

THREE VISIONS, ONE DIRECTION

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

as laid out in President Juncker's *State of the Union*, President Macron's *Initiative for Europe* and Chancellor Merkel's *Plans for European Reform*



Three EU leaders, one direction

Back in September 2017, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and French President Emmanuel Macron both laid out ambitious proposals for the future of Europe. In their respective speeches, they marked hope for the beginning of a new era after the polycrisis of past years.

The *State of the Union* (SOTEU) – delivered by the President of the European Commission on 13 September 2017 – outlined the European Commission’s work programme and legislative proposals for 2018, and set out the President’s broader vision for the longer term. The speech was President Juncker’s third and arguably most important *State of the Union* address, given the ‘wind in the sails’ that the European project was enjoying: increased public support, improved economic and social conditions in Europe, but also the need to be more united, given the growing instability abroad.

President Macron’s *Initiative for Europe* speech on 27 September 2017 outlined the French President’s vision for the future of Europe and the future role of France in this Union. It followed from his openly pro-European election campaign and the continued commitment he has shown in the first few months in office.

More recently – and following the European Commission’s proposals for the future Multiannual Financial Framework – German Chancellor Angela Merkel entered the debate with a wide-ranging interview in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung (FAZ), and a subsequent speech in Berlin on 4 June 2018. In both, she presented her own vision and responded to many of the proposals put forward by Presidents Juncker and Macron.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily correspond to those of the European Commission.

The quotes taken from President Macron’s *Initiative Europe* address and Chancellor Merkel’s interview and speech are not official translations but have been provided by the EPSC.

Significant convergence

There is a high degree of overlap and convergence across all three interventions, both in terms of the visions outlined and the concrete initiatives proposed. President Juncker presented a ‘Roadmap for a More United, Stronger and More Democratic Union’, and President Macron echoed this with ‘A Sovereign, More United and Democratic Europe’.

Speaking later, Chancellor Merkel looked to forge compromises on key areas of reform, and was able to go into more detail on some proposals.

Overall, it can be said that all three leaders share:

- Concerns over Europe’s long-term prospects and a desire to shape Europe’s future
- An ambition to strengthen Europe’s unique value proposition at home and abroad
- A focus on action and delivery

Slight nuances

The three leaders nonetheless diverge partly on questions of timing for delivery: the SOTEU, by its very nature, is in equal parts concerned with those initiatives and actions that can still be delivered under the current mandate of the European Parliament, i.e. before May 2019, and those designed with a 2025 perspective.

President Macron presents a two-stage process centred around the upcoming European Parliament elections, and the following ones in 2024. Chancellor Merkel does not indicate a timeframe, except regarding the need to agree on the next EU multiannual budget before the European elections in May 2019.

They also differ in their method. President Juncker’s overriding concern is the unity of the EU27, although he leaves open the possibility to advance initiatives with a smaller group of countries in instances where no consensus can be achieved.

President Macron, on the other hand, explicitly calls for more differentiated and flexible institutional arrangements to support his vision, including enabling those Member States which want to do more, to do more. Chancellor Merkel seems to take a cautious approach that aims at building a consensus among Member States about the future development of the EU27.

Whilst all of President Juncker’s and Chancellor Merkel’s proposals could be implemented on the basis of the Lisbon Treaty, some of President Macron’s proposals would require Treaty change and more far-reaching institutional innovation, therefore requiring significantly more time.

Repair or rebuild?

In this sense, while President Juncker wants to fix Europe’s roof ‘now that the sun is shining’, President Macron outlines a vision on how to rebuild the European house. On her side, Chancellor Merkel, speaking in a somewhat altered context, seems to tread the path of cautious compromise.

Where there are differences, they are more about the means of reaching the objective, rather than the objective itself. All three leaders exhibit a joint commitment to addressing areas of critical importance for the future of Europe.

What follows is a comparative assessment of their interventions and of the proposals they advance.

TRADE



'I want us to strengthen our European trade agenda (...) Yes Europe is open for business.'

