



Master's Thesis

Bordering Process in the EU: The Case of Ukraine

A Critical Discourse Analysis

Author:

Anna Gallén Espinosa

Supervisor:

Angela Bourne

Masters in Global Studies and Cultural Encounters

Department of Social Sciences and Business

Roskilde University

August 2023

Abstract

The project explores the multidimensional nature of the European Union's bordering process and its evolution in two key moments: the annexation of Crimea and the invasion of Ukraine. By understanding the bordering processes of debordering and rebordering, it is possible to comprehend and analyse whether the conflict in Ukraine influenced the EU's bordering process. The analysis was framed within a constructivist approach to border theory and employed Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis. Six speeches delivered by the President of the Commission were analysed. The results indicate that there was a relation of causality between the conflict and the EU's bordering process. Moreover, discourses played a significant role in defining those bordering processes. The results are important because they contribute to the field of border theory, exploring borders from a different perspective and through a different method.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Angela for guiding and encouraging me throughout the project. I would like to also thank Jorge for being a great support through the thesis, during Covid, and the loss of a loved one. Also, my family and friends that despite the distance have shown me unconditional support and understanding.

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Introduction

“The mythological history of the Western world stained with blood the first tracing of a border: it is worth noting that it was because of a sacred furrow, plowed to distinguish the soil of the city to be, Rome, from that of its unknown exterior, that Remus was killed by his twin brother Remulus. This deed was in reaction to Remus' mocking of the boundary Romulus had just traced: While Romulus was lifting the plow to mark a threshold, Remus deliberately walked over the line to denounce its weakness. Romulus responded to Remus' symbolic violence with a physical and irreversible act: One brother suppressed the other by declaring the possible territorilization of his identity through the establishment of a spatial limit”

(Amilhat Szary, 2015, p. 2)

The concept of borders, which defines the limits of the state, is rather recent since it appeared in 1648 upon the Treaty of Westphalia. This event sought to limit the influence of enemy states, thus delimiting every state and so creating balance of power (Amilhat Szary, 2015). The delimitation of the state depended on physical references such as rivers to establish the location of the border (Amilhat Szary, 2015). To this day, borders are a foundational aspect of international relations, defining a territory over which a state has sovereignty (Amilhat Szary, 2015).

This metaphorical origin of the creation of borders highlights the significance of borders, which to this day still impact our everyday lives and shape the way we interact with each other (Newman, 2006). While borders are often understood as immutable physical boundaries, they are, in fact, socially constructed and therefore alterable (Newman, 2006; Sendhardt, 2013).

In this sense, borders are alike the title of the film “Everything Everywhere All at Once”. The reason is that borders are a way of bounded thinking that allows for the definition of one's identity by defining the 'other' (Amilhat Szary, 2015). Borders also shape relations between states and can be found shaping our relations with the state (Newman, 2006; Sendhardt, 2013), an effect that happens constantly. Because of their multidimensionality, their dynamism, and their simultaneity, scholars agree that, considering the increased globalisation flows from 1989 onwards, it was more adequate to analyse borders as processes which encompass debordering (opening of borders, allowing flows of people, goods, and ideas) and rebordering (closing border, increasing controls).

In this regard, the EU is an interesting example since it represents a grouping of states rather than a state per se or a federation. This organisational structure allows Member States to preserve the

control over their territory and cooperate in different areas such as trade and protection (Ikenberry, 2018a, p.12) which is embodied in the multiple governmental layers of the EU: between Member States, between Member States and third countries, between the EU and the Member States and between the EU and other countries. Thus, analysing the EU bordering process can shed light onto these complex relations.

Considering the relevance of borders, they are embroiled in the war in Ukraine, where Russia invaded, allegedly to protect the Russians from genocide (Putin, 2022), and has far-reaching consequences for the EU. This conflict has posed multiple challenges to the EU, from refugees to food availability, energy shortage, and inflation. As Nye (2022) points out, many argue that the roots of this conflict can be the imperialist aims of Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, and his understanding of Ukraine "as a phony state". He emphasises that Russia's borders faced immediate threat after NATO approved the eventual NATO membership of Ukraine in 2008. According to Nye (2022), it is also possible that the reason Russia invaded Ukraine is because the West failed to help and assist Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War (Nye, 2022).

However, it can be said that the rejection to enter the Eastern Partnership (EaP) led to "widespread protests by pro-European actors in western Ukraine and pro-Russian actors in eastern Ukraine" (Doornich and Raspotnik, 2020, p. 347), culminating in the Maidan uprising of 2014 (Doornich and Raspotnik, 2020). Subsequently, President Yanukovich, was forced to flee the country, and Russia decided to annex the peninsula of Crimea to support pro-Russians in the East of Ukraine (Idem). The new President, Poroshenko, signed the Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine, which included a trade agreement and eased conditions for foreign investors in the country, raised tensions between the two countries (Doornich and Raspotnik, 2020, Nye, 2022).

Ever since, the EU responded with increasing sanctions against Russia and its allies. The measures encompass different actions like asset freezes and travel restrictions, economic sanctions, bans on media outlets, diplomatic measures, restrictions on economic relations with specific areas, and measures concerning economic cooperation (Council of the European Union, n.d.).

Considering these circumstances, the project explores the intricate relationship between the ongoing war in Ukraine and the EU's bordering process. To examine it, Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis is employed within a constructivist border theory framework. The analysis is centred around six speeches delivered by the President of the Commission, covering the years 2013, 2014, 2015, 2021, and 2022 – three preceding the annexation of Crimea and three following the invasion of Ukraine. This allows for a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the EU's bordering process.

Therefore, the project is structured as follows: first, there is the detailed historical context around the annexation and the invasion, the introduction of border theory and the existing literature is presented; second, there is the methodology and the analysis; lastly, there is the discussion and the conclusions.

Historical Context

This section provides the historical background on the war in Ukraine and aims at considering the events that led to the war and the European Union's role in them. The historical context surrounding the annexation of Crimea in 2014 is drawn from Howorth's article "'Stability on the Borders': The Ukraine Crisis and the EU's Constrained Policy Towards the Eastern Neighbourhood" (2017). And the context on the invasion of Ukraine is based on Lonardo's book "Russia's 2022 war against Ukraine and the foreign policy reaction of the EU: context, diplomacy, and law" (2002).

Organisation of the European Union

To clarify the EU's part in it as well as its 'constrained' reaction to the annexation of Crimea in 2014, it is necessary, according to Howorth (2017), to distinguish between the power exercised by the EU and the EU's Member States in the Ukrainian crisis. EU Member States, albeit being part of the Union, still are individual players in the international relations sphere, which became evident during the 2014 Annexation of Crimea, when Germany and France took the lead in the negotiations for finding a solution. Howorth (2017) emphasises that it is also "important to differentiate between actions, discourse and power" (Howorth, 2017, p. 122), because all the speeches and policies given and executed by the EU do not reflect the EU power to influence Russia in ceasing its actions. And so, to understand the Ukrainian crisis, it is crucial to understand that after the Berlin Wall was taken down in 1989, the integration of East Germany into the EU as part of the 'pan-European project' (Howorth, 2017, p. 123), posed a challenge to the Union: how to manage its relations with the Eastern countries while considering the EU's approach towards Russia at all times. Moreover, Lonardo (2022) suggests, after Russia invaded part of Eastern Ukraine, that the EU had, once again, a constrained reaction that is attributable to its military dependence on the US and NATO, as well as its energy dependence on Russia; which in turn is related to the diverging power dynamics between the EU as a collective and its individual Member States.

Thus, it is expected to find the EU lacking a common energy policy and a military, albeit efforts are underway with green initiatives like the REPowerEU Plan (European Commission, 2022). However, the ongoing war in Ukraine demonstrates the relevance of NATO and the US as spearheading the military defence in Europe, because, despite the increased military budget in some EU countries in response to the war, the EU's concept of 'strategic autonomy' or 'strategic sovereignty' for military independence, which started gaining relevance in 2016, is currently facing challenges to the extent that some critics argue that it is poorly designed or that it never really existed (Dempsey, 2023).

For Howorth (2017), understanding that after the Berlin Wall was taken down in 1989, the integration of East Germany into the EU as part of the 'pan-European project' is essential to understand how the

EU reacted to the annexation of Ukraine (Howorth, 2017, p. 123). This posed an issue to the Union: how to manage its relations with the Eastern countries. Even more, the EU had to devise a strategy always considering Russia.

In the late 1990's and early 2000's, the EU was posed with a dilemma, whether to deepen its existing institutions as or to expand its territory (Howorth, 2017; Nilsson, 2020). The EU's decided to shift its focus towards its enlargement to include those countries in Central and Eastern Europe rather than deepening the integration amongst current EU Member States in order to securitise its borders (Howorth, 2017). However, that same expansion towards the East meant that the "Union would find itself 'constrained' by its own success" (Howorth, 2017: 123). Accordingly, the EU successfully transformed those once authoritarian countries into democratic and liberal ones, following the requirements to join the EU established in Copenhagen in 1993 that emphasised "democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, protection of minorities and a well-functioning free market economy" (Nilsson, 2020, p. 4). Moreover, these countries had to sign a treaty declaring that all security issues remaining amongst them since the end of World War I were resolved; thus, hindering and prolonging the time to enter the Union (Howorth, 2017). Ultimately, this showcased the EU's ability to exercise power in an international crisis such as the end of the Cold War, although, the EU Enlargement process "proved to be a very lengthy and complex process" (Howorth, 2017, p. 124).

During the 'lengthy' EU enlargement process, the United States government proceeded with the enlargement of NATO, a more agile process, which raised security concerns for Russia despite the NATO initiative to establish closer ties with the Russian Federation through the 'Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security' (Howorth, 2017). Furthermore, NATO was presented during the EU enlargement as a "benign project for the stabilisation of Central and Eastern Europe with no hostile implications for Russia. Indeed, it was asserted that, by bringing stability to Russia's hinterland, this would be directly in Russia's own interests" (Howorth, 2017, p. 124). However, it is important to remember that the original purpose of NATO was developed as part of the 'containment' policy design by Geroge Kennan within the framework of the Truman doctrine; NATO was conceived as a military alliance aimed at preventing the spread of the communism of the Soviet Union to safeguard democratic nations during the Cold War (Hickman, 2019; Lonardo, 2022). Therefore, as Lonardo (2022) points out, pursuing a NATO enlargement policy towards the east presents "two diverging narratives: for some, it was necessary to guarantee the continent security, for others, it was a needless provocation that led among other things, to this war" [between Russia and Ukraine] (Lonardo, 2022, p. 36).

Detractors such as Kennan to the enlargement argued that a scenario where NATO expanded towards former Soviet states could potentially lead to a new Cold War or create new divisions within Europe (Howorth, 2017). Moreover, “I think the Russians will gradually react quite adversely [to NATO expansion] and it will affect their policies. I think it is a tragic mistake. There was no reason for this whatsoever. No one was threatening anybody else.” (Kennan as cited in Friedman, 1998). Moreover, Russia reminded the international community that there was a promise made by the US Secretary to Gorbachev that NATO would not expand to the East (Howorth, 2017; Lonardo, 2022). In spite of that, the US claimed there was no formal agreement and Gorbachev admits NATO enlargement was never officially discussed because the mere idea was considered “unthinkable” (Howorth, 2017, p. 124-125).

Georgia and Ukraine submitted their applications for NATO membership in 2007, but despite the support given by some US officials and EU Member States, the majority of the EU disagreed. In 2008, Russia invaded Georgia a few months after NATO’s Secretary General concluded that Georgia will ‘one day’ join the Organisation (Howorth, 2017, p. 125). This event led European countries to do nothing or offer public support to Georgia. The French President Sarkozy was essential in negotiating peace with both parties, so much that at the time of signing he was accompanied by the President of the European Commission and the High Representative for the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy (Howorth, 2017). Although Sarkozy was then President of the European Union at the time, it was him as President of France who reached a peace agreement (Howorth, 2017).

The European Union’s Foreign Policy

Howorth (2017) argues that one reason for the EU’s response to be ‘constrained’ in the Ukrainian crisis is due to the European Enlargement Process between 2004-2007. Simultaneously, the NATO enlargement intensified security concerns for both Russia and the EU which “has led to even greater instability on the borders” (Howorth, 2017, p. 122) because new relations had to be fostered with the new authoritarian neighbours. Within this context, Howorth (2017) criticises that the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), created in 2004 “to avoid the creation of new divisions in Europe by creating a ‘ring of friends’ around the entire periphery” (Howorth, 2017, p. 126), for Ukraine was poorly conceived and a failure.

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) officially aims to foster cooperation and integration with countries east of the European Union. The focus is to promote democracy and stability through the establishment of forums and mechanisms to discuss with the EU while remaining non-members of the Union (TLDR News, 2021). This relationship is based upon the EU’s values “democracy and human rights, the rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development”

(Carmona, Trapouzanlis and Jongberg, 2023, n.p.). Russia has accused the EU of using the ENP to increase its influence in the region (Pop, 2009). However, over the years, the ENP has undergone reviews in order to 'differentiate', that is, to accommodate de different countries based on their specific needs as well as their relationship with the EU, whilst maintaining "three joint priorities for cooperation: 1. Economic development for stabilisation; 2. Security; 3. Migration" (European Union External Action, 2021).

Howorth (2017) points out three reasons for the unsuccessful implementation of the ENP. Firstly, the policy's approach was to implement a homogeneous policy for all the countries, disregarding their differences, and expected that those countries would align themselves with the EU in exchange of economic aid and deals (Howorth, 2017), seemingly a form of clientelism. Secondly, the ENP overlooked the individual interests of the neighbour countries because it did not offer membership to the EU annoying those that aspired to join, and it was rendered irrelevant by other countries due to the requirements. Nevertheless, such requirements were only to be enforced through sanctions selectively and making exceptions according to the EU's own interests. Thirdly, the ENP is devoid of a common long-term geopolitical strategy for the neighbourhood, resulting in a technocratic policy, while the EU Member States can establish bilateral agreements leading to "too many cooks in the kitchen and none of them preparing the same meal" (Howorth, 2017, p. 123). Consequently, the ENP was moderately successful by bringing some neighbour countries into the EU's orbit but also generated even more instability with those that did not comply and strained the relations between the EU and Russia (Howorth, 2014).

In the aftermath of the war between Georgia and Russia in 2008, as part of the ENP, the EU created the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2009 consisting of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, mainly those countries between the EU and Russia, although, in 2021, Belarus suspended its participation in the Partnership (European External Action Service, 2022; Ghazanchyan, 2021). It was "a strategic and ambitious partnership based on common values and rules, mutual interests and commitments, as well as shared ownership and responsibility" (European External Action Service, 2022) aiming to "strengthen and deepen the political and economic relations between the EU, its Member States and the partner countries, as well as supports sustainable reform processes in countries of Eastern Partnership." (European External Action Service, 2022). Russia responded by pressuring most of those countries to join the Eurasian Customs Union (ECU), introduced in 2010, in order to pressure them into joining and preventing them from signing the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) (Dreyer and Popescu, 2014; Howorth, 2017), which was a thinly veiled strategy to compel those countries to align.

Annexation of Crimea

Howorth (2017) explains that a similar but more complex crisis to the Georgian-Russian war of 2008 repeated itself in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea to its territory. Despite the events in Georgia, the Ukrainian population was not sympathetic with NATO. In fact, the US project for NATO created problems for the EU when it comes to negotiate with its neighbouring countries in the East. And indeed, the EU should have considered the Ukrainian apprehension towards NATO.

Taking into account the EU's Eurocentric perspective and its understanding that its values are universal (Jensen, 2020, p. 135), it was unsurprising that the EU expected the countries in the EaP would sign the DCFTA (Howorth, 2017). According to Howorth (2017), the EU was confident about Ukraine inasmuch as it pressured the Ukrainian President, Yanukovich, to liberate a political opponent. However, Russia was at the same time pressuring the countries to join the ECU and forgo signing the DCFTA. Amid this tension, it was noticeable that the EU lacked a geopolitical strategy and coordination among EU representatives was absent (Howorth, 2017). Moreover, Howorth (2017) refers to a report made by the UK House of Lords that identifies three reasons for the EU's mishandling of the situation: "overestimating the intention of Yanukovich to sign the DCFTA; a lack of awareness of the public mood in Ukraine; and underestimating the depth of Russian hostility" (Howorth, 2017p, 128). This "led to widespread protests by pro-European actors in western Ukraine and pro-Russian actors in eastern Ukraine", culminating in the Maidan uprising of 2014 (Doornich and Raspotnik, 2020, p. 347). The pro-Europeans demanded to sign the DCFTA and to join the EU while the other half gave support to the ECU (Howorth, 2017). Following the annexation of Crimea, support for the ECU dropped, although it remained stable in the East (Howorth, 2017). As a result, there were clashes between the population and the government leading to the Revolution of Dignity (Open Society Foundation, 2019).

Thus, the following political turmoil in Ukraine, Russia seized the opportunity to annex Crimea, driven by a double intention: first, to push for a federal government that would grant greater independence to regions with Russian support, and second, to ensure Russia's strategic advantage in influencing Ukraine's decision regarding its integration to the EU (Konończuk, 2014). Subsequently, a referendum took place in Crimea with a result of over 90% where voters expressed their support for joining Russia, although the result was not recognised by neither the Ukrainian government nor Western authorities because Russia violated Ukraine's 'independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty' and the referendum was deemed illegal (Collett-White and Popeski, 2014; European Union External Action, 2018).

The European Union's Strategy

According to Howorth (2017), the EU lacked capacity to foresee the impact that its technocratic strategy would inflict on Russia which perceived the EU efforts towards Ukraine as a security threat and contributed to the crisis. However, he also acknowledges that the mishandling of the EU's relations with Ukraine could have also contributed, or even the deficiency of a clear EU agenda towards Ukraine, considering that Russia was seeking Ukraine's alignment and Ukraine is aspiring to join the EU (Howorth, 2017).

Such flawed strategy could be connected to the idiosyncrasies of the EU's executive and legislative structures. With the European Council and the Council of the European Union being composed of heads of state and ministers of state, respectively, the former sets the priorities of the Union will follow and the latter oversees coordination and implementation of the policies. The EU Parliament, elected directly by EU citizens, acts as a regular parliament, while the EU Commission, composed of a representative of each EU country elected by the European Council, proposes and implements legislation, policies, and the EU budget (McBride, 2022; EU & ME | HOW DOES THE EU WORK?). It is relatively evident from this structure that the EU Member States hold meaningful influence in the executive, hence, it is sometimes unsurprising when conflicts of interest between Member States and the EU as a whole emerge.

The Member States not only represent themselves in the Union but also internationally as separate entities with their own individual interest. This situation contributes to create a 'cacophony' of reactions to the Crimean conflict that hindered the development of a "clear and effective policy" at an EU level (Howorth, 2017, p. 129). Moreover, former Soviet states reached out to the US urging to "reinforce EU-US and EU-NATO relations" (Howorth, 2017, p. 130).

Once again, the key actors during the conflict were the Member States, Germany and France, rather than the EU. They put in motion the Minsk Agreements within the framework of the Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE), an intergovernmental organisation outside of the EU design, with 57 states from Europe, Asia and North America, including Russia. Thus, revealing "the real limits of [the] European Union capabilities when faced with an assertive Russia" (Howorth, 2017, p. 130).

Implementation of sanctions

The EU faced pressure from the US to respond to Russia, and some EU Member States began to mistrust Russia, which obligated the EU to take measures (Howorth, 2017). However, their effect was downplayed as Russia was capable of "play[ing] EU states off against one another" (Howorth, 2017, p. 132). Even so, some level of coordination among all EU Member States for the application of sanctions

was reached, “the difficulty of speaking with one voice and the capacity of the EU to send conflicting messages, remained as constraining as ever” (Howorth, 2017, p. 133). Moreover, the decision to impose sanctions was contested by some EU Member States, namely France, Hungary, Greece and Italy, because of the debatable effectiveness of sanctions (Howorth, 2017). Nevertheless, since March 2014, the EU progressively imposed sanctions on Russia and its allies, Belarus and Iran, that have increased over time and ranged from individual measures – asset freezes and travel restrictions-, economic sanctions – on the financial, energy and transport sectors, defence, raw materials and other goods and services to Russia or Russian persons-, bans on media outlets, diplomatic measures – suspension of visas-, restrictions on economic relations with specific areas – of Crimea, Sevastopol, Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson-, and measures concerning economic cooperation (Council of the European Union). And yet, sanctions had not been devised within a comprehensive general strategy (Howorth, 2017). Russia's economy was adversely affected, though Russia retaliated by implementing its own sanctions against the EU (Howorth, 2017).

‘Special Military Operation’

Throughout 2021, the military presence in the Russian border with Ukraine increased and on the 24th of February of 2022, Russia put in motion a ‘special military operation’ in Ukraine, as the Russian President describes, in order “to protect people who, for eight years now, have been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kiev regime” (Putin, 2022) to ultimately “guarantee the security of our Motherland” (Lonardo 2022). In other words, Russia deployed its army into the Donbass to safeguard those pro-Russian individuals residing in the Donbass region, and to guarantee Russia’s own security amidst a probable NATO enlargement (Lonardo, 2022).

The EU condemned the Russian operation as an illegal aggression that violated the international law and implemented even stricter sanctions against Russia whilst providing significant financial, military, and humanitarian aid to Ukraine (Kirby and Guyer, 2022; Lonardo, 2022). Furthermore, the EU emphasised the relevance of adhering and upholding international law, urging Russia to respect the principles outlined in the Helsinki Final Act (Lonardo, 2022). The Act was signed in 1975 at the end of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and it addressed a range of cooperative areas, including education, science, economy, technology, and humanitarian efforts; but the main principles for “guiding relations between participating states” include:

- I. Sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty
- II. Refraining from the threat or use of force
- III. Inviolability of frontiers

- IV. Territorial integrity of States
- V. Peaceful settlement of disputes
- VI. Non-intervention in internal affairs
- VII. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief
- VIII. Equal rights and self-determination of peoples
- IX. Co-operation among States
- X. Fulfilment in good faith of obligations under international law”

(OSCE, 1975)

Imposing sanctions on Russia was not new nor unprecedented for the EU as a hard power policy since it has sanctioned other countries before as well as Russia. It is relevant to notice that while sanctions are not ‘revolutionary’ within the EU, "sanctions appear now to be leading to a new phase of European integration” eventually developing onto new policies (Lonardo, 2022, p. 5). This partly suggests that the EU’s development has been driven more by reactive responses rather than a comprehensive project. However, it does not necessarily mean that for every new reaction to a crisis for the EU, there is a positive outcome, like, more integration, because the EU’s reactions to crisis can also result in further divisions among its Member States (Lehne, 2022).

To reminisce the conflict and its possible causes is important in order to understand how the war is affecting the EU’s bordering process. Considering the current situation and challenges posed by the war in Europe, it is expected that the EU will face internal challenges by its Member States. The integrity of the EU might be at stake as some countries could consider leaving the Union, just like the UK decided to Brexit. However, if the EU manages to come together, there is a possibility of seeing the EU’s borders altered given the requests for membership by Ukraine and other countries such as Georgia or Moldova (European Union, n.d. a). Nevertheless, the EU could also face external challenges if was to fail in developing a geopolitical strategy, given that its technocratic approach may unintentionally create tensions with third countries since its foreign policies, such as the ENP, could be inadvertently luring countries towards the influence of the EU. Therefore, the EU could develop a strategy “for where (and how) to ‘place’ Russia in the international system” (Lonardo, 2022, p. 6), moreover, the EU needs a vision for post-Putin Russia, one that avoids humiliating it while still maintaining accountability, respecting its own fundamental values and operating within international law” (Lonardo, 2022, p. 6).

Theoretical Framework

The borders that define Europe today, the ones one can see in what is called a 'political map', are just a creation, a construction that delimits the territory and population over which an administration, a state, has sovereignty. But that is a narrow understanding of borders. Borders are not just physical demarcation of territory nor static geographically or historically (Sendhardt, 2013). Borders divide geographical regions, but most importantly, they divide or unite people through violent or non-violent paths and so "many of the borders which order our lives are invisible to the human eye, but they nevertheless impact strongly on our daily life practices" (Newman, 2006, p. 172). Such is the case of Yugoslavia, splitting into several countries after a series of wars, and East and West Germany after the Berlin Wall was taken down (Pavković et al., 2000; Bozo et al., 2017). Thus, remaining a fundamental aspect of dispute in the international relations and geopolitical landscapes, which can be recognised in the 'special military operation' in Ukraine by Russia that developed into a war.

Furthermore, the understanding and analysis of borders is at the same time influenced and reflects the context in which such knowledge was produced. In that regard, J. W. Scott (2011) describes three key historical moments in Europe when it was manifested: "the advent of continental nation-states in the late nineteenth century, the post-Paris Peace Treaty Europe of newly created and recently fragmented states and the post-Maastricht European Union within the context of enlargement and the emergence of a new *pan-European* idea" (Scott, 2011, p. 124). Which also coincide with the scientific thought governing those times approximately: determinism, positivism, globalisation and "the post-Cold War *disorder*" and critical theory (Scott, 2011, p. 124).

Scott (2011) explains that during the age of empires after World War I, borders were understood as a way to secure the nation-state from a deterministic and Darwinist approach. Namely, Friedrich Ratzel's analogy of the state to an organism with organs to be protected and in constant expansion, Otto Maul's study of the state as an 'organisation' with 'good' and 'bad' borders according to their defensive ability, and the idea that borders are "delimiters of territorial control and ideology" of Karl Haushofer understanding the 'natural' need of societies for expansion (Scott, 2011, p. 127).

After World War II, the attention in the study of borders shifted to a functionalist and positivist approach spearheaded by Richard Hartshorne, Victor Prescott, Ladis Kristof and Julian Minghi. They saw the functioning of the state central to its study and therefore, borders were understood as part of the formation and development of the state. A distinction was made between borders, what keeps the content of the state, and its 'integrity' and frontiers are "outwardly oriented, integrate different

ecumenes and challenge the control functions of the state” (Scott, 2011, p. 129), in order to better manage the different state policies. And so, the concept permeability emerged again as a spectrum of different degrees of ‘interstate cooperation’ in order to secure state survival by sharing sovereignty which involved a contradiction of borders explored later: they functioned as bridge and barrier.

In more contemporary times, the foundation of the European Union and the globalisation period of the post-Cold War world are directly linked to what some authors call a ‘renaissance’ of border studies because since the late 1980s and 1990s, the study of borders became interdisciplinary, bringing together sociologists, historians, anthropologists, geographers, and political scientists (Newman, 2006; Paasi, 2011; Sendhardt, 2013; Amilhat Szary, 2015). During that time, the discourse about the possibility of a ‘borderless’ world where borders would have less and less relevance leading to their ultimate disappearance was predominant as alternative to the traditional concept of borders (Newman, 2006; Sendhardt, 2013). The reason was the rapid globalisation that followed the disappearance of the Iron Curtain in terms of increased global political, cultural, and economic interactions and the emergence of transnational communities leading to more permeable borders with the creation of supranational organisations such as the European Union (EU), where borders did become irrelevant within it (Newman, 2006) in exchange, that is, of a new external border. Nevertheless, despite the apparent stability of borders, they are, in fact, subject to great instability, exemplified in the creation of new states with recognised formed from what was the Soviet Union (Sendhardt, 2013; Amilhat Szary, 2015) and because as ‘borderless’ as it appeared, “many of the borders which order our lives are invisible to the human eye, but they nevertheless impact strongly on our daily life practices” (Newman, 2006, p. 172).

The ‘cultural turn’ influenced social sciences in the forms of “critical political economy, anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist perspectives on borders and border-defining processes” (Scott, 2011, p.130) which challenged the established knowledge about nation-states (Scott, 2011). In that sense, the focus on borders is moved from the ‘durable’ border lines to “the way that borders are socially constructed (demarcated in the traditional jargon), managed (delimited) and impact our daily life practices in the newly created transition spaces and borderlands (frontier zones) which are in a constant state of flux” (Newman, 2006, p.173). Furthermore, according to Paasi, borders are not understood just a static demarcation in time and space either (Paasi in Scott, 2011). In fact, they can be seen as “time inscribed within space” (Foucher in Amilhat Szary, 2015, p.6). Borders are susceptible to change and so borders should be better understood as a process of bordering instead, composed by: “first, *political boundaries* where physical changes of boundaries as demarcation lines take place, second, *boundaries*

of politics in which spatial scales of governance are redefined in response to globalisation and third, *politics of boundaries* in which boundaries are produced and reproduced in response to shifting relations between nation, state, territory and identities” (Paasi in Scott, 2011, p. 131).

