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The EU's New Global Strategy: Its Implementation in a Troubled International Environment

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The Hague Institute
for Global Justice

THE EU'S NEW GLOBAL STRATEGY: ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN A TROUBLED INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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About The Hague Institute for Global Justice

The Hague Institute is an independent, nonpartisan organization established to conduct interdisciplinary policy-relevant research, develop practitioner tools, and convene experts, practitioners, and policymakers to facilitate knowledge sharing. Located in the city that has been a symbol of peace and justice for over a century, The Hague Institute is positioned uniquely to address issues at the intersection of peace, security and justice.

Executive Summary

In June 2016, High Representative Mogherini presented the EU's new Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) to the European Council. With the Strategy now finalized, attention needs to turn to its implementation in an environment mired by crises both within Europe and the wider world. In September 2016, The Hague Institute for Global Justice and Europe House—the European Parliament Information Office and the Representation of the European Commission in The Netherlands—organized an expert meeting and a public panel discussion, which inform the present document as a first appraisal of the Global Strategy. Focusing on three areas of particular salience in EU foreign policy—the EU as a security actor, developing rules-based global governance in new areas, and the 'joined-up' approach in pursuing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—the following recommendations for the implementation of the EUGS can be made:

The EU as a security actor

The EU needs a pragmatic and flexible approach in order to solve the crises around Europe and to improve its credibility in the short and long term, for example by using ad hoc coalitions. Moreover, a possible withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU could open up political space for deepened defense cooperation. The EU would need to find ways to make use of this political space in order to generate political will in the capitals for deepening defense cooperation. More broadly speaking, the EU should devise plans to connect with its citizens as a security actor and communicate the message that EU defense cooperation tangibly benefits the security of all citizens.

Developing rules-based global governance

Using the area of cyber governance as an example given its cross-cutting importance, the EU should fully embrace the role of 'agenda-shaper, connector, coordinator and facilitator within a networked web of players' by investing in multistakeholder initiatives and, together with the Member States, showing coordinated political leadership in this area. The EU, furthermore, needs to take its internal normative innovations (such as the "right to be forgotten") to the global stage, where they can serve as inspiration to other actors. It should also use regional approaches and coalitions of like-minded countries as building blocks for working towards a global consensus. In addition, the EU should bolster its credibility as a cyber power by capacity-building, both within the EU Member States and third countries, to fight criminal activities and strengthen cooperation between law enforcement agencies.

Capacity-building as part of a 'joined-up approach' in the case of the SDGs

For SDGs to be progressively realized through 'joined-up' EU action, they need to be translated and concretized into measurable goals, which should be pursued through already existing policies and strategies and be taken into account during the framing of new ones. Moreover, the EU should invest, in tandem with the Member States, in communicating to the public that the SDGs are a global commitment with implications, both positive and negative, in the daily lives of citizens. For the EU, the most important next step is to translate the EUGS into prioritized and coherent sub-strategies with a view to maintaining the SDGs as a central element of the follow-up of the EUGS.

The Global Strategy will remain the core guidance for EU external action for years to come. However, the period until the first yearly progress report in June 2017 will be crucial for establishing the traction and first concrete results produced by the Strategy. As the calendars of the EU institutions and Member State policymakers are filling up with more milestones for its implementation, existing sector-specific strategies will be updated and new ones developed. Implementing the Global Strategy will be a momentous endeavor by any standard, both for the EU and its Member States. How well they will work together, use their resources, build political momentum and voice their common message will ultimately determine the role of the EU in the world.

1. Introduction

In June 2015, the European Council asked the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, to draft, in cooperation with the Member States an overarching strategy for the EU's foreign and security policy. One year later, on June 28, 2016, High Representative Mogherini presented the European Union Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS), entitled "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe,"¹ to EU leaders. The Strategy sets out the agenda for EU foreign policy and serves as a document which expresses the Union's shared vision for common action. Subsequently, the European Council noted in its Conclusions that it "welcomes the presentation of the Global Strategy [...] and invites the High Representative, the Commission and the Council to take the work forward."² In this spirit, the Conclusions of the EU's Foreign Affairs Council of October 2016 stressed that the "political vision set out in the EUGS will be swiftly translated into concrete policy."³ With the Strategy now finalized, attention is turning to its implementation in an environment mired by crises both within Europe and the world at large. First steps in this direction have been outlined already in the area of security and defense, as defined in November 2016.⁴ As momentum in this area needs to be maintained and other areas are yet to catch up, the period until the first yearly progress report in June 2017 will be crucial for establishing the traction and concrete results produced by the Global Strategy.

The new Strategy is the result of a year-long process during which the High Representative consulted with EU institutions, Member States, experts, civil society representatives, and other stakeholders. The Hague Institute for Global Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands organized a closed expert consultation and a public panel on December 8 and 9, 2015 to inform the Dutch input statement in the strategic review process. Following the event, The Hague Institute presented its report "Expert Consultation in the Framework of the EU Strategic Review Process," which summarized the main findings of the expert consultation, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.⁵

The EUGS sets priorities and objectives, and identifies the EU's means to achieve them. However, the new Strategy comes in a time of growing uncertainty and insecurity in Europe and beyond. With the Brexit referendum, the migration crisis, the unabating war in Syria, terrorist attacks in and outside the EU, and the "arc of instability"⁶ around Europe, the Strategy has to take into account a heavily troubled international environment. The question, therefore, is whether this document will serve as a lodestar in

¹ A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe", June 2016, https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/eugs_review_web.pdf (hereinafter: EUGS).

² European Council Conclusions, EUCO 26/16, Brussels, 28 June 2016, pt. 20.

³ Council Conclusions on the Global Strategy on the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, Luxembourg, 17 October 2016, 13202/16, pt. 3.

⁴ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, Brussels, 14 November 2016, 14149/16; and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission, and Head of the European Defense Agency, *Implementation Plan on Security and Defence*, Brussels, 14 November 2016, 14392/16.