- **New trade agreements** with targeted countries
- Greater **transparency**: publication of all draft and final negotiating mandates
- Increased **reciprocity**
- Export European social, environmental, data protection and food safety standards
- Defend strategic interests: **a new EU framework for investment screening**



'I hear the ambitions carried by some, but I say to them: Take heed, I am ready to follow you but on the condition that this trade policy be profoundly renewed and changed.'

- Yes to **new trade agreements** but not on the basis of old rules
- Greater **transparency** in negotiations
- **Reciprocity**
- Social and environmental **standards**
- Defend strategic interests: **a European trade prosecutor**



'It should be clear that we act based on values and human rights. We are the force that strengthens multilateralism.'

- Reiterated commitment to **multilateralism** in international politics
- A **strong World Trade Organisation**, alongside **fair bilateral trade agreements** where appropriate

Commonalities and nuances

- **Significant convergence among the three leaders** on trade and multilateralism as instruments for shaping a fairer, more inclusive globalisation
- Focus on rules, standards, transparency and reciprocity
- Trade as an instrument to shape a fairer, more inclusive globalisation
- Both President Juncker and President Macron stressed the need to defend strategic interests and support investment screening. Additionally, President Macron proposes an institutional change by calling for the establishment of a European trade prosecutor

CLIMATE, ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



'I want Europe to be the leader when it comes to the fight against climate change.'

- Proposals to **reduce carbon emissions in the transport sector**
- Investing in clean cars of tomorrow
- Link to industrial policy
- Increasing the use of qualified majority voting for decisions on **energy infrastructure**



'I sincerely believe that Europe must be at the forefront of an efficient and fair environmental transition.'

- A European **industrial programme to support clean vehicles** and the required **infrastructure** (charging stations, etc.)
- Fixed, **minimum carbon price** within the EU and a **carbon tax** at EU's border
- A **better functioning Energy Union** with better interconnections
- Reforming the **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**



'Europe should be seen as a strong voice in the concert of global actors when it comes to climate protection.'

- Goal of **carbon neutrality** by the second half of the century
- A comprehensive strategic framework for the implementation of the **Sustainable Development Goals** on EU level
- Opening new perspectives for people in **regions affected by the phase out of coal**

Commonalities and nuances

- **Full convergence on the objectives among the three leaders**
- President Macron adds a proposed reform of the **Common Agricultural Policy**, with stronger emphasis on food safety and greening
- Chancellor Merkel stresses that sustainability cannot be achieved against large parts of society, emphasising the need for **active support measures** for those negatively affected by the low-carbon transition

DIGITAL, INNOVATION AND INDUSTRIAL POLICY



'I want to help our industries stay, or become, the number one in innovation, digitisation and decarbonisation... And I want us to better protect Europeans in the digital age. Cyber-attacks can be more dangerous to the stability of democracies and economies than guns and tanks.'

- **New industrial policy** strategy based on innovation, digitisation and decarbonisation
- **European Cybersecurity Agency**
- New rules to **protect intellectual property, cultural diversity and personal data**
- Exporting Europe's **standards** on data protection
- Moving to qualified majority voting for decisions on **fair taxes for the digital industry**



'Throughout Europe, we must do all we can to create digital champions... And we must reinforce our cybersecurity.'

- Global promotion of the EU model **combining innovation and regulation**, as well as **security**
- Measures to **attract foreign talent**: scientists and entrepreneurs
- Establish – within 2 years – an **Agency for breakthrough innovation**, jointly funding new fields of research, such as **Artificial Intelligence**, or those that have yet to be explored (possible **Franco-German alliance** to give first impulse)
- Ensure equity and confidence in the digital transformation by defining norms, by rethinking the tax system (**taxation of digital companies, through a tax on value created**), by **regulating the major platforms and by protecting copyright in a digital era**



'Europe should present itself as an economically strong continent, and be a leader in innovation, which is decisive for our prosperity.'

