



# Initiative for a Renewed Transatlantic Partnership

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## How the EU Can Act Now to Assert Global Leadership

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The European Union is celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding Rome Treaty this month, and it has every right to be proud of a series of remarkable achievements over the past half century. But as diplomats clink their champagne glasses, there can be no hiding the embarrassing truth that, despite its past accomplishments, the EU is stuck in the doldrums with no agreed plan for what to do next. Germany, half way through its six-month stint in the presidential chair, wants to end the prolonged “period of reflection” that followed rejection of the EU Constitutional Treaty by France and the Netherlands in May and June, 2005 and find a way of adopting some or all of the treaty’s provisions. Supporters of the constitution argue that its proposals for streamlining foreign policy decision-making would help the EU fulfill its ambition of exerting global leadership. Stalemate over the constitution, however, looks likely to continue for some time to come. What then can the EU do to enhance its international influence in the meantime?

The EU should turn its attention to four pressing foreign policy challenges that desperately need European leadership, and on which it can act immediately. Afghanistan, Kosovo, Russia, and Darfur all present opportunities for the EU to showcase the civilian and military capabilities it has worked so hard to build in recent decades and make a bold statement about its future role on the global stage. As an institution that proclaims itself the preeminent advocate of soft power, the EU is now perfectly placed to put its overarching strategy into practice. No other institution is better suited to address these challenges.

### AFGHANISTAN

In the past six months, much of the transatlantic debate about Afghanistan has focused on the NATO

mission there. Countries bearing the brunt of the fighting, led by the United States, have constantly urged their more reluctant allies, including Germany, France, Italy and Spain, either to increase their troop levels or to lift “caveats” on the use of their soldiers which keep them away from the hardest fighting. All the allies agree, however, that even a doubling of the NATO force in Afghanistan would fail to guarantee success. Stabilization and development efforts must be pursued in tandem, and the EU is the obvious candidate to shoulder the development tasks.

The EU has been on the ground in Afghanistan since December 2001. Brussels has provided large sums of development assistance and partnered with other international organizations on reconstruction projects.<sup>1</sup> It has appointed a Special Representative—Francesc Vendrell—who works with other key participants in the Afghan political process and advises the EU on its Afghanistan policy. Most recently, the EU pledged an additional €8.7 billion (\$11.6 billion) over the next five years. EU member states and the European Commission have assumed key roles in specific areas of assistance and security. For example, the UK has the lead in counter-narcotics; Italy in judicial reform and training; and, until recently, Germany was the lead country for police training.

While the EU and nation-specific contributions are laudable, they are increasingly considered insufficient. Afghans, Non-Governmental Organizations, NATO,

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<sup>1</sup> Between 2002 and 2006, the EU and EU member states disbursed a total of €3.7 billion – one third of the aid pledged by the international community. At the London Conference in spring 2006, the EU and EU member states promised an additional \$2.4 billion (about €2 billion) for reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan over the coming years.

and an array of international partners on the ground have repeatedly called for more aid, faster and expanded training, and an increase in the EU's civilian presence. Such calls will only grow louder in the coming months, particularly as the Taliban's "spring offensive" gains momentum.

Given its current toolbox of capabilities, international experience, and institutional strengths, the EU should assume a much stronger leadership role in Afghanistan. Such an initiative would produce several tangible benefits. First and foremost, a stronger EU presence on the ground would bring much-needed resources to the local population. The EU has a wealth of experience in judicial reform, establishment of the rule of law, agriculture, health, education, police training, and reconstruction. Greater use of those skills, and of the EU's pool of trained civilians, would help Afghans match each stabilization victory with a reconstruction strategy. The EU, however, should make such assistance contingent on the performance of the Afghan government. In exchange for helping with reconstruction, the EU is perfectly justified in demanding good governance with very specific benchmarks.

Second, by assuming a greater coordinating role, the EU could fill one of the biggest gaps in the reconstruction effort. Coordination is a problem on multiple levels—among the hundreds of NGOs, government agencies, and international institutions operating on the ground; among EU member states; among the array of EU institutions contributing to the rebuilding efforts; and between military and civilian actors. The EU could play a constructive role in all or most of these areas. By establishing a coordination mechanism simply for its own member states, the EU could significantly reduce the waste and duplication that has been well-documented in recent months.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> And confirmed by EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who stated in a *Financial Times* article (February 1, 2007) that donors continue to duplicate their efforts. Local officials have been more strident in their critiques, with Afghan trade minister Amin Farhang labeling some donors "wasteful" and unable to coordinate relief efforts in spite of the establishment of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board.

