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Europe: a global leader for Sustainable Development?

E3G Discussion Paper

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Summary: Europe's greatest challenges are external not internal – will Europe play a leadership role in solving them?



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- The increasing interdependence of today's world has brought many opportunities, but also increased risks and vulnerabilities. Power balances are shifting as a growing number of economies are able to compete economically - and increasingly politically - at a global level.
- Despite growing economic integration, no major power is taking a lead to ensure the sustainable management of the social and environmental conditions which are needed to sustain this rapid economic progress.
- The "European project" has created a unique system of pooled sovereignty to manage the stresses of regional industrial development and preserve security and stability.
- Can Europe build on this foundation to take a leadership role at the global level as a pathfinder for sustainable development? Would this "new vocation" provide a focus for pan-European ambitions and aspirations?

Europe needs greater vision and confidence to be an effective leader



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The potential for Europe to act as leader rests on four pillars:

- **Necessity:** Does a global consensus on the need for leadership exist?
 - European citizens identify the need for a new type of “facilitating leadership” to recognise the complexity of the present world and particularly to deal simultaneously with economic, social and environmental challenges.
- **Motivation:** Does Europe want to act as a leader?
 - European citizens would welcome the EU taking a leadership role, but not at the expense of domestic issues. European elites do not have a clear vision and shared ambition to become a global leader, mostly seeing the EU as a defensive bulwark for national interests in a changing world.
- **Capability:** Does Europe have the ability and capacity to be a leader?
 - Europe has the capacity to be a global leader based on its experience of: creating a model of shared sovereignty, respecting diversity, creating and enforcing global rules, and exporting values. However, these strengths are undermined by a pessimism among EU citizens over their economic future, and a lack of coordinated action among Member States on external issues.
- **Permission:** Do others wish to see Europe taking a leadership role?
 - There is general global support for Europe to be a leader in the future, and Europe is already seen as the region of the world having the most positive influence.

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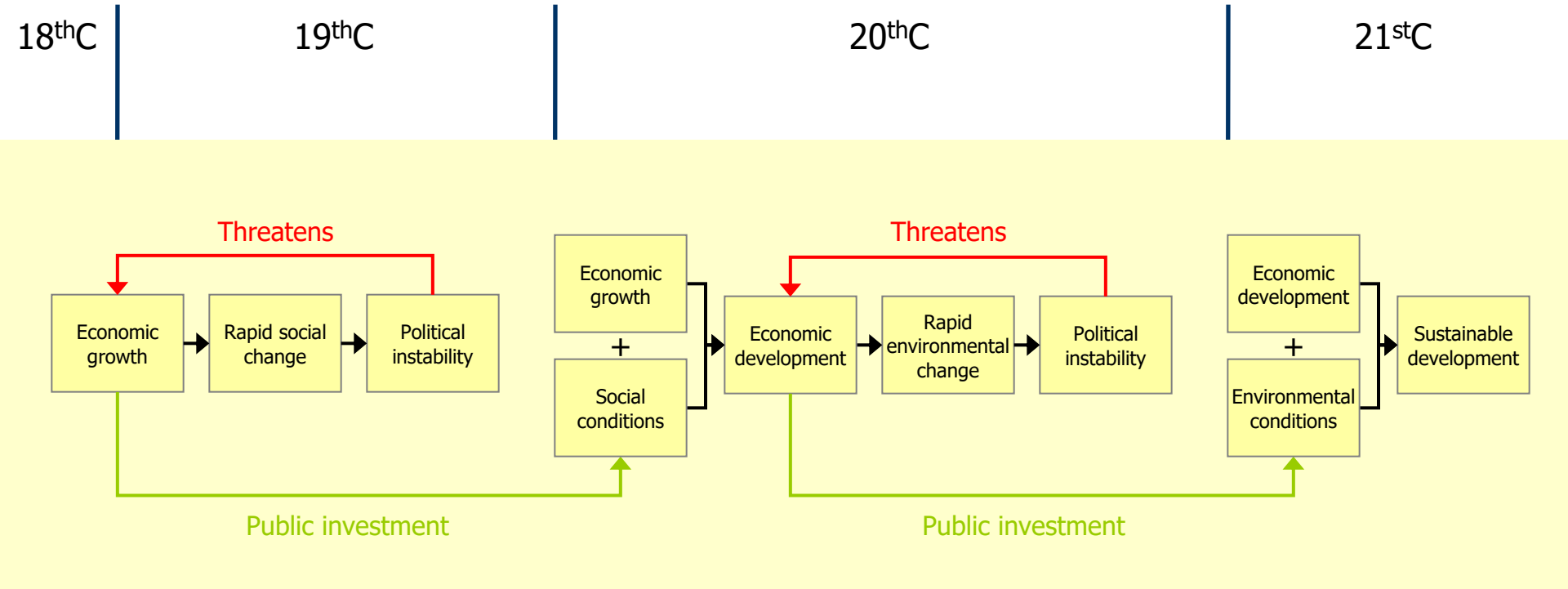
Citizens' wishes

Conclusion

History shows the consequences of failing to preserve the social conditions necessary for growth. The 21st century requires the preservation of the environmental conditions for development.



