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Elements of power in the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to assess the elements of power in the EU Global Strategy for foreign and security policy, and to suggest ideas for increasing the EU's influence on the global stage. It examines states and supranational organisations as the main actors in international relations ('IR'), where *power* is understood as their capacity to exert external influence.

The methodological approach is inductive, showing the EU as a case study of my PhD's theoretical framework of six elements of power. The security-related elements (*hard power*) include: 1) military, 2) economic/investment, 3) energy/climate. The influence-related elements (*soft power*) include: 4) diplomatic/political agreements, 5) governance/institutions, and 6) society/information access. The selected method is qualitative content analysis of the EU Global Strategy¹⁶⁶ 2016 and its annual reports for 2017, 2018 and 2019. It identifies the transformation of the proportional and contextual presence of each element of power.

The literature review examines how the EU fits conceptually within this framework. Surprisingly, internal discussions on unity and authorship are emphasised rather than the EU's actual external impact. Therefore, an additional EU-specific element of power is identified – EU unity – which is among its main security challenges. Most EU scholars agree that the EU needs to respond to external threats, which are perceived differently by its Member States.

The results from the EU Global Strategy assessment show: 0) The need for unity is illustrated by constant repetition of commitment words such as *we, us, our, together*. They create the impression for external readers that the EU acts as a coherent mechanism. The EU could be perceived as a serious external player if it fulfils these expectations. 1) One major observation is that the four documents – EU Global Strategy 2016 and its

166 European External Action Service, 'Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy', 69 pp, June 2016, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf, p. 44-51.

yearly assessments 2017-2019 change their narrative from civil society to defence and security, increasing the importance of military hard power. 2) The strongest EU asset to externally project influence is its financial investment. However, failure to trace how exactly and by whom the invested money is spent could damage the EU's reputation. 3) Climate migration is considered a security issue, while little scope is given to energy security, even though energy dependence is critical for the survival of some states. 4) The EU's diplomatic partnerships remain a strong element of power, and around 2019 different types of multilateralism address a range of security challenges. 5)&6) Concerning governance, norms, society and access to information, the EU adapts its external approach to specific world regions, which allows adequate response to their local realities.

Keywords: power elements, EU Global Strategy, external influence

Introduction - Geopolitical influence of the EU in times of security crises

The consequences of some recent security crises directly affect the European Union (EU). The specific crises are: the 2008 Georgia war, the 2014 Crimea annexation and Russia-Ukraine conflict, the 2015 migration crisis following the Syrian war, the 2016 terrorist attacks, the 2016 Brexit referendum, the 2020 intensification of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan supported by Turkey, the 2020 violation of the Cypriot Exclusive Economic Zone and Turkish revisionism as regards the 1923 Lausanne Treaty and the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea, and the world health crisis since 2020. The EU Global Strategy 2016 is assessed as a timely tool to address the essential for the EU root causes of security crises early enough¹⁶⁷.

I explore the regional security crises and conflicts in the Black Sea region/ South-Eastern neighbourhood as accelerated by the dynamics of the relations between Russia, Turkey and the EU. Their competition for influence intensifies the crises while their cooperation enhances stability. Aiming for regional stability, the EU needs to find the right balance of relations with the other regional competitors when projecting its external interests. The EU should position itself in the competition between the

167 'Interview with Nathalie Tocci on the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy', *The International Spectator*, vol. 51, no 3. (2016), pp. 1-8.

great powers, along with Russia and China¹⁶⁸, and the regional powers such as Turkey. Some geopolitical competitors only recognise hard power, despite the EU's attempt to combine it with soft power¹⁶⁹, which inevitably means that the EU needs to strengthen its hard power capabilities in order to be perceived as an equal. External influence on the geopolitical scene could be constructed through a clear differentiation between the elements of power.

The current research is based on six pre-defined categories of elements of power within which it locates the EU as a case study. Analysing the changes of attributed importance to each element of power will allow comparison between different IR actors. It will also provide a coherent approach to the EU's foreign and security policy. My main argument is that although power is subject to wide interpretation, in fact its elements could be grouped and their attributed value for an IR actor could be measured. By externally projecting these groups of elements of power, actors in the international relations system attempt to exercise external influence, which inevitably leads to competition with other actors who are attempting the same thing. In order to compare the elements over which different actors compete, we need to know the importance that each competitor attributes to the same group of elements of projected power. We can then create a comparable basis of projected elements of power between the EU and other regional actors, using the same categorisation.

The aim of this paper is to define which elements of power the EU considers strategic for exercising external influence. The research objective is to assess the value that the EU attributes to the elements of power in the strategic document that shapes its external image – the EU Global Strategy 2016. The findings analyse briefly the EU Global Strategy 2016, and then the yearly reports from 2017, 2018 and 2019, so as to spot any changes in the importance attributed to different elements of power. These findings could highlight priorities for an updated EU strategic document. To identify the changes in EU prioritised power elements, my research question is: *How has the EU Global Strategy progressed in its yearly reports in relation to six groups of elements of power, and what is their potential for projecting the EU's external influence?*

The structure of the paper is in three parts. First, the methodology explains the selected six groups of elements of power in IR theory, which the

168 Sven Biscop, 'From Global Strategy to Strategic Compass: Where Is the EU Heading?', *Security Policy Brief*, Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations, No. 121, (2019), p. 3.

169 Biscop, 2019. *op. cit.* p. 3.

international actors use to exert external influence. Second, the literature review outlines the main academic debates regarding the EU strategy for foreign and security policy, including the European Security Strategy (ESS) 2003, the EU Global Strategy 2016 and the Strategic Compass 2020. The views of EU foreign policy experts are examined to find out how they locate elements of power from the pre-selected IR theoretical framework, and to identify whether any other EU-specific elements of power might be emphasised. Third, in the empirical part, the text of the EU Global Strategy and its yearly assessments are examined. The paper identifies the relative share of each of the six categories of elements of power in the EU Global Strategy 2016 and its annual assessments from 2017, 2018 and 2019. The discussion shows how each of the six elements of power transformed in the subsequent three years. The value attributed by the EU to each group of elements of power is measured by the corresponding number of pages and content change in each document. The paper concludes with the observation made for each category of the EU elements of power and proposes areas of improvements to the EU's strategic external influence.

