

THE TIME FOR EU'S COMMON FOREIGN POLICY IS NOW

**THE EU'S 2021 FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES
IN THE EYES OF WORLD-CLASS PRACTITIONERS,
EXPERTS AND POLICYMAKERS**

GLOBSEC Strategic Brief



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Abstract

The world, at present, is rapidly changing, profoundly uncertain and challenged by an array of issues. The international environment, for one, has undergone a global power shift in recent years that has seen democratic values put on the defensive and the liberal economic model endure setbacks. Some global players including the United States have retreated from the multilateral international framework even as others, like China, have sought to augment their global influence. Where does the EU currently stand? What should Europe's foreign policy priorities be in 2021? And how can the EU optimally secure its objectives?

Constrained by a complicated institutional structure, limited authority and resources and a sluggish decision-making process, the EU is, in fact, struggling to project a cohesive foreign policy voice internationally. While important progress, undoubtedly, has been made on several fronts and should not be ignored, a full-fledged European foreign and security policy remains, for now, a far-off aspiration. The new Commission, nevertheless, is fully aware of the challenges it is going up against. Casting itself in a more geo-political role, the Commission has resolved to ensuring the strategic autonomy of the EU in relation to the US, China and Russia.

In this report, sixteen experts analyse what exactly Europe's foreign policy priorities should be in 2021 and what the EU should do to bolster its strategic ambitions. It brings together short contributions from distinguished practitioners, experts and policymakers.

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Executive Summary

The outset of this year has been marked by a far from festive mood, the pandemic still holding a tight grip on societies and economies. This crisis comes on the backdrop of wider global geopolitical changes which bode ill for a Europe that is, regrettably, becoming a marginal strategic actor. The EU, a real community of nations, has never been so severely neglected. Britain, for its part, has left the family. China, Russia and Brazil, meanwhile, perceive us as 'Europe', not the 'European Union'. And regional and world powers forgo speaking to EU institutions, instead turning to member states. The term "Global Europe", unquestionably, reflects more aspiration than reality.

These developments are disappointing given the potential of the European project, a unique ongoing continental experiment that has seen nearly half a billion people peacefully foster prosperity and democratic institutions over half a century. Integration has generally proceeded in fits and starts but over the past three decades, we have learned one matter the hard way: the Monnet method, the conventional approach towards deepening European integration, will likely not succeed in the foreign policy realm. The creation of new institutions and procedures was able to generate positive effects back in the 1950s when cooperation would spill over from one area of integration to another. Projection of power abroad, however, is not as concrete as sectoral coal and steel cooperation. No wonder the technocratic method that has, thus far, been applied to the Common Foreign and Security Policy has come up against formidable obstacles. This observation, notably, does not mean that foreign policy, by definition, can never achieve closer integration in the EU. It only means rather that it will not occur through an institutions-first and politics-later approach. In foreign policy, in other words, it will take much more than the Monnet method to bring about a common approach.

As 2021 finally shakes off a pandemic-induced torpor and normalcy is restored, what should the EU's five focal points on foreign policy encompass?

- 1. Sort out the European project from within.** EU foreign policy will only be as effective and ambitious as EU integration more broadly. To project power abroad, you need to have it in the first place. It would be naïve to assume that internal debates concerning the rule of law and shared values, the finalité of the EU and the limits of solidarity will not affect the bloc's global clout and standing. This fact sharply underlines the case for holding the Conference on the Future of Europe, which is to be launched by the President of the European Commission. The EU should go back to its roots and use the concept of 'community' instead of 'union'. It will foment a sense of belonging and open a debate on Europe's values and symbols and what lies beneath them.
- 2. The EU should embrace all available tools going beyond the Common Foreign and Security Policy *sensu stricto*.** EU foreign policy, be it on climate, peace building and development aid, energy, democracy, trade or migration, should all be perceived as part and parcel of "Global Europe". A policy of 'normative realism' could serve as a constructive approach enabling the EU to, for example, pursue its interests through free trade agreements. This will, however, necessitate a change in mindset and a further convergence of the instruments the EU has at its disposal.

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- 3. Seize once-in-a-generation opportunity.** The Biden administration provides a welcome respite for those pinning for a renewal of transatlantic ties, the cornerstone of Western civilization. There is a long to-do list for partners on both sides of the Atlantic – Iran and NPT, China, Russia, the WTO and trade and the regulation of digital giants. EU-US mutual investment is the real backbone of the transatlantic economy but it has suffered setbacks in recent years. Europeans and Americans could return to negotiations on a free trade agreement, or – as others call it – an 'economic NATO'. That name is no coincidence. The project has genuine geopolitical value and is finally gaining traction.

Today, despite a new administration in the White House, the contours of a post-American international order are forming. This includes not only its emerging structures but also its risks and threats, all of which are intensifying. For Europe – and for the rest of the world – the pandemic has proven to be a catalyst for far-reaching changes. The crisis has undermined the credibility of many institutions and created a climate of suspicion around institutional reforms. Rebuilding trust presents a considerable challenge that demands member states and EU institutions coordinate their responses. These needs, furthermore, reinforce calls for a "strategic autonomy" that complements rather than replaces the transatlantic bond.

- 4. 2021 provides, perhaps, the final geopolitical opportunity for Europeans to clarify what kind of relationship they want with key global players including China and Russia and our neighbourhood.** The EU, otherwise, will be a policy-taker, unable to shape events abroad. Foreign policy begins at the doorstep (i.e. the neighbourhood). If the EU is not able to work out what it wants with prospective members and neighbours, it is difficult to envision the EU becoming a superpower globally. The concept of Europe being a 'transformative power' is flailing. While the European model is attractive to societies that have no other choice but Europe, the EU is failing to persuade those who have decided on alternative development paths. With respect to countries which contradict universal values and international law, meanwhile, the EU has a powerful and effective tool available in the form of sanctions. Though sanctions can be effective, provided diplomacy on the ground is adept and coordinated with other instruments, it is only a tool and not a goal itself.
- 5. Part of the answer on "how to do it" will involve the adoption of flexible arrangements by member states and EU institutions or enhanced cooperation.** One way to provide this possibility would be for member states to step away from the unanimity rule, either formally or functionally. It is not fair to blame European institutions for problems that are the result of the negligence of national governments (i.e. the failure to equip institutions with an adequate mandate and resources).

