

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

Does the new EU Global Strategy deliver on security and defence?

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ABSTRACT

The [Global Strategy](#) for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy presented by High Representative Federica Mogherini on 28 June 2016 sets out a 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe', in response to the Member States' request for a new framework in which the EU can tackle the challenges and key changes to the EU's environment identified in a strategic assessment carried out in 2015. Many expectations were raised ahead of its publication but it soon became clear that defence would be a central element of the Global Strategy. A number of defence priorities emerged from the exchanges between the main stakeholders: a central role for the common security and defence policy (CSDP); a clear level of ambition with tools to match; emphasis on EU-NATO cooperation; and concrete follow-up measures such as a 'White Book' on European defence. Seen in this light, the Global Strategy captures the urgent need to face the challenges of today's environment and it may prove to be a major turning point in EU foreign policy and security thinking. It emphasizes the value of hard power — including via a strong partnership with NATO — along with soft power. It will not be easy for the Member States to match the level of ambition set in the Global Strategy and its success will be judged in terms of the follow-up and the measures taken to implement it. Could the first step be a White Book on European Defence?

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1 The EU Global Strategy: stressing the 'D' in CSDP

Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative, gave her assessment of 'the EU in a changing environment' in June 2015 and concluded that the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) needed to be updated.

The assessment's main finding was that the EU could no longer afford to ignore defence as a key factor in its external policy.

The renewed emphasis on security and defence led to calls for a strong defence component in the EU Global Strategy and for concrete follow-up.

This paper will assess the extent to which the Global Strategy addresses the priorities that emerged

At its summit in June 2015, the European Council tasked Federica Mogherini, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission (HR/VP), to draw up a Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy for the EU by June 2016. This request followed on from the strategic assessment of the key changes and challenges in the global environment presented by the High Representative in 2015. This assessment, entitled '[The European Union in a changing environment](#)', described the challenges created by today's more connected, more contested, and more complex world, and concluded that the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) needed to be revised in order to provide EU guidance in the form of a common, comprehensive and consistent EU global strategy.

The strategic assessment explored the implications of the changed environment and highlighted the issue of European defence. Although the [December 2013 European Council](#) had underlined that 'defence matters', the assessment noted that 'the current level of ambition and capability targets are not tailored to the degraded strategic environment'¹. While the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) has no doubt come a long way since its inception in 2000, the review pointed to the many limitations to CSDP missions, to the non-deployment of the Battlegroups, to the non-activation of permanent structured cooperation and of Article 44 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) on the implementation of a task by a group of Member States, and to the ever-decreasing national defence budgets, 'with Research and Technology (R&T) taking the greatest hit'. To sum up, the EU could no longer afford 'to ignore the 'D' in its CSDP'.

The purpose of the Global Strategy, presented to EU leaders at the European Council meeting of 28 June 2016 under the title 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe', was to give the EU the broad strategic framework needed to face today's international challenges in a strong and coherent manner, drawing from the wide range of tools at its disposal. It was clear from the June 2015 assessment that the EU Global Strategy must make the necessary space for European defence cooperation. Following years of shrinking defence budgets, appeals were made by a wide range of stakeholders for a strong security and defence dimension in the upcoming Global Strategy. Some also pleaded for an effective and concrete follow-up to the new Strategy, for example with a possible White Book on security and defence.

This paper seeks to provide an overview of the discussions on security and defence that led up to the Global Strategy, exploring the demands and red lines of the different stakeholders. It then goes on to assess the extent to which the EU Global Strategy presented to EU leaders on 28 June 2016

¹ The EU in a changing global environment, June 2015, http://eeas.europa.eu/docs/strategic_review/eu-strategic-review_strategic_review_en.pdf

during the discussions that preceded it.

addresses the priorities identified during the year-long discussions on the future of EU security and defence, and to look at how this strategy could be taken further in future.

2 Defence and the EU Global Strategy: tracking the conversation

2.1 HR/VP Mogherini and the EEAS

HR/VP Mogherini underscored the importance of CSDP in the Global Strategy and referred to a specific reflection on Europe's defence to follow it up.

The strategic assessment of June 2015 signalled that European defence could no longer be ignored. Addressing the European Defence Agency (EDA) annual conference in November 2015, Ms Mogherini again stressed this, underscoring the importance of security and defence and emphasising that this 'will be an **integral part of each chapter** of the Global Strategy.² A core theme of the Global Strategy should therefore be to consider the 'key principles that should guide our actions' as well as the tools and capabilities necessary for those actions. Reassuring her audience that a 'global' strategy would not mean less of a focus on security the HR/VP stressed that 'for each objective, we will identify the defence-related instruments we need'. Ms Mogherini put special emphasis on complementarity, with references to the security-development nexus and civil-military cooperation.

Ms Mogherini appeared cautious initially about a possible follow-up document that would be more specific and defence-targeted, despite saying that 'a specific reflection on Europe's defence will be on the agenda' after the publication of the Global Strategy, possibly as one of several anticipated sectorial papers. However, when she addressed European defence ministers in Luxembourg on 19 April 2016, she confirmed her intention of following up the Global Strategy with an **action plan** for military cooperation, once the Strategy had been endorsed by the Member States.³

2.2 European Commission

Michel Barnier, appointed Special Advisor for CSDP, believed the CSDP should play a pivotal role in the new EU Global Strategy and backed a future EU White Book on security and defence.

