



# FUTURE OF EUROPE OBSERVER

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In his nomination hearing at the European Parliament, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, postulated that the EU needs to learn the language of power in order to be competitive at the global level. In this issue of the Future of Europe Observer, our ZEI Master of European Studies-Fellows "Class of 2020" comprised of students from 13 countries, analyze how the EU can live up to this ambition. The articles were written prior to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in Europe.

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## Future of Europe Observer

accompanies the debate on governance and regulation in the European Union. Authors are ZEI Scholars, Master of European Studies Fellows and Alumni.

## How Can the EU Learn the 'The Language of Power'?

During the parliamentary hearing prior to his appointment in October 2019, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, stated that the European Union must learn and use the language of power: "We have the instruments to play power politics." For decades, the scholarly perception of European politics generated terms such as "normative power" or "civilian power". The world has changed fundamentally. It does not mean that the traditional contributions of the EU to peace and freedom have become meaningless. But they must be contextualized and expanded to include all necessary components of hard power. The EU Global Strategy in 2016 spoke of "principled pragmatism" as the new guiding idea in EU foreign policy making. The current EU leadership wants Europeans to learn a new language: the language of power. But what does it mean to use the instruments of power politics? And to which avail?

First, the EU, its citizens and its political representatives, need to turn to a serious, realistic and sober language when addressing geo-political issues. The diminutive form of political language, so often used to camouflage complexity or conflicting domestic interests for the sake of generating friendly compromises, has no place in the language of power.

Second, the European Union needs to put priorities first and develop a strategic culture across the EU ca-

pable and willing to reflect on root causes of geopolitical issues, and to decide accordingly. Confusing cause and effect and merely conducting a frustrating crisis management to deal with the fall out of effects originating in the neglect of root causes can no longer have a place in the geopolitical approach to global affairs.

Third, the European Union needs to give visibility to the internal application of a language of power in order to catch the attention of its own Union citizens and of the EU's external partners, competitors and foes alike. The creation of a political European Security Council and an Academic Panel for Geostrategic Foresight could be among the measures to be installed by the current EU leadership.

Everything depends on proper judgment, US Secretary of State George Marshall once said. Today, it is on the European Union to contribute to global leadership, wherever possible with others in a multilateral framework. The stakes are high and failure is a possibility, because of a lack of will, lack of resources or lack of clarity about the objectives. Hence, the EU, its citizens and its leaders, must not only learn to better judge matters of geopolitics and geo-economics. The EU must learn to better act on the basis of joint interests, if necessary, with majority voting, and always with wisdom.

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# I. Considerations about Structure and Concept of EU External Power

## Qualified Majority-Voting as a Structural Precondition

By declaring her team as a ‘Geopolitical Commission’, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen defines her ambition to make the Union a real player in the foreign and security policy arena. Reaffirming Juncker’s proposal to move unanimity to qualified majority voting (QMV), von der Leyen wishes to speed-up the decision-making process in the foreign and security policy, which ever since the establishment of the EPC in 1970 has been applying inter-governmental arrangement with unanimity as its key principle. But could transforming unanimity into QMV push the geopolitical agenda of von der Leyen?

Unanimity is a strong element in the inter-governmental setup. Unanimity, however, puts the EU foreign policy at risk to the external powers, as it only needs to persuade a single member state to ‘mess-up’ the entire bloc. Hence, replacing unanimity with QMV might be a sign of further integration of the Union. In theory, QMV could increase the EU’s effectiveness by ensuring that the decision would be reached in the voting manner rather than the veto. Member states should see the good in exercising such transformation: a challenge from external powers could be minimized. Nevertheless, diversity in the national interests provides the most fundamental challenge in applying QMV.

Several events such as the failure of the European Council to reach unanimity in the accession process of Balkans countries in 2019, Greece’s blocking of the EU Statement on criticizing China’s human rights record in 2017, as well as the no-single voice of the member states towards China, show how unanimity has been hindering the EU foreign and security policy from moving forward. Those events could be a sign for the Union to move the setup of foreign and security policy from inter-governmental into supranational. Discontinuing the delay of the accession of Balkans countries and pursuing cooperation with China in an open and fair economic manner could contribute to strengthening the EU’s role in the world. In this regard, QMV might be effective in giving power to the EU’s voice to speak louder and become a strong global actor, stronger than what it is now.

