

PRESS RELEASE

Summary of the conference to launch the report

Think Global-Act European.

The Contribution of European Think Tanks to the French, Czech and Swedish Trio presidencies of the European Union

Fondation pour l'innovation politique – Notre Europe

On Friday 23 May 2008, 13 eminent European think tanks, the French, Czech and Swedish Secretaries of State for European Affairs, several Director Generals of the European Commission, together with Members of the European Parliament and various political leaders of the Member States, gathered at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Paris for a conference on "Upcoming Trio of EU presidencies. Recommendations from 13 think tanks to France, Czech Republic, Sweden".

This conference was organised by Notre Europe and the Fondation pour l'innovation politique in partnership with the CCIP, the Echos, the Aspen Institute-France and Euractiv.fr in order to **launch the report "Think Global – Act European. The Contribution of European Think Tanks to the French, Czech and Swedish Trio Presidencies of the European Union"** (directed by Elvire Fabry and Gaëtane Ricard-Nihoul, Fondation pour l'innovation politique-Notre Europe, Paris, May 2008).

Discussion during the conference concentrated on the four main challenges confronting the French, Czech and Swedish Presidencies – the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, immigration, economic growth and energy and climate.

Report, press pack and summary of the conference are available in English and French at www.tgae.eu

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TGAE conference of 23 May 2008 - Summary

The format of *Think Global – Act European* illustrates very well the current phase of the European Union's development, as underlined by **Tommaso PADOA-SCHIOPPA**, president of Notre Europe and **JEAN-CLAUDE PAYE**, president of the Fondation pour l'innovation politique. After 60 years of focus on domestic issues, the EU has now to launch new collective action and expand its normative strength in the world.

The new positions created by the **Treaty of Lisbon**, those being the President of the European Council and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs, should help to achieve this goal. The role of the Trio presidencies will remain essential to maintain the continuity of activity. *"What is important,"* noted **Hakan JONSSON**, Swedish Secretary of State for European Affairs, *"is the process, the mechanism of establishing a dialogue through the common work of the Trio. It is even more than the result of these exchanges"*. **Jean-Pierre JOUYET**, French Secretary of State for European Affairs, emphasised that the new institutional system should allow *"a combination between stronger political influence and continuity."*

According to **Eneko LANDABURU**, Director-General for External Relations at the European Commission, the efficiency of the EU's external action will be strengthened, but the new European Office for Foreign Relations must become *"an ideas lab to develop a European doctrine for its foreign policy over time."*

According to **Marek MORA**, Czech Deputy Minister for European Affairs, the head of government of the country which holds the Council presidency should maintain *"a political visibility which allows him to get involved in the presidency and ensure continuity"*. However, in so far as the Union for the Mediterranean is concerned, **Eneko LANDABURU** indicated that France, as the initiator of the project, will only lead the project while holding the EU presidency and that as soon as the Treaty of Lisbon is ratified, the new institutions will take on this task.

Regarding the process of filling the three key positions of the new institutional machinery (President of the Council, High Representative and President of the Commission), **Jean-Pierre JOUYET** affirmed that *"there will be no package of nominations"*. The President of the Commission will be designated after the European elections even if *"the political and national balance has to be respected"*.

Even if it is impossible to achieve consensus on all aspects of an EU **immigration policy**, some basic principles should be able to be agreed according to **Jonathan FAULL**, Director General for Justice and Home Affairs at the European Commission. *"If we were able to create a single currency, we should be able to create a common immigration policy."*

Peter ALTMAIER, Parliamentary Secretary of State for the Federal Ministry of the Interior (Germany), and **Maxime TANDONNET**, Adviser to the President of France on Immigration and Integration, outlined the principles of the European Pact on Immigration, a Franco-German initiative, and in particular, the cessation of mass regularisations and the promotion of a circular immigration system which, according to **Maxime TANDONNET**, *"would reduce the loss of human resources and expertise from developing countries."*

Elisabeth GUIGOU, Vice President of the National Assembly Delegation to the EU highlighted the need to return to the source of the problem through greater cooperation with countries of origin, rather than procrastinating over the issues associated with large scale regularisations of illegal immigrants.

The **Lisbon Strategy** must be renewed to adapt to the EU's strategy towards globalisation, the latter being a challenge, and not a threat, according to **Laurent COHEN-TANUGI**, President of the French group, *Europe under globalisation*, which proposes a new focus on "Euro-Globe 2015".

One of the reasons behind the deceiving record of the Lisbon Strategy, according to **Tommaso PADOA-SCHIOPPA**, is the fact that in Brussels *"too much emphasis is placed on comparative individual reports and peer pressure and not enough emphasis on common policies.... Without a directive from Brussels, no action is guaranteed."* At the same time, **Marek MORA** argued, we have *"to find a balance between the work each State must undertake at home and the elements which must be renewed at the European level."* **Pierre SIMON**, President of the CCIP, emphasised the central role of business, highlighting the priority which must be given to finalising the single market and developing an entrepreneurial culture.

Hakan JONSSON underlined the pivotal point at which this new Trio will assume the presidencies in respect of Europe's response to **climate change** with the Ponzan and Copenhagen conferences scheduled to take place before the end of the Trio, and the likely leadership role to be played by Europe. Noting the state of progress of EU initiatives, **Peter CARL**, Director General for the Environment at the European Commission also indicated that *"the climate issue will not be resolved without some accommodation by rich countries of poorer countries."* European Members of Parliament **Françoise GROSSETÊTE** and **Alain LIPIETZ** stressed the importance of the role to be played by the European Parliament in this area, and the need for institutions to be able to respond to constantly evolving science, particularly in relation to biofuels. They also expressed their confidence in the capacity of the EU to be able to reconcile environmental constraints with the competitiveness of European enterprises.