- The goal of investing **3 percent of gross national income (GNI)** in research and innovation should be met
- Build **Networks of Excellence** for academia and research institutions
- Franco-German initiative to support disruptive innovation; innovations that will replace existing technologies and pave the way for new business models
- Ensure **Artificial Intelligence** is developed in an ethical and responsible way
- A digital single market with **uniform rules on data ownership**
- **Reform the tax system** to better reflect the central **value of data** and its pricing

Commonalities and nuances

- **Significant convergence among the three leaders**
- All propose a **reform of the tax system** for a fairer reflection of the value of data
- Franco-German initiative on **breakthrough innovation** with a focus on Artificial Intelligence. Chancellor Merkel stresses the importance of ensuring an ethical development of **Artificial Intelligence**. The EU already funds breakthrough innovation through its Horizon 2020 Programme and has set up a European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT) in 2008 to enhance Europe's innovation potential. These efforts are also supported by the newly established **European Innovation Council** which was set up earlier this year. In addition, the European Research Council has for over a decade funded research on breakthrough technologies
- While President Macron does not specifically mention the setup of a **Cybersecurity Agency**, he stresses the need to reinforce European cybersecurity

SECURITY AND JUSTICE



'The European Union must also be stronger in fighting terrorism. In the past three years, we have made real progress. But we still lack the means to act quickly in case of cross-border terrorist threats.'

- Tasking the new European Public Prosecutor with **prosecuting cross-border terrorist crimes**
- **Bolstering Europol's Counter-Terrorism Centre**



'In the face of international terrorism, our shield lies in a Europe of security.'

- Extending the **European Public Prosecutor's** competences to fighting terrorism and organised crime
- Amplify the fight against **illegal financing** of terrorism and Internet propaganda
- A **European Intelligence Academy** to create closer ties among Member States in the fight against terrorism



'There is a need for a European effort to anchor the European Union in the world order of the 21st century and to renew a comprehensive assurance on security.'

- A **European White Book on security policy** outlining a common definition of security challenges and strengthening cooperation in the areas of defence and development policy

Commonalities and nuances

- **Significant convergence among the three leaders**
- All three recognise the importance of strengthening EU **cooperation on security and intelligence sharing**. President Juncker wishes to do so by bolstering an existing agency, Europol, whereas President Macron calls for the creation of a new institution. Chancellor Merkel highlights the need for a holistic common strategic approach that covers security analysis and action

ENLARGEMENT



'If we want more stability in our neighbourhood, then we must also maintain a credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans.'

- **Preparing the ground for enlargement during the next Commission's mandate** (Serbia, Montenegro)
- Focus on **rule of law, fundamental rights and the fight against corruption**, and on the overall stability of the region
- **Accession of Turkey ruled out for the foreseeable future** due to infringement of rule of law, justice and fundamental rights – although the hands of the EU remain outstretched to the Turkish people



'This Union will have to open up to the Balkans once they fully respect the EU acquis and democratic requirements.'

- Clearly states that the EU will have to open up to the Balkans once they **fully respect the EU acquis and democratic requirements**



'All these countries have a clear prospect of accession to the European Union. For EU accession, however, some reforms are needed, such as the rule of law. A possible EU enlargement in the region must be rules-based. Conditions must be met.'

- Prioritises **rule of law** and **fighting corruption**
- Strengthen **economic and political cooperation**
- **No timeline** or indication of a possible accession date

Commonalities and nuances

- **Significant convergence among the three leaders**
- All highlight the need to maintain a credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans but stress the need for advances on the rule of law and corruption. The European Commission advances 2025 as a potential target date

MIGRATION AND AFRICA



'Europe is and must remain the continent of solidarity where those fleeing persecution can find refuge.'

- Call for **reform of the Dublin system**
- Strong role for the **European Border and Coast Guard**
- **Improving conditions for migrants in Libya**
- **Step up returns** policy
- **Legal pathways** for migration and Blue Card for skilled migrants
- Tackling migration **at the source: Africa Trust Fund**



'We must choose between a withdrawal within our borders – which would be both illusory and inefficient – and the construction of a common area of borders, asylum and migration... But even the most robust borders and the most ambitious security policies will not be able to hold off durable migration trends.'