Since taking office in 2014, the European Commission under President Jean-Claude Juncker has made defence and security a priority. This commitment to a 'stronger' Europe was best demonstrated early in 2015 by the appointment of former Commissioner Michel Barnier as Special Adviser for European Defence and Security Policy, with the prime task of helping prepare the contribution of the Commission president to the European Council's work on European defence policy.

² HR/VP Mogherini in a speech at the EDA Annual Conference, Brussels, 16 November 2015, <https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/speech-high-representativevice-president-european-commission-and-head-european-defence-agency> (accessed 09/03/2016)

³ <https://www.defensie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2016/04/19/hennis-spreekt-europese-collegas-in-luxemburg>

Mr Barnier stated in January 2016 that CSDP should play a **pivotal role** in the new EU Global Strategy, as it constituted a key instrument of the EU's external action.⁴ He singled out *strategic autonomy* as an important element, while also stressing coherence with NATO: 'Once the strategic ambition is set in the Global Strategy ... there [will be] an urgent need to revise and determine our ambition and means of action in common defence through a European Strategic Defence Review or White Book'.⁵ This should also be seen in the context of the Commission's work on the Defence Action Plan on capabilities and technology, conducted jointly with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the EDA).

The Group of Personalities report issued on 23 February 2016 [on the Preparatory Action for CSDP-related research](#) touched on the Global Strategy in its recommendations. It concluded that 'the EUGS should also **lay the foundation** for follow-up defence-related initiatives, [paying] adequate attention to identifying the military capabilities and cooperative initiatives required to implement the new strategy. It should also assess the potential need for autonomous EU action and pave the way to a **dedicated policy implementation agenda** for the years to come, taking into account the current debates on a possible European defence 'White Book'.⁶ The report recommended that the Preparatory Action / EU-funded Defence Research Programme should be 'part of a broader European defence policy framework - based on the EU Global Strategy and the Commission's Defence Action Plan'.⁷

2.3 Member States

Looking ahead to the presentation of the EU Global Strategy in June 2016, many Member States shared their positions regarding the emphasis that should be given to defence matters in the new strategy. Several drafted non-papers as input into the process, either alone or as a group of Member States. Others made their views on the upcoming Global Strategy known through speeches and official statements.

2.3.1 France, Germany, Italy and Spain

France, Germany, Italy and Spain called for a strong EU foreign policy and a central role for CSDP in the EU Global Strategy. They argued that CSDP should be

In February 2016, a non-paper co-authored by France, Germany, Italy and Spain (hereafter the 'G4') was released, calling for the new EU Global Strategy to define a strong EU posture and a **central role** for CSDP in order to deal with new challenges. According to the authors, CSDP had become an element of the wider purpose that citizens were seeking for the Union and it should be seen not as a mere instrument for crisis management but

⁴ Nicolas Gros-Verheyde, Nous devons mettre à jour notre logiciel de sécurité (Barnier), Bruxelles2Pro, 4 March 2016.

⁵ Barnier in European Defence Matters (EDA magazine), issue 10

⁶ Report of the Group of Personalities on the Preparatory Action for CSDP-related research, 23 February 2016, p. 78: http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/GoP_report.pdf (accessed 10/03/2016)

⁷ Ibid., p. 26.

seen as a core element of European security and defence and called for the creation of specific financial instruments to fund more comprehensive CSDP programmes.

as a **core aspect of European security and defence**, directly linked to the EU's internal security instruments. Thus, the continental 'G4' believe that 'CSDP should play a central role in the Global Strategy, as a pillar of an integrated 'EU approach.' At the same time, the four Member States remarked that a 'strategy is only as good as the tools designed to implement it' and emphasised that the strategy should clearly state the need for specific **financial instruments** to fund CSDP programmes. Moreover, the competitiveness of the European defence industry should be increased so as to strengthen the EU's strategic autonomy. The G4 Member States also proposed considering the possibility of a 'European Semester' for defence as part of the harmonization of national defence planning. Since contemporary security challenges can no longer be faced by the EU alone, the G4 emphasised complementarity with NATO and argued that the 'Global Strategy must send a clear signal to help overcome obstacles to **EU-NATO cooperation**'.

Germany's commitment to a stronger European defence was demonstrated further in early May 2016, when a draft version of a national German defence white paper (issued in final form on 13 July) was reported to strongly promote European military **integration**, and to call for 'the use of all possibilities available under EU treaties to establish deep co-operation between willing Member States, create a joint civil-military headquarters for EU operations, a council of defence ministers, and better co-ordinate the production and sharing of military equipment'.⁸ As quoted by the Financial Times, the white paper stated that: 'The more we Europeans are ready to take on a greater share of the common burden and the more our American partner is prepared to go along the road of common decision-making, the further the transatlantic security partnership will develop greater intensity and richer results'. This approach was confirmed by the German defence minister, Ursula von der Leyen, who called for more joint European military initiatives on 13 July when the German strategic document was published.

