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Ressort: Politik

Future world's leading economic powers

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In the next future China, the US and India are expected to be the world's leading economic powers, with even greater political influence, while none of the world's largest economies will be an EU Member State. The new world order is characterized by asymmetry, with various non-state actors becoming more and more influential over the past decade: from NGOs advocating human rights, to transnational corporations

influencing government policy, to socialmedia activists calling for democratic change. However, no emergent state or non-state actor can impose an unquestionable world view. Globalization has amplified interdependence, with decisions taken in Beijing or Washington having a direct impact on other parts of the World. Interdependence has generated transnational problems, which require transnational solutions. In this scenario one fourth of the world's population live in fragile states or societies. Western democracies have become more protectionist and inward-looking, and are swinging to the extremes at a time when multilateral cooperation is the only way to respond to global challenges effectively. This power vacuum is being filled by other

powers such as China or Russia.

The EU's aspirational global leadership has been undermined as a result of the financial crisis, of the rising Euroscepticism, of the proliferation of crises on its doorstep and of growing disbelief of European public opinion on the projection of force abroad, has given rise to a tendency to respond to events rather than to shape them. In any case, no single EU Member State can react effectively to today's global challenges on its own. Only pulling their weight together within the EU, the Member States can exert an influence on the world stage that they would not otherwise possess.

The future 27 Member States together, after Brexit, representing about 500 million citizens, can continue to have more influence in international negotiations and in setting international regulations and standards. Under the protection of the EU, globalization can anyhow represent an opportunity for EU citizens and not a threat.

The EU Member States all too often give precedence to their national interests, regardless of the possible consequences at a European level, thereby undermining the EU's credibility as a global player. A greater division of responsibilities and enhanced coordination between the EU and its Member States is essential to safeguard European democracy and its social and environmental standards.

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It's important to stress and remember that the European approach to external relations is characterized by: promoting and safeguarding European values such as freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. A commitment to multilateralism, with the support of the UN system and regional organizations at its core represents another factor involving the determination to give priority to diplomatic rather than military solutions.

The EU should stay true to its principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law emphasizing the importance of assessing whether the promotion of these principles in third countries has been successful.

The EU has played an important role in de-escalating and resolving foreign policy crises, namely when some Member States have taken the lead under the auspices of the Union overall, such as in the Normandy format or the EU3+3 negotiations with Iran.

The proximity to threats determines policy priorities and all Member States have to respect the principle of solidarity enshrined in the Treaties (Article 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) taking the necessary steps to respond to the migration crisis, just as all Member States have responded with solidarity to the challenges posed by a resurgent and assertive Russia.

Today internal and external security are increasingly intertwined. It's significant to remember that the Mediterranean is one of the most irregular borders in the world and there's the urgent need to stimulate the economic development of the Southern Mediterranean basin and Sub-Saharan Africa in order to create local economic opportunities in the countries of origin of migrants.

Despite their importance, soft power and institution building alone are not sufficient to exert influence in a world where power politics and hard power are increasingly significant. Developing new formats, such as a European Security Council, advocated by Chancellor Merkel, could facilitate a more efficient decision-making process for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

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