Borders, thus, can be seen as a social construction through discourses and practices susceptible of change adding to the functionality of borders also a meaning (Scott, 2011). In fact, “borders are a very complex set of social institutions that exist on and through various spatial scales and are related to a number of social practices and discourses in which they are produced and made meaningful. Such institutions are linked to a variety of social realities that often go beyond the border – and might be labelled as representing the relational aspect of borders” (Paasi, 2011, p.28). In fact, to remove, open or close borders depends on the power elites, usually economic, interested in constructing certain type of border, the same elites that colonised and imposed new borders and later imposed in a neo-colonial way the removal of the same borders through i.e., free trade agreements (Newman, 2006) or even the closing of borders during the COVID-19 pandemic. That is “border demarcation and management, past and present, cannot be understood without recourse to the question of power relations and an analysis of whose interests the opening or closing of borders serve” (Newman, 2006, p.176)

In this manner, Paasi’s definition of borders (in Scott, 2011; Paasi, 2011) also goes beyond the mere function of borders and focuses as well on the meaning through three elements: symbols, discourses and institutions that affect every aspect, private or collective, national or international, of society. Paasi connects the existence of borders to a process of institutionalisation, where such elements – symbols, discourses, and institutions – are closely related to a geographical area responding to the need to encapsule the multiple dimensions that borders encompass, because they are not just those “lines on maps” they are inherent to the very being of a state (Paasi, 2011, p.16). Borders, in a more sociologic point of view, outline disparity and can exemplify the distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ as part of the process of ‘othering’, by which some are ‘included’ and others ‘excluded’; they are more than tangible delimitations of territory, they give structure, compartmentalise, but they are also one of many boundaries in society (Newman, 2006). Following the globalist approach, borders act as ‘networks’ which can only happen in certain areas where borders are more ‘elastic’ making it easier to access the other ‘group’; thus, “borders move continuously through society and space as part of the rebordering process” (Newman, 2006, p. 177).

From a pragmatic approach, 'social practices' and the understanding the mutability of borders are at the centre when researching borders through (critical) discourse analyses (Scott, 2011). In this regard, Liam O'Dowd (2002), stating that "the structure, functions and meanings of state borders seldom remain fixed or stable for long periods" (O'Dowd, 2002, p. 29). However, state borders have been reconfigured along with their functions due to globalisation through the significance of borders as barriers, bridges, resources, and symbols of identity (O'Dowd, 2002; Scott, 2011).

Altogether, there is agreement as to the multidimensionality of borders and the challenge it poses in the different scientific disciplines, and less so as to the need for a universal theory of borders (Scott, 2011; Paasi, 2011; Sendhardt, 2013). The reason being that theorising the process of bordering, "as part of the process by which territories and their identities and meanings are formed and renewed" (Paasi, 2001, p. 135, in Scott, 2011) would allow to adapt to the particular context of the borders' case being studied precluding a one-size-fits-all-theory instead (Paasi, 2011). Thus, exemplifying that borders are a type of setting boundaries and that there could be different types and different ways of having boundaries.

So, Scott (2011) brings together the above notions of borders to elaborate on the concept of bordering as the "construction of borders through ideology, discourses, political institutions, attitudes and agency [...] reflected in media debates over national identity, legal and illegal immigration and language rights [...] read in terms of one, politics of identity (who is *in*, who is *out*), two, a regionalization of difference (defining who is a neighbour, a partner, a friend or rival) and three, a politics of *interests* (in which issues of economic self-interest, political stability and security play a prominent role)" (Scott, 2011, p. 134).

Existing Literature

The research field of border studies experienced a resurgence since the 1990s, prompting various disciplines undertook their study from new angles. Existing research encompasses diverse scopes, including economic dimensions of cross-border cooperation (Popescu, 2008), security concerns (Golunov, 2013), and responses to the refugee crisis deriving from the War in Ukraine (Opiola et al., 2022), for example. A significant amount of the research on borders is dedicated to theorising the different dimensions of borders (Parker and Adler-Nissen, 2012), researching into the European Neighbourhood Policy's implications for migrations and the EU security (Pinos, 2014), as well as exploring the EU enlargement and integration (Schimmelfennig, 2021).

Generally, the studies on borders revolve around the intersections of economy, migration, and security, including the migration-security nexus. However, the literature that holds particular relevance for this project addresses the European Union and its intricate relationship with its borders, with a specific focus on enlargement and interactions with neighbouring countries. These works often employ the concepts of “debordering” and “rebordering” to unpack the multidimensional dynamics of borders using diverse methodologies.

Scholars identify two main trends in thoughts when it comes to EU's borders. On the one hand we find those authors who describe European borders as a “fortress”, and on the other, those who see Europe as “borderless”. Nevertheless, scholars agree on the influence of globalisation and securitisation in the definition of borders.

Sendhardt (2013) attempts to contribute to an under-theorised border studies by presenting debordering and rebordering as an analytical framework. Using modern systems theory from a constructivist approach, he analyses the EU/Polish-Ukrainian border case, understanding borders as products of communication. Examining the EU/Polish-Ukrainian border as a case study of debordering and rebordering,

Sendhardt (2013) observes the significant changes that have undergone since 1989: the borders opened between Poland and Ukraine, but tightened when Poland joined the EU in 2004. Borders relaxed again between EU/Poland and Ukraine when the EU promoted cross-border cooperation initiatives through the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership. These seemingly contradictory policies of the EU have led some scholars to perceive the EU as either ‘borderless’ or as ‘fortress Europe’.

The author takes on the classification elaborated by Bonacker (2006 in Sendhardt, 2013) and Stetter (2005b in Sendhardt, 2013) proposing a typology that categorises borders in three according to the

functions and types. The three types are: territorial, functional, and symbolic. Territorial borders are formal state borders; functional separate the different functional systems of a state, “such as politics, law, science, economy, sports, love or the health system” (Stetter 2005b in Sendhardt, 2013, p. 5); and symbolic borders are those that define the ‘collective identity’ that distinguishes between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ allowing the emergence of ‘political, ethnic or religious’ groups (Sendhardt, 2013). These categories can overlap sometimes, giving borders the characteristic multidimensionality that makes them difficult to analyse.

Sendhardt (2013) argues that functional borders communicate differentiation. He explains that functional borders “can be constitutive (as content) of particular acts of communication, but also that the very process of creating borders is an act of communication.” (Sendhardt, 2013 p. 31). When it comes to symbolic borders, Sendhardt describes them as “an expression of collective identities based on the distinction between ‘self’ and ‘other’” (Sendhardt, 2013, p. 32). These borders, a product of society, are associated to a state, gender, race, etc., influence the perception of the ‘other’ can be either in a positively or negatively.

Sendhardt (2013)reinterprets territorial borders by defining them “as [a] secondary form of differentiation of some functional (and at times symbolic) systems.” (Sendhardt, 2013, p. 34). Territoriality, the control of a given area, must be easily identifiable on maps, although its representation on the site might differ, “thus, rather than maps being a representation of borders in reality, map lines are actually predecessors of borders on the ground.” (Sendhardt, 2013, p. 34). These created borders have a communicative origin, demonstrating that the fact that territorial borders need fortification shows their artificial nature.

In relation to functional systems, territoriality and so territorial borders allow to differentiate those functional systems such as political systems that rely on them to exist and function. However, the debordering process that came with globalisation showed that such systems can adapt to exist beyond territorial constraints as the formation of the EU exemplifies. On the other hand, when symbolic systems align with territorial borders, nationalism and the nation-state emerge. Territoriality often precedes nationalism, contrary to what nationalist discourse argues. However, globalisation challenged such narrative.

Thus, Sendhardt, adds a new dimension to debordering and rebordering when he refers to debordering as not just merely having more permeable borders, but that the functional and symbolic borders no longer need to be linked to territorial borders to function, which can cause the creation of supranational organisations as new political spaces. And, as mentioned above, when debordering

happens, rebordering also happens as a form of “re-territorialisation of space” (so, that functional, symbolic and territorial borders coincide again) (Sendhardt, 2013, p. 29). And so, rebordering can be seen as a way of regulating the process of debordering.

The author concludes that debordering and rebordering represent territoriality’s role in making a distinction between functional and symbolic systems, thus, “territorial borders, particularly in the form of state borders, are thus best understood as territorially converging borders of different functional and symbolic systems” (Sendhardt, 2013, p.36). Hence, the EU/Polish-Ukrainian border can be understood as a process where functional and symbolic systems are in constant change as a “result of ongoing communications at different functional and symbolic levels” (Sendhardt, 2013 p. 37). Because these changes take place independently from the territorial borders, a new framework can be used to analyse the apparent inconsistencies in the policies of the EU and Poland towards Ukraine. Sendhardt resolves that the EU aims at overcoming the challenges posed by debordering and rebordering processes that happen internationally. Consequently, for Sendhardt, debordering and rebordering transcend the ‘borderless’ vs. ‘Fortress Europe’ dichotomy by analysing the different borders in the bordering process whenever the territoriality of borders is “called into question or actively reaffirmed by social practices” (Sendhardt, 2013, p. 37).

Yndigegn (2011) explored the concept of debordering and rebordering in Europe, remarking that the trend since 1957 has been towards debordering. The Rome Treaty, the Schengen Area, and cross-border cooperation among EU Member States have symbolically and physically removed internal borders. However, the removal of such borders led to an increased control of the EU’ external borders, which has been referred as Fortress Europe. Despite this, the European Neighbourhood Policy aimed to secure the EU region through cooperation with the neighbouring countries rather than through border control.

The author’s goal is to analyse the debordering process of cross-border cooperation within the EU, using the Øresund region as a case study. The theoretical approach used understands borders as multidimensional social constructs that has effects on people, and thus are a form of power.

Historically, borders were central to states as they delineated the state’s territorial sovereignty. However, due to the flows of globalisation, borders have lost some of its relevance, leading to permeable and closed borders that allow both state sovereignty and the ability to filter people and goods. Yndigegn (2011) identifies two major factors contributing to this debordering: European integration and the enlargement of the EU, aiming to foster economic cooperation and prevent

conflicts in Europe through Interreg programmes. The Øresund Bridge became crucial in promoting cooperation and bringing closer together Denmark and Sweden, influencing mobility, urban development, and joint scientific development.

Despite efforts, Yndigegn (2011) concludes that the division that was once created by the border still persists, indicating that more work is needed to fully integrate and overcome the barriers that continue to separate the two nations.

Nilsson (2020) wrote her master's thesis focusing on the impact of the EU's previous enlargement had in subsequent enlargement discourses. Fifteen speeches given by high representatives of the EU from 2001 and 2020 are collected and analysed using narrative analysis within the framework of discursive institutionalism. The project concludes there is a trend in the speeches that reveals that previous EU enlargements did indeed affect the discourse of later enlargements.

According to Nilsson (2020), EU enlargement comes across various challenges and criticisms. One key challenge is the decline in advocates for enlargement over time, as the focus has shifted towards the rise of nationalism and populism within some EU Member States' governments. These Member States and the rest now wield significant power in controlling the process of enlargement. Additionally, the prospective countries seeking EU membership may not fully meet the requirements for accession, hindering the process. Lastly, the EU has faced obstacles in effectively integrating new Member States that joined without fulfilling the necessary requirements such as Bulgaria.

Even though there were discussions about potential enlargement towards the East with Albania and Macedonia, some countries like France opposed this idea and suggested revisiting the accession process seeking the establishment of a more gradual one. The aim was to address the economic inequality among the EU members, which had been observed after the 2007 enlargement when some members joined without meeting the conditions such as having a consolidated "liberal democracy, the rule of law and had remaining issues with corruption and organised crime" (Nilsson, 2020, p. 5).

In this manner, Nilsson's analysis suggests that the EU appears to display a contrary behaviour. On the one hand, the EU eases border restrictions for its Member States as means for fostering greater integration, namely, debordering. On the other hand, the EU is simultaneously tightening its borders with non-Member States when it comes to joining the union, it is rebordering. This dynamic reflects the EU's constant bordering process as it navigates various global challenges.

Freudlsperger and Schimmelfennig (2022) conducted a research study on the impact of the Russo-Ukrainian war on the development of the European Union from a 'bordering' perspective. They operationalised "four functional boundaries of political systems: economic, political cultural, and

military” into measurable variables so to analyse the changes in the degree of openness “of the EU’s boundaries with Russia and Ukraine as well as its internal boundaries between 2013 and August 2022” (Freudlsperger and Schimmelfennig, 2022, p. 852).

According to Freudlsperger and Schummelfenning (2022), the EU has increasingly closed its borders with Russia while increasingly opening its borders towards Ukraine since 2014 – after the Maidan Revolution and the Annexation of Crimea –, which is reflected in the level of cross-border cooperation between the countries and the EU. The full-scale war in 2022 is considered a transboundary crisis that created a boundary ‘shock’ for European borders that “challenged the identity, autonomy, and security of the EU’s political community” (Freudlsperger and Schimmelfennig, 2022, p. 844). As a result, there has been ‘external rebordering’ with increased border closures towards Russia and its allies (Freudlsperger and Schimmelfennig, 2022, pp. 844-845). That means that a boundary shock initiates processes of ‘debordering’ and ‘rebordering’; the former referring to a greater degree of openness of borders meaning less controls at the border, and difference between territorial borders and functional borders; the latter, entails closing of borders, increasing border controls, and more defined borders (Freudlsperger and Schimmelfennig, 2022, p. 848).

Freudlsperger and Schummelfenning (2022) introduce the scale-community dilemma to argue that the external rebordering of the EU depends on the balance between the local and the global communities. There are two aspects to the dilemma: first, the degree of openness of boundaries can benefit or hinder the scale; and second, the degree of openness can benefit or hinder the community. So, when facing an economic crisis, a shock that creates an imbalance in scale, there are calls to deborder because having open borders “allow[s] for economies of scale and enhance individual freedoms”, but, in exchange, open borders “tend to undermine the identity, solidarity, and security of political communities.” (Freudlsperger and Schimmelfennig, 2022., p. 847). Wars, on the other hand, create a different type of shock affecting the community, leading to demands for rebordering aimed at protecting the “security, autonomy, integrity, and potentially identity of a political community” (Freudlsperger and Schimmelfennig, 2022, p. 849). In this context of war, rebordering involves not only to close the borders but also to invest in a stronger military or even joining a military alliance. Such is the case of the Ukraine war, where the EU has closed its borders to Russia while opening them to Ukraine and has strengthen its ties with NATO. This reflects “a dual movement of boundary reconfiguration: closure against community outsiders, and openness and congruence among community insiders”, which therefore, starts a process of ‘othering’ towards Russia and of inclusion for Ukraine (Freudlsperger and Schimmelfennig, 2022, p. 849).

The results, albeit they express it might be too early to indicate the full consequences of the war, suggest that the EU's response to the war was in character with its regulatory nature, although its community building has been significantly more affected than its capacity building, which are "the two major dimensions of political development" (Freudlsperger and Schimmelfennig, 2022, p.847). Namely, the EU noticed the effects of the war through the closure of borders which has brought EU communities together. However, its community building has also led the EU to distance itself from other countries and communities, such as Russia or its supporters, like Belarus. On the other hand, the EU's capacity building has been relatively unaffected because the EU has not centralised "administrative, fiscal, and coercive capacities" to control its borders (Freudlsperger and Schimmelfennig, 2022, p. 847). However, it may prove challenging due to the uneven distribution of executive powers between the EU institutions and its Member States, leaving the EU to primarily regulate its degree of openness. In this sense, the EU's response to the war has mainly been administrative, focusing on sanctions and creating frameworks for border administration because the actual execution of border control remains a member state responsibility, highlighting the EU's limited capacity building, but also it points out its community building.

Amilhat Szary (2015) starts by discussing two paradoxes: first, how symbolic boundaries and borders are and how much they impact our lives and, second, how "our main experience of them is by confronting them or crossing them" (Amilhat Szary, p. 2). In fact, the author explores the evolution of the concepts over history, namely 'bounded thinking' and how it spread through colonialism and were established with maps, however, the author counter argues that borders need to be analysed dynamically because they are a creation in constant change due to the flows of globalisation and so their immutability is questioned.

Amilhat Szary (2015) rightly explains there are two opposing ways of thinking about EU borders. One, as mentioned above, is about the expectancy of a 'borderless' world because of the globalisation trend; and the other came into relevance after the 9/11 attack in the United States which placed focus on rebordering processing so to improve security. Both reasonings coincide with two disparate border research that developed approximately at the same time, "one focusing on the 'cross-boundary' cooperation processes and socio-spatial issues in borderlands, and the other on the securitization of border crossings and the renewal of demarcation processes" (Amilhat Szary, p. 3).

Amilhat Szary (2015) argues that the concept of borders as spatial limits of a state establishing a "balance of power guaranteed by territorial stability" originated from the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 as a conclusion of the Thirty Years' War (Amilhat Szary, 2015, p. 4). This profoundly shaped the understanding of borders and the state in the coming eras, as it began to define the state and its

authority over a given territory, bounded by a mutually agreed line with other political entities. Subsequently, the state exerted its power by implementing an administrative reorganisation of its territory. As a result, the idea that borders delimited a state evolved into the concept of territorial sovereignty and thus to the creation of the nation-state “which in turn gave rise to a long-lasting tautology whereby territory is defined by state, state by sovereignty, and sovereignty by territory” (Amilhat Szary, 2015, p. 4). And so, borders ended up working as a way to separate countries but also worked in order to assign who is in charge of what.

Furthermore, the process of bordering is dialectical, encompassing contradictory and simultaneous actions of both “debordering” and “rebordering”. “Debordering” refers to the opening of borders, often aimed at stimulating the trade of goods, ideas, people and more that come with globalisation. While, at the same time, “rebordering” occurs when closing the borders for security reasons, i.e. to secure these very flows. The reasons for this to happen are that “the form and functions of borders do not spatially coincide anymore” (Amilhat Szary, 2015, p. 7). Through passport control and new surveillance technology, borders can be found in places other than the traditional state lines, leading to the implementation of borders through technology at places like airports or even our phones. However, because of the changeable nature of borders, to locate them has become increasingly difficult as is the case of the EU’s Schengen Area. And so, democracies can be challenged because their territorial sovereignty, from where they emerge, is changed.

As mentioned above, there is consensus among scholars about the multidimensionality of borders, which makes their analysis complex and thus create the need for flexible approaches. Yet, within academia, there exists a tendency to strictly classify the European Union into either ‘borderless’ or ‘Fortress’ description. Nevertheless, the research presented in this project advocates for a more nuanced perspective, urging to transcend this binary distinction by not just acknowledging that borders exist beyond their lines and that there are different dimensions to them, but that they should be analysed more dynamically.

However, this approach might not reflect fully the reality. While the authors mentioned lean towards encapsulating the world as ‘borderless’, governments prioritised “rebordering” due to security reasons like the border enforcement during COVID-19. Even more, such enforcement varies from government to government to protect the territory and the state’s sovereignty over it, as the refugee management by the EU illustrates. The EU response to the refugees from Ukraine differed from the ones sent by Belarus. The former were welcomed and helped in their arrival to the EU while the latter were left at the border as Belarus was forcing a crisis in the EU by flying war refugees from Syria.

Nevertheless, the research contributes with valuable insights, particularly the introductions of the concepts “debordering” and “rebordering”. These provide a framework for comprehending the complexities and sometimes contradictory policies of the EU towards its borders. However, there is not much research that addresses the transformation of EU borders due to external influences through discourse analysis. Despite there being consensus on borders being socially constructed, I found a gap of studies that focus on the EU discourse as a way to analyse the alteration of its borders because of an external factor. Therefore, the aim of this project is to contribute to the research by studying how the war in Ukraine, divided in two in time, the annexation of Crimea and the invasion by Russia, affected the bordering process of the EU through critical discourse analysis.

Methodology

The purpose of this project is to research the institutionalisation of borders through political discourse and examine its evolution over time. The concepts of symbols, discourses, and institutions from Passi's work on bordering processes have informed the formulation of the research project. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is employed to facilitate understanding not only the substance of diverse EU speeches but also their correlation with their surrounding context. This is significant since context is interconnected with the discourses and conversely, because ultimately discourses can shape the course of events, meaning that CDA helps to analyse the intricate relationship between language, discourse and society to ultimately to uncover the complex power dynamics found in social practices. Consequently, CDA combined with the constructivist theoretical framework on borders will serve as a framework to explore the connection between EU speeches and their association with the political landscape, namely the Ukraine-Russia crisis. Specifically key EU speeches by relevant EU agents given in 2014 and 2022 will be analysed, scrutinising how the conflict has influenced them and perhaps vice-versa. To answer the purpose of this thesis, the following research question is posed:

- How have process of bordering in the EU been affected by the conflict in Ukraine since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014?

In order to explore the research question, a series of working questions are put forth:

- What are borders?
- What are the borders of the EU?
- Are borders institutionalised through political discourse? If so, how?
- Are discourses influenced by context?
- How are speeches related to processes globalisation?

Critical Discourse Analysis

Embedded within the paradigm of critical social constructivism, Norman Fairclough is one of the principal developers of critical discourse analysis (CDA) along with Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk and others (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000; Amoussou, and Allagbe, 2018). The three scholars view discourse as a social practice, however, they differ in their approach. Wodak's approach is focus on the relevance of context and history surrounding discourses; van Dijk, on the other hand, emphasises the socio-cognitive part of discourses as a key mediator between text and society (Amoussou and Allagbe, 2018)

Fairclough synthesises his theoretical foundations into the all-encompassing volume titled *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (2010) by drawing upon the influential work of Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory (Rear, 2014) and Halliday's functional analysis (Amoussou and Allagbe, 2018). Fairclough asserts that language plays a pivotal role in the establishment and reinforcement of power dynamics, encapsulating the notion that language is an integral component of our social praxis, effectively shaping and constructing our broader social context.

Nevertheless, it is of utmost importance to explain the conceptual framework underpinning the notion of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as defined by Fairclough. Within this context, the scholar highlights three fundamental characteristics that define CDA: its relational, dialectical, and transdisciplinary nature.

CDA is relational in that it focuses on social relations which are complex and 'layered' (Fairclough, 2010, p. 3). Fairclough deconstructs 'discourse' into the different ways it can be perceived, exemplifying that it can be an 'object' - what it is *per se*, and also a 'complex set of relations' - meaning that it can be a web of different relations including the different ways we communicate with each other, be it by oral or written means, "describe relations between concrete communicative events (conversations, newspaper articles etc.) and more abstract and enduring complex discursive 'objects' (with their own complex relations) like languages, discourses and genres" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 3). And yet, moreover, there can also be relations between discourse and other 'objects' with their own set of relations, which leads to characterise discourse by its 'internal' and 'external' relations.

The dialectical feature of CDA can be found such relations. An 'object' cannot be defined without considering the other 'objects' with which it has a relation, thus, "no one object or element (such as discourse) can be analysed other than in terms of its dialectical relations with others" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 4). In this case, Fairclough uses the 'external' relation between discourse and power, defining power of a state as the relation between those who govern and the governed. However, discourse is what legitimises a state and its government although a state is also capable to exercise at the same time its physical force to justify its existence. So, albeit discourse and power are different 'objects', they are interconnected in a dialectical manner, "power is partly discourse, and discourse is partly power" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 4).

CDA is transdisciplinary inasmuch as different disciplines across the academia intervene in the analyses, paradoxically establishing relations and dialogue amongst each other which become the source of research. "The analysis of the dialectical *relations between* discourse and other objects, elements or moments, as well as analysis of the 'internal relations' of discourse" (Fairclough, 2010 p. 4) is of such intricacy that it requires the use of diverse disciplines when analysing.

However, before proceeding, it is relevant to present Fairclough's summary of concepts to better comprehend the concepts presented:

<i>"discourse (abstract noun)</i>	Language use conceived as social practice.
<i>discursive event</i>	Instance of language use, analysed as text, discursive practice, social practice.
<i>text</i>	The written or spoken language produced in a discursive event.
<i>discursive practice</i>	The production, distribution and consumption of a text.
<i>interdiscursivity</i>	The constitution of a text from diverse discourses and genres.
<i>discourse (count noun)</i>	Way of signifying experience from a particular perspective.
<i>genre</i>	Use of language associated with a particular social activity.
<i>order of discourse</i>	Totality of discursive practices of an institution, and relations between them."

(Fairclough, 2010, pp. 95-96)

The method in CDA understands that texts have three characteristics: "genre: ways of acting; discourses: ways of representing; styles: ways of being" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 75). Thus, textual analysis is interdiscursive, that is the study of how the three characteristics are presented and expressed in a text; and linguistic because it analyses the different possible forms of discourse such as language, and images in relation to what they represent and mean within the genre, discourse and style combination. Essentially, interdiscursive analysis is where discourses, genres and styles are on their own both linguistic forms as well as categories for analysis.

In fact, CDA is based on the 'critical' aspect of it, aiming at uncovering the relations of power and the 'opacity' between "(a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 93). Ultimately, discursive practices, events

and texts are product of power relations embedded by ideology and such 'opacity' allows the establishment and reproduction of power relations (Fairclough, 2010). In this regard, the researcher brings their own perspectives to the project. It is paramount for them to maintain awareness of those values throughout their research because such values will affect the outcome of the research; as well as keeping distance from the topic at hand, ultimately, ensuring that the research does not turn "into political action (which is, of course, not in itself a bad thing) or becomes an attempt to prove what the researcher already believes. The data need to be allowed to speak for themselves. Thus, CDA requires a constant balancing between theory and empirical phenomena." (Wodak, 1999, p. 186)

Fairclough establishes a relation between discourse, power, and ideology which leads to one of the key assumptions in CDA: discourses always intend to inform and persuade, thus, behind discourses, there is always an ideology. By ideology, he refers to "a relation between meaning (and therefore texts) and social relations of power and domination" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 79). Thus, power relations can be produced and reproduced through discursive practices (Amoussou, and Allagbe, 2018).

Fairclough's work acknowledges the multidimensional nature of language, as both a social practice and a communicative event. Language is "a mode of action" which is "socially and historically situated [...], in a dialectical relationship with other facets of 'the social' (its 'social context') - it is socially shaped, but it is also socially shaping, or *constitutive* [...] of (i) social identities, (ii) social relations and (iii) systems of knowledge and belief" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 92).

It is possible to identify different types of discursive practice considering orders of discourse as a framework. By that a distinction between discourses (as a count noun) and genres can be made. These elements are key in shaping language use and reflecting the different discursive practices and the relationship between them in particular social activities.

Discursive events occur when language constitutes and is used as the main part of the analysis within the three-dimensional model, which includes text, discursive practice, and social practice. By examining these dimensions, the usage of language is more thoroughly understood. Although, underlying such discursive events are what Fairclough describes as orders of discourse which encompass "the totality of its discursive practices, and the relationships (of complementarity, inclusion/exclusion, opposition) between them" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 93).

Altogether, CDA as is used in this project, refers to an interdisciplinary constructivist approach that aims to investigate the complexly causal relations between "(a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 93). The

purpose is to examine how the different relations of power reflected in ideology formulates and models discursive practices, events and texts (a) within society (b).

To adequately analyse the complex interplay between discursive events and orders of discourse, that is between language, power, and social change, and eventually gain insight into how the different powers operate through language and discourse, the three-dimensional model will be employed. This model offers a comprehensive framework to “address relations between discursive and non-discursive elements or dimensions of social changes” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 87).

Three-Dimensional Model

The three-dimensional model posits that each discursive event encompasses the dimension of *text*, which is part of *discursive practice* which in turn is part of *social practice*, and they have a dialectical relation with each other. Thus, when analysing the social practice, Fairclough considers the power struggle as the framework of discursive events trying “to combine a theory of power based upon Gramsci’s concept of *hegemony* with a theory of discourse practice based upon the concept of intertextuality (more exactly, *interdiscursivity*)” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 94)

The first dimension is *texts*, the analysis of ‘form-and-meaning’ of any form of communication – spoken or written language as well as images and non-verbal communication (Fairclough, 2010: 94). The essential part of this dimension is to examine the ‘ideational’, ‘interpersonal’ and ‘textual’ meaning of the text, that is “the representation and signification of the world and experience, the constitution (establishment, reproduction, negotiation) of identities of participants and social and personal relationships between them, and the distribution of given versus new and foregrounded versus backgrounded information” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 94). Essentially, the analysis of the texts consists in examining the vocabulary, the form, execution, coherence, grammar, which can express different attitudes towards the subject crafting a particular ‘idea’ of it during the discursive event.

The second dimension is *discursive practice*, which encompasses the production, consumption and distribution of texts. Because language can be greatly influential to a point of influencing our perspectives on a certain matter, the choice of wording as well as the form in which they are expressed are central to the analysis – that is discourse, genre and who are the sender and the receiver. Fairclough highlights *interdiscursivity* as “the normal heterogeneity of texts in being constituted by combinations of diverse genres and discourses” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 95) as well as drawing combinations from the past and adapting them to the present (which draws from the concept of intertextuality). This emphasizes the relevance of considering the analysis with its historical changes

because in every historical moment, discourses have a different function in society (Fairclough, 2010, p. 96).

The third dimension is *social practice* which is concerned with the importance of social relationships and practices in different contexts as well as institutions that are created from discursive practices and vice-versa. Thus, the analysis is made of the “different levels of social organisation – the context of situation, the institutional context, and the wider societal context or ‘context of culture’” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 95).