Non-EU actors, especially NATO, would also have a body with which to communicate, coordinate, and construct common or at least complementary strategies.

Third, by taking a lead in reconstruction, the EU could relieve some of the burden on member states such as the UK and Italy that are currently responsible for individual reconstruction tasks. While individual EU member states could and should continue to play key roles, the EU could provide an overall framework that folded the individual projects into a single integrated strategy. Member states that wanted to help with reconstruction, but were unwilling or unable to take the lead in any one area, could contribute through the EU. Donors from inside and even outside the EU could fill gaps that the EU identified.

Fourth, the EU could help European political elites offset some of the public resistance to an increased role in Afghanistan. Many Europeans believe that the United States abandoned its efforts in Afghanistan to

pursue the unpopular Iraq war, leaving European governments and forces to deal with the dangerous security situation that the Iraq war in part created. Europeans also often caution against a strategy that focuses solely on military action, leading many to

conclude that more troops will not solve the problem. A heightened EU role, on the other hand, would give national leaders political cover to increase their financial, civilian and military contributions, without appearing to be doing America's dirty work. The EU could also redouble its efforts to explain to Europeans why failure in Afghanistan would be a direct threat to their own safety and stability.

Fifth, the EU, which is widely perceived around the world as an honest broker, could play a much greater diplomatic role, using its good offices to convene some of the regional players for a dialogue about Afghanistan's future and border security. The United States is currently unable to assume this role, given its tattered global image, its complex and politically charged relationship with Pakistan, and its lack of diplomatic ties with Iran.

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Finally, by asserting itself in Afghanistan, the EU would dramatically improve its own image abroad and position itself as a major contributor to peace and stability in the Middle East. While the EU has won worldwide international respect, particularly for its development assistance programs, it is also often seen as paralyzed by internal debates over its further enlargement and the desirability of deeper economic and political integration. Member states and EU officials often trumpet the EU's soft power potential. What better way to put those words into practice than by helping to rebuild Afghanistan?

## KOSOVO

On March 26, 2007, UN special envoy, former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari is due to present to the UN Security Council a plan leading to phased independence for Kosovo. The EU will have a more crucial role than any other institution in implementing the plan and ensuring a secure and prosperous future for both Kosovo and Serbia (as well as the Serb minority in Kosovo.)

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Ever since the end of the 1999 conflict, the EU has played a leading role in reconstructing Kosovo. In June 1999, the EU assumed control of recovery and development, one of the four pillars of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. In that capacity, the EU has contributed significant financial and human resources over the past eight years. It has also included Kosovo in its "Stabilization and Association Process" for the Western Balkans as a whole, spelling out the conditions for eventual EU membership and offering a strong incentive for reform.

In recent months, officials from both the EU and its member states have repeatedly stressed their readiness to play an even greater role after a settlement is reached on Kosovo's final status. Plans are under way for a European official—mandated by the UN and the EU—to supervise Kosovo during a transitional period. The EU has also promised to deploy a police mission alongside the current NATO peace-keeping force.

Given this detailed planning and numerous EU pledges of unwavering support for Kosovo's continuing growth and prosperity, there appears to be little cause to doubt the EU's commitment. The reality, however, is that the EU is not giving enough prominence to its preparations for assuming responsibility in Kosovo. Internal divisions are growing over how best to address Serbian and Russian opposition to the Ahtisaari plan, whether to cite "independence" as the ultimate aim, and whether the final agreement should be imposed or negotiated. These differences are making it difficult for the EU and the international community to reach consensus and to convince Moscow not to veto the plan in the UN Security Council.

The EU must quickly and firmly take a united stand. As the current holder of the EU's rotating presidency, Germany should take the lead in building consensus inside the Union. In the short term, it is crucial that the EU

adopt a united position if it is to prevent the Kosovar Albanians from declaring independence unilaterally, persuade the Russians to support (or at least not to block) the UN plan, maintain broader transatlantic and international unity, and provide incentives for the Serbs to accept Kosovo's new status. If the EU fails to chart a common strategy in the coming weeks, there are likely to be grave consequences for Kosovars and Serbs, for regional stability, and for the credibility of the EU.

In the long term, much as in Afghanistan, the EU is slated to be one of the most important contributors to the reconstruction process. It will need to rely on its longstanding expertise in nation building to help Kosovo establish legitimate, transparent, and accountable institutions. The EU's years of work in the Balkans make it the best prepared institution to guide Kosovo toward true independence. The benefits of a concerted EU effort in Kosovo are enormous. So are the consequences of failure.

