

Future of Europe Reflection Initiative

The European Union's Foreign and Security Policy: Challenges for the Next Five Years

An Austro-French Dialogue with Central European Countries

24 February 2020, 18:30 - 20:15
Vienna School of International Studies
Favoritenstraße 15a, 1040 Wien

Organised by

Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe, Vienna

In cooperation with

GLOBSEC Policy Institute, Bratislava
Vienna School of International Studies
Institut Français des Relations Internationales, Paris

Context and objectives

The European Union finds itself in an increasingly challenging environment. Its neighbourhood, from the Ukraine to Syria and Libya, is still marked by bloody conflicts whose repercussions are directly felt by European citizens. Terrorism and large-scale migration led to feelings of vulnerability and fear. Tensions in the Middle East reached a dangerous level. At the same time, we are witnessing the return of power politics as the post-war rules-based international order is under multiple attacks, including from the US which created it.

It is not surprising therefore that EU citizens are increasingly calling for a stronger European role in the world, a Europe capable of protecting its citizens and interests. Foreign and security policy also played a greater role in the campaign for the European Parliament elections last May than in the past. On the other side, Brexit and the rise of populist and nationalist sentiments in many member states contradict those rising expectations for a European Union as a strong, united international actor.

Important progress in a number of areas, not least with regard to the goal of a European Defence Union and the adoption of a common framework, the Global Strategy, should not be neglected. But 10 years after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the creation of the European External Action Service, a truly European foreign and security policy remains a distant objective. This led the former President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, to state that the European Union lacks “Weltpolitikfähigkeit” at a time when the global order is under threat.

The new Commission is fully aware of these challenges and sees itself as a geo-political Commission with the need to ensure the strategic sovereignty of the European Union when dealing with the US, China and Russia.

Many questions remain, when looking to the 5 years ahead:

Is the current institutional set-up sufficient for a more coherent, unified foreign and security policy? Do we need to move beyond a narrow definition of foreign and security policy to include areas such as trade and monetary policy and link them up more effectively? Which role should the European Council play in relation to the Foreign Affairs Council whose effectiveness has been frequently put into doubt? Do we need a European Security Council? If yes, in what format? How essential is more rapid and decisive progress on the European Defence Union? How important would a move to qualified majority voting in that context be? What else would be needed to overcome divisions among member states and increase trust in a European policy? Which are the key priorities for the next 5 years?

Programme

18:30 Opening

- **Emil BRIX**, Director, Vienna School of International Studies
- **Hans Dietmar SCHWEISGUT**, Secretary General, Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe, Vienna

18:40 Discussion and Questions

- **Tereza NOVOTNA**, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow, Free University Berlin & Senior Associate Research Fellow, EUROPEUM Prague
- **Stefan LEHNE**, Visiting Scholar, Carnegie Europe, Brussels
- **Pierre VIMONT**, Senior Fellow, Carnegie Europe, Brussels
- **Maciej POPOWSKI**, Deputy Director General, Directorate General Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission

Moderation: **Kinga BRUDZINSKA**, Senior Researcher, Future of Europe Programme, GLOBSEC Policy Institute, Bratislava

20:15 End of the Event

Please register via www.da-vienna.ac.at/events .