Ultimately, the three dimensions are interconnected and are dialectical in nature. As Fairclough formulates “on the one hand, processes of text production and interpretation are shaped by (and help shape) the nature of the social practice, and on the other hand the production process shapes (and leaves ‘traces’ in) the text, and the interpretative process operates upon ‘cues’ in the text” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 94). Text and social practice are connected through discursive practice, thus making discursive practice a central part of the analysis to unveil the ideology of the text as well as to facilitate the analysis from a global perspective. Such characteristic of the model enriches the analysis because it can be tailored to each case albeit the organisation and structure of the analysis is more demanding.

‘Technologisation of discourse’ is a concept from Fairclough that demonstrates why the analysis of the official speeches given by the EU are relevant to analyse. ‘Technologisation of discourse’ is characterised by ‘top-down’ interventions to transform discursive practices, to restructure them in order to reinstate institutional power (Fairclough, 2010). Importantly, such concept provides a connection between the state, the ‘macro’, and the discursive practices, the ‘micro’ (Fairclough, 2010). Thus, political speeches such as the ones given by the EU’s highest representatives are crucial in understanding the values produced and reproduced. The reason is that discourses are “characterised by having the distinctive and more important role in the constitution and reproduction of power relations and social identities which this entails.” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 97)

To integrate the constructivist approach of border theory with Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis, it is essential to consider the dialectical connection between discursive practices and social construction of borders – namely their meaning and function, and their sociopolitical context. When combining the theory and the three-dimensional model, the aim is to analyse how the EU’s bordering process is reflected in the speeches under the external war shock.

Analysis

As stated, the present research aims at analysing a group of written speeches of great significance, delivered by members of the European Union (EU) across distinct phases: prior to the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, after the annexation, and both pre- and post-invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation in 2022. These speeches are relevant discourses for the EU, reflecting not only its reaction to these events but also serving as its agenda-setter. The list of discourses include:

- 2013: State of the European Union
- 2014: Introductory statement by President Barroso on Ukraine
- 2015: State of the European Union - Time for Honesty, Unity and Solidarity
- 2021: State of the European Union Address by President von der Leyen - STRENGTHENING THE SOUL OF OUR UNION
- 2022: Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on the Russian aggression against Ukraine
- 2022: State of the European Union Address by President von der Leyen - A UNION THAT STANDS STRONG TOGETHER

The reason for having chosen these discourses, which can be found in the Annex, is based on their relation to the war in Ukraine and the articulation of the EU strategy towards its process of bordering considering the conflict. The focus on the speeches of the State of the European Union (SOTEU) is due to its role in conveying the EU's accomplishments and describes the priorities, challenges, and policies for the upcoming year (European Commission, n.d. b). Because of the change in the Commissioner's presidency in 2014, there was no SOTEU that year, thus, I chose the speeches from the preceding year, 2013, and the subsequent year, 2015, instead. And the purpose of analysing the speeches following the annexation and the invasion is precisely because they reflect the EU's immediate and swift response as well as the Union's strategy and plans under the new circumstances. So, by comparing the same type of speeches in different moments in time, the analysis aims to establish the evolutionary trajectory of the EU's bordering process and answer the research question: how have process of bordering in the EU been affected by the conflict in Ukraine since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014?

Because of the nature of the speeches, they all share part of their *discourse practice* section. They are all governmental political speeches, with a particular style and predictable format, delivered in front of the European Parliament. They all have the same structure, or very similar, when addressing the EU Parliamentarians, "Honourable Members", adding a formal tone to the speech and serving the purpose of defining different themes in the speech.

1. 2013 State of the Union Address by President Barroso

Published on September 11, 2013.

Text

The speech uses persuasive language to convey its message. It employs positive language, as “dramatic”, “suffered”, and “fought back” to evoke sympathetic feelings towards the EU’s challenging crisis. However, Barroso uses more negative language in relation to the consequences of the crisis, “alarming” and “unacceptable”, so to remark the urgency of action; and “challenging”, “stress”, “burden”, and “catastrophe” to highlight the severity of the situation.

To encourage inclusivity and shared responsibility, the President uses words like “we” and “ourselves”.

The speech incorporates a figure of speech, metaphors like “economic heavy weather”, “when you are in the same boat, one cannot say: ‘your end of the boat is sinking.’”. This way, Barroso expresses the need for greater cooperation within the EU.

Lastly, the speech uses authoritative language by using the word “must”, “have to”, and “should”. This adds weight to the message and asserts what it is that will be done.

Discourse practice

The speech was delivered five years after the beginning of the financial crisis of 2008 and its subsequent consequences. The technicality of the speech suggests that it was mainly intended for a bureaucratic audience. It aimed at encouraging cooperation and alignment towards a same goal.

Barroso emphasises the EU’s resilience and mentions the measures taken to overcome the crisis, pointing out Greece’s ability to deliver results and remain within the Euro. In this regard, he also highlights the EU’s strength to expand regardless: “the European Union enlarged from 27 to 28 Member States. Next year the euro area will grow from 17 to 18”.

The President dives into the technical aspects of the economic recovery using terms like “GDP”, “capital markets”, fiscal adjustment”, “Single Resolution Mechanism”, “SMEs”. These concepts technical enough to potentially alienate people outside the economic or political fields of the EU. In this line, Barroso also addressed the Europe 2020 and digital agendas, the need for increased cooperation across employment, education, and climate change, on top of asking for an increased EU budget.

Furthermore, Barroso also challenged those critical of the EU to be aware of the values for which the EU stands for and the positive impacts it has on its members urging them to “If you don't like Europe

as it is: improve it!". He also references the praise received at the G20 meeting, a form of interdiscursivity.

Another intertextual reference is his quoting of Aristotle, *"One swallow does not make a summer, nor one fine day"*. The reason is to illustrate that the crisis is not over despite the good results of the countermeasures. Barroso also quotes Justus Lipsius *"Constancy is a right and immovable strength of the mind, neither lifted up nor pressed down with external or casual accidents"*. Only a *'strength of the mind'*, he argued, based on *'judgment and sound reason'*, can help you through confusing and alarming times", to point out the need for continuing the hard work.

Social practice

The ideology of the speech is focused on unifying Europe. As Barroso states: "I believe that only together, as the European Union, we can give our citizens what they aspire: that our values, our interests, our prosperity are protected and promoted in the age of globalisation". This aims at positioning the EU as a key global actor advocating for a Liberal International Order (LIO) defined as "sovereign states – led by liberal democracies – cooperate for mutual gain and protection within a loosely rules-based global space" (Ikenberry, 2018a, p.12).

Moreover, the speech reflects a clear intention to establish further relations with the neighbouring countries such as Ukraine, with the idea that these nations will be drawn to the EU's model, but always respecting their sovereignty ("countries like Ukraine are more than ever seeking closer ties to the European Union, attracted by our economic and social model. We cannot turn our back on them. We cannot accept any attempts to limit these countries own sovereign choices").

Barroso denounces the limited power of the EU as it is mainly technocratic and unable to tackle all the dimensions of the crisis. He emphasises the Commission's willingness to work more closely with the Member States ("So all of us in the Commission – and I'm happy to have all my Commissioners today here with me – all of us want to work intensively with you, and with the Member States, to deliver as much of our growth agenda as we possibly can") and cooperate towards a European project and ("So now is time to rise above purely national issues and parochial interests").

In this regard, the President talks about the EU as a set of separated agencies, the Commission and the EP, Member States, and the citizens. This is highlighted in the speech as it demands for "structural reforms" and the need of stability and determination ("We are much more than a Market").

Nevertheless, Barroso advocates for promoting EU values internationally. Thus, he calls upon international actors to join in collaborating on common issues like climate change ("Frankly, we need the others also on board").

2. 2014 Introductory Statement by President Barroso on Ukraine

Published on March 12, 2014.

Text

The speech employs positive persuasive language such as “grateful”, “proud”, and “hold dear” in reference to the EU’s representatives and values. The use of figure of repetition used, “it challenges”, is used to emphasise the EU’s need to act. Also, wording like “robust”, “unity”, and “giving our best” highlight the EU’s characteristics and compromise. This tone is extended to Ukraine intended to awake sympathy with “legitimate” and “support”.

On the other hand, President Barroso uses negative language like “unprovoked”, “unacceptable, and “violation” to evoke hostility towards the annexation. “Condemned”, “tense”, “crisis”, and “illegal” are used to remark its gravity.

The use of inclusive terms such as “we”, “our”, and “us” personalise the EU. These words accompanied by “should” and “call on”, assert Barroso’s authority and influence, even more when he places expectations on the EP and the EU Council (“I hope we can count on your, and the Council's, active commitment to fast-track the approval process”).

There is an intention to awake sympathy by highlighting the human loss in Ukraine: “the Ukrainian people have already shed too much blood in this process. No more lives should be put to risk”.

Discourse practice

This formal political speech was delivered shortly after Russia’s annexation of Crimea in Ukraine. The speech, available in video and written format, aims at expressing the EU’s initiatives to help Ukraine and gather support while condemning the annexation.

The themes in the speech are about the EU’s stands on Ukraine’s situation, its contribution (“aid packages”), and its diplomatic efforts for “de-escalate[ing] the situation [...] and find a peaceful solution”. Barroso suggests international collaboration, although he suggests it by saying that institutions like the IMF and the World Bank “can participate”. However, he does exercise his authority by warning measures if negotiations stall (“if meaningful negotiations do not begin within the next few days and produce results within limited timeframe, this will trigger additional measures”).

There is interdiscursivity when adopting the structure of previous speeches delivered at the EP, addressing the members of Parliament as “Honourable Members”. This manifests the speaker’s authority and formality. Furthermore, Barroso references the significant Maidan Revolution: “the

developments which started with the people of Ukraine expressing a clear wish to take their future into their own hands” in order to weight power towards the Ukrainian cause.

Social practice

The speech manifests the ideology of the Liberal International Order. In this sense, Barroso advocates for the EU values of “unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity”, and in doing so, he aims at strengthening and expanding the EU’s relations with its neighbours (“Our relationship with our Eastern partners does not have to be an exclusive one. Our model of engagement is that of the open regionalism, and not of autarchic self-entrenchment”, “a united, inclusive, stable and prosperous Ukraine can only be of benefit to all its neighbours and partners”).

Furthermore, Barroso intends to dialogue through international platforms to address the conflict (“we have been proposing to Russia the possibility of direct talks through international mechanisms available”). However, he reprehends Russia for not participating in those initiatives.

The conflict developed as Ukraine was about to sign the Association Agreement/DCFTA, which meant a closer relationship with the EU, in both politics and trade. Considering this, the agreement served as means for the EU to exercise its influence in Ukraine, and in this regard, Barroso used the situation to assert that “the aid package is not a quick fix and needs to be implemented by, on the other side, a reform-oriented and inclusive Ukrainian government, committed to fixing the current state of their financial system and rebuilding the economic foundations of the country”.

3. 2015 State of the Union Address: Time for Honesty, Unity and Solidarity by President Jean-Claude Juncker

Published on September 9, 2015

Text

Juncker’s address is characterised by the usage of persuasive language, aimed at evoking feelings of empathy and support or hostility and rejection towards the situations he presents. He employs negative language as “terror”, “horror”, “oppressed”, “terrible” to describe the refugee crisis and positive language like “forced to flee their homes” and refers to migrants as “refugees” to awake sympathy. In relation to the EU, he also uses positive wording like “bold” and “determined” to encourage engagement within the Union, highlighting that “in spite of many differences amongst its Member States, is by far the wealthiest and most stable continent in the world”.

The President employs figures of speech: metaphors, rhetorical questions, and repetition. He refers to the EU as a “beacon of hope” to create a positive image; asks “Have we forgotten that there is a reason there are more McDonalds living in the U.S. than there are in Scotland?” inviting the audience to be critical; and repeats “we need”, “that we”, and “let it read” so to draw attention to the message.

The speech reflects Juncker’s position of authority to set the agenda in using “should” (“I believe we can and should *politicise* everything”), “must” (“European laws must be applied by all Member States – this must be self-evident in a Union based on the rule of law”), “have to” (“We have to step up the work for a fair and truly pan-European labour market”). Moreover, the use of “we”, on top of creating inclusivity, also involves shared responsibilities.

Throughout the speech, there is use of bold letters, like “legal channels of migration”, to emphasise and stress the relevance and urgency of his priorities and initiatives.

Overall, the speech is emotionally persuasive, characterised by a strong commitment to each topic, whether critiquing the Union’s actions (“We saw political posturing, bickering and insults carelessly bandied about”) or positively encouraging a better Union (“When the European Union stands united, we can change the world”).

Discourse practice

Jean-Claude Juncker establishes his recently assumed Presidency of the Commission’s authority by breaking from convention by centring the speech on his political message rather than his agenda. Moreover, he emphasises the legitimacy of his position as it is backed by the results of the 2014 EP elections, asserting even more his role.

The speech is available on video and written version. And the aim of it is to create change within the institutions and the attitude towards the different crisis faced by the EU. However, Juncker addresses the concerns of the EU population directly to talk about refugees and evokes sympathy by saying “Let us also be clear and honest with our often worried citizens: as long as there is war in Syria and terror in Libya, the refugee crisis will not simply go away”.

Most of the speech centres on refugees and the duty and responsibility of the EU to assist them, and to “open legal channels for migration” while increasing the presence of Frontex for security reasons (“we have given up border controls between the Member States of the Schengen area, to guarantee free movement of people, a unique symbol of European integration. But the other side of the coin to free movement is that we must work together more closely to manage our external borders”).

However, the political role of the Presidency of the Commission is also addressed (“I wanted to lead a political Commission. A very political Commission”), emphasising his intention to use political

measures to face future challenges (“there is not enough Europe in this Union. And there is not enough Union in this Union”).

Another main point of the speech is the economic crisis in Greece, highlighting the country’s non-departure of the Euro as a success of European cooperation (“Broad support and timely delivery of the reforms is what Greece needs, so that confidence can return both among the Greek people and to the Greek economy”). In relation to Ukraine, Juncker emphasises that albeit the cost of sanctions, they are necessary (“The sanctions the EU has imposed on Russia have a cost for each of our economies, and repercussions on important sectors, like farming. But sanctions are a powerful tool in confronting aggression and violation of international law”).

Interdiscursivity can be found when the Framework Agreement is referenced at the beginning of the speech so to state its importance. Lastly, Juncker alludes to a conversation with Putin which highlights that “a spirit of cooperation between the EU and Russia has given way to suspicion and distrust”, ultimately, showcasing the difficulty to find a solution to the annexation.

Social practice

The speech was delivered at a point when thousands of refugees were fleeing from Syria, Libya, and Eritrea due to the war, the Islamic State, and dictatorships.

Throughout the speech, Juncker seems to be admonishing the EU for its lack of consensus, cooperation and unity (“There has been a lot of finger pointing the past weeks. Member States have accused each other of not doing enough or of doing the wrong thing” and “We will also need to maintain our unity”). He, ultimately, urges the EU to have a more political role.

Juncker aims at placing the EU as a global leader (“I believe we can, and should, play our part on the world stage”) based on the ideology of freedom, cooperation and unity, worthy of been exported in order to have a more peaceful world (“if we want to promote a more peaceful world, we will need more Europe and more Union in our foreign policy”). To achieve this, the EU is to be proactively engage into solving international challenges, particularly climate change (“Let me be clear to our international partners: the EU will not sign just any deal”).

Concerning Ukraine, Juncker links the concepts of border and security (“The security and the borders of the EU Member States are untouchable”). In doing so, Russia is warned, demonstrating the EU’s authority (“The EU must show Russia the cost of confrontation but it must also make clear it is prepared to engage”).

4. 2021 State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen: STRENGTHENING THE SOUL OF OUR UNION

Published on September 15, 2021

Text

The speech uses positive persuasive language. Albeit seemingly contradictory, there is “There is still much grief in our society”, “hearts we can never mend, life stories we can never finish and time we can never give back to our young”, which intend to show a positive attitude, sympathetic emotions, towards those who lost much over COVID-19. In relation to the EU, von der Leyen employs wordings like “Europe is among world leaders”, “As one Europe. And we can be proud of it”, and “we did a lot of things right”, describing the EU as a strong and active union. “Most educated, talented and motivated generation. And it has missed out on so much to keep others safe” is positive language to evoke sympathy towards the youth.

The President makes use of bold lettering such as “Growth in the euro area outpaced both the US and China in the last quarter”, “democracy and common values”, “Human rights are not for sale – at any price”, “New Pact on Migration and Asylum”, and “Trade and Technology Council”; Italics, for example in “It is a Union where we strengthen our *individual liberty* through the *strength of our community*”; “we take a dual approach of dialogue *and* decisive action”, “*So clearly something is on the move*”; and underscore like “It is the authority on the *science* of climate change” in order to emphasises statements, concepts, ideas, institutions or policies.

Referring to the EU as “we” and “Team Europe” makes the institutions more inclusive, while combining those words with “must”, “have to”, “should”, demonstrates von der Leyen’s authority and shares responsibilities (“We must step up our support to those who fall into the gaps – those not in any kind of employment, education or training”).

When it comes to he pandemic, the economy and climate change, there is use of adjectives such as “biggest”, “deepest”, “gravest” to create a sense of importance and urgency into the matters.

Von der Leyen claims authority with respect to climate change and security (“Europe can – and clearly should – be able and willing to do more on its own”). There is an attempt to create a European identity through the younger generation (“Because our youth put meaning into empathy and solidarity”, “gain skills, to create bonds and help forge their own European identity”)

Discourse practice

It had been two years since COVID-19 began. The speech, as every other SOTEU, is about reminding the EU what has been done in the last year and what the next steps will be taken. However, the aim

is to promote support for future initiatives towards greater integration, “the European way”, so to be more effective when dealing with upcoming challenges.

The speech goes over a variety of themes: the soul of Europe, digitalisation, EU’s defence, climate change and healthcare. However, there is no mention to the Ukrainian situation regarding Crimea. Nevertheless, the speech highlights the last years achievements by using quotations by first Robert Schuman, “Europe needs a soul, an ideal, and the political will to serve this ideal”, and later, by Beatrice Vio, a gold medallist “*if it seems impossible then it can be done. Se sembra impossibile, allora si può fare*”.

Von der Leyen recognises the efforts of the Member States and remarks the importance of working together (“we learned the lessons from the part when we were too divided and too delayed”). But the Member States are also held accountable for their initial lack of cooperation (“This task needs leader’s attention and a structured dialogue at top-level”).

Social practice

The speech recognises the emergence of a “new international order”, following the US withdrawal from Afghanistan within which von der Leyen places the EU as a strategic leader. Thus, the underlying ideology is defined by democratic values embedded within a cooperative united community that is the EU. By standing behind it, the President of the Commission finds the authority to appeal to shared objectives to China and the US, urging them to demonstrate their compromise with climate change (“But we call for that same leadership on setting out how China will get there”, “but we expect the United States and our partners to step up too”). In fact, the discourse also places much responsibility on the Member States, demanding that they contribute more to the Union and its activities (“every country has a responsibility”) and that they adhere to the rule of law (“there are worrying developments in certain Member States”, “because people must be able to rely on the right to an independent judiciary”). Furthermore, von der Leyen asserts the EU’s responsibility towards other countries in terms of collaboration (“major economies do have a special duty to the *least* developed and *most* vulnerable countries”).

Understanding that the EU is a global leader, von der Leyen emphasises the commitment of the EU towards alliances and partnerships with its neighbourhood and in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indic (“today’s new EU - Indo-Pacific strategy is a milestone”, “And we will also continue investing in our partnership across our neighbourhood”). Even more, the alliance between the EU and NATO is emphasised by mentioning the “Joint Declaration” concerning the retreat from Afghanistan. Thus, the role of the EU as a major player is reinforced when showing a willingness in collaborating with other actors towards common goals.

Another essential part throughout the speech is the relevance of Europe's youth. Dedicating an entire section as well to the youth, they are characterised as victims ("Being young is normally a time of discovery, of creating new experiences. A time to meet lifelong friends, to find your own path. And what did we ask this generation to do? To keep their social distance, to stay locked down and to do school from home. For more than a year"). But also, as the most engaged and educated pursuant of a better future ("This is a generation with a conscience. They are pushing us to go further and faster to tackle the climate crisis", "This is our most educated, talented and motivated generation. And it has missed out on so much to keep others safe"). In this sense, the youth is portrayed as being the epitome of European values and, thus, they should partake in shaping EU policies ("we will make sure that young people can help lead the debate in the Conference on the Future of Europe") as a way, along the ALMA programme, of fostering a shared European identity ("to gain skills, to create bonds and help forge their own European Identity").

5. 2022 Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Published on March 1, 2022

Text

Overall, there is use of persuasive language by using emotive language, either in a more positive manner or negative. Adjectives and adverbs such as "tragic", "refugee", "bravely", "so right", "immense courage" which are found related to Ukraine and its people mean to awaken sympathy and solidarity, while "gruesome death", "foreign leader", "corrupt", "clash", "lies", "cruel" awaken the opposite, hostility, and they are found related to the invasion, Putin and Russia's elites. Furthermore, the different tones repeat in sentences such as "holding hands, crying silently, trying to cheer each other up", "they deserve it", "holding up the torch of freedom for all of us", "dying for universal values and they are willing to die for them" as well as "this is a clash between the rule of law and the rule of the gun; between democracies and autocracies; between a rules-based order and a world of naked aggression", "fleeing from Putin's bombs", "Putin's war", and "Putin's tanks". In this sense, the President of the Commission is building towards creating a diametrical opposition demonising, and humanising Ukrainians.

It is possible to see that she uses her power position, her authority to set the agenda when she uses words such as "we will", "have to", "must" and "should", e.g., "we must stand up against this cruel aggression". In this regard, von der Leyen also seeks the "unity" of Europe, using her authority ("we

must show the power that lies in our democracies”), personalising the institution (“our Union”), using positive wording (“makes me proud”). However, the fact that she personalises the institution but does not personalise who she addresses to, makes the speech impersonal and formal. Nevertheless, her speech tries to create union by differentiation between ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘us’ being the West, representant of “freedom” and “universal values” and Putin and Russia “corrupt elite”, “autocracies”.

Discourse practice

Five days after the invasion of Ukraine, the speech was delivered before the European Parliament (EP) in Brussels by the President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen. While the present audience was the MPs, the speech was also directed to the general public and it is available on video and written, although only in a few EU languages and Ukrainian and Russian. The overall aim of the speech is to find support for the EU’s response to the invasion by explaining how the EU will be supporting Ukraine, and what it will entail.

The central themes of the speech are about the EU’s commitment to defending Ukraine (“we are and we will be there for them”). She remarks the imperative in investing in defence and other sources of energy (“We have to invest in it”) because “our investments today will make us more independent tomorrow” regardless of the cost. The goal is that “freedom” should prevail thanks to joint efforts and unity in Europe against a common enemy.

Interdiscursivity can be found when referencing the Kyiv Independent text “this is not just about Ukraine. It is a clash of two worlds, two polar sets of values” and describing Ukraine’s situations as “darkest hour”, similarly as to how Churchill referred to France in his 1940’s speech “Their Finest Hour” (“the darkest hour in French history”). This reinforces von der Leyen’s position regarding the clash of values between two opposing systems “between democracies and autocracies” and reinforces the need for unity.

Furthermore, von der Leyen mentions a conversation with President Zelensky regarding Ukraine’s potential EU membership, which depicts commitment but also caution on her part. While she alludes to the possibility (“a people that stands up so bravely for our European values belongs in our European family”), she prioritises the ending of the war (“We have to end this war. And we should talk about the next steps”), which could be interpreted that, in the end, it is not entirely up to her, but rather, a decision taken by the Member States, who hold diverse and often opposed visions as to what countries should join the Union.

Social practice

As mentioned, the speech is pronounced soon after Russia deployed troops in Ukraine under a 'special military operation'. The conflict, however, originated long time ago, arising from the dissolution of the USSR, and is more immediately linked to the 2014 annexation of Crimea by Russia, supposedly to protect Russian inhabitants in the region.

Ursula von der Leyen, as the President of the Commission, has a leading role in the EU's foreign policy alongside the European Council, the Council of the EU, and the High Representative/Vice President of the Commission. Her role consists of developing policies, legislation, and managing the EU budget and it is defined by her political alignment to the centre-right. Her speech is, thus, characterised by an action plan. And because it is delivered before the European Parliament and those represented by it, it has a solemn tone, and it shows transparency.

The discourse shows the EU's ability to use soft and hard power. Von der Leyen appeals to EU Member States and allied nations, urging them to align around shared values such as "freedom", the "rule of law", "democracy", "European values", and "universal values", while at the same time deploys more coercive measures in sanctions on Russia targeting its economy and reduce the EU's reliance on Russian energy supply. This speech has an underlying ideology for the use of such powers, based on democratic principles and protecting Ukraine's sovereignty, which, in turn, aligns with the EU's core values (European Union, n.d. b), but also, the economic interests and the proximity of the conflict define the EU's strategy outlined in the speech.

The speech also features shifts in the EU's policy from its aim in 2021 "to support disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants (DDR), as part of the EU's wider contribution to peacebuilding" (European Commission, n.d. a). This is reflected in the increased military budget and use of Peace Facilities "to support Ukraine's defence". Furthermore, by recognising the support from key international actors such as the US, UK, Australia, Japan, and NATO, the speech emphasises the Union's alliances and position of power. However, since the EU is dependable mainly on the US for LNG gas (Yanatma, 2023), it seems like the US pressured the EU and its members to increase their military spending to meet the 2% demanded by NATO. As Lonardo (2022) suggests, cutting off Russia from the economy and any other similar relations could create resentment and risk the emergence of new divisions within Europe.

6. 2022 State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen > A UNION THAT STANDS STRONG TOGETHER

Published on September 14, 2022.

Text

Throughout the President's speech there is use of persuasive language, alternating between positive and negative language. Positive terms like "courage", "proud", "heroes", "innocent victims", and "heartbroken mothers and fathers" evoke empathy and solidarity towards Ukraine and Ukrainians, "determination", "solidarity" and "courage" praise the work of the EU and its inhabitants; while negative wording such as "raging", "aggression", "ruthless face of evil", "autocracy", "cruelty", and "brutality" condemn the war, Russia, Putin and his allies have a hostile tone.

Von der Leyen's speech employs metaphors like "a nation of heroes has risen again" and "the light shines brightest in the dark". These add an emotional tone towards Ukraine and appeal to people's solidarity.

Using "our", "Team Europe", and "we" promotes inclusivity and emphasises the joint responsibility to act and to work towards common goals.

There is different text formatting that accentuate important parts of the text. Bold lettering is used to highlight relevance, e.g., "this is why we are putting forwards measures for Member States to reduce their overall electricity consumption"; and Italic is used to stress key messages like "*And we should be proud of that*".

Discourse practice

The SOTEU serves to outline the policies and achievements of the EU, however, this year's speech is focused on positioning the EU against the war in Ukraine. Von der Leyen frames the war as more than one challenge because "this is a war on our energy, a war on our economy, a war on our values and a war on our Future. This is about autocracy against democracy. And I stand here with the conviction that with courage and solidarity, Putin will fail and Europe will prevail". The aim of the speech is to convey the EU's rejection of the war and to encourage cooperation and solidarity.

The speech has a rather personal tone, as it directly addresses not only EU institutions but also the people of the EU, expressing inclusiveness ("my fellow Europeans"). It takes place in front of the European Parliament (EP) and the presence of the Ukrainian First Lady, Olena, to whom von der Leyen alludes directly at some point. Such direct reference to a high-status person in Ukraine, is used to remark the EU's compromise to Ukraine ("we will work with the First Lady [...]"). In addition, attending the speech there are two people, Magdalena and Agnieszka, who welcomed refugees and are an

example of the EU's values ("their story is about everything our Union stands and strives for. It is a story of heart, character and solidarity").

The address is available in both video and written formats. Noticeably, part of the English version of the speech is in French and German, the two other primary working languages of the EU.

Nevertheless, the President of the Commission goes over the different initiatives undertaken and explains the Commission's future strategies for the EU. These encompass addressing the energy crisis, reducing the EU's dependency on Russia, and remarking the importance of the European Green Deal. These, she argues, will be costly yet, their possibility depends on the EU's unity ("Europe's greatest strength lies in each and every one of us.").

Regarding interdiscursivity, von der Leyen references significant historical figures. She quotes the late Queen Elizabeth II, as a stabilising figure, when saying "we will succeed – and that success will belong to every one of us", reinforcing the collective work despite the costs. Furthermore, the President draws upon David Sassoli, "democracy has not gone out of fashion, but it must update itself in order to keep improving people's lives". This reference remarks her message of unity in pursuit of a common European goal. And last, von der Leyen alludes to her previous 2021 SOTEU to emphasise the need to rejuvenate the EU, proposing a new European Convention.

Social practice

The speech's ideology is that of commitment, unity and cooperation. It demonstrates the solidarity of the EU with Ukraine, having the "refugees" found "shelter" within the Union. Moreover, von der Leyen points out symbolic forms of support such as the display of Ukrainian flags and saying "Slava Ukraini!" (Glory to Ukraine!) as a sign of support and remarking that Ukraine is its own sovereign nation.

