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Emmanuel Macron's Europe A vision, some proposals

On 26th September at the Sorbonne Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic delivered his vision of the European project and put forward a series of ideas for the European Union¹. They are presented here and a summary made based on his suggestions. Clearly the result of careful thought on his part his vision is firstly oriented towards the future. Open to sharing with his European partners and to debate with the citizens, this is expressed in over 77 proposals and real examples of what might be implemented in the Union by 2024.

Sovereign, united, democratic Europe

To speak of Europe, means explaining where we want to go". "Because we have spoken of instruments, we have lost the goal of bringing our peoples closer together. "Europe is an idea carried along over the centuries by pioneers, optimists, visionaries." Thanks to them "where chaos should have triumphed, civilisation has always won the day." But "Europe has built itself apart." Today this is no longer possible. "We can no longer afford to keep up the same habits, the same policies, the same vocabulary and the same budgets." "The path of national withdrawal would signify collective disaster." "The only way which will guarantee our future is the "re-foundation of a sovereign, united, democratic Europe."

A STRONG EUROPE IN THE WORLD

"Only Europe can, in a word, guarantee genuine sovereignty or our ability to exist in today's world to defend our values and interests."

The six keys to Europe's sovereignty:

1. Security:

Defence: "What Europe, Defence Europe, lacks most today is a common strategic culture. Our inability to work together convincingly undermines our credibility as Europeans. We do not have the same cultures, be they parliamentary, historical or political, or the same sensitivities" "In the area of defence, our aim needs to be ensuring Europe's autonomous operating capabilities, in complement to NATO."

PROPOSALS:

- As of 2020: a joint intervention force, common defence budget, common action policy

^[1] <http://www.elysee.fr/videos/initiative-pour-l-europe-discours-du-president-de-la-republique-emmanuel-macron-pour-une-europe-souveraine-unie-democratique/>

Emmanuel Macron's Europe

A vision, some proposals

- Introduction of European Defence and Permanent Structured Cooperation Fund
- European intervention initiative for an improved management of the armed forces
- Creation of a European Information Academy
- Reception in all national armies soldiers from all European countries who are willing to participate.

Anti-terrorism: the Member States and the Union must act jointly in response to the challenges set by terrorism

PROPOSAL:

- Stepping up the work started to counter the financing of terrorism and terrorist propaganda on the internet
- Extending the remit of the European Prosecutor's office to counter organised crime and terrorism
- Strengthening cybersecurity and creating a common area of security and justice

Natural Disasters: Climate change demands a collective response.

PROPOSAL:

- the creation of a common civil protection force, that will pool the means of rescue and intervention

2. Controlling our borders and protecting our values:

"The migration crisis is not really a crisis but a long-lasting challenge."

PROPOSALS:

- Construction of a common area for border, asylum and immigration
- Creation of a European Asylum Office
- Improving the interconnectivity of files and secure biometric ID documents
- Progressive introduction of a European border police force
- Financing together a European refugee training and integration programme

3. Africa and Mediterranean:

"We also need to look further, and I want to say clearly that even the most robust borders and most ambitious security policy will not suffice to curb long-term migration flows. Only stabilization and development in countries of origin will dry them up."

PROPOSALS:

- Let the external priorities be Africa and the Mediterranean
- A partnership with Africa founded on education, healthcare, energy transition, technological revolution
- An increase in public development aid financed by a tax on European financial transactions

4. Ecological and Agricultural Transition

"Europe has to be at the forefront of effective, fair ecological transition" to enable the emergence of a "new production model that will not just be economic but one of society, civilisation that will lead to new thought on inequality, the externalities of a society whose main victims of imbalances are the weakest and the most fragile."

PROPOSALS :

- Introduction of a floor price for carbon within the borders (over 30 euros per tonne).
- European border carbon tax
- Territorial transition contracts,
- European energy market to foster interconnection
- Industrial support programme for clean vehicles and the deployment of common infrastructures
- Strengthening Europe's food safety and sovereignty with agricultural transition
- Reform of the CAP: protection against the volatility of the world markets, fostering European agricultural transition
- Common force to monitor food safety
- Support to President Juncker regarding the end of double food standards
- Creation of a European investigative and control force to counter fraud, guarantee food safety and the respect of quality standards

5. Digital Europe

"I want Europe to take a leading role in this revolution through radical innovation. ."