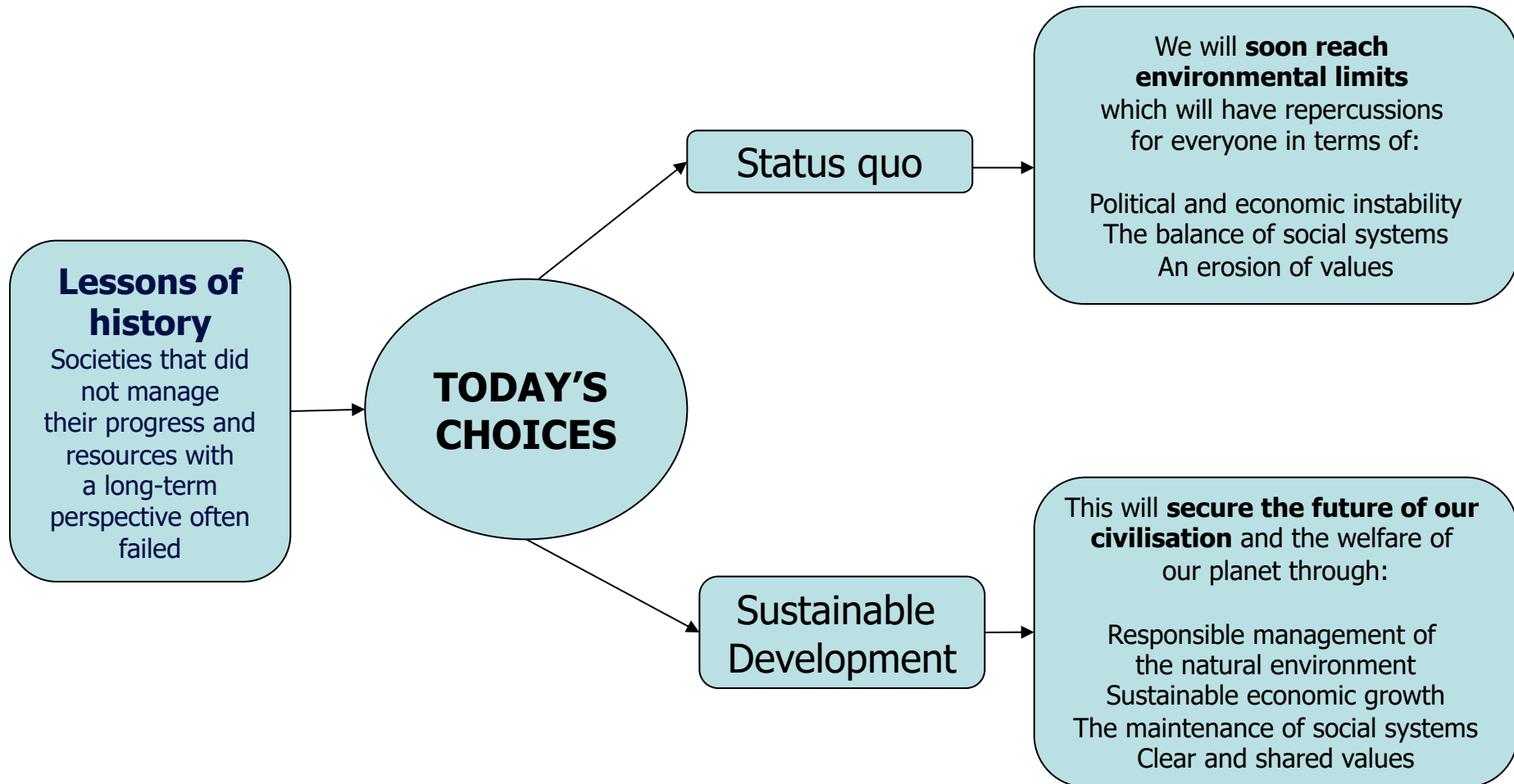
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Our interconnected world needs leadership which can manage this complexity with a focus on sustainability.



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Meeting the challenges of Sustainable Development requires transformational leadership of a new kind.



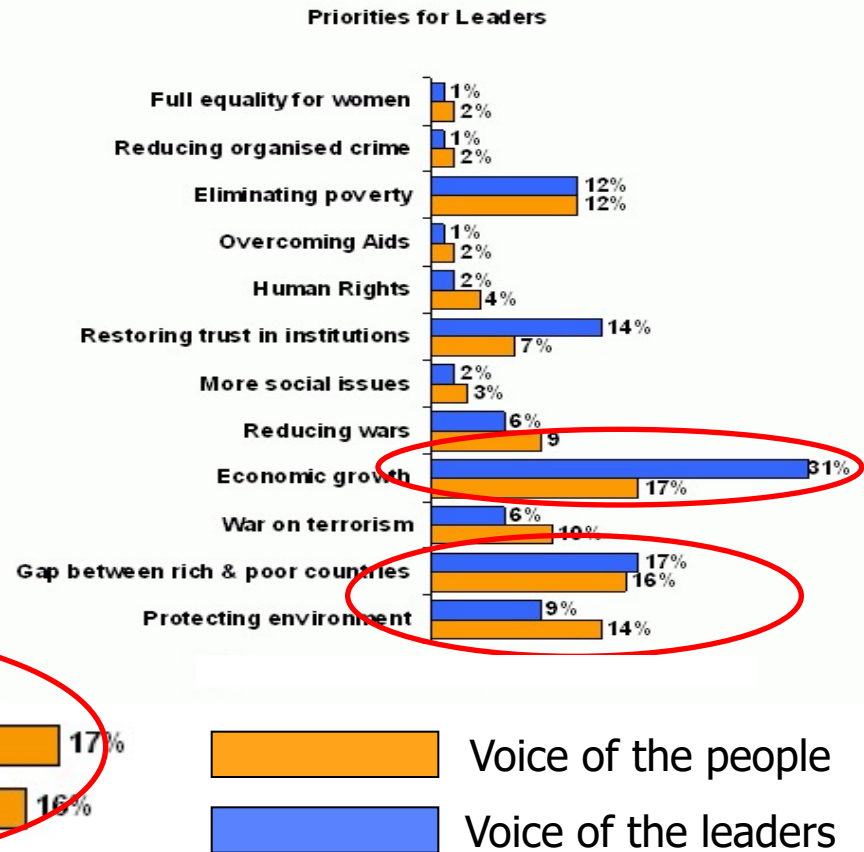
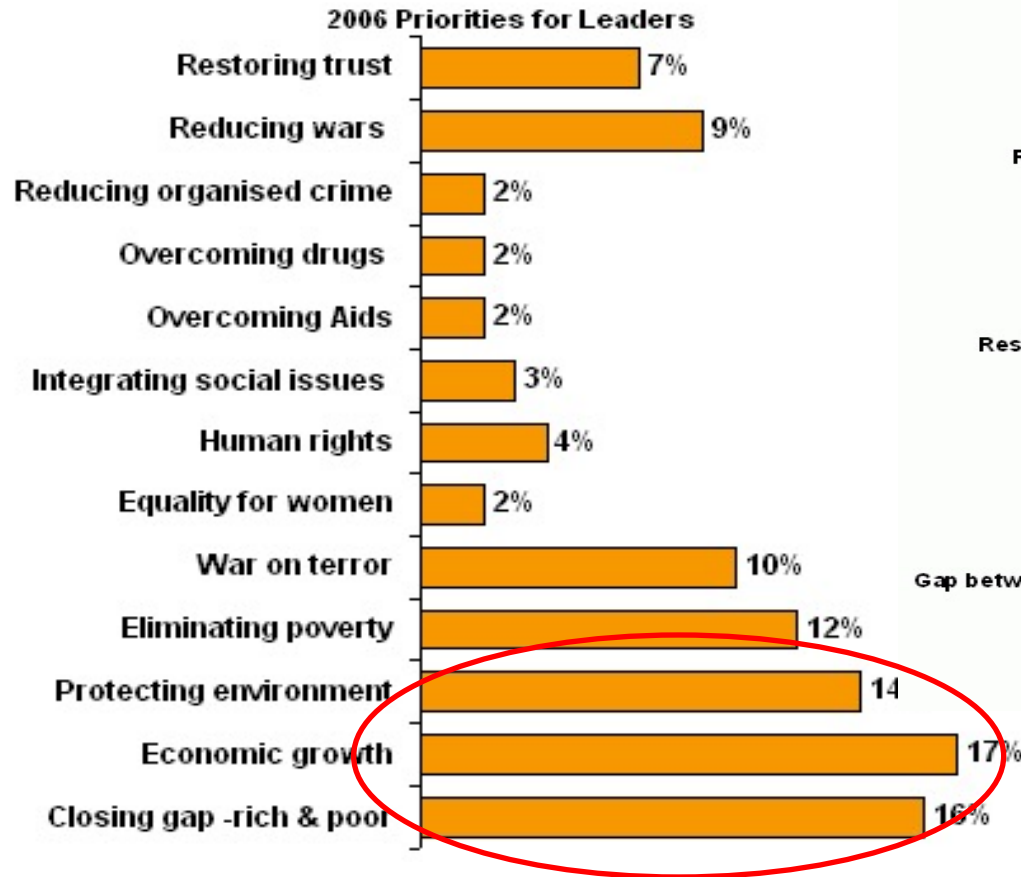
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- Ecological limits have already been breached in many areas, and are undermining social development and stability
- Sustainable Development requires global action to preserve the social and environmental foundations of prosperity and stability
- Human society has never attempted to achieve such an intentional global transformation against the time constraint of the “ticking clock” of environmental damage
- “Business as usual” incremental change will not be adequate – transformational leadership will be needed to pioneer new solutions and forms of co-operation.

