

Considerations on the European crisis

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The French and Dutch 'Noes' to the draft European Constitutional Treaty have not just given rise to an institutional problem but are also symptomatic of an underlying crisis in the process of European integration. The French 'No' has at the same time cast more doubt on how the Franco-German special relationship works in the EU. The reasons for both countries' decisions to reject the text could also have led to a 'No' in referenda in other member states, including Germany. That is why it is essential to understand these reasons first so as to gain a clear understanding of the nature of the crisis. Such considerations must fulfil the terms of reference, as suggested for the 'period of reflection' set out by the European Council. The 'period of reflection' is ongoing.

Nature of the crisis

The French and Dutch 'Noes' were not a rejection of specific articles in the European Constitutional Treaty per se or European unity in general but a rejection of the founding principle of the European process – the abolition of borders.

The European Union is a European answer to globalisation. Globalisation means the abolition of borders. The resulting cross-border reality, which is particularly strong in Europe, erodes the claim by member states that they can be solely, ultimately and completely sovereign within clear territorial borders in a growing number of areas. The abolition of borders amounts to denationalisation. That is why collective European answers are a historical necessity.

But the logic of breaking down borders is also true for Europe itself. Europe can establish common rules of competition inside the EU and can use its trading muscle to develop global

norms, which its member states could not do on their own. This added value is as important as its use within the EU. In this way the EU is both a part of globalisation, but also a dominant player in globalisation in that it is removing all the national barriers that stand in the way of transnational economic activity.

In the common market not only do European companies compete with each other for clients, but employees compete for jobs and states compete for investment. Company profits seem to grow inexorably, their shareholders seem to get richer and richer while jobs and the welfare of employees seem to be more and more under threat and member states seem more and more helpless in this process. European integration is even accelerating this process. It is often overlooked that companies are under extraordinary and constantly growing pressure. If they do not make as much profit as their global competitors, then they will be bought up. Capital may escape heavy regulatory conditions in one state by relocating jobs or choosing a state with more favourable conditions, which may be for taxation or other reasons.

These fears have gone up a notch following the enlargement of the EU to include countries with much lower wage and price levels. The 'Polish plumber' who emerged in the French referendum debate symbolises this fear. Hopes that European countries can find a good balance between a liberal economic order and a society based on solidarity by working together at institutional level and ensuring or reproducing the so-called 'European model' in the face of globalisation are fading. No-one seems to know how to achieve this goal. The substance of this ideal and the way in which it is achieved are essential parts of Europe's perception of itself. The European social model is also in crisis.

Most of the old member states do not trust the new member states enough to put their fates in the hands of a joint decision-making procedure involving their new partners. But this trust is the very basis of European integration. There is an unmistakeable tendency for them to withdraw into their national shells. The general prevailing mood is one of weakness and fear. The European Union seems neither to have nor to want to provide a solution for its internal problems or for the challenges from external competition from countries such as China and India.

Nor is it able to solve the problem of the flood of immigrants coming from its southern neighbours. Migration is not just understood as an economic and social challenge but as a challenge to the way in which European citizens perceive their national and European identities and the way in which people live together in society. That is why more and more people see Europe answer to globalisation not as an adaptation to it but as a protection from it. The crucial question, which does not only apply to Europe, is if this is actually possible, and if so, to what extent.

Europe's decision to break down borders, which is part of globalisation, also comes with some problems. Breaking down borders means more freedom but also less security. It means more competition but also more disparities and less cohesion within nations and possibly also between them. The latter is all the truer the less they feel close to one another. Set borders are not just the founding principle of the organisation of the power of a state but are also a core building block of people's awareness of themselves in society, in the way they see themselves as different from others, from those inside and outside the state, for the notion of being 'us' and for identity.

