

Op-Ed

Thus passes the glory of Europe

Former ambassadors to Germany, EU: The EU is failing to meet the ‘epochal challenge’ posed by the coronavirus, and cementing its irrelevance in the Mideast

By [Oded Eran](#) and [Shimon Stein](#) / May 6, 2020

Paradigm shifts in the course of history need, in our view, at least one of two conditions – a colossal crisis and bold, inspirational political leadership. The Second World War led to one such shift, as Europe emerged ruined, losing millions to death, poverty and homelessness. Outstanding leadership was provided by the German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, the French Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Robert Schuman and the Italian Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi, who worked indefatigably for the creation of what is today the European Union. They were supported by a generous and far-sighted US Administration that conditioned its Marshall Plan on a united Western Europe.

Another paradigmatic junction in the history of Europe occurred with the fall of the Berlin Wall. The collapse of the Soviet Bloc was an event of vast proportions that was navigated under the courageous leadership of US President George Bush, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, French President Francois Mitterrand and Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who understood the enormity of the moment and the necessity of the decision not to apply brutal force to try and save the Soviet Empire as his predecessors did in 1956 and 1968.

While it may be too early to judge the full impact of the crisis, the words of Pope Francis that “the European Union is presently facing an Epochal Challenge” are an apt description. Will the EU leaders rise to the challenge, overcome longstanding reservations, and take historic decisions that are essential to continue the integration process, and to demonstrate solidarity?

....

Shimon Stein and Oded Eran were Israel’s Ambassadors to Germany and the EU respectively. Both are currently senior researchers at the Tel Aviv [Institute for National Security Studies \(INSS\)](#).

For full article:

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/thus-passes-the-glory-of-europe/>