



# ‘Shaping France and Europe’s Foreign Policy in a New Globalized World’: Wrap up of the meeting with Bernard Kouchner

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## Background

The global governance of collective issues or “global public goods” has currently reached a crossroads. On the one hand, indisputable elements of crisis testify to the difficulty in governing globalization by means of concerted standards and rules. On the other hand, the “objectivization” of specific global problems ensures that these problems develop an unprecedented consensus of knowledge and interest, which confirms their importance. This is particularly so for the climate issue, for the Millennium Development Goals (especially poverty and health), and for security issues (nuclear proliferation, nuclear terrorism...).

Against this background, the EU finds itself in an unprecedented situation. Relentless supporter of multilateralism and of a rule-based approach of global issues mirrored by the very functioning of its internal political system, EU's voice and propositions are expected to bring significant contribution to the governance of global issues. But the possibility for the EU to export its internal political system as a possible reference to craft a rule-based global deal is challenged both because of EU's changing internal factors and because of factors specific to the changing difficulties to govern global issues.

What are the available options for the EU to shape the future of global governance then? Here are the main answers to this question and many others raised during the conference held in Paris on January 18 and 19, 2008, with the French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner.

## General remarks on global governance

1. The key goal of global governance should not be understood as the search for a “golden number” of participants in each institution.

Indeed, on theoretical grounds, the small group / large group debate seems to be stuck because of endless academic discussions about the tradeoff between efficiency and legitimacy. On practical grounds, negotiations to enlarge the Security Council or the G8 to new big emerging countries to create a G13, also seem to be stuck, because every candidacy provokes controversy (for what it is and for what it is not...). One possible solution to avoid such a controversy could be to impose technical criteria for membership to these clubs. But these clubs would then have to admit all countries who meet these criteria.

As a consequence, the key goal of global governance should rather be understood as attempts to reduce the tension between smaller groups providing leadership, and larger groups providing support for action. Club approaches and multilateralism should not be seen as exclusive but rather as reinforcing each other.

2. The currently available governance structures, whether public or private, local, national or international, are widely inadequate to face the global challenges.

There is a growing and urging need to develop solutions within a framework for collective action that would be as global as the challenges we face. The concept of Responsibility to Protect (R2P), even though it was initially developed to prevent crimes against humanity within the borders of a state, proves (when unbundled) to be a useful set of principles to redesign the global architecture, in order to address more efficiently global issues such as global warming, terrorism or migration. The core principles of R2P are the following: Each sovereign state will be looked at first to do its part towards achieving the consensus goals; The international community will furnish such support as may be needed to enable each state to get the job done; Where a state fails or refuses to do its part, there will be consequences calibrated to meet the seriousness of the lapse.

3. Uncertainties remain on the best way to provide global public goods, especially for climate change.

In her famous book<sup>1</sup>, Inge Kaul mentions the “forgotten equivalence principle” which, at its simplest, suggests that those who are significantly affected by a global good or bad should have a say in its provision or regulation. Using this principle as a starting point, she calls for an alignment of the “circles” between those who decide and those who benefit from the decision (or are hurt by the absence of decision), in order to “fill the accountability gap”.

Without denying the existence of a democracy deficit of global governance, especially in global economy, regarding the provision of some specific public goods, the equivalence principle may be in contradiction with the logic of collective action<sup>2</sup>. For example, the European Central Bank (ECB) can be described as a “non-democratic” institution (or at least an institution without democratic day-to-day control by citizens). The ECB was created because European states recognized that an independent central bank was necessary to maintain efficiently price stability inside the euro zone. The economic rationale for an independent central bank lies in the conflict between competing aims: the need for immediate consumption and for savings.

There is a similar conflict between short-term and long-term interests when it comes to the fight against climate change that could justify the existence of such a “non democratic” institution to tackle climate change issues.

4. The cooperation local, regional and national officials and experts that appears to be necessary to address efficiently the global issues goes well behind the traditional boundaries of Foreign Ministries.