2.3.2 Visegrad Group (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic)

The Visegrad countries believe CSDP should be a key element of the EU Global Strategy and stress the importance of strengthening EU-NATO cooperation.

In the [Bratislava Declaration](#) for a stronger CSDP in June 2015, the heads of government of the Visegrad group (hereafter the 'V4') stated that they were '**fully committed** to a stronger, more cohesive security and defence policy of the Union, including through enhanced regional security and defence cooperation'.⁹ As the 'future course of CSDP should be built upon achievable solutions with concrete ways and means required for their implementation', the V4 countries believe CSDP should be the 'key element' of the Global Strategy. Importantly, the EUGS should 'match the ambitions of the EU with tools needed for their implementation'. The V4 also called for 'further enhancement of the **EU-NATO** relations', stressing that 'synergy, complementarity and full use of EU-NATO cooperation is essential'.

⁸ <https://next.ft.com/content/e90a080e-107b-11e6-91da-096d89bd2173>

⁹ <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2015/bratislava-declaration>

2.3.3 The Netherlands

As holder of the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2016, the Netherlands called for a clear level of ambition in the EU Global Strategy and underlined the importance of actionable proposals and a 'White Book-like document'.

As holder of the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2016, the Netherlands sought to further develop European defence cooperation. On 11 March 2016, the Dutch minister of defence, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, stressed the need to 'set a **clear level of ambition**' in the Global Strategy, to show that the EU 'can be a credible, effective and efficient security actor in its immediate region and beyond'.¹⁰ The Netherlands underlined the importance of translating the new strategy 'into actionable proposals to strengthen European defence cooperation', referred to the need to produce a '**White Book**-like document [that] should describe the CSDP-related tasks and means we need to execute the Global Strategy', to 'make the case for a better equipped civil and military toolbox', and 'possibly also lead to an expansion or review of the so-called Petersburg tasks'.¹¹ Essential elements for such a 'White Book-like document' would be 'a clear level of ambition in line with the Strategy, a description of the capability shortfalls and a proposal for a follow-up mechanism to monitor the progress at the political level'.¹² Ms Hennis-Plasschaert has also emphasised the need to 'reaffirm the transatlantic partnership within NATO'.¹³

2.3.4 The United Kingdom

In the run-up to the UK referendum on EU membership, the UK remained relatively silent on the subject of the EU Global Strategy. All sides had nonetheless made clear that an EU army of any sort would be unthinkable and that NATO remained the principal guarantor of the UK's defence.

The relative **silence** in the United Kingdom on the subject of the EU Global Strategy in the period leading up to its presentation can largely be ascribed to the prospect of the UK **referendum** on EU membership, which was held on 23 June, a week before the European Council meeting. As the academic, Richard Whitman, pointed out, 'foreign and security policy is an area in which the impact of a vote to leave the EU might be relatively marginal in contrast to other aspects of the UK's EU relations'.¹⁴ Brexit campaigners underlined the prominent role of NATO, rather than the EU, in securing peace on the European continent, and played on public fears over the creation of a European army. The Remain camp also made its position clear: immediately following the European Council meeting of 19 February 2016 at which an EU deal with the UK was reached, the then UK prime minister, David Cameron, stressed that '[national security is a national competence](#),

¹⁰ Speech by Dutch defence minister Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert at the seminar 'Europe's security and defence: what's next?', 11 March 2016, Paris. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/toespraken/2016/03/11/toespraak-van-minister-hennis-plasschaert-bij-het-seminar-europe-s-security-and-defence-what-next-engels>

¹¹ These tasks encompass the traditional tasks of crisis management, such as peacekeeping, peace-making or humanitarian relief outside European borders.

¹² Hennis-Plasschaert in European Defence Matters (EDA magazine), issue 10

¹³ <https://www.defensie.nl/downloads/toespraken/2016/03/17/speech-minister-jeanine-hennis-plasschaert-denktank-chatham-house>

¹⁴ The UK's foreign and security policy: what's at stake in the referendum, Richard Whitman, http://www.egmontinstitute.be/publication_article/the-uks-foreign-and-security-policy-whats-at-stake-in-the-referendum/

and [the UK] would veto any suggestion of an EU army'.¹⁵ In a [speech on 9 May 2016](#), Mr Cameron reiterated that 'it is to NATO and to the Transatlantic Alliance that we look to for our defence'.¹⁶

This position was anything but new, as the United Kingdom had always been adamant about its reliance on **NATO** and consistently resisted any integration that might lead to a competing European defence union. For the EU, a UK exit would have a significant impact on its combined military power. While the result of the referendum was only to become clear a few days before the EU Global Strategy was presented, there can be no doubt that the Strategy had to take into account these sensitivities.

2.4 European Parliament

In its own-initiative report on the EU Global Strategy, the European Parliament underlined its eventual goal of a European Defence Union, demanded the creation of a permanent EU military headquarters and supported the adoption of a White Paper on EU defence.

