

EUROPEAN UNION AND THE COMPETITION FOR A NEW WORLD ORDER

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Abstract: *For the European states, the declared goal of the European Union is to achieve a high level of prosperity. The EU has continuously expanded, and the US has encouraged the expansion in order to have a collective entity to follow its geopolitical and geostrategic initiatives. But the Union believes that the time has come for it to become more and more independent and sovereign in the new international environment, this idea being especially embraced by countries such as Germany, France and Italy, but not only. The commitments of the EU alongside the US in the war in Ukraine led to the destruction of the ideals of prosperity dreamed of by the nations of the European Union.*

Keywords: *European Union, USA; war in Ukraine, prosperity, expansion.*

1. Ideals of prosperity, sovereignty and security. The European Union is considered the result of a process of cooperation and integration that actually began in 1951, after NATO had already been operating since 1949. This process was an extremely complex one, marked by several stages that led to the current configuration of Europe. Initially, the European Union was thought of as a solution to the crisis that arose after the Second World War. After in July 1914 Europe, as a summation of the power of the main European countries, not as its integration, was at its peak (the 19th century represented the culmination of power for Europe: in 1945 these countries found themselves almost destroyed from a political point of view, economic and military. From the entanglement specific to the Second World War, two great powers had imposed themselves on the world stage, the USA and the USSR, which, unfortunately, were also representative of two political systems that were going to assert their global primacy in the following decades.

Thus, between France and Germany, which have been in conflict for too long, for reasons of economic prosperity and under the security umbrella supported by the USA, the idea of historical reconciliation took root.

Starting from the idea of his adviser, Jean Monnet, the French foreign minister, Robert Schuman, proposed, in the famous declaration of

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May 9, 1950, the placement of the entire Franco-German production of coal and steel under a joint "High Authority", in within an organization open to the participation of other European entities. After a year of negotiations, France and Germany were joined by Italy, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg, countries that signed in Paris, on April 18, 1951, the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community. This Community laid the political foundations of the "Europe of the Six", marking the beginning of European construction. In March 1957, the six countries signed two treaties in Rome that marked the establishment of two new European communities: the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). As such, at that time, there were three distinct European communities in the western part of the old European continent, with limited competences and operating only on an economic level. These communities had distinct governing structures, a situation that persisted until 1965, when these governing bodies merged.

In a short time, the number of members of the European Communities increased following three waves of accession: 1973 – Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom; 1981 – Greece; 1986 – Spain and Portugal.

On February 7 1992, the Europe of the Twelve signed the Treaty on European Union (TEU) in Maastricht, which laid the foundation for the European Union as it is organized today. For the first time, European cooperation, until then strictly economic, also extended to the political level. Western European states thus entered a new phase of unification, creating a new structure, with a new name - "European Union" - and an organization based on the existence of three pillars of unequal importance. The first pillar is made up of the European Communities – EC and EURATOM, because the ECSC Treaty was in force for 50 years, which expired in 2002; in the center of this pillar, the most important role is played by the former European Economic Community (EEC), renamed by the Maastricht Treaty "European Community". This terminological change was not accidental, it being in reality the expression of the will of the signatories of the TEU to extend community competences to fields outside the economic sphere. Specific to this pillar is the completely new way of making decisions in international law, a unique example of a supranational organization, i.e. an organization created by the transfer of sovereignty from the member states to the Communities. In this context, the transfer of sovereignty means a delegation of sovereignty - from the member states to three certain common institutions (institutions with coercive powers over these states) - of the

