

[Karen E. Smith](#)

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A European Union global strategy for a changing world?

Karen E. Smith, LSE

Abstract: The EU agreed a ‘global strategy on foreign and security policy’ in June 2016, in the midst of unprecedented turmoil within the EU and outside it. This article begins with a discussion of what ‘strategy’ entails, and the challenges of strategizing in the EU. It then traces the development of the EU global strategy, focusing on why it was considered to be necessary, and summarises its content. Finally, the article analyses the new strategy in terms of clarity of strategic objectives, specification of resources dedicated to the pursuit of those objectives, and provision for monitoring of progress made in achieving the objectives. The global strategy provides a more ‘realist’ guide for EU foreign and security policy in the near future, but Brexit presents a severe challenge to implementing it in a world in which EU influence is increasingly resisted or contested.

Keywords: Brexit, European Union, strategy

Introduction

The Global Strategy of the European Union (European Union 2016) was welcomed by the European Council on 29 June 2016, just days after the British voted to leave the European Union (EU). ‘Brexit’ will have a negative impact on the United Kingdom (UK) and the EU, including in the field of foreign and security policy, though the extent of the damage depends on the eventual agreement reached between the UK and the EU (the closer the relationship, the fewer negative repercussions for the economy, geopolitical influence, and so on, of both sides). But in an interview with the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, the EU’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini said

that she wanted to present her initiative for the Global Strategy (EUGS) despite the uncertainty over the UK-EU relationship because it would help boost the EU's confidence and indicate a way forward in the field of foreign, security and defence policy (Caprara 2016). In the months following that European Council, the EU member states have begun to discuss one of the principal proposals in the strategy: strengthening and deepening defence cooperation. Given that the UK has traditionally been the most reticent member state in that area, defence cooperation may be one area around which the EU27 (all the member states bar the UK) can unify. If this indeed happens (a big if), then the EUGS will have had, at least partially, the impact that Mogherini sought. However, the impact of Brexit, on top of all of the other challenges facing the EU, may be more damaging overall, as it drains away resources on which EU global action depends.

This article begins with a discussion of what 'strategy' entails, and the challenges of strategizing in the EU. Section 2 traces the development of the EUGS, focusing on why it was considered to be necessary, and then summarises its content. Section 3 assesses how 'strategic' the EUGS is. It analyses the new EU global strategy in terms such as the clarity and prioritisation of strategic objectives, specification of resources dedicated to the pursuit of those objectives, and provision for monitoring of progress made in achieving the objectives. What challenges is the EU likely to face in implementing the strategy? Will the EUGS help the EU navigate the 'changing world'?

1. Strategy and the EU

'Strategy', as Lawrence Freedman (2013, pp. x-xi) has noted, is an overused word with multiple definitions (similar to 'power' and 'politics'). In a broad sense, a strategy is a plan to reach objectives. Strategies abound in both the public and private sectors, for good reasons, as Goldgeier and Suri (2016, p. 35) argue:

Strategic planning is important because it forces a fragmented policy bureaucracy to think imaginatively about how the world works and what their nation can achieve. Strategic planning creates space for leaders to articulate priorities and match diverse capabilities to overarching goals. When done well, it allows powerful governments to become forward-looking international agenda-setters, avoiding the all-too-frequent tendency to react to emerging crises in piecemeal fashion.

A number of elements have been widely considered to be important building blocks of foreign policy and security strategies. The UK's 2010 National Security Strategy (UK 2010, p. 10) states that 'a national security strategy, like any strategy, must be a combination of **ends** (what we are seeking to achieve), **ways** (the ways by which we seek to achieve those ends) and **means** (the resources we can devote to achieving the ends).' Annegret Bendiek and Heinz Kramer (2010, p. 456) define an EU foreign policy strategy as 'the existence of a comprehensive plan for the EU's various international relations, which also includes clear objectives and plans ordered according to priorities'. The external context should be assessed and incorporated into the overall plan, as the UK's 2010 National Security Strategy notes: a strategy 'must also take account of the activities of others: the positive contributions of allies and partners and of the private sector; and the negative effect of adversaries seeking to thwart our objectives' (UK 2010, p. 10).

