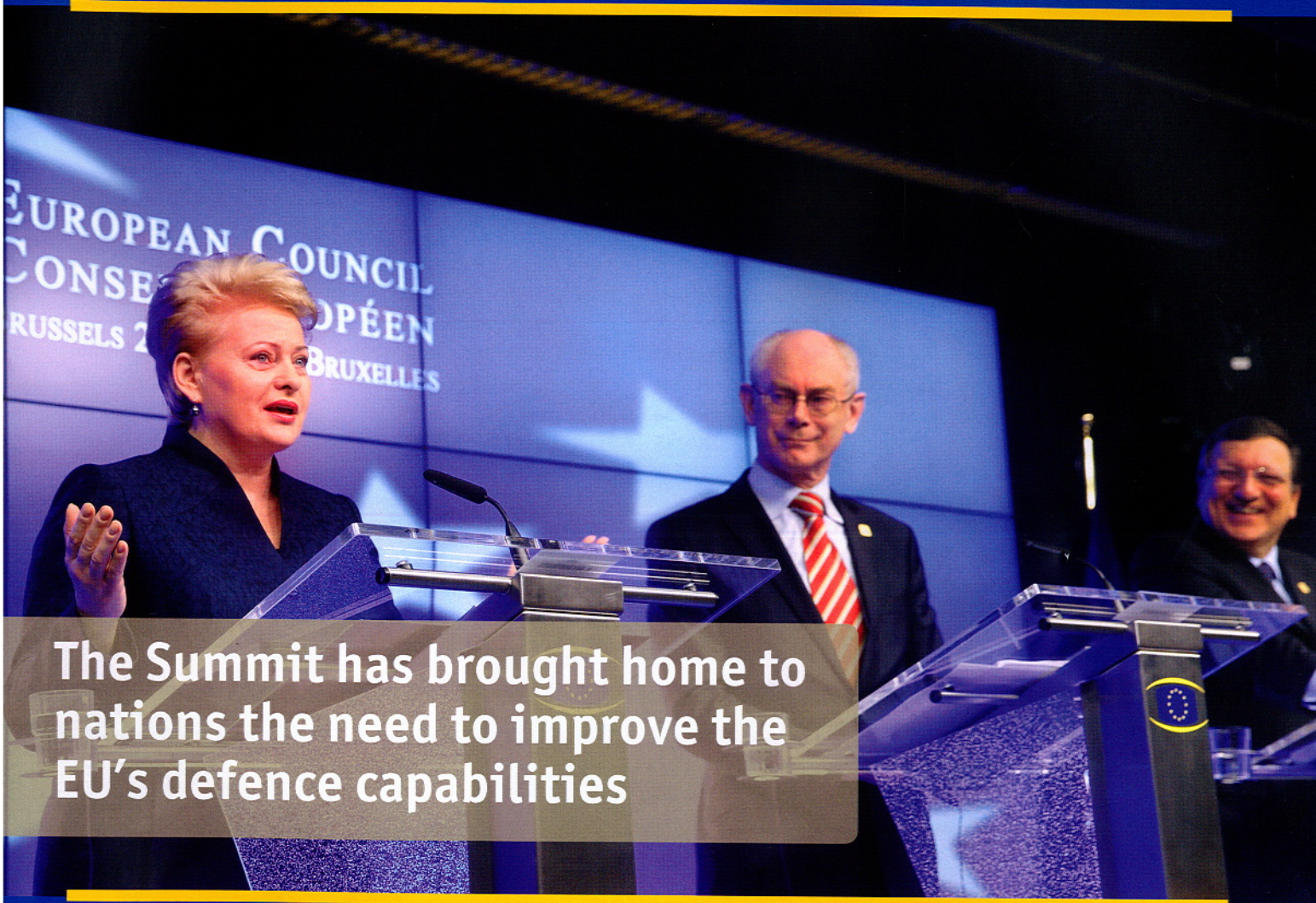


The European Security and Defence Union



The Summit has brought home to nations the need to improve the EU's defence capabilities



More coherence, more transparency

Lt General Wolfgang Wosolsobe, Director General EU Military Staff, Brussels



A roadmap to increase ambitious solidarity

General Patrick de Rousiers, Chairman EU Military Committee, Brussels

The Ukrainian crisis has become the Russian crisis

Russian lessons for Europe

by Jean-Dominique Giuliani, President Robert Schuman Foundation, Paris

One permanent European member of the UN Security Council has repeatedly breached the UN Charter, likewise all of the regional treaties to which it is a party (CFCE-OSCE, Council of Europe, CIS), as well as the promise made to Ukraine when it signed the Budapest Memorandum in 1994 (denuclearisation of Ukraine in exchange for the guarantee of its borders) and the Friendship Treaty (1997). This changes matters a great deal. Rather than focusing on the causes of the Ukrainian crisis, which has now become the Russian crisis, we should look at the effects that it will have on Europe.

Russia – an unpredictable neighbour

The European Union now has an unpredictable neighbour, not all of whose borders are recognised. Russia has used military force and threatens to do so again: a threat that it will almost certainly not hesitate to carry out.

The European Union had hoped to establish stable, long-term cooperation with Russia in the obvious interest of both parties, but is now faced with a player whose aim is again to become the major power it once was, a position it achieved through terrible oppression of its people and a communist dictatorship. This in spite of Russia's shrinking demography and a political and social structure that forces its citizens, capital and wealth to flee the country. In addition to this, it has deployed its military force twice in the space of six years. The generosity that the Union has extended to neighbouring peoples attracted by its freedom and living standards must be replaced by a proper foreign policy that privileges alliances. Europe, which symbolises the rule of law, the peaceful settlement of differences, multilateralism and dialogue, did not use to have enemies. Now it has one: not the Russian people, but a regime terrified by the idea of granting freedom and which pulls on the old strings of nationalism.

Europe must learn from experience

From an internal point of view 2014 just about marks the end of the financial crisis. The Member States who were in difficulty are all back on the road to growth; real progress has been made on a common economic governance, as illustrated by the establishment and approval of a banking union. This year might herald the European Union's return to strength, as it

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elects afresh all of its institutions and with a consensus gradually forming on the reform of their functioning and the revision of certain EU policies. Our challenges now come from outside. The European states have cashed in – more than amply – on the “dividends of peace”, to the point of weakening their

foreign policy. Because there has been no progress towards a common defence policy and the emphasis has always been on external intervention we now need to focus on protecting our borders and those of our European allies. Membership of the NATO Alliance, which is the only guarantee of our security, should not deter the EU Member States from seeking autonomy of thought and policy. They must now focus all of their strength on drafting a genuine foreign policy, notably with regard to the areas on the EU's borders.

Determination and steadfastness

Their initial response shows renewed determination. Their steadfastness in the face of any further provocation will be decisive for a peaceful future for our continent. They should now, together, decide to put an end to the constant reduction of their defence spending and to toughen up their common diplomacy.

Europe, as the world's leading economic and trading power, has global interests. It must understand that in order to guarantee peace it cannot respond to the use of brute force with dialogue alone; it must comprehend that diplomacy is only credible when backed up by resolute determination, which in turn is lent credibility by a strong military machine.



Photo: private

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