Concerning Russia, the speech reflects the EU's hard power in the form of financial sanctions as a response to the conflict. The sanctions are described as "the toughest sanction the world has ever seen". The President holds the Russian government responsible for the destruction of the country's economy ("It is the Kremlin that has put Russia's economy on the path to oblivion"), which overall is illustrative of the EU's commitment to stand against Russia and rally support for the cause. However, this position appears to contradict the EU's historical emphasis on cooperation for conflict avoidance, characteristics of the Liberal International Order to which it belongs.

Despite this seemingly contradiction, von der Leyen's positioning of the EU as a global leader can be appreciated once more. She prioritises the EU values above all else and exercises her authority by demanding responsibility to contribute and to fulfil their duties in the crisis to international companies ("so they have to pay a fair share" and "we will develop with the Member States a set of measures

that take into account the specific nature of our relationship with suppliers – ranging from unreliable suppliers such as Russia to reliable friends such as Norway”). It can also be appreciated in her defence of democratic values (“we will not allow any autocracy’s Trojan horses to attack our democracies from within”), of the EU’s commitment to find a “global agreement” for climate change.

Conclusion of the Analysis

Each speech reveals key insights from the different speeches delivered by the three Presidents of the Commission. Each speech reflects a distinct moment in time and provides important perspectives on the EU's stance, actions, and underlying ideology through time. And, albeit the literature may suggest that Europe was moving towards a process of debordering, the analysis of the speeches indicates a different trend: increased securitisation, i.e., rebordering. However, it can be appreciated that the EU is trying to navigate between debordering and rebordering.

Language is an aspect that evolves over the six speeches, becoming more emotionally charged as the Presidents of the Commission aim to engage the European Parliament (EP) and get them involved in finding and implementing solutions for the challenges. The change in tone is noticeable when Russia annexed Crimea, the refugee crisis and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The overall aim seems to be to inspire action and unity in the EU in the face of common challenges, emphasising what Member States have in common rather than their differences.

Considering speeches 1, 2, and 3, it is possible to observe an evolution towards the EU’s aspiration for greater integration and its emergence as a global leader. Over time, these speeches have developed from mainly addressing economic matters, as visible in speech 1, to incorporate humanitarian and geopolitical issues, as seen in speech 2 and 3. The reason for this change is found in the EU’s calls for international action for Ukraine and the refugees from Syria and Libya, and the interest in greater inner and external cooperation. Essentially, the EU intended to promote its values, attract other countries to its way of doing things, and assume global leadership.

There is significant contrast between speech 1, which is more technical and focused on the EU’s internal workings, advocating for expanded powers for the Commission and the EP beyond economic matters. This demands further EU integration, namely, the EU aims at debordering within. While speeches 2 and 3 are less technical and use more persuasive language.

Speech 2 takes a more emotional tone, highlighting the EU’s role in aiding Ukraine to demonstrate the superiority of a united EU compared to a divided one. Furthermore, speech 2 emphasises the EU’s hard power, implementing sanctions that build borders with Russia. In this sense, the EU is bordering,

that is, it is debordering and rebordering at the same time: it opens its borders to refugees, gives financial help and promotes EU values beyond its borders and establishes borders to Russia when it comes to the economy.

Speech 3 in fact seems to reprimand EU Members for their lack of will to address the refugee crisis. When referring to Ukraine, the speech remarks the need to transcend borders (debordering), establishing relations of cooperation and exporting EU values, and not only with just Ukraine. Simultaneously, there is also rebordering towards Russia as sanctions are still applied.

Speeches 4, 5 and 6 focus on unity, cooperation, and the importance of EU values with a consistent use of persuasive language which is consistent since they are delivered by the same person. Each speech acknowledges the challenges and crises posed to the EU, remarks the importance of European unity and has a focus on the future of the EU.

In speech 4, the focus is placed on the economy and the internal functioning of the EU. It argues about the need to strengthen the Union in fighting the climate crisis, enhance the EU's defence capacity and finding consensus on how to manage migration. At the same time, the speech positions the EU as a global leader as it seeks to have closer ties with neighbouring countries. So, the speech represents the debordering process, as it intends the EU to increase integration within and establishing cooperation with third countries; while it also reorders as it intends to close the borders to migrants and develop a united defence policy.

Speech 5 shows a shift towards using more persuasive language since it is the one given soon after the invasion, and this one focuses on the humanitarian aid but also on the geopolitical issues. This speech sets the EU to deborder, first within because there is need for cooperation so keep up the sanctions but also by opening borders to refugees from the war, but also to countries and people that agree with the EU values. On the other hand, there is rebordering, as the EU is closing its borders by militarising a neighbouring country and establishing even more sanctions to Russia and its allies.

The last speech, speech 6, is similar to speech 5 as it also uses persuasive language and focuses on humanitarian aid and geopolitical issues. Since it is a longer speech, it covers more themes, however, it highlights the importance of the existence of the EU and its efforts to increase sanctions and to reduce its dependency on Russia, which is a sign of rebordering. Furthermore, there is also debordering since the speech asks for greater integration in the EU and calls for reinforcing alliances with neighbouring countries that share the EU's values.

Discussion

EU borders are, as the rest of borders, multifaceted, as the literature and the speeches point out. The borders are more than political boundaries, and their definition and representation are given through symbols, institutions, and discourse. Therefore, it can be understood that the speeches have a role in shaping the bordering process of the EU, and in doing that, the speeches are defining borders by communicating them.

Thus, as borders are not static lines as suggested by the literature, they also have functions: territorial, functional and symbolic. It may seem self-evident, but EU borders, indeed, are more than its inner borders between Member States. In this regard, it is possible to divide EU borders in two: borders within and external border.

First, within the EU, physical borders are almost non-existent, mainly due to the implementation of the Schengen area. This debordering is constant, as the speeches are consistently encouraging for increased cooperation and shared responsibilities. Second, the EU's has symbolic borders as it tries to create a European identity. It can be appreciated in the speeches where positive values and common history are remarked and the use of "we" contribute to create such shared identity.

Looking outwards, the EU's borders are also different from its physical delimitation. While there are police controls at the physical border, there is also control at the airports or the border is even when applying for a visa. The functional border of the EU also expands outwards in the form of agreements with third countries that, although not EU Member States (or not yet) have close economic ties with the EU.

The construction of that "we" mentioned above, the European identity, involves 'othering'. That means that the EU defines itself by opposition to others that do not share its values. So, through differentiation, avoiding relations with countries that do not share those values, the EU equates its values as universal values, and so it defines its borders.

Moreover, the call for unity may reinforce the idea that the EU is becoming its own state as the European Commission acquires executive powers previously held by other EU institutions where Member States are represented. This is because, according to Sendhardt (2013), the existence of a state is preceded to the existence of a border. So, by reinforcing its external borders, the EU may gradually transform into a European state.

The war in Ukraine, an external shock, has put pressure on the EU to close its borders to protect its identity, autonomy and sovereignty, as Freudlsperger and Schummelfenning (2022) suggest. In this

regard, the EU has indeed closed its borders and reduced its ties with Russia and its allies, through sanctions and searching for alternative energy markets.

Thus, it is possible to observe a complex dialectical relation between bordering and rebordering, as stated in the literature. Despite the seemingly contradictory policies of bordering and rebordering of the EU, the EU is basically in a process of bordering that entail exactly defining and redefining its borders.

At a macro-level, there is coexistence between the Westphalian understanding of international relations - characterised by "sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-intervention [...] self-determination and non-discrimination" (Ikenberry, 2018b, p.22-23); and the liberal international order (LIO) - characterised by "sovereign states – led by liberal democracies – cooperate for mutual gain and protection within a loosely rules-based global space" (Ikenberry, 2018a, p.12). Within the EU's structure, there are all the elements of the Westphalian system and the LIO which sometimes hinders the EU integration and affects its bordering process, since the territorialisation of border is linked to sovereignty and territorial integrity which are key to the EU. Furthermore, there is a power struggle between the EU and its Member States. Since the EU is not a state per se, it works according to framework given by the Member States. Since both, the EU and the Member States, can act independently in their international relations, understanding both systems shed lights to how the EU's bordering process work.

Moreover, according to the speeches, the EU is attempting to be a key global actor that promotes debordering, more cooperation to face global challenges. However, rebordering, closing its borders to Russia and its allies, may inadvertently create new divisions in Europe. This, together with Russia's actions, signals towards a trend of de-globalisation, of "powerful nation states, local solutions, and border controls rather than global institutions, treaties, and free movement" (Kornprobst and Wallace, 2021).

Despite this possibility, the EU continues to navigate its bordering process, between debordering and rebordering, between promoting cooperation and rebordering when faced with shocks. Such dynamic stresses how intricate the EU's bordering process is and, how necessary is to study it considering as a process and not a static moment in time.

Conclusions

This project aimed to explore this question: “How have process of bordering in the EU been affected by the conflict in Ukraine since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014?”. So, to address it, Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis was used, analysing six speeches delivered by the President of the Commission. The speeches were held during two recent critical moments in Europe: the annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, which gave insight to analyse the EU’s bordering process using a constructivist approach to border theory.

The analysis allows to conclude that the EU’s bordering processes is multidimensional and simultaneous. The war in Ukraine had an impact on the EU’s bordering process, rebordering towards Russia, the aggressor, and debordering towards Ukraine. This dynamic is demonstrated in three main dimensions: sovereignty, security and globalisation.

Through the analysis, it has been possible to assert that the simple dichotomy between “borderless” and “fortress” Europe was not enough to describe the complexity of the EU borders. This is because EU borders are dynamic, constantly debordering and rebordering in each of their different dimensions.

The project highlights the power of speeches, a form of discourse, in shaping the EU’s bordering process. The speeches delivered by the President of the Commission, the highest-ranking representative of the EU, are crucial in defining the EU’s position on its borders, setting the agenda and determining future policies.

Thus, this research was conducted a year into the war and as such, the conclusions should be considered preliminary. Future research could on the EU’s bordering process could focus on the resolution of the war. Moreover, future research could explore Russia’s bordering process also through Critical Discourse Analysis, so to have a more comprehensive understanding of both sides understand and define their borders.

In summary, this project intended to contribute to the field of border studies that challenged the traditional understanding of borders as static, immutable, and geographically delimited. It understood borders as a dynamic and simultaneous process through the EU’s response to the war in Ukraine. In this sense, the project also attempted to offer a different perspective by analysing from a constructivist approach using Critical Discourse Analysis the influence of discourses in debordering and rebordering.

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Annex



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

José Manuel Durão Barroso
President of the European Commission

State of the Union address 2013

Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

European Parliament plenary session/Strasbourg
11 September 2013

Mr. President,
Presidency of the Council,
Honourable Members,
Ladies and gentlemen,

In 8 months' time, voters across Europe will judge what we have achieved together in the last 5 years.

In these 5 years, Europe has been more present in the lives of citizens than ever before. Europe has been discussed in the coffee houses and popular talk shows all over our continent.

Today, I want to look at what we have done together. At what we have yet to do. And I want to present what I believe are the main ideas for a truly European political debate ahead of next year's elections.

Honourable Members,

As we speak, exactly 5 years ago, the United States government took over Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, bailed out AIG, and Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy protection.

These events triggered the global financial crisis. It evolved into an unprecedented economic crisis. And it became a social crisis with dramatic consequences for many of our citizens. These events have aggravated the debt problem that still distresses our governments. They have led to an alarming increase in unemployment, especially amongst young people. And they are still holding back our households and our companies.

But Europe has fought back. In those 5 years, we have given a determined response. We suffered the crisis together. We realised we had to fight it together. And we did, and we are doing it.

If we look back and think about what we have done together to unite Europe throughout the crisis, I think it is fair to say that we would never have thought all of this possible 5 years ago.

We are fundamentally reforming the financial sector so that people's savings are safe.

We have improved the way governments work together, how they return to sound public finances and modernise their economies.

We have mobilised over 700 billion euro to pull crisis-struck countries back from the brink, the biggest effort ever in stabilisation between countries.

I still vividly remember my meeting last year with chief economists of many of our leading banks. Most of them were expecting Greece to leave the euro. All of them feared the disintegration of the euro area. Now, we can give a clear reply to those fears: no one has left or has been forced to leave the euro. This year, the European Union enlarged from 27 to 28 member states. Next year the euro area will grow from 17 to 18.

What matters now is what we make of this progress. *Do we talk it up, or talk it down? Do we draw confidence from it to pursue what we have started, or do we belittle the results of our efforts?*

Honourable members,

I just came back from the G20 in Saint Petersburg. I can tell you: this year, contrary to recent years, we Europeans did not receive any lessons from other parts of the world on how to address the crisis. We received appreciation and encouragement.

Not because the crisis is over, because it is not over. The resilience of our Union will continue to be tested. But what we are doing creates the confidence that we are overcoming the crisis – provided we are not complacent.

We are tackling our challenges together.

We have to tackle them together.

In our world of geo-economic and geopolitical tectonic changes, I believe that only together, as the European Union, we can give our citizens what they aspire: that our values, our interests, our prosperity are protected and promoted in the age of globalisation.

So now is the time to rise above purely national issues and parochial interests and to have real progress for Europe. To bring a truly European perspective to the debate with national constituencies.

Now is the time for all those who care about Europe, whatever their political or ideological position, wherever they come from, to speak up for Europe.

If we ourselves don't do it, we cannot expect others to do it either.

Honourable Members,

We have come a long way since the start of the crisis.

In last year's State of the Union speech, I stated that *'despite all [our] efforts, our responses have not yet convinced citizens, markets or our international partners'*.

One year on, the facts tell us that our efforts have started to convince. Overall spreads are coming down. The most vulnerable countries are paying less to borrow. Industrial output is increasing. Market trust is returning. Stock markets are performing well. The business outlook is steadily improving. Consumer confidence is sharply rising.

We see that the countries who are most vulnerable to the crisis and are now doing most to reform their economies, are starting to note positive results.

In Spain, as a signal of the very important reforms and increased competitiveness, exports of goods and services now make up 33% of GDP, more than ever since the introduction of the euro. Ireland has been able to draw money from capital markets since the summer of 2012, the economy is expected to grow for a third consecutive year in 2013 and Irish manufacturing companies are re-hiring staff.

In Portugal, the external current account, which was structurally negative, is now expected to be broadly balanced, and growth is picking up after many quarters in the red. Greece has completed, just in 3 years, a truly remarkable fiscal adjustment, is regaining competitiveness and is nearing for the first time in decades a primary surplus. And Cyprus, that has started the programme later, is also implementing it as scheduled, which is the pre-condition for a return to growth.

For Europe, recovery is within sight.

Of course, we need to be vigilant. *'One swallow does not make a summer, nor one fine day'*. Let us be realistic in the analysis. Let us not overestimate, but let's also not underestimate what has been done. Even one fine quarter doesn't mean we are out of the economic heavy weather. But it does prove we are on the right track. On the basis of the figures and evolutions as we now see them, we have good reason to be confident.

This should push us to keep up our efforts. We owe it to those for whom the recovery is not yet within reach, to those who do not yet profit from positive developments. We owe it to our 26 million unemployed. Especially to the young people who are looking to us to give them hope. Hope and confidence are also part of the economic equation.

Honourable members,

If we are where we are today, it is because we have shown the resolve to adapt both our politics and our policies to the lessons drawn from the crisis.

And when I say 'we', I really mean: 'we': it has really been a joint effort.

At each and every step, you, the European Parliament, you have played a decisive role through one of the most impressive records of legislative work ever. I personally believe this is not sufficiently known by the citizens of Europe, and you deserve more credit and recognition for this.

So let us continue to work together to reform our economies, for growth and jobs, and to adapt our institutional architecture. Only if we do so, we will leave this phase of the crisis behind us as well.

There is a lot we can still deliver together, in this Parliament's and this Commission's mandate.

What we can and must do, first and foremost, let's be concrete is delivering the banking union. It is the first and most urgent phase on the way to deepen our economic and monetary union, as mapped out in the Commission's Blueprint presented last autumn.

The legislative process on the Single Supervisory Mechanism is almost completed. The next step is the ECB's independent valuation of banks assets, before it takes up its supervisory role.

Our attention now must urgently turn to the Single Resolution Mechanism. The Commission's proposal is on the table since July and, together, we must do the necessary to have it adopted still during this term.

It is the way to ensure that taxpayers are no longer the ones in the front line for paying the price of bank failure. It is the way to make progress in decoupling bank from sovereign risk.

It is the way to remedy one of the most alarming and unacceptable results of the crisis: increased fragmentation of Europe's financial sector and credit markets - even an implicit re-nationalisation.

And it is also the way to help restoring normal lending to the economy, notably to SMEs. Because in spite of the accommodating monetary policy, credit is not yet sufficiently flowing to the economy across the euro area. This needs to be addressed resolutely.

Ultimately, this is about one thing: growth, which is necessary to remedy today's most pressing problem: unemployment. The current level of unemployment is economically unsustainable, politically untenable, socially unacceptable. So all of us here in the Commission – and I'm happy to have all my Commissioners today here with me - all of us want to work intensively with you, and with the member states, to deliver as much of our growth agenda as we possibly can, we are mobilizing all instruments, but of course we have to be honest, not all are at European level, some are at national level. I want to focus on implementation of the decisions on youth employment and financing of the real economy. We need to avoid a jobless recovery.

Europe therefore must speed up the pace of structural reforms. Our Country Specific Recommendations set out what the member states must do in this respect.

At EU level - because there is what can be done at national level and what can be done at European level -, the focus should be on what matters most for the real economy: exploiting the full potential of the single market comes first.

We have a well-functioning single market for goods, and we see the economic benefits of that. We need to extend the same formula to other areas: mobility, communications, energy, finance and e-commerce, to name but a few. We have to remove the obstacles that hold back dynamic companies and people. We have to complete connecting Europe.

I'd like to announce that, today, we will formally adopt a proposal that gives a push towards a single market for telecoms. Citizens know that Europe has dramatically brought down their costs for roaming. Our proposal will strengthen guarantees and lower prices for consumers, and present new opportunities for companies. We know that in the future, trade will be more and more digital. Isn't it a paradox that we have an internal market for goods but when it comes to digital market we have 28 national markets? How can we grab all the opportunities of the future that are opened by the digital economy if we don't conclude this internal market?

The same logic applies to the broader digital agenda: it solves real problems and improves daily life for citizens. The strength of Europe's future industrial base depends on how well people and businesses are interconnected. And by properly combining the digital agenda with data protection and the defence of privacy, our European model strengthens the trust of the citizens. Both with respect to internal and external developments, adopting the proposed legislation on data protection is of utmost importance to the European Commission.

The single market is a key lever for competitiveness and employment. Adopting all remaining proposals under the Single Market Act I and II, and implementing the Connecting Europe Facility in the next few months, we lay the foundations for prosperity in the years to come.

We are also adapting to a dynamic transformation on a global scale, so we must encourage this innovative dynamism at a European scale. That is why we must also invest more in innovation, in technology and the role of science. I have great faith in science, in the capacity of the human mind and a creative society to solve its problems. The world is changing dramatically. And I believe many of the solutions are going to come, in Europe and outside Europe, from new science studies, from new technologies. And I would like Europe to be leading that effort globally. This is why we - Parliament and Commission - have made such a priority of Horizon 2020 in the discussions on the EU budget.

That is why we use the EU budget to invest in skills, education and vocational training, dynamising and supporting talent. That is why we have pushed for Erasmus Plus.

And that is why, later this autumn, we will make further proposals for an industrial policy fit for the 21st century. Why we mobilize support for SMEs because we believe a strong dynamic industrial base is indispensable for a strong European economy.

And whilst fighting climate change, our 20-20-20 goals have set our economy on the path to green growth and resource efficiency, reducing costs and creating jobs.

By the end of this year, we will come out with concrete proposals for our energy and climate framework up to 2030. And we will continue to shape the international agenda by fleshing out a comprehensive, legally binding global climate agreement by 2015, with our partners. Europe alone cannot do all the fight for climate change. Frankly, we need the others also on board. At the same time, we will pursue our work on the impact of energy prices on competitiveness and on social cohesion.

All these drivers for growth are part of our 'Europe 2020' agenda, and fully and swiftly implementing it is more urgent than ever. In certain cases, we need to go beyond the 2020 agenda.

This means we must also pursue our active and assertive trade agenda. It is about linking us closer to growing third markets and guaranteeing our place in the global supply chain. Contrary to perception, where most of our citizens think we are losing in global trade, we have a significant and increasing trade surplus of more than 300 billion euro a year, goods, services, and agriculture. We need to build on that. This too will demand our full attention in the months to come, notably with the *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* with the US and the negotiations with Canada and Japan.

And last but not least, we need to step up our game in implementing the Multiannual Financial Framework, the European budget. The EU budget is the most concrete lever we have at hand to boost investments. In some of our regions, the European Union budget is the only way to get public investment because they don't have the sources at national level.

Both the European Parliament and the Commission wanted more resources. We have been in that fight together. But even so, one single year's EU budget represents more money - in today's prices - than the whole Marshall plan in its time! Let us now make sure that the programmes can start on the 1st of January 2014. That the results are being felt on the ground. And that we use the possibilities of innovative financing, from instruments that have already started, to EIB money, to project bonds.

We have to make good on the commitment we have made in July. From the Commission's side, we will deliver. We will, for example, present the second amending budget for 2013 still this month. There is no time to waste, so I warn against holding it up. In particular, I urge member states not to delay.

I cannot emphasise this enough: citizens will not be convinced with rhetoric and promises only, but only with a concrete set of common achievements. We have to show the many areas where Europe has solved problems for citizens. Europe is not the cause of problems, Europe is part of the solution.

I address what we have to do still more extensively in today's letter to the President of the European Parliament, which you will also have received. I will not go now in detail regarding the programme for next year.

My point today is clear: together, there is a lot still to achieve before the elections. It is not the time to throw in the towel, it is time to roll up our sleeves.

Honourable Members,

None of this is easy. These are challenging times, a real stress test for the EU. The path of permanent and profound reform is as demanding as it is unavoidable. Let's make no mistake: there is no way back to business as usual. Some people believe that after this everything will come back as it was before. They are wrong, This crisis is different. This is not a cyclical crisis, but a structural one. We will not come back to the old normal. We have to shape a new normal. We are in a transformative period of history. We have to understand that, and not just say it. But we have to draw all the consequences from that, including in our state of mind, and how we react to the problems.

We see from the first results that it is possible.

And we all know from experience that it is necessary.

At this point in time, with a fragile recovery, the biggest downside risk I see is political: lack of stability and lack of determination. Over the last years we have seen that anything that casts doubt on governments' commitment to reform is instantly punished. On the positive side, strong and convincing decisions have an important and immediate impact.

In this phase of the crisis, governments' job is to provide the certainty and predictability that markets still lack.

Surely, you all know Justus Lipsius. Justus Lipsius is the name of the Council building in Brussels. Justus Lipsius was a very influential 16th century humanist scholar, who wrote a very important book called *De Constantia*.

He wrote, 'Constancy is a right and immovable strength of the mind, neither lifted up nor pressed down with external or casual accidents.' Only a '*strength of the mind*', he argued, based on '*judgment and sound reason*', can help you through confusing and alarming times.

I hope that in these times, these difficult times, all of us, including the governments' representatives that meet at the Justus Lipsius building, show that determination, that perseverance, when it comes to the implementation of the decisions taken. Because one of the issues that we have is to be coherent, not just take decisions, but afterwards be able to implement them on the ground.

Honourable members,

It is only natural that, over the last few years, our efforts to overcome the economic crisis have overshadowed everything else.

But our idea of Europe needs to go far beyond the economy. We are much more than a market. The European ideal touches the very foundations of European society. It is about values, and I underline this word: values. It is based on a firm belief in political, social and economic standards, grounded in our social market economy.

In today's world, the EU level is indispensable to protect these values and standards and promote citizens' rights: from consumer protection to labour rights, from women's rights to respect for minorities, from environmental standards to data protection and privacy.

Whether defending our interests in international trade, securing our energy provision, or restoring people's sense of fairness by fighting tax fraud and tax evasion: only by acting as a Union do we pull our weight at the world stage.

Whether seeking impact for the development and humanitarian aid we give to developing countries, managing our common external borders or seeking to develop in Europe a strong security and defense policy: only by integrating more can we really reach our objectives.

There is no doubt about it. Our internal coherence and international relevance are inextricably linked. Our economic attraction and political traction are fundamentally entwined.

Does anyone seriously believe that, if the euro had collapsed, we or our Member States would still have any credibility left internationally?

Does everyone still realise how enlargement has been a success in terms of healing history's deep scars, establishing democracies where no one had thought it possible? How neighbourhood policy was and still is the best way to provide security and prosperity in regions of vital importance for Europe? Where would we be without all of this?

Today, countries like Ukraine are more than ever seeking closer ties to the European Union, attracted by our economic and social model. We cannot turn our back on them. We cannot accept any attempts to limit these countries own sovereign choices. Free will and free consent need to be respected. These are also the principles that lie at the basis of our Eastern Partnership, which we want to take forward at our summit in Vilnius.

And does everyone still remember just how much Europe has suffered from its wars during the last century, and how European integration was the valid answer?

Next year, it will be one century after the start of the First World War. A war that tore Europe apart, from Sarajevo to the Somme. We must never take peace for granted. We need to recall that it is because of Europe that former enemies now sit around the same table and work together. It is only because they were offered a European perspective that now even Serbia and Kosovo come to an agreement, under mediation of the EU.

Last year's Nobel Peace Prize reminded us of that historic achievement: that Europe is a project of peace.

We should be more aware of it ourselves. Sometimes I think we should not be ashamed to be proud. Not arrogant. But more proud. We should look towards the future, but with a wisdom we gained from the past.

Let me say this to all those who rejoice in Europe's difficulties and who want to roll back our integration and go back to isolation: the pre-integrated Europe of the divisions, the war, the trenches, is not what people desire and deserve. The European continent has never in its history known such a long period of peace as since the creation of the European Community. It is our duty to preserve it and deepen it.

Honourable members,

It is precisely with our values that we address the unbearable situation in Syria, which has tested, over the last months, the world's conscience so severely. The European Union has led the international aid response by mobilising close to 1.5 billion euros, of which €850 million comes directly from the EU budget. The Commission will do its utmost to help the Syrian people and refugees in neighbouring countries.

We have recently witnessed events we thought had long been eradicated. The use of chemical weapons is a horrendous act that deserves a clear condemnation and a strong answer. The international community, with the UN at its centre, carries a collective responsibility to sanction these acts and to put an end to this conflict. The proposal to put Syria's chemical weapons beyond use is potentially a positive development. The Syrian regime must now demonstrate that it will implement this without any delay. In Europe, we believe that, ultimately, only a political solution stands a chance of delivering the lasting peace that the Syrian people deserve.

Honourable members,

There are those who claim that a weaker Europe would make their country stronger, that Europe is a burden; that they would be better off without it.

My reply is clear: we all need a Europe that is united, strong and open.

In the debate that is ongoing all across Europe, the bottom-line question is: *Do we want to improve Europe, or give it up?*

My answer is clear: let's engage!

If you don't like Europe as it is: improve it!

Find ways to make it stronger, internally and internationally, and you will have in me the firmest of supporters. Find ways that allow for diversity without creating discriminations, and I will be with you all the way.

But don't turn away from it.

I recognize: as any human endeavor, the EU is not perfect.

For example, controversies about the division of labour between the national and European levels will never be conclusively ended.

I value subsidiarity highly. For me, subsidiarity is not a technical concept. It is a fundamental democratic principle. An ever closer union among the citizens of Europe demands that decisions are taken as openly as possible and as closely to the people as possible.

Not everything needs a solution at European level. Europe must focus on where it can add most value. Where this is not the case, it should not meddle. The EU needs to be *big on big things and smaller on smaller things* - something we may occasionally have neglected in the past. The EU needs to show it has the capacity to set both positive and negative priorities. As all governments, we need to take extra care of the quality and quantity of our regulation knowing that, as Montesquieu said, *'les lois inutiles affaiblissent les lois nécessaires'*. [*'Useless laws weaken the necessary ones'*.]

But there are, honourable members, areas of major importance where Europe must have more integration, more unity. Where only a strong Europe can deliver results.

I believe a political union needs to be our political horizon, as I stressed in last year's State of the Union. This is not just the demand of a passionate European. This is the indispensable way forward to consolidate our progress and ensure the future.

Ultimately, the solidity of our policies, namely of the economic and monetary union, depend on the credibility of the political and institutional construct that supports it.

So we have mapped out, in the Commission *Blueprint for a deep and genuine Economic and Monetary Union*, not only the economic and monetary features, but also the necessities, possibilities and limits of deepening our institutional set-up in the medium and long term. The Commission will continue to work for the implementation of its Blueprint, step by step, one phase after the other.

And I confirm, as announced last year, the intention to present, before the European elections, further ideas on the future of our Union and how best to consolidate and deepen the community method and community approach in the longer term. That way, they can be subject to a real European debate. They will set out the principles and orientations that are necessary for a true political union.