⁵ Subsequently, this document was made available on the website the EU dedicated to the Global Strategy. See Tom Buitelaar, Joris Larik and Aaron Matta, *The EU's Contribution to Common Global Rules: Challenges in an Age of Power Shifts: Summary of Findings of the Expert Consultation in the Framework of the EU Strategic Review Process*, The Hague Institute for Global Justice, December 2015, <https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/file/137/download?token=FOJ1XQyl>.

⁶ Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Bert Koenders, "Koenders to strengthen diplomacy efforts in response to instability on Europe's borders," 11 September 2015, <https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2015/09/11/koenders-to-strengthen-diplomacy-efforts-in-response-to-instability-on-europe-s-borders>.

stormy waters, or whether it will end up in a desk drawer, having failed to make its mark in this critical time.

On September 30, 2016, The Hague Institute and Europe House – the European Parliament Information Office and the Representation of the European Commission in The Netherlands – organized an event to offer a first appraisal of the EUGS and outline the way forward in terms of its implementation in a number of select areas. The event consisted of two elements: a closed expert meeting and a public panel discussion. The expert meeting brought together specialists from diplomacy, academia, and civil society, to assess the content and outlook of the EUGS and to discuss its future implementation, including from the particular perspective of the Netherlands. The specialists met in three breakout sessions to focus on the following topics: the EU as a security actor, developing rules-based global governance in new areas, and capacity-building as part of the ‘joined-up’ approach⁷ with regard to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The public panel took a wider perspective, reflecting on the relevance of the EUGS in the current geopolitical context.

This report has two main parts – one looking back and one looking forward. Firstly, it evaluates to which extent the suggestions coming out of the December 2015 expert meeting are reflected in the final EUGS document. Secondly, it highlights opportunities and challenges for the implementation of the EUGS. This section will be structured in line with the three topics that were addressed during the event on September 30, 2016: strengthening the EU as a security actor, developing rules-based global governance, and capacity-building as part of the ‘joined-up’ approach. The conclusion summarizes the main findings and provides an overview of the next steps for the implementation of the Global Strategy.

2. Shaping the Global Strategy

Before turning to challenges and opportunities of implementation, a brief appraisal of the content of the Global Strategy is warranted. The document is the result of a year-long process of consultation with institutions and stakeholders which are now called upon to facilitate turning its aspirations into reality. To this end, this section evaluates how the content of the EUGS relates to the proposals made at the Expert Consultation in the Framework of the EU Strategic Review Process at The Hague Institute, compiled in a report published in December 2015, and identifies where the consultation’s Summary of Findings and the EUGS dovetail.⁸

2.1 Values, interests and a rules-based global order

The Strategy sets out a foreign policy based on “principled pragmatism,” through which the EU will approach the world “as much from a realistic assessment of the strategic environment as from an idealistic aspiration to advance a better world.”⁹ This approach has generated much discussion in appraisals of the EUGS.¹⁰ It means that the Strategy recognizes the potential tensions between

⁷ In our definition, a joined-up approach can be understood as interagency (inter-institutional), cross- sectoral cooperation in internal and external EU policies where the EU is working to close gaps and avoid overlaps in development cooperation, security and other domains.

⁸ As a disclaimer, this analysis does not claim causality. Instead, it seeks to trace the translation of certain ideas from the December consultation – not to the exclusion of similar events held elsewhere – and to identify areas of input that reverberated within the Dutch foreign policy community and the European External Action Service (EEAS), and that were ultimately reflected in the Strategy.

⁹ EUGS, p. 16.

¹⁰ For some of these discussions see, e.g., Sven Biscop, *The EU Global Strategy: Realpolitik with European Characteristics*, EGMONT Security Policy Brief No. 75 (June 2016); Giovanni Grevi, *A Global Strategy for a soul-searching European Union*, EPC Discussion Paper, 13 July 2016; and Stefan Lehne, *The EU Global Strategy, a*

interests and values. Nevertheless, achieving a balance between the two is a notoriously difficult issue and how this 'principle' will work out in practice remains to be seen. In its surrounding regions, the EUGS makes the promotion of human rights an important pillar of its approach, simultaneously arguing for "tailor-made policies" to achieve this and other goals.¹¹ This is laid out in more detail in its treatment of the relationship with China and Asia, where the support for human rights is mentioned several times.¹²

In this context, the experts convened in December 2015 noted that if the EU wants to promote a rules-based global order, it could not be overly assertive. Instead, it should point to the fact that these values are underpinned by international law and universally accepted norms, and start with keeping a clean house so that it can be credible in its rule-promotion.¹³ The EUGS endorses this view by setting out clearly the principles which will guide the Union in its foreign policy, namely unity, engagement, responsibility and partnership.¹⁴ Moreover, the Strategy emphasizes the EU's commitment to a rules-based global order, the principle of multilateralism and the UN as the most important international organization.¹⁵ In addition, the EUGS notes that European security and defense will be developed further in "full compliance with international law."¹⁶ The EUGS also recognizes that it is necessary that the EU follows its 'own' norms and rules and maintains a strong rule of law to be 'credible' to the outside world.

2.2 Enhancing the EU's capacity to deliver

Despite the regular misgivings about the value of multilateralism, the participants at the December 2015 expert consultation recommended that the Strategy would "make clear that the EU has a stake in the international rules-based system."¹⁷ In this context, the Strategy states that "[t]he EU will promote a rules-based global order with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core."¹⁸ This order, it goes on, should be "grounded in international law, including the principles of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."¹⁹ It makes clear that the countries in the Union cannot face the world alone and that they need to be unified in making this world a more "peaceful, fair and prosperous" one.²⁰

Importantly, during the consultation, non-European experts emphasized that those outside the EU will see the Strategy as a clear signal to the rest of the world: it matters what the EU says and does.²¹ At

Triumph of Hope Over Experience, Carnegie Europe, 4 July 2016, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=64003>.

¹¹ EUGS, pp. 25-26.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹³ Buitelaar, Larik and Matta, *Summary of Findings*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁴ EUGS, pp. 16-18. The Summary of Findings recommended that the EUGS reiterate the Lisbon Treaty's values (p. 5). It is therefore notable that these values differ from the values set out by the Lisbon Treaty (which are respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities), though it must be noted that these concepts permeate the document.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹⁷ Buitelaar, Larik and Matta, *Summary of Findings*, p. 4.