- Harmonisation of asylum procedures and establishment of a **European Asylum Office**
- Progressively establish a **European border police force**
- Establish interconnected databases and secure biometric identification documents
- European **funding for integration and training of refugees**
- Tackle migration **at the source: Africa Partnership** and focus on the **Mediterranean**, as well as a tax on European financial transactions to finance development aid



'Our aim is to achieve an orderly situation at European borders, but isolation is not the right way.'

- **Common asylum standards and procedures**, under the authority of a common **European Asylum Office**
- **Flexible burden-sharing** whereby each Member State contributes according to its own possibilities
- **A European border police**, with European competences, which is entitled to act on its own authority at European borders
- **Reducing illegal migration** also through agreements with transit countries
- **Promoting legal migration** for education, professional training and skilled workers
- **Marshall Plan for Africa** to give perspectives to young people

Commonalities and nuances

- **Significant convergence among the three leaders**
- All want a reform of the Dublin system, strengthening Europe's external borders and **creating legal pathways** for migration into the EU
- On **Africa**, there is significant **overlap**: all insist on more investment in Africa, with some small nuances: President Juncker calls on Member States to show solidarity now by matching funds for the EU-Africa Trust Fund; President Macron suggests a new source of income (financial transaction tax); Chancellor Merkel calls for a Marshall Plan (i.e. based on credits for investment)
- The creation of a **European Asylum Office** was already proposed by the European Commission in its Migration Package of June 2016. The interoperability of security-relevant databases is also underway as part of the European Agenda on Security
- All highlight that **common borders require common protection**, with both President Macron and Chancellor Merkel proposing to establish a European border police force. Depending on whether this refers to strengthening the current European Border and Coast Guard, set up on 6 October 2016, or whether the intention is to develop a fully-fledged European border police with European staff, this could require a modification of the Treaty in the latter case, insofar as border control is still a Member State competence (cf. Article 77 (1) c) and 77(2)(d) TFEU and/ or Article 78 TFEU (common policy on asylum, subsidiary protection and temporary protection)
- All stress the importance of preserving European values when securing our borders, as well as the need to tackle immigration at the source through cooperation with Africa in particular
- Chancellor Merkel also stresses the need for a revision of **burden-sharing** mechanisms based on the notion of **flexible solidarity**

SCHENGEN



'We need to open the Schengen area of free movement to Bulgaria and Romania immediately. We should also allow Croatia to become a full member once it meets all the criteria.'

- Admit Romania and Bulgaria to the Schengen area
- Await the October/November 2017 assessment of whether Croatia fulfills the requirements for joining the Schengen area
- Strong role for the **European Border and Coast Guard**



'Let us gradually establish a European border police force that ensures rigorous management of borders everywhere in Europe.'

- Progressive establishment of a **European border police force**



'Free movement is a constituent element of the internal market, from which we all benefit. This freedom of movement is based on the protection of our external borders.'

- **A European border police**, with European competences, which is entitled to act on its own authority at European borders

Commonalities and nuances

- **Significant convergence among the three leaders**
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- While President Macron did not address Schengen explicitly in his speech, during an official visit to Romania in August 2017, he stated that Romania was right to request joining the Schengen area of free movement, and had been so for some years as the necessary requirements have been fulfilled

DEFENCE



'By 2025 we need a fully-fledged European Defence Union. We need it. And NATO wants it.'

- **European Defence Fund**
- **Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)** in Defence
- By 2025 creation of a fully-fledged **Defence Union**



'Our objective must be to give Europe the capacity to act autonomously, in complementarity with NATO... What Europe lacks most today, this European Defence Union, is a common strategic culture.'

- **Swift implementation of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)** and the **European Defence Fund**
- Proposes that national armies make it possible to **host nationals from other EU Member States**
- Calls for a fully deployable European **common defence force** 'by the beginning of the next decade', underpinned by a **common budget**
- **European civil protection force**



'I am positive regarding President Macron's proposal of an 'intervention initiative'. Such an initiative must be part of common defence cooperation.'

