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Implementing the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy

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Abstract

The European Union Global Strategy represented not only a strategic alignment of the EU in times of crisis, but also a level of ambition to become a credible global actor. Since its presentation in 2016, the document has revealed that it intended to go further than a doctrine document and provide the EU with capabilities and operability. To date, three implementation reports have been presented to assess the results achieved.

Introduction

The “Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy – Shared vision, Common Action: a Stronger Europe” (EUGS) was presented to the European Council on 28 June 2016 and was conceived through the notion of resilience, in order to strengthen the EU's power to resist internal and external threats. This document

represented, also, a change regarding the security environment and the deviations within the EU since 2003 (European Security Strategy), namely the changes introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon and the following crises that the EU has faced. Five priorities for the EU external action are visible in the EUGS:

1. The EU must improve the security of the Union, with specific reference to measures to combat terrorism, hybrid threats, climate change and energy security, and improving its defence capabilities;
2. The EU should seek to strengthen the resilience of states and societies in the East and South, which cover a geographic perimeter bounded by the Western Balkans, Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia; and stabilize fragile state's structures;
3. The EU must develop an integrated EU approach to conflict and crisis based on preventive peace, security and stabilization, conflict resolution, and the "political economy";
4. The EU should use its experience of promoting peace and the integration

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process to support regional orders around the world;

5. The EU must make a renewed commitment to a multilateral system of global governance, based on international law, in order to guarantee the respect for human rights and the principles of sustainable development and guarantee “lasting access to global common goods”.

In order to turn this vision into action, the Global Strategy calls for collective investment in the EU's credibility, notably, but not exclusively, through enhanced defence and security capabilities (European Union External Service, 2016).

Since its presentation, three Implementation Reports have followed with the aim of assessing what the EU and the Member States have been doing to overcome the European ambitions narrative into operational capacities for European action. To Dick Zandee (2016, p. 27) “The EUGS has to be translated into action — no doubt a more difficult task as diverging interests of Member States and the issue of resources will come to the fore”.

This TEPSA brief seeks to assess the EUGS and the efforts that have been made to implement it until today.

Assess Implementing Reports - Turn Ambition into Action

One way to measure what has been done is through self-assessment. Since the European Union intended the EUGS to be an operational document and a working tool, it has sought to carry out a balance of all the achievements over the last three years. To this end, it drew up a yearly EUGS Implementation Report. According to Karen Smith (2017, p. 514), “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”.

The first Implementation Report presented in 2017 proclaimed that “[i]n the area of security and defence, more has been achieved in the last ten months than in the last decade” (European Union External Service, 2017, p. 20) and highlighted the establishment of a Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) for its nonexecutive military missions within the EU Military Staff (EUMS), as well as the Agreement reached in the Council to explore the activation of a Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)¹ as the main achievements in the first year of the EUGS.

¹ The first 17 approved projects cover the following topics/domains: European Medical Command; European Secure Software defined Radio (ESSOR); Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe and Support to Operations; Military Mobility; European Union Training Mission Competence Centre (EU TMCC); European Training Certification Centre for European Armies; Energy Operational Function (EOF); Deployable Military Disaster Relief Capability Package; Maritime (semi-) Autonomous Systems for Mine Countermeasures (MAS MCM); Harbour & Maritime Surveillance and Protection (HARMSPRO); Upgrade of Maritime Surveillance; Cyber Threats and Incident Response Information Sharing Platform; Cyber Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security; Strategic Command and Control (C2) System for CSDP Missions and Operations; Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle / Amphibious Assault Vehicle / Light Armoured Vehicle; Indirect Fire Support (EuroArtillery); EUFOR Crisis Response Operation Core (EUFOR CROC). On 19 November 2018, the Council approved a second list of 17 additional projects. More recently, on 12 November 2019, the Council approved a third list of 13 new projects. All PESCO projects are available on [https://www.eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/our-current-priorities/permanent-structured-cooperation-\(PESCO\)/current-list-of-pesco-projects](https://www.eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/our-current-priorities/permanent-structured-cooperation-(PESCO)/current-list-of-pesco-projects), accessed 12 January 2020.

But other initiatives are still worth noting at the level of the commitment of Member States, especially the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence presented by the HRVP in November 2016. In fact, the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of the same month agreed on a new level of ambition in security and defence based on three strategic priorities derived from the EUGS: responding to external conflicts and crises, building capacities of partner countries, and protecting the EU and its citizens. The Foreign Affairs Council on 18 November 2018 also agreed to establish a Joint Support Coordination Cell to strengthen synergies between EU civilian and military missions and initiate a Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). This mechanism will facilitate a regular and systematic sharing of information between Member States on their defence planning and the implementation of the Capability Development Plan.