This article will thus assess the EU Global Strategy on the basis of the following elements (see also Bicchi et al 2015):

- The extent to which the EUGS is based on agreement on the shared interests and values of the EU and its member states in the field of foreign and security policy, and on a set of objectives derived from those shared interests and values;

- Given that resources are necessarily finite, the extent to which the EUGS sets priorities from among those objectives;
- The extent to which the EGUS evaluates how the external context poses challenges or opportunities in terms of achieving the EU's priorities;
- The extent to which the EUGS assesses the instruments and resources that are necessary to achieve those objectives within a specified time frame, acknowledges the decisions that need to be taken to direct the necessary resources to their fulfilment and indicates the specific instruments and institutional actors that will need to be devoted to implementing the decisions;
- The extent to which the EUGS includes provisions for regular monitoring and assessment of the progress made in implementing and achieving objectives, and then adjustment of priorities and resources as necessary.

The EU actually produces a lot of strategies. There is a 'strategic framework on human rights and democracy'. There are 'country strategies' as well as 'regional strategies' for all of the EU's aid recipients. The EU has 'strategic partnerships' with ten countries and several international organisations, including a 'partnership with a strategic purpose' with ASEAN. And before the EUGS, there was the 2003 European Security Strategy (European Union 2003) and the 2008 implementation report on the European Security Strategy (European Union 2008). The EU thus at first sight appears to be the kind of actor that is intent on setting out long-term plans and priorities for its foreign relations, and not merely reacting to the latest crisis.

A closer look reveals a more problematic picture. Freedman (2013, p. 611) has noted that many government strategy documents have short half-lives because they:

lack focus, cover too many dissimilar or only loosely connected issues and themes, address multiple audiences to the satisfaction of none, and reflect

nuanced bureaucratic compromises. They are often about issues that might have to be addressed rather than ways of dealing with specific problems.

In fact, EU strategies almost universally tend to be about issues that have to be addressed rather than specific plans for dealing with specific problems with the specific resources available. As Bendiek and Kramer (2010, p. 456) argue:

there are hardly any clear and long-term goals to be discernable (sic) for the plethora of inter-regional and bilateral EU foreign relations. While certain goals are commonly named in the agreements that form the basis for the respective relations, these documents usually lack a clear time frame, a prioritization of the stated objectives, effective monitoring of the achievement of objectives, or a systematic assessment of whether the instruments being used are suited for the stated purposes.

Jolyon Howorth argued in 2010 that ‘there is no doubt that the EU needs much greater strategic thinking – especially in terms of the application of means to large ends’ (Howorth 2010, p. 463). External actors tend to agree. The EU may be an attractive partner, but it is also seen as ineffective with diminishing capabilities, and internally divided (European Commission 2014, pp. 45-7). For example, Jonathan Holslag (2011, p. 310) concludes that the ‘idea that Europe will continue to fail to deliver as a strategic player is becoming more and more common among Chinese experts and officials’.

Of course, the EU is not the only actor whose security strategies have been criticised, as the Freedman quote above indicates. The 2015 US National Security Strategy was described as vague, lacking a clear foreign policy direction, and ‘so innocuous that Republican presidential hopefuls have not even bothered to attack it’ (Goldgeier and Suri 2015, p. 39). But while US strategy declarations may be found wanting, it is still arguably the most powerful state in the international system, which enjoys internal and external legitimacy

as such. The same cannot be said of the EU, which is why an absence of strategic direction poses more of a fundamental problem: if the EU cannot get its act together, then the continued existence of the EU can be questioned. The current internal contestation of the EU is so high that predictions of its demise – in the event of Brexit, in the event of populist parties taking over in France or the Netherlands, and so on – are commonplace. In this internal context, then, a declaration such as the EU Global Strategy takes on a particularly symbolic purpose, for it represents an attempt to maintain unity and therefore the EU itself.