- **European Defence Fund** could cover expenditure for common military actions
- Closer **military integration**, including an **'intervention initiative'**, within the framework of the **Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)**
- **Common weapon systems** and **common strategic actions**
- Open to **cooperation with UK** on defence
- More **common action on foreign policy**
- Establish a **European Security Council**, with rotating membership of Member States. This Council would have the ability to act swiftly, in cooperation with the EU High Representative and the European Members of the **UN Security Council**. In addition, the non-permanent seats of Member States in the UN Security Council could be turned into European seats

Commonalities and nuances

- **Significant convergence among the three leaders**
- Chancellor Merkel supports the idea of a **European intervention force** within the framework of the **Permanent Structured Cooperation** and with actions funded by the Defence Fund. In addition, she wants to create a **European Security Council** to enable Europe to act faster together
- President Macron's proposals seemingly raise the level of ambition – mentioning the development of **a common force, supported with a common budget on defence**. On a similar note, the European Commission and the European Council have stressed the need to take measures to ensure the deployability of EU Battlegroups (these multinational rapid-response EU forces have been operational since January 2007 but they have never been deployed)
 - Article 42(2) TEU allows for the creation of a common force of intervention – understood as a 'common defence' – by unanimity of the European Council
 - However, Article 41(2) TEU currently excludes expenditure arising from operations having military or defence implications being charged to the EU budget. If this Common Defence Budget is to be part of the EU budget, it would require Treaty change
- President Macron's proposals to enable the **hosting of soldiers** in Member States could be achieved through a Common Security and Defence Policy decision. Article 42 (3) TEU states that 'Member States shall undertake progressively to improve their military capabilities'. This could be read as a way to improve military capabilities through exchange of knowledge and best practices
- The European Commission has proposed strengthening the already existing **EU civil protection mechanism** with its 'rescEU' proposal, put forward in November 2017

SINGLE MARKET, SOCIAL EUROPE AND TAXATION



'Europe must be a Union of equality and a Union of equals.'

- Equip national authorities with stronger powers to **better enforce EU consumer and food quality laws** and cut out illegal practices wherever they exist
- **Create a common Labour Authority** – a European inspection and enforcement body to ensure that all EU rules on labour mobility are enforced in a fair, simple and effective manner
- Address social dumping by agreeing on the European Pillar of Social Rights – setting the basis for a **European Social Standards Union** (e.g. same pay for the same work in the same place) – as soon as possible and at the latest at the Gothenburg Social Summit in November 2017
- Qualified majority voting for decisions on the **common consolidated corporate tax base**, on VAT, on **fair taxes for the digital industry** and on the financial transaction tax



'The single market is the very soul of Europe.. But today, Europe does not protect from social dumping; today we have let the European single market develop against the very philosophy of our united labour market.. Europe must build a genuine project of fiscal and social convergence.'

- **End double standards on food**, to combat fraud and guarantee food security
- **A European inspection and enforcement body** to ensure that all EU rules on **labour mobility** are enforced in a fair, simple and effective manner
- Encourage **convergence** across the whole EU, setting **rules and criteria** (as the basis of discussions on the new Multiannual Financial Framework) that **gradually bring social and tax models closer together** (e.g. minimum wage; convergence of social contributions; solidarity fund)
- Accelerate the **harmonisation of corporate tax base** (between France and Germany within the next 4 years) by agreeing, by 2020, on a range of rates that would bind Member States.
- Rethinking the **taxation of digital companies**
- **Franco-German initiative to fully integrate markets**, by 2024, by applying the same rules to their enterprises, from business law to bankruptcy law



'The social market economy of the 21st century has come under pressure and digitalisation is one of the major challenges.'

- Economic **convergence** through strengthening of innovation capacity, with the help of additional structural policies
- Assist those countries that need to catch up by **fostering science, technology and innovation**
- A **digital single market** with uniform rules on data ownership
- **Reform of the tax system** to better reflect the central **value of data** and its pricing

Commonalities and nuances

- **Significant convergence among the three leaders**
- **President Macron openly supports a number of President Juncker's proposals**, namely stronger action against double quality standards and the establishment of a European Labour Authority
- President Macron's call for rules and criteria to encourage **social and fiscal convergence** is part of the European Pillar of Social rights, adopted in November 2017 at the Gothenburg Social Summit
- Chancellor Merkel favours economic convergence through improved innovation performance

EURO



'If we want the euro to unite rather than divide our continent, then it should be more than the currency of a select group of countries. The euro is meant to be the single currency of the European Union as a whole.'