The EU often finds itself squandering considerable time on its own problems. We can either continue arguing about fish, potatoes, milk and shoring up the banks, watching Europe's power diminish in the process. Or we can join together and become a global power, one that speaks to both economic and foreign policy and defence concerns. The potential is there within our grasp - if we utilize it.

It is far past time for Europeans to abandon their Europe-centric and inward-looking approach and instead launch a common foreign policy worthy of its name. To start investing properly in their future security, the EU must mature and develop the capacity to defend its own interests. The day is indeed fast approaching when others will be less able and willing to do this for us than they once were.

“The EU should solve competitive inequality and develop an assertive foreign policy”

by Prof. Jordi Bacaria Colom

Professor of Applied Economics, Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB)

The EU – and the world more generally - is currently facing numerous foreign policy challenges, some of them latent for a long time and many the consequence of actions or inactions of the past (e.g. climate change and the pandemic). Though not all problems will be easy to solve in the short-term, EU foreign policy officials should, nonetheless, focus on five priority areas in 2021 (not all may, however, be realistic given the timetable).

66 The first EU goal should be to recompose relations with the US on trade, climate, NATO reform and the Iran

The first (realistic to achieve) concerns the need to recompose relations with the US on trade, climate change (Paris Agreement), NATO reform and the Iran agreement. Improving political dialogue with Russia should be a second aim (not realistic to achieve but it is necessary to retain it). Progress will largely depend on the US position. The EU, moreover, must establish its security agenda on the European stage. A third goal (realistic with cooperation with the US) rests on the EU asserting a strong and unified position towards China and enforcing rules and addressing competitive inequality with Beijing. If agreed, WTO reforms, fourthly, should serve to aid in resolving disputes and concentrate needed action on digital trade, technology and climate change. Finally (not very realistic in the short term), the EU should develop an assertive foreign policy to promote security and economic growth in the Mediterranean space and the Middle East. Turkey is an essential piece to this puzzle.

There are several internal and external challenges the EU will be tasked with facing to advance its foreign policy priorities in 2021. Regarding the former, they include: achieving unanimity among EU Member States on foreign policy objectives; triggering effective implementation of the Next Generation EU recovery instrument to improve the confidence of European citizens

in EU public actions; fostering inclusive growth for social cohesion to prevent radicalism and political populism that erode democracy and social stability.

On external challenges, meanwhile, they encompass: protecting critical EU value chains; ensuring the safety of supplies of all raw materials that are produced abroad and essential to developing clean energy; avoiding absolute external dependencies on health and food products.

To overcome the challenges identified above, the EU should intensify its diplomacy and use second track diplomacy by conducting outreach to civil society organizations; promote investments in infrastructure and inclusive education in strategic regions; take a precautionary approach towards introducing economic sanctions in response to political situations in other countries as they may prove to be ineffective and counterproductive.

If the EU wants to bolster its strategic ambition in the world, it should, foremost:

- ▶ **Strengthen its alliances.**
- ▶ **Prioritize multilateralism.**
- ▶ **Pursue and complete the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP),** enhance the North Atlantic alliance and balance the effects of Asian integration and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).
- ▶ **Improve relations with Latin American countries** through support for initiatives including on climate change, health and social cohesion.
- ▶ Use trade as an instrument for bolstering relations with ASEAN countries, South Korea and Japan. **The EU must be present in Asia as part of its moves to rebalance foreign policy.**
- ▶ **The EU must speak to and support Africa.** Land grabs and the exploitation of critical minerals, oil and natural resources are a current reality of global geopolitics. Through multilateralism, however, the EU must cooperate with other countries to devise rules to protect populations.

“EU foreign policy should not merely be a facsimile of member state foreign policy but be highly targeted towards select partners, actions and issues”

by Dr. Péter Balázs

Professor Emeritus of Central European University (CEU)

The normativity and continuity of EU foreign policy should be maintained at a time when two key pillars, Germany and France, face important upcoming elections (Bundestag in September 2021, French Presidency in 2022).

The most important change that 2021 will bring concerns President Joe Biden and the return of the US to transatlantic cooperation and multilateral deals and organisations. This is an opportunity for Europe to forge unity internally and intensify relations with the US and the G7 on important strategic questions.

66 The EU should, deploy foreign policy activities where member states are fervently convinced that common action will prove more successful than individual national efforts.

The expansion of China in Europe should be curtailed - “17+1” meetings indeed represent an open intrusion into the internal affairs of the EU. The new US administration, in fact, achieved what the EU has not previously been able to accomplish, successfully persuading some member states from participating at the highest level of a 17+1 meeting with the Chinese President. Major projects of member states with China (e.g. the Budapest-Belgrade railway) should be suspended if they are contrary to or in competition with EU programmes.

On Russia, meanwhile, ‘sticks and carrots’ work. The West will, sooner or later, be faced with swallowing Moscow’s belligerent occupation of Crimea. Russia, nevertheless, should pay a particularly high price for its transgression focused towards, among other topics, promoting human rights and finding a solution to protracted conflicts. In a new détente, some Eastern Partnership projects could be extended to Russia as confidence building gestures (e.g. environmental protection, transport networks, the war on terrorism).

In the Western Balkans, more transparency is needed on future enlargements. EU member states should be provided a road map on the process and candidates should also be presented with clearer scenarios bound to gradual conditionality. Turkey, furthermore, should be provided enticements to encourage the country to cooperate more with the EU and NATO and pull the country away from Russia’s orbit.

EU foreign policy should not merely serve as a facsimile of member state level foreign policy. Rather than necessarily addressing the entire world, it should be highly targeted towards select partners including the most prominent countries and organizations (e.g. ASEAN) and the most pressing global problems (Covid-19, climate change, terrorism etc.).

The EU should, moreover, deploy foreign policy activities where member states are fervently convinced that common action will prove more successful than individual national efforts.

“The EU’s foreign policy priorities need to be grounded in a deeper understanding of global challenges”

by Dr. Rosa Balfour

Director, Carnegie Europe

The international context is so troubled that any list of foreign policy priorities would resemble the Christmas tree that Javier Solana, former EU High Representative for foreign policy, used to complain about. EU disunity has made its foreign policy an aggregation of disjointed national priorities. This process undergone little change over the past twenty years. The precariousness of Europe’s future, meanwhile, is apparently not impetus enough to galvanise European capitals to agree on a common agenda.