Methodology and methods

The selected methodology follows an inductive approach, starting from conceptual differentiation between six categories of power in IR, which I examine in the case study on EU foreign policy, assessing the very specific content of the EU Global Strategy.

Analytical framework: elements of power in six groups

Organising a classification chart of power in international relations is a challenge. Most scholars agree that power is multidimensional and that it is difficult to measure or to readily define its elements due to the constantly changing international environment. Furthermore, its dimensions depend on the specific actors and their own understanding of power.

During the Cold War from 1945-1989, the main asset of the great powers, the US and the USSR – nowadays inherited by Russia – was their nuclear weapons and military capabilities. At that time, power was measured in terms of military destructive might. Currently, EU-Russia regional competition concerns 'identity production and institutional arrangements in the neighbourhood'¹⁷⁰, imposing contradictory institutional norms, '(non-

170 Tom Casier 'The different faces of power in European Union-Russia relations', *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 53, no 1. (2018) pp. 101-117, p.102.

) recognition of the Other's identity'¹⁷¹, and the 'capacity to create socially accepted categories of identity, such as genuine Europeaness or great power status'¹⁷². Power is also measured as an ability to influence societies and governmental norms.

In a contemporary reading, four steps for measurement of power are recommended by classical IR theorists: '1. *Clear specification of the concept to be measured*; 2. *Statement of the proposed operational measure*; 3. *Reasons why this measure is preferable to alternative measures*; 4. *Acknowledgement of the ways in which the operational measure is deficient, that is, aspects of the concept that it fails to capture*'¹⁷³. The prerequisite for measuring how power is understood by different actors in international relations is to define its elements clearly, and to locate the specific time to which the definition refers.

Studying classical IR theorists such as D. Baldwin (1997; 2006), K. Waltz (1979), R. Keohane (1977; 1988; 2012), J. Nye (1977; 2012; 2020), and contemporary scholars - T. Casier (2016; 2018) - I developed a framework of six groups of power elements in international relations¹⁷⁴. My interpretation of power is: a set of tools that provides IR actors - states or supranational organisations - with the ability to guarantee internal security and to exert external influence over other actors. My grouping of the elements of power is valid for the XXIst century. The hard power elements relate to the physical survival of a state, its security and its defence: 1) *Military Security*, 2) *Economic Security/Investment* and 3) *Energy Security/Climate*. The soft power elements relate to influence through the political choices of a state, its governance and people: 4) *Political/ Diplomatic Agreements*, 5) *Government/Institutions/Norms*, 6) *Society* (constructing consciousness, education, religion, nationalism) and *Information Access* (language, local media, internet sites, travel/exchange).

Method: qualitative content analysis

This paper aims to find out how each of the elements of power develops in the latest EU foreign and security policy strategy, what are the tendencies and what is further recommended to maintain stronger

171 Casier, 2018. *op. cit.* p. 110.

172 *Idem.* p. 111.

173 David A. Baldwin, 'Power and International Relations. A Conceptual Approach', pp. 240. (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), p. 75.

174 The analytical framework is based on a thorough study of power in IR, with a solid theoretical grounding which I implement in my PhD thesis (not published yet). After its publication, more data will be available on the exact selection of categories of power.

international influence. Through the method of qualitative content analysis, I assess the relative weight of each category of elements of power (6 in all) for each document (4 in all), and their proportional transformation, by applying the following analytical steps¹⁷⁵:

1. I selected the unit of analysis - 6 groups of elements of power - taking the EU as a case study. The groups of power elements are: military, economic/investment, energy/climate, diplomatic/political, governance/institutions/norms, society/information access.
2. I tested the coding of elements of power by reviewing academic literature on EU foreign and security policy strategies – the European Security Strategy 2003, the EU Global Strategy 2016 and the Strategic Compass 2020. Searching for correspondence to the pre-defined six categories, I identified a new EU-specific category – unity.
3. I collected suitable empirical data sets – the EU Global Strategy for foreign and security policy 2016, and each of its annual assessments in 2017, 2018 and 2019.
4. In the four documents, I examined how each selected category changes as a share of the content of the whole document and in comparison with the other documents.
5. Reporting the results, I explained the proportional change represented by each category of elements of power in each document in terms of the number of pages devoted to a topic, changes in the meaning, or new elements added. This showed the EU attitude responsible for change of the value of each selected category.

The analysis is trustworthy as it only assesses the very specific progress of the EU Global Strategy for foreign and security policy. Its internal validity is restricted, because it does not go into depth on all processes, internal debates and preceding documents that created the EU Global Strategy, but only assesses the resulting image of the EU that this strategy projects to the world. Its external validity is strong, as it could successfully compare the same kind of projected external image in the foreign and security policy of other regional or world competitors, based on the same sample of years, 2016-2020, and the same pre-defined framework of elements of power.

175 S. Elo, M. Kaariainen, O. Kanste, T. Polkki, K. Utriainen, H. Kyngas, 'Qualitative content analysis: a Focus on Trustworthiness' *SAGE Open Journals*, 2014, p. 2 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2158244014522633>.

Literature review – EU foreign and security policy strategy

This literature review locates the six elements of power framework in recent debates between distinguished EU foreign policy analysts - D. Fiott (2020), A. Mattelaer (2016), S. Biscop (2014;2016;2019), G. Lindstrom (2014), and N. Tocci (2016;2017), the EU Global Strategy's author and adviser of HR/VP F. Mogherini. It outlines some EU-specific characteristics identified in the EU's foreign and security policy strategies: the EU Global Strategy 2016, the European Security Strategy 2003, and the Strategic Compass 2020. Rather than the process underlying the creation of each strategy, my focus is the image projected externally through the EU Global Strategy.

Internal EU strategic concept: unity, foreign policy, security policy

EU unity

The EU consists of 27 Member States (MS) and has a status between a state and an international organisation¹⁷⁶. I examine it as a supranational organisation and an equal regional player, as compared to traditional IR actors – the states. However, some internal EU debates concerning all MS affect it: their unified decision, the choice of perceived threats, common action¹⁷⁷, time and initiative¹⁷⁸. After the ESS 2003, a new goal was for Member States to 'feel ownership of the EUGS'¹⁷⁹. As a result, despite internal Euroscepticism the EU Global Strategy 'was agreed, line by line by all 28 Member States' at that time¹⁸⁰.