If borders become increasingly porous in every sphere, and are in addition changing constantly, essential problems of identity and identification will arise. As borders for all areas of life become more and more porous and permanent, as is happening in the EU, the underlying problems of identity and identification emerge. This is all the more true given the growing pace at which people today live their lives. In this case people will only perceive the disadvantages and dangers of the abolition of borders and not its advantages and opportunities. They will only see the consequences for themselves and not for the others any more or for the whole.

The state of affairs described above is not the full picture. The situation and mood differs from member state to member state. In places where people attach hopes to Europe because "it's going forwards", as they tend to do in Spain, a positive attitude still prevails. Meanwhile, traditional reservations about Europe are the order of the day in the UK and Scandinavian countries. But here too the fear of a loss of identity is at the heart of their concerns about Europe.

In the new central and eastern European member states, reservations are mixed with deep uncertainties and fears as a result of the fundamental upheaval in all political and social relations that arose in the transition from a totalitarian system to a democratic one. André Plecu, a Romanian intellectual and a former foreign minister of Romania, has said of these countries: "When we eastern Europeans talk about Europe, we mean the past. When western European talks about Europe, they mean the future." The crux of the East-West problem is not unequal economic development but the legacies of the past.

The new members long to restore their national sovereignty and identity, both of which have often been suppressed and threatened by Germany and Russia down the centuries. The debate about how they behaved under Communism and under National Socialist rule as well as immediately afterwards is a dominant theme among citizens and politicians. It is not only their relationship with Germany, but also their European vocation, which is still vulnerable to crises.

Consequences

The practical consequences of the European crisis are demands for integration to be limited in three ways. One is within the EU (eg the Services Directive) another is towards further enlargements (especially Turkey), and the third is towards the rest of the world, both as regards textiles from China and migrants. Broadly speaking, people want a more closed rather than a more open Europe and more security rather than more freedom.

From an institutional point of view, the currently shipwrecked EU Constitutional Treaty above all means a failure to make progress on the urgently needed improvements in the decision-making process. This is clearly not the time for institutional progress in the European process of unification, not even for such modest developments as the EU Constitutional Treaty. Any kind of deeper integration, especially in the economic field (via the usual Europeanisation of further areas of economic policy) and above all social policy, can be ruled out not just because of the very different thinking on these policy areas but also because of the very different conditions in different member states and even more so because of the problems of democratic legitimacy. The best that can be hoped for is better coordination.

Vacuum of leadership in the EU

In this disastrous situation, the EU is in urgent need of strong leadership. Germany and France, who used to be the driving forces of the EU, are relatively weak and lack confidence in their own ability to shape the EU as they want to. Indeed they no longer even appear to know exactly what they want.

They have not been up to this task for years and will not be up to it for at least another year. France is not up to the task not just because the French voted 'No' [to the EU Constitution] but also because it capitulated to young people's opposition to the government's employment protection reform plans and because of the two elections in the first half of 2007. Both France and Germany have been unable to implement reforms that have been recognised as being essential. This has curtailed their economic growth, an area in which Germany has led the way for years. Germany has not been sticking to the EU Stability and Growth Pact, which it pushed through into the Maastricht Treaty in the teeth of stiff opposition from France in particular. No-one would hold up Germany as a model for Europe now, as Jacques Delors did in 1993. Neither country is fulfilling the guidelines that they took part in deciding on (the Lisbon Strategy). They are anything but examples to follow and are too weak to be recognised as leading players. And yet, try as one might, there is just no other alternative that comes to mind.