decision-making power on some common issues, according to the principles of democracy and the rule of law. For this purpose, decision-making mechanisms and a complex institutional framework were created, capable of ensuring the representation of the interests of the governments of the member states, the general interest of the Communities, as well as the interests of European citizens. The second pillar covers provisions relating to the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). This policy is defined and implemented by the Union and the Member States and marks the elevation of political cooperation between the Member States to the level of common policy and, consequently, its inclusion in a specific institutional framework. The objectives of the CFSP are aimed at safeguarding the common values, fundamental interests and independence of the Union, as well as maintaining international peace and security. The Union thus establishes systematic cooperation between member states and implements common actions in areas where these states share important interests. The CFSP encompasses all issues related to the security of the European Union, including the definition of a defense policy likely to lead to a common defense of the member states. The CFSP is managed by the same institutions that operate under the first pillar, but with different powers and decision-making procedures. Thus, since this area is of strategic importance for the member states, an area in which it is difficult to renounce national sovereignty, the decision-making procedure applied is the intergovernmental method (decisions are taken at the level of the governments of the member states - so not within the EU institutions - , and for their adoption unanimity of votes of the member states is necessary). The third pillar organizes the cooperation of the EU states in the fields of justice and internal affairs, cooperation which, until that moment, was carried out on the basis of occasional international agreements (such an example is the Schengen Agreement, signed in 1995). This strengthened cooperation is the direct consequence of the establishment within the EU of a European space without internal borders. The aspects covered by the third pillar are asylum policy, immigration policy, border crossing and control policy, issues related to cross-border crime (drug addiction, terrorism, fraud), as well as judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters and in the customs field. The decision-making process within this pillar is based, as in the case of the CFSP, on the intergovernmental method.

The Treaty of Maastricht establishes, in conclusion, the European Union, a *sui generis* international organization, structured on three pillars

(thanks to this structure, the European construction is imagined like a Greek temple), within which the member states cooperate in the economic, political and social.

In 1995, a new wave of accession created the Europe of the Fifteen, with the integration of Austria, Finland and Sweden. The Treaty of Amsterdam, signed on October 2, 1997, and the Treaty of Nice, of February 26, 2001, consolidated the three pillars of the European Union and opened the way to a new period of enlargement of the Union. Thus, the fifth wave of accession brought 12 new states to the Union. In 2004, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary became EU member states, while Romania and Bulgaria joined on 1 January 2007. Turkey and Croatia and Macedonia became candidate countries with which accession negotiations have just begun, but only Croatia has met the preliminary accession criteria.

Currently, the European Union is a political, social and economic entity, composed of 27 countries. The main objectives of the Union are: - the promotion of economic and social progress (the single European market was established in 1993, and the single currency - euro - was launched in 1999); affirming the identity of the European Union on the international stage (through humanitarian aid for non-member countries, a common foreign and security policy, involvement in solving international crises, common positions within international organizations); - the establishment of European citizenship (which does not replace national citizenship but complements it, conferring a number of civil and political rights on European citizens); - the development of an area of freedom, security and justice (related to the functioning of the internal market and in particular to the free movement of people); - to exist and be consolidated on the basis of Community law. The European Union is expressed in 23 official languages, covers an area of 4,325,675 km² and has approximately 496,000,000 inhabitants.

The current European Union operates through a hybrid system of supranational and intergovernmental decision-making and in accordance with the principle of attribution, which states that it can act only within the limits of the powers assigned to it by the member countries in the treaties to achieve the objectives set out in them. Laws formulated by the institutions of the European Union are adopted in a variety of forms and can be classified into two groups: those that enter into force without the need for national measures (regulations) and those that specifically require national measures (directives).

The European Union has seven main decision-making bodies, its institutions: the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Central Bank and the European Court of Auditors. Competence in examining and amending legislation is shared between the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament, while executive tasks are carried out by the European Commission and in a limited capacity by the European Council, not to be confused with the Council of the European Union. The monetary policy of the euro area is determined by the European Central Bank. The interpretation and application of European Union legislation and treaties is ensured by the Court of Justice of the European Union. The EU budget is examined by the European Court of Auditors. There are also a number of subsidiary bodies that provide advice or operate in a particular area. The European Council sets the general political directions and priorities of the Union by gathering the heads of state/government of the member states, and joint decisions are adopted by consensus. The European Commission, the "*Guardian of the Treaties*", consists of an executive cabinet of civil servants, headed by an indirectly elected president. This College of Commissioners manages and directs the permanent public service of the Commission. It transforms the consensual objectives of the European Council into legislative proposals. The Council of the European Union brings together the ministers of the departments of the governments of the member states. It forms the upper arm of the EU's essentially bicameral legislature, and its approval is required for any proposed law.