EU foreign policy: time-dependent

EU **foreign policy** is affected by time and status change between internal/external countries. For example, the UK's constructive participation in the EUGS challenged its legitimacy¹⁸¹ after the UK became an external actor. Some external countries neighbouring the EU would bring new security perceptions after becoming members. In addition to the different

176 Tocci, 2016. *op. cit.* p. 3.

177 Sven Biscop, 'Global Strategy', In J. Rehr (ed.) *Handbook for decision makers. The Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union* (Vienna: Armed Forces Printing Centre, 2014) pp. 20–25.

178 Nathalie Tocci, Framing the EU Global Strategy. A Stronger Europe in a Fragile World, *Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics* (London/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783319555850>.

179 Biscop, 2016. *op. cit.* p. 6; Tocci, 2017 *op. cit.*

180 Tocci, 2016. *op. cit.* p. 5.

181 *Idem.*

Member States in place in 2003, 2016 and 2020, global challenges and the internal EU structure both change over time. For example, J. Solana created a concept of entirely Security Strategy 2003, while due to changed HR/VP duties F. Mogherini created a broader concept of Global Strategy 2016¹⁸².

EU security policy: differently perceived threats

Security depends on the type of perceived threats, geographical proximity and how they affect the EU. It can address internal or external threats, natural or man-made disasters, calamities, flood, fire, pollution, resource scarcity, international political crises, military conflicts, wars, terrorism, disinformation, etc. A security strategy aims to respond efficiently by preserving geographical borders, human beings, governance regimes and the natural environment.

The EU needs analysis on the threat location and crisis-prevention tools. Its foreign and security policy strategy should combine vital security interests with the MS' common action¹⁸³. Three corresponding terms are created in the EUGS. Firstly, the '*strategic autonomy*' to decide and act upon decisions¹⁸⁴. Secondly, a '*comprehensive approach*' of using all available instruments coherently, to approach local and regional conflict dimensions acting locally and internationally¹⁸⁵. Thirdly, '*defence cooperation*' meaning 'enhanced cooperation as well as permanent structured cooperation between groups of willing and able Member States'¹⁸⁶.

External EU strategic image: common threat response, geopolitical influence

The main goals of the EU Global Strategy and the Strategic Compass are to address external threats and to promote internal EU stability¹⁸⁷. The number of times a specific threat appears in the security strategies of the MS shows their different perception¹⁸⁸, which in turn leads to different priorities. I apply the threats to MS¹⁸⁹ to my elements of power analytical

182 *Idem*.

183 Biscop, 2014. *op. cit.* p. 25.

184 Tocci, 2016. *op. cit.* p. 3.

185 *Idem* p. 3.

186 *Idem* p. 4.

187 Biscop 2019 *op. cit.*; Fiott 2020 *op. cit.*

188 Daniel Fiott, 'Uncharted territory? Towards a common threat analysis and a Strategic Compass for EU security and defence'. *EUJSS Brief*, no.16, July 2020, p. 5 (Brussels/Paris) <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/uncharted-territory-towards-common-threat-analysis-and-strategic-compass-eu-security-and->

189 Fiott, 2020 *op. cit.*

framework, followed by academic views regarding external challenges for the EU and recommended tools to overcome them. These are later examined through the content of the EUGS and its annual reports.

Military Security

*Threats perceived by MS*¹⁹⁰: weapons, proliferation, violent conflict and military, frozen conflicts, terrorism, radicalisation and extremism, maritime security, piracy. *Challenges for the EU*: terrorism, WMD proliferation¹⁹¹, 'hard power capacities'¹⁹², military capabilities, crisis prevention, intervention and stabilisation, NATO, civilian infrastructure, commitment, defence cooperation, situation awareness, rapid response, capacity-building¹⁹³, security, war and crises¹⁹⁴, type of forces, tasks and timing in defence planning¹⁹⁵, defence and military cooperation with NATO¹⁹⁶, 'military planning and conduct capability'¹⁹⁷. *Tools*: the German Presidency of the Council 2020 proposed an updated EU security and defence strategy clarifying the 'threats and challenges' with common EU objectives - 'crisis management, resilience, capabilities and partnerships'¹⁹⁸.

Economic/Investment

*Threats perceived by MS*¹⁹⁹: economic instability, critical infrastructure, access of goods, poverty, health, social exclusion. *Challenges for the EU*: trade, development²⁰⁰, connectivity²⁰¹, reducing poverty and stimulating

190 *Idem*.

191 Gustav Lindstrom, 'Internal and External Security Strategies', In J. Rehl (ed.) *Handbook for decision makers. The Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union*, pp. 16-19 (Vienna: Armed Forces Printing Centre, 2014), p. 17.

192 Astrid Boening, Jan-Frederik Kremer and Aukje van Loon (eds.), *Global Power Europe Vol.2, Global Power Shift* (2013).

193 Jan Joel Andersson, Daniel Fiott and Antonio Missiroli (eds.) 'After the EU Global Strategy. Consulting the experts. Security and Defence' (Paris: EUISS, 2016). <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/after-eu-global-strategy-%E2%80%93consulting-experts-%E2%80%93security-and-defence>

194 Sven Biscop, 'The EU Global Strategy: Realpolitik with European Characteristics', *Security Policy Brief* No. 75, Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations (2016), p. 2.

195 Alexander Mattelaer, In J. J. Anderson, D. Fiott & A. Missiroli, (eds.) 'After the EU Global Strategy. Consulting the experts. Security and Defence' *op. cit.* p. 35.

196 Wolfgang Wosolsobe, 'After the EUGS: Specifying the Military Tasks', Paris: EUISS, 2016. <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/after-eugs-specifying-military-tasks>

197 Antonio Missiroli, In Florence Gaub and Nicu Popescu (eds.) 'After the EU Global Strategy. Building resilience' (Paris: EUISS, 2017), p. 6. <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/after-eu-global-strategy-%E2%80%93building-resilience>

198 German Presidency to the Council of the EU 2020, 'Strategic Compass: Developing strategic principles', www.eu2020.de/eu2020-en/news/article/eu-defense-strategic-compass-foreign-policy/2377030.