Citizens seem to recognise that economic, social and environmental issues are all priorities. Leaders tend to focus more on the economy.



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Source 1: World Economic Forum survey – the Voice of the People – carried out by Gallup International
 Source 2: World Economic Forum – Voice of the Leaders survey

A global leader in sustainable development needs a convergence of qualities and competencies:



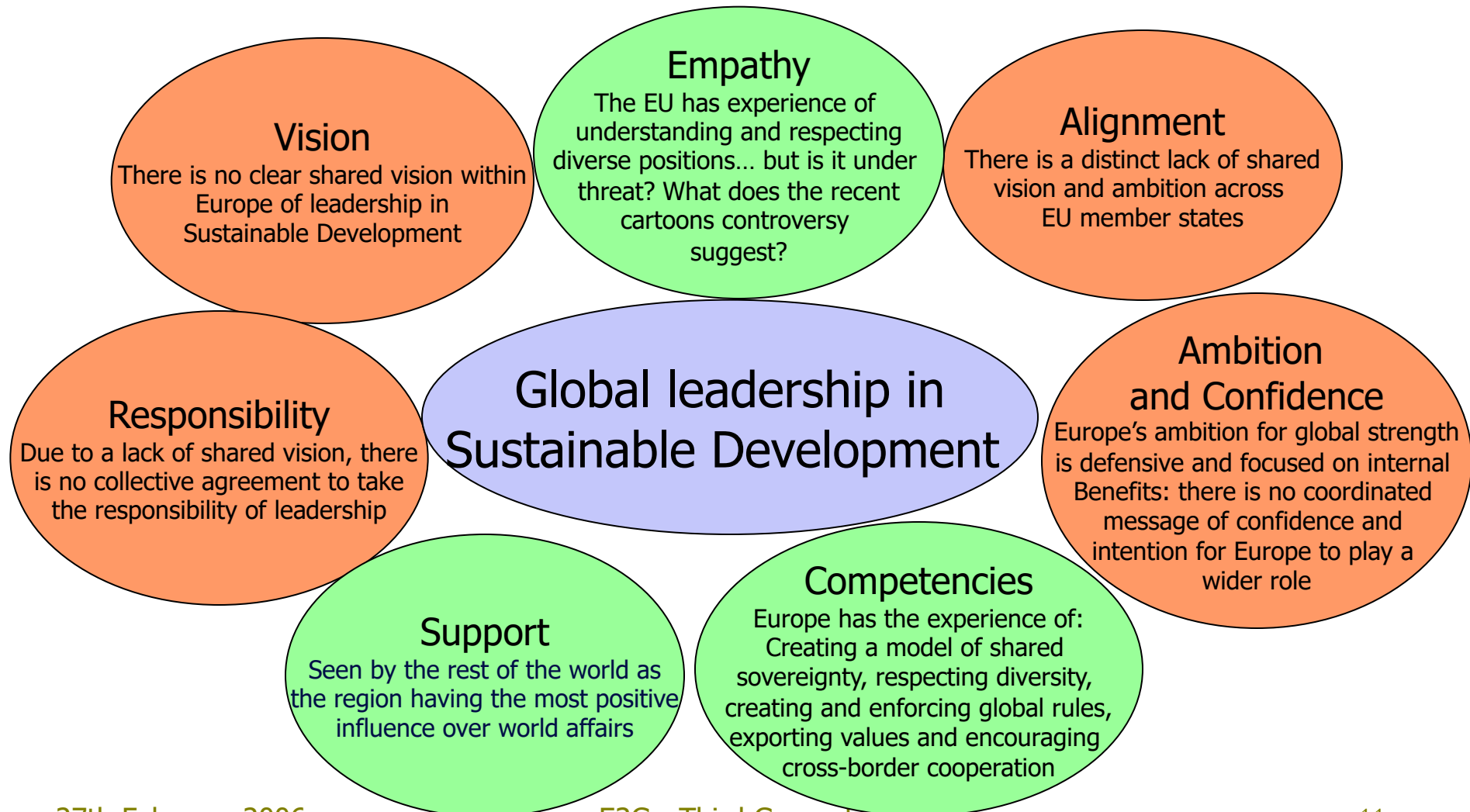
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Europe has the experience, the right approach and the support to be a global leader. However, it lacks the vision, ambition, alignment and confidence to take on this responsibility.