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This will support delivering capabilities and actively promote enhanced defence cooperation among Member States. At the same time, the EU has reinforced its civil-military situational awareness through the joint work carried out by the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre and the Intelligence Directorate of the EUMS within the EEAS. The second

Implementation Report, published on 2018, underlined the relevance of the adoption of Action Plan by the High Representative and the Commission on 28 March aimed to improve the ability to react more quickly in the event of a crisis, and allowed seamless movement of troops and vehicles across the continent. Three months later, the European Parliament and the Council reached a political agreement establishing the European Defence Industrial Programme (EDIDP) with an investment of EUR 500 million over two years to co-finance collaborative capability development of defence equipment and technologies in all domains (air, land, sea, cyber, and space). In the same wake of financial strengthening, the European Commission proposed a more ambitious European Defence Fund (around EUR 13 billion to finance collaborative research projects and co-fund capability development)². It should be noted that for the first time the European budget contains a specific line for defence. Following this budget increase, the High Representative, together with the support of the European Commission, presented a proposal to establish a European Peace Facility (EPF), with EUR 10.5 million to finance operational actions under CFSP

² On 13 June 2018, the European Commission presented its proposal on the European Defence Fund. The Commission proposes a budget of €13 billion in current prices for the 2021-2027 period. The Fund will provide €4.1 billion to directly finance competitive and collaborative research projects, in particular through grants. In addition, the European Defence Fund will provide €8.9 billion to complement Member States' investment by co-financing the costs for prototype development, the ensuing certification and testing requirements. Available at <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-new-boost-for-jobs-growth-and-investment/file-mff-european-defence-fund>, accessed on 20 February 2020.

that have military or defence implications, and therefore cannot be financed under the EU budget³. There was also a commitment to strengthen the civil pillar of the CSDP. This report also set out the evolution of PESCO and the strengthening of the areas involved (European Union External Service, 2018).

Finally, the latest implementation report, “Three Years on, Looking Forward”, elaborated a more realistic assessment of the European Union since the presentation of the Strategy in 2016, as it acknowledged the world as more “connected, contested and complex” (European Union External Service, 2019). But with some pessimism, also, this report exposed that the “defining feature of greater international complexity is the on-going shift from a unipolar structure to a more fragmented distribution of power”. Remarkably, “so far this has not led to more cooperation, but rather to growing uncertainty and rivalry”. In a clear balance stage of the results achieved, this implementation report reveals in a further concrete and graphic way the European Union's action abroad, with its sixteen civilian and military missions and operations involving more than 4,000 EU personnel deployed worldwide. Currently, around 5,000 are deployed (see annex 1). The EU's action also reflected its commitment to an integrated approach in two senses – at the level of the civilian-military approach, as well as at the combination of instruments from the European Union and the Member States. The integrated approach to

³ European Parliament approved the Decision establishing European Peace Facility on 28 March 2019, P8_TA-PROV(2019)0330, available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0330_EN.pdf, accessed on 12 January 2020

conflicts and crises was not only intended to fully account for the security-development nexus but also to move beyond it by developing a holistic approach to conflicts, bearing in mind their identity, humanitarian, socioeconomic, security, environmental, and energy dimensions. This report also points out the progress that has been made on the internal-external nexus in the context of the integrated approach. The work done on civilian CSDP, leading to the Civilian Compact in 2018, is a key case in point. Justice and Home Affairs agencies such as Europol, Eurojust, and Frontex are increasingly engaged by and through CSDP. More broadly, the field that best exemplifies the progress implemented by the European Union's Global Strategy on the internal-external nexus is migration.

This latest report also makes a statement of what the EUGS proposed in 2016 and what was accomplished until 2019, dividing it by thematic areas and regions.

Conclusion

To draw up a strategy is to define a way to optimize the use of the means available to achieve a desired end. However, developing a strategy can entail much more. In the case of the European Union and its Global Strategy, it is clear that this strategy has simultaneously become a matter of identity, credibility, and legitimacy. The EUGS translates into an exercise to identifying EU ambitions and the means to achieve them.

Unlike the European Security Strategy of 2003 (European Council, 2003), the Global Strategy of the European Union assumed from the beginning its intention to go beyond the simple strategic and doctrinal statement for the European Union and to

equip it with (further) capabilities. That is why its analysis should also be interpreted as an appeal to the European Union to close the capabilities-expectation gap, according to Hill (1993).

Also for the same reason, the EUGS presented its annual Implementation Reports, while its predecessor would only have an Implementation Report in 2008 (European Council, 2008) and a broad review of the doctrinal framework, namely of threats.

During the past three years, the EUGS has not succeeded to achieve all the objectives

to which had set itself to. However it allowed the Member States to commit to capabilities improvement, namely through PESCO. To date, the EUGS has had the merit of articulating the institutions, namely the Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council. The latter had hitherto had a monopoly on decision-making in matters of foreign and defence policy. However, it should be noted that the EUGS has been able to initiate a virtuous cycle of combining instruments and a joined-up internal and external policies from the European Union.

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Annex 1



CSDP Civilian Missions and Military Operations in 2020

Retrieved from : https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/430/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations_en, last accessed on 12 February 2020



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