

The Future of the EU: What Is at Stake?

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The President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, said for the second time in his 'State of the Union' speech in September that the state of the Union is not good. And the President of the European Parliament is not only deeply concerned, but believes that the Union could even explode. Never before in its history has the European Union been confronted with so many serious problems.

After the financial crisis of 2008, the economy is recovering very slowly. The single currency still suffers from the financial misbehaviour of some members. Free trade is at stake; CETA may have been the last substantial free trade agreement, and TTIP is already dead.

There are conflicts with member states on fundamental rights, such as freedom of expression and the independence of the judiciary. Turkey, as an official candidate for membership, is on the one hand an indispensable partner for the refugee agreement, but it seems to have crossed several red lines in its reaction to the military putsch.

The so-called refugee crisis demonstrates the deficiencies of the EU: a lack of solidarity among its members and its weakness in defending its external borders. The Union is also threatened from inside; populist movements cast the Union as the scapegoat for everything that may go wrong and pretend that Britain first, or France first, or Germany first would be the solution. Is Brexit a single case? Furthermore, Europe's relations with its largest neighbour, Russia, are far from good.

Europe is still a peace project. Europe is still attractive because it is prosperous. But there are unsolved problems; there is a need to do better.

Is so-called Core Europe the answer – an inner circle of economically strong, Europe-minded countries? Can and should Europe afford further enlargement? Or must there be a change of paradigms, from a union that is just the sum of (often very selfish) member states to a union of European citizens? Shall we give the peace project a new and timely dimension, reaching out to greater Europe and even beyond? Can we, even in times of sanctions and countersanctions, think about the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union together providing a wide space of prosperity, stability, and peace?

Let's look for the answers.

Core Europe: An Option for the Future?

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The European Union is at a crossroads. Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker spoke of an 'existential crisis' of the EU; European Parliament President Martin Schulz called the 'collapse of the EU a realistic scenario'. The reason for these rather pessimistic views from two usually optimistic people has to be seen in the ongoing financial and migration crises that have led to a split between North and South on one hand, and between East and West on the other hand (the latter, in fact, between Germany and the rest of the EU).

Historically, the European Union has been forged in crises, and Brexit and the US election may serve as another trigger for further integration. Brexit has removed an obstacle to integration, and a Trump administration may put pressure on Europe to do more about defence and security. But this will not happen with 27 member states, because the deep-seated reason for the crisis of the EU has to be found in the policy of irresponsible enlargement without corresponding deepening, i.e., without creating adequate structures and instruments for the functioning of the Union.

What we need is a smaller but more powerful Europe. This 'Core Europe' will be fully integrated, it will be democratic, and it will dispense a common foreign and security policy that deserves its name, using permanent structured cooperation as a starting point. It will begin as a coalition of the willing, in which EU founding members and the Weimar Triangle might form the basis. It will take the shape of concentric circles, with the EU in its present form as a second tier, and candidate and neighbourhood countries as a third tier. Core Europe will remain open for those who are willing to join and who fulfill the criteria for membership. In this way, Europe could become an influential player in global affairs and be able to contribute to the stabilisation of its fragile wider neighbourhood, in cooperation with other powers.

Europe's Commonwealth: Dialogue and Cooperation Across the Divide Between Atlanticist and Eurasian Powers

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Europe faces an existential crisis that has implications for security across the continent and beyond. There are external threats, such as ISIS and Islamic radicalisation or the effects of mass migration on the indigenous population. But there are also internal dynamics that tend towards the disintegration of the European polity – from a lack of economic growth and demographic decline via social dislocation to geopolitical conflict.

Both the EU and the Eurasian Union in their current configuration are characterised by an absence of strategic thinking linked to a lack of shared geopolitical purpose. Across the whole of Europe and Eurasia we are seeing tactical positioning and reactive improvisation rather than strategic thinking and long-term planning. First, all sides show signs of 'strategic autism', blaming others for conflict and refusing to take responsibility (e.g., in the Ukraine). Second, Europe's great powers suffer from the 'strategic deficiency' syndrome, lacking the social intelligence to put themselves in other people's shoes and find common ground, such as shared self-interest (e.g., fighting Islamic State in Syria). Third, both 'hard' and 'soft' power approaches have failed to create a pan-European security architecture.

Neither the Atlanticism of NATO nor the Eurasianism that in part underpins the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation can provide a framework for security across the Euro-Eurasian space. Instead, what is needed is a recognition of both shared interests and common cultural and historical ties that can build bridges at a time when aggressive propaganda and dysfunctional diplomacy make matters worse.

In contrast to the liberal world order, with its focus on formal treaties and abstract rules, the notion of 'commonwealth' shifts the emphasis to multinational associations of nations and peoples wherein social and cultural ties shape political identity and geopolitical decisions. A new European security architecture requires a healing of the breach with Russia, and this involves a recognition of the sacrifice of the Russian people in fighting Nazism and fascism, combined with a recognition that Russia's neighbouring countries – like many Russians – suffered under the Soviet system and want to live in peaceful coexistence. A new role for Russia in European security, together with Russian security guarantees for Russia's neighbours, can begin to build a plausible and constructive alternative to the existing structures.

