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The European Political Community could potentially account for up to 1/4 of the global GDP

The French project of the European Political Community (EPC), including EU member states and 17 other countries in Europe and Eurasia, excluding Russia, has significant political and economic potential. The participation of EPC economies in the global GDP would be 23.5 percent. Currently, this area is home to 689.5 million people, which constitutes 8.7 percent of the world's population. The GDP per capita of countries outside the EU that would be part of the EPC is 88.8 percent of the EU average. The Polish Economic Institute, in its report titled "European Political Community: Geopolitics, Civilization, and the French Vision for the Future of the European Union," analyzes the French idea of the geopolitical and civilizational opening of the EU to other countries.

The French Idea for Europe

The Russian invasion has created a space for a debate on visions for the future of the EU that could help overcome the current geopolitical crisis and provide new developmental directions for Europe. In response to this need, France proposes the European Political Community (EPC). This is a project of geopolitical and civilizational opening of the EU to 17 other countries in Europe and Eurasia, excluding Russia. The EPC aims to provide new platforms for cooperation and integration with Europe to countries such as Ukraine, Moldova, Turkey, the Balkan and Caucasus states, while also fostering better relations between the EU and non-EU countries in Western Europe, including Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

"The European Political Community would be an alliance formed to fill the geopolitical void resulting from the ongoing weakening of Russia and the growing aversion to this country by its neighbors. The EPC will gather in various countries, with an emphasis on non-EU countries, which is a political opportunity for countries like Moldova, the UK, or Turkey to strengthen their ties with the Union. Importantly, France, at least in declarations, has already gained Brussels' support for the EPC initiative, so it did not have to lobby for it, unlike the Three Seas Initiative," notes Grzegorz Lewicki, the author of the report.

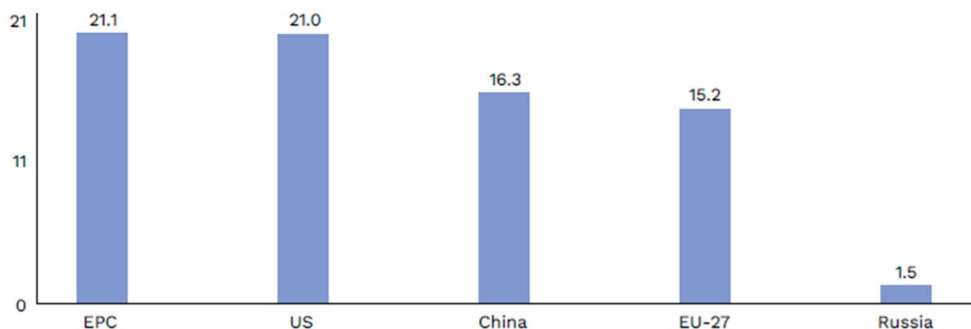
A project with significant economic potential

The EPC is a French project that theoretically encompasses 23.5 percent of the world's economy and nearly 9 percent of the world's population. However, to be successful, as envisioned by President Macron, it must be supported by actions and concrete backing

from the countries in the Central and Eastern European region. This would provide tangible benefits in areas such as knowledge exchange, economic cooperation, and the acceleration of integration for countries aspiring to join the EU. It must also be a project that does not promote protectionism or create multiple "Europes" but genuinely supports European integration. To gain the support of Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries within the European Economic Community (EEC), France could make certain promises regarding key regional issues and priorities.

"The French government could declare support for policies and initiatives that promote economic development both within the EU and the EPC. This could include facilitating investments, promoting free trade, and supporting partnerships between businesses in EPC countries. It would also be crucial to ensure fair access to the single market for goods and services and to work towards this within the emerging Community," evaluates Grzegorz Lewicki.

Chart 1. EPC countries' total GDP, compared to Russia, the US, the EU and China
(trillions of USD at constant 2015 prices)



Source: prepared by PEI based on World Bank data.

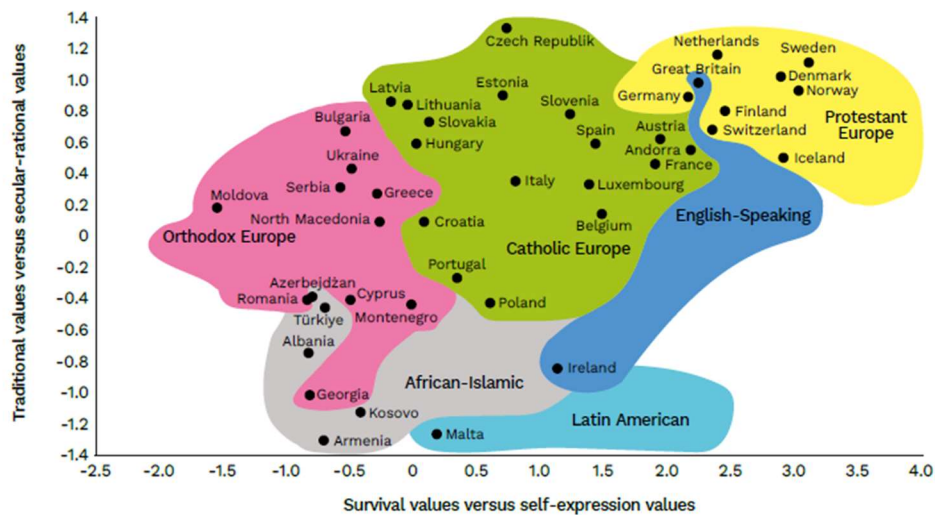
A civilizational project, not just geopolitical

The practical aspect of the initiative currently revolves primarily around security, infrastructure, and stable energy supplies, but in the long term, it will bring about civilizational changes.

"If the EPC is not only to be a ad hoc geopolitical community but also a civilizational community that upholds and promotes certain cultural frameworks, it must invest in soft power in such a way that not only infrastructure but also the cultures of associated states have the opportunity to converge. In the 21st century, it is clear that culture is also a critical infrastructure for the social stability of Europe. Of course, this does not mean homogenizing cultures through politics, but rather seeking a dynamic balance

between diversity and unity that can ensure prosperity, stability, and peace," says Grzegorz Lewicki.

Chart 5. Value map of the EPC countries



Note: lack of data for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino.

Source: prepared by PEI based on: <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSNewsShow.jsp?ID=467> [accessed: 04.07.2023].

The Polish Economic Institute is a public economic think-tank dating back to 1928. Its research primarily spans macroeconomics, energy and climate, the world economy, economic foresight, the digital economy and behavioural economics. The Institute provides reports, analyses and recommendations for key areas of the economy and social life in Poland, taking into account the international situation.

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