The EU has struggled with strategy because it is a complex, intergovernmental organisation. Although decision-making in trade policy is formally supranational, most of the EU's external relations have to be agreed by unanimity. The need for the EU member states to compromise leads to an avoidance of issues that may spark too much conflict, so hard decisions tend not to be taken. Hence, the EU's long-term foreign policy goals are usually uncontroversial and fairly vague. Prioritising amongst the (numerous) various objectives is almost impossible: each member state has its own priorities (what decades ago Stanley Hoffmann (1966) termed the 'logic of diversity'), and reaching agreement on an EU set of priorities would require trade-offs which may simply be too difficult to negotiate (Smith 2014, chapter 9; Müller 2016). Reaction and crisis management tend to characterise EU external relations, rather than long-term planning, as Sven Biscop (2012) has argued:

For in the absence of clear priorities, the EU rarely takes to the initiative on the key foreign policy issues of the moment (contrary to the other great powers) or, when it does, its initiatives tend to be fragmented and stove-piped. Consequently, it is not very successful in prevention, despite its rhetoric, and to which it has not been able to prevent, it tends to react late. Furthermore, the allocation of the means bears no relation to any prioritization of objectives.

These obstacles, however, have not stopped the EU from putting forward strategies and action plans. There is, in other words, recognition that the EU needs agreement on what its common objectives are and how to achieve them. The rest of this article then considers whether the EUGS represents an improvement on previous strategies: has the very challenging internal and external context prompted the EU and its member states to be more strategic?

2. Why an EU Global Strategy in 2016?

The EU has on several occasions in the past declared its main objectives in the field of foreign relations (see European Council 1988; Council of Foreign Ministers 1992), including: preserving international peace and security; strengthening the United Nations; strengthening democracy, human rights, good governance, and regional cooperation around the world; and contributing to conflict prevention and settlement. These were not, however, declared in the context of a strategy.

In 2003, the efforts to specify EU foreign and security policy aims became more serious. In 1999, the EU member states had agreed to build EU military capability with a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), so that the EU could implement foreign policy decisions that had defence implications. But as Biscop (2005, p. 13) notes, there was little agreement beyond that, with unanswered questions about the scope of EU foreign and security policy ambitions, the role that military instruments should play in EU foreign policy, and the relationship of the EU to NATO. During the European Convention, which in 2002-03 drafted the doomed EU constitutional treaty (which eventually was transformed into the 2009 Lisbon Treaty), the need for an agreed approach to security was discussed, but not followed.

However, by 2003, the external context was changing, with a more aggressive Bush administration in the US, the global war on terror, and the war in Iraq. The EU member states

had experienced a severe split over the Iraq war, but still felt a need to distance themselves from the Bush administration's policies. According to Christoph Meyer, the initiative for the European Security Strategy (ESS) came from the Political and Security Committee, which is composed of member state ambassadors and responsible for common foreign, security and defence policy. Therefore, CSDP actors

had a key impact on the formulation of a document, which represents a substantial shift away from the "civil power" *leitbild* towards a Union that aims to develop autonomy in defence matters and considers the use of military force a legitimate option to tackle security threats (Meyer 2005, p. 538).

The ESS was drafted in mid-2003, and agreed formally by the European Council in December 2003 (European Union 2003). It declares that the EU has three core strategic objectives:

- addressing security threats: terrorism; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; regional conflicts; state failure; and organised crime;
- enhancing security in the EU's neighbourhood, by, for example, building relations with the Mediterranean and East European states; and
- creating an international order based on 'effective multilateralism', which entails upholding international law and strengthening the United Nations.

The ESS made it clear that none of the threats could be addressed with purely military means, and that 'preventive engagement' (not pre-emptive coercion, such as that favoured by the US vis-à-vis Iraq) is the best way to try to ensure that situations do not escalate or deteriorate. The ESS calls for more coherent policies, bringing together different instruments including aid, military capabilities, trade, environmental policies, and so on. The novelty here was that military capabilities were so explicitly included in the EU's approach, even though there is a shared and clear preference to intervene earlier with a broad range of

instruments and thus perhaps reduce the need to use military means (Biscop 2005, p. 26). But the ESS did not set out clear priorities, link specific resources to the fulfilment of specific objectives, or provide for regular assessment of its implementation.