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## Becoming conscious of the constraints of EU power projection

In order for the von der Leyen Commission to become a geopolitical one, High Representative Borrell must make the EU’s external actions more strategic, assertive, and united within the Common Security and Defense Policy (CFSP) in order to compete with the United States or China. The EU will need to incorporate all the tools within its arsenal in order to remain assertive and competitive on the global stage. A clear understanding of the Union’s constraints and limitations can allow the EU to project both, (super) soft power and (soft) hard power.

The Permanent Security Cooperation (PESCO), Europe’s program for common defense projects entrenched in the Lisbon Treaty was first activated in 2017. Since its activation, PESCO has incorporated 47 ongoing projects through all security frontiers. PESCO has sought to streamline redundancies within European defense spending resulting in 28 billion euro in waste per year. However, despite PESCO’s rapid expansion, NATO and its Art. V clause still retains primacy as Europe’s security guarantor as non-PESCO NATO members account for 81 per cent of its military spending. PESCO’s capabilities are further limited by the CFSP, as Art. 46 (6) TEU requires unanimous approval for any mission or project. However, PESCO can be used to achieve distinctly European goals. Training operations organized with other interregional associations can add additional legal depths to them. As of November 2019, naval operations have been implemented with ASEAN while cooperation between the EU and the African Union has steadily increased. PESCO is also responsible for operating two projects promoting cyber defense and resiliency within Europe’s digital infrastructure from asymmetrical attacks.

As for EU soft power projection, the Juncker Commission’s Digital Single Market initiatives has invested heavily to create the largest e-commerce market in the world with an estimated valuation at 241 billion Euro in 2011. The General Data Privacy Regulation (GDPR) has created an additional geostrategic depth by creating an international standard within the digital marketplace through enforcement actions over privacy breaches. This allows the EU to project its values throughout the globe. As a core competency of the Union, this can be done through the Ordinary Legislative Procedure rather than by unanimous consent. Global projection through trade deals and internal regulation has proven effective with privacy protections incorporated into the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement.

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# I. Considerations about Structure and Concept of EU External Power

## The Interdependence of Internal Democratic Legitimacy and External Capability of the EU

The new EU leadership is under growing pressure to respond rapidly to new geopolitical challenges and position itself as a new kind of global power. Global challenges such as migration, climate change and terrorism are neither to be tackled by individual member states, nor purely on the EU level. Therefore, in order to be able to cope with global issues, the EU must be legitimate in the eyes of both member states and its citizens. There is a close inter-dependence between internal legitimacy of the EU and its ability to be more united and more assertive in its external action.

On the one hand, there is a high approval rating of a common foreign policy across EU member states according to Eurobarometer polls. One might think that member states have realized the necessity to act commonly and united with regard to external action.

However, when it comes to implementation of joint policies, in particular, politically very sensitive area such as migration policy, member states are obviously still hesitant to give up their national sovereignty and act with united European voice on the global stage. One of the reasons that could be given as an explanation is the lack of natural common interest in the field of Common Foreign and Security Policy. Member states still have very different roles on the global stage and their external interest vary dramatically.

On the other hand, there is a huge disenchantment among European citizens who feel remote from the EU institutions, perceiving them mainly as too bureaucratic. No real success affecting the everyday citizen's life, or at least lack of proper communication between institutions and citizens, could potentially

lead to the governments which are generally reluctant towards the EU and thus not ready to subordinate their own national foreign policy to that of the EU.

The rise of Euroskepticism goes hand in hand with the member states willingness to block decision making processes and thus could undermine the domestic legitimacy of the EU. As von der Leyen in her Letter announced, one of the main objectives, which is interrelated with the necessity to act globally, will be to strengthen the links between people and institutions that serve them in order to narrow the gap between expectations and reality and to communicate about what

Europe is doing. It seems to be an essential precondition for the future of Europe as a new and strong global player.

As long as Europe is restrained from within it will be difficult to act in a united way at the global level. Performing real leadership behaviour on the global scene, by acting with united voice, while at the same time enhancing domestic legitimacy and political cohesion seem to be the biggest challenge for the new European leadership. Europe is expected to project stability deriving from inside, both from its member states and its citizens.

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**Josep Borrell, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Policy & Security Policy and Vice-President of European Commission**

**“We need to be more assertive in protecting our vital interests. We live in a world of power politics and we need a truly integrated foreign policy that combines the power of Member States with the coordinated mobilisation of all European Union instruments. [...] We need to strengthen the links between internal and external policies”**

**“[...] We need coherence between internal and external policies and we have the instruments to play power politics. Our challenge is to put them together at the service of one strategy. We are the key normative power in setting worldwide rules and standards. We have a powerful common drug policy powerful because it's common.”**

## II. Turning the EU into a Security Provider

### The European Defense Union as an Opportunity for a Stronger EU

The idea of a European Defense Union has been on the agenda since the 1950s, when the first attempt to establish such an institution (called the European Defence Community back then) failed because of the resistance of France and the general reluctance of Member States to relinquish sovereignty in defence matters. This reluctance can still be felt today.

