

ECFR in the New World Disorder

ECFR began 10 years ago. The goal was to help European nations and citizens come together to stand up for the values of the open society and transform the world order to reflect them. In 2016, that vision suffered major setbacks. We witnessed a global counter-revolution against the institutions and values of the open society; a European Union at risk of disintegrating, where the consensus for EU action had eroded; and a fundamental change in politics and the media which raises questions about traditional ways of achieving political change. Donald Trump is not just the first US President who does not back European integration; he may even see the break-up of the Union as an opportunity. These developments necessarily change how we do business, but they also make our work all the more important. We believe that a liberal world order is essential to preserving European values and human dignity and we work daily to defend that proposition.

Defending the Liberal Order

In the face of these shocks, Europe is more focused on protecting itself than promoting its values around the world. Europe's foreign policy priority must be to defend the core pillars of liberal internationalism and peace, particularly close to home. ECFR must show how protecting the EU's nations and citizens will depend on engagement and co-operation rather than isolationism. We will make the case for cooperative European solutions to the key foreign policy challenges.

New Security Threats – We have embarked on an effort to understand the new types of security threats that are already plaguing Europe. We have established a [New European Security Initiative](#) that will bring together expertise on cyber, hybrid war, terrorism, and conventional military threats to defend against them. This will include reflections on how Britain fits into securing Europe.

Roots of the Refugee Crisis and Terror – The refugee crisis and many of the terrorist attacks in Europe stem from instability and poor governance in the Middle East. ECFR research seeks first to understand that region and ultimately to provide European solutions – at a time when the United States is retreating and regional actors such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, alongside neighbouring states like Turkey and Russia, are shaping the agenda. We will convene policymakers, officials, and opinion leaders around innovative proposals for European efforts to de-escalate the war in Syria, promote economic stabilisation in Libya, save the Iranian nuclear deal and find creative solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as facilitating a debate about the links between foreign policy and immigration and integration.

Instability on Europe's Eastern Periphery – The European Union cannot be stable and united while instability persists on its periphery. ECFR's work focuses on supporting independence and effective governance in Eastern Europe, particularly Ukraine. We will work to propose new mechanisms both for deterring Russian intervention and for engaging with Russia. With support from Europeans and Erdogan, we are establishing a Turkish-European Strategy Group to allow dialogue in a less formal setting.

Saving the EU from the Unravelling of Global Order – Europe's influence and wellbeing both supports and depends on a functioning global order. That order is now under threat not just from Russia, but from actors as diverse as China, India, and even the United States.

ECFR seeks to understand how others see the evolving global order, what they want from it, and how Europeans can work with them to preserve its best features. As well as coming up with a strategy for taming Trump's revisionism we will focus particularly on the Chinese challenge, providing European policymakers with new ideas on how to engage Beijing and other regional players on trade, protectionism and security issues. We will do a series of 'reverse power audits' designed to rethink relations with core countries such as the United States, Russia, China, and Turkey in this new era.

Impact in the New Political Era

ECFR was always based on the idea that EU foreign policy does not exist waiting to be influenced – it has to be built throughout Europe on every issue. That's why we have a Council of over 270 members and seven offices throughout Europe. But, whereas 10 years ago, many member states were interested in building a common European foreign policy, that consensus has all but disappeared. In this new world, ECFR needs to work even harder to build a consensus for European co-operation on foreign policy by framing arguments in ways that will resonate in national capitals, working with political parties as well as governments, reaching out to new media and sceptical audiences. Our approach has three main dimensions:

Building up ECFR's policy and advocacy capacity in national capitals. In a fragmenting Europe, we have a vision for a more networked ECFR where the leadership, policy and advocacy staff are working more closely with the national debates shaping European foreign policy. In practical terms that means that over the next five years, we will ensure that each of the four policy programmes has both policy and advocacy staff based in those offices which are most influential in their area in order to counter Europe's centrifugal tendencies.

Shift Centre of Gravity from London to Berlin and other capitals. In order to reflect the British decision to leave the EU, but also the belief that Germany will serve even more as a pivot in European foreign and security policy, over the next two years we will gradually shift the centre of gravity of ECFR away from London and build up our network of offices across the EU, in particular Paris and Berlin which will become a new administrative centre for the organisation. To facilitate this, we are already splitting Senior Management Team time between London and Berlin, where we are also investing in a larger convening space. Our goal is to use the engagement of the German government as a kernel of wider European coalitions, which we will encourage through building up our other continental national offices.

Move toward new forms of communication. The way that people receive and understand information is in a state of constant flux. Many of traditional modes of engagement, particularly the written word, have become less effective. We will be increasing our use of data visualisation, of infographics, of podcasts, and of social media to allow our ideas to profit from new forms of communications.