But Germany does now have a stable government again, one with a huge majority at least. Whether it will be in a position to take the lead again ultimately depends on its ability to finally set in motion the necessary reforms. Its responsibility in Europe's current crisis is all the greater as it will take over the reins of the EU Presidency in the first half of 2007. When preparing for this, it should not just oil the wheels of the usual cooperation with the preceding and subsequent presidencies, but it should also draw in Spain with its similarly stable, successful and pro-European government and the new Italian government, as soon as it shows itself to be capable of resuming cooperation in the construction of Europe as it has done so often in the past. Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands should also certainly be drawn in, as far as the upcoming elections in the latter country allows this to happen. No-one should be left out in the cold, not even Poland, in spite of the very problematic direction that its current government is taking. The German Chancellor has already begun to make a move along these lines. In this way Germany can signal to France how it envisages the responsibility of both countries in leading Europe in the future. Basically this amounts to returning to the way things were, working as partners and not subserviently, ie in a European spirit, an approach which both countries had moved away from not just in terms of the substance but also the style of their policies. The conditions for them to take on their former roles again are even better than they were before in that their citizens today have almost exactly the same understanding of what they mean to each other, which they see as the most important thing, and as being distinct from the rest of the world, especially the US. That is a remarkable change, ie not that there are no more reciprocal prejudices, especially in the political classes of both countries, but that it has gone unnoticed that France is almost the only country in Europe where there are no longer any latent resentments or fears towards Germany.

Another important element in the diagnosis of the EU's ailments

Germany's special relationship with France should certainly help keep such fears in check but, instead of that, fears have recently reemerged and spread to both countries. There were very good reasons for France's and Germany's opposition to the US's war plans in Iraq back in 2003. But the way in which they took their stance, without bringing in the other partners in the EU in the slightest – the UK did likewise on the other side of the fence – created the impression that they were trying to take a stand against the US in the name of Europe. But, for the other member states, the US is still the counterweight to the feared hegemon Germany or any other hegemonic group of powers, which one should not take a stand against in such a crucial issue as the Iraq war. And it is not for Europe to be a counterweight to the USA as was regarded as, above all, France's aim. France and Germany have reawoken the spectres of the past via the impression of a Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis and thereby thrown a spotlight on a fundamental European truth: mutual trust in Europe is still in short supply. It has to be fought for and won in every situation. As those to whom the suspicions are above all directed,

Germany and France have a particular responsibility, which they did not live up to during the Iraq crisis and on other occasions. This awareness of the internal tensions within Europe, which is inextricably bound up with the transatlantic conflict, is also a very important element of the EU's diagnosis. The improvement in transatlantic relations in the meantime, above all in German-US relations, does not change this underlying reality much.

Using the crisis to clear things up

Germany must of course use its presidency first of all to try to save the Constitutional Treaty or at least its most important parts. Whether it will succeed in practice is by no means certain, but even if it were to be, it would by no means mean an end to the European crisis. That is why all German proposals and encouragements must be in line with deeper considerations, as raised by the 'period of reflection', and be directed towards answering the questions that were thrown up by the French and Dutch 'Noes' and can be summed up as follows:

- What does the 'European model' mean and what exactly can be done to achieve it?
- What does a 'political' Europe mean?
- What are its borders?
- What is Europe's role in the world?
- What is Europe's perception of itself?
- Does everyone have a common vision of Europe?

The broad debate needed for this cannot just be led by politicians but must be one in which all parts of society take part. But the German government should start it and take care above all that it becomes a truly European debate, in which all national contributions come together. That is already a tough but achievable task and would as such be a big contribution to Europe. But Germany will only ultimately be living up to its responsibility via ideas and proposals that match the depth of the crisis. Removing red tape and more democratic transparency are not enough.

The limits of politics

The following question must first be cleared up: how far should the abolition of borders, ie the globalisation of politics, go and where are the limits?

Lying behind the question of the 'European model' - crucial for Europe (and the nation state) to be accepted - and what that precisely means and how it can be achieved in a globalising world, is the really fundamental question of the limits of politics. The choice is between a political Europe and a market-based Europe, as can be clearly heard in France and a little less clearly in Germany and elsewhere in the EU. That sounds convincing. But if the market, say the labour market, is a transnational and unrestricted one, then political decisions in a restricted area have little effect if they negate this reality. Does that only leave the option of adapting to globalisation, and does that not mean the capitulation of politics? Or must we not aspire to freedom as "insight into the necessity", ie be aware of it, accept it and finally have the will to do what you have to do.