The past years, however, have seen rising awareness of the necessity of common European defense. Several countries, France most prominently, have taken the initiative and launched various formats like permanent structured cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Fund (EDF) and the European Intervention Initiative (EI2). All these formats, however, are still intergovernmental and lack an overarching structure.

This is also true for a European response to current global challenges that pose a serious threat to European stability and democracy. The EU must take a stronger stance on Russia and not let Chinese geopolitical aspirations steer European politics and divide the Union.

A key issue for the new Commission will be the relationship with NATO and the United States. So far, the EU has failed to find a common position. Instead, national interests and concerns dominate the debate. To be successful in creating consensus across the EU, the new Commission must develop strategies that lay out specific measures. Although Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has made defense policy one of her top priorities, she too, has not yet presented any concrete steps she intends to take. One first step could be to reflect on what are the values that define the EU and what the EU wants to represent towards the rest of the world. This not only could give the Union more legitimacy in the world but also deepen European integration. Another aspect worth considering is the

EU's mutual defense clause that obliges EU countries to help a member state under attack. This clause still has some shortcomings, for instance, the EU has no leverage to enforce it in case a member state decides not to act, and the clause is only bilateral. However, it also provides a starting point and opportunity for the EU to coordinate defense resources in times when the United States is readjusting its focus towards the Pacific region.

The new Commission must realize that the EU is closely intertwined with the rest of the world. EU domestic policy and EU foreign affairs are two sides of the same coin. The Union must therefore develop a strategy on how to tackle European as well as global and geopolitical issues.

Most importantly, the Union must overcome its fragmentation in defense matters and speak with one voice and act through one common institution. The European Defense Union could be an instrument to achieve just this and its establishment therefore is key for becoming a geopolitical Commission as well as a geopolitical European Union.

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**Josep Borrell, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Policy & Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission**

**“The beating heart of the CSDP [Common Security and Defence Policy] today are the 17 missions and operations deployed in different regions beyond our borders.”**

**“Our military spending is roughly half the GDP of Belgium, more than China, much more than Russia, second only to the United States. We spend 40 percent but our capacity is much lesser because of our fragmentation and duplication.”**

### Mogherini's Role in the Iran Nuclear Deal

One of the most memorable cases of the Juncker Commission exercising global power was the High Representative's Federica Mogherini significant role in reaching the Iran nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA).

What were the main steps taken by Mogherini to give the Union a chance of speaking the 'language of power'? The first one was to strike a unified and agreed position of all member states on this question and, second, to obtain essential international recognition in order to have any influence on the concerned parties.

Mogherini's ability to embrace an economic and political diplomacy of the EU in order to secure the Union's role as a global economic player, colored the legacy of the EU and the role of the High Representative. Her effective diplomatic skills within Joint Commission (gath-

## II. Turning the EU into a Security Provider

ering all interested parties) were crucial for creation of a common ground among member states to start the action of facilitation. She was faced with the role of a facilitator but also of a mediator, since the period from 2015 to 2017 was marked with many challenges in the relations between the USA and Iran, which disabled the two sides from reaching a deal.

Her biggest success was seen in her astonishing representation of the Union as the only impartial and capable actor to reconcile the conflicting parties. Using a dual-track approach of economic pressure and political dialogue, she brokered the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on 14 July 2015. After that, she was officially assigned with a leading role, on behalf of the EU, by the UN Security Council embraced the JCPOA in Resolution 2231 (2015).

One of the strategies conducted by Mogherini was the deepening of EU-Iran's political and socio-economic relations that were followed by many visits of Mogherini to Tehran. Followed by the intensive process of bargaining with USA's president Trump on reducing criteria and sanctions against Iran.

After the deal was agreed, the EU gathered the Joint Commission in January 2017 in a successful effort to conciliate between the two arch rivals for some time. Even though the period of truce has not lasted until this day, the important and decisive global role of the Union in alleviating the crisis must not be neglected. This role that was reflected in one person-the High Representative Mogherini.

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### EU-African Union Relations - Security and Economic Cooperation

What are the fields in which the European Union and the African Union can best collaborate?