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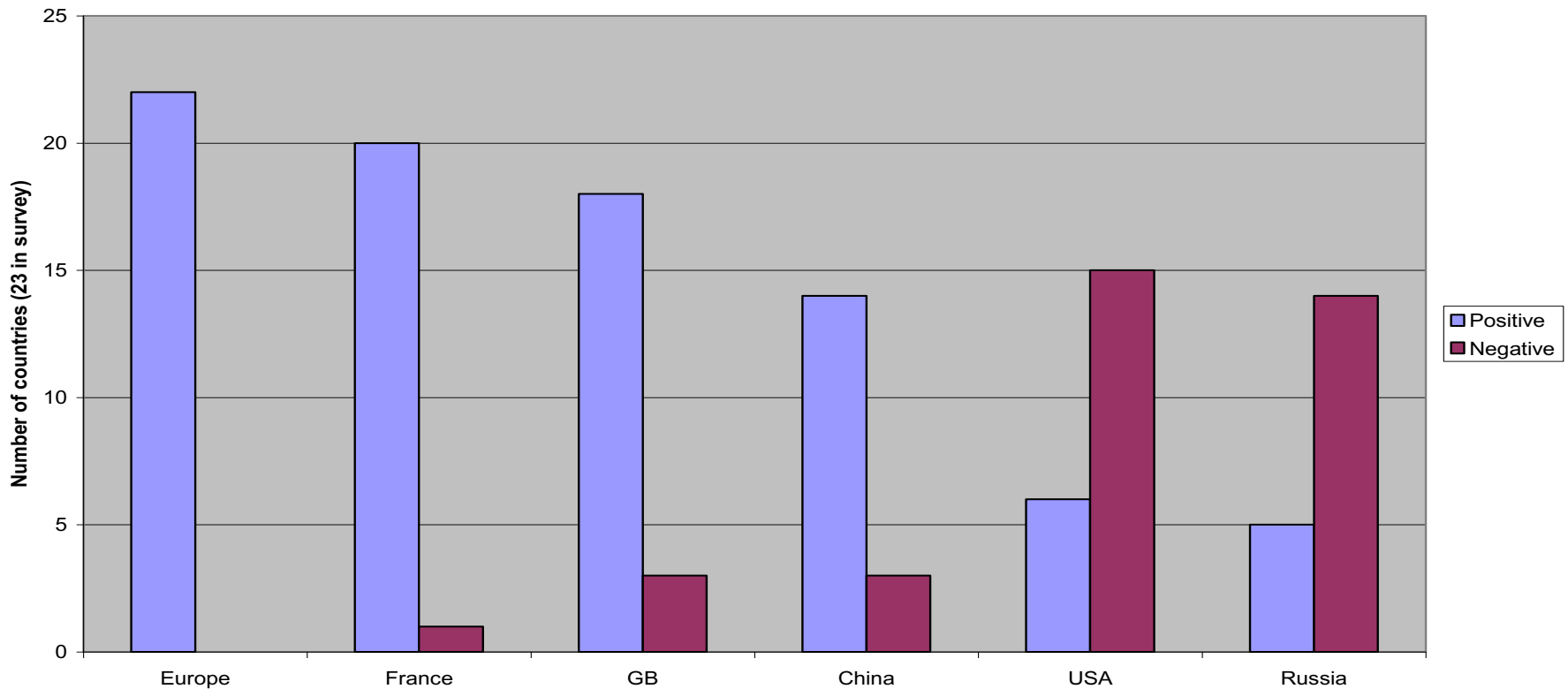
Conclusion

Europe is seen as the region of the world having the most positive influence.



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Perceived role of specific countries