EU foreign policy priorities for 2021 thus need to be grounded in a deeper understanding of global challenges - how and with whom these can be addressed is the next step. The climate crisis and the technological revolution, in particular, are two developments that will critically shape the future. And they will play out amid three significant and interconnected challenges: the US-China rivalry, the state of democracy and the post-pandemic recovery.

The US-China rivalry, which is politically dividing the world, impinges on all policy areas. The EU’s ambivalence on this issue reflects divisions among member states and misconceived hopes that Europe can be a neutral or equidistant party. Secondly, the state of democracy in Europe and the EU’s inability to prevent its deterioration are a weakness vis-à-vis geopolitical rivalries. These democratic shortcomings reveal Europe’s vulnerabilities, which are, in turn, exploited by actors seeking to further undermine the EU’s global clout, its position in the multilateral system, and the security of its societies. Finally, steering the post-pandemic recovery on both health and the economy will absorb considerable time and energy from political leaders. But it is, nonetheless, crucial that its reach be international and not just focused on Europe.

The EU recovery plan identified the recipe: marrying green and digital to make the economy fit for the future. The EU priority should now be to craft its foreign relations around these goals by supporting other countries in this transformative effort. Doing so will require investing resources and expending diplomatic effort towards existing partnerships and alliances. This cooperation can contribute in reformulating institutional global governance to make it responsive to the emerging world, pushing back against detractors of democracy and making our societies more resilient.

In the more pragmatic world of policy, this translates into five priorities for 2021.

- ▶ **Reboot the US relationship.** The EU cannot reject Washington’s call to discuss the challenge posed by China. The EU need not entirely align itself with US views on China but it needs to prove itself trustworthy and reliable if it wants to be listened to in Washington. Rather than join a race to the bottom, European capitals can play a role in de-escalating tensions where possible. To be credible, this will, however, necessitate standing firm on principles.
- ▶ **Counter geopolitics through inclusive multilateralism and openness.** The US return to multilateral institutions provides a once in a generation opportunity to reform multilateralism to make it more effective – designing/crafting global solutions to global problems - and more inclusive – involving multiple state and non-state actors from all corners of the world.
- ▶ **Invest in democracy at home and abroad** by strengthening institutions and practices to counter authoritarianism and the democratic pitfalls of the technological revolution.
- ▶ Support other countries and actors in **addressing the post-pandemic recovery** and greening their economies.
- ▶ **Address the multitude of foreign policy challenges on the EU’s doorstep** including, among others, Libya, Turkey and Russia. Through the above lenses – working with partners, defusing geopolitical tensions, investing in diplomacy and bolstering the commitment to universal principles – Europe can succeed.

The climate crisis and the technological revolution are two developments that will critically shape the future

“A “constitutional moment” needed to bolster the EU’s international strategic ambitions”

by Dr. Emil Brix

Director of the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna

Why is EU foreign policy taking centre stage during on-going discussions on the geopolitical position and role of the European Union (EU)? This is, in fact, a direct consequence of both real and perceived changes in unstable geopolitical power relations. The notion that the bloc needs to learn “the language of power” to defend its interests and those of its member states on the global stage has indeed become commonplace in the EU. Josep Borrell, High Representative/Vice-President for foreign affairs and security policy, in particular, has advocated for this type of approach in EU relations with third countries and in addressing global challenges (from migration to climate change to cyber threats).

The EU’s global strength and influence, however, are now in jeopardy amid the continued economic rise of China, the departure of the UK from the EU and growing confrontations with Russia. Despite these headwinds, wake-up calls agitating for greater “strategic autonomy” of the EU are not yet prevalent enough to create the necessary momentum for large-scale reform of governance. Without an EU “constitutional moment”, it is unlikely that foreign policy activities can decisively bolster international strategic ambitions. Further piecemeal engineering, therefore, remains the most realistic approach to foreign policy priorities in 2021. This would entail:

- ▶ **Using the window of opportunity of the renewed US commitment to multilateral institutions** to develop common EU proposals for a more up-to-date and “effective multilateralism”.
- ▶ **Continuing to make headway on a comprehensive EU-China strategy.**
- ▶ **Not relenting on the ambition to establish a common EU-migration policy.**
- ▶ **Re-activating the accession process of the Western Balkans.**
- ▶ **Bolstering all other EU policy areas in making better use of the major global strengths of the EU,** including trade and the setting of standards, on a wider scale. This, in fact, ranks as the most ambitious and important priority.

The notion that the bloc needs to learn “the language of power” to defend its interests and those of its member states on the global stage has indeed become commonplace in the EU.



“The EU as a global player: a must”

by Jim Cloos

Secretary-General of TEPSA, former Deputy Director General for General and Institutional Policy at the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union

In a world where a more assertive China is rapidly rising, the United States is becoming less predictable, the UK is going its own path, neighbors like Russia and Turkey are difficult and at times hostile and Africa is struggling to find its way, the EU must raise its game and become a stronger global player. There are indeed important lessons to be drawn from the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises that have befallen the EU and the world over the past twelve years.

This changing context, as evidenced in the Strategic Agenda adopted in June 2019 and various conclusions adopted in recent years, is increasingly recognized by the European Heads of State and Government. The EU's tone has, in fact, become more assertive and voluntarist, with the European Council more frequently holding strategic debates on important third country partners.

The EU, rightly, prides itself on being a strong promoter of multilateralism and a defender of values. And it should certainly continue pressing these priorities.

A global player must perceive itself as one and adopt a language and demeanor that reflect this stance. A global player, moreover, sees the world as it is, not as the one it would like it to be. The EU, rightly, prides itself on being a strong promoter of multilateralism and a defender of values. And it should certainly continue pressing these priorities. But if other players are choosing not to play that game, then the EU must adapt and give itself the means to defend its interests in a more hard-headed way.

A global player also develops its own strategic autonomy, conferring it the possibility to help shape the world, defend its interests and make its own choices as to its place in the world. The EU should, notably, not orient itself towards protectionism or autarky, which would be folly on the part of the largest trading bloc in the world and an actor deeply integrated in the world. It is also paramount that the concept be defined in a broad and comprehensive manner: this is not just about foreign policy and security but also trade, the internal market, the economy, the digital world, climate change and energy policy.