- Facilitate access to the euro area to all Member States through a **euro-accession Instrument**, offering technical and even financial assistance
- **No parallel structures**: No specific euro area budget, but a strong dedicated line in the overall EU budget. The Parliament of the euro area is the European Parliament
- A **European Minister of Economy and Finance** (possibly conceived as a Vice-President for economic and financial affairs, as well as chair of Eurogroup) that promotes and supports structural reforms in Member States. The new Minister should coordinate all EU financial instruments that can be deployed if a Member State is in a recession or hit by a fundamental crisis. He or she must be accountable to the European Parliament
- Encourage all Member States to join the **Banking Union** to ensure that all banks operate under the same rules and under the same supervision
- Transform the European Stabilisation Mechanism (ESM) into a **European Monetary Fund**. As access to ESM support is contingent on participation in the Fiscal Compact, this will also have to be the case when the European Monetary Fund is created



'A sustainable economic power can only be built around a single currency.'

- **The euro as the single currency of the European Union as a whole**. Need to make the euro area more efficient and more attractive. It's a question of unity
- A strong euro area with a **specific euro budget financed through European taxes** e.g. in the digital or environmental area, and through a percentage of its members' corporate tax, once harmonised
- Strong political leadership and coordination of economic policies under a **common Minister**, under parliamentary control at European level



'For a successful economy we need to sustainably stabilise the euro. Current instruments are not sufficient. That's why we need the Banking and Capital Market Union.'

- Supports additional budget for countries that pursue structural reforms
- Transform the European Stabilisation Mechanism (ESM) into a **European Monetary Fund**, which would function on an **intergovernmental** basis, accountable to national parliaments
- The new European Monetary Fund toolbox should comprise a **short-term** (e.g. up to 5 years) **credit line**, available to countries that get into trouble due to 'external circumstances', which would be subject to conditionality, limited in amount and to be paid back in full
- The European Monetary Fund should also assess the **debt sustainability** of euro area Member States and have tools at its disposal to 'reinstate debt sustainability, if necessary' (i.e. debt restructuring mechanism)
- An **investment budget for the euro area** (in the lower double-digit billion euro range), to support convergence by investing in science, technology and innovation. This could be within or outside of the Multiannual Financial Framework

Commonalities and nuances

- **Convergence on the objectives, with differences with respect to the governance models**
- President Macron calls for a **separate euro area budget**, based on new, own i.e. European sources. This would require Treaty change, and if it were to be financed through a harmonised corporate tax, this would take some time to materialise. President Juncker favours a **euro area budget line within the Multiannual Financial Framework**. Chancellor Merkel appears to be open to either solution (within or outside the Multiannual Financial Framework)
- Presidents Juncker and Macron speak of a **European Minister of Economy and Finance**, which Chancellor Merkel does not mention. President Macron seems to call for a broader mandate. If such Minister were to have the competence to issue binding decisions, this would require Treaty change
- President Macron makes no real mention of the European Monetary Fund or completion of the Banking Union, whereas Chancellor Merkel stresses their importance – without however going as far as mentioning the European Deposit Insurance Scheme (EDIS). Chancellor Merkel also prefers a European Monetary Fund on an intergovernmental basis, with accountability towards national parliaments, instead of the European Parliament, while the proposal of the European Commission is to integrate this new institution into the EU framework

A MORE DEMOCRATIC UNION



'Our Union needs to take a democratic leap forward.'

- Continuation of the **Spitzenkandidaten process**
- Has sympathy for transnational lists in European Parliament elections
- Supports the organisation of **democratic conventions** across Europe in 2018 to continue the debate on the future of Europe up to the June 2019 elections
- More democracy and unity through more efficiency: **Merger of the Presidents of the European Commission and the European Council**
- No **Treaty Change** but progress to be made using existing clauses, e.g. the 'passerelle clauses' to move from unanimity to qualified majority voting in certain areas
- A **Subsidiarity and Proportionality Task Force** to help the EU focus on things that matter and to give back competences to Member States where it makes sense



'We must rebuild the European project, by and with the people, with a much stronger democratic foundation.'