- Trade: Through integration, the European Union and the African Union have engaged in several trade activities and as a result of these activities there have been improvement of economic governance .(A joint Africa-EU strategy, 2007, p.9) .
- Human and Social Development: The EU finances and initiatives development programs benefiting multiple countries across Africa. Most of the funding comes from the European development fund (EDF), which has a budget of €30.5 billion for the period 2014-2020. (A Joint Africa-EU, 2007, p. 13)
- Migration: Security issues and massive unregulated migration present challenges for both African and European leaders, who have sought in recent years to curb dangerous sea crossings to Europe. For her first trip

outside Europe as head of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen arrived in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, to "send a strong political message" underlining the EU's commitment to Africa. (<https://www.dw.com/en/von-der-leyen-in-ethiopia-calls-for-eu-unity-with-africa/a-51567687>) .

- Security Cooperation / counter-terrorism: Over the last ten years, the EU has deployed seven military operations and an equal number of civilian missions in sub-Saharan Africa and the Gulf of Aden. In three of these cases – Somalia, the CAR, and Mali – EU operations were deployed simultaneously alongside African-led operations. (EUISS, 2016, p. 2).

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### Opportunities for the EU as a Humanitarian Power

The EU can turn the long-term impact of the ongoing migration crisis into economic strength due to a spike in migration that closes labor shortages, improves the economy and would eventually cause unemployment rates to drop. This would contradict the idea that refugees place an excessive financial burden on a recipient country by drawing upon its public resources. In the long-run, the host government can only receive fiscal benefits after the refugee has entered the labor market. Many who migrated to the EU are young and skilled in different professions. An important investment is to identify the respective skill of the refugee and to provide the necessary training for integration. Providing a cleaning job to a doctor from Syria will simply lead to an underutilization of human capital which will adversely affect his or her ability to pay taxes and contribute to the fiscal system. The migrants will surely change the demographic of Europe yet replenish the workforce which are diminishing due to the aging population. This needs to be highlighted as an opportunity for EU economies. Therefore, countries such as Germany, Finland, Lithuania and Sweden have started admitting more people. Their economies are under pressure as the number of workers declines just as the number of retirees increases. Another key point of strength is how this crisis affects the international public opinion toward Europe in a positive way, as some EU member states opened their doors to asylum-seekers and supported them in contrast to some gulf countries that denied entry to Syrians despite their Arab origin. Even the Arab league failed to change their mind. That's a kind of soft power for Europe and will influence the Arab region in particular. *Rewan Ammar is a ZEI Fellow "Class of 2020".*

### III. Executing Migration Policy as Foreign Policy

#### Building a Functioning Migration System Beyond Frontex

The von der Leyen Commission is committed to better coordinating external and internal relations of foreign policy, visible in the handling of migration in the Mediterranean. A new organizational structure called Group for External Coordination (EXCO) shall make it easier and more efficient to align the work of Commissioners Schinas (“migration”) and Johansson (“home”) whose portfolios strongly focus on migration and related aspects. Moreover, the agency Frontex, under DG Home Affairs (Johansson), strongly overlaps with DG enlargement considering the Frontex expansion in the non-EU Balkans. As EXCO is chaired by the High Representative Josep Borrell, it will be facing foreign policy questions of the EU, especially those regarding migration. Coordinating several portfolios might slow down decision-making. However, EXCO might potentially make migration policy more sustainable and efficient, avoiding later corrections by avoiding policy interferences in the first place.

Better coordination and efficiency of policies is bitterly needed. With the ongoing conflicts in Syria and Libya, Frontex will likely be more often asked for help by Greece and Italy in shutting themselves off from migrant flows. The EXCO group is pressured to negotiate effective deals with 3rd countries who seem unstable partners to sustain security in the region. The better Frontex works within a coordinated policy, the more such negotiations will matter for the sake of migrants to improve their humanitarian condition. However, the danger of a strong Frontex lies in the EU’s isolation from and neglect of migrant suffering in the Mediterranean. The worst case would be a “Fortress Europe” scenario, in which migrants would be deprived of help by forcefully keeping EU borders tight. Obviously, the EU can do better than that. The challenge of organizing a functioning migration system is also a chance to become a powerful global actor. By promoting multilateralism and human rights, a functioning migration system can strengthen the region’s overall security, as a result of which the success might spill over into other areas. Regarding Turkey, only a stable partnership with the EU’s neighbor will ensure an effective border minimizing the suffering of illegal migrants.

The EU’s power is not unlimited in this foreign policy aspect of migration. Disparities among EU members must be overcome to show solidarity towards Greece, where both authorities and migrants are pressured, and take Turkey seriously.