Can borders in Europe and worldwide be maintained at least provisionally or even redrawn? Could protection not be given at least until new competitors have got closer to the cost and wage levels of the old competitors? From what moment does this so impede and lengthen the catching up process that the price for the establishment of such barriers becomes too high for both sides? Does the ethical principle that everyone looks after themselves apply? Does all security have an end if short-term working relationships in different jobs alternate with times of unemployment and make all predictability and life planning things of the past? At the end of all questions about social Europe, do we not end up recognising that the only really crucial and remaining political duty is to prepare people for global competition, to give them freedom in as well equipped a condition as possible and above all to ensure that the abolition of borders does not put any obstacles in the way states deal effectively with each other? But how do things stand with the lack of or inadequately qualified people, who will grow in number against a backdrop of more and more demands? In this context, what is the relationship with globalisation and the way it is accelerating? Has the latter not, for more than 150 years, led to the loss of jobs as much as the creation of new ones via technological progress just as with globalisation? What is the ratio of jobs lost to jobs created?

Can what is 'social' still be defined as 'social' in the whole world or is it about global redistribution?

Is "fairness...the inner measure of politics" (Pope Benedict XVI) more a question of the ability of a political order to put (growing) inequality right in that the weak also benefit from this (John Rawls)? Does the term concept need to be redefined?

What consequences does the declining significance of the nation state have on relations with citizens, on national self-perception, which is very much marked by the effectiveness of its decisions? This is a question which has special significance for the French nation state but not by any means just for France.

What particular consequences does the abolition of borders have for democracy, which is also organised by state and by territory? What consequences can be drawn from the recognition that the few reforms that came about from the pressure of the European institutions - the European Commission and the European Central Bank – are precisely because of the nation states' independence, ie a lack of democratic control in the traditional sense? Is the equation, the more democratic the better for Europe in the face of the fears of the 'demos' valid and what is the 'demos' in Europe anyway? At the beginning of all individual questions about the consequences of globalisation, do we not need to acknowledge that globalisation is no less than the result of all the development and civilisation process of mankind, whose latest phase was introduced by Europe's expansion 600 years ago, and that to go against the overwhelming reality of the *one*, albeit far from united world, requires a conscious act of will, while recognising it offers us the chance to shape it? Is then neoliberalism no "mad" idea at all, but more a kind of description of reality, which no longer allows fairness to be created with old means or is it an ideology to justify itself?

What are Europe's borders?

The second question which the EU - and first and foremost France and Germany - has to answer, is about Europe's borders. From a practical point of view, a political union is all the more difficult to manage the more members it has and the more different they are. Only clear and firm institutional rules, above all a majority voting procedure, make it governable. But the attempt to introduce an improved procedure has failed in the first instance. It failed because countries did not have enough confidence to allow joint decision-making to win the day in so large and diverse a community. The legal requirements of enhanced cooperation made possible by the institutional framework also failed with it. This is precisely what is urgently needed not just because of the objective differences between member states but also because of their widely divergent approaches to the very purpose of the process of European unification. This leads to the conclusion that a halt should be called to further enlargements until this problem is resolved. As evident as that may sound, it must however not be forgotten that the decision to allow Romania and Bulgaria, the two biggest and very difficult Balkan countries, to join has been taken and that the prospect of joining has already been promised to still more problematic countries of the western Balkans, that this is the only chance for a self-sustaining stabilisation of the region and that this is very much in the interest of the older members of the Union. By postponing the prospects of new member states joining the EU again and again, would one not rob oneself of the only means to achieve this goal and punish

would-be EU members for the failure of the old member states to agree on the appropriate institutional provisions in a timely fashion, because they disagreed on what Europe is finally meant to be, as has been the case for almost all enlargements up until now? Would one not be proceeding according to the motto: "The dogs bite the last"? Would that not run up against the particularly difficult case of Turkey, where the price of accepting them would be undoubtedly high but so would the price of not accepting them be? And isn't the only chance for acceptance of the offer of a 'privileged partnership' that the EU and its members don't talk about it and that Turkey itself comes to the conclusion that it would be a better solution for it?