Honourable Members,

We can only meet the challenges of our time if we strengthen the consensus on fundamental objectives.

Politically, we must not be divided by differences between the euro area and those outside it, between the centre and the periphery, between the North and the South, between East and West. The European Union must remain a project for all members, a community of equals.

Economically, Europe has always been a way to close gaps between countries, regions and people. And that must remain so. We cannot do member states' work for them. The responsibility remains theirs. But we can and must complement it with European responsibility and European solidarity.

For that reason, strengthening the social dimension is a priority for the months to come, together with our social partners. The Commission will come with its communication on the social dimension of the economic and monetary union on the 2nd of October. Solidarity is a key element of what being part of Europe is all about, and something to take pride in.

Safeguarding its values, such as the rule of law, is what the European Union was made to do, from its inception to the latest chapters in enlargement.

In last year's State of the Union speech, at a moment of challenges to the rule of law in our own member states, I addressed the need to make a bridge between political persuasion and targeted infringement procedures on the one hand, and what I call the nuclear option of Article 7 of the Treaty, namely suspension of a member states' rights.

Experience has confirmed the usefulness of the Commission role as an independent and objective referee. We should consolidate this experience through a more general framework. It should be based on the principle of equality between member states, activated only in situations where there is a serious, systemic risk to the rule of law, and triggered by pre-defined benchmarks.

The Commission will come forward with a communication on this. I believe it is a debate that is key to our idea of Europe.

This does not mean that national sovereignty or democracy are constrained. But we do need a robust European mechanism to influence the equation when basic common principles are at stake.

There are certain non-negotiable values that the EU and its member states must and shall always defend.

Honourable Members,

The polarisation that resulted from the crisis poses a risk to us all, to the project, to the European project.

We, legitimate political representatives of the European Union, can turn the tide. You, the democratic representatives of Europe, directly elected, will be at the forefront of the political debate. The question I want to pose is: which picture of Europe will voters be presented with? The candid version, or the cartoon version? The myths or the facts? The honest, reasonable version, or the extremist, populist version? It's an important difference.

I know some people out there will say Europe is to blame for the crisis and the hardship.

But we can remind people that Europe was not at the origin of this crisis. It resulted from mismanagement of public finances by national governments and irresponsible behaviour in financial markets.

We can explain how Europe has worked to fix the crisis. What we would have lost if we hadn't succeeded in upholding the single market, because it was under threat, and the common currency, because some people predicted the end of the euro. If we hadn't coordinated recovery efforts and employment initiatives.

Some people will say that Europe is forcing governments to cut spending.

But we can remind voters that government debt got way out of hand even before the crisis, not *because of* but *despite* Europe. We can add that the most vulnerable in our societies, and our children, would end up paying the price if we don't persevere now. And the truth is that countries inside the euro or outside the euro, in Europe or outside Europe, they are making efforts to curb their very burdened public finances.

Some will campaign saying that we have given too much money to vulnerable countries. Others will say we have given too little money to vulnerable countries.

But every one of us can explain what we did and why: there is a direct link between one country's loans and another country's banks, between one country's investments and another country's businesses, between one country's workers and another country's companies. This kind of interdependence means only European solutions work.

What I tell people is: when you are in the same boat, one cannot say: '*your end of the boat is sinking.*' We were in the same boat when things went well, and we are in it together when things are difficult.

Some people might campaign saying: Europe has grabbed too much power. Others will claim Europe always does *too little, too late*. The interesting thing is that sometimes we have the same people saying that Europe is not doing enough and at the same time that's not giving more means to Europe to do what Europe has to do.

But we can explain that member states have entrusted Europe with tasks and competences. The European Union is not a foreign power. It is the result of democratic decisions by the European institutions and by member states.

At the same time we must acknowledge that, in some areas, Europe still lacks the power to do what is asked of it. A fact that is all too easily forgotten by those, and there are many out there, who always like to nationalise success and Europeanise failure. Ultimately, what we have, and what we don't have, is the result of democratic decision-making. And I think we should remind people of that.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Mr President,
Honourable members,

I hope the European Parliament will take up this challenge with all the idealism it holds, with as much realism and determination as the times demand of us.

The arguments are there.

The facts are there.

The agenda has been set out.

In 8 months' time, voters will decide.

Now, it's up to us to make the case for Europe.

We can do so by using the next 8 months to conclude as much as we can. We have a lot to do still.

Adopt and implement the European budget, the MFF. This is critical for investment in our regions all over Europe. This is indispensable for the first priority we have: to fight against unemployment, notably youth unemployment.

Advance and implement the banking union. This is critical to address the problem of financing for businesses and SMEs.

These are our clear priorities: employment and growth.

Our job is not finished. It is in its decisive phase.

Because, Honourable Members, the elections will not only be about the European Parliament, nor will they be about the European Commission or about the Council or about this or that personality.

They will be about Europe.

We will be judged together.

So let us work together - for Europe.

With passion and with determination.

Let us not forget: one hundred years ago –Europe was sleepwalking into the catastrophe of the war of 1914.

Next year, in 2014, I hope Europe will be walking out of the crisis towards a Europe that is more united, stronger and open.

Thank you for your attention.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

[CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY]

José Manuel Durão Barroso

President of the European Commission

Introductory statement by President Barroso on Ukraine

European Parliament Plenary debate
Strasbourg, 12 March 2014

Mr. President,

Honourable members,

Very serious concerns remain over the situation in Ukraine. And I would like to start by saying how grateful we are for the constant attention that this Parliament has been giving to this most important crisis. I know that the Parliament, as an institution, and many of you in this room have been deploying considerable energy and time to help find a solution. And I hope that we can put all our efforts along the same lines to support Ukraine, a European country.

Ukraine was also subject of an extraordinary meeting of Heads of State and Government last week, also attended partly by the Ukrainian Prime-Minister Yatseniuk. Today I want to share with you the results of that meeting, and specifically what the European Commission has been doing to support Ukraine in these very challenging times, not only supporting the legitimate aspirations of the Ukrainians but also giving our best for regional and international peace.

The developments which started with the people of Ukraine expressing a clear wish to take their future into their own hands, have called for a robust and united European response. The present situation directly challenges us in many ways and forms. It challenges our conscience as individuals. It challenges our unity as Europeans. It challenges our policies as decision makers. And it challenges some of the values that we hold dear, such as peace and democracy.

This is, in a way, a test of our Union. And the outcome of the current situation will greatly impact in the geopolitical configuration of our continent for the years to come.

What happened in Crimea was an unprovoked and unacceptable violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and its territorial integrity.

In the aftermath of this violation, together with other G7 leaders, the President of the European Council and myself, on behalf of the European Union, have strongly and unequivocally condemned this action on behalf of the European Union.

Today, at 14:00 Central European Time, we will release another statement that will leave no doubt about the determination of the G-7 countries and the European Union. We call on the Russian Federation to cease all efforts to annexe Ukraine's autonomous Republic of Crimea.

Honourable Members,

The present situation remains very tense, so we need to take a very principled but also a very responsible approach. The Ukrainian people have already shed too much blood in this process. No more lives should be put at risk.

Our immediate goal and objective should be to de-escalate the situation and find a peaceful solution to the current crisis, in full respect of international law. Any attempt to legitimise a referendum in Crimea is contrary to the Ukrainian constitution and international law and quite clearly illegal.

We have been proposing to Russia the possibility of direct talks through international mechanisms available, including a possible contact group, in full respect of the principles of unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. So far, unfortunately, as you know, to no avail. The High Representative/ Vice-President Catherine Ashton remains in constant contact with her counterparts on this front and I would like to praise her role.

Meanwhile, however, the financial and economic situation has already deteriorated dramatically, and we have not lost any time in mobilising a support package to help stem the tide and help Ukraine to stabilise its economic and financial situation.

I am proud that the Commission was quickly able to propose an overall support package of at least €11 billion from the European budget and European Union-based international financial institutions and this for the short and medium term. This was the proof that we can react quickly; that we can show solidarity; that we can rise to the challenge.

And as you know, this package was welcomed by our Member States in the European Council and, specifically, the Prime Minister of Ukraine expressed his gratitude for this initiative.

Some of the measures can be put into practice immediately. And indeed, just yesterday, Commissioner De Gucht and myself publicly presented a Commission proposal to frontload unilaterally the trade parts of the Association Agreement, so that Ukraine can benefit from tariff reductions and tariff rate quotas even before the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area is fully applied. This will save the Ukrainian economy €500 million a year in tariff cuts. I hope we can count on your, and the Council's, active commitment to fast-track the approval process.

We have also immediately dispatched a mission from our services to identify the economic and financial needs of the Ukrainian authorities. And I can announce that the Commission will propose next week, the 19th March, macro financial assistance of an additional €1 billion.

This amount, will bring our total macro financial assistance to 1.6 billion, and is a very concrete demonstration of our solidarity to help Ukraine face the short term difficulties. However, it is crucial that this is part of a wider international effort where also other international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, as well as our Member States bilaterally and international partners, can participate. I would like to thank Olli Rehn and his services for moving quickly on this. And I would like to have a special word of thanks to Stefan Füle for his constant and strong engagement in this file.

At the same time it is equally crucial to underline that this aid package is not a quick fix and needs to be complemented by, on the other side, a reform-oriented and inclusive Ukrainian government, committed to fixing the current state of their financial system and rebuilding the economic foundations of the country, during both the current transition phase and in the medium to long term.

At the Summit meeting last week, we also decided that we will sign the political chapters of the Association agreement before the Presidential elections that will take place in May. This will seal the political association of Ukraine with the European Union, as was wished for by its people in such a clear manner during these past months and can naturally be followed by the entry into force of the remaining parts of the Association Agreement/DCFTA post presidential elections. We also reconfirmed our intention to sign Association Agreements/DCFTAs with Georgia and Moldova before the end of August.

Honourable members,

The European Union has been pro-active and united throughout this crisis, and I am sure this will also be the case when the European Council discusses the next steps next week.

This is vital for Ukraine's stability and prosperity, and it is vital for our credibility. The ball is currently in Russia's court and, as we speak, the diplomatic, political and military situation is not yet moving in the right direction.

Last week's meeting of Heads of State and Government has taken a gradual approach to the measures we are ready to take in response to the current situation, so as to send an unambiguous signal that going further down this path will have consequences, but at the same time preventing further entrenching the conflict from our side.

Our dialogue on visa facilitation and liberalisation, the discussions on the New Agreement and the preparations for the G8 meeting in Sochi have already been suspended. If meaningful negotiations do not begin within the next few days and produce results within a limited timeframe, this will trigger additional measures. And a further deterioration of the situation could lead to far reaching consequences, which I sincerely hope can be avoided.

Honourable Members,

I have been working together with the Commission and also with the Member States for the last 10 years to build a constructive relationship with Russia, while supporting our neighbours' efforts and sovereign choices to reform, to modernise and build closer relations with the European Union.

Our relationship with our Eastern partners does not have to be an exclusive one. Our model of engagement is that of open regionalism, and not of autarchic self-entrenchment. We are not asking, not even suggesting to our partners from the Eastern Neighbourhood, to turn their backs on Russia. On the contrary, we encourage them to have good neighbourly relations, to enhance their traditional trade ties. But at the same time Russia needs to accept fully the right of these countries to decide their own future and the nature of relations they chose to have with Russia.

The page of last century's history should be turned and not re-written. I believe in a European continent where the rule of law prevails over the rule of force, where sovereignty is shared and not limited, where the logic of cooperation replaces the logic of confrontation. We don't need new Cold Wars. And we certainly do not want them.

Security does not come from segregation, separating communities, building fences, but by embracing differences and diversity. Ukraine should not be a border between neighbours that don't speak to each other, but a bridge where they can meet.

Ukraine should not be seen as a problem for Europe, but an asset for a more united European continent.

On the basis of these principles, I think we can say that a united, inclusive, stable and prosperous Ukraine can only be of benefit to all its neighbours and partners. The European Union remains committed to that goal. To Ukraine's unity and to European peace.

I thank you for your attention.



State of the Union 2015: Time for Honesty, Unity and Solidarity

Strasbourg, 9 September 2015

Jean-Claude Juncker

President of the European Commission

Mr President,

Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

Today is the first time during my mandate as President of the European Commission that I have the honour to address this House on the State of our European Union.

I would therefore like to recall the political importance of this very special institutional moment.

The State of the Union address is foreseen explicitly by the Framework Agreement that governs the relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission. This Agreement provides that "*[e]ach year in the first part-session of September, a State of the Union debate will be held in which the President of the Commission shall deliver an address, taking stock of the current year and looking ahead to priorities for the following years. To that end, the President of the Commission will in parallel set out in writing to Parliament the main elements guiding the preparation of the Commission Work Programme for the following year.*"

The State of the Union address requires the President of the Commission to take stock of the current situation of our European Union and to set priorities for the work ahead.

And it launches the interinstitutional process leading to a new Work Programme of the European Commission for the year ahead.

Together with Frans Timmermans, my First Vice-President, this morning I sent a letter to the Presidents of both branches of the European legislator: to President Martin Schulz, and to Luxembourg's Prime Minister Xavier Bettel, who currently holds the rotating Presidency of the Council. This letter sets out in detail the numerous actions the Commission intends to take by means of legislation and other initiatives, from now until the end of 2016. We are proposing an ambitious, focused, and intense legislative agenda that will require Commission, Parliament and Council to work closely and effectively together.

I will not go into the details of our legislative agenda now. We will have a structured dialogue with the Parliament and the Council on this in the weeks to come.

But I feel that today is not the moment to speak about all this.

I am the first President of the Commission whose nomination and election is the direct result of the outcome of the European Parliament elections in May 2014.

Having campaigned as a lead candidate, as *Spitzenkandidat*, in the run up to the elections, I had the opportunity to be a more political President.

This political role is foreseen by the Treaties, by means of which the Member States made the Commission the promoter of the general interest of the Union. But the crisis years have diminished this understanding.

This is why I said last September before this House that I wanted to lead a political Commission. A very political Commission.

I said this not because I believe we can and should *politicise* everything.

I said it because I believe the immense challenges Europe is currently facing – both internally and externally – leave us no choice but to address them from a very political perspective, in a very political manner and having the political consequences of our decisions very much in mind.

Recent events have confirmed the urgent need for such a political approach in the European Union.

This is not the time for business as usual.

This is not the time for ticking off lists or checking whether this or that sectorial initiative has found its way into the State of the Union speech.

This is not the time to count how many times the word social, economic or sustainable appears in the State of the Union speech.

Instead, it is time for honesty.

It is time to speak frankly about the big issues facing the European Union.

Because our European Union is not in a good state.

There is not enough Europe in this Union.

And there is not enough Union in this Union.

We have to change this. And we have to change this now.

The Refugee Crisis: The Imperative to Act as a Union

Whatever work programmes or legislative agendas say: The first priority today is and must be addressing the refugee crisis.

Since the beginning of the year, nearly 500,000 people have made their way to Europe. The vast majority of them are fleeing from war in Syria, the terror of the Islamic State in Libya or dictatorship in Eritrea. The most affected Member States are Greece, with over 213,000 refugees, Hungary, with over 145,000, and Italy, with over 115,000.

The numbers are impressive. For some they are frightening.

But now is not the time to take fright. It is time for bold, determined and concerted action by the European Union, by its institutions and by all its Member States.

This is first of all a matter of humanity and of human dignity. And for Europe it is also a matter of historical fairness.

We Europeans should remember well that Europe is a continent where nearly everyone has at one time been a refugee. Our common history is marked by millions of Europeans fleeing from religious or political persecution, from war, dictatorship, or oppression.

Huguenots fleeing from France in the 17th century.

Jews, Sinti, Roma and many others fleeing from Germany during the Nazi horror of the 1930s and 1940s.

Spanish republicans fleeing to refugee camps in southern France at the end of the 1930s after their defeat in the Civil War.

Hungarian revolutionaries fleeing to Austria after their uprising against communist rule was oppressed by Soviet tanks in 1956.

Czech and Slovak citizens seeking exile in other European countries after the oppression of the Prague Spring in 1968.

Hundreds and thousands were forced to flee from their homes after the Yugoslav wars.

Have we forgotten that there is a reason there are more McDonalds living in the U.S. than there are in Scotland? That there is a reason the number of O'Neills and Murphys in the U.S. exceeds by far those living in Ireland?

Have we forgotten that 20 million people of Polish ancestry live outside Poland, as a result of political and economic emigration after the many border shifts, forced expulsions and resettlements during Poland's often painful history?

Have we really forgotten that after the devastation of the Second World War, 60 million people were refugees in Europe? That as a result of this terrible European experience, a global protection regime – the 1951 Geneva Convention on the status of refugees – was established to grant refuge to those who jumped the walls in Europe to escape from war and totalitarian oppression?

We Europeans should know and should never forget why giving refuge and complying with the fundamental right to asylum is so important.

I have said in the past that we are too seldom proud of our European heritage and our European project.

Yet, in spite of our fragility, our self-perceived weaknesses, today it is Europe that is sought as a place of refuge and exile.

It is Europe today that represents a beacon of hope, a haven of stability in the eyes of women and men in the Middle East and in Africa.

That is something to be proud of and not something to fear.

Europe today, in spite of many differences amongst its Member States, is by far the wealthiest and most stable continent in the world.

We have the means to help those fleeing from war, terror and oppression.

I know that many now will want to say that this is all very well, but Europe cannot take everybody.

It is true that Europe cannot house all the misery of the world. But let us be honest and put things into perspective.

There is certainly an important and unprecedented number of refugees coming to Europe at the moment. However, they still represent just 0.11% of the total EU population. In Lebanon, refugees represent 25% of the population. And this in a country where people have only one fifth of the wealth we enjoy in the European Union.

Let us also be clear and honest with our often worried citizens: as long as there is war in Syria and terror in Libya, the refugee crisis will not simply go away.

We can build walls, we can build fences. But imagine for a second it were you, your child in your arms, the world you knew torn apart around you. There is no price you would not pay, there is no wall you would not climb, no sea you would not sail, no border you would not cross if it is war or the barbarism of the so-called Islamic State that you are fleeing.

So it is high time to act to *manage* the refugee crisis. There is no alternative to this.

There has been a lot of finger pointing in the past weeks. Member States have accused each other of not doing enough or of doing the wrong thing. And more often than not fingers have been pointed from national capitals towards Brussels.

We could all be angry about this blame-game. But I wonder who that would serve. Being angry does not help anyone. And the attempt of blaming others is often just a sign that politicians are overwhelmed by unexpected events.

Instead, we should rather recall what has been agreed that can help in the current situation. It is time to look at what is on the table and move swiftly forwards.

We are not starting anew. Since the early 2000s, the Commission has persistently tabled legislation after legislation, to build a Common European Asylum System. And the Parliament and the Council have enacted this legislation, piece by piece. The last piece of legislation entered into force just in July 2015.

Across Europe we now have common standards for the way we receive asylum seekers, in respect of their dignity, for the way we process their asylum applications, and we have common criteria which our independent justice systems use to determine whether someone is entitled to international protection.

But these standards need to be implemented and respected in practice. And this is clearly not yet the case, we can see this every day on television. Before the summer, the Commission had to start a first series of 32 infringement proceedings to remind Member States of what they had previously agreed to do. And a second series will follow in the days to come. European laws must be applied by all Member States – this must be self-evident in a Union based on the rule of law.

Common asylum standards are important, but not enough to cope with the current refugee crisis. The Commission, the Parliament and the Council said this in spring. The Commission tabled a

comprehensive European Agenda on Migration in May. And it would be dishonest to say that nothing has happened since then.

We tripled our presence at sea. Over 122,000 lives have been saved since then. Every life lost is one too many, but many more have been rescued that would have been lost otherwise – an increase of 250%. 29 Member States and Schengen Associated countries are participating in the joint operations coordinated by Frontex in Italy, Greece and Hungary. 102 guest officers from 20 countries; 31 ships; 3 helicopters; 4 fixed wing aircrafts; 8 patrol cars, 6 thermo-vision vehicles and 4 transport vehicles – that is a first measure of European solidarity in action, even though more will have to be done.

We have redoubled our efforts to tackle smugglers and dismantle human trafficker groups. Cheap ships are now harder to come by, leading to less people putting their lives in peril in rickety, unseaworthy boats. As a result, the Central Mediterranean route has stabilised at around 115,000 arriving during the month of August, the same as last year. We now need to achieve a similar stabilisation of the Balkans route, which has clearly been neglected by all policy-makers.

The European Union is also the number one donor in the global efforts to alleviate the Syrian refugee crisis. Around €4 billion have been mobilised by the European Commission and Member States in humanitarian, development, economic and stabilisation assistance to Syrians in their country and to refugees and their host communities in neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt. Indeed just today we launched two new projects to provide schooling and food security to 240,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey.

We have collectively committed to resettling over 22,000 people from outside of Europe over the next year, showing solidarity with our neighbours. Of course, this remains very modest in comparison to the Herculean efforts undertaken by Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, who are hosting over 4 million Syrian refugees. I am encouraged that some Member States are showing their willingness to significantly step up our European resettlement efforts. This will allow us very soon to come forward with a structured system to pool European resettlement efforts more systematically.

Where Europe has clearly under-delivered, is on common solidarity with regard to the refugees who have arrived on our territory.

To me, it is clear that the Member States where most refugees first arrive – at the moment, these are Italy, Greece and Hungary – cannot be left alone to cope with this challenge.

This is why the Commission already proposed an emergency mechanism in May, to relocate initially **40,000 people** seeking international protection from Italy and Greece.

And this is why today we are proposing **a second emergency mechanism to relocate a further 120,000 from Italy, Greece and Hungary.**

This requires a strong effort in European solidarity. Before the summer, we did not receive the backing from Member States I had hoped for. But I see that the mood is turning. And I believe it is high time for this.

I call on Member States to adopt the Commission proposals on the emergency relocation of altogether 160,000 refugees at the Extraordinary Council of Interior Ministers on 14 September. We now need immediate action. We cannot leave Italy, Greece and Hungary to fare alone. Just as we would not leave any other EU Member State alone. For if it is Syria and Libya people are fleeing from today, it could just as easily be Ukraine tomorrow.

Europe has made the mistake in the past of distinguishing between Jews, Christians, Muslims. There is no religion, no belief, no philosophy when it comes to refugees.

Do not underestimate the urgency. Do not underestimate our imperative to act. Winter is approaching – think of the families sleeping in parks and railway stations in Budapest, in tents in Traiskirchen, or on shores in Kos. What we will become of them on cold, winter nights?

Of course, relocation alone will not solve the issue. It is true that we also need to separate better those who are in clear need of international protection and are therefore very likely to apply for asylum successfully; and those who are leaving their country for other reasons which do not fall under the right of asylum. This is why today the Commission is proposing **a common EU list of safe countries of origin.** This list will enable Member States to fast track asylum procedures for nationals of countries that are presumed safe to live in. This presumption of safety must in our view certainly apply to all countries which the European Council unanimously decided meet the basic Copenhagen criteria for EU membership – notably as regards democracy, the rule of law, and fundamental rights. It should also apply to the other potential candidate countries on the Western Balkans, in view of their progress made towards candidate status.

I am of course aware that the list of safe countries is only a procedural simplification. It cannot take away the fundamental right of asylum for asylum seekers from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. But it allows national authorities to focus on those refugees which are much more likely to be granted asylum, notably those from Syria. And this focus is very much needed in the current situation.

I also believe that beyond the immediate action needed to address current emergencies, **it is time we prepare a more fundamental change in the way we deal with asylum applications** – and notably the Dublin system that requires that asylum applications be dealt with by the first country of entry.

We need more Europe in our asylum policy. We need more Union in our refugee policy.

A true European refugee and asylum policy requires solidarity to be permanently anchored in our policy approach and our rules. This is why, today, the Commission is also proposing **a permanent relocation mechanism**, which will allow us to deal with crisis situations more swiftly in the future.

A common refugee and asylum policy requires **further approximation of asylum policies after refugee status is granted**. Member States need to take a second look at their support, integration and inclusion policies. The Commission is ready to look into how EU Funds can support these efforts. And **I am strongly in favour of allowing asylum seekers to work and earn their own money whilst their applications are being processed**.

A united refugee and asylum policy also requires **stronger joint efforts to secure our external borders**. Fortunately, we have given up border controls between the Member States of the Schengen area, to guarantee free movement of people, a unique symbol of European integration. But the other side of the coin to free movement is that we must work together more closely to manage our external borders. This is what our citizens expect. The Commission said it back in May, and I said it during my election campaign: **We need to strengthen Frontex significantly and develop it into a fully operational European border and coast guard system**. It is certainly feasible. But it will cost money. The Commission believes this is money well invested. This is why we will propose ambitious steps towards a European Border and Coast Guard before the end of the year.

A truly united, European migration policy also means that we need to look into opening **legal channels for migration**. Let us be clear: this will not help in addressing the current refugee crisis. But if there are more, safe and controlled roads opened to Europe, we can manage migration better and make the illegal work of human traffickers less attractive. Let us not forget, we are an ageing continent in demographic decline. We will be needing talent. Over time, migration must change from a problem to be tackled to a well-managed resource. To this end, **the Commission will come forward with a well-designed legal migration package in early 2016**.

A lasting solution will only come if we address the root causes, the reasons why we are currently facing this important refugee crisis. **Our European foreign policy must be more assertive. We can no longer afford to be ignorant or disunited with regard to war or instability right in our neighbourhood**.

In **Libya**, the EU and our Member States need to do more to engage with regional partners to make sure a Government of National Accord is in place soon. We should be prepared to help, with all EU instruments available, such a government to deliver security and services to the population as soon as it is in place. Our EU development and humanitarian support will have to be immediate and comprehensive.

I would also like to point out that we are entering the fifth year of the **Syrian crisis** with no end in sight. So far, the international community has failed the Syrian people. Europe has failed the Syrian people.

Today I call for a European diplomatic offensive to address the crises in Syria and in Libya. We need a stronger Europe when it comes to foreign policy. And I am very glad that Federica Mogherini, our determined High Representative, has prepared the ground for such an initiative with her diplomatic success in the Iran nuclear talks. And that she stands ready to work closely together with our Member States towards peace and stability in Syria and Libya.

To facilitate Federica's work, **today the Commission is proposing to establish an emergency Trust Fund, starting with €1.8 billion from our common EU financial means to address the crises in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions, the Horn of Africa, and the North of Africa**. We want to help create lasting stability, for instance by creating employment opportunities in local communities, and thereby address the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and illegal migration. I expect all EU Member States to pitch in and match our ambitions.

I do not want to create any illusions that the refugee crisis will be over any time soon. It will not.

But pushing back boats from piers, setting fire to refugee camps, or turning a blind eye to poor and helpless people: that is not Europe.

Europe is the baker in Kos who gives away his bread to hungry and weary souls. Europe is the students in Munich and in Passau who bring clothes for the new arrivals at the train station. Europe is the policeman in Austria who welcomes exhausted refugees upon crossing the border. This is the Europe I want to live in.

The crisis is stark and the journey is still long. I am counting on you, in this House, and on all Member States to show European courage going forward, in line with our common values and our history.

A new start for Greece, for the euro area and for the European economy

Mr President, Honourable Members,

I said I want to talk about the big issues today. This is why this State of the Union speech needs to address the situation in Greece, as well as the broader lessons from the fifth year of Greek crisis the impact of which continues to be felt in the Eurozone and in the European economy and society as a whole.

Since the start of the year, the talks on Greece have tested all our patience. A lot of time and a lot of trust was lost. Bridges were burnt. Words were said that cannot easily be taken back.

We saw political posturing, bickering and insults carelessly bandied about.

Too often, we saw people thinking they can impose their views without a wayward thought for another's point of view.

We saw democracies in the Eurozone being played against each other. The recovery and creation of jobs witnessed last year in Greece vanished during these months.

Collectively, we looked into the abyss.

And it was once more only when we were at the brink that we were able to see the bigger picture and to live up to our responsibilities.

In the end, a deal was reached, commitments were adhered to and implemented. Trust has started to be regained, even though it remains very fragile.

I am not proud of every aspect of the results achieved. However, I am proud of the teams in the European Commission who worked day and night until late in August, relentlessly, to bridge the gap between far-flung positions and to bring about solutions in the interest of Europe and of the Greek people.

I know that not everybody was happy with what the Commission did.

Many Greek politicians were not happy that we insisted on reforms in Greece, notably as regards the unsustainable pension system and the unfair tax regime.

Many other European politicians could not understand why the Commission continued to negotiate. Some could not understand why we did not simply leave all the talks to the technicians of the International Monetary Fund. Why we sometimes also spoke about the social side of programme commitments and amended those to take account of the effects on the most vulnerable in society. Or that I personally dared to say again and again that the euro, and membership in the euro, is meant to be irreversible.