## RUSSIA

Russia started 2007 with an unwelcome bang. On New Year's Day it provided a chilling reminder of the importance and the precariousness of Russian energy supplies to Europe by cutting off natural gas shipments to Belarus in a price dispute. Little more than a month later, Russian President Vladimir Putin grabbed headlines at the Munich International Security Conference with a strident speech spelling out a long list of grievances with the United States and its western partners. Moscow followed up his speech with a number of stern warnings about the consequences of a U.S. decision to build an anti-ballistic missile shield on Polish and Czech soil. The Russians seem to be more intent on escalating tensions with the United States than with Europe. But Russia's muscular approach is also serving the purpose of dividing the EU at a time when the Europeans face a number of challenges from Moscow, especially over energy policy.

The growing debate in Europe about energy security and diversification shows that Europeans are paying closer attention to the general problem of relying too heavily on a single source of energy. More specifically, it also betrays heightened nervousness over the growing power of Russia as it supplies an ever increasing share of Europe's energy. Most EU attempts to grapple with the challenge of Russian energy policy, however, have been inhibited by fear of damaging Europe's already fragile relationship with Moscow. The EU has quickened its efforts, for example, to create a common energy policy and a single energy market. But many EU countries are more interested in protecting their own interests by striking bilateral deals with Moscow and overlooking the harsh treatment that Russia continues to mete out to countries in its "near abroad" in Central and Eastern Europe, even though many of those countries are now EU and NATO members.

There can be little doubt that the EU would have a stronger hand in dealing with Moscow if it spoke with a single voice, especially as Russia is increasingly using its energy leverage to pick off individual countries, in order to achieve political as well as economic objectives. But efforts to diversify EU sources of supply (and, to a lesser extent, fuel choices,

including greater reliance on alternatives and renewables) have little prospect of bearing significant fruit in the near future. And most EU countries seem too fearful to call Moscow's bluff by taking the more robust approach of gambling that their role as reliable customers is just as important to Russia as are Russia's supplies to Europe.

There is a forum for a tougher, more united EU approach. Both Moscow and Brussels have stated that they wish to negotiate a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement to replace an earlier pact that will soon expire. Recently, Poland has been disrupting the negotiations, ostensibly in retaliation for a Russian ban on Polish meat exports, but also more generally because it is not inclined to do Moscow any favors. The negotiations are dogged by other problems, including growing European concern over President Putin's increasingly autocratic rule, and the imminent arrival of new leaders in Britain and France, whose attitudes toward Moscow remain to be tested.

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Nevertheless, it seems likely that the talks, which both sides want, will eventually get back on track. And there are some things that Moscow seeks from them—particular-

ly recognition that the latest negotiations have to be conducted between equals. The Russians argue that the previous agreement, concluded in 1997, was negotiated at a time when their country was much weaker than it is now. In return, the EU negotiators can point out that the new treaty is unlikely to be ratified by all 27 member states if Moscow does not adopt a more cooperative attitude, both on energy and in its political attitudes more broadly.

EU leaders must adopt a more courageous approach. Kowtowing to Russia over energy will only encourage Moscow to take an even harder line. The EU should not shrink from wielding the powerful weapon of its competition policies, under which it could, and should, act against abuses of dominant market positions by Russia's oil and gas pipeline monopolies on EU territory. The EU should demand reciprocity in investment regulations, correcting the present one-sided arrangement under which Russian companies can

invest much more easily in Europe than European companies in Russia. Above all, the 15 Western European countries that were members before the EU recently expanded into Central and Eastern Europe must show greater solidarity with their new partners from behind the old Iron Curtain. That is not only a moral and political obligation; it would also strengthen the EU's negotiating position.

At the same time, the EU must not be bullied into relaxing pressure on Moscow on issues ranging from human rights and democratic reforms to the international bid to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Just as Europe's leadership is changing, nobody knows for certain how Moscow's leadership will evolve after President Putin leaves office in 2008. But it is clear that encouraging Russia to remain committed to democratic reforms without pushing it away or losing its valuable cooperation on a number of global security challenges will remain an extremely delicate task. It is therefore imperative that the EU and the United States deliver a consistent and common message while offering incentives for Russian cooperation. Neither the United States nor the EU will be able to exert much positive influence on Russian policy acting alone. But the EU can still play a key role in defusing some of the tensions in Russia's broader relationship with the West.