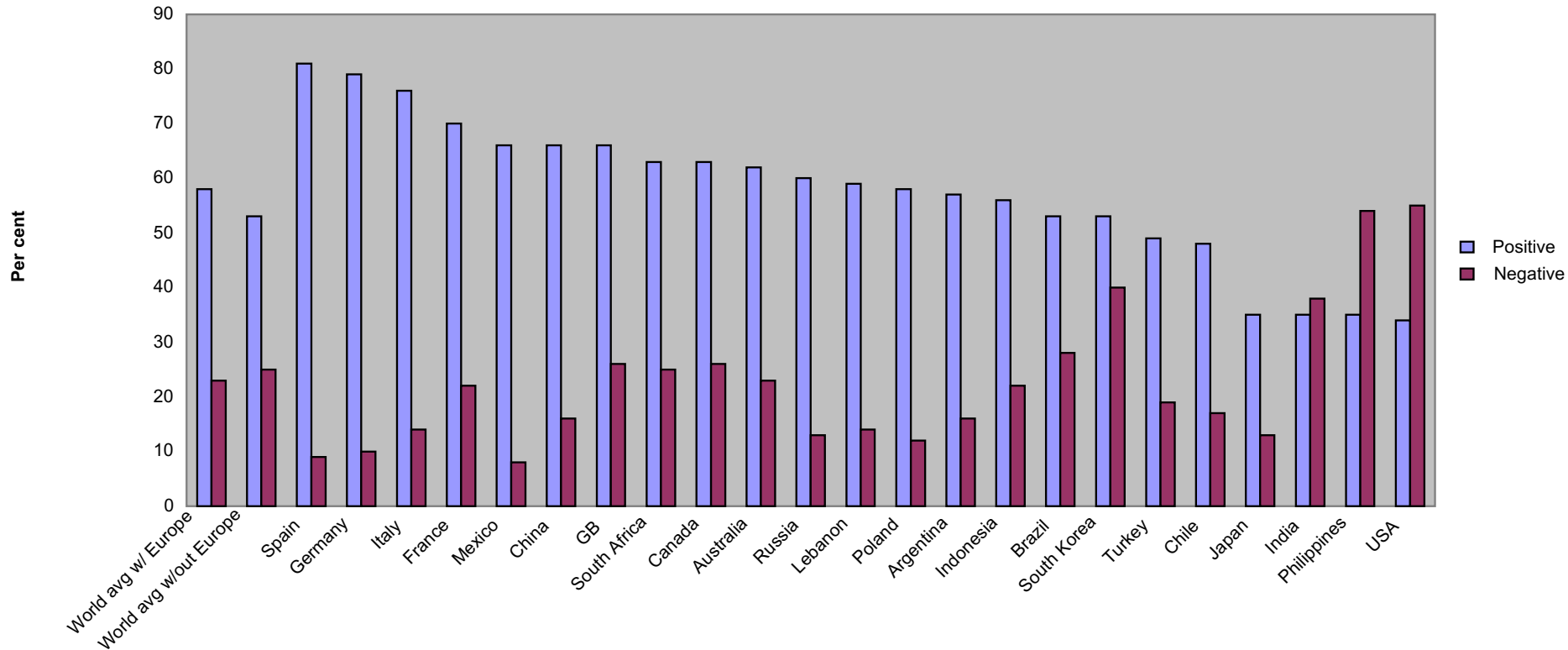
(Source: Globescan - http://www.globescan.com/news_archives/GS_PIPA_EU.html)

There is general global support for Europe to be more influential in the future.



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Would it be mainly positive if Europe became more influential than the US in world affairs?



(Source Globescan http://www.globescan.com/news_archives/GS_PIPA_EU.html)

Young people, those with a relatively high level of education and people with higher levels of income are more supportive of Europe becoming more influential than the US in global affairs.



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- Young people, aged 18-29, are more in favour of Europe having greater influence than the US in world affairs, than those aged 60 or more (60% vs. 51%)
- Larger percentages of young people than older people have a positive view of the influence of Europe (69% vs. 57%)
- People with relatively high levels of education are more likely to have a positive view of Europe becoming more influential than the US (63% vs. 53%)
- People with higher levels of income are more likely to have a positive view of Europe becoming more influential than the US.

Source: Globescan January 5, 2005

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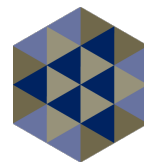
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Europe's challenges are linked to global trends. They cannot be solved in isolation.



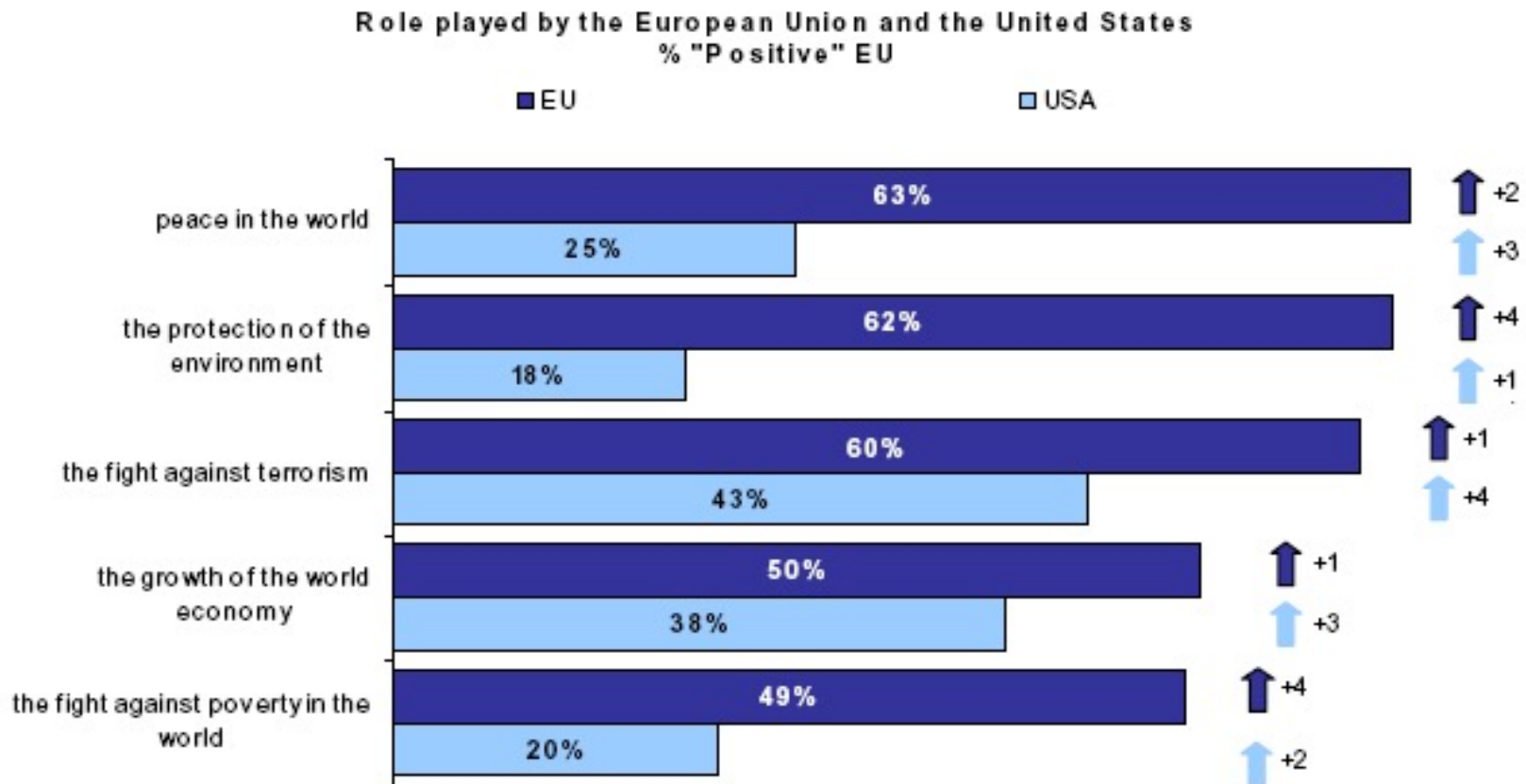
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Trend	Global	Europe
Migration	Increasing cross-border migration - cultural and economic pressures.	Migration and immigration - major challenges in an enlarging EU – integration, jobs, welfare.
Demographic changes	Population increasing - strain on natural environment. Population getting younger.	Population decreasing - strain on the economy. Population getting older – strain on pensions systems, health care etc.
Environmental threats	Serious environmental threats.	Some direct environmental threats. Indirect impacts of external environmental problems.
Environmental concerns	Growing concern.	A major concern of citizens.
Demand for natural resources	Increasing demand.	Largest importer of natural resources.
Scarcity of natural resources	Combined with a rapidly growing population this is a serious problem.	Becoming increasingly reliant on imports.
Security threats and concerns	Increasingly important and more globally dispersed.	Increasingly important.
Technological development	General development, rapid in major economies.	Rapid development but increasingly vulnerable to competition.