The European Parliament adopted its position on the EU Global Strategy on 13 April 2016, in an own-initiative report ['on the EU in a changing global environment — a more connected, contested and complex world'](#).¹⁷ The EP stated in its resolution that 'a principal objective should be to move towards permanently pooled multinational military units, joint defence forces and the framing of a common defence policy which should ultimately lead to a **European Defence Union ...** 'and demanded 'the establishment of a permanent EU military headquarters to improve military crisis management capability'. The EP called on the Member States to 'reinforce defence cooperation collectively, bilaterally and in regional clusters ... ' and supported 'the adoption of a **White Paper** on EU defence based on the EU Global Strategy'. The EP also underlined the importance of EU strategic autonomy and defence research. Stressing the 'vital importance of strengthening **EU-NATO cooperation**', it backed the establishment of European capabilities, which would strengthen NATO in territorial defence and would be able to conduct intervention operations autonomously beyond the EU's border, and stressed that 'the CSDP should reinforce the European pillar of NATO and ensure that European members of NATO actually live up to their NATO commitments'. The Parliament emphasised that 'the Global Strategy should be **revised** every five years, in synchrony with the new European Parliament and the new Commission' and also stressed the importance of joint parliamentary scrutiny during the sessions of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on CFSP/CSDP.

The most recent bi-annual Inter-parliamentary Conferences (IPC) on CFSP and CSDP took place in the Hague from 6 to 8 April 2016. There, the IPC stressed the need to design a common, comprehensive and consistent Global Strategy, with cooperation, commitment and active engagement by

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-statement-following-european-council-meeting-19-february-2016>

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-the-uks-strength-and-security-in-the-eu-9-may-2016>

¹⁷ [European Parliament resolution of 13 April 2016 on the EU in a changing global environment – a more connected, contested and complex world](#) (2015/2272(INI))

The recent IPC stressed the need to strengthen the EU's resilience and defence capabilities and called on the Commission to base the European Defence Action Plan on the future EU White Book on security and defence.

all relevant actors. The IPC believes that the comprehensive approach and the consistent and coordinated use of the EU's external and internal policy instruments should be at the core of the new strategy. The IPC also stressed that the **EU's resilience and defence capabilities** needed to be strengthened and called on EU Member States to put into practice the instruments provided for under the TEU (such as Article 42.6 and Article 44¹⁸). The IPC wished to be kept involved in further discussions concerning the EU Global Strategy, including the follow-up to its **implementation**, and the **White Book** emanating from the Strategy, and called on the European Commission to base the suggested European Defence Action Plan on this EU White Book on security and defence.

3 Priorities for the EU Global Strategy

The following CSDP priorities for the EU Global Strategy emerged from the input gathered from all the relevant actors:

Central role for CSDP

Member States, the Commission and the European Parliament emphasised that security and defence should, in the words of Special Advisor Barnier, play a '**pivotal role**' in the EUGS. HR/VP Mogherini affirmed that CSDP would be an integral part of each chapter of the EUGS.

Clear level of ambition

The EUGS should have a clear level of **ambition**, demonstrating that the EU 'can be a credible, effective and efficient security actor in its immediate region and beyond'¹⁹. The Commission, Parliament and G4 countries stressed the importance of **strategic autonomy** in particular.

Tools

The Visegrad countries noted that the EU Global Strategy should 'match the ambitions of the EU with the tools needed for their implementation'. Increased **capabilities, financial instruments** to ensure common funding and a strong European **defence industry** were mentioned among the most important elements.

EU-NATO cooperation

In line with others, the G4 countries stated that the Global Strategy must send a clear signal to help overcome obstacles to **EU-NATO cooperation**. The European Parliament called this cooperation 'of vital importance' and stressed that CSDP should reinforce the European pillar of NATO.

Implementation and White Book

The EU Global Strategy should allow for concrete follow-up. The Commission, the EP and several Member States have come out in favour of a European Strategic Defence Review or a **White Book** on European defence. HR/V Mogherini has confirmed the aim of developing the Global Strategy in an **action plan**.

¹⁸ Article 42.6 TEU and article 44 TEU provide for the Council to entrust the implementation of a task to a group of Member States which are willing and have the necessary capability for such a task, and allow for permanent structured cooperation.

¹⁹ As stated by Dutch minister of defence, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert

4 Living up to expectations?

The EU Global Strategy was presented to EU leaders on 28 June 2016. How far does it live up to expectations?

Ms Mogherini presented the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy to the EU heads of state and government on 28 June 2016, a year after she was tasked by EU leaders to draw it up. The Strategy was welcomed by the Member States although it was overshadowed by the outcome of the UK referendum. Though public debate has since been dominated by Brexit, the Global Strategy paper may well prove to be an important step forward in the EU's development. Accordingly, this analysis seeks to explore the extent to which the Strategy actually takes account of the priorities identified in the discussions on security, defence and the Global Strategy during the year leading up to its presentation.

4.1 Central role for CSDP

The EUGS presents a major turn in European thinking by emphasising the value of 'hard power' along the traditional 'soft power'.

