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The 2007 Berlin and 2017 Rome Declarations: Compared, with Conclusions

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The Berlin and Rome Declarations, adopted respectively on the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the Treaties of Rome, differ in both the general tone and the challenges presented. At the time that the Berlin Declaration was signed, the direction of European Union reforms was clearly outlined. The Union was to be transformed into a single international organisation, in which the majority of decisions would be made using the "community" method. This direction was confirmed by the Treaty of Lisbon. In the Rome Declaration, there is uncertainty about the future of the EU and the lack of a coherent vision for the development of the organisation. This could result in the short-term defence of the status quo, and the longer-term differentiation of integration.

Both the Berlin and the Rome Declarations were signed in important moments for the EU. The first came after the "great enlargement" of the organisation, and followed the turbulence that arose from the failure to ratify the Constitution for Europe and the challenges of adopting the newly revised treaty. The second was signed after a series of internal and external crises, and in the face of the reforms that are needed if the EU is to survive.

The declarations differ both in terms of overall tone, level of detail, and the challenges presented. They propose different approaches to some of the Union's fundamental issues, such as unity between EU Member States and the EU's relations with the rest of the world.

The levels of generality and details are mixed in the Rome Declaration. This reflects the difficult route to achieving a compromise on the content of the document. In making specific, written demands about usually very general content, some Member States wanted to guarantee that they would be taken into account in the further evolution of the EU. Given the differences between the Member States on the vision of further integration, this may be a harbinger of conflicts over the future shape of the European project.

Enthusiasm in Berlin, Uncertainty in Rome. Despite the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty (TCE) in referendums in France and the Netherlands in 2005, the Berlin Declaration was optimistic. The main source of this optimism was the historic enlargement of the EU to include the Central European states, which overcame what the signatories of the document saw as the "unnatural" division of the continent. In addition, European economic success and democracy, guaranteeing social justice and pluralism, were the sources of "happiness" expressed in the document. This gave rise to reformist ambitions among the signatories, who declared the constant need to renew in time the political shape of the EU, setting a concrete date for the renewal of the common foundations of the Union. Indeed, in December 2007 the Member States succeeded in signing a new treaty. The Treaty of Lisbon entered into force in late 2009 and was viewed as an instrument for unlocking the EU's potential.

Similar optimism cannot be seen in the Rome Declaration. It is tainted by the EU crises and concerns about the future in the context of Brexit. In the first half of 2017, the European Union has experienced financial and economic crisis that hit the euro, and the political, social and security crisis in its southern neighbourhood. The feeling of uncertainty is exacerbated by the situation in the east, triggered by Russia's aggressive policy. Internal uncertainty lay behind the UK's decision to leave the EU, and centrifugal tendencies are also evident in many other EU countries. As a result, in the Rome Declaration expresses anxiety in phrases such as "taken individually, we would be side-lined by global

dynamics," and "aware of the concerns of our citizens." This has resulted in leaders (in the short term, at least), preparing to defend the treaty status quo rather than backing wide-ranging reform of the political system.

Challenges Facing the EU. The general tone of the documents translates into the priorities for the Union, as defined in each of them. The Berlin Declaration places much emphasis on the ideals and values on which the Union was founded, with human rights taking centre stage and much attention being paid to tolerance, openness and "unity in diversity."

The challenges formulated in the Rome Declaration reflect the crises the EU faces. Security (with special emphasis on the protection of external borders, the fight against terrorism, and tackling crime) are at the forefront. There is also a declaration of deepening defence cooperation. An important element is the recovery of the European economy after the crisis. Attention is drawn to the plan to complete the economic and monetary union (EMU), and tackle unemployment and social exclusion.

Model of Integration. Signatories of the documents reveal much about the model of integration. In the Berlin Declaration, EU citizens are symbolic signatories ("We, citizens of the European Union"), while in the Rome Declaration the leaders of EU states and institutions ("We, the leaders of the 27 Member States and the EU institutions") play the key role. The emphasis on citizens and citizenship in the Berlin Declaration was an attempt to reconcile the sovereignty that rejected the TCE in the referendums. It also corresponded with the treaty changes that were taking place at that time. An important element of Lisbon reform was the strengthening of EU citizenship, among other things by introducing the European citizens' initiative. Ten years later, enthusiasm for developing citizenship at EU level has cooled sharply, and governments and institutions have reverted to their role of representing citizens.

On the internal organisation of the Union, the Berlin Declaration demonstrated a visible attachment to the then popular concept of "multi-level governance." The phrase "tasks are shared between the European Union, the Member States and their regions and local authorities" is a clear sign of that. The Rome Declaration emphasises the role of national parliaments and the principle of subsidiarity, which is a positive gesture towards the Member States. It was indicated that the EU should be "big on big issues and small on small ones." This can be viewed as an expression of criticism of excessive EU regulation on some specific issues, and a lack of response to challenges of strategic importance. The lack of EU transparency and the implementation deficit (weak implementation of EU policies and law) are also problems raised by the signatories.

The priorities outlined in Berlin and Rome show how the perception of European unity has changed over time. The unity of Member States, recognised when the Berlin Declaration was signed as a reason for pride and an obvious element of the document is not so clear cut in the Rome Declaration. While the two documents emphasise the importance of unity, the Rome Declaration presents it not as something "natural," but rather as something that needs to be defended. The understanding of unity is also changing, with the Rome Declaration opening the door to a "multi-speed Europe." This is visible in two parts of the text, which states "we will act together, at different paces and intensity where necessary, while moving in the same direction," and makes a similar statement regarding deepening the EMU. Although "many speeds" are currently a reality in the EU, Member States have until now attempted to limit differentiation of integration. The parts of the Rome Declaration mentioned above signal a change in this trend.

EU Relations with the World. The declaration adopted in Berlin emphasised European openness, perceived very broadly and ideologically. In Rome, openness is becoming more pragmatic, for example in the fragmentation on enlargement, where it is emphasised that the EU remains open to those European countries that respect its values. The spirit of Berlin's idealism is reflected in the postulates of supporting democracy, freedom, peace, stability and prosperity in the world, all of which were modified in Rome. At present, the EU is focused primarily focused on supporting economic development in its near neighbourhood, taking into account the priority of its own security. This also applies to hard power, which proves both concerns about fragility in the east of Europe and fears in connection with the future of transatlantic relations in the face of political change in the U.S. following the election of Donald Trump.