



THE YEAR THAT WAR RETURNED TO EUROPE

EU FOREIGN POLICY IN 2022

JOSEP BORRELL FONTELLES





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INTRODUCTION

2022, THE YEAR THAT WAR RETURNED TO EUROPE

The year 2022 was above all the year of the war of aggression launched by Russia against Ukraine. The phone call I received around 05:00 on 24 February 2022 to inform me of the start of the Russian invasion will certainly remain one of the most striking and painful memories of my mandate. This aggression launched by a nuclear power, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, meant that high intensity war was returning to the European continent, just a few kilometres from the Union's borders. It was clear to me that history had turned a page and that this moment marked a tipping point not only for the European Union, but also for the whole world.

Even if the EU itself does not take part in this war, it was also clear from day one that Vladimir Putin's objective was not only to annex Ukraine and deny its right to exist as a sovereign and democratic country. Using an imperial logic of another age, he wanted also to divide and weaken the European Union. He intended to put a halt to the attraction that our democratic model, which he abhors, exerts on the Russian people and on the people of Central and Eastern Europe that, in his imperialistic view, should belong to a Russian sphere of influence.

Putin expected to divide us easily

A few weeks before the invasion, in early 2022, I went to Eastern Ukraine to the contact line. In Kiev, I met with the Prime Minister, Denys Shmyhal. He told me in essence: 'We know that the Russian invasion will happen. We know that you will not send soldiers to fight with us, but will you support us in every other way?'. At that moment, I honestly didn't know what to say precisely because I wasn't sure of the position of all member states of the Union on a subject that requires their unanimity.

Just as Putin thought he would succeed in taking Kyiv in a few days, he also expected indeed to divide us easily, particularly because of the EU's strong dependence on Russian energy. To increase his leverage, just as he was amassing more than 100 000 troops on Ukraine's borders ready to attack, he had begun from 2021 to restrict Russian gas deliveries to the EU despite the long term agreements between Russian suppliers and European customers.

The price to pay for our freedom and security

However, we have managed to not only react in a united and resolved way, but also to get rid of almost all Russian fossil fuels imports in just one year (see p. 193). This proved to be socially and economically costly and difficult, with gas and electricity prices on the spot markets rising dramatically in the summer of 2022. But this was the price to pay for our freedom and security. And we have succeeded: by the beginning of 2023, energy prices have come down to pre-Russian invasion levels, although they still remain high, too high, due to the consequences of the war on the energy markets.

We are not out of the woods yet. We need to continue and expand the work begun with the RePowerEU plan (see p. 189) to accelerate the deployment of renewable energies and increase our efforts in energy saving and efficiency. The EU has been structurally an energy importer for decades so we have every reason to invest in developing renewables at home. As we do so, we should be careful not to replace one form of dependence (on Russian energy imports) for another (on Chinese critical raw materials that are needed for the green transition).

In the face of Russian aggression, we have managed to maintain our unity while massively supporting Ukraine. In one year, the European Union, its financial institutions and its member states have mobilised almost €50 billion on all fronts: humanitarian aid, refugee reception, support for the energy system, development of transport connections with the EU, macro-financial aid, etc. And for the first time ever, the EU and its member states have also supported Ukraine with around €12 billion in arms and ammunition deliveries, notably by mobilising the European Peace Facility that the EU member states had set up in 2021 (see p. 37).

We have also launched unprecedented sanctions against Vladimir Putin's regime and those responsible for the Russian aggression. And these sanctions are working (see p. 101), even if they have not yet succeeded to force Russia to stop its aggression: the income received by Russia from hydrocarbon exports is falling

sharply, thousands of companies have left Russia and Russian arms, automobile and aeronautics industries have been badly affected...

Four solidarities at the same time

In short, the European Union has resisted and we have been able to implement four solidarities at the same time:

- Massive solidarity with Ukraine, both financial, humanitarian, and with deliveries of military equipment.
- Solidarity between EU countries, particularly to deal with the energy crisis caused by the end of Russian fossil fuel supplies, which affected the member states in very different ways.
- Transatlantic solidarity, which has been strengthened in recent months, in the framework of NATO in particular but also in the face of the energy crisis.
- And finally, solidarity with the rest of the world to help the countries most affected to cope with the consequences of this war of aggression waged by Vladimir Putin. This was the case in particular in the face of the risk of famine with the development in May of the Solidarity Lanes to help get the cereals stored in Ukraine out of the country and then in the autumn with the Black Sea Grain Initiative brokered by the UN with the support of Türkiye.

The EU managed to adapt to this massive threat in record time, breaking many taboos in the process. Unwittingly, Vladimir Putin has helped to bring about the geopolitical Europe we were hoping for (see p. 41).

However, this war has also highlighted the long way we still have to go to reinforce our capacities in defence and security. It has shown how serious the threats posed to the European Union by the rise of authoritarian regimes was with power politics and the ‘weaponisation of everything’. Although our military support to Ukraine has been substantial, it has been less than that of the United States, which has been decisive. The war has stressed the importance of NATO to ensure the territorial defence of Europe but it has also made clear that Europe and the Europeans have to do more to contribute to their own security by our own means.

Even before the outbreak of this war, we were aware of the weakness of our defence capabilities. This is why, since the beginning of my mandate, we have been working on a new ‘Strategic Compass’. It was completed at the beginning of 2022

(see p. 147), just as the war started. With the ‘Strategic Compass’ we agreed on the means for moving forward, not towards a single European army but towards increased interoperability of European armies, defining concrete steps to be taken in this direction over the next few years.

However, the war against Ukraine raises the stakes to an even higher level. In 2022, we felt the cumulative effect of our lack of defence expanses over the past thirty years: our stocks are too low, our capabilities too limited in many areas. The analyses carried out by the European Defence Agency (EDA), have illustrated the extent of the many shortcomings that we must correct (see p. XX).

The conclusion is clear: we must spend more on security and defence but above all we must spend better, which means in a more closely coordinated way, to make up for our shortfalls and to avoid duplication. This must also be an opportunity to strengthen our European defence industry. Important decisions in this direction have been announced in 2022 in several European countries and now it is time to deliver.

The attack against Ukraine has shown how much NATO is needed for European security and the organisation has been further strengthened with the application for membership by Sweden and Finland. However, within NATO, the defence effort made by Europeans themselves must now be substantially increased as we agreed in the EU-NATO joint statement on 10 January 2023.

A major impact far beyond Ukraine

The war against Ukraine has been sending shockwaves around the globe and had a major impact far beyond Ukraine and the European continent. By attacking one of the world’s major exporters of grain and vegetable oils, especially to Africa and the Middle East, Russia has triggered a sharp rise in food prices globally that has endangered the lives of millions of people around the world (see p. 67 and 91). Russia systematically destroyed and mined fields, targeted silos and transport routes and blocked Ukrainian ports.

The European Union organised ‘solidarity lanes’ to evacuate Ukrainian grain by land, and then the United Nations assisted by Türkiye succeeded in the autumn of 2022 to unblock Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea, so that food prices could be brought down. Similarly, by using energy as a weapon against the European Union, Russia has triggered a sharp rise in global energy prices (see p. 189).

Adding to the already significant effects of climate change, and coming on the heels of a pandemic whose effects are still far from being overcome everywhere, this war has triggered a ‘perfect storm’ in the global economy (see p. 79). It has affected the whole world, but it hit particularly hard the many emerging and developing countries that are energy and food importers. These countries often have neither the social systems nor the budgetary space to cope with these economic and social difficulties. The most vulnerable are the ones who suffer most of the consequences of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine.

This aggression constitutes a flagrant violation of the most fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter: the non-use of force and respect for state borders. This is all the more serious because it is not the act of an ordinary member of the international community but of a nuclear power and a permanent member of the Security Council. It was accompanied by many war crimes committed by the Russian army, which are widely documented (see p. 45).

The Russian aggression against Ukraine is in fact a textbook case of classical imperialist policy. If the international community fails to stop and punish such a serious violation of the basic principles of international law and to bring the perpetrators of the multiple war crimes committed to justice, the whole multilateral system and body of international law will be in danger (see p. 121).

Since 24 February 2022, Russia’s aggression and its consequences have been repeatedly condemned by a large majority of countries member of the United Nations General Assembly. However, we have had to notice that many of our partners in the so-called ‘Global South’ are more sensitive to the consequences of this war than to its causes. In particular, many seem unwilling to take the active steps needed to force Russia to stop its aggression.

The lies of Russian propaganda

In many countries marked by colonialism, and also by the subsequent errors such as the war in Iraq, public opinion is often receptive to the lies of Russian propaganda and its massive information manipulation campaigns, particularly concerning the supposed impact of our sanctions on the supply of Southern countries with energy or food. Yet these sanctions have never targeted Russian grain or fertiliser exports, nor have they sought to prohibit the export of Russian fossil fuels to destinations other than Europe (see pages XX).

There are also many other conflicts taking place around the world. In the Sahel (see p. 301), instability is spreading and terrorists are making progress. In Libya, the situation also remains very unstable. In Ethiopia, there was a terrible war in Tigray, marked by numerous atrocities (see p. 297). In Yemen, the conflict has not been resolved and still threatens the stability of the region. In Syria and Iraq the situation remains also tense and unstable (see p. 287). In Israel and the Palestinian occupied territories, 2022 has been another bloody year. And the examples could be multiplied. Many of our partners feel more directly concerned by conflicts in their region than by the war in Ukraine. And they blame us for not paying enough attention to these conflicts and for using double standards between what is happening in Ukraine and in other events around the world.

In the often messy multipolar world we have entered in recent years, many countries in the ‘Global South’ like Türkiye, India, Brazil, South Africa, Nigeria, Mexico or Indonesia are playing the role of ‘swing states’ on a global scale, leaning one way or the other according to what they consider to be their interests. However the issue with the war of aggression against Ukraine is not about choosing sides between ‘the West’ and Russia, but about how to preserve the core principles of the international law and the UN charter.

In this context, we need to be more proactive. We are still often too Eurocentric. The war against Ukraine shows that we must listen more to what some call the ‘Global South’, show more empathy with these countries and reach out to them with more humility. We need in particular to strengthen our ties with our Southern Neighbourhood (see p. 269), Africa (see p. 291), Latin America and the Caribe (see p. 329), Central Asia (see p. 319) or the Indo-Pacific region (see p. 313). The future of the EU and its role in the world depends on it.

Win the ‘battle of narratives’

We need to fight more actively the Russian information manipulation campaigns everywhere and win the ‘battle of narratives’. We need also to make the different strands of EU’s foreign policy more coherent and bring member states’ and EU policies closer together, as we are doing with the Team Europe approaches and the Global Gateway initiative (see p. 251). However, we have still a long way to go before we can be perceived by our partners as a united and coherent whole.

And, as I said before, some of our partners are also expressing the fear that, because of the war against Ukraine, we risk disengaging from other global files

like peace in other regions, climate, gender equality or the Sustainable Development Goals. We must be attentive to this fear and ensure that we continue to commit ourselves fully to these global issues.

Beyond the war in Ukraine and its consequences, you will find in this book, which is the third of its kind⁽¹⁾, an echo of the actions carried out throughout the year 2022 to make the European Union a true geopolitical actor. This effort continues in 2023 in the hope that this year will mark the success of Ukraine in defeating the Russian aggression and that a just and lasting peace can be achieved.

Brussels, 15 February 2023.

(1) See 'European policy in times of COVID-19' and 'Staying on course in troubled waters, EU foreign policy in 2021' by Josep Borrell Fontelles, Publications Office of the European Union accessible on https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/window-world-blog-hrvp-josep-borrell_en#16098

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FACING RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE



EU SUPPORT TO UKRAINE AND THE SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN EUROPE

09.01.2022 – Blog (²) – On the very first days of 2022, I visited the contact line in the Donbas region of Ukraine at a moment when the country was already facing a massive Russian military build-up. I assured our partners of the EU's steady support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

My visit to Ukraine (³) came at a particularly important moment, when the conflict at the border of the country is on the verge of getting deeper, in the context of the Russian military build-up. It took place ahead of a series of meetings between Russia, the US and NATO that will discuss Russia's demands for 'security guarantees'. The security situation in Eastern Europe will also be the main topic for the informal meetings with EU Foreign and Defence Ministers next week in Brest, France.

EU's support to the conflict affected population

The mission was my third visit to Ukraine since the beginning of my mandate, but the first time I travelled to the Donbass region, in the east of Ukraine. It was also the first mission of an HR/VP to the contact line with the non-governmental controlled areas of the country. Together with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, we visited the Stanytsya Luhanska entry-exit checkpoint on the contact line, to highlight the tangible support of the EU to the conflict-affected population.

The entry-exit checkpoint facilities and the associated Administrative Service Centre, opened last November, were both established with the support of the EU. The original bridge in Stanytsya Luhanska was destroyed in March 2015 during the armed conflict. The Ukrainian government opened the new bridge in 2019. It was intentionally built for light traffic only, in order not to accommodate movements of heavy military vehicles. Today, around 70 000 people cross this entry-exit checkpoint monthly. The Administrative Services Centre offers services to the

(²) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-support-ukraine-and-security-architecture-europe_en

(³) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/ukraine-high-representative-josep-borrell-visited-ukraine-reconfirm-eu%20%99s-support-against_en

people crossing the checkpoint. Stanytsya Luhanska is the only active checkpoint in the Luhansk region. The de facto authorities in the non-government controlled area have until now refused to open other checkpoints.

The consequences of the war in the Donbas region

The visit was an opportunity to eyewitness the consequences of the war in the Donbas region. I could hear and see how the conflict has dramatically affected the lives of thousands of people, with many destinies destroyed; families divided living on both sides of the contact line and many obstacles to access basic services and work. However, I was also impressed by the daily work done by the Ukrainian government, international organisations and NGOs.

In Stanytsya Luhanska, I was also briefed on the military situation by the Deputy Commander of the Joint Forces Operation. He stressed that there was no abatement in the ceasefire breaches by the Russian backed armed formations. Since last November, Russia has been massing troops and weapons in an unusual manner around Ukraine's border. This, alongside other subversive actions aimed at Ukraine, is another attempt to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty. There can be no doubt that Russia is a party to this conflict, and not a mediator as it often claims.

Overall, tensions have been building up with respect to the European security. During the press conference that we held on the contact line, I stressed that our main interest, concern and purpose is to get Russia to de-escalate tensions. The full implementation of the Minsk agreement by Russia remains a fundamental condition. We will continue to support diplomatic efforts to revive conflict resolution in the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group (Russia, Ukraine and OSCE) and the Normandy format (Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany). It is equally important that the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission can fully undertake its mandate.

Dialogue is a must, but so is deterrence and resolve through a firm support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Any further aggression against Ukraine will have massive consequences and severe costs for Russia. We are coordinating our approach closely with transatlantic and other like-minded partners. There is no security in Europe without the security of Ukraine.

The whole European security architecture at stake

Beyond Ukraine, the whole European security architecture is at stake. The Russian leadership, by deliberately excluding any reference to the EU from the 'draft treaties' they presented last December, seems to intend to turn the clock backward to the old times of Cold War logics. The Russian proposals reflect indeed the position of Russian authorities aiming to roll back evolutions that took place since 1990 to the detriment of European unity and in breach of the independence and sovereignty of former Soviet states. This type of delimitation of spheres of influence does not belong to 2022.

These times have definitely passed and we need to be clear that nothing will be discussed about the security in Europe without the Europeans. We agreed with the US⁽⁴⁾ and our partners that such discussions will continue in coordination with, and participation of the EU. In addition, there should be no limits placed on Ukraine's independence or its right to determine its foreign policy choices. And, of course, any discussion about Ukraine must require Ukraine to be at the table.

Several of the Russian proposals are incompatible with the funding principle of European security, notably the Helsinki Final Act from 1975. The dialogue with Russia at the NATO-Russia Council meeting does not imply any endorsement of Russian proposals but rather offers a platform for diplomatic discussions, in line with our security interests and reiterating the fundamental principles of European security and stability. For example, the proposals regarding the creation of crisis management mechanisms could be useful.

In addition to the NATO-Russia discussions, the OSCE is a privileged place for discussing European security: it was created precisely to deal with situations like the one we are facing and is a well-suited institution to start a meaningful dialogue. Discussions on European security should take place on the precondition of constructive engagement by Russia to address regional security issues in the relevant existing formats.

Continuing my mission with visiting Kyiv, I also met Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal. He highly valued the EU's proactive stance and support provided. Our discussion focused on enhancing Ukraine's internal resilience as a way to also strengthen Ukraine's capacity to resist external challenges. These are two sides of the same coin. Sticking to the reform agenda must remain a priority, starting

⁽⁴⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/transatlantic-cooperation-russia-and-ukraine-high-representative-josep-borrell-spoke-us_en

with a comprehensive reform of the judiciary, the ‘mother of all reforms’. I encouraged the Prime Minister to also further pursue important reforms relating to the Constitutional Court, security services and corporate governance of state-owned enterprises and I assured him of the EU’s continued support on this. Strengthening anti-corruption efforts and building stronger democratic institutions are an important element to face Russian pressure.

The EU, the most reliable partner of Ukraine

Since the beginning of the conflict in 2014 and the illegal annexation of Crimea, the [EU has indeed been the most reliable partner of Ukraine](#) ⁽⁵⁾: we have mobilised €17 billion to help the country and our Association agreement is simply the most comprehensive one we have with any country in the world. Recently, we adopted an additional [€31 million in support of the Ukrainian armed forces](#) ⁽⁶⁾. The [European Union Advisory Mission \(EUAM\)](#) ⁽⁷⁾ has also been operating on the ground since 2014 to help reform the Ukrainian civilian security sector. In addition, our support for countering disinformation continues and the EU-Ukraine cyber dialogue is now running. With €200 million, the EU has also put forward a strong support to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, the largest assistance package for any of our Eastern partners. On top of this, we have provided an emergency support of €1.2 billion to help Ukraine cover its urgent financing needs.

Ukraine can be sure that we will continue supporting the country politically, diplomatically and economically.

⁽⁵⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-ukraine-relations-factsheet_en

⁽⁶⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/12/02/european-peace-facility-council-adopts-assistance-measures-for-georgia-the-republic-of-moldova-ukraine-and-the-republic-of-mali/>

⁽⁷⁾ See: <https://www.euam-ukraine.eu/>

FACED WITH RUSSIAN THREATS, THE EUROPEAN UNION MUST STAY UNITED AND ACT

12.01.2022 – Blog ⁽⁸⁾ – *A few weeks before the invasion of Ukraine, EU Foreign and Defence Ministers met in Brest (France). I stressed that we have to be united, clear about what we wanted and what we intended to do.*

Russia has addressed to the United States and NATO proposals on the future of security in Europe that contravene the principles of the European security architecture. They are accompanied by a military build-up on the border of Ukraine and the open threat by Russia of taking military actions if these demands are not met.

The EU must uphold the security order of Europe

Working with the US and NATO, the EU must now define what we can do to uphold the security order of Europe and the principles underpinning it – which are clearly under threat today. This issue is on top of the agenda of the meeting of EU Foreign and Defence Ministers in Brest this week. Going into that meeting, two things are clear: we have to come to a united EU position and we have to substantiate our role, backing it up with concrete action tracks, i.e. not just on what we think or want but on what we intend to do.

The ambition of the Russian authorities is to challenge the political and security order born after the Cold War. Moscow wants to go back on the NATO-Russia founding act of 1997, which accompanied NATO's enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe; the Paris Charter of 1990, which codified the principles for European security after the end of the Cold War.

There are three principles that Russia has previously accepted and that it now puts into question. The first is the right of each state to freely choose to belong, or not to belong, to an international organisation and to be a party to treaties or alliances, as recognised by the Paris Charter. By challenging this fundamental principle, Moscow is acting as a revisionist power. In Russia's eyes, this prohibition would

⁽⁸⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/faced-russian-threats-european-union-must-stay-firm-united-and-act_en

not only apply to countries of the former Soviet Union but also to EU member states like Sweden or Finland.

The second and the third are the non-use of force and the respect for the territorial integrity of all states. Russia is violating these three fundamental principles in Ukraine, as it has already done in Georgia. And Russia is not merely making assertions but accompanying this with growing military pressure on the Ukrainian border and by threatening Kyiv with a new intervention unless its demands are met in full.

In addition, Russia wants to portray the European Union as irrelevant and push for a strategic decoupling between the United States and Europe. It also seeks our acceptance of it having a decisive influence over Ukraine and Belarus, not to mention Central Asia. The fact that Central Asia is included in the stated perimeter of Russian security confirms that the question of NATO is a pretext, since no Central Asian state is a candidate for NATO membership.

Reconstitute the Soviet geopolitical glacis

In short, reconstituting the Soviet geopolitical glacis in Europe and trying for a decoupling between the United States and Europe could be the strategic objectives of Moscow.

They are clearly unacceptable. But why should we still discuss these with Moscow? First, because not discussing never helps. This week an initial set of discussions took place: on Monday between the US and Russia in Geneva, followed by NATO-Russia talks in Brussels on Wednesday. The positions remain far apart but we can envisage a continuation of a series of intense, multi-layered talks and consultations in which the EU will continue to play its full part.

I spoke with Secretary Blinken ⁽⁹⁾ last weekend and will do so again after the Gymnich meeting, EU-NATO coordination is strong at all levels, the EEAS Secretary General Sannino spoke with US Deputy Secretary Sherman and OSCE Secretary General Schmid.

During this week's informal Foreign and Defence Ministers meetings in Brest, we will work on the EU's precise role and contribution. We need to come with clear

⁽⁹⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/transatlantic-cooperation-russia-and-ukraine-high-representative-josep-borrell-spoke-us_en

positions on what we want to achieve in these discussions on Europe's security architecture, and, even more, with clear actions and contributions. To achieve this aim, we Europeans must be united and formulate our answer in case Russia carries out its threats to Ukraine or the wider European security order.

When it comes to substance, one can of course discuss with Russia the security arrangements in Europe and how to improve them. The first task will be to return to the general principles of the security architecture as they derive from the Helsinki Charter, the Paris Charter, the NATO-Russia agreement, or the OSCE Vienna document on confidence-building measures. The second is the establishment of a more effective crisis management mechanism with Russia, an area in which the EU has a great deal of experience. With good faith, it should be possible to make progress in this area. The third is the establishment of permanent and operational conflict prevention mechanisms and confidence building measures so that the conduct of all parties is not misinterpreted, particularly with regard to military manoeuvres.

Any further move would carry massive consequences

When it comes to EU-Russia relations itself, EU leaders have already said (^(o)) that any further move against Ukraine would carry real costs and massive consequences. In addition to adopting a coordinated set of sanctions, we should also be ready to accelerate different actions tracks within the overall framework of 'pushing back, containing and engaging' Russia. We are not a military alliance but we do have ways and means to advance our security interests and that of our partners.

This includes being prepared to scale up our work on countering disinformation and cyber threats emanating from Russia; strengthening our resilience and energy security through faster development of renewables at home and greater diversification of routes and sources for imports; and stepping up our support to Ukraine (⁽ⁱ⁾) and its sovereignty so that it is better able to resist Russian pressures.

Together with NATO and the OSCE, the European Union is a key player in European security. We need to seize the opportunity of this crisis with Russia to strengthen our unity and determination, to defend our security interests and that of the continent as a whole.

(^(o)) See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/53575/20211216-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>

(⁽ⁱ⁾) See p. 19.

WITH TENSIONS RISING AT OUR EASTERN BORDERS, UNITY REMAINS OUR STRENGTH

30.01.2022 – Blog ⁽¹²⁾ – *In January, Russia's actions against Ukraine continued. In coordination with the EU, the US and NATO responded to Russia's 'draft treaties' on European security architecture. At this time, we still tried to stick to our twin tracks of diplomacy and deterrence.*

The crisis with Russia and Ukraine remains at the centre of today's geopolitical tensions. Russia's military build-up at the Ukrainian border has increased further and now includes preparations for military drills in Belarus, to be conducted just 18 km from the Ukrainian border. Moscow has also announced naval drills involving its fleets – including for instance in the North-Atlantic in front of the Irish coast – as well as military exercises inside Russia.

On our side, EU Foreign ministers met last Monday and formalised our decisions taken in Brest ⁽¹³⁾: we reaffirmed our unity opposing Russia's attempt to re-create dividing lines on our continent ⁽¹⁴⁾. These bring back memories of 'spheres of influence', which do not belong to the 21st century and are unacceptable. With Ministers, we agreed on the main elements that will guide our collective diplomatic efforts, to convince Russia to take the path of dialogue.

The diplomatic surge

During our FAC meeting, we also had a substantive exchange with US Secretary of State Blinken. Transatlantic unity is key and we will continue our close coordination and cooperation, as we have been doing during this whole process.

Some commentators have been expressing disappointment about the alleged absence of the European Union from the diplomatic process on the Russia/Ukraine conflict, saying that the EU is 'not at the table'. While obviously the EU did not sit at the table of initial bilateral US-Russia and NATO-Russia meetings, it

⁽¹²⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/tensions-rising-our-eastern-borders-unity-remains-our-strength_en

⁽¹³⁾ See p. 23.

⁽¹⁴⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/01/24/european-security-situation-notions-of-spheres-of-influence-have-no-place-in-the-21st-century/>

does not mean the EU has been absent from the wider and multi-layered set of diplomatic discussions. The United States and the European Union have been coordinating constantly, informing each other and discussing the next steps to take. I have been in close contact with the US Secretary of State with whom we also had an [exchange with the NATO Secretary General and the Polish Foreign Minister, who currently is the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office](#) and with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister ⁽¹⁵⁾. Of course, I am also in close touch with my French and German colleagues on the discussions in the Normandy format (France, Germany, Ukraine, Russia). It is very important that these Normandy talks started again on Wednesday in Paris, for the first time since 2019, and are set to continue in Berlin in the coming weeks.

Close transatlantic coordination

Following this close transatlantic coordination, the US and NATO sent their respective written responses on Wednesday to the Russian demands published last December. Secretary Blinken and other US officials [have made it clear in public](#) ⁽¹⁶⁾ that the response reiterates the concerns about Russia's actions that undermine European security; it contains a principled and pragmatic evaluation of the concerns that Russia has raised; and proposals for areas where it may be possible to find common ground.

I welcome the US and NATO proposals: they have the potential – if negotiated in good faith – to enhance security in Europe, while also addressing Russia's stated concerns through reciprocal commitments.

We aim to increase transparency and confidence, while underlining the need to respect the basic principles on which Europe's security is established, in particular respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of European states and the right of states to choose their own security arrangements and alliances. Disputes must be resolved peacefully and not through the use or threat of force.

Our ultimate interest is that reason prevails and that conflicts that have been increasing mistrust and antagonism within Europe in recent years are resolved through negotiations. Europe, as well as the United States, opt for peaceful and

⁽¹⁵⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/russiaukraine-high-representative-borrell-multilateral-coordination-talks-us-secretary-blinken_en

⁽¹⁶⁾ See: <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-a-press-availability-13/>

negotiated solutions and invite Russia to follow that path rather than armed aggression. We prefer diplomacy and are prepared to move forward, if Russia de-escalates its aggression toward Ukraine and approaches discussions about security in Europe in a balanced and reciprocal way.

In parallel, the EU has increased financial assistance to Ukraine significantly. After having already allocated over €17 billion since 2014, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced last Monday a new financial assistance package of both emergency loans and grants. It will include a new emergency macro-financial assistance package of €1.2 billion, to address Ukraine's current financing needs. The European Parliament and Council should adopt this package as soon as possible.

On the security and defence side, we decided last month to use the European Peace Facility to increase the resilience capacity of the Ukrainian army (¹⁷). Right now, we are intensifying our work on how best to expand our support to Ukraine on the reform of its higher military education. I hope that member states can soon agree on these modalities, so that work can start.

Countering Kremlin's disinformation

Meanwhile, Kremlin disinformation around Ukraine is also intensifying, aimed at creating a very misleading impression of a besieged Russia, encircled by NATO and the West, who are cynically pushing Ukraine into conflict with Russia. In pro-Kremlin narratives, Kyiv is portrayed as a puppet, directed by a war-mongering West and preparing a provocation to start military operation to reclaim its own territory.

Besides being fundamentally wrong, such narratives increase tensions, aim at creating uncertainty and confusion in the public and at generating dangerous pretexts for escalating actions. As part of our fight against disinformation campaigns emanating from pro-Kremlin outlets, our experts have identified and debunked more than 5 000 cases targeting Ukraine (¹⁸). We have exposed the seven most prevalent and dangerous myths about Ukraine (¹⁹).

(¹⁷) See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/12/02/european-peace-facility-council-adopts-assistance-measures-for-georgia-the-republic-of-moldova-ukraine-and-the-republic-of-mali/>

(¹⁸) See: <https://euvdisinfo.eu/the-kremlins-main-target-of-disinformation/>

(¹⁹) See: <https://euvdisinfo.eu/disinformation-about-the-current-russia-ukraine-conflict-seven-myths-debunked/>

We work closely with Ukrainian authorities and civil society to deliver technical and financial support to help them combat foreign information manipulation and interference. The recently established Ukrainian [Centre for Strategic Communications and Information Security](#) ⁽²⁰⁾ has already delivered good results in its first months of operation and will grow further. Ukraine can continue to count on the EU in this field.

The coercive actions against Ukraine have coincided with a cyber-attack. This month, a number of Ukrainian government websites and service platforms were defaced with deceptive messaging, and worse, destructive elements were found on some of the government IT systems and elsewhere in society.

Cyber-attacks are rarely used just to cause harm to technical systems. They are also aimed at triggering psychological effects, trying to delegitimise Ukrainian authorities and spreading distrust and fear among the general population.

Thankfully, Ukrainian authorities have reacted promptly and remedied the situation. This was a good example of the resilience of Ukrainian society against the pressures they are facing. The EU actively supports Ukraine in tackling cyber threats. In addition to the EU-Ukraine Cyber Dialogue, we have established strong cooperation, enabling us to assist Ukraine to increase its defences against cyber threats and attacks.

Most dangerous moment of the post-Cold War period

As I said earlier this week, [we are living today through the most dangerous moment of the post-Cold War period](#) ⁽²¹⁾. At the same time, we have to avoid further feeding an escalation spiral, and follow President Zelenskyy's calls to avoid any 'panic'. In this vein, we agreed at last week's FAC to maintain unchanged our diplomatic presence in Kyiv.

Russia is waging a war of nerves – so we have to keep ours. In this standoff, we are doing our best to make diplomacy work, using all possible paths. In this context, I deplore the decision by Russian authorities, announced on Friday, to ban an unknown number of representatives of EU member states and institutions from entry into Russia. This decision lacks any legal justification and transparency

⁽²⁰⁾ See: <https://spravdi.gov.ua/en/>

⁽²¹⁾ See p.147.

and will meet an appropriate response. With it, Russia continues to fuel a climate of tensions in Europe instead of contributing to de-escalation.

We are prepared in case diplomacy fails and we are looking at all options. This includes improving our resilience, including by working with partners like the US, Qatar and Azerbaijan, on [the issue of gas supply](#) ⁽²²⁾ in case Russia decides to reduce or halt deliveries.

Preparing a high-impact response

As part of our work on deterrence, we have advanced with the preparations of a high-impact response that would inflict severe costs on the Russian economy and financial system. We are also considering export controls measures that would have a longer-term effect, by denying Russia products that it needs to fulfil its strategic ambitions. Member states in the Council will decide based on a proposal from me as High Representative. I am working closely with the Commission to ensure that our joint proposal on implementing measures will follow immediately my first proposal on establishing economic and financial sanctions, so that decisions are adopted as quickly as possible, if required.

As I said during [my visit to Ukraine in early January](#) ⁽²³⁾, the European Union will not waver from its support to Ukraine's sovereignty, its territorial integrity and its right of self-determination. Ukraine is our partner and neighbour: its security is our security.

⁽²²⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_22_664

⁽²³⁾ See P. 19.

UNJUST WARS ARE DOOMED TO BE LOST

27.02.2022 – Op-ed ⁽²⁴⁾ – *Right after the start of Russia's invasion, I published this Op-ed in more than 80 media outlets around the globe denouncing the unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression waged against Ukraine and the lies of the Kremlin's propaganda.*

At this dark hour, when we see Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine and massive disinformation campaigns and information manipulation, it is essential to separate lies – invented to justify what cannot be justified – from facts.

The facts are that Russia, a major nuclear power, has attacked and invaded a peaceful and democratic neighbouring country, which posed no threat to it, nor provoked it. Moreover, president Putin is threatening reprisals on any other state that may come to the rescue of the people of Ukraine. Such use of force and coercion has no place in the 21st century.

A violation of the basic principles of human coexistence

What Putin is doing is not only a grave violation of international law, it is a violation of the basic principles of human coexistence. With his choice to bring war back to Europe, we see the return of the 'law of the jungle' where might makes right. The target is not only Ukraine, but the security of Europe and the whole international rules-based order, based on the UN system and international law.

His aggression is taking innocent lives, crushing people's wish to live in peace. Civilian targets are being struck, clearly violating international humanitarian law, forcing people to flee. We see a humanitarian catastrophe developing. For months, we pursued unparalleled efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution. But Putin lied to the faces of all who met him, pretending to be interested in a peaceful solution. Instead, he opted for a full-scale invasion, a fully fledged war.

Russia must cease its military operations immediately, and unconditionally withdraw from the entire territory of Ukraine. The same goes for Belarus, which has to immediately stop its involvement in this aggression and respect its

⁽²⁴⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/might-makes-not-right-unjust-wars-are-doomed-be-lost_en

international obligations. The European Union is united in offering its strong support to Ukraine and its people. This is a matter of life and death. I am preparing an emergency package to support the Ukrainian armed forces in their fight.

The international community will now in response opt for a full-scale isolation of Russia, to hold Putin accountable for this aggression. We are sanctioning those who finance the war, crippling the Russian banking system and its access to international reserves.

Russia's horrifying attack on a free and sovereign country

The EU and its partners have already imposed massive sanctions on Russia that target its leaders and elites and strategic sectors of the Kremlin-run economy. The aim is not to harm the Russian people, but to weaken the Kremlin's ability to finance this unjust war. In doing this, we are closely aligned with our partners and allies – the US, Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan, South Korea and Australia. We also see many countries from around the world rallying to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, including the United Kingdom. We stand together on the right side of history in the face of Russia's horrifying attack on a free and sovereign country.

To justify its crimes, the Kremlin and its supporters have engaged in a massive disinformation campaign, which started already weeks ago. We have seen Russian state media and their ecosystem peddling untruths in social media networks with the aim of deceiving and manipulating.

The Kremlin propagandists call the invasion 'a special operation', but this cynical euphemism cannot hide the fact that we witness a fully fledged invasion of Ukraine, with the aim to crush its freedom, legitimate government and democratic structures. Calling the Kyiv government 'neo-Nazi' and 'Russophobic' is nonsense: all manifestations of Nazism are banned in Ukraine. In modern Ukraine, extreme right-wing candidates are a fringe phenomenon with minimal support, without passing the barrier to enter the parliament. The Ukrainian government did not cut the Donbas off and it has not prohibited the use of Russian language and culture. Donetsk and Luhansk are no republics, they are Ukrainian regions controlled by Russia-backed and armed separatist groupings.

We know this – and many Russians know this. There have been courageous protests in cities across Russia since the invasion started, demanding the end of

the aggression against a peaceful neighbouring nation. We hear their voices and recognise their courage in speaking out, and we also see many prominent public figures in Russia protesting this senseless invasion.

Joint action against the Kremlin's behaviour

I continue to work with our partners around the world to ensure the joint action of the international community against the Kremlin's behaviour. On 25 February, only Russia vetoed a UN security council Resolution on Russia's aggression against Ukraine, with China, India and the United Arab Emirates abstaining. From all over the world, countries condemn Russia's attacks, and at the General Assembly the entire international community needs to join forces and help to end Russia's military aggression by adopting the related UN resolution.

With this war on Ukraine, the world will never be the same again. It is now, more than ever, the time for societies and alliances to come together to build our future on trust, justice and freedom. It is the moment to stand up and to speak out. Might does not make right. Never did. Never will.

DEFENDING UKRAINE IN ITS HOUR OF MAXIMUM NEED

01.03.2022 – Blog ⁽²⁵⁾ – *To support Ukraine, the EU immediately mobilised all available tools. We adopted unprecedented sanctions; blocked the Kremlin-linked disinformation machine and, for the first time ever, supplied Ukraine with lethal weapons. We probably advanced more in building a geopolitical Europe in the first weeks after the invasion than we did in several years.*

A major war has broken out in Europe and it is President Putin's war of choice. Across Ukraine, we see the violence and destruction caused by the Russian military, including missile attacks on civilian targets. There are already hundreds of deaths and the UN estimates that more than 600 000 people have fled the violence – with many more to come.

We tried for months to avoid this war and pursue the path of diplomacy. But Putin lied to the faces of all who met him, pretending to be interested in a peaceful solution. Instead, he opted for a full-scale invasion, a fully-fledged war.

Putin underestimated Ukraine

He underestimated Ukraine. Having dismissed Ukraine's identity as fake and its government as illegitimate, he did not expect Ukrainians to fight heroically for their country, nor the inspirational leadership of their President Zelenskyy. He counted on the EU to dither and the West to be divided: to maybe make some statements but not much more. Instead, we have shown unity and taken concrete steps with real bite. Putin also relied on getting international support from fellow strong men and hoped that many others would just look away.

Instead, he has led his country into growing isolation. Not only do most countries condemn the Russian invasion, but the Champions League final has been moved from Saint Petersburg to Paris; the Russian Formula 1 Grand Prix has been cancelled; FIFA and UEFA have suspended Russia from global football; Putin is no longer the honorary President of the international judo federation, and Russia has been kicked out of the Eurovision Song Contest.

⁽²⁵⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/defending-ukraine-its-hour-maximum-need-o_en

Five days into the war, Ukraine has so far managed to slow down the Russian onslaught. It has done so despite the overwhelming number of Russian forces and the outrageous escalating tactics that Putin has chosen, including attacks on residential areas in cities like Kharkiv.

At the same time, we see thousands of brave Russians being detained for participating in calm protests for peace and against the unjustified attack on Ukraine. Numerous artists, sports men and women and business leaders are speaking out against the war. We know that the Kremlin is not Russia and that Putin's choices are not those of the Russian people.

Our goal is clear: we want to make sure that Putin's war will fail. To that end, we have been working non-stop on various action tracks:

1. Diplomatic outreach: supporting Ukraine, isolating Russia

From the start of the war, we have worked to bring together a large international coalition to support Ukraine and condemn Russia's actions. It is striking that many governments and regional organisations from around the world have expressed their condemnation of Russia's aggression, ranging from the African Union to leaders across Latin America and Asia. They, like us, reject a world where big countries attack smaller neighbours and where 'might makes right'.

At the UN Security Council, 11 out of 15 countries voted in favour of a clear condemnation of its aggression with only three countries abstaining (China, India and the UAE) and forcing Russia to cast its veto on its own. Next up will be the vote in the UN General Assembly where we expect an overwhelming majority to say loudly and clearly that Russia is violating Ukrainian sovereignty and the principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

At the Human Rights Council in Geneva, the EU and its partners have expressed our unified horror at Russia's blatant human rights violations.

2. New EU sanctions: on SWIFT, the Russian Central Bank and oligarchs; closing the airspace; and banning Sputnik and Russia Today

We have adopted tough sanctions, targeting the financial, energy and transport sectors and restrictions on dual use goods. The list of Russian individuals sanctioned now include President Putin and Minister Lavrov as well as top oligarchs, political and military figures, and propagandists that have responsibilities for the aggression. A total of 680 individuals, high-profile persons, members of

the State Duma, members of the Russian Security Council, as well as 53 entities are on the sanction list. We are also expanding our sanctions regimes to include targeting corruption and foreign information manipulation and interference.

In addition, we have cut off the most significant Russian banks from the SWIFT system and frozen all transactions with the Russian Central Bank. This has triggered a fall of the rouble by around 30 % and forced a closure of the Russian stock exchange plus a doubling of interest rates by the Central Bank to stave off a total collapse of the Russian economy.

On all our sanctions, including the most severe ones such as the ones on SWIFT and the Russian Central Bank we are coordinating closely with the US, UK, Canada and others. In addition, Switzerland has announced that it will adopt the same sanctions as the EU, including notably those in the financial area.

All EU member states have closed their airspace to all Russian aircraft, including those of oligarchs, and so has Canada, making it impossible to leave Russia by plane for the West or North: 65 % of all flights from Moscow airports have been cancelled.

And we continue to fight the Kremlin's disinformation machine and expose its lies and manipulations. Now, we have taken the crucial step towards banning Sputnik and Russia Today from broadcasting their propaganda in the EU. We also want the social media platforms to take their responsibility to push back on the Kremlin's disinformation.

3. Ramping up support to Ukraine, including direct military assistance

As this is a full-scale war and Ukraine has every right to defend itself, we need to support it with the means it needs for that self-defence. We have decided to use the European Peace Facility to provide lethal arms equipment for a value of €450 million and €50 million of non-lethal supplies (such as fuel and protective equipment). These measures will be fully coherent with what EU member states have already decided to do on a national basis. This is the first time ever that the EU will provide lethal military equipment to a country under attack. I have discussed with EU Defence Ministers how to implement these measures as quickly as possible, using the EU Military Staff as clearinghouse.

We know the cyber front is crucial so we activated the PESCO project Cyber Rapid Response Teams and the European Commission is providing equipment, software and other forms of assistance to boost Ukrainian cyber resilience.

There are many other planks in the EU's overall response. We are increasing pressure on Belarus for its complicity in Russia's attack. We are also expanding our support to Moldova, which is bearing the consequences of the war and where I will travel on Wednesday to signal the EU's commitment.

The EU's geopolitical awakening

Russia's outrageous attack on Ukraine was a shock, sending waves across the continent and further afield. It risks creating a world where the rules-based international order gives way to the laws of the jungle.

We do not know when or how the conflict will end. But this week we might have seen the belated birth of a geopolitical Europe. The one that we have talking about for years: with a unity of purpose and using all instruments and leverage in support of its political goals.

In the last days, we have acted at the speed of light and broken several taboos. We have arguably advanced more in one week than we have over decades of debates. All this proves that when crisis hits, Europeans do come together and summon the collective will to defend their values and interests from attack. To stand with Ukraine, not just with words, but with deeds. To pay a steep price if needed.

We want Russia to come back to reason so that peace can be re-established in Ukraine and the European continent. To get there, a long and difficult path lies ahead. Surely, this week has been a sea change in the history of Europe.

PUTIN'S WAR HAS GIVEN BIRTH TO GEOPOLITICAL EUROPE

03.03.2022 – Op-ed ⁽²⁶⁾ – *Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, I underlined in this op-ed that after long years of debates we have decided to go forward quickly by reducing drastically our energy dependency on authoritarian regimes and strengthening our defence capacities.*

Some weeks can feel like decades, and this week has been one of them. With Russia's naked act of aggression against Ukraine, the tragedy of war has erupted in Europe once again. Russian forces have shelled residential housing, schools, hospitals, and other civilian infrastructure. The Kremlin's propaganda machine has been pushed into overdrive in its effort to justify the unjustifiable. More than 1 million people have already fled the violence with more to come.

Ukrainians, meanwhile, are mounting a heroic defence of their country, galvanised by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's leadership. Faced with an escalating onslaught and the Kremlin's absurd claims denying their national identity, Ukrainians have demonstrated unity and resilience. Stuck in the past, Russian President Vladimir Putin may have convinced himself that Ukraine belongs to him under his vision of a 'greater Russia.' But Ukrainians have demonstrated that their country belongs to them, and that they intend for it to have a European future.

The European Union has sprung into action

The European Union has sprung into action. While some expected us to dither, disagree, and delay, we have acted at record speed to support Ukraine, breaking taboos along the way. We have imposed unprecedented sanctions on Kremlin-linked oligarchs and those responsible for the war. Measures that were unthinkable just a few days ago – such as barring leading Russian banks from the SWIFT system and freezing the Russian central bank's assets – are now in place. And for the first time ever, the EU is supporting member states as they supply military equipment to embattled Ukraine, mobilising €500 million (\$553 million) under the European Peace Facility.

⁽²⁶⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/putins-war-has-given-birth-geopolitical-europe_en

We have done all this together with other countries to ensure maximum effect. The United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Switzerland, Japan, Singapore, and many other financial and economic nerve centres have joined us in adopting tough sanctions. The international outrage against Russia is cascading, even into sports and the arts. A stampede of companies is leaving the Russian market.

Still, the news from the ground in Ukraine is horrific and sobering, and no one knows how this war will end. Putin will try to excuse the bloodshed he has unleashed by depicting it as an unavoidable by-product of some mythical clash between the West and the Rest; but he will convince almost no one. The vast majority of countries and people around the world refuse to accept a world where an autocratic leader can simply seize whatever he wants through military aggression.

An overwhelming majority to support Ukraine's rights

On March 2, an overwhelming majority of the United Nations General Assembly – 141 countries – voted to support Ukraine's sovereign rights, denouncing Russia's actions as a clear violation of the UN Charter and international law. Only four countries voted with Russia (the remaining 35 abstained). This historic display of global consensus shows just how much Russia's leaders have isolated their country. The EU worked hard to achieve this outcome at the UN, and we fully agree with UN Secretary-General António Guterres that the task now is to end the violence and open the door to diplomacy.

In the week since Russia's invasion, we have also witnessed the belated birth of a geopolitical Europe. For years, Europeans have been debating how the EU can be made more robust and security-conscious, with unity of purpose and capabilities to pursue our political goals on the world stage. We have now arguably gone further down that path in the past week than we did in the previous decade.

This is a welcome development, but there is so much more to do. First, we must prepare to support Ukraine and its people for the long haul – for their sake as well as our own. There will be no security for anyone if we allow Putin to prevail. If there are no longer any rules, we will all be in danger. That is why we must ensure that a free Ukraine survives. And to that end, we must maintain an opening for Russia to return to reason, so that peace can be re-established.

Second, we need to recognise what this war means for European security and resilience more broadly. Consider the energy dimension. Clearly, reducing our dependence on energy imports from authoritarian and aggressive powers is an urgent strategic imperative. It is absurd that we have literally financed our opponent's ability to wage war. The invasion of Ukraine should lend new momentum to our green-energy transition. Every euro that we invest in developing renewables at home will reduce our strategic vulnerabilities, as well as helping to avert catastrophic climate change.

Third, in a world of power politics, we need to build greater capacity to defend ourselves. Strengthening our defence means tackling Russia's aggressive disinformation networks and going after the Kremlin's ecosystem of finance and influence peddling.

Build greater capacity to defend ourselves

Yes, this includes military means, and we need to develop them more. But the essence of what the EU did this week was to use all policies and levers – which remain mainly economic and regulatory in nature – as instruments of power. We should build on this approach in the weeks ahead, in Ukraine but elsewhere, too, as needed.

The core task for 'geopolitical Europe' is straightforward. We must use our newfound sense of purpose first to ensure a free Ukraine, and then to re-establish peace and security across our continent.

THE FUTURE OF EUROPE IS BEING DEFINED IN UKRAINE

03.03.2022 – Blog ⁽²⁷⁾ – *In the final days of February 2022, we had a debate in the European Parliament about Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the European response. On this occasion, I drew the first lessons from the invasion for EU foreign policy and the security of our continent.*

To open this debate, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made a powerful speech via VTC ⁽²⁸⁾ on what it at stake – not just for Ukraine but for Europe as a whole. Council President Charles Michel ⁽²⁹⁾ and European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen ⁽³⁰⁾ also introduced this important discussion. For my part, as I pointed out a few days ago ⁽³¹⁾, I stressed that the Ukraine war marks the birth of a geopolitical Europe. It is the moment we became fully aware of the challenges we face and our responsibilities. For the first time since the end of the Second World War, one European country is invading another, and that country has nuclear weapons.

It makes me sick to think of the analogy with the events that marked the beginning of the Second World War. What is happening today, reminds me also of the bad memories of Budapest in 1956. I was only nine years old, but I remember listening all day to the radio. It reminds me also of 1968, the Prague Spring. I was an officer in the Spanish army then. In the last two cases, we did nothing because we couldn't do anything. Today, that is not the case.

The return of tragedy on the European soil

With the Ukraine war, we witness the return of tragedy on European soil. This return, instead of frightening us, should galvanise us. During the past decades, we have often had the impression that the European project was losing its appeal

⁽²⁷⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/future-europe-being-defined-now_en

⁽²⁸⁾ See: https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/da/video/extraordinary-plenary-session-on-the-russian-aggression-against-ukraine-extracts_1219552

⁽²⁹⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/01/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-extraordinary-debate-at-the-european-parliament-on-russian-aggression-against-ukraine/>

⁽³⁰⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_22_1483

⁽³¹⁾ See p. 37

because the memory of the war was fading on our continent. That is over now. Ukraine reminds us that tragedy never disappears from human societies.

In recent years, we have often discussed defence issues and begun to set up joint military programmes. The European Parliament has voted to set up a European Defence Fund, and the member states have created the European Peace Facility that we are mobilising to provide weapons to Ukraine. In the coming weeks, the European Council will adopt [the Strategic Compass](#) ⁽³²⁾. With the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, we must amplify our reflection, adjust our means and anticipate our responses. It is no longer a luxury, it's an urgent necessity.

To make peace, we need to be two

To make peace, we need to be at least two, but to make war, it is enough to be one. This is exactly what Putin is telling us. It's clear that our deterrence capacity has not been strong enough to prevent Putin's aggression. We need to think about our instruments of coercion and retaliation, to deter reckless adversaries. Since this aggression started, we have reacted in a way that Putin didn't expect. And we are showing him that we will never sacrifice our freedom, and the freedom of others, on the altar of our well-being and prosperity.

As President of the European Parliament in 2007, I had the opportunity to tell Putin, eye to eye, in the aftermath of the killing of a journalist, Anna Politkovskaya, that 'we are not going to change human rights because of your gas'. And this is the moment to repeat that we will not abandon the defence of human rights and freedom because we are dependent on Russian gas.

This tremendous conflict can only end positively with a return by Russia to basic international norms and principles. To achieve this goal, we started immediately working with our international partners, to cut off Russia from the financial system. Now half of the reserves of the Central Bank of Russia are out of their control. A few days ago, it was regarded as impossible and now we have done it.

We agreed also within hours, on using the [European Peace Facility](#) ⁽³³⁾ to bring financial support and coordinate member states efforts to deliver weapons to the

⁽³²⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-eu-o_en

⁽³³⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/02/28/eu-adopts-new-set-of-measures-to-respond-to-russia-s-military-aggression-against-ukraine/>

Ukrainian army to help defend the country against the Russian aggression. Another taboo has fallen. We have retaliation capacities. We have mobilised these capacities and we have to continue doing so, pooling the capacities of the member states and the EU institutions.

Condemnation of Russia by the UN: an historic outcome

In the international arena, no one can put the aggressor and the aggrieved on the same footing when a powerful aggressor unjustifiably attacks a much weaker neighbour. On Wednesday, an overwhelming majority of 141 countries at [the UN General Assembly voted to support Ukraine's rights and condemn Russia's actions](#) as a clear violation of the UN Charter and international law, with only 5 voting against and 35 abstaining. The EU had worked hard to achieve this historic outcome. It shows just how much Russia's leadership has isolated their country. And we fully agree with Secretary General Guterres that the message is clear: there must be an end to the violence now and we need to open the door to diplomacy.

When I say that Europe has to become a hard power, people think only of military power. However, the capacity to impose others to change their behaviour is not only dependent on weapons. With the measures the EU has taken, we have shown exactly that. Taking measures like we did, do not mobilise missiles, but have a far-reaching effects on a country's solvency. They prevent Russia from fuelling its war with the money we pay for its gas. Russia's government start feeling the consequences in terms of inflation and the fall of the Russian currency. These unprecedented financial measures could trigger a Russian default, which will have consequences for the global financial system. We should not underestimate the importance of what we have decided and what could follow.

However, negotiation and dialogue stay at the heart of what the European Union is. We have not declared war on anyone and are ready to mobilise all our diplomatic resources to find a negotiated solution to the conflict. Sanctions are necessary, unavoidable, but in addition, we need to find solutions, starting with a ceasefire.

The second issue that has been discussed at length in the European Parliament is our dependence on gas. We spend €700 million per day for gas, and oil, and coal imports from Russia. Many of the speakers have said that we have to reduce this dependence. However, I have been listening to the same kind of discourse for the last 20 years, and this dependence has been increasing during that time. I have been

a parliamentarian for many years, even President of the European Parliament, and I understand the enthusiasm that the European Parliament has shown last Tuesday. But now we have to act. We need to put our actions in accordance with our words. We have to increase renewables and build green hydrogen production capacities. We have a tremendous work to do and we need to remain committed to it.

These are, I think, the most important lessons we have to draw from these tragic circumstances. We can no longer trust that appealing to the rule of law and developing trade relations will turn the world into a peaceful place where everyone will evolve towards representative democracy. The forces of evil, the forces that strive to use physical violence to solve conflicts, are still alive. We have to demonstrate a much more powerful, more consistent and more united capacity to deter them. We have undoubtedly surprised Putin with our ability to react quickly and unitedly, but we must continue on this path.

We have to become a hard power

We have to become a hard power. I know that the word may scare some people. But hard power, I insist, is not just talking about military. Hard power is having the power to coerce and we have done it. We have now to be prepared for the consequences. We have to be prepared to resist. We have to be prepared to act, in the long term, with a clear understanding of what the challenges and our capacities are.

We need to put more defence and security in our mind-set, and stop theological discussions about strategic autonomy. We can call it any way we want, but we have to take our security in our own hands. It has nothing to do with weakening the transatlantic alliances, which, by the way, is stronger than ever: in the current crisis, our transatlantic unity has been 100 %.

This is the moment for the European Union to discuss what it wants to be. To face the challenges of the future, we have many things to review. About our procedures, our methods, putting more attention on our capacity to act than on internal discussions. The pandemic pushed us down the path of coming closer together, especially with Next Generation EU. The current tragic moment must spur us to go further on this path to protect the lives, security and prosperity of all. That's the real challenge we have to face in the next weeks and months. In that regard, the Conference on the Future of Europe can play an important role.

THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EU

14.03.2022 – Blog ⁽³⁴⁾ – *At the informal summit in Versailles in March, EU leaders agreed to radically reduce our energy imports from Russia and to move ahead with strengthening of European defence. Putin's war against Ukraine caused thousands of deaths and major economic damages globally. We needed to limit the impact of this shock, at home and abroad.*

The war against Ukraine that Vladimir Putin started is already having considerable economic consequences in Russia, where the rouble has lost half its value and inflation is soaring. Moscow's stock exchange is closed. Many international companies, like Ikea, McDonald's, Visa and MasterCard have left the country. Russia's economy is expected to shrink by at least 15 % this year. Weakened and isolated, Russia risks becoming very dependent on China in the future.

The price of freedom and democracy

However, we are also seeing significant effects in Europe, with energy and other prices rising and probably set to continue to do so. We, inside the EU, have to accept to pay also a price to stop this outrageous and unprovoked war: the future of our security and our democracies depends on it. The price to pay is the price of freedom.

The war in Ukraine is the third asymmetric shock, as economists call it, that the Union has experienced in the last two decades, after the 2008 financial and economic crisis and the following Eurozone crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. An asymmetric shock is a sudden change in economic conditions that affects some EU countries more than others. The war in Ukraine is indeed having a much greater impact on neighbouring countries due to the influx of refugees and their heavy dependence on Russian gas.

To prevent asymmetric shocks from weakening the EU, we need to step up our capacity to show solidarity with the most affected countries. This is what we did after the 2008-2009 crisis, even if we were slow to do so. This is what we did facing

⁽³⁴⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/war-ukraine-and-its-implications-eu_en

the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, both by pooling vaccine purchases and through the Next Generation EU plan. This is also what we need to do now.

The consequences of the war in Ukraine were at the centre of the informal EU leaders meeting in Versailles ⁽³⁵⁾. The heads of states and government agreed to phase out our dependence on Russian gas, oil and coal imports as soon as possible. It is not possible for us to continue to feed Vladimir Putin's war machine through our energy imports. The Commission will present, by the end of March, a plan to secure our supply in the coming winter season and specify by the end of May the details for the REPowerEU plan ⁽³⁶⁾ to end our dependency to fossil fuels imports from Russia.

The impact of rising energy prices

In parallel, the heads of states and governments will address the impact of rising energy prices on EU citizens and businesses at the next meeting of the European Council on 24-25 March. In particular, we probably need to rethink our wholesale electricity pricing system, which is currently driven for all energy sources by gas prices, even though gas-fired power generation is a very small fraction of the whole.

This plan has many important internal implications for the EU, but also for its external policy. The three ways of cutting our dependence on Russia are diversification of supplies, energy efficiency and the acceleration of renewables. On the diversification front, we need to increase our purchases of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from suppliers such as the US, Qatar, Norway, African producers and others.

To achieve this, we need in particular the infrastructure capable of receiving and processing LNG. These are currently very unevenly distributed in Europe with many in Spain, for example, but almost none in Germany or in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. However, we currently lack sufficient pipeline connections between Spain and the rest of the continent. We will have to create new infrastructure and organise ourselves to pool these LNG supplies.

In addition, we must reduce energy consumption in the EU and hence our need for gas, but also for oil and coal, for which Russia is also our main supplier. Otherwise, our efforts to reduce our dependence on Russia risk leading to a sharp

⁽³⁵⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54777/20220311-versailles-declaration-fr.pdf>

⁽³⁶⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1511

rise in the EU's overall energy bill. We also need to avoid simply replacing one excessive external dependence with another.

At the same time, we have to accelerate the deployment of renewable energies: in 2020, almost all EU countries had exceeded the targets set in 2008 for the share of renewables, but there is still a need to reinforce this trend. This is the purpose of the [Fit for 55 action plan](#)⁽³⁷⁾ proposed by the Commission last year to implement our emission reduction commitments made in Glasgow. We must accelerate its implementation.

The need to increase defence spending

Finally, this war will also force us to increase our defence spending. We need to spend more but above all to spend better, i.e. jointly. Some member states, such as Germany, have already taken important new measures in this area with €100 billion additional defence spending in 2022 and an increase of the defence budget to above 2 % of GDP from 2024. This must be the case everywhere where defence spending is still too low. Again, these are always painful decisions in a context of high public debt and scarce public resources, but Vladimir Putin clearly leaves us no choice.

With the return of war to European soil, all of us in Europe must contribute more actively to taking responsibility for our own security. [The Strategic Compass](#), which I have prepared and which we are in the process of adjusting to the new situation, should be adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 21 March. It will provide a framework for using these additional means in an efficient and coordinated way within the EU, ensuring full complementarity with NATO. With the European Defence Agency, we will also analyse the structure of our military spending and the investment gaps, and propose additional initiatives to strengthen the European defence industrial and technological base.

In addition, this war is already causing a massive influx of refugees into the European Union. As I write, more than 2 million people have crossed our borders and this number is expected to increase further in the days and weeks ahead, as long as Putin continues his aggression. Ukraine's EU neighbours have shown remarkable mobilisation and solidarity in welcoming these refugees. Here too, we already help the EU countries most directly concerned to cope with this influx and we will need to do more in the next future. But the refugees issue also raises the

⁽³⁷⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_3541

broader question of the renewal of our common policy on asylum and migration to build more solidarity, a process that began in 2020 but has not yet been finalised.

The war in Ukraine also makes it more urgent to prevent this conflict to spill over elsewhere in the world and to solve other crises. We have been working for a long time now to help find a political solution to the political and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. We also need to reduce tensions in the Gulf region, which is closely linked to the resumption of the JCPOA, the Iranian nuclear deal, a file on which we have been working hard for many months. We must also monitor closely the situation in Western Balkans or in the Caucasus.

A negative impact on emerging and developing countries

This war will also have important repercussions for emerging and developing countries that are energy importers. They will suffer even more than us from the rise in the price of fossil fuels. And it is not just about energy. The impact on the market for grain, wheat but also maize, sunflower and fertiliser, for which Russia and Ukraine were major exporters, will also be significant. The prices of basic agricultural products were already high. They will probably increase further with major potential for creating suffering and political instability.

We saw last year that developing countries had been hit harder than developed ones by the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. World hunger and poverty had again increased significantly. The war in Ukraine may make things even worse in this respect with the risk of major unrests related to food and energy price hikes, as we have already seen in the past in comparable circumstances. Despite our own difficulties, we must therefore increase our support to poorer countries most affected by the indirect effects of this war, including in Africa and the Middle East.

With the invasion of Ukraine, Vladimir Putin is forcing us to urgently rethink many elements of our internal organisation and our worldview. We must rise to this challenge to defend our security and our democratic values.

THE EU'S GEOPOLITICAL AWAKENING

24.03.2022 – Op-ed ⁽³⁸⁾ – *In this essay for Le Grand Continent, I explained that the war against Ukraine proved that Europe was even more in danger than we thought. Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine represented the biggest challenge to Europe's security order since the end of World War II putting at risk the very principles upon which international relations are built.*

Crises tend to crystallise developments and this one has made it even clearer that we live in a world shaped by raw power politics, where everything is weaponised and where we face a fierce battle of narratives. All these trends were already happening before the Ukraine war; now they are accelerating.