The European Parliament is made up of 751 directly elected representatives who form the EU's lower house of its bicameral legislature. It shares with the Council of the EU the legislative powers to amend, approve or reject Commission proposals for most areas of EU legislation. Its powers are limited in areas where the sovereignty of member states is of primary interest, i.e. defence. The Court of Justice of the European Union ensures the uniform application of European Union legislation and resolves disputes between its institutions and member states. The European Central Bank is responsible for monetary stability in the member states. The European Court of Auditors investigates the good management of finances both within the entities of the European Union and the funding of the European Union granted to the member states. In addition to providing oversight and advice, it can refer outstanding matters to the European Court

of Justice to arbitrate any alleged irregularities. European Union policy is generally promulgated by its directives, which are then implemented in the domestic laws of member states, and by European Union regulations, which are immediately applicable in all member states.

During the Cold War, the European Union barely reached twelve members. Their hope was linked to the growth of economic prosperity through collective effort, under the NATO security umbrella, in which US supremacy was recognized and demanded. The Cold War ended with the victory of the West, and the USA became the self-declared winner, still arrogating its role as the sole international hegemon. While recognized formators of social opinions considered that humanity had reached the ideal of the "end of history" or the specific "the earth is flat" and the specter of a world war was unthinkable, more and more European countries considered it opportune to regiment the principles basic of the European Union, as well as being part of NATO, as a sure guarantee of enrolling everyone on the path of economic prosperity, in a climate of collective protection of national security. This is how the European Union expanded, but so did NATO, only global peace and economic prosperity began to falter. The hegemonic role of the US began to be challenged, and the economic relationships that underpinned economic globalization began to be violated. The great economic powers of the world began to resort to mutual economic sanctions, and economic relations that had become traditional began to be treated as dangers to collective security.

Through NATO, the US has pushed European member states into relatively small-scale military conflicts in various parts of the world. Through NATO, the US made the European Union a supporter of Ukraine in its war against Russian aggression. Thus, the European Union has engaged in massive military and logistical commitments towards Ukraine and participates in the toughest economic sanctions dictated against a state since the end of the Cold War. At the same time, the European Union was involved in a restrictive economic policy in relation to China. Of course, Russia and China, together with other states, have laid the foundations of an organization that defies Western values, values unconditionally supported by the European Union. In such conditions, the European Union finds that it has publicly become a second-rate player within NATO and is drawn into an economic war with China, perhaps BRICS, an economic war that can become a military war, without the European Union being able to understand the reasons this one.

Alain Frachon, Le Monde columnist, believes that European defense does not have the means for strategic autonomy, appreciating that, since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, Washington has systematically set the tone. Such considerations began to multiply and become radicalized. There is also growing discontent that, as time goes on, European allies find themselves in a position of vassals, more dominated than ever by the Americans, and the power gap widens to the detriment of Europeans in all areas. At least this is the conclusion of a comparative study carried out by two researchers from the European Council for Foreign Relations (ECFR), it is Jana Puglierin and Jeremy Shapiro who, in April 2023, developed a material *"The Art of Subjugation"*, which is an inventory of the European Union's contribution to the war in Ukraine, highlighting an increasingly unbalanced situation between the two components of the Atlantic Alliance, the US and the European Union. The opinions of the two are categorical: "Besides the question of the contribution to the NATO budget, the 27 channels significant civil and military aid, they bring multiple assistance to Kiev, they receive refugees, they sanction Moscow and, in particular, they made the decision, as strategic as it is, on so radical, of an embargo on gas and oil imports from Russia. Their political support is strong, European leaders often go to Kiev to show their support. Finally, the Europeans decided to make the relationship thus developed with Ukraine a long-term one, as the country is now a candidate for membership. But until today, in all this tragedy, the United States has set the tone. The Americans were the first to announce that Vladimir Putin would enter the war. They determined, at each stage, the level of weaponry that could be delivered to Ukraine. They deliver real-time information to the battlefield that Ukrainian defenders need. The crisis is unfolding in the same way as during the Cold War: it is largely managed by the Americans. Because the Europeans still haven't developed the tools for a start of strategic autonomy".