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#### Academic Migration

Cross-border migration within the EU is an everyday reality. Since 2016, the European Commission has been supporting EU member states in their efforts at integrating asylum seekers in their education and training systems - from early childhood education and care to higher education. Being an important player and role model at the world stage seems to be more demanding though.

Take the Thailand-EU Policy Dialogue for instance, which serves as the framework for cooperation in trade and investment, higher education, science, technology, environment, climate change & energy, natural resources and good governance. Via this channel, aid was provided to uprooted people between 2014-2019 with 8 projects to support refugees from Myanmar and host communities on the Thailand -Myanmar border in education. From the beginning of 2003 onwards, the nature of the cooperation changed in parallel to the



dynamic development Thailand has undergone. Today, the EU-Thailand relationship is on an equal basis with regard to trade and economic matters. Both partners also work together closely in diplomacy and recognize the leading role Thailand is playing in regional fora such as ASEAN (Commission 2016). The EU is creating global norms and standards of education as investment in education provides a long-term base for good economic integration. The EU needs to better link internal and external policies however. Such a strategy must include specific targets, monitoring as well as action plans with the necessary legislative, policy instruments and financial resources.

Von der Leyen already communicated the message that the EU is about to be goal-oriented with policies which will be implemented with foreign countries together.

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## IV. Rethinking EU Neighborhood Policy

### The EU's Neighborhood Policy Needs to be more Strategic, Assertive and United

With the aim of being a strong global actor, the EU needs to collaborate with neighboring countries and would like to enjoy the invisible competence which is conferred to it by those countries that are relatively weaker. Those countries would expect to pursue their international interests under the umbrella of the EU. The EU can not pursue its global interests without good relations with the neighboring countries.

In order to be a world player who can provide immediate resolution of serious conflicts and prevent the spread of crises as well as speak a language of power, the EU needs to be more strategic, more assertive and more united in its relations with neighboring countries. This is possible in several respects.

First, the use of geopolitical thinking in external affairs needs to be enhanced by the EU policy makers in their statements and actions. Being aware of geopolitical aspects, while determining a vision for the future, will provide the EU an insight into the problems and lead it to adopt solution-oriented policies, so that the EU can prevent crises from spreading and provide peaceful resolution of conflicts of interest in the neighborhood. As in Mrs. Mogherini's speech at Oxford University and in Mrs. von der Leyen's mission letter to Josep Borrell, the EU is not a regional subject with domestic concerns, it is a world player with a broad geopolitical vision.

Second, geopolitical thinking must be the indispensable part of the policy making process, particularly in external affairs. It can be conceptualized in principle as subsidiarity in external affairs which may lead the EU to make decisions in external affairs as closely as to the region concerned.

Third, geopolitical thinking requires the EU to adopt a united approach to its humanitarian, migration, trade, infrastructure and development policies. So that, the EU can invest in the state and societal resilience. To be surrounded by resilient neighboring states is an important aspect for the EU. Because, resilient states are experiencing different features as democracy, trust in institutions and sustainable development which will prevent them from having domestic conflicts may turn into a civil war later on.

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### The Notion of Principled Pragmatism as a Common Yardstick for EU-Turkey Relations

Since its establishment, the European Union (EU) used several initiatives for diffusing its normative values in Mediterranean Basin and stabilizing the region; however, in a paradoxical way the EU's initiatives triggered a chain of events which then led to the Arab spring. After the spillover of the Arab Spring revolts to Syria, Syrian leader Bashar Al-Assad's despotism against his opponents triggered a civil war which in return affected the EU dramatically.

Although a new approach known as "principled pragmatism" calling for a balance between the aim of being a normative power and matching the current harsh realities was embedded in the EU Global Strategy of 2016, the EU seems to lack a sense of acting pragmatism in the Syrian war. The entry of foreign fighters into EU territory resulting in terrorist attacks is considered to be one of the the biggest threats by the Union.

To deal with the risks stemming from its inability to intervene with hard power, the EU chose – actually was forced - to rely on 3rd countries and diplomatic channels; however the choice of means, seems to not have worked for the EU. Turkey, one of the most serious warriors against ISIL terrorism and Assad despotism, an old friend of the EU and eager candidate for EU membership as well as the greatest buffer to asylum seekers coming from Syria, proved as the only wall to lean on to minimize negative impacts. The EU's migrant agreement with Turkey and its effectiveness serves as a great case in point for that argument; however, when the EU backed the Kurdish militia YPG in the fight against ISIL whilst opposing Turkey in every intervention operation against terrorist groups in Syria, the fragile ties gradually broke.