European citizens view the EU as having a very positive impact on all aspects of Sustainable Development worldwide.



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Source: Eurobarometer 63, September 2005

Europe shows ambitions and potential in various areas. However messages are mainly defensive and come in reaction to internal weaknesses. Perceptions are higher than ambitions and reality.



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Ambitions	Reality	Perceptions
<p>Europe seeks to maintain a competitive economy. However the main motivating messages are defensive and do not point to ambitious leadership, rather the protection of current standards.</p>	<p>Europe suffers from slow growth. However, the EU economy is still strong enough to compete with other economic powers.</p>	<p>As a result of its mainly defensive and protectionist messages Europe is seen by its citizens as a region facing serious economic challenges entailing the need for unpopular reform measures.</p>
<p>Europe is the only global region with a Sustainable Development strategy. However there is no clearly declared vision for Europe to become a global leader in this area.</p>	<p>Even in its internal affairs Europe does not show great commitment to implementation.</p>	<p>Europe is seen as a potential leader for Sustainable Development by its citizens and the rest of the world.</p>
<p>Europe is clear that its social and environmental models are important.</p>	<p>Significant differences about the way forward divide EU members. Recognition of the importance of the environment is sporadic.</p>	<p>Europe is seen by others as a region having progressive and successful social and environmental models.</p>

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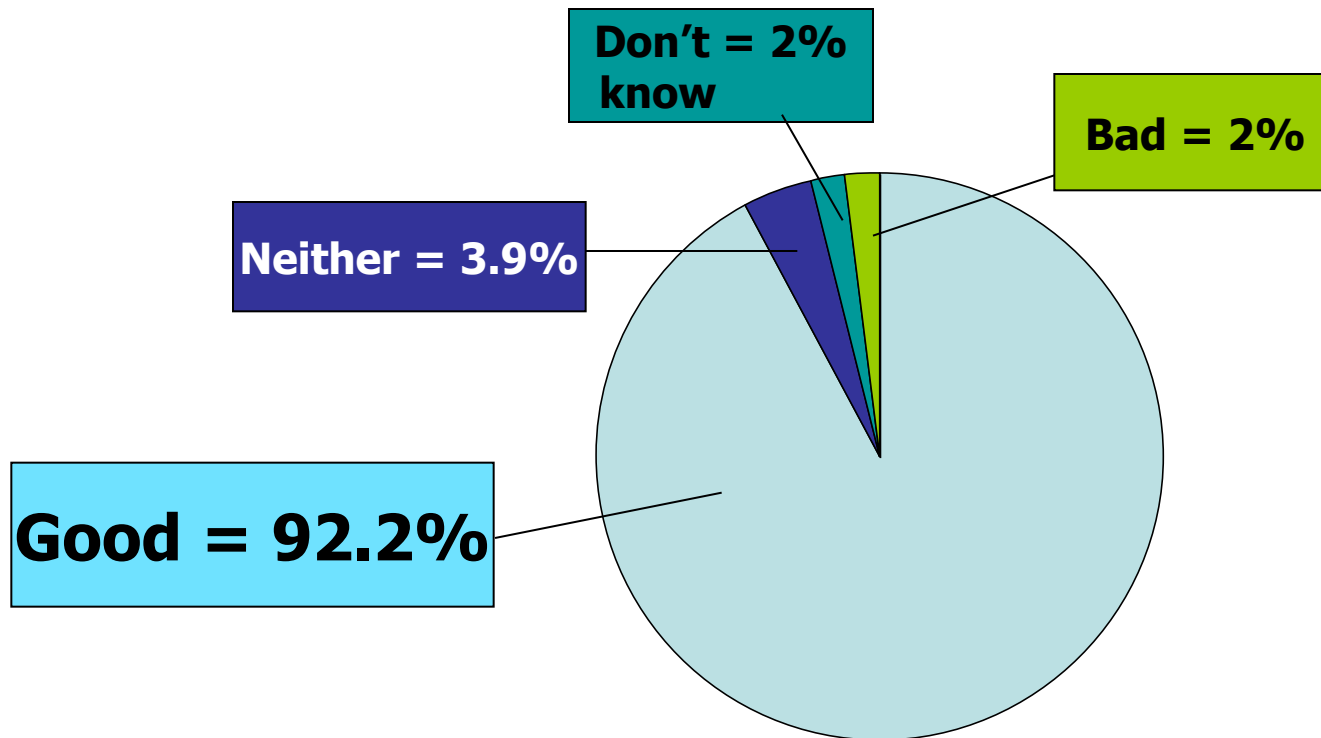
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Top EU decision-makers strongly support membership of the EU.



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Top decision-makers survey
Membership to the EU is...

