



## Online conference in English

### **A more sovereign European Union in the new geopolitical age? A first assessment after the French Presidency of the Council**

28.6.2022, 11h00 - 12h30 CET

#### **Organised by**

Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe  
Institut Montaigne, Paris  
Europeum Institute for European Policy, Prague  
Globsec Policy Institute, Bratislava  
Austrian Society for European Politics  
French Embassy in Austria

#### **Context and objectives**

Building up European sovereignty has been the golden thread of President Emmanuel Macron's European policy since his speeches at La Sorbonne, Athens, Strasbourg, and Aix-la-Chapelle. It has also been a priority of the French Presidency of the Council, which now comes to an end. Its motto, "recovery, power, belonging", echoed the debates launched in the framework of the Conference on the future of Europe, and conveyed aspirations that the EU should gain in strategic autonomy.

Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine has now put this vision of Europe to a severe test, forcing the Union to effectively respond to the greatest challenge posed to its security and values. The EU does not start from an advantageous position. The economic crisis, Brexit, tensions among the Member states, populism, and the Covid-pandemic have already eroded its stamina. But the salience of this existential threat, with its far-reaching implications, is of game-changing significance. With the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the vision advocated by France, Germany, and others of a Europe that bears its future in its hands is more pressing than ever.

As the French Presidency of the Council comes to an end, what assessment can be done of the past six months? How has the war affected the priorities of the French Presidency and the EU in general? How does it reflect on the discussions on the future of Europe? What geopolitical implications will it have on the world stage? And how can the EU square the circle of values vs. geopolitical interests in its security engagement? What contribution can the Czech Presidency seek to make?

## **Opening**

Gilles Pécout, French Ambassador to Austria

## **Discussion**

Georgina Wright, Europe Programme Director at the Institut Montaigne

Žiga Faktor, Head of Brussels Office, Europeum Institute for European Policy

Vladislava Gubalova, Senior Fellow, Centre for Global Europe, GLOBSEC

Dietmar Schweisgut, Secretary General of the Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe

**Moderation:** Paul Schmidt, Secretary General of the Austrian Society for European Politics