the success of the European project from a global perspective.

Europe as successful project in a global perspective

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