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“Time to Talk Europe”

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and

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9 June 2016

On June 9, 2016 the Académie Diplomatique Internationale, and the *International New York Times* co-hosted a “Forum For New Diplomacy” under the title “Time to Talk Europe” featuring Emmanuel Macron, Minister of Economy, Industry & Digital Affairs of France. In his speech Mr. Macron spoke about the challenges the European Union is facing in times of economic difficulties, the migration crisis and separation movements, most prominently the upcoming Brexit vote. Identifying the common market and security as the two key tasks of the EU, Mr. Macron called for rearticulating the European project under the objectives of more solidarity and more dynamic movement towards prosperity.

Analyzing whether the EU has been capable of keeping its founding promises of peace, prosperity and liberty, Mr. Macron noted that with the EU, Europe has seen the longest period of non-hegemonic peace in its history. While appreciating the geopolitical equilibrium that the EU has established following World War II, he also pointed to the recent terrorist attacks as a reemergence of a security threat in the heart of Europe. Furthermore, he warned of the potential German dominance in the economic sphere, which, according to Mr. Macron, would undermine the legitimacy of the European project based precisely on a sense of balance between the partners.

Mr. Macron focused on the economic malfunctioning of the Euro zone as one of the major problems of the European Union leading to doubt and disaggregation. “The promise of prosperity”, he said, “is seriously being threatened”. Mr. Macron observed that since the 2008 economic crisis, the European leadership has been managing the EU as it is, failing to implement long-term responses to the crisis and failing to protect the European markets. In the following, Mr. Macron made a strong case for more solidarity within the European Union. While he accepted the necessity of responsibility and competitiveness in economic policies, he clearly stated the need for adding solidarity to the strategy.

In the context of calling for more united and coordinated efforts to create a true, common market Mr. Macron criticized the Great Britain’s moves to leave the EU or at least attain a special status within it. The paradox is that the European Union is rejected by many British citizens for being over-deregulated while this deregulation in the EU was largely due to British influence. While it should be the collective preferences of the EU member states that are in the

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focus, Great Britain is setting a bad precedent of individualism no matter what the results of the referendum will be. If the British vote to stay, other countries will demand a similar special status, causing further disaggregation in the EU; if they vote to leave, the Brexit would exacerbate the risk.

Despite all the issues he identified, especially within the economic sphere of the European Union, Mr. Macron made it clear that he personally believes in the European project and the European dream. Highlighting polls that show the majority support for the European project within the member states' populations, Mr. Macron demanded their governments stop this "rhetoric, shared by many countries in the last few decades, which blames Europe as the culprit, Europe as the root of problems, when really it is the solution." Instead, he called for a novel, coordinated effort to create a unified and powerful Europe that can prevail on the geopolitical and economic stage.