A few years after the ESS was agreed, there were calls from several member states for a new strategy, but crucially, Germany and the UK were particularly unenthusiastic (Müller 2016, p. 368). In 2008, all that could be agreed was an implementation report on the 2003 ESS, which argued that the EU had to become ‘more strategic in our thinking, and more effective and visible around the world’ (European Union 2008, p. 2). It added a few new areas that the EU needed to address, including the security implications of climate change, energy security and cybersecurity. But the timing was awful; within months the EU was consumed by the Eurozone crisis, which drained attention and resources away from foreign policy generally. The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy between 2009 and 2014, Catherine Ashton, was not in favour of drafting another strategy.

However, once again the changing global situation (the rise of the BRICs, the growing instability in the neighbourhood after the Arab Spring), along with entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty (on 1 December 2009), convinced some member states that a new strategy was necessary. In July 2012, the foreign ministers of four of those states (Italy, Poland, Spain and Sweden) initiated the ‘European Global Strategy’ project, charging four think tanks with producing a report which could be seen as the draft of an EU-wide global strategy (International Affairs Institute et al 2013). Although Mogherini became Italian foreign minister after this initiative was taken (she served from February to October 2014), she clearly came from a context in which the push for a new strategy had originated.

Within months of assuming the post of High Representative, Mogherini decided that she needed to produce a new strategy. In December 2013, the European Council had agreed to give the High Representative (then Catherine Ashton) a mandate to produce a report on

‘the impact of changes in the global environment, and to report to the Council in the course of 2015 on the challenges and opportunities arising for the Union, following consultations with the Member States’ (European Council 2013). This was not a mandate to produce a new strategy, but Mogherini was intent on getting one (Tocci 2015, p. 118; Tocci 2016). In June 2015, she presented a report on the ‘European Union in a changing global environment’ to the European Council, which then agreed it would be the basis for a new strategy on EU foreign and security policy (European External Action Service 2015; European Council 2016). The European Council’s acquiescence came about also because events in the broader neighbourhood, from Ukraine and Turkey to Syria and Egypt and the Sahel, were illustrating patently that the EU was surrounded by an arc of crisis.

The process of producing the new strategy differed from previous processes. The European Security Strategy in 2003 was drafted by the office of Javier Solana, the first High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (1999-2009). It was discussed in three seminars in the autumn of 2003, with officials from member states, future member states, EU institutions, academic experts, NGO representatives, and the media (Biscop 2005, p. 13). However, William Wallace (forthcoming) argues that the ESS was not discussed at length by the foreign ministers when they agreed it, and afterwards, received very little attention in the media or parliaments of EU member states.

In contrast Mogherini and the EEAS conducted a more open consultation process with the member states, think tanks around the EU and civil society organisations, although some member states complained that they were not consulted sufficiently and that Mogherini was pursuing her own agenda too much (Pomorska and Vanhoonacker 2015, pp. 207-8). The final pages of the EUGS contain a long list of all the organisations that were consulted. The consultation process was mostly internal (intra-EU), although according to the EUGS acknowledgements, some ‘third countries’ also contributed ideas: Brazil, Georgia, Japan,

Norway, and the US. The extent of the consultation process may mean that the EUGS will have a wider resonance than previous strategies, as a larger community could feel some ownership of it.

The EUGS itself is a much longer document than the 2003 ESS and the 2008 report on the implementation of the ESS. The EUGS also differs in tone. The ESS began with words that now seem other-worldly: ‘Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free.’ This despite the fact that the EU member states and EU membership candidates had been visibly and rancorously divided over the war in Iraq in early 2003, with doubts raised about the durability of the common foreign and security policy (see Hill, 2004). The ESS was thus both a European response to the external context and a way to demonstrate internal unity.

The EUGS is considerably more downbeat. Mogherini’s forward notes that ‘the purpose, even existence, of our Union is being questioned’ and ‘our wider region has become more unstable and more insecure’. The EEAS paper that sparked the consultation process for the EUGS declared bleakly, ‘It is becoming a more dangerous world’ (European External Action Service 2015, p. 6). Nathalie Tocci (2015, p. 116), a special adviser to Mogherini, argues that ‘we live in more far more turbulent times than we did back then...’ While this can be questioned (wars were raging in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2003 after all), it is nonetheless notable that both major EU strategies were born out of a sense that the EU was in a severe crisis *and* surrounded by crises, but the ESS struck a more optimistic (perhaps naively) tone.

The EUGS begins by listing the shared interests and principles of the EU (see box 1).

