

# EU Foreign Policy - Defining European 'Smart Power'

in "[Volt's Mapping of Policies](#)" - "EU Reform - Foreign & Neighbourhood Policy Reform Migration Policy team"

**Position in MOP:** Challenge 5+1 - EU Reform, V. Foreign & Neighbourhood Policy Reform on page 199 of the MoP of Volt Europa.

## Overview of Volt's Foreign Policy

### 1. The Case for a European Foreign Policy

The European Union inches ever closer to resembling a federal state: it has an executive, a parliament, a central bank, a robust bureaucracy, and a capital. Altogether, European Union countries total 450 million people, are second in defense spending, and boast the largest single market in the world. Domestically, Volt's vision of the EU elaborates a process whereby the EU is a beacon of peace and democratic prosperity, transitions from a passive entity into something more significant. While this vision holds global implications, it largely concerns itself with internal EU affairs. This document seeks to change that. Lacking a unified foreign and external policy will hinder Volt's vision of a greater European Union. The EU must not eschew the opportunity to create a more auspicious international environment for itself and its allies.

\*\*When referring to foreign policy throughout this text, it is understood in terms of both the broader external policy, which includes trade and regulatory alignment, and the foreign policy in a more narrow sense, i.e. diplomatic relations and foreign policy statements. This distinction is particularly important in the EU context where the external representation of the Union is split between the EEAS and the Commission.

#### a. Peaceful Diplomacy: A European Tradition

Modern diplomacy has deep roots in European history. As early as 1455, northern Italian city states like Milan sent Aristocrats into France. From the Renaissance and beyond, the system of sending permanent delegates into foreign countries became a common practice throughout Europe. Following the French Revolution, rather than sending members of the

Royal Family, common citizens were sent out from the Première République to interface with other states. Ever since, diplomacy has grown more professional and unalienable in international relations.

The culmination of diplomatic craftsmanship came after Napoleon's defeat in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna, where an international diplomatic system was established. After WWII, the world understood that negotiating skills were crucial to maintaining peace. Therefore, after the formation of the EU, Europe continued its strong diplomatic tradition and forged a long-lasting peace on our continent. Since the founding of the EEAS in 2010, a single EU foreign policy administered by European Union agencies and institutions is a real possibility. Richelieu, Talleyrand and Genscher, to name a few, are historical names in European diplomacy; we aim to add some more.

## **b. A Unified Doctrine**

The time has come to create a coherent foreign and external policy that concerns all EU member states. Volt envisions an empowered European Union community of political unity and economic vitality. Achieving such global prominence implies rising to the responsibilities of statehood on a scale thus far unknown to the EU. As the European Union's global influence expands, our issues and interests will encompass a greater geographic area. Crises and threats will demand a cogent and timely response backed by the resolute unity of members. This requires preordained foreign and external policy that adheres to and projects European values abroad.

### **i. A common purpose**

Precisely because of Europe's long history, diversity and position between continents each Member State and each nation has legacy relationships, traditions and natural allegiances. We need to find ways to weld this into a common purpose and understanding of our needs as a united citizenry. This will require accommodating cultural and historical ties and acknowledging the interwoven interests between us.

Under the current circumstances where the EU does not yet have its own foreign policy, we believe the guiding principles below ought to be followed by member states in their foreign policy. Nevertheless, unifying the European Union under a single foreign policy is an immediate priority in order to ensure that EU actors speak with one voice.

### **ii. Institutional Reform and Regional Policies**

The complex transition to a unified European Union has found EU institutions and leaders retroactively responding to crises rather than creating policy that presages possible exigencies. In the case of foreign policy, Volt seeks to determine who the answerable authorities are, in what circumstances they are empowered to act, and what powers they wield. This document will investigate the roles of the Commission, the External Actions

Service (EEAS), the Parliament, and the Council in the foreign and external affairs of the EU. The goal is to prevent post factum scrambling, and instead, provide a framework for decisive action.

This doctrine will also guide decision-making and problem solving *within* the foreign and external policy apparatus. To do so, it is necessary to define the EU's interests in various geographic regions. This will avoid past inefficiencies which have prevented decisive action as a single body. To be clear, Volt's foreign policy does not seek to prescribe concrete solutions to issues that are time-sensitive, polarizing and/or disaffecting, or vaguely relevant to the interests of the EU. It is vitally important that foreign policy promotes a systematic approach and a process of understanding which is applied only as necessary.

### **c. Balancing Posture with Capability and Circumstance**

It is necessary to understand the implications and feasibility of the EU as a global player. As of now, the EU does not operate jointly on the world stage and, thus, fails to adopt effective policy measures that comprehensively address the union's needs. Instead, in a swath of bilateral agreements, individual member states further their own self-interest, consequently undermining the union's external unity.