This means that our response must accelerate too – and it has. We have taken rapid action across the whole policy spectrum and broken several taboos along the way: unprecedented sanctions, massive support to Ukraine including, for the first time ever, financing the delivery of military equipment to a country under attack. We have also built a wide international coalition to support Ukraine, isolate Russia and restore international legality. By any standard, the EU's response has been impressive – even if it is still not enough with the war still going on.

We do not know how and when this war will end. As *le Grand Continent* frames it in their recent print issue, we are still navigating an Interregnum ⁽³⁹⁾. But we can already say that the 2022 Ukraine war saw the belated birth of a geopolitical EU. For years, Europeans have been debating how to make the EU more security-conscious, with a unity of purpose and capabilities to pursue its political goals on the world stage. We have now arguably gone further down that path in the past weeks than we did in the previous decade. This is welcome, but we need to ensure that the EU's geopolitical awakening is turned into a more permanent strategic posture. For there is so much more to do, in Ukraine and elsewhere.

⁽³⁸⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/europe-interregnum-our-geopolitical-awakening-after-ukraine_en

⁽³⁹⁾ Le Grand Continent, 'Politiques de l'interrègne', Gallimard, 2022

Making Europe also a hard power

I am convinced that the EU must be more than a soft power: we need hard power too. However, we need to realise that the concept of hard power cannot be reduced to military means: it is about using the full range of our instruments to achieve our goals. It is about thinking and acting in terms of power. And, bit by bit, the conditions for this to happen are being fulfilled.

First, there is a growing awareness among Europeans about the threats they face together and the degree to which their fates are tied. Today, no one in Europe can believe or think that what is happening in Ukraine does not concern them, no matter how far away they are from the drama. So our support to Ukraine is not just an act of solidarity but also a way of defending our common interests and acting in self-defence against a heavily-armed and ruthless aggressor.

Second, the peoples of Europe have reached an unprecedented level of prosperity and social welfare, which EU membership has further increased. This makes Europe a fundamentally peaceful area built around the idea of interdependence generating prosperity and peace. However, one of the lessons of the war in Ukraine is that economic interdependence alone cannot guarantee our security. On the contrary, it can be instrumentalised against us. So we need to be ready to act against those who want to use the benefits of interdependence to harm us or wage war.

This is what is happening today. By taking unprecedented sanctions against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we are making the cost of aggression more and more prohibitive. At the same time, we must further enhance our resilience and reduce strategic vulnerabilities, be it on critical infrastructure, raw materials, health products or other domains.

Across the EU, there is a clear commitment to learn the right lessons from this crisis. This involves us finally getting serious about threats to our strategic interests that we have been aware of but not always acted upon. Take energy. We have known for years that energy plays a disproportionate role in EU-Russia relations and that Russia has used energy as a political weapon. We are now fully mobilised to cut our excessive dependence on Russia energy imports (of oil, gas and coal).

In a similar way, the war in Ukraine is making it more urgent to achieve a leap forward on EU security and defence. Here the main point is to stress that the extra investments that EU member states are now making – which are very welcome

– should involve more coordination in EU and NATO. It is not just that each of us should spend more; it is that we must all spend more together.

The Ukraine war is the most serious security crisis in Europe in decades, but threats to European security clearly come from a variety of sources, both within Europe and beyond. Our security interests are at stake in the western Balkans, the Sahel, the wider Middle East, the Indo-Pacific, etc.

While the Ukraine war rages on and exacts a terrible toll, we should not forget that the world is full of situations where we face hybrid tactics and intermediate dynamics of competition, intimidation and coercion. Indeed, in Ukraine as elsewhere, the tools of power are not only soldiers, tanks and planes but also financial sanctions or import and export bans, as well as energy flows, and disinformation and foreign interference operations.

In addition, we have seen in recent years the instrumentalisation of migrants, the privatisation of armies and the politicisation of the control of sensitive technologies. Add to this the dynamics of state failures, the retreat of democratic freedoms, plus the attacks on the ‘global commons’ of cyber space, the high seas and outer-space, and the conclusion is clear: the defence of Europe requires a comprehensive concept of security.

Thankfully, there is more awareness and agreement in Europe today on the nature of the threats we face – just as there is a process of strategic convergence on what to do about them.

A leap forward on European security and defence

If we do want to avoid being a bystander in a world shaped by and for others, we need to act – together. That is the philosophy of the Strategic Compass that I presented last November and which was finalised by EU Foreign and Defence Ministers on 21 March (⁴⁰). There is a lot of detail in the Compass, which has developed into 47 pages, grouped under four work strands (Act, Secure, Invest and Partner). Let me highlight just a few of the main ideas:

To strengthen our capacity to act, we will work to reinforce our crisis management missions and operation and will develop an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity to

(⁴⁰) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/en_updated_foreword - a strategic compass to make europe a security provider v12_final.pdf

allow us to quickly deploy up to 5 000 troops for different types of crises. We will increase the readiness of our forces through regular live exercises (never been done before at the EU level), strengthen our command and control arrangements and promote faster and more flexible decision-making. We will expand our capacity to tackle cyber threats, disinformation and foreign interference. And we will deepen investment into the necessary strategic enablers and next-generation capabilities. This will make the EU a more capable security provider for its citizens, but also a stronger global partner working for international peace and security.

More than the papers that we usually produce in Brussels, the Strategic Compass sets out concrete actions – with clear deadlines to measure progress. This is a Member States-owned document now adopted by the Council. Throughout the process, Member States have been in the driving seat. By signing off to it, they commit to implementing it. There will be a robust follow-up process to ensure implementation. These are major differences with the 2003 EU Security Strategy and the 2016 Global Strategy.

A stronger EU and a stronger transatlantic partnership

At this point of the conversation, people tend to say: ‘that is all very nice but what about NATO?’ Let me stress that NATO remains at the heart of Europe’s territorial defence. No one is questioning that. However, this should not prevent European countries from developing their capabilities and conducting operations in our neighbourhood and beyond. We should be able to act as EU in scenarios like we saw last year in Afghanistan (securing an airport for emergency evacuation) or intervene quickly in a crisis where violence is threatening the lives of civilians.

I am convinced that greater European strategic responsibility is the best way to reinforce transatlantic solidarity. It is not either EU or NATO: it is both EU and NATO. Let me add that hesitations to move ahead on this agenda ‘because of NATO’ come from inside the EU, not the US. Here I can quote from the joint statement that Secretary Blinken and I issued last December, namely that the US wants: ‘a stronger and more capable European defence that contributes to global and Transatlantic security’. The US essentially says: ‘Don’t talk, act. Please get on with it and help us share the security burden.’

I realise that those, like me, who want a step change on security and defence should explain why we feel that ‘this time will be different’. We should acknowledge

that in the history of European defence there have been numerous plans and initiatives, full of acronyms, going from the Pleven Plan and the European Defence Community; to the start of the Common Foreign and Security Policy after Maastricht; to the wars in former Yugoslavia and the ‘hour of Europe’, to Saint Malo, the start of ESDP, then CSDP, the Helsinki Headline Goal, PESCO, the European Defence Fund and the European Peace Facility, etc..

If not now, then when?

Yet the basic fact remains that security and defence is probably the area in EU integration with the biggest gap between expectations and results. Between what we could be and what citizens demand – and what we actually achieve.

So it is time to have another go. And the reason why I feel the Strategic Compass could have more impact than previous plans lies in the speed at which the global trends and geopolitical context are changing and worsening. This makes the case for action urgent and indeed compelling. This is vividly true for the war in Ukraine and the wider implications of a revisionist Russia has for European security.

But it goes beyond that: all the threats we face are intensifying and the capacity of individual member states to cope is both insufficient and declining. The gap is growing and this cannot go on.

My job has been to sketch a way out. But I know all too well that results do not depend on strategy papers, but on actions. These belong to the member states: they hold the prerogatives and the assets.

The good news is that every day we are seeing more member states ready to invest more in security and defence. We have to ensure that these welcome additional investments are done in a collaborative way and not in a fragmented, national manner. We must use the new momentum to ensure that we, finally, equip ourselves with the mind-set, the means and the mechanisms to defend our Union, our citizens and our partners.

Politically I see the choice we face as similar to when we launched the euro or the Recovery Plan. When the costs of ‘non-Europe’ became so high that people were ready to re-think their red lines and invest in truly European solutions. We jumped together, so to speak and, in both cases, the results are clear and positive. Let us

make a similar jump forward on European security and defence, as our citizens expect. If not now, then when?

The language of power revisited

For good or bad, I suspect that my mandate as EU High Representative will be associated with a phrase I used during my hearing in October 2019 in the European Parliament, namely that Europeans had ‘to learn to speak the language of power’.

I argued that the origin of European integration had stemmed from a rejection of power politics among the participating states. The European project had succeeded by turning political problems into technocratic ones and by supplanting power calculations with legal procedures. In the history of international relations and our war-torn continent, this was a Copernican revolution. It was also spectacularly successful, cementing peace and cooperation among previously warring parties, creating institutions, mental maps and a vocabulary that were unique.

But this historic chapter has ended, as the EU grappled with various crises and shocks: the financial and euro crises, the migration crisis³ and Brexit. All these triggered intensely political debates about the nature of the EU and the sources of solidarity and legitimacy. These could not be solved with the usual EU tactic of de-politicisation and technical fixes and market-based solutions.

For many years, we have been living through a new phase of European history that is not so much about *spaces* (a Brussels favourite, of open borders and free movement) but about *places* (where people come from and belong to, their identity). We seem less focused on *trends* (globalisation, technological progress) and more on historic *events* (and how we respond to them): like the pandemic and Russia’s attack against Ukraine⁽⁴¹⁾.

On top comes a major external driver. The success of EU integration and the chosen method of de-politicisation also came at a price: a reluctance and inability to come to terms with the fact that, outside our post-modern garden, ‘the jungle was growing back’⁽⁴²⁾. Thirty years ago, many discussions and books were about how the world was flat, how history had ended and how Europe and its model was going to run the 21st century. These days they are about the weaponisation of

⁽⁴¹⁾ See: <https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2021/04/15/le-reveil-geopolitique-de-leurope/>

⁽⁴²⁾ See: <https://www.brookings.edu/books/the-jungle-grows-back-america-and-our-imperiled-world/>

interdependence and how a supposedly naïve Europe is ill suited to the age of power politics.

Throughout all this, I have been convinced of two core points:

First, we must be realistic and recognise that the current phase in history and global politics requires us to think and act in terms of power (hence, the phrase ‘the language of power’). The war against Ukraine is the latest and most dramatic illustration of this.

Second, the best way to exert influence, shape events and not be driven by them, is at the EU level: by investing in our collective capacity to act. Everything else is embellishment and detail.

As a consequence, we must equip ourselves with the mind-set and the means to handle the age of power politics and we must do so at scale. This will not happen overnight – given who we are and where we come from. However, I do believe that we are putting in place the building blocks and that the Ukraine crisis has accelerated this trend.

Already in 2021 we were showing that we were ready to adopt a strong posture to counter the open displays of power politics on our eastern borders. In addition to our support for Ukraine, one can point to what we did on Belarus, where we have held firm including on the instrumentalisation of migrants, or to Moldova, where we expanded our support.

Strengthening our approach to China

In addition, we have been strengthening our approach to China and set out how the EU can enhance its engagement in and with the Indo-Pacific region. On China, we have become less naïve and been doing our homework to counter the challenge of asymmetrical openness with our policies on investment screening, 5G, procurement and the anti-coercion instrument, as also set out by Sabine Weyand (43).

Plus, with our Indo-Pacific strategy, we are engaged in a process of political diversification, investing in our ties with democratic Asia. Central to this effort is our work on the Global Gateway, to spell out our offer and how it differs from

(43) See: <https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2022/01/31/doctrine-de-la-double-integration-sabine-weyand>

that of other actors. The point of the Global Gateway is to build links not dependencies. Indeed, many Africa and Asian partners welcome the European approach to connectivity with its emphasis on agreed rules, sustainability and local ownership. But this is a competitive field and there is a battle of standards underway. Therefore, we need to be concrete and not limit our stance to general statements of principles and intent. That is why we envisage mobilising up to €300 billion under the Global Gateway, with €150 billion especially for Africa, plus several flagships, to make the cooperation as concrete and tangible as possible⁽⁴⁴⁾.

I could go on but the main point is to underline that, bit by bit, the notion of a geopolitically aware EU was already taking shape before the war against Ukraine. The task ahead is to make Europe's geopolitical awakening more permanent and consequential. This requires us not just to learn the language of power but to speak it.

What can we do differently and better?

This European Commission started in December 2019. More than two years on and having analysed how we make EU foreign policy, my main worry is that we are not keeping pace. As my friend and the EU's first High Representative Javier Solana says, time in politics, like in physics, is relative: if the speed at which you are changing is lower than the speed of change around you, you are going backwards. And this we cannot afford. Our response to the Ukraine crisis shows what can be done if the pressure is extreme. However, it is too early to conclude this has become the general way of operating in EU foreign policy.

So let me share some ideas on what could be the four key ingredients for success and greater EU impact in a turbulent world:

- 1. Think and act in terms of power.**

Europeans, with good reason, continue to favour dialogue over confrontation; diplomacy over force; multilateralism over unilateralism. But if you want dialogue, diplomacy and multilateralism to succeed, you need to put power and resources behind it. Whenever we have done so – in Ukraine, Belarus or with our climate diplomacy – we have had an impact. Whenever we opted for stating principled

⁽⁴⁴⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_6433

positions without specifying the means to give them effect, the results have been less impressive.

My sense is that the ideas around the language of power or the weaponisation of inter-dependence are now broadly accepted. However, the implementation and the needed resources and commitments are still a challenge.

2. Take the initiative and be ready to experiment.

Overall, we are too often in a reactive mode, responding to other people's plans and decisions. I also believe we have to avoid bureaucratic routine ('what did we do last time?') and regain a sense of initiative.

In addition, we must be ready to experiment more. It is often the safest option to stick to what we know and what we have always done. But that is not always the best way to get results.

3. Build diverse coalitions and take decisions faster.

We need to be more goal-oriented and think how we can mobilise partners around our priorities, issue by issue. We should acknowledge that, alongside coalitions of like-minded partners, we also have countries working with us on some issues while opposing us on others. And if the central government is unhelpful, we should work more with local forces or civil society groups.

In the EU, we are very busy with ourselves and it takes a long time to establish common positions. When member states are divided, the unanimity rule in foreign security policy is a recipe for paralysis and delay. That is why I am in favour of using constructive abstention and other options provided for under the Treaty, such as using qualified majority voting (QMV) in selected areas, to facilitate faster decision-making ⁽⁴⁵⁾

There is the risk that we prioritise the search for internal unity over maximising our external effectiveness. When we have finally reached a common position – often by adding a lot of water to the wine – the rest of the world has moved on.

4. Shape the narrative

⁽⁴⁵⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/when-member-states-are-divided-how-do-we-ensure-europe-able-act-o_en

After spending decades in politics, I am convinced that probably the most important ingredient for success is shaping the narrative. This is the real currency of global power.

For this reason, at the beginning of the pandemic I spoke about existence of a 'battle of narratives' ⁽⁴⁶⁾ and stressed the importance of investing in a common strategic culture, which needs a European debate, a space to discuss about what we can and cannot do in EU foreign policy and why. Accordingly, I regularly contribute to this journal and to the seminars of Groupe d'études géopolitiques, which I consider a tangible example of the emergence of a strategic, political and intellectual debate on a continental level.

The citizens of the EU do not care much about who does what in Brussels, nor about abstract discussions. They are not bothered with the number of statements we make, or what sanctions we adopt. They judge us on outputs not inputs. In other words on results: are they safer, or more prosperous because of EU action? Is the EU more or less influential, also in terms of defending our values, than a year ago? Are we more or less trusted by others? Have we achieved more or less by way of supporting our partners? These are the metrics that matter.

The war against Ukraine has made it clear that in a world of power politics we need to build a greater capacity to defend ourselves. Yes, this includes military means, and we need to develop them more. But the essence of what the EU did in this crisis was to use all policies and levers – which remain mainly economic and regulatory in nature – as instruments of power.

We should build on this approach, in Ukraine but elsewhere too. The core task for 'geopolitical Europe' is straightforward: to use our newfound sense of purpose and make that the 'new normal' in EU foreign policy. To protect our citizens, to support our partners and to face our global security responsibilities.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/coronavirus-pandemic-and-new-world-it-creating_en

ON CHINA'S CHOICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

06.04.2022 – Blog ⁽⁴⁷⁾ – *In April, we held an EU-China summit. We discussed with the Chinese leadership our expectations on China to put pressure on Vladimir Putin to stop its war of aggression. The divide in how we saw this conflict was important. Principled diplomacy, based on EU unity and strength, remains the best way to shape China's choices.*

For some years now, EU-China relations have gone through a difficult period ⁽⁴⁸⁾, with clashes over human rights (Xinjiang, Hong Kong); China's regional behaviour (East and South China Sea, Indian border, Taiwan Strait); the persistent problems that EU companies face in accessing the Chinese market; the escalatory use of sanctions against EU officials and bodies; the expansion of disinformation activities and the overt attempt at economic coercion towards Lithuania and the wider EU single market. All these have fed a sense of stalemate and divergence.

Beijing's pro-Russian neutrality

Then came Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine. For Europeans this is a clear-cut case of aggression: Russia has inexplicably violated its smaller neighbour's sovereignty and territorial integrity. These are principles that are supposedly sacrosanct in Chinese diplomacy. However, in practice, Beijing's attitude has been one of pro-Russian neutrality. China does not condone Russia's behaviour – it abstained in the UN General Assembly votes – but it does support Russia's justifications of the war, i.e. the claim that the root causes lie in 'Cold War thinking' and especially NATO enlargement. China does not use the term war, preferring euphemisms like issue, crisis or conflict. It rejects the use of sanctions. And it likes to apportion equal blame rather than call out Russian aggression, pleading for 'all sides' to find an end to the bloodshed.

Through their statements and actions, Russia and China have made clear that they believe that great powers are entitled to a zone of influence in their respective neighbourhoods. We instead believe that the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final

⁽⁴⁷⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/china%20%99s-choices-and-responsibilities_en

⁽⁴⁸⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-china-relations-factsheet_en

Act enshrine the right to of countries to make their own, sovereign choices. The joint Russia-China statement of 4 February is, at heart, a revisionist manifesto as I [said](#) at the Munich Security Conference on 20 February 2022.

We see the war against Ukraine as a moment of truth where countries have to show their colours, but China feels it can avoid fateful choices. As things stand, it believes it gets a West that is focused on Ukraine and a weak Russia that is making China even more the senior partner with cheap oil and gas on offer, as Europe reduces its energy imports from Russia.

A difficult but necessary summit

This was the difficult backdrop against which the [recent EU-China Summit](#) took place (⁴⁹). The fact that there was no joint statement nor any list of ‘deliverables’, was a clear indication that this was not ‘business as usual’.

As I [said in the European Parliament](#) (⁵⁰), in terms of tactics, China wanted us to compartmentalise to set aside our well-known differences over human rights, Ukraine and other issues and instead ‘focus on the positives’. The EU side made clear that this is not feasible: some values are universal and core to how we approach the world. And the same is true for Ukraine. This is not a local quarrel between two countries who are equally to blame. And neither is it a return to the Cold War with two opposing ideological and economic blocs. No, this is a defining moment for whether we live in a world governed by rules or by force. The central question is whether we normalise the illegal use of force or not. Is it OK that someone can just order his army to march into a neighbouring state and try to take what he believes is his? We do not want to live in a world where the use of force is as deregulated as the economy has been deregulated, as [Ghassam Salamé the Lebanese scholar and diplomat put it in Le Monde](#) (⁵¹).

We condemn Russian aggression against Ukraine and support that country’s sovereignty and democracy, not because we ‘follow the US blindly’, as China

(⁴⁹) See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2022/04/01/>

(⁵⁰) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-china-summit-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-ep-plenary_en

(⁵¹) See: https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2022/04/01/ghassan-salame-cela-fait-vingt-ans-que-le-monde-souffre-de-la-deregulation-de-la-force_6120177_3210.html

sometimes suggests, but because it is genuinely our own position. This was an important message for the Chinese leadership to hear.

Discussions at the Summit were frank but also serene – a fact that perhaps illustrates that neither side had exaggerated expectations. The EU side called on China not just to support Ukrainian sovereignty and the need for a ceasefire in abstract terms, but to use its influence with Russia to help bring one about and to rule out any active military support to Russia. The Chinese side stuck to general statements of wishing to see peace and de-escalation, but avoiding specific commitments, on getting a ceasefire. It is also important that China reaffirms its opposition to the use of weapons of mass destruction in this conflict.

In all this, there is a major paradox. Our bilateral economic links have never been deeper – EU-China trade is €2 billion every day vs. only €300 million per day between China and Russia – but our political outlooks are ever further apart. This ultimately proves that political and ideological factors overshadow economic ones.

Where do we go from here?

One of the conclusions of this Summit must be that China will, for the time being, not engage actively to bring about an end to Russia's war against Ukraine. The best we can realistically aim for is that China does not move into a more active pro-Russian stance. But since the Summit we have seen evidence of further Russian atrocities, including in Bucha, which will make a political solution more difficult. China should be involved in any commission of inquiry launched by the UN and will have to pronounce itself one way or the other. We also have to see whether President Xi will finally speak to President Zelenskyy, which is something that the EU side encouraged at the Summit.

Meanwhile as EU, we have to continue to do all we can to pressure Russia (we have just proposed a 5th round of hard-hitting sanctions ⁽⁵²⁾, expand our support to Ukraine and handle the wider global fall-out of the war, including the growing risk of food insecurity due to rising energy and commodities prices. We are engaging with African and Asian countries to make clear that this conflict is not a conflict between the East and the West but a conflict that jeopardises the principle of national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

⁽⁵²⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/russia-president-european-commission-and-high-representative-submit-proposals-5th-sanctions_en

Let's keep doing our 'home work'

When it comes to EU-China relations, probably the most important thing for us is to keep doing our 'home work' and strengthen internal EU resilience. In recent years, we have taken significant steps on the defensive side of the ledger (investment screening, 5G toolbox, anti-subsidies, procurement instrument with more to come through the adoption of the anti-coercion instrument). We have also increased our cooperation with like-minded partners on how to address the challenges brought along by China but also to seize the opportunities, when they arise.

We should always keep the door open to engage with China. The Summit was an important channel of communication to pass messages to the highest level in Beijing. Despite all the well-known difficulties, it is important that we recognise that we have a shared interest in managing this relationship in a responsible manner. Climate change, bio-diversity, but also the growing threat of food insecurity in Africa or regional crises like Afghanistan: these are all topics for which we need to try to cooperate with China.

The purpose of foreign policy is shaping the choices of international players. This also applies to China. For the EU the best way to do so is to be realistic, firm and united. Diplomacy implies talking to everyone including those with whom we have sharp disagreements. In its dialogue with China I think the EU truly spoke the language of power.

FOOD INSECURITY: TIME TO ACT

07.04.2022 – Blog ⁽⁵³⁾ – *Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine provoked massive hikes in food prices and created the risk of food shortages worldwide. We had to act to protect the people most affected. In March the European Commission launched a plan to help fight global food insecurity.*

Food is essential for all of us, but this is particularly the case in developing countries where it represents a dominant part of household expenditure. Many of these countries depend heavily on imported food. North Africa and the Middle East in particular import over 50 % of their cereal from Ukraine and Russia. Record food prices preceded the 'Arab spring' a decade ago and social tensions might mount again in the region. Others, like for instance Niger, Madagascar or Somalia, already face severe food crises, and Lebanon or Türkiye are subject to major economic crises. The South Caucasus countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, are also in great danger due to their extreme reliance on imports from Russia and Ukraine.

Massive hikes in food price combined with rising energy prices have worsened inflation that was already rising before the invasion. It has further increased the pressure on governments' capacity for public spending which was already affected by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Spending more on food means less money for other essentials like education and health care, thus deepening general poverty. Food insecurity inevitably increases inequalities. Around the world, at least 195 million people were in food crises or worse in 2021, a 25 % increase from 2020; the situation is unfortunately projected to get much worse this year.

A period of 'food diplomacy'

After the 'mask diplomacy' and the 'vaccine diplomacy', we are probably entering now a period of 'food diplomacy' and we have to fight an additional 'battle of narratives' with the Russian disinformation machinery. We have to be clear about the sources of the serious difficulties in the global food market: it is exclusively Russia's invasion of Ukraine that has put world's food supplies in peril.

⁽⁵³⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/food-insecurity-time-act-now_en

In 2021, Russia and Ukraine were among the top world exporters of cereals and sunflower seeds and oil with Ukraine accounting for over 50 % of world trade of sunflower oil. Russia is occupying or shelling parts of arable Ukrainian land and it is estimated that 49 % of winter wheat, 38 % of rye and 63 % of corn to be harvested in summer 2022 is situated in zones that are at risk. Consequently, between 20 % and 30 % of the areas under winter cereal, maize and sunflower seed production in Ukraine will either remain unharvested or not be planted this spring. The Russian invasion has also brought cereal shipments through the Black Sea to a halt: according to a recent World Food Programme report, more than 90 ships are affected today. As a result, an estimated 13.5 million tonnes of wheat and 16 million tonnes of maize are blocked – 23 % and 43 % of their expected exports in 2021/22.

The invasion of Ukraine has also substantially elevated the risk of disruptions in the global fertiliser trade. Russia is the world's largest exporter of fertilisers. Last February, Russia banned the export of ammonium nitrate, and in March, it told fertiliser producers to slow their exports ⁽⁵⁴⁾ in retaliation to Western sanctions.

No responsibility in the growing food insecurity

Our sanctions against Russia do not bear any responsibility for the growing food insecurity: the agricultural sector in Russia is not targeted. Our sanctions do not prohibit the import and transportation of Russian agricultural goods, payment for such Russian exports or the provision of seeds, provided that sanctioned individuals or entities are not involved.

Sub-Saharan Africa is generally less dependent than North Africa or the Middle East on food imports from Russia and Ukraine, but it will be affected because of pre-existing food insecurity and limited budgetary flexibility to address hikes in food prices, especially in the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa, food represents around 40 % of household consumption expenditure against 15 % in advanced countries. Drought, climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and now war-induced market disruptions could leave close to 120 million people food insecure, across the continent. West Africa is also particularly vulnerable in this respect: it has seen a series of coups or coup attempts recently.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ See: <https://www.reuters.com/article/ukraine-crisis-russia-fertilizers-idINL2N2V71JG>

Many Asian countries are also dependent on cereal imports. China has secured large stocks and reviewed its phytosanitary rules to allow more imports from Russia, but in Sri Lanka or Afghanistan, the situation is already very worrying. As major food producers, Brazil and Argentina should rather benefit from the current situation even though rising energy and food prices will also create additional hardship for the poorest people. Other Latin American and Caribbean countries are importers of cereals, but not so much from Russia and Ukraine. However, the price hikes will affect them and they risk also to be hit being fertiliser importers from Russia.

What we have to do

We cannot stand idly by as hunger threatens the world again. We need to act decisively to support the people in need and strengthen the global alliance we have built to condemn this invasion and to keep the pressure on Russia to withdraw from Ukraine. The EU has already launched on 23 March [a plan to safeguard food security](#)⁽⁵⁵⁾ and has started with its implementation.

The first strand of action is obviously to redouble our efforts to stop this war as soon as possible: battlefields must again become fields of wheat, corn and sunflower. The reports of war crimes committed by Russian forces that are reaching us add to this urgency. This is the purpose, in particular, of the unprecedented sanctions that we have already adopted and are in the process of strengthening, and of the significant aid that we are providing to the Ukrainian government, particularly in terms of military equipment.

We also need to be more active in countering Russian disinformation, which unfortunately finds an echo in various parts of the world. Russian aggression bears all the responsibility for the growing food insecurity and we need to make this clear to our interlocutors worldwide.

We must help Ukraine to maintain its economic activity and keep producing agricultural products. This aid must cover seeds, fertilisers and export routes if the ports remain blocked. Ukraine's connection to the European electricity grid is thus a significant contribution to this. Increasing economic help to Ukraine is also essential to avoid a major humanitarian crisis in Ukraine itself and a mass exodus of its population.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ See: https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-03/safeguarding-food-security-reinforcing-resilience-food-systems_o.pdf

We have to keep global commodities markets open, address speculation and support the multilateral food system, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme. Through close international cooperation, we must prevent the risk of excessive build-up of stocks that could only feed price speculation. We will discuss the way to address these issues it at a special FAO Emergency session on 8 April.

Proactive to deal with food insecurity at the G7

We will also be proactive to deal with food insecurity at the G7, the G20, the United Nations and the international financial institutions, World Bank and International Monetary Fund. President Macron already proposed a multi-layered approach at the recent G7 Summit called [Food and Agriculture Resilience Mechanism](#) (FARM) (56).

We also have to help our partners in the developing and emerging world with financial and other support. The EU has already allocated €2.5 billion in international assistance with a nutrition objective for 2021–2024, (€1.4 billion for development and €1.1 billion for humanitarian aid), supporting food systems in about 70 partner countries. We are working to build up an additional food facility to deal with the emergency, in particular in the MENA region. At the recent high-level [event on food security in the Sahel](#) (57), the EU announced an additional €67 million to fight hunger in the region, bringing the total to €240 million in 2022 so far. To enhance the sustainability of food systems, the EU has also set aside €654 million for 2021–2024, out of these €314 million will be made available before the end of 2022.

There are indeed also rising concerns among developing countries that a 'quickly cooked' western response in form of food exports could damage local production and this fear is not always unjustified. To avoid it, we need to help our partners more actively to become self-sufficient. For example, a joint initiative was launched at [the EU-AU Summit last February](#) to promote protein crops in Africa (58), such as beans, oil-rich pulses or those from shrubs and bushes, for human consumption or animal feed. We need to accelerate its implementation.

(56) See: <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/development-assistance/food-security-nutrition-and-sustainable-agriculture/news/article/food-security-implementation-of-the-farm-initiative-05-apr-2022>

(57) See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_2245

(58) See: <https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2022/02/18/eu-au-summit-developing-opportunities-for-plant-based-proteins-in-africa>

A Team Europe approach

As we did during the pandemic, we need to work on this issue with a Team Europe approach building a close coordination between the EEAS, the European Commission, the aid agencies of our member states and European financial institutions.

The way we address the global food insecurity crisis today will be decisive for Europe's geopolitical position in the world tomorrow.

RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE: WHAT CAN THE FUTURE BRING?

26.04.2022 – Blog ⁽⁵⁹⁾ – *Two months into the war against Ukraine, Russia's actions pointed to an intensification of the war. I called on the Russian leadership to stop the aggression and reconsider the unacceptable path it has chosen: for the sake of Ukraine, Russia, Europe and the wider world.*

Since the beginning of this war on 24 February, four Russian assumptions have proved clearly wrong: that the Ukrainian government would crumble and Russian forces would take Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities swiftly; that the European Union would be at pains to show resolve and respond to this aggression; that the ‘Western world’ would be divided and uncertain in its reaction; and that the broader international community would not condemn Russia’s invasion.

The consolidation of Ukraine as a sovereign nation

Instead, the Ukrainian government has rallied the whole nation in a fight against the invasion and has organised a fierce resistance, putting Russian troops in considerable difficulties and pushing back their offensive. Contrary to what President Putin might have expected, this war will be a landmark in the consolidation of Ukraine as a sovereign nation and in the reaffirmation of its identity, separated from that of Russia. This was the sentiment I strongly felt when meeting President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian leadership in Kyiv ⁽⁶⁰⁾.

The European Union reacted swiftly and robustly ⁽⁶¹⁾ in support of the Ukrainian government. It adopted the most severe sanctions ever and keeps widening their scope and reach, as the war continues. The Union is making extensive financial and humanitarian support available to Ukraine and contributing to the financing of military equipment provided by member states. EU countries have welcomed close to 5 million refugees so far and will keep their borders open to all those fleeing the conflict. We are increasing our resilience and shedding dependencies

⁽⁵⁹⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/russia%20%99s-war-against-ukraine-where-do-we-stand-and-what-can-future-bring_en

⁽⁶⁰⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/ukraine-high-representative-borrell-visited-kyiv-reinforce-eu-support_en

⁽⁶¹⁾ See P. 37

on energy at a much faster pace than anyone could have envisioned before. The EU has strengthened itself as an international player and one can even speak of the [birth of the geopolitical Union](#) ⁽⁶²⁾.

The EU, together with the US, the UK, Canada, Japan and other like-minded partners and allies, have championed the international defence of Ukraine. The response was coordinated from day one, and even earlier, as intelligence was shared in unprecedented ways, to ensure awareness and preparedness. We provided abundant warnings of what our response would be, to discourage the Russian invasion and replied substantially to Russian security demands, hoping a true negotiation would ensue. Reassuring allies closest to the conflict with preventative deployments, the prudent – and yet firm – reaction of NATO conveys a clear message: the Alliance will not flinch in defending itself, yet it harbours no offensive intentions vis-à-vis Russia.

Finally, the international community has – notably on three occasions so far through the UN General Assembly – sent clear messages rejecting an invasion that contradicts the core principles of international coexistence as reflected in the UN Charter itself: the equal sovereignty of states, the peaceful solution of conflicts and the ban on the use of force in international relations. Most states, from all regions of the world, know that what is at stake, fundamentally, is the protection of weaker states from more powerful ones that could prey on them. The core principles of our international order, which UN Secretary General António Guterres will certainly underline when visiting Russia and Ukraine this week.

Rejecting the law of the jungle

Defending Ukraine from Russia's invasion is rejecting the law of the jungle, the notion that 'might makes right'. Being 'neutral' is a false concept here. One country has invaded another one. Putting them on the same footing fails to differentiate between the attacker and the attacked. Such 'neutrality' may respond, of course, to a variety of reasons, from hidden alignment to fear of reprisals, but it becomes in practice support to Russia and its war of aggression.

The present conflict is not the outcome of centuries old hatreds: it is a war of choice. It is the decision of one man, President Putin. Based on his own interpretation of history, it is not adapted to realities of the 21st century. But if

⁽⁶²⁾ See P. 41

the war started with a personal decision, it could also end the same way. The question is when the Russian President will accept that persevering in the military path he has chosen will bring more harm than good to his country, or to his own political role.

There are three factors to consider: the war's impact on the Russian population, the fate of the war, and pressure from the international community. Up to now, polls coming from Russia show significant support to the war, or rather the 'special military operation' as baptised by the Russian leadership. However, this support rests on false information. If the Russian population knew what is happening, they would not be backing this awful conflict.

Russia curtailing all freedom of expression on the war

The Duma has passed an impressive number of laws in the last weeks curtailing all possible freedom of reporting or expressing views on the war and imposing heavy penalties on anyone who does not accept the official version of events. Rallies against the war in multiple Russian cities have been repressed and the remaining free media have been fully silenced. The authorities continue to peddle a false narrative of de-Nazification, coupled with allusions to undetermined threats against Russian security. Atrocities committed by Russian forces in Ukraine are shamelessly re-attributed to the Ukrainians.

Such an accumulation of lies and falsehoods will backfire at some point. The Russian society is paying a high price for this war in many ways, and although the sanctions imposed by the EU and others in trying to end the conflict may initially help build a bunker mentality, the reality of events will one day be clear to Russian citizens. Tens of thousands have already left the country due to the war, the stifling censorship and the repression.

In addition, this is even truer because so far military activities have not favoured Russia, despite its overwhelming military capacity when compared to Ukraine. Its Northern operation has been a failure and it has had to adjust its plans to concentrate its attacks on the Donbas and the South. History has repeatedly shown that wars of invasion are rarely successful. Even when weaker or less organised, the entire population of the invaded country often ends up rising against the invader or supporting those that fight against him.

To justify the war, Russia and those that support it have launched an international disinformation offensive. Old Cold War ghosts are being brought out of the closet. Blame for [threats of food crises](#) are being shifted towards sanctions imposed by the EU and allies, instead of being placed at the doorstep of the Russian leadership for initiating the war in the first place, blocking harbours in the Black Sea for Ukrainian wheat and fertiliser exports, destroying Ukrainian wheat production and suspending Russia's own wheat exports.

Countering false narratives by presenting the facts

The EU, together with many partners, is countering such narratives by presenting the facts and by helping countries most in need through bilateral aid and the mobilisation of the World Food Programme, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In addition, the rapid activation of the International Criminal Court, and of the whole UN system, should help in exposing the realities of the conflict and the responsibilities involved. It should also bring to justice those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Haunting images of civilian deaths, that I could personally witness when visiting Bucha, or in Mariupol and other Ukrainian cities will leave a lasting mark on our collective memory. It shows the true face of the war waged against Ukraine.

Tolerating aggression such as this will lead to a dangerous world, where countries with stronger militaries will impose their will on others and international rules are disregarded with impunity. This is not the international order that the European Union and many others have been trying to build in the last decades.

Global challenges, such as climate change, economic development, the fight against pandemics or the maintenance of international peace and security can only be solved by joining forces. This is why we will continue to defend a multilateral order, based on common objectives and international law. Violating the basic principles of this international order, as Russia has just done, cannot be condoned.

All countries, especially the most powerful ones, must contribute to preserving and strengthening this rules-based international order. Some have specific international responsibilities. China is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and has always stated its attachment to protecting the sovereignty of countries and the inviolability of borders. Bearing in mind its important economic relations with the European Union as well as with Ukraine, it would be logical for China to use its good relations with Russia to help bring

President Putin to a path of law and peace. Unfortunately, we do not see any sign of this happening at the moment.

Looking at the future

Unless we choose to remain in perpetual tension or conflict, and this is certainly not the option preferred by the EU, we will need to find ways to reorganise the relationship between the EU and Russia and agree on security guarantees and mechanisms to allow for peaceful coexistence to take hold again. This will for sure be a very difficult and lengthy process. The Russian leadership must first understand that its own security cannot and will not be attained at the expense of broader European security and that of its neighbours.

In fact, everything that Russia has done over the last years to ‘guarantee’ its security has achieved just the opposite. By developing a system of unsolved conflicts in our common neighbourhood, Russia has poisoned the life of countries affected by them and undermined trust between the EU and Russia. Peace in Europe can only be built and should be built on solid ground, mindful of respective security interests and concerns, but equally respectful of national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Putin’s decision to invade Ukraine should have been avoided. The EU, US and NATO replied carefully to Russian proposed treaties and letters. The message was clear on our side: we are ready to discuss all aspects of security, including the Russian references to ‘indivisibility’ of security. But this cannot be done while military actions are taken, cities are bombarded and civilians are killed – and guns are literally pointed at one’s, or one’s friends, heads. The aggression needs to stop first. The question now is how many deaths and how much destruction it will take before President Putin agrees to follow this path instead of presenting what he knows are totally unacceptable conditions and false premises.

Particularly as the UN Secretary General Guterres visits Russia today and Kyiv on Thursday, I wish to conclude once more with an appeal to the Russian leadership to end its aggression, to leave behind the demons of the past, to stop the bloodshed and destruction, and to embrace a future where reason and law prevail. Unfortunately, the prospects are not encouraging, far from it. When the Austrian chancellor Karl Nehammer – a leader from a non-NATO EU country – returned from his visit to Moscow earlier this month, the answer he received from President

Putin was very clear: 'No, I don't want to stop the war. We are going to keep fighting.'

In this context, and having seen what the Russian leadership and its military forces have embarked on in the last weeks, my appeal to President Putin may perhaps seem naïve to some. However, despite these low prospects, we have to keep trying to find a diplomatic solution, to stop the suffering and the aggression as soon as possible. The real question is what price will need to be paid before this is achieved. Until then, the European Union and its partners will continue to fully support Ukraine's fight for its sovereignty and freedom.

RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE HAS PUT THE GLOBAL ECONOMY AT RISK

16.05.2022 – Blog ⁽⁶³⁾ – *In May, I attended the G7 foreign ministers meeting in Germany. We discussed the massive global impact of the war against Ukraine, which risked destabilising many regions and countries. G7 and Europeans acted to limit these risks.*

Many voices are warning of the recession that the war against Ukraine could cause. ‘War sets back economic recovery’ [the International Monetary Fund](#) (IMF) stated recently ⁽⁶⁴⁾. ‘Is the global economy flying into a perfect storm, with Europe, China, and the United States all entering downturns at the same time later this year?’, the American economist Kenneth Rogoff [asked](#) ⁽⁶⁵⁾. Such a negative dynamic could trigger a new global financial crisis.

Major consequences in the EU itself

The negative consequences of the war are obviously major within the EU itself, since we are neighbouring the theatre of operations and had close economic ties with both Ukraine and Russia. It also brings with it in the EU a flow of refugees that is unprecedented since the Second World War. The European Commission has already dealt with these issues and will continue to do so, notably on the energy front with the [REPowerEU plan](#) ⁽⁶⁶⁾, which will be specified this week. But our own difficulties must not make us forget those faced by many emerging and developing countries. I have already addressed [the crucial subject of food insecurity](#) in this blog recently ⁽⁶⁷⁾. The shock waves are reaching more and more countries and sectors. Let’s summarise the risks that the global economy is facing.

⁽⁶³⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/russia%E2%80%99s-invasion-ukraine-puts-global-economy-risk_en

⁽⁶⁴⁾ See: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2022/04/19/world-economic-outlook-april-2022>

⁽⁶⁵⁾ See: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/economic-recession-risk-in-china-united-states-europe-by-kenneth-rogoff-2022-04>

⁽⁶⁶⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1511

⁽⁶⁷⁾ See P. 67

The war against Ukraine has been accompanied by a sharp rise in inflation under the pressure of food, energy and major commodity prices. Inflation had already been rising throughout 2021 as a result of increased demand caused by the economic recovery and the continued disruption of many value chains, but the war has accelerated it. And this movement has been more pronounced in emerging and developing countries. Inflation affects most the poorest and weakest and contributes to increasing inequalities worldwide.

The rise in inflation

This rise in inflation is leading to significant increases in interest rates by central banks and a tightening of monetary conditions. And here again, this movement is even more marked in emerging and developing countries. This in a context where the external debt of these countries had again increased in recent years because of the pandemic. Emerging and developing countries have less fiscal room to combat crises and cushion the impact on their citizens than developed ones. This was already the case before, but it is even more the case today.

In this worrying context, we have also observed in recent weeks a rapid fall in share prices on financial markets and a spectacular loss of value on cryptocurrencies. This could trigger a new financial crisis, accompanied by a '[flight to quality](#)'⁽⁶⁸⁾ of international capital to the United States. This risk is already beginning to materialise with a sharp rise of the exchange rate of US currency; a movement that feeds inflation in countries whose currency is depreciating. This context has led the IMF to significantly lower its economic forecasts compared to last January, particularly for emerging countries, aggravating the loss of growth suffered by these countries due to the pandemic.

If we look more specifically at the different regions of the world, in the Middle East, non-energy producing and food importing countries such as Egypt are weakened. The IMF anticipates also a sharp slowdown in North Africa and in countries that were already experiencing major crises such as Lebanon and even more so in Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan. In Türkiye, which was already going through a difficult economic period, inflation has soared above 60 % while the Western Balkans economies are expected to lose significantly steam due to the war.

The Caucasus and Central Asia will be the hardest hit regions because of their close ties with Russia and Ukraine, with the non-energy producing countries,

⁽⁶⁸⁾ See: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flight-to-quality>

particularly Armenia and Georgia, most at risk. In Latin America, the COVID-19 pandemic had wreaked havoc in many countries and led to a sharp rise in poverty and inequality. The continent should experience in addition a severe economic slowdown this year, particularly in Brazil and Chile.

In Asia, the direct effects of the war are expected to be more limited particularly because the price of rice remain stable, but the COVID-19 pandemic had greatly weakened the region's economy and the economic slowdown in Europe and the United States will continue to affect it. While China should experience a major economic slowdown, due to the resurgence of the pandemic and the strict zero COVID policy. Some countries, such as Sri Lanka and Pakistan, are nonetheless already destabilised, while in Indonesia, the rise in palm oil prices as a result of the global shortage of vegetable oil caused by the war (Ukraine exports half of the world's sunflower oil) has led the country to block its exports. Looking ahead, the exceptional heat waves experienced this spring in the Indian subcontinent, combined with the droughts in Europe and the United States, could have a very negative effect on global food security in coming months. India, the third wheat producer in the world, has already decided to ban wheat exports...

Greatest risks in sub-Saharan Africa

It is in sub-Saharan Africa that the risks are the greatest. This continent, which is experiencing strong demographic growth, is already the most affected by climate change, with prolonged droughts in East Africa. It is also increasingly destabilised, particularly in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. Nigeria and South Africa are going through major social crises. The external debt of many African countries has increased significantly in recent years, particularly with China, and spreads have widened considerably since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Several sub-Saharan African countries are heavily importing energy and food products, particularly wheat from Russia and Ukraine.

In short, this bleak economic outlook in many emerging and developing countries will have negative social and political consequences and affect the perception of the war on Ukraine. Most partners do not question our position on the war, but demand more action from us in addressing these consequences. As the crisis advances, the risk is clear: encouraged by the Russian propaganda apparatus, many could be tempted to blame Europeans and the West for these problems

rather than the war of aggression led by Vladimir Putin. This is wrong on the facts but if people define a situation as real, it is real in its consequences.

During the G7 ministers meeting we had a video conference with Retno Marsudi, our colleague from Indonesia, ahead of the G20 meeting planned in November in Bali. She warned us about this trend and so did Argentinian President Alberto Fernandez when meeting the Spanish Government in Madrid last week. That is why we must counter everywhere the Russian narrative and explain the reality of the facts and responsibilities, not only with political leaders but also directly to the public opinion.

We need to do more

But we need also to do more. First, by increasing the pressure to bring Vladimir Putin to stop this war and withdraw Russian troops from Ukrainian territory and by enabling Ukraine to keep producing and exporting agricultural products. Second, we must lead with ambition within the international institutions, the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Food Programme, the G7 and G20. It will be necessary to expand the efforts already undertaken for debt relief of over-indebted poor countries, in particular by getting China to assume all its responsibilities in this area. And, once again, we need a closely coordinated macroeconomic policy response from the world's largest economies to limit the risks of recession and global financial crisis.

We should also avoid false solutions, keeping trade open, as trade barriers would only worsen affordability and have an asymmetrical impact on the poor. We should help stimulate local production in emerging and developing countries rather than dumping in-kind donations of food with adverse developmental effects. During the G7 Foreign Ministers meeting, we discussed extensively the issue and welcomed the UN Secretary General's initiative to convene a 'Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance' (GCRG). The global response is disjointed so far and the challenge is not just to do more, but also to better coordinate efforts.

The EU and its member states are already the largest contributors of development aid in the world. However, we must recognise that we face strong constraints. Due to its limited amount and multi-year nature, the EU budget does not give us a large room for manoeuvre to deal with exceptional situations such as the one we

are currently facing globally. This is one of the subjects on which the work undertaken on the future of Europe should allow to make progress.

The EU, already the largest contributor in development aid

We must at least ensure that our internal difficulties and our support to Ukraine do not weigh on the aid we are providing to other regions of the world. There are growing fears that this could happen. We must also coordinate more closely the actions of European institutions, including the financial ones, and member states in the various countries and regions of the world.

The war on Ukraine has pushed us to speak the ‘language of power’, giving active support to Ukraine, being determined on sanctions and improving our common defence capacities. However, to compel Vladimir Putin to back down, we have also to convince the world that the economic problems we are facing are the result of Putin’s war of choice and take resolute action to address the wider impacts that this brutal war is having on our partners worldwide.

THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE: A TSUNAMI AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE?

09.06.2022 – Speech ⁽⁶⁹⁾ – *In June, I spoke at the 20th anniversary of the EU Institute for Strategic Studies (EU ISS) on the geopolitical consequences of the war against Ukraine. Three months after the start of the war, it gave a first overview of the conclusions to draw for the EU.*

I want to talk about ‘the tsunami after the earthquake’. Russia’s war against Ukraine is an earthquake with dramatic consequences, most directly for the people of Ukraine. At enormous cost, they are defending their country, democracy and sovereignty. As you all know, the EU is fully mobilised to support them with:

- sanctions – with the 6th package centred on oil ban for 90 % at end 2022 plus insurance.
- military support – so far €2 billion from the European Peace Facility and more to come.
- financial support – €9 billion in macro financial assistance.
- political support: we are isolating Russia and EU leaders will take decision on granting Ukraine candidate status later this month.

My key message is this: we have to see this through and ensure victory for Ukraine. To this end, need to be ready to commit for the long-term, also when attention fades and costs go up: we have to be ready to pay the price of freedom.

The war is sending shockwaves to neighbouring countries: am sure Minister Nicu Popescu will set out what is at stake for Moldova.

But crucially, the war is also affecting people far away from the field of battle, with ripple effects throughout the world. Eventually these could create something of a tsunami at global scale.

Today I want to focus on these global ramifications. For the sake of argument I will group them into two broad categories or ‘risk scenarios’. Not to make precise predictions but to think through some trends and policy choices.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-iss-annual-conference_en

Looked at through a geo-political lens, the war risks creating a bipolar world of permanent competition and even confrontation. Between the US, Europe and the like-minded on the one hand and Russia plus China on the other side. And with a group of hedgers and 'swing states' in the middle.

Rather than inter-dependence and globalisation bringing us together and creating 'one world ruled by global governance', we face growing fragmentation, where everything gets weaponised between rival blocs.

Multilateral cooperation risks getting even harder, to the point of paralysis, even on global threats and global commons like climate change, bio-diversity, the pandemic etc.

Using an economic perspective, the war risks creating a geo-economic storm. We already have a major food and energy crisis, plus rising inflation and lower growth. This could lead to a period of stagflation or even an outright recession, deepening global inequalities.

The backdrop and hence the capacity of governments to handle these economic waves, is conditioned by the still-lingering effects of the pandemic i.e. a lot of debt and no fiscal space.

As ever, economic tensions risk leading to political and security crises, radicalisation and uncontrolled migration – at Europe's border and further afield.

Let me say a bit more about each scenario, to sketch out briefly what each entails and what we can do about it.

Russia's brutal violation of Ukraine's sovereignty is the latest case in point of a long-standing Russian campaign. At least since 2009 (the Georgia war), Putin has acted to undermine the European security order. What he has attacked is so fundamental for European security that he must fail in his war of choice.

But the ramifications are broader, indeed global. This war takes place against a backdrop of a wider revisionist effort of both Russia and China. What is at stake is the UN-mandated fundamental equality of states and respect for their sovereignty. Or, whether they succeed with their hierarchical worldview where big powers are entitled to historically justified 'spheres of influence'. As I said at

the Munich Security Conference: their joint statement of 4 February and their 'no limits' partnership was, at heart, a revisionist manifesto.

We tend to focus more on the internal repression inside Russia. But in China too there is a clear process of centralisation underway, with less space for a plurality of views. And on the foreign policy front, key concepts such as 'peaceful rise and coexistence' are gradually giving way to attempts to re-define multilateralism and put China at the centre of geopolitical power structures.

Meanwhile in the US, we also see that Democrats and Republicans, who disagree about pretty much everything, do agree that the strategic competition with China is the primary goal for US grand strategy for decades to come.

Put all this together and you see strong forces driving a logic of binary choices: autocrats vs democrats.

What would be the consequences internationally? A world that is increasingly organised along two rival camps would mean that multilateral cooperation suffers: even more paralysis in the UN Security Council; less trust and even fewer results in the G20, the WTO or the WHO.

A world where security competition is pre-eminent, also means less scope and less money for cooperation on global commons like the climate change, biodiversity or things like the Arctic, the oceans or outer-space.

Finally, a world of binary security competition could marginalise respect for human rights and good governance. This means that decades of EU efforts to support nascent democracies around the world would be at risk.

I want to be clear: this is NOT the outcome that we Europeans want or seek. And whether this scenario happens depends on many factors and choices including ours.

But the risks are certainly there that the Ukraine war – especially if it lasts for months – could tip over into a harder form of geo-political competition and rival blocs.

Now, let's look at the war through an economic prism. Here, the ramifications are equally worrying. This audience knows well about the enormous increases in the prices for food, energy and fertilisers.

The FAO food price index has increased by 40 % this year and reached an all-time high this month. Oil is at \$120 a barrel and gas prices in Europe, already sky high before the war, have roughly doubled again. For fertilisers the increases are even more frightening.

It is Russia's plundering and its blockade of the Black Sea that are hurting the availability and affordability of food. Right now, about 20 million tonnes of Ukrainian wheat cannot reach global markets. And if Ukraine cannot export what it has in its silos, the new summer wheat cannot be harvested. Alarmingly, former President Medvedev talked in April of Russia using food as a 'silent weapon' to reward friendly countries.

From his side, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has warned about a 'hurricane of hunger', hitting especially the countries in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MENA countries like Egypt, Yemen, Syria and others.

The World Food Programme estimates that by this summer the number of people in acute hunger will rise by 47 million, from a pre-war baseline of 196 million. It is good to realise that we spend 15 % of our disposable income on food; but for developing countries the figure is normally 40 %.

All this is happening when the world has not recovered yet from a pandemic that had already deepened inequalities, within and between countries and overwhelmed the fiscal 'space' of many developing countries. With interest rates rising everywhere, the IMF warned that 60 % of low-income countries are at risk of debt distress.

Faced with the choice of feeding their populations or paying their international creditors, many governments will opt for the former. Sri Lanka is in the middle of an economic crisis: it was the first country since the Russian invasion to default on its debts, but will not be the last.

If governments don't manage to handle the food and energy crisis this will inevitably affect social stability, security and create migratory pressures.

In other words, we risk facing a 'perfect storm', with geo-political and economic tensions rising and reinforcing each other. Put together this represents a major test for the capacity of governments to cope, individually and collectively.

As ever, the question is: what to do? Let me end with a few thoughts to open the debate and hear from colleagues.

- The longer the war lasts, the worse the global consequences will be. So the best way to avoid these worrying scenarios is to invest massively in ending the war as quickly as possible. Principally by enabling Ukraine to defeat the Russian aggression. This means keeping Ukraine militarily supplied and economically afloat. This the priority of all priorities.
- On the risk of risk of the world splitting into two rival camps: we should be clear that our stance is about upholding the sovereign rights of all, not about 'the West' against Russia or the Rest. A world where the illegal use of force is normalised is a dangerous world for all.
- We should certainly counter Russian and Chinese attempts to re-define core international principles and challenge the established rights of states and individuals. But it should be possible to do so without paralysing multilateral cooperation on the global commons – there is only one climate and somehow both China and Russia need to be part of the solution to prevent runaway climate change.
- We should be working not just with the 'already like-minded', but also with those 'hedgers' and 'swing states' that do not always or fully share our views. The UN votes in March were a telling sign: we need to find ways of cooperating and doing deals with a large number of states and people that are not 'like-minded' but not with Russia/China either...
- On the second set of risks, let me focus on the food crisis in particular. Here we need a response that matches the scale and urgency of the problem.
 - Keep Ukraine producing/ and exporting as much as possible;
 - Keep global markets open so avoid unilateral closures and 'food diplomacy';
 - Adopt a Team Europe approach to scale up food security support, especially through the UN system.
- Last: we have to get better at getting our messages across. In the global battle of narratives, if you don't manage to tell your story, others will.

The war against Ukraine is changing Europe and the wider world. Citizens demand that the EU steps up its game and addresses these ramifications. It is up to all of us, Europe's strategic community to make sure that we deliver.

THE BATTLE OF NARRATIVES AROUND THE FOOD CRISIS

18.06.2022 – Blog ⁽⁷⁰⁾ – *Russia's war against Ukraine caused a global food crisis and we saw a 'battle of narratives' around the impact of our sanctions. These sanctions do not target these Russian exports and I underlined that we were ready to work with the UN and our partners to prevent any unintended impact on global food security.*

For several decades, hunger was declining and the international community committed to end it globally by 2030 with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) adopted in 2015. However, since then, the number of undernourished people had stopped decreasing and the COVID-19 pandemic had already made things much worse. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that this number has risen from 132 million people before the COVID-19 pandemic to 276 million in early 2022 and 323 million today.

Even before Putin's war against Ukraine, we were losing ground in the global fight against hunger. Now, this unjustified and unprovoked war puts the world in danger of a famine affecting hundreds of millions of people. [According to the UN Global Crisis Response Group](#) ⁽⁷¹⁾, 1.2 billion people – one in six of the world's population – are living in 'perfect-storm' countries that are severely exposed to the combination of rising food prices, rising energy prices and tightening financial conditions.

Ukraine, one of the most important 'breadbaskets'

For decades, Ukraine has been indeed one of the most important 'breadbaskets' of the planet. Today, Putin's troops shell, mine and occupy arable land of Ukraine, attack farm equipment, warehouses, markets, roads, bridges in Ukraine and block Ukraine's ports, preventing the export of millions of tonnes of grain to global markets. Russia turned the Black Sea into a war zone, blocking shipments of grain and fertiliser from Ukraine but also affecting Russian merchant shipping. Russia is also applying quotas and taxes on its grain exports. Russia's conscious political

⁽⁷⁰⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/battle-narratives-around-food-crisis%C2%A0_en

⁽⁷¹⁾ See: https://news.un.org/pages/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/GCRG_2nd-Brief_Jun8_2022_FINAL.pdf

choice is to ‘weaponise’ these exports and use them as a tool for blackmail against anyone that opposes its aggression.

As a result, food prices, that were already affected by the pandemic and climate change, have never been as high as today in real terms. It has major consequences for many low-income countries and for the World Food Programme, which has already had to reduce its interventions in several regions. Many experts warn that the worst is yet to come if Ukrainian exports remain blocked until the next harvest. Meanwhile, several countries have introduced unilateral restrictions on their own agricultural exports, while others are seeking to build up stocks, exacerbating the problems on world markets. Higher energy costs and a loss of fertiliser supply have led to fertiliser prices rising even faster than food prices. Because of this, the price for rice, the most consumed staple in the world, which up to now has low prices, could increase significantly and global food production may not be able to meet rising demand. The UN has warned for *‘a food catastrophe of global proportions in 2023’*.

An absolute urgency to act

There is an absolute urgency to act. With our member states, we are putting together emergency relief. As Team Europe, we have pledged €1 billion for the Sahel and Lake Chad regions and over €600 million for the Horn of Africa. We put in place a €225 million food facility to assist our partners in North Africa – the region most dependent of food supplies from Ukraine and Russia. More structurally, we will also spend €1.5 billion to help develop sustainable food systems in the Eastern and Southern neighbourhood, the Western Balkans and Türkiye, until 2024.

We are also acting within the G7, the G20, the World Bank and the IMF, to increase their commitment to the countries most in need via emergency financial support, additional debt relief, the emission of new Special Drawing Rights and other instruments. We fully support the efforts in that direction by the UN Secretary General within the Global Crisis Response Group.

To avoid a global food calamity, the top priority remains to stop the war and get Russian troops out of Ukraine. This is the aim of the EU’s massive support to Ukraine and of the restrictive measures, we are applying with our allies against Putin’s regime. However, we have never targeted Russian agricultural and fertiliser exports. EU sanctions do not prohibit Russia to export any agricultural goods, payment for such Russian exports or the provision of seeds, provided that

sanctioned individuals or entities are not involved. EU sanctions have also no extraterritorial application, i.e. they do not create obligations for non-EU operators, unless their business is conducted at least partly within the EU.

We are fully aware that there is a 'battle of narratives' around this issue. Senegal's President Macky Sall, who chairs the African Union, has talked in particular about difficulties that African countries encounter on this subject following his recent meeting with Vladimir Putin in Sochi and at the OECD ministerial meeting. Last Saturday, I spoke about this issue with Aissata Tall Sall, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal. On Tuesday, I met also UNCTAD Secretary General Rebeca Grynspan and talked with UN Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths, both in charge of the UN-sponsored negotiations about facilitating grain and fertiliser exports out of Russia and reopening export routes for Ukrainian grains. And, on Thursday, I met with the ambassadors to the UN from the African group following [my address to the UN Security Council](#) (7²).

I assured all my interlocutors that we are ready to work with the UN and partners in preventing any unwanted impacts of our sanctions on global food security. We are in close contact with the UN to look into issues such as market avoidance and over compliance which could affect purchases of Russian grain or fertilisers. We are ready to discuss these matters through experts in order to identify concrete obstacles including possible difficulties in payments, and to work towards solutions. I have also instructed EU ambassadors in our African partner countries to discuss with the authorities all relevant aspect of the present situation on payments.

Concrete problems and the Kremlin's disinformation

I urged my African interlocutors to differentiate between concrete problems and the Kremlin's disinformation. When the Russian propaganda machine claims that we are responsible for the food crisis, this is nothing but cynical lies, like many others that this machine has been spreading for many years. The cynicism of that posture was obvious when Russia bombed Ukraine's second largest grain silo in Mykolaiv, just a couple of days after President Sall spoke with President Putin in Sochi. All those who want to limit the global food crisis should above all help us to increase the pressure on Russia to stop its war of aggression.