The Europeans in NATO find themselves in a situation of accepting the "temptation of the shelf", i.e. to acquire military equipment from its strategic partner the USA, instead of strengthening its defense independence by creating a European industry. At the same time, the US is asking the European pillar for greater financial involvement in NATO's collective defense, but the American defense industry is increasingly present in the European Union, successfully competing for the rare joint European projects. The strategic autonomy of the European Union seems to be receding day by day. At the same time, he may wonder what will happen to

it, if the US clearly declares its supreme interests towards the Indo-Pacific area. It seems that more and more national entities in the European Union are beginning to question its role in the US-led Western world, and the European Union as a collective entity has emotions about the new security configurations within NATO.

2. The European Union feels the signs of the storm from the anti-Western front around the BRICS. If at the emergence of BRICS, Western public opinion appreciated it as an organization of the inability of some countries to join the requirements of Western values, this time, through the decisions of the last BRICS summit in Johannesburg, through which the founding nations, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, decided to expand the group by adding six more countries, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia and Iran, which will become BRICS members from January 2024, this time the world public opinion noted the creation and consolidation of an anti-American and anti-Western front, which declares that it does not agree with the current world order under American hegemony.

This process is seen by some as a victory for Russia and China to counter the influence of the West in the world. Others, on the contrary, consider the moment as a defeat for the West, since the new countries that became members of BRICS, until yesterday, were considered as nations that revolved around Western interests. Although Putin could not directly participate in this summit, he wanted to welcome the accession of the new members, appreciating that their accession will contribute to increasing the influence of BRICS on the world level, since "We are all in favor of building a new multipolar world order, a truly balanced one". In confronting the Western world, China and Russia have sought support and membership from several countries in the so-called Global South, countries that, since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, have not agreed to declare that humanity is dealing with an attack by a great power against a sovereign country, but, on the contrary, with a new confrontation between the West and Russia. The West is accused, on the contrary, of selectively applying the principle of territorial self-determination of the nationalities exploited by the majority populations, granting military aid to a country that killed, according to UN bodies, more than ten thousand citizens of Russian origin, "encouraging the war", by sending weapons to Ukraine.

The current expansion of BRICS introduces a huge political mutation in the international landscape. Iran's accession already means that

this country will no longer be isolated in the world economic landscape, and the trend of political reconciliation with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, under the hopeful eyes of Egypt and Ethiopia, sends cold breezes to the US-Israel pillar. At the same time, Iran is the eighth largest oil producer in the world and has the third largest proven oil reserves. BRICS was joined by Saudi Arabia, considered the world's largest oil producer. The Middle East appears to have moved out of the sphere of American political influence, and the privilege of conditioning oil transactions in dollars appears to be lost, since these Gulf countries have agreed to adhere to the policies of trading oil in national currencies .

A former German defense official, Jan Techau, now Germany director of the consulting firm Eurasia Group, was forced to note by the Wall Street Journal: "...many Western officials underestimated the degree of animosity toward the United States and Europe in certain parts of the world and the desire of major actors such as Brazil and South Africa to assert its independence and interests on the international stage" and also "It is clear that, in general, the West has been surprised by the rather widespread reluctance of many countries in the so-called global South ... to join the West's position on Ukraine".¹

Of course, the West, of which the EU is a part, believes that the formation of an anti-Western front around the BRICS, by including a number of countries from the Global South, cannot have a hard word to say within international bodies, and these countries will hit on many complications when making strategic decisions. However, the EU notes that the international bodies established after the Second World War, such as the UN, the Security Council, etc. they are no longer relevant, since precisely the great powers of the world have repeatedly ignored them.