A strong global player, finally, clearly envisions its place on the global stage. There is a need for a new and more equal partnership with the US and a clear understanding of how the bloc fits into a US-China-EU triangle. The EU must also resolve its future relations with the UK, devise a more stringent policy towards Russia and Turkey that, nevertheless, keeps the door open for more constructive dialogue and reinvent its relationship with Africa.

A few general principles to follow if the EU is to become a global actor:

- ▶ **Strong European Council leadership.**
- ▶ **A “Team Europe” of institutional leaders.**
- ▶ **Closer link between EU and national policies and the effective use of all available resources.**
- ▶ **Use of reinforced cooperation where necessary.**
- ▶ **A fresh review of EU governance.**

“More realism and less fantasy about what the EU is and can be globally”

by Steven Erlanger

Chief Diplomatic Correspondent in Europe for The New York Times

The priorities for EU foreign and security policy must begin with the EU itself. A necessary starting point, in particular, rests on bringing Germany, France, Italy and Poland on board on key issues. EU foreign policy is too often limited to the lowest common-denominator or is merely rhetorical. We should stop thinking overly hard about a common EU foreign policy, especially on key bilateral relationships like those with Washington, Moscow and Beijing. The High Representative should rather spend more time coordinating relations with these crucial countries than worrying about consensus at 27, which is nearly impossible to attain on pressing or important issues, not least in a timely fashion. It is worth remembering that EU statements tend to come after France and Germany have made their positions known (not speaking now about the UK, which also often issued its own statements).

Americans like to talk about “Europe” -- but what and where is this mystical unified “Europe”? It is largely derived from the power that comes from EU competences on trade. But it will never rule on foreign policy and qualified majority voting is unlikely in this area, too. Nor will there be any sort of European “army” given that commanders and political control would be necessary. Who would be commander-in-chief? What type of democratic mandate would such a person have? What about parliamentary mandates, as in Germany? And what large country would allow its troops to go into combat under some unelected European command?

An additional key priority for the EU is to figure out its relations with the UK in a post-Brexit Europe. Britain is a nuclear power, a NATO member and a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Both sides need a good working relationship on, among other issues, security, crime, intelligence and defence.

When it comes to the US, **the EU should work on settling trade disputes with Washington.** There is equally a need to discuss digital and carbon taxes and coordinate on climate. The EU and the US should, moreover, work together to ensure that Ukraine becomes a success story (no easy task but a crucial one). On China, the EU should engage with the US through the framework of the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls or create a joint version of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) to screen investments from both China and Russia.

The EU should, furthermore, engage on military mobility permissions in cooperation with NATO and resist the urge to continue resetting relations with Russian leadership. This should transpire even as the EU shows solidarity towards civil society and struggling and relatively independent media outlets and internet activists in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia.

The priorities for EU foreign and security policy must begin with the EU itself. EU foreign policy is too often limited to the lowest common-denominator or is merely rhetorical

In responding to China, meanwhile, the EU needs to apply more of an American-style approach and strike the right balance, especially in discussions with the big European powers, between constructive trade and climate relations and confrontation. The EU should, on the one hand, show solidarity with the populace and find ways to communicate with society. This also entails maintaining the faith with Hong Kong and Xinjiang, among other afflicted locales, even while recognizing that China is not easy to change. To put it simply, the EU needs to be careful to avoid merely engaging in virtue signalling. The EU should also keep up efforts to continue dialogue with Turkey, recognizing that the country is not united politically. It is important as the stakes are high and Turkey matters for the EU and for NATO.

More realism and less fantasy, finally, is needed on what the European Union is and can be. This necessitates taking the views of Central and Eastern European members, stemming from their different historical experiences, more seriously, and not presuming that the interests of the EU at 15 are identical to the EU at 27 – or larger.

“EU bolstering of global strategic ambitions rests on part deeper integration and part smart combination of tools already at its disposal”

by Štefan Füle

former European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy

The biggest challenge, I believe, is that ambitions of ours and expectations of others about our global role are not matched with instruments and resources at our disposal. The most important task for the EEAS (High Representative) in 2021 will be, therefore, to continue its evolution towards becoming an effective EU external policy tool in close interaction and co-operation with other EU institutions and member states (already possible for example through closer and deeper coordination and interaction between the EEAS and the European Commission).

There are other priorities for the EU in 2021. The EU, secondly, should reach out towards the new US Administration with a bold agenda aimed at protecting and promoting a democratic and accountable multilateral

While the above-mentioned priorities are attainable, there are also other internal challenges with which the EU must cope if it is to realize its goals. One of them is to improve the EU crisis management and to overcome institutional “contradiction”. While EU leaders, notably, hold collective responsibility for EU crisis management, the task of holding these leaders accountable falls exclusively on respective national electorates. Another internal challenge is undergirded by the failure of some member states to deliver fully on shared values and democratic principles.

Externally, EU foreign policy officials must confront disinformation campaigns sanctioned and promoted by some EU “partners” and new forms of interference that are generally originating from the same sources. The promotion of competing models of multilateralism and governance, moreover, remains a formidable challenge. These are the new “battlegrounds” which we should not underestimate.

A further deepening of EU integration presents one feasible roadmap for how the EU could bring forth a more coherent common foreign policy over the long term. Bolstering the legitimacy of the decision-making model and advancing the “integration” of the EEAS and external policies associated with the European Commission are plausible options. Enhancing the credibility of both the European Commission and the EEAS will also be vital. This entails rendering the Commission less and the EEAS more political.

While the EU needs to strengthen its capacity to become a serious “geopolitical” player, it will ultimately lose the “game” if we do not combine it with a more proactive stance in defending fundamental freedoms, dignity, rule of law and democracy throughout the world.

The most important task for the EEAS in 2021 will be to continue its evolution towards becoming an effective EU external policy tool

system. To deliver on EU needs and ambitions, thirdly, the EU should make an extra effort to ensure that the UK remains our primary and indispensable ally. A fourth priority concerns the EU accelerating and deepening the integration of countries in its neighbourhood in the EU common market and other policy areas. Fifth, the EU should use the pandemic and post-pandemic backdrop as an opportunity for creating strategic alliances with different regions and countries on the basis of the EU green recovery policy. In addition to that, whenever feasible and desirable, the EU should be able to pragmatically disconnect the political (EEAS) and technical (EC) aspects of external policy (for example focusing on the EU-EAEU working relationship particularly in area of regulatory framework).