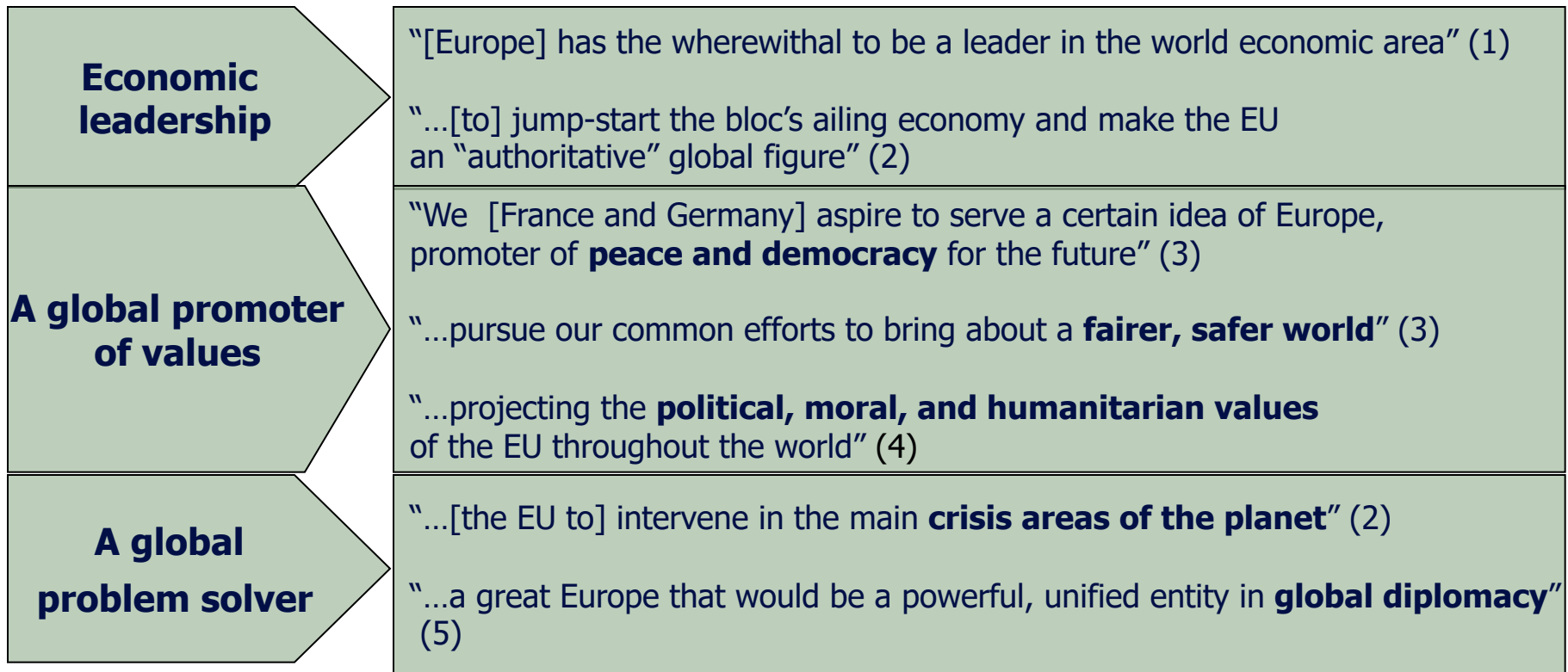


Source: 2000 Eurobarometer Report 'How Europeans see themselves'

EU elites' aspirations for Europe include taking on more responsibility for global Sustainable Development.



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Source 1: "Strength and solidarity: living up to European expectations" – Jacques Chirac

http://www.elysee.fr/elysee/anglais/speeches_and_documents/2005/analysis_by_jacques_chirac_president_of_the_french_republic_strength_and_solidarity_living_up_to_european_expectations.31692.html

Source 2: EU: "Berlusconi Outlines Agenda For Europe's Presidency" (2003) <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2003/07/mil-030702-rfel-164753.htm>

Source 3: "Angela Merkel's visit to France" (Nov 23 2005) http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files_156/germany_335/angela-merkel-visit-to-france-paris-23.11.05_2833.html

Source 4: "European Union enlargement – Cyprus after Copenhagen". Speech by Ambassador Sotos Zackheos Dec 16th 2002 <http://www.un.int/cyprus/copenhagenCY.htm>

Source 5: "Mourning, politics mix at Madrid funeral" 24 March 2004 <http://www.jsonline.com/news/gen/mar04/217049.asp?format=print>

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E3G - Third Generation
Environmentalism

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However, elite views are framed defensively – they want Europe to be stronger to secure the future of their own nations in an increasingly dynamic world. There is no “offer” to other countries.



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*"It is **the only means to face [today's global] challenges**"... "a Europe of growth and jobs that **strengthens and protects us**"*

Jacques Chirac (1)

*"**only as one can Europe face [the increasing power of China and India, along with the power of the US] effectively**"*

Adam Daniel Rotfield (Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs) (2)

*"[As well as immigration], **the EU is also facing two other big challenges: our prosperity and our safety**"*

Jose Luis Zapatero (5)

*"**We can only maintain our prosperity in Europe if we belong to the most innovative regions in the world**"*

Angela Merkel (3)

*"The idea of Europe, united and working together, is **essential for our nations to be strong enough to keep our place in this world**"*

Tony Blair (4)

Source 1: "Strength and solidarity: living up to European expectations" – Jacques Chirac

http://www.elysee.fr/elysee/anglais/speeches_and_documents/2005/analysis_by_jacques_chirac_president_of_the_french_republic_strength_and_solidarity_living_up_to_europe_an_expectations.31692.html

Source 2: "Minister's Annual address 2005" by the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pro. Adam Daniel Rotfield 21st Jan 2005 <http://www.msz.gov.pl/Policy,2155.html>

Source 3: Transcript of Angela Merkel interview by Bertrand Benoit and Andrew Gowers www.16beavergroup.org

Source 4: Tony Blair's address to the EU Parliament 23 Jun 2005 <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page7714.asp>

Source 5: Europe is the answer by Jose Luis Zapatero (Spanish PM) 26 Oct 2005 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,7369,1600663,00.html>

Europe continues to demonstrate a lack of alignment towards its preferred global role.