(7²) See p. 217.

In the meantime, we continue to help Ukraine to export agricultural products by other routes than the Black Sea through our ‘Solidarity Lanes Action Plan’. We are working with market players to make additional freight rolling stock, vessels and lorries available. We are facilitating border checks of agri-food products, and we will make storage facilities of member states available for Ukrainian grains. As we did last March for the electricity network, we must accelerate the integration of the Ukrainian railway network into the European system, although this certainly poses difficulties because of the differences in rail gauge.

The imperative to allow Ukrainian exports by ship

However, we must face the facts: none of these alternatives can provide a sufficient flow of exports in the short term. It is therefore imperative to allow Ukrainian exports by ship to resume. We are working closely with the UN on this issue and the EU and its member states are ready to do their part of the necessary actions to achieve this. We hope that a solution can be found in the coming days. Not doing this threatens to cause a global food catastrophe.

TAKING ACTION ON THE GEOPOLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF RUSSIA'S WAR

24.06.2022 – Blog ⁽⁷³⁾ – *In June, the EU Foreign Affairs Council discussed the geopolitical consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. We agreed on our main work strands to face the global food and energy crises and to defend the rules-based international order. We also decided to engage more with third countries affected by Russia's war.*

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is sending shockwaves around the world with food insecurity growing, limited access to energy and rising inflation and debt. As the UN Global Crisis Response Group summarised it recently: '[Billions of people face the greatest cost-of-living crisis in a generation](#)' ⁽⁷⁴⁾. These developments come on top of the global climate emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic and risk sparking social unrest and political destabilisation.

More focus on the consequences than on the causes

During the UN General Assembly in March, a large majority of countries condemned the Russian aggression. However, it should not conceal the reality that most of our partners are focused on the consequences of the war, not the causes. Against this background, a false Russian narrative holding the EU responsible for the food crisis has been making inroads. We have to put the blame on those who deserve it: in addition to invading and destroying Ukraine, Russia is blocking 20 million tonnes of grains in Ukrainian storage facilities. Because of that, people at the other end of the planet risk suffer from hunger. This is a deliberate attempt to create political instability. Russia's war of aggression poses a direct challenge to the rules-based world order. We need to act to defend it and counter Russian disinformation. This was at the centre of our discussions at our [last Foreign Affairs Council](#) ⁽⁷⁵⁾.

Ukraine's invasion is having an impact on all regions across the world. In the Western Balkans, Russian disinformation is prevalent and Russia has listed three

⁽⁷³⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/taking-action-geopolitical-consequences-russia%E2%80%99s-war_en

⁽⁷⁴⁾ See: <https://news.un.org/pages/global-crisis-response-group/>

⁽⁷⁵⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/foreign-affairs-council-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-press-conference-2_en

countries (North Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro) as ‘unfriendly’, following their alignment with our sanctions. In this difficult context, a credible political commitment to the region’s European perspective is essential. However, by not being able to open this week the accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia, I must say that we are not where we should be with the region. We need to find a way forward without further delay.

The war also has a negative impact on tourism and the economy in Türkiye. Türkiye’s diplomatic engagement regarding the conflict – not least on the need to end the Black Sea blockade – calls for closer EU-Türkiye cooperation but also vigilance to ensure non-circumvention of EU sanctions.

Countries of the Eastern Partnership severely affected

The war is also hitting the countries of the Eastern Partnership very severely. The multiple spill over effects are propelling the region to another recession, with risks of instability and insecurity. Ukraine and Moldova received the candidate status in the European Council. The European Council also sent a positive signal to Georgia: it should be granted candidate status once a number of priorities will have been addressed.

Belarus is now subject to sanctions similar to Russia but the majority of Eastern Partnership countries are looking more than ever to Europe for their connectivity needs, trade and foreign investment. Central Asian states, already under severe Russian pressure, are also heavily impacted by the negative spill over effects of the conflict, in particular trade disruptions, declining foreign remittances and currency fluctuations.

In the Southern Neighbourhood and across the Middle East, many countries are highly dependent on Russia and Ukraine for food and energy. Disruptions of trade flows caused by Russian invasion have already put huge pressure on them. Oil and gas producing countries are of course benefiting from high energy prices but in many other, rising commodity and food prices as well as reduced subsidies (due to a tightening of budgetary conditions), combined with severe droughts in some countries, may result in catastrophic hunger among the poorest and provoke new waves of social unrest, internal displacement and migration.

Africa is also severely affected. Many countries heavily depend on Russia and Ukraine. As many as 25 African countries, including many least developed

countries, import more than one third of their wheat from Ukraine and Russia and 15 of them over half. Wheat prices have risen by 60 % because of the war. The UN expects that close to 120 million people will be in 'food crisis or worse' in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2022, particularly in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. This is the result of a deliberate attempt by Russia to use food as a weapon of war, accompanied by the typical playbook of the Russian propaganda –creating a problem and then blaming the others, in this case the EU's sanctions, although these sanctions do not apply to Russian grain or fertiliser exports. At the same time, [we must listen to Africa's concerns](#) on this issue⁽⁷⁶⁾ and we are ready to look into potential issues such as over compliance and market avoidance and provide the necessary clarifications to private actors about the real scope of our sanctions.

An uneven impact in Asia

In Asia, the overall economic impact of Russia's invasion will be uneven across areas. The more advanced economies in the region have limited trade and investment links with Russia or Ukraine. However, for many others the impact is significant. This includes Indonesia (heavily dependent on wheat imports from Ukraine), Mongolia (with 98 % energy dependence on Russia), Thailand, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. China is probably not very comfortable with Russia's violent escalation in Ukraine and concerned about the impact of the war on its wider economic interests. However, Beijing has so far refrained from using its leverage on Russia to help finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict. On the contrary, it is still expressing its public support to its 'no limits' partnership with Russia. India has so far sought to preserve its relations with Russia, which it sees as a crucial security and defence partner. India has also become the main international buyer of Russian oil, with often an important discount.

Russia's war has widespread impacts on Latin America and the Caribbean. There also, higher energy and food prices will increase poverty, hunger and social tensions in a context of growing inequality, political polarisation and distrust in governments. Shortages in fertiliser supply will have a strong effect on Mexico, Peru, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Argentina. Disruptions to the grain market will affect supply in countries such as Nicaragua, Haiti, Peru, Ecuador and Caribbean Islands. On the other hand, rising prices for key commodities will give some countries an economic boost (e.g. coal for Colombia, copper for Chile and Peru, wheat and soybean for Argentina). Politically, the Latin American region has broadly condemned Russia's aggression. However, we cannot take this position

⁽⁷⁶⁾ See p. 91

for granted. We must intensify our engagement with the region to address concerns in some capitals that Russia's war of aggression could deflect the EU's attention away from LAC countries.

Renewed political commitment and concrete actions

Renewed political commitment, supported by concrete actions, will prove that the EU can help our partners mitigate the most immediate consequences of this conflict as well as improve their more long-term sustainable resilience. On Monday, we discussed following concrete actions strands for EU institutions and member states:

1. **Food security:** we are providing emergency funds to the regions and countries that are most affected. The EU together with its member states, has already committed €1 billion for the Sahel, €633 million for the Horn of Africa and €225 million for the Southern Neighbourhood countries. We will focus on support for resilience in over 70 countries, including the promotion of a more efficient use of, and alternatives to, fertilisers. We also help to get the millions of tonnes of Ukrainian grain onto global markets through the [EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes Action Plan](#) ⁽⁷⁷⁾ and by supporting UN efforts to reopen the Odessa harbour. In addition, we will strive to increase the EU's own food exports.
2. **Energy:** with the [RePowerEU plan](#) ⁽⁷⁸⁾, we are working full speed to reduce our dependency on Russian fossil fuels and helping to lower energy prices globally by further accelerating our green energy transition. We will also open the [EU Energy platform for gas common purchasing](#) ⁽⁷⁹⁾ to partners in the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, as well as develop their connections to European electricity grids. To secure supplies, we are engaging with various partners on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), relaunching the EU-Algeria dialogue on gas, and exploring cooperation opportunities with African partners. We will also engage with partners to import 10 million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2030, via three major hydrogen corridors as [Global Gateway](#) projects ⁽⁸⁰⁾.
3. **Macroeconomic risks:** the EU's global action is focusing on additional debt relief and macro-economic support by the international financial institutions.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ See: https://transport.ec.europa.eu/news/european-commission-establish-solidarity-lanes-help-ukraine-export-agricultural-goods-2022-05-12_en

⁽⁷⁸⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_3131

⁽⁷⁹⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_2387

⁽⁸⁰⁾ See: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en

We will work within the G20 on an extended [Common Framework for Debt Treatment](#)⁽⁸¹⁾. We also need to find ways to re-channel the advanced economies' IMF [Special Drawing Rights](#)⁽⁸²⁾ to low income countries.

4. **Trade and investment:** developing trade and investment with like-minded partners offers alternative trade flows to Russian supplies and markets and strengthens our ties at the political level. This includes to offer a temporary trade liberalisation with Moldova; to finalise the negotiations with Central Asian countries and to modernise our trade and investment relations with our Southern Neighbourhood. We are relaunching the trade and investment negotiations with India. We also need to advance with the ratification of the three pending trade agreements with Mexico, Chile and MERCOSUR. The conclusion of an [EU-LAC Digital Alliance](#)⁽⁸³⁾ would boost digital trade with Europe.
5. **Disinformation:** we will [address the concerns expressed in many developing countries regarding the alleged negative impact of EU sanctions](#)⁽⁸⁴⁾ and proactively counter Russia's disinformation with facts and locally tailored messages. Wherever possible, we will develop partnerships with internet platforms, analysts, fact checkers, journalists and institutional partners to deal with pro-Kremlin disinformation.

We have a lot of work to do in the coming weeks. Strengthened EU solidarity with countries and regions most affected by the Russian aggression will help fight the global 'battle of narratives' in which the whole world is involved.

⁽⁸¹⁾ See: <https://www.imf.org/en/About/FAQ/sovereign-debt#Section%205>

⁽⁸²⁾ See: <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/special-drawing-right>

⁽⁸³⁾ See: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/tei-jp-tracker/tei/eu-latin-america-and-caribbean-digital-alliance>

⁽⁸⁴⁾ See p. 91

THE SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA ARE WORKING

16.07.2022 – Blog ⁽⁸⁵⁾ – During the summer, many asked whether the sanctions against Russia were effective. I explained in this blog post why the clear answer is yes. The sanctions are hitting Vladimir Putin and his accomplices hard – and their effects on the Russian economy are increasing. We need strategic patience until Ukraine can recover its sovereignty in full.

Since Russia brutally invaded Ukraine, the EU has adopted six packages of sanctions ⁽⁸⁶⁾ against Moscow – and we are about to finalise a 'maintenance and alignment' package ⁽⁸⁷⁾ to clarify a number of provisions to strengthen legal certainty for operators and align the EU's sanctions with those of our allies and partners of the G7. Our measures already now target nearly 1 200 individuals and almost 100 entities in Russia as well as a significant number of sectors of the Russian economy. These sanctions were adopted in close coordination with the G7 members, and the fact that over forty other countries, including traditionally neutral countries, have also adopted them or taken similar measures enhances their effectiveness.

Sanctions require strategic patience

Now, as the war drags on and the costs of energy rises, people in Europe and elsewhere ask whether these sanctions are working and/or whether the side effects are too great. Without underestimating different problems that could occur, including attempts made to bypass them, sanctions remain an important instrument of political action. But for sure we need to use them in a well targeted manner, and, above all, they require strategic patience because it may take a long time for them to have the desired effect.

One of the main sanctions adopted is to stop buying 90 % of EU oil supplies from Russia by the end of 2022, depriving Moscow of corresponding revenues. Yes, Russia is able to sell its oil to other markets, however this benefit is limited by the fact that Russia is forced to give high discounts on each barrel (Russian

⁽⁸⁵⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/sanctions-against-russia-are-working_en

⁽⁸⁶⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/>

⁽⁸⁷⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_4548

oil is sold at around \$30 less than the global average). In addition, and this is perhaps the most important point, this gradual oil embargo and the scaling back of the import of gas, liberates Europe from its energy dependence on Russia. We have discussed this issue at the EU level for years, but now we are implementing it.

Cutting our structural energy dependence on Russia matters a lot because this dependence has been an obstacle to developing a strong European policy towards Moscow's aggressive actions. This dependence probably played an important role in Putin's initial calculations in Ukraine. He may have believed that the EU would never sanction Russia seriously because it was too dependent on energy. This is one of his most important blunders when launching this war.

The price to pay for our democracy

Of course, this rapid detoxification from Russian energy involves significant costs for a number of countries and sectors that we will have to face. However, it is the price to pay to defend our democracies and international law. We have to handle these consequences by reinforcing our internal solidarity and that is what we are doing. By breaking its energy dependence, in line with its climate ambition, the EU is learning that interdependence is not always a neutral instrument that is beneficial to all or a mean to guarantee peaceful international relations. The Ukraine war confirmed that interdependence can be used as a weapon.

Are the sanctions really hurting the Russian economy? Some observers have argued they are not very effective because the exchange rate of the Russian currency is very high. But this interpretation is dubious. The exchange rate of the Rouble simply reflects the fact that Russia has a massive imbalance between the high volume of oil and gas exports and the parallel collapse of imports that has followed the sanctions. This trade surplus is not a sign of good economic health, especially for an economy like Russia. While exporting unprocessed raw materials, Russia must import many high-value products that it does not manufacture. For advanced technology products, Russia depends on Europe for more than 45 %, the United States for 21 % and China for only 11 %. Russia may of course try to limit the effects of sanctions by substituting imports through domestic products. This was done, not without success, in the agricultural sector after the 2014 sanctions. However, for high-tech products, import substitution is much more difficult to achieve.

Sanctions on semiconductors imports for instance have a direct impact on Russian companies that produce consumer electronics, computers, airplanes, cars, or military equipment. In this field, which is obviously crucial in the war in Ukraine, sanctions limit Russia's capacity to produce precision missiles. On the ground, the Russian army is not making much use of this type of precision-guided missiles, not out of moderation, but out of necessity, as it does not have enough of them. In addition, the Russian air force has underperformed in Ukraine, also because it lacks precision-guided munitions.

The automotive sector is another sector that is very much feeling the effects of the sanctions. Almost all foreign manufacturers have decided to withdraw from Russia and production was last May down by 97 % compared with 2021. In addition, the few cars that Russian manufacturers still produce will not have airbags or automatic gearboxes.

The Russian oil industry will suffer

Russia as the world's second largest oil producer is still earning large sums from selling its oil worldwide, notably to Asian customers and this helps it to keep financing the war. But over time, the Russian oil industry will suffer not only from the departure of foreign operators but also from its increasing difficulty in accessing sophisticated technologies such as horizontal drilling. In fact, the capacity of Russia to put new wells in production will be limited, which will lead to a drop in production. Finally, there is the airline industry, which plays a very important role in such a vast country. Around 700 of Russia's 1100 civilian aircraft are of foreign origin. Russia will have to sacrifice a large part of its fleet, to find spare parts, so that the remaining aircrafts can fly. Even the Russian-produced aircrafts are dependent on technologies and material from western countries. As Alexander Morozov, the head of the research department of Bank of Russia recently wrote ⁽⁸⁸⁾: '*The restrictions will lead to decreases in technological and engineering sophistication and in labor productivity in the sanctioned industries. Industries that rely on the most advanced foreign technologies and those with highly digitalized business processes risk being hit harder than others*'.

The list could go on with other important factors: the loss of access to financial markets; the disconnection of Russia with the major global research networks such as CERN for example; the massive brain drain of Russian elites with thousands of highly qualified professionals having left the country. The effects of such moves

⁽⁸⁸⁾ See: <https://econs.online/en/articles/opinions/the-new-life-of-the-economy-four-stages/>

are not immediately visible. However, the scientific, economic and technological isolation of Russia is a major loss for the country in the medium term.

Moscow may claim that its relations with many countries remain intact. However, in reality, sanctions against Russia are also hurting its trade with non-sanctioning countries like China. The alternative offered by China to the Russian economy remains indeed limited. Although Beijing seems to want to make ideological gestures by siding with Moscow; refusing to condemn its invasion; or taking up the Russian narrative on the threat of NATO, it is overall rather careful regarding helping Russia circumvent the sanctions. While its imports from Russia have risen (mainly through greater energy imports), Chinese exports to Russia have decreased in proportions that are comparable to those of Western countries. Even if it does not admit it publicly, China is probably worried that this war could strengthen the position of the United States not only in Europe but also in Asia, with the strong involvement of countries such as Japan and South Korea in responding to Russia's aggression. This is not exactly what China is aiming at.

As a result, the latest Russian figures released by Bank of Russia show that transactions through the Russian payment system are down 7.2 % in June compared to the first quarter of 2022. This is a real-time indicator of the important slowdown in the Russian economy. Of course the biggest question of all is this: will the sanctions and the real effects they have, lead Putin changing his strategic calculations and if so when? Here we need to be cautious and recognise that his actions have always been disconnected from economic considerations. Putin believes in the magical power of political voluntarism. However, this cannot last forever. Hence Europe must show strategic patience. The war will be long and the test of strength will last. We have no other choice. Allowing Russia to prevail would mean allowing it to destroy our democracies and the very basis of the international rules-based world order.

Russia forced to 'choose between butter and guns'

Even if sanctions do not change the Russian trajectory in the short-term, that does not mean they are useless for they do affect sheer amount of resources it has to wage its war. Without sanctions, Russia would 'have its cake and eat it', as the expression goes. With sanctions, it will be forced to 'choose between butter and guns' locking Putin in a vice that is gradually tightening.

Finally, let me raise here as well the issue of the alleged or real impact of our sanctions on third countries, particularly African countries, which depend on

Russian and Ukrainian wheat and fertilisers. Here it is very clear where responsibility lies for the food crisis. Our sanctions do not target Russian wheat or fertiliser exports. And it is until now Russia's aggression and its blockade of the Black Sea that is preventing Ukraine from exporting its wheat. We hope however that the negotiations led by the Secretary General of the United Nations will enable this issue to be resolved quickly. I have informed my African counterparts that we are ready to assist them with any difficulties they may encounter related with our sanctions while urging them not to be fooled by the Russian authorities' lies and disinformation regarding this subject.

There is a 'battle of narratives' going on internationally over who is responsible global food and energy crisis as was clear at the last G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting ⁽⁸⁹⁾. But the real answer is to bring an end to the war and this can only be achieved by Russia's withdrawal from Ukraine. I keep reminding all our international partners that respect for the territorial integrity of states and the non-use of force are not Western or European principles. They are the basis of all international law and Russia is blithely trampling on them. To accept such a violation would open the door to the law of the jungle on a global scale.

Europe must become a real power

The war in Ukraine makes clear that, contrary to what many thought rather naively just a few years ago, economic interdependence does not automatically guarantee peaceful international relations. This is why Europe must become a real power, as I have been calling for since the beginning of my mandate. Faced with the invasion of Ukraine, we have moved from debates to concrete actions, showing that, when provoked, Europe can respond. Since we do not want to go to war with Russia, economic sanctions and the support of Ukraine are at the core of this response. And our sanctions are beginning to have an effect and will do so even more in the months to come.

⁽⁸⁹⁾ See p. 235

STANDING WITH UKRAINE ON ITS INDEPENDENCE DAY – AND EVERY DAY THEREAFTER

24.08.2022 – Blog ⁽⁹⁰⁾ *Six months after the Russian aggression started, I sent the clear message that the EU will continue to stand with Ukraine until it has regained its full sovereignty. We must be prepared to pay the price of defending our common freedom and security.*

Six months ago, Russia launched a brutal, unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine: an attack that was both a crime and a major miscalculation. President Putin thought that Ukraine's government would quickly collapse and its President would flee. The Russian regime also assumed that the EU would be divided and unable to muster a forceful response. But Ukrainians rallied to defend their country and their sovereignty, displaying impressive bravery against the aggressor. And the EU with its partners has shown unprecedented unity and determination to support Ukraine in all domains, upholding international legality and the UN Charter.

Today is Ukrainian Independence Day: in fact, it is the 31st time that the country celebrates its independence since 1991. Normally this should be a time of joy and celebration, as it is for countries around the world on their national days. But for Ukrainians this year it is marked by fears of further attacks and tragedy. For Russia's invasion has already caused six months of death and destruction. We have seen war crimes, massacres and indiscriminate attacks on schools and hospitals; around 10 million people forced to leave their home; and cynical attacks on fields of wheat and the weaponisation of grain exports. Today, in spite of the recent agreement brokered by the UN and Türkiye, Ukraine's grain exports are still far less than what they were last year.

This is not 'just' an European war

This is not 'just' a European war, neither in terms of the principles involved nor its concrete effects. In a world where a bigger country can just invade its neighbour and violate the principle of the non-use of force in such a blatant manner, everyone

⁽⁹⁰⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/standing-ukraine-its-independence-day-%E2%80%93-and-every-day-thereafter_en

would be less safe. This war is sending massive ripple effects around the world. Most strikingly, it has sent prices for energy and food through the roof. And as usual, those least able to cope are the ones suffering the greatest burden.

The EU has been on the side of the Ukrainians, right from the start of the war, aware that our shared security is at stake. We have adopted six packages of ever more significant [sanctions](#) ⁽⁹¹⁾. We have, for the first time ever, financed the delivery of military support to a country under attack, to enable Ukraine to fight back. We are providing humanitarian support and [macro-financial assistance](#) ⁽⁹²⁾, to keep the Ukrainian state afloat. In total, €9.5 billion have been mobilised by Team Europe so far, with up to €8 billion in additional macro-financial assistance in the pipeline.

And we have formally decided that we want Ukraine to become [a future member of the EU](#) ⁽⁹³⁾, as part of our family. The EU and Europe are changing in profound ways because of this war.

Ukraine has managed to halt the Russian offensive

Six months into the war, Russia has occupied twenty percent of Ukrainian territory and a good part of its Black Sea coastline. However, the war has now clearly entered a new phase. Also thanks to Western military support, Ukraine has managed to halt the Russian offensive and, more recently, liberated some areas, especially in the South of the country near Kherson. There have been a number of effective attacks on munition dumps and military bases deep into Russian-illegally held territory.

These attacks are undoubtedly having a major symbolic and psychological effect on Russia and are boosting Ukrainian morale. As the balance on the ground seems to shift, Ukrainians are ever more determined to recover their national territory in full, as President Zelenskyy said at the [Crimea Forum](#) yesterday ⁽⁹⁴⁾. And we have to be clear: Ukraine deserves our continued support to do just that. On this day, it is important to remember that the Russian aggression against Ukraine did

⁽⁹¹⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/sanctions-against-russia-explained/>

⁽⁹²⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_4264

⁽⁹³⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/06/23/european-council-conclusions-on-ukraine-the-membership-applications-of-ukraine-the-republic-of-moldova-and-georgia-western-balkans-and-external-relations-23-june-2022/>

⁽⁹⁴⁾ See: <https://crimea-platform.org/en>

not start on 24 February but dates back to the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula

Increase the cost of war for Russia

As EU, we have to see what else we can do in terms of support to Ukraine and increasing the cost of this war for Russia. We will discuss this with EU Foreign and Defence Ministers in Prague next week, including on the issue of visas for Russian citizens and a possible EU training mission for Ukrainian armed forces.

In the coming weeks, the international community will have to stay the course on our triple strategy: supporting Ukraine, pressuring Russia and addressing the wider fall out of the war. This will be at the heart of the discussions at the UN General Assembly in New York in September.

Longer term, there is also the question of how we can not only end this war, but prevent another one from erupting in a few months or years from now. That includes important questions around how to enable Ukraine to defend itself as well as the issue of security guarantees.

Today, on Ukrainian Independence Day and six months after the start of the Russian attack, the best message we can give as EU is that we will continue to stand with Ukraine. Yes, the coming weeks and months will be very challenging. First of all for Ukrainians, who are paying with their lives, but also for all other Europeans. But we cannot reduce our commitments or lessen our resolve, even when the price goes up. At stake is the future of a fellow democracy and the wider principles of European and indeed global security. We must be prepared to pay this price: the price for our common freedom and our common security.

Slava Ukraini

WHAT MORE CAN WE DO FOR UKRAINE?

04.09.2022 – Blog ⁽⁹⁵⁾ – *In September, EU Defence and Foreign Ministers met in Prague for the usual informal ‘Gymnich meetings’ marking the ‘rentrée’ after summer. Naturally, the war against Ukraine dominated the discussions. We agreed to limit visas for Russian citizens and to prepare an EU training mission for the Ukrainian armed forces.*

Before getting to Prague, I took part in the European Forum Alpbach ⁽⁹⁶⁾ where I also met a number of young people, for example from Afghanistan, Kosovo ⁽⁹⁷⁾, Ethiopia and Ukraine. It was good to exchange with them and hear their views, hopes and expectations when it comes to the EU. They were worried about the war against Ukraine and its global fallout and wondered how Europe can develop its role in security and defence.

Both in Alpbach and in Prague, Russia's war against Ukraine was the main item on the agenda. Indeed, it is now more than six months since the start of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and we are in a new phase: Ukraine is pushing back, which is important from a military, political and psychological point of view. Yes, Russia has occupied about 20 % of Ukrainian territory and it is still brutalising the civilian population. However, the military initiative is seemingly shifting to the Ukrainians. They are successfully attacking munition depots and other targets behind the frontline including in Crimea and they have started a counter-offensive in the south, especially around Kherson.

The impact of sanctions on Russia is set to increase

Meanwhile, the impact of sanctions on the Russian economy and especially the high-tech sector continues and is set to increase in the coming months. Putin could not have imagined that six months after launching the war, Russia would be in a situation like this. We could say that morally and politically, Russia has

⁽⁹⁵⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/what-more-can-we-do-ukraine_en

⁽⁹⁶⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-forum-alpbach-keynote-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-panel_en

⁽⁹⁷⁾ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

already lost the war and that Ukraine has shown a capacity to resist and defend itself that few expected.

The situation is still very challenging, for Ukraine but also for us in the EU, given the fallout of high-energy prices, inflation etc. We know that a tough winter lies ahead. But if we get through it, addressing the energy crisis and keeping our unity, and if the military balance continues to shift on the ground, then by next spring both Ukraine and the EU will be in a strategically better position.

The next six months will be decisive

For decades, our energy dependence has been a limiting factor to the development of a more robust EU stance on Russia and respond to Putin's authoritarian and aggressive policies. But if we do manage to phase out our energy imports from Russia, we will remove that obstacle. In short, the next six months are decisive.

This was the backdrop for our discussions with EU Defence and Foreign Ministers in Prague on 29-31 August. These were informal meetings, so no decisions were taken. However, we had important debates where we managed to make progress, including on issues where opinions diverge. As I have said before⁽⁹⁸⁾: what matters in the EU is not how a discussion begins – often with different opinions among 27 member states – what matters is how a discussion ends, with a united position, accommodating the differences that naturally exist.

At the heart of the discussion in Prague were two main topics: what approach to take on visas for Russian citizens and whether the EU should launch a military training mission for the Ukrainian army.

On visas, we managed to converge on a common approach, balancing the need to curtail significantly the number of Russians entering the EU, especially for those countries that border Russia, with the need for a targeted approach, keeping travel possible for opponents of the war but also students, scientists etc. In this area, one has to consider both the issue of whether and how to issue new visas but also what to do with the stock of existing visas (many Russian citizens today hold multi-entry Schengen visas).

⁽⁹⁸⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/86276_ar

We agreed that we have to suspend the visa facilitation agreement with Russia (as Russia for its part has already done in April): this will in itself make it harder for Russians to get European visas. We also agreed not to recognise passports issued by Russia in regions of Ukraine that it currently occupies. And we asked the European Commission for guidance on what to do with the stock of already-issued visas. Some member states on the border of Russia are facing huge inflows of Russians and this is also a national security issue for them. Border control remains a national competence and these member states could take additional measures to limit the privileges of these visa-holders, all while adhering to the Schengen Border Code.

Work will continue on this file in the coming weeks, based on this guidance. For me it was crucial to send a clear signal: mass Russian tourism in Europe is not compatible with Russia waging a war of aggression against a European country. But we should also avoid a blanket ban of all Russians. We must keep investing in our unity, also when initial positions diverge. And this is precisely what we did in Prague.

A military training mission for Ukraine

The second main item was the proposal for a military training mission for Ukraine. Establishing a military CSDP mission in Ukraine is per se not a new idea, as several member states had already proposed one before the start of the war, focused on higher military education. But regrettably, we were unable to launch it.

In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, we all focused on delivering military equipment to Ukraine and how the EU could help its member states to do that. So far, this has led [to €2.5 billion of EU-funded support from the European Peace Facility](#) ⁽⁹⁹⁾. We know that the availability of EU support has incentivised the delivery of military equipment by member states and facilitated a coordinated EU response so that it best matches Ukrainian needs. In recent months, the volume of EU-funded military support has continued undiminished.

Alongside these crucial deliveries of military support, various member states are also training Ukrainian soldiers including on how to use this equipment, especially with advanced weapon systems. Building on these bilateral training activities, a CSDP mission would enhance coordination and build a more sustainable platform

⁽⁹⁹⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/07/22/european-peace-facility-eu-support-to-ukraine-increased-to-2-5-billion/>

for continued capacity building of the Ukrainian armed forces, enabling also member states who do not have national training efforts underway to contribute to the overall effort.

Intensive work is underway

We discussed this in Prague with the Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov who joined us via VTC. He expressed a clear wish to take this forward in line with the Ukraine's short-, medium and long-term needs. I am glad that member states agreed to launch the preparatory work and see with the Ukrainians, EU member states and partners how such a training mission could work best. Intensive work is underway and in the current circumstances, time is of the essence. If member states agree, we could launch this mission in the coming weeks. I am convinced it would be an important additional and concrete form of EU support to Ukraine.

THE STRATEGY AGAINST RUSSIA IS WORKING

14.09.2022 – Op-ed ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ – *In the autumn, Russia's war against Ukraine entered a new phase. The Ukrainian army made spectacular advances, liberating many towns and villages, and forcing Russian forces to retreat. I underlined in this Op-ed how much the strategic balance had shifted.*

Russia's war against Ukraine has entered a new phase. The Ukrainian army is making spectacular advances, liberating many towns and villages, and forcing Russian forces to retreat. While it remains to be seen how far the Ukrainian counteroffensive will go, it is already clear that the strategic balance on the ground is shifting.

Meanwhile, the European Union has fully mobilised to confront the energy crisis. We have filled our gas storage facilities to above 80 % – well ahead of the November 1 target date – and agreed to clear targets to reduce gas consumption through the winter. To help vulnerable consumers and businesses manage price surges, we are moving forward with proposals such as a windfall tax on energy companies that have made excess profits.

Moreover, in coordination with the G7 and other likeminded partners, we are discussing plans to cap the price of Russian oil exports. And we are helping our partners in the Global South to handle the fallout from Russia's brutal aggression and cynical weaponisation of energy and food.

Support Ukraine, pressure Russia and help global partners

In short: the overall strategy is working. We must continue to support Ukraine, pressure Russia with sanctions, and help our global partners in a spirit of solidarity.

Those who question whether sanctions are working are on increasingly shaky ground. In general, sanctions have a double function: to signal and to compel. The signal expresses opposition to a state's conduct – which in this case includes violations of international law and wanton attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. And while we are not at war with Russia, the compelling aims both

⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategy-against-russia-working-and-must-continue_en

to force a change in its behaviour and to erode the economic and technological means for its aggression.

In a very clear signal, the EU has made the historic decision to end its reliance on Russian energy. The Kremlin has broken its contracts by dramatically reducing gas export volumes, rattling markets in the process. The ability to engage in such blackmail may seem like a Russian strength; but it ultimately is a losing strategy. Contrary to popular belief, Russia cannot easily find sustainable substitutes for the European market, because much of its gas-export infrastructure (pipelines and LNG terminals) is geared toward Europe. Redirecting the flow of gas to countries like China will take years and cost billions of dollars.

No easy substitutes for the European market

True, Russia has benefited from the recent gas-price hikes. But that doesn't mean the sanctions have failed. Rather, we must wait to see the full effects of Europe's decision to cut its energy imports from Russia. So far, Europe has only banned Russian coal imports and reduced its purchases of Russian oil. Yet even here, the impact has been discernible.

Russia's coal export volumes recently fell ^(¹⁰¹) to their lowest level since the start of the invasion, reflecting the Kremlin's failure to find other buyers. Similarly, since the EU announced ^(¹⁰²) that it would reduce its imports of Russian oil by 90 % by the end of 2022, oil prices have come down. And the Kremlin will be reducing its revenues by even more if it makes still more cuts to its gas deliveries to Europe.

As German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock has observed ^(¹⁰³), Europe may have paid a low financial price for Russian gas in the past, but that was because it was paying in terms of its security. Russia attacked Ukraine because it was convinced that the EU would be too divided and dependent on Russian energy to act. But Russian President Vladimir Putin miscalculated.

By reducing its dependence on Russian energy, Europe is freeing itself from the old belief that economic interdependence automatically reduces political tensions.

^(¹⁰¹) See: <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/russias-coal-exports-asia-slipping-even-discount-widens-russell-2022-09-12/>

^(¹⁰²) See: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-pledge-support-ukraine-not-ready-with-new-russia-sanctions-2022-05-30/>

^(¹⁰³) See: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/business-forum-amb-conference/2551336>

This might have made sense 40 years ago, but it certainly does not now, when economic interdependence has become weaponised.

But the proper response is not to turn inward. We still need an open economy; but we must not permit interdependence without resilience and diversification. We need to account of the political identities of those with whom we trade and interact. Otherwise, we will fall into the same kind of trap that Putin has been setting for 20 years.

The sanctions had a compelling effect

The sanctions have demonstrably also had a compelling effect. The loss of access to Western technology has begun to hit the Russian military, whose tanks, planes, telecommunication systems, and precision weapons also rely on imported components.

Moreover, a leaked internal Russian government [report](#) warns of prolonged damage to the Russian economy from the import restrictions ⁽¹⁰⁴⁾. In agriculture, 99 % of poultry production depends on imported inputs. In aviation, 95 % of passengers in Russia travel on foreign-made planes; and now, a lack of spare parts is shrinking the Russian commercial aviation fleet. In pharmaceuticals, 80 % of domestic production relies on imported raw materials. Finally, in communications and information technology, Russia could run short of SIM cards by 2025, and other parts of its telecommunications sector are being set back by many years. Remember, this bleak assessment came from official internal Russian sources.

Will sanctions alone be sufficient to defeat the invader? No, but that is why we are also providing massive [economic](#) ⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ and [military support](#) ⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ to Ukraine and working to deploy an [EU military training mission](#) ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ to strengthen the Ukrainian armed forces further. The war is not over, and Putin's regime still holds some cards. But with the current Western strategy in place, the Kremlin will find it virtually impossible to turn the tide. Time and history are on the Ukrainians' side – as long we stick with our strategy.

⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ See: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-05/russia-risks-bigger-longer-sanctions-hit-internal-report-warns?leadSource=uverify%20wall>

⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_5373

⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/07/22/european-peace-facility-eu-support-to-ukraine-increased-to-2-5-billion/>

⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ See p. 111

PUTIN'S ESCALATION WILL NOT WEAKEN OUR RESOLVE

21.09.2022 – Blog ⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ – *In reaction to its failure on the ground, Vladimir Putin decided in September to escalate by organising pseudo-referenda of annexation in four Ukrainian regions and mobilising 300 000 additional troops. In this blog post I condemned this relentless pursuit of a failed strategy.*

Seven months ago, I woke up in Brussels to the news of Russia's having started its brutal invasion of Ukraine. This morning I woke up in New York to the news of President Putin's announcements:

- The decision to proceed with sham referenda to annex occupied Ukrainian territory into Russia
- The decision to start a mobilisation of 300 000 Russian reservists; and
- A not-so-veiled statement about using 'all necessary means' to defend Russia, which basically amounts to the threat of using nuclear weapons.

All this constitutes yet another, major escalation.

Putin is doubling down on a failing strategy

Putin is doubling down on a failing strategy. He is trying to intimidate Ukraine and all countries that support it. But fake referenda will not change the legal status of Ukrainian territory. Mobilising reservists will not mean fresh, trained and motivated troops are somehow available. Threatening with nuclear blackmail is unacceptable and it will only increase Russia's diplomatic isolation. The threat to use nuclear weapons should alert the international community and in particular all the states which for one reason or another look with distance at this war which they believe does not concern them.

This decision to escalate is a sign of fear. We can already begin to see the reactions inside Russia, with courageous people trying to get on flights out of Russia, while they can.

⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/why-putin%20%99s-escalation-will-not-weaken-our-resolve_en

The main thing is not to be intimidated. We have to stay united as EU and continue our support to Ukraine as well as the countries that support it. Putin is trying to destroy Ukraine; we must make sure that Ukraine will prevail.

This is a moment of grave danger

This is a moment of grave danger. That is why I am convening an informal meeting of EU Foreign Ministers who are all in New York. We will discuss the latest events, reiterate our support to Ukraine and agree how we can best use the presence of so many world leaders in New York. Certainly, the UN will have to play its role. I will speak at the Security Council tomorrow on behalf of the European Union.

RUSSIA MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE CRIMES COMMITTED IN UKRAINE

27.09.2022 – Blog (¹⁰⁹) – *In September, I attended the annual UN General Assembly High Level Week and participated in a Security Council meeting on Ukraine. I stressed that the international community must force Russia to end this war, prevent at all costs the use of weapons of mass destruction and ensure that Russia is held accountable for its actions.*

The United Nations is the temple of multilateralism and the Security Council is its inner sanctum. Last week, with France acting as Chair, Foreign Ministers from the members of the Security Council and invited countries, plus the UN Secretary General and the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) had the rare opportunity to debate in person the war against Ukraine and, in particular, accountability for the crimes committed there. My intervention before this Council was the most important moment of my week in New York.

I presented the EU's point of view on the illegal nature of the Russian aggression, the moral and political defeat that Russia has already suffered, our refusal to recognise the sham referenda organised by the Russian occupation authorities in Ukraine with a strong warning against the potential use of weapons of mass destruction by Russia (¹¹⁰).

This last issue is essential. I appealed to all global leaders to send a clear and united signal to Russia that the use of weapons of mass destruction is unacceptable in any circumstances, and I was pleased that the Chinese Foreign Minister, among others, joined our position during our bilateral meeting (¹¹¹). Based on what I heard in the UNSC and during my various bilateral meetings, there seems to be a global consensus on which we must build.

(¹⁰⁹) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/security-council-debate-most-important-moment-my-week-new-york_en

(¹¹⁰) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/ukraine-speech-high-representative-josep-borrell-un-security-council_en

(¹¹¹) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/china-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-meets-state-councillorforeign-minister_en

Morally and politically, Russia has already lost the war

Morally and politically, Russia has indeed already lost the war and is increasingly losing it on the battlefield as well. However, regrettably, President Putin is continuing on his dangerous path of escalation. He is trying to intimidate Ukraine and all countries that support Ukraine. This will fail again, as it has already failed in recent months and as all wars of invasion eventually do. But how many more men, women and children will need to die before the Russian President decides to silence his guns?

This war is much more than a war in Europe. At stake is the protection of weaker states from the more powerful ones. Do we want the global rule of law, or do we want the law of the jungle? Do we believe in spheres of influence or in the free choice of sovereign states?

This war is a tragedy in so many ways. In addition to the terrible casualties and destruction caused in Ukraine, Russia is dragging the world into an economic recession and a global food crisis. It is not only Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, who are victims of this senseless war, many others around the globe are also strongly affected by hunger, instability and inflation caused by this war.

We support the Black Sea Grain Initiative facilitated by the UN Secretary-General and Türkiye. Together with our European Union Solidarity Lanes, this has helped to lower global food prices – but so far it did not solve this global challenge. It is important to highlight that two-thirds of the Ukraine grain exported this way goes to those countries that need it most and not to Europeans, as Putin is falsely arguing.

All victims of Russia's aggression deserve justice

Accountability was the core issue of this Security Council meeting. Russian armed forces have been terrorising civilian populations and are committing countless crimes: mass murder, destruction, rape and forced migration. All victims of Russia's aggression deserve justice and reparation.

As President Zelenskyy said in the General Assembly: where there have been crimes, there must be justice. Otherwise, peace will not be possible. During our meeting, Karim Khan, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court reported on the worrying findings of the ICC in Ukraine during the past months. We rely on the ICC and on the Ukrainian authorities on this issue. However, ensuring accountability is

the responsibility of the whole international community. We owe this not only to the victims, but also to the next generation, to the future of Ukraine.

During this meeting, the person that should have been listening most to the other Foreign ministers – Sergei Lavrov, the Russian Minister – only entered the room to deliver his own surreal and outrageous speech and then immediately walked out, as he has also done at the recent [G20](#) Foreign Minister's meeting (¹¹²) and at the [ASEAN Regional Forum](#) (¹¹³). During his address to the Council, Lavrov spouted well-known Russian propaganda, trying to justify the unjustifiable with absurd accusations regarding the so-called 'Nazi' regime in Ukraine. He seemed impervious to reality and living in a parallel universe.

Despite being a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the attitude of the Russian Foreign Minister in New York confirms his country's profound disrespect for the international community, the multilateral institutions and the international rules-based order. This contempt was already clearly expressed by Vladimir Putin's decision to escalate the conflict in the middle of the United Nations High Level Week, with sham referenda to annex part of Ukraine, the mobilisation of at least 300 000 men, to strengthen its aggression against this country and threats to use weapons of mass destruction. In stark contrast, Dmytro Kuleba, Foreign Minister of Ukraine, recalled with dignity the suffering of the Ukrainian people caused by Russian aggression.

No other countries supported Russia's point of view

It was striking that besides Belarus, none of the other countries expressed support of Russia's point of view. Chinese FM Wang Yi, recalled that '*the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be safeguarded, the purposes and principles of the UN Charter upheld*'. He also asked that '*international humanitarian law should be observed to minimize civilian casualties*' contrary to what Russia is doing on the ground. Indian Foreign Minister Jaishankar stressed that '*this cannot be an era of war*' and recalled that '*the global order that we all subscribe to, is based on international law, the UN Charter and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States*'. Also, Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, Ghana's Foreign Minister stressed that Ukraine '*has every right and indeed a responsibility to defend its territorial integrity and political independence*', and concluded that '*Ghana does not,*

(¹¹²) See p. 235.

(¹¹³) See p. 315.

and will not, recognise any territory that is unilaterally and forcefully acquired as dismembered from a sovereign entity'.

Many other countries, from all continents spoke during this meeting, including US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (⁽¹⁴⁾) and my colleagues from the EU and wider European family. They all underlined our united and undivided support for Ukraine to regain its full sovereignty over its entire territory, our condemnation of threats to use weapons of mass destruction and of the multiple abuses committed by Russia in Ukraine, which must be brought to justice.

Peace in Ukraine still seems a long way off. However, I have returned from New York both worried and confident. Worried because I am fully aware of the seriousness of the international situation caused in particular by the food and energy crises and the dangers that Russia poses to world peace. But also confident because between the last G20 Foreign Ministers meeting in Bali (⁽¹⁵⁾) in July and the UNGA week in New York, I have noted a real shift in the positioning of many countries, including several important ones. The Russia's political and military radicalisation has begun to worry many of them.

Therefore, I have come to Brussels reassured on one crucial issue: Russia's isolation within the international community has become more pronounced in the last few weeks. Despite a massive and cynical use of disinformation and blatant lies, Russia is losing ground in the ongoing battle of narratives. More and more countries understand now that Putin is taking the world into a very dangerous direction and must be stopped.

Engaging with the rest of the world

At the same time, I understood that it is necessary for the EU to engage with the rest of the world. We need to help the most vulnerable countries of the Global South to face the food and energy crises caused by the war.

(¹⁴) See: <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-the-united-nations-security-council-ministerial-meeting-on-ukrainian-sovereignty-and-russian-accountability/>

(¹⁵) See p. 235.

HOW THE WAR CHANGED EUROPE

01.10.2022 – Speech ^(¹¹⁶) – *During the Atlantic Forum in La Toja (Spain) in the autumn, I painted a portrait of how Russia's war had transformed Europe both internally and in its relations with the rest of the world.*

This is a moment for Europe to wake up.

Europe was built as a project of peace among Europeans and, fortunately, this goal has now been achieved. But in order to build this peace project, Europe wanted to bypass the concept of power and replaced it with trade and law. We replaced power with a peaceful relationship that trade builds and law sustains.

And today we realise that interdependence alone does not guarantee peace because we live in a world where power, the power relationship, is increasingly naked and brutal. We have read a lot of Kant and little Hobbes.

And now we realise that unity, which is difficult to build by means of clever agreements, is not enough. We realise that we Europeans have to build a new relationship with the idea of power. It is not enough to be a soft power, it is not enough to be a soft power.

We also need to have elements of coercive power. We do not want to stop being an instrument in the service of peace, but we must also be able to deal with situations of war. And these are words that European society is not used to, because we have happily settled into peace. I know how difficult it is for me that some European countries want to take part in our military missions around the world, even if they are not combat missions, but missions to help others to fight.

We must understand that economic interdependence is not enough to guarantee peace and that having military instruments at our disposal is not a whim, it is not something to be reduced to a minimum, but it is necessary and indispensable for survival.

^(¹¹⁶) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/speech-hrvp-la-toja_en

It takes at least two to trade, but one is enough to wage war. And that one is willing to wage war, has waged it and will continue to do so.

So let me try to explore what this war means, how it is changing us, and how we can get out of it. We thought the war had disappeared from our space. We haven't had it for more than 30 years. We haven't had war since the wars in the former Yugoslavia.

And now we have a high intensity war with tanks, missiles, planes, infantry, trenches. A war unleashed by a member of the United Nations Security Council with nuclear power and with a very precise objective, which is to liquidate and cut up Ukraine and forcibly integrate it into Russia.

It is true that Russia and Ukraine have had historical and cultural relations for a long time, that Ukraine is the cradle even of Russia itself and of the Orthodox religion, and that they have intense and complex cultural and historical ties over the centuries.

But does that give Russia the right to attack and annex Ukraine? Certainly not, because if that were the case, how many could claim such a right on the basis of past history? Moreover, in 1994, Russia signed the Budapest Memorandum in which it solemnly pledged to guarantee Ukraine's territorial integrity.

So why does Russia attack Ukraine?

Because since the end of the collapse of the Soviet empire, Russia has had an existential problem and a feeling of humiliation towards the West. Its political and ideological system collapsed like a house of cards. Its economy has been privatised and the state has also been privatised because it has been devoured by the oligarchs.

Putin proposes to the Russian people the deal 'You stay out of politics and I will guarantee you welfare, because I have enormous oil and gas wealth'. And that has worked for years and has certainly built up, thanks to hydrocarbons, a military power. Russia's economy today is the size of Italy's in global terms but in per capita terms it is three times smaller.

It has built a power on oil and gas. It has strengthened its external influence by selling arms and by meddling and participating in every conflict in which it could pose a problem for the West.

Putin is not trying to recreate the Soviet Union. He knows that no one wants communism to return. On the contrary, he relies on something, on an argument that is much more inexhaustible, that never goes out of fashion and that is very attractive. It is called nationalism. That is what Putin relies on and many of us here know what the consequences of exacerbated nationalism are.

It is a nationalism that is structured around the more or less mythical memory of the Russia of the Tsars or, more recently, of Soviet Russia, including the German-Russian Pact of 1939, the seed of the Second World War, which Moscow solemnly celebrates every year.

There is a big difference with respect to China. China also has a feeling of resentment towards the West. China remembers very well the humiliation and the quartering they suffered when they lost the industrial revolution. The opium wars. They know this all too well, but China's resentment towards the West is expressed in another way. China knows very well that to compete with the West it must first have the weapons of economics and technology.

And they are doing so. And they are doing it, by the way, very well, but Russia has never succeeded and that is its drama. And what it cannot achieve through economics and technology, it is now trying to achieve through armed violence. And the question is: when military failure becomes a reality, what will happen to Russia?

The war is not going well for Putin.

I am sure he could never have imagined that seven months after launching the invasion he would be backtracking. On the contrary, he was convinced that in two weeks he would take Kyiv and install an independent regime exactly as he has with Lukashenko.

In Belarus no such thing has happened. And why has it not happened? On paper, the Russian army is an extremely powerful army and has shown enormous weakness.

Why? Because of its lack of command and control.

Russia has lost 14 generals so far in the war. This has demonstrated an intrinsic weakness, which is the weakness of armies in authoritarian systems where no one tells the truth to the supreme leader.

In any case, the war is today in a new, different phase, because the Ukrainian advance is confronted by two decisions taken by Russia:

- 300 000 soldiers will be called up. We will see how effective these new recruits will be.
- and the clearly expressed threat to use nuclear weapons again reiterated by Russia.

Putin did not expect the European reaction either.

He was too convinced that our energy dependence on Russia would prevent us from acting and that our divisions would prevent us from acting. Most Eastern and Baltic countries, i.e. those that have suffered from Russia throughout history, have always had an extremely suspicious and even defensive attitude.

And, admittedly, they were right.

From the other side of Europe, the Portuguese, the Spanish, those of us who are far from the front, if I can put it that way, have no special problems with Russia. And central Europeans like Germany had woven with Russia a network of economic interdependence visualised in gas because they believed that this was the surest way to secure peace with Russia.

And now? Now it must be recognised that this was a serious strategic mistake.

Since the end of the Cold War, we in Europe have been living on peace dividends. And the peace dividends have come from two sides.

On the one hand because the United States provided us with military security. And when the first gas supply contract was signed, we were warned that we were creating a dependency that could be lethal. And, in spite of everything, we continued. Just look at the network of pipelines stretching from the Arctic peninsulas to the heart of Europe.

But this dependence has NOT prevented us from standing up to Russia.

And Putin did not imagine that instead of him cutting off the gas, it is we who have decided to stop using their oil, coal and gas. By the end of the year we will stop buying oil. And before the war, Russia supplied us with 40 % of the gas we imported. Now it is only 10 %.

Some can't reduce anything because they consume nothing because energy poverty is a reality. But all of us who can, including the public authorities, must make the necessary effort to free ourselves from this dependence.

We have also done something else that was not in the programme, which was to use European budgetary resources to finance arms to a country at war.

Fortunately we had an intergovernmental fund which is administered by the states, which is not subject to European budgetary rules and which has enabled us to spend €2.5 million to date on the purchase of arms for Ukraine.

But that is only part of the story, because each member state does this on its own and nobody knows how much each one does. But I have a small idea and I can assure you that it is much more than the EU's €2 500 000 000.

Our military effort is much, much greater than this figure.

And if we add to that our economic support plus €10 billion to help support the Ukrainian state's civilian expenditure budget, our contribution is not ridiculous, as some say. On the contrary, it is essential and we must continue to make it.

When the press asks me 'And what else are you going to do?' Well, more of the same, more military aid, more sanctions against Russia, more and better diplomatic work in the world to convince the world of the reasons and consequences of this war. A war that Russia has already lost in moral and political terms and that Ukraine has not yet won.

Russia intended to wage a blitzkrieg. And it has not succeeded. It has not succeeded because the Ukrainians have defended themselves, but they have been able to defend themselves thanks to our military support. In January, when I visited the front line in the Donbass, when the drums of war were already beating, when Ukraine was already waiting for the attack, its prime minister said to me: 'I know that when Russia attacks, you will not come to defend us, but at least give us the weapons with which we can do it ourselves'.

And that's what we have done, and that's what we had to do.

And it's costly for us. But it would be much more costly in political and economic terms if Russia had succeeded in invading, cutting up and dominating Ukraine, because the threat to our security would be much greater.

Another thing that the war has served to do, and every cloud has a silver lining, is to make Europe wake up and understand, as I said at the beginning, that Europe must integrate war into its existential horizon and modernise its armed forces.

Because today we have many duplications and redundancies among our 27 armies. All together we spend four times what Russia spends on defence, four times. Certainly not with the same efficiency.

And as much as China spends.

But 27 budgets and 27 armies together do not make one. There are many things that are duplicated and others that we don't have. We have redundancies and gaps. We don't have refuelling capabilities, we don't have drones and we've run out of ammunition pretty quickly.

We need a rearmament process that is done in a coordinated way. Otherwise, we can waste a lot of public money.

And that is also the task for me, trying, from the agencies we have, to plan a military development, both industrially and operationally, that will allow us to coordinate our military capabilities more.

That will strengthen NATO and make us stronger. It is important to note how important it is that our rearmament is not done in an uncoordinated way, as we did our disarmament in the previous financial crisis.

And a final word to situate ourselves vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

Yes, in the United Nations, 140 countries condemned Russia, but there were many abstentions. In the Security Council, Brazil and India abstained from condemning Russia's annexation of Ukrainian territories. This means that not everyone has understood the causes, but they have understood the consequences of the war very well, because the consequences are being suffered.

Businessmen tell me that they can't keep the factories running with this price of gas. I know the consequences very well. Like the president of the African Republic who tells me I can't plant because I don't have fertilisers. The consequences can be felt, experienced, suffered. And Russia has tried very hard to convince the world that the consequences of the war are not the consequences of the war, but the consequences of our economic sanctions.

And that is absolutely false.

And certainly people, many people in the world, at the individual level and at the institutional level, get the narrative that we are responsible. The battle of the narrative is a battle that we must also win.

Battles are won on the battlefield with weapons by those who fight and they are won in the realm of ideas by those of us who have the word. We diplomats do not fight with weapons, but we fight with words and we have to strengthen our efforts for what is now called the Global South.

Everyone is talking about the Global South, i.e. the countries that are neither committed nor aligned, that do not want to follow us, that are not with Russia but do not want to speak out against it either.

The war has brought with it a food crisis and an energy crisis that we are suffering from, but I can assure you that there are countries that are suffering much more. Food accounts for 15 % of our budget and 40 % of the average African's budget.

The poorest people are suffering much more from rising prices.

We are filling our gas stocks and we have succeeded in doing so.

But we have taken 60 billion cubic metres out of the international market for liquefied gas. This means that we have taken it away from someone who no longer consumes it because we can pay more for it. And that also upsets political balances and creates resentment.

Let's face reality. We have a very large economic capacity, but not everyone has the same economic capacity as we do.

The gas market is extremely tight.

In the short term it is very difficult to increase gas supply and therefore we not only have to give up Russian gas as part of the process of ecological transition and because the world gas market will not be able to meet all demand.

The discourse of the Global South reflects the old historical anti-imperialist resentment in Latin America and anti-colonialist resentment in Africa. We are told that Russia is not alone in invading others. You did it too. There are those who remember that Russia was a great supporter of the liberation struggles for independence in Africa.

These things we have to understand, we have to grasp them, we have to incorporate them into our mental and dialectical structure when we deal with others. That is a battle we also have to win, because we have enough arguments to do so, but at the cost of engaging much more with the rest of the world.

And this would be the ultimate lesson we Europeans have to learn from this war.

Our unity and our ability to overcome differences by peaceful means makes us attractive to Latin America, for example, which is looking for forms of regional integration, or to Africa. We must make more effort, not only in classical development aid, but also in fairer trade agreements and more targeted investment to promote the economic capacities of these countries.

This is a multidimensional war.

It is fought on the battlefields, it is fought in the communication networks, it is fought in the field of ideas and in the momentum that is going to be created by the movement of people and it adds to the effects of climate change. If you go to the Horn of Africa, you will see that the devastating effect of climate change is compounded by the no less devastating effect of the lack of food.

20 million tonnes of wheat blocked in Ukraine. That's a lot of people who have starved to death. And others will be spared from dying, because thanks to the UN and Türkiye's Pact, that grain will be unblocked and will arrive.

For some it will come late and for others not yet, but the geopolitical consequences of the war are as important as the war itself.

Putin also believes that democracies are weak, that our public opinion systems will falter, that when winter comes, General Winter who has always saved the Russian army when it was in trouble, when winter comes and we are cold, he will win.

Who does not want to stop the war? But how do you end the war? The war has to end well in order to build peace.

The war cannot end simply because of Westerners' fatigue in supporting Ukraine.

The war has to end:

- Ukraine can defend its territorial integrity.
- with Russia paying for the effects of the destruction, and
- in political terms, recognising its moral culpability.

We must use the consequences of the war to build stronger security relations. I know that this will be very difficult, but we can ask no less. We cannot waver.

Because what is at stake is much more than Ukraine's territorial integrity. It is, at the end of the day, our way of life.

THE FIGHT CONTINUES AGAINST FOOD INSECURITY

21.11.2022 – Blog ^(¹¹⁷) – *In November, the Black Sea Grain Initiative, brokered by the United Nations and Türkiye, was extended. Together with the Solidarity Lanes, which the EU put in place, both initiatives were vital to limit food insecurity globally. Food should never be used as a weapon of war.*

Before Russia's war of aggression, Ukraine was one of the world's leading exporters of agricultural products: the first one for sunflower seed oil, the fourth for maize and the fifth for wheat. And these exports were mainly destined for countries in the Global South: in 2021, 27 % of Ukrainian wheat went to North Africa and 58 % to Asia.

Ukraine used to supply around 45 million tonnes of grain to the global market every year, mostly by ships. Since the start of Russia's war on 24 February, Russian armed forces have systematically targeted crops, farms, silos and transport infrastructures to limit Ukraine's capacity to produce and export agricultural products. Russian fleet deliberately blocked safe passage to and from Ukrainian Black Sea ports.

The livelihoods of millions at risk

This has contributed substantially to driving up world cereals prices, creating food insecurity globally and putting the livelihoods of millions of people at risk. It has severely affected the activities of the United Nations World Food Programme, which was buying half of its grain stock from Ukraine before the war. I recently visited Somalia and have seen first-hand the severity of the food insecurity caused by the cumulative effects of climate change and the war in Ukraine in that part of the world.

In response to Russia's unacceptable weaponisation of food, two successful initiatives were taken. Last May, the European Commission and bordering EU member states established the [EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes](#) ^(¹¹⁸) to facilitate and

^(¹¹⁷) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/fight-continues-against-food-insecurity-russia%E2%80%99s-war-creating_en

^(¹¹⁸) See: https://transport.ec.europa.eu/news/european-commission-establish-solidarity-lanes-help-ukraine-export-agricultural-goods-2022-05-12_en

accelerate land freight transport between Ukraine and the EU and, in July, the United Nations and Türkiye brokered an agreement to open a safe maritime humanitarian corridor in the Black Sea ([the Black Sea Grain Initiative](#)⁽¹¹⁹⁾).

Since the start of the Solidarity Lanes, [more than 15 million tonnes of Ukrainian agricultural goods have been exported](#) by road, rail and through Romanian Black Sea and Danube ports⁽¹²⁰⁾. These lanes are currently also the only option for the export of non-agricultural Ukrainian goods and for importing goods that Ukraine needs, such as fuel and humanitarian assistance. As such, they have become the lifeline of Ukraine's economy, bringing back more than €15 billion of much-needed income to Ukrainian farmers and businesses.

EU member states bordering Ukraine (Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary) have made big efforts and investments to facilitate these trade routes. By establishing a more stable connectivity with the EU, the Solidarity Lanes have become an indispensable link with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, which is also important in view of their accession process to the EU.

€1 billion to improve EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes

However, these lanes have capacity limits, bottlenecks persist and logistics costs are high. [The European Commission will dedicate €250 million](#) of grants to sustain and further increase their capacity. In the short-term, it will support quick improvements to reduce waiting times and improve movement through the border crossing points and their access routes. To go further, the EU will mobilise €1 billion in total until the end of 2023, with the European Investment Bank (which will lend €300 million for this project), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (€300 million), and the World Bank (\$100 million) to ensure liquidity for operators and funding for repairs and capacity increases⁽¹²¹⁾.

Moreover, since July 2022, when the Black Sea Grain Initiative was agreed, over 400 ships with grain and other foodstuffs have left the Ukrainian ports of Chornomorsk, Odesa and Yuzhny/Pivdennyi. [As of 7 November 2022, over 10 million tonnes have been exported via this initiative](#)⁽¹²²⁾. Over 40 % of the cargo was maize, the grain most affected by blockages in Ukrainian granaries at the

⁽¹¹⁹⁾ See: <https://www.un.org/en/black-sea-grain-initiative>

⁽¹²⁰⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/uk/FS_22_6862

⁽¹²¹⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_22_6825

⁽¹²²⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/ukrainian-grain-exports-explained/>

beginning of the war (75 % of the 20 million tonnes of grain stored). It had to be moved quickly to make space for wheat from the summer harvest.

Contrary to Russian propaganda, half of all agricultural products (two-thirds of wheat and three-quarters of sunflower oil) exported through the Black Sea Initiative went to developing countries. The World Food Programme has restarted shipping wheat from Black Sea ports. So far, five ships carrying a total of over 150 000 tonnes of wheat have left Ukrainian ports for Ethiopia, Yemen, Djibouti, Somalia and Afghanistan.