“The EU can forget about projection of its soft power globally if it doesn’t beef up its internal enforcement of principles and revise its concept of hard power”

by Roland Freudenstein

Head of Research and Policy Director of the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (WMCES)

Amid the defining conflict of the era between democracy and authoritarianism, the primary challenge for the entire decade ahead will be to **save liberal democracy**. EU rivalries with Russia under Putin and China under Xi, in this vein, feature prominently. In both cases, this competition is often cast as ‘geopolitical’ but is, in reality, systemic, pertaining to the ways in which the different polities are structured. If Russia and China were free and open societies, our differences would become entirely manageable. The same goes for medium size powers including Turkey and Iran. It is, nevertheless, apparent that the EU cannot prevail in this struggle, in all its complicated facets, without (1) allies, (2) the internal enforcement of its fundamental principles, (3) an improvement in its defence and (4) development of a new dynamism.

A **Transatlantic Renewal**, therefore, is urgently necessary. The EU, unfortunately, has already complicated matters through, for example, an investment deal with China and its resolve to continue NordStream2. The EU, in this regard, is sacrificing long term strategic interests for short term economic gain. If the overarching challenge is correctly identified though, the EU will be able to find common ground with the new administration on confronting systemic threats arising from authoritarian powers. Europe, consequently, will need to shoulder more of the security burden, demonstrate a willingness to confront the Chinese Communist Party more visibly and respect US domestic economic interests in any future transatlantic trade deal.

We can, additionally, forget about the much-hyped EU soft power role globally if we fail to beef up our **internal enforcement of principles** including on rule of law. We will indeed not be able to strengthen good governance in the EU’s neighbourhood, or, together with the US, lead a global alliance of democracies if we tolerate the erosion of democracy at home. This entails the need to impose real repercussions (beyond the Rule of Law conditionality in the EU budget) on the governments of Poland and Hungary when they undermine checks and balances.

The EU also needs to revise its **concept of hard power**. Useless quasi-theological debates about strategic autonomy and European sovereignty must give way to pragmatic and palpable improvements of military ca-

pabilities if the neighbourhood is to be stabilised and the US burden to be alleviated. This process must start in the member states themselves and not through the pie-in-the-sky European Army concept. The EU also has real homework to complete on building resilience against hybrid threats, strategic corruption and hostile external influence.

The EU’s **internal economic and technological dynamism** and ability to meet challenges like climate change, changing demographics, migration and integration, finally, also influence Brussels’ ability to promote its interests and defend the bloc’s values (keeping in mind that values represent long-term interests).

We can, additionally, forget about the much-hyped EU soft power role globally if we fail to beef up our internal enforcement of principles including on rule of law.

One last point: On all these challenges, my own country, **Germany**, the EU’s largest and wealthiest member state, holds special responsibility. And on most of these issues, from taking a firm stand against the Kremlin and the CCP to advancing a serious approach on defence and resilience, its performance has been sub-optimal. The new German government coming in after the elections in September 2021 would be prudent to grasp the opportunity to, at long last, rise to the occasion.

“The EU and US must be partners in leadership on the global stage”

by Dan Fried

Former US Ambassador to Poland, Weiser Family Distinguished Fellow, Atlantic Council

In 2021, EU foreign policy officials should focus on: the post-COVID-19 recovery in Europe and the world, EU policy towards Russia and China, trade and regulatory convergence with the US, and the strengthening of the world's democratic core. For all these issues, the EU and US must be partners in leadership.

For the EU to bolster its position – its values and interests - in the world, it needs to develop the means and will to use its numerous instruments of power.

The EU's Russia policy (hopefully developed in coordination with the US) should be targeted towards resisting Vladimir Putin's aggression, stabilizing relations and finding space for cooperation where feasible. The positive side of the agenda should not come at the expense of European security including, for example, energy security or Europe's eastern neighbors (e.g. Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia). EU policy, finally, should prioritize outreach to Russian civil society including pro-democracy activists.

On China, EU policy (also hopefully developed in conjunction with the US and Asian democracies) should avoid a “decoupling” and instead focus on seeking to prevent China from gaming and exploiting the international system.

It is not clear whether a TTIP2.0 is possible. In any case, the EU should focus on building common ground with the US and other key democracies on financial transparency, developing standards on transparency and integrity for social media (the EU, through its Code

of Practice, is ahead of the US on combating disinformation) and combining efforts to set regulatory standards on high-tech/5G and emerging technologies.

An overarching strategic point should be EU contributions to strengthening the world's democratic core. This means that the EU, alongside the US, UK, Asian democracies, Canada and other partners, should work together to contend with aggressive authoritarians and lead on global challenges (e.g., climate change).

For the EU to bolster its position – its values and interests - in the world, it needs to develop the means and will to use its numerous instruments of power. This includes military power but also, and more importantly, the use of its economic clout and regulatory tools. The EU must be careful to not allow short-term commercial interests prevail (i.e., engaging in “trade missions” to China while relegating its reaction to Uyghur repression or the decimation of the rule of law in Hong Kong to symbolic protests). It requires, above all, regaining the habit of thinking in strategic terms and not merely expecting Americans to do all the work even as EU leaders criticize the Washington's mistakes. The US, for its part, must learn that it cannot simultaneously demand Europeans to do more and grumble when Europeans subsequently insist on more policy input in exchange for this policy ownership.

The EU must deal with (and work with the US and UK and other democracies) to deal with external challenges emerging from authoritarians (Russia, China), failed states, and malign non-state actors (especially in the broader Middle East), and transnational threats (climate change, the pandemic). At the same time, key democracies must tackle their respective internal challenges – including economic and social distress and the political divisions they fuel -- moreover, must further be addressed. Democracies need to recover their confidence and, most of all, show that they can deliver.

The key to the EU meeting these challenges will be EU political leadership. The leaders of Europe's big countries need to think at a Europe-wide scale. President Macron's language on European autonomy worries some but if that is the price of a Europe that can think and act in larger ways to shape the 21st century, I'll take it.

“The EU has the power to become global actor only incrementally”

by Prof. Paolo Magri

Executive Vice President and Director of the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI)

The most important issue facing the EU in 2021, by far, includes how to realign Europe towards the three “big powers”: the US, China and Russia. Another strategic EU imperative, meanwhile, pertains to Libya and Turkey, with the latter representing a case where there is considerable space for improvement.

