The European Union needs to change dimension
Jean-Dominique Giuliani,
President Robert Schuman Foundation

Is the EU’s foreign policy prepared for Brexit?
Hilde Vautmans MEP,
AFET Committee,
European Parliament

The EU27 in a multipolar world
Should the European Union learn the language of power?
The construction of Europe is, internationally, one of the biggest successes of the second half of the 20th century, despite tragedy and conflict in the first. Europe could have been excluded from history. Instead, it peacefully rebuilt itself with an unparalleled level of cooperation between the states that form it. The progressive integration of the continent allowed its rapid reconstruction and brought it prosperity. At the turn of the 21st century, Europe is an economic giant that must be reckoned with. However, the beginning of this new century marks a sudden and accelerated decline of the strategic context. The access of new continents to growth and wealth was good news for hundreds of thousands of people; it marked a new balance of power. Russian and Turkish revisionism accompanied a return of nationalism and caused conflict near Europe, as well as causing pressing tensions and potential problems.

The EU needs to become more political
The European Union needs to change dimension and finally become more political, agreeing to pool its strengths and weaknesses to weigh in the world at the height of its past successes. Indeed, nothing would be worse for the European Union than continuing to reason and act as in the past. It must take off geo-strategically, something it finds difficult. A number of Member States are satisfied with the current situation and do not see the value of further integration. Others are ashamed of their laws and their past. Finally, others are inward-looking, victims of the fashionable “anti-globalisation and anti-multilateralism” syndrome. To preserve its achievements, the Union must now be able to speak and act internationally in the same way as the most important powers. It is neither a state nor an empire and it was deliberately built against these models. However, it must learn the language of the balance of power, that of the return of power states, to avoid being taken hostage and suffer decisions made elsewhere, inconsistent with its interests.

It needs to give credibility to its fledgling diplomacy through a military capability. It does not have to embark on expansionist or interventionist adventures, it is simply a question of being credible for, precisely, not having to use force, which most of its members are reluctant to do.

Waking up to global strategic realities
At the beginning of February, the French President, after his predecessors, took another step towards a slowly progressing defence cooperation. He offered to talk to his partners on nuclear deterrence, of which France is now the only holder within the Union. Those who are not familiar with the most sophisticated diplomacy should remember the characteristics of nuclear weapons. They are the ultimate guarantee; not intended to be used, but to deter, because they promise unacceptable damage to aggressors. They cannot be put under joint command, and there is no example of this ever being done, including NATO in which it is discussed, but where only the American President has the final capacity to use them. Given the evolution of the United States, so caricatured by the extreme sensitivity of its current president (!), the French offer is an unexpected opportunity to give European diplomacy, and still too limited military capabilities, credibility on which a European defence can gradually be built. NATO will continue to exist because it is not incompatible. It is even necessary at this time. But there will be no peaceful, sustainable future for Europeans without their own coordinated deterrent capacities. To guarantee peace, one must be ready, if necessary, to wage war. It is – alas – the law of nations since the origin of the human race. This is likely the reason why the German minister of defence officially accepted the French offer. In parallel, the two partners, France and Germany, are accelerating their defence industrial cooperation. It seems that Europe is waking up to the global strategic realities, with a delay it must urgently make up. May our European leaders finally respond to the requests of their fellow citizens by building a more sovereign and independent Europe that defends its interests all over the world! This may be the condition for the continuation of the European adventure.

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