



Wilfried
Martens Centre
for European Studies

Good or Bad Neighbours

The Main European
Security Challenge

Salome Samadashvili





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Credits

Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies
Rue du Commerce 20
Brussels, BE - 1000

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About the author



About Salome Samadashvili



Ambassador Salome Samadashvili was the Head of Georgia's Mission to the EU and Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg from 2005 to 2013. After leaving the diplomatic service of Georgia, she joined the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies as a visiting fellow, following which she served as the Resident Governance Director for Libya at the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. Since returning to Georgia in 2015, she has re-entered Georgian domestic politics and will be one of the United National Movement's top candidates in the Georgian parliamentary elections in October 2016. She was a member of the Georgian Parliament in 2004–5.

Executive summary



The EU is facing internal as well as external challenges which have made the Union more susceptible to instability than ever before. The ‘state of the Union’ is not strong. With the Brexit decision, rising Euroscepticism in other EU member states, strengthened extreme left- and right-wing actors on the European political spectrum, new ‘hybrid warfare’ security threats, an assertive Russia, violent Islamist terrorism, the rise of Islamic State and declining engagement in European security from the US, Europe has to take bold and decisive action to secure its long-term interests. The EU’s Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy is set to pave the way for this much-needed change in the way the EU views its internal and external security. As the spillover effects of instability in the regions outside of the EU are taking a significant toll on the Union, this paper argues that rethinking the way it deals with its neighbourhood has to play a central part in the EU’s Global Strategy.

From its new role as a global actor, the EU must graduate to being a ‘geopolitical’ actor. History is putting this burden on the EU’s shoulders. The EU has to recognise that its policies, such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), go beyond the limited scope of technical cooperation or the project of economic integration. The new European strategy should boldly commit the EU to the transformative potential of the ENP as a geopolitical project. The EU’s new Global Strategy has to prioritise the EU’s role as a ‘stabiliser’ and security actor in its immediate neighbourhood, as the main sources of the EU’s internal challenges arise from the ring of instability around its borders.

We remember from history that Christian pacifism played a role in the barbarians’ victory over Rome. The current Western liberal order is also in danger of becoming vulnerable to threats posed by political systems which have no regard for universal values, such as human rights, and are willing to use brutal force—that is, Putin’s Russia and aggressive Islamist movements. Unless the West succeeds in making a case for the universality of the values underpinning its institutions and shows the capacity to defend those values, in the medium and long term the West could lose this battle. Europe’s borders are safest where they are shared with stable democracies. This is why the EU has to continue to invest in building stable democracies in the surrounding world. As a ‘postmodern Empire’, Europe has no better way to defend itself than by expanding the geographic reach of its ideological sphere of influence.



The EU's current ENP policy is focused on supporting democratic transformation and creating economic opportunities in its neighbourhood. This paper argues that without more emphasis on democratic state-building and security, the countries in the EU's neighbourhood will not have the chance to take advantage of the opportunities available through the ENP. Therefore, the new Global Strategy must place renewed emphasis on the EU's role as a security actor in the ENP countries. It must also emphasise that unless democracy support is accompanied by viable strategies for sustaining the functioning of state institutions, democracy promotion might backfire in the form of increased instability. In approaching this goal, the EU has to take a pragmatic, principled and creative approach.



Introduction



The EU is about to launch its new Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy for the European Union—the code name for an ambitious revamped foreign policy for the EU. Many historians have grown fond of drawing a comparison between the current crisis facing the EU and the declining period of the Roman Empire.¹ They remind us that, much like the EU today, Rome was both dependent on and resentful of foreigners, unwilling to spend its resources on warfare, and increasingly given to contemplation of the fruits of its long and unchallenged political and economic domination of the contemporary world. In a world which remains ‘Euro-centric’ in a cultural and ideological sense, it is also often mentioned that the Roman Empire, which suffered from internal weaknesses, was not undermined by a civilisation of higher standing, but rather by barbarians.

As the EU is about to review the way it deals with the outside world, it seems that re-reading Edward Gibbons’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* has become the order of the day.² What led to the gradual fall of the Roman Empire, according to Gibbons, was a combination of various factors. These ranged from the increasing unwillingness of the Roman citizens to take on the burdens of military duty and the ideological problems of the pacifism preached by Christianity, to the lack of political leadership. Thus, it is self-evident that any new strategy of the EU which aims to strengthen the Union’s global impact should deal with the political, ideological, financial and structural underpinnings of the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy.

An important piece of the puzzle in this policymaking exercise is the way in which the EU deals with its immediate neighbourhood, both to the east and to the south. If the EU cannot play a pivotal role in building security and democracy around its borders, it cannot possibly aspire to the role of a global actor. Many observers consider the recent migrant crisis, the string of terrorist attacks in Europe, the spillover effects of instability in Europe’s neighbourhood, Russia’s aggressions against Ukraine, and the political and economic implications of the uprisings known as the ‘Arab Spring’ in the EU’s southern neighbourhood as all having contributed to increasing the level of instability in the countries sharing land or sea borders with the EU. Unfinished democratic transformations, which have made the security environment in some cases much worse, have bred a feeling of instability and chaos, and the EU has been left to deal

¹ See the opening speech of the Canadian historian Margaret Macmillan at the 2016 Brussels Forum ‘A World Beyond Disorder’, 18 March 2016.

² Gibbons, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1997).



with the consequences. This makes it clear that the connection between the EU's external policies and its internal security has never been stronger.

The challenges facing Europe are manifold. The EU is struggling with the largest inflow of migrants since the end of the Second World War, caused by people fleeing instability in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In addition, the threat posed by terrorist movements supported by various non-state actors, such as Islamic State (IS), is no longer just a potential danger, but a daily concern for the majority of Europeans. Following the shift away from the EU's 'Russia-first' policy, which viewed the EU's policy towards countries like Ukraine and Georgia through the prism of its Russia policy, Russia has stepped up its efforts to undermine the EU in Eastern Europe. An assertive Russia is attempting to disrupt EU policies not only in what it considers its 'privileged sphere of influence'—the countries which once formed the USSR—but also more globally in the Middle East and beyond. Both the radical Islamist movement and Russia are challenging the EU ideologically and engaging in hybrid warfare strategies to achieve their goals. The EU's borders to the south and the east look neither secure nor prosperous. It seems that the declared goals of the EU's ENP, launched in 2003 as the EU's strategy for building stability, security and democracy at its borders, are further out of reach today than they were at its launch. The fact that the EU's neighbourhood, though more democratic in some places, is less secure today than it was some 13 years ago when the EU launched the ENP programme, clearly demonstrates that successful democratisation efforts should be accompanied by a strong component of security assistance.

One obvious reason that the countries in the EU's neighbourhood seem to fail to achieve either stability or prosperity is the challenges that they face in building strong state institutions that apply the rule of law, addressing serious security threats and advancing democracy, all at once. Looking around the EU's neighbourhood, especially towards the south, it is clear to see that when a democratic opening is not followed by at least a modestly successful attempt at state-building, the newly emerging potential democracies face the danger of turning into what Robert Cooper calls 'pre-modern states'. This, in its turn, makes the EU's neighbourhood and the EU itself increasingly vulnerable: pre-modern states have a tendency to spread chaos beyond their borders and into zones of stability as the state collapses and crime takes over.³

³ R. Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003), 66.