As President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen wants to act as a "geopolitical commission". Therefore, one would expect the EU to adopt the new guiding principle of "principled pragmatism" for cooperating with a transition country as Turkey in the Syrian crisis. To prevent clashes and to not diffuse European norms, the EU should refrain from its negatives conclusions on – whether true or not - Turkey's backsliding in the fields of democracy, rule of law and freedom of speech. Despite resentments, it is still not too late for the EU to adopt a more constructive approach. The clock is ticking for the geopolitical Commission!

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## V. Reframing Climate and Environmental Diplomacy

### The European Union's Potential Leadership towards a Global New Deal for Nature

Taking a leadership role in environmental policies both domestically and internationally will be a key challenge testing the European Union's geopolitical mettle and its ability of exerting leadership. In her Political Guidelines and the mission letters to the Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans (Green Deal) & Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius (Environment and Oceans), European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen laid out ambitious plans for the EU in response to the environmental crises, calling for a European Green Deal.

This will include an implementation of the first European Climate Law to meet the 2050 target on climate neutrality. The respective Regulation proposal 'COM(2020) 80 final' from the 4th of March 2020 provides that Union-wide emissions and removals of greenhouse gases regulated in Union law shall be balanced at the latest by 2050, thus reducing emissions to net zero by that date. By September 2020, the Commission shall review the Union's 2030 target for climate in light of the climate-neutrality objective and explore options for a new 2030 target of 50 to 55 per cent emission reductions compared to 1990. By the 30th of June 2021, the Commission shall assess how the Union legislation implementing the Union's 2030 target would need to be amended in order to enable the achievement of 50 to 55 per cent emission reductions compared to 1990.

As for environmental policy, the Commission is in the process of devising a Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. Through this strategy, von der Leyen has stated an ambition of leading the world at the COP15 of the

United Nations Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), where a new Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework will be adopted - often referred to as a 'New Deal for Nature'. This moment is seen as a crucial and urgent opportunity to achieve an ambitious global commitment to restoring nature, requiring governmental leaders to come together for strengthening their commitments and delivery mechanisms of the United Nations.

This presents a much-needed chance for the EU to 'bend the curve' on biodiversity loss and show political leadership by bringing the strategy to fruition, thereby being a lighthouse for the rest of world on environmental action. However, Europe's ability to mobilize the international community for a robust global 'New Deal for Nature' will also hinge upon a demonstrated leadership through internal action matching ambitious rhetoric. Clearly, ambitious rhetoric alone is insufficient to bring about transformative changes for 'business as usual'.

As part of a larger geopolitical strategy for leadership on the key issues facing humanity, delivering tangible results on the environmental crises – particularly when voters all around the world are demanding real change – can prove that the EU is an actor able to rally the international community for a 'moon shot' like the superpower which it aspires to be.

If the EU is able to employ all facets of its soft power to get governments and businesses to agree upon robust measures for protecting nature, then von der Leyen's Commission will be a historic achievement toward global leadership in environmental policy. It could situate itself as a dominant geopolitical titan through climate and biodiversity leadership.

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**Josep Borrell:**  
**"Europeans citizens say that the two biggest challenges they face are climate change and migration. Both are geopolitical challenges because we cannot solve them alone. Even if we become carbon neutral the European Green leader will have to help others to move in the same direction or we will not solve the problem. Climate change poses the biggest problem of redistribution after the Industrial Revolution."**

## V. Reframing Climate and Environmental Diplomacy

### The EU's Role as Leader and Mediator in International Climate Policy

With worldwide movements like Fridays For Future gaining in popularity and millions of protesters joining the global climate strike in September 2019, the public call for climate action has become louder. The EU has long since realized the importance of formulating clear, supranational objectives and setting regulatory guidelines on environmental protection. Since the early 1990s, the EU has consistently advocated ambitious international policy objectives on climate change.

For Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, sustainability and environmental topics are high on the agenda. Climate neutrality by 2050 is her target, which she seeks to substantiate through the policy initiatives brought forward in the European Green Deal. With the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, 25 per cent of EU expenditure is intended to contribute to climate objectives.

While concerns are raised that sustainability measures may adversely affect economic progress in the EU and put European businesses at a competitive disadvantage, environmental protection and economic growth may actually be mutually reinforcing. Restructuring the Union's economies towards more circularity, for instance, is estimated to increase GDP by 1 to 7 percentage points by 2030.