Box 1: EU shared interests and principles in the EUGS

Advancing the prosperity of its people

Promoting a rules-based global order

Principled pragmatism: a realistic assessment of the strategic environment coupled with an idealistic aspiration to advance a better world

Engagement with the wider world

Strong sense of responsibility, to address root causes of conflict and poverty, and promote human rights

Based on these shared interests, the EUGS declares there are five priorities for EU external action (see box 2).

Box 2: Priorities for EU external action in the EUGS

The security of the Union, understood in the sense of addressing threats to security (not keeping the Union intact)

State and societal resilience to the East and South of the EU

An integrated approach to conflicts

Cooperative regional orders

Global governance for the 21st century

According to Tocci, the EUGS was going to indicate a set of common interests and goals, and the means to achieve them. It ‘would bring together into a coherent whole all the dimensions of EU external action, security and non-security related’ (Tocci 2015, p. 117). This would reflect also the institutional changes of the Lisbon Treaty, which bring together the various external relations bits of the EU in a way that previous treaty reforms had not.

The EUGS devotes considerably more space to how the EU will pursue its objectives than was the case in the ESS, and mentions a wide variety of relevant EU policy areas. Thus, the EU has to ‘invest in a credible, responsive and joined-up Union’ (European Union 2016, p. 44). Investment in all dimensions of foreign policy has to increase, though there is a strong and sustained focus on defence policy and military capabilities. The EUGS calls for member states to reach a ‘sufficient level of expenditure’ on defence, including on procurement and research and technology. Intelligence gathering and sharing must improve. The CSDP must become more effective, and a capacity to deploy military forces and civilian personnel rapidly has to be improved. The EU’s ability to respond to challenges must also be boosted by improving diplomatic action. Development aid should become more flexible, so that funds can be shifted rapidly to respond to crises. The EU should ‘join up’ its external action in areas such as energy diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and economic diplomacy; internal and external security; security and development policy; and human rights and gender issues (European Union 2016, pp. 44-51).

3. How strategic is the EUGS?

It has become a truism to note that the EU is now in the midst of unprecedented turmoil. Externally, severe instability, conflict and gross human rights abuses are ongoing on Europe’s southern and eastern periphery, which have also generated refugee flows to which EU member states have failed to respond in a coherent and unified manner. There has been more agreement on short-term responses to challenges from a revisionist and authoritarian Russia, but little indication of a long-term strategy. The election of Donald Trump as US president presents yet another challenge, as the foreign policy positions he presented during the campaign were alarming for many in the EU and seemed to call into question the international liberal order in which the EU has been able to develop; he expressed highly

favourable views of Russian President Vladimir Putin and very negative views of international trade and NATO. Internally, the rise of populism, illiberalism and radicalism across EU member states poses a particular threat to European unity and its capacity to address these challenges and adjust to global power shifts. The likely exit of the UK from the EU before 2020 obviously exacerbates these trends.

Does the EUGS provide the EU with a plan for dealing with this turmoil? Commentators have mixed views. Biscop (2016, p. 1) asks ‘whether it gives us something to work with to render EU foreign and security policy more effective. The answer is: yes, and quite a lot.’ Kristina Kausch (2016) argues that Mogherini and her team, and the European Council, should be proud of the EUGS: it ‘reveals a good deal of sensible and innovative thinking amid a generally toned-down level of transformative rhetoric’, and it is ‘a forceful reminder that the union stands for a liberal internationalist world order that Europeans need to stand up for much more vigorously.’ Annegret Bendiek (2016) is less positive: ‘This document, however, largely lacks the core features of a strategy: a clearly stated objective, a defined (longer) timeframe, and a methodical approach.’

