

A European's viewpoint

Without political Union Europe's security is at stake

BY *DUSAN SIDJANSKI**



The bloody attack at the heart of Paris and of Europe has triggered a radical change in our outlook and priorities. Politics have taken precedence over pure economics. From now on, survival and security are our main concern. The terror attacks by Islamist extremists have turned the economic crisis into an existential one. Europe and its incomplete Union is the main target of the ubiquitous menace posed by ISIS. It is time for Europeans to become aware of the increasing threats hanging over them: the economic crisis followed by the mounting wave of migrants, paving the way for extremist, populist movements, and to top it all the terrorist attacks. These multiple risks strike the founding principles of a political community, the security of Europeans and the very survival of our civilisation by demonising our values and our way of life. No European country can claim to be shielded from danger as proven by the networks of terrorists preparing the ground, the deadly attacks across permeable borders and the recruitment of suicide bombers via Internet. On the day before the attacks in Paris European police forces, coordinated by Eurojust, arrested 7 terrorists in Italy, 4 in Great Britain, 3 in Norway and 1 in Finland.

The EU responded by unanimously agreeing to France's request for aid. Germany and the United Kingdom have declared themselves on board at France's side. Other instruments exist: the Union has the power to mandate one or several Member States to undertake external interventions; moreover, a core group of at least nine Members can safeguard security. In addition, the Union should fully exploit cooperation between judicial, police, intelligence and information services until such time as a European Public Prosecutor's department has been set up together with specialised agencies. The EU is clearly involved in an all-out war which requires actions at various levels. For example, the Security Council has adopted a resolution

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at France's request and in accordance with the strategy defined by President Hollande who, in the same spirit, has been working on the creation of a "unique coalition" between the United States, France and Russia. Its mission is to restore peace in Syria and to let the people be heard. This act clearly marks a turnaround in the French Government's foreign policy and Russia's return alongside the EU. Unfortunately the fact that Turkey downed a Russian military plane the day before the talks started put the brakes on this ambitious project by reducing it to a simple question of coordination! Which prompted Russia in turn to accuse Turkey of being involved in the trafficking of oil purchased from Daesh.

In order to ensure that the EU is equipped with a coherent long-term policy line, it must be incorporated within an institutional framework by resorting without delay to "enhanced cooperation". The creation of a vanguard as a precursor to the establishment of the core of a political Union is indeed provided for by the treaty. Once constituted, the dynamic core group would guarantee the control of security forces and their deployment by a political power according to democratic procedures. An effective response requires bombing of ISIS command centres and oil facilities, measures to cut off Islamic State's sources of funding from Turkey and other neighbouring countries; fighting against Islamist ideology and the indoctrination of young jihadis and suicide bombers. This series of actions requires a political authority capable of defining and implementing a common strategy.

The very heart of Europe is under attack, ushering in a new age of insecurity intended to weaken and even destroy our civilisation. Europeans will need to demonstrate political courage, solidarity and commitment if we are to defend our cultural heritage. At the vanguard, France and Germany in association with the United Kingdom and Italy, called upon to form an influential core group within the Union. If we are to rally our forces and take effective long-term action, we must urgently create a democratic institution based on shared sovereignty. The very survival of our civilisation requires us to pool our resources and our strength within a European political Union.