The economic potential of the EU's green transition is complemented by its capacity to strengthen the Union's global authority as a leader and mediator in international climate policy. While the Union failed to overcome the resistance of the United States (US) to include binding emission targets in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, it did achieve such targets in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, was influential in bringing it into force and shaping its implementation in the 2000s. What is more, the EU took the lead in securing the launch of negotiations on the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Under the umbrella of von der Leyen's Green Deal, the EU 27 agreed on an EU climate law in March 2020, which is a milestone regarding the binding nature of EU climate policy. The Green Deal has the potential to strengthen the EU's climate diplomacy, to make it more effective and to drive global change towards climate

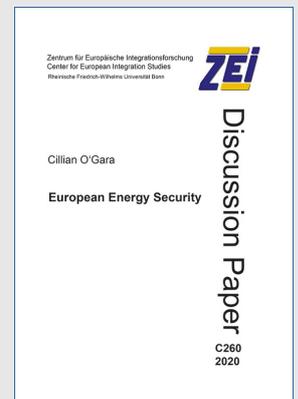
ZEI Discussion Paper C 260/2020

### European Energy Security

By Cillian O'Gara

In the wake of the European Union's enlargements in 2004 and 2007, which saw the accession of 12 new member states, lengthy debates and discussion took place on the burden of onboarding the new member states and the dependence of many of these states on a single supplier for their energy needs.

This ZEI Discussion paper examines the EU's efforts to form a comprehensive energy security policy in recent decades, paying particular attention to the evolution of the theory of energy security and the main developments of the EU's energy security policy in recent years. In addition, the Energy Union, a flagship initiative launched by the European Commission in 2015, is assessed through an examination of its governance structure and achievements in specific policy domains. Finally, this paper explores the controversy over the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project and the EU's response to concerns raised by several member states.



neutrality. Still, the overall Green Deal approach must be anchored much more effectively in EU foreign policy as the EU ultimately needs Green Deals with partners worldwide, from the Neighbourhood to key actors such as China or India. Consequently, the role of the EU as leader and mediator likely stays relevant in the foreseeable future, as the Union remains a middle power in multipolar climate geopolitics.

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## VI. Tackling the China Challenge

### Being a Global Power by Using Soft Power

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's "Geopolitical Commission" is rightly directed to pursue the EU's geopolitical ambition. The EU holds strategic relevance and significance in contemporary international politics. At a time of impending change in world order from unipolar to multipolar, the EU cannot quietly sit and follow the existing world order. The EU is poised to play its role as a global power. In its geopolitical ambition, the EU is faced with a challenge from a systematic rival China. The EU is an ethical normative power and a torchbearer of multilateralism. However, China is an authoritarian state. Due to the EU's openness, China has already penetrated into the EU. China, on the contrary, controls the access to its markets. The one-sided openness hurts the EU's interests. However, both are strategic partners and two of the world's largest economies and traders. China with its 16+1 initiative within Europe aims to avoid criticism against its human rights violations. The EU is, however, cognizant of China's human rights violations. Along with challenges from China, the EU has opportunities to pursue its interests and promote European values around the world with its soft-power. In this regard, the EU can make the most of its global recognition as a trade negotiator to enhance its role as a global power. Moreover, the EU has a great reputation in international development cooperation which can enable it to promote its values in different parts of the world to counter China's influence. Within Europe, the EU must provide alternatives to investments from China. Additionally, just like China has entered into the EU markets, the EU must penetrate with its diplomatic mechanism into the Asia Pacific region which China dominates. For economic diplomacy in Africa and Asia, the EU should adopt forward-looking ambitions. EU's "Comprehensive Strategy in Africa" can enable it to become a political and economic power to be reckoned with in Africa where China is winning influence with its Belt and Road Initiative. Furthermore, the EU should materialize its soft-power to project its values and interests to attain global power status. Lastly, the EU, as a global archipelago, must utilize its OCTs to safeguard and promote its interests. However, the EU's geopolitical ambition is not going to be smooth sailing. The EU needs to be more assertive, strategic and united in its approach to external relations. The EU needs to adopt this approach in its pursuit of global power status and geopolitical ambition.

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### Finetuning External Trade Policy

Due to global economic development, globalization, and the internationalization of markets the global trade has become a central topic on the world stage. China has become one of the most important trading partners for the EU. In 2018 the EU exported goods worth 210 billion euro to China and at the same time imported goods worth 395 billion euro. Some of these trading goods have been produced and distributed under questionable conditions.

Ursula von der Leyen wants to reshape the EU trade relations and fight against those who compete through, dumping, deregulation and subsidization. She wants to implement high standards of free trade as well as climate and worker protection and despite protectionism and child labor. Further she wants to be strong against those countries that do not want to cooperate but create dependencies by buying up key European industries.