## DARFUR

For the past three years, the people of Darfur have been victims of a bloody and brutal conflict. Hundreds of thousands have been killed and more than two million people have been displaced. While images of the conflict have been broadcast in every time zone, the international community has tragically failed to take effective steps to induce the Sudanese government to stop the violence. Consumed with Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States lacks both the resources and political capital to make Darfur its top priority (although it sent special envoys to lead the negotiation of the well-intentioned but unsuccessful Darfur Peace Agreement.) The EU, however, could and should do much more to end the conflict. Europe's capacity to act

must simply be paired with the corresponding political will.

Like the UN and other multilateral players, the EU has been heavy on rhetoric but light on action. EU officials have repeatedly declared Darfur to be of "grave concern." Since the conflict started, however, the EU has taken only a handful of modest and ineffective steps toward a resolution. It sanctioned four individuals—a former Sudanese air force commander, one Janjaweed militia leader and two rebels—and imposed a weak arms embargo on the warring parties. It has also assisted the peacekeeping efforts of the Africa Union Mission by providing equipment and assets, planning and technical assistance, military observers, and training. The EU's best performance, however, has been in helping to cope with the widening humanitarian crisis. The EU has contributed more than €50 million in relief aid and has saved many lives.

The EU is capable of playing a much more influential role than it has to date. Virtually all

monitors of the conflict agree that forceful measures are needed to persuade Khartoum to halt the violence and negotiate a peace deal. Experience has shown that the Sudanese respond to firm international pressure, as witnessed in 2005 when Sudan signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement ending the civil war in the south. The EU could easily lead international efforts to apply such pressure through tough and targeted sanctions. In addition, it could impose travel bans and asset freezes on individuals who have been identified as complacent in the ongoing violence. (A list of such individuals can be found in the UN's Commission of Inquiry and Panel of Experts.) Brussels could also impose a freeze on assets and companies inside the EU controlled or owned by Sudan's ruling National Congress Party.

If EU pressure on Khartoum were successful, there would be much more to celebrate than just the end of one of the bloodiest conflicts in Africa's recent history. The EU would have successfully countered the argument that only military force could halt the

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violence in Darfur, and it would have showcased its muscle in resolving international crises. Most importantly, if the EU were to act now, it might avert future intervention on a much larger scale. There are clear indications that the conflict is spreading to Chad and the Central African Republic. If that trend continues, the international community will soon face an expanding regional crisis.

If the EU cannot muster the political will to act as one, EU countries should take meaningful steps on their own. For example, EU countries in the UN Security Council, together with the United States, should take the lead in pressing for the targeted sanctions and travel bans mentioned above. EU member states can also do more to highlight Sudan's support of armed militias and continued bombing, while calling for the immediate cessation of the military offensive in Darfur. Public condemnation can play a key role in applying pressure on the Sudanese government, although it should not be viewed as sufficient.

### THE HOUR OF EUROPE (REVISITED)

On its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the EU has much to celebrate. It has brought unprecedented peace and stability to the European continent and created an economic powerhouse. For the first time in history, it has united Europe peacefully, rather than by force of arms. The EU now has a chance to add another milestone to its forward progress. By taking action in the four areas cited in this paper, the EU can propel itself onto the world stage as a foreign policy actor that matches its words with deeds. Failure to seize the opportunity could seriously jeopardize global security, the EU-U.S. relationship, and indeed the EU project itself.

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- ❖ The Europe Program is pleased to announce the launch of a new transatlantic newsletter in spring 2007. This publication will feature insight and analysis from CSIS experts on a wide-range of European and transatlantic issues. The newsletter will also provide information on upcoming Europe Program events and publications. For more information, please contact [JWiseman@csis.org](mailto:JWiseman@csis.org).
- ❖ On March 15, CSIS released *Terms of Engagement: The Euro-Atlantic Partnership at Sixty*, by Simon Serfaty, CSIS Brzezinski Chair and senior adviser to the Europe Program. *Terms of Engagement* puts forth over two dozen key recommendations for the EU, the United States, and NATO. For more information on the CSIS EU-U.S.-NATO project, please contact [DMix@csis.org](mailto:DMix@csis.org).
- ❖ On March 27<sup>th</sup> at 5pm, CSIS's Europe and Russia/Eurasia Programs will co-host an event with OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, discussing the immediate challenges facing the OSCE region. For further information, please contact [JWiseman@csis.org](mailto:JWiseman@csis.org).

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