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Europe has demonstrated a lack of alignment in a number of areas:

The EU Budget



Representation in
UN Security Council



The EU
Constitution



National reactions to the
invasion of Iraq



Working in national
interest at international
meetings

WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION



In many ways, the interests of member state elites fit the vision of Europe as a leader in Sustainable Development. However, their national bias, poor policy alignment and lack of shared vision are barriers to leadership.



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Corresponds to the idea of Europe as a global leader for SD	Do not correspond to the idea of Europe as a global leader for SD
National elites generally support the EU.	The EU is seen as a tool to protect national interests.
National elites have similar visions of the EU promoting its values and solving world problems.	There is a lack of alignment between EU member states in terms of how they approach global policy.
They want Europe to be stronger in the world.	A strong Europe is seen as important for Europe rather than for global benefit.

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Europeans support the development of the EU. They believe that Europe is becoming more important in global affairs, and would like to see the EU as a leader.



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- Half of Europeans believe that membership to the EU is a good thing against 15% who think it is a bad thing (1)
- A clear majority (58%) of EU citizens believe that development towards a European political union is desirable (2)
- 62% of Europeans believe that the Union's international role has become more important over the last five years (2)
- 79% of Europeans believe that it is very or somewhat desirable for the EU to have a more important/leading role in the 21st century. (3)

Source 1: 2000 Eurobarometer Report 'How Europeans see themselves'

Source 2: Eurobarometer 63, September 2005

Source 3: Transatlantic Trends 2005

But Europeans only support Europe as a new type of leader – there is little support for an EU “Great Power”.



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A leader who shows solidarity	Helping others is considered the most important value by 95% of Europeans. 84% believe being involved in creating better society is important. (1)
A self-limiting leader	A vast majority of the Europeans favour the use of diplomatic and other soft power measures. Two-thirds of Europeans consider military power as a last resort (2)
A leader who cooperates	80% of EU citizens prefer cooperation with other major powers to competition (2)
A leader who promotes democracy	80% of Europeans think the EU should promote democracy (2)
A leader who respects the environment	The environment is number 1 on Europeans' list of worries (1). 73% of EU citizens consider global warming as the most important threat (2)

Source 1: 2000 Report of the European Commission on 'How Europeans see themselves'

Source 2: Transatlantic trends – Key Findings 2005

There are problems at the level of citizens within the EU which need to be resolved if Europe is to take on this role of leadership.



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Democracy deficit

- The majority of Europeans are still not satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU, although the trend is improving (1)
- The majority of European citizens (53%) believe their voices don't count in the EU (1)

Sense of belonging and connection...

- 49% of Europeans do not believe that there is a European identity, however the majority of EU citizens feel to some extent European. It should be pointed that this is an issue where opinions differ greatly between countries (2)
- The level of attachment is also relatively low in comparison with the feeling of regional and country belonging (1)

... and Europeans' priorities

- European citizens tend to prefer the EU to prioritise issues which are important for their own country. Thus 90% of them believe the EU should prioritise fighting unemployment vs. only 50% who think the EU should stress on asserting its political and diplomatic importance around the world. (2)

Source 1: Eurobarometer 63, September 2005

Source 2: 2000 Eurobarometer Report 'How Europeans see themselves'

European citizens are not confident about the future. They don't believe the EU can become a global economic leader in the next five years.



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Confidence

... in the future

- Europeans are the biggest pessimists in comparison with other regions. 55% of them believe that the next generation will live in a less safe world, which is the highest percentage – the average for the world is 45%. (1)

... in Europe's potential

- Only 6% of Europeans are confident that the EU will become the leading global economy within the near future. (2)

Source 1: World Economic Forum 2005

Source 2: Eurobarometer 63, September 2005

In general Europeans tend to be supportive of the idea of Europe as a leader. However there are a number of areas where the EU needs to engage more actively its citizens to gain their confidence and support.



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Corresponds to the idea of Europe as a global leader in SD	Do not correspond to the idea of Europe as a global leader in SD
Europeans support the development of the EU.	The way that democracy works at EU level is still seen as unsatisfying. The extent to which Europeans feel attached to the EU is not very high. These factors could demotivate Europeans from more active support for Europe to become a global leader.
Europeans believe that the EU is becoming more important in global affairs, and would like to see the EU as a leader.	Europeans are not confident in the future nor in Europe's ability to become a global economic power in the near future.
Europeans' values and expectations show that Europeans would support the EU becoming a new type of leader who will respond to complexity of interdependence.	Although Europeans want the EU to have a more important role in the world affairs they tend to prioritise national interests.

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Key Conclusions



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- Strong support from citizens and other regions for the EU to play a stronger leadership role
- Elite views see a stronger EU mainly as a defensive tactic against an increasingly turbulent world
- EU citizens only support the EU as new type of “facilitative leader” not a great power
- However EU citizens are pessimistic about Europe’s ability to play this role – particularly Europe’s future economic strength
- There is a lack of a strong motivating vision of the EU global role which could align both Member State policy and citizen support

Main sources:



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- Globescan http://www.globescan.com/news_archives/GS_PIPA_EU.html
- Eurobarometer http://www.gesis.org/en/data_service/eurobarometer/
- Transatlantic Trends <http://www.transatlantictrends.org/>
- World Economic Forum <http://www.weforum.org/>
- "Strength and solidarity: living up to European expectations" – Jacques Chirac http://www.elysee.fr/elysee/anglais/speeches_and_documents/2005/analysis_by_jacques_chirac_president_of_the_french_republic_strength_and_solidarity_living_up_to_european_expectations.31692.html
- "Berlusconi Outlines Agenda For Europe's Presidency" (2003) <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2003/07/mil-030702-rfel-164753.htm>
- "Angela Merkel's visit to France" (Nov 23 2005) http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files_156/germany_335/angela-merkel-visit-to-france-paris-23.11.05_2833.html
- "European Union enlargement – Cyprus after Copenhagen". Speech by Ambassador Sotos Zackheos Dec 16th 2002 <http://www.un.int/cyprus/copenhagenCY.htm>
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