199 Fiott, 2020. *op. cit.*

200 Tocci, 2016. *op. cit.* p. 2.

201 Andersson, Fiott and Missiroli 2016. *op. cit.*

equality²⁰². *Tools*: financial instruments²⁰³, 'context-specific, conflict-sensitive (...) understanding of situations and risks', 'mobilisation of resources and responses'²⁰⁴, financial stability and common research as defence instruments²⁰⁵.

Energy/Climate

*Threats perceived by MS*²⁰⁶: resource scarcity, energy, climate, environment. *Challenges for the EU*: energy, climate, migration²⁰⁷. *Tools*: sustainable development²⁰⁸.

Diplomatic/ Political agreements

Geographical location is considered to be a substantial factor when defining threats²⁰⁹. In 2020, the most important external actors for the EU are those with geographical proximity - the Eastern Partnership countries, the Western Balkans, North Africa and the Middle East; the great powers Russia, the USA and China; the regional power Turkey, and all countries on the European continent. *Threats perceived by MS*²¹⁰: espionage and intelligence, EU disunity, the international order, North Korea, the Western Balkans, North-Atlantic, Russia, the Black Sea region. *Challenges for the EU*: indecisiveness, non-unified MS, 'authoritarian regimes', 'unresolved conflicts'²¹¹, coherence, 'differentiated integration'²¹², diplomacy, joined up internal-external²¹³, third countries, strategic autonomy, Russia²¹⁴, neighbourhood, stable regions, global governance²¹⁵, 'resilience in the EU neighbours and surrounding countries'²¹⁶. *Tools*: EU neighbourhood stability building, international multilateral partnerships, and regions of action²¹⁷.

202 Biscop, 2016. *op. cit.* p. 2.

203 Tocci, 2017. *op. cit.* p. 86; Missiroli, 2017. *op. cit.* p. 6.

204 Missiroli, 2017. *op. cit.* p. 6.

205 Mattelaer, 2016 *op. cit.* p. 36.

206 Fiott, 2020. *op. cit.*

207 Tocci, 2016 *op. cit.*; Biscop, 2016. *op. cit.* p. 2.

208 Tocci, 2017. *op. cit.* p. 86.

209 Mattelaer, 2016. *op. cit.* p. 36.

210 Fiott, 2020. *op. cit.*

211 Özgür Ünal Eris, 'European Neighbourhood Policy and the EU's role as a normative power: the case of Ukraine'. In A. Boening et al. (eds.), *Global Power Europe Vol.2, Global Power Shift* (Verlag/Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer, 2013), p. 61.

212 Boeing, Kremer and van Loon, 2013. *op. cit.*

213 Tocci, 2017. *op. cit.* p. 86.

214 Andersson, Fiott and Missiroli, 2016. *op. cit.*

215 Biscop, 2016. *op. cit.* p. 2.

216 Missiroli, 2017. *op. cit.* p. 6.

217 Lindstrom, 2014. *op. cit.* p. 17.

Each specific region has its own challenges. The EU concerns in its neighbourhood include cyber, infrastructure, diplomacy, state-building, EU coherence, prevention, climate, reconciliation, security, economy, demography, democracy, nationalism, elections, reforms, peace, sovereignty, pragmatism, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, oligarchy, authoritarian, military, policy, intelligence, political – all of which open space for external influence²¹⁸. The challenge over EaP and Central Asia is the perceived Russian sphere of influence, while in the Western Balkans the challenge is from corruption, economic risks, disinformation, destabilisation, possible ‘civil conflicts or failed states’, to which the EU responds through diplomacy, economic policy, military security, and strategic communication²¹⁹. The Middle East and North Africa are perceived as vulnerable also in politics, climate, energy, cyber, environment, demography, economics, food, conflict²²⁰. This differentiation shows that the EU should specify the geographical regions attracting its interest, so as to provide appropriate measures to address the specific regional needs. The diplomatic attitude of the EU is demonstrated through its connectivity with China and EU-ASEAN, dialogue with Iran, patience towards Russia, strategic trade with Japan, the US, Mercosur and India, but its diplomatic initiatives to deal with crises need improvement²²¹.

Government/Institutions/Norms

*Threats perceived by MS*²²²: illegal migration and human trafficking, organised crime, state failure, demography. *Challenges for the EU*: organised crime, regional conflicts and state failure²²³, migration, international crime, bottom-up approach, institutionalisation²²⁴. *Tools*: Since the first version of the EU security strategy 2003 the focus has been on ‘spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights (as) the best means of strengthening the international order’²²⁵. A substantial element of EU power is the ability to change ‘norms, standards and prescriptions of world politics’²²⁶. The

218 Gaub & Popescu, 2017. *op. cit.* p. 94.

219 Missiroli, 2017. *op. cit.* p. 8.

220 *Idem.* p. 8.

221 Biscop, 2016. *op. cit.* p. 4.

222 Fiott, 2020. *op. cit.*

223 Lindstrom, 2014. *op. cit.* p. 17.

224 Andersson, Fiott and Missiroli, 2016. *op. cit.*

225 Council of the EU, ‘A Secure Europe in a Better World’, Brussels, 8 December 2003, 15895/03, PESC 787, p.11. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15895-2003-INIT/en/pdf>,

226 Manners, 2008 in Eris, 2013. *op. cit.* p. 55.

normative power of the EU towards its neighbourhood has reinforced its own security, by addressing ‘the threat of neighbourhood disorder spilling across its border’²²⁷. But a main EU challenge is to find identity and a role in international relations, transforming it from a civilian and normative power to a ‘normal international actor’²²⁸. The Strategic Compass, as a ‘politico-military’ component of the EUGS²²⁹, is expected to redefine the EU’s ‘type of security and defence actor’ in the global competition²³⁰.