While the EU's transformative power has been successful as part of its enlargement policy, it seems that with the absence of the promise of membership, the EU finds it increasingly difficult to transform the countries in its neighbourhood into stable democracies. Thus the main challenge for the EU's Global Strategy, where it concerns neighbouring countries, is balancing the need to support democratisation with assistance in state-building and security.

In turn, the success of the EU's strategy in its neighbourhood is a cornerstone of the continued success of the European project and hence any new long-term global strategy. EU High Representative Federica Mogherini seemed to recognise that the need to produce a new global strategy for the EU was mainly motivated by developments in the EU's neighbourhood. She launched the process of reviewing the European Security Strategy (ESS) in June 2015, declaring that the 'security situation in the EU's neighbourhood has deteriorated significantly'.⁴ The hard lessons we have learned from history, not from the Roman Empire but from the much nearer past, that is, the First and Second World Wars of the twentieth century, which defined modern European history, are clear. The spillover effects of increased chaos in the neighbourhood have a tendency to lead to Continental disasters. In the modern world, where wars have become hybrid and no longer take a conventional form, but rather involve terrorism and information and economic warfare, the threat of such spillover effects is more acute than ever. Building a wall around Europe to prevent them is neither a viable, nor a realistic, option. In the increasingly globalised economic and information space, defensive walls are difficult and often impossible to construct. While the recent string of terrorist attacks and migrant flows might have drawn Europe's attention to strengthening its borders and internal security, it is clear that if the situation in Europe's eastern and southern neighbourhood continues to deteriorate, Europe will find itself becoming increasingly vulnerable. No wall will be tall enough and no Frontex⁵ strong enough to protect Europe from the potential spillover effects of an increasingly authoritarian and chaotic Russia, engaged in warfare with its neighbours, or the MENA region going up in the flames of civil war, and ethnic and sectarian strife. The ongoing armed confrontation between Ukraine and Russia in eastern Ukraine has considerably destabilised the EU's eastern flank, with thousands of Ukrainian refugees fleeing to Europe.⁶ As disappointment with yet another Ukrain-

⁴ European External Action Service, 'HRVP / Head of the Agency Report Ahead of the June 2015 EC.'

⁵ Frontex is the EU agency which promotes, coordinates and develops European border management in line with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

⁶ See European Commission, 'Report of the Fourth EASO Consultative Forum Plenary Meeting, 11 & 12 December 2014', December 2014.



ian government is increasing, even more Ukrainians might start seeking opportunities outside of their country. Russia itself, which is in economic decline due to plummeting oil prices and sanctions, and is operating under the increasingly authoritarian rule of President Putin, is fearful of the new chaos which might be the inevitable result of a transition to a post-Putin era. This could result in Russia becoming a major new source of people seeking refugee status in Europe.

With the conflicting sectarian and economic interests in the Muslim world; divisions along tribal, ethnic and linguistic lines; various economically powerful players all pursuing their objectives by means of ‘proxy’ wars; and fragmented, often poorly coordinated Western intervention, the EU’s southern neighbourhood looks like an ocean of instability. As the youth of Tunisia, Morocco and other MENA countries seek opportunities which they do not have in their own countries, they will inevitably look to Europe as their preferred destination, where many already have strong family, cultural and economic ties. Thus, the source of the security crisis has to be addressed at its root—in the unstable countries surrounding the EU to the east and the south—and better solutions must be found to bring stability and prosperity to these societies. While the creation of economic opportunities is the key to finding sustainable solutions for the well-being of the citizens in the ENP countries, it is clear that such economic growth cannot be generated in the absence of the necessary security arrangements and the stability of the political process.

Finding a way to address the two challenges—making countries in the EU’s neighbourhood more democratic and more secure—will be the key to any new European global strategy. The fact that the two do not always go hand in hand does not make the task any less complicated or cumbersome.

Offering recommendations on how to find the right balance, how to craft cooperation strategies in response to the difficulties facing the countries in transition in the EU’s eastern and southern neighbourhoods, and where the stronger role for the EU, as the security provider, should be, is the main aim of this paper. It will assess the EU’s current foreign policy framework with respect to its neighbouring countries, review the main challenges which should be addressed through the new Global Strategy where the neighbourhood is concerned and offer some recommendations on how the EU can address these challenges more effectively.



**How has
the EU handled
its security and
foreign policy
and dealt with
its neighbours
so far?**



European Security Policy

The EU as a global actor on the international stage has gone through several important transformative stages. Initially, the EU did not aspire to have a common foreign policy and failed to develop one. As the EU grew in size and geographic reach, the gap between its relative economic weight on the world stage and the absence of a policy to deal with the rest of the globe was an increasingly obvious handicap. The ESS, adopted by the European Council on 12–13 December 2003,⁷ was the first successful step in developing a common vision among the member states regarding the way the EU dealt with the outside world. It provided the conceptual framework for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, including what would later become the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Titled *A Secure Europe in a Better World*, the ESS was drafted as a brief but comprehensive document, which for the first time analysed and defined the EU's security environment, identifying key security challenges and the subsequent political implications for the EU: terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure and organised crime. The ESS also called for preventative engagement to avoid new conflicts or crises. Building security, by helping the EU's neighbours to construct more stable and prosperous countries (for example, in the Western Balkans, Southern Caucasus and the Mediterranean), was prioritised, as was the goal of strengthening the international rules-based order through effectively engaging with other multinational organisations and global actors. The ESS explicitly acknowledged the interdependence of various global security challenges, by linking security and development issues, and highlighting the possible interplay between key threats. Finally, the ESS addressed the political implications of the new security environment. The conclusion reaffirmed that these challenges also posed opportunities for the EU to become more active and more capable in the pursuit of a safer, more unified world.⁸

⁷ European External Action Service, *European Security Strategy* (Brussels, 2003).

⁸ Ibid.



The 2008 assessment of the implementation of the ESS recognised the progress made and warned of the challenges to come. It concluded that five years on from the adoption of the ESS, the EU remained an anchor of stability and had created a strong framework for relations with partners to the south and east, with renewed engagement through policies such as the Union for the Mediterranean and the Eastern Partnership. Since 2003, the EU has become more active in addressing crisis and conflict, in places ranging from Afghanistan to Georgia. Yet, the report also admitted that, 20 years after the Cold War, Europe faced increasingly complex threats and challenges, highlighting the conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere in the neighbourhood. This assertion is correct if one looks at the current migrant crisis facing the EU, with the migrants' place of origin being the EU's 'wider neighbourhood'.