PROPOSALS:

- the creation of a European Intelligence Academy
- the creation of a Franco-German Artificial Intelligence Agency
- Strengthening the digital market
- Protecting economic data
- Taxation of digital businesses on the value created in a country
- Regulation of major platforms
- Defence of copyright in the modern digital space

6. Europe, an economic, industrial and monetary power

"Because it is through this Economic and Monetary Union, at its heart, that we can create the heart of an integrated Europe. (...) "It is a question of (...) a long-term economic and political strategy, and our challenge within the eurozone is to work out how to make it an economic power which can compete with China and the United States, and how to achieve what for the past 10 years we have failed to do: to create jobs."

PROPOSALS :

- Financing a euro zone budget based on own resources such as European taxes in the digital or environmental areas or a corporate tax, once harmonisation has been achieved
- Creation of a European Finance Minister
- Continuation of an ambitious space policy and the consolidation of a competitive European industry at world level
- Promoting a trade policy that effectively defends European interests based on three principles of transparency, social and environmental requirements and reciprocity
- Creation of a European Trade Prosecutor

A UNITED EUROPE**4**

"We will never have a strong, sovereign Europe if it is not united and coherent in itself." "Europe's 28 Member States cannot operate like the original six-member bloc. Our project, the future of our peoples cannot be based on the lowest common denominator." If we are to cultivate the desire to push ahead and ensure Europe's progress benefits everyone, we need to constantly accommodate the driving ambition of some while allowing others to move ahead at their own speed."

1. Social and Tax Convergence

"The Single Market (...) is not a race to the bottom".

"So in Europe, we need a revamped social model: not one stuck in the twentieth century, and not that of a catch-up economy."

PROPOSALS :

- Support the proposal made by the Commission to create a European Control Authority to check on the implementation of the rules governing posted workers
- Creation of a corporate tax bracket in 2020 which would condition access to the European Cohesion Fund
- Convergence of corporate tax within the next four years between France and Germany
- Bringing social systems closer together at European level
- Revision of the posted workers directive
- Definition of a European social pillar (discussions as of November)
- Minimum wage adapted to the economic reality of each country and progressive convergence
- Convergence Fund with a dedicated budget

2. Creating a sense of belonging via culture and knowledge

"The strongest cement that binds the European Union together will always be culture and knowledge. This Europe, where every European recognizes their destiny in the figures adorning a Greek temple or in Mona Lisa's smile...."

"Instead of deploring our many languages, we should make them an asset. Europe must be a place where all students can speak at least two European languages by 2024."

"Europe must be shaped by these languages and it will always be made of the untranslatable." "I champion this untranslatable quality, our complex differences ..."

PROPOSALS :

- Strengthening exchanges, goals for 2024: 50% of an age group having spent six months in another European country before their 25th birthday – 100% of students speaking two European languages
- European universities with true European semesters and European diplomas. One per Member State by 2024
- a network of European universities
- a harmonisation process or mutual recognition of secondary school diplomas
- Launch of an Apprentice Erasmus

A DEMOCRATIC EUROPE

"... we have drawn a line under one form of European integration."

"... the essence of the European project is democracy. I would even say that it is its greatest strength, what really fuels it." "And those who think we could choose sovereignty without democracy are mistaken!" "The founding fathers built Europe in isolation from the people, because they were an enlightened vanguard and perhaps because they could do that, and they made progress by proving subsequently that it worked. Perhaps they enjoyed a trust that is no longer exclusive to leaders; that is how things are. They lived in another time, when means of communication were not the same." "European democratic doubt – the doubt which the "no" votes in the French and Dutch referendums made us experience – put an abrupt end to that chapter." "But we mustn't fall into the trap of the populists or extremes, which consists in saying: "let's ask the question in a simplistic way: yes or no?" "We know the answer: it is always "no", whatever the question. We need to overhaul the European project, through and with the people, with much greater democratic stringency than a mere binary question."

1. Democratic Conventions:

"Let's give the European elections a project to feed on and see who is for and who is against!"

PROPOSALS:

2019 a good time to transform Europe

- Development of democratic conventions that would be national and local debates regarding common issues for six months in 2018.
- Building a project in view of the European elections in 2019
- Promotion for the elections of 2019 of transnational lists for the 73 MEP seats relinquished by the UK.

2 . The European Parliament at the heart of the transformation of Europe:

2024: Goal

- that half of Parliament be elected from transnational lists in 2024.
- the strengthening of European Parliament via "genuine European elections" with transnational lists.
- True European political parties: "But then you will all see, at European level, what appeared clearly in France in May: namely that what sometimes keeps you in common parties no longer exists, because your relationship with Europe is no longer the same, within the same major parties, and you no longer believe in the same things." "I will not leave those major European parties a monopoly on the debate about Europe and the European elections!"

