A strong EU needs both vision and realism

The European Union is now more vital than ever before and needs both vision and realism to push forward its agenda, High Representative Federica Mogherini said last night.

"European Union integration is the indispensable factor we need. In 1989, in the 90s, Europe was the dream of a luxury: freedom of movement, the friendship, the openness to the world. Today, it is a necessity," Mogherini said in the Willy Brandt Lecture 2016 - 'United we must stand. The European Union in testing times', at the Humboldt University of Berlin.

"Vision and realism are incredibly needed in today’s Europe," the High Representative said.

"This European peace project does not simply belong to our past. It is not just history. It is still very much a work in progress," she said, underlining how countries outside the EU often recognise the benefits and
strengths of the EU more than its own citizens.

"Here is the challenge for our daily work. Demonstrate every single day, every single day that together we are stronger. Demonstrate it through concrete facts and tangible results. The only way to save the European project - that yes is at risk - the only way to save it is to invest in a Union that delivers on our citizens’ needs. And also on our citizens’ dreams, because life is not only made of needs."

Mogherini told her audience that all Europeans have a shared responsibility to make the EU work: "And to do so, to deliver, to make our Union work, we need the right mix of realism and vision; of pragmatism and ambition".

For the High Representative, the EU is becoming "more and more an indispensable power", admired around the world "as a strong pole of stability, peace, democracy, economic growth, freedoms", and needs to recognise its own power.

"We are the biggest global economy, bigger than the United States and China. Countries at all corners of the world ask us to cooperate on their security or to support their peace processes. Our diplomacy allows us to act in every remote part of the planet – from the Arctic to the small Pacific islands. Our common work, 28 Member States together, allows us shape the global agenda on the international arena as we did with the climate change agreement last year, achieving the nuclear deal with Iran or achieving global consensus on the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). That was the power of Europe."

"We are the first provider of humanitarian aid worldwide, the first provider of development aid worldwide, we are the first trade partner everywhere in the world. Sometimes we do not realise what we are. We are a superpower. And we need to be aware of it, because only if we are aware of our power we will make full use of it. Power is nothing if you do not use it."

Mogherini underlined the importance for the EU to push forward its proactive agenda. With this in mind, she will next week present her package of proposals for enhanced EU security and defence to EU leaders.

"So here we are, with concrete steps, we are finally moving towards a European Union of Security and Defence at the service of peace," she said.

The High Representative concluded on an optimistic note: "A Union that delivers can only be a Union with a vision. And the Union we dream is a Union with the vision, with action, that delivers. A Union we can build only together, day by day. And I am sure, I am one hundred per cent sure, that we will make it.

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