



CENTER FOR TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

**“EU Constitution and EU Enlargement:
Challenges and Opportunities”**

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It is often argued that the French like grand designs. Let me reassure you, we like all kinds of designs as well. In our Cartesian mindset, what we like is the neatness of a well-ordered whole that we can grasp fully. That, one can see both in the renaissance gardens of the Loire Valley castles, in the “jardins à la française” or ... in the map of the City of Washington, designed, as you know, by a French architect, Pierre-Charles L’enfant.

That is why Europe can look so unsettling to a French eye : like reality, it sometimes defies the grand plans that are made for it. It looks more like evolution, as described by George Wald, a life-scientist working in your country, in that it : “advances, not by a priori design, but by the selection of what works best out of whatever choices offer. We are the product of editing, rather than authorship”.

The European Union is a political and legal non identified object. And yet, and yet, I will argue that the steps the European Union are taking today are merely the logical continuity of processes started in full knowledge, 50 years ago. Because, in our view, Europe was always meant to be a European force, not a mere market. And that should reassure us because it means that, far from being improvised steps, getting a Constitution for Europe (I) and welcoming in 10 new member States (II) are processes appropriate and under control.

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I. Getting a Constitution, a stronger defense and a real foreign policy seems to us the crowning of a 50-year integration process

It is often said that Europe is completely changing as, initially a market, it now has political aims. It is that very change of nature that is sometimes perceived as new, and even by some as a source of destabilization. Let me argue the opposite point because I think the political nature of European integration was there all along (A) and that, therefore, what we are doing is merely bringing more purpose and effectiveness to that ambition (B).

➤ **European integration has always aimed at building a Europe that is a whole, able to decide and to act on the world stage, and not merely an area.**

1. Let's look at the two Communities that arose in 1951 to deal with Coal and Steel and in 1957 to facilitate the exchange of goods. Their aim was clearly political : building a lasting and real peace between France and Germany. But so were their means : the member states built a system to bring the passion out of State to State relationship and to allow the rise, above petty interests, of the greater interests of "Europeans". That means unique institutions sometimes hard to understand for non-Europeans (and, let me reassure you, also for Europeans!):

- the Commission, the Brussels administrative but also political body which is independent. At the same time, engine and referee of the whole integration process, it is in a sense the keeper of the flame or the watchdog ;
- States deciding in a Council using a qualified majority system in which the smaller ones could make themselves heard, whether it be by a weighted majority system favorable to them or, as is proposed in the draft Constitution, by requiring a majority of States and not merely of population, to approve any European act. The fact that States have to forego their right of veto for many decisions is the real originality of Europe ;
- The primacy of Law and a Supreme Court to enforce it. Nothing would have been possible if it was not for the principle of the primacy of EU law ;
- Later, in the 1970's, a Parliament elected directly by the people was added to the system, whereas before, it was mostly a consultative forum of appointed MPs. It allows their hopes and dreams to guide the process forward and has to give the nod to most European

acts. On June 13th, throughout Europe, 338 million European voters in the 25 countries will elect their new European Parliament.

Are these the institutions of a common market ? Don't they bear quite strong similarities with those of the early United States ? Without entering into a legal debate, let us note the strongly federal logic on which Europe has built itself since the beginning.

2. That political aspiration behind European integration, can also be found in the will, as soon as these Communities were created, to lead common policies : agriculture came first, but was quickly followed by a development policy that is the biggest in the world and that introduced new concepts such as bringing together all aspects of development in one policy and dealing with them as a whole. The Yaounde and then Lome agreements between Europeans and Countries of Africa or small islands around the world pioneered the concepts of the importance of good governance, of human rights, of partnerships, as conditions of sound development. These European tools are now effective enough that our recent decision to also include, apart from our Human Rights clause, a WMD non proliferation clause in them is a promising contribution to our common fight against our common worry.

Beyond these early policies, other policies have started to shape the lives of Europeans : mobility of people that is now, finally, on the rise ; environment ; and our new activities since 1992 : a common currency, the Euro, and police/justice co-operation within the European Union with the creation, for instance, of a European-wide arrest warrant. Are these not the endeavors of a political Union ?

3. Finally, it is little known that the ambition to have a foreign policy stems from the origin of European integration. After the failure of a project in 1954 (the CED) and another one in 1961 (the Plan Fouchet), a systematic policy of exchange in the field of diplomacy was put in place as early as 1970. When did we start having a common European foreign policy ? With the successive Balkan crises in the early 1990's, after the trauma of not being able to assure the stability of our continent. In 10 years, decision making procedures and institutions were set up and the habit of acting together is being adopted. Result : it was Javier Solana, our CSFP High representative, who was able to avoid the breakup of Serbia and Montenegro in 2002, a crisis the world was happy to avoid... Another example : together with the US special envoy, it was

the European François Leotard and then Alain Le Roy who managed to settle things down in FYROM.