State failure was mentioned as one of the major problems affecting the EU's security, as it leads to crime, illegal immigration and piracy. Terrorism and organised crime—the side effects of a weak state—are often mentioned as the major outstanding problems. The report highlighted the maturity and growth of the EU's CSDP, which had deployed over 20 missions in response to crises, including in the EU's neighbourhood. The ESS implementation report also highlighted that to ensure European security and meet the expectations of its citizens the EU must be ready to shape events by being more proactive. The report stated that despite its achievements so far, implementation of the ESS remained a work in progress and there was a need to continue defining what it meant in order for it to become more strategic, effective and visible around the world.⁹

However, the report does not mention what is obvious to an observer of the EU's foreign-policymaking process over the 13 years since the ESS was launched—the ongoing differences of opinion between the member states on the priorities of the EU's policy in terms of geography, which is an endemic problem for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

This challenge continues to weaken the EU's global role even though the institutional framework for dealing with the global challenges outlined in the 2003 document has evolved over the past 13 years. The creation in 2010 of both the EU's External Action Service and the double-headed position of the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who is also a Vice-President of the European Commission and official Chair of the Council of the EU's foreign ministers, was the culmination of the insti-

⁹ Council of the EU, 'Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy—Providing Security in a Changing World', S401/08 (Brussels, 2008).



tutional development. Thus, as the EU is tackling the redefinition of its global challenges, its institutional capacity to design and implement an effective strategy for dealing with them has been substantially upgraded.

European Neighbourhood Policy

Dealing with the neighbours of the EU, both to the east and to the south, has been an important factor in the EU's foreign policy since 2003. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is a key part of the EU's foreign policy. The creation of the ENP was also the first serious declaration of the EU's commitment to and desire to play a role in promoting democracy in its immediate neighbourhood.

The ENP's main assumption is that more prosperous and democratic societies are also more stable and secure. Therefore the ENP's main goal is to strengthen democratic institutions and ensure accountable governance, while extending the opportunity for economic growth and development to the countries in its neighbourhood. However, more democracy does not necessarily mean more stability or security in the absence of functioning state institutions capable of ensuring the legitimate use of force, such as in controlling state borders or carrying out other law enforcement functions. This weak link between the need to support democratisation while retaining functional law-enforcement and military capacity capable of addressing 'hard security' challenges has not been sufficiently addressed by the ENP.

However this is not the only weakness of the ENP. From the outset, the ENP has faced a myriad of criticisms from both ENP countries and EU member states. France, Spain and other southern EU member states have lobbied for more active engagement in the south, while Germany and the Central and Eastern European states have lobbied for the east. For the ENP countries themselves, the policy is too broad and does not differentiate between the states, which have vastly different political and economic systems.

At the review of the ENP in 2010–11, the EU introduced the more-for-more principle: the idea that the EU will develop stronger partnerships and offer greater incentives to those countries that make more



progress towards democratic reforms. Yet another review presented in November 2015 highlighted that as the EU's own stability is built on democracy, human rights, the rule of law and economic openness, the new ENP would take stabilisation through promotion of the EU's universal values as its main political priority, on the assumption that one reinforces the other. At the same time, the document highlighted the need for greater differentiation between the different ENP countries and greater mutual ownership, recognising that not all partners aspire to EU rules and standards, and reflecting the wishes of each country concerning the nature and focus of its partnership with the EU. The renewed ENP strategy stressed the need to search for more effective ways to promote democratic, accountable and good governance, as well as justice reform, where there is a shared commitment to the rule of law and fundamental rights. Given the challenges presented by the developments in several ENP countries, and perhaps also in recognition of a prior lack of emphasis, security was identified as an important new area of cooperation in the ENP review.

In recognising the need to assist the partners in the areas of state-building and security, there will be a new focus in the EU's work with partners on security sector reform, conflict prevention, counter-terrorism and anti-radicalisation policies, in full compliance with international human rights law. Safe and legal mobility, and tackling irregular migration, human trafficking and smuggling are also priorities. The new ENP as presented in 2015 will seek to deploy the available instruments and resources in a more coherent and flexible manner.¹⁰

An assessment of the ENP in the wake of producing the new Global Strategy for the EU's foreign and security policy clearly showed that the record of the ENP as the policy tool for pursuing the EU's objectives in its neighbourhood was mixed in terms of success. Many challenges remain and they need to be addressed in the innovative, more flexible and at the same time bolder ways that will be revealed in the main policy document on global strategy which the EU unveiled in June 2016.

¹⁰ European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy*, Communication, JOIN (2015) 50 final (18 November 2015).



**The main
challenges to
the EU's Global
Strategy in
the European
neighbourhood**



Democratic recession

The EU's approach to foreign policy has traditionally claimed to be 'values driven', and this was once again reaffirmed in the Lisbon Treaty and is highlighted in EU documents, such as the renewed strategy for the ENP.

Some analysts argue that currently the EU is in no shape to promote its values beyond its current borders. They contend that the EU is finding it increasingly difficult both to fight external security threats within its borders and to counter the ideological assault on democratic and liberal values from extremist groups and some mainstream political players within the EU—on both the far right and the far left. However, I would argue that pursuing the promotion of its values in an external policy remains fundamentally important for the EU, not per se out of humanitarian or altruistic reasons, but out of sheer pragmatism. Much as Christian pacifism may have contributed to the fall of Rome to the barbarians, the Western liberal order risks becoming even more vulnerable to the threats posed to it by Putin's Russia and aggressive Islamist movements unless it succeeds in making a case for the universality of the values underpinning Western institutions. Europe's borders are safest where they are shared with stable democracies. Therefore in order to make the rest of its borders secure, the EU must continue to invest in building stable democracies in the surrounding world. As a postmodern Empire, Europe has no better way to defend itself than by expanding its ideological influence—that is, by supporting democracies in its neighbourhood: '... the wider the postmodern network can be extended, the less risk there will be from neighbours and the more resources to define the community without having to become excessively militarised.'¹¹

¹¹ R. Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations*, 78.



In a sense, the more the EU invests in building up secure democracies at its borders, the less it will have to spend on defensive capacities, such as enhanced border reinforcement, internal security and so on. This of course does not mean neglecting the needs of European defence—just the opposite. As is argued below, one of the main reasons that the EU is facing the current crisis is its unwillingness to recognise that it has to invest more in security and defence policy and develop new toolkits in response to the changing security environment. The point is to find the right balance between the need to reinforce internal security and the need to continue ‘values-based’ engagement with the rest of the world, especially in the EU’s neighbourhood. While the Global Strategy will most probably continue to pursue the values-based approach for EU foreign policy, coupled with greater investment in security, the question is, to what extent will it provide innovative solutions to achieve greater efficiency in pursuing what some commentators have called ‘interest-driven values’? ‘... [T]he Global Strategy can offer added-value in the mid-range between macroabstract principles and quotidian decision-making, if it does not limit itself to generic principles. And it is precisely in this mid-range that the EU needs greater clarity and precision in how to advance what might be termed interest-driven values.’¹²

A legitimate claim that forms part of the ideological superiority of modern liberal democracies, and hence the hegemony of Europe, is their success in building prosperity and security for societies governed in a democratic way. With the collapse of the USSR, the West won the major ideological rivalry of the twentieth century. The idea that there are alternative political and economic models to the Western liberal democratic one was discredited by the failure of the Communist economic model and subsequent decline and ruin of the Marxist–Leninist ideology. In the early 1990s, it was assumed that former constituent parts of the USSR, Russia and its satellite states in Central and Eastern Europe included, would all gradually transition into modern democracies. However, looking at the world today, it is obvious that these forecasts were too optimistic. A large majority of the former Warsaw Pact countries are now secure democracies and integrated into the Western political, defence and economic structures, such as NATO and the EU. However, with the exception of the three Baltic countries, which have already become members of the EU and NATO, democracy in the countries of the former USSR, Russia included, has been in decline over the course of the last decade.

