



Democracy, Sovereignty and Security in Europe

Theme 2

**Information document prepared by Mr Mogens Lykketoft
Speaker of the Folketinget, Denmark**

Theme 2 – Democracy, Sovereignty and Security in Europe

The three concepts democracy, sovereignty and security have been strongly interrelated in a European context for centuries.

The Peace of Westphalia 1648 following the Thirty Years War established the principles of the sovereign state in Europe.

The Nation State has since then been the political, institutional framework for the development of democracy in Europe.

Inspired by the French revolution in 1789 many European Countries adopted new more democratic constitutions in the following decades including among others Norway 1814, The Netherlands 1814, Belgium 1831 and Denmark 1849.

The Nation states and national parliaments will also in the future remain the most important building stones in our democracies.

But experiences from two World Wars, the trade wars during the crisis years in the 1930's, postwar globalization of the economy, global financial crises and cross border challenges such as climate change, pollution, transnational crime and illegal immigration have pushed forward many efforts to pool sovereignty in different kinds of international organizations, because all the most frightening challenges for the individual nation cannot be met within the national democratic framework alone.

The United Nations is the formal foundation for global governance, but not yet an expression of real pooling of global sovereignty - except in the rather few cases, where the Permanent Five in the Security Council can act together.

NATO has after the cold war included several Eastern European countries as member states, thereby providing a security guarantee to the young democratic nations. The treaty obligations for the North American and Western European members are the guarantee that the new NATO members cannot once again be forced to join alliances against their will and national interest. And they know they can rely on support in case of pressure through cyber attacks, shut-down of energy supply lines and other kinds of non-military aggression.

The major enlargement of the European Union is by far the most important change in Europe in the last decade. With its own supranational democratic institutions that administer the pooling of national sovereignty in important areas, The European Union is easily the most ambitious and far-reaching example of a regional cooperation.

For smaller nations such as Denmark that used to be under the dominance of big neighbours this has actually meant more real sovereignty and an influence on the whole European Community of nations which is much bigger than the size of their population would justify.

Nevertheless the result of the European Parliament Elections in May this year showed us, that popular support for the European project is declining. There are a lot of disappointed expectations towards the EU because of a situation with low growth in Europe and high unemployment especially among young people. In particular public frustrations are piling up in those member states that have high public debt and have been forced to tough austerity measures. But there is also rising frustrations in the West because of some of the consequences of the major enlargement: Opening of the common labor market to the East has made it possible for many East Europeans to migrate to the West, where living standards are still much higher - to take rather low paid jobs in the West. This is seen - especially in a situation with rather high unemployment - as undermining the social structures and taking away jobs from the national population in the receiving countries.

The combination of financial crisis and the early days of digesting the social consequences of the major enlargement has contributed to an increasing lack of trust in the political and economic institutions of the nation states as well as the European institutions. The crisis has revealed the limits of power of democratic institutions and has aggravated public distrust in representative democracy.

It is beyond the ambition of this brief paper to address all these challenges. But some of the challenges related to rising nationalism and European security will be touched upon.

Rising nationalism

We are witnessing worrying signs of rising nationalism in many European countries. It has been illustrated at several national elections the last couple of years and quite recently at the elections to the European Parliament. We have also seen violent behavior of groups belonging to the extreme right. Very often immigrants have been the victims of these violent incidents.

Nationalistic tendencies have many different faces and take different forms in various countries, but unfortunately it seems to be a general tendency. It would be dangerous just to pin point the problem to a few countries. We have seen the rise of nationalistic parties and xenophobic rhetoric across Europe. It is a common problem and it has to be addressed at national as well as European level. At times the tendency towards increased nationalism seems to be a symptom of socio-economic issues more than anything else. A better understanding of the origins of the rising nationalism in Europe is therefore essential.

Too often the public debate is dominated by simple, populist rhetoric. The national parliaments have a special responsibility to foster a well informed, nuanced debate on why nationalism is on the rise and what the proper political answers will be. National Parliaments can for instance

- promote discussions through parliamentary debates and questions to obtain information, raise awareness, and hold governments to account,
- conduct public hearings, engage independent experts and civil society representatives to further improve the debate on nationalism, immigration and related issues.

No alternative to strong European cooperation

The European countries are highly interdependent. There is no really attractive alternative to strong international and European cooperation. The European Union is – as already mentioned – the prime example of how member states have exchanged formal sovereignty with real influence in a number of well defined transnational policy areas. This development has by no means lead to the dissolution of the nation state.