A VISION OF EUROPE FOR 2024

1. The two pillars: values and Single Market:

Values

"The first represents the values of democracy and the rule of law. They're non-negotiable; there can be no cherry-picking. On values, there can be no two-speed Europe. They are the catalyst for our unity and freedom."

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PROPOSAL:

- Support to the European Commission and the procedures launched over the last few months.

Single Market: Convergence rather than competition

"The second pillar is the single market, which is still the best guarantee of our power, prosperity and attractiveness."
 " (...) a simpler, more transparent, less bureaucratic Europe" "If the vitality of the law is Europe's strength, the profusion of standards sparks its rejection."

PROPOSALS:

- The work towards simplification must be taken up where it came to a halt before the British vote.
- Review of European rules with business leaders, NGO's and citizen panels

Trade Agreements: Transparency, Requirements and Reciprocity

PROPOSAL:

- Creation of the post of European Trade Prosecutor, responsible for checking on the respect of the rules by our competitors and punishing unfair practice.

2. Union Institutions and Policies:PROPOSALS:

- A 15 member committee.
- That the founding countries set the example by relinquishing – as a start – their Commissioners
- Continuing two-tiered Europe without excluding anyone
- Cooperation that is always open to everyone, with the only criteria of having a shared level of ambition, with a defined format.
- Completing the Union's borders. The Balkans are destined to join when they fulfil the criteria: "They'll have to respect the conditions stipulated, but securing them to a European Union reinvented in this way is a precondition for their not turning their backs on Europe and moving towards either Russia or Turkey, or towards authoritarian powers that don't currently uphold our values."
- the UK will find its place in a renewed Union: "But in this revamped, simplified European Union that I propose, I cannot imagine that the UK would be unable to find its place."
- Accepting differentiation: "We've got to make progress on all our major challenges, quickening the pace and setting our sights higher. No State must be excluded from the process, but no country must be able to block those wanting to make faster progress or forge further ahead."

3. Franco-German Impetus

"So first of all I am making the proposal to Germany for a new partnership. We will not agree on everything, or straightaway, but we will discuss everything."

PROPOSALS :

- Total integration of the French and Germany markets by 2024: convergence of rules applied to businesses, from corporate law to bankruptcy law
- Franco-Germany Intelligence Agency, launch of a common artificial intelligence programme

- A new Elysée Treaty on 22nd January 2018 (55th anniversary of the 1963 Treaty), to record and formalise the new common commitments

3. The Group to refound Europe:

"... I will be making proposals to everyone who shares this desire for a sovereign Europe, based on the central objectives I have mapped out: the desire for a united, differentiated Europe, for a democratic Europe supporting the conventions initiative, for launching in the next few weeks a group for the refoundation of Europe. This group will include representatives of each participating Member State and will involve European institutions."

PROPOSAL :

- Creation of a "Group for the refoundation of Europe" to include representatives of any Member State that is willing and to include the European institutions.
- Proposals for measures by the summer of 2018, drafted using information from democratic conventions.

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"So today, I take responsibility for making proposals, forging further ahead, being bold enough to talk about Europe and finding words of affection and ambition for it again. Not imposing, forcing or seeking to reinvent everything (...) but taking the risk of proposing a coherent, ambitious vision, proposing a way forward, an objective, rather than discussing instruments, and taking the vital risk of proposing initiatives". The time when France took decisions for Europe never existed, except in the fantasy world of a few misguided nationalists. The time when France "sought" to take decisions for Europe may have existed; but that is not what I want to do. But the time when France makes proposals in order to move forward with Europe and every European who so wishes – that time has and I'm thinking right now of Robert Schuman who, in Paris on 9th May 1950, was bold enough to propose building Europe. I remember his powerful words: 'A united Europe was not achieved and we had war'."

Speaking of Europe's dark years the speech at the Sorbonne concludes with a vibrant appeal to all Europeans, notably addressed to their leaders: "look at our times, (...) and you'll see that you have no choice, you don't have the luxury of the generation preceding us, which could manage what had been achieved and had scarcely been built.

You have only a simple choice: making a bit more room at each election for nationalists, for those who hate Europe – and, in five, 10, 15 years they'll be there. We have already seen them win here! Or you can choose to shoulder your responsibilities, everywhere, and want this Europe, taking every risk, each of us in our own country, (...) because the scars which disfigured our Europe are our scars!! (...) we have only one responsibility: the one our young people require of us, for the generations to come: that of earning their gratitude, otherwise we will deserve their scorn. I have made my choice.

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