¹⁸ EUGS, p. 15.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

²¹ Buitelaar, Larik and Matta, *Summary of Findings*, p. 5.

the same time, the experts noted that the EU has to pay attention to the ‘expectations-credibility gap’, i.e. it should not set expectations that the EU cannot deliver upon.²² It is therefore noteworthy that the Global Strategy includes a paragraph on strategic communication—noting that the EU will enhance its public diplomacy to “connect EU foreign policy with citizens and better communicate it to our partners”²³—while simultaneously remaining humble in the expectations it is setting.²⁴

2.3 The EU’s engagement with old and new partners

Regional developments and forms of governance are increasingly important for foreign policy. The EU is often seen—and tends to portray itself—as a possible model for the peaceful and effective organization of a region into a bloc.²⁵ To some extent, the experts at the December 2015 consultation supported inter-regional cooperation, recommending that the EU supports regional organizations as long as they respect core international norms and contribute to the maintenance or development of global public goods. Such improved inter-regional cooperation can, in turn, “act as stepping-stone to an improved rules-based multilateral system.”²⁶ To a large extent, the EUGS echoes this assessment, stating that the Union “will not strive to export [its] model, but rather seek reciprocal inspiration from different regional experiences.”²⁷

In the context of partnerships, one could argue that the shifting global order necessitates a more flexible approach towards partnering and coalition building. Experts at the consultation argued that, to “defend, promote and develop further jointly owned norms and values,” the EU “should cooperate with other organizations, emerging powers and ‘non-Western-led’ forms of governance.”²⁸

Firstly, this concerns the reform of the architecture and functioning of the UN and global rule of law and justice institutions. The system of global governance is often seen to be outdated and in need of reform.²⁹ One of the primary recommendations of the experts in this respect was to approach each organization on its own merits, maintain the principle of “effectiveness, transparency, inclusiveness, flexibility, and accountability” while remaining “sensitive to the context, and taking into account the role of the EU and its Member States within these organizations.”³⁰

In this spirit the EUGS states a commitment to reform the UN, to make it stronger and more fit for the 21st century, to maintain it as “the bedrock of the multilateral rules-based order.”³¹ It puts forward the principles of “accountability, representativeness, responsibility, effectiveness and transparency” as the guide to reforming UN institutions, which will all require a different approach determined on a case-by-

²² The concept was coined as early as 1993, see Christopher Hill, “The Capability-Expectations Gap, or Conceptualising Europe’s International Role” (1993) 31 *Journal of Common Market Studies* 305.

²³ EUGS, p. 23.

²⁴ This was also noted by other commentators. See, for example: Kristina Kausch, *The EU Global Strategy in the Shadow of Brexit*, Carnegie Europe, 7 July 2016, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=64034>.

²⁵ Some have instead argued that is unlikely that the EU can be replicated elsewhere and that it is unwise to try to do so as the EU was the result of unique historical developments, which are unlikely to arise in other states. See, for example Stephen Krasner on Sovereignty, Failed States and International Regimes, Theory Talks, 19 October 2008, <http://www.theory-talks.org/2008/10/theory-talk-21.html>.

²⁶ Buitelaar, Larik and Matta, *Summary of Findings*, p. 6.

²⁷ EUGS, p. 32.

²⁸ Buitelaar, Larik and Matta, *Summary of Findings*, p. 3. At the expert consultation, the term “non-Western-led” was also criticized by some as potentially “patronizing, as if the EU were in a ‘privileged’ position in which it can choose to allow non-Western led approaches to flourish” (p. 7).

²⁹ See William Durch, Joris Larik and Richard Ponzio, “Just Security and the Crisis of Global Governance,” *Survival* 58, no. 4 (2016), 95-112.

³⁰ Buitelaar, Larik and Matta, *Summary of Findings*, p. 5.

³¹ EUGS, p. 39.

case basis. The EUGS additionally maintains the wish to strengthen the voice of the EU “across multilateral fora” although it does not detail how it seeks to do so.³²

Secondly, global engagement also entails the development of new partnerships with non-state actors to address non-traditional challenges and tackle emerging threats. In December 2015 experts argued for enhanced support for different types of governance “as long as they respect core international norms (including human rights) and as long as they furnish contributions to global public goods.”³³ They also recommended to remain pragmatic and to work through tailor-made coalitions for specific problems.³⁴ For this purpose, they argued, it is important to “acknowledge the existence of a degree of normative pluralism,” while maintaining the need for collective action based on shared principles.³⁵ This acknowledgment is absent in the Strategy. However, the EUGS does note that the EU will “partner selectively with players whose cooperation is necessary to deliver global public goods and address common challenges” and that it will reach out more to civil society and the private sector.³⁶

The December 2015 consultation, furthermore, featured discussions on the role and place of civil society in the foreign policy of the Union. Experts noted the importance of supporting a vibrant civil society as a primary interest of the EU and that, consequently, the EU should take a clear stand against the oppression of civil society in other countries. At the same time, they also cautioned against patronizing language or appearances of instrumentalizing civil society for the purposes of the EU.³⁷ It is therefore encouraging that the EUGS speaks of civil society as key partners multiple times and promises long-term support for civil society, vowing to “speak out against the shrinking space for civil society.”³⁸

While new challenges require new partners, they also require new approaches and the courage to challenge the status quo and develop new norms for global governance. The experts noted the added value of the EU as a “connector and coordinator,” recommending that it should use this role to “contribute to the development of rules for areas where these were either non-existent or underdeveloped (such as cyber, outer space, energy, etc.).”³⁹ The EUGS endorses this idea and states that the Union will not only uphold international law as it currently stands, but also be proactive in developing rules “[a]t the frontiers of global affairs.” Echoing the calls from the 2015 expert consultation, the EUGS attempts to carve out a role for the EU in developing global norms in the areas of, amongst others, cyber, space, energy, and health.⁴⁰ It sees its role as to “promote exchanges with relevant multilateral fora to help spearhead the development of rules and build partnerships at the frontiers of global affairs.”⁴¹ It sees its role as “an agenda-shaper, a connector, coordinator and facilitator within a networked web of players.”⁴² This is language which seems to build upon the discussions at the December 2015 expert consultation.