On the US, the EU should focus on deciding its stance towards the Biden presidency. This includes an emphasis on those issues where the EU does not appear to see eye to eye with Washington. The Iranian nuclear deal (where the standoff continues), the relationship with China (EU openness versus a continued stern US stance) and the longstanding Israel-Palestine question, now following the Abraham Accords, are all par-amount.

The EU should also reflect on how to optimally develop a common front vis-à-vis Beijing. China continues to divide Europe between doves and hawks. Here, the EU should adopt a balanced stance against the backdrop of the signing of the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment and Beijing's continued assertive approach towards Hong Kong and Taiwan.

When it comes to Russia, the EU should engage in a policy re-think. Recent developments (e.g. HR/VP Borrell's visit to Russia) underscore the fact that the Kremlin does not appear to be interested in entering mediation yet even as many Western European countries (e.g. Germany and Italy) indicate willingness on their part.

On Libya, the EU should concentrate more energy into solving the conflict, with the new transitional government recently assuming office and faced with the task of guiding the divided country towards December elections. On Turkey, the EU should find a way to curtail its escalating confrontation. This could begin foremost on issues where Turkey is open to dialogue including energy, migration or Libya.

The EU, finally, should showcase its support for multilateralism and the G20 in particular. The bloc should strive to set up a clear-cut strategy – on issues ranging from vaccination to digital transformation to debt relief - and take concrete steps to scale-up its ability to deliver at multilateral fora.

When it comes to the challenges that constrain the EU foreign policy's ambitions, both internal and external problems can be noted. On the internal side, the first problem is structural: the continued disunity and strained relations between EU member states. The

second internal challenge is pandemic-related. The EU's turn to managing domestic problems like health-care and the post-pandemic economic recovery has put a spotlight on longstanding tensions between member states. Externally, the rising US-China rivalry is increasingly pressing the EU to take sides. It is getting ever more challenging for the EU and member states to act as “mediators” and “bridges”. The effect is that foreign policy has become more polarised and risks driving another wedge between EU countries.

The rising US-China confrontation is going to offer new testing ground to ascertain whether the EU will really be able to speak with a single voice.

There are no magic wands or silver bullets on how the EU can overcome these challenges. The rising US-China confrontation is, however, going to offer new testing ground to ascertain whether the EU will really be able to rise to the task and speak with a single voice.

The EU has the power to become “one” only incrementally, with the common market and the common currency showing the way forward. The small steps and movements in the defence sector could lead to greater interoperability and a basis for action in the future. But as long as national governments continue to hold onto different perceptions and interests, it will prove difficult to truly bolster strategic ambitions at the EU level.

“The EU must recognize its potential to lead on key global issues”

by Dr. Alina Polyakova

President and CEO of the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA)

The top issues that EU foreign policy officials should focus on in 2021 are all interconnected and will depend on a vibrant EU-US alliance.

The first is the need for the EU to engage with Washington on issues that pose challenges to both parties, particularly competition with China. The EU is currently pursuing an economic and diplomatic agenda with China that threatens to drive a wedge in the transatlantic relationship. Neither the EU nor the US can go at it alone – a strategic transatlantic approach in key to ensuring long-term competitive advantage. Technology, and digital innovation more broadly, must be at the core of the EU-US agenda on China.

The competition over technology is about more than market share – whoever sets the rules around technology (and that will inevitably be the top innovator) will define the global normative agenda (e.g. rules on data use, data privacy and other emerging technologies) that will determine the nature of geopolitics for the 21st century. The EU should, furthermore, aim to strengthen cohesion among member states on key issues like the development of 5G infrastructure. Through speaking with one voice and coordinating strategy with the US to ensure transatlantic consensus, the EU can take on a constructive role.

Europe is also well positioned to take leadership on energy and climate change. Given Europe's own commitment to manage climate change and investments in clean energy, the EU can steer the global agenda on these topics including in assisting developing countries to develop their own sustainability commitments.

The EU, finally, should take the lead on the global promotion of democracy, a sphere that has generally been reserved for the US in the past. If it is to be successful though, the EU must show that its own member states uphold the fundamental values and democratic principles on which the EU is based. Only by serving as a role model can the EU effectively promote its values-based approach internationally.

The EU faces numerous challenges in pursuing its foreign policy goals. Internally, these hurdles include a lack of political cohesion among member states (e.g. inability to develop a common EU foreign policy on Russia and China) and different degrees of adherence to democratic values and principles. European institutions, furthermore, operate within a limited mandate on some external policies (e.g. foreign investment review policy), leading to fragmentation in approach-

es towards third countries. Geopolitical tensions that contribute to instability and authoritarian regimes that threaten democratic ideals also pose external challenges.

The top issues that EU foreign policy officials should focus on in 2021 are all interconnected and will depend on a vibrant EU-US alliance.

To bolster its strategic ambition in the world, the EU should clearly define and effectively communicate its foreign policy aims. Europe remains a beacon of hope for many across the world living in less prosperous and less democratic countries, but it has yet to assert itself on the world stage. The EU must recognize its potential power to lead on key global issues, but for that the bloc must speak with one voice and not be afraid to act.

“One step at a time: towards an autonomous EU foreign policy”

by Elena Poptodorov

Ambassador (ret.), Vice President of the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria

The development of an autonomous EU foreign policy, which can be achieved by eliminating the unanimity requirement of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the enactment of a robust increase in external action funding, enabling the EU to become a key pillar of the multilateral global order, should be central focal points in 2021.

The EU should further aim to enhance EU integration in defense and security and hasten the European production of military equipment. These developments, notably, should proceed through cooperation with NATO and without duplicating processes. An EU role in creating “European economic champions” and EU leadership on the digital economy and AI would also be prudent if European companies are to compete with global corporate giants. The EU, at the same time, should not surrender its status as a regulatory power and leader on personal data protection and the setting of standards and parameters for the economy of the future. The EU, finally, should continue its work on decarbonization and the promotion of “green” policies to secure European leadership on safeguarding the planet's future. The pursuit of the above objectives, however, can and should happen only in coordination with the US.

The development of an autonomous EU foreign policy can be achieved by eliminating the unanimity and by increasing funding in external action.