- Link the **Spitzenkandidaten process** to **transnational lists**, which should be introduced in European Parliament elections as early as 2019 – using the quotas of departing British MEPs. Half of MEPs should be elected on transnational lists in 2024
- Organisation of **democratic conventions** across Europe in 2018
- More democracy and unity through more efficiency: **Reducing the number of Commissioners to 15** members
- **Treaty change** is not an end in itself but can be an option if the European project requires it
- Reduce red-tape, and **empower the regional level** where necessary



'A year ago, I said [...] that we need to take our destiny into our own hands. Europe must be able to act – both internally and externally – so that its voice is taken seriously in the world.'

- Acknowledges continuation of the **Spitzenkandidaten process**
- In the longer run, **transnational lists** will be required so that the Spitzenkandidat can be elected in all Member States and does not depend on nomination by his/her national government
- **Reducing the number of Commissioners**

Commonalities and nuances

- **Significant convergence among the three leaders**
- All support the democratisation of European elections by continuing the **Spitzenkandidaten process**. However, Merkel points out to the fact that the political family of the person nominated by a Member State should, as a rule, reflect the political family in government in that Member State
- All mention **transnational lists** for the European Parliament elections, with President Juncker seemingly more cautious, expressing only 'sympathy' and acknowledging that some MEPs disagree with the idea. President Macron, however, explicitly calls for such lists to be put forward as early as the 2019 elections and to go much further in the 2024 elections. Chancellor Merkel's CDU was among the opponents of transnational lists, voting against their introduction already in 2019. If transnational lists were to bring about a change in the composition of the European Parliament and its voting rules, this would require a unanimous decision by the European Council. What is more, electing half of the European Parliament on the basis of transnational lists could run counter to Article 14(2) TEU and may require Treaty change
- All three are supportive of more **citizen engagement**. The European Commission has a long tradition in this area, having organised in the last three years over 300 interactive Citizens' Dialogues in more than 80 cities and towns across 27 Member States. President Macron calls for democratic conventions throughout Europe – an idea fully endorsed by President Juncker
- Both President Macron and Chancellor Merkel are in favour of a **smaller College of Commissioners** – as already foreseen in the Lisbon Treaty, although President Macron's goal of 15 members would require a modification of Article 17 TEU
- Both President Juncker and Chancellor Merkel are in favour of **enhancing the EU's ability to speak with a unified voice on the global stage**. President Juncker develops this further by proposing to make use of existing Treaty provisions to move towards qualified majority voting on common foreign and security policy issues

EDUCATION AND YOUTH



'I am particularly proud of the young Europeans volunteering to give language courses to Syrian refugees or the thousands more young people who are serving in our new European Solidarity Corps. These young people are bringing life and colour to European solidarity.'

- Praises creation of the European Solidarity Corps, first announced in the 2016 State of the Union speech



'Europe must be that space where every student speaks at least two languages by 2024. Instead of regretting our divisions, let us reinforce exchanges among ourselves.'

- A network of European Universities
- Harmonisation or mutual recognition of diplomas from secondary institutions
- Strengthening exchanges: Enabling half of school population under the age of 25 to spend at least 6 months in another EU Member State



'A European Youth Agency could help to involve young people with Europe.'

- **European exchange programmes** should be open to all youth
- The EU should aim towards **common professional qualifications**

Commonalities and nuances

- **Significant convergence among the three leaders**
- All want to make European policies more **citizen-centric** and youth-focused
- The EU's **Erasmus+ programme** already covers exchanges of pupils, students, vocational trainees, apprentices and teachers



European **Political Strategy** Centre

The European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC) is the European Commission's in-house think tank. It reports directly to President Juncker and operates under his authority.

The mandate of the EPSC includes: **strategic analysis and policy advice**, both short- and long-term, to the President and the College on issues related to the policy priorities of the Juncker Commission (as defined by the President in his political guidelines presented to the European Parliament on July 15 2014); and **outreach** to decision-makers, think tanks and civil society at large.