³² Ibid., pp. 39-40.

³³ Buitelaar, Larik and Matta, *Summary of Findings*, p. 6.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

³⁶ EUGS, p. 18.

³⁷ Buitelaar, Larik and Matta, *Summary of Findings*, p. 3.

³⁸ EUGS, p. 27.

³⁹ Buitelaar, Larik and Matta, *Summary of Findings*, p. 2.

⁴⁰ EUGS, pp. 42-43.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 43.

⁴² Ibid.

3. Next Steps: Opportunities and Challenges for Implementation

With the EUGS having been finalized and presented to the European Council, attention now shifts from its content to its implementation in a troubled international environment. This was the focus of the event of 30 September, 2016, which featured a public panel debate on the overall appraisal of the Global Strategy and the current geopolitical climate (3.1), as well as three closed expert discussions which respectively focused on: the EU as a security actor (3.2), developing rules-based global governance in new areas (3.3), and capacity-building as part of the ‘joined-up’ approach in the case of pursuing the UN’s SDGs (3.4).⁴³ The following pages will summarize these debates and elaborate on the main findings with regard to each focus area.

3.1 The Global Strategy: Its Relevance in a Troubled International Environment

The topics discussed in both the plenary discussion and the public panel focused on the following issues: security and defense with relation to capabilities and operations; civil society engagement and the concept of ‘resilience’; the Strategy’s emphasis on ‘responsive Union’ and the ‘joined-up approach’; the tension between development and security; and the notion of ‘principled pragmatism’.

The public panel was opened by Dr. Abi Williams (President of The Hague Institute for Global Justice) and Ms. Maria Silvia Gatta (Head of the political department of the Representation of the European Commission in The Netherlands). Ms. Gatta highlighted in her remarks the rationale of the event, i.e. the need to create awareness, support and ownership for the Global Strategy and for the role of the EU as a global actor. In addition to Mr. Conte and Ms. Karimi, Ms. Lise Gregoire-van Haaren (Head of the Political Affairs Unit at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Prof. Dr. Joris Voorhoeve (The Hague University of Applied Sciences, Leiden University and former Defense Minister of The Netherlands) provided their insights to the public.

Mr. Conte highlighted the main ideas behind the EUGS, one of which is the importance of partnerships in effectively addressing the challenges the Union is currently facing. Additionally, Mr. Conte argued that commitment from the Member States is critical to make the EUGS a success, as foreign policy begins in the EU Member States, not in Brussels. Finally, the importance of outreach and reconnecting with the public was stressed as foreign policy concerns everyone.

Ms. Gregoire-van Haaren focused on the perspective of the Netherlands on the EUGS. She stated that citizens and their interests are at the core of both Dutch foreign policy and the Dutch priorities for the EUGS. The Dutch government wants to uphold its ‘social contract’ with its citizens in a dynamic world. Ms. Gregoire-van Haaren continued that, in a globalized world, the Member States of the European Union will have increasing difficulties in upholding the ‘social contract’ alone – hence the need for cooperation to provide security and bring prosperity for their citizens in a more connected, contested and complex world.

Following these statements, the panel discussed the aforementioned themes. On security and defense, Prof. Voorhoeve stressed that nothing can succeed without leadership, including from the

⁴³ The joined-up approach in the Global Strategy is defined as to mainstream external and internal policies between Member States and EU institutions, and between the internal and external dimensions of our policies, EUGS, pp. 49-51.

larger EU Member States such as Germany. He noted that there is currently a lack of political will to effectively deal with the current security challenges that surround Europe. This is problematic and has fed into the growing sense of anti-internationalism. Prof. Voorhoeve continued to describe European integration as one of the most positive developments in the history of international politics, but added that it has lost its glamour. The EU, therefore, should show concrete results to generate popular support for international cooperation. These results can be achieved by creating *ad hoc* coalitions of willing states to tackle urgent problems around Europe. Principled pragmatism, therefore, seems to be the right mentality for the Union to move forward.

There was also concern regarding the emphasis on security and defense in the EUGS. Ms. Karimi cautioned that ‘hard security’ interests should not triumph over other important issues like the SDGs. Ms. Karimi then turned to issues of civil society engagement and the concept of ‘resilience.’ On the role of NGOs, while she stressed the need for cooperation, she observed at the same time that it is vitally important to be able to explain, communicate and have the support of the people for the EUGS. At the moment, she argues, the EU is perceived negatively by EU citizens. Therefore, Ms. Karimi’s main question was whether the EU citizens expect such an ambitious strategy. She agrees with Prof. Voorhoeve that there is a lack of political will within the EU to deliver the necessary actions, for example with regard to the SDGs.

On the issues of a ‘joined-up approach’ and the potential tensions between development and security, one common issue that was voiced during the discussions was that the EUGS rejects a narrow understanding of the EU’s security. The Strategy notes that “[f]ragility beyond our borders threatens all our vital interests. By contrast, resilience [...] benefits us and countries in our surrounding regions.”⁴⁴ To this end, the ‘joined-up’ approach as set out in the EUGS is expected to make more resources available to strengthen capacity-building, intended as a means to build more resilient societies and states and to contribute to the realization of the SDGs, thereby helping to prevent conflict. This new approach further aligns the security and development objectives of the external action of the European Union, and is expected to contribute to more peaceful and cooperative neighbors and regional orders. This broad all-inclusive approach includes attempts to ease any tensions between development on the one hand and security and defense on the other.

On the topic of a ‘responsive union,’ Mr. Conte stated that one of the main challenges Europe faces is the erosion of unity. He argued that the EU wants to strike a balance between preserving unity and guaranteeing flexibility. Mr. Conte argued that unity should not become a straightjacket: “We need an ambitious agenda. We need a realistic agenda.” Striking the right balance between unity and flexibility prevents divisions within the EU.