So Europe is indeed a political unit since its beginning. Such is the view of France.

➤ **Our draft Constitution aims at bringing more purpose and effectiveness into our political aspirations**

The draft Constitution is not a rift or a break with the past. But it carries to a higher level the principles of earlier treaties. Let me take three examples :

- European citizenship : that's what we have in common as Europeans. Since the Maastricht treaty, we have rights to free movement, rights to stand and be elected in any country for town halls and the European Parliament, rights to consular protection. Now, the very name Constitution puts the concept of citizenship at the heart of the project with a strengthened European Parliament, a bill of rights, the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the possibility, if one collects 1 million signature over Europe, to require discussions on a draft European law (that's the first time we introduce an element of direct democracy in European decision making). To highlight these changes, in France, we will distribute a booklet stating the rights and duties of European citizen to all young people on their 18th birthday.
- European foreign policy : we plan to appoint a European Foreign Minister and give him or her a diplomatic service. That means more efficiency but not a fundamental change. How come ? Because the whole point is to bring more efficiency where there now exists some bureaucratic rivalries and overly complex procedures. In the post 9/11 world, we need efficient institutions. Look at the situation today in Haiti. If Europe wants to help, one official must be able to come in and talk security, aid, trade, migration. Today, that's difficult. Tomorrow, it will be normal.
- European defense : There indeed, the changes are greater but again, in full continuity with the process launched in Saint-Malo between France and the United Kingdom in 1998. After decades of discussions about "burden sharing", who can object to Europe taking defense seriously ? Especially when, in doing so, Europe is able to bring a positive contribution to the stabilization of the Balkans (in the case of Bosnia, relieving NATO for

other tasks). Who can criticize the EU when it deploys soldiers in support of peace keeping efforts, such as last summer in Africa ?

It's first a matter of means, and our effort regarding capacities is strong. France, for instance, has increased its defense budget and encourages others to do so. Hence the creation of an armament agency to promote capacity building and look for cost effective ways of working together. And in anticipation, France and the UK have very recently engaged into a close co-operation to build 3 aircraft carriers.

But it's also a matter of organization. In that matter, full of tricky theoretical questions, our aim is to be as flexible as possible. Major steps were made recently : the creation of an operational cell in the EU Headquarters, the creation of an EU Cell at Shape, NATO's Headquarters, the drafting of an ambitious chapter on defense in the European Constitution. The point is to be able to have NATO operations (we have no problem in using the Eurocorps, as European a force as you can get, in a NATO operation in Afghanistan), EU operations with NATO means in support and EU autonomous operations. Various tools for various missions because we don't know what kind of challenge is expecting us. And when I say us, I mean Europe and the US because the point of all this is to stand shoulder to shoulder to face the crises and the instability of the present world.

I hope to have shown that Europe was there all the time as a political project and that today's effort to build a more cohesive Union is merely striving for more effectiveness.

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II. Reuniting the continent is also the achievement of a long-time hope

Another indication of a complete transformation of Europe is the integration of 10 new Member states. That event is mentioned with some fear for Europe (and its friends) as a double challenge : the challenge of a level of development much lower than ours, the new Member states being significantly less prosperous than the ones already in, and the challenge of numbers, that is whether 25 sovereign States could ever agree on anything. Because the new Members States are no less assertive than the old ones. Is there a choice to make between enlargement and widening ? In fact, Europe has been awaiting this moment all along. Let me therefore challenge you with two ideas : the unification of Europe was always a purpose of

the European Union and successive enlargements (present one included) are arguably one of its most successful policies.

➤ **Unifying Europe, the hope and the aim of the founding fathers of Europe**

There are many schools of thoughts at the origin of the European Union. Some of these schools have the idea of domination as a guiding force (the “fate” of a Nation or a group of Nations is to dominate the Continent). The European Union is founded on an altogether different idea of co-operation to face the future together. In a sense, it’s inspired by the national motto of Belgium “Union breeds strength”. The European Union is the child of two such schools of co-operation :

- a mix of Christian democrat and Social democrat schools
- a “Gaullian” school.

Political scientists would describe them in more detail but that is not our purpose today. Instead, let me point to the fact that both schools advocated the unification of the continent since the very beginning. Robert Schumann, the Christian Democrat French Minister of Foreign Affairs who launched Europe, asked if the new Community could open its doors to countries from the Warsaw Pact, replied “eventually yes”. And everyone knows de Gaulle’s vision about Europe “from the Atlantic to the Urals” (which was probably going a bit far, at least for the present !).