Right after Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the Russian blockade of Ukrainian agricultural products exports, prices of wheat and maize rose sharply and maintained high levels until May 2022. At the end of May, when Solidarity Lanes were established, the prices started to drop. Both the lanes and the Black Sea Grain Initiative have had a very positive impact. However, export levels remain significantly lower than in previous years and prices are still above pre-war levels. In September and October, due to Russia's announcement of its intention to end the Black Sea Grain Initiative, prices started to rise again. That is why it was so crucial for this initiative to be extended.

It is obvious that it is Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its deliberate targeting of Ukrainian agricultural facilities and export routes that have exacerbated the food price spike and the global food crisis. However, Russia continues to manipulate information and spread propaganda accusing our sanctions. These are blatant lies. We have always been clear that our sanctions do not target the trade in agricultural and food products, including grain and fertiliser, between Russia and third countries.

Food should never be used as a weapon of war

The Solidarity Lanes and the Black Sea initiative are of course of crucial importance to limit the risk of a global famine, but they cannot solve the food crisis alone. Only the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukrainian territory and the cessation of Russian aggression, in accordance with the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly, can enable Ukraine to produce and export the quantities of agricultural products that a world of 8 billion people needs urgently. The Russian aggression is not only a crime against Ukraine and Ukrainians and a blatant violation of the core principles of the UN Charter; it also puts in danger the life of millions of people in the poorest countries of the world. Food should never be used as a weapon of war.

INTENSE DAYS IN POLAND TO SUPPORT UKRAINE

04.12.2022 – Blog ¹²³ – *In early December, I went to Poland to participate in the OSCE ministerial meeting. I also met with the Polish defence minister and visited the new EU military mission to train Ukrainian soldiers.*

Nineteen years ago, I came to Lodz to participate in a debate ahead of the referendum on Poland's accession to the EU. Last Wednesday, I was again in this city to participate in the ministerial meeting ⁽¹²⁴⁾ of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) ⁽¹²⁵⁾.

This organisation was created during the Cold War, in the wake of the Helsinki agreement of 1975, to ensure early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Since almost fifty years, with its today 57 participating countries, it has played a very significant role to preserve a relatively stable European peace order, despite various conflicts and crises.

OSCE in jeopardy due to Russian aggression

Since 24 February, the Russian aggression against Ukraine has put this architecture in jeopardy. Last year, during the OSCE Ministerial Council in Stockholm in December 2021, the focus was how to reengage Russia in the dialogue on the European security architecture. This year, the attention has been on how to continue the multilateral engagement despite the current stalemate after Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

The Polish government decided not to grant visa to the Russian foreign affairs minister Lavrov to attend the OSCE meeting. This spared him from witnessing a widespread condemnation of Russia's behaviour. As many other participants I stated during the plenary meeting ⁽¹²⁶⁾ that Russia has flouted not only the specific

⁽¹²³⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/intense-days-poland-support-ukraine_en

⁽¹²⁴⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/osce-press-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-ahead-ministerial-council_en

⁽¹²⁵⁾ See: <https://www.osce.org/>

⁽¹²⁶⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/osce-speech-high-representative-josep-borrell-behalf-european-union-plenary-session-osce_en

Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) commitments, but also violated the core principles on which European security is built.

The Russian army targeting civilian infrastructure

After failing to invade Ukraine, the Russian army is now deliberately targeting energy and water infrastructure on which normal Ukrainian citizens rely. Turning its war of aggression into a purely punitive campaign, Russia is trying to inflict as much pain as possible on Ukrainian citizens, using winter as a weapon to put them into darkness and cold. It constitutes clearly an additional war crime. There can be no respect of the OSCE values as long as Russia continues its war of aggression against Ukraine with Belarus' complicity.

Russia has not joined the consensus on the extension of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine ⁽¹²⁷⁾. However, the OSCE Secretary General launched a new extra-budgetary Support Programme for Ukraine ⁽¹²⁸⁾ in November to ensure continued OSCE presence. I announced that the EU will support this programme with €1.2 million to help further demining Ukraine.

Furthermore, the OSCE budget for 2022 and 2023 has not been approved and the organisation has to work on the basis of monthly allotments. Despite these issues, the Moscow Mechanism, dedicated to send missions of experts to assist participating States, has been used three times already in 2022 (twice on Ukraine and once on Russia). Its reports provided a wealth of evidence on violations of international humanitarian law and human rights by Russian invasion forces.

North Macedonia will take over the chair of the OSCE from Poland in 2023, and I met my colleague, Foreign Minister Bujar Osmani on that issue. We discussed how the OSCE could remain a useful multilateral framework despite the major obstacles created by Russia's flagrant violation of the Helsinki and UN Charters. As EU, we continue to see this organisation as a major building stone of the European security architecture and the OSCE will continue to receive our political and financial support. We have to work creatively to ensure that it remains capable of actions and fulfils as much of its functions as possible.

⁽¹²⁷⁾ See: <https://www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine-closed>

⁽¹²⁸⁾ See: <https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/530219>

I used also the opportunity of this OSCE meeting to meet my colleagues from Azerbaijan and Armenia to help deescalate the tensions between the two countries and discuss the future of our EU monitoring capacity (EUMCAP) mission deployed since October in the region.

I participated also with my colleague and friend Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba to a side event on '[Ending Russia's Impunity and Delivering Justice for Victims](#)'⁽¹²⁹⁾. The EU is fully engaged with Ukraine and international partners to ensure accountability for crimes committed in Russia's war against Ukraine. That is why, together with the European Commission, I presented recently a proposal to the member states along three work strands.

First, we are supporting the [International Criminal Court's](#) (ICC)⁽¹³⁰⁾ central role in investigating the war crimes and crimes against humanity. All those who have seen the horrors of Bucha and elsewhere, know these are the gravest of crimes and I pay tribute to the work already done by the ICC Chief Prosecutor.

Secondly, we are providing support to the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, on the collection of evidence, training of investigators. We do this through our representation, the EU Advisory Mission Ukraine, Eurojust and the Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group (ACA).

Thirdly, we are ready to support Ukrainian efforts to ensure accountability for the crime of aggression. The EU, together with Ukraine and international partners, and in full coherence with the action of the ICC, will work to support the establishment of a special tribunal to investigate and prosecute the crime of aggression as President Zelenskyy has called for. This tribunal must have the backing of the UN and the broadest support of the UN membership.

A special tribunal to prosecute the crime of aggression

Accountability requires also Russia to pay for the damages caused to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. To date, EU Member States have frozen approximately €19 billion of assets belonging to Russian oligarchs and others supporting President Putin. Approximately €300 billion of Russian Central Bank reserves have been blocked. While 'frozen' and 'blocked' does not mean 'confiscated', we will

⁽¹²⁹⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/russiaukraine-speech-high-representative-josep-borrell-event-%E2%80%9Cjoint-actions-ending-russia%E2%80%99s_en

⁽¹³⁰⁾ See: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/>

explore legal avenues to make sure that Russia will effectively pays for the reconstruction of Ukraine. There are already precedents with for example the seized assets of the Central Bank of Afghanistan used to compensate the victims of the 9/11 attacks.

After the OSCE Meeting in Lodz, I went to Warsaw to meet the Polish Minister of Defence Błaszcak. To him, I expressed our gratitude for all the efforts Poland is doing in support of Ukraine.

In Warsaw, I also spoke at the [Polish Institute of International Affairs \(PISM\)](#) (¹³¹), the leading Polish foreign policy think tank, on EU support to Ukraine. When I am on mission, I want to use any opportunity to meet civil society actors or to exchange with think tankers and researchers. This is essential both to get an idea of what is really going on in a society and to explain what we are doing, including the difficulties we encounter.

We had a lively discussion with Director Sławomir Dębski and a group of professors and researchers about the causes and the geopolitical consequences of the war. I passed a strong message on how decided the EU is to support Ukraine to recover its territorial integrity and the political work needed to keep the support of the European society.

The new EU military assistance mission

On Friday morning, I travelled to Brzeg, near Wrocław, to visit one of the training centre of the brand new [EU Military Assistance Mission \(EUMAM\) Ukraine](#) (¹³²), two weeks after it was launched.

Anyone familiar with European decision-making processes will appreciate the speed with which this mission was put in place. I proposed its creation during the informal Defence Ministerial meeting on 30 August. Following intense negotiations, EUMAM was decided on 17 October. It was launched officially on 15 November and was operational on 30 November, only 15 days after.

With the Combined Arms Training Command Commander, Major General Piotr Trytek, I witnessed some of the ongoing training activities of Ukrainian sappers.

(¹³¹) See: <https://www.pism.pl/konferencje/winning-the-war-securing-the-peace-eu-support-for-ukraine>

(¹³²) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-union-military-assistance-mission-ukraine-eumam_en

I exchanged with the Ukrainian troops and their trainers, among them British and Canadians officers.

It is difficult to talk to soldiers, which are being trained to go to war, risking their lives. We used to say that Ukrainian soldiers are not only defending their country but also the values we believe in. And that's true. But, they need not only our applause for their determination and courage, they need above all more support to defend their homeland and its territorial integrity, as long as it takes. I thanked Poland for being at the forefront of the EU support to Ukraine and for hosting the EUMAM mission, an important way to provide this support.

Training 15 000 Ukrainian soldiers

Our mission will train 15 000 Ukrainian soldiers with a budget of €107 million for its initial two year mandate. Training will be conducted in different EU countries: 24 member states have put forward over 100 offers for training modules, which are currently under review to ensure they match Ukrainian needs. As of today, fifteen modules are ongoing with 1125 Ukrainian soldiers and nine modules have already been completed with 377 soldiers.

The last few days in Poland have been particularly intense. But this effort has been useful to demonstrate once again our determination to support Ukraine in every possible way.

2.

STRENGTHENING EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE



EUROPE IS IN DANGER

25.01.2022 – Speech ^(¹³³) – *A few weeks before the Russian war against Ukraine, I presented the result of our in-depth work on a Strategic Compass for the EU at the Bibliothèque Solvay in Brussels. I set out in this speech how the EU should develop into a real security actor.*

I want to split my remarks into three parts:

1. Why I believe Europe is in danger;
2. What we should do on the crisis around Russia/Ukraine; and
3. How can we develop the EU as a real security actor?

1. Europe in danger

For decades, we have had a debate on Europe's role in the world. Often people would describe the EU as an economic giant, but also a political dwarf and a military worm. I know that is a cliché. But, like many clichés, it had a basic element of truth in it.

So over the years, we had a long stream of plans and initiatives, full of acronyms. Going from the Pleven Plan and the European Defence Community; to European Political Cooperation and the start of the Common Foreign and Security Policy after Maastricht; to the wars in former Yugoslavia and the 'hour of Europe', to Saint Malo, the start of ESDP, then CSDP, the Helsinki Headline Goal, PESCO, the European Peace Facility etc.

This audience knows the 'alphabet soup'. And the basic fact is that, even if we have come a long way, security and defence is probably the area in EU integration with the biggest gap between expectations and results. Between what we could be and what citizens demand – and what we actually achieve.

Ever since I started as High Representative, I have advocated a realistic approach. Europeans must look at the world as it is, not as we want it to be. I also think we need to use plain language, rather than the usual, polite but empty phrases. That is why, at my EP hearing, I argued that Europeans must learn 'to speak the language of power'.

^(¹³³) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/%E2%80%9Ceurope-danger-what-next-eu-security-and-defence%E2%80%9D-speech-high-representativevice-president_en

Tonight I will speak in that same spirit.

The core message is this: Europe is in danger. I wish it were different, but the last two years have seen a serious worsening of our strategic environment. To the extent that I am convinced that today we are living through the most dangerous moment of the post-Cold War period.

- We face the risk of a major military conflict on our continent. Russia has amassed more than 100 000 troops and heavy equipment at the Ukrainian border. It is making open threats to use force unless its demands are met. At stake are the fate of Ukraine but also the wider principles of European security.
- Besides Russia/Ukraine, we have an unprecedented number of conflicts brewing at or beyond our borders: Syria (not solved), Libya, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa etc.
- In the wider world, the pandemic has exposed and accelerated underlying trends, acting like 'contrast fluid'. We see clearly how our world is marked by aggressive competition among states, with US-China strategic competition as the main 'structuring force'.
- Military conflicts still exist, but most striking are the 'invisible wars' everywhere and the weaponisation of everything. Migrants, vaccines, energy, technology standards are all tools for political competition.
- There is a geographic power shift, from West to East, from the Atlantic world to the Indo Pacific. And a functional one, away from governments. Our world is being transformed by financial markets, technology giants and media conglomerates – but also by crime syndicates and sleeper cells.
- All this is happening when the capacity of 'the multilateral system' is at its weakest for 30 years. Because relations among the main actors are conflictual, international cooperation has ground to a halt. The UN, the G20, the OSCE: we need them like never before but all are weakened by distrust, vetoes and infighting.

In a nutshell, we have the coming together of the problems of the 19th century, i.e. the clash of empires; of the 20th century, i.e. the age of power politics and that of the 21st century, i.e. the weaponisation of inter-dependence.

This is a risky cocktail: more problems, which are more serious and more inter-related, but less capacity to cope.

That is why I say Europe and its security are in danger. We need answers on the crisis of the day – Ukraine/Russia and Europe's security architecture – but also on the wider challenges we face.

For Europe, we have a choice to make. Either we seriously invest in our collective capacity to act. Or we accept being an object and not a subject in foreign policy – and then scale back the rhetoric of being a geopolitical actor.

The main missing ingredient is political will. I know that is a cliché. But as I said, most clichés contain a large element of truth.

2. The Ukraine/Russia crisis

This crisis did not start last December. Russia has been undermining the European security order for years.

Its military build up comes after previous uses of force against Ukraine (in Crimea, Donbas) and Georgia. It is taking place against the backdrop of Russia's aggressive use of disinformation and cyber attacks, in our neighbourhood and inside the EU itself. Not to mention its actions in Syria, Libya, the use of the Wagner group in Africa, etc.

My point is not to repeat, yet again, the litany of our differences. But to be realistic and acknowledge that we have profound disagreements with President Putin's government.

This crisis is not just about Ukraine but the European security order. Russia is trying to turn back the clock and get us to accept spheres of influence. This we cannot do. It is not a concept that belongs to this century.

As tensions have risen, so too has the pace of international diplomacy. There has been a diplomatic 'surge' with an intense, multi-layered diplomatic effort, in Geneva, Brussels, Vienna.

In all this, the EU has two priorities: diplomacy and deterrence. We need both and each depends on the other for success. We discussed yesterday at the FAC, with Secretary Blinken joining us via VTC. You have seen the outcome so I will only summarise our main action tracks:

- We must continue the search for de-escalation and contribute to all diplomatic efforts. We are coordinating with the US on the written response it will send this week in response to Russia's proposals.
- As a deterrent, we are preparing a set of strong sanctions in case Russia decides to take further military action against Ukraine. We must be ready for all scenarios. The nature of our response must match the nature of Russia's choices.

The sanctions decision will probably be the most consequential leverage that the West has – and we will do this in cooperation with the US and others. It falls to me as High Representative to propose a sanctions package to the Council where member states will have to decide.

- At the same time, we are expanding our support to Ukraine, so that it is better able to resist Russian pressure. Since 2014, we have supported Ukraine with €17 billion, also to increase its resilience against hybrid challenges. Yesterday, the European Commission added a new macro financial assistance package of €1.2 billion.

We are supporting Ukraine's security sector through an EU Advisory Mission. We have recently added €31 million from the European Peace Facility, to support the Ukrainian armed forces. And we are actively considering adding a military higher education component.

- We all know that Russia has many means to undermine Ukraine and cyber is prominent among these, as shown by last week's cyberattack. That is why we have signalled our readiness to assist Ukraine with cyber security experts.
- Finally and longer-term, there is the energy dimension, where again the EU role is key. The truth is that Russia has made its economy more sanctions proof, but we have not done the same on energy. We must reduce the outsized role that energy considerations play in EU-Russia relations.

We have to reduce our overall reliance on oil and gas and imports, for the Green Deal but also for geo-politics. This means the development of renewables at home and greater diversification of routes and sources from abroad. This is about investing in the green transition but also in reducing our strategic dependencies.

3. The Strategic Compass: facing our strategic responsibilities

The Ukraine/Russia crisis demonstrates that we face an increasingly competitive strategic environment. But the debate on European security and defence goes far beyond the Ukraine/Russia crisis.

We have security interests and stakes around the world, in the western Balkans, the Middle East, Africa and the Indo Pacific. These days, threats are coming from everywhere and manifest themselves in all strategic domains: cyber, maritime and space.

So we need to see the whole board and adopt a truly comprehensive approach to security. That is the philosophy of the Strategic Compass that I presented last November, in close cooperation with the European Commission.

More than the papers we usually produce in Brussels, the Strategic Compass proposes concrete ideas – with clear deadlines to measure progress. The Compass is a guide for action. There will be a robust follow-up process to ensure implementation. These are major differences with the 2003 EU Security Strategy and the 2016 Global Strategy.

There is a lot of detail in the Compass, which has developed into 35 pages, grouped under four work strands (ACT, SECURE, INVEST and PARTNER). Let me highlight just a few of the main ideas.

- The European Union should be able to rescue citizens in a situation like we saw in Afghanistan last summer. Or intervene quickly in a crisis where violence is threatening the lives of civilians. That is why we propose to develop an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity to allow us to quickly deploy up to 5 000 troops for different types of crises;
- We should increase our readiness through regular live exercises (never been done before); promote faster and more flexible decision-making and ensure greater financial solidarity, by enlarging the scope of common costs;
- We also propose to create an EU Hybrid Toolbox and expand our capacity to tackle disinformation and foreign interference. The point here is to mobilise all our tools, including sanctions and response teams. Right now, a cyber-exercise organised by the French Presidency is ongoing. We need more of this. And not only in the cyber domain.
- We must also deepen investment into the necessary strategic enablers and next-generation capabilities, such as high-end naval platforms, future combat air systems or capabilities for space-based earth observation;

At this point of the conversation, people tend to say: 'that is very nice but what about NATO?'.

Let me stress that NATO remains at the heart of Europe's territorial defence. No one is questioning that. But this should not prevent European countries from developing their capabilities and conducting operations in our neighbourhood and beyond.

Greater European strategic responsibility is the best way to reinforce transatlantic solidarity. It is not either EU or NATO: it is both/and.

Let me also add that hesitations to move ahead on this agenda 'because of NATO' come from inside the EU, not the US. They have repeatedly said, and I quote that the US wants: 'a stronger and more capable European defence that contributes to global and Transatlantic security'.

The US essentially says: 'Don't talk, act. Please get on with it and help us share the security burden.'

Naturally, we must remain faithful to Europe's way of doing security. We know that purely military responses are inadequate. We have seen this time and again, in Afghanistan, the Sahel and elsewhere. There are a lot of 'lessons to learn'. One thing is clear: we need a comprehensive understanding of security and locally-owned political settlements.

This is why the Compass puts a lot of emphasis on our 'integrated' approach, bringing civilian and military instruments together, investing in cooperative and multilateral solutions. That is our trademark and we must stick to wherever we operate around the world.

Conclusion: why now?

As I said at the beginning, the history of European integration is full of plans to strengthen the EU's role on security and defence. Most have come and gone. So why, people ask, should it be different this time?

My answer lies in the speed at which the geo-political context is changing. This makes the case for action urgent and compelling.

All the threats we face are intensifying and the capacity of individual member states to cope is both insufficient and declining. The gap is growing and this cannot go on.

My job has been to sketch a way out. However, results do not depend on strategy papers but on actions. These belong to the member states: they hold the prerogatives and the assets.

I am glad that member states' reactions have been very positive. They are fully engaged in the process and we are now building the consensus we need to adopt it in March. We will need to keep the level of ambition.

But the ultimate test will come after. The real question, also for today's debate is this: will the Strategic Compass be yet another plan – or truly a new beginning?

Politically the choice is similar to when we launched the euro or the Recovery Plan. When the costs of 'non-Europe' became so high that people were ready to re-think their red lines and invest in truly European solutions.

We jumped together, so to speak. In both cases, the results are clear and positive. Let us make a similar jump forward on European security and defence, as our citizens expect.

Thank you and I look forward to the debate.

SPACE AND DEFENCE: STRENGTHENING OUR CAPACITY TO ACT

20.02.2022 – Blog ⁽¹³⁴⁾ – *The changing geopolitical context obliges us to strengthen the EU's defence policy. However, what we understand by 'defence' must evolve to encompass new domains such as outer space.*

Space has become a strategic domain and an essential enabler for most of our daily activities, whether the Internet, telecommunications, or the movement of people, ships, aircraft or vehicles. In addition, it plays a central role in security and defence; for example, the United States created in 2019 a US Space Force. Therefore, we need to guarantee our ability to operate securely and constantly the infrastructures essential to our societies, including against threats in outer space. Last November, Russia deliberately destroyed one of its satellites, an irresponsible act that generated dangerous debris.

But space is also an important area of interest for me on a more personal level. From background, I am an aeronautical engineer. One of my first ministerial posts in Spain, as Minister for Telecommunications, led me to launch the first Hispasat satellite in 1992. Since then, I have never ceased to follow closely this sector, which has become essential for our societies.

Europe is a significant space power: its space sector had a turnover of €74 billion in 2019, which represents between 15 % and 20 % of the world market, with 48 000 employees working directly in this sector. The EU is increasingly involved, with the best known EU success stories: Galileo ⁽¹³⁵⁾ for positioning, navigation and timing and Copernicus ⁽¹³⁶⁾, the largest Earth observation system. Under the steering of my colleague Commissioner Breton, the Space Programme has been allocated €13.2 billion in the new Multiannual Financial Framework – the largest ever space budget at EU level. However, we need to do more in the future to keep up the pace, remain a leading space power and enhance our strategic autonomy in that field.

⁽¹³⁴⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/space-and-defence-protecting-europe-and-strengthening-our-capacity-act_en

⁽¹³⁵⁾ See: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-space-policy/galileo_en

⁽¹³⁶⁾ See: <https://www.copernicus.eu/en>

Space is becoming increasingly congested

We face also a growing problem: space is becoming increasingly congested due to a huge increase in satellites and space debris. Just to give some figures: since the beginning of the space era, in the 1960s, humanity has put in orbit 11 800 satellites of which 4 550 are currently operational. More than 20 000 new satellites are expected to be launched in the next 10 years – and this is just a conservative estimate. On top of that, there are over 128 million pieces of debris smaller than 1 centimetre orbiting Earth, and almost 1 million between 1 and 10 centimetres. The majority of debris is found at altitudes below 2 000 km, reflecting the space activity that takes place mainly in low earth orbit (Earth observation satellites, telecommunications satellite constellations, most military satellites...). This space debris has an average speed of 7-8 km/s, or 25-29 000 km/h. At these speeds, even if the debris is small, in case of collision, the impact is very destructive because the kinetic energy is the product of the mass of the debris and the square of its speed: a one-centimetre debris has about the same kinetic energy as a car travelling at 130 kilometres per hour...

This threatens our space infrastructure and space services. It risks affecting our daily life, our economies and societies, as well as our security and defence. Indeed, space is also a strategic enabler for defence capabilities. There is therefore a real need for the EU to contribute to address this global challenge. That is what we have proposed to do, [with our Joint communication on Space Traffic Management \(STM\)](#) (¹³⁷).

We intend to enhance EU capabilities to detect and catalogue more space objects and avoid collisions. We propose to foster EU-led standards and guidelines, to encourage safe conduct by operators, and to work toward a possible legislative proposal on STM rules. What is particularly important for me is the international dimension: space is a global common good that the international community has to protect and manage. Therefore, we aim for a multilateral STM framework at UN level and we will discuss this issue with the US and other key partners. STM is a civilian effort, yet it will also apply to military satellites. The [European Defence Agency](#) (¹³⁸) will help consolidate military needs in that domain.

As part of this week's space package, the Commission has also proposed to launch a [new strategic EU space infrastructure](#) (¹³⁹) in addition to Galileo and Copernicus. This is a major initiative to equip the EU with a European space-based secure

(¹³⁷) See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_22_923

(¹³⁸) See: <https://eda.europa.eu/>

(¹³⁹) See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_22_922

connectivity. In concrete terms, it will provide two services: a governmental highly secured communication service, which will ensure ultra-secured – quantum encrypted – communication with multiple defence and civilian users and a high-speed broadband access service, to provide internet access to all, and reduce the digital divide. The main features of the proposal comprise its security-by-design, which is a precondition for high-end security, and defence use.

A new strategic EU space infrastructure

The satellites will have a north/south orbit, which means they will cover all of Africa as well as the Arctic. So, by design, they can offer Africa high-speed internet, everywhere. This infrastructure could be the first major '[Global Gateway](#)' initiative (¹⁴⁰). Overall, the cost of this programme would be around €6 billion, to which the Union would contribute €2.4 billion. The rest of the financing would have to come from member states and from a public-private partnership scheme.

The Commission has also presented this week a [communication](#) outlining its contribution to European defence (¹⁴¹). This is the result of President von der Leyen's push towards a stronger EU defence, and teamwork with my colleagues Executive Vice President Margrethe Vestager and Commissioner Thierry Breton.

It proposes to step up investments in defence research and the development of capabilities, notably through the [European Defence Fund](#) (EDF) (¹⁴²), to facilitate synergies between civilian and defence domains, and to incentivise EU joint procurement of defence capabilities, notably through a value added tax (VAT) waiver and new financing solutions. It also proposes to look further into security and defence aspects of space, in line with the Strategic Compass. Lastly, it outlines the Commission contribution to counter hybrid threats and strengthen the EU's engagement on cybersecurity and cyber defence.

This communication is associated with a new [Roadmap on critical technologies](#) for security and defence (¹⁴³), which aims to boost them through European

(¹⁴⁰) See: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en

(¹⁴¹) See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_22_925

(¹⁴²) See: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-fund-edf_en

(¹⁴³) See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_924

research, development and innovation in close cooperation with member states and like-minded partners, especially the US and NATO. It also aims at reducing strategic dependencies in critical technologies for security and defence. This initiative links up with the work being carried out by the European Defence Agency (EDA) in defence innovation, including through the proposed EDA Defence Innovation Hub. The agenda developed in this defence package builds up on existing work strands and contributes to further strengthening the Strategic Compass (¹⁴⁴), currently being finalised.

With these two packages and with the Strategic Compass, the European Union – EU institutions and its member states – has a unique opportunity to join efforts to advance on these decisive issues. The geostrategic context in which we live in requires nothing less. The ‘proof of the pudding’, as usual, will be in implementation. After the adoption of the Strategic Compass in one month, it will be time for all of us to walk the talk.

(¹⁴⁴) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-eu-o_en

THE STRATEGIC COMPASS, A STEP CHANGE IN EU SECURITY AND DEFENCE

25.03.2022 – Blog ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ – *In March, I stressed in this blog post that the war against Ukraine proved that Europe was even more in danger than we thought when we presented the Strategic Compass, a document marking a real step change to strengthen EU security and defence.*

‘Knowing is not enough – one must apply. Willing is not enough – one must also act’, the German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once said. This quote is quite relevant to discussions on EU security and defence.

We have known for a long time that Europe is facing a fast-worsening strategic environment – but we have not always applied this knowledge. Similarly, we have often stated our desire to transform the EU into a stronger security and defence actor – but we have not always acted on it.

Two years ago, EU leaders tasked me as High Representative to develop an ambitious and actionable plan to strengthen the EU’s role on security and defence. This week, 27 EU foreign and defence ministers adopted the Strategic Compass and EU Leaders will endorse it today.

Enhance our collective capacity to act

We started to work on the Compass when we already felt that in a world of power politics, the EU needed to speak the language of power and enhance its collective capacity to act. Everything that has happened since has only strengthened this argument. It is obvious that the war against Ukraine reinforces even more this need for a sea change in EU security and defence. Today, no one denies that we need robust capabilities and the willingness to use them against the full spectrum of threats we face. How to get this done in practice is the purpose of the Strategic Compass, a rich document, with four main work strands:

- **Act** more quickly and decisively when facing crises;
- **Secure** our citizens against fast-changing threats;

⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-out-now-we-have-implement-it_en

- **Invest** in the capabilities and technologies we need; and
- **Partner** with others to achieve common goals.

The Compass includes a concrete plan for an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity to allow us to quickly deploy up to 5 000 troops for different types of crises, based on different scenarios. We will also increase the readiness of our forces through regular live exercises (never been done before at the EU level), strengthen our command and control arrangements and promote faster and more flexible decision-making. We will expand our capacity to tackle cyber threats, disinformation and foreign interference. And we will deepen investment into the necessary strategic enablers and next-generation capabilities. All this will make the EU a more capable security provider for its citizens, but also a stronger global partner, working with the UN, NATO and others for international peace and security.

More than the papers that we usually produce in Brussels, the Strategic Compass sets out concrete actions, with clear deadlines to measure progress. This is a member states-owned document and by signing off to it, they commit to implementing it.

Implementation, implementation, implementation

I am well aware that words are often easy and cheap but that actually providing security and defence is hard and expensive. The real metric for success will be whether the Strategic Compass leads to concrete results or not. That is why we need to move immediately to the implementation phase, working with member states, the European Commission, the European Defence Agency (EDA) and others.

When it comes to implementation, let me just mention a few action tracks: we will start now on developing the scenarios that will guide the development of the Rapid Deployment Capacity; we will begin the preparations for live exercises at the EU level. In May, the Commission together with the EDA will produce a report on existing defence gaps and proposals on how to remedy them. The same sense of urgency applies to accelerate our work on cyber, hybrid and foreign interference and manipulation of information, space, maritime etc...

Keeping up the momentum is essential. As High Representative, I will be relentless in pushing everyone towards results. If there are blockages or hesitations to implement what everyone has now agreed to, I will not be shy in pointing them out.

If open war on our continent does not compel us to act and become a real security actor act, when will we?

For more details, you can read my personal foreword ‘A Strategic Compass to make Europe a Security Provider’ and access the full document (¹⁴⁶). You can find all relevant documents at the special EEAS webpage devoted to the Strategic Compass (¹⁴⁷).

(¹⁴⁶) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf

(¹⁴⁷) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en

GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT EUROPEAN DEFENCE

01.06.2022 – Op-ed (¹⁴⁸) – *Following the special European Council in May, I highlighted in this Op-ed the urgency to strengthen our defence and security policy. I stressed in particular that greater joint investment were urgently needed which in turn requires greater political will.*

At a recent summit to assess the European Union's defence and security policy in response to Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, the bloc's leaders agreed that more pooled investment is urgently needed. With many of the necessary tools already in place, what is needed most now is the political will to follow through.

Russia's war in Ukraine has forced the European Union to address longstanding strategic challenges. The most immediate task is to end Europe's dependence on Russian energy imports, and this process is now underway, with a gradual oil embargo that will reach 90 % by the end of the year.

More broadly, Europe must also develop an effective security and defence policy, as well as the capabilities required to implement it. While this ambition itself is not new, there is a fresh impetus for it. Russia's war makes clear that we need a step change toward greater pooling of defence investments. That was the main conclusion from the European Council's discussion on defence this week.

No two political problems are identical. Sometimes, a challenge seems so new and unprecedented that it cannot be addressed until there has been a proper assessment of a changed landscape. And sometimes, the solutions are known but the resources for them are lacking. The European security and defence debate falls into a third category: the diagnosis and prescriptions are clear, but there has been a deficit of political will.

Spending too little on defence

We have known for years – even decades – that European governments have been spending too little on defence, and in too fragmented a manner. The result is that we lack the military capabilities to guarantee our own security or serve as a

(¹⁴⁸) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/getting-serious-about-european-defence_en

capable partner for NATO. We need to spend more, and we need to do more of that spending together.

Over the years, many European politicians, institutions, defence ministries, think tanks, and others have issued reports and proposals calling for more and better defence spending. These exhortations have reflected a clear and firm consensus among experts on the issue. Moreover, in 2004, the EU created the European Defence Agency to support member states with joint research, development, and procurement projects.

But many countries cut their defence spending following the 2008 financial crisis, reducing the shares of their budgets devoted to collaborative security investments. Since then, governments have too often paid lip service to joint spending while continuing to put national procurement first (often for political reasons, such as to support domestic industries and employment).

The net result has been dramatic

The net result has been dramatic. Between 2009 and 2018, member states cuts amounted to an aggregate defence under-spending of around €160 billion (\$171 billion) (¹⁴⁹). Worse, many others around the world have raced ahead. In the last 20 years, EU combined defence spending increased by only 20 %, compared to 66 % for the United States, almost 300 % for Russia, and 600 % for China (¹⁵⁰). Even more alarmingly, Europe reached a new low in 2021, when only 8 % of equipment spending went toward collaborative investments – a far cry from the 35 % that EU member states themselves have set as a target.

This underspending and lack of collaboration is costing EU countries (and thus taxpayers) tens of billions of euros per year, because of redundant spending and inefficiencies. But it doesn't have to be this way. It is within our own power to change course, and we already know the way. Through the Strategic Compass, EU institutions and all 27 member states have drawn up a roadmap. We have tools and frameworks in place – starting with the Permanent Structured Cooperation and the European Defence Fund – to help member states pursue research, development, and investments in a more coordinated manner.

(¹⁴⁹) See: <https://eda.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/2021/12/06/eda-finds-record-european-defence-spending-in-2020-with-slump-in-collaborative-expenditure>

(¹⁵⁰) See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/FS_22_3145

Strengthen the EU's defence industry

But other pieces still need to fall in place. We must provide financial incentives for joint procurement and move toward more strategic programming. We also need to strengthen the EU's defence industrial and technological base by supporting R&D and harnessing the potential of disruptive new technologies. As I told European leaders this week when they endorsed this approach, both the European Commission and the EDA can help with coordination.

Yes, it is a cliché in European politics to say that we lack only the political will to use the tools at our disposal. But clichés are generally true. We Europeans tend to make tough decisions only when we have tried everything else and are facing an acute crisis.

Those conditions have clearly been met. We are watching Russia wage a brutal war of aggression against Ukraine – one that has underscored Europe's own vulnerabilities, revealing longstanding capability deficits and new needs (such as to refill our depleted stocks). Moreover, this crisis comes on top of many other threats, both in our own neighbourhood and beyond. European interests are being challenged in all strategic domains, including cyber, maritime, and space.

We need to develop the means to protect ourselves in a dangerous world. That will require not just more defence spending but *better* defence spending. To ensure our collective security, we must invest more together.

WHAT NEXT FOR EU SECURITY AND DEFENCE?

13.07.2022 – Blog (¹⁵¹) – *After the June NATO Summit, I underlined in this blog post that in the new strategic environment we face, the EU's security and defence agenda had never been as relevant. We need member states to fulfil all their responsibilities within both the EU and NATO.*

The debate on European security and the EU's role as well as that of our strategic partners is in full swing. The recent NATO summit in Madrid (¹⁵²) was a success for the transatlantic alliance, both in terms of the strategic unity it displayed and the concrete decisions it took. The summit put renewed emphasis on NATO's collective defence task including plans to strengthen its presence on the eastern flank and enhance the overall number of high readiness forces. All leaders restated their commitment to help Ukraine defend itself against Russia's aggression until it could recover its sovereignty in full. Leaders also agreed to proceed with the NATO accession of Finland and Sweden, which further strengthens the sense of transatlantic unity at a critical time.

All this is unreservedly good news for European citizens and the EU. The EU's Strategic Compass agreed in March and the NATO 2022 Strategic Concept (¹⁵³) adopted at the Madrid Summit demonstrate that our respective assessments of the strategic environment are fully convergent, and US President Joe Biden has personally welcomed the EU's Strategic Compass (¹⁵⁴) and the ambitious agenda it contains. The task now is to take our strategic partnership with NATO to the next level and show how we as EU can take greater responsibility for our own security. In fact, these tasks are two sides of the same coin and going forward I see three main elements:

More deployable and inter-operable forces

1. We need more deployable and inter-operable forces, ready to address the full spectrum of threats and risks. This means Europeans should spend more

(¹⁵¹) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/what-next-eu-security-and-defence-o_en

(¹⁵²) See: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_196144.htm

(¹⁵³) See: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf

(¹⁵⁴) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en

on defence and above all spend better, i.e. together. The fact that EU member states have said they will increase defence spending, by a total of around €200 billion, is most welcome. However, unless the proportion that is spent on joint development and procurement increases, the risk is that a lot of that extra investment will go to waste (¹⁵⁵). The defence investment gap analysis presented to EU Leaders last May (¹⁵⁶) shows the nature of the problem, but also what can be done, for example with the Commission and the European Defence Agency supporting member states to proceed with joint procurement. One urgent example is the replenishing of stockpiles depleted due to the delivery of military equipment to Ukraine. Jointly acquiring capabilities not only serves the EU's security and defence agenda, they are also necessary for NATO Allies to protect Europe against threats from Russia.

Our willingness to act as a security provider

2. Second, as important as procuring the necessary capabilities is the need to demonstrate our willingness to use them and act as a security provider. In the past 20 years, the EU has developed extensive experience with its crisis management operations. What started in the Balkans has grown into a powerful instrument, through which the EU today has deployed 18 missions and operations, of which 11 civilian and 7 military, on three continents.

Some of these missions have been real success stories. Take, for example, operation Atalanta (¹⁵⁷), acting off-shore and its flanking mission EUCAP Somalia acting on-shore. Somalia still has massive internal security problems but thanks to our efforts, piracy is no longer a major problem for international shipping in the Horn of Africa. Beyond piracy, Atalanta has also conducted successful anti-drugs operations, seizing up to 12 tonnes of narcotic drugs a few months ago, with an estimated economic impact of more than €200 million diverted from feeding criminal and terrorist networks, which destabilise region.

Another example is operation EUFOR Althea (¹⁵⁸), which has made an important contribution to maintaining stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as recognised by

(¹⁵⁵) See p. 177.

(¹⁵⁶) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/we-need-increase-european-defence-capabilities-working-better-together_en

(¹⁵⁷) See: <https://eunavfor.eu/>

(¹⁵⁸) See: <https://euforbih.org/>

all political party leaders and members of the Presidency. And EULEX Kosovo⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ continues to this day to support rule of law institutions at the request of authorities in Pristina.

Each case is different and we also need to recognise that we do face challenges in our crisis management. Sometimes this is due to under-resourcing of the missions and operations; sometimes to the political context in which we operate – and sometimes the two are connected. There is always room for improvement and the Strategic Compass has opened the way to enhance the effectiveness of our missions. However, it is equally important to state that each time that we took risks and engaged, adapting to challenging circumstances, we have made a positive difference on the ground.

Draw the right lessons

3. This leads me to the third element: our ability to adapt and draw the right lessons. The speed at which the world is changing is often exceeding our capacity to cope. We need to become more agile and have a strong capacity for doing lessons learned, including in the field of CSDP.

Last summer, we had the dramatic withdrawal of the international community from Afghanistan. We said at the time that we needed to understand why, despite the vast resources deployed over 20 years, the results were so meagre. As we recalibrate our engagement in the Sahel in response to new developments, which include the growing presence of Russian mercenaries, we need to ask ourselves: what can we realistically achieve and how? Can we tailor our efforts better to local specificities? How to get more buy-in and ownership? Also, what would be the consequences if we scale back our engagement – for local populations and our own security?

These are difficult dilemmas, which is why we need an honest debate to guide our choices. The Strategic Compass is highly relevant for this debate and it contains concrete ideas and a timeline to enhance our collective impact.

The overall point is clear: in a dangerous world, Europeans must assume their strategic responsibility, both within the EU and NATO – and give themselves the means and agility to do so.

⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ See: <https://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/>

FOREIGN INTERVENTIONS AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN DEFENCE

27.08.2022 – Blog ^(¹⁶⁰) – 2022 gave us plenty of food for thought on European security and defence from the war against Ukraine, to the continuous deterioration in the Sahel and the one-year anniversary of the Taliban take-over in Afghanistan. We must be ready to face difficult choices.

It has been a sobering period for those engaged in ‘stabilisation interventions’ abroad. One year ago, we had the Fall of Kabul and the dramatic withdrawal of US and international forces from Afghanistan. Twenty years, a clear UN mandate, tens of thousands of international troops and more than a trillion dollars had not produced a sustainable and legitimate Afghan government. Strikingly, the last President, Ashraf Ghani, had literally written one of the seminal books on ‘state building’ ^(¹⁶¹). And still....

Afghanistan may have dropped from the headlines. However, the situation for its people is dire. In the past year, the Taliban have shown no sign of moderation, quite the contrary: all girls, despite earlier promises, are banned from education; huge swathes of the country are gripped by hunger (70 % of the population); and many Afghans live in fear or exile. Understandably, no government, not even Pakistan or Qatar, has officially recognised the Taliban. Meanwhile, the Afghan people pay a heavy price for their country’s isolation: humanitarian aid levels are tiny compared to the needs.

Coincidentally, the French government announced that the last French soldier had left Mali on the anniversary of the Fall of Kabul. This departure had become inevitable given the choices of the military Mali government.

Trend lines in the Sahel region are poor

The situation is complex, but here too we are forced to acknowledge that trend lines in the region, after more than ten years of international engagement, are poor: terrorism is rife, states are weak and civilian populations are bereft of security and

^(¹⁶⁰) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/foreign-interventions-and-future-european-defence_en

^(¹⁶¹) See: <https://gsdrc.org/document-library/closing-the-sovereignty-gap-an-approach-to-state-building/>

basic services. And this despite all the attention and resources deployed to underpin a G-5 Sahel-led process and a civilian ‘surge’ announced last year.

The Mali government is increasingly turning to the Wagner group. But this move is doomed to fail. It will only exacerbate existing social tensions, deprive the state from valuable resources and will not provide any sustainable response to the security problems of the country, instead increasing the risk of unhealthy dependencies.

Both the Afghanistan and the Mali experiences point to the inherent difficulties of such external ‘stabilisation operations’. This no surprise really given the historical record of this type of effort – from Somalia to Iraq or Libya. Each case is different when it comes to the mandate, coalition, core objectives, duration, resources etc. But the overwhelming impression is how challenging these operations are; how resource-intensive they have been and, too often, how underwhelming the results.

Provide a legitimate political settlement

What are the reasons? There is an extensive literature on why this is the case⁽¹⁶²⁾. One basic reason is that externally driven interventions cannot provide the core necessary ingredient: a viable, legitimate political settlement and government. Only local forces can do this. By their very nature, foreigners are, almost inevitably, seen as ‘the other’, the outsider against whom local forces identify themselves and, eventually, resist. This was true for Napoleon’s armies venturing into Spain who brought ideas ‘on their bayonets’, which were promptly resisted precisely because they were brought by foreigners. Something similar happened to the international coalition in Afghanistan, no matter how good the intentions and no matter the formal mandate agreed in New York. Outsiders can provide temporary security, or do ‘capacity building’, but only locals can do the politics and make the institutions work.

The second problem is unclear goals and ‘mission creep’. It is hard enough to succeed in this type of external interventions but if we are unclear about what the goals are, failure is almost baked-in. In Afghanistan, what started as a limited operation to end the rule of the Taliban who had sheltered Al Qaeda – i.e. a counter-terrorism operation – had morphed into a much broader, more ambitious ‘state building’ operation, to build a broad-based, accountable Afghan government

⁽¹⁶²⁾ See: <https://online.ucpress.edu/currenthistory/article-abstract/99/641/419/108683/Humanitarian-Intervention-The-Lessons-Learned?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

that would make a quantum leap and uphold civil liberties. On the first goal, the operation succeeded, already in 2001; on the second, it did not. Indeed, outsiders bringing sophisticated equipment and their own cultural values were unable to ‘short circuit’ history and deliver a government that somehow respects international norms but also fits local, cultural conditions.

Look closer at the interests of local actors

Third and related: we need to look closer at the interests and motives of local actors and forces. Often the so-called ‘international community’ relies heavily on elites based in capitals, ideally English-speaking and Western-educated. But real power mostly lies with groups of tribes, mayors and militia leaders. In fragmented societies, people’s loyalty is not necessarily towards the central government in which they have no stake. Members of the security services are unlikely to want to risk their lives for a state-building project that they do not buy into.

Is all this a reason to simply give up and conclude that we better just stay at home? No. Because here is the core dilemma of foreign policy. As former EU diplomat Robert Cooper said⁽¹⁶³⁾: ‘you may not be interested in chaos, but chaos is interested in you.’ We cannot provide for functioning politics, but the absence rebounds on us. We may withdraw, but the consequences of doing so may mean more instability, more terrorism, more migration etc. In addition, we have the basic, human urge to want to help people in need, showing solidarity. That is why isolationism will not work either.

What perhaps could work is an approach that is more selective in what interventions to undertake but, once chosen, commits the right resources and allows enough time to see it through. Above all, we must internalise the lesson that crisis management is about creating the space for functional politics to work. ‘Local ownership’ is a terrible cliché but one we too often overlook.

All this matters per se but it should also be situated in the context of the debate on the future of European armed forces. The basic focus for European armies in the past 20 years has been ‘expeditionary operations’, precisely like those in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Sahel. During this time, there have been a set of steep and uncoordinated cuts in defence budgets across Europe (only partially reversed in recent years), precisely when US, China, Russia and others have increased theirs massively (Europe +20 %, Russia +300 % and China +600 %). So the relative gap

⁽¹⁶³⁾ See: <https://groveatlantic.com/book/the-breaking-of-nations/>

between European countries and others has widened dramatically. As I have argued repeatedly (¹⁶⁴), this is something we must urgently address.

The rise of China as a major military player – going well beyond the economic dimension that most of us were focused on – is particularly striking: its navy now has more surface ships than the US navy. In addition, we have seen this Summer, around Taiwan, how China is ready to use its armed forces to send clear signals.

European armies have become 'bonsai armies'

European armies have been 'hollowed out' and been described as 'bonsai armies' (¹⁶⁵): they look like the real thing but have shrunk into miniature versions. To give an example, in his testimony before the Defence Committee of the French Assemblée Nationale on 13 July, the French Chief of Defence General Burkard openly questioned whether the combination of the focus on expeditionary and asymmetric warfare plus budget cuts have put into question the French army's ability to wage a 'high intensity' conflict on European soil (¹⁶⁶).

He went on to say that since 1945, the French navy has never been as small as now: the number of ships has been cut in half since 1990. Since 1996, the French air force has cut the number of planes by 30 %. Big gaps also exist for the army, notably on artillery and munitions (stocks are depleted because of supplies to Ukraine). All this in one of the EU member states that takes its defence role very seriously – the situation is worse in Germany, Italy, Spain etc..

The question is what to do. What type of conflicts do we prepare our armies for and what sort of decisions flow from that in terms of posture, budgets, training etc.? We cannot continue to face a more threatening strategic landscape including opponents using high intensity warfare with 'bonsai armies'. At the same time, we cannot pretend to be satisfied with our record of expeditionary warfare.

Our armies need to be able to handle both territorial defence and asymmetric war further afield. We need to do that in the framework of NATO, indeed, and almost

(¹⁶⁴) See p. 177.

(¹⁶⁵) See: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351361373_TRANSFORMATION_OF_THE_EUROPEAN_BONSAI_ARMIES_-DIFFICULTIES_BY_ADOPTING_A_COMMON_MILITARY_DOCTRINE_FOR_WARFARE_IN_21_CENTURY](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351361373_TRANSFORMATION_OF_THE_EUROPEAN_BONSAI_ARMIES_-_DIFFICULTIES_BY_ADOPTING_A_COMMON_MILITARY_DOCTRINE_FOR_WARFARE_IN_21_CENTURY)

(¹⁶⁶) See: https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2022/08/13/armee-francaise-l-alerte-des-chefs-d-etat-major_6137950_3210.html

all EU member states are now members. But we also need to be able to rely more on ourselves and demonstrate our strategic responsibility when our security interests are at stake at our borders and beyond. This is why EU member states need to invest better and together and cooperate much more on defence.

All this calls for a readiness to think deep and hard about the choices and trade-offs we face and decide accordingly. The real point is to do this reflection together, as Europeans. The raft of proposals we have adopted under the Strategic Compass go a long way to enhance our collective impact, if fully implemented.

If we share lessons learned, we can avoid costly mistakes. If we pool resources, we can get more results. If we coordinate among us, we can do task specialisation.

Or we can fool ourselves and continue on autopilot, ignoring the changes in the world around us.

INVESTING MORE TOGETHER IN EUROPE'S DEFENCE

11.12.2022 – Blog ^(¹⁶⁷) – According to the European Defence Agency, Europeans have been increasing their defence spending and capabilities in 2021. This is very much needed. However, it is still not enough and I argued in this blog post that we must invest more together to prepare Europe face a dangerous world.

Our work on European security and defence is starting to show results. This week we had the annual conference of the [European Defence Agency](#) ^(¹⁶⁸). The EDA is tasked to help EU member states to develop their military capacities in a more coordinated manner and to support defence research and industry. The overall goal is to get more defence capabilities and better value for money.

This week the EDA published two important documents: the [Defence Data 2020-2021 report](#) ^(¹⁶⁹) and the 2022 issue of the [European Defence Matters review](#) ^(¹⁷⁰). Both documents are of crucial importance to understand the European defence landscape and the current geopolitical situation has given them more importance

Naturally, the starting point of our discussion was Russia's war against Ukraine, a frontal attack on a peaceful neighbour. I stressed the importance of our support to Ukraine, politically, economically and militarily, meaning with [weapons](#) ^{(¹⁷¹) and [training](#) ^{(¹⁷²), so they can push out the invader, as they are. And we should be able to do this as long as necessary, until Ukraine prevails.}}

A wake-up call for Europeans

This war has also been a wake-up call for all of us about our military capabilities. We have given weapons to Ukraine, but in so doing, we realised that our military stockpiles have been depleted. With conventional war returning to the heart of

^(¹⁶⁷) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/investing-more-together-europe%20%90s-defence_en

^(¹⁶⁸) See: <https://eda.europa.eu/home>

^(¹⁶⁹) See: <https://eda.europa.eu/publications-and-data/latest-publications/eda-defence-data-2020-2021>

^(¹⁷⁰) See: <https://eda.europa.eu/webzine/issue24>

^(¹⁷¹) See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/10/17/ukraine-council-agrees-on-further-support-under-the-european-peace-facility/>

^(¹⁷²) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-union-military-assistance-mission-ukraine-eumam_en

Europe, we also realised that we are lacking critical defence capabilities, to be able to protect ourselves from a higher level of threats on the European continent itself.

As I said in my [speech](#) (¹⁷³), Europe is spending more on defence, and – to a certain extent – also better. How do we know? This is thanks to the [EU defence data](#) put together by the EDA (¹⁷⁴). The EDA has been collecting defence data on an annual basis since 2006 and it is the best available overview of the evolution of EU armies' capabilities.

These data are worth analysing as they tell us a lot – of what we have achieved but also of what we still need to do. According to the EDA's data, defence spending within the EU grew in 2021 to €214 billion. This is a 6 % increase compared to 2020 – and the strongest yearly growth rate since 2015. But we are still far away from the 2 % NATO benchmark.

And there are big differences among member states. Overall, member states spend on average 1.5 % of their GDP on defence. Five of our member states increased defence spending by 20 % or more last year; and one of them increased by 42 %.

You do not fight wars with bank notes

Money matters but a financial figure alone is not enough to know what this means in terms of available defence capabilities. Financial resources are needed, but you do not fight wars with bank notes. There is a long way between allocating money and developing physical and human operational capabilities.

It is good that the EDA reports show that last year, we saw a record level of defence investments: €52 billion, which is 24 % of total defence expenditure. For the third year in a row, we collectively met and exceeded the agreed benchmark of 20 %. Indeed, 19 member states achieved this benchmark, the highest number since EDA started collecting data and 5 more countries than in 2020.

When it comes to spending on Defence Research & Technology, we also have good news, with a rise to €3.6 billion, a 41 % increase compared to last year. It almost tripled compared to the historic low of 2016.

(¹⁷³) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-defence-agency-opening-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-during-annual_en

(¹⁷⁴) See: <https://eda.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/2022/12/o8/european-defence-spending-surpasses-200-billion-for-first-time-driven-by-record-defence-investments-in-2021>

But there is another, less positive side too when we look at defence cooperation. Collaborative defence equipment procurement in 2021 amounted to €7.9 billion, which represents 18 % of total spending in equipment procurement. This is a significant increase compared to 11 % in 2020, but we are still far below the agreed benchmark of 35 %.

Buying and investing more together

So, these figures are telling us that we are doing better, but not enough, especially when it comes to cooperation. As ever, the question is what we can do about this.

First, we need to address short-term needs by investing and procuring more jointly. Put simply: buying more together. More than 10 months of war and of support to Ukraine have exposed the inadequacy of our stockpiles and the fragility of our supply chains.

In May, we presented a [defence investment gaps analysis](#) (¹⁷⁵). Since then, the Joint Procurement Task Force (EDA, EEAS, and Commission) has been working with member states to aggregate their needs and identify realistic opportunities for joint procurement, for both ammunitions and equipment.

Now, we are in the next phase. Together with Commissioner Breton, we have reached out to the defence industry, asking relevant companies to provide information on their production capacity. To help European defence industry ramp up its production capacity, the Commission has also proposed a new EU Instrument – [EDIRPA](#) (¹⁷⁶) – to facilitate and incentivise joint procurement with €500 million for 2022-2024. We hear there are very concrete intentions by member states to procure jointly. But these intentions need to be translated into acquisition orders, sooner rather than later. Fine words are not enough.

Second, we must look ahead and face future threats. We have said it many times before: Europe needs to take more responsibility for its own security. To achieve this, we need to cooperate more to equip ourselves with the defence capabilities we need. The 2022 Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) [report](#) (¹⁷⁷) shows that less than 20 % of all investment in defence programmes is conducted

(¹⁷⁵) See: https://commission.europa.eu/publications/defence-investment-gaps-and-measures-address-them_en

(¹⁷⁶) See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_4491

(¹⁷⁷) See: <https://eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/eda-publications/2022-card-report.pdf>

in cooperation. Sadly, defence cooperation remains the exception rather than the rule.

To prevent fragmentation and improve coherence, member states should design their national plans with an EU outlook. And they must systematically plan and develop capabilities in cooperation. CARD can help, as it identifies concrete collaborative opportunities. More than 100 have been identified so far, covering all domains.

The CARD report did not get enough attention in the past. It must now be the compass to guide the necessary joint development efforts. But to implement this kind of coordination, we need concrete tools and use community funding, to facilitate the interaction between member state demand and the industrial supplies.

And we have them. We have [PESCO](#) ⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ and the [European Defence Fund](#) (EDF) ⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ as important key EU initiatives to foster defence cooperation. The Commission has allocated €1.2 billion to a first batch of 61 projects under the EDF for collaborative defence research and development. These include for example next generation of fighter aircraft, armoured vehicles and ships, as well as critical defence technologies in the areas of space, cyber, military cloud or Artificial Intelligence. It is important that the CARD findings and the EDF allocation of resources go hand in hand.

Preparing for the future

I have previously likened Europe's armies to Japanese bonsai trees, to make the point that since the 2008 financial crisis we have shrunk our forces to miniature versions, and we have done so without any coordination. We cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past.

We are now at a turning point. Next year we should reach the 'recovery point'. This is when we will have compensated years of underspending and will be able to shift the focus from repairing the past to start winning the future.

If all announced spending increases are implemented, total EU defence expenditure will grow by another €70 billion by 2025. It is important to date any

⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ See: <https://www.pesco.europa.eu>

⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ See: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-fund-edf_en

announced effort on military spending. *How much* doesn't make a lot of sense if you do not say *when* it is going to happen. This is especially true in the troubled times we live, when we have a real sense of urgency.

Still, these plans are an enormous opportunity. But not if the money is spent in an uncoordinated manner, or if national decisions focus only on present needs relying on 'off-the-shelf acquisitions'. This would perpetuate the fragmented EU capability landscape. So, we need the right balance between repairing the underspending of the past, responding to the present needs, but also preparing for the future.

The overall conclusions are clear and this is the message I will bring to European leaders at the EU Summit next week:

The threats we face are real, close-by and likely to get worse. At the same time, everything is in place for a leap forward on defence cooperation: we have the ideas, the money, the EU frameworks and an organisation, the EDA, specifically set up as a forum to boost defence cooperation. We need action and this requires a political push from the top, i.e. EU Presidents and Prime Ministers.

We should not just spend more on defence but better. And this means cooperate more. To continue supporting Ukraine; to address present needs; and to start preparing for the future.

3.

TACKLING THE ENERGY CRISIS



EUROPE'S ENERGY SECURITY AND EU-US COOPERATION

06.02.2022 – Blog ^(¹⁸⁰) – *Energy has always been a major geopolitical issue. With gas supply challenges caused by Russia, it was already at the top of our agenda before Russia's invasion. We need to address short-term pressures while sticking to the goal of net-zero emissions.*

Flying to Washington with my colleague Energy Commissioner Kadri Simson, the global context appears worrying ahead of the EU-US Energy Council that I will co-chair with Secretary of State Antony Blinken this Monday.

Energy prices have surged due to global supply and demand issues. Gas prices in the EU are six to ten times higher than they were a year ago, putting great strains on electricity prices, due to the way these prices are determined on the wholesale electricity market in Europe. It has already boosted inflation at the end of 2021. If energy prices stay high throughout 2022, feeding higher inflation, this will seriously affect the post-pandemic recovery.

Energy prices have boosted inflation

With the severe crisis that we are currently going through with Russia, it has become not only a price issue but also a matter of security of supplies. Energy policy always looms large in EU-Russia relations: over forty percent of EU gas imports come from Russia and sixty percent of the energy revenues that Russia gets, come from the EU. As I said last week, by reducing the overall gas import ratio from Russia, we will be investing not only in the green transition but also in reducing our strategic dependencies ^(¹⁸¹). However, in recent years, Russia has enhanced its resilience against economic sanctions, by increasing its foreign currency reserves, more than we have done to enhance our capacity to face potential gas supply cuts. We should urgently consider developing EU strategic gas reserves and the possibility of joint gas purchasing, as the Commission has

^(¹⁸⁰) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/europe%20%99s-energy-security-and-eu-us-cooperation-%C2%A0_en

^(¹⁸¹) See p. 147.

suggested (¹⁸²). This would enhance the security of all at a manageable price, as set out in a recent report by the think tank CEPS (¹⁸³).

Russia has already in the past used energy supplies for political purposes. In recent weeks, although Russia has been fulfilling strictly its contractual commitments, the Russian-state owned Gazprom has refused to send additional supplies to re-fill European storage facilities, creating further nervousness in the market.

So what can the EU and the US do to address short-term challenges while at the same time addressing the imperative of moving to net zero and cutting our dependence on fossil fuels? Together with the US and other partners, we oppose the use of energy supply as a weapon and geopolitical lever. The recent EU-US joint statement on energy security already places resilience to future price shocks and safeguards against geopolitical tensions at the centre of the transatlantic energy security agenda. We are committed to ensure the energy security of the EU and our neighbours, including Moldova, Ukraine and the Western Balkans.

The starting point of our strategy is the European Green Deal (¹⁸⁴) and the energy transition that we want to accelerate in light of the climate emergency. We know that the path of this transition is not straightforward, but we cannot allow current events to put us off track.

Security of gas supply

However, in the short term, we face, and we must tackle, the immediate problem of ensuring security of gas supply. This means working for greater diversification of import routes and sources. The US already is Europe's largest Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) supplier, and we are intensifying our cooperation to ensure that our gas supplies are safe throughout the months to come. Beyond the US, we are also talking with Norway, Qatar, Azerbaijan, Algeria and others to expand LNG supplies. We will also have to work rapidly to better integrate the Iberian peninsula, which is actually an electricity island in Europe, in the European energy market because it has more LNG receiving capacities than other European countries. These efforts are more likely to succeed if we invest in relations with potential

(¹⁸²) See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0660&from=EN>

(¹⁸³) See: <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/a-eu-turn-from-nord-stream-2-towards-a-european-strategic-gas-reserve/>

(¹⁸⁴) See: https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-green-deal_en

LNG suppliers, not as a short-term fix, but as part of our interest in developing more strategic relationships, working also on renewables like hydrogen and solar.

While we seek to address the EU's own energy and climate goals and enhance our resilience, we must do the same for Ukraine. In terms of energy security, Ukraine today is already better prepared for any conflict. As in the rest of Europe, true energy security can however only come through more investment in domestic renewables and better connections with the EU market. Our meeting will be an opportunity to seek even tighter coordination on energy market reforms needed in Ukraine to reinforce corporate governance and transparency ahead of Ukraine's synchronisation to the European electricity network, planned in 2023. We will also work on increased reverse flows within the existing gas transportation infrastructures.

There is a broad lesson in all this: in the end, reliable, affordable and secure energy will only come through a decarbonised energy system based largely on renewables. This is why we are also cooperating closely with the US on technology. Energy efficiency, renewables (such as wind power) and hydrogen are high on our common agenda. A new EU-US High-Level Climate Action Group has been established last year, and we have aligned our positions ahead of the COP26 in Glasgow. This Energy Council will jumpstart the Transatlantic Green Technology Alliance on innovation and rapid, at scale deployment of key clean energy technologies globally, including heat pumps, advanced metering, long-duration energy storage, notably by reinforcing our common efforts on codes, standards, certification and regulatory frameworks.