In such conditions, the EU finds that it no longer finds its role both in NATO and in the international community, since it is seen as a vassal of the international hegemon, i.e. the USA. Following closely the economic and military policies of the US, the European Union notes great economic losses in relations with emerging countries, economic relationships that are built with great difficulty.

Everyone knows that the European Union was born through the unity of Franco-German political views. France and Germany spoke the

¹ Alexandru Lăzescu, G7 vs BRICS – competiția pentru o nouă ordine mondială, Revista 22, no.17/2023, p. 10.

same language for a long time in building the European Union, all measures receiving the blessing of the USA. From the moment the US assumed the role of international hegemon, US relations with the EU began to take on accents of authority and dictation. Against this background, France and Germany tried to gain a more privileged position within the European Union. As such, since the main pillar of the European Union, France and Germany, begin to speak in the name of their own interests, the European Union continues to live, being marked by three obvious political currents: a current that includes France and some countries that follow it closely; a current Germany and some countries that follow it closely; a current supported by the strategic partnerships between the US and some countries on the eastern flank of Europe, partnerships that seem to ignore the old partnerships between the US and traditional Western countries. Since France and Germany pretend to speak the same language, the European Union is still visible through the bureaucratic apparatus in Brussels, as well as through the positions taken by some countries that are part of the European Union, but which do not speak on behalf of this collective organization.

Thus, in April 2023, after the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, visited China, he gave an interview, from which the media presented opinions and assessments like:

"French President Emmanuel Macron believes that Europe should gain its "strategic autonomy" in relation to the major global powers", "In Macron's interview, the word "autonomy" is used nine times.", "The paradox would be to follow the policy out of a panic reflex", "Strategic autonomy must be a struggle of Europe", "We do not want to depend on others on critical issues", "The day you have no choice in energy matters, how to defend yourself, from social networks, from artificial intelligence, because you no longer have infrastructure in these fields, leave history for a while", "The paradox would be that, at the moment we implement the elements of a true European strategic autonomy, let's start following American policy, through a kind of panic reflex", "Let's not get caught in crises that are not ours", "Europe must not be involved in the even greater tension of relations between the US and China "If there is an acceleration of the sharpening of the two poles, we will have neither the time nor the means to finance our strategic autonomy and we will become vassals, when we can be the third pole, if we have a few years to build it" , "The EU must not deviate from its line of conduct, despite the geopolitical crises of the moment, in Taiwan or in Ukraine", "The trap for Europe would be when it

makes a clarification of its strategic position, when it is more autonomous from a strategic point of view than before Covid, to be caught in a disorganization of the world and in crises that are not ours", "For too long Europe has not built this strategic autonomy for which I advocate", "Saying that he does not want to enter "a logic from block to block", the head of the Elysée Palace nevertheless believes that Europe must "assume to have convergence of views with the United States", "But whether it is about Ukraine, the relationship with China or sanctions, we have a European strategy", "the USA will respect us if we are sovereign in terms of defense", "Certainly we have increased our dependence on the United States in the field of energy, but in a logic of diversification, because we were far too dependent on Russian gas", "For too long, Europe has not built this strategic autonomy for which I advocate", "today, the ideological battle has been won and the foundations have been laid. Five years ago, strategic autonomy was a chimera. Today, everyone is talking about her. This is a big change"² etc. Not many years ago, the same President of France said: "NATO is brain dead", and today NATO and the European Union have practically assumed Ukraine's military effort against Russia.

Of course, the European Union has pledged solidarity with the US and NATO in helping Ukraine. Thus, it renounced the economic advantages of some long-term contracts with Russia, it sincerely participates in the sanctions dictated against Russia, it makes large financial resources available for Ukraine, it deploys important quantities of armaments, ammunition and logistic components to Ukraine, respecting its status of important pillar of NATO and the Western world, but he cannot help asking himself the question: what will happen to the European Union if the US simply stops participating in the military efforts required by the war in Ukraine?