But if it is not possible, to create differentiated, institutionalised cooperation outside today's EU borders, because everyone regards it as inferior and discriminatory, if (with or without Turkey) the Europe that is soon to number 30 countries has no prospects of becoming a strong and united Europe that is capable of action in all political areas, does the idea not grow nearer of differentiating within the EU, ie establishing a looser core and a hard core and not just that all members are active in a growing set of joint policies and a smaller group active in a few more areas, as is already envisaged and practised - Schengen and EMU (Economic and Monetary Union) - and as is set out in some detail and should be developed via the draft Constitutional Treaty? There must from now on also be a group of countries, which, separately from the provisions set out in the treaties, carry out joint policies, above all in the central areas of foreign and security policy, including defence and a joint army, and which create the institutions they need to do that. All those who share the same vision of Europe should be able to take part but not those who want to take part so as to thwart it. When the necessary consensus throughout the Union is reached then these areas must of course be added to joint institutional frameworks.

The ideas are not new, nor are the doubts. They have come up again and again throughout the history of Europe's process of unification. They reflect the awareness that such an avant garde or pioneer group or such a centre of gravity or hard core or a group of countries with sufficient weight exert pressure on other member states so that they join in. That is exactly what is needed, and is a useful and legitimate way of working. The only new thing is the urgency of the situation and the need to make progress in the foreseeable and not distant future, progress which will not be achievable with what will soon be 30 member states. The situation is pressing also because of the need to allow this group, which is overly large and not very trusting in one another to form a closer, more trusting circle without shutting itself off from the others. The centrifugal forces that were released by the 'Noes' in France and the Netherlands can only be brought back to the centre via a strong centre of gravity. The abolition of borders must not lead to alienation.

USA – where lines need to be drawn?

The United States of America is outside and inside at the same time. It is a non-European yet also a European power. Admittedly it is not always physically present when Europeans meet but its presence is always felt. It is not just present in terms of its soldiers in Europe but, much more importantly, it has a strong cultural presence. The US is part of our world, ie Europe's world, and vice versa, Europe is also part of the US's world although this influence is becoming weaker. Neither are allowing that link to be broken and neither want that to happen. But Europeans want to change both yet not all Europeans want that because they don't trust what they want. The Iraq crisis, as discussed above, split Europe in terms of what role the US should play in Europe. It is about an 'Atlanticist Europe' versus a 'European Europe', a tension that has existed throughout the history of Europe's process of unification. In order to overcome the lack of trust of the 'Atlanticists', the 'Europeans' must make it unambiguously clear what they want to change – and almost more importantly – what they don't want to change. It cannot be about eroding or weakening links with the US. No-one should insinuate such stupid thoughts. But the alliance must be transformed into one between the US and Europe as a unit, in which Europe has its own means. According to the same logic, such a Europe must first develop its wishes before it sits at the NATO table with the US, in order to develop a common approach there. So that means strengthening and not weakening the alliance. If things stay as they are and happen as they did particularly clearly in the Iraq war, when the US makes decisions, for which it expects its partners to share in subsequently, or at least to support and legitimise, and if not all of them follow, forms a 'coalition of the willing' (a very descriptive expression) and when it claims the 'assets' of the alliance that it needs (the 'toolbox'), then the alliance will crumble over time. This is called subservience and not partnership.

But indignation is misplaced. The US acts in this way because it can and because Europe does not exist as a counterpart to the US and Europeans generally don't know what they want or else all want something different. So the US cannot only decide alone but must do so, although not necessarily in the way it has in recent times, when it has not wanted any joint European voice. But this situation for the alliance will lead to it ending, a fateful prospect for Europe as well as for the US. None of the European will be prepared in the long run to play this 'subservient' role, because it hurts the sense of pride of those, who, as during the Iraq war, see the US as a counterweight in Europe. Then anti-Americanism would develop out of the already widespread tendency to criticise the US, something which would not only run counter to Europe's political interests but also to the European spirit, which no longer wants to base its self-perception on a hostile sense of being anti something, certainly not anti the US.

