EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson has today launched a new pamphlet on the future of the European Union. Written to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, the pamphlet – entitled The European Union in the Global Age – assesses the changing rationale for the European Union as it passes from what Mandelson calls "its continental phase to its global phase". The pamphlet is published by the London-based Policy Network.

In The European Union in the Global Age Mandelson argues that despite its extraordinary achievements since 1957 the EU at 50 "has never been more questioned or debated". Mandelson suggests that rebuilding support for the European Union starts with explaining the vital role it can play in giving individual European Member States leverage with continental-sized partners and global issues that they could not exercise alone. Mandelson argues: "the task for EU leaders today is to build a positive politics of globalisation with the EU at its heart...the rationale for the EU in the 21st century is to be our response to globalisation both at home and abroad. In projecting Europe's collective interests in a globalised world and in equipping Europeans for the economic and social challenges it brings".

In The European Union in the Global Age Mandelson:

- argues that the political reactions to globalization in Europe are driving European states apart not together. Ironically, this is weakening the very institutions and habits of cooperation that are our greatest asset in shaping globalization for Europe’s benefit.

- rejects the protectionist argument that the European Union should be a bulwark against globalisation. Warning that this would be to "mortgage Europe's economic future to its present", Mandelson argues instead that the EU is a way of shaping globalisation to ensure it reflects European interests while preserving the benefits globalisation offers for Europeans and hundred of millions in the developing world.

- argues that the nation state is and will remain the key unit of political organization in Europe. But many of the questions that dominate are national politics – migration, de-industrialization, climate change, energy costs, development – will require nation states to pool their power to apply it effectively.

- argues that the EU needs to strengthen the single market to respond to a more dynamic global economy. We need to strongly defend the European Central Bank in its maintenance of a strong euro – especially in the face of governments who would use it as a scapegoat for weak economic performance.

- argues that the EU needs to tackle economic and labour market reform to equip workers for economic change and provide guarantees of economic security and social justice for workers. That means greater investment in education and lifelong learning and concerted action to protect workers as they move between jobs.

- argues that the EU needs to reform its institutions to equip itself for the global age, but the public are skeptical of a debate about the EU's institutions that is not firmly grounded in a
conception of the EU’s purpose and policy. He argues that in the global age the EU needs to create the capacity to speak with a single voice on foreign policy, replace the rotating presidency of the European council with a more stable system that provides consistent strategic leadership and reform voting in the Council to make it easier for the EU to act in areas where it needs to.

Read the pamphlet

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