Given how dependent Ukraine is on weapons and ammunition delivered by the Pentagon, its situation will become one of dramatic, existential importance. Defending Ukraine will also become more difficult as Russia steps up its efforts to freeze the country's population by destroying its energy infrastructure. Of course, some Western countries will try to compensate for the decrease in American aid, but it is hard to believe that the European Union will be able to replace the US role in this war. At best, then, a US withdrawal will leave Ukraine in a brutal stalemate on its own

² Les Echos, Le Figaro și News.ro, after april 9 2023.

territory, but it will also leave a European Union without clear benchmarks in its confrontation with Russia, the BRICS and states that show their intention to join the BRICS structures. It is obvious that the reduction of military and financial support for Ukraine will have global implications, which will find the European Union without clear benchmarks.

Of course, the war in Ukraine was never just a war between Ukraine and Russia, but a test of strength between those who defend the unipolar world order, i.e. the Western world, in which the European Union is considered an important pillar, and those who want to destroy the existing international order, increasingly coalesced around the BRICS. The thesis that motivates Beijing and Moscow - that democracies are decadent, dysfunctional and easily distracted - will appear to be confirmed. Many Western European politicians are already wondering whether an apocalyptic scenario for the European Union could result from espousing the idea that the best way to deter great power aggression in the Pacific is to allow it in Europe. As such, the European Union does not seem to be in the Western world either, since each country's interests matter, it is not in NATO, since the US develops strategic partnerships with most of the member countries, it is not nor in the context of geostrategic and geopolitical changes, since it is no longer considered a reliable partner.

3. Threats to the dollar with ricochets to the euro. A second important mutation brought about by this second tranche of BRICS enlargement consists in the fact that all countries, both the old initiators and the new ones that have become co-interested, have committed to strengthening the process of reducing the world economy's dependence on the US dollar. The process was hailed because of the frequent economic sanctions imposed by the US against some countries, and the foreign currency seizures imposed by the West against Russia, sent an ominous signal to all countries, large and small, that foreign exchange reserves could always be subject to geopolitical risks. . On the occasion of the Johannesburg summit, those present took note of the following: The Shanghai Stock Exchange trades oil in yuan or national currency; the yuan became a strictly gold-backed currency; the BRICS bank will increase lending to its members, but unlike the IMF and the World Bank, it will lend in local currency (yuan) and will not impose the conditions that accompany loans from the aforementioned global lenders.

Essentially, the dollar circuit was as follows: The Federal Reserve, a private institution, issued the dollar, essentially bearing the costs of

production. The US government borrowed from the Federal Reserve with sums of dollars that were used to carry out economic transactions, but also to lend to other state entities that were going through financial difficulties. Over time, the governments of the world have found that they are in debt with billions and billions of dollars, but the flow of indebtedness does not stop, but continues to take on unimaginable dimensions. At one point, real dollars were far outnumbered by dollars that have nothing but printing value. All countries are debtors to all countries, the biggest debtor being precisely the USA.

Paul Christie, executive director of the Institute for Global Perspectives at Columbia University and, above all, an employee of the National Security Agency (NSA) has publicly declared that the US owes about \$17 trillion, one trillion equals a thousand billion dollars and the US debt is growing by \$3.5 billion a day. Each American personally owes \$148,000 to creditor states, the largest US creditors being: 1. China with \$2 trillion; 2. Japan with \$1.14 trillion; 3. Brazil with USD 256.4 billion; 4. Taiwan with USD 185.8 billion; 5. Switzerland with 178.2 billion USD; 6. Belgium with USD 167.7 billion; 7. Great Britain with USD 156.9 billion; 8. Luxembourg with USD 146.8 billion; 9. Russia with USD 131.6 billion; 10. Hong Kong with 120 billion USD etc. The same employee of the National Security Agency (NSA) also stated in relation to these debts: There is no battle for Ukraine. There is a war against Russia. The war against Russia is a war against Europe. Why is the United States fighting this war? For the love of democracy and human rights? Because of altruistic concern for the future of Europe and the world? To spread peace and prosperity across the globe? The answer is disgustingly cynical. Because of the \$17 trillion they owe the world, because of the \$500 billion trade between Russia and Europe that they want to steal, to keep the dollar as the world currency, because the yuan came from the East and not that's right, and the BRICS countries just set up their own bank and currency fund. In order for the United States to meet its debts, it had to organize cataclysms that did not have devastating consequences for the United States (the consequences are always for others, only for Europeans, preferably Russians), without lowering the standard of its own population, that is, all at the expense someone else and the whole world, that is, every country to participate in solving America's financial difficulties.