¹² R. Youngs, ‘Balancing Interests and Values’, in European Union Institute for Security Studies and European Union Global Strategy (eds.), *Towards the EU Global Strategy—Consulting the Experts* (Paris, 2016), 13–14.



The picture is not more optimistic when looking at the countries in the EU's southern neighbourhood. The hopes harboured by many in the post-Arab Spring world regarding the advancement of democracy have been shattered by the chaos descending on post-Gaddafi Libya, the return of autocratic rule to Egypt and the ongoing civil war in Syria. While there might be a number of factors which have led to what Larry Diamond has called 'democratic recession' in the world,¹³ it seems that the rapid breakdown of state institutions, the subsequent deterioration of the standard of living and the inability of democratic governments to deliver 'public goods' have played a significant role in stalling the advancement of democracy. In places such as Russia, the relatively democratic rule of the pre-Putin era is often associated with chaos, instability and economic decline. Likewise, Libya's ongoing civil confrontation has led to a decline in living standards, as well as a rapidly deteriorating security environment. Two years on from the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine, which returned the country to a pro-European course, the much-needed reforms are still failing to deliver an improved standard of living for the majority of its citizens, leading to rapid disillusionment with the political class. Corruption within the pro-European government in Moldova is also undermining public trust in a better future for the country. The story of democratic transformation in the neighbourhood of the EU today is so unpromising that Georgia might have the best shot at success, despite the staunchly pro-Western political force led by former President Mikhail Saakashvili losing out in the 2012 elections to the opposition coalition led by the Russian-made oligarch, Bidzina Ivanishvili. Georgia could yet set an example of how to carry out a peaceful, democratic change of government in the region. Ivanishvili's government lost the opportunity to create a precedent for a successful political handover when it decided to jail or exile the most influential members of Saakashvili's party. However, if the already vastly unpopular Georgian Dream coalition is voted out in free and fair democratic elections in October 2016, Georgia will have successfully achieved a step forward in the consolidation of its democracy. Georgia's story might hold some useful lessons for the new EU Global Strategy with regard to its neighbours, as discussed later in greater detail.

State-building and democratisation challenges

¹³ L. Diamond, 'Facing up to the Democratic Recession', *Journal of Democracy* 26/1 (2015), 144.



As a ‘transformative’ power, the EU has a number of tools at its disposal to aid the achievement of its goal of helping to create peaceful, rules-based and prosperous democracies in third countries. The EU’s approach to democracy promotion takes three directions. In its ‘bottom-up’ approach, the EU tries to promote democracy in third countries by creating ‘linkages’ with societies, that is, by supporting civil society actors, a free media and so on. In its ‘top-down’ approach the EU tries to induce democracy through political conditionality, by attempting to force political elites to implement democratic reforms; this is known as the leverage model. Finally, in the ‘governance’ model approach to promoting democracy, the EU tries to introduce democratic elements to the governance of third countries by supporting the administration of specific sectors.¹⁴

It is clear that the EU’s success in promoting democracy in its neighbourhood depends on finding tailor-made solutions for each ENP country, by combining the policies from the three models that are best suited to the domestic and international context of each country.

The most successful model of democracy promotion so far has been conditionality, in which the EU’s enlargement policy has provided a very strong inducement by generating a clear path towards membership. Enlargement has also successfully been used to encourage democracy promotion in the EU’s linkage model. After all, the most important partners of the EU in the Central and Eastern European candidate countries were the citizens, who overwhelmingly supported the goal of EU membership.¹⁵ In the ENP countries, the landscape for the EU’s efforts to promote democracy is more complicated. In some of the Eastern Partnership countries, the majority of the citizens might be willing partners of the EU, but the absence of a membership prospect significantly weakens the EU’s leverage. Russia’s attempt to undermine support for the EU through its propaganda operations is also often a significant challenge to the EU’s influence.

In the EU’s southern neighbourhood, where the framework of cooperation between the EU and its neighbours is often even feebler, the leverage is even weaker. Add in the cultural and ideological debate about the compatibility of Islam with modern democratic values, and the picture becomes even more complicated.

¹⁴ S. Lavenex and F. Schimmelfennig, *EU Democracy Promotion in the Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?* (Lucerne: University of Lucerne, 2011).

¹⁵ European Commission, ‘Central and Eastern European Barometer No. 6, 1996’, last updated 1 February 2012. Over 90% of those polled supported EU membership.



The success of any modern democracy rests on three pillars: the state, the rule of law and democratic accountability.¹⁶ The role of the state in both an authoritarian and a democratic government is to deliver public goods, such as the ability to defend state borders, collect taxes, secure the enforcement of the law in an impartial manner, provide basic infrastructure and so on. A failure to deliver these public goods delegitimises the government, whether it is democratically elected or not. This is why a state's failure to provide basic security arrangements, eradicate corruption, and address other policy challenges in a substantive and meaningful way can cause irreparable damage to the democratic process. Assessing the relative successes and failures of the countries in the EU neighbourhood, it is clear that where a government with democratic legitimacy can deliver public goods, democracy has a better shot at success.

As the MENA region of Europe's southern neighbourhood has become a byword for instability and disappointed expectations, we have to remember that the main reason for this is related to the inability of the local governments, following the downfall of the *ancien régime*, to construct even an embryonic version of functioning state institutions and a lack of meaningful international assistance in addressing this problem. The results are staggering: in Syria alone some 1,200 armed groups are involved in the fighting. In Libya more than 1,700 rival clans, criminal gangs, tribal factions and Islamist militias are competing for power.¹⁷ But with the rise of IS the distinction between non-state and state actors has become blurred. By proclaiming the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate, conquering and defending territory, and installing state-like institutions, IS gives the impression of being a state. At the same time, in many ways IS acts as a non-state actor, particularly in its armed struggle. IS can be described as a mixture of a state and non-state actor, or as a 'hybrid state'.¹⁸ The creation of IS was in many ways a result of the shortcomings of Western policies. Following the regime changes in the MENA region, the West failed to commit the necessary assistance, either in the form of security mechanisms or state-building, to avoid the creation of a complete authority vacuum in places such as Libya, which has fallen into chaos. As a result, what the region suffers from is less a problem of provenance than a failure of governance. Under the old order, one-man, one-party or one-family regimes ruled by co-optation and coercion. Mostly they relied on a social contract which provided public goods in return for public loyalty. That contract was underwritten by coercive measures that either

¹⁶ F. Fukuyama 'Why is Democracy Performing So Poorly?', *Journal of Democracy* 26/1 (2015), 12.

