Mr Macron’s long term strategy to dominate European politics has fully emerged in the recent creation of the newly appointed European Commission headed by Ursula von der Leyen and its commitment to making Europe a more autonomous actor or, as it is referred to in euro-jargon, to extending “European sovereignty”.

The French stronghold on economics and defence was consolidated across the Institutions with France’s proposals for the Eurozone and European strategic autonomy in security and defence at the top of the French agenda. Mr Macron’s influence on the selection of the heads of the EU’s institutions and of these future thematic focuses was reflected in the nomination of Mrs Sylvie Goulard, a former Deputy Governor of the Bank of France and MEP. Mrs Goulard’s nomination as the Internal Market Commissioner will lead work on industrial policy and promote the Digital Single Market. Having served briefly as a Defence Minister in 2017, the newly elected Commissioner will also head a new Directorate General for Defence Industry and Space which indicates Paris’s ambitious vision to promote a European Industrial Policy and European strategic autonomy in the area of Defence.

Mr Macron’s efforts aimed at imposing a firm grip on European and global politics and France’s role in the world were also sharply evident in the role the French President took on during the G7 summit. The French President’s active role, facilitated by the ongoing Brexit negotiations and the outgoing German Chancellor, was well placed to preside over the G7 Summit in Biarritz on the 24-26 August. In an address to the Annual Conference of Ambassadors, Mr Macron discussed efforts to sustain France’s role as a global power on the international stage, reiterating his proposal for a “European sovereignty” as a means for Europe to retain its place in the global order and warning of an end to western dominance referring to the US and China as the future superpowers.

Mr Macron’s activism aims at establishing France’s role in the world through a firm grip on European and global politics. This is also reflected in the French Government strategy
towards the Brexit negotiations, which has prompted the French Foreign Minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian to confirm that a delay beyond the 31st October deadline would not be granted to the UK in current circumstances. The French pressure comes after the UK Parliament passed a law aimed at blocking a no deal Brexit and which has prompted Tory Brexiteer Peter Bone to declare that “The French do not want us in the EU causing endless trouble to their plans for a superstate.” They fear we could shatter the EU agenda. It is incredible to me that the EU does not agree to a Free Trade Agreement right now”. The French pressure comes after the UK Parliament passed a law aimed at blocking a no deal Brexit which would force the PM to force an extension. Boris Johnson has repeatedly said he would not ask for a delay, but Mr Drian’s comments suggest his request would be denied even if he was forced to, thus putting pressure on the UK and Parliament into agreeing to the already rejected Withdrawal Agreement.