

Anna Moskal\*

ORCID: 0000-0001-9070-069X

# THE IMPACT OF BREXIT ON THE EUROPEAN UNION'S FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

## ABSTRACT

The future of the European Union is a topic which frequently generates numerous heated debates amongst politicians, lawyers and political scientists. This issue is even more burning and contentious after the Brexit referendum, which is a turning point in the history of European integration. In response to the first withdrawal of a member state from the European Union, the European Commission published the “White Paper on the future of Europe. Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025”, which was immediately subjected to severe criticism. In this publication five possible scenarios for the future development of the European Union were presented with a view to “launching a process in which Europe determines its own path”. In September 2017 the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, in his “State of the Union Address 2017” outlined his own unique and alternative sixth scenario for Europe’s future, which concentrates principally on freedom, equality and the rule of law. The main aim of this article is to compile and provide an analysis of the effect of the United Kingdom’s withdrawal on the European Union’s future development in the context of European integration. This paper consists of five parts which include the history of European integration, an analysis of the Brexit referendum and its impact as well as a presentation of the six possible future development scenarios. The research methodology of this study combines both qualitative and quantitative methods.

**Keywords:** Brexit, European Union, withdrawal, European future, development scenarios

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\* Faculty of Law and Administration, Jagiellonian University in Cracow, e-mail: [annamaria-moskal@gmail.com](mailto:annamaria-moskal@gmail.com)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) is commonly known as one of the most significant and *sui generis* international organisations. It consists of 28 member states which cover an area of almost 4 500 000 km<sup>2</sup> and has 500 million citizens (Eurostat, 2018). Without a doubt, the EU is a major world trading power thanks to its single market of 28 European countries. According to the Eurostat, the EU's GDP (Gross Domestic Product, the most frequently used measure for the overall size of an economy) was equal €15.3 trillion in 2017. The European Union is the largest trade block in the world. It is the world's biggest import market for over 100 countries and a significant exporter of manufactured goods and services (European Union [EU], 2018b). Together with China and the United States of America, the EU is one of the three largest global players in international trade. Without a doubt, these economic statistics themselves make European Union one of the most influential political actors in the world (Tonra, 2009).

European Union's enlargement strategy turned out to be an effective and powerful tool also for social transformation in those member states which have undergone significant economic, democratic and societal developments. Such improvements were possible thanks to the EU policy which assumes cooperation in order to achieve peace, freedom and prosperity as well as to assert Europe's role in the world (EU, 2018a). The main aims of the EU include assuring the well-being of its citizens, combating social exclusion and discrimination and deepening the solidarity between member states while respecting their history, their culture and their traditions (Preamble to the Treaty on European Union, 2018). These noble goals are not easy to achieve in a group of 28 countries, each with its own, unique perspective and different political and economic priorities.

During several decades of its existence, the European Union went through various peaks and valleys. It was the last decade that was particularly tough – since 2008 the EU has had to face several crises: financial, Russian-Ukrainian and migration one (Prawda, 2018). Even though the EU handled each of them, more and more negative opinions about the EU's actions and the EU itself emerged. Since the last decade whenever the EU was mentioned on the media, there were always contentions about the EU crisis expressed (Borkowski, 2018). The sentence “the European Union is on the verge of crisis” was repeated over and over again on the media without deeper reflection and substantive explanation. This narrative has been built over the years and reached its peak on 24 June 2016 when the Brexit referendum results were published.

The controversial referendum in which the United Kingdom's citizens decided to leave the European Union has an unprecedented implication – the first withdrawal of a member state from the EU. Therefore, it initiated a new chapter in the EU's integration history. The results of the referendum also imply that the EU has run out of original ideas in both a conceptual and functional sense (Barburska, 2017). Nowadays, after decades of its existence the European Union has to face the lack of vision and unprecedented brand identity crisis (de Santis, 2016). A reaction to this predicament was a publication by the European Commission of the “White Paper on the future of Europe. Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025”, which provides five possible scenarios of the EU's future development. In order to thoroughly predict how the withdrawal of the United Kingdom will affect the European Union and which of the presented scenarios is the most plausible, the essence of the European Union's integration mission has to be taken into consideration.