Society (identity, education, religion, nationalism, beliefs) and Information Access (language, media, Internet websites, travel/exchange)

*Threats perceived by MS*²³¹: hybrid (disinformation, election interference, propaganda), digital, technological and cyber threats, values, nationalism. *Challenges for the EU*: hybrid, cyber, communication²³², ‘common values and interests’²³³. *Tools*: How power is perceived in the receiving entity is of strategic importance for a global actor. Looking back 55 years, this statement remains valid: ‘the reality of power in the mind of the observer can be as important as the reality of power itself’²³⁴. In this regard, addressing ‘images and perceptions’ in ‘EU public diplomacy’ is a key element of ‘public opinion and media framing’ in the EU’s interests²³⁵.

Qualitative content analysis – Elements of power in the EU Global Strategy 2016 and its annual reports for 2017, 2018 and 2019

The predefined six groups of elements of power serve as analytical framework to examine the relative weight of each category of power in the EU Global Strategy 2016 and its yearly reports in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

227 Eris, 2013. *op. cit.* p. 70.

228 Filip Tereszkiwicz, ‘The European Union as a normal international actor: an analysis of the EU Global Strategy’, *International Politics* 57(3) (London/Berlin/New York: Springer Nature Limited 2019, 2020), pp. 95-114.

229 Biscop, 2019. *op. cit.* p. 4.

230 Fiott, 2020. *op. cit.* p. 8.

231 *Idem.*

232 Andersson, Fiott and Missiroli, 2016. *op. cit.*

233 Missiroli, 2017. *op. cit.* p. 6.

234 Morghentau 1965 in Chaban and Holland, 2019. *op. cit.* p. 2.

235 N. Chaban & M. Holland (eds.) ‘Shaping the EU Global Strategy Introduction. Partners and Perceptions’, *The European Union International Affairs* (London/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p. 2.

Volumes and key messages

The EUGS, which was published in June 2016 soon after the terrorist attacks in Brussels in March 2016, provides a vision of the EU's foreign and security policy in 57 pages. Its main message is the unity of the union, concluding with 7 pages on converting 'vision into action' through shared assessment, joined-up union, thinking further than soft power, and using different types of diplomacy focusing on the economic, cultural and energy spheres²³⁶. The main principles of external action in 2 pages address 'principled pragmatism', unity, engagement, responsibility and partnership. The external priorities outlined in 1 page address: 'security of our union', democracy and prosperity, terrorism, cyber, climate, economy²³⁷. This is a very optimistic view on the future of the EU and the global arena, focusing primarily on diplomacy.

The 2017 EUGS Year 1 report²³⁸ is 35 pages long, less than 2/3 of the size of the original. The foreword by HR/VP Mogherini in the first 9 pages addresses the fast changes in the world order which led to the Brexit vote, and also UN development cooperation and global alliances. The EU aims to prove itself as a global power by providing security. Its actions are directed towards the SDGs, prevention of wars, coping with humanitarian disasters, refugee crises, cooperation, neighbourhood policy, migration and terrorism. A key message for the EU again is that '*together, we*' are strong²³⁹. Its priorities include NATO, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, climate, unity between the MS and the EU institutions, and internal-external stability. The new message, conveyed over 7 pages, is that the world is changing quickly with more wars and insecurity, and the EU should unite its institutions - Council, Commission, Parliament - and its Member States to respond through investment in Syria, Turkey, Africa and Libya, and to address migration, terrorism, trafficking, smuggling, organised crime and cybersecurity, whilst aiming to achieve the UN 2030 SDGs²⁴⁰. The next steps envisaged are security and defence, public diplomacy, and continuity in the common action.

236 EEAS, 'Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy' 2016, *op. cit.*

237 EEAS, 'Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy' 2016, *op. cit.* p. 18.

238 European External Action Service, 'From Shared Vision to Common Action: Implementing the EU Global Strategy Year 1' *A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, 35 pp, June 2017, pp. 16–18.

239 EEAS, 'Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy' 2016, *op. cit.* pp.1–9.

240 EEAS, 'From Shared Vision to Common Action: Implementing the EU Global Strategy Year 1' 2017, *op. cit.* pp. 25–32.

The 2018 EUGS Year 2 report²⁴¹ is only 17 pages long, relatively half of the year 1 report and 1/3 of the full text of the strategy. Its introduction takes just 1 page, to outline the unpredictability within the international institutions, constant challenges to the international order, declining respect for human rights and democracy, lack of a solution for Syria, conflicts in Yemen and Gaza, but territorial defeat of Da'esh. It underlines the strengths of the EU in multilateral diplomacy: lasting solutions, cooperation, guaranteeing international rules, Iran nuclear agreement, closer Western Balkans, and strong global governance aiming for climate and migration solutions. The new final message hints about a 'European Security and Defence Union', while referring to openness towards Asia, the Americas, WTO, and the need for unity in order to demonstrate credibility both to EU citizens and external partners.

The 2019 EUGS Year 3 report²⁴² substantially changes from the previous ones. It contains 59 pages, 33 of which are a report, while 26 pages show the practical achievements in figures. The foreword of 2 pages is focused on UN peacekeeping, the UN Security Council, multilateralism, negotiations, NATO, Africa, ASEAN, Syria, Venezuela, Libya, Afghanistan, trust funds and political will. The way of work requires a more credible, responsive and joined-up union, described over 3 pages. Its main goals relate to the international financial institutions, the development banks of the MS, visibility through public diplomacy, communication against disinformation, implementing the UN SDGs through combined efforts on humanitarian development and peace actions, and coordination of the EU's internal and external images on migration plus diplomacy in the economic, cultural and digital dimension. The next EU strategic goals are intelligence, strategic culture, defence cooperation, command and control, technology, access to routes and networks, an autonomous EU and principled pragmatism.

The preamble of the EUGS 2016 highlights the EU's internal strength as a key element of power, constantly affirmed through words denoting mutual commitment, such as 'we', 'us', 'our unity', 'shared'²⁴³, 'our principles, our interests, and our priorities', which were signalled by the HR/VP at that time F. Mogherini²⁴⁴. They attribute ownership to, and promote a mutual

241 European External Action Service, 'Implementing the EU Global Strategy Year 2. From Shared Vision to Common Action: A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, 17 pp, June 2018, pp. 6–8.

242 European External Action Service, 'From Vision to Action: *The European Union's Global Strategy* - Three years on, looking forward' 59 pp, June 2019, pp. 26–29.

