

46 EU GLOBAL STRATEGY EXPERT OPINION

Andres Kasekamp

Deputy Director

Estonian Foreign Policy Institute

There is a clear need for a new strategy document. Much has changed since the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS). Most importantly, 13 new member states have joined the Union and the Lisbon Treaty has established the European External Action Service (EEAS), headed by the High Representative. The external environment has deteriorated. The ESS's goal of a 'ring of friends' in the EU's neighbourhood has come to resemble a 'ring of fire', as Sweden's former foreign minister Carl Bildt has noted.

In the wake of the Brussels bombings, the natural reaction will be to focus on the threat from within. Populist eurosceptic parties are already exploiting Islamist terrorism and conflating it with the refugee crisis. The Schengen regime – one of the EU's greatest achievements – is under increasing pressure and may not survive in its present form. However, withdrawing behind national borders is not a feasible option: only increased cooperation among member states can effectively meet the challenges emanating from the outside. In the field of security, the answer is more Europe, not less. The Brussels attacks highlighted the need for greater integration. In dealing with the influx of refugees and migrants, the estab-

lishment of a European Border and Coast Guard is also a vital step forward.

Showing added value to citizens

The adoption of a European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) is an opportunity to show EU citizens the importance of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). While the legitimacy of the EU is being increasingly questioned domestically, the launch of the EUGS could be a useful exercise in explaining the added value of the CFSP, and countering the trend of re-nationalisation of foreign policies. The EU has been a beacon for other regions, but its power of attraction has been severely eroded.

The EUGS provides a chance to send a signal to the world. The language of the strategy will be scrutinised by others, especially neighbouring countries. The EU's most successful foreign policy has been enlargement. Therefore, the EUGS must unambiguously state that membership is not off the table and that the door remains open for European countries that meet the conditions. Europeans need not fear further enlargement, since those countries that actu-

ally manage to fulfil the EU's objective criteria will have genuinely transformed themselves into success stories. This will not happen in the foreseeable future, but the incentive of membership should not be excluded. Widening has not prevented deepening – on the contrary, every round of enlargement has been a catalyst for closer integration. Enlargement has been a win-win proposition.

Strengthening transatlantic relations must be a priority for the EU, and the US will remain the EU's primary partner because of shared values and common interests. Neither Russia nor China could ever be a substitute. Working together with the US enables the EU to have greater influence and be the global agenda-setter. To this end, concluding the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) would bolster and cement the transatlantic relationship politically, as well as economically.

There is increasing urgency for this. For years, Americans have fruitlessly urged Europeans to contribute more to their own defence, but now one of the leading candidates for the US presidency is even questioning the basic rationale of NATO. The trend towards diminishing US engagement with Europe is evident, be it a new isolationism or the pivot to Asia. The EU needs to invest more resources if it wants to be an equal partner and not a follower.

The obvious place to start would be greater cooperation between NATO and EU. Though both organisations are headquartered in Brussels and have largely overlapping membership, political will is necessary for reducing institutional barriers and creating synergies. One of the chief hindrances to closer cooperation is the Cyprus question. To be a more effective actor globally, the EU needs to resolve this frozen

conflict within the Union.

Defending Europe

The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) has largely focused on crisis management outside of the Union's borders. The situation has changed dramatically since the 2003 ESS when it was unimaginable to discuss a response to hybrid threats or attacks on the territory of an EU member state. And last year saw France invoke the 'solidarity clause' (Article 42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty) for the first time following terrorist attacks in 2015.

The EU should focus more on Europe. The rejection of European values and norms by the Putin regime in Moscow can no longer be ignored. While the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) can damage the EU, only Russia poses an existential threat. For the first time, a neighbouring power is not only contesting 'spheres of influence', but actively undermining the EU from within. While exploiting divisions within the EU has been a constant objective of Russian policy, the current combination of crises provides an unprecedented opportunity to unravel the security architecture of Europe.

It is no longer inconceivable that the territory of an EU member state could be threatened by hybrid tactics or even be occupied by military force. The response to such a contingency could not simply be compartmentalised as a matter solely for NATO. The EU needs to strengthen resilience and think through what consequences such a scenario would have on the functioning of its core elements.