A telling case study is tomato sauce. Who doesn't think of it as a traditional Italian product when cooking it? But this picture is no longer the reality. In fact China is one of the biggest industrial tomato producers even though tomatoes are not on the regular menu there. The tomatoes are still harvested by hand under very rough working conditions, very low wages and piecework. This is a work that only the poorest do – and sometimes their children. When observing the tomato paste production, it can be seen that 55 per cent is thickened with soybean flour to depress prices even more.

The EU seems to be suspicious of China's actions. This might be one of the reasons why the EU and China have not been able to conclude a trade agreement and the access to the EU market is still negotiable. Further Ursula von der Leyen plans to appoint a Chief Trade Enforcement Officer. This is intended to optimize compliance with and enforcement of the EU's trade agreements and to oversee enforcement in the partner countries.

This structural amendment is a first step of the EU to fight back with regard to the economic trade relations of China. Also the fact that no trade agreement has been arranged so far allows the EU to redesign the whole trade situation. In a next step it needs to be defined how to recapture trading power, independence and how to design the external trade policy. This might be linked to stronger conditions, product standards or import and export regulations or tariff preferences. The increased consciousness on power relations in EU-China trade relations and structural changes that are already made, are important steps to speak the language of power.

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## VII. Reinvigorating Development Policy

### Big Brother behind the Scene: Reforming the European Development Fund

As the world external assistance champion, the European Union (EU) has spoken a “language of power” in this regard with a relatively soft voice. The European Development Fund (EDF) is the major tool responsible for channelling one-third of EU aid. Its primary objective is to eradicate poverty and support sustainable development in two specific regions - overseas territories and countries, and African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, where both have close links with EU member states. Programs funded does not only emphasise stage-by-stage national economic integration of the latter group to the world, but also underline the socioeconomic cooperation between these states and the EU. These strategic aims echo the Union’s interests and values. Referencing the latest reform within the upcoming multiannual financial framework of the EU, a single financial instrument merging the EDF with other tools is proposed. It should enhance the connection between the cooperation of sustainable development and the promotion of the Union interests, such as migration and security. This change facilitates the EU to take the leading role in international affairs with one and solid voice.

Brexit more or less impacts every policy area of the EU. The EDF is not an exception as the United Kingdom is one of the top contributors to the Fund. The British government admitted that it is possible to continue its cooperation with the Union in this area whereas stressed that the prerequisite is the way of contribution matches with the national priorities. Taking this possible loss into consideration, the impact can be enormous.

The China factor is worth studying as well. As a newcomer in this field, countries perceive Chinese financial assistant as an alternative to the West due to the absence of binding measures and political conditionality, and faster distribution of funds. The emerging dragon from the East should not be ignored.

Taking the EDF as an example, investing in the world strategically benefits Europeans with development, peace and security. The reformed role of the EU’s external financial instrument should go beyond just being the world largest ATM (Automated Teller Machine). Linking the Union’s interests with tools for external actions and countering the impacts of Brexit and from China are two of the key elements for the EU to be through the turbulence.

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### “A Union of Equality”- Facts & Figures on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in the EU

Gender equality issues are included in almost all policies, programs or decision-making of European Union. Despite this, the abuse of women is still present in EU. The new program of Von der Leyen tries to enhance equality and to increase the role and the power of women and girls in society, in economy and in the family.

In 2012, 8 per cent of women in EU had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner in the 12 months prior to the interview.

In the EU, women overall tend to perform better than men when it comes to participation in education. However, the two indicators on participation in basic and tertiary education show divergent trends in the development of these gender gaps: while the gap is closing for early school leavers, it is widening for tertiary education.

In 2018, the proportion of men of working age in employment still exceeded that of women by 11.6 per cent points. Caring responsibilities were by far the main reasons among women caused by the lack of available, accessible and quality formal care services, especially for children.

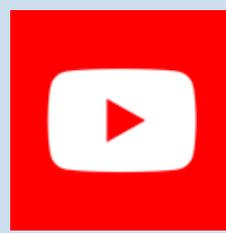
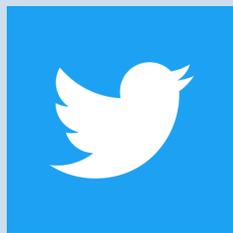
The latest figures on gender balance in the European Parliament show that the percentage of women member of the European Parliament has risen slightly since the 2014 elections and now stands at 36.1 per cent. This is above average for national parliaments and above the EU average for national parliaments which stands at 30.2 per cent.

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