Based on such comments, there are enough opinion makers who biasly justify the US engagements in the war in Ukraine, believing that "the

US only wants to cause an irreparable rift between Europe and Russia, to create manageable chaos in Ukraine to stop Russia's energy resources and that Europe seethes with indignation against Russia, boils to a boil, and then it itself causes an irreversible rupture of relations with Russia. Then Europe will be forced to reorient itself to US energy supplies" and then "the United States, with its shale gas, will again be in the role of benefactor of Europe, equipped with a kind of magic energy wand. That will lead to huge investments in American shale gas production, creating a strong infrastructure for processing and delivering it to Europe. And the old lady, running out of Russian gas, will not comment, which will allow the United States to quickly eliminate its financial problems.

Thus, the "benefactor" will win, and the "favored" Europe will pay twice or three times more for American shale gas, and in consolation, celebrate and sing happily for freedom from Russian energy oppression, boots, budyonka and vatniki".

And Paul Christie continues: "The \$500 billion trade turnover between Europe and Russia must (must!) become the trade turnover between Europe and America." To intimidate Europe, to instill in Europeans a terrible horror of "Russian danger and aggression", to flood Europe every second with lies about "Russian atrocities", about "the arrival of hordes of Russian tanks", about the "army of ships" of Russian war", he uses manipulation in all ways, he must keep Europe in hysteria until it passes out, and Russia must be provoked to escalate conflicts, for example the one in Ukraine. And "let Europeans shudder at the possible Russian invasion"! The more misunderstandings arise between Russia and Europe, the more the US plans will soon be realized. And look how in this way America will "preserve peace on the planet and give the strongest possible impetus to progress" (American, of course). Well, Europe will also "win" something: by giving up Russian supplies, Europe would keep its title of defender of European values, human rights and help the United States solve its debt problem.

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin once called the United States a "*world parasite*" and commented on the US position on its debts to other countries in the manner: "*We really want to return the money we owe you, we can't wait to we take, but in our own way. We will organize "color revolutions", "Arab springs" and "maidan strikes"; we will most democratically take control of your lands, waters and forests, oil, gas, gold, diamonds and whatnot (because we have to live, right?); we will destroy your industry, military, culture, history, memory and spirituality in the most*

civilized and valuable way; we will plunder and plunder you in the noblest and most precise manner, to the bone. However, if you have the audacity to disobey, we will exterminate, incinerate and bomb you in the most humane and peaceful way, subjugate you Euro-Atlantic style and stage a terrible massacre. And, of course, we will not return anything to you because we have no such intentions, but we will take everything from you as a reward."³

Such an apocalyptic vision would cause the European market to be flooded with worthless dollars and the euro to flee the market, all representing the actualization of the famous ancient observation that "*fake money drives good money out of the market.*"

