

Committee: European Parliament AFET

Delegation: France/ ESN

Topic: Enlargement of the European Union



The French Republic, being one of the leading and founding members of the European Union and an advocate of how common global spaces need to be protected, believes that the European Union must have a role that maintains a responsible tone within the dynamics of governance in Antarctica, stating this the country believes that there is a need to respect international law¹ and multilateral cooperation while maintaining the decision-making power of the countries involved in the dynamic. Antarctica, considered a territory of peace and science under the 1959 Antarctic Treaty², is also considered a place for how global resources should be managed in a shared manner.

The French Republic believes that it is essential that the European Union should have more space and should have greater executive power within the Antarctic Treaty System coordination, so that a say is guaranteed on the part of Europe that is consistent with European laws on environmental protection, fisheries regulation and climate research³. Furthermore, it would be avoided if the European Union questioned its desire to militarize or use the area as a geopolitical tactic, so that it remained only a territory dedicated to scientific cooperation and peace.

Instead, with regard to the analysis of environmental land management, the European Union, the French Republic believes that it should be part of the contribution of keeping polar ecosystems protected and that it is done through scientific monitoring and CCAMLR measures⁴. The position and support that the French Republic has historically given to ocean protection reinforce the need for the creation of new Marine Protected Areas in the Antarctic to combat problems such as declining biodiversity, the pressure of fishing activities, and the effects of climate change.

¹ *Joint Communication on a stronger EU engagement for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic* | EEAS Website. (n.d.). www.eeas.europa.eu.

https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/joint-communication-stronger-eu-engagement-peaceful-sustainable-and-prosperous-arctic_en

² Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty. (2019). *Antarctic Treaty*. www.ats.aq.
https://www.ats.aq/index_e.html

³ Antarctic Governance - Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition. (2023, March 30). Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition. <https://www.asoc.org/learn/antarctic-governance/>
Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty. (2019). *Antarctic Treaty*. www.ats.aq.
https://www.ats.aq/index_e.html

⁴ Arrêté du 28 juin 2023 portant approbation de la convention constitutive modificative du groupement d'intérêt public "Institut polaire français - Paul-Emile Victor" - Légifrance. (2023). [Gouv.fr. https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000047873249](https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000047873249)
Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty. (2019). *Antarctic Treaty*.
www.ats.aq.https://www.ats.aq/index_e.html

Finally, the French Republic, both politically and institutionally and represented within this committee and in the European Parliament by the European Sovereign Nations (ESN) group, believes that through a gradual and responsible approach, there is a need for existing scientific and diplomatic cooperation that does not, however, create new overlapping institutional mechanisms. Previously in 2023, President Emmanuel Macron, representing the French Republic, believed that “international cooperation is the only possible form of sustainable presence at the poles”⁵. Therefore, the European Union, according to the ESN group and the French Republic, should act as a guarantor of peace, science, and environmental protection, so that the territory of Antarctica is preserved as a common heritage of humanity, but not through going against the sovereignty of participating states.

In conclusion, it emphasizes the need for an evolution of Antarctic governance through multilevel and transparent cooperation, where the European Union is part of a conscious contribution that it does not transform into an actor that limits the decision-making power of the signatory states of the Treaty. The ESN Group and the French Republic argue that Europe can be strong through the cooperation of sovereign, responsible and participatory nations, capable of acting through respect for international law and international legality and the founding principle of peaceful cooperation⁶.

⁵ Goar, M., & Valo, M. (2023, November 12). *At the Pole Summit, Emmanuel Macron hones his climate diplomacy ahead of COP28*. Le Monde.fr; Le Monde.
https://www.lemonde.fr/en/environment/article/2023/11/12/at-the-pole-summit-emmanuel-macron-hones-his-climate-diplomacy-ahead-of-cop28_6247748_114.html

⁶ COMMISSION *Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources Commission pour la conservation de la faune et la flore marines de l’Antarctique Комиссия по сохранению морских живых ресурсов Антарктики Comisión para la Conservación de los Recursos Vivos Marinos Antárticos*. (2024).
<https://www.asoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/ASOC-Report-to-CCAMLR.pdf>

Committee: European Parliament AFET

Delegation: France/ ESN

Topic: Enlargement of the European Union



The French Republic, one of the six founding members of the European Union and a major historical promoter of European integration, believes that enlargement represents a political and economic future within the European Union. Indeed, the French Republic has supported the construction of a Europe founded on cooperation between sovereign States, since 1957, that is, since the signing of the Treaty of Rome, based on institutional balance and the defence of the common values of democracy and freedom. Despite this, which has led to the inclusion of twenty-seven member states over time, it has brought to light structural problems such as internal cohesion, economic disparity, and the decision-making capacity of the Union itself. Therefore, enlargement must be a conscious choice and not a political automatism, where economic sustainability, institutional stability and, above all, respect for national sovereignty are taken into account.