Despite such lively debates, many questions regarding the Strategy remain. The Strategy states that “EU foreign policy is not a solo performance: it is an orchestra which plays from the same score.”⁴⁵ To stay within this metaphor: Who is the conductor and who are the backing vocals? Nonetheless, clear recommendations for implementation were voiced: showing clear results to gain public support for the EU and its external policies, the importance of outreach and connecting with citizens, and the idea that security should not come at the cost of other important goals like the SDGs.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 46.

3.2 Strengthening the EU as a security actor

In the words of the Global Strategy, an “appropriate level of ambition and strategic autonomy is important for Europe’s ability to foster peace and safeguard security within and beyond its borders.”⁴⁶ The EU’s involvement in fragile and conflict-torn states has increased in recent years⁴⁷; from troop training and security sector reform activities in EUSEC RD Congo and countering anti-terrorism and organized crime in EUCAP Sahel Niger, to border management with a capacity-building mandate in EUBAM Libya. Furthermore, adaptations to the EU’s common security capabilities and organizational frameworks are proposed in the EUGS, ranging from reinforced EDA benchmarking to further extending the mandates and ambition of EU military and civilian operations. This ambition is also reflected in the Global Strategy, with the first priority solely focusing on security of the Union.⁴⁸ This first priority on “strengthening security and defence” was reiterated in the conclusions of the EU’s Foreign Affairs Council of 17 October 2016.⁴⁹ This ambition was developed further in the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, presented by High Representative Mogherini during the Council of 14 November 2016. The plan, which also includes concrete actions, was subsequently welcomed by the Council and will be discussed by EU’s Heads of State and Government in December.⁵⁰ The first breakout session of the closed expert consultation discussed the ambitious plans of the EUGS and the possible obstacles and opportunities for their implementation.

The experts began by outlining several challenges. Firstly, experts discussed the state of the European security architecture and that of the EU. According to the experts, the security architecture, built over the last 25 years, is not only deteriorating but also falling apart. There are several current issues that need be addressed: the US presidential elections and the possible consequences for NATO, uncertainty about a resurgent Russia, the Syrian conflict, the so-called ‘Islamic State,’ the fear of terrorist attacks, and the political situation in Turkey and Libya. On top of that, the EU as a project has lost its glamour and there is increasing uncertainty within the EU.

Secondly, the experts discussed Brexit and its implications. Expectations were that the United Kingdom would continue to play a role in European defense and security as it is in its interest to stay close to Europe. Moreover, the United Kingdom is a NATO member. The experts noted that the British departure from the Union would have both negative and positive effects. The negative effect would be that the biggest military spender would leave the EU—roughly 25% of the total EU defense expenditure.⁵¹ Additionally, one of the more decisive and willing members on defense and security issues would leave the Union. Over the past years, London has displayed great willingness to act in crisis situations. A British withdrawal from the EU raises questions of who will step up and take on this role. At the same time, a Brexit could result in opening of political space. However, further defense cooperation can also backfire with the European citizens. Overall, the general consensus was that a pragmatic arrangement with London could be struck, for example a sort of associate membership on defense issues, similar to arrangements in the former Western European Union (WEU, 1954-2011).

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁷ “Ongoing mission and operations,” European Union External Action, last updated October 2015, http://collections.internetmemory.org/haeu/content/20160313172652/http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/index_en.htm.

⁴⁸ See in particular EUGS, pp. 44-46.

⁴⁹ Council Conclusions on the Global Strategy on the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy, Luxembourg, 17 October 2016, 13202/16, p. 2.

⁵⁰ “Mogherini presents Implementation Plan on Security and Defense to EU Ministers,” 14 November 2016, European External Action Service, https://eeas.europa.eu/diplomatic-network/foreign-affairs-council/14820/mogherini-presents-implementation-plan-on-security-and-defence-to-eu-ministers_en.

⁵¹ “Defense Data Portal,” European Defense Agency, <http://www.eda.europa.eu/info-hub/defense-data-portal>.

Thirdly, experts felt that the Global Strategy lacked vision and was technocratic. In addition, experts underscored the EU's credibility issue. All participants agreed that admitting this problem would be positive. Many experts argued that a stronger need for defense and security could have been voiced in the Strategy. The Strategy was the opportunity to present a deep strategic vision and give a fair strategic assessment of European security and Europe's geopolitical position. This assessment could be included in action plans following the Strategy.

Following the discussion on the many challenges facing Europe, the many opportunities for the Union were also discussed. Firstly, pragmatic solutions were put forward as means to solve urgent crises and as a way to build credibility. The notion of 'principled pragmatism'⁵² was therefore welcomed by the experts. The experts concluded that there are sufficient institutional mechanisms and policies, such as article 42 of the Lisbon Treaty, together with the other provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). These mechanisms and policies would provide sufficient possibilities for cooperation within the EU framework. There is therefore no need for new institutional mechanisms. Moreover, there is no lack of capacity within the EU, but, rather, a lack of political will. Political leadership in the capitals is needed if the goals in the Strategy are ever to be achieved.

Secondly, the importance attached in the Global Strategy to NATO and EU-NATO cooperation was discussed. The experts welcomed this idea and stated that there was room for more cooperation between the EU and NATO, and even with non-EU and non-NATO members. *Ad hoc* coalitions were mentioned as a serious option to address current urgent crises as well as build credibility. Alternatively, more structured formats or mechanisms were also considered. One example of a successful cooperation mechanism between the EU, NATO, non-EU and non-NATO countries is the "Shared Awareness and Deconfliction" mechanism (SHADE), that was created during the military counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and the western Indian Ocean. Since 2015, SHADE meetings have also taken place for the Mediterranean Sea. SHADE could therefore be considered a 'best practice'.

Thirdly, suggestions for private-public defense cooperation were put forward to address future challenges. It was argued this was much needed since states cannot deal with the complex nature of contemporary and future challenges. An example for this is the field of cyber security. The EU could function as a conduit for cooperation between multiple traditional, Member States-based, and non-traditional actors of a non-state nature.