Mr President, Honourable Members,

The Commission's mandate in negotiations with a programme country such as Greece has a very clear basis: it is the Treaty on European Union which calls on the Commission to promote the common interest of the Union and to uphold the law. The same law includes the Treaty clause, agreed by all Member States, that qualifies membership in the euro as irrevocable.

As long as Member States have not amended the Treaties, I believe the Commission and all other EU institutions have a clear mandate and duty to do everything possible to preserve the integrity of the euro area.

The Commission has also been explicitly entrusted by the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) Treaty, ratified by all euro area Member States, with conducting programme negotiations with a

Member State. We have to do this in liaison with the European Central Bank and, where possible, together with the International Monetary Fund. But we have a clear mandate to do so.

Where the Treaties talk about the Commission, I read this as meaning the Commission as an institution that is politically led by the President and the College of Commissioners. This is why I did not leave the talks with Greece to the Commission bureaucracy alone, in spite of their great expertise and the hard work they are doing. But I spoke personally to our experts regularly, often several times per day, to orient them or to adjust their work. I also ensured that every week, the situation of the negotiations in Greece was discussed at length and very politically in the meetings of the College.

Because it is not a technical question whether you increase VAT not only on restaurants, but also on processed food. It is a political and social question.

It is not a technical question, but a deeply political question, whether you increase VAT on medicines in a country where 30% of the population is no longer covered by the public health system as a result of the crisis. Or whether you cut military expenditure instead – in a country that continues to have one of the highest military expenditures in the EU.

It is certainly not a technical question whether you reduce the pensions of the poorest in society or the minimum wage; or if you instead levy a tax on Greek ship owners.

Of course, the figures in what is now the third Greek programme had to add up in the end. But we managed to do this with social fairness in mind. I read the Troika report of the European Parliament very thoroughly. I hope you can see that we have drawn the lessons from this, that we have made, for the first time, a social impact assessment of the programme. Even though I admit frankly that the Commission also had to compromise sometimes in these negotiations.

What matters to me, is that, in the end, a compromise was found which could be agreed by all 19 euro area Member States, including Greece.

After weeks of talks, small progress, repeated setbacks, many crisis moments, and often a good dose of drama, we managed to sign a new Stability Support Programme for Greece on 19 August.

Now that the new programme is in place, I want it to be a new start, for Greece and for the euro area as a whole.

Let us be very honest: We are only at the beginning of a new, long journey.

For Greece, the key now is to implement the deal which was agreed. There has to be broad political ownership for this.

I had the leaders of all the mainstream Greek political groups in my office before the final agreement was concluded. They all promised to support this agreement, and they gave first proof of their commitment when they voted for the new programme and for the first three waves of reforms in the Hellenic Parliament. I expect them to stand by their word and deliver on the agreement – whoever governs. **Broad support and timely delivery of the reforms is what Greece needs, so that confidence can return both among the Greek people and to the Greek economy.**

The programme is one thing, but it is not enough to put Greece on a path of sustainable growth. **The Commission will stand by Greece to make sure the reforms take shape. And we will assist Greece in developing a growth strategy which is Greek owned and Greek led.**

From the modernisation of the public administration and the independence of the tax authority, the Commission will provide tailor-made technical assistance, together with the help of European and international partners. This will be the main task of the new Structural Reform Support Service I established in July.

On 15 July, the Commission also put forward a proposal to limit national co-financing in Greece and to frontload funding for investment projects short of liquidity: **a €35 billion package for growth.** This is urgent for recovery after months of financial squeeze. This is money that will reach the Greek real economy, for businesses and authorities to invest and recruit.

The Commission worked day-in, day-out to put this on the table. National Parliaments met several times throughout the month of August. I therefore hope that the European Parliament will also play its part, in line with previous commitments. Our programme for growth in Greece has been on the table of this House for two months. If adopted, it will still take several weeks until the first euro will reach the real economy of Greece.

I call on you to follow the example of the Council, which will agree on this growth programme by the end of this month. The European Parliament should be at least as fast as the Council on this.

I said I wanted the new programme to be a new start not just for Greece but for the euro area as a whole, because there are important lessons we need to draw from the crisis that has haunted us for far too long.

The economic and social situation speaks for itself: over 23 million people are still unemployed today in the European Union, with more than half without a job for a year or more. In the euro area alone, more than 17.5 million people are without a job. Our recovery is hampered by global uncertainties. Government debt in the EU has reached more than 88% of GDP on average, and stands at almost 93% in the euro area.

The crisis is not over. It has just been put on pause.

This is not to say that nothing is happening. Unemployment figures are improving, GDP is rising at its highest rate for years, and the financing conditions of households and companies have recovered significantly. And several Member States once severely affected – like Latvia, Ireland, Spain and Portugal – which received European financial assistance are now steadily growing and consolidating their economies.

This is progress but recovery is too slow, too fragile and too dependent on our external partners.

More fundamentally, the crisis has left us with very wide differences across the euro area and the EU as a whole. It has damaged our growth potential. It has added to the long-term trend of rising inequalities. All this has fuelled doubts about social progress, the value of change and the merits of belonging together.

What we need is to recreate a process of convergence, both between Member States and within societies, with productivity, job creation and social fairness at its core.

We need more Union in our Europe.

For the European Union, and for my Commission in particular, this means two things: first, investing in Europe's sources of jobs and growth, notably in our Single Market; and secondly, completing our Economic and Monetary Union to creating the conditions for a lasting recovery. We are acting on both fronts.

Together with you and the Member States, we brought to life the **€315 billion Investment Plan for Europe**, with a new European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI).

Less than a year after I announced this plan, we are now at a point where some of the first projects are just taking off:

40,000 households all over France will get a lower energy bill and 6,000 jobs will be created, thanks to Investment Fund-financed improved energy efficiency in buildings.

In health clinics in Barcelona, better treatment will be available to patients through new plasma derived therapies, funded by the Investment Fund.

In Limerick and other locations in Ireland, families will have improved access to primary healthcare and social services through fourteen new primary care centres. This is just the beginning, with many more projects like these to follow.

At the same time as we deploy our Investment Plan, we are upgrading our Single Market to create more opportunities for people and business in all 28 Member States. Thanks to Commission projects such as the Digital Single Market, Capital Markets Union and the Energy Union, we are reducing obstacles to activities cross-border and using the scale of our continent to stimulate innovation, connecting talents and offering a wider choice of products and services.

But we will fail in our efforts to prosper if we do not learn a hard lesson: we have not yet convinced the people of Europe and the world that our Union is not just here to survive, but can also thrive and prosper.

Let us not fool ourselves: our collective inability to provide a swift and clear answer to the Greek crisis over the last months weakened us all. It damaged the trust in our single currency and the EU's reputation in the world.

No wind favours he who has no destined port – we need to know where we are headed.

This is the essence of the report I presented in June with the other Presidents of the European institutions on the completion of our Economic and Monetary Union.

It was self-evident for me to include President Schulz in this important work. After all, the Parliament

is the heart of democracy at EU level, just as national Parliaments are the heart of democracy at national level. **The European Parliament is and must remain the Parliament of the euro area.** And the European Parliament, in its role as co-legislator, will be in charge of deciding on the new initiatives the Commission will propose in the months to come to deepen our Economic and Monetary Union. **I am therefore glad that for the first time, we have written not a 'Four Presidents' Report', but a 'Five Presidents' Report'.**

Despite months of late-night discussions to find an agreement for Greece, we wrote this report in May and June to set out the course for a stronger future. The Five Presidents of the leading EU institutions have agreed a **roadmap that should allow us to stabilise and consolidate the euro area by early 2017**; and then, on the basis of a renewed convergence of our economies, to achieve **more fundamental reform** and move where we can from crisis resilience to new growth perspectives.

As we had expected, the Five Presidents' Report has triggered a lively debate across Europe. Some say we need a government of the euro. Others say we need more discipline and respect of the rules. I agree with both: we need collective responsibility, a greater sense of the common good and full respect and implementation of what is collectively agreed. But I do not agree this should mean the multiplication of institutions or putting the euro on auto pilot, as if new institutions or magic rules could deliver more or better.

You cannot run a single currency on the basis of rules and statistics alone. It needs constant political assessment, as the basis of new economic, fiscal and social policy choices.

The Five Presidents' Report includes a full agenda of work for the years to come, and I want us to move swiftly on all fronts – economic, financial, fiscal and political Union. Some efforts will have to be focused on the euro area, while others should be open to all 28 Member States, in view of their close interaction with our Single Market.

Allow me to highlight five domains where the Commission will present ambitious proposals swiftly and where we will be expecting progress already this autumn.

First: the Five Presidents agreed that we need **a common system to ensure that citizens' bank savings are always protected up to a limit of €100,000 per person and account.** This is the missing part of our Banking Union.

Today, such protection schemes exist, but they are all national. **What we need is a more European system, disconnected from government purses so that citizens can be absolutely sure that their savings are safe.**

We all saw what happened in Greece during the summer: Citizens were – understandably – taking out their savings since they had little trust and confidence in the financial capability of the State to support its banking system. This must change.

A more common deposit guarantee system is urgently needed, and the Commission will present a legislative proposal on the first steps towards this before the end of the year.

I am of course fully aware there is no consensus on this yet. But I also know that many of you are as convinced as I am of the need to move ahead. I say to those who are more sceptical: the Commission is fully aware that there are differences in the starting positions of Member States. Some have developed and well-financed their national systems of deposit insurance. Others are still building up such systems. We need to take these differences into account. This is why the Five Presidents' Report advocates not full mutualisation, but a new approach by means of **a reinsurance system.** We will present further details on this in the weeks to come.

Second: **we need a stronger representation of the euro on the global scene.** How is it possible that the euro area, which has the second largest currency in the world, can still not speak with one voice on economic matters in international financial institutions?

Imagine yourselves in the daily work of the International Monetary Fund for a moment. We know well how important the IMF is. Still, instead of speaking with one voice as the euro area, Belgium and Luxembourg have to agree their voting position with Armenia and Israel; and Spain sits in a joint constituency with Latin American countries.

How can it be that we – Europeans – are jointly major shareholders of global institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank and still end up acting as a minority?

How can it be that a strategically important new Infrastructure Investment Bank is created in Asia, and European governments, instead of coordinating their efforts, engage in a race who is first to become a member?

We need to grow up and put our common interests ahead of our national ones. **For me, the President of the Eurogroup should be the natural spokesperson for the euro area in international financial institutions such as the IMF.**

Third: **we need a more effective and more democratic system of economic and fiscal surveillance.** I want this Parliament, national Parliaments, as well as social partners at all levels, to be key actors in the process. I also want the interest of the euro area as a whole to be better reflected upfront in EU and national policies: the interest of the whole is not just the sum of its parts. This will be reflected in our proposals to streamline and strengthen the European Semester of economic policy coordination further.

In the future, I no longer want our recommendations for the economic orientation of the euro area as a whole to be empty words. I want them to provide real orientation, notably on the fiscal stance of the euro area.

Fourth: **we need to enhance fairness in our taxation policies.** This requires greater transparency and equity, for citizens and companies. We presented an Action Plan in June, the gist of which is the following: **the country where a company generates its profits must also be the country of taxation.**

One step towards this goal is our work on a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base. This simplification will make tax avoidance more difficult.

We are also working hard with the Council to conclude an agreement on the automatic exchange of information on tax rulings by the end of the year.

At the same time, we expect our investigations into the different national schemes to yield results very soon.

And we are fighting hard to get Member States to adopt the modalities of a Financial Transaction Tax by the end of the year.

We need more Europe, we need more Union, and we need more fairness in our taxation policy.

Fifth: **We have to step up the work for a fair and truly pan-European labour market.** Fairness in this context means promoting and safeguarding the free movement of citizens as a fundamental right of our Union, while avoiding cases of abuses and risks of social dumping.

Labour mobility is welcome and needed to make the euro area and the single market prosper. But labour mobility should be based on clear rules and principles. The key principle should be that we ensure **the same pay for the same job at the same place.**

As part of these efforts, I will want to develop **a European pillar of social rights**, which takes account of the changing realities of Europe's societies and the world of work. And which can serve as a compass for the renewed convergence within the euro area.

This European pillar of social rights should complement what we have already jointly achieved when it comes to the protection of workers in the EU. I will expect social partners to play a central role in this process. I believe we do well to start with this initiative within the euro area, while allowing other EU Member States to join in if they want to do so.

As said in the Five Presidents' Report, we will also need to look ahead at more fundamental steps with regard to the euro area. The Commission will present a White Paper on this in spring 2017.

Yes, we will need to set up a Euro Area Treasury over time, which is accountable at European level. And I believe it should be built on the European Stability Mechanism we created during the crisis, which has, with a potential credit volume of €500 billion, a firepower that is as important as the one of the IMF. The ESM should progressively assume a broader macroeconomic stabilisation function to better deal with shocks that cannot be managed at the national level alone. We will prepare the ground for this to happen in the second half of this mandate.

The European Union is a dynamic project. A project to serve its people. There are no winners or losers. We all get back more than we put in. It is one, comprehensive project. This is also a message for our partners in the United Kingdom, which I have very much in my mind when thinking about the big political challenges of the months to come.

A fair deal for Britain

Since I took office, things have become clearer as regards the United Kingdom: before the end of

2017, there will be a referendum on whether Britain remains in the Union or not. This will of course be a decision for voters in the United Kingdom. But it would not be honest nor realistic to say that this decision will not be of strategic importance for the Union as a whole.

I have always said that I want the UK to stay in the European Union. And that I want to work together with the British government on a fair deal for Britain.

The British are asking fundamental questions to and of the EU. Whether the EU delivers prosperity for its citizens. Whether the action of the EU concentrates on areas where it can deliver results. Whether the EU is open to the rest of the world.

These are questions to which the EU has answers, and not just for the sake of the UK. All 28 EU Member States want the EU to be modern and focused for the benefit of all its citizens. We all agree that the EU must adapt and change in view of the major challenges and crisis we are facing at the moment.

This is why we are completing the Single Market, slashing red tape, improving the investment climate for small businesses.

This is why we are creating a Digital Single Market – to make it such that your location in the EU makes no difference to the price you pay when you book a car online. We are modernising the EU's copyright rules – to increase people's access to cultural content online while ensuring that authors get a fair remuneration. And just two months ago, the EU agreed to abolish roaming charges as of summer 2017, a move many tourists and travellers, notably from Britain, have been calling for, for years.

This is why we are negotiating trade agreements with leading nations such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. This is why we are opening markets and breaking down barriers for businesses and workers in all 28 EU Member States.

It is my very personal commitment to improve the way in which the Union works with national Parliaments. I have inscribed a duty to interact more closely with national Parliaments in the mission letters of all Members of my Commission. **I am convinced that strengthening our relationship with national Parliaments will bring the Union closer to the people that it serves.** This is an ambition that I know Prime Minister David Cameron also shares. I am confident that we will be able to find a common answer.

Over a year ago, when I campaigned to become President of the Commission, I made a vow that, as President, I would seek a fair deal for Britain. A deal that is fair for Britain. And that is also fair for the 27 other Member States.

I want to ensure we preserve the integrity of all four freedoms of the Single Market and at the same time find ways to allow the further integration of the Eurozone to strengthen the Economic and Monetary Union.

To be fair to the UK, part of this deal will be to recognise the reality that not all Member States participate in all areas of EU policy. Special Protocols define the position of the UK, for instance in relation to the euro and to Justice and Home Affairs. To be fair to the other Member States, the UK's choices must not prevent them from further integration where they see fit.

I will seek a fair deal for Britain. I will do this for one reason and one reason alone: because I believe that the EU is better with Britain in it and that Britain is better within the EU.

In key areas, we can achieve much more by acting collectively, than we could each on our own. This is in particular the case for the tremendous foreign policy challenges Europe is currently facing and which I will address in the next part of this speech.

United alongside Ukraine

Europe is a small part of the world. If we have something to offer, it is our knowledge and leadership.

Around a century ago, one in five of the world's population were in Europe; today that figure is one in nine; in another century it will be one in twenty-five.

I believe we can, and should, play our part on the world stage; not for our own vanity, but because we have something to offer. We can show the world the strength that comes from uniting and the strategic interest in acting together. There has never been a more urgent and compelling time to do so.

We have more than 40 active conflicts in the world at the moment. While these conflicts rage, whilst families are broken and homes reduced to rubble, I cannot come to you, almost 60 years after the birth of the European Union and pitch you peace. For the world is not at peace.

If we want to promote a more peaceful world, we will need more Europe and more Union in our foreign policy. This is most urgent towards Ukraine.

The challenge of helping Ukraine to survive, to reform and to prosper is a European one. Ultimately, the Ukrainian dream, the dream of the Maidan is European: to live in a modern country, in a stable economy, in a sound and fair political system.

Over the past twelve months, I have got to know President Poroshenko well, at a Summit, over dinner at his home, during many meetings and countless phone calls. He has begun a transformation of his country. He is fighting for peace. He deserves our support.

We have already done a lot, lending €3.41 billion in three Macro-Financial Assistance programmes, helping to broker a deal that will secure Ukraine's winter gas supplies and advising on the reform of the judiciary. The EU and all its Member States must contribute if we are to succeed.

We will also need to maintain our unity.

We need unity when it comes to **the security of our Eastern Member States, notably the Baltics. The security and the borders of EU Member States are untouchable. I want this to be understood very clearly in Moscow.**

We need more unity when it comes to sanctions. The sanctions the EU has imposed on Russia have a cost for each of our economies, and repercussions on important sectors, like farming. But sanctions are a powerful tool in confronting aggression and violation of international law. They are a policy that needs to be kept in place until the Minsk Agreements are complied with in full. We will have to keep our nerve and our unity.

But we must also continue to look for solutions.

I spoke to President Putin in Brisbane at the G20, in a bilateral meeting that went on into the early hours of the morning. We recalled how long we have known each other, how different times had become. A spirit of cooperation between the EU and Russia has given way to suspicion and distrust.

The EU must show Russia the cost of confrontation but it must also make clear it is prepared to engage.

I do not want a Europe that stands on the sidelines of history. I want a Europe that leads. When the European Union stands united, we can change the world.

United in Leadership in Addressing Climate Change

One example of where Europe is already leading is in our action on climate change.

In Europe we all know that climate change is a major global challenge – and we have known for a while now.

The planet we share – its atmosphere and stable climate – cannot cope with the use mankind is making of it.

Some parts of the world have been living beyond their means, creating carbon debt and living on it. As we know from economics and crisis management, living beyond our means is not sustainable behaviour.

Nature will foot us the bill soon enough. In some parts of the world, climate change is changing the sources of conflict – the control over a dam or a lake can be more strategic than an oil refinery.

Climate change is even one the root causes of a new migration phenomenon. Climate refugees will become a new challenge – if we do not act swiftly.

The world will meet in Paris in 90 days to agree on action to meet the target of keeping the global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius. **The EU is on track and made a clear pledge back in March: a binding, economy-wide emissions reduction target of at least 40% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. This is the most ambitious contribution presented to date.**

Others are following, some only reluctantly.

Let me be very clear to our international partners: the EU will not sign just any deal. My priority, Europe's priority, is to adopt an ambitious, robust and binding global climate deal.

This is why my Commission and I have been spending part of this first year in drumming support for ambition in Paris. Last May I was in Tokyo where I challenged Prime Minister Abe to work with us in ensuring that Paris is a worthy successor of Kyoto.

In June at the G7 summit, leaders agreed to develop long-term low-carbon strategies and abandon fossil fuels by the end of the century.

Later I met Chinese Premier Li Keqiang to prepare Paris and to launch a partnership to ensure that cities of today are designed to meet the energy and climate needs of tomorrow.

And, in coordination with the High Representative, the members of the College have been engaged in climate diplomacy efforts. Today Commissioner Arias Cañete is in Papua New Guinea discussing the plans for Paris with the leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum. If corrective action is not taken to tackle climate change, the tide will rise and those islands will be the proverbial canary in the coalmine.

However, if Paris delivers, humanity will, for the first time, have an international regime to efficiently combat climate change.

Paris will be the next stop but not the last stop. There is a Road to Paris; but there is also a Road from Paris.

My Commission will work to ensure Europe keeps leading in the fight against climate change. We will practice what we preach.

We have no silver bullet to tackle climate change. But our laws, such as the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, and our actions have allowed us to decrease carbon emissions whilst keeping the economy growing.

Our forward-looking climate policy is also delivering on our much needed Energy Union goals: it is making us a world leader in the renewable energy sector, which today employs over one million people across the EU and generates €130 billion turnover, including €35 billion worth of exports. European companies today hold 40% of all patents for renewable technologies and the pace of technological change increases the potential for new global trade in green technology.

This is why a strategic focus on innovation and on interconnecting our markets is being given in the implementation of the Energy Union.

This is what I promised you last year and this is what this Commission has delivered and will continue to deliver.

The fight against climate change will not be won or lost in diplomatic discussions in Brussels or in Paris. It will be won or lost on the ground and in the cities where most Europeans live, work and use about 80% of all the energy produced in Europe.

That is why I have asked President Schulz to host the Covenant of the Mayors meeting in the Parliament next month, bringing together more than 5,000 European mayors. They have all pledged to meet the EU CO2 reduction objective. I hope that all members of this House will lend their support to the action that communities and localities across Europe are taking to making Paris and its follow up a success.

Conclusion

Mr President, Honourable Members,

There were many things I did not and could not mention today. For example, I would have liked to talk to you about Cyprus and my hope, my ambition and my wish to see the island united next year. After I met for a long talk with Presidents Nikos Anastasiades and Mustafa Akinci in the middle of the Green Line in July, I am confident that, with the necessary vision and political will from the two leaders, this is feasible under the current conditions and with continued good coordination between UN and EU efforts. I will offer all my support and assistance to help achieve this objective. **Because I believe that walls and fences have no place in an EU Member State.**

I have not spoken about Europe's farmers who were protesting this week in Brussels. **I agree with them that there is something wrong in a market when the price of a litre of milk is less than the price of a litre of water.** But I do not believe that we can or should start micromanaging the milk market from Brussels. We should compensate the farmers who are suffering from the effects of sanctions against Russia. And this is why the Commission is putting a **€500 million solidarity package** for farmers on the table. And European and national competition authorities should take a close look into the structure of the market. Something has turned sour in the milk market. My

impression is that we need to break some retail oligopolies.

There is much more to be said but in touching upon the main issues, the main challenges confronting us today, for me there is one thing that becomes clear: whether it is the refugee crisis we are talking about, the economy or foreign policy: we can only succeed as a Union.

Who is the Union that represents Europe's 507 million citizens? The Union is not just Brussels or Strasbourg. The Union is the European Institutions. The Union is also the Member States. It is national governments and national Parliaments.

It is enough if just one of us fails to deliver for all of us to stumble.

Europe and our Union have to deliver. While I am a strong defender of the Community method in normal times, I am not a purist in crisis times – I do not mind *how* we cope with a crisis, be it by intergovernmental solutions or community-led processes. As long as we find a solution and get things done in the interest of Europe's citizens.

However, when we see the weaknesses of a method, we have to change our approach.

Look at the relocation mechanism for refugees we put on the table for Greece and Italy in May: the Commission proposed a binding, communitarian solidarity scheme. Member States opted instead for a voluntary approach. The result: the 40,000 figure was never reached. Not a single person in need of protection has been relocated yet and Italy and Greece continue to cope alone. This is simply not good enough.

Look at intergovernmental solutions like the 2011 Fiscal Compact to strengthen fiscal discipline or the 2014 Agreement setting up a common bank resolution fund. Today, we see that not a single Member State has completely implemented the Fiscal Compact. And only 4 out of 19 Member States have ratified the agreement on the bank resolution fund, which is meant to be launched on 1 January 2016.

This is simply not good enough if we want to cope with the present, immense challenges.

We have to change our way of working.

We have to be faster.

We have to be more European in our method.

Not because we want power at European level. But because we need urgently better and swifter results.

We need more Europe in our Union.

We need more Union in our Union.

All my life, I have believed in Europe. I have my reasons, many of which I know and am relieved are not relatable to generations today.

Upon taking office, I said I want to rebuild bridges that had started to crumble. Where solidarity had started to fray at the seams. Where old daemons sought to resurface.

We still have a long way to go.

But when, generations from now, people read about this moment in Europe's history books, let it read that we stood together in demonstrating compassion and opened our homes to those in need of our protection.

That we joined forces in addressing global challenges, protecting our values and resolving conflicts.

That we made sure taxpayers never again have to pay for the greed of financial speculators.

That hand in hand we secured growth and prosperity for our economies, for our businesses, and above all for our children.

Let it read that we forged a Union stronger than ever before.

Let it read that together we made European history. A story our grandchildren will tell with pride.

For further information:

[Highlights of the speech](#)

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2021 State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen

Strasbourg, 15 September 2021

STATE OF THE UNION 2021

The original version of the speech is available [here](#).

STRENGTHENING THE SOUL OF OUR UNION

Introduction

Mr President,
Honourable Members,

Many are the people who feel their lives have been on pause while the world has been on fast forward.

The speed of events and the enormity of the challenges are sometimes difficult to grasp.

This has also been a time of soul-searching. From people reassessing their own lives to wider debates on sharing vaccines and on shared values.

But as I look back on this past year, if I look at the state of the Union today, I see a strong soul in everything that we do.

It was Robert Schuman who said: *Europe needs a soul, an ideal, and the political will to serve this ideal.*

Europe has brought those words to life in the last twelve months.

In the biggest global health crisis for a century, we chose to go it together so that every part of Europe got the same access to a life-saving vaccine.

In the deepest global economic crisis for decades, we chose to go it together with NextGenerationEU.

And in the gravest planetary crisis of all time, again we chose to go it together with the European Green Deal.

We did that together as Commission, as Parliament, as 27 Member States. As one Europe. And we can be proud of it.

But corona times are not over.

There is still much grief in our society as the pandemic lingers. There are hearts we can never mend, life stories we can never finish and time we can never give back to our young. We face new and enduring challenges in a world recovering – and fracturing – unevenly.

So there is no question: the next year will be yet another test of character.

But I believe that it is when you are tested that your spirit – your soul - truly shines through.

As I look across our Union, I know that Europe will pass that test.

And what gives me that confidence is the inspiration we can draw from Europe's young people.

Because our youth put meaning into empathy and solidarity. They believe we have a responsibility towards the planet.

And while they are anxious about the future, they are determined to make it better.

Our Union will be stronger if it is more like our next generation: reflective, determined and caring. Grounded in values and bold in action.

This spirit will be more important than ever over the next twelve months. This is the message in the Letter of Intent I sent this morning to President Sassoli and Prime Minister Janša to outline our priorities for the year ahead.

A EUROPE UNITED THROUGH ADVERSITY AND RECOVERY

Honourable Members,

A year is a long time in a pandemic.

When I stood in front of you 12 months ago, I did not know when – or even if – we would have a safe and effective vaccine against COVID-19.

But today, and against all critics, Europe is among the world leaders.

More than 70 per cent of adults in the EU are fully vaccinated. We were the only ones to share half of our vaccine production with the rest of the world. We delivered more than 700 million doses to the European people, and we delivered more than another 700 million doses to the rest of the world, to more than 130 countries.

We are the only region in the world to achieve that.

A pandemic is a marathon, not a sprint.

We followed the science.

We delivered to Europe. We delivered to the world.

We did it the right way, because we did it the *European way*. And it worked!

But while we have every reason to be confident, we have no reason to be complacent.

Our first – and most urgent – priority is to speed up global vaccination.

With less than 1% of global doses administered in low-income countries, the scale of injustice and the level of urgency are obvious. This is one of the great geopolitical issues of our time.

Team Europe is investing one billion Euro to ramp up mRNA production capacity in Africa. We have already committed to share 250 million doses.

I can announce today that the Commission will add a new donation of another 200 million doses by the middle of next year.

This is an investment in solidarity – but also in global health.

The second priority is to continue our efforts here in Europe.

We see worrisome divergences in vaccination rates in our Union.

So we need to keep up the momentum.

And Europe is ready. We have 1.8 billion additional doses secured. This is enough for us and our neighbourhood when booster shots are needed. Let's do everything possible to ensure that this does not turn into a pandemic of the unvaccinated.

The final priority is to strengthen our pandemic preparedness.

Last year, I said it was time to build a European Health Union. **Today we are delivering. With our proposal we get the HERA authority up and running.**

This will be a huge asset to deal with future health threats earlier and better.

We have the innovation and scientific capacity, the private sector knowledge, we have competent national authorities. And now we need to bring all of that together, including massive funding.

So I am proposing **a new health preparedness and resilience mission for the whole of the EU**. And it should be backed up by Team Europe investment of EUR 50 billion by 2027.

To make sure that no virus will ever turn a local epidemic into a global pandemic. There is no better return on investment than that.

Honourable Members,

The work on the European Health Union is a big step forward. And I want to thank this House for your support.

We have shown that when we act together, we are able to act fast.

Take the EU digital certificate:

Today more than 400 million certificates have been generated across Europe. 42 countries in 4 continents are plugged in.

We proposed it in March.

You pushed it!

Three months later it was up and running.

Thanks to this joint effort, while the rest of the world talked about it, Europe just did it.