The EU is currently confronted with two major internal challenges. The first concerns growing “regionalization” that comes at the expense of the European project (e.g. fragile unity among member states and a lack of agreement on the primary common risks and threats

facing the bloc). This obstacle is further coupled with perceptions that the EU is constrained by relatively weak leadership. The second, meanwhile, pertains to the drift towards stronger internal opposition to liberal democracy. Some member states (e.g. Hungary and Poland) have indicated a willingness to challenge the European project and others appear to be striving for a leadership role on their own terms (France and Germany). Another risk, furthermore, concerns the creation of a “two-speed Europe”. The upcoming change of guard in Germany will be critically important on this point.

Three paramount external challenges can be noted. Firstly, a new wave of immigration is likely around the corner. The issue of 5G connectivity and infrastructure in Europe, secondly, remain pressing against the backdrop of China's aggressive posture. Russia, finally, continues to pose a challenge. Every attempt at ‘re-starting’ cooperation evokes the impression of weakness on the part of the West. And there is growing Russian contempt towards Western interests in East-European security and the Middle East. The EU has been pushed out of Libya, Syria, the South Caucasus and sub-Saharan Africa. Diplomatic talk of a restart, meanwhile, will not transform the EU from being merely a spectator to a principal actor. Paradoxically, a more confrontational attitude towards Russia on certain files may produce better results than incessantly making goodwill gestures.

Overcoming these numerous challenges will need to begin in the EU and will rest on increasing the “connectivity” of the European project between North and South and East and West. The rule of law conditionality mechanism needs to be applied based on performance and compliance. Despite some sniping, no one genuinely shares misgivings on the importance of the transatlantic bond. Any rejection of the societal and historical compatibility between Europe and the US would represent a long-term blunder as would clinging to the illusion that the EU can replicate the capabilities and resources of national governments.

“The EU should start paying far more attention to existential issues in its immediate neighbourhood”

by Dušan Reljić

Head of Brussels Office, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)

First, the EU should aim to re-establish a regular political dialogue with the US built on trust. There are numerous possible joint points of interest: placing the world economy on track to overcome the effects of the pandemic; rolling back the stifling effects of the climate crisis; stepping up efforts to alleviate poverty and improve global public health; promoting a multilateral system based on the rule of law.

Second, the EU should move more swiftly on achieving the finalité of the enlargement of the EU. This entails the specification of precise dates and mechanisms to bring the southeast European Six (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Albania and Serbia with Kosovo) into the EU. This is the only region where the EU still can bring into play considerable political appeal and transformational power.

Third, the EU should champion its green deal ambitions. Environmental degradation and climate change do not stop at Schengen borders. The EU, consequently, should come up with bolder topical programmes and funding in its neighbourhood – from the Maghreb to the Levant to Eastern Europe.

The EU is prosperous and maintains a position of power in international trade and finance. It should put these tools to good use with an emphasis on its neighbourhood

The EU, finally, should establish a framework for legal migration into the aging demographic space of the EU. At the same time, the member states should provide all young citizens and residents of the EU with a guarantee that they will have full access to education and a first job opportunity.

The greatest internal challenge concerning the EU foreign policy agenda involves doing away with assumptions that there is a path back to neoliberal thinking. The EU should rather do its best to find a new concept of political economy that at the same time can prevent new collapses and bureaucratic suffocation.

When it comes to external challenges, the EU must overcome the ideological presumption that EU member states can export their political model and culture to the rest of the world. The daunting task, therefore, for the EU is to, without sacrificing its own character and values, identify a *modus vivendi* with systemic rivals, such as Russia and China, which pursue oppressive “political capitalism”. Branko Milanović, the Serbian-American economist, offers a persuasive analysis of such economic and political structures in his latest book: *Capitalism, alone, The Future of the System That Rules the World*, Harvard University Press 2020.

The central problem for the EU remains the fact that the democratic deficit of the EU has not yet vanished. Particularistic notions in member states, especially the most powerful ones, often further undermine EU policies. The EU can only become effective on the global stage if societies come to see EU institutions as equally democratic and legitimate to their national parliaments and governments. However, it is also possible that this will never be achieved, leaving the EU an auxiliary and less efficient actor.

If the EU wants to bolster its strategic ambition in the world, it should confine itself to achieving realistic goals as outlined above. This entails an end to day-dreaming about tweaking the ear of Putin or Xi and turning instead to existential issues that are overwhelming societies in its immediate neighbourhood: poverty, the lack of access to education, healthcare, unemployment and autocratic oppression. The EU is prosperous and maintains a position of power in international trade and finance. It should put these tools to good use with an emphasis on its neighbourhood.

“To bolster its ambition on the global stage, the EU should first clearly define what its ambition is”

by Prof. Erzsébet N. Rózsa

Professor, National University of Public Service and the Institute of World Economy, Hungary

The EU is generally losing relevance as a global actor and arguably should no longer be called one at all. According to the realist school of international relations, the EU, in fact, has probably never deserved the global actor title. Yet, the bloc’s “global actorness” is still relevant in terms of its normative power – both its ability to attract and repel.

There are, furthermore, valid questions concerning the economic-financial-humanitarian donor capability of the EU and the relevance of some EU (or now non-EU) members – the UK and France – in this international order including, for example, in the UN Security Council.

The EU, nonetheless, possesses the unique ability and credibility to mediate conflicts, a capability that was, paradoxically, amplified by the Trump administration. Questions, however, remain concerning whether the EU will prove willing/capable of maintaining this credibility, particularly if the “normative” role of Europe is again to be relied on and emphasized.

But is the EU still the normative power it perceives itself to be? Or is there going to be a division of labour within the EU regarding the “normative” role? Regardless of the path the EU takes, it should focus on nurturing its relations with the US against the backdrop of a Biden administration that has signaled an interest in returning to multilateralism.

The EU, moreover, should exercise its soft power and mediation skills in its neighbourhood. It is here where the EU functions, in regional terms, as a “global actor”, especially in the Mediterranean. The greatest challenge will be posed by conflicts on the southern/eastern shore.

The Global Strategy, launched in 2016, also holds an uncertain future. It is not presently clear if EU leadership will pursue it or other – not any less important – issues (e. g. climate change).

There are, meanwhile, numerous items on the international agenda where the EU could contribute. The Iran nuclear issue is a case in point. As the only success story of EU diplomacy, a successful return to the JCPOA could enhance EU credibility (the announced EU mediated negotiations in February this year already point in this direction). EU credibility will also be

on the line if and when the Review Conference for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) convenes (it was postponed from last spring to this year).

