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Ressort: Politik

A new epicenter for Multilateralism

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The Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and Japan will in due course remove almost all tariffs on goods. The European Parliament, which has to give its consent before the deal can enter into force, is expected to vote its consent to the agreement at its December plenary session. If the deal is approved in Parliament, it can enter into force as soon as the Japanese Diet ratifies it.

The EU and Japan Agreement opens up services, including e-commerce, maritime transport, postal services, energy and telecommunications. It also is creating common rules for bilateral trade, and common standards for the two trading blocs. The agreement represents a timely signal in support of open, fair, values-based and rules-based trade, while promoting high standards, at a time of serious protectionist challenges to the international order. A timely signal in the moment when the liberal rules-based international order is in question. The USA are ready to act alone against their great strategic rival: People's Republic of China.

People's Republic of China, for its part, has the goal to become the global leader for innovation by 2050. It is already competing with the Americans in high technology. Its Silk Roads project, huge maritime and rail infrastructure between People's Republic of China and Europe and also Africa, opens up many opportunities for trade, but also strategic threats, for the European Union. Unfair competition, non-respect of intellectual property, Chinese state-owned enterprises, market access problem: People's Republic of China does not always respect European Union rules.

Europe is still divided between small countries that promote free trade because their market is too small, Germany, well positioned in global value chains, and countries like France, which are in favor of a Europe that protects.

Europe ought to be open but not offered for free, and should strengthen its arsenal of commercial defense: cybersecurity, control of foreign Investments and so on. In a network economy like the digital economy, only a European impetus can make a difference. Europeans can still improve their lives in health, transport, services by the use of industrial data and artificial intelligence .

As China's rise in new global value chains accelerates, European Union needs a 2050 vision to identify strategic positions, build its comparative advantages over time and translate them into European industrial pathways.

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The ability to act requires building a European strategy for security and competitiveness that will go through an ambitious and coherent long-term investment agenda. In short, if Europeans do not want all this to be translated into protectionism and war, they need both more market and more state, but also more cooperation in the service of the goods today endangered (climate, health, education, digital).

France and the United Kingdom will be out of the G8 in 2030. The BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) stand together, united and interventionist in the challenge of Western values . They are structured in particular in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), or Shanghai Pact, which includes People's Republic of China, Russia, four countries of Central Asia, and now India and Pakistan, more than 3 billion People. Multilateralism is not dead but its epicenter has changed.

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