We did a lot of things right. We moved fast to create SURE. This supported over 31 million workers and 2.5 million companies across Europe.

We learned the lessons from the past when we were too divided and too delayed.

And the difference is stark: last time it took 8 years for the Eurozone GDP to get back to pre-crisis levels.

This time we expect 19 countries to be at pre-pandemic levels this year with the rest following next. **Growth in the euro area outpaced both the US and China in the last quarter.**

But this is only the beginning. And the lessons from the financial crisis should serve as a cautionary tale. At that time, Europe declared victory too soon and we paid the price for that. And we will not repeat the same mistake.

The good news is that with NextGenerationEU we will now invest in both *short-term* recovery and *long-term* prosperity.

We will address structural issues in our economy: from labour market reforms in Spain, to pension reforms in Slovenia or tax reform in Austria.

In an unprecedented manner, we will invest in 5G and fibre. But equally important is the investment in digital skills. This task needs leaders' attention and a structured dialogue at top-level.

Our response provides a clear direction to markets and investors alike.

But, as we look ahead, we also need to reflect on how the crisis has affected the shape of our economy – from increased debt, to uneven impact on different sectors, or new ways of working.

To do that, the Commission will relaunch the discussion on the Economic Governance Review in the coming weeks. The aim is to build a consensus on the way forward well in time for 2023.

Honourable Members,

We will soon celebrate 30 years of the Single Market. For 30 years it has been the great enabler of progress and prosperity in Europe.

At the outset of the pandemic, we defended it against the pressures of erosion and fragmentation. For our recovery, the Single Market is the driver of good jobs and competitiveness.

That is particularly important in the digital single market.

We have made ambitious proposals in the last year.

To contain the gatekeeper power of major platforms;

To underpin the democratic responsibility of those platforms;

To foster innovation;

To channel the power of artificial intelligence.

Digital is the make-or-break issue. And Member States share that view. Digital spending in NextGenerationEU will even overshoot the 20% target.

That reflects the importance of investing in our European tech sovereignty. We have to double down to shape our digital transformation according to our own rules and values.

Allow me to focus on semi-conductors, those tiny chips that make everything work: from smartphones and electric scooters to trains or entire smart factories.

There is no digital without chips. And while we speak, whole production lines are already working at reduced speed - despite growing demand - because of a shortage of semi-conductors.

But while global demand has exploded, Europe's share across the entire value chain, from design to manufacturing capacity has shrunk. We depend on state-of-the-art chips manufactured in Asia.

So this is not just a matter of our competitiveness. This is also a matter of tech sovereignty. So let's put all of our focus on it.

We will present a new European Chips Act. We need to link together our world-class research, design and testing capacities. We need to coordinate EU and national investment along the value chain.

The aim is to jointly create a state-of-the-art European chip ecosystem, including production. That ensures our security of supply and will develop new markets for ground-breaking European tech.

Yes, this is a daunting task. And I know that some claim it cannot be done.

But they said the same thing about Galileo 20 years ago.

And look what happened. We got our act together. Today European satellites provide the navigation system for more than 2 billion smartphones worldwide. We are world leaders. **So let's be bold again, this time with semi-conductors.**

Honourable Members,

The pandemic has left deep scars that have also left their mark on our social market economy.

For nights on end, we all stood at our windows and doors to applaud critical workers. We felt how much we relied on all those women and men who work for lower wages, fewer protections and less security.

The applause may have faded away but the strength of feeling cannot.

This is why the implementation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** is so important – to ensure decent jobs, fairer working conditions, better healthcare and better balance in people's lives.

If the pandemic taught us one thing, it is that time is precious. And caring for someone you love is the most precious time of all.

We will come forward with a new European Care Strategy to support men and women in finding the best care and the best life balance for them.

But social fairness is not just a question of time. It is also a question of fair taxation.

In our social market economy, it is good for companies to make profits. And they make profits thanks to the quality of our infrastructure, social security and education systems. So the very least we can expect is that they pay their fair share.

This is why we will continue to crack down on tax avoidance and evasion.

We will put forward a new initiative to address those hiding profits behind shell entities.

And we will do everything in our power to seal the historic global deal on minimum taxation.

Asking big companies to pay the right amount of tax is not only a question of public finances, but above all a question of basic fairness.

Honourable Members,

We have all benefited from the principles of our European social market economy – and we must

make sure that the next generation can do so to build their future.

This is our most educated, talented and motivated generation. And it has missed out on so much to keep others safe.

Being young is normally a time of discovery, of creating new experiences. A time to meet lifelong friends, to find your own path. And what did we ask this generation to do? To keep their social distance, to stay locked down and to do school from home. For more than a year.

This is why everything that we do – from the European Green Deal to NextGenerationEU – is about protecting their future.

That is also why NextGenerationEU must be funded by the **new own resources** that we are working on.

But we must also caution against creating new divides. **Because Europe needs all of its youth.**

We must step up our support to those who fall into the gaps – those not in any kind of employment, education or training.

For them, we will put in place a new programme, ALMA.

ALMA will help these young Europeans to find temporary work experience in another Member State.

Because they too deserve an experience like Erasmus. To gain skills, to create bonds and help forge their own European identity.

But if we are to shape our Union in their mould, young people must be able to shape Europe's future. Our Union needs a soul and a vision they can connect to.

Or as Jacques Delors asked: *How can we ever build Europe if young people do not see it as a collective project and a vision of their own future?*

This is why we will propose to make 2022 the Year of European Youth. A year dedicated to empowering those who have dedicated so much to others.

And it is why we will make sure that young people can help lead the debate in the Conference on the Future of Europe.

This is their future and this must be their Conference too.

And as we said when we took office, the Commission will be ready to follow up on what is agreed by the Conference.

A EUROPE UNITED IN RESPONSIBILITY

Honourable Members,

This is a generation with a conscience. They are pushing us to go further and faster to tackle the climate crisis.

And events of the summer only served to explain why. We saw floods in Belgium and Germany. And wildfires burning from the Greek islands to the hills in France.

And if we don't believe our own eyes, we only have to follow the science.

The UN recently published the IPCC report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It is the authority on the *science* of climate change.

The report leaves no doubt. Climate change is man-made. But since it is man-made, we can do something about it.

As I heard it said recently: **It's warming. It's us. We're sure. It's bad. But we can fix it.**

And change is already happening.

More electric vehicles than diesel cars were registered in Germany in the first half of this year.

Poland is now the EU's largest exporter of car batteries and electric buses. Or take the **New European Bauhaus** that led to an explosion of creativity of architects, designers, engineers across our Union.

So clearly something is on the move.

And this is what the European Green Deal is all about.

In my speech last year, I announced our target of at least 55% emission reduction by 2030. Since then we have together turned our climate goals into legal obligations.

And we are the first major economy to present comprehensive legislation in order to get it done.

You have seen the complexity of the detail. But the goal is simple. We will put a price on pollution. We will clean the energy we use. We will have smarter cars and cleaner airplanes.

And we will make sure that higher climate ambition comes with more social ambition. **This must be a fair green transition. This is why we proposed a new Social Climate Fund** to tackle the energy poverty that already 34 million Europeans suffer from.

I count on both Parliament and Member States to keep the package and to keep the ambition together.

When it comes to climate change and the nature crisis, **Europe can do a lot.** And it will support others. I am proud to **announce today that the EU will double its external funding for biodiversity**, in particular for the most vulnerable countries.

But Europe cannot do it alone.

The COP26 in Glasgow will be a moment of truth for the global community.

Major economies – from the US to Japan – have set ambitions for climate neutrality in 2050 or shortly after. These need now to be backed up by concrete plans in time for Glasgow. Because current commitments for 2030 will not keep global warming to 1.5°C within reach.

Every country has a responsibility!

The goals that President Xi has set for China are encouraging. But we call for that same leadership on setting out how China will get there. The world would be relieved if they showed they could peak emissions by mid-decade - and move away from coal at home and abroad.

But while every country has a responsibility, major economies do have a special duty to the *least* developed and *most* vulnerable countries. **Climate finance** is essential for them - both for mitigation and adaptation.

In Mexico and in Paris, the major economies committed to provide 100 billion dollars a year until 2025 to the least developed and most vulnerable countries.

We deliver on our commitment. **Team Europe contributes 25 billion dollars per year.** But others still leave a gaping hole towards reaching the global target.

Closing that gap will increase the chance of success at Glasgow.

My message today is that Europe is ready to do more. **We will now propose an additional 4 billion euro for climate finance until 2027.** But we expect the United States and our partners to step up too.

Closing the climate finance gap together – the US and the EU – would be a strong signal for global climate leadership. It is time to deliver.

Honourable Members,

This climate and economic leadership is central to Europe's global and security objectives.

It also reflects a wider shift in world affairs at a time of transition towards a new international order.

We are entering a **new era of hyper-competitiveness.**

An era in which some stop at nothing to gain influence: from vaccine promises and high-interest loans, to missiles and misinformation.

An era of regional rivalries and major powers refocusing their attention towards each other.

Recent events in Afghanistan are not the cause of this change – but they are a symptom of it.

And first and foremost, I want to be clear. **We stand by the Afghan people.** The women and children, prosecutors, journalists and human rights defenders.

I think in particular of women judges who are now in hiding from the men they jailed. They have been put at risk for their contribution to justice and the rule of law. We must support them and we will coordinate all efforts with Member States to bring them to safety.

And we must continue supporting all Afghans in the country and in neighbouring countries. We must do everything to avert the real risk of a major famine and humanitarian disaster. And we will do our part. We will increase again humanitarian aid for Afghanistan by 100 million euro.

This will be part of a new, wider **Afghan Support Package** that we will present in the next weeks to combine all of our efforts.

Honourable Members,

Witnessing events unfold in Afghanistan was profoundly painful for all the families of fallen servicemen and servicewomen.

We bow to the sacrifice of those soldiers, diplomats and aid workers who laid down their lives.

To make sure that their service will never be in vain, we have to reflect on how this mission could end so abruptly.

There are deeply troubling questions that allies will have to tackle within NATO.

But there is simply no security and defence issue where *less* cooperation is the answer. We need to invest in our joint partnership and to draw on each side's unique strength.

This is why we are working with Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on a new EU-NATO Joint Declaration to be presented before the end of the year.

But this is only one part of the equation.

Europe can – and clearly should – be able and willing to do more on its own. But if we are to do more, we first need to explain why. I see three broad categories.

First, we need to provide stability in our neighbourhood and across different regions.

We are connected to the world by narrow straits, stormy seas and vast land borders. Because of that geography, Europe knows better than anyone that if you don't deal in time with the crisis abroad, the crisis comes to you.

Secondly, the nature of the threats we face is evolving rapidly: from hybrid or cyber-attacks to the growing arms race in space.

Disruptive technology has been a great equaliser in the way power can be used today by rogue states or non-state groups.

You no longer need armies and missiles to cause mass damage. You can paralyse industrial plants, city administrations and hospitals – all you need is your laptop. You can disrupt entire elections with a smartphone and an internet connection.

The third reason is that the European Union is a unique security provider. There will be missions where NATO or the UN will not be present, but where the EU should be.

On the ground, our soldiers work side-by-side with police officers, lawyers and doctors, with humanitarian workers and human rights defenders, with teachers and engineers.

We can combine military and civilian, along with diplomacy and development – and we have a long history in building and protecting peace.

The good news is that over the past years, we have started to develop a European defence ecosystem.

But what we need is the European Defence Union.

In the last weeks, there have been many discussions on expeditionary forces. On what type and how many we need: battlegroups or EU entry forces.

This is no doubt part of the debate – and I believe it will be part of the solution.

But the more fundamental issue is why this has not worked in the past.

You can have the most advanced forces in the world – but if you are never prepared to use them - of what use are they?

What has held us back until now is not just a shortfall of capacity – it is the lack of political will.

And if we develop this political will, there is a lot that we can do at EU level.

Allow me to give you three concrete examples:

First, we need to build the foundation for collective decision-making – this is what I call situational awareness.

We fall short if Member States active in the same region, do not share their information on the European level. It is vital that we improve intelligence cooperation.

But this is not just about intelligence in the narrow sense.

It is about bringing together the knowledge from all services and all sources. From space to police trainers, from open source to development agencies. Their work gives us a unique scope and depth of knowledge.

It is out there!

But we can only use that, to make informed decisions if we have the full picture. And this is currently not the case. We have the knowledge, but it is disjointed. Information is fragmented.

This is why the EU could consider its own Joint Situational Awareness Centre to fuse all the different pieces of information.

And to be better prepared, to be fully informed and to be able to decide.

Secondly, we need to improve interoperability. This is why we are already investing in common European platforms, from fighter jets, to drones and cyber.

But we have to keep thinking of new ways to use all possible synergies. One example could be to consider waiving VAT when buying defence equipment developed and produced in Europe.

This would not only increase our interoperability, but also decrease our dependencies of today.

Third, we cannot talk about defence without talking about cyber. If everything is connected, everything can be hacked. Given that resources are scarce, we have to bundle our forces. And we should not just be satisfied to address the cyber threat, but also strive to become a leader in cyber security.

It should be here in Europe where cyber defence tools are developed. This is why we need a **European Cyber Defence Policy**, including legislation on common standards under a **new European Cyber Resilience Act**.

So, we can do a lot at EU level. But Member States need to do more too.

This starts with a common assessment of the threats we face and a common approach to dealing with them. The upcoming **Strategic Compass** is a key process of this discussion.

And we need to decide how we can use all of the possibilities that are already in the Treaty.

This is why, under the French Presidency, President Macron and I will convene a **Summit on European defence**.

It is time for Europe to step up to the next level.

Honourable Members,

In a more contested world, protecting your interests is not only about defending yourself.

It is about forging strong and reliable partnerships. This is not a luxury – it is essential for our future stability, security and prosperity.

This work starts by deepening our partnership with our closest allies.

With the US we will develop our new agenda for global change – from the new **Trade and Technology Council** to health security and sustainability.

The EU and the US will always be stronger – together.

The same is true of our neighbours in the **Western Balkans**.

Before the end of the month, I will travel to the region to send a strong signal of our commitment to the accession process. **We owe it to all those young people who believe in a European future.**

This is why we are ramping up our support through our new investment and economic plan, worth around a third of the region's GDP. Because an investment in the future of the Western Balkans is an

investment in the future of the EU.

And we will also continue investing in our partnerships across our neighbourhood – from stepping up our engagement in the Eastern Partnership to implementing the new Agenda for the Mediterranean and continuing to work on the different aspects of our relationship with Turkey.

Honourable Members,

If Europe is to become a more active global player, it also needs to focus on the next generation of partnerships.

In this spirit, **today's new EU - Indo-Pacific strategy is a milestone.** It reflects the growing importance of the region to our prosperity and security. But also the fact that autocratic regimes use it to try to expand their influence.

Europe needs to be more present and more active in the region.

So we will work together to deepen trade links, strengthen global supply chains and develop new investment projects on green and digital technologies.

This is a template for how Europe can redesign its model to connect the world.

We are good at financing roads. But it does not make sense for Europe to build a perfect road between a Chinese-owned copper mine and a Chinese-owned harbour.

We have to get smarter when it comes to these kinds of investments.

This is why we will soon present our new connectivity strategy called Global Gateway.

We will build **Global Gateway partnerships** with countries around the world. We want investments in quality infrastructure, connecting goods, people and services around the world.

We will take a values-based approach, offering transparency and good governance to our partners.

We want to create links and not dependencies!

And we know how this can work. Since the summer, a new underwater fibre optic cable has connected Brazil to Portugal.

We will invest with Africa to create a market for green hydrogen that connects the two shores of the Mediterranean.

We need a Team Europe approach to make Global Gateway happen. We will connect institutions and investment, banks and the business community. And we will make this a priority for regional summits – starting with the next EU-Africa Summit in February.

We want to turn Global Gateway into a trusted brand around the world.

And let me be very clear: doing business around the world, global trade – all that is good and necessary. But this can never be done at the expense of people's dignity and freedom.

There are 25 million people out there, who are threatened or coerced into forced labour. We can never accept that they are forced to make products – and that these products then end up for sale in shops here in Europe.

So we will propose a ban on products in our market that have been made by forced labour.

Human rights are not for sale – at any price.

A EUROPE UNITED IN FREEDOM AND DIVERSITY

And, Honourable Members, human beings are not bargaining chips.

Look at what happened at our borders with Belarus. The regime in Minsk has instrumentalised human beings. They have put people on planes and literally pushed them towards Europe's borders.

This can never be tolerated.

And the quick European reaction shows that. **And rest assured, we will continue to stand together with Lithuania, Latvia and Poland.**

And, let's call it what it is: this is a hybrid attack to destabilise Europe.

Honourable Members,

These are not isolated events. We saw similar incidents at other borders. And we can expect to see it again. This is why, as part of our work on Schengen, we will set out new ways to respond to such aggression and ensure unity in protecting our external borders.

But as long as we do not find common ground on how to manage migration, our opponents will continue to target that.

Meanwhile, human traffickers continue to exploit people through deadly routes across the Mediterranean.

These events show us that every country has a stake in building a European migration system.

The **New Pact on Migration and Asylum** gives us everything we need to manage the different types of situations we face.

All the elements are there. This is a balanced and humane system that works for all Member States - *in all circumstances*. We know that we can find common ground.

But in the year since the Commission presented the Pact, progress has been painfully slow.

I think, this is the moment now for a *European migration management policy*. So I urge you, in this House and in Member States, to speed up the process.

This ultimately comes down to a question of trust. Trust between Member States. Trust for Europeans that migration can be managed. Trust that Europe will always live up to its enduring duty to the most vulnerable and most in need.

There are many strongly held views on migration in Europe but I believe the common ground is not so far away.

Because if you ask most Europeans, they would agree that we should act to curb irregular migration but also act to provide a refuge for those forced to flee.

They would agree that we should return those who have no right to stay. But that we should welcome those who come here legally and make such a vital contribution to our society and economy.

And we should *all* agree that the topic of migration should never be used to divide.

I am convinced that there is a way that Europe can build trust amongst us when it comes to migration.

Honourable Members,

Societies that build on **democracy and common values** stand on stable ground.

They have trust in people.

This is how new ideas are formed, how change happens, how injustices are overcome.

Trust in these common values brought our founders together, after World War Two.

And it is these same values that united the freedom fighters who tore down the Iron Curtain over 30 years ago.

They wanted democracy.

They wanted the freedom to choose their government.

They wanted the rule of law and for everyone to be equal before the law.

They wanted freedom of speech and independent media. To no longer be spied on by their governments.

They wanted to combat corruption. And the freedom to be different from the majority.

Or, as former Czech President Václav Havel put it, they wanted all those "great European values". These values come from the cultural, religious and humanist heritage of Europe.

They are part of our soul, part of what defines us today.

These values are now enshrined in our European treaties. This is what we all signed up to when we

became part of this Union as free and sovereign countries.

We are determined to defend these values. And we will never waver in that determination.

Our values are guaranteed by our legal order and safeguarded by the judgments of the **European Court of Justice**. These judgments are binding. We make sure that they are respected. And we do so in every Member State of our Union.

Because protecting the rule of law is not just a noble goal. Protecting the rule of law is also hard work and a constant struggle for improvement.

Our **Rule of Law reports** are part of this process, with for example justice reforms in Malta or corruption inquiries in Slovakia.

And from 2022, our Rule of Law reports will come with specific recommendations to Member States.

Nevertheless, there are worrying developments in certain Member States. **Let me be clear: dialogue always comes first. But dialogue is not an end in itself, it should lead to results.**

This is why we take a dual approach of dialogue *and* decisive action. This is what we did last week. And this is what we will continue to do.

Because people must be able to rely on the right to an independent judiciary. The right to be treated equally before the law. Everywhere in Europe. Whether you belong to a majority or a minority.

Honourable Members,

The European budget is the future of our Union cast in figures.

That is why it must be protected. We need to ensure that every euro and every cent is spent for its proper purpose and in line with rule of law principles.

Investments that enable our children to have a better future must not be allowed to seep away into dark channels.

Corruption is not just taxpayer money stolen. It is investors scared off, big favours bought by big money and democracy undermined by the powerful.

When it comes to protecting our budget, we will pursue every case, with everything in our power.

Honourable Members,

Defending our values is also defending freedom. Freedom to be who you are, freedom to say what's on your mind, freedom to love whoever you want.

But freedom also means freedom from fear. And during the pandemic, too many women were deprived of that freedom. It was an acutely terrifying time for those with nowhere to hide, nowhere to escape from their abusers. We need to shed light on this darkness, we need to show ways out of the pain. **Their abusers must be brought to justice.**

And those women must have their freedom and their self-determination back.

This is why **by the end of year, we will propose a law to combat violence against women** – from prevention to protection and effective prosecution, online and offline.

It is about defending the dignity of each individual. It is about justice. Because this is the soul of Europe. And we must make it even stronger.

Honourable members,

Allow me to finish with one of the freedoms that gives voice to all other freedoms – **media freedom**.

Journalists are being targeted simply for doing their job. Some have been threatened, some beaten and, tragically, some murdered. Right here, in our European Union.

Let me mention some of their names: Daphné Caruana Galizia. Ján Kuciak. Peter de Vries.

The details of their stories may be different but what they have in common is that they all fought

and died for our right to be informed.

Information is a public good. We must protect those who create transparency – the journalists. That is why today we have put forward a recommendation to give journalists better protection.

And we need to stop those who threaten media freedom. Media companies cannot be treated as just another business. Their independence is essential. Europe needs a law that safeguards this independence – and the Commission will deliver a **Media Freedom Act** in the next year.

Defending media freedom means defending our democracy.

Conclusion

Honourable Members,

Strengthening Schuman's European ideal that I invoked earlier is a continuous work.

And we should not hide away from our inconsistencies and imperfections.

But imperfect as it might be, our Union is both beautifully unique and uniquely beautiful.

It is a Union where we strengthen our *individual liberty* through the *strength of our community*.

A Union shaped as much by our *shared* history and values as by our *different* cultures and perspectives.

A Union with a soul.

Trying to find the right words to capture the essence of this feeling is not easy. But it is easier when you borrow them from someone who inspires you. And this is why I have invited a guest of honour to be with us today.

Many of you might know her – **a gold medallist from Italy** who captured my heart this summer.

But what you might not know is that only in April, she was told her life was in peril. She went through surgery, she fought back, she recovered.

And only 119 days after she left the hospital, she won Paralympic gold. Honourable Members, please join me in welcoming **Beatrice Vio**. Bebe has overcome so much, so young.

Her story is one of *rising against all odds*. Of succeeding thanks to talent, tenacity and unrelenting positivity. She is in the image of her generation: a leader and an advocate for the causes she believes in.

And she has managed to achieve all of that by living up to her belief that - *if it seems impossible* – then it can be done. *Se sembra impossibile, allora si può fare*.

This was the spirit of Europe's founders and this is the **spirit of Europe's next generation**. So let's be inspired by Bebe and by all the young people who change our perception of the possible.

Who show us that you can be what you want to be. And that you can *achieve* whatever you *believe*.

Honourable Members:

This is the *soul* of Europe.

This is the *future* of Europe.

Let's make it stronger together.

Viva l'Europa.

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[EP Plenary session State of the European Union debate \(Enhanced version with captions\)](#)



[State of the Union Address 2021 by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission](#)



Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on the Russian aggression against Ukraine

Brussels, 1 March 2022

Madam President of the European Parliament,

Mr President of the Council,

High Representative,

Mr President of the Ukraine, dear Volodymyr,

Mr Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament,

My Honourable Members,

War has returned to Europe. Almost thirty years after the Balkan Wars, and over half a century after Soviet troops marched into Prague and Budapest, civil defence sirens again went off in the heart of a European capital. Thousands of people fleeing from bombs, camped in underground stations – holding hands, crying silently, trying to cheer each other up. Cars lined up towards Ukrainian Western borders, and when many of them ran out of fuel, people picked up their children and their backpacks and marched for tens of kilometres towards our Union. They sought refuge inside our borders, because their country was not safe any longer. Because inside Ukraine, a gruesome death count has begun. Men, women, children are dying, once again, because a foreign leader, President Putin, decided that their country, Ukraine, has no right to exist. And we will never ever let that happen and never ever accept that.

Honourable Members,

This is a moment of truth for Europe. Let me quote the editorial of one Ukrainian newspaper, the Kyiv Independent, published just hours before the invasion began: 'This is not just about Ukraine. It is a clash of two worlds, two polar sets of values.' They are so right. This is a clash between the rule of law and the rule of the gun; between democracies and autocracies; between a rules-based order and a world of naked aggression. How we respond today to what Russia is doing will determine the future of the international system. The destiny of Ukraine is at stake, but our own fate also lies in the balance. We must show the power that lies in our democracies; we must show the power of people that choose their independent paths, freely and democratically. This is our show of force.

Today, a Union of almost half a billion people has mobilised for Ukraine. The people of Europe are demonstrating in front of Russian embassies all across our Union. Many of them have opened their homes to Ukrainians – fleeing from Putin's bombs. And let me thank especially Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary for welcoming these women, men and children. Europe will be there for them, not only in the first days, but also in the weeks and months to come. That must be our promise altogether. And this is why we are proposing to activate the temporary protection mechanism to provide them with a secure status and access to schools, medical care and work. They deserve it. We need to do that now. We know this is only the beginning. More Ukrainians will need our protection and solidarity. We are and we will be there for them.

Our Union is showing a unity of purpose that makes me proud. At the speed of light, the European Union has adopted three waves of heavy sanctions against Russia's financial system, its high-tech industries and its corrupt elite. This is the largest sanctions package in our Union's history. We do not take these measures lightly, but we feel we had to act. These sanctions will take a heavy toll on the Russian economy and on the Kremlin. We are disconnecting key Russian banks from the SWIFT network. We also banned the transactions of Russia's central bank, the single most important financial institution in Russia. This paralyses billions in foreign reserves, turning off the tap on Russia's and Putin's war. We have to end this financing of his war.

Second, we target important sectors of the Russian economy. We are making it impossible for Russia to upgrade its oil refineries; to repair and modernise its air fleet; and to access many important technologies it needs to build a prosperous future. We have closed our skies to Russian aircraft,

including the private jets of oligarchs. And make no mistake: We will freeze their other assets as well – be it yachts or fancy cars or luxury properties. We will freeze that altogether.

Thirdly, in another unprecedented step, we are suspending the licences of the Kremlin's propaganda machine. The state-owned Russia Today and Sputnik, and all of their subsidiaries, will no longer be able to spread their lies to justify Putin's war and to divide our Union. These are unprecedented actions by the European Union and our partners in response to an unprecedented aggression by Russia.

Each one of these steps has been closely coordinated with our partners and allies, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Norway, but also, for example, Japan, South Korea and Australia. All of these days, you see that more than 30 countries – representing well over half of the world's economy – have also announced sanctions and export controls on Russia. If Putin was seeking to divide the European Union, to weaken NATO, and to break the international community, he has achieved exactly the opposite. We are more united than ever and we will stand up in this war, that is for sure that we will overcome and we will prevail. We are united and we stay united.

Honourable Members,

I am well aware that these sanctions will come at a cost for our economy, too. I know this, and I want to speak honestly to the people of Europe. We have endured two years of pandemic. And we all wished that we could focus on our economic and social recovery. But I believe that the people of Europe understand very well that we must stand up against this cruel aggression. Yes, protecting our liberty comes at a price. But this is a defining moment. And this is the cost we are willing to pay. Because freedom is priceless, Honourable Members. This is our principle: Freedom is priceless.

Our investments today will make us more independent tomorrow. I am thinking, first and foremost, about our energy security. We simply cannot rely so much on a supplier that explicitly threatens us. This is why we reached out to other global suppliers. And they responded. Norway is stepping up. In January, we had a record supply of LNG gas. We are building new LNG terminals and working on interconnectors. But in the long run, it is our switch to renewables and hydrogen that will make us truly independent. We have to accelerate the green transition. Because every kilowatt-hour of electricity Europe generates from solar, wind, hydropower or biomass reduces our dependency on Russian gas and other energy sources. This is a strategic investment. And my Honourable Members, this is a strategic investment, because on top, less dependency on Russian gas and other fossil fuel sources also means less money for the Kremlin's war chest. This is also a truth.

We are resolute, Europe can rise up to the challenge. The same is true on defence. European security and defence has evolved more in the last six days than in the last two decades. Most Member States have promised deliveries of military equipment to Ukraine. Germany announced that it will meet the 2% goal of NATO as soon as possible. And our Union, for the first time ever, is using the European budget to purchase and deliver military equipment to a country that is under attack. EUR 500 million from the European Peace Facility, to support Ukraine's defence. As a first batch, we will now also match this by at least EUR 500 million from the EU budget to deal with the humanitarian consequences of this tragic war, both in the country and for the refugees.

Honourable Members,

This is a watershed moment for our Union. We cannot take our security and the protection of people for granted. We have to stand up for it. We have to invest in it. We have to carry our fair share of the responsibility.

