

(PROJECT SYNDICATE) The next 18-24 months are likely to decide the shape of Europe for decades to come, and the United Kingdom has now started the clock on that process. Reelected with a resounding – and entirely unexpected – majority in the House of Commons, Prime Minister David Cameron must now use his increased mandate to set out an EU reform package that is attractive to all member states.

In recent years, the tail has tended to wag the dog in the UK, with Cameron kowtowing to the fanatically anti-European wing of his Conservative Party, if only to hold the pro-withdrawal UK Independence Party at bay. But now that his own authority has been strengthened significantly by his victory, with the UKIP emerging as the election's biggest loser, he can now step forward as the pragmatic but committed European that he truly is.

In a series of speeches over recent years, Cameron has spoken about a European reform agenda centered on increasing the EU's competitiveness and improving its institutions' transparency. In the wake of Russian revanchism and the mayhem spreading across the Middle East, were Cameron to speak today of the changes that Europe needs to make, I would hope that he would add his support for more effective common foreign and security policies.

Read [full text](#) at Project Syndicate.

Carl Bildt was Sweden's foreign minister from 2006 to October 2014, and was Prime Minister from 1991 to 1994.

Published with permission of Project Syndicate.