

# 45 EU GLOBAL STRATEGY EXPERT OPINION

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The task facing the authors of the new EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) is a daunting one: it will not be easy to craft a document which must be both credible and realistic, as well as acceptable to member states and EU institutions alike. If anything, this task is even more difficult today than it was when four European think tanks published a European Global Strategy (EGS) in 2013, largely because the EU's credibility and appeal have suffered considerably in recent years, both at home and abroad.

The EU is best understood as the instrument Europeans have developed over several generations to deal with the complex, multifaceted challenges posed by globalisation. Increasingly, however, many of its citizens are concluding that the EU is neither protecting them from the unwanted consequences of globalisation, nor helping them benefit from the many opportunities it has to offer. As a result, we are witnessing a growing tension between 'globalists' and 'territorialists', or those who believe open societies require open borders and those who see inter-

connectedness itself as a threat.

Thus, the future of the EU will largely be determined by the outcome of this struggle, and it is by no means certain that our own home-grown populists, who are so adept at providing deceptively simple answers to increasingly complex questions, will not finally prevail.

In light of this, the EUGS should make a powerful statement about the EU's commitment to an open, competitive, innovative economy, but also to the social and political values it embodies. Europe's appeal and strength (both at home and abroad) will continue to owe far more to our quality of life, equality of opportunity and individual and collective freedoms than to the strength of our armies or the negotiating skills of our diplomats.

Ultimately, the EUGS' relevance will be measured against its ability to bolster security, prosperity and freedom within the EU itself, for it is the Union's internal resilience and cohesion that should give us greatest cause for concern.

Given the speed at which the EU's strategic environment is evolving, a relevant EUGS will probably need to be revised every five years or so. In the current climate, it would probably be best to produce a relatively modest text, but one that aims to provide concrete answers to the major challenges facing the EU, namely: managing unprecedented migration flows, which may cause the undoing of the Schengen area (undoubtedly one of the EU's most valuable achievements); protecting our societies against terrorist attacks, by acting more effectively both at home and abroad; and deterring Russian aggression against some member states, which requires the EU to respond to a new kind of (hybrid) warfare.

All of these challenges have their origin in Europe's (immediate) southern and eastern neighbourhoods, and it is here that the EUGS should concentrate its attention. To some extent, the EU is already doing this with a revamped European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) which acknowledges that democracy promotion is only viable in a handful of states. Elsewhere, focus should be on energy security and fighting against climate change, security sector reform, conflict prevention, counter-terrorism and anti-radicalisation, as well as tackling irregular migration, human trafficking and smuggling.

The problem with this approach is that the citizens of some of these states will conclude that the EU is not really interested in enhancing their resilience against external threats, and simply hopes to create a buffer zone to protect itself from unruly neighbours.

This has already happened in Ukraine, and is likely to occur in Turkey in the wake of the

current refugee crisis, which is why the 2013 EGS argued in favour of offering Ankara an 'enhanced political partnership' encompassing (but not limited to) deeper cooperation in the area of foreign and security policy, without waiting for accession negotiations to be completed.

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The 2013 EGS also called for the forging of a new Atlantic community with the US, built on the back of an ambitious Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement. Although a successful TTIP deal would undoubtedly boost badly-needed economic growth on both sides of the Atlantic, the US' recent tendency to divide the world into Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and TTIP, inadvertently bringing Russia and China closer together, is something the EUGS would be well advised to resist.

In politics, timing is everything. In view of the British referendum, it would probably have been best to postpone the launching of the EUGS until later this year. If Britain decides to leave the EU on 23 June 2016, any text published that month will be stillborn.

Although Brexit would not be the end of the EU, the loss of Europe's second largest economy would be a major blow to its prestige and standing worldwide. And even if reason prevails, the impact of what could well be a very close result will need to be properly digested.