This danger is all the greater as Europe and the US share these same values but increasingly interpret them in different ways and have even more different understandings of the right

means to bring these basic convictions to bear in the world. This does not just concern the war. US methods are clearly not very successful everywhere, to put it mildly, as is the case especially in the near and middle East, in the Islamic world, where hatred and hostility towards the US have grown alarmingly and are continuing to grow. The US is actually being left to face the challenges of this world too much on its own. So it may not be only the arrogance of power, which gives it the deceptive feeling that it has no borders, but also the sense of being alone. How can there actually be any doubt that the US needs a partner, which is also a counterweight, and which otherwise would not be a partner? Is that not a compelling conclusion based on basic human experience?

Europe must not exclude the US. It cannot do so and it must also not try to do so. But it can and must define and differentiate itself. How else should it come into its own, if the US always sits at the table when Europe is deciding?

The US will remain present in Europe and take part in the public debate here. It has excellent intellectual institutions. Europe must also be present as such in the US and take part in the US debate. It has many allies in the political and intellectual world of the US.

Europe and the US must find new ways to build common consensus and to take decisions, they must get on with institutional business and create a new NATO.

This kind of Europe is the 'European Europe', where Europe sits as itself at the one table of NATO with the US, and in such a way that the opposite to the 'Atlanticist Europe' is saved.

The creation of an external pillar

Europe cannot rely only on its economy. It has to make its foreign policy into something that really deserves to be called a 'pillar'. That must be an absolutely top priority aim, based on the extraordinary challenges that are known to be facing Europe, which are so inextricably bound up with the internal challenges, that foreign policy actually needs another term and should be set alongside every kind of internal policy. These challenges are not peculiar to any one European nation. This is something that citizens of all member states are all instinctively aware of and hence they demand a joint foreign policy. This is a value that, especially given their criticism and even rejection of economic Europe, cannot be underestimated. The relationship to the outside world, to 'the others', the decisive element, through which every politically created community becomes aware of itself and its peculiarities and recognises that it is a community. Foreign policy is the essential identity-determining experience for the EU too. Only those bodies that act as a unit towards the world will be understood as one. Self-awareness lies in differentiation. In this sense preparing for a common foreign policy is also the crucial criterion in preparing for a political union, for deciding on a common destiny. A Europe with a foreign policy is a political Europe. That is why Germany must do all in its power to develop the existing appendages for a fully-fledged joint foreign and security policy and

implement the improvements in this area set out in the draft Constitutional Treaty, as far as this is legally and politically possible without it having been adopted. As long as there are no majority decisions – and this will fail in the foreseeable future not just in the UK – this common foreign policy will remain inadequate ever to be in a position to take the often essential, quick and important decisions. Europe will once again be split, when, as in the Iraq crisis, a fundamental conflict with the US arises again.

That can only be prevented via a strong and magnetic core in the EU. The initiative of France, Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium, begun in 2003, and which would have led to a common European army, should be revived. Today, at least the Italians and Spaniards would also be ready to join in. One must not give defence the highest position in the context of a European foreign policy, without knowing that Europe will never play a significant role in the world without drastically improving its capacity in this area. And one does not need to be a prophet to predict that the means needed by nation states will not be brought up to the necessary levels for security in the foreseeable future. Nor does one need to be a military expert to know that splitting the military strength of Europe is financially irrational and objectively ineffective. All these very good reasons for a common army would also be powerful reasons for a joint foreign policy. Facts create pressures. An effort was made to apply a process, which Europe has successfully applied to the economy, to create European unity in defence but it failed in 1954 in the French national assembly. It is high time to pursue this again.