## 2. HISTORY OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The idea of European integration emerged during the Second World War. In 1941 a founding father of the EU, Italian politician Altiero Spinelli, and an Italian actor Ernesto Rossi declared in their “Manifesto of Ventotene” the necessity of creating an international organisation that would prevent countries from starting bloody wars (Spinelli & Rossi, 1941). Two years later during a meeting of the French Committee of National Liberation French political and economic adviser Jean Monnet, who is widely known as an architect of European unity, declared: “There will be no peace in Europe, if the states are reconstituted on the basis of national sovereignty... The countries of Europe are too small to guarantee their peoples the necessary prosperity and social development. The European states must constitute themselves into a federation...”. The political impulse for the realisation of this vision was a speech delivered by the then British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, in 1949 in Zurich. Churchill called for “United States of Europe” in order to prevent future wars in Europe. On 9 May 1950, the then French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, announced the so-called “Schuman Declaration”, which was a plan for European supranational cooperation. However, it needs to be pointed out that this idea was originally thought out by Jean Monnet (Segers, 2009).

The unification of the European countries started in the 1951 through the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community by six founding members; that is, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany (Rittberger, 2012). Six years later, in 1957, with a view to ensure enduring peace, economic development and democracy the aforementioned six founding members signed the Treaty of Rome, which called into existence the European Atomic Energy Community and the European Economic Community (Gilbert, 2012). In the beginning of 1973, the group gained three more members: Denmark, Ireland and the Great Britain. Within the next fifteen years Greece, Portugal and Spain joined the group. The next milestone in the history of European integration was the signing of the Single European Act in 1986, which created the single market and cleared up problems stemming from the free flow of trade between European countries. The European Union was formally constituted after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 by twelve European states (Dinan, 2005). That was a turning point in European integration and a breakthrough in the cooperation between European countries. After this historic moment the European Union enlargement policy was a fact. In 1995 Austria, Finland and Sweden joined the European Union. Fifteen years later no fewer than 10 new countries joined the EU, followed by Bulgaria and Romania, which achieved the status of EU member states in 2007. In 2013 Croatia became the latest EU member state. What was set up for purely economic reasons within years of the successful cooperation evolved into a unique organization which covers areas such as safety, justice, migration, climate change and health. Furthermore, the European Union has become a major political player worldwide, desiring to foster stability, prosperity, democracy, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law at the international level. In 2000 the EU even established its own official motto - “*In varietate concordia*” (Eng. ‘united in diversity’). According to the European Commission the motto means that, via the EU, Europeans are united in working together for peace and prosperity, and that many different cultures, traditions and languages in Europe are a positive asset for the continent. Without a doubt, the European integration process is a unique phenomenon on a global scale.

Unfortunately, the impact and consequences of the European Union's expansions quickly became noticeable and the Eurosceptic tendencies grew in strength. Nationalist and populist parties have been gaining more and more supporters and the initial enthusiasm derived from the creation of the union has burnt out (Savin, 2017). There are several reasons for being dissatisfied with the functioning and the policy of the European Union – bureaucracy, weakened sovereignty of the nation states, internal sabotage exemplified by blocking various ideas proposed by member states as well as economic and migration crises. However, the real economic and political turmoil was caused by the Brexit referendum, which was conducted on 23 June 2016. The United Kingdom's citizens decided to leave the European Union and soon afterwards the government respected the nation's decision. On 29 March 2017, the United Kingdom officially initiated the EU withdrawal procedure regulated in article 50 of the Treaty on the European Union (TUE). After a two-year period of negotiating the conditions of leaving and the future relations between United Kingdom and European Union, Brexit will have come into effect by 30 March 2019. It will be a real watershed in the history of European integration because the United Kingdom, one of the oldest member states, will become the first country to ever leave the EU. Taking into consideration the numerous discussions and doubts regarding the shape and condition of the EU which burst out after the British referendum, the current situation of the EU could be described as the largest crisis of this group since the beginning of its functioning (Szymczyński, 2016).