In terms of security and defence, the new EU Global Strategy may well be a turning point for European external action. While CSDP is not given a pivotal role, the strong emphasis in the Strategy on assuring the Union's security through CSDP as one of the Union's five broad priorities, reflects a clear and major shift in foreign policy thinking. 'The idea that Europe is an exclusively civilian power', says Ms Mogherini in the introduction, 'does not do justice to an evolving reality For Europe, soft and hard power go hand in hand'. In the Global Strategy's list of five priorities, security and defence is thus ranked alongside an increased resilience in Europe's neighbourhood; an integrated approach to conflicts and crises; cooperative regional orders; and a commitment to global governance.

Infused with a sense of realpolitik, the EU Global Strategy is based on principled pragmatism and a realistic assessment of the current challenges that shows that the EU can no longer ignore the 'D' in CSDP.

More than simply giving greater importance to CSDP in its own right, the Global Strategy reflects a new sense of realpolitik, best expressed in its emphasis on '**principled pragmatism**'. This realistic assessment of the current strategic environment, resulting from the urgent challenges coming from the east and the south, has sparked the realisation that the EU can no longer afford 'to ignore the 'D' in its CSDP'. Not only has the amount of attention given to 'hard power' aspects increased, but its relative importance has grown too. As [Egmont's Sven Biscop points out](#), the Global Strategy places 'much less emphasis on democracy'. He argues that 'lowering the level of ambition in terms of democratization is but the acceptance of reality'.²⁰ Hence, with the solidification of hard power as an integral aspect of European external policy, both by increasing its importance and putting previous priorities into perspective, the Global Strategy seems to respond to the many calls for a stronger role of CSDP in the Union's strategic outlook.

²⁰ Sven Biscop, The EU Global Strategy: Realpolitik with European Characteristics, Egmont Institute, no. 75 (June 2016): <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/SPB75.pdf>

4.2 Clear level of ambition

In the past, the lack of political will has been a key hindrance to further EU defence cooperation.

The Global Strategy is ambitious in calling for increased political will and more strategic autonomy and is not afraid to raise the bar for future EU defence cooperation.

The importance of ambition and political will should not be underestimated. In the past, it has been the lack of political will that has held up any significant progress in European security and defence because the possibilities for further cooperation do exist under the treaties. It is logical then that the Global Strategy should deliver on the demands for a clear level of political ambition. The Strategy states that, as Europeans should take responsibility for their own security, 'an appropriate level of **ambition** and **strategic autonomy** (a key concept of the EU Global Strategy reflecting its new pragmatism) is important for Europe's ability to foster peace and safeguard security within and beyond its borders'. Europeans should 'be better equipped, trained and organised' and should be able 'to act autonomously if and when necessary' in protecting Europe, responding to external crises or assisting the development of partners. In fact, 'Member States will need to move towards defence cooperation as the norm'. While the Strategy does recall that 'NATO remains the primary framework for most Member States', its ambition is clear in its plea for a stronger and more autonomous European military power through far-reaching cooperation. [As Carnegie Europe's Jan Techau notes](#), 'the document gets very ambitious at the policy level [as] it contains a large number of concrete proposals, not spelled out in detail, but defined precisely enough to point toward action, not just good intentions'.²¹ Indeed, the Global Strategy is not afraid to raise the bar for future European defence cooperation and makes several concrete proposals on the tools needed to build a stronger EU.

4.3 Tools

Increased ambition is no more than an empty shell if it is not matched by the tools needed for implementation. The Global Strategy is aware of the existing obstacles but is unable to address them fully.

Despite the clear political will in the EU Global Strategy to strengthen European defence cooperation, increased ambition is only an empty shell if it is not matched by the tools needed to meet those ambitions. Within the existing European structures, political reluctance to make full use of the possibilities provided by the Lisbon treaty has often been motivated in part by the technical and legal limitations to those ambitions as well as by the complexity of decision-making. A case in point is the EU Battlegroups, which have never been deployed because of the lack of an institutionalised capacity for financial burden-sharing, the difficulties in force-generation stemming from low national defence budgets and the complex political decision-making process. As long as such complications render the alternative of ad-hoc military cooperation outside the European framework easier, more effective and thus more attractive than structured cooperation within the European Union, far-reaching defence cooperation will remain a distant goal. In line with the input gathered from EU institutions and Member States, the Global Strategy shows that it is aware of these

²¹ Jan Techau, *The EU's New Global Strategy: Useful or Pointless?*, 1 July 2016, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=63994>

difficulties by addressing European capabilities, common funding and developing the defence industry, but it still fails to address all the obstacles fully.

First and foremost, if a stronger European 'hard power' capable of fulfilling its ambitions for strategic autonomy is to be built, it must have the capacity to act accordingly. The approach in the Global Strategy towards strengthening EU capabilities is focused chiefly on quality and efficiency, rather than on quantity. While the Strategy emphasises the importance of 'a sufficient level of expenditure for defence', it recognises that 'defence policy and spending remain national prerogatives'. Instead, the Strategy's philosophy is that 'deeper cooperation engenders interoperability, effectiveness, efficiency and trust: it **increases the output**'.