Germany's role

In 1954, the USA was pushing the Europeans, especially the French, to take this route. Fifty years later, they are rather trying to stop it from happening. Back then the US emphatically supported and promoted European unity and pushed for Germany to be brought back into the fold of honourable peoples. They did not do so out of selfless sympathy for the Germans. Who could expect that of anyone after 1945? No, they did it out of clever foresight and out of the feeling of the strong, to which the Soviet Union was to be thanked for the victory over Hitler's Germany, and which had not suffered so much, and which, apart from the UK, was not so humiliated as the other European countries. That allowed it be generous in its help for the economic and political reconstruction of Germany, whose western part was essential and more important than the other part of Europe for the defence of Europe from the new Soviet threat. This is how Germany became the USA's most important ally here. And this developed into an asymmetric balance in a two-way relationship, although the Bundesrepublik (Federal Republic of Germany) was of course, in its need for protection, more dependent on the USA than the other way round. For one it was about its existence and for the other about its place in the world. At the same time the USA offered protection from Germany. There was a double protection – for Germany and from Germany. The whole of Europe, but especially Germany, has had positive experiences with this US role on the old continent. And when the Soviet

Union collapsed in 1990, many believed and many still believe that, despite the fundamentally different underlying circumstances, this system could and must continue. Just as his son is now, President Bush senior offered Germany 'partnership in leadership', a global political role. In that sense too much was and is being asked of Germany, not least on the psychological front. But to the extent Germany plays a crucial role in determining Europe's approach to the US, it is the US's most important ally in Europe and is wooed for that very reason.

However, Europe no longer stands at the centre of the US's global strategy. And in terms of raw military power, the gap is still vaster than it was before. Both face the same challenges, but have increasingly different perceptions as to how to face them. Both are dependent on each other but Europe more so than the US. That is why there can be no doubt that Germany's strategic goal must be a Europe that is able to act in terms of its foreign and security policy. Thanks to its experience with the USA, Germany can make a significant contribution in moving towards this goal and making this development as free of conflict as possible. Germany should also do it so as not to arouse the ghosts of the past (see above) but also out of gratitude. But concepts such as being an intermediary can be misunderstood because an intermediary is a third party and not a party involved itself. Germany has aligned itself with Europe and must do so but choosing Europe does not mean dropping the US. And Europe's position is of course not just identical to France's position. If that often appears to be the case, it is because France tends to be the clearest in taking a European position, which is not a German strength. When there are conflicts, Germany would prefer not to choose and would prefer to keep quiet on uncomfortable issues, such as France's repeated offer to develop a 'concerted strategy' for its nuclear weapons, although the fact that not just France but also the UK has nuclear weapons, should not be taken as a 'negligible factor' in building Europe's defence. When the failure of Germany's aim to secure a permanent seat on the UN's Security Council is soon formally announced, Germany has a particular opportunity to bring forward Europe's foreign policy and gradually bring a practical representation of the EU in this body closer. That would correspond to the German parliament's decision of 11 November 1992. Germany's efforts towards securing a national seat did not only have slim prospects from the outset but were above all not very good for Europe. That too divided Europe. Germany should now accept France's offer to send a German representative to the French UN representation and use its position there, as in the Franco-German relationship, to work on joint European positions in the Security Council and to gradually develop a formal procedure in the EU bodies.

The current crisis in the European Union is one of growing pains and, in that sense, is a natural one. A stronger drive for more internal growth in Europe could come out of it if it is used to achieve clarity – clarity via a European debate about a 'European model', but above all clarity via political initiatives for the internal structure of the EU and its foreign policy. In the meantime, Europe must not stand still but should, as France has proposed, launch many

concrete projects, above all ones that bring people together and ensure the future, such as education, science and research projects.

Europe needs successes. But it should not forget that the enlargement eastwards was an extraordinary economic and political success for both sides. Europe should remember that precisely because the enlargement eastwards also triggered the crisis.