¹⁷ M. Drent, R. Hendriks and D. Zandee, *New Threats, New NATO and EU Responses*, Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations (The Hague, 2015), 16.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*



prevented dissent from arising or protected regimes when it arose.¹⁹ Today, either IS or one of the many paramilitary groups steps in as the sole provider of a new social contract in places where there is a total meltdown of state structures.

The exact sequence of how states advance state-building and democracy is a puzzle for political scientists. In patrimonial regimes state institutions lack democratic attributes, such as accountability, transparency and public oversight. Despite this, in many restrictive political systems, state institutions still manage to perform the tasks assigned to them. For example, the state agencies responsible for law enforcement might act with impunity, be non-transparent and engage in practices which involve the violation of human rights. At the same time, however, they are capable of exercising the power to enforce law and order, secure the border and carry out the other functions for which law-enforcement agencies are responsible. Democratic change which brings down a patrimonial regime causes a collapse of the power vertical and thus the centrally integrated state institutions collapse. The quicker the demise of the governing regime and the more restrictive its nature, the greater the vacuum that is left in state authority in the months following the democratic opening. The building of democratic state institutions cannot happen overnight and so societies are left facing a power vacuum, with the result that they have even fewer public goods than under a patrimonial regime. The democratic process is also more deliberate and takes a longer time to deliver results, which exposes the newly emerging democracies to the threat of disappointment. Therefore, the challenge of introducing institutions such as democratic elections, transparency and accountability, while maintaining the functionality of the state, is the dilemma of newly emerging democracies everywhere. The more diverse the society undergoing democratisation, the greater the challenge, as ethnic strife and other confrontations within the society make the transition even more difficult.

As many ENP countries face this challenge, if the EU wants to succeed in promoting democratic stability in its neighbourhood, its approach to the assistance provided to ENP countries with regard to the democratisation process must have the right mixture of programmes based on the linkage approach to democracy promotion—that is, supporting the non-governmental actors—and the leverage and governance models—that is, supporting the democratic state-building exercise. History has demonstrated that where the EU has chosen to close its eyes to the democratic shortcomings of a particular government in the ENP countries

¹⁹ A. Bubalo, in European Union Institute for Security Studies and European Union (eds.), *Towards the EU Global Strategy—Consulting the Experts* (Paris, 2016), 71–2.



for the benefit of sustained stability, the failure of the regime to create public goods has led to both social instability and the strengthening of alternative political actors, as happened with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. In Ukraine, the failure of the government under President Yanukovich's regime led to political instability. As the public's demand for reforms and a responsive government seems to be more advanced than the ability of the current Ukrainian government to deliver public goods, Ukraine might face another wave of instability in the coming months, with demands for early elections, if not another Maidan revolution.

Bearing in mind the outcome of the April 2016 referendum in the Netherlands, which rejected the ratification of the EU–Ukraine Association Agreement, it is clear that the current climate in Europe makes it highly unlikely that the EU will place any new countries under the umbrella of enlargement beyond those currently in the queue—the Balkans. In the EU's southern neighbourhood, membership could never be an option due to geography. Considering that the comprehensive framework of reforms and democratisation, as provided to prospective members, is absent, the EU's Global Strategy will have to rely most heavily on the governance model of democratisation to address the challenges facing the countries in the ENP region. It should declare the EU's readiness to assist the countries in its neighbourhood to build and reform state institutions, sharing the European experience with its partner countries and committing the necessary resources. This would send the important message to both the governments and the citizens in the ENP countries that the EU's 'pragmatic rationalism' does not mean abandoning its intention to strengthen democracy in the EU's neighbourhood.

In a sense, the EU's strategy for neighbouring countries has to aspire to do both: support state-building and strengthen democracy simultaneously. The governance model would imply developing a framework of cooperation with the governments in place regarding specific areas for reform and cooperation, while at the same time engaging in the process of introducing strong elements of democratic governance. By concentrating on areas such as anti-corruption reforms, reforms of the state and internal security structures, border controls, and law and justice, the EU can both strengthen the fragile state institutions in its neighbouring countries and introduce important democratic safeguards to the system of state administration.

The EU's instruments



for supporting state-building

From its role in the Western Balkans the EU has significant experience to draw on in its attempts to help neighbouring countries rebuild functioning state institutions. After the staggering failure of both the US and the EU to prevent a major ethnic conflict and the massacres that claimed the lives of 140,000 people, the EU has become a major stabilising actor in this region. It has played a central role in both reconciling the parties to the conflict, as well as implementing missions which have been instrumental in building up functioning state institutions. Even in the absence of the prospect of membership, the EU will be able to apply the lessons learned from its Western Balkan experience in order to assist the societies and governments in neighbouring countries to consolidate state and democratic institutions. The new EU Global Strategy must clearly declare its commitment to this goal and step up to the challenge of taking on the responsibility. It should demonstrate the EU's willingness to deploy the necessary resources, using the flexible framework offered by the EU's capacity to intervene through CSDP missions. The EU has to be more proactive in its approach to using the CSDP framework to assist ENP countries in state-building. It must broaden the scope of the policy areas where it will be used as the preferred mode of intervention.

It is clear that the commitment of the partner country's government is important to the success of CSDP missions in the areas of police reforms (such as the request of the current Ukrainian government) or the rule of law (e.g. Georgia's EUJUST THEMIS) and other public sector reform initiatives. However, through its governance and linkage models for democracy promotion, the EU can use the CSDP framework of cooperation with the ENP countries with greater success and to have a larger impact. Where the government is not amenable to cooperating with a CSDP mission attempting to introduce democratic governance elements, the positive potential of the EU's intervention can be promoted vis-à-vis the society by supporting its civil actors. The CSDP is a good tool, because cooperation under its framework that aims to create public goods, thereby contributing to increasing the popularity of the incumbent regime or addressing the needs of a dysfunctional state apparatus, can be successful, even in the ENP countries with the least liberal governments.



The idea of ‘joint ownership’ is an important part of the EU’s approach to cooperation with third countries. Not all ENP countries have the same interest in advancing democracy. Among the Eastern Partnership countries it is clear that in Belarus and Azerbaijan the EU must deal with less willing counterparts in government than in the other four states. To the south, Tunisia and Morocco might hold some promise of democratisation, while the current Egyptian government is clearly not interested in democratic reforms. At present, Libya has no functioning government that the EU can engage with. Nevertheless, the space for engagement in some ENP countries is larger than ever before and the EU must take advantage of this.