In conclusion, five main recommendations follow from the discussion in session A. Firstly, define ways to improve the EU's credibility in the short and long term and be pragmatic and flexible in dealing with urgent crises around Europe. Secondly, explore the political space for defense cooperation in view of a potential Brexit. Thirdly, come up with ideas for pragmatic arrangements with London. Fourthly, devise strategies to connect with citizens and communicate the message that defense cooperation benefits the security of all citizens. Lastly, devise plans to fully use the institutional mechanisms and policies already in place. As can be seen from the Council Conclusions of 14 November 2016, most if not all of these recommendations are being taken forward, though concrete progress will become visible only in the first half of 2017 based on further proposals and their follow-up by the High Representative, the Commission and others.

⁵² EUGS, p.8.

3.3 Strengthening rules-based global governance (in the case of cyber)

The Global Strategy emphasizes the EU's commitment "to a global order based on international law, including the principles of the UN Charter" and notes that this "commitment translates into an aspiration to transform rather than simply preserve the existing system."⁵³ The EUGS thus puts a particular emphasis on the importance of strengthening international law and international institutions. The Strategy mentions specifically cyber, space, energy and health as fields for developing further a rules-based international system.⁵⁴

Against this background, the questions guiding the discussion of the second breakout session revolved around how the EU could better harness its strengths in bringing about tangible progress in building a rules-based global order. Developing norms for cyber space was selected as a focused case study. This was due, firstly, to the emphasis the EUGS accords to cyber norms and security.⁵⁵ Secondly, the Conclusions of the EU's Foreign Affairs Council of 17 October 2016 also stressed the need to optimize "synergies and ensur[e] coherence between policy responses to challenges straddling the internal and external policies of the Union" and the need to focus on "hybrid threats."⁵⁶ Thirdly, this choice was due to the trailblazing role the Netherlands has played in this area, as evidenced by its hosting of the 2015 Global Conference on CyberSpace in The Hague.

In the discussion with the experts, it became apparent that many kinds of crime – and security threats more generally – have acquired an online dimension today. Considering also the economic importance of the digital revolution for the EU's place in the world, cyber is a cross-cutting theme.

In terms of creating norms for cyber governance, two main modes of norm creation can be distinguished. Each of them provides both challenges and opportunities for the EU as a shaper of global norms. Firstly, there is the traditional mode of creating international law through international agreements and working through international organizations. Examples in point here are the 2001 Convention on Cybercrime (also known as the Budapest Convention) and the work of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The other, novel mode is working through multistakeholder processes, i.e. informal, fluid settings involving non-state actors such as the business sector, the technical community and users.⁵⁷ Examples for this include the governance of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and the 2014 NetMundial Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance. In the latter case, governments are still represented, for instance in ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC), but play a far less prominent role. By contrast, the private sector assumes a more (overtly) powerful position in multistakeholder settings. However, the lines between two models are blurry, as inter-governmental approaches can and do consult with non-state actors. Moreover, governments, including the Netherlands, openly support multistakeholder approaches, for instance through the Internet Governance Forum.

In terms of challenges, at the moment neither mode of governance is able to forge a global consensus on an ambitious set of cyber norms. This means that many issues of policy, law and ethics remain to be sorted out by corporations by default. This led one expert to describe the current state of affairs as the "privatization of justice." In addition, currently public opinion appears rather averse to new global

⁵³ Ibid., p. 39.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 42-43.

⁵⁵ See Ibid., pp. 21-22 on cyber security, p. 26 on resilience in the surrounding regions, which specifically refers to capacity-building in the area of cyber, and p. 37 on transatlantic cooperation.

⁵⁶ Council Conclusions on the Global Strategy on the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, Luxembourg, 17 October 2016, 13202/16, pt. 5.

⁵⁷ See Sash Jayawardane, Erin Jackson and Joris Larik, *Cyber Governance: Challenges, Solutions, and Lessons for Effective Global Governance*, The Hague Institute for Global Justice Policy Brief No. 17, December 2015.

rules in general, heeding the experience the EU had with the ratification of the ill-fated Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) and the lack of public support for new trade agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

Moreover, the creation of norms and their universalization would mean little if not backed up by a strong European digital industrial base and implementation and enforcement capabilities. Due to the interconnected nature of the Internet, the weakest links can often be found in weak states outside of the EU, making a secure Internet also a matter of EU foreign policy.

In terms of opportunities, given the Global Strategy's conception of the EU's role as "an agenda-shaper, a connector, coordinator and facilitator within a networked web of players,"⁵⁸ it is well-equipped to play a much more active role in multistakeholder settings than it currently does. This does not equate replacing the Member States. Rather, it entails the EU investing in multistakeholder governance, showing more high-profile leadership in this area, and playing a constructive role in coordinating the Member States, including in the GAC, at the ITU and in the global promotion of the Budapest Convention, which is also open to non-European states.

Moreover, even though the EU might not be perceived as a "cyber power" on the world stage, it has shown its potential to be innovative and work towards tangible benefits for its citizens. One high-profile example is in the area of data protection and privacy, as evidenced by the case law of the Court of Justice of the EU, which established a "right to be forgotten"⁵⁹ and new legislation such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).⁶⁰ Through these measures, the EU has shown leadership in the application of fundamental rights in the digital age, which can serve as inspiration—or at least as a stimulus for debate—in the global marketplace of ideas. For this to happen, these internal developments must receive political follow-up, including by the external representatives of the EU and the Member States. This brings back the importance of strategic communication mentioned earlier, to the outside world, but also to EU citizens and consumers to help explain in which ways the EU is protecting individual rights. Moreover, considering norm advancement at the global level too ambitious, opting for regional approaches and coalitions of like-minded actors can respond to the public's concerns. As a 'second best option', this may lead to fragmentation and to some extent a loss of effectiveness. But this can be seen as the price to be paid in order to move forward at all.

Furthermore, the completion of the digital single market and flanking measures should strengthen Europe's market power in this area. Regarding implementation and enforcement in particular, the EU needs to lead by example in order to be credible on the international stage. Hence, efforts must be made to further advance both digital rights and to harmonize criminal justice with a digital dimension within the EU. The latter can be achieved through stronger cooperation of law enforcement agencies, using more fully the potential of Europol and the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA), which can also be seen as part of the EU positioning itself as a player in global cyber governance and security. Both in Europe and in third countries, especially in weak states, norm-shaping needs to go hand-in-hand with capacity-building efforts. Consequently, a nexus exists between the EU's development policy and cyber security.