The consequences of this phenomenon were experienced directly in the French Republic after the accession of 2004 and 2007. In fact, after these accession, there was the creation of the single market to member states of Eastern Europe, and in doing so, an asymmetric competition of the European economy was created, including the relocation of numerous industries, where a loss of over three hundred thousand jobs was estimated in French manufacturing between 2004 and 2014 according to INSEE data¹. That event created a profound problem within the French industrial structure, creating a perception among the people that enlargement was not beneficial since guarantees for the protection of workers and for the balance of the tax and social systems were lacking. In fact, from the political point of view, it emerged in the 2005 referendum that fifty-five per cent of French citizens would have rejected the Treaty that would have created a Constitution for Europe².

With regard to the geopolitical context, the growth of instability on Europe's eastern borders, such as the war in Ukraine, which generated global energy tensions, the French Republic recognizes that it is essential to maintain relations in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. Despite this, France does not consider that accelerated enlargement was dictated by geopolitical motives or by strategic rivalries with other powers and that membership should remain a pure political and legal process founded on the criteria of the Treaty of Copenhagen and the unanimous consent of the members, as provided for in Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union³. Therefore, the European Union must not be transformed into an instrument of geopolitical disequilibrium, but must remain a project of voluntary cooperation between sovereign states.

The French President, Emmanuel Macron, giving a speech in Bratislava, said that “we cannot continue to enlarge a Europe that has not yet reformed. A wider Europe must first be a stronger

¹ Plus de 10 000 emplois délocalisés chaque année de 2011 à 2017, en baisse par rapport à la décennie antérieure – Les entreprises en France | Insee
<https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/6667029?sommaire=6667157#:~:text=Plus%20de%2010%20000%20emplois,Les%20entreprises%20en%20France%20%7C%20Insee>

² Ministère de l'Intérieur, *Résultats du référendum du 29 mai 2005*.

https://www.archives-resultats-elections.interieur.gouv.fr/resultats/referendum_2005/index.php

³ Treaty on European Union

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

Europe⁴". This declaration is the key to the French position on European construction, which must be based on solid internal cohesion and more efficient institutions, before extending its borders. The same idea was underlined by former Prime Minister Édouard Philippe, who, in fact, underlined in a 2021 interview that France "supports gradual integration, but not the dilution of the European project⁵". These statements by the French leaders explain the country's foreign policy, that is, defending a model of Europe of Nations.

This has been demonstrated by more recent statistics highlighting French opinion. In fact, according to Eurobarometer 103 of 2025, compared to a European average of fifty-four per cent⁶ who declare themselves in favour of new enlargements, French citizens in favour of this are only thirty-nine per cent. Economically speaking, it has been demonstrated by the European Commission's Directorate-General for the Budget that if Ukraine, Moldova and the Western Balkans were to enter simultaneously, there would be a need to increase the Union budget by between twenty and twenty-five per cent, which would have a direct impact on the allocation of structural funds. From the institutional point of view, enlargement from the parliamentary point of view would have over eight hundred seats, aggravating the complexity of the decision-making process⁷.

As a response to these challenges, France has decided to promote the European Political Community (EPC), created in Prague in 2022, i.e. a platform where there is cooperation between European member and non-member countries of the EU. EPC therefore creates stronger collaboration on security, energy and research, without immediate membership. This community, which is founded on flexible cooperation, offers the applicant countries the possibility of gradually moving closer to the Union, while maintaining their national sovereignty.

The French idea concerning this topic is based on a model of gradual and conditional integration, based on criteria of transparency, rule of law and economic capacity. Such an approach is also referred to as "concentric circle" as it would give a consensus to maintain the internal coherence of the Union, albeit seeking to avoid institutional imbalances. Paris also supports the creation of a European Council of Associated Partners, which would aim to develop political and commercial partnerships with neighbouring countries without imposing formal membership.

Diplomatically, France aims for an open and responsible approach in cooperation with countries such as the Netherlands, Austria and Denmark, which have the same prudent approach, and seeking to maintain dialogue with Germany and Poland, that on the other hand they are more in favour of speeding up the process while Paris believes that the European Union must have a balanced approach that will maintain internal stability and political coherence.

So to conclude, the French Republic believes that a broader Europe does not necessarily equate to a stronger Europe. The phenomenon of enlargement must be accompanied by institutional reforms and solid democratic control. France, therefore, has as its objective a Europe of sovereign, cooperating and responsible nations where the growth of the Union must not only take place by extension but also with strength and cohesion.

⁴ Macron, E. (2023). *Discours de Bratislava sur l'avenir de l'Europe*
<https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2023/06/01/globsec-summit-in-bratislava>

⁵ Philippe, É. (2021). *Entretien sur la politique européenne de la France*. *Le Monde*.
https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2021/07/17/edouard-philippe-la-decision-des-juges-europeens-sur-le-temps-de-travail-de-nos-soldats-touche-au-c-ur-de-la-souverainete-et-de-la-securite-de-la-france_6088572_3232.html

⁶ Eurobarometro Standard 103 (2025)
<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3372>

⁷ Parlamento Europeo (2024). *Institutional Balance and Enlargement Impact Report*.
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-10-2025-0177_EN.html