Energy transition and political balances

The energy transition will continue to change geo-political balances, shifting power from those controlling fossil fuels to those developing clean energy technologies. This will require countries that now heavily rely on fossil fuel exports to diversify their economies and we need to be ready to help them take this big step forward (¹⁸⁵). The net zero and just energy transition is vital to save our planet but will also have foreign policy benefits: a world run on clean energy will be a more stable and better world for all, although it will also create new dependencies because of the materials it requires. A new EU strategy on international energy

(¹⁸⁵) See: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/eu-geopolitics-of-climate-change-by-frans-timmermans-i-and-josep-borrell-2021-04>

will be published this spring, to set out in more detail our response to the wider challenges on this issue.

In cooperation with the US, the EU will continue to build a global energy transition that is socially just and takes care of the geopolitical challenges. Tomorrow, we will work together on this broad agenda, sending a strong message to those who seek to divide us.

EUROPE'S ENERGY BALANCING ACT

01.08.2022 – Blog (¹⁸⁶) – *In the summer, the situation in the EU seemed difficult with sky high prices for gas and electricity and risks of shortage for the winter. In this blog post I presented what the EU decided to do for savings, diversification and accelerating investments in renewables.*

When it comes to energy, Europe faces a dilemma: it needs to balance its short-term goals – to wean itself off Russian oil and gas while getting through the winter – with its long-term net-zero targets under the Green Deal. And it must ensure that its internal choices are compatible with its external commitments. There is no point pretending that doing so is easy, cheap or without trade-offs. But it is possible, if we invest seriously in energy savings, renewables and solidarity, both at home and around the world.

The short-term imperative

Winter comes every year but the one we face promises to be exceptional. There is real uncertainty over whether the EU will have enough gas (i.e. volume) and whether it will be affordable (i.e. at what price). While oil prices have come down to where they were at the start of the war in Ukraine, gas prices are more than four times the price of end-February and almost ten times what they were a year ago.

We know the reason. The energy price hikes did not start on 24 February, however, as for many other issues, Russia's aggression has made it much worse. Russia is using energy as a weapon: it has already cut or reduced supplies to 12 member states, in clear breach of contract. Last week it cut supplies through Nord Stream 1 to only 20 % of its normal capacity. By creating shortages and nervousness in the market, it guarantees the exact price rises from which it profits itself. We should prepare ourselves for all scenarios including one where Russia cuts supplies altogether, at a moment of its choosing.

We have already managed to cope with an overall reduction in the share of Russian gas imports from 40 % at the beginning of the year to around 20 % today, principally by buying more LNG, whose share of gas usage has doubled from 19 %

⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/europe%20%99s-energy-balancing-act_en

to 37 %. We have also made progress in buying more pipeline gas from Norway, Algeria and Azerbaijan. In July, I co-chaired the EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council where we welcomed the recent signature of [a Memorandum of understanding on a Strategic Partnership on Energy](#)^(¹⁸⁷). Longer-term, we can expect more progress with this diversification drive. But the hard truth is that for this winter, we are approaching the limits of what extra gas we can buy from non-Russian sources. So, the bulk will have to come from energy savings, i.e. demand reduction.

A 15 % reduction of EU gas consumption

The [experts from Bruegel](#) as well as those of the Commission estimate that we will need an overall reduction of EU gas consumption of 15 % to manage a complete stop of Russian supplies^(¹⁸⁸). Of course, there are significant variations among EU countries in their exposure and vulnerability to a possible Russian cut off. On 26 July, the [Council](#) adopted an important set of measures. Its central plank is this overall gas savings target of 15 %^(¹⁸⁹). But it will take into account different national circumstances and efforts, for instance the degree to which infrastructure exists that connects individual countries to their neighbours. For now, this is a voluntary target but if circumstances so dictate, member states can decide to make the savings compulsory.

At heart, this is about how we prepare ourselves for a tough winter and how we organise solidarity among us, pooling risks and resources. It is a familiar debate for us Europeans: we went through a comparable process at the beginning of the pandemic. At first, the tendency was for every country to go it alone, but then, quite rightly and successfully, EU countries opted for joint procurement of vaccines, which guaranteed all EU citizens had equal access to life-saving vaccines.

After Russia's annexation of Crimea, we should have but didn't develop a real EU energy union, built around diversification away from Russia and investing in energy efficiency and home-grown and climate-friendly renewables. This time the stakes are even higher: we cannot afford to make that same mistake again.

^(¹⁸⁷) See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_450

^(¹⁸⁸) See: <https://www.bruegel.org/2022/07/european-union-demand-reduction-needs-to-cope-with-russian-gas-cuts>

^(¹⁸⁹) See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/tte/2022/07/26/>

As we in Europe think about our current energy dilemmas and focus on savings, we need to remember that for the vast majority of humanity the challenge is how to get more energy: 600 million Africans lack secure access to electricity according to the [IEA](#) (¹⁹⁰). Demographic and economic trends make it clear that we need a massive acceleration of energy efficiency and renewables to meet the growing demands for energy world-wide and avoid runaway climate change at the same time. This is what EU energy and climate diplomacy are about since many years: forging longer-term partnerships, with investment, technology and finance. Good examples include our promising work to shape Just Transition Energy Partnerships first with [South Africa](#) (¹⁹¹), but also with others.

Despite our short-term needs for fossil fuels to partially replace supplies from Russia, we are not in any way promoting a global *renaissance* of fossil fuels. We need in particular to avoid aggravating the problem of so-called '[stranded assets](#)' (¹⁹²)⁴ for fossil fuel producers. That is why we also work with our partners on the production and trade of clean hydrogen. It has great potential to become a major new source of energy and some of the existing infrastructure including pipelines could be re-purposed. This is one of the priorities under the [EU strategy with the Gulf](#) that we adopted last May (¹⁹³). A large part of the EU's alternative gas needs could also be ensured simply with a better management of oil and gas production and transit facilities, where the IEA estimates that over 50 bcm of gas is wasted to through leaks, flaring or venting. This is roughly the volume we need to cover a possible Russian gas cut off. It would also generate significant climate benefits.

The best energy is the one you don't need

But mainly, it is still true that the best energy of all is the one you don't need. That is why saving energy and improving energy efficiency has to get the priority it has long deserved. In the EU, we are now embarking on a serious effort at demand reduction. The Commission has proposed to raise the binding Energy Efficiency target to 13 % by 2030, along with additional savings measures in industry, buildings and elsewhere.

(¹⁹⁰) See: <https://www.iea.org/reports/africa-energy-outlook-2022/key-findings>

(¹⁹¹) See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/it/ip_21_5768

(¹⁹²) See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stranded_asset

(¹⁹³) See: <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Joint%20Communication%20to%20the%20European%20Parliament%20and%20the%20Council%20-%20A%20Strategic%20Partnership%20with%20the%20Gulf.pdf>

Doing so is necessary to get through the next winter, but this will also give us the necessary credentials to put the international focus and launch a global movement on energy savings and efficiency in the run up to the UNGA and COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh. We can draw inspiration from the [Methane Pledge](#) ⁽¹⁹⁴⁾, a real success of EU climate diplomacy: the EU proposed it, the US partnered with us and in the end 110 countries signed, representing 70 % of the global economy. We need a similar global campaign around energy efficiency and savings, and in the coming months I will invest in helping building the necessary coalition.

⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_21_5766

A YEAR OF WAR AND ENERGY AND CLIMATE CRISES

02.01.2023 – Blog (¹⁹⁵) – *Russia's invasion of Ukraine caused a serious energy crisis in the EU. However, despite our dependence on Russia, we had not given in to Putin's blackmail. We managed to fill the gap and accelerate our energy transition which will have a major geopolitical impact.*

The year 2022 has been dominated by Vladimir Putin's war of aggression against Ukraine. This war has already caused tens of thousands of deaths in Ukraine and multiple war crimes committed by Russian forces. Having failed to conquer Ukraine, Vladimir Putin decided to destroy it and in particular its energy infrastructure, to force its inhabitants to live in cold and darkness this winter.

Beyond Ukraine, this war has also triggered a serious energy crisis in Europe due to Russia's weaponisation of energy. Vladimir Putin obviously thought that EU's heavy dependence on imports of Russian fossil energy, and in particular gas, would allow him to divide the EU, preventing it from supporting Ukraine actively. This is why, as early as 2021, he began to restrict Russian gas deliveries to the EU despite the existing long-term contracts between Russian suppliers and European customers. He then aggravated this blackmail policy after 24 February.

Russia's weaponisation of energy

This policy did indeed trigger a major crisis on European energy markets, with gas prices exceeding 300 Euro/MWh last August on the Dutch TTF spot market, compared to around 20 Euro/MWh in 2020. Due to the difficulties of French nuclear power plants and the climate change-related limited hydroelectricity production, it also led to a severe crisis on the EU electricity market, raising fears of blackouts this winter. These combined crises caused a sharp rise in energy prices for households and businesses, creating serious economic and social problems in the EU. This has led in particular to fears that the deindustrialisation process of the EU is accelerating.

(¹⁹⁵) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/year-war-and-energy-and-climate-crisis_en

Despite this energy crisis, we did not give in to Vladimir Putin's blackmail and EU member states stayed united, supporting Ukraine decisively, including with weapons deliveries. On the energy front, we responded last May by launching the [RePowerEU plan](#) ⁽¹⁹⁶⁾. In the framework proposed by the European Commission, EU member states took different [short-term measures to alleviate the difficulties of households and businesses](#) ⁽¹⁹⁷⁾. We also decided an [embargo on Russian coal from last August](#) ⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ and on [Russian oil from last December](#) ⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ accompanied by a [price cap on Russian oil exports](#) ⁽²⁰⁰⁾ to other countries, leading to a significant decrease of Russia's income from fossil fuel sales.

We did not give in to Vladimir Putin's blackmail

We managed to compensate for the lack of Russian gas principally with other Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) sources. We succeeded to fill our stocks for this winter and to reduce significantly [our use of gas](#) ⁽²⁰¹⁾ and electricity. It is in particular interesting to notice how quickly Germany reacted. Russian gas imports have been reduced from 55 % of the total at the beginning of 2022 to almost zero and oil from 40 % to zero. It marks a turning point in EU-Russia relations, which have been very much conditioned until now by the energy issue.

As a result, currently [the price of gas on the European spot market is back to its level of last February](#) ⁽²⁰²⁾ before the invasion of Ukraine and the price of oil is back to its level of last January. However, energy prices remain still high and 2023 promises to be another difficult year regarding gas supply. We have decided in particular to [buy 15 % of our gas stocks jointly this year](#) ⁽²⁰³⁾ and [apply a price cap](#)

⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_3131

⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ See: <https://www.bruegel.org/dataset/national-policies-shield-consumers-rising-energy-prices>

⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ See: <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/08/11/eu-embargo-on-russian-coal-comes-into-force>

⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ See: <https://energyandcleanair.org/eu-ban-on-russian-oil-why-it-matters-and-whats-next/>

⁽²⁰⁰⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/03/russian-oil-eu-agrees-on-level-of-price-cap/>

⁽²⁰¹⁾ See: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/news/eu-slashed-gas-consumption-by-20-in-august-november-eurostat/>

⁽²⁰²⁾ See: <https://www.theice.com/products/2799665/Dutch-TTF-Gas-Futures/?data?marketId=5493476&span=3>

⁽²⁰³⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/11/24/further-measures-to-tackle-the-energy-crisis-council-agrees-on-joint-purchases-of-gas-and-a-solidarity-mechanism/>

for the gas we buy)⁽²⁰⁴⁾ to limit excessive speculative expectations on this market. In the midst of this energy crisis, we have also adopted several measures to fight climate change and accelerate the decarbonisation of our economy.

More ambitious target for the EU Emission Trading Scheme (ETS)

It is in this context that on 18 December, EU legislators, i.e. representatives of EU member states and the European Parliament, reached a deal to reform the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS)⁽²⁰⁵⁾. The EU ETS⁽²⁰⁶⁾, put in place in 2005, covers the high CO₂-emitting sectors in the EU, like power and heat generation, energy-intensive industrial sectors and commercial aviation.

Covered companies receive a yearly CO₂ emission allocation and can eventually trade them with others, thus setting a market price for CO₂. Every year, the EU lowers the permitted level of emissions. This is an efficient way to guarantee an overall decrease in emissions, by ensuring that this is done at the lowest cost.

In the new EU law, the amount of emissions in the covered sectors will be reduced by 62 % by 2030, compared to 2005 levels, instead of 43 % under current legislation. We will also include the shipping sector in the EU ETS, making the EU the first jurisdiction to do so. Between 2026 and 2034, the EU will gradually phase out free emission allowances currently given to EU companies.

This much more ambitious target under the EU ETS is one of the key elements that allowed the EU to raise its greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets to 57 % by 2030 compared to 1990 at COP 27 in Sharm el-Sheikh.

However, the reform of the EU ETS also increases the risk that energy-intensive EU industries will relocate to countries with less demanding climate standards. Such moves, called 'carbon leakage', would not only hurt employment in the EU, but would also cancel out the positive effect of the measures that EU is taking for the global climate, as GHG emissions would simply increase elsewhere, thus offsetting the decrease in Europe. For the climate, it does not matter where the emissions are coming from but people everywhere will suffer their consequences.

⁽²⁰⁴⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/19/council-agrees-on-temporary-mechanism-to-limit-excessive-gas-prices/>

⁽²⁰⁵⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/18/fit-for-55-council-and-parliament-reach-provisional-deal-on-eu-emissions-trading-system-and-the-social-climate-fund/>

⁽²⁰⁶⁾ See: https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/eu-emissions-trading-system-eu-ets_en

This is why the strengthening of EU climate rules will be coupled with a new [Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism \(CBAM\)](#) ⁽²⁰⁷⁾. The CBAM will apply to imports of goods whose production is most at risk of 'carbon leakage': cement, iron and steel, aluminium, fertilisers, electricity and hydrogen.

During an initial period, importers of these goods will only have to report GHG emissions embedded in their imports, without making any payments. The real phase-in of the CBAM will take place between 2026 and 2034, in parallel to the above-mentioned phase-out of free emission allowances to EU companies.

Once the permanent system is in place, importers will have to buy CBAM certificates corresponding to the GHG content of the goods imported in the EU. The price of these certificates will be set based on the weekly price average of EU ETS allowances. If a carbon price has already been paid in the country of origin, this amount will be deducted from the CBAM credits to be acquired.

A level-playing field

The CBAM is aimed at establishing a level-playing field between European-based companies and their foreign competitors regarding GHG emissions requirements. It is therefore not a protectionist measure and we have taken particular care to ensure that this legislation complies with the rules laid down by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

With this reform of EU-ETS, the EU aims to play its full part in implementing the Paris Agreement and limiting global warming to 1.5 °C. It is in the interest of the whole world that we manage to implement these measures together with our partners in the fastest and most effective way. The same can be said about the [anti-deforestation legislation](#) ⁽²⁰⁸⁾ that we have approved last December.

In recent months, the US administration has also taken important steps to accelerate the energy transition with the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). However, this legislation is based on a very different philosophy from the one we have favoured. It does not provide for carbon pricing and mainly provides for important public subsidies to companies producing goods incorporating green technologies on American soil.

⁽²⁰⁷⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_7719

⁽²⁰⁸⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_7444

This type of action penalises European producers in our trade relations and does not respect WTO rules. We do not want and we cannot embark in a competitive fight based on public subsidies because it would harm the world economy. The EU does not have a fiscal capacity comparable to that of the federal state in the US and adopting analogue policies to the US at member states level could fragment our internal market. We are in active discussion with the US authorities to resolve these differences of approach on this key issue.

In 2023, energy will remain a key issue

In 2023, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the energy and climate crises and their economic and social consequences will remain key issues for the EU and the world. The EU will continue supporting Ukraine and resisting the weaponisation of energy by Russia by accelerating the decarbonisation of its economy. It will require also working with our partners to stabilise global energy markets and help the most vulnerable countries to face the consequences of this new geopolitical environment.

4.

SHAPING THE FUTURE EUROPEAN ORDER



**EUROPEAN
POLITICAL
COMMUNITY**

PRAGUE SUMMIT

Czech Republic
6 October 2022

THE EU MUST BOTH WIDEN AND DEEPEN

27.06.2022 – Blog ⁽²⁰⁹⁾ – *In June, the European Council decided that the future of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia lies within the EU. It also reaffirmed the EU's commitment to the Western Balkans. But an enlarged EU must have the capacity to act. In my view, this means reducing the scope of the unanimity rule in foreign and security policy and other areas.*

Enlargement remains one of the EU's most successful foreign policy tools. It has its critics, for going either too slow or too fast, for being too technical or hostage to political horse trading. But the facts shows that enlargement has been the principal way of organising the European continent, with the EU steadily growing from 6 member states in the 1950s to 12, 15 and 27 member states today. It is hard to think of an EU policy that has been more transformational. Historically, institutional reforms and new areas of integration have accompanied each wave of accession: so we have been most successful when we have pursued widening and deepening together.

Russia's war against Ukraine has accelerated history

Russia's war against Ukraine has accelerated history from many perspectives. It has also sharpened the debate on Europe's order and the principles that underpin it. For many countries, beginning with Ukraine, this is a strategic moment to state their aspirations to join the EU and all it represents – and to get recognition for their ambitions. Ukrainian leaders have been quite explicit that, together with the military support to defend itself against the Russian aggression, getting EU candidate status has been their top priority. You see a similar reasoning from the government of Moldova. And finally, you see it in the government of Georgia's request and the tens of thousands of Georgian demonstrators who took to the streets of Tbilisi this week with EU flags.

At the same time, the countries of the Western Balkans have, quite rightly, demanded that their accession process is judged on their own merits. It has been almost 20 years ago that the EU declared in Thessaloniki that 'the future of the

⁽²⁰⁹⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/geo-political-imperative-eu-both-widen-and-deepen_en

Western Balkans is within the EU', so a certain degree of impatience on their side, to say the least, is understandable.

On the EU side, we should be clear that enlarging the EU with those countries willing and able to meet the conditions is not a 'favour' or a concession. It is in our strategic interest. It is a way of structuring the continent around EU values and standards. A credible enlargement policy is a geostrategic investment in peace, stability, security and economic growth in the whole of Europe. Others are openly contesting EU influence and values in the neighbourhood, so we have to be active and enlarge to those who meet the criteria.

Maintaining our capacity to act

As we revive EU enlargement, we must at the same time maintain the EU's capacity to act. This too is a geo-political imperative. It is clear that at various times we have paid a price for the unanimity principle in EU foreign policy, by weakening and delaying our actions.

During the first weeks after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we were acting at speed and scale, breaking several taboos along the way. Some were surprised and many welcomed that the EU was acting with a real strategic sense of purpose. But soon after the situation became more mixed.

At the end of May we reached an agreement on the 6th package of sanctions against Russia (targeting oil, insurance and adding more listings). But it took us a month to get the package over the line. And I have to regret that some final provisions were watered down and in the final hours, the Patriarch Kirill was left off the list of sanctioned individuals, despite the fact that his presence on the list was not contested during discussions in the Council and despite his well-documented record as a staunch supporter of Putin's war.

We have seen similar dynamics on the opening of accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania, with one country blocking what everyone else can agree to – again with negative consequences for the EU's credibility and influence.

After two and a half years of experiences having dealt with such situations, I think that we have to review our decision-making process. Over the years, we have seen many instances where member states were divided on foreign policy issues. And in principle it is normal that we have different views to start with, given our

differences in history, geography and strategic political culture. But what matters in political life is not how a discussion starts but how it ends. The strength of the EU system has always been to somehow turn divisions into agreements. And here it matters a great deal whether a decision is taken by unanimity or by qualified majority vote (QMV).

If countries know in advance that the final decision can be taken by a qualified majority vote, they have a strong incentive to negotiate, to create alliances and to shape the consensus. If they know that they can block everything – and are sometimes even compensated for it – they do not have an incentive to invest in a healthy compromise. They can sit on their positions, obliging others to change. And the more outliers are seen as successful in their tactics, the more these dynamics spread, with vetoes now happening on a more frequently than in the past.

One sometimes hears we must keep unanimity in foreign and security policy because decisions in this area are ultra-sensitive: who can risk being outvoted on a matter of vital national interest? Here one can make two counter points:

First, many policy areas where the EU does take decisions by QMV are no less sensitive or important: think of migration, climate targets or the green taxonomy – to name a recent controversial item. Second, in practice, the Council rarely ever adopts decisions by a vote. The ethos of the club – as the historical record shows – is to keep talking until a consensus is formed. But if the threat of casting a veto is not there, every member state, big or small, has to negotiate. And they do – and that makes all the difference.

Take strategic decisions in real time

This is of course a long-standing debate, as I argued already in October 2020 (²¹⁰). But the context is new: the war against Ukraine has highlighted the need for the EU to be able to take strategic decisions in real time. Many EU leaders and citizens have called for a move away from unanimity in foreign policy. Indeed, it is a clear demand coming out of the Conference on the Future of Europe (²¹¹).

And now that enlargement is firmly back on the agenda, we can no longer duck the issue of how an EU of, say, 35 countries would function. There are compelling

(²¹⁰) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/86276_ar

(²¹¹) See: <https://futureu.europa.eu/en/pages/reporting?locale=en>

reasons to bring in the Western Balkans countries, give candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova, and hopefully soon to Georgia as well. But equally, it is folly to make what does not work at 27, completely unworkable at 30 or still more. We need to cut the Gordian knot.

The best answer is to remove the dead weight of the unanimity rule. It is already possible to do so by using the so-called constructive abstention, which is, for instance, how EULEX Kosovo was launched. But this is no use if the outlier does not accept to abstain constructively. Here we could advance with 'super QMV', for example 27 minus 2 or 3, so as not to be blocked by one or two single countries. We can also identify areas of foreign policy where we experiment with QMV, for example statements, sanctions and implementing decisions. This could help build confidence among member states with the idea of loosening the unanimity requirement.

There are many other problems in EU foreign policy and getting rid of unanimity is not a panacea. But having been 2.5 years in the job, I cannot think of a single change that would have a more powerful effect to improve our ability to act in a hostile world. And that is precisely what our citizens demand of us.

Building 'wider Europe'

In addition to the renewed debate on EU enlargement and decision-making, there is also the idea of building a wider European Political Community, as for instance President Macron has proposed and President Michel has echoed. This wider club could unite all European countries that share democratic principles and want to pursue concrete and flexible forms of cooperation. It is about the future organisation of our continent and how we as EU should position ourselves, following Russia's war against Ukraine. I participated in the Leaders' discussion at the Summit on different options for such a Community, in terms of purpose, membership and practical modalities. Everyone agrees that any such club should complement and not replace existing EU policies, notably enlargement. And it should also supplement, not substitute, the work of existing organisations like the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

As I said, the war is acting as an accelerator of history. And by its complexities and requirements, EU enlargement is a demanding process that takes many years. Its speed does not fit easily with the speed of the changes in the geopolitical context. So an additional framework is necessary. A European Political Community could

enable candidate countries to take part in various EU policies right away. It could also involve certain countries that are not necessarily destined to join the Union, such as Norway or Switzerland or the United Kingdom, if they wish. The subject is complex and requires careful consideration, but the idea has merits and the debate will certainly continue. We should take careful and gradual steps in developing the structure of the initiative, while respecting the EU's decision-making autonomy.

REVISITING THE QUESTION OF EUROPE'S ORDER

05.10.2022 – Blog ^(²¹²) – *President Putin has been dragging Russia further down the path of isolation. We must not be intimidated and build an European political and security order with all countries willing to abide by common principles. The first meeting of the European Political Community, a new political initiative in this direction, was held in Prague on 6 October.*

Last week, President Putin gathered Russia's political and security elite in the Kremlin to mark his totally illegal land grab, whereby four regions of Ukraine were forcibly annexed into Russia. This followed the sham 'referenda', in which often only a handful of the pre-war populations voted – at gunpoint.

He repeated that the annexation of around 20 % of Ukrainian territory would be 'irreversible', mixing it with overt references to the use of nuclear weapons to defend Russian territory (saying the US had already set a precedent in 1945 with its atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki). The Ukrainian President Zelenskyy that same night spoke for many, rightly denouncing the annexation as illegal and unacceptable, adding that Ukraine would continue its fight to liberate 'all the territory that is currently occupied'. Quickly and forcefully, UN Secretary General Guterres also condemned the annexation. And the following day in the UN Security Council, no country voted with Russia, while a clear majority voted to condemn it (as expected, China, India, Brazil and Gabon abstained).

Sham referenda and illegal annexation

As EU, we have made it clear ^(²¹³) that we will never accept the annexation and that we will not be intimidated by Russia's threats and escalations. On the contrary, we will reinforce our strategy of supporting Ukraine – militarily, financially and politically; upping the pressure on Russia with more sanctions and supporting our international partner to handle the fallout of the war. At the next Foreign Affairs Council on 17 October, I hope we can formally launch our training mission for Ukrainian armed forces. At the same time, we remain ready to pursue a diplomatic solution, should the circumstances return to do so in a meaningful way.

^(²¹²) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/revisiting-question-europe%20%99s-order-o_en

^(²¹³) See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/09/30/statement-by-the-members-of-the-european-council/>

On the one hand, all this felt familiar, as Putin had followed a similar procedure in 2014, with the annexation of Crimea (naked use of force, a forced referendum, followed by a grandiose ceremony to force through a *fait accompli*). On the other hand, last week's events felt different. For Putin is now facing defeats on the battlefield, growing opposition at home and increasing isolation abroad. The [speech](#) he gave⁽²¹⁴⁾ and the thinking he presented was an almost surreal cocktail of wild threats, conspiracy thinking and fantasy grievances. It suggested a man who is so isolated that he is drowning in a sense of victimhood and who has lost touch with reality.

The enemy he focused on was no longer a Ukraine with no right to exist and run by Nazis. No, the main target was 'the collective West'. He denounced the 'totalitarianism, despotism and apartheid' of today's West which wanted Russia to 'be a colony'. He lambasted the West's for many things ranging from the bombing of Dresden to the pillaging of India and even to and 'gender reassignment surgery'. He even claimed that in the West 'the suppression of freedom itself has taken on the features of a religion: outright Satanism.'

Putin's choices and his speech show to what extent he has closed the door to dialogue, diplomacy and a minimum sense of common humanity. He is only taking his country ever more on the path of war, escalation and isolation. And this is certainly worrisome.

Putin, Gorbachev and Europe's order

All this shows how over several years Russia has moved away from the rest of Europe. Putin's dangerous and deluded worldview are a far cry from the ideas, for instance, of Mikhail Gorbachev, who passed away recently. As [Ivan Krastev](#) reminded us⁽²¹⁵⁾, Gorbachev taught all Europeans two words in Russian: *glasnost* and *perestroika* (openness/transparency and reconstruction/reform). Putin instead will be remembered for only one word, *siloviki*, strongmen.

Gorbachev played a central role in ending the Cold War and proposed '[a common European Home](#)'⁽²¹⁶⁾, based on the fundamental premise of shared security and equal rights for all states. The reaction to these ideas and the debate on them

⁽²¹⁴⁾ See: <https://www.reuters.com/world/extracts-putins-speech-annexation-ceremony-2022-09-30/>

⁽²¹⁵⁾ See: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/sep/04/gorbachev-freed-my-generation-of-european-from-abysse-we-saw-a-different-future>

⁽²¹⁶⁾ See: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2002/9/20/4c021687-98f9-4727-9e8b-836e0bc1f6fb/publishable_en.pdf

belongs to the history books – and we cannot go back in time. But historians and others will continue to debate this period including on lessons to learn on how we handled the end of the Cold War, including what we in the West could have done differently.

Now we are again in a new phase of history. Russia has launched a brutal assault on the basic tenets of the post-Cold War European and international rules-based security order. For the foreseeable future and probably as long as Putin is in power, it is impossible to conceive of a new security order or ‘peace architecture’ in Europe of which Russia’s Putin would be an integral part, respecting shared principles again. Russia remains a geographical neighbour and a member of the international system – but right now, we have to build a European political community without Putin’s Russia.

Wider Europe and the European Political Community

Still, we do need to rethink and reform the wider European order, beyond the work of the EU and NATO as such. Indeed, we are in the midst of an active discussion about how to organise this European political order, partly triggered by [President Macron’s call on 9 May](#) ⁽²¹⁷⁾ for a ‘European Political Community’ (EPC). In recent weeks and months, we have seen a multiplication of proposals and analyses by political leaders, and the full range of European think tanks, tackling this issue.

After initial discussions in the European Council, the inaugural meeting of the EPC will take place on 6 October in Prague. The leaders of 27 EU member states will take part plus all the EU candidate countries, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, the UK plus Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, [making a total of 44 leaders representing their countries](#) ⁽²¹⁸⁾.

It will be a half-day event and with that many participants, it cannot be more than an initial exchange. Some still unresolved questions include: what should be the EPC’s core rationale, its final membership and its relationship with the EU? Also, how should it work in practice? For example, how should it take decisions and should it have its own budget?

⁽²¹⁷⁾ See: <https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20221120120217/https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/en/news/speech-by-emmanuel-macron-at-the-closing-ceremony-of-the-conference-on-the-future-of-europe/>

⁽²¹⁸⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/10/02/invitation-letter-by-president-charles-michel-to-the-members-of-the-european-council-ahead-of-the-prague-leaders-meetings/>

While many aspects remain to be clarified, for me at least a few things are clear:

- The EPC can be no alternative to EU enlargement (i.e. no '*Ersatz*' or substitute for full EU membership)
- It must add value to existing institutions and formats, like the OSCE, Council of Europe and EU frameworks like the Eastern Partnership.
- The EPC should be a community of shared principles (even if we all know that the degree to which these principles are upheld varies across countries...)
- It should have a light-touch structure, but it cannot be just a meeting or talking shop: it needs to do things not just talk about them. In all the areas that leaders will discuss in Prague (security, energy/climate, migration), there could be concrete projects to undertake, to boost resilience across the continent.

As the debate continues, having this common ground is at least something to build upon. Let us use the time until the next meeting takes place, to flesh out this important new political venture.

5.

DEFENDING MULTILATERALISM



RESISTING WHEN AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES TRY TO RE-DEFINE INTERNATIONAL RULES

23.02.2022 – Blog (²¹⁹) – *During the Munich Security Conference (MSC), a few days before Russia's invasion, I responded to the Russia-China declaration on 4 February, explaining why we must uphold international law and universal rights, against any revisionist attempts.*

After two years of pandemic, it was crucial that the MSC could be held in person. It makes a big difference in diplomacy when you can meet people physically and look them in the eye. On the side-lines of the MSC, I met in particular with the G7 foreign ministers to discuss the situation in and around Ukraine and the Ukrainian foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, joined us. We reiterated our call for de-escalation and the use of diplomatic means instead of force and reaffirmed our full solidarity with Ukraine.

A flagrant violation of international law

Since then it has become clear that, unfortunately, this call has not been heard. Last Monday, Russian President Putin decided on the contrary to recognise the independence of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk republics and to send troops there. To respond to this flagrant violation of international law and Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, we held an Extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council last Tuesday and unanimously decided in close coordination with our partners to adopt a package of sanctions. This package targets the 351 members of the Russian State Duma who voted for this recognition as well as 27 individuals and entities that threaten the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. This will cover the political, military, business and media sectors. We also target the economic relations between the two regions and the European Union, exactly as we did in the Crimea case. The package will also target the ability of the Russian State to access the EU's capital and financial markets. In parallel, the German government has decided to suspend the certification of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

(²¹⁹) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/why-we-must-resist-when-authoritarian-regimes-try-re-define-international-rules_en

But sanctions are only a part of our response. Our diplomatic efforts will continue to stop a new eruption of war in the heart of Europe. The risk of a major conflict is real and we need to prevent it at all costs. So, we will continue our outreach to the United Nations and the OSCE to bring Russia back to the negotiation table.

At the MSC last weekend, I discussed also, for the third time this month, the way forward for the Iran nuclear negotiations with the Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. I also discussed the issue with my German, French and British colleagues as well as with US Secretary of State Blinken. It is vital to unblock the ongoing Vienna talks and to revive the JCPOA as soon as possible.

I also exchanged on the growing tensions in the Western Balkans with key local protagonists. I met Kosovo Prime Minister Kurti and his Foreign Minister Gërvalla to help relaunch the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue. I have spoken to the Prime Minister Kovačevski and Foreign Minister Osmani of North Macedonia to confirm our willingness to make rapid progress on his country's accession to the EU. I expressed also our strong worries about the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For 25 years, it has never been easy to keep the Dayton agreement alive, but the centrifugal forces have accelerated in recent months.

Finally at a lunch hosted by the Indian Foreign Minister Jaishankar, we discussed ways and means to reinforce our relations in the Indo-Pacific. I discussed this issue again with Japan Foreign Minister Hayashi. I also had a very interesting exchange with BBC anchor Lyze Doucet about the situation in Afghanistan, where she stayed after the takeover of the country by the Taliban.

Take a step back

On Sunday morning, I delivered a speech ⁽²²⁰⁾ and joined a panel discussion with the French and German defence ministers. Before delving into the burning issues of Ukraine, the Sahel and so on, I wanted to take a step back and address a growing ideological challenge posed by Russia and China. Thirty years after the end of the cold war, we are facing a determined effort to re-define core tenets of the multilateral order. The outcome will decide whether the post-war multilateral 'acquis' survives, centred on the UN, international law and universal rights. Or, whether this will be replaced with a power-based, multi-polar order, with zones of influence and a relativist approach to human rights.

⁽²²⁰⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/munich-security-conference-20-february-2022-opening-statement-hrvp-josep-borrell_en

The [Russia-China joint statement of 4 February](#) ⁽²²¹⁾ is the culmination of that long-standing campaign. It is an act of defiance and its essence is clear. It is a revisionist manifesto, in other words, a manifesto to review the world order.

It is worth reading carefully. One striking passage states that '*Russia and China stand against attempts by external forces to undermine security and stability in their common adjacent regions.*' The UN charter starts with '*We the peoples*' and Article 1 defines '*the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples*'. But for Russia and China, states are sovereign, not people. So they pledge to '*counter interference by outside forces in the internal affairs of sovereign countries and oppose colour revolutions.*'

Re-defining democracy

Re-defining democracy is another major plank in their revisionist drive. They talk about '*genuine democracy*'. Adding qualifying adjectives reminds us of Soviet times when communist regimes were talking of so called '*people's democracy*' or '*organic democracies*' in Franco's Spain.

Democracy, they say, should be implemented '*to suit national conditions*'. And we are told that '*China and Russia, as major countries with long-standing history and culture, have profound traditions of democracy rooted in thousands of years of experience of development.*' Russia claims to have thousands of years of experience of developing democracy...

When President Biden organised his '*Summit for Democracy*' last December, China released a white paper with a telling title: '[China: democracy that works](#)' ⁽²²²⁾. It argued that the ultimate criterion for judging a democracy was '*whether it produces results*'. So not whether it is based on the consent of the people expressed in free elections but by the result they deliver.

This is not a semantic discussion but a political one. We can see every day how in multilateral organisations there is a battle about the universality of human rights. Authoritarian powers – and not just Russia and China – seek to relativise the notion of individual rights, making them subject to local and culturally determined limitations.

The real question is what to do. I see three tracks:

⁽²²¹⁾ See: <http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5770>

⁽²²²⁾ See: http://www.news.cn/english/2021-12/04/c_1310351231.htm

- 1. We have to prepare for the long haul and be ready to see that ‘the technical and the legal is the political’.**

What is at stake are not footnotes in legal documents but the core of the multilateral system. So when we say that we want to defend the UN system, the OSCE acquis and the universality of human rights, we must understand that all this begins with defining the terms and upholding their meaning. If we reluctantly go along with innocent sounding phrases – just to get a resolution through or a Summit document agreed – and these terms are later re-interpreted in harmful ways, we will regret it. Europeans should know from our own experience that what may seem legal or technical actually has profound political implications.

- 2. We must realise that the main targets are not Western governments or publics, but those in ‘swing states’: i.e. governments and publics in Africa, South East Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.**

This is not about ‘defending the West’ but upholding shared principles that underpin common security and promote collective goals. And the big issue is what kind of model these ‘swing states’ will follow, as they hesitate between our democratic system and a more authoritarian one..

The message and appeal of democracy endures globally. The Afrobarometer shows for example that large majorities of African people (70 %) want multi-party democracy, also – no, especially – in authoritarian-run countries. We need to tap into that broad reservoir of support to democracy and build on it.

- 3. We need to avoid looking defensive or backward looking.**

In fact, Russia and China are the ones who want to go back, to the 19th century. Russia and China are becoming more and more assertive and willing to restore the old empires that they have been in the past. We want to move forward with the 21st century – taking into account the lessons learned from the 20th century.

Resist this Russian-Chinese revisionist drive

In conclusion, the UN and the wider multilateral system has two legs: the fundamental equality of sovereign states and the pursuit of common goals with the recognition of the rights of all human beings. Taking that second leg away means taking away the progress we made in the last 75 years. That is why we must resist this Russian-Chinese revisionist drive.

ADDRESS TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

16.06.2022 – Speech (²²³) – *In June, I addressed the United Nations Security Council to take stock of the European Union's main concerns as to the multilateral system and the geopolitical situation. This year my intervention was of course dominated by the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the serious threats it poses to international law and multilateralism.*

Dear colleagues,

We meet at a historical juncture. The UN was created 72 years ago to save humanity from the scourge of war. To build a system of global cooperation, safeguarding the sovereign equality of all. Protecting the rights of both states and of people.

Gradually, the UN built around itself a whole ‘system’ of rules, norms and organisations dealing with the full range of international relations.

The UN has always been the embodiment of this bigger idea: that we share one planet and that we need global governance to live together, peacefully and sustainably. Even at the height of the Cold War, the UN kept functioning

The bedrock of it all was the respect for the international rule of law. All states, no matter their size or political orientation, committed to respect international law and core principles, above all the non-use of force in international relations.

The EU has multilateralism in its DNA

The EU has multilateralism in its DNA. We are multilateralist by nature. It is part of our deepest conviction that we need agreed rules: to tame the passion of states; to provide public goods; and to ensure there is global cooperation even among states with different ideological beliefs.

(²²³) see: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/un-address-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-un-security-council_en

It is easier to cooperate among friends and like-minded. But it is still necessary to cooperate with countries that are not. We need to cooperate in spite of our differences.

We have always been a strong supporter of the UN: investing politically and financially. We pay our dues in full and on time. We have consistently backed big UN initiatives like the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris agreement on climate change and work on human rights.

We cooperate closely here in New York and in the field. All EU crisis management operations work with the UN as their partner. We are the partner you can count on.

The multilateral system under pressure like never before

The hard truth is that the multilateral system is under pressure like never before. There are major global trends and challenges for which we need global cooperation. But the supply and demand of multilateralism do not match.

The speed and scale of cooperation is falling short of what is needed to manage the 'global commons'. Think climate change but also vaccines and the pandemic or the digital revolution. In each case, science and technology are advancing, but diplomacy and rule making are not – or not enough.

The main reason has been the rise in power political competition. In recent years, we have seen, more distrust, more point scoring and more vetoes. The price has been paid in terms of problems not solved, wars and conflicts that fester, people left at the mercy of events.

Last year when I met you all. I talked about a 'deficit in multilateralism'. I fear the situation has only worsened since.

The UN Charter has entrusted this Council to maintain international peace and security. So to sit on the Security Council is a great responsibility. The world needs this Council to be able to take decisions and protect the people whose lives depend on it.

Russia's war against Ukraine has come on top of these structural problems and amplified them. It has already left tens of thousands of dead and over 5 million refugees – the fastest growing refugee crisis since World War 2.

The war takes place in Europe but this is not a European war. This is an attack on the foundations of the UN and this Security Council, by a permanent member of the Council.

In a globalised world, there is no ‘faraway’. Everything is close to everyone. A war or major security crisis in one region affects everyone. It is also impossible to ‘compartmentalise’, to think that security tensions will not affect the economy. We can see it from the shockwaves Russia’s war against Ukraine is sending around the world, exacerbating a global food and energy crisis.

The EU fully mobilised to support Ukraine

The EU is fully mobilised to keep Ukraine economically afloat and militarily able to defend its people, its territorial integrity and its democracy. And we call on every member of the UN, big and small, to help Ukraine by doing the same.

In the face of aggression, no one can be neutral. Being neutral in this case means being on the side of the aggressor. No one can live safely in a world where the illegal use of force is normalised or tolerated.

This war is sending ripple effects throughout the world. And these compound a pre-existing food crisis with yields suffering because of climate change.

The World Food Programme estimates that the number of food-insecure people has doubled from 135 million before the pandemic to 276 million at the start of 2022. Because of the war, the WFP now estimates this number to grow to 323 million.

I urge all of you to help end the war, to restore Ukraine’s sovereignty and to ensure that the global fallout is contained, especially the growing food crisis.

Right now, Russia is blocking at least 20 million tonnes of Ukrainian grain that cannot reach global markets because they are being blocked.

That is the equivalent of 300 massive ships that should be docking at ports all over the world. Instead, Russia is bombing Ukraine’s ports, infrastructure and farmland.

Just after President Putin spoke with the Chair of the African Union, Russian forces bombed Ukraine's second largest grain silo in Mykolaiv. These actions speak for themselves.

We fully support the UN's efforts so that Ukraine can re-open its ports and resume its deliveries of grain to the world. This has to be the top priority.

Russia has to withdraw its troops from all of Ukraine

The easiest way to do this is for Russia to stop its aggression, withdraw its troops from all of Ukraine and to, finally, work with the UN and others to re-open the Black Sea. Military risks to commercial navigation in the area inevitably drive up the cost of insurance and transport further fuelling the current crisis.

Until such time, we will all have to deal with the global consequences of Russia's war. On this you have our word: Europe stands by its partners. We support the UN role, including the Global Crisis Response Group.

The EU has already increased its support for some of the most affected regions. The EU and its member states – what we call Team Europe – have pledged €1 billion for the Sahel and Lake Chad regions and over €600 million for the Horn of Africa. We have also put in place a €225 million food facility to assist our partners in the Middle East and North Africa.

Let me add here a word on sanctions and respond directly to Russian disinformation: EU sanctions are not the cause of food shortages. They only target the Kremlin's ability to finance the military aggression – not the conduct of legitimate trade.

EU sanctions do not prohibit the import and transportation of Russian agricultural goods, nor for fertilisers, nor for payment for such Russian exports.

Furthermore, EU financial sanctions only apply on EU territory: we are against secondary sanctions as a matter of principle and law. So, our measures do not affect the ability of third countries to purchase from Russia if they wish.

I have been discussing with UN Secretary General Guterres, Under Secretary General Griffiths and UNCTAD Secretary General Grynspan and their efforts to unblock Ukrainian grain exports in the Black Sea.

In support of UN efforts, we are ready to look into possible misinterpretation of EU sanctions that could lead to over-compliance or market avoidance and further clarify to economic operators what is and what is not targeted in our sanctions. We are ready to work with all partners in this regard.

Madame President,

While war has returned to Europe, it has not stopped anywhere else. We are acutely aware of this. This is why the EU continues to help prevent and solve conflicts and crises around the world.

Over 4000 women and men are deployed by the EU in 18 crisis management Missions and Operations on three continents, always working in close cooperation with the UN.

I want to mention especially our operations in the Mediterranean (IRINI), off the Somali coasts (ATALANTA) and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (ALTHEA).

IRINI implementing the UN arms embargo

IRINI plays a unique role in implementing the UN arms embargo and prevent illicit petrol export from Libya. ATALANTA has been successfully helping counter piracy off the coasts of Somalia since 2008 and is now also addressing other illicit trafficking, including drugs. Only between last March and April, it intercepted 12 tonnes of narcotics. And ALTHEA supports the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in maintaining a safe and secure environment in a politically very difficult context.

Beyond crisis management and peace operations, the EU and its member states make large contributions to the UN's work on mediation, peacebuilding and transitions. Just to give you one figure: for the 2021-2022 period, we tripled our contribution to the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).

In this context, I want to underline the strategic nature of the cooperation on peace and security between the EU and AU. We work together to offer tailor-made forms of support for training, capacity building and equipment. We want to put into practice our maxim of 'African solutions to African problems'.

Let me end with some quick comments on specific regional crises where the EU has a deep stake and where we work closely with the UN:

Syria: 11 years into the crisis, we cannot forget the Syrian people. We continue to support Special Envoy Pedersen. We need a solution so that cross-border humanitarian aid can continue to flow. Millions depend on this. At the last Brussels conference on Syria, the EU and its member states €4.8 billion for 2022 and beyond, 75 % of the total sum pledged.

Iran: I am in permanent contact with all the parties to try arrange a return to the JCPOA and ensure its full implementation. The basic elements and terms to do this are known and on the table. And the time for decision is now.

The Sahel: the trends are worrying. The EU will stay engaged in the region, with our operations, working with MINUSMA. But we do need commitments from local partners, both on the security situation on the ground and the state of democratic governance

Afghanistan: we will continue supporting the Afghan people. I welcome the new UNAMA mandate but it is clear that the human rights situation is getting worse, especially for women and girls. We need sustained international pressure on the Taleban to re-open education in full to all girls and women. Access to education is a basic human rights,

There are many other crises I could mention: Myanmar, Yemen, Venezuela etc. But let me stop here. I am sure we will have an interesting debate. I look forward to your comments.

Closing remarks

I cannot finish this meeting without thanking many of you for your engagement and acknowledgement on the contribution of the European Union to global peace security and your support for the further strengthening of the European Union – United Nations partnership.

I can only echo the words of some ambassadors, in particular the ones from [the ambassadors of] Ghana and Gabon. Also [the ambassador of] Kenya, who spoke on the important role of regional and sub-regional organisations in addressing global challenges.

I agree with China that we will not want a world organised around opposing blocs. This would only bring greater insecurity. We are sensitive to the security concerns

of all countries and ready to engage in discussions and negotiations to rebuild the European security, once Russia stops its invasion of Ukraine and re-establishes its territorial integrity.

I also welcome the comments of India on the Indo-Pacific strategy. With this strategy, we look forward to strengthening our strategic partnership not only with India, but also with the entire region.

About the main subjects of the discussion today, which is the situation in Ukraine and the role of the European Union. Well, I was certainly not expecting to agree with the Russian Ambassador. I thank him for lecturing me about the interpretation of the historical role of the European Union and how the founding fathers conceived it, but I think I have better interpreters of my history.

And, I do not think we are diverging from this prospect of peace, which is the essence of the European Union. We continue being a Union who wants to engage in peace. We are not a military Union, but certainly we cannot be indifferent to what is happening in our neighbourhood and the aggression of one of our most important partners – Ukraine – is suffering.

There is one thing for me, at this moment, that is the most important, and this is the issue on which should concentrate our attention. We can discuss endlessly about the causes of this war and certainly, we will not agree. But one thing is clear, there are Russian troops in Ukraine and there are no Ukrainian troops in Russia. Who is the aggressor is clear, but we will not agree.

But we should concentrate our efforts in trying to avoid the next step of this drama. And the next step of this drama is a big wave of hunger in the world.

And, this is going to happen if Russia continues to block the exports of wheat from Ukraine. And certainly, it is not the European Union who is blocking these exports. It is certainly not us who are bombing the storage of wheat, certainly not.

So, I call here on everyone, and in particular the private actors, to do whatever they can in order to avoid the dramatic situation that millions of people could be suffering in the next months – a big wave of hunger.

We do not prevent Russia to export wheat and fertilisers

From our side, we will do everything we can in order to explain to the economic actors that there is nothing in our sanctions that prevent the export of wheat and fertilisers from Russia – any kind of overinterpretation, any kind of market avoidances, have to be corrected it. And we will do our best in order to dissipate any kind of misinterpretation, and it would be good if others do the same thing and stop spreading disinformation about that.

But it is a common responsibility for all of us to avoid a dramatic situation, in the weeks to come, of millions of people being deprived of basic food – and this may happen. And the United Nations is working hard in order to avoid it and we are supporting the United Nations to avoid it. And I ask all of you to contribute to this. Some can act, others can put pressure. But among all of us, there is the responsibility to avoid what may happen if things continue the way they are. I think this is a very important warning and just that justifies this meeting.

Thank you very much for your attention.

VACCINATING THE WORLD: BETWEEN PROMISES AND REALITIES

19.06.2022 – Blog ^(²²⁴) – *After one and a half years of COVID-19 vaccines rollout, we were able to establish what the EU has achieved to help vaccinate the world. The EU's record stands in contrast to what China and Russia really did, beyond the bluster of their noisy 'vaccine diplomacy'.*

The COVID-19 pandemic is not yet over and every day there are still more than 500 000 active cases daily. However, the topic has slipped into the background almost everywhere, being replaced by the consequences of Vladimir Putin's war of aggression against Ukraine and the sharp rise in energy and food prices that it has triggered.

China and Russia active 'vaccine diplomacies'

The waning public attention for the pandemic has also reduced attention to the issue of vaccines. In 2021, as you will recall, the subject was not only dominating the headlines, but also at the centre of international relations, with major powers, and in particular China and Russia, conducting active 'vaccine diplomacy' to extend their global influence by promising to provide vaccines to the world.

In this context, Europe was often criticised for not doing enough. From the outset, we had chosen to act in a multilateral framework, by supporting the COVAX facility launched by the WHO to jointly purchase and supply vaccines for low and middle-income countries. This meant that, unlike others, the European flag did not always appear on every batch of vaccine that was delivered thanks to us.

One and a half years after the start of vaccination campaigns, if we take stock of the situation, as the EEAS services have done recently based on data collected by the multilateral institutions, the EU has actually been by far the largest exporter of vaccines in the world. With 2.2 billion doses supplied to 167 countries, we exported almost twice as much vaccines as China, three times as much as the United States and 20 times as much as Russia.

^(²²⁴) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/vaccinating-world-between-promises-and-realities_en

Of these 2.2 billion exported doses, 475 million were donated to 104 countries, of which 405 million via COVAX and 70 million bilaterally, particularly in the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership. In terms of donations, the United States did slightly more than us, with 542 million doses donated to 117 countries. But we have actually donated far more vaccines than China – with just 130 million to 95 countries – and Russia – with only 1.5 million doses to 19 countries.

We have not only exported and donated vaccines but also helped to develop vaccines production in Africa: last year, the EU with its member states and financial institutions have committed over €1 billion to finance this development. By 2040, the African Union wants that 60 % of the vaccines used on the continent are manufactured in Africa and the EU fully supports that goal. This year already, two factories will be installed in Rwanda and Senegal and commercial production is set to begin in 2023. Close cooperation is also ongoing with South Africa's Biovac Institute and with our partners in Ghana.

China has been the second largest commercial provider of COVID-19 vaccines globally, but it donated three times fewer vaccines than the EU and the US did respectively. China participates to COVAX and has sold 226 million doses to that multilateral facility, but has not donated any vaccine to COVAX. Crucially, China did not deliver also any mRNA vaccines, which have proven to be the most effective tool against the coronavirus including the new variants.

Russian vaccine diplomacy a total failure

Russian vaccine diplomacy has been a total failure and this was already the case before the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. In August 2020, President Putin announced that Russia had approved the first vaccine against COVID-19, labelled 'Sputnik V'. However, the fact that it was approved before going into compulsory phase III clinical trials, breached relevant international protocols and ruined its reputation from the outset, including in Russia as demonstrated by a high degree of vaccine hesitancy. Sputnik V has never been approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA), primarily because of a lack of transparency of Russian laboratories.

Sputnik V was heavily promoted via a professional international marketing campaign and Russia obtained commercial contracts for close to 800 million doses of Sputnik V. However, up to now, Russia has only delivered 108 million doses, i.e. less than 15 %. This has caused intense irritation among foreign

governments and some are cancelling their procurement contracts (e.g. Guatemala). Many procurement deals were also contingent on WHO approval, which is not going to happen.

Russia also signed manufacturing agreements with no less than 23 countries to produce Sputnik V. However, only a few countries actually started production, due to delays in the supply of raw materials. Following the start of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine, more manufacturing contracts have been cancelled. As one of very few countries, Russia stayed completely outside the COVAX Facility and it played no significant role in vaccine donations. In short, the vaccine diplomacy of these two countries can be summarised as 'great expectations – broken promises'.

India is also an important player on vaccines. In the early phase of the vaccine rollout, India gave credit to its fame as 'pharmacy of the world' by mass-producing the AstraZeneca vaccine at the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, the Serum Institute of India (SII) in Pune. The Indian version of the vaccine became known as Covishield was later joined by India's first own vaccine development Covaxin. India obtained WHO emergency use listing for both.

However, in view of a domestic pandemic surge, India halted all vaccine exports in April 2021. This decision constituted a major problem for the COVAX Facility, which at the time was quasi exclusively relying on the AstraZeneca vaccine. The Indian vaccine export ban had been lifted only in October 2021. Since then, India's vaccines exports have not really recovered, with only 230 million doses exported to 100 countries, of which 15 million have been donated.

The EU has a lot to be proud of

In short, on COVID-19 vaccines, the EU has a lot to be proud of. Not only did we manage to vaccinate our own population against COVID-19 in a short period of time, but we have also been the world's largest exporter of vaccines and the second largest donor to low- and middle-income countries. We have accomplished much more in this area than China and Russia together. Building on this solid track record, the EU will continue to support access to vaccines worldwide, in particular by helping Africa to produce them.

WHY IT IS SO HARD TO PROVIDE PUBLIC GOODS AND PROTECT THE GLOBAL COMMONS

07.07.2022 – Blog ^(²²⁵) – *Last year, multilateral action was in short supply. The G20 could play a crucial role in building bridges, but it has been hampered by growing geo-political tensions. Ahead of the G20 Foreign Ministers meeting in Indonesia, I reflected on why it is so hard to deliver global public goods and what we can do in this direction.*

A classic problem in international politics is how to produce public goods and take care of the global commons ^(²²⁶). Things like preserving peace and security, vaccinating the world, addressing the climate crisis, protecting bio-diversity, or fighting against tax evasion: it is easy to state that we want these things and why. But in the absence of a world government, they are hard to deliver, requiring immense efforts of cooperation and solidarity. This is even more the case today, with the Russian aggression against Ukraine deepening geopolitical divisions.

The ‘free-rider dilemma’

When it comes to global problems, every country clearly benefits from collective action, but there is a tendency to wait for others to take the lead and pay the costs (the so-called ‘free-rider dilemma’). Political leaders frequently say in rousing speeches that the international community must do this or that. Yet their actions show that national considerations often outweigh international requirements. This is regrettable but not surprising: national politicians are accountable to national electorates and nationalism remains a powerful political force.

For decades, scholars and diplomats have discussed how to handle this dilemma. And the best answer they have come up with, is what’s called ‘rules-based multilateralism’. It is maybe an off-putting phrase. But at heart this is about the whole system of rules, organisations and financing arrangements, among states and non-state actors, to tackle global challenges and provide global public goods. The UN and the Security Council are at the heart of this system, with many

^(²²⁵) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/hard-effort-provide-public-goods-and-protect-global-commons_en

^(²²⁶) See: <https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/en/2022/04/10/public-goods-common-goods-and-global-common-goods-a-brief-explanation/>

operational organisations and agencies operating alongside it: such as the WTO, WHO, IMF, FAO, UNFCCC etc.

Since 1945, the multilateral system produced many results

Between 1945 and the beginning of the 21st century, we saw a significant growth in the multilateral system and it produced many results: from an increase in life expectancy and a reduction in world poverty, to rising standards of living and literacy, to the elimination of diseases like small pox or harmful chemicals like chlorofluorocarbons, CFCs, that caused the hole in the ozone layer, [which is now closing again](#).

Of course, many other problems and crises erupted or endured in this period, including debt and financial crises or the failure to regulate the ‘dark side’ of globalisation. But by historical standards, ‘the system’ produced results: with hunger in decline and growing numbers of people, especially women, being better educated and living longer, healthier and freer lives.

Unhappily, in the past decades, the system has been increasingly struggling with the general trend towards populism at home and geo-political competition among the major players. We see more distrust, more nationalism and more free-riding than the world can afford. As I noted in my recent [address to the UN Security Council](#) (²²⁷), there is ‘a deficit of multilateralism’ and the price is paid in problems not solved and people left at the mercy of events.

A few concrete examples underline both the dynamics we are seeing and the need for the EU to keep investing in effective multilateralism, especially when the political trends make this difficult.

1. **Vaccines.** Three weeks ago, the *Lancet* published [a major study](#) estimating that Covid-19 vaccines prevented around 15 million deaths in the first year of their rollout (²²⁸). This is a staggering number. As of mid-June, according to [Our World in Data](#), 67 % of the whole world had received at least one dose (²²⁹). But that figure drops to 18.6 % for low-income countries and the number of prevented deaths is heavily concentrated in the developed countries that were able to vaccinate their populations. The hard truth is that COVAX, the main multilateral

(²²⁷) See p. 217.

(²²⁸) See: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(22\)00320-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(22)00320-6/fulltext)

(²²⁹) See: <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations>

vehicle that the EU supported from the start and that was set up to manage the global vaccination drive in an equitable way, has not been able to deliver on its targets in 2021 (especially due to exports restrictions).

As EU, we have a [better track record on vaccine exports and donations](#) and support to vaccine multilateralism than China, Russia, India or the US⁽²³⁰⁾. But we still need to do more with partners to ‘vaccinate the world’ as we said we would, including through greater support for production capacity in Africa, support for logistics and addressing vaccine hesitancy which remains an enduring challenge. In addition, we have to strengthen the WHO to make sure the world as a whole is better prepared to handle public health emergencies in the future.

2. **Climate change.** On paper, the Paris Agreement was a true landmark: a global, legally-binding agreement to combat climate change. But implementation has been a real challenge and the latest [IPCC assessment report](#)⁽²³¹⁾ makes for grim reading: already 3.5 billion people are highly vulnerable to climate impacts and half the world’s population suffers severe water shortages.

Crucially, carbon emissions are rising faster than the climate can afford. After the pandemic-induced reduction of CO₂ of 2020, emissions rose again by 6 % in 2021 and are now above 2019 levels. Without a significant increase in the global of ambition, the world will overshoot the objectives of the Paris Agreement, with all the consequences that follow, including for global security.

We have to step up our own actions as EU and we are with our [Fit for 55](#) package⁽²³²⁾, just adopted. But we must mobilise others that can do more to join us and help prepare the most climate-exposed and fragile countries to cope with the inevitable and growing fall out of the climate crisis. The COP27 in Cairo later this year will be a make or break moment, including for mobilising \$100 billion for climate finance. We cannot let the urgency of the energy crisis we face now come at the expense of the permanent threat of climate change.

3. **Bio-diversity.** The threats to bio-diversity are often less known than those to the climate but the consequences are at least as damaging for the planet and our livelihoods. The [UN estimates](#) that 1 million plant and animal species – out of a total of 8 million – are threatened with extinction⁽²³³⁾. The [World Bank](#) says that forest reserve cover (like the Amazon) has been decreasing by 5 million

⁽²³⁰⁾ See p. 225.

⁽²³¹⁾ See: https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6wg3/pdf/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_FinalDraft_FullReport.pdf

⁽²³²⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/green-deal/fit-for-55-the-eu-plan-for-a-green-transition/>

⁽²³³⁾ See: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/biodiversity/>

hectares a year, for more than ten years (⁹³⁴). Coral reefs have halved in the past 100 years, 35 % of marine stocks are overfished etc..

The diagnosis is clear: what is needed, again, is more determined international action. Previous UN action plans in this field have not seen sufficient implementation of commitments. The COP 15 meeting of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will be held in Canada next December where it has to take crucial decisions on proposals to protect 30 % of land and sea, cuts to chemical runoff from agriculture and restoring at least a fifth of degraded freshwater, marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

4. **Tax justice.** Tax avoidance is depriving cash-strapped governments around the world with revenues of between \$100-200 billion, every year (⁹³⁵). Last Summer, after lengthy negotiations, there was a landmark agreement in the framework of the G20 with over 135 countries and jurisdictions agreeing to an OECD 'two-pillar plan to reform international taxation rules and ensure that multinational enterprises pay a fair share of tax wherever they operate.' It was a breakthrough that was widely hailed, including by me (⁹³⁶). Both as a step towards addressing the problem of tax evasion to build a more just form of globalisation but also a much-needed example that multilateral cooperation can produce meaningful results.

It is therefore very frustrating that as EU we have not been able yet to transpose this international agreement into EU law, due to the opposition of one member state. We are shooting ourselves in the foot: our citizens want to see action on this file and all governments need revenue to address the multiple crises we face. And it is also hard to explain to our partners that a Union that prides itself on its multilateral credentials is unable to deliver on its commitment. This will only encourage those who have their own reservations to stall their ratification. It is opposite of what the world needs: instead of a boost to multilateralism we see a stalemate.