⁵⁸ EUGS, p. 43.

⁵⁹ C-131/12, *Google Spain v AEPD and Mario Costeja Gonzalez*, ECLI:EU:C:2014:317.

⁶⁰ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) [2016] OJ L 119/1.

Regarding the next steps for establishing policy-specific roadmaps for implementing the EUGS, the area of cyber can build on the 2013 Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union.⁶¹ As a first step, this document needs to be updated in light of the Global Strategy. Moreover, given the cross-cutting importance of cyber in today's governance, both internal and external, cyber aspects should be mainstreamed into other sectoral strategies to be adopted with a view to the implementation of the EUGS.

3.4 Strengthening the EU's 'joined-up' approach in the implementation of the SDGs

During the third breakout session, three interrelated aspects of the EUGS with regard to the SDGs were discussed: firstly, the level of reflection of the SDGs in the EUGS as the new cornerstone of global development policy; secondly, an assessment of the 'joined-up approach' and its implications for the SDGs; and, thirdly, the operationalization of the ambitions enshrined in the EUGS with regard to the SDGs and the way forward regarding implementation. The Global Strategy uses the SDGs as an example for the added-value of a more 'joined-up Union,' noting that the "SDGs also encourage us to expand and apply the principle of policy coherence for development to other policy areas, and encourage joint analysis and engagement across Commission services, institutions and Member States."⁶²

Firstly, when assessing the place of the SDGs in the ambitions laid down in the EUGS as a whole, the experts affirmed that there is an apparent sense of friction between the support for the SDGs (and the civil society actors engaged in the pursuit of these goals) and the increased emphasis on the security sector. Even if it is only aimed at creating a degree of EU strategic autonomy from NATO, this nonetheless creates concerns that the CSDP will be prioritized in EU external action—over development and other policies in pursuit of the SDGs. There was a common understanding among the experts, however, that similarly to the SDGs, the EUGS is also the result of complex negotiations. One of the new elements, when compared to the 2003 European Security Strategy,⁶³ is the EUGS's less Eurocentric nature, which was highly welcomed by the experts. While Eurocentrism is not bad *per se* it is not helpful for engaging global civil society and for promoting universal values, thus rendering EU foreign policy less effective. This could become a credibility challenge for the Union. In the end, all these issues translate into an uneasy marriage of values and interests in the EUGS. The 'principled pragmatism' approach and the choice of terms such as 'resilience' and 'flexibility' is well founded in this regard and will hopefully prove useful when devising internal and external policies to overcome insecurity and uncertainty within Europe and beyond.

Secondly, a 'joined-up approach' can facilitate joint actions at the sector level, and incorporate development initiatives and objectives, above all the SDGs, in the first stages of EU programming. In doing so the joined-up approach can close gaps and avoid overlaps in development cooperation in support of the SDGs, as well as improving the EU's political visibility. However, experts warned that the priorities of the EUGS seem to be more aligned within the internal needs of the Union and that the SDGs are not at the center of the EUGS. Therefore, there is an apparent discrepancy between internal and external approaches, and as a result SDGs are not always strongly translated in the EUGS.

⁶¹ European Commission and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign and Security Policy, Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union: An Open, Safe and Secure Cyberspace, Brussels, 7 February 2013, JOIN(2013) 1 final.

⁶² EUGS, p. 50. See also p. 26, where the EUGS states that "[e]choing the Sustainable Development Goals, the EU will adopt a joined-up approach to its humanitarian, development, migration, trade, investment, infrastructure, education, health and research policies, as well as improve horizontal coherence between the EU and its Member States."

⁶³ European Council, A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Security Strategy, 12 December 2003.

Migration is a case in point, being regarded rather as a security concern. Unfortunately, the positive aspects of migration that could be used as a way of promoting sustainable development seem largely absent from the EUGS and the surrounding discourse. But experts agreed that the EUGS is a balancing exercise of prioritizing objectives and challenges of the EU, as opposed to the SDGs which are a global commitment.

A joined-up approach aims at greater efficiency and lower transaction costs for partner countries. In the short term this means more coordination on the side of the Member States and EU delegations. However, the concept remains very broad and needs more substance and strengthening, particularly when creating more connectivity and unity within the EU and in its message abroad. There is a need to focus more on the implementation of already existing policies related to SDGs within the EU for which the EU must lead by example. The fact that this is mentioned in the EUGS was welcomed by the experts.⁶⁴ In the end, even if overoptimistic, the EUGS remains a good reference point for future policies and can be used to hold EU institutions and Member State governments accountable.

The main issues regarding the implementation of the EUGS and the way forward remain the political will and the financial means. The wide-ranging SDGs are not easily or always translated into the EUGS, and this will make it difficult for their implementation and credibility. While acknowledging the limitations of the EUGS, in that it is a non-legally binding document with generic objectives, an issue of concern is the lack of vision on operationalization of the SDGs and the means and human resources to do it. Fourteen years remain to achieve the SDGs, therefore the political will to achieve unity internally and the financial means to push the message across and promote change externally will be no small task. Strategic investment should aim at integrating the SDGs and the financial tools to implement these goals should be better specified in follow-up documents. The Global Strategy emphasizes that “implementing the SDGs will require change across all internal and external policies, galvanizing public-private partnerships, and leveraging the experience of the European Investment Bank (EIB) in providing technical assistance and building capacities in developing and middle income countries.”⁶⁵ It remains unclear how this will be achieved in practice. Therefore, developing more specific cross-cutting sub-strategies at the sectoral level will be crucial.

Moreover, communication will be a serious challenge. The EU should take, and is already taking to some extent, a leading role in coordinating the efforts to communicate to the European public how the Strategy translates into the daily life of Europeans when it comes to sustainable development. This will be critical to get the requisite public support. The EUGS highlights that “while a prosperous Union is the basis for a stronger Europe in the world, prosperity must be shared and requires fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals worldwide, including in Europe.”⁶⁶ This focus on prosperity can lead the way to incorporating the language of the SDGs in subsequent implementation policies of the EUGS.