243 EEAS, 'Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy' 2016, *op. cit.* p. 8.

244 EEAS, 'Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy' 2016, *op. cit.* p. 3.

approach by all Member States, indicating that acting alone is not sufficient, while together they are strong. This vocabulary of mutual ownership is regularly used in the EUGS 2016, while in the assessment reports for 2017 and 2018 it slowly decreases, and is limited in 2019.

This 2016-2019 transformation from an optimistic to a pragmatic view reflects the constant security crises in the rapidly changing world. While in 2016 various diplomatic tools are highlighted, together with the importance of internal unity, in 2018 more pragmatic action is necessary, which requires multilateral partnerships with international organisations and various IR actors. Different types of multilateralism are sought, aiming to address the different types of security challenges worldwide. Unity is needed by the EU not only internally, but also to demonstrate external strength. And a number of funds with substantial budgets are allocated to support these purposes.

Table 1: Key priorities in the EUGS and its yearly assessments: proportional allocation of pages to the six groups of elements of power

	EUGS 2016	2017 EUGS Year 1	2018 EUGS Year 2	2019 EUGS Year 3
Total pages	57	35	17	59 (33 report/ 26 results)
Opening	13 (vision)	9 (SDGs)	1 (unpredictability)	2 (UN, NATO, multilateralism, trust funds)
Military	4 (NATO) 4 (conflicts/ crises)	4 (integrated approach, PRISM), 4 (sec/def, PESCO)	2 (def. research) 2 (investment, legal migration, UN, NATO, OSCE, CoE, CSDP, Europol, Frontex)	5 (Security Union, funds, CARD, MPCC, EDF, Atalanta, SIAC, EDTIB)
Economic/ Investment	n/a	Sec/def, dev/co, UN, WB, Colombia TF	Nat. def. spending, EU def. fund, EU peace facility	EUR 27 bln , variety of funds
Energy/ Climate	n/a	12 (climate, Africa, Middle East, Lat. Am)	n/a	n/a
Diplomatic/ Political Agreements	5 (East-South), 7 (cooperative regional orders)	2 (public diplomacy)	3 (EU transformative power, econ. dipl., Youth/ Women, Peace and Security)	1 (Brexit, W. Balkans, Iran) 7 (transforming multilateralism)
Governance/ Institutions	5 (international law)	7 (res./ integr. appr.)	3 (resilience/ integr.appr./ reg.order)	4 (res/integr. appr)
Society/ Information access	4 (citizens' interests)	12 (SDGs, youth, education, health, empl.)	1 (int-ext, social groups inclusion)	1 (connected, contested, complex – disinform., cyber, pol. narratives)
Final/ Next steps/ Way of work	7 (vision/action, dipl.)	10 (sec./def., dipl., continuity)	4 (European Security and Defence Union)	5 (credible, visibility, fin. inst.)
Main message	Unity of the Union	Insecurities, Together we are strong	EU credibility internal/ external	Intelligence, EU autonomy, principled pragmatism

Element of power: military security

In the EUGS 2016 only 4 pages are devoted to security and defence, NATO, counter-terrorism, cyber, energy and strategic communication²⁴⁵. 'Conflicts and crises' are located in 4 additional pages, where the EU aims peacebuilding, pre-emptive peace, stabilisation, rapid crisis response, conflict settlement, protecting human lives through health, education, basic goods, employment, and 'restrictive measures'²⁴⁶. Such action could be implemented only from a position of power, if recognised by the vulnerable state and by the aggressor in international relations. The progress on priorities is substantial during the 2016-2019 EU foreign and security policy strategy development.

In the 2017 EUGS assessment, the SDGs have key importance, including security and defence, but also enlargement, development, trade, migration, climate, environment, culture, resilience and East-South relations²⁴⁷, also wars, humanitarian disasters, Iran, Tunisia, Latin America, Caribbean, early warning, prevention, resilience. The term 'Integrated approach to conflicts and crises' is introduced, addressing Syria, Colombia, Afghanistan; a diplomatic push for PRISM (prevention of conflict, rule of law, security sector reform, integrated approach, stabilisation and mediation); necessity to develop multilevel local, national and regional dialogue; a crisis response mechanism to address Sahel, Libya, CSDP missions; introduction of conflict analysis, embassies on the ground, geographical interests in Jordan, Egypt, Burundi, Central African Republic, Mali, Somalia, Nigeria²⁴⁸. Particularly to security and defence, 4 pages are dedicated, introducing PESCO, permanent planning, civil-military operations and battlegroups²⁴⁹, which shows interests in military development and Arab and African crisis regions.

The 2018 EUGS assessment devotes 2 pages to security and defence, outlining research on defence, strong EU unity aiming to provide internal safety via global peace, for which it needs: national defence spending, operative PESCO, movement of troops and vehicles, common missions

245 EEAS, 'Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy' 2016, *op.cit.* pp.19–23.

246 EEAS, 'Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy' 2016, *op. cit.* pp. 28–32.

247 EEAS, 'From Shared Vision to Common Action: Implementing the EU Global Strategy Year 1' 2017, *op. cit.* pp.12–16.

248 EEAS, 'From Shared Vision to Common Action: Implementing the EU Global Strategy Year 1' 2017, *op. cit.* pp. 16 –20.

249 EEAS, 'From Shared Vision to Common Action: Implementing the EU Global Strategy Year 1' 2017, *op. cit.* pp. 20 –24.

and operations, joint military training and mobility, maritime surveillance, cyber information sharing, addressing terrorism, organised crime, border security, radicalisation, smuggling, training Libyan coastguards, saving lives, in partnership with NATO, UN Central Africa, Mali, Sahel, Libya, Somalia, operation Sophia, Women, Peace and Security. Additional 2 pages are devoted to changes in addressing the security challenges via investment, legal migration, protection, UN, NATO, ASEAN, OSCE, CoE, CSDP missions, Justice and Home Affairs agencies, Europol, Frontex, Radicalisation Awareness Fund, a new budget for development and cooperation in the EU neighbourhood, public diplomacy and strategic communication²⁵⁰. This shows a tendency towards partnership with a range of different international organisations, joined military efforts and spending for military conflict zones worldwide, but less attention to softer methods in the EU neighbourhood.