The rest of this section assesses the EUGS against the elements of a coherent and useful strategy outlined in section 1. As Table 1 below indicates, the picture is rather mixed:

Table 1: Assessment of EUGS	
Elements of a coherent strategy	Presence of those elements in the EUGS
Agreement on shared interests and values of EU and member states	Yes
Agreement on set of objectives derived from shared interests and values	Yes, though objectives are very broad
Prioritisation of objectives	To a very limited extent
Assessment of the challenges and	To a limited extent

opportunities that the external context (and external actors) presents for the fulfilment of the objectives	
Assessment of instruments and resources necessary to achieve objectives within specific time frame, decisions on directing resources to fulfilling priorities, and specific instruments and actors devoting to implementing decisions	No
Provisions for regular monitoring and assessment of progress made	Yes, though basis for assessment of progress not clear

The EUGS does set out a list of very broad shared values, interests and objectives (see Boxes 1 and 2 above) that are quite similar to EU foreign policy objectives set out previously. The EU has long sought to promote a rules-based global order (centred on the United Nations), engage with the wider world, address the root causes of conflict and poverty, promote human rights, enhance the security of the EU, and foster regional cooperation around the world.

Prioritisation, however, is still clearly a challenge for the EU. Under each of the separate headings in the EUGS on the EU's five priorities, there are quite long lists of things the EU 'will' (read 'should') do. Indeed, there are over 25 pages on the EU's priorities (pp. 18-44). As Hanns W. Maull (2016, p. 35) notes, 'if all those are "priorities", one wonders about the secondary goals of the EU in world affairs'. In addition, the EUGS is full of exhortations of what should be done, without strong indications of how or when these priorities will be met, or which are more important. Some of these exhortations are relatively

practical, such as supporting neighbouring countries to implement Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (European Union 2016, p. 25) or not recognising Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea (p. 33). But much of the content of these sections is fairly vague, as in 'the EU will live up to its values internally and externally', to help counter terrorism (p. 21), or will 'invest in [conflict] prevention, resolution and destabilisation, and avoid premature disengagement when a new crisis erupts elsewhere' (pp. 28-9).

The objectives that are set out in the EUGS are more 'realistic' than in previous strategies, where the clear sense was that the EU was a 'force for good' in the world. Realists have long been more sceptical: Adrian Hyde-Price (2008, p. 31), for example, argued that the EU had become the 'institutional repository of the second-hand normative concerns of EU member states', and this meant that the EU was not only blind to perceptions that it was not always seen as a force for good, but was also weak and ineffective in protecting the economic and security interests of its member states. The EUGS contains an explicit acknowledgement that 'principled pragmatism will guide our external action in the years ahead', meaning that the EU will 'engage the world manifesting responsibility towards others and sensitivity to contingency' (European Union 2016, p. 16). This is, Biscop (2016, p. 1) notes, considerably more realistic than the ESS, and indicates that the EU faces internal limits (capability) and external limits (other actors' preferences), and must be more 'modest'.

However, although the discussion document that led to the EUGS presented quite starkly the crises surrounding the EU (European External Action Service 2015), the EUGS arguably does not sufficiently link the challenges or opportunities they pose to the fulfilment of the EU's objectives. The EUGS also does not acknowledge the resistance the EU faces globally: the EU's image is not universally a positive one, as numerous researchers have shown (see, for example Chaban, Elgstrom and Holland 2007), and as power diffuses internationally, Europe inevitably will struggle to exercise influence.

There are several examples of the absence of a consideration of the external context in the EUGS. Firstly, the EUGS indicates that enlargement policy is to be ‘credible’, and the accession process is to proceed, but the enormous challenges there are not tackled (European Union 2016, pp. 24-5). There appears to be almost no enthusiasm within the EU for further enlargement (indeed ‘contraction’, with Brexit, is one of the current preoccupations), and progress towards meeting the EU’s membership conditions has stalled or reversed in many of the candidate countries, above all Turkey. Secondly, the EUGS states that the EU will foster dialogue and negotiation regarding the conflicts in Syria and Libya (European Union 2016, p. 34). Yet it does not indicate how the EU could overcome the considerable difficulties this entails: how, and on what basis, would the EU work with Russia or Turkey on Syria, for example? Thirdly, there is much in the EUGS about a commitment to reforming the UN (pp. 39-40), but Peter van Ham (2016, p. 23) asks how the EU can succeed in reforming global governance ‘now that the UK is no longer obliged to strive towards a common European approach within the EU?’ Thus while ‘principled pragmatism’ is a step towards acknowledging ‘contingency’, there is still more wishful thinking than realistic assessments in the EUGS.