Together, Member States can do more with the same money. In this process of intensified cooperation, the Global Strategy identifies the **European Defence Agency (EDA)** as a key player that can provide support 'by strengthening the Capability Development Plan, acting as an interface between Member States and the Commission, and assisting Member States to develop the capabilities stemming from the political goals set out in this strategy'. The EUGS makes several proposals for increased defence output:

- Encouraging **strategic convergence** among Member States through a 'gradual synchronisation and mutual adaptation of national defence planning cycles and capability development practices'.
- Organising 'an annual coordinated **review process** at EU level to discuss Member States' military spending plans could instil greater coherence in defence planning and capability development'. Regular reviews of EDA benchmarks could create **positive peer pressure** among Member States.
- Improving **shared assessments** by investing in Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, including drones²², satellite communications, and autonomous access to space and permanent earth observation.
- Making sure Member States have all the **major equipment** needed to respond to external crises and keep Europe safe. This means having full-spectrum land, air, space and maritime capabilities, including strategic enablers.
- Increasing synergies between CSDP operations and missions, the European Border and Coast Guard, and EU agencies, working alongside each other to enhance border protection and maritime security.

Yet, despite such proposals, the EUGS remains **inherently 'global'** and remains within the limits of what is already coming up and what is already possible within the current structures. For example, the Strategy identifies

A hard power needs the capacity to act accordingly. The Global Strategy focuses on increasing the effectiveness of defence output through stronger cooperation.

The EDA is a key player in Member States' cooperation. The Global Strategy makes several proposals for increased defence cooperation:

Strategic convergence;

Coordinated reviews and positive peer pressure;

Shared assessments;

Having the right capabilities;

CSDP, border and maritime cooperation.

The Global Strategy remains inherently global and remains within the current limits.

²² Mentioned in the EUGS as Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS)

The Global Strategy reaffirms ambitions and emphasises processes under way but does not bring any new tools to the table.

The EUGS recognises the procedural, financial and political obstacles to further defence cooperation, but does not provide an answer.

The EUGS does leave the door open to further developments, making the follow-up even more important.

‘Union funds to support defence research and technologies and multinational cooperation, and full use of the European Defence Agency’s potential’ as ‘essential prerequisites for European security and defence efforts underpinned by a strong European defence industry’. This vision is in line with the Commission’s Defence Action Plan, which includes the Preparatory Action / EU-funded Defence Research Programme, and with the collective commitment to devoting 20 % of defence budget spending to Research & Technology, to which the Global Strategy also refers. Although the reaffirmation of this ambition is certainly helpful, it does not bring anything new in terms of tools or capacity. Similarly, the Global Strategy emphasises the importance of a sustainable, innovative and competitive European defence industry but does not make any new proposals. Although the importance of the defence industry, as stressed by many stakeholders, is reflected, this should be seen mainly as a reference to the work that is already under way, based on the 2009 directives on defence procurement, intra-EU defence transfers, and the European Defence Action Plan.

The Global Strategy has little to say in response to the requests from several stakeholders for a dedicated **financial instrument** to fund CSDP programmes. While it does recognise the need to address ‘procedural, financial and political obstacles which prevent the deployment of the Battlegroups, hamper force generation and reduce the effectiveness of CSDP military operations’, it does not offer a clear answer as to how these issues might be tackled. Similarly, the call to streamline institutional structures remains very general, although the goal of strengthening operational planning and conduct structures may leave the door open for something close to a European civil-military command structure. Yet, leaving the door open is not the same as giving direction, as the Global Strategy aims primarily at ‘making full use of the Lisbon Treaty’s potential’. The fact that, to date, this potential has not been fully exploited makes this a valid point in principle, but the Strategy fails to remove the obstacles to exploiting it. The Global Strategy in itself does not suggest or provide new ‘tools’ to match its high ambitions and remains within the limits of the current structures. However, it does clearly leave space for further development of such tools in the future. This makes the follow-up to the Global Strategy all the more important and we can expect it to be centred on exactly these questions of overcoming obstacles and increasing capacity and effectiveness.

4.4 EU-NATO cooperation

EU-NATO cooperation is given an important role in the Global Strategy, which sees the two as complementing each other rather than as rivals.

Some Member States had feared that a stronger and more autonomous EU would harm the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), of which 22 EU countries are members, and called for a strong role for NATO in the Strategy. These concerns are addressed, as NATO features strongly in the Global Strategy. The Strategy sees no inevitable conflict between the interests of the EU and NATO. Rather, it shares the European Parliament’s view that CSDP should reinforce the European pillar of NATO. While

'A more credible European defence is essential also for the sake of a healthy transatlantic partnership with the United States', says the Strategy.

acknowledging that 'NATO remains the primary framework for most Member States', the Strategy states that 'a more credible European defence is essential also for the sake of a healthy transatlantic partnership with the United States'. The view taken by the Strategy is compelling and is clearly in line with the increased EU-NATO cooperation seen over the past few years, of which the signing of the EU-NATO Joint Declaration at the Warsaw Summit was the most recent and perhaps the strongest proof. According to the Strategy, 'the EU will deepen its partnership with NATO through coordinated defence capability development, parallel and synchronised exercises, and mutually reinforcing actions to build the capacities of our partners, counter hybrid and cyber threats, and promote maritime security'. With the EU Global Strategy, the EU thus confirms once again that it has chosen a path towards a future where NATO and a stronger EU complement one another rather than competing against each other.