While Putin was philosophizing about how the Americans think about reducing the historic public debts, a military crisis broke out in the Near East, which caught the European Union unprepared, as it has done countless times. For many Europeans, among the countless geostrategic illusions that have been shattered in the last few days since the mutual slaughter in the Middle East began, the most troubling realization for anyone living on the European continent seems to be this: Nobody cares what Europe thinks anymore, from since the EU's response to the Hamas attack in Israel has generated confusion. In a short time, but with consequences rooted in years of political uncertainty, in a series of global flashpoints, from Nagorno-Karabakh to Kosovo to Israel, the general belief is that "the European Union was relegated to the role of a well-intentioned NGO whose humanitarian contributions are welcomed but otherwise ignored"⁴. Although no one noticed it, the 27-member bloc has always struggled to articulate a coherent foreign policy even as various national interests are at stake. At the time of the outbreak of hostilities between Hamas, the European Union was unable to articulate a coherent position. In the face of growing global instability, instead of the reliable "geopolitical" power that European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen promised when she took office in 2019, the European Union has become a collectivity of nations discrediting itself day by day, since its decisions are always contradictory. For example, as Politico notes, the messages that have the European Union as their source of credibility are ridiculous, in the manner: following the massacre by Hamas of hundreds of Israeli civilians at the weekend, the European Commissioner for Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi,

³ Wikipedia.com.

⁴ Politico analysis.

announced on Monday, 9 October, that the bloc will "immediately" suspend 691 million euros in aid to the Palestinian Authority. A few hours later, Slovenian Commissioner Janez Lenarčič contradicted his Hungarian counterpart, insisting that the aid "will continue as long as it is needed".

The Commission's press briefing continued with a statement that the European Union would carry out an "urgent review" of aid programs to ensure that funds were not directed to terrorism, implying that such guarantees were not already in place. As far as EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell was concerned, the outcome of any review of aid to the Palestinians was a foregone conclusion: "We will have to support more, not less," he said on Tuesday. Borrell, a Spanish socialist, condemned the "barbaric and terrorist attack" by Hamas, while scolding Israel for its blockade of Gaza and pointing to the "suffering" of Palestinians who voted Hamas into power. The Spaniard's approach was in stark contrast to that of von der Leyen, who unequivocally condemned the attacks and projected the Israeli flag on the facade of her office. The moves immediately drew protests from elsewhere in the European Union, however, with Clare Daly, a left-wing MEP from Ireland, questioning von der Leyen's legitimacy and telling her to "shut up". Outside the official media, the Europeans said about his representatives: "They spoke when they should have been silent", being easy to understand what feelings such communications aroused not only in the heart of the European community, not only for the countries of the Gulf, but also for the other countries from NATO. The US, through the voice of the President, declared that it stands with Israel. At the same time, Joe Biden mentioned that he called France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom to discuss the crisis, but he did not talk to anyone from the leadership of the European Union, as a bloc.

The European Union seems like a non-homogeneous team, which wants to be part of strong competitions, delights with the playing equipment, but no longer convinces anyone, being on the verge of dissatisfying even its own players.

Conclusions

The European Union was established through the political unity between France and Germany, under the security protection provided by the USA. For European countries, the stated goal of this community was to achieve a high level of economic prosperity, by cultivating generally accepted principles of security and sovereignty in relations with the strategic partner – the USA. After the West's victory over communist ideology, the

European Union expanded with the blessing of the US, only this time the two pillars had relatively different interests: the US encouraged the expansion of the European Union with the desire to have a collective entity that would steadfastly follow its geopolitical initiatives and geostrategic, while the European Union considered that the time had come for this European entity to become increasingly independent and sovereign in the new context of international relations. In practice, the US tried to impose itself on the European Union with authority, which created some dissatisfaction on the part of some partner countries, in particular France, Germany, Italy and the examples do not stop here. Since these countries began to question American initiatives, the monolithic unity of the European Union around France and Germany also began to falter. The European Union is no longer within NATO, nor in the new geopolitical context of the multipolar initiative triggered by BRICS. The commitments of the European Union alongside the USA in the war in Ukraine have destroyed the ideals of prosperity dreamed of by the European peoples, since the economic contracts with Russia have been cancelled, the economic sanctions against Russia, to which the European Union is a party, have economic repercussions that are difficult to incur for this, and the purchase of energy resources are increasingly expensive, which causes the standard of living of Europeans to decrease more and more. The European Union is no longer seen as an entity worthy of consideration in the international context, and the European population looks anxiously towards the future.



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