But there is a need to seriously reconsider the role of political institutions in a fast developing world and possibly to renegotiate the EU design in order to regain broader popular support and maintain all members inside.

Legitimacy and support for European decision-making must be built from the level of citizens upwards. This would include a stronger role for the national parliaments which go beyond monitoring the principle of subsidiarity and scrutinizing national governments. National parliaments must play a more active role in European decision-making. To this end a number of proposals earlier this summer have been put forward by the Danish Parliament and other national parliaments. As a first step the European Commission has been recommended to set up a working group to look closer at role of national parliaments in the EU.

Security

The fundamental choices in Europe after the end of the Cold War and the breakup of the Soviet Union included the major enlargement of the European Union and the expansion of NATO to include former Soviet allies and republics.

In the West it was the hope that those countries staying outside EU and NATO – including the Russian Federation – would be incorporated in much closer cooperation with those institutions – both economically with the development of market economies and in a common security policy network.

To maintain and strengthen cooperation and security of the broader Europe, organizations such as the OSCE, the Council of Europe and NATO have in different ways made valuable contributions.

Recent political developments in Ukraine with the Russian annexation of Crimea and support for the separatists in Eastern Ukraine and the events a few years ago in Georgia clearly show that these institutions still have an important role to play.

The efforts to break up the territorial integrity of Ukraine have been extremely disturbing for the whole security architecture of the broader Europe – taking into account in particular the so called Budapest Memoranda on Security Assurances, 1994. The Presidents of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the United States of America and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom signed three memoranda on December 5, 1994, in connection with the accession of Ukraine to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Through this agreement, these countries (later to include China and France in individual statements) gave national security assurances to Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The Joint Declaration by the Russian Federation and the United States of America of December 4, 2009 confirmed their commitment.

The signatory states of the memoranda will respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine, and the parties reaffirm their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine. Ukraine promised to eliminate all nuclear weapons from its territory within a specified period of time.

The annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation is unacceptable and is in contradiction to international law and the Budapest Memoranda. The territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders was affirmed by a huge majority in the United Nations General Assembly 27 March 2014 in resolution 68/262.

Since the Russian annexation of Crimea terrible events have unfolded in the Eastern part of Ukraine including the downing of the Malaysian civilian airplane. Military as well as political/economical responses have been taken by the USA and the EU.

1) Small American contingents have left for Poland and a number of NATO-member states including Denmark, support Baltic States with air policing. We have to be prepared to take further steps to demonstrate solidarity according to the NATO treaty article 4 and 5.

2) An increasing number of economic sanctions have been introduced from EU and USA since events in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine have unfolded. The latest sanctions adopted by the EU the 29 July 2014 may very well have negative consequences for higher growth in Europe – but the cost for Russia will be much higher. If Russia does not contribute to a de-escalation of the situation further sanctions cannot be excluded. But there is reason to believe that the nationalistic fever in Russia will fade and that at some point the economic interest of the oligarchs around president Putin as well as ordinary Russians will move to the top of the agenda again.

Huge amounts of money are today needed in order to keep the state of Ukraine afloat in spite of economic collapse and cost of fighting a civil war in the East. International support for Ukraine must be provided while at the same time insisting on Ukraine to build strong, transparent democratic state institutions with a high degree of decentralization in order to calm anxieties of national minorities inside the borders of Ukraine.

EU and the Eastern Partnership

The massive support of the territorial integrity of Ukraine also sends a strong message of support to other countries in the region, including the Republic of Moldova and Georgia in their efforts to strengthen the cooperation with the European Union. Here the so called Eastern Partnership - a joint initiative between the EU, EU-member states and the Eastern European countries - is a valuable tool. It enables partner countries interested in increasing political, economic and cultural links with the EU to do so. It is underpinned by a shared commitment to international law and fundamental values – democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the principles of a free market economy.

The latest Association Agreements agreed upon were the ones for Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. On 27 June 2014 the EU signed association agreements with Georgia and the Republic of Moldova and completed the signature process with Ukraine.

It is important to underline that an enlarged Eastern Partnership is in no way excluding the participating countries from developing economic, cultural and political relations with Russia and other members of the Eurasian Union. Hopefully we at some point return to the 1990's ideas of broader integration and cooperation in all of the broader European space.

The concepts of democracy, sovereignty and security will also in the future remain crucial to a stable and secure Europe. The Council of Europe has since its foundation in 1949 made a valuable contribution, especially when it comes to the defense of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This work is today more important than ever.