

# Macron and Europe: An urgent appeal

## *Understanding the French President's speech at the Sorbonne*

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Emmanuel Macron appealed to Europe in his second speech at the Sorbonne on 25 April 2024 — in other words to its Member States — calling for them to wake up urgently to the new strategic context.

The world no longer abides by the rules it once set for itself — our friends, rivals and enemies are blithely ignoring them. We can no longer be the only ones to respect them. We have to defend our interests, protect ourselves from repeated aggression, cyber or otherwise; we must even counterattack.

In economic terms, 21st-century Europe can no longer continue to follow 19th-century budgetary rules or a 20th-century monetary policy, while our competitors are flooding their markets with liquidity at the cost of huge debts, even though they are still considered sustainable. Ordo-liberalism is well and truly dead.

In a period of transition, the finances of a State cannot be managed like those of a household, allowing Europe to fall behind the world's major economies: 3 times less growth, 50% less in per capita income, downgrading of overall GDP to 3rd place while it was still in first place 10 years ago. If we continue like this, Europe will become truly impoverished.

Only a policy of growth can reverse the trend, restore purchasing power to Europeans and allow them to repay their debts. The extremes would then probably find limits to their demagoguery.

But the French President's appeal to his European counterparts also concerned security and defence.

While a great deal of conceptual progress has been made in this area and the need for a more independent Europe is more widely shared every day, we now face up to reality: a nuclear power, namely Russia, worried about our alliances and our strength, has openly declared war on us and is using devious means to wage it. Europeans are at war; they must recognise this, even if it challenges their message of peace. To preserve peace, they must rearm and agree on a genuine system of defence for the continent.

Emmanuel Macron has agreed to discuss an anti-missile shield if France's nuclear deterrent, in its current configuration, is recognised for its contribution to European security. This is a step forward.

Finally, in a highly thought-provoking contribution, he places the cultural project, emblematic of our model of society, back at the heart of Europe and calls for the creation, based on Arte, of a genuine European digital cultural platform to embody what we are and what we value: A culture of creativity, freedom and abundance. This is an ongoing project, and the German and French players involved are already hard at work. We must support them.

These French proposals for Europe are ambitious, but visionary. They reflect the urgent need for people to wake up and do what is necessary. They call for concerted action by our European partners to provide urgent answers to the people who expect them. We should act now!