### **3. THE BREXIT REFERENDUM AND THE FIRST WITHDRAWAL OF A MEMBER STATE FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION**

History indicates that the British decision to withdraw from the European Union had been in the minds of the islanders for generations (Zadarneko, 2017). It was a result of underlying Euroscepticism which fluctuated in the last few decades on the British political scene. It also must be pointed out that from the very beginning of European integration, the United Kingdom had private interests outside of Europe which did not necessarily match the European Community policy and some of the common institutions and postulates did not serve the British purposes' (Gowland & Turner, 2000). For decades, many myths and untruths about the dark side of the EU were aired on the British media and political leaders did not manage to adequately elucidate the positive features of European integration (Howorth, Schimdt, 2016). In 1993, an extremely Eurosceptic party, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), was established. Within years, UKIP prospered and grew – in 2004 it achieved the third place in European elections, in 2009 – second place and in 2014 the party ranked number one with 27.5% of the total vote. UKIP's growth and success have been regarded as one of the most important correlates of the support for the "Leave" campaign in the referendum (Pruitt, 2017). Due to political pressure to conduct a referendum regarding British status in the EU, in 2013 the then British Prime Minister, David Cameron, outlined the challenges facing Europe and declared to renegotiate British membership in the EU on the condition that his Conservative Party won an upcoming general election in 2015 (Cameron, 2013). The Conservative Party managed to win the general election with a majority and soon afterwards the European Union Referendum Act was submitted to make the referendum come into effect.

On 20 February 2016, David Cameron announced that the referendum would be held on 23 June 2016. Soon afterwards the vigorous and forceful “Leave” campaign was launched. It was led by several Eurosceptic groups, the most popular of which were Vote Leave, Leave.EU and Grassroots Out. The supporters of leaving claimed that Great Britain would be in a better position outside the EU and correctly pointed out many of the EU flaws and problems. Even though their campaign was really powerful, withdrawal from the EU still seemed to be unrealistic. And to the astonishment of the whole world, 51.89% of the British citizens made a historic decision by voting in favour of leaving the European Union, while only 48.11% opted for remaining (BBC, 2016c). However, it must be noted that there was a considerable difference of opinion across the United Kingdom. Scotland, Northern Ireland and London voted for remaining, while Wales and England (except London) voted in favour of withdrawal from the EU. It is hardly possible to provide one, univocal answer why so many people decided to vote for leaving the EU. In the literature there are several reasons quoted: risk assessments, emotional reactions to EU membership and leader image heuristics, economic- and migration-focused benefit-cost evaluations and finally a diverse mix of calculations, emotions and cues (Clarke, Goodwin, Whitley, 2017).

After the publication of referendum results, David Cameron, a supporter of the “Remain” group, announced that he would have resigned by October 2016 (BBCa, 2016). On 13 July 2016, then Home Secretary, Theresa May, became the next Prime Minister. In January 2017, the United Kingdom Supreme Court ruled in the famous judgement *R (Miller) v Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union* that the government needed parliamentary approval to trigger article 50 TUE (UK Supreme Court, 2017). Consequently, the House of Commons voted for a government bill authorising the Prime Minister to invoke article 50 TUE (BBC, 2017). On 29 March 2017 Theresa May triggered article 50 TUE with the view to withdrawing the Great Britain from the EU. Her letter was delivered to the European Council President, Donald Tusk, and since then the two-year period to the UK's withdrawal has been counting down. After 46 years of cooperation within the European Union the United Kingdom will leave its structures. The withdrawal from the EU constitutes a phenomenon not only for the United Kingdom but also for the EU which has to cope with the departure of one of the oldest member states and the various political consequences thereof.

#### **4. THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AFTER BREXIT REFERENDUM RESULTS**

The result of the Brexit referendum shocked the world and the EU in particular. The implications of the withdrawal of one of the most significant member states were not easy to forecast. In a survey conducted among almost 10.5 thousand EU citizens between 4 April–12 May 2016, 70% of the interviewees declared that the UK's withdrawal would be unfavourable for the EU (Kirk, 2016). However, only 51% of EU citizens in the examined 10 countries (including France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom) said that they shared a positive view of the EU itself (Stokes, 2016). The world's media present a wide array of reactions to the Brexit referendum from sarcastic wishes of good luck for both the UK and the EU to the welcoming support of other non-EU countries (Osborne, 2016).