As a consequence of growing interdependencies between countries, the boundary between national and international issues is being more and more porous. Many Ministries are no longer necessary to cope with these interdependencies (finance, health, environment...). Therefore, Foreign Ministries should become less regalian and increase their function as a coordinative body between Ministries.

## Europe's role as a model and as an actor in global governance

1. If the EU sometimes looks like a 50 year-old lady without an aim, it is because it lacks a political narrative (or at least, for the time being only a negative one exists...). So far, the story of the EU is a story of no.

On practical grounds first: Europe was built around the Franco German compact as a coal and steel community to prevent the resurgence of a war. This was a huge accomplishment. However, this historical success is no longer enough to justify the continued existence of the EU, especially for the young people (in France, almost 3 out of 4 voters under the age of 25 voted 'no' to the referendum about the European constitutional treaty in 2005).

On theoretical grounds then: Europe is not a state, not a nation, not an international institution... As a consequence, we always use categories that do not fit Europe to describe it. The parallel with the “third way”, which was supposed to transcend old left and new right, but eventually failed to find its way, is striking. Europe is frequently said to be a process and not an entity. But where is this process turned to? And what would be the consequence if the enlargement process were to be stopped?

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<sup>1</sup> Inge Kaul et al (2003): *Global Public Goods: International Cooperation in the 21st Century*.

<sup>2</sup> Mancur Olson (1971): *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*.

Above all, the political narrative of the EU will have to clarify what is the European global project. Indeed, while people living in the United States (US) make a very clear difference between the US and the EU, this difference is not always that clear for people living in emerging and developing countries.

2. "Why does the EU punch below its weight?"

Part of the answer lies in the specificities of EU's method to overcome conflicting interests between its member states.

In order to solve these conflicts, and to aggregate the different collective preferences between its member states, the EU turns every issue from a political issue to a technical one and lastly to an administrative one. In Europe's history, this method has proved to be extremely successful internally, to overcome conflicting interests between member states.

Europe's "mistake" might come from the fact that it behaves in the same way with its member states and with foreign countries. Indeed, when this method has been used to deal with the outside world, it has proven to be far less successful (some even go as far as saying that it has proven to be as inefficient externally as it has been internally). The reason is quite simple: Europe does not speak the same language, namely the language of politics and sovereignty, as others.

But if the EU punches below its weight, it is not always because it behaves in the same way internally and externally. On the contrary, if Europe tends to be considered, quite paradoxically, as a good example of global governance and an inefficient actor on the global scene, it is partly because it does not use networks in the same way inside and outside Europe. The EU is probably the best example of the efficiency of a governance model based on the intermediate level of networks. However, when it comes to global governance, the EU seems to rely overly on multilateralism and international institutions. This method is very heavy, and official government networks can be a more flexible instrument to cope with global challenges.

Europe's ability to lead in global governance should not be minimized. Indeed, the EU enjoys a great deal of soft power, based on a rule-based system, especially thanks to the development of a large and successful market. But if Europe punches below its weight, it is also because it under-invests in hard power. In the meantime, it can be argued that the US has been ignoring soft power lately. Even if Europe should not have in mind to compete with the US military power for the sole purpose of competition, if the EU really wants to punch at its weight, it will need to combine much more efficiently soft and hard power (such a balanced combination can be labeled "smart power"). Nevertheless, it is far from obvious if Europeans are prone to support the financial costs of such an investment.

## Climate change: a chance for Europe's leadership on the global scene.

1. If climate change is first and foremost a terrible threat for humanity, it is also a fantastic opportunity to change politics into a more collective action.

The "sustainable development" argument, even though it is perfectly sound intellectually and very popular in public opinion, may not be strong enough by itself to get enough political traction. In order to get heads of state in the game, especially in emerging and developing countries, the "security" argument should be added on top of the sustainable development argument.

2. To spur the debate, the issue paper prepared for the meeting was intentionally over pessimistic about the ability for the EU to continue to lead on global environmental governance in general, and on climate change negotiation in particular.