And that also explains Europe’s willingness to let others in. Successive waves made us go from 6 to 9 in 1973 (UK, Ireland, Denmark), 10 in 1981 (Greece), 12 in 1986 (Spain and Portugal) and 15 in 1995 (Sweden, Finland, Austria). And each brought something : regional policy was born of the first enlargement, cohesion funds and an ambitious policy for our Mediterranean neighbors was born of the two following enlargements, the Northern dimension, a policy designed among others to clean up the Arctic ocean, would not have seen the light of day without the last enlargement. So every enlargement brings a new topic, a new policy, a new plus.

If Switzerland and Norway are not in, that’s because they voted against coming in. Indeed, the criteria for coming in are demanding but fair : a robust democracy, an economy able to withstand the competition of European firms, an administration able to apply EU laws effectively. Any European State that respects these criteria can come in. I insist on this point

because I want to show that it's not enough to want to be in the EU, one also needs to make a significant effort to do so because the point is to participate in a common destiny and not merely to belong to an organization. In that sense, we are inventing a new political governance completely different from classical multilateral diplomacy.

So building Europe on the scale of the continent is a big part of our ambitions. Is the present enlargement so big as to be the exception ? Not necessarily.

➤ **That is because enlargements, the present one included, have the seeds in them to be one of the EU's most effective policies**

The present enlargement was dreamt by France since the beginning of European integration : I've quoted Robert Schumann who, suggesting the creation of the European Community in the 1950's, argued that Central and East European would eventually join. France wanted the enlargement and President Chirac was the first to endorse the objective even before he was President. Earlier this week, President Chirac was in Budapest, and I was with him, to review our programs of co-operation and give ever more support to Hungary. So I am here to tell you that the widely held belief that France, when it comes to enlargement, is just going along with the process, that belief is not true.

What is true is that the enlargement process is lived without enough enthusiasm in France. Polls regularly show that about half of the country is moderately in favor and the rest remains moderately unconvinced. Why is that ? One reason is that, in France, enlargement is largely seen as a moral duty : to welcome into our home those countries whose tragic history led them to decades of hard oppression. But let me be clear : that lack of enthusiasm does not reflect a refusal of enlargement itself, merely a worry about the present economic trend, as it is common that the European project is less popular in times of economic slowdown. That's why I relentlessly go around France to explain again and again what's in it for us.

A difficulty I face is that these advantages are in the future and our people don't feel them today. But they are clear enough to make us, political leaders of right and left (the accession treaty was ratified with quasi unanimity by both chambers of Parliament) know that the entire continent will gain from the increased rate of growth of these countries as they catch up with our level of development. We know that such development will bring the consolidation of

democracy and therefore stability across the entire continent. Think of the earlier enlargement to Spain and Portugal : we feared the competition for our agricultural products. Now these countries are among the most effective engines of growth of the Union (and our investors and exporters don't complain !) and stable vigorous democracies. That's exactly the process that is starting in Central and Eastern Europe. In Hungary, we, French, are the third biggest foreign investors, just behind you and we are first in Poland and Romania. That's how enlargement has become the European Union's most successful policy ever. And extending that model of peace and prosperity from the half way point of the Blue Danube to its mouth is definitely good news for France and for Europe. And isn't anything that contributes to the world's stability good for the United States ?

As a Minister, I have visited several times all the capitals of the new member states in the past 2 years. And one thing is clear when you meet the usually young leaders of these countries, when you stroll their streets, when you visit their factories and farms : it is that we are in Europe. I have recently distributed a movie about these countries to teenage schoolchildren of France and was struck by their enthusiastic reaction. "We didn't know they were so much like us", they said seeing mobile phone, rock bands, other youngsters practicing sports. Well, they are like us because we are more and more like other Europeans inside our Union, sharing common values, which we also share with our American friends.

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So, to conclude, I hope you are now convinced that recent events in Europe are the results of decades of determination. Decades of living together to create the confidence to act together, decades of hoping for an enlargement that finally occurs, decades of calling for Europeans to think as one which they finally do. But also decades of American determination to support the process of European integration since the Marshall Plan : a loyalty to each other that has stayed, nearly untouched (barring the occasional disagreement) from the Cold War to the post 9/11 world. And therefore, let me conclude with famous verses that Shakespeare puts in the mouth of Julius Caesar, the founder of another Europe : "If I could pray to move, prayers would move me, / But I am constant as the northern star, / Of whose true-fixed and resting

quality / There is no fellow in the firmament.” Let us therefore stay constant and true to each other, in the building of a Europe as a space and a force of security and stability, and in our uniquely deep and productive transatlantic relationship.