Investing in multilateral action

Each case is different, but what these issues have in common is that for each global public good, the definition of the problem exists and we have an established international framework to address it. But the system struggles to deliver results, at the scale and speed required.

^(⁹³⁴) See: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/biodiversity>

^(⁹³⁵) See: <https://www.oecd.org/tax/beps/>

^(⁹³⁶) See: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/eu-multilateralism-corporate-taxation-by-josep-borell-and-paolo-gentiloni-2021-07>

Where the problem lies within the EU we really have no good argument but to deliver on our commitments. However, by definition, the EU cannot solve these problems on its own: *regional* organisations can contribute but not deliver *global* public goods. This requires everyone doing more, especially developed countries.

Obviously, the geo-political context of Russia's war against Ukraine is complicating this task. We see a hardening of tensions spilling over into all multilateral forums. We must certainly defend our principles and uphold the core tenets of the rules-based order against revisionist challengers such as Russia and China ⁽²³⁷⁾. At the same time, we must somehow continue to work with all powers to solve global issues. This is a balancing act requiring constant fine-tuning and close coordination with like-minded partners. The G20 Foreign Ministers meeting in Indonesia is a crucial moment to do this, above all on the dramatic food and energy crisis but also on vaccines, climate and all the other public goods that our world so badly needs.

⁽²³⁷⁾ See p. 213.

G20: DIFFICULT TIMES FOR MULTILATERALISM

10.07.2022 – Blog ⁽²³⁸⁾ – *In July, the G20 foreign ministers' meeting in Bali highlighted the different perspectives on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its consequences. I stressed in this blog post that we need to continue our efforts to convince doubting partners, while being sensitive to their needs.*

I have just returned from two intense days of 'diplomatic speed-dating' around the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting in Indonesia. One of the advantages of such meetings is that one can meet many colleagues in a short period of time. So apart from participating at the plenary sessions, I also met my counterparts from China, India, and several other Latin American, Asian and African countries.

The main takeaway is that in abstract terms everybody agrees on the need for multilateralism and defending principles such as territorial sovereignty and the non-use of force. However, this often looks different when it must become concrete, such as on the fallout from Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine. The hard truth is that national interests often outweigh general commitments to bigger ideals.

Before elaborating on this, let me briefly summarise what I focused on during the ministerial sessions. During our first session centred on 'Multilateralism', there was widespread agreement that the multilateral system is under pressure like never before. There is a deficit in multilateralism, at a time when we need it, mostly due to the rise in power politics. And while we have witnessed this trend for some years, Russia's war against Ukraine has taken these developments to a whole new level. This unprovoked war constitutes a blatant violation of international law, contravening the basic tenets of the UN Charter and endangering the global economic recovery. I stressed again that this is not 'a European war' but an international conflict that concerns the whole world. In the face of aggression, no one can be neutral. No one can live safely in a world where the illegal use of force is normalised or tolerated.

A deficit in multilateralism

During the second session on 'Addressing Food and Energy Security', despite a broad agreement on the need to solve these twin crises, ministers disagreed on

⁽²³⁸⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/g20-difficult-times-multilateralism_en

how to address this matter and who is responsible for the current (and upcoming) challenges. I stressed once more that, despite all the propaganda and lies coming from the Kremlin, this food crisis is not caused by the EU or the international sanctions. We do not target the agricultural sector in Russia, nor do we prohibit the imports of Russian agricultural goods or fertilisers, nor the payment of such products. It is Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine that is dramatically aggravating the food crisis.

Russia has invaded a breadbasket of the world, turning the shipping lanes of the Black Sea into a war zone, while blocking 20 million tonnes of grain in Ukrainian storage facilities. This is a deliberate attempt to use food as a weapon against the most vulnerable countries in the world, especially in Africa. According to the UN, today, 1.2 billion people – one in six of the world's population – are subject to a 'perfect storm' because they are severely exposed to the combination of rising food prices, rising energy prices, and tightening financial conditions. In the energy sector, the real reasons for high prices and a tight market are artificial supply shortages, especially of gas, caused once more by Russia. Of course, we must act as the EU and as the international community to address the food and energy crises. However, the quickest solution remains in the hands of one man: President Putin, who has the power to stop his senseless war and avoid a global food and energy calamity.

A better understanding where different countries stand

Discussing these issues during the two sessions and my bilateral meetings gave me a better understanding where different countries stand. Indeed, in the March vote at the UN General Assembly, 140 states condemned the Russian aggression and no member of the G20, apart from the aggressor, opposed this resolution. But on how to move forward and on the consequences of the war, views differ sharply. The G7 and like-minded countries are united in condemning and sanctioning Russia and in trying to hold the regime accountable. But other countries, and we can speak here of the majority of the 'Global South', often take a different perspective.

In principle, everyone condemns the attack on a country's territorial integrity and sovereignty. But when it comes to naming the aggressor and stating who is responsible for the consequences, many are reticent for different reasons. Some are more concerned about the consequences of the war for themselves, rather than about who is responsible for these difficulties and how to end this war; others complain about 'double standards' or simply want to preserve their good bilateral

relationship with Russia. And many remain vague and not wanting to take sides, because this would jeopardise their geopolitical interests.

We are not winning the global battle of narratives

The global battle of narratives is in full swing and, for now, we are not winning. As the EU, we have to engage further to refute Russian lies and war propaganda, making it clear who is responsible for the aggression and hence its consequences. We also need to show solidarity with the victim, i.e. Ukraine, while helping in a concrete and visible way those who are most affected by the fallout of Putin's dreadful war but that somehow look to Russia for help.

The course of the G20 Meeting itself was quite telling. We are always serious about our multilateral engagement, and we show respect for the opinions of others. This was not the case of Russia. Foreign Minister Lavrov left the G20 Meeting right after his intervention in the first session. He did not even bother to listen to what others had to say. That decision tells you all you need to know about how much Russia really cares about multilateral forums. I hope that some G20 members that are sitting on the fence with respect to the war in Ukraine took good note.

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY: FACING THE PERFECT STORM

20.09.2022 – Blog (²³⁹) – *In September, I attended the UN General Assembly high-level week in New York. Russia's illegal war against Ukraine was on top of the agenda but there were also many other issues to address. With the food, energy, climate and debt crises, multilateral action is more needed than ever, while at the same time also more difficult to deliver.*

My agenda started on Sunday with a meeting with the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. It gave me the opportunity to confirm the EU's support to multilateralism with the UN at the centre. And yesterday I chaired our usual informal meeting of the EU Foreign ministers ahead of the UN General Assembly.

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine will of course be on top of our diplomatic priorities during this week. We intend to use the General Assembly to promote international support for Ukraine, not only because it is our neighbour, but because by defending Ukraine, we are defending the core principles of the United Nations: the respect of international law, sovereignty and independence of countries.

I will have also many bilateral meetings in coming days and we want to use them to continue to explain to our partners –in Asia, Africa and Latin America – who is the real culprit of the growing instability and the energy and food crisis: Vladimir Putin. And that for us, it is not a question of choosing between Ukraine and others issues: we also remain committed to addressing other crises in the world.

The Black Sea Grain Deal needs to be extended

Looking at the dire consequences of the war, we have the chance to discuss the Black Sea Grain Deal, concluded this summer thank to the direct mediation of the UN Secretary General and Türkiye. The grain deal and our efforts through the EU Solidarity Lanes have already led to a significant decrease in food prices worldwide. The world urgently needs this agreement to be extended. We will continue to push back against the Russian misleading narrative regarding this agreement. Two-

⁽²³⁹⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/un-general-assembly-facing-perfect-storm_en

thirds of Ukrainian exports have gone to the countries that need them the most: in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

We are also trying to make progress on the demilitarisation of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. As International Atomic Energy Agency Director-General Grossi proposed in his report following his visit, Russia must cease its occupation immediately and establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone.

More broadly, Secretary General Antonio Guterres has rightly referred to the current global environment as a ‘perfect storm’ and in our meeting, we discussed how to jointly tackle it. Record temperatures, floods and droughts have struck all continents in recent months as climate change wreaks havoc. The UN Secretary General had just come back from Pakistan where devastating floods have paralysed 40 % of the country. Pakistan, like Ukraine, are both important food-exporting countries. Over 300 million people in 82 countries are food insecure. The number of refugees worldwide are on the rise. For people in Yemen and Somalia, starvation is around the corner.

The effects of the pandemic are still lingering in many parts of the world, and even many stable countries are now caught in debt traps as inflationary pressures puts them in a bind. Colleagues from the Global South are reminding us that the recovery is as uneven as has been the distribution of vaccines. The global human development index has regressed for the second year. Democracy, women empowerment and human rights are all under threat. We are falling behind on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) on every continent. Whilst Europe braces itself for a harsh winter, many countries are struggling for survival.

China and Russia feed distrust against the international order

To top it all off, international tensions make it very difficult to find meaningful multilateral solutions to the current challenges. An assertive China and a discredited and destructive Russia are trying to feed distrust against the international rules-based order among parts of the developing world. Tensions between China and the US and between Russia and the rest of us are hampering international cooperation. The Russian veto has predictably disqualified the Security Council from taking any meaningful outcomes on the war against Ukraine, the worst and most flagrant violation of the UN charter since Iraq invaded Kuwait.

So where is the EU in all of this? As the UN Secretary General stresses regularly, the world needs the EU to be globally engaged, to lead by example and to build diplomatic bridges on the triple planetary crisis (of energy, food and debt), on climate finance and on the digital agenda. The world needs an assertive EU as a major development partner, as a bulwark for human rights and as a defender of international law and the UN Charter.

Many of our partners around the world present here in New York send the same message. They understand that the Russian war is a game changer in many ways, but they are concerned that it could distract the EU from the broader global agenda. They ask us to remain engaged also beyond Europe and to be a global, moderate voice of reason and common sense that strengthens international cooperation and the multilateral system.

The high-level week will be a chance not only to push back Russia and support Ukraine, but also to show that we stay engaged on all other global issues that matter to us and our partners. From the Sustainable Development Goals to ensuring ambitious outcomes against climate change at COP 27, transforming education, reshaping the financial system, ensuring improved action in the Sahel, supporting Afghan women: we remain committed on all these files.

Build a stronger, more resilient rules-based global system

With many crises coming at us, we need to muster the political energy to build a stronger, more resilient rules-based global system with the UN at the centre. It is very much in our interest to have it revived. I am well aware that we may not be able to make progress on all these issues in just one week, but we will use the coming days to work in that direction. The European Union wants to seize every opportunity to move multilateral action forward.

G7: FACING TOGETHER THE MAIN GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES

07.11.2022 – Blog ⁽²⁴⁰⁾ – *In November, we had a fruitful G7 foreign ministers meeting in Münster (Germany). While the war against Ukraine dominated the agenda, we also discussed our relations with China and the situations in Iran and Africa and addressed the latest developments in the Western Balkans.*

The G7 Foreign Ministers were welcomed last week for two days in the historic city of Münster by my colleague Annalena Baerbock, the German Foreign Minister. First of all, we all agreed that we have to stay the course on our strategy regarding the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine: supporting Ukraine, pressuring Russia and addressing the wider fallout of the war.

It's been nearly 9 months since Vladimir Putin started its illegal aggression. Together with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Dmytro Kuleba, who joined us by video link, we condemned Russia's recent escalation, including its attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, in particular energy and water facilities using missiles and Iranian drones and trainers. As Putin did not succeed to conquer Ukraine, he obviously now intends to terrorise the Ukrainian population and destroy the country.

Putin now intends to destroy Ukraine

But Ukrainians are fighting back and we support them in any way we can. Together with our member states, the EU mobilised over €19 billion for Ukraine's economic, social and financial resilience, and €3.1 billion in military support. Our help also includes technical support to help repair energy infrastructures and supply of additional power generation. We will also increase our humanitarian support, which has become even more pressing in view of the approaching winter. Keeping Ukraine's economy afloat remains key. The EU is to propose a substantial financial package of up to €1.5 billion a month, totalling up to €18 billion, to significantly cover Ukraine's financing needs for 2023.

We also discussed the importance of ensuring that Ukraine's agricultural exports can reach the world, and gave full support to the UN's efforts to get Russia to

⁽²⁴⁰⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/g7-m%C3%BCnster-facing-together-main-geopolitical-challenges_en

resume its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative. It is crucial that the agreement is extended beyond 19 November: Russia must not use yet another pretext to renounce to its obligations. It is not acceptable to use food and hunger as a weapon of war. I also underlined the importance of the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes, which have been used to transport the great majority of Ukrainian agricultural and non-agricultural exports since the start of the Russian war.

In addressing the wider fallout of the war, we also discussed the situation of Central Asia. The countries of the region are increasingly looking towards the EU as they are seeking more security and a diversification of their partnerships, including in the field of sustainable connectivity, trade and energy. I will travel to Samarkand next week, for an important Connectivity Conference and what will probably be the most meaningful EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting.

We also discussed the situation in China and in the Indo-Pacific region, reflecting on the outcome of the recent 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. With President Xi Jinping's third mandate as General Secretary of the Party, China is obviously consolidating its assertive policies. Additional tensions in the Taiwan Strait could in particular have a disruptive effect on EU-China relations and we must prepare for the different possible scenarios.

China an economic partner, a competitor and a systemic rival

For the EU, China remains, simultaneously, a key economic partner, an overall competitor, and a systemic rival. Rivalry and competition are however increasingly prominent. We have to manage competition with China across all areas, and at the same time aim for constructive cooperation, where possible and in our interest. This includes global challenges like peace and security, global health, the climate and biodiversity crisis and the conservation of natural resources, in particular ahead of a crucial week with the start of the COP 27.

We must level the playing field for our companies operating in China and make sure that our dependencies do not turn into vulnerabilities. China plays a crucial role in many supply chains and our dependence on China for our green transition strategy is currently higher than our dependence on fossil fuels from Russia. China accounts for 90 % of our magnesium needs, 90 % of our rare earths requirements and 80 % of the solar panels used in the EU. We need to work on reducing these excessive dependencies, addressing vulnerabilities and strengthen our resilience. We will continue engaging with our partners on China – including through the G7.

The dire situation of human rights in China is one of the most divisive issues in EU-China relations and we called on China to act in accordance with its international commitments and legal obligations. Our top concerns are about Xinjiang, Tibet and Inner Mongolia. When we meet Chinese representatives at senior and top levels, we raise these points systematically and I expect all member states to do the same. We will continue to air our differences, mindful that our pressure can only be successful if we keep our dialogue going.

The bravery of the Iranian women

In Münster, we had also an important discussion on [Iran](#). Protests are continuing following the killing of Mahsa Amini. We admire the bravery of the Iranian women who are at the forefront of the peaceful protests. I passed this message very clearly to my counterpart, Minister Abdollahian during our call last Wednesday. On 17 October, the EU imposed sanctions on those responsible for the unacceptable violent repression of the protests. The EU also took action following the extremely worrying delivery of Iranian drones to Russia.

Regarding the JCPOA, things are not evolving in the right direction. Positions between the parties are not converging yet. Iran must engage with the International Atomic Agency in a constructive way. I urged Minister Abdollahian to take this forward.

In Münster, we were joined by our counterparts from Kenya and Ghana as well as the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission. We underscored the geopolitical and strategic importance of the African continent and the need for close cooperation with our African partners. Africa is particularly affected by multiple global crises such as the climate crisis, the still ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, democratic backsliding plus food and energy insecurity as consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Specifically on Ethiopia, we should not forget the tens of thousands of people who were killed and those who were victims of the worst atrocities as we enter the 2nd year of this conflict. Human rights violations, atrocities and abuses must cease immediately. Perpetrators of these violations and abuses must be held to account; survivors and victims must obtain justice. Last week there was some positive news with the announcement of a cessation of hostilities. We welcome it and urged the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) to fully honour and implement this commitment.

More broadly, African societies continue to suffer from Russia's weaponisation of food and fertiliser exports. We cannot afford to be losing ground, so we will continue to work with our African partners to build resilient and sustainable agri-food and energy systems, mitigate climate change, and address disinformation.

The basis for joint action with our African partners are the priorities and deliverables agreed at the EU-African Union Summit last February, notably the Africa-Europe Global Gateway Investment Package. In this area, it is important that we realise synergies with G7 initiatives, such as the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment. Africa is diversifying its partners, and we are engaged in a competition of offers.

Reconciliation in the Western Balkans

Finally, a word on the Western Balkans, as I participated also last week in the Berlin Process Summit, hosted by Chancellor Scholz. We have to advance on both resilience and reconciliation in the region. On resilience, we have announced at this event a €1bn energy emergency support package. We also need to step up our help to improve cyber resilience for those countries in the region that are most exposed to threats by Russia. We are also working to strengthen the fight against Russian disinformation in Western Balkan.

With the war ongoing in Ukraine, we need to help avoid any new conflicts to erupt in Europe. In recent months we saw recurring tensions between Kosovo and Serbia, notably on the issue of license plates. As facilitator of the Belgrade – Pristina Dialogue, supported by EUSR Miroslav Lajcak, I presented a proposal to the parties to make concrete and irreversible progress on the road to comprehensive normalisation. I am grateful in particular to Germany and France for their support to this proposal. Discussions on this proposal are ongoing with both parties. We urge Kosovo and Serbia to take a historic leap forward in normalising their relations.

These useful meetings have shown the extent of convergence between the G7 countries on the main geopolitical challenges⁽²⁴⁾. Together we must continue to defend the rules-based international order.

⁽²⁴⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/g7-foreign-ministers-statement_en

DEFENDING DEMOCRACY – AT HOME AND ABROAD

10.12.2022 – Blog ^{([242](#))} – *For years, democracy has been in decline globally. EU efforts to observe elections help countries to enhance democratic resilience. In December, the European External Action Service and the European Parliament hosted a meeting of key actors in the field of electoral observation, an opportunity for me to highlight their work.*

The trend of the past decade is clear: democracy is under severe threat. A recent [Global State of Democracy Report](#) ^{([243](#))} confirmed that people are losing faith in democracy. We see everywhere a greater polarisation, often fuelled by disinformation, and deliberate efforts by non-democratic regimes to undermine the universal right of people to elect their own governments and choose their own future. When democracy is being attacked, we, as EU, stand strong in our convictions. We must and will continue to support democracy, both internally and externally.

Democracy needed to tackle the enormous challenges we face

Democracy remains indeed the only approach that can tackle the enormous challenges societies face. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, some authoritarian regimes pretended they had more efficient policies than democracies. However, the rest of the story has proven exactly the opposite. The same applies to the fight against climate change: if citizens are not directly involved in the urgent choices to make, it will become more difficult to achieve carbon neutrality in time. I grew up in a dictatorship and I am well placed to appreciate the difference that democracy makes.

Supporting participation in democratic elections is not about imposing any Western model, as some want to make-believe: it is nothing less than a universal right. Political participation goes hand in hand with trust in institutions. It is a fundamental right and a fundamental citizen responsibility as well. This is why re-establishing public confidence in democratic processes is essential. We must

^{([242](#))} See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/defending-democracy-%E2%80%93-home-and-abroad_en

^{([243](#))} See: <https://www.idea.int/democracytracker/publications>

help our partners worldwide when a rising democracy struggles to build more robust institutions.

'To be or not to be a democracy' goes beyond elections. However, elections constitute a cornerstone of any democratic architecture. Without them, there is no democracy to talk about. This is why the EU, together with partners around the world, is putting a lot of effort into observing elections. Since the beginning of my mandate, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU has sent 25 electoral observations and follow-up missions in 23 countries, 13 in Africa, 6 in Latin America, 2 in the Middle East, 1 in the Pacific and 1 in the Western Balkans. Since 1990, we have had in total no less than 170 EU missions.

However, before going further on this, I would like to thank the thousands of national and international election observers that serve worldwide: they embody democratic resilience. The increase in attacks against them is alarming. In the run-up to the 2019 elections in Mozambique, one of the country's most prominent citizen observers, Dr Anastácio Matavel, was assassinated by the police. It is totally unacceptable. Electoral observers must be considered what they truly are: human rights defenders. The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Ms. Mary Lawlor, called last October on states to take 'all necessary steps' to allow election observers to carry out their work.

Our EU Electoral Observation Missions (EOM) do not interfere with national processes, as some want to make-believe: the organisation of elections is the sole responsibility of the country itself and EU missions are only deployed by invitation. Over the past decades, the EU has become one of the most respected election observation providers in the world, in particular because EU missions have demonstrated independence, professionalism and impartiality; they are seen therefore as being capable of assessing the electoral process and recommending reforms honestly.

Our efforts have proven their value

And our efforts have proven their value. In 2021, I have decided to send an EU mission to observe the regional and municipal elections in Venezuela. My decision was initially challenged in Europe, although being much awaited by civil society and political forces in Venezuela. Finally, the mission proved helpful. We have seen improvements in the electoral conditions compared to previous processes – these Venezuelan elections were marked by the return of the majority of political parties

to the electoral arena. The mission report raised also a number of structural deficiencies and made many recommendations for reforms. This mission helped pave the way for the return to the negotiation process between Venezuelan conflicting parties in Mexico, which is currently taking place.

I could mention other examples, as the EU mission last August, in Kenya. The situation around the presidential election was quite tense and fears of unrests following the results were high. The presence of an EU EOM and its evaluation of the election process helped to defuse these tensions and avoid major violence. In spring 2022, during the last presidential elections in Colombia, EU EOM presence, together with the prominent role of brave local observers, also served to defuse tensions in a country that has experienced a lot of political violence in recent years.

Most people may think that when observers have left the country this is the end of the mission – but this is actually when the real work should begin! To give one relevant example: in Nigeria, the Election Follow-up Mission deployed in February 2022 after the 2019 elections, concluded that significant progress had been made: out of the previous 30 recommendations, 13 had been implemented. The Nigerian National Assembly, the Independent National Electoral Commission and civil society had found a compromising ground for the new Election Act. The EU – together with member states and the larger international community – has provided financial and technical support to the process.

The challenge of the digitalisation of elections

We are working now to respond to new challenges such as the digitalisation of the electoral process, with elections increasingly moving online. We have also made progress when it comes to assessing social media and disinformation during elections. Citizens have the right to access truthful information and facts – their votes should not be distorted by propaganda from abroad or from within. There were among the issues discussed in Brussels this week with international partners who also adhere to the UN-sponsored '[Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation](#)'.

But, let's be frank: making progress on democracy is often hard. The forces blocking democratic change are powerful. But democracy is too important – politicians shying away from doing the right thing should be met with clear demands. The EU will continue to advance the democracy agenda worldwide, with all relevant partners, including through our election observation missions.

THE GLOBAL GATEWAY: A BRAND TO BOOST EUROPEAN ACTION WORLDWIDE

15.12.2022 – Blog ⁽²⁴⁴⁾ – *At the end of 2021, the European Commission launched the Global Gateway to promote sustainable connectivity around the world. In December 2022, I participated in the first Global Gateway board meeting, taking stock of this strategic project. Since its launch, this initiative has raised high expectations, we need now to deliver.*

As a major EU foreign policy tool, the Global Gateway offers a framework to link EU support for infrastructure investment in emerging and developing countries with EU geopolitical objectives. We want to promote trusted connectivity and democratic values worldwide and build closer links, not dependencies, with our partners, by supporting them in their digital and green transition.

Global Gateway aims also to give greater visibility to the European Union's actions in a field in which it is already a major player. In an increasingly multipolar world with intense competition, other actors, like China with its Belt and Road Initiative, have developed their own footprint.

The need to align our resources

No investment is possible without money. That is why the Global Gateway can only become a success if all EU actors work closely to align their resources. We are bringing together the European Commission, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), our member states and their national financial and development Institutions, as well as the private sector. We need to act as a real Team Europe to be more than the sum of our parts. Without this, we will not reach the scale we need to compete in the geopolitical marketplace.

We need projects that serve our interests but they also have to serve our partners. We need to be very strategic on where we place our money and develop a better understanding of what our partners really need. We need to ask ourselves What

⁽²⁴⁴⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/global-gateway-brand-boost-european%C2%Aoaction-worldwide_en

we want to put our leverage on; *Who* we want to work with; and *How* to go faster and have more visibility. We have worked hard in 2022 to select flagship projects around the world that will move the needle on key challenges from digital to climate change.

Ready to take off

Due to the high number of stakeholders involved, it has taken time and effort to get to the point where we are ready to take off. At our first board meeting last Sunday, chaired by European Commission President Von der Leyen, with representatives of EU member states, the presidents of the EIB and EBRD, and representatives of the European Parliament, we discussed our main priorities around the globe.

As to Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), we will adopt a specific Global Gateway Investment Agenda at the EU-LAC Summit in July 2023. For that purpose, we are mobilising private and public partners to give shape to our Digital Alliance ⁽²⁴⁵⁾ to be launched in March. We want to cooperate more closely in this area after having put in place the BELLA undersea cable ⁽²⁴⁶⁾ connecting our two continents. We will also develop our cooperation on energy, including green hydrogen, and raw materials, such as lithium.

For Africa, €150 billion is planned for investment projects in the Global Gateway framework ⁽²⁴⁷⁾. We have already launched an important initiative to produce vaccines on the continent ⁽²⁴⁸⁾. We will work in priority with countries like Namibia, Rwanda, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Angola, Niger or Senegal, that have shown interest in strengthening their partnership with us on digital connectivity, hydrogen, critical raw material or transport corridors.

In Central Asia, which I visited last month, the EU is financing 15 % of the €5 billion Rogun Hydropower Plant ⁽²⁴⁹⁾. Our Tajik partners have chosen the high-quality EU offer over the low-cost Chinese one. Member states and international financial

⁽²⁴⁵⁾ See: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/tei-jp-tracker/tei/eu-latin-america-and-caribbean-digital-alliance>

⁽²⁴⁶⁾ See: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/bella-programme-completes-cable-construction-connecting-europe-and-latin-america>

⁽²⁴⁷⁾ See: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway/eu-africa-global-gateway-investment-package_en

⁽²⁴⁸⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_2594

⁽²⁴⁹⁾ See: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/central-asia/news/eu-plans-investment-in-worlds-tallest-dam-in-tajikistan-to-dent-russias-energy-clout/>

institutions are also engaged in this project, which will change the dynamics of power generation in the whole of Central Asia. We are also investing €60 million to develop a high-capacity internet network in the region, establishing a secure connection between Europe and Central Asia.

In the Indo-Pacific Region, we have announced [a €10 billion investment package at the EU-ASEAN Summit](#) (²⁵⁰) this week. Under the Global Gateway umbrella, we are also bringing Ukraine closer to the EU by changing Ukraine's railway gauge to the European one and welcoming Ukraine into our free roaming area.

Global Gateway, a key EU foreign policy tool

For the coming years, Global Gateway will be a key EU foreign policy tool. The EIB and the EBRD will support this work, mobilising their expertise. EU delegations and member state embassies will have to coordinate closely on the ground, where Global Gateway projects will be developed. To reach our geopolitical objective, we will need also to work with other like-minded partners. Global Gateway will be the EU's contribution to the [G7 Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment](#) (²⁵¹).

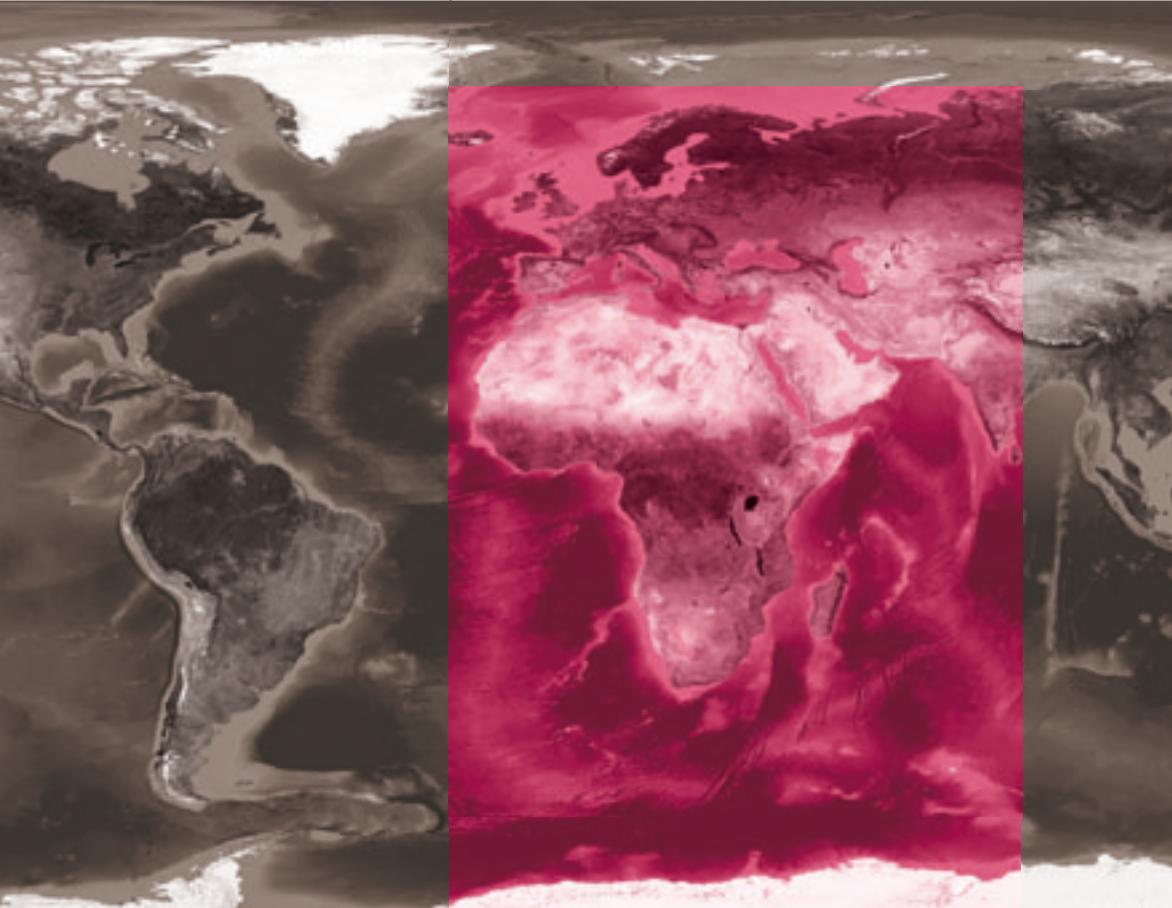
Today, we are not only witnessing a global battle of narratives but also a global battle of offers. We, as EU, need to be ready to do more, differently and better in this battle. Since its launch last year, Global Gateway has raised high expectations. 2023 will be a credibility test for us. We need now to under-promise and over-deliver. Talk less about abstract financial figures and show in practice what we can do on the ground. Let's get to work!

(²⁵⁰) See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_7678

(²⁵¹) See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_22_4122

6.

EU FOREIGN POLICY AROUND THE WORLD





6.1 THE EU'S NEIGHBOURHOOD

WESTERN BALKANS: TIME TO MOVE FORWARD WITH EU INTEGRATION

20.03.2022 – Blog ⁽²⁵²⁾ – *In March, I visited North Macedonia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their leaders were clear in condemning Russia's invasion and have joined our sanctions against Russia. I underlined our commitment to take forward the region's path towards the EU.*

The war in Ukraine brings back vivid memories of the wars around the break-up of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s and early 2000s. Since then, the European Union has been deeply engaged in the region. We have worked to help heal the wounds of those conflicts, resolve remaining disputes and modernise the societies and economies through the perspective of joining the European Union. The future of the Western Balkans clearly lies within the EU – they are not our backyard but our courtyard.

A worrying resurgence of tensions

But even before the war in Ukraine, there was a worrying resurgence of tensions in the region, particularly within Bosnia and Herzegovina and between Serbia and Kosovo. We have seen outside interference seeking to destabilise our neighbours and weaken the European Union, notably through Russia's insidious and well-documented disinformation campaigns. The hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout Europe have been exploited but these campaigns have increased further substantially since the start of the war on Ukraine. The fears of rising energy and food prices resulting from the war in Ukraine are also very strong in the Western Balkans, countries that are much poorer than those in the EU. This emerged clearly in my discussions with authorities and civil society alike.

We are providing strong support to fight disinformation and strengthen cyber resilience. We are united to stop the unjustified and unprovoked war in Ukraine and are joining forces in applying tough sanctions on Putin's regime. In Albania, I commended the country for using its two-year seat at the UN Security Council ⁽²⁵³⁾, working closely with the EU in the interest of peace and international justice. We

⁽²⁵²⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/time-move-forward-eu-integration-western-balkans_en

⁽²⁵³⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/albania-hrvp-borrell-visited-tirana-discuss-global-impact-war-against-ukraine-and-reaffirm_en

recognise the frustration in the region at delays in moving forward on the EU path. The people in the Western Balkan's are very firm in their resolve to join the EU. It struck me when a young woman told me, 'if the EU does not come to us, we come to the EU'. The high emigration figures are proof: many young people are leaving the region to come to the EU.

Both our practical support and a clear way forward on EU integration are key to keep the region firmly on the EU path. I reiterated to leaders in North Macedonia⁽²⁵⁴⁾ and Albania that both countries have fulfilled all the requirements to start accession negotiations with the EU. They are also 100 % aligned with our foreign policy decisions. I am personally working to ensure that the start of accession negotiations takes place as soon as possible. This must happen now, still under the French presidency of the Council of the EU. I am encouraging North Macedonia and Bulgaria to resolve their remaining bilateral issues as a matter of priority. It is in the clear strategic interest of the EU to move forward.

Protect security and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the political situation has become very worrying in recent months⁽²⁵⁵⁾. I met the troops serving in our European military operation in the country, EUFOR Operation Althea⁽²⁵⁶⁾. To stress our commitment and resolve to protect security and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond, we recently decided to double the number of EU military forces in the country. We are indeed resolute in defending our values against external threats and maintaining stability in our closest neighbourhood.

I underlined to all elected leaders of the country that we want to see Bosnia and Herzegovina advance again on the European path⁽²⁵⁷⁾. I made clear in particular that the authorities in Republika Srpska must return to a more constructive stance to allow proper decision-making in all Bosnia and Herzegovina state institutions. We have worked over the past 9 months to facilitate talks on a comprehensive package of constitutional and electoral reforms. Important progress had been done, and only a final stretch was needed at the time I was in Bosnia and

⁽²⁵⁴⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/north-macedonia-high-representativevice-president-borrell-visited-skopje-discuss-eu-accession_en

⁽²⁵⁵⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/leaders-bosnia-herzegovina-must-deliver-reforms_en

⁽²⁵⁶⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/bosnia-and-herzegovina-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-operation-eufor_en

⁽²⁵⁷⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/bosnia-and-herzegovina-high-representativevice-president-borrell-visited-sarajevo-confirm-eu%20%99s_en

Herzegovina. Talks continued for four days after I left the country but an agreement could not be reached.

Political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina missed another key opportunity to resolve longstanding issues. Short-term priorities took over from the need for long-term compromise in the interest of the people. In these times where Europe is facing unparalleled challenges to its security, Bosnia and Herzegovina leaders have a particular responsibility to overcome disagreements to protect the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country.

Exchanges with civil society representatives

During my visit to these three countries, I had the opportunity to exchange with civil society representatives. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, I met extraordinary women peacebuilders who told me how the current war and instability brings back painful memories and fears. In Albania and North Macedonia I met with journalists, fact-checkers, researchers and academics who are fighting disinformation and information manipulation. Many have also contributed actively to the Conference on the Future of Europe. I received their contributions in Skopje, from a group of young people, who shared practical ideas on democracy, the rule of law, as well as the Green Deal. I told them that the future of Europe is more their future, than it is mine – the EU is the way for the European people to survive. Their engagement helps build their countries' future as part of the European family: a Union of democracies governed by the rule of law.

Putin's brutal attack on Ukraine forces all countries to make a choice. A choice between the rule of law and the rule of the gun, between a rules-based order and a world of naked aggression. With the countries I visited, we are united in trying to stop the outrageous war in Ukraine. We need to continue to work closely together to keep the Western Balkans peaceful, stable and firmly on the EU path.

TWO YEARS AFTER: WE STAND WITH BELARUS

09.08.2022 – Blog (²⁵⁸) – *Two years after the stolen presidential elections and the following brutal repression of opponents in August 2020, I assured the people of Belarus that we will never stop to denounce the oppression in their country. We will stand with them as long as it takes.*

Two years ago, millions of Belarusians stood in long lines to cast their votes for the country's president because they wanted change, they wanted Belarus to become a modern democratic country. But their voice was ignored and the elections rigged. Therefore, Belarusians took to the streets to protest. The regime in Minsk responded with all-encompassing lawlessness and brutality. It has decimated civil society, outlawed the media and persecuted thousands for protesting peacefully. Extensive disinformation and slander campaigns continue to accompany the brutality of Aleksandr Lukashenko's regime against its own citizens.

The Lukashenko's regime, accomplice of the Russian aggression

Last February, as Russia launched its military aggression against Ukraine, the Lukashenko's regime became an accomplice in this aggression by letting Belarusian territory become a launchpad for Russian missiles and by granting Moscow full political and logistical support. Thousands of Belarusians are now being intimidated and persecuted by the regime for standing up against the war.

There are nearly 1300 political prisoners today, of which twenty-nine media workers, and there are even more people detained in reality for political reasons. The regime has labelled many democracy activists as 'terrorists', targeting them with disinformation and intimidation, as well as threatening them with the death penalty. It has also intensified its persecution against the Polish community. In contrast, none of the perpetrators of violence against the civilian population has been held to account. Over 850 civil society organisations have been liquidated. Independent trade unions are no longer allowed to exist. Hundreds of journalists have left the country to work in exile and continue to defiantly provide quality reporting to the public in Belarus. Reports of new arbitrary arrests, of abuse and inhumane treatment in custody come in every day.

(²⁵⁸) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/9-august-2022-we-stand-belarus_en

The use of brutal force with no respect for individuals, their fundamental freedoms and rights must be held accountable. Together with international partners, non-governmental organisations and human rights defenders we are working to collect and preserve evidence of human rights violations committed by the Lukashenko regime. Together with like-minded partners, the EU has also introduced six rounds of sanctions targeting 195 individuals and 34 entities responsible for brutally repressive and lawless actions against the people of Belarus.

The restrictive measures also target those involved with the instrumentalisation of migrants, the so-called Lukashenko ‘wallets’, those responsible for the forced landing of the Ryanair flight in May 2021, and those complicit in Russia’s full-scale military aggression against Ukraine. In addition, we have imposed targeted economic sanctions against the Belarusian regime, which includes trade in certain goods, and access to capital markets. The EU remains ready to consider more sanctions if the situation in Belarus continues to deteriorate.

At the same time, we have made it clear that sanctions are reversible and will be lifted when the Belarusian authorities halt repressions, release and rehabilitate all political prisoners, start a genuine, inclusive national dialogue and end their complicity in Russia’s war against Ukraine. We stand ready to mobilise a €3 billion comprehensive plan of economic support once a democratic transition will have taken place in Belarus. This clearly shows our long-term commitment to the peace, democratic aspirations and prosperity of the Belarusian people.

The perseverance and courage of the Belarusian people

Over the past two years, I have met many Belarusians, and in particular, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and her team on different occasions. I profoundly admire their perseverance, their courage, their commitment to continue standing up for dignity, for respect of fundamental rights, for their vision of a free, sovereign Belarus, part of the wider European family of nations. Since August 2020, the EU has committed about €65 million in support to the people of Belarus – the victims of repression, civil society, independent media, women, youth and students, small businesses, health and culture.

On this second anniversary of 9 August 2020, I think of political prisoners who have been stolen years of life and their families who can only connect to their loved ones via rare prison-censored letters; of inmates in serious medical

conditions who may simply not live to see their release; of the invaluable human capital being lost for Belarus due to persecution and forced emigration, preventing so many people from serving their people and their land.

Sovereignty and democracy are inextricably linked

At this turning point in European history, as Russia has brought war back to Europe, one realises more than ever that sovereignty and democracy are inextricably linked: sovereignty can only be safeguarded by the people of a country, and only their free will can be its validating foundation. A tyrant, who violates the rule of law and fundamental rights and freedoms, is also capable of abandoning the sovereignty of his country to preserve his regime. As I reaffirmed solemnly yesterday in the name of the EU and its 27 member states ⁽²⁵⁹⁾, we will stand with the people of Belarus, as we will stand with the people of Ukraine, as long as it takes to secure our common future in a safe, sovereign, democratic and prosperous Europe.

⁽²⁵⁹⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/08/08/belarus-declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu-on-the-second-anniversary-of-the-fraudulent-presidential-elections/>

EU CANDIDATE STATUS FOR BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: A MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE AND A TASKING FOR POLITICIANS

16.12.2022 – Op-ed (²⁶⁰) – *In December 2022, EU leaders granted Bosnia and Herzegovina EU candidate status, confirming the European future of the country. I underlined in this Op-ed that this decision should act as a drive for change in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

On Thursday, the leaders of the European Union unanimously decided to grant EU candidate status to Bosnia and Herzegovina. This decision is an important milestone, confirming the European future of the country. It answers the clear demands from citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to live in dignity, peace and prosperity. This decision should now provide a drive for change in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Political leaders have a clear tasking to advance with decisive and long-overdue reforms to turn this ambition into reality.

Improve institutions and address migration challenges

From the start of my mandate, I have worked to ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina can continue to count on the EU's support. We have worked intensively to help political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina improve the functionality of the institutions, address migration challenges, and prepare an ambitious electoral reform package. We have maintained a strong mandate for our military operation EUFOR/ALTHEA and provided the necessary financial support. As I said in Sarajevo earlier this year: our commitment to maintain safety and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina is rock solid. We are and remain fully committed to the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Russia's illegal and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine has reminded all of us of the fragility of peace on our continent. There can be no neutrality between the aggressor and the victim. Together, the EU and the Western Balkans partners share the responsibility to build a democratic, stable, and peaceful continent. Bosnia

(²⁶⁰) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-candidate-status-bosnia-and-herzegovina-message-people-and-tasking-politicians_en

and Herzegovina did take this responsibility seriously, condemning the aggression and aligning to the EU's unprecedented sanctions against the Russian leadership. This stance demonstrates: our common future is based on shared values and shared principles.

No one is helping Bosnia and Herzegovina more than the EU

The EU has worked closely with partners around the globe to mitigate the negative impact of the Russian aggression, on food supply, inflation, energy and commodity prices and this applies to Bosnia and Herzegovina too. Indeed, no one is helping Bosnia and Herzegovina more than the EU, and we do it without a hidden agenda. The EU has mobilised €1 billion to help families and small and medium enterprises in the Western Balkans cope with the rising energy prices. Longer-term, we invest in the green transition, to end our energy dependencies and create good jobs in the region.

I look forward to working with the newly elected leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina, putting the country's European integration at the centre of their actions. There is still a lot to do: candidate status is not the final destination, but rather the beginning of a new chapter. Serious acceleration of reforms is needed before the accession talks will begin. These reforms are not for the sake of 'Brussels', but for improving the daily life of all people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Every citizen has a role to play in this process, even if the ultimate responsibility to deliver lies with the elected officials.

While the road from Dayton to Brussels remains challenging, the destination is now in plain sight and the roadmap clearly spelled out. Let us engage together in a new way forward for Bosnia and Herzegovina to the European Union.



6.2 THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

THE RUSSIAN WAR AND THE STRENGTHENING OF OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GULF

30.03.2022 – Blog ^(²⁶¹) – *Russia's invasion of Ukraine has wide-reaching ramifications beyond Europe. In March, I was in Qatar and Kuwait and the war and its consequences were on everybody's mind. To tackle its fall-outs, we need to strengthen our cooperation with the Gulf countries.*

Just a few months passed since [my last visit to the Gulf](#) ^(²⁶²), yet the world is not the same: President Putin brought war to Europe at a scale and intensity not seen since the end of World War II. The Russian invasion is a defining moment for the future of the rules-based international order that will decide whether we live in a rules-based or a power-based world.

The Ukraine war, 'one of many' conflicts

These questions were the [main issues I discussed during the entire visit](#) ^(²⁶³) with representatives from the Arab world, the 'Global South' and other Doha Forum participants. The virtual live intervention of President Zelenskyy at the opening set the tone for the Forum, but in my panel discussion and during my meetings with the [Qatari](#) ^(²⁶⁴) and [Kuwaiti](#) ^(²⁶⁵) leadership and other leaders, one thing became clear: while there is a shared principled opposition to Russia's aggression and the use of force, the war in Ukraine is, for many countries, only one of the world's many conflicts that require attention. Unlike in Europe, war has been part of the daily lives of many people around the world and particularly in the Middle East.

In addition, I heard various concerns as to whether the EU's reaction and the sanctions we adopted might be ineffective when it comes to changing President's

^(²⁶¹) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/different-views-russian-war-aggression-and-strengthening-our-partnership-gulf_en

^(²⁶²) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu%80%99s-stakes-and-options-changing-gulf-region_en

^(²⁶³) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/qatar-high-representative-josep-borrell-doha-enhance-bilateral-and-regional-ties-and-engage_en

^(²⁶⁴) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/qatar-high-representative-josep-borrell-doha-enhance-bilateral-and-regional-ties-and-engage_en

^(²⁶⁵) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/kuwait-high-representative-josep-borrell-discussed-bilateral-partnership-and-regional_en

Putin behaviour, and that they could hurt other countries' economies and lead towards parallel financial systems and production chains.

With both Russia and Ukraine being important wheat producers (30 % of global exports), Russia's attack on Ukraine and its decision to stop exports, blocking the Black Sea, can indeed cause food insecurity affecting the lives of millions and potentially creating instability in the Middle East and in Africa. The EU is well aware of these risks and we are looking at ways to help the countries that are most badly hit.

Europe accused of double standards

Paired with many justified concerns, comes in many countries a narrative that accuses Europe of double standards, of being too self-centred and of not taking into account consequences such as increased food prices. And, with their well-known machinery of lies and disinformation, Russia is playing on this type of concerns and older anti-colonial narratives, trying to blame the EU or 'the West'.

To counter this, we need first to explain what is really happening on the ground and who is causing this immense damage to Ukraine and the whole world. It is Russia that attacked Ukraine in complete disregard for the rules of international politics and the UN Charter. It is Russia that is causing huge human suffering in Ukraine and making already 3.7 million people flee its violence, numbers increasing every day. The pattern of Russia's military intervention in Ukraine, including the deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure among other elements, tragically resembles its approach in Syria over the last decade, which caused equally dramatic suffering there. Clearly, it is Russia's war against a sovereign country that posed no threat whatsoever, which causes food insecurity, rising prices of various other commodities and the disruption of supply chains.

Having this in mind, it is clear that the current crisis is not about 'the East vs the West' or a conflict that is less relevant for the 'Global South'. The war against Ukraine is not only a European or Western issue. It endangers the whole world, because it tries to endorse the approach that 'might makes right' as I said during the Doha Forum session – and the consequences of the Russian aggression will not be borne just by Ukraine or Europe alone. They will also be borne by vulnerable countries in the Middle East and Africa.

Not only a European issue

I explained to my various interlocutors that the EU has since its creation always supported a world where international law is respected, where war has no place, where conflicts are resolved through dialogue and negotiations. We have always and everywhere tried to solve conflicts – be it in Palestine, in Syria, in Yemen or in Iraq – and contributed to alleviating the suffering of the civilian population with substantial resources. Not only now, when the war is happening in front of our doors. We will continue our efforts to defend the UN Charter and the international rules-based order. The EU is working towards the widest possible international condemnation and isolation of Russia and we want to work closely with Middle Eastern and Gulf countries to convince Russia to stop this senseless war. In this regard, we are glad that most Gulf and Arab countries support these efforts and also voted in favour of the two recent UN General Assembly resolutions condemning Russia's aggression.

However, it is not just because of the reckless actions by President Putin that we have a major interest in developing a stronger strategic partnership with the Gulf. Last February in Brussels (²⁶⁶), the EU already discussed with Ministers from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) a new level of ambition for our cooperation and during my mission, engagement has continued on energy and the green transition, regional security, global trade and security and safety of important trading routes.

One core challenge obviously is energy security and the needed acceleration of the green transition. In our meetings, both the Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign minister Sheikh bin Abdulrahman Al Thani confirmed Qatar's interest in building a strategic long-term energy partnership with the EU. While the capacity to deliver additional LNG to Europe is limited in the short term, I am confident that Qatar is ready to reserve increased production for the EU as of 2025. This can be an important element for our REPowerEU strategy (²⁶⁷), both in terms of diversification of gas supply and supply of other energy sources like green hydrogen and renewables.

Similarly, talks with Kuwaiti Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah and Foreign Minister Ahmed Nasser

(²⁶⁶) See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/02/22/co-chairs-statement-26th-eu-gcc-joint-council-and-ministerial-meeting/>

(²⁶⁷) See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1511

Al-Sabah touched upon the important role Kuwait plays in stabilising the international oil market.

Maritime safety around the Strait of Hormuz

Also when it comes to, the EU and the Gulf are natural partners to promote de-escalation, dialogue and confidence-building. Here, a key area is for instance maritime safety around the Strait of Hormuz or in the Red Sea and the effort to improve situational awareness and information exchange mechanisms for all neighbours in the Gulf. The EU launched in February 2022 a new European Common Maritime Presence in the North West Indian Ocean, covering the seas from India to the Horn of Africa and the Street of Hormuz. Regarding regional security, I also updated my interlocutors on the status of the ongoing talks on the nuclear deal with Iran, and exchanged on the situation in Afghanistan, where our Qatari partners played and continue playing an instrumental role. In facilitating contacts with the Taliban de facto authorities, beyond the support provided to ensure evacuations and helping the EU to re-establish its presence in Kabul after the Taliban takeover.

In addition, I heard a lot about the ambitious steps undertaken to implement the 'Visions' that leaders in [Qatar](#)⁽²⁶⁸⁾ and [Kuwait](#)⁽²⁶⁹⁾ have for their countries' societal and economic change, ambitious as those of other partners in the region. In fact, these plans tally in many ways with the EU's ideas for the future of our partnership

Naturally, we do not always agree on everything and differences exist above all when it comes to human rights for instance. However, I come back from my mission with the confirmation that the EU and the Gulf countries share many common goals and mutual interests on key global issues and that we should deepen our partnership to contribute to global responsibility and stability. Based on the February EU-GCC ministerial Council discussions, we will take this forward and concretise our ambitions in a 'Joint Communication' on the Partnership with the Gulf, which the EU plans to adopt in the coming weeks.

⁽²⁶⁸⁾ See: <https://www.gco.gov.qa/en/about-qatar/national-vision2030/>

⁽²⁶⁹⁾ See: <https://www.mofa.gov.kw/en/kuwait-state/kuwait-vision-2035/>

WHY THE EU-JORDAN PARTNERSHIP IS SO CRUCIAL

06.06.2022 – Blog (²⁷⁰) – *In June, I was in Jordan to hold the 14th Association Council with the EU. Jordan plays a key role in a critical region in a period marked by increasing geopolitical tensions. It was important to strengthen our ties with such an essential partner.*

In February 2020, Jordan was one of the first countries I visited as HR/VP, just before the pandemic. I returned two years later in a profoundly changed world. With 10.8 million inhabitants, Jordan's population is relatively small and the country has not been blessed with natural resources as many of its neighbours. However, Jordan plays a crucial stabilising and moderating role in a region beset by multiple conflicts and tensions. This is one of the main reasons why our partnership with Jordan is so important.

A longstanding special relationship

During my stay, we held the 14th Association Council between the EU and Jordan. I was accompanied by my colleague Commissioner Várhelyi and the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Ireland, Luxembourg, Cyprus and Greece. Association Councils bring together representatives of the Union, of the 27 Member States and of our partner country to discuss how to deepen further our partnerships. Usually, these Councils are held in Brussels or Luxembourg. In Jordan, it was the first time that we met in the partner country. My colleague Ayman al Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates who co-chaired the council with me, made sure that Jordan gave a high profile to our meeting, in particular with His Majesty King Abdullah II addressing us at the end of our discussions. Jordan is also the first country in the Southern Neighbourhood with which we have agreed new Partnership Priorities for this mandate, an agreement that we publicly signed during this meeting. These two firsts are a sign of the quality and importance of our long-standing relationship.

The meeting took place in the context of the war that Russia unleashed against Ukraine. This war is creating global shock waves, notably by causing a sharp rise in energy and food prices. Putin is de-constructing the international rules-based

⁽²⁷⁰⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/why-eu-jordan-partnership-so-crucial_en

order, trying to replace the rule of law by the rule of the gun. He is also triggering a global food crisis with his troops looting and destroying Ukrainian grain silos, bombing fields and blocking the Ukrainian ports. Before the war, Ukraine exported up to 5 million tonnes of grain per month. In May, it was only 600 000 tonnes, ten times less. We are facing a grain war, using hunger as a weapon against the most vulnerable – not only in Ukraine, but also in the Middle East, in Africa and in Asia.

During our bilateral talks, we touched upon this issue with King Abdullah II and Foreign Minister Safadi. We welcomed Jordan's unambiguous position on the war unleashed by Putin at the United Nations General Assembly and assured Jordan of our continued support in dealing with the consequences of this war. We are also working hard to unblock with the UN the Black Sea route and to build alternatives routes to ship the wheat out of Ukraine.

Jordan is also severely affected by the conflicts in the region. For more than ten years now, it hosts some 700 000 UNHCR registered Syrian refugees, but probably twice that number in reality with unregistered ones. And this in a country of 10.8 million inhabitants. Jordan is one of the countries in the region that has made the greatest effort to welcome refugees with dignity. The EU will continue to actively support Jordan and other countries in hosting and providing basic services to Syrian refugees as we demonstrated during the sixth Brussels conference on the future of Syria and the region organised in May ⁽²⁷¹⁾, which raised €6.4 billion for this purpose. Together with the Jordanian authorities, we will also continue to put pressure on the Assad regime to initiate a political process to solve the Syria crisis that will create conditions to make the refugees be able to return home.

Put pressure on the Assad regime

The growing tensions in Israel and the prolonged stalemate in the Middle East peace process are also a major source of concern for us as well as for Jordan, which host over 2 million Palestinian refugees since 1967. In this regard, we actively support and will continue to support UNRWA, the United Nations agency that serves these refugee camps. During the mission to Jordan, my team visited Baq'a ⁽²⁷²⁾, the oldest camp which hosts 120 000 Palestinian refugees in the suburbs of Amman. They were able to see first-hand the extent of UNRWA's work

⁽²⁷¹⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-ministerial-meetings/2022/05/10/>

⁽²⁷²⁾ See: <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan/baqaa-camp>

in health, education and social services for a population that often remains in very precarious conditions.

Jordan has also played a crucial role since 1967 in the management of Temple Mount/Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem. The Jordan authorities are, like us, worried about the attempts to call into question the status quo that we have witnessed in recent weeks. Together we intend to defend the existing rules and the central role they entrust to the Hashemite Custodianship of the Holy Sites. We also want to coordinate our efforts to revive the Middle East peace process and promote the two-state solution. We are fully aware of the difficulty of the task in the current context, but we share with the Jordanian authorities the conviction that the two-state solution, supported by United Nations resolutions, remains the only viable way to resolve this conflict (273).

We intend also to strengthen our cooperation to help Jordan succeed in its green and digital transition. This is a difficult challenge in a country that is already suffering the consequences of climate change and whose population has doubled since 2000. In this context, the water issue is a major one: Jordan is one of the most affected countries in the world regarding water scarcity. This is why we are supporting the construction of a desalination plant on the Red sea and a pipeline to transport fresh water from Aqaba to Amman.

Supporting Jordan's efforts to reforest

We are also supporting Jordan's efforts to reforest and strengthen its agriculture. My team visited a project led by the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the Jordanian Ministry of Agriculture with the support of the European Union in the Al Karak region (274). Its aim is to help vulnerable Jordanian families and Syrian refugees develop agricultural activities in their communities to increase the country's resilience and food self-sufficiency. Our joint projects also concern the deployment of renewable energies and digital development.

Finally, we also exchanged on democratic principles, fundamental freedoms and human rights that we intend to make a cornerstone of our partnership with Jordan. During our discussions, I expressed our strong support for the ambitious reform

(273) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-after-ceasefire-what-should-europe-do_en

(274) See: <https://jordan.un.org/en/176133-eu-funded-agricultural-grants-support-agricultural-activities-job-creation-awarded-fao>

agenda, especially on modernising the political system, that His Majesty King Abdullah II highlighted in his [speech on Jordan Independence Day last May](#) (²⁷⁵).

In short, in a region that is at the heart of today's global tensions and where we have not only friends, we were very pleased to strengthen our ties with such an essential partner as Jordan.

(²⁷⁵) See: <https://kingabdullah.jo/en/speeches/76th-independence-day>

HOW TO SAVE THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL?

30.07.2022- Blog ⁽²⁷⁶⁾ – *A restored JCPOA agreement would strengthen regional and global security. In July, I underlined in that blog post that after 15 months of intense negotiations the time has come to conclude. However, the events in Iran during the last autumn made this not possible for now.*

Seven years ago, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Germany, Iran and the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concluded a landmark diplomatic deal. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was the result of more than a decade of intense diplomacy on Iran's nuclear programme and won the UN Security Council's unanimous endorsement. The deal required substantial political will to be concluded in 2015, particularly during the last months of the negotiations.

I am proud of the role Europeans have played in bringing the Nuclear Deal about. The European diplomatic engagement goes back to 2003, when the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and the United Kingdom first travelled to Tehran to discuss nuclear concerns with Iran. My friend and former EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana joined them in 2004. By 2006, he had managed to get all Security Council members to support this effort. Our aim has always been to conclude a deal that is in the interest of all. In the interest of Europe, in the interest of Iran and in the interest of the international community. And we all achieved just that. We concluded the JCPOA in July 2015, we implemented it and preserved it.

Strict limits on Iran's nuclear activities

The agreement secured strict limits on Iran's nuclear activities and the most extensive monitoring and inspection regime ever implemented by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The entry into force of the JCPOA resulted in a massive drop in Iran's enriched uranium stockpile by 98 % and the removal of thousands of centrifuges. In addition, Iran's provisional application of the IAEA Additional Protocol and the other JCPOA transparency provisions allowed the IAEA to inspect every site in Iran it wanted to, at any time. The restoration of the

⁽²⁷⁶⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/now-time-save-iran-nuclear-deal_en

JCPOA would bring all the limitations on Iran's nuclear programme back in force. In return, it opened up the prospect of benefiting economically from the lifting of US, EU and UN sanctions to Iran.

The full implementation of this deal has been severely affected by Donald Trump's decision in 2018 to withdraw the US from it and to pursue a unilateral 'maximum pressure' campaign. The EU and all the remaining JCPOA participants have been very clear how much we disagree with the US withdrawal and the re-imposition of sanctions. We have done so publicly, individually, collectively, and multilaterally, at the UN. For its part, Iran has ratcheted up its nuclear activity to alarming levels. Regrettably, it has also limited IAEA monitoring, while failing to co-operate fully with the agency under its basic safeguards' obligations. 'Maximum pressure' failed as the collective unity of the remaining participants kept this deal alive. It is now more important than ever to continue doing so.

Despite the best efforts of the remaining participants, including the European unique and voluntary scheme of INSTEX aimed at facilitating legitimate trade with Iran, the US departure dramatically reduced the expected economic benefits for Iran, which is why the deal could never develop its full potential. Meanwhile, the people of Iran have been deprived of the full benefits of the sanctions lifting. The Iranian economy has suffered – and above all – the Iranian people have suffered. We clearly recognise this.

Reverse a dangerous escalation

To reverse this dangerous escalation, in my capacity as JCPOA co-ordinator and based on the mandate of the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, I seized the political momentum of a new US administration to launch in April 2021 a diplomatic process involving the JCPOA participants and the US. The aim was to facilitate a US return to the deal and full US and Iranian implementation of their JCPOA commitments.

After the first six negotiation rounds until June 2021, the meetings in Vienna were suspended until late November 2021, to give the opportunity to a newly elected Iranian president and government to clarify their negotiation positions and teams. While the following 7th and 8th negotiation rounds built on the substantive work achieved in summer 2021, it went beyond to find solutions to specific concerns and requests. It was a very detailed and complex work pursued by very committed negotiating teams from all sides in the unique, historical setting generously

provided by the Austrian authorities. There has been equally a permanent sense of time pressure framed by the constant advancements of Iranian nuclear programme and the risk that a restored JCPOA could lose its original non-proliferation value.

No more space for additional compromises

After 15 months of intense, constructive negotiations in Vienna and countless interactions with the JCPOA participants and the US, I have concluded that the space for additional significant compromises has been exhausted.

I have now put on the table a text that addresses, in precise detail, the sanctions lifting as well as the nuclear steps needed to restore the JCPOA. This text represents the best possible deal that I, as facilitator of the negotiations, see as feasible. It is not a perfect agreement, but it addresses all essential elements and includes hard-won compromises by all sides. Decisions need to be taken now to seize this unique opportunity to succeed, and to free up the great potential of a fully implemented deal. I see no other comprehensive or effective alternative within reach.

