

THE EUROPEANS AND UNCLE TRUMP: A RISK AND AN OPPORTUNITY

Enrico Letta | *president of the Jacques Delors Institute*

Yves Bertoncini | *director of the Jacques Delors Institute*

Erik Belfrage, Joachim Bitterlich, Jean-Louis Bourlanges, Laurent Cohen-Tanugi, Nicole Gnesotto, Elisabeth Guigou, Eneko Landaburu, Riccardo Perissich, Maria João Rodrigues, Javier Solana, Christian Stoffaës | *members of the Board of directors of the Jacques Delors Institute*

Donald Trump's election to the presidency of the United States of America is a geopolitical event that entails risks whose causes and consequences the Europeans need to analyse if they are to turn that event into an opportunity for our Union. This tribune by Enrico Letta, Yves Bertoncini and members of our Board of directors was published on Euractiv.com, on Euractive.de, in [Le Figaro](http://LeFigaro.com) and in [El País](http://ElPaís.com).

Trump's victory is an earthquake resulting from the tectonic movements currently destabilising a majority of Western countries and caused, in particular, by the rise of the "emerging" countries and of wars within the Arab-Muslim world. His victory cannot in any way be called a victory "of the people against the elites" because Donald Trump garnered 2.8 million votes fewer than Hillary Clinton. But it is unquestionably the expression of an "anti-system" vote which can also be found on this side of the Atlantic.

Trump's victory expresses a malaise that is gaining ground in particular amid the working class and a part of the middle class as the heart of the globalisation process moves further and further away from the Western world: a malaise caused by an economic, cultural and political opening up of the global system that is being experienced in a very ambivalent manner. This clash of tectonic plates has already caused a few earth tremors of greater or lesser intensity (for example, the vote in favour of Brexit) and those tremors are going to trigger as many "replicas" in countries suffering from specifically national fault lines and fragilities.

There can be no question but that we need to learn the lessons imparted by these earthquakes so as to adapt the policies pursued by the member states and by the EU to cope with them, making every effort to regulate and to mould the globalisation process in a direction more favourable to our values and to the interests of the majority.

But while Trump's election win should alert us to its several causes, it is above all its potential

consequences that must mobilise us as Europeans. This, because while the Trump administration embodies a return to what, when all is said and done, is a traditional form of American isolationism accentuating a focus on Asia that is already broadly present, that isolationism could well be played out in a less predictable and more brutal fashion in the event of growing threats and risks.

It is up to us as Europeans, therefore, to act together to bolster our collective security by improving our police and legal cooperation, by strengthening external border controls, and also by playing a more determined role on the diplomatic and military levels. The "Atlantic alliance's European pillar" is returning centre stage at this time of Russian aggressiveness, of regional and civil war in Syria, of chaos in Libya and of Islamist terrorism, but also of such event as the United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU.

Donald Trump is more than likely to remind us of our duties while at the same time accusing us of being reluctant to raise our national spending on defence to 2% of our GDP in accordance with the guidelines formulated within the framework of NATO. We need to listen to his message, which indeed Barack Obama had already voiced, if we are to improve our capacity to act for our own security in the face of crises which, while they may seem peripheral and of secondary importance when seen from Washington, have a direct and often lethal impact here in Europe.

Donald Trump's election might also accentuate the political differences between the United States and the EU if his presidency proves to be a continuation

of his election campaign. Angela Merkel was quite right to remind us that the transatlantic partnership rests on shared values and principles including the defence of democracy, of the rule-of-law, of human rights, of gender equality and of respect for minorities. It is more urgent than ever before for us to reaffirm and to embody those great principles as part and parcel of our common European identity!

By the same token, we have to defend and promote a development model which endeavours to reconcile economic effectiveness with social cohesion and with the protection of the environment, a model from which the United States is marking its distance in view of the priority that it affords to economic effectiveness and from which Donald Trump may soon move even further away. We must seize this opportunity to reaffirm the legitimacy of our model

not only by contrast with China or with Russia but also by contrast with the United States. And we must do this by continuing to mobilise in favour of the environment and to hold our “green flag” proudly aloft, while at the same time moving ahead with the national reforms required for our model to function more effectively, particularly in terms of social cohesion.

Donald Trump’s election is at once a risk and a geopolitical opportunity for the EU. The EU will be able to benefit from it on condition that its member states and its citizens seize that opportunity in a spirit of cooperation and of solidarity rather than by vainly vying for the favours of a partner which is in any case likely to direct its gaze elsewhere in the future even more than it has done in the past.

On the same themes...

YES, WE ARE EUROPEAN!

Jacques Delors, Enrico Letta, Pascal Lamy, Yves Bertoncini and the participants of our 2016 European Steering Committee, *Tribune - Viewpoint*, Jacques Delors Institute, October 2016

STRONGER TOGETHER – EVEN AT 27!

Enrico Letta and Yves Bertoncini, *Tribune - Viewpoint*, Jacques Delors Institute, September 2016

BREXIT: BETWEEN BRITISH EUROPHOBIA AND CONTINENTAL EUROSCPTICISMS

Yves Bertoncini, *Policy Paper No. 171*, Jacques Delors Institute, September 2016

THE EU AND OUR COLLECTIVE SECURITY: STRONGER TOGETHER!

Jacques Delors, António Vitorino, Pascal Lamy, Enrico Letta and Yves Bertoncini, *Tribune - Viewpoint*, Jacques Delors Institute, June 2016

Managing Editor: Yves Bertoncini • The document may be reproduced in part or in full on the dual condition that its meaning is not distorted and that the source is mentioned • The views expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher • The Jacques Delors Institute cannot be held responsible for the use which any third party may make of the document • Translation from French: Stephen Tobin • © Jacques Delors Institute