The absence of a realistic assessment of the external context and the EU’s resources is also apparent in the aim to work at the local level in post-conflict situations, to ‘foster inclusive governance at all levels’ (European Union 2016, p. 31). Yet in volatile, post-conflict situations, reaching out to local actors is risky and potentially destabilising, but also difficult logistically. As Séverine Autessere (2014) has shown, the dominant mode of operation of international actors in such situations actually prevents local authorship and decreases local ownership. Thematic expertise is valued over local expertise, and technocratic, top-down solutions to complex problems are favoured. Foreign actors rarely actually meet many local actors and for security reasons spend little time engaging with the

world outside the confines of their own constructed 'peaceland'. The EUGS does not indicate how such obstacles could be overcome by the EU, and there is reason to believe they could not, given, for example, that the EEAS rotates personnel in and out of countries just like EU member states' embassies do, thus privileging general over specific expertise.

In another way, however, the objectives in the EUGS are more 'realist' compared to previous strategies. The EUGS makes frequent use of the concept of 'resilience'. As Wolfgang Wagner and Rosanne Anholt (2016) note, resilience is currently much in vogue in discourses about international crisis management and humanitarian disasters, and has been used in recent EU documents regarding conflict zones, apparently supplanting other concepts such as fragility (see European Commission 2013). Resilience is a step away from previous EU rhetoric on democracy promotion, even though in practice, the EU has long tilted more towards the promotion of civil and political rights rather than democracy per se, and has privileged stability more than the spread of democracy, with the Middle East and North Africa the premier examples of this (see, for example, Wetzel and Orbie 2011). Resilience is seen by EU officials and policy-makers as the 'perfect middle ground between over-ambitious liberal peace-building and the under-ambitious objective of stability' (Wagner and Anholt 2016, p. 415).

This is still problematic. Wagner and Anholt (2016, p. 419-22) argue that by focussing on strengthening a society's or a state's capacity to withstand crises, actors implementing a resilience strategy avoid tackling the sources of crises, which could include, for example, global and/or domestic inequality. Biscop (2016, p. 3) notes that if the EU tries to increase the resilience of a state against external threats, then it can end up increasing the resilience of a repressive regime. Fostering resilience can merely cement the status quo, which may be undesirable.

There are also dilemmas involved in strengthening societal resilience. The EUGS states that the EU will do this in the neighbourhood by deepening relations with civil society, working with local organisations on issues such as holding governments to account, education, and culture. This may or may not work, depending on whether neighbouring countries allow foreign support for civil society organisations; increasingly, semi-authoritarian regimes do not. Russia requires any NGO engaging in ‘political activity’ (undefined) that receives foreign funding to register and identify itself as a ‘foreign agent’ (Human Rights Watch 2016). In Egypt, government authorisation is required before NGOs can accept foreign funding, and foreign and domestic NGOs have been shut down, and employees of some NGOs have been arrested and sentenced to prison (Amnesty International 2016). Even a democracy such as Israel makes it controversial: human rights NGOs must reveal that more than half of their funding comes from abroad in all their official reports (Beaumont 2016).

Even more importantly, not only is there an absence of clear priorities, but there is also no clear link between the objectives and the resources that are necessary to try to achieve them. How much will the EU invest in conflict prevention, for example? How will it avoid ‘premature disengagement when a new crisis erupts elsewhere’, given that resources are limited? The EUGS is meant to be followed up with concrete actions in a way that the ESS was not, but there is still considerable room for slippage between intention and action.

The EUGS does pay considerable attention to the EU’s own security, and to the need to develop much more effective EU military capabilities. Indeed, even though the title of the document omits the word ‘security’, it is more focused on the EU’s security and on military instruments than the ESS was. The High Representative thus seems to be trying to move the EU away from an identity as a normative, ethical or civilian power towards what some have

referred to as a 'normal' power, that is, a country willing to use power, including military power, in its own interests (Hampton 2000; Pacheco Pardo, 2012).

In the months since the publication of the EUGS, several member states and EU officials have pushed publicly for strengthening defence cooperation, along the lines that Mogherini laid down in the EUGS. This has arguably acquired new force and urgency after Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential elections, as he has repeatedly indicated that he views NATO as a transactional alliance, and that the US will only defend allies that he considers to have contributed fairly to the alliance. Trump's election may prompt quicker and more decisive movement on the proposals: indeed, a few days after the election, EU defence ministers agreed a significant implementation plan on security and defence (Council of the European Union 2016).