4.5 Implementation and White Book

The EU Global Strategy retains its 'global' dimension. This is why there have been calls for a follow-up White Book on defence. The Global Strategy's response is its commitment to a more concrete sectorial strategy on security and defence.

As stated before, while it has strong ambitions, the EU Global Strategy is inherently 'global', as reflected in the title. For this reason, the European Parliament, the Commission's special advisor for CSDP, and several Member States have called for a concrete follow-up to the Strategy in the form of a White Book on security and defence. In the words of the Dutch defence minister, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, the essential elements of such a document would be 'a clear level of ambition in line with the Strategy, a description of the capability shortfalls and a proposal for a follow-up mechanism to monitor the progress at the political level'. For Michel Barnier, the special advisor for CSDP, the purpose of a White Book would be to review and determine our level of ambition and the means for action in common defence. Although the term White Book or White Paper does not feature in the Global Strategy itself, the Strategy clearly responds to these demands by stating that 'a sectorial strategy, to be agreed by the Council, should further specify the civil-military level of ambition, tasks, requirements and capability priorities stemming from [the EUGS]'. This commitment is crucial, as it allows for a much deeper discussion on the current state and the desired future of European defence to an extent that the EU Global Strategy, with its comprehensive but global approach, has not been able to provide.

The implementation of the EUGS will be the subject of an annual reflection. The Strategy also provides for the option of a new strategy if needed at a later stage.

To ensure real follow-up, the Global Strategy will be reviewed annually in consultation with the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament, to assess progress with its implementation. The Global Strategy does not have a shelf life, after which a new strategy would have to be drafted, but it does leave open the door to a new process of strategic reflection whenever the EU and its Member States deem this necessary.

4.6 The EU will, should or could?

Where the Commission or the EEAS are concerned, the Global Strategy refers to what the EU 'will' do. This is a compilation of work that is expected or is under way.

Striking a delicate balance, the EU Global Strategy does not directly tell the Member States what to do, but creates a sense of urgency that clearly shows the only direction possible.

This allows the EU Global Strategy to be bold, ambitious and holistic while respecting the special role of Member States in security and defence cooperation.

The Strategy has been welcomed by both the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council. Mogherini will present a framework to follow up the Strategy in the autumn of 2016.

The EU Global Strategy is ambitious and largely lives up to the demands of the most important stakeholders. Yet, its exact status remains unclear. Is the Strategy merely a list of proposals? Does it set out what it believes the EU should do? Or does it even decide on what the EU will do?

An analysis of the tone of the Strategy reveals that it uses several different discourses. Where action by the European Commission or the External Action Service is concerned, the document refers to what the EU 'will' do to improve European security. For example, the EU 'will' systematically encourage cooperation between Member States and 'will' deepen cooperation with NATO. These parts of the Strategy often refer to proposals or plans that have already been decided on and are currently being developed or implemented. They are not intended to bring anything new to the table, but present on-going work in a wider context.

On proposals for increased defence cooperation in the future, the tone is naturally different. As foreign and defence policy remains a prerogative of the Member States, the Global Strategy has to strike a delicate balance when addressing what the EU as a whole, including the Member States, should do. Yet, the Strategy does not shirk from taking a bold and direct stand on its assessment of the EU's needs. It says the voluntary approach to defence cooperation 'must' be translated into real commitment, the EU 'must' develop the capacity for rapid response by tackling the relevant obstacles, and the EU 'must' strengthen its operational planning and conduct structures. The Strategy does not order the Member States to undertake action directly, but instead speaks from a sense of urgency that makes its proposals the only viable option: a more effective CSDP 'requires' Member States to enhance capacity to deploy, along with interoperability, as no single Member State can face the current challenges alone. The discourse followed by the Strategy is very effective, as it allows the broader picture to be examined, rather than looking only at the possible actions of EU institutions alone. It also instils a sense of urgency that renders greater ambition in defence cooperation the only viable option. Here, the Strategy manages to be bold, ambitious and holistic while simultaneously respecting the special role Member States play in European security and defence cooperation.

The follow-up to the Strategy will show whether the Member States act with the urgency indicated in the Global Strategy. EU leaders 'welcomed' the Strategy when it was presented on 28 June, leaving further deliberation to the High Representative, Federica Mogherini, the Commission and the Council. At their meeting on 18 July, EU foreign ministers welcomed the document and expressed their readiness to carry forward work in the implementation phase. Ms Mogherini intends to present a framework in the autumn of 2016, with a process and timelines, in order to chart a course towards implementing the vision set out in the Global Strategy.

5 Looking ahead

The EU Global Strategy reflects the fact that Europe needs a changed vision in a changed environment.