Russia and the West: Ideas for a Better Future

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Like the declining Soviet Union, Putin's Russia needs 'new thinking' in its foreign and security policy as part of its urgent modernisation. The West, particularly NATO, should facilitate this by self-critically acknowledging its share of the responsibility for the constant deterioration of the relationship over almost 20 years (although this does not justify military aggression, of course). That is the main thesis of this paper. Wittmann makes very clear his critical stance on Russia's policy towards its 'near abroad', on the annexation of Crimea, on the war in Eastern Ukraine, and also on Russia's military actions in Syria. He also explains the reactions of the EU and NATO.

But this criticism leads to constructive ideas for a better future, spelling out what 'new thinking' would mean for Russia's foreign and security policy and also indicating points where some Western soul-searching should be done. The failure to conduct a thorough, structured, long-term dialogue with Russia about its place in the European security order will be highlighted.

Wittmann emphasises two aspects of the 'real' Russian interest, as he sees it: First, it is true that security in Europe in the long run cannot be achieved against or without Russia, but its present policy has again made security from Russia the priority for many. That is not in Russia's interest. Second, parity and respect cannot be enforced; they must be earned. A Russia that would constructively contribute to regional and global problem-solving (such as in the almost singular case of the Iran nuclear deal) – instead of relying on nuisance power, prevention by force, military surprise actions, regional military superiority, destabilisation and fear of its neighbours, and hostility towards democracy and the West – would be highly welcome as a 'great power'.

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Restarting the Dialogue for European Peace: A View from Germany

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This presentation considers the prospects for a political European peace initiative with Russia, roughly along the lines of the Helsinki process or West Germany's New Ostpolitik, to be severely limited. The reasons for this are located in the political crises of many western democracies. These crises can be seen in the successes of populist and nationalist movements in the European Union, or in the election of Donald Trump in the United States. Citizens and voters are protesting that their elected representatives have increasingly lost their interpretive authority to the media, which is perceived as predominant. Mainstream media, in turn, presents its critics as easily seduced, of limited intelligence, and prone to extremist right-wing ideas.

This means that in the EU and the US, good political arguments in favour of a rapprochement with Russia won't suffice. Additionally, it seems hardly realistic that in the European Union such a policy could be agreed upon with member states that take a sceptical view of Russia, such as the Baltic states and Poland. Still, it is possible and even likely that a decisive impulse for peace, supported by considerable circles of the population and of the business community, will emerge within larger European countries such as Germany, France, or Italy. In these countries, calls for an accommodation with Russia are growing in volume, even in the face of dominant views in both the media and political life. Such calls focus attention on the successes of economic and societal cooperation.

For now, a constructive *Realpolitik* has to focus on small confidence-building measures. These have to be based on close involvement with civil society. Common themes that unite East and West need to take centre stage in political and societal dialogues. Trust can emerge when shared interests and objectives are translated into concrete win-win situations. Potential areas for such cooperation include the fight against terrorism, the Middle East, and cooperation on economic and municipal levels as well as a dialogue between the European and the Eurasian Unions.

Germany, Russia, and the Future of the European Security Order

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The starting point of this paper is examining Germany and Russia as two potential global players on one continent. Unlike Russia – which is mostly self-reliant in its global ambitions – Germany sees the EU as its main instrument for shaping globalisation.

The process of strengthening the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – especially its defence component, which was launched in 2013–2014 in response to changes in US foreign policy – will continue irrespective of the new American administration's policy. However, the isolationist and unilateral tendencies of the new US administration could undoubtedly accelerate EU activity in defence and foreign policy.

The same holds true for Germany, which not only leads relevant processes within the EU, but has also developed new frameworks for its foreign and defence policies. These frameworks suggest a more active stance and 'greater responsibility' in international politics and are completely compatible with the EU's CFSP. If the US reduces its presence in Europe, Germany will shoulder even more responsibility as a leading member of the EU.

The development of the EU as a security and defence actor will complicate the security situation in Europe, and there is no guarantee that EU-Russia relations will improve in such a case. The obstacles to improvement are not only insufficient EU-Russia security dialogue and poor relations between Russia and some EU members, but also the problem of a 'common neighbourhood' – the main and still unresolved problem in EU-Russia relations.

**Europe in the Wider World:
Steps Toward a Comprehensive Collective Security Policy:
A Proposal for a Road Map**

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Until 2014 notions of building up defence and security structures in Central Europe to prevent any potential aggression from Russia were practically nonexistent. The Ukrainian crisis was a game changer. At least three questions arise:

1. Is there really a Russian threat?
2. If so, which policy should be adopted: militarisation of security or defusing potential threats by creating frameworks of settlement and crisis prevention?
3. How should threats resulting from conflicts in the space between the geopolitical zones of influence claimed by Moscow and Brussels be dealt with?