The EU leaders reacted quickly to the news and shared their opinion about the implications of Brexit on the EU's future. For instance, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, peremptorily stated that the result "would not be the beginning of the end of the EU", while the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, calmly commented that "We respect the result. We have clarity for the UK to go its own way. Now is the time for us to behave seriously and responsibly." (BBC, 2016b). The reasonable reaction of the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, is also worth mentioning; the former Polish Prime Minister said that "This is not a moment for hysterical reactions. Today on behalf of the 27 leaders I can say that we are determined to keep our unity as 27. Until the UK formally leaves the EU, EU law will continue to apply to and within the UK, and by this I mean rights, as well as obligations." (BBC, 2016b). However, more empathic and self-critical voices from European politicians could also be heard. For example, the French Left Party Member of European Parliament Jean-Luc Melenchon stated that «This is the end of a world that begins with this Brexit. This teaches a lesson to the whole of Europe; either we change it or we leave it. This is the time for a plan B". Similarly, Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni warned that "The decision of the British voters must be a wake-up call." and the senior member of Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Party Norbert Röttgen decried Brexit as the "biggest catastrophe in the history of European integration." (McBride, Dewast, 2016).

#### **4.1 THE DEBATE ON THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN 2017 – THE IDEA OF 5+1 POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS**

After months full of numerous lively disputes over the future of the EU which were caused by the United Kingdom's decision to withdraw from the European Union, the European Commission on 1 March 2017 released the "White Paper on the future of Europe. Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025", in which five future development scenarios for the EU were presented (European Commission [EC], 2017). In the foreword the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, explained that the main goal of the publication is to "map out the challenges and opportunities ahead of us and present how we can collectively choose to respond". In the introduction, the European Commission reiterated the essence of European integration and its stormy growth, diagnosed what citizens consider to be the EU's flaws and made assurances that the EU would evolve and adapt to the current uncertainty.

Hypothetical scenarios have always been known as useful tools to define potential future paths with the aim of achieving desired goals. Rather than just being simple, detailed and ready to use plans, they are thought-provoking illustrations of future possibilities. The European Commission strongly emphasised that the five proposed visions of the future development of the EU were not considered mutually exclusive. Furthermore, they can combine and complement each other (EC, 2017, p. 15). On 13 September 2017, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, in his State of the Union Address 2017 proposed his own alternative, ambitious idea regarding EU's future development in order to "build a more united, stronger, more democratic Europe for 2025" (Juncker, 2017, p. 2).

#### 4.2 SCENARIO 1: CARRY ON

The first presented scenario titled “Carry on” can be considered to be the upholding of the status quo as it preserves the ongoing *modus operandi* of the EU. The scenario assumes that the remaining 27 member states will “focus on delivering positive reform agenda” (EC, p. 16). With this optimistic view the European Commission proposes to concentrate on jobs, growth and investment, as well as on intensifying activity in the single market, specifically by stepping up investment in digital, transport and energy infrastructure. The EU would like to repeal obsolete laws, ensure that majority of all State aid measures are in the hands of the authorities outside the EU and deepen cooperation in the field of defence. Luckily, Brexit simplifies at least this last issue — the United Kingdom has always been the most fierce opponent to Europeanisation and funding military operations from the EU budget (Novaky, 2016). On the other hand, the withdrawal of the EU’s largest financial contributor means that remaining member states will be forced to pay more into the budget. It is also worth noting that after 29 March 2019 the most significant member state with a common law system will leave and thus some reforms can be legislated faster, as the UK has always required legal measures to be applied in accordance with its unique fundamental legal rules. In regard to foreign policy, the scenario assumed idealistic vision of “the EU speaking with one voice”. As an obvious drawback of this policy, the European Commission points out the fact that the smooth and productive process of decision-making can be achieved only if all the 27 member states readily agree on the discussed issues. This, however, is highly questionable due to the fact that each of the countries has its own priorities and perspectives. Especially after Brexit, the common views are blurry and unsettled and the countries concentrate more on their national preferences. In the light of current Polish and Hungarian democracy crises and their Euro-sceptic attitude “speaking with one voice” could be difficult to achieve. Although this scenario can be evaluated as feasible, especially due to the UK’s withdrawal, it is not easy to implement and it is not really effective nor promising in the long run. Moreover, it does not solve the EU’s problem with the faulty cooperation between member states and their attitudes.

