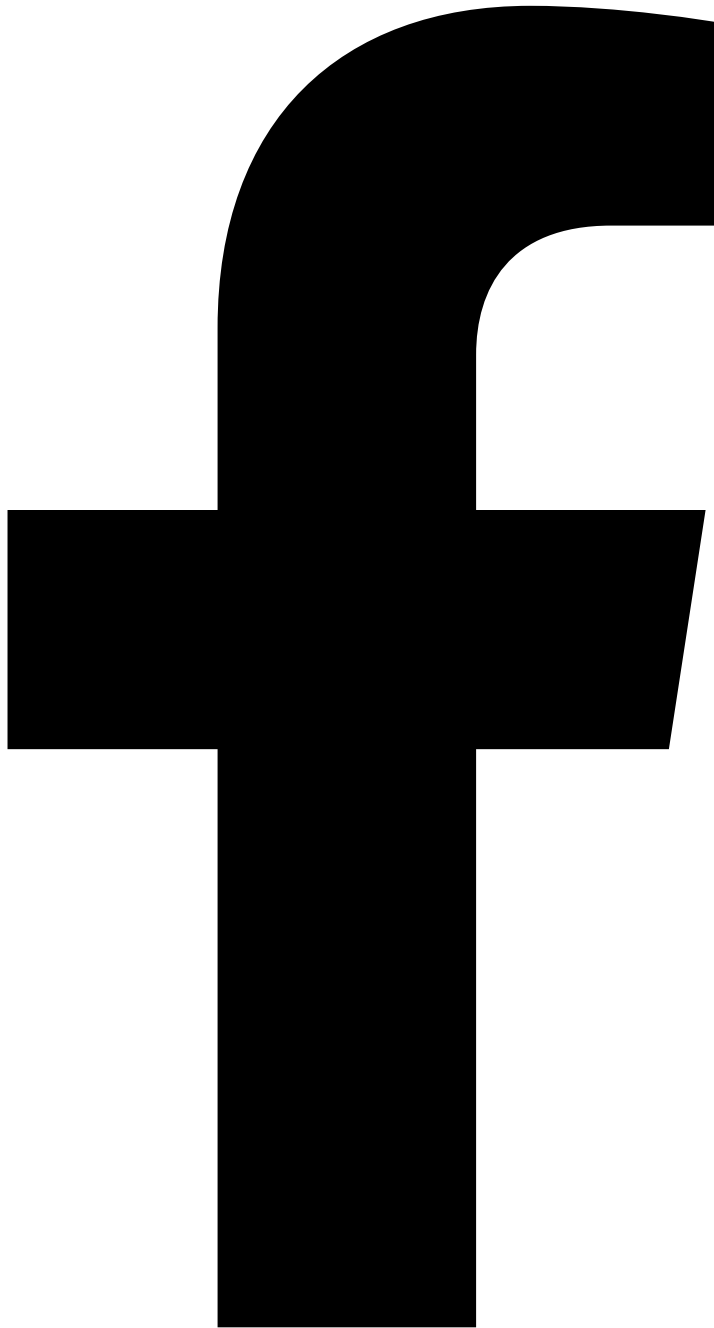


EU needs to stand together against foreign powers like US, China: Dutch PM



Mark Rutte. (Photo: Berolina/DepositPhotos)

If the European Commission and the European Union Member States make one fist together, Europe can become one of the most important players on the world stage, according to Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte. With countries like the United States, China and Russia increasingly pursuing their own interests, it is

time for the EU to join forces. "Power is not a dirty word", Rutte said in his Churchill speech in Zurich on Wednesday, NU.nl reports. "It is now up to us to secure the position of Europe on the world stage."

According to Rutte, Europe must start looking more at its own self-interests. The EU must be less "naive" and "more realistic". The EU is the largest trading block in the world, he said. But at the same time, economic power is not sufficient. More investments will have to be made in Defense, so that Member States are able to stand on their own feet and become less dependent on NATO and US military power, he said.

The Dutch Prime Minister believes that Europe can claim a much larger and more important geopolitical role internationally, but then the EU must be willing to use that power. The EU may be right on international issues, but without exercising power, Europe can "always be right, but will rarely be relevant", Rutte said.

The European sanctions policy will have to change, he said. Now EU Member States can veto sanctions, but too often Member States are played off against each other. Instead Rutte wants a qualified majority to take the lead in the European sanctions policy.

This was Rutte's third pro-European speech in a short time, after speeches given in Berlin and Strasbourg last year. According to the newspaper, this speech feeds the speculation that Rutte is eyeing a European top function. Though Rutte himself repeatedly denied that he wants to exchange Prime Minister for a position in Brussels.

Source: <https://nltimes.nl/2019/02/14/eu-needs-stand-together-foreign-powers-like-us-china-dutch-pm>

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