Unlike real empires, postmodern, values-driven ones cannot build democracy or the rule of law against the will of the citizens or their government. However, through a creative approach to finding areas of common interest, the EU can play a pivotal role in introducing a democratic culture and helping to build the state in the countries of its neighbourhood. The EU could also proactively offer the ENP countries a ‘menu’ of CSDP missions, based on its own assessment of their needs, as its preferred mode of engagement. Such menus could include a wide variety of areas of cooperation, ranging from human rights, democracy, the rule of law, security reform and intelligence, to making it easier for people from these countries to study and work legally in the EU, opening up access to the EU markets and benefiting from the prospects of economic cooperation. Balancing the carrot and stick approaches, the EU’s Global Strategy should make certain that while joint ownership of the cooperation initiatives is important, the EU continues to have a values-based approach to working with its neighbours and to offer more to those who are committed to reforms and capacity-building.

The European Commission’s April 2015 Communication *Capacity Building in Support of Security and Development—Enabling Partners to Prevent and Manage Crises* outlined several important proposals for upgrading the EU’s approach to how it carries out programming related to capacity-building and crisis management. Among them were proposals for a review of the legislative EU framework, which would introduce greater flexibility and coherence for the various financial instruments that can support the EU’s activities in this area. Another communication called for the establishment of a facility linking peace, security and development in the framework of one or more existing instruments.²⁰ The EU’s new Global Strategy should demonstrate the political will to move forward with these proposals. To succeed, the new Global Strategy

²⁰ European Commission, *Capacity Building in Support of Security and Development—Enabling Partners to Prevent and Manage Crises*, Communication, JOIN (2015) 17 final (28 April 2015).



will require even more integration between the development and foreign policy goals pursued by the EU, something also advocated by the aforementioned communication. This in turn, will require stronger integration of the efforts of the development policies of the European Commission and the EU member states. It will also demand better coordination between the EU's policies and those of other important international development actors, such as the international financial institutions and the UN agencies.

However, any efforts made by the EU's new Global Strategy in either state-building or democracy promotion will not bear fruit unless the EU finds a new, forceful and effective way to strengthen the security environment of the countries in its neighbourhood.

The challenge of building security in the EU's neighbourhood

The wave of peaceful revolutions in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that brought down the Communist dictatorships was the beginning of a new chapter in European history. The European countries that were already members of the EU and NATO were not easily persuaded that Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic should be extended membership of either organisation. It took considerable political brinkmanship, chiefly from the other side of the Atlantic, to convince 'the old Europeans', that is, the existing members of the then much-smaller EU and NATO, to let the newcomers in. Many populists in Europe today argue that this was a fundamental mistake. A number of European citizens, daunted by the recent economic and security challenges, have echoed these sentiments, even though the EU's enlargement to the East has been arguably its greatest success, vindicating the European project and the Union's role as a global actor. However, looking back at history, we have to remember that the world has changed, and the reality facing the Eastern European states joining the EU was vastly different in terms of the security environment from the one facing the EU's neighbours either in Eastern Europe or in the MENA region today.



After the end of the Second World War and into the 1990s the US was both deeply engaged in and committed to the security of Europe. The US championed the early admission of the Central and Eastern European countries to NATO, believing that this was a crucial step in building a Europe 'whole and free'. While the new democracies had to meet certain standards of democratic reform in order to be admitted to NATO, once a member, they could calmly proceed with the rest of the reforms necessary for building a modern European state. Accession to NATO also prevented ethnic conflicts and strife from erupting, not just in the Balkans, but in also other former socialist countries that share the colourful mosaic of mixed ethnicity 'souvenir' from the First and Second World Wars. Such a security umbrella is not available today to countries such as Georgia or Ukraine, which have the promise of NATO membership but not an actual path to it in the form of a Membership Action Plan.

The countries which have attempted to emerge as democracies in the most recent 'waves of democratisation' (the string of Colour Revolutions in the 2000s and the Arab Spring in 2011) place much greater demands on the EU in terms of its performance as a security actor. These countries cannot look elsewhere for assistance. NATO is not a viable option for many of them, due to political, geographical or other factors. Russia has blocked any meaningful decision of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe that would use the potential of this organisation to strengthen the security of countries such as Ukraine or Georgia. Furthermore, the UN operations implemented in the MENA region might play an important role in mitigating the immediate crisis at hand, but they are much less suitable for the long-term, strategic commitment which is required to build sustainable security.

In the meantime, it is clear that the US will stay relatively disengaged from the European scene for the foreseeable future. It seems that the wave which the EU has been riding since the end of the Second World War, with the US being to a large extent the security provider for the EU, has come to an end. It would not be surprising if the Americans felt that Europe, which was shattered to pieces by the violent first part of the twentieth century, is now strong enough politically and economically to take care of its own security needs. As the memories of the horrors of the Second World War fade, American taxpayers seem to be less and less interested in paying for the safety of Europeans and feel that a greater share of the European budget should be spent on European defence and security needs, rather than on the universal health-care systems boasted by many European countries, which remain a subject of envy on the other side of the Atlantic. The economic interests of the US also look different compared to the last century, as technological advances



have made the US a much more self-sufficient economy. As the US no longer perceives Russia as its main security threat and is more concerned about containing China's influence over the rest of Asia, Europe will have to become reconciled with the reality that it must play the leading role in building security on both its eastern and southern flanks. While strategic cooperation between the EU and the US will continue in the face of the threat of terrorism and violent extremism from the MENA region, the EU will have to take the lion's share of responsibility in addressing the security concerns on its southern borders.

The first telling sign that the EU is recognising the new reality was the call of French President François Hollande for Union solidarity following the 13 November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, in which he invoked the so-called mutual assistance clause of the treaties for the first time in the history of the EU. Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union calls on member states to assist each other against armed aggression by 'all the means in their power'. It came as a surprise that Hollande preferred to refer to the EU's collective defence clause, long deemed irrelevant, rather than to Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. His decision amounted to a call to arms for Europe and could be seen as yet another demonstration of French 'Continentalism'. It seems that the new reality that Europe has to be responsible for its own security is slowly setting in. As the newly appointed Special Adviser to the President of the Commission on European Defence and Security, Michel Barnier has stated that the French president's decision adds a new political dimension to security discussions in Europe, from the Baltics to Cyprus. It must now revitalise European political solidarity and make collective security the cornerstone of the EU's adaptation to an increasingly threatening international landscape. Defence matters, and so does internal security. The EU is now facing a fundamental strategic shift: whether through acts of terrorism or hybrid threats, there is an inseparable nexus between external and internal security. Safety at home is the flipside of security and even military engagement abroad.²¹

The EU Global Strategy has to pave the way for upgrading the strategy, means and capabilities of the EU defence policy—the EU's strategic defence review—by clearly articulating the policy's goals in the new hybrid-warfare security environment. As the EU moves forward with a policy review for collective security, thinking about the ways in which to strengthen the EU's defence capabilities, while avoiding an overlap with NATO functions, will be one of the biggest challenges. As NATO is devoting more resources to strengthening its eastern flanks in the face of an increasingly assertive Russia, the danger is that the new EU defence

²¹ European Political Strategy Centre, 'From Mutual Assistance to Collective Security, Article 42(7) TEU: Orchestrating Our Response to New Threats', EPSC Strategic Notes 10 (Brussels, 22 December 2015).



strategy will give more of its attention to the southern neighbourhood. This would be a mistake. The EU's eastern neighbours will not succeed in implementing the reforms required by the ENP without a strengthened framework of cooperation in the security field. Many of them still face 'frozen' conflicts, which could melt very quickly. At times these countries' security can be indirectly strengthened by other EU policies, such as the sanctions against Russia (see Box "Policy on sanctions", pg 36). For the reasons outlined above, the capacity of the other security actors in Europe, such as NATO or the OSCE, to implement activities and missions which are fundamentally important for maintaining the security of the Eastern Partners, is limited. A case in point is Georgia, where attempts by the Georgian government prior to the 2008 Russo-Georgian War to internationalise the peacekeeping and negotiating formats failed. Russia blocked any such attempts both through the UN and the OSCE. Georgia's desire to receive an EU-led CSDP mission in the country was also unsuccessful, as a number of EU member states did not support the deployment decision. While an EU monitoring mission was deployed after the war, the failure to secure one prior to the outbreak of the conflict was another example of a missed opportunity by the EU to play a preventative role in maintaining stability in its neighbourhood, a role to which the EU says it aspires.