#### 4.3 SCENARIO 2: NOTHING BUT THE SINGLE MARKET

The second scenario assumes gradually shifting focus to the single market without deepening cooperation in new areas if no consensus is achieved between the member states. Specifically, the EU would concentrate on maintaining and improving five freedoms without affecting national sovereignty. As the European Commission notes the single market would be transformed into the main *raison d’être* of the EU (EC, 2017, p. 18). This scheme basically assumes regressing the EU from the union into a financial partnership and seems to be contrary to the EU’s axiology and developmental direction. Although this vision might be flawless from an integrationist perspective there is no doubt that it would be a huge step backward in terms of European integration. Especially after Brexit, the EU, at least in the author’s opinion, should decide on a policy which would strengthen the integration of the member states instead of loosening ties which currently bind them. Professorial Research Fellow and Co-Director of the Dahrendorf Forum Ian Begg rightly noted that this agenda is too little too late even for the mainstream supporters of the withdrawal from the European Union (Begg, 2017). It is not surprising that the President of the European Commission was reserved when presenting this particular scenario. Taking into consideration the essence of the European integration

and the current stage of development of the EU this scheme seems to be unrealistic and highly unfavourable.

#### **4.4 SCENARIO 3: THOSE WHO WANT MORE DO MORE**

The third scenario assumes deepening cooperation in selected policies but only by those member states which are interested in solidifying collaboration (EC, 2017, p. 20). In areas such as taxation, social matters, defence and internal security member states which are willing to cooperate would have this opportunity provided regardless of the resistance of other European countries. Unquestionably, differentiated integration enables quicker and more effective cooperation and opens new outstanding possibilities for at least some of the EU member states. On the other hand, in this scheme differences in citizens' rights would be clearly noticeable and some member states might feel excluded. Although the European Commission predicts that this model of flexible coalitions would make it possible to achieve general progress on a deeper single market, the division between the leading member states and other countries would inevitably grow. This vision of the *EU à la carte* is an answer to the controversial concept of multi-speed Europe which has been forced and favoured by the United Kingdom for years. In fact, the UK has kept this approach even after announcing its withdrawal from the EU. That was particularly visible during the beginning of the negotiation process between the EU and the UK. An idea of multi-speed Europe is constantly pushed by Germany and France against strong resistance of the Visegrád group and reservation from Finland and Austria. The scenario "those who want more do more" is undoubtedly realistic and relatively easy to achieve (even in the nearest future) but it creates a definite risk of frustration and disaffection from those member states that would not be included in certain collaborations. The selective solidarity introduced by this scheme might also become a serious threat to European integrity.

#### **4.5 SCENARIO 4: DOING LESS MORE EFFICIENTLY**

The fourth scenario, titled 'doing less more efficiently', focuses on quick and successful development in selected political areas (EC, 2017, p. 22) chosen by all the remaining 27 member states. The obvious drawback of this strategy is severe difficulty in achieving agreement on which aspects should be prioritised. If this major challenge were to be somehow overcome, not only would the single market develop in key areas but the EU would also act as one in international trade. With this scheme the European Border and Coast Guard and the European Defence Union would be well funded. A significant improvement would also be noticed in trade, security and digitalisation. This fourth scenario potentially enables the creation of a coherent, operational and fully functional European Union. Unfortunately, this wonderful vision will never materialise for two main reasons. Firstly, as it was mentioned before, it is highly implausible that all 27 member states would agree which policy fields should be prioritised and to what extent. Each country has its own political interests and preferences. Secondly, in the era of globalisation, constant development and interdependence of new policies, it is nearly impossible to separate most policy areas and expand only some of them with fully positive results. Policies are frequently combined and complementary, especially in the fields such as economy or new technologies. Moreover, for several countries, among others the United Kingdom, this vision would be also partly unappealing due to their reduced role in employment and social policy (Begg, 2017).