The Global Strategy captures the urgency of today's challenging environment and represents a major shift in European foreign policy thinking by emphasising hard power.

The Global Strategy is not afraid to turn to the Member States, which will have to match its ambition.

The Global Strategy restates the importance of strong EU-NATO cooperation and gives it a prominent place within the EU's strategic vision for security.

The EUGS focuses on increased output and formulating a coherent

The Member States tasked the High Representative in 2015 to draft a new European strategy on foreign and security policy because they had realised that the world had changed since 2003. To remain effective and consistent in its foreign policy, but above all to remain safe and secure, the EU needed a new vision for a changed environment. In the discussions that followed, it became clear that the Union could no longer afford to neglect its defence cooperation. Instead, the EU would have to be more ambitious than ever before.

The Global Strategy captures the urgency of the exchanges that led up to its publication and by and large addresses the priorities set by the different stakeholders. It represents a major shift in European foreign policy thinking, by emphasising the value of hard power along with soft power and it provides the EU with a principled, yet pragmatic, and realistic view of its environment and of Europe's role in it. While the Strategy is not built entirely around defence, hard power is certainly given unprecedented emphasis. The new vision underpinning the strategy is matched by the ambition needed for the EU to play an active role in this challenging and complex environment. As the lack of political will has been a key hindrance to further EU defence cooperation in the past, the Strategy does not shirk from stating the need for greater ambition. This is neatly summarised in the equation set out in the title: 'Shared Vision, Common Action = A Stronger Europe'. In this, it is helped by the general tone of the document. With its realist assessment, the Strategy creates a sense of urgency that makes more cooperation on security and defence the only viable option. While the EU institutions are willing to support this process wherever they can, the Strategy is not afraid to turn openly to the Member States, which will ultimately have to demonstrate this ambition as well.

The Global Strategy also reaffirms the importance of EU-NATO cooperation. The idea that 'a more credible European defence is essential also for the sake of a healthy transatlantic partnership with the United States' is in line with the priorities signalled by most stakeholders. In the context of the recent UK vote to leave the European Union, moreover, the commitment to good relations between the EU and NATO will be even more crucial in ensuring continued security on the continent, and in the Western world at large. Although the process of closer cooperation was already under way, symbolised above all by the joint declaration at the NATO Warsaw Summit in July 2016, it is very significant that the Global Strategy has been able to affirm the vitality of this relationship and give it a prominent place within the broader European strategic thinking.

When it comes to tools to match its increased ambition, the Global Strategy encounters natural limitations. The Strategy's main philosophy is to increase output through cooperation and to put on-going work together in one coherent vision. While it is not afraid to flag up existing obstacles, the Strategy is contained within the limits of the current framework and

vision. It struggles to address crucial obstacles.

struggles to provide solutions to all existing problems. Most importantly, the request for a specialised financial instrument for CSDP operations remains unanswered, leaving in place what has been a crucial obstacle to increased EU action in the past: the lack of common funding. Of course, the failure to give clear direction on such issues is also a consequence of the Strategy's inherently 'global' nature. In principle, the Strategy does not need to bring anything new to the table in itself. Rather, it should be seen as a catalyst for further development in the future. Another important aspect of the Global Strategy is not what it proposes, but the room it leaves for a strong follow-up.

The success of the Global Strategy will depend on its follow-up. It paves the way for a White Book on European security and defence and ensures regular implementation reviews.

No matter how coherent or ambitious, the success of the Strategy will depend on its actual implementation. While the Strategy itself cannot control this it does attempt to ensure that the follow-up will happen. First of all, the Strategy paves the way for a widely called for White Book on European security and defence or a similar 'sectorial strategy'. Having provided a vision of a strategically autonomous Europe that looks at the world with 'principled pragmatism', it will be for the follow-up document to address the nitty-gritty of the political, financial and other obstacles. In addition, the implementation of the Strategy will itself be reviewed on a regular basis, putting extra pressure on all relevant actors to work for a stronger Europe. The first signs of follow-up have been positive: at the Foreign Affairs Council of 18 July, the HR/VP stated her intention of presenting a framework with processes and timelines in the autumn of 2016 to take forward the realisation of the vision set out in the Global Strategy. Together with others, the European Parliament must ensure that the pace is kept up.

The first indications of follow-up have been positive.

Listening carefully to stakeholders around the European table, the Global Strategy has delivered in terms of coherence, boldness and ambition. Now, it will be up to the Member States, in cooperation with the EU institutions, to demonstrate a similar level of ambition, and drive the process forward.

It will now be up to the Member States to drive the process forward.

In this regard, the initial reactions and initiatives since the Global Strategy was published have been constructive. In particular, the [joint declaration by the Foreign Ministers of the Weimar Triangle](#) (France, Germany and Poland) on the Future of Europe, of 28 August 2016, states the need to rapidly implement the Global Strategy with a substantive follow-up strategy in the field of security and defence, with proposals including an annual 'European Security Council' meeting, making full use of the defence or crisis-related articles of the Treaty of Lisbon, or a European civilian and military planning and operational capacity. But translating words into deeds can be a long endeavour.