This crisis is changing Europe. But Russia has also reached a crossroads. The actions of the Kremlin are severely damaging the long-term interests of Russia and its people. More and more Russians understand this as well. They are marching for peace and freedom. And how does the Kremlin respond to this? By arresting thousands of them. But ultimately, the longing for peace and freedom cannot be silenced. There is another Russia besides Putin's tanks. And we extend our hand of friendship to this other Russia. Be assured, they have our support.

Honourable Members,

In these days, independent Ukraine is facing its darkest hour. At the same time, the Ukrainian people are holding up the torch of freedom for all of us. They are showing immense courage. They are defending their lives. But they are also fighting for universal values and they are willing to die for them. President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people are a true inspiration. When we last spoke, he told me again about his people's dream to join our Union. Today, the European Union and Ukraine are already closer than ever before. There is still a long path ahead. We have to end this war. And we should talk about the next steps. But I am sure: Nobody in this hemicycle can doubt that a people that stands up so bravely for our European values belongs in our European family.

And therefore, Honourable Members, I say: Long live Europe. And long live a free and independent Ukraine.

My z vamy. Slava Ukraini.

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2022 State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen

Strasbourg, 14 September 2022



A UNION THAT STANDS STRONG TOGETHER

INTRODUCTION

Madam President,
Honourable Members,
My fellow Europeans,

Never before has this Parliament debated the State of our Union with war raging on European soil.

We all remember that fateful morning in late February.

Europeans from across our Union woke up dismayed by what they saw. Shaken by the resurgent and ruthless face of evil. Haunted by the sounds of sirens and the sheer brutality of war.

But from that very moment, a whole continent has risen in solidarity.

At the border crossings where refugees found shelter. In our streets, filled with Ukrainian flags. In the classrooms, where Ukrainian children made new friends.

From that very moment, Europeans neither hid nor hesitated.

They found the courage to do the right thing.

And from that very moment, our Union as a whole has risen to the occasion.

Fifteen years ago, during the financial crisis, it took us years to find lasting solutions.

A decade later, when the global pandemic hit, it took us only weeks.

But this year, as soon as Russian troops crossed the border into Ukraine, our response was united, determined and immediate.

And we should be proud of that.

We have brought Europe's inner strength back to the surface.

And we will need all of this strength. The months ahead of us will not be easy. Be it for families who are struggling to make ends meet, or businesses, who are facing tough choices about their future.

Let us be very clear: much is at stake here. Not just for Ukraine – but for all of Europe and the world at large.

And we will be tested. Tested by those who want to exploit any kind of divisions between us.

This is not only a war unleashed by Russia against Ukraine.

This is a war on our energy, a war on our economy, a war on our values and a war on our future.

This is about autocracy against democracy.

And I stand here with the conviction that with courage and solidarity, Putin will fail and Europe will prevail.

THE COURAGE TO STAND WITH OUR HEROES

Honourable Members,

Today - courage has a name, and that name is Ukraine.

Courage has a face, the face of Ukrainian men and women who are standing up to Russian aggression.

I remember a moment in the early weeks of the invasion. When the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska, gathered the parents of Ukrainian children killed by the invader.

Hundreds of families for whom the war will never end, and for whom life will never go back to what it was before.

We saw the first Lady leading a silent crowd of heartbroken mothers and fathers, and hang small bells in the trees, one for every fallen child.

And now the bells will ring forever in the wind, and forever, the innocent victims of this war will live in our memory.

And she is here with us today!

Dear Olena, it took immense courage to resist Putin's cruelty.

But you found that courage.

And a nation of heroes has risen.

Today, Ukraine stands strong because an entire country has fought street by street, home by home.

Ukraine stands strong because people like your husband, President Zelenskyy, have stayed in Kyiv to lead the resistance – together with you and your children, dear First Lady.

You have given *courage* to the whole nation. And we have seen in the last days the bravery of Ukrainians paying off.

You have given *voice* to your people on the global stage.

And you have given *hope* to all of us.

So today we want to thank you and all Ukrainians.

Glory to a country of European heroes. *Slava Ukraini!*

Europe's solidarity with Ukraine will remain unshakeable.

From day one, Europe has stood at Ukraine's side. With weapons. With funds. With hospitality for refugees. And with the toughest sanctions the world has ever seen.

Russia's financial sector is on life-support. We have cut off three quarters of Russia's banking sector from international markets.

Nearly one thousand international companies have left the country.

The production of cars fell by three-quarters compared to last year. Aeroflot is grounding planes because there are no more spare parts. The Russian military is taking chips from dishwashers and refrigerators to fix their military hardware, because they ran out of semiconductors. Russia's industry is in tatters.

It is the Kremlin that has put Russia's economy on the path to oblivion.

This is the price for Putin's trail of death and destruction.

And I want to make it very clear, the sanctions are here to stay.

This is the time for us to show resolve, not appeasement.

The same is true for our financial support to Ukraine.

So far Team Europe have provided more than 19 billion euros in financial assistance.

And this is without counting our military support.

And we are in it for the long haul.

Ukraine's reconstruction will require massive resources. For instance, Russian strikes have damaged or destroyed more than 70 schools.

Half a million Ukrainian children have started their school year in the European Union. But many others inside Ukraine simply don't have a classroom to go to.

So today I am announcing that we will work with the First Lady to support the rehabilitation of damaged Ukrainian schools. And that is why we will provide 100 million euros. Because the future of Ukraine begins in its schools.

We will not only support with finance – but also empower Ukraine to make the most of its potential.

Ukraine is already a rising tech hub and home to many innovative young companies.

So I want us to mobilise the full power of our Single Market to help accelerate growth and create opportunities.

In March, we connected successfully Ukraine to our electricity grid. It was initially planned for 2024. But we did it within two weeks. And today, Ukraine is exporting electricity to us. I want to significantly expand this mutually beneficial trade.

We have already suspended import duties on Ukrainian exports to the EU.

We will bring Ukraine into our European free roaming area.

Our solidarity lanes are a big success.

And building on all that, the Commission will work with Ukraine to ensure seamless access to the Single Market. And vice-versa.

Our Single Market is one of Europe's greatest success stories. Now it's time to make it a success story for our Ukrainian friends, too.

And this is why I am going to Kyiv today, to discuss this in detail with President Zelenskyy.

Honourable Members,

One lesson from this war is we should have listened to those who know Putin.

To Anna Politkovskaya and all the Russian journalists who exposed the crimes, and paid the ultimate price.

To our friends in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and to the opposition in Belarus.

We should have listened to the voices inside our Union – in Poland, in the Baltics, and all across Central and Eastern Europe.

They have been telling us for years that Putin would not stop.

And they acted accordingly.

Our friends in the Baltics have worked hard to end their dependency on Russia. They have invested in renewable energy, in LNG terminals, and in interconnectors.

This costs a lot. But dependency on Russian fossil fuels comes at a much higher price.

We have to get rid of this dependency all over Europe.

Therefore we agreed on joint storage. We are at 84% now: we are overshooting our target.

But unfortunately that will not be enough.

We have diversified away from Russia to reliable suppliers. US, Norway, Algeria and others.

Last year, Russian gas accounted for 40% of our gas imports. Today it's down to 9% pipeline gas.

But Russia keeps on actively manipulating our energy market. They prefer to flare the gas than to deliver it. This market is not functioning anymore.

In addition the climate crisis is heavily weighing on our bills. Heat waves have boosted electricity

demand. Droughts shut down hydro and nuclear plants.

As a result, gas prices have risen by more than 10 times compared to before the pandemic.

Making ends meet is becoming a source of anxiety for millions of businesses and households.

But Europeans are also coping courageously with this.

Workers in ceramics factories in central Italy, have decided to move their shifts to early morning, to benefit from lower energy prices.

Just imagine the parents among them, having to leave home early, when the kids are still sleeping, because of a war they haven't chosen.

This is one example in a million of Europeans adapting to this new reality.

I want our Union to take example from its people. Reducing demand during peak hours will make supply last longer, and it will bring prices down.

This is why we are putting forward measures for Member States to reduce their overall electricity consumption.

But more targeted support is needed.

For industries, like glass makers who have to turn off their ovens. Or for single parents facing one daunting bill after another.

Millions of Europeans need support.

EU Member States have already invested billions of euros to assist vulnerable households.

But we know this will not be enough.

This is why we are proposing a cap on the revenues of companies that produce electricity at a low cost.

These companies are making revenues they never accounted for, they never even dreamt of.

In our social market economy, profits are good.

But in these times it is wrong to receive extraordinary record profits benefitting from war and on the back of consumers.

In these times, profits must be shared and channelled to those who need it the most.

Our proposal will raise more than 140 billion euros for Member States to cushion the blow directly.

And because we are in a fossil fuel crisis, the fossil fuel industry has a special duty, too.

Major oil, gas and coal companies are also making huge profits. So they have to pay a fair share – they have to give a crisis contribution.

These are all emergency and temporary measures we are working on, including our discussions on price caps.

We need to keep working to lower gas prices.

We have to ensure our security of supply and, at the same time, ensure our global competitiveness.

So we will develop with the Member States a set of measures that take into account the specific nature of our relationship with suppliers – ranging from unreliable suppliers such as Russia to reliable friends such as Norway.

I have agreed with Prime Minister Støre to set up a task force. Teams have started their work.

Another important topic is on the agenda. Today our gas market has changed dramatically: from pipeline gas mainly to increasing amounts of LNG.

But the benchmark used in the gas market – the TTF – has not adapted.

This is why the Commission will work on establishing a more representative benchmark.

At the same time we also know that energy companies are facing severe problems with liquidity in electricity futures markets, risking the functioning of our energy system.

We will work with market regulators to ease these problems by amending the rules on collateral -

and by taking measures to limit intra-day price volatility.

And we will amend the temporary state aid framework in October to allow for the provision of state guarantees, while preserving a level playing field.

These are all first steps. But as we deal with this immediate crisis, we must also look forward.

The current electricity market design – based on merit order – is not doing justice to consumers anymore.

They should reap the benefits of low-cost renewables.

So, we have to decouple the dominant influence of gas on the price of electricity. This is why we will do a deep and comprehensive reform of the electricity market.

Now - here is an important point. Half a century ago, in the 1970s, the world faced another fossil fuel crisis.

Some of us remember the car-free weekends to save energy. *Yet we kept driving on the same road.*

We did not get rid of our dependency on oil. And worse, fossil fuels were even massively subsidised.

This was wrong, not just for the climate, but also for our public finances, and our independence. *And we are still paying for this today.*

Only a few visionaries understood that the real problem was fossil fuels themselves, not just their price.

Among them were our Danish friends.

When the oil crisis hit, Denmark started to invest heavily into harnessing the power of the wind.

They laid the foundations for its global leadership in the sector and created tens of thousands of new jobs.

This is the way to go!

Not just a quick fix, but a change of paradigm, a leap into the future.

STAYING THE COURSE AND PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Mesdames et Messieurs les Députés,

La bonne nouvelle est que cette transformation nécessaire a commencé.

Elle a lieu en mer du Nord et en mer Baltique, où nos États membres ont massivement investi dans l'éolien en mer.

Elle a lieu en Sicile, où la plus grande usine solaire d'Europe produira bientôt la toute dernière génération de panneaux solaires.

Et elle a lieu dans le nord de l'Allemagne, où les trains régionaux roulent désormais à l'hydrogène vert.

L'hydrogène peut changer la donne pour l'Europe.

Nous devons passer du marché de niche au marché de masse pour l'hydrogène.

Avec REPowerEU, nous avons doublé notre objectif : nous voulons produire dix millions de tonnes d'hydrogène renouvelable dans l'Union européenne, chaque année d'ici 2030.

Pour y parvenir, nous devons créer un animateur de marché pour l'hydrogène, afin de combler le déficit d'investissement et de mettre en relation l'offre et la demande futures.

C'est pourquoi je peux annoncer aujourd'hui que nous allons créer une nouvelle Banque européenne de l'hydrogène.

Elle aidera à garantir l'achat d'hydrogène, notamment en utilisant les ressources du Fonds pour l'innovation.

Elle pourra investir 3 milliard d'euros pour aider à construire le futur marché de l'hydrogène.

C'est ainsi que se bâtira l'économie du futur.

C'est cela, notre Pacte vert pour l'Europe.

Et nous avons tous vu au cours des derniers mois à quel point le Pacte vert pour l'Europe est important.

L'été 2022 restera dans les mémoires. Nous avons tous vu les rivières asséchées, les forêts en feu, la chaleur extrême.

Et la situation est bien plus grave encore. Jusqu'à présent, les glaciers des Alpes ont servi de réserve d'urgence pour des rivières comme le Rhin ou le Rhône.

Mais comme les glaciers d'Europe fondent plus vite que jamais, les sécheresses futures seront beaucoup plus graves.

Nous devons travailler sans relâche à l'adaptation climatique et faire de la nature notre premier allié.

C'est pourquoi notre Union poussera pour un accord mondial ambitieux pour la nature lors de la conférence des Nations Unies sur la biodiversité qui se tiendra à Montréal cette année.

Et nous ferons de même lors de la COP27 à Sharm el-Sheikh.

Mais à court terme, nous devons aussi être mieux équipés pour faire face au changement climatique.

Aucun pays ne peut lutter seul contre les phénomènes météorologiques extrêmes et leurs forces destructrices.

Cet été, nous avons envoyé des avions de la Grèce, la Suède ou d'Italie pour combattre des incendies en France et en Allemagne.

Mais comme ces événements deviennent plus fréquents et plus intenses, l'Europe aura besoin de plus de capacités.

C'est pourquoi aujourd'hui j'annonce que nous allons doubler notre capacité de lutte contre les incendies au cours de l'année prochaine.

L'Union Européenne achètera dix avions amphibies légers et trois hélicoptères supplémentaires pour compléter notre flotte.

Voilà la solidarité européenne en action

Honourable Members,

The last years have shown how much Europe can achieve when it is united.

After an unprecedented pandemic, our economic output overtook pre-crisis levels in record time.

We went from *having no vaccine* to securing over 4 billion doses for Europeans and for the world.

And in record time, we came up with SURE – so that people could stay in their jobs even if their companies had run out of work.

**We were in the deepest recession since World War 2.
We achieved the fastest recovery since the post-war boom.**

And that was possible because we all rallied behind a common recovery plan.

NextGenerationEU has been a boost of confidence for our economy.

And its journey has only just begun.

So far, 100 billion euros have been disbursed to Member States. This means: 700 billion euros still haven't flown into our economy.

NextGenerationEU will guarantee a constant stream of investment to sustain jobs and growth.

It means relief for our economy. But most importantly, it means renewal.

It is financing new wind turbines and solar parks, high-speed trains and energy-saving renovations.

We conceived NextGenerationEU almost two years ago, and yet it is exactly what Europe needs today.

So let's stick to the plan.

Let's get the money on the ground.

Honourable Members,

The future of our children needs both that we invest in sustainability and that we invest sustainably.

We must finance the transition to a digital and net-zero economy.

And yet we also have to acknowledge a new reality of higher public debt.

We need fiscal rules that allow for strategic investment, while safeguarding fiscal sustainability.

Rules that are fit for the challenges of this decade.

In October, we will come forward with new ideas for our economic governance.

But let me share a few basic principles with you.

Member States should have more flexibility on their debt reduction paths.

But there should be more accountability on the delivery of what we have agreed on.

There should be simpler rules that all can follow.

To open the space for strategic investment and to give financial markets the confidence they need.

Let us chart once again a joint way forward.

With more freedom to invest. And more scrutiny on progress.

More ownership by Member States. And better results for citizens.

Let us rediscover the Maastricht spirit – stability and growth can only go hand in hand.

Honourable Members,

As we embark on this transition in our economy, we must rely on the enduring values of our social market economy.

It's the simple idea that Europe's greatest strength lies in each and every one of us.

Our social market economy encourages everyone to excel, but it also takes care of our fragility as human beings.

It rewards performance and guarantees protection. It opens opportunities but also set limits.

We need this even more today.

Because the strength of our social market economy will drive the green and digital transition.

We need an *enabling business environment*, a workforce with the right skills and access to raw materials our industry needs.

Our future competitiveness depends on it.

We must remove the obstacles that still hold our small companies back.

They must be at the centre of this transformation – because they are the backbone of Europe's long history of industrial prowess.

And they have always put their employees first – even and especially in times of crisis.

But inflation and uncertainty are weighing especially hard on them.

This is why we will put forward an SME Relief Package.

It will include a proposal for a single set of tax rules for doing business in Europe – we call it BEFIT.

This will make it easier to do business in our Union. Less red tape means better access to the dynamism of a continental market.

And we will revise the Late Payment Directive – because it is simply not fair that 1 in 4 bankruptcies are due to invoices not being paid on time.

For millions of family businesses, this will be a lifeline in troubled waters.

Der Mangel an Personal ist eine weitere Herausforderung für Europas Unternehmen.

Die Zahl der Arbeitslosen ist so niedrig wie nie zuvor.

Das ist gut!

Aber gleichzeitig liegt die Zahl der offenen Stellen auf Rekordniveau.

Ob Lastwagenfahrer, Kellnern oder Flughafenpersonal.

Ob auch Krankenpfleger, Ingenieurinnen oder IT-Technikerinnen.

Von Ungelernt bis Universitätsabschluß, Europa braucht sie alle!

Wir müssen daher viel stärker in die Aus- und Weiterbildung investieren.

Dazu wollen wir eng mit den Unternehmen zusammenarbeiten.

Denn sie wissen am besten, welche Fachkräfte sie heute und morgen brauchen.

Und wir müssen diesen Bedarf besser in Einklang bringen mit den Zielen und Wünschen die Arbeitssuchende selbst für ihren Berufsweg haben.

Darüber hinaus wollen wir gezielter Fachkräfte aus dem Ausland anwerben, die hier Unternehmen und Europas Wachstum stärken.

Ein wichtiger erster Schritt ist, ihre Qualifikationen in Europa besser und schneller anzuerkennen.

Denn Europa muss attraktiver werden für die, die etwas können und sich einbringen wollen.

Deshalb schlage ich vor, 2023 zum Europäischen Jahr der Aus- und vor allem auch der Weiterbildung zu machen.

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren Abgeordnete,

zu meinem dritten Punkt für unseren Mittelstand und unsere Industrie.

Unabhängig davon, ob wir über maßgeschneiderte Chips für die virtuelle Realität sprechen oder über Speicherzellen für Solaranlagen – der Zugang zu Rohstoffen ist entscheidend für den Erfolg unserer Transformation hin zu einer nachhaltigen und digitalen Wirtschaft.

Lithium und seltene Erden werden bald wichtiger sein als Öl und Gas.

Allein unser Bedarf an seltenen Erden wird sich bis 2030 verfünffachen.

Und das ist ein gutes Zeichen!

Denn es zeigt, mit welchem Tempo unser Europäischer Green Deal vorankommt.

Das Problem ist nur, dass derzeit ein einziges Land fast den kompletten Markt beherrscht.

Wir müssen vermeiden erneut in Abhängigkeit zu geraten wie bei Öl und Gas.

An diesem Punkt kommt unsere Handelspolitik ins Spiel.

Neue Partnerschaften helfen uns, nicht nur unsere Wirtschaft zu stärken, sondern auch unsere Interessen und unsere Werte global voranzubringen.

Mit gleichgesinnten Partnern können wir auch außerhalb unserer Grenzen Arbeitsstandards und Umweltstandards sichern.

Wir müssen vor allem unsere Beziehungen zu diesen Partnern und zu wichtigen Wachstumsregionen erneuern.

Ich werde daher die Abkommen mit Chile, Mexiko und Neuseeland zur Ratifizierung vorlegen.

Und wir treiben die Verhandlungen mit bedeutenden Partnern wie Australien und Indien

voran.

But securing supplies is only a first step.

The processing of these metals is just as critical.

Today, China controls the global processing industry. Almost 90 % of rare earths and 60 % of lithium are processed in China.

We will identify strategic projects all along the supply chain, from extraction to refining, from processing to recycling. And we will build up strategic reserves where supply is at risk.

This is why today I am announcing a European Critical Raw Materials Act.

We know this approach can work.

Five years ago, Europe launched the Battery Alliance. And soon, two third of the batteries we need will be produced in Europe.

Last year I announced the European Chips Act. And the first chips gigafactory will break ground in the coming months.

We now need to replicate this success.

This is also why we will increase our financial participation to Important Projects of Common European Interest.

And for the future, I will push to create a new European Sovereignty Fund.

Let's make sure that the future of industry is made in Europe.

STANDING UP FOR OUR DEMOCRACY

Honourable Members,

As we look around at the state of the world today, it can often feel like there is a fading away of what once seemed so permanent.

And in some way, the passing of Queen Elizabeth II last week reminded us of this.

She is a legend!

She was a constant throughout the turbulent and transforming events in the last 70 years.

Stoic and steadfast in her service.

But more than anything, she always found the right words for every moment in time.

From the calls she made to war evacuees in 1940 to her historic address during the pandemic.

She spoke not only to the heart of her nation but to the soul of the world.

And when I think of the situation we are in today, her words at the height of the pandemic still resonate with me.

She said: "We will succeed – and that success will belong to every one of us".

She always reminded us that our future is built on new ideas and founded in our oldest values.

Since the end of World War 2, we have pursued the promise of democracy and the rule of law.

And the nations of the world have built together an international system promoting peace and security, justice and economic progress.

Today this is the very target of Russian missiles.

What we saw in the streets of Bucha, in the scorched fields of grain, and now at the gates of Ukraine's largest nuclear plant – *is not only a violation of international rules.*

It's a deliberate attempt to discard them.

This watershed moment in global politics calls for a rethink of our foreign policy agenda.

This is the time to invest in the power of democracies.

This work begins with the core group of our like-minded partners: our friends in every single democratic nation on this globe.

We see the world with the same eyes. And we should mobilise our collective power to shape global goods.

We should strive to expand this core of democracies. The most immediate way to do so is to deepen our ties and strengthen democracies on our continent.

This starts with those countries that are already on the path to our Union.

We must be at their side every step of the way.

Because the path towards strong democracies and the path towards our Union are one and the same.

So I want the people of the Western Balkans, of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia to know:

You are part of our family, your future is in our Union, and our Union is not complete without you!

We have also seen that there is a need to reach out to the countries of Europe – beyond the accession process.

This is why I support the call for a European Political Community – and we will set out our ideas to the European Council.

But our future also depends on our ability to engage beyond the core of our democratic partners.

Countries near and far, share an interest in working with us on the great challenges of this century, such as climate change and digitalisation.

This is the main idea behind Global Gateway, the investment plan I announced right here one year ago.

It is already delivering on the ground.

Together with our African partners we are building two factories in Rwanda and Senegal to manufacture mRNA vaccines.

They will be made in Africa, for Africa, with world-class technology.

And we are now replicating this approach across Latin America as part of a larger engagement strategy.

This requires investment on a global scale.

So we will team up with our friends in the US and with other G7 partners to make this happen.

In this spirit, President Biden and I will convene a leaders' meeting to review and announce implementation projects.

Honourable Members,

This is part of our work of strengthening our democracies.

But we should not lose sight of the way foreign autocrats are targeting our own countries.

Foreign entities are funding institutes that undermine our values.

Their disinformation is spreading from the internet to the halls of our universities.

Earlier this year, a university in Amsterdam shut down an allegedly independent research centre, which was actually funded by Chinese entities. This centre was publishing so-called research on human rights, dismissing the evidence of forced labour camps for Uyghurs as "rumours".

These lies are toxic for our democracies.

Think about this: We introduced legislation to screen foreign direct investment in our companies for security concerns.

If we do that for our economy, shouldn't we do the same for our values?

We need to better shield ourselves from malign interference.

This is why we will present a Defence of Democracy package.

It will bring covert foreign influence and shady funding to light.

We will not allow any autocracy's Trojan horses to attack our democracies from within.

For more than 70 years, our continent has marched towards democracy. But the gains of our long journey are not assured.

Many of us have taken democracy for granted for too long. Especially those, like me, who have never experienced what it means to live under the fist of an authoritarian regime.

Today we all see that we must fight for our democracies. Every single day.

We must protect them both from the external threats they face, and from the vices that corrode them from within.

It is my Commission's duty and most noble role to protect the rule of law.

So let me assure you: we will keep insisting on judicial independence.

And we will also protect our budget through the conditionality mechanism.

And today I would like to focus on corruption, with all its faces. The face of foreign agents trying to influence our political system. The face of shady companies or foundations abusing public money.

If we want to be credible when we ask candidate countries to strengthen their democracies, we must also eradicate corruption at home.

That is why in the coming year the Commission will present measures to update our legislative framework for fighting corruption.

We will raise standards on offences such as illicit enrichment, trafficking in influence and abuse of power, beyond the more classic offences such as bribery.

And we will also propose to include corruption in our human rights sanction regime, our new tool to protect our values abroad.

Corruption erodes trust in our institutions. So we must fight back with the full force of the law.

Honourable Members,

Our founders only meant to lay the first stone of this democracy.

They always thought that future generations would complete their work.

"Democracy has not gone out of fashion, but it must update itself in order to keep improving people's lives."

These are the words of David Sassoli – a great European, who we all pay tribute to today.

David Sassoli thought that Europe should always look for new horizons.

And through the adversities of these times, we have started to see what our new horizon might be.

A braver Union.

Closer to its people in times of need.

Bolder in responding to historic challenges and daily concerns of Europeans. And to walk at their side when they deal with the big trials of life.

This is why the Conference on the Future of Europe was so important.

It was a sneak peek of a different kind of citizens' engagement, well beyond election day.

And after Europe listened to its citizens' voice, we now need to deliver.

The Citizens' Panels that were central to the Conference will now become a regular feature of our democratic life.

And in the Letter of Intent that I have sent today to President Metsola and Prime Minister Fiala, I have outlined a number of proposals for the year ahead that stem from the Conference conclusions.

They include for example a new initiative on mental health.

We should take better care of each other. And for many who feel anxious and lost, appropriate, accessible and affordable support can make all the difference.

Honourable Members,

Democratic institutions must constantly gain and regain the citizens' trust.

We must live up to the new challenges that history always puts before us.

Just like Europeans did when millions of Ukrainians came knocking on their door.

This is Europe at its best.

A Union of determination and solidarity.

But this determination and drive for solidarity is still missing in our migration debate.

Our actions towards Ukrainian refugees must not be an exception. They can be our blueprint for going forward.

We need fair and quick procedures, a system that is crisis proof and quick to deploy, and a permanent and legally binding mechanism that ensures solidarity.

And at the same time, we need effective control of our external borders, in line with the respect of fundamental rights.

I want a Europe that manages migration with dignity and respect.

I want a Europe where all Member States take responsibility for challenges we all share.

And I want a Europe that shows solidarity to all Member States.

We have progress on the Pact, we now have the Roadmap. And we now need the political will to match.

Honourable Members,

Three weeks ago, I had the incredible opportunity of joining 1,500 young people from all over Europe and the world, who gathered in Taizé.

They have different views, they come from different countries, they have different backgrounds, they speak different languages.

And yet, there is something that connects them.

They share a set of values and ideals.

They believe in these values.

They are all passionate about something larger than themselves.

This generation is a generation of dreamers but also of makers.

In my last State of the Union address, I told you that I would like Europe to look more like these young people.

We should put their aspirations at the heart of everything we do.

And the place for this is in our founding Treaties.

Every action that our Union takes should be inspired by a simple principle.

That we should do no harm to our children's future.

That we should leave the world a better place for the next generation.

And therefore, Honourable Members, I believe that it is time to enshrine solidarity between generations in our Treaties.

It is time to renew the European promise.

And we also need to improve the way we do things and the way we decide things.

Some might say this is not the right time. But if we are serious about preparing for the world of tomorrow we must be able to act on the things that matter the most to people.

And as we are serious about a larger union, we also have to be serious about reform.

So as this Parliament has called for, I believe the moment has arrived for a European Convention.

CONCLUSION

Honourable Members,

They say that light shines brightest in the dark.

And that was certainly true for the women and the children fleeing Russia's bombs.

They fled a country at war, filled with sadness for what they had left behind, and fear for what may lie ahead.

But they were received with open arms. By many citizens like Magdalena and Agnieszka. Two selfless young women from Poland.

As soon as they heard about trains full of refugees, they rushed to the Warsaw Central Station.

They started to organise.

They set up a tent to assist as many people as possible.

They reached out to supermarket chains for food, and to local authorities to organise buses to hospitality centres.

In a matter of days, they gathered 3000 volunteers, to welcome refugees 24/7.

Honourable Members,

Magdalena and Agnieszka are here with us today.

Please join me in applauding them and each and every European who opened their hearts and their homes.

Their story is about everything our Union stands and strives for.

It is a story of heart, character and solidarity.

They showed everyone what Europeans can achieve when we rally around a common mission.

This is Europe's spirit.

A Union that stands strong together.

A Union that prevails together.

Long live Europe.

SPEECH/22/5493

Press contacts:

[Eric MAMER](#) (+32 2 299 40 73)

[Dana SPINANT](#) (+32 2 299 01 50)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)

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