#### **4.6 SCENARIO 5: DOING MUCH MORE TOGETHER**

The last scenario which was presented by the European Commission might be read as a call for a federal Union. It assumes that “cooperation between all Member States goes further than ever before in all domains” by sharing power, resources and decision-making across the board (EC, 2017, p. 24). In this ambitious scheme, the single market would be strengthened, the euro would be stabilised and the EU would have one coherent approach in foreign policy. Similarly to the fourth scenario, decisions would be made faster but action would be taken in all common areas. Furthermore, according to the fifth scenario, the European Union would become a global leader in the areas of both humanitarian and environmental issues. As the main flaw of this scheme the European Commission correctly pointed out that such deep and broad integration might be received by some EU citizens as an illegitimate and excessive interference in matters of national sovereignty of individual member states. Although the last proposed scenario seems promising, it has to be evaluated as extremely difficult to pursue, especially nowadays when the Eurosceptic and populist slogans are receiving more and more media exposure and, consequently, support. The Brexit “Leave” campaign perfectly illustrates how strong and convincing this narrative can be. Moreover, there are some member states which clearly and openly express that what they wish is to restrain rather than deepen the EU integration process. Poland and Hungary are the perfect examples. This unfavourable approach together with the constitutional dilemmas regarding assenting to extending the EU competences which would certainly arise in many member states make this scenario nearly impossible to be realised in the current situation.

#### **4.7 JUNCKER'S ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO: UNION OF FREEDOM, EQUALITY AND DEMOCRACY**

On 13 September 2017 the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, delivered the “State of the Union Address 2017” in the European Parliament (Juncker, 2017). In the speech Juncker not only announced particular priorities and action in specific policy areas but also laid out his own ambitious vision of “a more united, stronger, more democratic Europe for 2025” (Juncker, 2017, p. 2). The European Commission President declared that Europe is something more than just a single market and a currency union. It is a union based on fundamental values such as freedom, equality and rule of law which should be developed and enhanced. By “union of freedom” Juncker understands both freedom from any oppression or dictatorship as well as lack of censorship, especially on the media. Equality applies both to the member states and EU citizens (with special emphasis on workers and consumers). The last key area mentioned (and currently perhaps the most important one taking into consideration the recent actions taken by Poland and Hungary) is democracy. The President of the European Commission emphasises the necessity of respecting the verdicts of the European Court of Justice and its judges by the member states. An independent judiciary is the essence of the rule of law and thus should be particularly respected and protected. These three principles are believed to be the key to the consolidation and enhancement of the European Union. Juncker's roadmap for “a more united, stronger, more democratic Europe” was topped off by concrete proposals on the subjects such as trade, industry, fight against climate change, migration, investment screening and cybersecurity. However, from the perspective of maintaining European integrity after Brexit this scenario seems to focus on the

most important and prominent factors, it has been widely criticised for Juncker's political postulates (namely merging the European Council and European Commission posts, almost compulsory participation in the eurozone, obligatory participation of all the member states in the Schengen zone, prioritisation of climate change policy and new rules on financing of political parties).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Unquestionably, the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU is a serious blow to European integration. However, as the most important EU leaders rightly noted, it cannot be read as an irreparable loss nor as the beginning of the end of the EU. At the present time, more than ever before, member states have to unite and overcome the difficulties and doubts resulting from the departure of one of the oldest member states. It is not easy to choose one correct path for the EU nor to predict what the EU will look like in the next decades. Out of all analysed six visions of the EU's future development after Brexit the mix of the first ("Carry on") and third ("Those who want more do more") scenarios seems to be the most plausible and achievable given the present member states' attitude towards the European Union. The second scenario presented by the European Commission would be an undesirable step back in the European integration while the schemes number four and five require a consent of all the member states, which is highly unrealistic. Juncker's vision places emphasis on praiseworthy and necessary European values but is strongly opposed due to political changes it postulates. Regardless of which course of action member states will choose after 29 March 2019, in order to support and develop a 60-year-long successful cooperation, they have to stand together with a strong sense of unity and solidarity. As Robert Schuman prophesied on 9 May 1950, "Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity" (Schuman, 1950).

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