

## **PRESS RELEASE – EU NEEDS MORE INTEGRATION TO EXIT CRISIS, SAID JAVIER SOLANA AT STATE OF THE UNION**

As EU leaders and thinkers gathered today in Florence during the second-annual State of the Union, panelists addressed a range of issues calling for greater EU integration to address the current economic crisis as well as a range of longer term issues such as security policy.

“If there is a big failure of European foreign policy, it is not of capacity, but of intellectual ambition and collective purpose,” said Mark Leonard, Director of the European Council on Foreign Relations. He pointed out that the EU lacks the ability to influence states in its neighborhood without its ability to offer membership, and has not yet found a way to forge its relations with these countries, notably Russia and Turkey. It is the lack of thinking, not the lack of funds, that also plagues EU security and defense policy, Leonard said, adding that without a collective strategy the bloc risks having the US and China decide on the rules in this area.

Concerning the EU’s relations with the US, Federico Romero, Professor of history at the European University Institute, also pointed out that a generation gap is rapidly widening between the attitudes of the younger generation of Americans who have a more global view on travel and culture versus the previous generation centered on Europe: “We can soon expect it to reach a tipping point,” he added.

The way in which the European Union conducts its foreign relations also must undergo a shift in behavior, said Alfredo Conte, Head of Strategic Planning at EEAS: “European diplomats need to learn to be a little more humble. To listen to other ... And maybe stop preaching altogether,” Conte said. He went on to say that the need for cooperation by foreign countries with the EU is even greater, as problems from cybersecurity to climate change are very complex and multifaceted.

Change is made even more important as in 40 years’ time, when no European country will be one of the world’s 10 largest economic powers, said Javier Solana, Former EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy. Solana also underlined that the political cycle in developed countries of only two years to deal with global problems is too short. He also underscored that Europe needs more integration to exit the current economic crisis: “This is not going to be an easy task. We have member countries, the UK I have in mind, which are not in a position to move in that direction. How we handle them will be crucial.”

### **CONTACTS**

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# THE STATE OF THE UNION

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