The main conclusion drawn from this session was that one of the principal strengths of the EUGS is in fact its broadness and openness while highlighting core concepts of global development. Hence, it can be used for advocacy and hold governments accountable. However, this is also its weakness, since its vague language can be used by states to be very selective in its interpretation, depending on their needs. Therefore, tensions between the internal challenges (lack of unity), and external challenges (effectiveness of EU external action) remain, and they mutually affect each other. Moreover, increasing internal divisions will render difficult the implementation of EU policies related to SDGs abroad as well. Implementation will be possible if the SDGs are translated into measurable goals. Efforts should be focused on implementing already existing policies and strategies regarding the

⁶⁴ See EUGS, p. 40.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

SDGs, and in taking them into account when devising new ones. The joined-up approach is highly welcomed particularly in the fields of climate diplomacy, energy diplomacy, economic diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, as highlighted also in the Council Conclusions of 17 October.⁶⁷ However, the limited human resources and financial means need to be wisely used.

Coherent communication and co-ownership with Member States will remain vital if the SDGs are to be progressively realized through joined-up EU external action as guided by the EUGS. Agreeing on a common language and message is critical to incorporate the SDGs in the implementation of the EUGS. The most important next step is to translate the EUGS into prioritized and coherent sub-strategies at the EU and member state level in a coordinated manner, acknowledging consistently the importance of the SDGs as a global commitment. In this sense, the Council Conclusions, which declared in relation to the implementation of the EUGS that the “sustainable development goals will be a crosscutting dimension of all this work,”⁶⁸ show that the EU is going in the right direction.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The preceding reflections on the content, reception and implementation of the Global Strategy, drawing on the discussions at the expert meetings convened by The Hague Institute in December 2015 and by The Hague Institute and Europe House in September 2016 can be summarized in the following main points. Firstly, a wide range of ideas, put forward during the expert consultation of December 2015, were reflected in the EUGS. These include the acknowledgement of civil society as a key partner for the EU, the EU’s role in developing norms in new areas of global governance in order to construct a rules-based global order, and the EU’s role as a connector, coordinator and agenda-setter.

Secondly, with regard to the expert sessions of 30 September 2016, the following main findings and recommendations with a view to implementing the EUGS stand out. The current European security and geopolitical situation require pragmatic solutions to solve urgent crises. Both capacity and the necessary institutional mechanisms and policies already exist, but political will is lacking—especially in the capitals. The experts strongly believe in NATO-EU cooperation, especially with the possibility of a British exit from the EU and hence from the CFSP/CSDP over the next few years. Furthermore, they advised to include the private sector and civil society in defense cooperation to address future challenges (e.g. in the areas of cyber and space). Recommendations in this area include:

- The EU needs a pragmatic and flexible approach in order to solve the crises facing and surrounding Europe and to improve its credibility in the short and long term, for example, by using ad hoc coalitions.
- A possible Brexit could open up political space for deepened defense cooperation. To achieve this, the EU would need to find ways to make use of this political space in order to generate political will in the capitals.
- The EU should devise plans to connect with its citizens as a security actor and communicate the message that EU defense cooperation tangibly benefits the security of all citizens.

⁶⁷ Council Conclusions on the Global Strategy on the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy, Luxembourg, 17 October 2016, 13202/16, pt. 5.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

In terms of implementing the Global Strategy's ambition for the EU to develop norms "at the frontiers of global affairs," the area of cyber governance is of cross-cutting importance for both the Union's economy and security. Recommendations in this area include:

- The EU should fully embrace the role of agenda-shaper, connector, coordinator and facilitator within a networked web of players in cyber governance by investing in multistakeholder initiatives and together with the Member States showing coordinated political leadership in this area.
- The EU needs to take its internal normative innovations (such as the "right to be forgotten") to the global stage, where they can serve as inspiration to other actors and stimulate discussions, and use regional approaches and coalitions of like-minded countries as building blocks for working towards a global consensus.
- The EU should bolster its credibility as a cyber power by capacity-building both within the EU and the Member States and by supporting third countries, especially weak states, to fight criminal activities and strengthen cooperation between law enforcement agencies.

Concerning the EU's joined-up approach and the pursuit of the SDGs, it was found that there is friction between support towards SDGs and an increased emphasis on security. The main challenge is to tackle the mismatch between what is already being done and what is proposed in the EUGS. Additionally, the joined-up approach is seen as very broad and needs more substance and strengthening, in particular to create more connectivity and unity within the EU. Finally, the main issues regarding the implementation of the EUGS and the way forward remain political will and financial means. The recommendations in this area include:

- The progressive realization of the SDGs through 'joined-up' EU action needs to be translated and concretized into measurable goals. This should be pursued through already existing policies and strategies and be taken into account in new ones.
- The EU should invest in communicating to the public, in tandem with the Member States, that the SDGs are a global commitment with implications, both positive and negative, in the daily lives of citizens.
- For the EU, the most important next step is to translate the EUGS into prioritized and coherent sub-strategies with a view to maintaining the SDGs as a central element of the follow-up of the EUGS.

As the EU's Foreign Affairs Council noted in its Conclusions of 17 October 2016, the Global Strategy "will guide the EU's external action for the years to come."⁶⁹ First steps have already been taken by the Council in November 2016 in one of the three focus areas of this report in the form of an Implementation Plan on Security and Defence.⁷⁰ The calendars of the EU institutions and Member State policymakers continue to fill up with further milestones for its implementation. Existing sector-specific strategies will be updated and new ones developed. In June 2017, the High Representative will submit the first yearly implementation report of the EUGS to the Council. This will be a crucial moment to gauge whether the words of the Strategy have been followed by deeds. Implementing the Global Strategy is a momentous endeavor by any standard, both for the EU and its Member States. How well they will work together, use their resources, build political momentum and voice their common message will ultimately determine whether it will be a Herculean or a Sisyphean task.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pt. 1.

⁷⁰ High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission, and Head of the European Defense Agency, *Implementation Plan on Security and Defense*, Brussels, 14 November 2016, 14392/16.