Very interestingly, participants, coming mainly from outside the EU, showed much more optimism toward the EU's ability to lead. They highlighted the fact that the EU should be

praised for being a pioneer in the fight against climate change, as it is seen as an opportunity for the EU to become a global leader since it has the potential to change the global politics paradigm and since the EU is a pioneer on climate change.

3. But this situation creates high expectations: the world looks to Europe to push forward the international agenda and to demonstrate that it is possible to cut carbon emissions while also maintaining welfare spending and economic growth<sup>3</sup>.

This makes Europe the world's testing ground for the green, market-based energy solutions of tomorrow. However, Europe's legitimacy as a global leader on climate change will not depend simply on setting targets. It will not depend either on its ability to deliver on them. It will depend on its capacity to craft a more inclusive post Kyoto international climate regime, including the major polluter economies. At some point, that may go against its traditional vision of effective multilateralism, and necessitate taking a second look on club approaches. Major emitters should be part of a leading club in order to tackle climate change on three or four key sectors (energy, transport, housing...); this club should then articulate with the overarching UNFCCC to include poor countries which are going to be the most affected by CC.

**Conclusions:** We must cast a new light on climate change and see it as a pivotal global political issue.

1. As in the case of Europe, we need a political narrative for climate change.

Indeed, thanks to the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), we have a scientific narrative: the critical tipping point of climate change may be at an atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration of 450 ppm. Now, thanks to Nicholas Stern's Review Report on the Economics of Climate Change, we also have the economic narrative: the cost of non action is far higher than the cost of action. Yet, the political narrative, as important as it is to put back on track the more and more urgently needed collective effort to tackle climate change, is still missing (or at least, for the time being, we have the wrong one...).

2. International climate change negotiations should not be seen as a painful burden sharing exercise.

In the context of the Kyoto Protocol, negotiations hinge on the central issue of fairness in setting greenhouse gases emissions reduction targets. The issue of fairness is very important. There are common but differentiated responsibilities between countries implying a common but differentiated effort to tackle climate change. But climate change should not be pictured as a mere distributive issue, otherwise the world goes directly into the wall. In practice, this quest for fairness leads to a deadlock: the largest greenhouse gas emissions producer, the United States, did not ratify the Kyoto process and refuses to be party to it unless the new framework contains obligations for emerging countries.

The Kyoto rationale, founded on the idea of a burden-sharing exercise, should be replaced in 2012 by a partnership on a new development and growth model. Without eluding the question of fairness, the debate today must be refocused on financing this reorientation and especially the energy transition.

3. Climate change legitimates, more than any other global issue, the need for a rule-based system and offers an opportunity to gather security and global public goods approaches.

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<sup>3</sup> « Denmark, for example, has achieved 70% growth since the early 1980s without increasing energy consumption and while transferring 15% of overall energy production to renewable sources<sup>7</sup>. Anders Fogh Rasmussen (Denmark Prime Minister): Europe's chance to become a global climate champion.

## The French Presidency of the EU should set the agenda for the next US President.

1. Given the political sequence, the timing will be good.

French Presidency of the EU will start in July and will last six months; American elections will take place in November. In addition, the new president, whether he or she is Democrat or Republican, will more or less feel free from the Bush administration's legacy. And perhaps most importantly, he or she will need some quick success, especially on foreign policy, after the failure of the invasion of Iraq, and its negative consequences on the perception of America as a superpower by global public opinion.

2. More generally, and apart from these cyclical favorable circumstances, this initiative should be seen as an attempt from the EU to engage the US in a rule-based system.

America's stance toward the respective pros and cons of unilateralism and multilateralism seems to be progressively changing. Iraq's plight proves, if needed, the limits faced by any unilateral military intervention, even when the world most powerful army heads it. There is a growing sense in America that it will no longer be the world sole superpower in a near future. Therefore, for its own well-understood interest, the US should try to reengage in the multilateral system and push for a rule-based system (Rawls' veil of ignorance).

3. The explicit content of such an initiative still needs to be discussed. But its general purpose could be to better articulate policies relating to the three dimensions of security (to reform non nuclear proliferation international regime), development (to reach Millennium Development Goals) and climate change.