The 2019 EUGS assessment introduces the term 'Security Union', described over 5 pages. It lists particular actions in 16 civilian and military missions, Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, Military Planning and Conduct Capability, operational readiness of 25 MS, European Defence Fund, aiming to provide military peace support, maritime security, the Atalanta operation, piracy in the Horn of Africa, Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity, European Defence and Technological Industrial Base, and defence cooperation covering space, air, land, maritime, and common training²⁵¹. These specific actions in the area of security and defence increase constantly showing a different face of the EU – that of a security power.

Element of power: economic/ investment

The EUGS 2016 limitedly mentions economic security which the EU provides to external regions as a main power tool. However, this changes considerably up to the last evaluation in 2019. In the 2017 EUGS assessment, different types of funds are identified – security and defence, CSDP missions, development and cooperation, partnership with the UN and the World Bank, Colombia Trust Fund²⁵². The specific funds in the 2018 EUGS report are European Defence Fund in the Multiannual Financial

250 EEAS, 'Implementing the EU Global Strategy Year 2. From Shared Vision to Common Action' 2018, *op. cit.* pp.14–16.

251 EEAS, 'From Vision to Action: The European Union's Global Strategy - Three years on, looking forward' 2019, *op. cit.* pp.10–14.

252 EEAS, 'From Shared Vision to Common Action: Implementing the EU Global Strategy Year 1' 2017, *op. cit.* pp. 16–20.

Framework for research and capabilities, European Peace Facility with new budget²⁵³. In contrast, the 2019 EUGS annex shows examples of about EUR 27 billion invested in security and defence via different funds, and particular steps to generate joint funds for specific issues in conflict and war zones worldwide, which brings hard power credibility to the EU through its strongest asset – economic investment. But there is no guarantee on how exactly the funding is implemented, by whom and for what purposes it is spent, which might transform the EU's image from a strong actor to a donor.

Element of power: energy/climate

Surprisingly, not much attention is devoted to energy dependence as a security challenge in EUGS 2016. However, a number of MS are highly dependent on external energy supply, which is critical for their security. In the 2017 EUGS assessment, the importance of energy security rises, together with climate change and insecurities in the Middle East, Northern Africa and Latin America²⁵⁴, because resource scarcity is considered to be a reason for global migration. During the next years, due to military security crises, wars and violent conflicts, energy and climate remain aside on the EU foreign policy agenda.

Element of power: diplomatic/ political agreements

The EUGS 2016 addresses 'state and societal resilience' East-South over 5 pages, listing enlargement, neighbourhood, SDGs, humanitarian, development, migration, trade, investment, education, health and research policies²⁵⁵. The biggest share of 7 pages is for 'cooperative regional orders' addressing democracy, rule of law, human rights, free choice, disagreements and cooperation with Russia, 'peaceful and prosperous Mediterranean, Middle East and Africa', terrorism, demography, migration, climate, 'closer Atlantic', 'connected Asia', China, and intellectual property²⁵⁶. These priorities portray a very optimistic view towards the world, which changes over the next years from aiming for peace and prosperity to

253 EEAS, 'Implementing the EU Global Strategy Year 2. From Shared Vision to Common Action' 2018, *op. cit.* pp. 6–8.

254 EEAS, 'From Shared Vision to Common Action: Implementing the EU Global Strategy Year 1' 2017, *op. cit.* pp. 12–24.

255 EEAS, 'Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy' 2016, *op. cit.* pp. 23–28.

256 EEAS, 'Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy' 2016, *op. cit.* pp. 32–39.

managing security crises. The 2017 EUGS assessment addresses public diplomacy over 2 pages, including a geopolitical approach towards Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Arab world, Morocco, Algeria, Beirut, Tunisia, the Western Balkans, and thematic dialogue with youth, inclusion in decision-making, public diplomacy, partnerships, and capacity of delegations²⁵⁷.

The 2018 EUGS assessment introduces cooperative regional orders with EU transformative power in the Western Balkans, the Sofia Declaration promoting good-neighbourly relations between Albania, North Macedonia²⁵⁸, Bosnia and Herzegovina, EaP, addressing disinformation, corruption, youth, Russian civil society, African humanitarian and development issues, US common objectives, CETA with Canada, MERCOSUR with Latin America, a number of LA and Asian countries, China, India, Australia and New Zealand, ASEAN, and specific funds for economic diplomacy²⁵⁹. In providing a mutual rules based order for the 21st century, the EU aims for partnership with the UN, achievement of the SDGs to reduce poverty, a joint plan for Iran, security in the Middle East, equality between men and women, Youth/Women Peace and Security, peacebuilding, International Court for migrants and refugees, clean water, election observation in Gambia, Kosovo, Tunisia and Honduras. This shows inclusion of different social groups in the process of providing peace. The 2019 EUGS assesses in 1 page the implications of Brexit, the Western Balkans, Iran, agreed strategic priorities, and a collective capacity to act autonomously and in cooperation. The 2019 EUGS assessment addresses global governance and cooperative regional orders in 7 pages, highlighting multilateralism, the UN, Good Human Rights Stories, democratic change, natural resources, climate, human rights, North Macedonia agreement, Turkey, Middle East, Africa, youth, democracy, education, sustainable investment, trade, Asia, China, ASEAN, Central Asia, Latin America, MERCOSUR, Venezuela, Russia and the Arctic²⁶⁰. It aims to reform multilateralism and refers to the UN, WTO, CoE, G7, G20, OSCE, adapting to changes, consistency, ASEAN, EaP, MERCOSUR, trilateral EU-UN-African Union cooperation, sub-regional approach to Sahel/Maghreb, the Horn of Africa, local implementation of the SDGs, updated digitalisation, democratic change in Tunisia and Global Tech Panel teaching

257 EEAS, 'From Shared Vision to Common Action: Implementing the EU Global Strategy Year 1' 2017, *op. cit.* pp. 30–32.

258 Prior to February 2019 the name was 'former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' (FYROM).

259 EEAS, 'Implementing the EU Global Strategy Year 2. From Shared Vision to Common Action' 2018, *op. cit.* pp. 9–12.

260 EEAS, 'From Vision to Action: The European Union's Global Strategy - Three years on, looking forward' 2019, *op. cit.* pp. 15–22.

entrepreneurs. Global governance success is achieved in UN Syria-Libya peace talks, Canada trade, Mercosur, 72 countries with FTAs, the Iran deal, 25% of the EU budget 2021-2027 on climate change, digital diplomacy, 20 countries in political dialogues. A number of actions are implemented on the EU's second strongest element of power after investment - the diplomatic and political agreements.