Based on its newfound interest in enhancing cooperation on defence and security issues, the EU's new Global Strategy has to make a clear commitment to making the stabilisation of its neighbourhood the top priority. While the EU cannot replace NATO, through a strengthened framework of cooperation EU/NATO assistance can have a greater impact. The EU should use the full potential of CSDP operations to maintain security in both its eastern and southern neighbourhoods. This will require a clear commitment to strengthening the EU's capacities. Fighting IS, with its state-like capabilities, will require a conceptual upgrade of the EU's approach to its role as a security actor, both in terms of the kind of manpower it will need, as well as in the strategy and tactics for planning actual missions. The EU has to recognise that without an actual deployment in the ENP countries—that is, boots on the ground—it will have an extremely difficult time meeting its objectives. In some cases, the EU's CSDP missions will play the role of monitors, or 'peace-enforcers'. But as the societies in the EU's neighbourhood suffer from a lack of capable state security actors—such as police forces and armies capable of maintaining law and order—the EU will also have to devote more of its CSDP missions to the 'train and equip' approach to cooperation. The financial mechanisms for supporting such deployments should also be upgraded to make speedy deployment institutionally and financially feasible. The EU's new role cannot be used to diminish the role of the NATO as the main security actor on the



European continent, but it can certainly complement NATO's contributions to its civilian operations, which are often in action in the ENP countries.

Finally, better integration of the more flexible cooperation framework offered by the CSDP with the regular bilateral agenda of cooperation between the ENP countries and the EU is needed, in order to address the growing demand for preventative and early action by the EU in many ENP countries. Changing the regulations to allow EU funds to be moved between the different cooperation instruments, in order to address the most pressing needs, would make the EU's operations in the ENP countries much more efficient.

Thus, the EU Global Strategy has to clearly define the EU's role in its neighbourhood as that of a 'stabiliser' and a key actor in development. The existing framework of cooperation with the ENP countries emphasises the EU's 'stabilising' role as one of democracy promotion and economic cooperation. It is true that EU assistance in democracy building and the opening up of EU markets for the countries of the neighbourhood are important. But it must also be recognised that amid the chaos of ethnic and civilian conflict, failed state

Policy on sanctions

When assessing the impact of the EU as a global actor over the course of last the 13 years, it is clear that where the EU has managed to maintain unity in applying coercive measures against violators of international law it has achieved desirable results. Iran stands out as one of the most successful cases, where the EU, both in its ability to act as a strong global player and maintain a unified position, and also in its broader role, demonstrated the success of multilateralism when addressing a global challenge. The sanctions which the EU introduced vis-à-vis Russia following the annexation of Crimea and the destabilisation of eastern Ukraine have also demonstrated the success of unified European action. The Global Strategy will set the framework for anticipative, preventative and efficient EU policy responses to global threats, which in the modern security environment often originate from rogue states, non-state actors and sometimes a combination of both. More often than not such policy responses will include sanctions, economic measures and targeted actions. Therefore, a commitment by the EU to create a permanent structure that deals with the sanctions policy, rather than addressing it in an ad hoc manner, might also be a valuable solution.



institutions and chronic government inefficiency, these countries will neither be able to develop economic activities, nor sustain a normal democratic process. A brief review of the story of the European integration of Georgia, which today stands as the most successful example of the EU's transformative power, best illustrates the shortcomings and merits of the existing EU cooperation frameworks with the ENP countries.

The symbiotic relationship between stability and democratisation

Among the countries in the Eastern Partnership Initiative, Georgia stands out as a relative success story since the development of meaningful EU policy towards Europe's eastern neighbours coincided with the democratic Rose Revolution of 2003.²² The post-revolutionary government of Georgia was more successful in addressing some of the basic public grievances, than, for example, the 'Orange Team' that took over Ukraine following the 2004 Orange Revolution. As a result, Georgia's government managed to sustain public support for a longer period. The reforms which the United National Movement (UNM) introduced in the period 2003–8 were all popular with the Georgian voters. They included cleaning up the corrupt traffic police; creating a functional law enforcement system, which replaced the informal criminal network that had run the country since the collapse of the USSR; improving the public finances; reforming the education system; and replacing corrupt practices with a meritocracy in the university entrance system. The UNM government was spectacularly successful at state-building, though less successful at building a society based on the principles of the rule of law. The Georgian public's eventual disappointment with the UNM government was not related to state failure, but rather to concern that the state was going too far and applying the law arbitrarily, allowing the abuse of power in the penitentiary system, overstepping the law concerning private property and so on. As a result, the outcome of the 2012 parliamentary elections favoured the opposition,

²² For detailed information on Georgia's transition to democracy, see S. Cornell, *Getting Georgia Right*, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (Brussels, 2013).



with the first change of government through peaceful, free and fair elections taking place—a monumental step towards building a successful democracy, and a success story in itself. Given the significant public support for a pro-European foreign policy orientation, the newly elected government continued to deepen the relationship with the EU, and signed the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement and Association Agreement. While the post-2012 government has failed to initiate any significant institutional reform initiatives comparable to the scale of the ones implemented under the UNM, the Georgian traffic police still remains clean and functional, and there has not been a major reversal of any of the other important achievements of the UNM government. The overwhelming majority of Georgian voters also continue to support future closer association with the EU—some 87%, according to the most recent polls.²³

When emerging democracies see the ability of a democratically elected government to provide public goods, the commitment to democracy is strengthened. The continued and overwhelming support and goodwill in Georgia for the EU, despite a forceful Russian propaganda campaign attempting to undermine it, can also be explained by the positive image of the EU in Georgia. Since the Russo-Georgian War, the EU has become a major security provider for the country. The EU's monitoring mission (EUMM), which has deployed some 200 EU monitors on the ground, plays a vital role in overseeing the situation at the de facto borders between the Georgian regions under Russian military occupation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The EUMM has been instrumental in addressing numerous security-related incidents over the past eight years, ranging from moving the de facto borders, to dealing with disputes between the population on different sides of the conflict related to property or other issues. Such incidents have the tendency to flare up, leading to renewed confrontation. In a sense the EUMM has sealed off the zone of instability in the occupied regions from Georgia proper. A renewed military confrontation with Russia could bring down Georgia's democracy and put an end to the story of its European integration. Thus the mission is a great success story today, even though it was a failure on the part of the EU not to deploy a CSDP mission before the conflict broke out—this was a significant missed opportunity for the EU to play a preventative role as the security actor in the neighbourhood.