Concomitantly, the EU is relegated to only reliably yielding effective influence in its regional neighborhood. In the long term, Volt envisions the EU acting in a concerted effort on a global scale and, thereby, project its influence more effectively to further human rights, multilateralism and democratic values.

In accordance with the time-relevance of this doctrine, the EU will be discussed as both a mediator and a major power. Ideally, the balance between these roles will shift over time. The EU is a rising global force; its growing power will eventually preclude it from being both a neutral problem solver and a pursuer of geopolitical self-interest. In considering the current state and/or lack of EU foreign and external policy, and in the context of Volt's vision for the EU (EU Army, federalized governance, economic powerhouse, etc.), the dual *raison d'être* is possible as part of a continuum.

Volt has an ambitious strategy for reform which, over years, endeavors to deliver prodigious social and institutional change to Europe. Of course, it is necessary to ground ourselves in the current circumstances and capabilities of the EU. Therefore, Volt's foreign and external policy will develop incrementally. This foreign and external policy seeks to balance the existing state of affairs with the larger vision of a more powerful Europe. As such, this is a living document—built to adapt over time and guide future policy.

For example, where the EU finds its interests are not threatened (i.e a neutral stance can be reasonably assumed) and meaningful strides towards peace are possible, it will be open to acting as a mediator. On the other hand, as capabilities expand and situations evolve, the EU

may no longer find it advisable to mediate, and may rather involve itself as an interested party. Such possibilities will be enshrined in Volt's foreign and external policy.

In its current state, the EU observes a limited set of global interests and is likewise incapable of supporting its soft power initiatives with hard power across the globe. As our capabilities evolve, the EU will apply a smart power doctrine i.e. the combination of hard power coercion with soft power persuasion and attraction. Thus, finding ourselves at the beginning of the aforementioned continuum, Volt's foreign policy will define the cases in which mediation is preferable to intervention. This policy will include a historical and cultural understanding of Europe's modern role of mediation and peaceful diplomacy. In further developing its policy, Volt will consider how, over time, we envision the core institutions developing to support a robust foreign policy that projects European strength and values abroad.

## Previously Established Principles

The MoP provides a starting point in principle, insofar as it outlines that the principles which should shall guide Volt's foreign policy, are the following - currently not in any ranked order:

- Human Rights
- European Security
- Commitment to Multilateralism
- International Aid
- Environmental Protection and Climate

As this drafting progresses, through this document's approval, we ask the GA to reaffirm its support for these principles as the north stars of Volt's Foreign Policy.

## Smart Power

In addition to the above, we want to launch the concept of 'smart power'. Essentially, it is about the balancing of hard and soft power. Certainly, the EU's biggest contribution to the world scene so far has been its soft power, but its main weakness remains its lack of hard power. To avoid the historic mistakes of other superpowers, it is important that we strike a balance between hard and soft approaches to international relations. We must be vocal in supporting what is right, we must not yield to international bullying, and certainly, we must never be warmongers or gung-ho interventionists. Peace and stability is a priority, as is the minimising of international suffering. With that in mind, we strive to retain the soft power profile that has become the EU's trademark, while consciously and strategically developing the EU's hard power capabilities.

It should also be highlighted that the EU's famed soft power is insufficient in itself as well. The EU must distil and crystallise its ability to be one foreign policy actor, with all necessary tools provided to it.

## Next Steps and Further Work

Going forward, we intend to develop Volt's foreign policy framework along two main lines - institutional reform and development of regionally applicable policies. Central to those workstreams, both large in their own right, is the further development of what we consider to be this document's single largest addition to Volt's foreign policy - the concept of 'smart power'.

### a. Institutional Reform

Volt speaks a lot already about reforming and 'fixing' the European Union. Certainly, as we go forward in developing our comprehensive foreign policy, it is crucial that we dedicate sufficient time to considering how the different existing institutions will be affected by our proposal, and how we would see them reformed to better be able to work for our guiding principles. For now, we identify the following institutions for further consideration:

- Commission
- Parliament
- Council
- EEAS
- Existing Treaties

### b. Regional Policies

As we develop further, it is also important to note that Volt should consider well-thought Foreign Policy strategies and approaches to specific regions. This list is not exhaustive, but we propose that going forward, Volt's foreign policy - be it top level or granular - should enable us to position ourselves on the following regions:

- Sub-saharan Africa
- Asia Pacific
- South East Asia
- Central Asia
- Middle East and North Africa
- Latin America
- North America