We know the JCPOA remains politically polarising in Washington as the midterm elections approach. The deal may not have addressed all US concerns with respect to Iran. The EU shares concerns that go beyond the nuclear issue, such as human rights and Iran's regional activities. We continuously address them with Iran in bilateral discussions. The JCPOA does not address them and was never supposed to do so. It did, however, provide the benefit of winding down the previously expanding Iranian nuclear programme and opening it up to strict IAEA monitoring and inspections. This makes it a cornerstone of the global non-proliferation architecture. Restoring the full implementation of the agreement now can deliver on these benefits again, including through strict limitations on Iran's uranium enrichment capacity and close monitoring by the IAEA. It can also help bring about a more co-operative security dynamic in the region, creating a positive momentum of confidence building.

We know, too, that in Tehran there are significant reservations over fully implementing a deal after the negative experience of recent years. The deal on the table reflects, however, the determination of all JCPOA participants to ensure its sustainability, including the commitment of President Joe Biden and US

assurances in this regard. As a result, the deal is better protected from potential unilateral moves to undermine it.

Every day with no agreement in Vienna postpones concrete economic benefits to the Iranian people through substantial US sanctions lifting, as well as the benefits of non-proliferation for the world. Concluding an agreement now will deliver significant economic and financial dividends as well as strengthen regional and global security. Rejecting it assures a loss on both accounts — who knows for how long. It is now time for swift political decisions to conclude the Vienna negotiations on the basis of my proposed text and to immediately return to a fully implemented JCPOA.

The deal serves the cause of non-proliferation in return for sanctions lifting, showing that in turbulent times balanced international agreements are still possible. If the deal is rejected, we risk a dangerous nuclear crisis, set against the prospect of increased isolation for Iran and its people. It is our joint responsibility to conclude the deal.

EU-ISRAEL RELATIONS AND THE DIFFICULT PATH FOR PEACE IN THE REGION

09.10.2022 – Blog ^(²⁷⁷) – *In October, we held an EU-Israel Association Council for the first time in ten years. It was important to relaunch this top-level channel for dialogue. It was also an opportunity to discuss issues on which we do not always agree, such as the peace process and the situation in the Palestinian territories.*

After so many years, there was a lot to talk about many issues on our common agenda. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Lapid, who currently is also Foreign Minister, was unable to join the Council in person, but we exchanged with him via VTC beforehand and with the Israeli delegation led by Elazar Stern, the Minister for Intelligence who had come to Brussels for our meeting.

In many ways, the EU and Israel are very close

In many ways, the EU and Israel are very close. The EU is Israel's biggest trade partner. We cooperate with Israel in a wide range of areas, indeed more so than with any other country in the region. Israel has an impressive track record as part of our Horizon research programme. Israel is for instance a pioneer in water technology and in agriculture in warm climates, something that is very interesting for us. On the energy field, we recently signed a trilateral agreement with Egypt, which will allow for Israeli gas to reach the EU.

Moreover, people-to-people contacts between the EU and Israel are intensive. Many Israelis live in Europe and many European citizens live in Israel. The EU has adopted a broad strategy to fight antisemitism, which is a key priority for the EU and Israel. We also discussed and share deep concerns about terrorism as well as about regional stability across the Middle East. The bilateral EU-Israel relationship overall is a solid and very constructive one. And we are ready to restart the full range of meetings with Israel, including on political issues and human rights.

^(²⁷⁷) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-israel-association-council-discussed-difficult-path-peace-region_en

Naturally, the Association Council meeting was also an opportunity to talk about issues on which we do not agree. In a joint position paper prior to the meeting, all 27 EU member states set out their priorities for the relationship as well as the issues on which we have differences with Israel. The biggest one on that list is the persistent lack of progress towards a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

During the last 30 years, thousands of people have died unnecessarily due to this conflict. Millions of Palestinians continue to live under occupation, on less and less land and with the two-state solution becoming less and less viable. Millions more are still refugees. Meanwhile, millions of Israelis live in fear of a conflict-inspired terror attack, which have killed numerous victims in the past decades.

There are many reasons why this conflict continues, including terrorism and regional instability. We must have an honest analysis of the root causes and we call on everyone to do their part to address these. Certainly, the continuing conflict is harmful to all. It means prolonging the suffering and the insecurity for people on both sides. And that in turn threatens the long-term stability of Israel, and for many its international standing. As friends and partners of Israel, we need to address this and for me that was a key reason to organise this official meeting after so many years.

The EU has expressed its views and heard those of Israel

The EU used the Association Council to express its views and hear those of Israel on a number of difficult issues such as the closure of Gaza and the suffering of its estimated 2.3 million inhabitants; the continued construction of new settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem; continued settler violence without accountability; the evictions of numerous Palestinians ‘from an Israeli firing zone’; the number of casualties, especially children; the demolitions of EU-funded humanitarian structures; administrative detentions; the erosion of the status quo on the Holy Sites and the designation of respected NGOs as terrorist organisations. These are all things happening today without any improvement. As I said in New York during the UNGA week, these things are difficult to understand, for us and other close friends of Israel. And we need to discuss these issues openly – and that is what we try to do on this occasion.

While we discuss the crises of today, we must also address the fundamental issues of tomorrow. We want to hear from Israel what peace it needs and wants, how we can contribute to its security, and what it is willing to do to address the legitimate demands of Palestinians to have their own state. We need of course also to ask

the Palestinian authorities how they want to achieve peace, and assure Israel of its security. To that end, we will reach out to them to have an exchange at the highest possible level. The Palestinian side also has homework to do, on reforms, on governance and on the delivery of basic services to its population. We will offer our support, but we also have expectations and questions for the Palestinians.

Help building a future peace

As EU, we need to develop a practical perspective on how to help building a future peace. This is why, two weeks ago at the United Nations high-level week in New York, I hosted a meeting with Arab leaders, at the initiative of Saudi Arabia and the Arab League, to revive and build on the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. Inspired by the recent normalisation agreements with four Arab States, is it possible to make progress towards a comprehensive regional peace that ends the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and brings substantial security, trade, and other cooperation for the region at the same time? There is for sure a long and difficult road to walk, but we must explore all we can to bring peace and prosperity not just to Israel and Palestine, but to the entire region.

To this end, I have asked EU Special Representative Koopmans to explore with all parties and international partners the opportunities for security, trade, water, energy, innovation and other areas of cooperation that peace would bring, and to work within the EU to identify our own potential contributions to these efforts.

I felt in New York that there is a growing interest to pursue these thoughts. We would like to engage with all parties to have a fresh look at regional peace and make our contribution to that peaceful future. The Association Council meeting with Israel was a first step along that path.

HOW IRAQ COULD CONTRIBUTE ACTIVELY TO REGIONAL STABILITY

23/12/2022 – Blog (²⁷⁸) – *In December, I travelled to Jordan to represent the EU in the second Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership, co-hosted by King Abdullah and President Macron. Key actors from the region discussed how to further support Iraq, its sovereignty and security. I also had a number of bilateral meetings on regional and global issues.*

The first edition of this conference took place in August 2021 in Baghdad. Iraq was then making its return as an active regional player after years of looking inward, and domestic conflicts to which also policy mistakes of Europeans and the international community had contributed. This conference was also remarkable for bringing together some of the often-conflicting forces of the region and notably Saudi Arabia and Iran.

This week's 'Baghdad II Conference' picked up on these efforts. We discussed in particular how to meet the aspirations of the people of Iraq and how to support the government of Prime Minister Al Sudani in delivering on these. They can be easily summarised: more security and sovereignty, more stability, and more development and prosperity. These are every people's aspirations. And that is the main point of the Conference: bringing normality to Iraq after so many years of violence and suffering. These are also the priorities of the new Iraqi government installed in October 2022. It has presented an ambitious reform agenda and wants to engage with the EU and other regional and international partners.

The stability of Iraq is not just important for Iraqis

In my speech at the conference and my meeting with the new Prime Minister of Iraq, I underlined the EU's full support for Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the context of recent foreign incursions on its soil. The EU supports also Prime Minister Sudani's commitment to undertake the comprehensive reforms demanded by the Iraqi people. A stronger and more democratic sovereign Iraq would above all benefit its people and the region. And the EU has

(²⁷⁸) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/iraq-%E2%80%93-more-linchpin-can-actively-contribute-regional-stability_en

a direct interest in achieving that goal, because instability in Iraq would impact Europe in terms of migration flows and threaten our economic and security interests.

To achieve this, Iraq must shield itself from malign foreign interference and be protected from being abused as a proxy battlefield, as it has been so often in the last decades. Instead, Iraq should become a regional bridge builder contributing to reduce tensions. That is why we support the Iraqi government's efforts to further develop a balanced foreign policy.

For the EU promoting peace and stability in the wider Gulf region and in the broader Middle East are key priorities and the [EU Strategic Partnership with the Gulf](#)⁽²⁷⁹⁾ has proven a useful platform for this end. As EU, we are ready to do more and better to support Iraq and the region.

Bilateral engagements and sensitive issues

At the side-lines of the conference, I had bilateral meetings with the Jordanian King and the Jordanian Foreign Minister, and with the Foreign Ministers of Bahrein, Oman, Qatar, as well as of Iran.

I met the Jordanian King and Foreign Minister Safadi. Jordan is an important partner for the European Union and an anchor of stability in a turbulent region. We are working together for upholding the rules-based international system and dealing with the damaging consequences of Putin's war on food and energy security. We also discussed the ongoing Jordanian efforts to implement a wide range of political and economic reforms. The EU will continue to help Jordan in areas where our assistance can be useful and is requested.

With the Qatari Foreign Minister, I discussed not only regional issues and our bilateral relations – which went through a positive trend lately – but also the ongoing corruption investigations against European Parliament members and staffers carried out by the Belgian authorities. I shared my principled concern on this serious issue and underlined the EU's zero tolerance policy in that matter. Our counterparts denied that Qatar is involved in this, that they regretted not having been officially informed on the allegations by respective authorities and that they resent being judged based on media speculations. We agreed to fully

⁽²⁷⁹⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/joint-communication-%E2%80%9Cstrategic-partnership-gulf%E2%80%9D_en

support a thorough investigation by the Belgian law enforcement authorities and the European Parliament itself, to bring full clarity to the matter.

Iran is choosing a wrong path

With the Iranian Foreign Minister, we had a tough exchange on the unacceptable developments inside Iran, on the country's extremely worrying military support to Russia and on the nuclear deal.

The EU is closely following the brutal way Iranian authorities deal with recent protests. We urge Iran's leadership to stop the executions of arrested people and the bloody repression of peaceful protesters, and with the delivery of drones and the military cooperation with Russia, with which the country supports the illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. Tehran is aware of Russia's ongoing war crimes, targeting civilian infrastructures. Iran is making a huge strategic mistake; it is choosing the wrong path and is destroying its credibility when it pretends not to take sides in that war. Let me note here that reacting to me stressing this, the Iranian Minister forcefully denied that Iran is providing drones to Russia and claimed that such deliveries had only happened before Russia's attack. However, siding with Russia and the unacceptable repression of protests cannot come without consequences. That is why last week's Foreign Affairs Council adopted new sanctions against Iran (²⁸⁰) in reaction to its delivery of drones to Russia, as well as because of the human rights violations.

Nevertheless, I still believe that when it comes to nuclear non-proliferation, there is no alternative to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Those who think otherwise simply fool themselves. This is why, as coordinator, I continue working towards restoring the JCPOA based on the results of the Vienna negotiations. I talked long with Minister Abdollahian about that. I also stressed that bringing the JCPOA back to life does not happen in a strategic vacuum. It is part, a key part, of a broader picture. The Islamic Republic should listen to its own citizens, instead of repressing them. Iran must stop immediately its military support to Russia. In that regard, I urged the Foreign Minister to continue the direct conversation with his Ukrainian counterparts on the transfer of military equipment to Russia.

(²⁸⁰) See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/12/iran-eu-adopts-council-conclusions-and-additional-restrictive-measures/>



6.3 AFRICA

EUROPE MUST BE AFRICA'S PARTNER OF CHOICE

14.02.2022 – Op-ed ^{([281](#))} – *In February, we had the first African Union-European Union meeting since the COVID-19 outbreak. In this Op-ed, I underlined that with other global powers competing for influence, much more than trade and investment is at stake for Europe with Africa.*

After being postponed several times because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this month's European Union-African Union Summit in Brussels (February 17-18) will bring together European and African heads of state and government for the first time since 2017. The EU's objective is to become Africa's partner of choice, a goal set by European Commission President [Ursula von der Leyen](#) during our first visit to the AU's headquarters in Addis Ababa two years ago.

Approach the EU-AU partnership with modesty

What will it take to achieve this ambitious goal? First, we must approach the EU-AU partnership with modesty. Africa is a continent as large as the United States, Mexico, China, Japan, India, and much of Europe combined. With 54 countries and some 2 000 languages, and with a diverse range of opportunities as well as problems, the continent cannot be treated as a homogenous entity.

Second, we must be realistic. Between Afro-pessimism and Afro-optimism, I advocate Afro-realism. Before talking about economic growth and trade relations, Europe must show that it can contribute to peace, security, and good governance in African countries. Before talking about the demographic dividend, we must also acknowledge the scale of the difficulties that uncontrolled population growth can create in societies. By 2030, [30 million](#) young people will be entering the African labour market each year. To generate sustainable jobs for them, basic education must be a high priority.

Moreover, in supporting the global transition to green energy and sustainable development, we must help ensure access to basic services on a continent where almost [half the population](#) has no electricity and must fight a daily battle for access to water and food. And while helping African countries develop their future

^{([281](#))} see: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/europes-must-be-africas-partner-choice_en

vaccine-production capacity, we also must help accelerate vaccination in the present. Over [90 %](#) of the continent's population remains unvaccinated against COVID-19.

In thinking about these issues, we Europeans must not make the mistake of believing that we could impose an agenda on Africa. Nor should we ignore the immediate realities and short-term constraints facing the vast majority of Africans. This is especially true now that the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the continent's fragilities. In the Sahel, insecurity is increasing along with political instability. The Horn of Africa, where we saw promising democratic transitions just two years ago, is now deeply destabilised. And several African countries have once again entered a debt spiral.

Geopolitical competition in Africa

The pandemic has also moved geopolitical competition in Africa beyond investment and business opportunities to include values and governance models. We find ourselves confronted with other global actors whose methods and agendas are very different from our own. Many of them will not hesitate to use disinformation campaigns and other forms of hybrid warfare to undercut European influence.

Despite these difficulties, we still have compelling reasons for wanting to make Europe Africa's partner of choice. One is that Africa's problems are our problems. Terrorism and insecurity know no borders. The Sahel is not as remote from Europe as it sometimes seems; and instability in the Horn of Africa threatens one of the world's most important trade routes. Then there is climate change, which will inevitably create new waves of migration as it destroys people's livelihoods and renders their communities uninhabitable.

Our goal is also motivated by the wealth of opportunities across the continent. Africa's economies and societies are young and dynamic. Europe's aging societies will have to rely on them sooner or later. The continent also has an abundance of raw materials and immense potential both to deploy and help produce renewable energy technologies.

Finally, we must think in geopolitical terms. With its population expected to reach [2.5 billion](#) by 2050, Africa is a rising global force. A closer partnership would enable

Europe and Africa together to exercise much greater influence on the world stage, giving a boost to the model of multilateralism that both partners support.

To succeed, we will need a positive agenda based on joint priorities. Without sidestepping the difficulties, we must focus on achieving concrete, rapid results. Africa does not need charity or media stunts. It needs cooperation and partnerships that can actually deliver for its people.

'Team Europe' approach

To that end, the EU will need to combine the strengths of its member states, financial institutions, development banks, and agencies. The pandemic has given substance to the notion of this 'Team Europe' approach, and this way of working must become a habit to avoid a fragmented strategy and all the problems that come with it.

In Africa, as elsewhere, the EU carries weight only when its constituent parts work together. That includes not just EU institutions and governments; civil society and the private sector also must be better attuned to dynamics on the ground.

Europe's future will be shaped in no small part by Africa's future. There and elsewhere, we must also better defend the European project by demonstrating that the EU's added value exceeds that of other global powers. This month's summit must be the starting point for building a new intercontinental partnership.

TIME TO STOP THE FORGOTTEN WAR IN TIGRAY

11.08.2022 – Blog ^(²⁸²) – *For two years, the Tigray region in Ethiopia has been in the grip of an atrocious war, with countless deaths, hunger and sexual violence. In August, I appealed to all parties to finally engage in dialogue. And while there was some progress the following months, a lot remains to be done to solve this conflict and stop the suffering.*

A few weeks ago, Ethiopia came second in the world athletics championship. Among the medallists, many champions from Tigray wore the colours of Ethiopia, which has always been a multi-ethnic nation. Taking advantage of the occasion, some tried to draw the world's attention to the suffering that their own people endured.

The President of Ethiopia, Sahle-Work Zewde, also denounced the deadly violence that is tearing her country apart: '*There is a winner in Ethiopia. It is the Ethiopia we know and want. However, Ethiopia is also the land of the cruel and the destructive. It is the land where we have witnessed outrageous cruelty.*' She is right: ethnic violence, violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law are commonplace. And while the peace rhetoric of the conflict parties continues, everything is still weaponised: access to food, medicine, electricity, telecom services, access to bank accounts...

13 million persons in need of humanitarian assistance

The World Food Programme estimates that more than 13 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in northern Ethiopia (4.8 million in Tigray; 1.2 million in Afar; and more than 7 million in Amhara). Despite some progress, access to these populations – especially in Tigray – is still a major problem. So is the access to fuel and fertilisers at a time where Ethiopia is experiencing one of its worst droughts. Other regions in the country are also experiencing tensions, while various sub-national and transboundary conflicts continue to worsen the security situation in the country and beyond. Recent Al-Shabaab infiltrations across the eastern border with Somalia are highlighting the danger that a prolonged crisis will entail.

^(²⁸²) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/time-stop-forgotten-war-tigray_en

These are the facts. As repeated during the last Foreign Affairs Council (²⁸³), the EU has made its key asks very clear to the Ethiopian government since the beginning of this war: a negotiated ceasefire including the withdrawal of Eritrean troops, unfettered humanitarian access and full resumption of services in Tigray, as well as accountability for atrocities committed by all parties, are a prerequisite to revive our partnership with Ethiopia. Despite the truce announced in March, some improvements on the ground and various announcements regarding political dialogue, there has been not enough progress ‘for a full normalisation of our relationship’ stated the EU member states at our last FAC.

The EU has suspended its budget support to the Ethiopian government. However, it has never stopped supporting the Ethiopian population. Just before the summer, we announced a package of around €80 million to finance programmes in the area of health and education, with a special focus on areas affected by the conflict.

My colleague Commissioner Lenarcic visited Ethiopia last June (²⁸⁴). His statement was very clear: the restoration of basic services and free movement of people, goods, and services, can neither be disputed nor negotiated. Because this is about saving lives. We expect the government of Ethiopia to fulfil its obligations to the people of Tigray and beyond without further delay. This is not about accepting preconditions by one side for the political process to start; this is about respecting the obligations a government has vis-à-vis its own people.

On 2 August, the UN, the EU and the US Special Envoys for the Horn of Africa travelled together to Addis and to Mekelle (²⁸⁵) to talk to the conflict parties and to explore ways to resume the delivery of basic services and reconnect power grids. They heard the conflict parties talking about peace, but the war, a silent war, is still going on.

Time to show real commitment to peace

It is now time for these conflict parties to show real determination in their commitment to peace. For the sake of their people. For the sake of their country, whose fragility poses immense risks to the entire region. Agreeing peace requires courage – more courage than continuing the war – to engage in dialogue and compromise. While the restoration of services and lifting all restrictions in Tigray

(²⁸³) See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2022/06/20/>

(²⁸⁴) See: https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/news/commissioner-lenarcic-ethiopia-reaffirming-eus-humanitarian-aid-countrys-most-vulnerable-2022-06-21_en

(²⁸⁵) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/ethiopia-eu-and-us-special-envoys-visit-mekelle-tigray_en

are a clear *sine qua non*, there are numerous other ‘bones of contention’ that need to be negotiated. We need strong African Union leadership to succeed in this process with the solid support of the UN, the US, the EU and other like-minded partners.

Engaging in a peace process is not about one party winning, and the other one losing. It is about exercising political leadership in its deepest sense. Even if there is only a small window of opportunity, now is the time: we call on all the conflict parties to seize this opportunity.

THE TERRORIST THREAT IS EXPANDING IN THE SAHEL

19.08.2022 – Blog ^{([286](#))} – *Terrorist attacks are increasing in the Sahel. While there are lessons to be learned about the international actions in the region, relying on private mercenaries makes only the situation worse. I called in this blog post on all actors to work for a collective response.*

For a decade now, the European Union has been engaged in the Sahel alongside its African and international partners in the fight against terrorism. This fight is of course primarily an African affair, but it also concerns Europe and the world. In fact, the destabilisation of the Sahel constitutes a direct threat to the Union not only in terms of security and terrorism but also in many other areas such as trafficking of all kinds. This is why, since the beginning of my mandate deteriorates, I have been regularly involved in this issue, [notably by visiting the region in April 2021](#) ^{([287](#))}.

The situation on the ground deteriorates

As the last soldiers of the Barkhane force, deployed by France, are leaving Mali, the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate significantly in recent weeks, with an increase in terrorist attacks affecting both soldiers and civilians. Beyond the particularly heavy human toll, especially recently for the Malian army, it is both the increasing geographical spread of these attacks and the increasingly sophisticated operating methods used by the terrorists that should alarm us.

In reality, in the Sahel, but also now in the Gulf of Guinea, terrorists are increasingly aiming to isolate the populations of the capitals of the countries of the region, as shown by the explosion of the Woussé and Naré bridges in Burkina Faso last July. The roads linking Niamey, the capital of Niger, and Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, are no longer secure, yet they are the main connections to and from the countries of the Gulf of Guinea. The symbolic, political and material isolation of the populations is reinforced and they become prone to recruitment by terrorist movements.

^{([286](#))} See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/terrorist-threat-expanding-sahel_en

^{([287](#))} See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/le-sahel-besoin-d-%E2%80%99un-sursaut-civil-et-politique_en

This deterioration is due firstly to the progressive sidelining of African and international actors whose mandate is precisely to help restore peace and security in the region. It also confirms the failure of a purely security strategy: the fight against terrorism cannot be won solely on the military front. As I have said on many occasions, to win this war we must also win the peace.

Regional and international coordination weakened

The deterioration of the security situation is due in particular to the failure of the policy pursued by the Malian authorities following the coups of 2020 and 2021: fragile states are never strengthened by long transitions. The G5 Sahel (²⁸⁸), created in 2014 to coordinate the action of the authorities of Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad, has been constantly weakened in recent months. The withdrawal of Mali, announced last May, has dealt this organisation a near-fatal blow, even though regional coordination remains the indispensable foundation of an effective fight against terrorism and for the development of the Sahel.

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) (²⁸⁹), set up by the Security Council in 2013, has also become increasingly fragile. Due to the attitude of the Malian transitional authorities, it cannot implement the new mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council last June: these authorities have in fact forbidden the Blue Helmets to enter certain parts of the territory – in particular those where abuses have been committed by the Malian Armed Forces and the Russia's Wagner Group of mercenaries. In addition, last July they arrested 49 Ivorian soldiers who are still being held for unclear reasons. Despite attempts at mediation by the United Nations and the Chair of the African Union, the Malian authorities have just charged them with 'attempting to undermine state security'. In the first days of August, the transitional authorities had also demanded the withdrawal of the Spanish and German helicopters used by MINUSMA and the EU training mission. As a result, Germany had to temporarily suspend its participation in MINUSMA.

Our European missions EUTM Mali (²⁹⁰) and EUCAP Sahel Mali (²⁹¹), which have trained around 18 000 Malian soldiers since 2013 (i.e. half of the country's military

(²⁸⁸) See: <https://www.gssahel.org/>

(²⁸⁹) See: <https://minusma.unmissions.org/en/about-minusma>

(²⁹⁰) See: <https://eutmmali.eu/>

(²⁹¹) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eucap-sahel-mali_en

personnel), are also increasingly sidelined by the transition authorities. Finally, the withdrawal of the Barkhane force, deployed by France, and of the Takuba force, which brings together special force soldiers of nine European countries, completes the picture of a very weakened counter-terrorism strategy. Its effectiveness is further undermined by the action of private foreign mercenaries who are more famous for their exactions against the civilian population than for their will and capacity to fight effectively against the jihadists.

The limits of the ‘all-military’ approach

The increase in terrorist attacks in the Sahel in recent months is also a reminder of the failure of a counter-terrorism strategy based on a mainly military response. For our part, we had already noted such a failure: to be sustainable, any military gain must imperatively be consolidated by actions that benefit the most vulnerable populations. This is true in the Sahel, but also elsewhere in the world. This was the meaning of the ‘civil and political surge’⁽²⁹²⁾ that we had decided on with our Sahelian partners before the coups d'état undermined this strategic turning point.

The fight against terrorism as the EU understands it and accompanies it in the Sahel must indeed tackle terrorism as much as its root causes, namely the weakness of the rule of law and the absence of basic services for all, throughout the territory. This is undoubtedly a long-term task. Reinforcing our support for programmes focused on access to basic services and putting this civil and political surge at the heart of the fight against terrorism by supporting credible political transitions and democratically legitimised authorities is the priority of European action in the region.

This approach is certainly not that of Wagner’s private mercenaries. The ‘hit-and-run’ actions carried out by the Malian armed forces and Russia’s Wagner Group of mercenaries assisting them appear to be thought of and executed as punitive expeditions against certain populations. This can only fuel, in the Sahel as elsewhere, a cycle of violence and endless reprisals.

The fight against terrorism cannot be improvised, nor can it be delegated to mercenaries with unclear motivations. The events of the last few weeks have clearly reminded us of this fact.

⁽²⁹²⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/le-sahel-besoin-d%20%99un-sursaut-civil-et-politique_en

FIGHTING TERRORISM IN MOZAMBIQUE CONTRIBUTES TO SECURITY IN EUROPE

12.09.2022 – Blog ⁽²⁹³⁾ – *In September, I went to Mozambique, a country where EU plays a significant role, in particular to help its fight against terrorism in the Cabo Delgado region. My visit also showed that the EU does not forget crises in other parts of the world, despite facing in Europe the worst threat to European security since the end of World War II.*

In Europe, we are very focused on Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its implications for European security. But other crises and global problems do not stop. On the contrary, they have often been aggravated by the consequences of this war. We need more than ever to continue to work with our partners around the globe to defend the rules-based order and to keep up our work on global challenges. For this purpose, the EU's close partnership with Africa is crucial.

Mozambique and terrorism in Cabo Delgado

This was the backdrop of my two-days visit to Mozambique. It is a coastal country in Southern Africa with an area bigger than any EU country, inhabited by some 30 million people. With its fast demographic growth (6 children per woman on average), its population is set to double by 2050 (and already now almost half of the population is under the age of 14). Mozambique ranks 181/189 on the Human Development Index and the poverty rate is above 60 %. After the country became independent from Portugal in 1975, Mozambique went through a protracted civil war that ended in 1992, but it was only in 2019, that a 'definitive' peace and reconciliation agreement was reached. My predecessor Federica Mogherini came to Maputo ⁽²⁹⁴⁾ to witness the signature of this historic agreement that the EU supported significantly.

While the agreement holds for most of the country, the northern Cabo Delgado province has suffered from armed attacks since 2017 leading to an unprecedented humanitarian and security crisis. Fighting have resulted in over 4 000 deaths,

⁽²⁹³⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/helping-fight-terrorism-mozambique-also-contributes-security-europe_en

⁽²⁹⁴⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/66274_fr

some 950 000 internally displaced persons and 1.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in this region. This insurgency is inspired and driven by ISIS, while local grievances and domestic root causes also play a significant role. Foreign fighters are involved and their transit to Cabo Delgado poses risks to neighbouring countries. Due to this instability, the region has become a hotspot of organised crime (heroin, wildlife, wood and gemstone trafficking for instance) in Mozambique and the entire Southern African region.

Following the establishment of an EU training mission and the deployment in 2021 of Rwandan and Southern African Development Community (SADC)⁽²⁹⁵⁾ troops to Cabo Delgado to support the efforts of the Mozambican army, these armed groups temporarily lost the initiative. However, security incidents have continued in the province as the armed groups have dispersed and changed tactics.

EU training mission

The EUTM Mozambique⁽²⁹⁶⁾, launched in November 2021, is a key element in the EU's commitment to help Mozambique's fight against this terrorism. Over the next two years, it will train 11 units of the Mozambican army (commandos and marines) that will be part of a future Quick Reaction Force. In addition to military training, the EUTM is also providing training on human rights and international humanitarian law, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and relevant UN organisations. Ten EU member states participate in the Mission with 110 soldiers deployed at the moment. This mission is now fully operational, having already trained 600 soldiers. During my stay in Mozambique, I visited the mission to hand over European Peace Facility (EPF)-funded equipment and witness a change of command.

In all of this, we work closely with the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), and during my visit, I announced the EU decision to provide €15 million to this mission in addition to the €89 million of EPF support. It is the first time ever that we train people while in parallel providing them with equipment. In the coming weeks, I hope that our member states will also agree on my proposal to support the Rwandese military mission that has been decisive to improve the situation in Cabo Delgado.

⁽²⁹⁵⁾ See: <https://www.sadc.int/>

⁽²⁹⁶⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eutm-mozambique_en

But we know that you cannot win a war against terror with soldiers and weapons only. To win this kind of war, one needs to win the peace as well. This is why we work closely with the Government of Mozambique to cover the full spectrum of humanitarian, development, security and peace-building actions. In parallel to our security support, we focus on education, access to water and sanitation, energy, nutrition and climate change. This includes a package of €428 million for the 2021-2024 period, in addition to around €36 million of humanitarian assistance (mainly to Cabo Delgado since 2021).

Some journalists in Mozambique have asked me whether our support to the fight against terrorism in Cabo Delgado is linked to the gas reserves in this region. My answer was clear: the gas discoveries in Mozambique should benefit the Mozambican people first and foremost, while they can also help to tackle the global energy crisis and energy demand. But that is not the primary reason of our engagement in Mozambique. The security of Europe starts in places that can be sometimes thousands of kilometres away. The Somali crisis have had profound repercussions on the neighbouring countries and the ship traffic in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel crisis also started in a limited area and quickly spread all over the region. We need to help avoid that kind of large-scale destabilisation happening in another place on the continent. This is why we support the efforts of Mozambique in Cabo Delgado.

Defend multilateralism

I discussed these issues with the President of Mozambique as well as the Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers. In addition, we focused on how to strengthen our partnership on the international stage in the context of Mozambique's election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council as of next year. Both Mozambique and the EU know that multilateralism needs to be strengthened at a moment when Russia is sending shockwaves around the world by tearing down basis principles of the rules-based order.

BUILDING SOMALIA'S STATE AND STABILISING THE HORN OF AFRICA

16.09.2022 – Blog ⁽²⁹⁷⁾ – *For decades, Somalia has suffered from being a 'failed state' and the recent drought has made things even worse. The EU has been providing humanitarian support and helping to stabilise the situation in region. During my visit in September, I could see first-hand how our operations contribute to maritime and wider security.*

Somalia is located in the Horn of Africa and has the longest coastline on Africa's mainland. For more than 30 years, it has been suffering from an ongoing humanitarian crisis and enduring political and social instability. The poverty rate of the 17 million population is around 70 %; more than 50 % are illiterate; and the average life expectancy is just 48 years. In recent years, the humanitarian situation has worsened further, due to a severe a drought and the risk of famine (the UN just said this week that hunger levels leave more than 500 000 children at risk of dying ⁽²⁹⁸⁾) and climate change affecting above all the lives of the most vulnerable, plus the lingering impact of COVID-19 and enduring conflicts. Finally, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has further increased food insecurity with soaring food and fuel prices.

40 % of world shipping lanes through the Gulf of Aden

Why does this matter for Europe, given that Somalia seems so far away? To start, because around 40 % of world shipping lanes and 25 % of the EU maritime supply transit through the Gulf of Aden. Although piracy has been largely suppressed through international efforts, and above all the EU Operation Atalanta, it remains an underlying threat to maritime security including illegal trafficking and illicit trade. And because international terrorism threatens us all if we don't tackle it. The security situation remains highly volatile, with the terrorist groups Al-Shabaab and Da'esh remaining active, as illustrated by the attack against the Hayat hotel in Mogadishu last August, with 20 persons killed and 120 injured.

⁽²⁹⁷⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/building-somalia%20%99s-state-and-security-and-stabilising-horn-africa_en

⁽²⁹⁸⁾ See: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1126491>

That is why the European Union needs to sustain its efforts in this part of the world, as elsewhere, to promote stability and security. And this is what we have been doing. From 2014 to 2022, the EU has invested more than €3.5 billion to support Somalia's political, security and economic reform efforts and to address the humanitarian situation. We do so through humanitarian aid and cooperation programmes on governance and the rule of law, peace-building, social inclusion and education, and on resilience and adaptation to climate change.

Three CSDP missions in Somali

Crucially, we support Somali through three Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions to support peace and stability in the country and to help it to be able to take full ownership again for its own security:

- [Operation Atalanta](#) ⁽²⁹⁹⁾ to support the fight against maritime crime;
- [EUTM Somalia](#) ⁽³⁰⁰⁾ to train the Somali military and more generally to build its autonomy (including its capacity to train its personnel by itself);
- [EUCAP Somalia](#) ⁽³⁰¹⁾ to advise coast guards and police.

Last Sunday I met Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who has been elected by members of Parliament in May 2022 (the new Cabinet was only appointed in August 2022). I also visited our two land-based CSDP missions and the Naval Force Operation Atalanta flagship, the Spanish frigate Numancia, which is patrolling the Somali coast.

Atalanta was the first EU naval operation ever, launched in 2008 and it has made a big difference in the fight against piracy. Indeed, it is one of the most remarkable success stories of the CSDP. Beyond piracy, it is now also engaged in other maritime security challenges, like the fight against narco- and arms-trafficking and illegal fishing.

Atalanta has turned into a maritime security actor of reference, offering a platform to develop our partnerships and for joint exercises with India, Indonesia, Oman and Japan. The operation is our main asset in the Indian Ocean, protecting freedom of navigation and demonstrating the EU's ability and commitment to

⁽²⁹⁹⁾ See: <https://eunavfor.eu/>

⁽³⁰⁰⁾ See: <https://www.eutm-somalia.eu/>

⁽³⁰¹⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eucap-som_en

enforce a rules-based order. It has been a pioneer shaping the maritime dimension of the CSDP and that continues to do this.

Only limited results onshore

However, while Atalanta is a success, it is fair to recognise that our operations EUTM and EUCLAP Somalia on shore have achieved only limited results. The Somali National Army (SNA), coast guards and police continue to face considerable force generation and efficiency challenges and we did not progress to the extent we had wished for, in terms of providing capacity building through advice and training to Somali authorities. However, having trained 8 000 Somali military so far, we will continue to do so and the SNA has already increased its capacity to train its personnel by itself.

We do this as part of wider efforts of the international community. The African Union Transition Mission (ATMIS) has an UN mandate that authorises AU states to deploy some 19 000 uniformed personnel in the country and the EU is the mission's main financial supporter. Other countries are also active, with for instance Turkey running a big training mission and controlling the port of Mogadishu.

Visiting the missions and speaking to our soldiers and trainers, gave me first-hand insight on how our staff work on the ground, how they bring our security and defence policy to life. I praised our staff for their hard work and commitment in Mogadishu, as well as in Hargeisa, Garowe and Berbera. This work, far from home and in often very tough and difficult living conditions, takes courage and resilience and the dedication of our people in the field is a key element to promote and protect the EU's values and interests. It a fundamental work, to preserve regional security and to demonstrate that the EU is Africa's most reliable partner, supporting African peace efforts with eleven missions across the continent.

We intend to continue to strengthen the Somali security institutions while diminishing gradually our support. The aim is that Somalia takes full ownership for its own security by the end of 2024. I assured President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud that our missions would stand by the army, the police and the coast guards to help them fulfil this objective. I also acknowledged the new leadership's efforts to promote economic and social reform and advance state-building in cooperation with federal member states –underlining that indeed cooperation between the federal government and the federal member states is crucial.

However, I also stressed that we are moving towards a more transactional partnership with the Somali authorities. EU support cannot be taken for granted.



6.4 ASIA AND THE INDO-PACIFIC

EU AND THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION: TIME TO RUN TOGETHER

08.08.2022 – Blog ^(³⁰²) – *In August, I attended the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Post-Ministerial-Conference and the ASEAN Regional Forum in Phnom Penh (Cambodia). I was reminded to what extent the region is becoming the new centre of gravity of the world.*

My visit ^(³⁰³) took place at a moment of fast rising tensions with a major escalatory potential between the US and China over Taiwan; the deepening international impact of Russia's war against Ukraine; and the brutal deterioration of the situation in Myanmar.

I have stressed several times during my mandate that the history of the 21st century will be written to a great extent in Asia and that we must be much more engaged with this region. If the EU wants to be a geopolitical actor, we also have to be perceived as a political and security actor in the Asia-Pacific region, not just as a development cooperation, trading or investment partner.

To start with, let me remind some basic figures. The Asia-Pacific region creates 60 % of global GDP and two-thirds of global growth. It is the second largest destination for EU exports and home to four out of the top ten EU trading partners. Around 40 % of the EU's foreign trade passes through the South China Sea. The EU is also the top investor and development assistance provider for the Asia-Pacific. Beyond economic factors, demographic and geopolitical developments do also make the region the world's gravity centre. Asian security has a direct impact on European security and prosperity.

Deepening EU-ASEAN relations

In all meetings, I formulated the EU's intention of engaging much more and of deepening EU-ASEAN relations. Our discussions proved that there is clear demand in the region for more EU presence: on the post-pandemic recovery, on

^(³⁰²) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-and-asia-pacific-region-time-run-together_en

^(³⁰³) See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-visits-cambodia-meet-asean-partners_en

connectivity, on the green transition, and on security. The bilateral meetings held during my visit, were again a confirmation that we can no longer afford running behind the curve in our engagement with the region.

As underlined in my meeting with ASEAN Secretary-General Dato Lim Jock Hoi, ASEAN and the European Union share strong common aspirations. We cannot forget that both organisations were founded to prevent conflict by bringing economies together and ensuring stability.

It is in this spirit that we adopted during my visit the [EU-ASEAN Plan of Action 2023-2027](#) ⁽³⁰⁴⁾. We plan also to sign a far-reaching Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement (CATA) with ASEAN partners later this year. These are not only concrete expressions of our Strategic Partnership on a wide range of cooperation areas, including pandemic recovery, trade, rules-based and sustainable connectivity, climate change, research, and security. In the face of today's security crises and economic challenges, it is also particularly important to be able to draw on partners who share the same attachment to multilateralism, free and fair trade, and a rules-based global order.

Geopolitical and regional security issues

The rules-based international order is currently at stake as never before and we see multiple and grave threats to peace and stability in our regions. During [my intervention at the Regional Forum](#) ⁽³⁰⁵⁾, I presented the EU's view on these threats, starting with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. While this war has been condemned by 141 members of the UN, I realised again during our meetings in Cambodia that views differ on how to move forward and on the consequences of the war. Notably the US, EU, and Singapore had a hard job to do in fighting the Russian narrative that it was the EU/US sanctions which made food insecurity and led to inflation and poverty to the detriment of developing countries. Without defending the Russian explanations as to the causes of the conflict, most countries in ASEAN tended to explicitly follow or implicitly sympathise with the Russian narrative. This battle is far from won for the West and requires significantly stepped-up communication efforts, adapted to local languages and social media.

⁽³⁰⁴⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/plan-action-implement-asean-eu-strategic-partnership-2023-2027_en

⁽³⁰⁵⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/29th-asean-regional-forum-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell_en

In his intervention during our meeting, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov focused on this wrong narrative, but then again, he left right after delivering his speech. He therefore did not listen to other ministers who explained, like I did, that the purchase, the transport, the payment, and the import of Russian agricultural products are specifically exempted from the sanctions. Furthermore, the fact that we are phasing out Russian energy imports does not mean that we are asking everyone else to do the same. The responsibility lies with Russia's war actions. More than 20 million tonnes of grain have been prevented until recent days to leave the ports of Ukraine. That is a fact.

The rules-based international order at stake

Another geopolitical tension that I raised was the situation in the South China Sea, considering the increased militarisation and destabilising actions, which threaten freedom of navigation and overflight, while affecting stability and security. The EU actively supports the ASEAN-led process towards an effective, substantive and legally binding Code of Conduct for this maritime area, respectful of the interests of third parties.

As the Taiwan Strait crisis went *in crescendo* during my stay in Phnom Penh, it was impossible not to mention it in my speech. For the EU, it is clear: we want to preserve peace and the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. The firing of ballistic missiles overflying Taiwan, several of which landed in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone, was a worrying development that could lead to further destabilisation and risk escalation. That is why the EU called with the G7 ⁽³⁰⁶⁾ on all parties to remain calm, to exercise restraint, to act with transparency and to maintain open lines of communication to prevent any miscalculations that could lead to tragic consequences. This said, the sudden escalation of tensions across the Taiwan Strait has become a divisive issue among ASEAN countries, confronting its members with what they most strongly want to avoid: having to make a binary choice between the US and China. ASEAN appeals strongly to both partners to calm down and to de-escalate. This conflict has a major divisive and disruptive potential for ASEAN and the world economy.

In addition, the worsening situation in Myanmar was high on the agenda during my two days in Phnom Penh. The execution of four pro-democracy activists ⁽³⁰⁷⁾ was a

⁽³⁰⁶⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/g7-foreign-ministers%20%99-statement-preserving-peace-and-stability-across-taiwan-strait_en

⁽³⁰⁷⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/g7-foreign-ministers%20%99-statement-executions-military-junta-myanmar_en

shocking signal to the world of the junta's disregard for the lives and rights of Myanmar's citizens and their desire for freedom. We are concerned by the lack of progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus and stand ready to support ASEAN in its renewed efforts towards a peaceful and inclusive political solution. The priorities must be to set an end to the violence, to resume a political settlement process, and to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit in Brussels

This trip to Cambodia has further convinced me that (1) ASEAN is an important organisation helping to preserve peace and security and that (2) the EU should be a reliable partner in this endeavour. The last days have demonstrated so, and I am now looking forward to implementing our plans, to further deepening our ties, and to hosting ASEAN Leaders in Brussels in December to commemorate 45 years of EU-ASEAN relations. Despite the 'unfriendly' timing in August, the PMC/ARF meetings have become my 'must do' Asia-Pacific appointment of the year, so we will see each other next year in Jakarta.

Finally, I want to say a word about Cambodia and the bilateral elements of my visit. I commended Cambodia for its role as ASEAN Chair in a very complex international and regional context, and in my meetings with Prime Minister Hun Sen and Foreign Minister Prak Sonhonn, I strongly supported Cambodia's efforts in addressing the crisis in Myanmar and the Cambodian Foreign Minister's role as ASEAN Special Envoy for Myanmar. Regarding our bilateral relations, it is crucial to deepen our cooperation and keep our dialogue open on issues of common interest, including difficult ones such as human rights and the protection of fundamental freedoms, which are an integral element of our bilateral relationship.

Apart from current affairs, I had the opportunity to briefly visit the treasures of the ancient Khmer Empire in Cambodia's Angkor Wat Archaeological Park. An astonishing monument of human history and development, which is so impressive and truly breath-taking. In Phnom Penh I was confronted by a much tragic and sombre memory of Cambodia's recent past. I visited the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, a high school building converted into the S-21 prison by the Khmer Rouge, where over 12 000 people were tortured and killed. During the four years of the brutal Pol Pot regime, over 2 million men, women and children died by execution, hunger and overwork. The memory of these atrocities should be preserved to prevent future genocides. The younger generations need to understand the importance of their contribution to continue to build peace and protect rights.

CENTRAL ASIA'S GROWING IMPORTANCE

20.11.2022 – Blog ⁽³⁰⁸⁾ – *In November, I visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to participate in the EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting and in a EU-Central Asia connectivity conference in Samarkand. Our Central Asian partners want to diversify their partnerships. We need to do a lot more together on connectivity, energy and security.*

For centuries, Central Asia played a key role, linking the Far East to Europe when goods and ideas flowed back and forth along the Silk Road. But relations need to be nurtured and constantly updated in light of new circumstances. These days, Central Asia is at the centre of events, in geo-strategic and geo-economic terms.

When you travel to Central Asia, you feel there is a new dynamic. It is clear that Russia but also China have played a major role in the region and continue to do so. Equally, it is obvious that the region is looking to diversify its relationships and that they see the EU as a partner of choice. Leaders in the region are undertaking various reform programmes. In addition, relations among Central Asian countries are improving.

The EU is seen as a partner of choice

As EU, we have a clear interest to seize on these changes. We must deepen our ties with the region and tap into the vast potential it has to offer, in terms of energy supplies, critical raw materials and new transport corridors that do not depend on Russia (to so-called Middle Corridor or Trans Caspian Corridor).

Happily, we do not start from zero. Maybe not many people know it, but we are already the main investment partner of the region. The EU accounts for more than 42 % of the total FDI stock in Central Asia, compared to 14.2 % for the US, 6 % for Russia and 3.7 % for China. Moreover, we are about to mark 30 years of diplomatic relations. The key task is to build on these foundations and give a new impulse, while taking into account the fast changing geopolitical context.

⁽³⁰⁸⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/central-asia%20%95-growing-importance-globally-and-eu_en

I started my visit in Kazakhstan, a country of 20 million but with a surface that is five times France. With President Tokayev and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tileuberdi we discussed how to take forward the positive momentum we see in our relations, as evidenced also by the recent visit of President of the European Council Michel and the MoU signed by President of the European Commission von der Leyen on access to raw materials. Kazakhstan is a key partner for us, not least as a major source of oil imports (about 8 % of our total imports) but also gas, uranium and other critical raw materials.

In political terms, Kazakhstan has seen various reforms that go in the direction of political pluralism. Today's Presidential elections and next year's parliamentary elections will be important markers in this respect. But there is a lot of progress needed and my meeting with key civil society leaders was a good occasion to hear first-hand their perspective and the work they do, with EU support.

A long history as 'gateway' between East and West

I then moved on to Samarkand in Uzbekistan, by far the most populous country in the region. Samarkand has a long history as trading post and 'gateway' between East and West – long before we started using the term Global Gateway. Uzbekistan is also the birthplace of the notion 'algorithm', a term we now hear so much about in the world of IT and social media.

In Samarkand we held the [9th EU-Asian Central Ministerial](#) ⁽³⁰⁹⁾, with all five Central Asian countries participating. We discussed the full range of issues between us. We agreed that there is a new momentum but also still a lot of untapped potential.

On the security side, we discussed the shockwaves that Russia's invasion has caused. For obvious geographical and historical reasons, the region follows a balanced approach. But we were united on the need to defend key principles of the UN charter (territorial integrity, non-use of force etc.). And of course the region wants to minimise the negative effect of Russia's war. Logically, the dramatic situation in Afghanistan also featured prominently where the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate and the Taliban show no sign of moderating its behaviour.

⁽³⁰⁹⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/central-asia-18th-eu-central-asia-ministerial-meeting-finding-solutions-common-challenges_en

We also discussed the water, energy and climate nexus; people-to-people exchanges and the role of the EU in supporting cooperation among Central Asian states and between our two regions. We agreed that in a world of rapid change, we need each other. We will work hard on the follow up towards the next EU-Central Asia Ministerial to be held in Brussels.

In all discussions in Central Asia, the buzzword Connectivity tops the agenda. This is logical: the region sits strategically between East and West. However, generally speaking, existing transport and other linkages are under-developed. Many Central Asian countries lack access options to European and global markets that do not pass through or rely on Russia. They, like us, want to develop more, additional options and links.

How to do this in practice was at the heart of the [EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference: Global Gateway](#)⁽³¹⁰⁾, attended by political leaders from the region, the EU, financial institutions and business.

In my [speech](#)⁽³¹¹⁾, I stressed the great potential of better linking our two regions and, with that, our peoples. Ultimately, connectivity is a combination of politics and engineering. It is about overcoming borders, which are scars of history, by building hard and soft infrastructure, or the veins through which pass flows of people, goods, services and ideas.

This may sound abstract. But with the EU's *Global Gateway* and its global financing that is expected to be as much as €300 billion and by adopting a real *Team Europe* approach, we can turn lofty words into concrete actions and do so in a sustainable way.

Trade and investment need solid rules

However, for trade and investment to flow, we need solid rules and international law to be respected. What we call the rules based international order makes states secure, people free and companies willing to invest. That is the reason why I said that we all need to defend it when that order is under threat – as it is today.

⁽³¹⁰⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/samarkand-eu-central-asia-connectivity-conference-global-gateway_en

⁽³¹¹⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/opening-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-eu-central-asia-connectivity_en

Another key message was that we in Europe, like our partners in Central Asia, see the need to advance our strategic autonomy. So that we can all choose freely how and with whom we connect. Having connections and options is good. But excessive dependencies and the absence of choice can come at a heavy cost, as we learned the hard way over energy and Russia.

I had the feeling that the conference could be a foundational moment on what concrete solutions we can implement to boost connectivity within and between the two regions.

The EBRD is working on a study on sustainable transport corridors between Europe and Central Asia, looking at how to overcome the bottlenecks. Both in terms of hardware like railways that lack inter-operability due to different gauges, or the lack of logistic capacities in ships and in ports; but also in terms of software like customs procedures. There are certainly real obstacles but equally there is a joint commitment and strategic interest to overcome these obstacles, including through the support of the EU, the EBRD and the EIB.

At the conference, I also had the opportunity to launch [two Team Europe initiatives](#)⁽³¹²⁾, especially made for Central Asia:

- one on water, energy and climate change to help the region address the growing impact of climate change and better water management.
- another one on increasing digital connectivity within the region and with Europe, including through satellite connections.

A new dynamic

As usual with this type of events, what matters is not only the event per se and the speeches and connections people make there but the follow up. The final [communiqué](#)⁽³¹³⁾ is certainly full of important joint commitments that need to be implemented. On my side, I will work with my colleagues in the Commission and with EU member states to ensure it is not a standalone event but sets in motion a new dynamic.

⁽³¹²⁾ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_6963

⁽³¹³⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/central-asia-18th-eu-central-asia-ministerial-meeting-finding-solutions-common-challenges_en

Finally, I also met the President of Uzbekistan Mirziyoyev in Tashkent. We discussed all the strategic issues that dominated my trip to the region and a good wrap-up of my visit. We discussed Russia's war against Ukraine and its fallout and the growing instability in Afghanistan. But we also talked about the great potential in our bilateral relations and the upward momentum in EU-Central Asia relations and especially the strategic nature of our cooperation on connectivity.

I come away from this trip with a sense that the changes in the geopolitical landscape – the fall of Kabul and the war against Ukraine – require us to invest much more in our increasingly important partnership in and with Central Asia.

THE EU AND ASEAN: STRONGER TOGETHER

16.12.2022 – Blog ⁽³¹⁴⁾ – *In December, we had the first-ever EU-ASEAN Summit in Brussels, marking 45 years of relations. South-East Asia is a highly dynamic part of the world and an important ‘swing’ player amid growing strategic competition. There is a lot of potential to deepen collaboration: on trade and investment, security and global challenges.*

The Indo-Pacific is the strategic theatre where the future of our planet will be written, as I argued in a recent speech ⁽³¹⁵⁾. At the confluence of two oceans, it is a region on the rise, where two key global trends are coming together: US-China strategic competition and the weaponisation of interdependence ⁽³¹⁶⁾.

This region is home to 60 % of the world population, produces 60 % of global GDP and contributed to two-thirds of pre-pandemic global economic growth. As EU, we have to invest more time and resources in playing a full role in and with the Indo-Pacific region.

ASEAN supports a rules-based international order

At the centre of the Indo-Pacific there is ASEAN, a fellow regional organisation that supports effective multilateralism and a rules-based international order. For the first time ever, the leaders of ASEAN came to Brussels ⁽³¹⁷⁾ this week to meet for a Summit with the leaders of the EU.

It was a politically significant moment: in a world where great powers are throwing their weight around, the EU and ASEAN sent a message of wanting to join forces. And although Philippines' President Marcos may have blamed our winter weather for coming down with a cold, the welcome given to ASEAN was a warm one.

⁽³¹⁴⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-and-asean-stronger-together_en

⁽³¹⁵⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/indo-pacific-opening-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-brussels-indo_en

⁽³¹⁶⁾ See: <https://geopolitique.eu/en/2022/03/24/europe-in-the-interregnum-our-geopolitical-awakening-after-ukraine/>

⁽³¹⁷⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2022/12/14/>

Along with the EU-ASEAN region-to-region meeting, we also had a lot of bilateral meetings: I met the Foreign Ministers of Cambodia, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Laos. I also signed important Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with Malaysia and Thailand.

ASEAN has experienced decades of strong growth and is now on track to become, as a group, the fourth largest economy in the world by [2030](#) ⁽³¹⁸⁾. The EU is already ASEAN's first development partner, its second investment partner and its third largest trading partner ⁽³¹⁹⁾. So logically, economic themes loomed large in our discussions.

We celebrated the signing of the EU-ASEAN [Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement](#) ⁽³²⁰⁾. This is the world's first bloc-to-bloc agreement liberalising aviation. It will lead to more flight options for both passengers and cargo, and hence more competitive prices.

Connectivity is a buzzword globally and in South-East Asia, there is a true 'battle of offers' going on. The EU is a connectivity superpower and ASEAN knows this. In the EU we have years of experience in abolishing borders.

€10bn Global Gateway investment package

ASEAN's integration goal and methods are very different from ours, for example when it comes to majority voting or the size of the common budget. Still, we have been supporting ASEAN for many years in their 'community building'. We have worked both on the hardware side of connectivity and the software, i.e. regulatory dialogue and support. At the Summit, we announced a dedicated [€10 billion investment package under the Global Gateway](#) ⁽³²¹⁾ to promote sustainable investment across the region.

At the bilateral level, the EU has free trade agreements (FTA) with Singapore and Vietnam and negotiations with Indonesia are also underway. Indonesia has the biggest economy in ASEAN and there is a lot of upside potential. We have reaffirmed at the Summit a future EU-ASEAN FTA as a common long-term objective.

⁽³¹⁸⁾ See: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/01/asean-is-poised-for-post-pandemic-inclusive-growth-and-prosperity-heres-why/>

⁽³¹⁹⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-and-asean-economic-cooperation_en

⁽³²⁰⁾ See: <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/move/items/714576/en>

⁽³²¹⁾ See: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/60832/global-gateway-asean-factsheet_final.pdf

Energy, climate and the green transition was a second big theme at the Summit. Many ASEAN countries remain highly dependent on fossil fuels and look for greater incentives to enhance their ambitions to combat climate change. In the absence of any significant decarbonisation, CO₂ emissions in the ASEAN region would almost double by 2040. In addition, EU green agenda policies are sometimes received with scepticism or labelled as protectionist. We have to take these concerns seriously and invest in real dialogue when we devise our energy and climate policies.

Concrete deliverables for the green transition

So it was good to discuss how we can advance together with the necessary green transition and we had plenty of concrete deliverables in this area: the launch of the [Just Energy Transition Partnership \(JETP\) with Vietnam](#); plus the launch of a dedicated Ministerial Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change, the start of the ASEAN-EU Energy Dialogue, and other initiatives listed under the [EU-ASEAN Plan of Action \(2023-2027\)](#) which was launched at the Summit.

Thirdly, the EU and ASEAN have a geopolitical interest to collaborate. In this region which prefers not to choose between the two big powers, [opinion polls](#)⁽³²²⁾ show the EU as the second most trusted and preferred partner (after Japan), to hedge against the uncertainties of the US-China rivalry.

The message from the EU was one of sustained commitment to the region and a willingness to engage more, especially in the area of security. We expressed our common resolve on maintaining and promoting peace, security and freedom of navigation and overflight at the South China Sea, in accordance with international law and, in particular, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. We also have a dedicated project to enhance security cooperation in and with Asia ([ESIWA](#)⁽³²³⁾) to work on cyber issues, maritime security, or counter-terrorism.

Myanmar, ruled by a military junta, was absent at our Summit. But as ASEAN steps up its engagement with all stakeholders to find a way back to a democratic path for the country, I made a clear offer from the EU to support ASEAN in ways which they think will be of most help.

⁽³²²⁾ See: <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/state-of-southeast-asia-survey/the-state-of-southeast-asia-2022-survey-report/>

⁽³²³⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/factsheet_eu_asia_security_july_2019.pdf

Unconditional withdrawal of Russia from Ukraine's territory

Naturally, Russia's brutal war against Ukraine featured prominently in our discussions. Despite the range of views among them, ASEAN as a group has for the first time agreed at our Summit to state that most of its members deplores in the strongest terms and condemns the Russian aggression against Ukraine and demands its complete and unconditional withdrawal from its territory.

When ASEAN Chair, Prime Minister Hun Sen, opened the Summit speaking of multilateralism being under severe strain with global peace threatened by 'state action blatantly violating universally recognised international law, norms and principles,' we all knew what he was referring to. And everyone around the table agreed on the need to uphold the UN Charter including its core provisions on territorial integrity and the non-use of force, including of nuclear weapons (³²⁴). After all, many of the current generation of ASEAN leaders have their own personal experience of wars and conflict.

Amid all the chaos and crises of our world, it was good that we took time this week to engage with ASEAN, a strategically important partner.

⁽³²⁴⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/14/eu-asean-commemorative-summit-joint-leaders-statement-14-december-2022/>



6.5 LATIN AMERICA

THE EU COMMITMENT TO WORK WITH LATIN AMERICA

03.05.2022 – Blog ⁽³²⁵⁾ – *In April, I travelled to Chile after Gabriel Boric became president for my second visit to Latin America as HR/VP. Chile is since many years an important partner of the EU and in December we finalised the modernisation of our Association Agreement.*

It was the right time for me to visit Chile. The country experienced a violent and long ‘*estallido social*’ (social outbreak) that started in October 2019 and which resulted in a Constituent Convention that will culminate in a referendum on a new Constitution to substitute the one inherited from the times of Pinochet. And Chile has also just elected a new left-wing government, which is a trend in current Latin American politics and which will also have an important international impact.

The war in Ukraine prevented me from attending the inauguration of the new President, Gabriel Boric, on 11 March. His victory in December 2021, with 56 % of the vote, was followed by an exemplary transition of power with the former President Piñera and with the losing candidate conceding as soon as the result became clear, even before the counting had finished.

High expectations for more equality

These were some of the issues that we discussed when I met with President Boric and several of his ministers. Most of them mentioned that they have been in power for just a month and a half, but that it already felt as a year and a half. Indeed, expectations are very high and the new government is facing high social demands for more equality and a fairer distribution of incomes, which had provoked the social implosion and brought them to power.

Now, the shockwaves of the Ukrainian war are causing inflationary pressures and supply chain disruptions that are dramatically lowering growth projections around the world. Chile is no exception: inflation has reached 9 % and projected GDP growth for 2022 has been lowered to 1.5 %. The EU will need to pay more attention

⁽³²⁵⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/showing-strong-eu-commitment-work-latin-america_en

to help the whole region, which has already suffered a heavy toll during the Covid pandemic, and is crucial to avoid a new 'lost decade'.

Chile is evidence good example of the fact that a sound macroeconomic performance does not necessarily reduce inequality. Just a few days before the start of the '*estallido social*', former President Piñera portrayed Chile as an 'oasis' of political stability in the region.

It is true that in the first decade of this century, tens of millions of Latin Americans left poverty behind. However, when the economic boom, driven by high prices of raw materials, stalled, it was difficult to keep the gains achieved. Certainly, the dramatic events in Chile captured the attention around the world. But Colombia, Ecuador, Perú and other countries also experienced bouts of social unrest. And we should not forget that Europe too had similar problems, as demonstrated by the 'gilets jaunes' in France. We are experiencing a major transformation of the political landscape driven by growing inequality and the resulting feeling of unfairness.

A remarkable political change

But there are few places where social protest has generated political change as remarkably as in Chile. Just after his reference to the 'Chilean oasis', President Piñera apologised for his 'lack of vision' and raised the minimum wage and the lowest pensions by 20 %. The political parties reached an agreement to write a new Constitution. In October 2020, in a referendum with a 51 % turnout, 78 % of Chileans supported the initiation of a Constituent Convention. In May 2021, in a election with a 41 % turnout, the Constituent Assembly was formed where left-wing candidates won about three-quarters of the seats and two-thirds of all deputies were independent. And in November of 2021, regular national elections elected a Parliament with an approximate 50/50 split between left and right parties.

As a consequence, Chile now has a Constituent Assembly with a clear left-wing majority and a Parliament where the new left-wing government does not have a guaranteed majority in any of the two chambers. However, it has found no opposition from business leaders to a significant raise of the minimum wage and it is preparing a tax reform aimed at increasing the dismal amount of public spending that is now just 20 % of GDP.

