



European sovereignty between autonomy and dependence: A guide for EU policy

European View
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Is the idea of ‘European sovereignty’ still relevant? It was originally developed as an EU response to the rise of populism within its territory and the disruption of transatlantic relations brought about by the Trump presidency. But today its relevance appears uncertain in the face of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the growing assertiveness of China. This brief argues that European sovereignty (and related concepts such as strategic autonomy) is still an important and necessary guide for EU policy, but only if it is dissociated from some of the excessive and overambitious definitions given to the concept when it was first developed.

European sovereignty is bound to fail if it is defined as taking an equidistant position between the US and China or as aiming for the atavistic goal of autarky in all conceivable policy areas, from security and energy to economy and technology. Instead, the brief argues, European sovereignty must be understood as a moderate and pragmatic agenda of defending EU interests and priorities within the wider framework of the transatlantic relationship, protecting the EU’s internal liberal political and economic order, and defending international openness where the EU still has comparative advantages. Most of all, the necessary objective of protecting European sovereignty against external forces must not become a backdoor for the undue centralisation of political and economic power inside the EU, a process that would be bound to generate new populist reactions and constrain the EU’s room of manoeuvre internationally. The brief concludes by proposing an understanding of European sovereignty as a compound term, containing both the ideal of EU autonomy of action internationally and the protection of the Union’s internal heterogeneity, diversity and level playing field. Understood in this way as a

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Author Biography

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Summary
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In the era of European sovereignty still relevant it was primarily developed as an EU response to the rise of populism within its borders and the diffusion of nationalist notions brought about by the Trump presidency. But today its relevance appears amplified in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the growing assertiveness of China. This book argues that European sovereignty and related concepts such as strategic autonomy is still an important and necessary guiding principle but it also introduces 'continental' dimensions to the concept and demonstrates differences from the concept when it was first developed. European sovereignty is not a historical doctrine but a living and evolving concept between the EU and China or as a spring for the strategic goal of autonomy in all conceivable policy areas. Both security and energy to mobility and technology. Indeed, the book argues, European sovereignty must be understood as a holistic and pragmatic approach of orienting EU interests and practices within the wider framework of the international, including, promoting the high economic, social, political and economic order, and enhancing international operations within the EU context. Sovereignty, therefore, must not be seen as a mere legal principle. European sovereignty against external forces must not become a hindrance for the active contribution of political and economic power inside the EU. It is crucial the world be bound to generate new political measures and conduct the EU's own 'non-secure' international. The book concludes by proposing an understanding of European sovereignty as a non-secure form, combining both the idea of full autonomy of action internationally and the protection of the Union's internal heterogeneity, diversity and knowledge flow. In addition it offers ways as a 'sovereignty of sovereignties', European sovereignty can serve as an important guide for EU policy.

Keywords: Sovereignty – Strategic autonomy – Security – Trade – Technology – West

Angelos Chrysogelos is a Lecturer in Politics and International Relations at London Metropolitan University. His interests lie in external relations of the EU, foreign policy in Europe, and European party politics. Apart from being a Martens Centre Research Associate he is also an Associate Fellow of the Europe Programme of Chatham House and an associate of the Hellenic Observatory, European Institute of the London School of Economics. He is also the president of the Athens-based think tank Hellenic Conservative Policy Institute.