Much of the commentary on these developments has focused on questions of capabilities: will the member states cooperate on procurement? Will they spend more on defence overall? If the UK does not participate in the CSDP after Brexit, then the EU will certainly miss its resources, which are among the most advanced in Europe. How will the loss of these resources affect EU capabilities and ambitions? There is also the fundamental issue of whether the EU27 share a strategic culture, that is, 'a pool of sufficiently shared norms, beliefs and ideas regarding the means and ends of defence policy' (Meyer 2005, p. 524). There are differences between the EU27 over important issues such as the role that UN Security Council authorisation should play in EU decisions to deploy CSDP missions, or the use of force more generally (with some member states more willing to use military force than others). The UK was not an outlier here, as the differences between French and German approaches to Libya and Syria in 2011 demonstrate. Beyond territorial defence, which the EUGS stresses (European Union 2016, p. 19), it is not clear how stronger military capabilities fit into a global strategy: how will the EU use these capabilities to increase internal and

external security? Will the EU be more interventionist, and if so, where? Will it act only with the UN Security Council's authorisation? These are hard questions, and it remains to be seen how the EU member states will address them. Military capabilities are not a magic wand, and simply having them may not make the EU more effective and influential in any given situation.

Foreign policy, of course, cannot rely on military power alone, and the EUGS was intended to bring together the full range of EU policy instruments. Yet the section of the EUGS on instruments, 'From Vision to Action' (European Union 2016, pp. 44-51), focuses extensively on defence policy, and only to some extent on civilian CSDP capabilities. Only one paragraph (p. 45) notes that diplomacy is important and that member states could be tasked by the High Representative to implement positions (indeed a useful division of labour). Another paragraph notes that development is to become more 'aligned with our strategic priorities' (p. 48), which might alarm many in the development policy community who would prioritise poverty reduction. But this section is rather sparse, compared to the external challenges faced by the EU. The further problem here is that Brexit will lead to a substantial reduction in the resources available for external action, but the EUGS does not appear to take this into account.

On a much more positive note, a notable change in comparison to the 2003 ESS is that the EUGS specifies that every year, the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament will reflect on the state of play of the strategy, and that when the EU and the member states deem it necessary to agree a new process of strategic reflection, they will do so. This goes some way towards instituting a feedback loop, and may thus ensure that the EUGS guides policy-making in future, in a way that the ESS never did. Thus, there is considerable scope for the High Representative and the EEAS to use the yearly assessments to add specificity to the EUGS.

Conclusion

The EUGS is considerably more strategic than previous EU strategies, including the 2003 European Security Strategy, but it still does not meet the standard of a useful strategy set out in the first section. This reflects the reality of the intergovernmental framework: the EU member states must agree to set priorities and provide the necessary resources to meet them, and their willingness and/or ability to do so is not clear.

How well does the EUGS enable the EU to develop effective foreign policies for a changing world? Although the EUGS is indicative of the challenges the EU faces in trying to be strategic, it does point to a way in which the EU can strengthen its internal unity and legitimacy: through a more robust defence of member states' security interests. However, if the EUGS does enable the EU to unify around a more realist foreign policy, the reactions of outsiders may be even less accommodating. As Daniel Thomas (2012, p. 472) noted, 'coherence may be necessary for the EU to exert its influence abroad, but it clearly is not sufficient in a multi-centric world order where many others do not share the EU's collective policy preferences and are ready to deploy vast resources in pursuit of their goals.' The EU might encounter even more 'push back' than it already has, for example, at the UN (Laatikainen 2010; Smith 2013).

By far the largest dilemma now is that Brexit will deprive the EU of attention and material resources that are necessary for an effective and influential foreign policy in a more 'multi-centric world'. The survival of the EU may depend on the EU27 fully appreciating that 'in the world of today, every single EU member state is a small one', as Mogherini (2016) has argued, and that unity is the best way to confront the numerous challenges they face. With one large member state, the UK, apparently ignoring that argument already, the challenges ahead are stark.

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