Defending Chile and the EU's common values

In our meeting, I agreed with President Boric' assertions that Chile and the EU share common values that need to be defended. Our joint commitment to democracy, a division of powers, human rights and (scientific) progress make us like-minded partners. The EU welcomes that Chile is not only part of the majority of the countries in the world that have condemned Russia's aggression of Ukraine, but we also appreciate the clarity with which it has done so. We also agreed that Venezuela has to hold elections that are recognised as free and fair by the world community.

We also discussed how to best finalise the modernisation of the Association Agreement of 2002, which goes well beyond being a mere trade agreement. It is the first of the EU's 'new generation agreements' and covers a broad agenda of collaboration in areas such as diplomacy, security, human rights, democracy, gender equality and energy. I hope it can be signed before the end of this year, coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the original.

In President Boric, who is 36 years old, I perceived a similar willingness to be transformational as in the first government of Felipe González in 1982 in Spain. President Boric told me about his commitment to produce long-term structural change, to reduce inequality by reducing the subsidiary role that the state has had in the last decades and that is embedded in the current Constitution. The EU has been observing the Constitutional Convention with great interest and acknowledges the effort to involve the whole people of Chile. I hope, as President Boric said, that the new Constitution becomes the '*punto de encuentro*' (meeting point) for the whole country. Several times during my visit, I remarked that Constitutions are a kind of playing field for the political actors that need a broad social consensus to last.

We were honoured to have Minister of Foreign Relations, Antonia Urrejola at the opening of the EU's new Delegation in Chile. We discussed the potential geopolitical implications of the aforementioned regional shift towards the left, particularly in Central America. Also, based on her extensive experience in the matter, she gave me an eloquent explanation of the need to give political recognition to indigenous people. I also had the opportunity to thank the Minister of Defence, Maya Fernández Allende, for the participation of members of Chile's armed forces in EU missions around the world. Indeed, in a recent trip to Sarajevo I was briefed by a Chilean officer.

With the Minister of Interior, Izkia Siches, we discussed challenges and best practices of control and integration of migrants in search of a better future, since Chile is hosting an important and increasing number of Venezuelan and Haitian migrants. We also discussed best practices in police models. With the General Minister of the Presidency, Giorgio Jackson, I had a frank exchange on how to combine measures such as raising the minimum wage, increasing protection for the self-employed, and a progressive and green tax reform in the context of increasing interest rates.

I also met with the President and the Vice-President of the Convención Constitucional, María Elisa Quinteros and Gaspar Domínguez, whose work is reaching the final stages. On 4 July, they will present the proposal of the new Constitution, which will be voted on in a referendum on 4 September. There are several issues receiving a significant amount of media and social attention where different positions are still being debated ahead of the final compromise.

In a meeting organised by the Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), I reflected on Chile's great renewable energy potential, and announced four EU-Chile joint initiatives to develop green hydrogen projects, to address climate change and a digital alliance to share data from the Copernicus system. The Minister of Environment Maisa Rojas explained the plans to make the country's decarbonisation commitments binding and to make them a reality with specific plans across all the regions. I also met with companies with pilot projects of green hydrogen in the country.

At the Universidad de Chile, I had the opportunity to meet with students to debate the need of all societies to make progress on the green and digital transitions, ensuring equality and social cohesion. Rector Ennio Vivaldi argued that Chile needs to eliminate the subsidiary role of the state in the provision of public services and develop high-quality public education.

The memory of president Allende

I also had the honour of having been hosted at the Palacio de la Moneda by four Presidents of Chile. After our meeting, president Boric accompanied me, once more, through the rooms and corridors of the Palacio de la Moneda that are full with history and where the memory of president Allende is present. President Boric said in his victory speech that he is standing on the shoulders of giants.

Indeed. And it was very clear to me that he will do everything within his reach to honour them.

It is clear that both his most difficult challenge and his main goal is to reduce inequality, while increasing the standard of living. [Chile's Gini's coefficient](#) ⁽³²⁶⁾, which measures inequality, is slightly below Latin America's average. But Latin America's average is significantly higher than that of any region in the world. In this sense, Chile's main goal is also Latin America's. A serious project of regional integration, as the one that the European Union represents, could be of great help. This is another reason to strengthen our cooperation.

⁽³²⁶⁾ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=CL>

ENGAGING WITH THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA

08.05.2022 – Blog ⁽³²⁷⁾ – *After Chile, I visited Panama to attend the first-ever joint SICA ⁽³²⁸⁾-CARICOM ⁽³²⁹⁾ meeting with the EU. Both organisations bring together 21 member countries in Central America and the Caribbean. The message from the region was clear: the EU needs to be more present.*

Rather than complaining about Europe's loss of influence in the world, the EU needs indeed to engage proactively, listen to our partners and forge alliances with like-minded partners.

Throughout my talks with the Foreign Ministers of the region, I heard a strong condemnation of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Only Nicaragua, which chose not to attend the meeting, and El Salvador have deviated from this regional consensus. The shockwaves of Putin's war in terms of sharply increasing prices for food, energy and other commodities are being felt strongly in Central America and the Caribbean, affecting lower income countries the most. Unlike many European countries, our partners simply do not have the fiscal margin to cushion the impact of the economic crisis on their citizens.

They know this is a man-made crisis, and we know that man's name: Vladimir Putin. Russia has a vested interest in keeping energy prices at record levels, benefitting some producer countries in the short term but harming the recovery prospects of many more. According to the Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL) ⁽³³⁰⁾, the COVID-19 pandemic had already increased by 30 % the number of people suffering from hunger in the region. As a result, 40 % of the population experienced in 2020 food insecurity with the largest increase of any area in the world. The region is calling upon the EU to contribute to the global response to these shocks and to assist our partners.

Besides explaining that the sanctions are not causing the inflationary effects and supply chain disruptions, we must contribute decisively to mitigate the

⁽³²⁷⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/engaging-caribbean-and-central-america_en

⁽³²⁸⁾ See: https://www.sica.int/sica/vista_en.aspx

⁽³²⁹⁾ See: <https://caricom.org/member-states-and-associate-members/>

⁽³³⁰⁾ See: <https://www.cepal.org/en>

impact now. We cannot wave a magic wand and make the global market disruption caused by Russian aggression simply disappear but the EU and its member states are working bilaterally and multilaterally with international organisations and the [Global Crisis Response Group](#) ⁽³³¹⁾ led by the UN. The EU is reviewing its toolbox with a focus on the most at-risk regions and lower income countries. This crisis requires an integrated humanitarian, development and macroeconomic response.

Strengthening our partnership with the Caribbean

Engaging with the Caribbean was one of the top priorities for my visit. The EU and the Caribbean countries are bound by strong historical and economic ties, but we should not neglect the political relationship. We are united by our commitment to democracy human rights, and multilateralism. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and individual Caribbean countries have been clear-eyed in condemning the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine. '*CARICOM welcomes a Europe that champions multilateralism and a rules-based global order through a more active role and stronger voice for all our countries,*' said CARICOM Secretary General Dr Carla Barnett in the meeting. It has been too long since high-level engagement between the EU and the Caribbean took place. We have much to gain by working together.

Beyond the immediate consequences of the Russian aggression, we also discussed in Panama a future-oriented agenda. For the past 45 years, the relationship has been framed by a donor-beneficiary logic. Now it is time to lift our relationship to a partnership of political equals. The Caribbean feels that [the Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and CARIFORUM](#) ⁽³³²⁾ has not delivered on its promises. The region demands that the new 'post-Cotonou' Agreement between the EU and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the associated Caribbean Protocol responds to the specific constraints that limit possibilities to diversify their economies.

The EU is acutely aware in particular of the specific vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the low-lying coastal areas in the Caribbean regarding climate change. This is not an abstract or potential problem. People in the region already experience its devastating effects on their daily lives: more

⁽³³¹⁾ See: <https://news.un.org/pages/global-crisis-response-group/>

⁽³³²⁾ See: <https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/content/eu-cariforum-economic-partnership-agreement>

frequent and heavier tropical storms and hurricanes, droughts, rising sea levels and destruction of marine habitats. The European Union is fighting climate change at home with our ambitious [Fit for 55 agenda](#)⁽³³³⁾ but we also try to put our money where our mouth is. We are the largest contributors to the [UN Adaptation Fund](#)⁽³³⁴⁾, and are stepping up our efforts to mobilise further climate finance. This fight is a priority in our cooperation programmes with the Caribbean.

A frank discussion about anti-money laundering regulations

Partnership means also being able to address areas where we have differences. We engaged in a frank discussion about irritants such as anti-money laundering regulations and tax governance. Most of our partners are working hard to comply with existing requirements, but implementation of new regulations is key. Having listened to CARICOM partners, I am also convinced that we must pay closer attention to the consequences of [the EU non-cooperative jurisdictions listings](#)⁽³³⁵⁾ for the average citizen.

Central American integration has made progress and it remains the most integrated region in Latin America, but the isthmus faces a turbulent period. Nicaragua's terrible autocratic spiral threatens regional cooperation. We must work together to help the Nicaraguan people. The appointment of a new [SICA](#) Secretary General is blocked and only the countries of the region can solve this problem but we must also do our homework. The EU's Association Agreement with Central America was signed 10 years ago but it has not been ratified. There is still one member state missing, Belgium, to finalise the ratification. This means that the trade pillar has been in provisional application for a decade but the political and cooperation part is not.

In some Central American countries, homicide rates are among the highest in the world and are invariably linked to organised crime and drug trafficking, which affects the EU directly. Officials that I met reflected on the futility of fighting drug trafficking without a global strategy that also includes the countries of origin and destination. The price of a kilo of cocaine in a country of origin is around €2 000, which increases to around €5 500 in the ports of Central America used to ship it to Europe, and jumps to €50 000 or more when it arrives in Europe. In addition to all the health and security problems caused by drug trafficking, the associated money laundering is a

⁽³³³⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/green-deal/fit-for-55-the-eu-plan-for-a-green-transition/>

⁽³³⁴⁾ See: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/>

⁽³³⁵⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-list-of-non-cooperative-jurisdictions/>

key factor to include certain countries of the region in the EU list of high-risk jurisdictions. Migration was another issue of concern. Many countries in the region are part of the routes used by migrants to reach the United States. Last year alone, 133 000 migrants crossed Panamá to reach the Mexican border with the US.

Beside all these challenges, there are also positive signs. In my meeting with the Alliance for Development in Democracy, put together in 2021 by the presidents of Panama, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic, I witnessed the commitment to work with the EU in the promotion of democratic values, human rights and economic growth.

Panama a strategic logistical and economic hub

In bilateral meetings, President Cortizo and Foreign Minister Mouynes reiterated Panama's condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and we addressed bilateral issues. Panama is a strategic aeronautic, logistical and economic hub, with growing European business interests and a great potential for cooperation. With EU companies operating in Panama, I learned about many projects ranging from the expansion of the subway system to new recycling and renewable energy plants. We also discussed the forthcoming establishment in Panama of a regional data centre for the EU's Copernicus earth observation programme that will support Latin American and Caribbean countries in dealing with climate change and natural disasters. Accompanied by the European Investment Bank (EIB), we visited the Panama Canal, which routes 6 % of world commerce. The EIB contributed with a loan of \$500 million to its expansion, which has reduced global CO₂ emissions by 40 million tonnes since 2016.

The message from the region was loud and clear: the EU needs to be more present. Our Caribbean counterparts accepted my proposal to hold regular annual meetings at ministerial level. Beyond Central America and the Caribbean, there has not been also a bi-regional summit between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) since 2015. We want to develop a forward-looking and substantive agenda for EU-LAC relations in the coming months, in order to build momentum for a Summit in the second semester of 2023. To succeed, we must however proceed with finalising pending agreements. Last time I spoke with the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs, he said: 'call me when you are ready'. It is not only a question of mere geopolitical influence, but a matter of self-interest as well.

ACCOMPANYING A DIVERSE COLOMBIA

26.06.2022 – Op-ed ⁽³³⁶⁾ – *After the election of Gustavo Petro as President of Colombia, I expressed in this Op-ed our wish to strengthen our ties with a country going in the direction of peace, social justice and democracy.*

On 19 June Colombia gave a lesson in democracy and maturity. After elections with the highest turnout since 1998, it elected as its next President and Vice-President Gustavo Petro, former mayor of Bogotá, a guerrilla fighter in his youth and historic leader of the left, and Francia Márquez, a woman of African descent, environmental and human rights defender and a powerful voice of the so-called forgotten Colombia.

Rejection of violence and demand for greater equality

For the first time in more than 200 years, Colombia has elected a left-wing president. This election marks a historic change and expresses a desire for profound change, a rejection of the return of violence and a demand for greater equality and social justice. It also reaffirms the most basic democratic conviction: change is made at the ballot box, through politics and dialogue. Only in this way can the wounds of the conflict be healed and the ‘non-repetition’ central to the 2016 Peace Agreement be achieved.

As highlighted by the EU Election Observation Mission, the well-organised elections, with a historically high turnout in a calm and peaceful environment, confirm Colombia’s democratic strength. In addition, the youth and the hardest hit regions of the country have actively participated. I congratulated the elected President and Vice-President, on behalf of the European Union, on the very night of the elections. Despite a tense and polarised campaign, I would like to highlight the speed and institutional sense with which the candidate Rodolfo Hernández, President Iván Duque, and his predecessors as well as the political forces of the country have welcomed the result, preparing the transition to the next presidency.

⁽³³⁶⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/queremos-seguir-acompa%C3%B1ando-esa-colombia-diversa_en

A long history of cooperation

The European Union and Colombia have a long history of cooperation, trust and working together. We supported from the outset the negotiation of the Peace Agreement, and Colombia's ambition to address the root causes of its history of conflict, violence and social unrest. The result was a demanding, ambitious and comprehensive document, which outlines a perspective to change the direction of the country and address challenges still present: inequalities, whether social, gender, ethnic, or geographic, and the lack of comprehensive state presence in part of the national territory.

Six years on, Colombia has travelled part of this road and, while the will and energy of the process belong to the Colombian people, the European Union and its member countries have done our part. I welcome the President-elect's commitment to unite the country in a great national agreement and to work in dialogue with all political forces for the good of Colombia and to overcome poverty and inequalities. I also highlight his willingness, shared by his main adversaries in the election campaign, to re-establish relations with Venezuela, to start new negotiations with the 'National Liberation Army' (ELN) and to support territorial dialogues to put an end to violence in the most remote departments. There, too, it can count on our full support.

The environment is another increasingly central element of our close relationship with Colombia. Europe looks to Latin America as a sister continent in the fight against climate change and deforestation, the preservation of biodiversity and the transition to a more sustainable and fairer economy. As the second largest destination for Colombian exports and the largest foreign investor in the country, Europe wants to continue to generate trade and business opportunities that foster a green, digital and social transition.

Our ties are based on intense cooperation, ranging from the management of the migration crisis in recent years, to the impressive success of the Erasmus+ scholarship programme among Colombian students, to the short-stay visa waiver agreement in force since 2015, or our military and security cooperation. Colombia has joined the vast majority of countries condemning the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the violation of the UN Charter and human rights. This unjustified war should bring Europeans and Latin Americans even closer together in our shared vision of an international community based on rules, dialogue, cooperation and peaceful resolution of disputes.

The road to national harmony belongs to the Colombian people

Last Sunday illustrated two of our most essential common values: democracy and respect for pluralism. No one says it is easy. We Europeans know this well because that has been our own history from the ashes of war and fratricidal confrontation to our union in diversity. The road to change and national harmony belongs to the Colombian people, but being a friendly continent, we want to continue accompanying this diverse and talented Colombia which, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Andes to the Llanos, looks to the future with the hope of being a more inclusive and fairer nation.

URUGUAY AND ARGENTINA, KEY PARTNERS TO BRING THE EU AND LATIN AMERICA CLOSER

29.10.2022 – Blog ⁽³³⁷⁾ – *In October, I went to South America and had fruitful bilateral exchanges with many Argentinian and Uruguayan leaders. Both countries are key partners in bringing Latin America and Europe closer: a goal I am pursuing since the beginning of my mandate.*

Uruguay, a country of 3.5 million inhabitants, is a stable democracy with a developed social model, which makes it one of our closest partners in Latin America. While EU-Uruguay relations are close, my visit was the first bilateral one by an HR/VP. I met President Luis Lacalle Pou, Vice-President and President of the Senate, Beatriz Argimón, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Francisco Bustillo and the Minister of Economy Azucena Arbeleche.

The EU largest investor in Uruguay

The EU is by far the largest investor in Uruguay, with 40 % of the Foreign Direct Investments stock in the country and these investments have grown rapidly in recent years. Over 600 EU companies are active in key sectors: wood pulp, logistics, banking, telecommunications, and tourism. In 2019, the Finnish paper company UPM started the construction of an additional pulp mill and a new specialised port terminal, worth €3 billion, making it one of the biggest private investment in Uruguay's history.

Wood pulp account for nearly 50 % of Uruguayan exports to the EU. We visited the brand new and impressive port terminal, inaugurated by President Lacalle Pou early October. The Uruguayan state accompanied these investments with a new 300 km railway line, linking the pulp mill and the port. This is Team Europe in action: companies from four EU member states were involved in these projects, combining industrialisation, connectivity and innovation.

In terms of trade, however, China has become Uruguay's main export market and the Uruguayan government, tired of waiting for the EU-Mercosur agreement,

⁽³³⁷⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/uruguay-and-argentina-key-partners-bring-eu-and-latin-america-closer_en

intends to negotiate a bilateral free trade agreement with China. We must realise that if we do not take steps to strengthen our ties with Latin America quickly, others will take our place. However, if China has become the largest buyer of Uruguayan agricultural products, we continue to be the ones who help bring productive capital and technologies to the country.

Uruguay is also a world leader in renewable energies thanks to a stable and favourable investment regime. Its power production is almost fully coming from renewable sources (97 %), due notably to major hydropower capacities. Uruguay also intends to develop a green hydrogen production. The German company Enertag has recently announced an investment of \$800 million to produce 15 000 tonnes of green hydrogen per year. In Uruguay, and more broadly in Latin America, there are major opportunities for the development of green energy, to advance the global green transition.

A special personal relationship with Argentina

After Uruguay, I went to Argentina with which I have a special personal relationship: it is the country where my father is born. I had the opportunity to discuss bilateral and global issues with President Alberto Fernandez, Vice president Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Santiago Cafiero, the president of the Chamber of Deputies, and the Chief of Government of the city of Buenos Aires Horacio Larreta. Before I leave, I will also meet with the Minister of Economy Sergio Massa.

I started my visit in the '*Parque de la Memoria*'⁽³³⁸⁾, a park dedicated to the memory of the 9000 victims that were murdered during the military dictatorship. It is located on the coastal strip of the Río de la Plata in Buenos Aires, a testimony of the fate of many of the victims who were thrown into the river from airplanes. I was accompanied on this visit by Norma Hochbaum, the director of the Park, and by descendants of the victims. It was a moving experience, in particular, to be confronted with the dramatic fate of the more than 400 children of the victims, who were abducted by the military and placed without knowing their true origin. Thanks to the DNA database built by the courageous grandmothers of '*Plaza de Mayo*'⁽³³⁹⁾ some have been able to recover their identity and learn who their real parents were. One of them told

⁽³³⁸⁾ See: <https://parquedelamemoria.org.ar/>

⁽³³⁹⁾ See: <https://www.cipdh.gob.ar/memorias-situadas/en/lugar-de-memoria/ronda-de-las-madres-de-plaza-de-mayo/>

me about his painful experience. It was also very moving because right now we hear reports of similar crimes being committed by Russia in Ukraine. Next year, Argentina will celebrate the 40th anniversary of its return to democracy. This is an important reminder of how fragile democracy remains and how high the price is when it is overturned.

Argentina, a country of 46 million people and the third largest economy in Latin America, is facing a difficult economic situation. The inflation rate already exceeds 70 % per year and the economic rebound of 2021 and early 2022 has ended. Due to the massive costs of imports of gas and oil at high prices, the government had to tighten capital controls and the Argentinian economy is expected to experience a recession, aggravating poverty and social tensions.

The EU has deep economic ties with Argentina: we are Argentina's first investment partner and second trading partner outside Latin America after China. EU companies have been present in Argentina for decades, some for over 100 years, and they hold 44 % of the foreign investment stock in the country. They have accompanied the country throughout all the economic ups and downs, employing hundreds of thousands of people in Argentina (around 290 000 direct jobs). In contrast, like in Uruguay, Chinese investment has been very limited in Argentina until now, concentrated in a few sectors (e.g. lithium mining) with minimal employment.

Lithium, a key asset for Argentina

Lithium is a key asset for Argentina and an essential component of electric vehicles batteries. Bolivia, Argentina and Chile form the 'lithium triangle': they are the three leading countries for lithium reserves globally. Chinese companies are active in Argentina in this sector. The only EU-led lithium project in Latin America is currently the French ERAMET project in Argentina. It should start producing over 20 000 tonnes of lithium per year from 2023. For the time being, the European Investment Bank does not fund mining activities due to environmental concerns. However, given the importance of lithium for the green transition, we have started to adapt this policy. Our cooperation with Latin America in that area should not concentrate only on raw materials. We should also help build local industrial value chains around these raw materials.

Argentina also has an important potential as an exporter of energy – natural gas as well as wind and solar energy. However, to develop, the sector needs large

investments, which requires a stable and trustworthy investment climate. We are preparing a Memorandum of Understanding on energy cooperation with Argentina, covering LNG, green hydrogen and other energy sources.

After the EU-CELAC ministerial meeting, I also visited the Rio Negro province in Patagonia, a sparsely populated region, to launch a programme to support civil society projects. With an amount of €6.3 million, it will be the most important of such programmes ever in Argentina. I used this opportunity to meet the governor of the Rio Negro province, Arabela Carreras, and discuss her ambitious projects regarding Green Hydrogen production⁽³⁴⁰⁾. On Monday I will also meet the Governor of the Neuquen province and visit INVAP (Investigación Aplicada Sociedad del Estado⁽³⁴¹⁾), a Argentinian High Tech Company, who built the country's geostationary telecommunications satellites, ARSAT 1 and 2, launched in 2014 and 2015 by the European company Arianespace. At that time, Argentina was among the eight countries developing its own geostationary satellites. The Argentinian economy is much more than meat, soya and wine: it has also impressive capacities in high tech and we intend to develop our cooperation in that field.

Uruguay and Argentina, very supportive to Ukraine

In both Uruguay and Argentina, I discussed the Russian war against Ukraine and its consequences. Both countries have been very supportive to Ukraine in the UN General Assembly and other multilateral forums. My interlocutors confirmed their firm commitment to defend the territorial integrity of Ukraine. They are also willing to work for peace and help put a rapid end to this war.

The Russian war of aggression reinforces the urgency of strengthening the links between the EU and Latin America to preserve an international order based on international law, respect for the territorial integrity of states and fundamental human rights. Europe is also looking for reliable partners not only on energy and commodities but also on high tech and industrial value chains to strengthen our respective strategic autonomies. There is certainly scope for increased trade and investment between the EU and LAC countries.

My Uruguayan and Argentinian interlocutors share the idea that this strengthening would be in our common interest. However, they expect not only words from us

⁽³⁴⁰⁾ See: <https://hidrogenoverde-eng.rionegro.gov.ar/>

⁽³⁴¹⁾ See: <https://www.invap.com.ar/en/>

but also actions. This primarily concerns the completion of the EU-Mercosur agreement (³⁴²), which we have been negotiating for 20 years. In my view, it is much more than a trade agreement; it is the way to concretise this strategic link between Europe and Latin America. The ball is in our court: we are working to present to Mercosur a proposal for an ‘additional instrument’, seeking to clarify the mutual commitments on issues such as deforestation, preservation of biodiversity and implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Having neglected Latin America for too long, the European Union has no more time to lose. My Uruguayan and Argentine interlocutors made this very clear to me. This issue was also at the centre of the discussions during the CEPAL and EU-CELAC meetings. I will come back on these events in another blog post.

⁽³⁴²⁾ See: https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/mercosur/eu-mercosur-agreement_en

LET'S STRENGTHEN OUR 'OTHER TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP'

31.10.2022 – Blog ⁽³⁴³⁾ – *The CEPAL (Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribe ⁽³⁴⁴⁾) meeting and the EU-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States ⁽³⁴⁵⁾) ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires in October were important milestones for strengthening our 'other transatlantic relationship' at times of growing geopolitical tensions.*

Since the beginning of my mandate, one of my main goals has been to revive what I have often called our 'other transatlantic relation', the link between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic complicated this undertaking: for diplomatic affairs, VTCs can never replace direct contacts.

However, I visited Peru ⁽³⁴⁶⁾ and Brazil ⁽³⁴⁷⁾ in November 2021 and Chile ⁽³⁴⁸⁾ and Panama ⁽³⁴⁹⁾ in April 2022 to participate in a joint ministerial meeting of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Central American Integration System (SICA). Three years into my mandate, this EU-CELAC ministerial meeting ⁽³⁵⁰⁾, the first one in over 4 years, represents an important milestone on the road to a renewed and reinforced partnership between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean.

It has brought together ministers and representatives of 60 countries from both sides of the Atlantic. It was made possible thanks to the much appreciated hospitality of the Argentinian government and in particular from my colleague Santiago Cafiero. In this sort of events, the possibility to hold multiple bilateral meetings in a very short period of time, probably plays a more important role to

⁽³⁴³⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/lets-strengthen-our-%E2%80%9Cother-transatlantic-relationships%E2%80%9D_en

⁽³⁴⁴⁾ See: <https://www.cepal.org/en>

⁽³⁴⁵⁾ See: <https://celacinternational.org/>

⁽³⁴⁶⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/huge-post-pandemic-challenges-peru-has-face_en

⁽³⁴⁷⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/useful-visit-brazil_en

⁽³⁴⁸⁾ See p. 331.

⁽³⁴⁹⁾ See p. 337.

⁽³⁵⁰⁾ See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/10/27/celac-eu-3rd-foreign-ministers-meeting-co-chairs-communique-buenos-aires-argentina-27-october-2022/>

cultivate relationships and bring our continents together than the official meetings themselves.

Deep and longstanding links

As we all know, the links between Latin America and Europe are long-standing and deep, in human and cultural terms. I am a concrete proof of this, since Argentina, the country where we were meeting, is also the country where my father was born. Millions of Europeans live in Latin America and the Caribbean and millions of Latin Americans and Caribbean people live in Europe.

Our ties are also close politically: in particular, we share a deep attachment to a rules-based international order and a rejection of a ‘might makes right’ logic in international affairs. The war of aggression unleashed by Russia against Ukraine has shown this once again: in the Global South, Latin America is the region who most actively defended the UN Charter and the territorial integrity of Ukraine, in the various votes held in the UN General Assembly or in other multilateral forums.

Our ties are also close on the economic front. With a direct investments stock of €800 billion, the EU is by far the largest investor in the region and we are on our way to reaching the trillion euro mark soon. When I say that the European Union has invested more in Latin America and the Caribbean than in China, Japan, Russia and India combined, people usually look at me with wide eyes and don’t believe it. But that is indeed the case: we have invested more in Latin America than in other regions of the world that are generally considered to have more growth potential. In purely commercial terms, however, China has surpassed us as trade partner for Latin America and the Caribbean. Although we remain by far the largest contributor of capital and technology to the region, we know that we need to strengthen our economic partnership with Latin America.

Moreover, in the current geopolitical context, economic and political issues are closely linked. The lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and the difficulties resulting from the geopolitical tensions heightened by the war against Ukraine, are driving us to strengthen our ‘strategic autonomy’ on both sides of the Atlantic. However, autonomy does not mean isolation. Autonomy requires intelligent cooperation and reliable partners to reach agreements, share experiences and technology, regulate new markets, innovate and connect secure infrastructures such as the transatlantic digital cable Bella or the Copernicus satellite network. For the green transition as for the digital revolution, Latin America offers

opportunities and has important needs. The European Union is ready and willing to work together with Latin America and the Caribbean in these areas.

However, this strengthened partnership cannot be built on the basis of the 'extractivism' often practiced by Western companies during the 20th century in Latin America. Many of our interlocutors have told us, both during the ECLAC and CELAC debates, particularly with regard to the issue of lithium, a raw material critical for the green transition available in large quantities in Latin America. The region wants to take advantage of the new transitions to industrialise key sectors and add value to its productive capacity, diversifying global value chains on the basis of advanced social and environmental standards. The EU-LAC partnership can only develop by actively contributing to this purpose: the message has been received.

What are the main conclusions we have drawn from these two days of intense debates? The first is the need to intensify regular political engagement at the highest level. We agreed to organise a summit of heads of state and government of EU and CELAC during the second half of next year, at the beginning of the Spanish Presidency. This is an important step forward: it will be the first one since 2015.

Complete our trade agreements

The second line of action is to complete our trade and association agreements. We need, in particular, to achieve the modernisation of the agreements with Chile and Mexico. We must also succeed in overcoming the remaining difficulties and finalise the EU-Mercosur agreement that we have been negotiating for twenty years. This agreement is much more than a trade agreement: in the current geopolitical context, this is a way to show our willingness to act together on the world stage. The ball is in our court. To unblock the situation, we must present to our Mercosur partners an additional protocol to clarify our joint commitments in the fight against climate change and deforestation and the protection of biodiversity.

The third line of action consists of developing our cooperation in areas of common interest: not missing the boat of the digital revolution, accelerating the green transition, developing our economic and energy cooperation, contributing together to the fight against inequalities, etc.

With the [Bella cable](#) (351), we have already established a major data highway between our two continents. We now need to develop the cooperation between our universities, researchers, civil societies... to fully use these new connectivity capacities. We also need to work together on standards and norms in the digital area to protect a safe and open internet safeguarding the rights of the users.

We have 230 million young people on both sides of the Atlantic: we must open the doors of Erasmus+ to develop student exchanges with the youth in Latin America and the Caribbean. Half of the students from Latin America who study abroad already do so in Europe and 20 % in the United States.

Renewable energy, green hydrogen and batteries

We need to cooperate more closely to develop renewable energy, green hydrogen and batteries. Latin American hydrocarbons can also help us bridge the gap created by the Russian war against Ukraine.

In the areas of internal and external security, too, we have shared interests and challenges to fight together transnational organised crime, as we have already started with the [EL PAcCTO programme](#) (352). Drug trafficking is feeding greater interaction between European and Latin American based crime groups. Countries of production, transit and final markets must work together. We already cooperate with countries in the region bilaterally and through [COPOLAD](#) (353), our programme to support the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in improving their drug policies.

The fourth line of action, which is perhaps the most important, is to collaborate in the promotion of a rules-based global order, based on peace, democracy and human rights. If we are to defeat the autocratic threat and improve our democracy as a space for freedom and justice, we can only do so together.

In short, these meetings have been an important step in this direction, but we still have a lot of work to ensure that our 'other transatlantic relationship' can reach its full potential.

(351) See: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/bella-programme-completes-cable-construction-connecting-europe-and-latin-america>

(352) See: <https://www.elpaccto.eu/en/about-el-paccto/what-is-el-paccto/>

(353) See: <https://copolad.eu/en/>

REENERGISING THE EU'S PARTNERSHIP WITH BRAZIL

03.01.2023 – Op-ed ⁽³⁵⁴⁾ – *On 1 January 2023, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva took office as President of Brazil. I was not able to attend the inauguration, but I sent via this Op-ed in the Folha de S. Paulo my best wishes for his third term as leader of one of the world's greatest countries. I expressed our will to strengthen again our ties with Brazil after a period of difficulties.*

On 1 January 2023, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva took office as President of Brazil. I was not able to attend the inauguration, but I send my best wishes for his third term as leader of one of the world's greatest countries.

Last October, more than 120 million Brazilians went to the polls. The winner of these elections, under difficult and polarised circumstances, has been Brazilian democracy. Now, President Lula is sending a clear message to the world: Brazil is back. He intends to heal the wounds of society, defend democracy, fight inequality, and boost the economy while fighting climate change and deforestation. After a period of isolation and disengagement, the new administration returns to the international stage to act as committed global and multilateral player.

These commitments have been received very positively by Europeans. In the current geopolitical context, characterised by threats to the rules-based international order and Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the world needs Brazil. With its powerful diplomacy, it can make a difference. And by acting together, the EU and Brazil can be a force for good around the world.

Reenergise our strategic partnership

Together, the EU and Brazil represent almost one fifth of global GDP. The EU is the biggest investor and the second trade partner of Brazil. However, our economic relations have not lived up to their full potential in recent years. Others, like China in particular, are expanding their role as commercial partner and source of investment in Brazil and Latin America. We need to reenergise our strategic partnership.

⁽³⁵⁴⁾ See: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/reenergising-eu-partnership-brazil_en

An obvious area where we should join our forces is the fight against climate change. Brazil can become a green superpower driving global efforts to protect our planet. During President Lula's previous terms, the deforestation rate fell significantly. For the future, robust traceability systems can restore trust in our bilateral value chains. These efforts must go hand in hand with social justice and the fight against inequality: environmental policies need to be flanked by strong measures for a fairer and more inclusive economy, so we do not risk leaving vulnerable communities behind. Brazil is also already a giant in the field of renewable energies, but we can also develop our cooperation in this area, including on green hydrogen.

Cooperation on the digital transition

The EU is also ready to step up cooperation on the digital transition. We share the same understanding of the importance of a human-centric digital transformation and its enormous potential to foster development, create jobs and advance social inclusion. After installing the submarine Bella cable to connect our two continents, we intend to launch a digital alliance between the EU and Latin American and Caribbean countries in the coming months.

I have no doubt that President Lula's rule will help Brazil to return to a sustainable growth path. It offers an opportunity to expand our economic ties. Under the Global Gateway strategy, we stand ready to step-up EU investments in Brazil in the green, digital and fair transitions.

In addition, we should join efforts in areas like health and education, research and innovation, human rights and security, including the fight against illegal mining and the protection of indigenous peoples. In all these areas, we have a huge potential for cooperation – not only between states, but also between regional and local authorities, the private sector and our societies at large.

Finally, it is critical we make decisive progress with the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement. This agreement would seal a strategic alliance between two regions, among the world's most closely aligned in terms of interests and values.

On both sides of the Atlantic, we intend to improve our economic resilience by reducing excessive dependencies. However, we both know that autonomy does not mean isolation. Rather, it requires more cooperation with reliable economic and political partners. Mercosur countries strive to develop their own productive capacity, adding value to natural resources through innovation and technology,

while adhering to high social and environmental standards. We are ready to accompany Brazil and the other Mercosur countries on this road.

Bringing together two of the world's largest trading blocs – with a combined population of more than 700 million – the EU-MERCOSUR agreement would generate real opportunities for businesses on both sides, supporting the creation of high-quality jobs in Europe and in Latin America. Recognising an economic asymmetry in our situations, the agreement specifies that trade would be opened up progressively, thereby giving relevant sectors time to modernise and become competitive. A shared commitment to fight climate change and stronger environmental policies brings us closer to help overcome the remaining concerns.

2023 should also mark the revitalisation of the cooperation between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean through an EU-CELAC summit. Our common agenda is clear: to counter geopolitical tensions, succeed in the global digital, green and fair transitions and build the multilateral order of the future, we need to deepen EU-Brazil cooperation and finalise the EU-Mercosur agreement. Let us roll up our sleeves and start working together.

ANNEX

GLOBAL EVENTS AND KEY ACTIVITIES DURING 2022

Grouped by month and by topic, region or country, this timeline presents a selection of key global events that were of relevance to the EU foreign and security policy. It also features key meetings that I attended and visits that took place.

JANUARY 2022

RUSSIA/UKRAINE – I travel to Ukraine. It was the first time that an HR/VP went to the line of contact in eastern Ukraine. I have several exchanges with NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg, US State Secretary Blinken and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Kuleba. President von der Leyen announces €1.2 billion in Macro-Financial Assistance to Ukraine and €120 million in additional grants to face the crisis. We have a VTC between President Biden, European Commission President Von der Leyen, Council President Michel and Presidents from several EU member states. In close cooperation with the EU, NATO and USA respond to the draft Treaties on Security in Europe proposed by Russia. United States and NATO reject Russia's demands to bar definitely Ukraine from NATO.

SERBIA – The EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association Council takes place.

IRAN – Vienna negotiations resume to revive the JCPOA.

IRAQ – I meet with Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs Fuad Hussein in Brussels.

PALESTINE/ISRAEL – The EU expresses its worries about increasing numbers of demolitions and evictions in the West Bank.

ARABIC GULF – I meet with Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) General Al-Hajraf to exchange on regional files and explore ways to step up EU-GCC cooperation. I meet also Kuwait's Minister for foreign affairs Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, to discuss strategic partnership with Kuwait and other GCC countries. The EU strongly condemns the drone attack claimed by Yemeni group Ansar Allah near the Abu Dhabi airport.

AFGHANISTAN – Commission adopts €268 million worth of support to education, health and livelihoods of the Afghan people. Three-days talk in Norway between representatives of the Taliban and Western officials to cover human rights and the humanitarian crisis in the country.

KAZAKHSTAN – EU strongly condemns widespread violence and defends the sovereignty of Kazakhstan in the context of outside military intervention by Russia.

CHINA – I recall EU solidarity with Lithuania and Member States affected by the trade restrictions by China, during the Gymnich in Brest and the European Commission launches a case against China at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

SAHEL – I meet with Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad. Coup d'état in Burkina Faso.

KENYA – I visit Kenya for the kick-off of the EU-Kenya Strategic Dialogue.

NICARAGUA – EU and US impose new sanctions on more figures of Ortega's government.

FEBRUARY 2022

RUSSIA/UKRAINE – Joint call with US, NATO and OSCE Chairman-in-Office counterparts on Russia's military build-up. I reply to Foreign Minister Lavrov's letter, calling Russia to de-escalate. I condemn Russia's recognition of Donetsk and Luhansk oblast of Ukraine as independent entities and sending of troops. First sanction package against Russia is adopted. Russia's large scale aggression against Ukraine starts the 24th. I make several statements, together with European Commission President Von der Leyen, Council President Michel and Members of the European Council. An extraordinary European Council is held. A second package of sanctions against Russia is approved. I convene an extraordinary meeting of EU Foreign Ministers and propose to use the European Peace Facility to provide military equipment to Ukraine. Reinforced sanctions against Belarus are adopted. A third package of sanctions against Russia is adopted the 28th.

WESTERN BALKANS – Launch of a €3.2 billion investment package to advance sustainable connectivity in the Western Balkans. I hold phone calls with political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to resume dialogue and ensure a sustainable resolution to the political crisis in the country.

IRAN – JCPOA negotiators resume talks in Vienna. I call Iranian Foreign Minister.

LEBANON – EU deploys an Election Observation Mission.

ARABIC GULF – I lead the EU delegation at the 26th EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting.

ASIA – EU imposes restrictive measures on 22 individuals and 4 entities in Myanmar in fourth round of sanctions. EU deploys an Election Observation Mission in Timor Leste.

AFRICA – 6th European Union – African Union summit takes place in Brussels. Leaders agree on a joint vision for a renewed partnership and an Africa-Europe Investment Package of €150 billion is announced. French Ambassador in Mali is expelled. The European Council adopts targeted sanctions against five individuals. The European Council lifts the suspension of direct financial assistance to Burundi.

UNITED STATES – 9th EU-US Energy Council in Washington DC. I meet bilaterally with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

COLOMBIA – I meet with President Ivan Duque Márquez.

MARCH 2022

RUSSIA/UKRAINE – EU decides a SWIFT ban for seven Russian banks and the suspension of broadcasting activities of Russia Today and Sputnik. UN General Assembly adopts with a large majority a resolution denouncing the Russian ‘aggression against Ukraine’. Extraordinary NATO Foreign Ministers meeting. Extraordinary EU Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) meeting in presence of US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken. EU Council unanimously introduces temporary protection for people fleeing the war. G7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, condemning officially Russian assault. I speak with China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi asking China to exert its considerable influence on Russia. Informal meeting of EU Heads of State or Government in Versailles leading to the Versailles Declaration setting the bases for our policy vis à vis the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. EU disburses €300 million in emergency Macro-Financial Assistance to Ukraine. 4th package of sanctions against Russia adopted by the European Council with additional restrictive measures on 160 individuals. The International Court of Justice orders Russia to immediately suspend its military operations. Russia’s membership in the Council of Europe is suspended. European Council agrees to double the funding under the European Peace Facility to €1 billion in support of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. UN resolution deplored the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine and demanding an immediate

cessation of attacks against civilians. Shelling of the EU Advisory Mission Ukraine (EUAM) Field office in Mariupol by Russia. In Russia, Alexei Navalny's politically motivated imprisonment is extended by an additional 9 years.

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP – EU hosts a [meeting](#) between high-level officials from Armenia and Azerbaijan to resolve bilateral issues. European Council imposes sanctions on additional 22 individuals and further restrictions on trade for Belarus' role in the Russian military aggression of Ukraine. Georgia presents its applications for EU membership. I speak with President Zourabichvili. I visit the Republic of Moldova, which presents its applications for EU membership. The EU signs an agreement with Moldova on border management cooperation and Frontex operational support in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

WESTERN BALKANS – I meet Prime Minister Rama during a visit in Albania. I visit Bosnia & Herzegovina and speak at Camp Butmir of Operation EUFOR Althea. I visit Skopje to discuss EU accession and consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

SYRIA – The EU imposes restrictive sanctions on five members of the Makhlof family.

ARABIC GULF – My first official visit to Kuwait to meet Prince Sheikh, Prime Minister Al-Khalid Al-Sabah and Minister for Foreign Affairs Al -Mohammad Al-Sabah. I participate in the Doha Forum 2022 and meet with Qatar Minister for Foreign Affairs Al-Thani.

AFGHANISTAN – Afghan Women Leaders Forum. Taliban apply restrictions to women and girls' access to education. EU announces €113 million in EU Humanitarian assistance for the Afghan people.

KAZAKHSTAN – The 19th EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Committee takes place in Brussels.

CHINA – I twice call Minister for Foreign Affairs Wang Yi on Russia's military invasion of Ukraine.

INDONESIA – The 6th Political dialogue between the EU and Indonesia takes place in Brussels.

UNITED STATES – [Joint statement](#) by President von der Leyen and President Biden on deepening transatlantic cooperation and coordinating efforts to support Ukraine and impose costs on Russia.

MULTILATERALISM – EU helps to launch negotiations on landmark global agreement on plastic pollution at UN General Assembly.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE – Adoption of the Strategic Compass for the EU defining the threats we have to face and actions to be taken in coming years.

APRIL 2022

RUSSIA/UKRAINE – European Commission President von der Leyen and I propose a 5th sanctions package to the EU Council. I participate in the meeting of NATO's Foreign Ministers. European Commission President von der Leyen and myself visit Kyiv and Bucha and announce additional support to Ukraine. We meet with President Zelenskyy and Prime Minister Shmyhal. 'Stand Up For Ukraine' pledging event, co-hosted by President von der Leyen and Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau in Warsaw, raised €9.1 billion including €1 billion pledge from the European Commission. Council agrees on third tranche of support under the European Peace Facility for a total of €1.5 billion. It also amends the EUAM Ukraine mandate to provide support in the investigation and prosecution of international crimes in the context of the Russian aggression of Ukraine. President Michel visits Kyiv.

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP – 2nd trilateral meeting hosted by President Charles Michel with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia. I meet new Georgian Minister for Foreign Affairs Darchiashvili. €53 million budget support to help the Republic of Moldova cope with the multiple repercussions of the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

CHINA – I take part in the 23rd EU-China Summit via VTC. We discussed bilateral issues and the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

NORTH KOREA – EU Council adds 8 individuals and 4 entities involved in financing of nuclear programme to sanctions list.

AFRICA – The Council adopts an assistance measure of €600 million under the European Peace Facility in support of the African Union. The EU announces reinforcement of its support to partner countries in Sahel and Lake Chad regions, with €554 million targeted at increasing food security in 2022. The EU Council adopts also additional support of €45 million to the Mozambican Armed Forces.

CHILE – I visit Chile and meet with President Boric. I inaugurate the new offices of the EUDEL.

MAY 2022

RUSSIA/UKRAINE – High-level international donors' Conference for Ukraine, co-hosted by Polish and Swedish PMs, in Warsaw. EU Council agrees on fourth tranche of support under the European Peace Facility for total of €2 billion. EU Council allows temporary trade liberalisation and other trade

concessions with regard to certain Ukrainian products. The EU, the US, and the UK announce the creation of the Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group, a mechanism aimed at strengthening their respective support to accountability efforts on the ground. EU leaders agree on a 6th sanctions package.

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP – EU-Armenia Partnership Council. 3rd trilateral meeting hosted by Council President Charles Michel with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and PM Pashinyan of Armenia. I meet with Georgian Prime Minister Garibashvili in Brussels, recalling the EU's support to strengthen Georgia's resilience in the context of Russian invasion of Ukraine. I meet with Moldovan President Sandu in Brussels.

WESTERN BALKANS – I host an informal dinner with the political leaders of the Western Balkans in Brussels. I meet with Prime Minister Abazović from Montenegro, in Brussels. Despite EU sanctions, Serbian President Vučić secures gas deal with Putin.

PALESTINE/ISRAEL – The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC), hosted by myself, takes place in Brussels.

SYRIA – 6th Brussels Conference on supporting the Future of Syria and the region, hosted by the EU and with the UN as participant.

YEMEN – The EU announces €3 million in support of the UN-coordinated plan to address the environmental threat posed by FSO Safer tanker in the Red Sea.

AFGHANISTAN – The Taliban announce further restrictions on women rights.

CHINA – The European Commission and myself report on political and economic developments in the Macao Special Administrative Region and in the Hong Kong Administrative Region.

JAPAN – The EU and Japan hold the 28th bilateral summit.

NORTH KOREA – North Korea tests another Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, blatantly violating relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

SOMALIA – I meet elected President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

CANADA – 3rd EU-Canada Joint Ministerial Committee meeting.

PANAMA – I go on Mission to Panama. I meet with Foreign Minister Mouynes and participate in a joint Ministerial meeting of CARICOM and SICA countries.

MULTILATERALISM – I travel to Weissenhaus to participate in the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE – Foreign Affairs Council prolongs the framework for restrictive measures against cyber-attacks for three years. The Commission and myself present an analysis of the defence investment gaps, and propose measures and actions to fill it. I deliver a [keynote address](#) on the 15th Anniversary of the Civilian Planning Conduct and Capability.

JUNE 2022

RUSSIA/UKRAINE – 6th [package of sanctions](#) targeting both Russia and Belarus. EU supports the investigation capacities of the International Criminal Court into war crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine, with €7.25 million. European Council agreed to grant Ukraine candidate status.

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP – EU Council is ready to grant the status of candidate country to Georgia once 12 priorities specified in the Commission's opinion have been addressed. EU Council grants candidate status to Moldova. European Peace Assistance measure adopted for Moldova, worth €40 million for the benefit of the Moldova Defence Forces.

WESTERN BALKANS – Council adopts assistance measure under European Peace Facility worth €6 million in support of Balkan Medical Task Force. EU-Western Balkans summit in Brussels. Chief Negotiators of Kosovo and Serbia agree in Brussels on the Energy Agreements' Implementation Roadmap in the EU-facilitated Dialogue. Council adopts €6 million in support of Balkan Medical Task Force.

IRAN – I travel to Tehran as part of the ongoing efforts to bring the JCPOA back to full implementation and met Minister for Foreign Affairs Amirabdollahian.

JORDAN – I co-chair the EU-Jordan Association Council. The parties adopt new [EU-Jordan partnership priorities until 2027](#).

PALESTINE – European Commission approves new bilateral allocation to Palestine worth €224.8 million.

PAKISTAN – EU mobilises €30 million into humanitarian programmes combating the floods.

KAZAKHSTAN – EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Council takes place.

KENYA – The EU deploys an Election Observation Mission to the general elections.

ALGERIA – Algeria suspends the Treaty of friendship and good neighbourly relations with Spain.

EGYPT – EU-Egypt Association Council. The parties endorse the EU-Egypt partnership priorities until 2027.

MULTILATERALISM – I address the UN Security Council on international geopolitical topics.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE – Referendum in Denmark decides to end the country's opt-out in defence matters.

JULY 2022

RUSSIA/UKRAINE – New €1 billion macro-financial assistance for Ukraine, as the first part of the exceptional Macro Financial Assistance package of €9 billion announced in May. Russia is reported to have killed dozens of Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) in violation of its obligations under international humanitarian law.

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP – Signature in Baku of the new EU-Azerbaijan Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on a Strategic Partnership in the field of Energy. 8th EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council in Brussels. Georgians rally on the streets of Tbilisi, on the lack of progress on reforms that can boost the country's hopes of joining the EU.

WESTERN BALKANS – Intergovernmental Conference at Ministerial level on the EU Accession of Albania. I travel to Montenegro for the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Council and met with Minister for Foreign Affairs Krivokapić. Compromise to unblock North Macedonia's EU Bid sparks protests. [I make a joint statement](#) with US Secretary of State Blinken on support for opening EU accession. Intergovernmental Conference at Ministerial level on the Accession of North Macedonia.

UZBEKISTAN – The EU and Uzbekistan complete negotiations for a new Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

JAPAN – Japan's former PM Shinzo Abe is murdered two days before the 2022 House of Councillors election.

INDIA – I meet with Minister for Foreign Affairs Jaishankar in the margins of the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting.

AFRICA – Council adopts a €25 million assistance measure, under the European Peace Facility, for the Republic of Niger. EU Council approves also €120 million of additional support to AMISOM/ATMIS in 2022 in Somalia.

ENERGY, CLIMATE – Commission proposes gas demand reduction plan to prepare the EU for supply cuts. Member states commit to reducing gas demand by 15 % next winter.

MULTILATERALISM – I participate in the G20 Foreign Minister's meeting in Bali. Important differences between G20 countries regarding the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE – 30th anniversary of EU SatCen. Commission proposes the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act (EDIRPA) for 2022-2024, to address the most urgent needs for defence products, resulting from Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

AUGUST 2022

RUSSIA/UKRAINE – G7 Foreign Ministers' [Statement](#) on Energy Security in condemnation of Russia's attempts to weaponise its energy exports.

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP – 4th trilateral meeting hosted by President Charles Michel with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and PM Pashinyan of Armenia.

WESTERN BALKANS – I host a high-level meeting with Serbian President Vučić and Kosovo PM Kurti in Brussels. Leaders agree to meet in Brussels every month, and reach an agreement on freedom of movement.

PALESTINE – EU announces €261 million in support of UNRWA's operations.

ASIA & INDO-PACIFIC – I visit Cambodia. I also participate in annual Ministerial Meeting between the EU and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as well as the ASEAN [Regional Forum](#) (ARF) Ministerial Meeting. First EU-Indonesia Joint Naval Exercise in the Arabian Sea. Joint Ministerial Statement by the EU and Foreign Affairs Ministers of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway, UK and the US on Myanmar.

CHINA/TAIWAN – US House of Representative Speaker Nancy Pelosi visits Taiwan triggering condemnations from the Chinese government and the start of different military exercises.

UNITED STATES – I meet with Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Cambodia.

EEAS – EEAS launches the pilot project to establish a European Diplomatic Academy.

SEPTEMBER 2022

RUSSIA/UKRAINE – EU-Ukraine Association Council meeting in Brussels. Commission proposes second €5 billion tranche of Macro Financial Assistance to Ukraine. Russia announces partial mobilisation in its territory and threatens

again with the use of weapons of mass destruction. Sham annexation ‘referenda’ organised by Russia take place in parts of the Ukrainian Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions. I give a [speech](#) at the UN Security Council on Russia’s aggression against Ukraine.

GEORGIA – 7th meeting of the EU-Georgia Association Council.

WESTERN BALKANS – I meet with WB leaders in the margins of UN General Assembly organising the usual Leaders’ lunch. I submit to Serbia and Kosovo a proposal backed by Germany and France to advance the Dialogue on the normalisation of relations. Bosnia and Herzegovina joins EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Belgrade signs an agreement with Moscow pledging long-term ‘consultations’ on foreign policy matters.

IRAN – Mahsa Amini dies in the custody of the Iranian morality police, protests begin in the street throughout the country.

PALESTINE/ISRAEL – Israeli PM Lapid expresses support for a peace agreement based on two states for two peoples.

ARABIC GULF – I meet with leadership of the GCC in the margins of UN General Assembly 77.

CENTRAL ASIA – EU-Kyrgyz Republic Human Rights Dialogue takes place in Bishkek. I meet Uzbek Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs Norov, in Brussels.

CHINA – I meet Minister for Foreign Affairs Wang Yi in the margins of UN General Assembly. He says that China would oppose a nuclear war.

AFRICA – Council renews the mandate of the EU civilian mission EUCAP Sahel Niger. In Ethiopia, the Regional Government of Tigray announces its readiness to abide by an immediate cessation of hostilities and to commit to an AU-led peace process. I travel to Kenya and met with President Ruto. I visit Somalia and met with President Sheikh Mohamud. I deliver a [speech](#) at EUCAP and EUTM Somalia. I also visit the flagship of EUNAVFOR Operation ATALANTA. Under European Peace Facility, the EU approves the provision of €15 million in support of the Southern African Development Community mission in Mozambique (SAMIM). I visit Mozambique and meet with President Nyusi.

MOROCCO – I meet Minister for Foreign Affairs Bourita in the margins of UN General Assembly 77.

UNITED STATES – EU opens new Office in San Francisco to reinforce its Digital Diplomacy.

GENERAL EVENTS – European Commission President von der Leyen delivers her [2022 State of the Union Address](#).

OCTOBER 2022

RUSSIA/UKRAINE – EU adopts 8th package of sanctions against Russia. President Putin decides the illegal seizure of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant and the establishment of a government enterprise to that matter. I have a phone call with Ukrainian Minister for Foreign Affairs Kuleba to discuss Russia's latest indiscriminate attacks. Foreign Affair Council agrees to establish an EU Military Assistance Mission to support the Ukrainian Armed Forces and to allocate further €500 million under the European Peace Facility.

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP – EU hosts 3rd meeting of Armenia's and Azerbaijan's border commissions. I hold bilateral calls with Armenian and Azerbaijani Ministers for Foreign Affairs. [EU Monitoring Capacity for Armenia](#) is launched. I meet with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Republic of Moldova, Nicu Popescu in Brussels.

EUROPEAN POLITICAL COMMUNITY – Inaugural meeting of the European Political Community takes place in Prague.

WESTERN BALKANS – 2022 Enlargement package: European Commission assesses reforms in the Western Balkans and recommends candidate status for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Energy support packages are announced in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia.

IRAN – The Council adds 14 individuals and 5 entities for human rights violations in Iran and provision of drones to Russian army.

ISRAEL – 12th EU-Israel Association Council takes place in Brussels.

AUSTRALIA – Framework Agreement between the EU and Australia enters into force.

AFRICA – A coup takes place in Burkina Faso. The EU renews Burundi's regime of restrictive measures for one year and delists three individuals.

LATIN AMERICA – I visit Argentina where I meet Chancellor Cafiero and President Fernández. I also co-host the EU-CELAC Ministerial Meeting. I visit Uruguay where I inaugurate the IV Forum of European Investment and meet President Lacalle Pou. The head of the EU Delegation to Nicaragua is declared *persona non grata*. EU Council declares the Head of the Mission of the Republic of Nicaragua to the EU *persona non grata*. I sign with Peru Minister for Foreign Affairs Landa the Memorandum of Understanding on an enhanced political and sectoral dialogue and cooperation for the next decade, and the EU-Peru agreement for the participation of Peru in EU crisis management operations.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE – At the NATO Defence Ministers Meeting I announce a new tranche of support to Ukraine under the European Peace

Facility and the launch of a new mission to train Ukrainian Armed Forces. The task Force on Joint Procurement presents the main areas for joint procurement after consultations with member states.

NOVEMBER 2022

RUSSIA/UKRAINE – Russia launches conscription campaign in Crimea and in Sevastopol. A missile explosion takes place in the Polish village of Przewodów near the border with Ukraine and kills two Polish citizens. Further repressive measures are adopted by the Russian State Duma, related to the ‘foreign agents’ legislation and the LGBTI legislation. EU adds violation of sanctions to list of EU crimes. The EU Council launches the European Union Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine), and adopts an assistance measure under the European Peace Facility worth €16 million.

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP – I exchange with Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya in an informal breakfast before the Foreign Affairs Council. Russia’s missile and drone attacks cause massive blackout in Moldova.

WESTERN BALKANS – I participate in the Western Balkans Summit in the context of the Berlin Process. The EU announces €1 billion energy support package for the Western Balkans and welcomes new agreements to strengthen the Common Regional Market. Albania joins the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. I meet with President Vučić and PM Kurti in separate meetings in the margins of the Paris Peace Forum and later in Brussels in the framework of the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue. The Parties agree on measures to avoid further escalation in the license plates dispute and to concentrate on the proposal on the normalisation of their relations, as presented this September by the EU Facilitator.

TÜRKİYE – Council prolongs the sanctions regime over Türkiye’s unauthorised drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean for a further year. The EU rejects the statements by Türkiye about the acceptance of the Turkish Cypriot secessionist entity, as an observer in the Organisation of Turkish States. Türkiye rejects inspection of its ships by EU’s Operation IRINI.

IRAN – Foreign Affairs Council adds 29 individuals and three entities to the list of those subject to sanctions.

PALESTINE – I speak to President Abbas over the phone to reiterate EU support to the People of Palestine.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES – I travel to the United Arab Emirates and held bilateral meetings as well as attended Sir Bani Yas Forum.

CENTRAL ASIA – I travel to Central Asia. I meet with President of Kazakhstan Tokayev and Minister for Foreign Affairs Tileuberdi in which is my first visit to the country. I chair the 18th EU-Central Asia Ministerial and the EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference in my visit to Uzbekistan. EU-Kyrgyz Republic cooperation meeting takes place in Brussels. The EU and Turkmenistan hold their 14th Human Rights Dialogue and their 21st Joint Committee meeting in Brussels.

MYANMAR – EU imposes fifth round of sanctions on the 2nd anniversary of the elections in Myanmar.

ETHIOPIA – An agreement on a Cessation of Hostilities is announced.

ENERGY, CLIMATE – COP27 takes place in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. Commission proposes a Market Correction Mechanism to limit excessive gas price spikes.

MULTILATERALISM – I participate in the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Münster, Germany. G20 Summit takes place in Bali.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE – I give an [opening speech](#) at the exhibition in Brussels marking the 30th anniversary of the European Satellite Centre. Together with the Commission, we put forward a [Joint Communication on an EU Cyber Defence policy](#) and an Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0. The EU formally invites the UK to join the PESCO project Military Mobility. Ministers adopt the recommendations of the 2022 Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) report.

DEVELOPMENT – Joint Statement on global food security and Russia sanctions together with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly. The UN Black Sea Grain initiative is renewed. Commission adopts a new EU Global Health Strategy to improve global health security.

DECEMBER 2022

RUSSIA/UKRAINE – In coordination with G7 countries, the EU agrees on price cap at \$60 per barrel, and adopts 9th package of sanctions against Russia.

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP – Eastern Partnership Ministerial takes place. I hold bilateral meetings with Armenian and Azerbaijani Ministers for Foreign Affairs in margins of OSCE Ministerial Council. European Peace Assistance measure for Georgia is adopted, worth €20 million for the benefit of the Georgian Defence Forces.

WESTERN BALKANS – I attend the EU-Western Balkans summit, taking place for the first time in the region in Tirana. EULEX patrol attacked in Kosovo by a stun grenade. I call for EULEX reinforcements and send EU Special Representative Lajcak to the region to report to the EU Council. Foreign Affairs Council endorses European Commission's recommendation to grant Bosnia & Herzegovina candidate status.

IRAN – Foreign Affairs Council adopts 3rd round of sanctions for human rights violations and 2nd round of sanctions for supplies of drones to Russia.

ASIA & INDO-PACIFIC – EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit celebrates 45 years of partnerships, in Brussels.

MOZAMBIQUE – EU Council adopts €20 million to support the continued deployment of Rwanda Defence Force in Cabo Delgado province.

UNITED STATES – EU-US Trade and Technology Council takes place.

THE YEAR THAT WAR RETURNED TO EUROPE EU foreign policy in 2022

2022 has been the year of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war against Ukraine. The Russian aggression and its global consequences raise many questions for EU foreign and security policy.

How did the EU react, maintaining its unity and breaking many taboos? Are the sanctions against Russia working? How did the EU respond to the weaponisation of energy by Russia? How did the EU address the consequences of Russia's aggression on the availability of food and fertilizers globally? What conclusions should the EU draw from this war for European security and defence? How can the EU, in this new geopolitical context, maintain international law and revitalise the multilateral framework to ensure cooperation on global issues like climate change? And how can the EU reinforce its engagement with Africa, the Indo-Pacific and Latin America, what some now call the "Global South"?

In this book, which brings together a collection of blog posts, op-eds and speeches, HR/VP Josep Borrell Fontelles addresses these questions and other issues that dominated EU foreign and security policy in 2022.

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