The EU will also be faced with, besides responding to post-Brexit aftershocks, numerous pending questions: for example, how the bloc should proceed with EU integration including prospective members and the ever-green debate on further and deeper integration versus a “Europe of nations”. Migration (both its humanitarian and political dimensions) also remains a major issue. What if Turkey, for example, conditions the continuation of its EU migration deal on promises of EU accession? It is worth recalling that President Erdoğan once designated 2023, the 100th anniversary of the country’s founding, as a deadline.

To overcome its immense challenges, the EU will need to invest time and resources in facilitating coordination with the Biden administration. Making effective use of the political distance brought on by the Trump administration, however, could be used to project a more independent EU foreign policy. Maintaining a credible mediating role will be vital to addressing all the above challenges and to the status of the EU as a global actor.

The EU, to bolster its ambitions globally, should clearly define what its ambitions are – internally first and then externally. Delineating the extent of integration intended will be paramount.

“Translating EU’s global ambition into action requires greater political and economic cohesion”

by Hans Dietmar Schweisgut

Ambassador (ret.), Secretary General of the Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe

It will, above all, be vital for the EU to maintain a united approach on the Covid 19 pandemic and successfully implement its economic recovery package. This is a prerequisite for the EU to establish the credibility necessary to provide leadership on global health cooperation and climate change and take the lead on bolstering global multilateral governance.

It appears increasingly plausible that the EU can develop a common agenda on these issue areas in cooperation with the Biden administration, reversing the trend towards unilateralism. But restoring trust in the UN system and in the WTO, in particular, will be a challenge, one exacerbated by differences between the US and the EU on trade and technology issues.

Tensions between the US and the EU could also arise on China presuming Washington pursues a more confrontation approach. The EU will need to show that the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment deal, recently signed with China, will not prevent it from strengthening its defense and taking a principled stand on a range of issues including human rights. There will, otherwise, be little scope for cooperation with the US and like-minded partners on China and the Indo-Pacific more broadly.

As the ill-fated Moscow trip of the EU High Representative underlined, relations with Russia will largely remain frozen and are likely to further deteriorate. The EU-Russia relationship, simultaneously, will constitute the greatest challenge to EU unity. This tension will also impact the stability of the EU's neighbourhood, ranging from Belarus to the Middle East to North Africa. The Western Balkans and Turkey further stand out as distinct challenges. Greater engagement from the US in the region, including in the Western Balkans, would be welcomed, though the EU must do more if it wishes to be a credible actor.

Prospects for a stronger transatlantic partnership offer a window of opportunity but should not be presumed to be a return to the status quo ante. The American pivot to Asia was not an aberration of US foreign policy but is here to stay. Competition with China will, in fact, define the overall future policy framework of the US.

The notion of strategic autonomy is currently too compromised to provide a useful framework. Already ambitious enough are moves to establish a stronger and more united Europe, one with the capabilities neces-

sary to contribute to stability in the neighbourhood and develop a framework on China and Russia based on a more realistic and balanced partnership with the US and like-minded partners. Translating this ambition into action will, nonetheless, require greater political and economic cohesion and strength than is currently on display.

It will be vital for the EU to maintain a united approach on the Covid 19 pandemic and successfully implement its economic recovery package. This is a prerequisite for the EU to establish the credibility necessary to provide leadership on global health cooperation and climate change and take the lead on bolstering global multilateral governance.

“The need to bridge the mentality gap between EU member states on the bloc’s foreign policy”

by Pierre Vimont

Ambassador of France, Senior Associate Researcher at Carnegie Europe, first Executive Secretary General of the EEAS

Conversations on the future of EU foreign policy frequently turn to criticism of EU institutions for their lack of geopolitical vision. Europe, as the narrative goes, has the toolbox but lacks the strategy. This conclusion, in turn, implies a need for the EU to devise and apply bold strategic plans to numerous ongoing developments including open conflicts in neighbouring areas (Ukraine, Libya, Syria), a rekindled international order (« make multilateralism great again ») and a reset of the transatlantic partnership.

Are geopolitics the missing link in European foreign policy? More precisely, is the strategic void, so obvious for all to see, the reason behind Europe's fragile diplomacy or is it only a symptom of a deeper fault line? After all, an EU Global Strategy was adopted more than four years ago. Current discussions between member states targeted towards defining pressing security threats (the strategic compass process), meanwhile, could mobilize a welcomed burgeoning strategic culture over the upcoming year. The ongoing narrative on the importance of strategic autonomy and the need for a more assertive European sovereignty, furthermore, appear to indicate a genuine awareness of present EU vulnerabilities.

Yet strong reservations over ambitious goals have been aired by numerous EU member states, standing as a reminder that the main obstacle to reaching the strategic goalpost rests on a change in mindset. Indeed, foreign policy continues to be marked by a profound mentality gap between European governments. This gulf, running deep into the identity crisis the EU has been embroiled in from its start, has not yet been bridged.

For many EU countries, the bloc is essentially considered an economic player with only limited stakes in foreign policy. In their eyes, European diplomacy remains a coordinating process, set up primarily to avoid embarrassing overlaps or blunders between EU members. The notion of Europe as a global power runs counter to the vision of a Union immune from power politics that many member states still favour. For them, a strategic agenda bent on genuine European sovereignty induces flavours of constant transatlantic feud and risks growing tensions with third countries. In a nutshell, it raises the EU flag too far away from their vision of Europe's natural playground as a provider of humanitarian assistance, a leader in free trade and a staunch supporter of multilateralism.

Can there be a mentality shift soon? Probably not but the need to overcome this gap makes it a paramount priority for the years to come. Through patient conversation between EU members, exemplified in the strategic compass exercise, but mostly through concrete action and increased agility and swiftness, the EU can kickstart a new brand of European diplomacy. In crisis areas, when major challenges to EU security unfold, the bloc may need to resort to more flexibility with core groups of members leading the way with the support and presence of Josep Borrell (like the EU3+1 format for the JCPOA negotiations). To bolster the European strategic mindset, the next step remains to act by all means necessary and demonstrate EU ambition concretely on the ground.

Through patient conversation between EU members, exemplified in the strategic compass exercise, but mostly through concrete action and increased agility and swiftness, the EU can kickstart a new brand of European diplomacy.