Today we are facing these questions in an international and territorial context that has seen fundamental changes in the power constellation of international actors. These changes have affected Europe and will further determine opportunities to establish a peace and security order for the whole of Europe.

Indisputably, the European Union plays a vital role in the international system. This model performed well during the bipolar era, until the demise of the USSR in 1991. Even after 1991, the EU established a pragmatic and interest-based relationship to post-Soviet Russia until 2009, which was positively received by the Kremlin. But a change of paradigm shifted the EU's Russia policy away from cooperation toward confrontation. This policy lacked a strategic view and overlooked its detrimental consequences for 'Europe-in-between', the contested space between the two geopolitical power blocs of Brussels and Moscow. The Russian answer followed swiftly; security concepts designed to renew key elements of the Charter of Paris were aired but quickly buried. Since 2012/14 an icy relation between the EU and Russia has surfaced, and a variant of the old Cold War has emerged.

Lessons from the Ukrainian crisis can be drawn, emphasising that the creation of antagonistic block structures (EU versus EEU) will lead to mutual aggressive policies and foster destructive nationalist sentiments. As a result, 'antagonistic' relations will neither safeguard territorial integrity nor support political or economic rehabilitation. Consequently, an interest-based dialogue to build a robust European security architecture, stressing common responsibility and including Russia, must be started. The question is how we can amend and combine the existing building blocks of security.

European Energy Security: Challenges in Diversifying and Decarbonising the Energy Fuel Mix

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The dimensions of the term 'energy security' range from global climate change to the finite nature of fossil and nuclear energy sources, from the use of energy as a weapon to the sudden disruption of energy supply and the high costs of energy imports. In addition to the traditional supply-side view, the demand-side of energy security and the emergence of energy prosumers are important.

Europe has the third largest gross inland energy consumption worldwide and faces many energy policy challenges regarding its future energy supply, such as changing energy markets and energy demand structures and the diversification and decarbonisation of the energy fuel mix towards a cleaner and more sustainable energy system. Also, new technologies for changing economic, social, and demographic development and solutions for the limitation of GHG emissions or the disposal of nuclear waste are needed.

The energy mix of the EU-28 countries is dominated by oil and gas. Since 1980, European countries have not been self-sufficient in the supply of crude oil. A similar picture can be seen in the natural gas sector since the middle of the 1990s. In 2014, the EU's energy import dependency reached 53.5% (with natural gas, coal, and oil combined). The countries of origin for energy exports have changed in recent years, but Russia has maintained the leading position as a supplier of mineral oil and natural gas and has gained the lead in the supply of solid fuels, too. However, since 2004 new partner countries are emerging, such as the Caspian region in the first instance.

The regional geopolitical complexities resulting from the competing interests of actors hinder the smooth integration of the South Caucasus and the Caspian region into the world market. The region's dependence on transit countries for the marketing of hydrocarbon production leads to the question of whether political factors even allow a diversification of the transport routes and an increase in production.

What Is Greater Eurasia? The Prospects of the EU and the EAEU

Anna Kuznetsova

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Antagonism between the EU and Russia has become the new norm. Relations between Moscow and its European neighbours have been developing towards a form of 'escalated alienation'. In the meantime, it has become evident that the lack of dialogue between the EU and Russia and the unwillingness to seek out solutions leads nowhere.

The European Union today faces serious challenges: prolonged economic stagnation, the crisis of the euro zone, mounting migration problems, the threat of separatism, and signs of a confrontation between its northern and southern regions. The main problem for Russia is finding fundamentally new sources of economic growth and a new place for itself in the global economy in the twenty-first century.

The European Union is willing to enhance its political independence on the global stage. Russia actively participates in Eurasian integration processes. It is important not to admit new bipolarity and instead to concentrate on mutual problems, such as migration, political extremism, and terrorism. Such principles of selective engagement could be a way of finding a solution to the current antagonism. Nevertheless, there are other possible variants of partnership that have been underestimated – that is, a partnership not only between the EU and Russia, but between the EU and the EAEU. Given the fact that the EAEU is an economic union, such a partnership could depoliticise the dialogue between Russia and the EU and consequently increase economic interdependence. Such an increase is likely to lead to a more stable and mutually beneficial partnership between Russia and the EU.

Amidst the Tensions of Big Powers: Central Asia Between China, Russia, and the EU

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The New Silk Road Project was set up to connect the EU and China. Both economic regions and continents are interested in having closer ties. Roads, railways, and other infrastructure projects have been set up across Central Asia to intensify trade.

The basic ideas were brought out by the EU in its Central Asia Strategy and unanimously voted for by all member states in June 2007.

How successful can the strategy be, when at the same time Russia and China each have their own ideas about Central Asia? What are these ideas? Can common ground be found? And if so, where?