Element of power: governance/ institutions/ norms

In the EUGS 2016, 'global governance for the 21st century' occupies 5 pages, highlighting international law, UN, reforming, investing, global trade, economic diplomacy, international norms, regimes and institutions, WMD, protection and empowerment of civic actors, human rights defenders²⁶¹. The optimistic EUGS perspectives require all other international actors to share the same perception of cooperation. In the 2018 EUGS assessment, resilience and integrated approach deliver a key message regarding the need to rebuild countries and societies destroyed by conflicts, and suggest early warning risk assessment²⁶². Resilience and an integrated approach in surrounding regions are outlined in 4 pages, addressing fragility and conflict, promotion of democracy via strategic communication, supporting state and society, differentiating the needs of the Western Balkans and Africa, adding results of the EU Conference on Youth, Peace and Security for conflict prevention²⁶³. The investment of EUR 23.1 billion in the integrated approach has led to more than 8000 people accessing jobs and studies, with their basic needs covered.

Element of power: society (identity, education, religion, beliefs) and information access (language, media, Internet, travel/exchange)

The EUGS 2016 (14-16) outlines interests of the citizens over 4 pages, including 'security at home', prosperity, democracy, the rule of law, justice, the 'rule-based global order', UN human rights, and global connections. The following year, the 2017 EUGS assessment (12-24) highlights the UN SDGs, including youth, education, health, research, culture, policy dialogue, infrastructure and employment. The 2019 EUGS assessment describes

261 EEAS, 'Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy' 2016, *op. cit.* pp. 39–44.

262 EEAS, 'Implementing the EU Global Strategy Year 2. From Shared Vision to Common Action' 2018, *op. cit.* pp. 8–9.

263 EEAS, 'From Vision to Action: The European Union's Global Strategy - Three years on, looking forward' 2019, *op. cit.* pp. 22–26.

the world as 'connected, contested, complex', quickly changing, in need of cooperation to address disinformation, cyberattacks, political narratives undermining democracy, demography. As a result of EU action, EUR 65 billion are invested, 390 000 people recruited, 31.6 million people reached. Besides the tools of power aimed at society and information access, an urgent EU priority remains international security, stability, and the need for peace.

Conclusion – the EU's potential to exercise external influence

Assessing the elements of power is a challenge, especially for a global player consisting of 27 Member States. The EU Global Strategy for foreign and security policy clearly differentiates the need for an internally strong EU, security guarantees, and external geopolitical influence. The current paper shows how the EUGS 2016 and its three yearly reports 2017-2019 transformed over six power elements. The conclusions point to some changes in the EU global image which strengthen its influence. Externally observed, the EU is a complete IR actor and acts as such. Promoting debates on the challenge of internal unity is an obstacle to projecting a strong external image. The next foreign and security policy strategy should demonstrate confidence in the EU's external action, rather than losing focus on internal debates. This requires continuous rhetoric of *us*, the EU, supported by the proud citizens of the EU. Any individualistic leadership would decrease the opportunities for external strength.

The conclusions drawn with regard to the elements of power are as follows:

Firstly, the EU significantly changes its foreign policy narrative from governmental norms and human rights to military security, defence and saving human lives. Among global players, the EU needs military security for equal partner recognition. It highlights a new image of partnership engagement in crisis management, conflict prevention, military training and equipment. The EUGS interpretation of power continuously evolves on security and defence, relying on funding and investment as tools to exercise influence.

Secondly, the strongest EU element of power is economic, but its external image depends on how the investment is implemented. More instruments to track the funding results are needed, to punctually detect any double funding of similar projects by EU/UN/NATO, or by different EU instruments. Funding could stabilise external influence, but could also

project to beneficiary countries the image of an EU that is exclusively a funding source. To be perceived seriously by its beneficiaries, the EU needs to monitor its funds, clarifying by whom and for what exact purposes the money is spent.

Thirdly, energy and climate were not top priorities for the EU, except in relation to migration. Energy security needs to be a high priority, if vital security interests of the MS are respected.

Fourthly, diplomatic partnerships were transformed due to urgent security challenges requiring a search for strong partners. The EU's attempt to manage evolving world crises led to increased diplomatic and political agreements, the EU's most valuable soft power instrument. Its multilateralism resulted in strengthened global cooperation, including with the UN, OSCE, NATO, ASEAN, MERCOSUR, the African Union, with individual IR actors on issues of mutual interest, despite different attitudes on other issues.

Fifthly, due to the changing world challenges, the priorities of world governance changed during the years 2016-2019 from constructing norms and social inclusion in the neighbouring countries to more action towards resolving military conflicts and wars.

Sixthly, civil society and disinformation were prioritised in 2016, and after a 2-year decrease, again in 2019. This element of power enables the full spectrum of society to be reached. It enhances the building of a stable foundation for trust.

Finally, the EU's skilful diplomacy efficiently approaches world challenges, while gaining the trust of civil society is significant for maintaining constant influence. But to be a credible partner among other global actors, the EU needs wise economic investments, to track how the funds are used, and careful military advances.

Limitations: This is a qualitative assessment of the EUGS 2016-2019 for foreign and security policy, which considers the EU's strategic image projected externally. It examines the latest EU approaches in relation to six groups of elements of power. It enables comparisons to be made on an equal basis with other IR actors, if the same categorisation of elements of power and time period are applied.

Recommendation: For further research, a logical sequence is to study whether and how elements of externally-projected EU power differ from elements of power projected towards the EU by external actors. Thus, a comparison can be made between externally projected influence and

acceptance of external influence, evaluating whether the same standards apply. This could be framed within a three-level differentiation of limits, with scope for nuancing between acceptable, negotiable, and unacceptable phases of influence in both directions.