The EUMM was not the first CSDP mission in Georgia. The story of another CSDP mission, this one aimed at assisting with state-building, also offers a good example of how a more integrated approach from

²³ National Democratic Institute, 'Results of March 2016 Public Opinion Poll in Georgia', March 2016.



the EU in pursuing its foreign policy objectives could benefit its role as a global actor. At the request of the Georgian government, on 16 July 2004 the EU launched an EU Rule of Law Mission to Georgia (EUJUST THEMIS) (Council Joint Action 2004/523/CFSP of 28 June 2004).²⁴ This was the first Rule of Law Mission launched by the EU in the context of the CSDP. In the framework of EUJUST THEMIS, senior and highly experienced personnel supported, mentored and advised ministers, senior officials and appropriate bodies at the central government level. The mission successfully provided a framework for the reform of the Georgian structures responsible for the rule of law. Together with other cooperation frameworks within the EU in the field of justice and security, this CSDP mission has played an important role in providing a blueprint for reforms. It demonstrates the EU's normative power in setting the standards for the reform of state structures for those countries aspiring to closer cooperation with the EU. However, in hindsight, the EU could have applied a stricter 'conditionality' approach to its relations with Georgia in order to make certain that the recommendations of this CSDP mission were implemented more consistently and earlier. This might have taken Georgia's reforms in the rule of law much further by the time the UNM was voted out of power in 2012.

A field to which the EU should have devoted more of its time and resources in its cooperation with Georgia was reform of the security sector. As for many societies emerging from a totalitarian past, security sector reform has proven to be the biggest challenge for Georgia. Many shocking scandals under the rule of the UNM—such as the illegal taping of private lives, the abuse of power by law-enforcement officials and so on—were related to the failure to reform the security sector. While Georgia managed to construct functional police and intelligence services out of nothing after 2003, it failed to build the democratic safeguards necessary for preventing the abuse of power into the system. The EU could have played a more important role here, by using both bottom-up as well as top-down mechanisms to support democratic governance and providing the accountability needed to achieve it.

²⁴ Council of the EU, Council Joint Action 2005/100/CFSP extending the mandate of the Special Representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus, OJ L31 (2 February 2005), 74.

Recommendations



- From its new role of global actor, the EU must graduate to become a ‘geopolitical’ actor. History is placing this burden on the EU’s shoulders. The EU has to recognise that its policies, such as the ENP, go beyond the limited scope of technical cooperation or economic integration. The new European strategy should boldly commit the EU to the transformative potential of the ENP countries as a geopolitical project.
- The EU’s new Global Strategy has to prioritise the EU’s role as a ‘stabiliser’ in its immediate neighbourhood, as the main sources of the EU’s internal challenges come from the ring of instability around its borders.
- Much as Christian pacifism might have contributed to the fall of Rome to the barbarians, the Western liberal order risks becoming even more vulnerable to the threats posed to it by both Putin’s Russia and aggressive Islamist movements unless it succeeds in making a case for the universality of the values underpinning Western institutions. Europe’s borders are safest where they are shared with stable democracies. The EU must continue to invest in building stable democracies in the surrounding world. As a postmodern Empire, Europe has no better way to defend itself than by expanding the geographic reach of its ideological sphere of influence.
- As a democracy-promoter, the EU has to take a pragmatic, principled and creative approach to its role. It should use both bottom-up and top-down approaches to democracy promotion. Through the linkage model of democracy promotion, the EU should build closer ties with the societies in its neighbourhood. At the same time, focusing on the areas where there is the highest demand for the delivery of public goods—such as law enforcement, public finance and so on—the EU should use the governance model of democracy support, as well as implementing tailor-made policies and missions which will strengthen the state while introducing democratic elements.
- The EU should refer to its experience in the Balkans as it looks for ways to assist the fragile states in its neighbourhood with building functioning state institutions, reconciling societies in post-conflict environments and constructing modern, accountable democratic institutions.
- The EU must accept that it will have to shoulder the greatest burden of responsibility for its own security. In preparation for the review of the EU’s collective self-defence capabilities, the EU’s Global



Strategy must also define the main military objectives for the EU in the coming years. The aim should be to avoid an overlap between the functions of NATO and the new European strategy in the area of defence and security. Addressing the deteriorating security situation in its neighbourhood should also be a top priority for the new EU defence strategy.

- To achieve the new goals and objectives, the EU will have to take a comprehensive look at the way it implements programmes in the ENP countries. The scope of application of the CSDP missions should be broadened, as they provide the flexible framework needed to address the many ongoing needs of the ENP countries. CSDP missions are fit to meet not only military needs, but also those in key areas of cooperation, such as security sector reform, law and justice, police reform and so on. The scope of the CSDP missions in the ENP regions will vary from monitoring to capacity building, but the EU should increasingly look at the potential of the CSDP for a ‘train and equip’ programme.
- The EU’s policy of fending off the threats to its security from Russia, radical Islamist movements and other actors in the hybrid warfare environment will continue to require the implementation of sanctions and economic measures targeted at specific state and non-state actors. The EU might benefit from strengthening its institutional capacity to work on such measures.
- The EU’s new Global Strategy should recognise the need to commit considerable EU efforts to fighting the ideological war vis-à-vis Russia, as well as radical Islam, by devoting more resources to fighting the information war.
- The EU member states must give their unequivocal endorsement to the EU’s new Global Strategy and declare their willingness to pledge the necessary resources. The new approaches to EU security will require a considerable commitment of both financial and human resources, without which the strategy cannot be implemented. Member states will also have to do a better job of explaining to their citizens why investing in the stability and prosperity of the EU’s neighbours will make them more secure. While good fences make good neighbours, constructing them around Europe to protect Europeans from modern threats is not a viable option.



Conclusion



In order to avoid the fate of the Roman Empire, the Western world needs to find new energy to pursue its global strategy, step up its defence capabilities, find new solutions to the threat of hybrid warfare and strengthen its ideological standing. Producing a new EU Global Strategy is an important part of that exercise. In order to rise to the challenge and take the dimensions of Europe's security, foreign and defence policy to the next level, the new Global Strategy needs to demonstrate the EU's leadership, dedication and strategic thinking about its role as a geopolitical actor on the world scene. This paper has argued that the key to the EU's success in this will be how it manages to address the challenge of building stability and security at its borders. The countries in the EU's neighbourhood cannot hope to be extended the same strong framework of stabilisation and democratisation as the countries covered by the EU's enlargement policy. However, an outline of the new, geopolitical ENP should be clearly articulated in the EU's new strategic document. The main policy lines of the renewed commitment to its neighbours should aspire to help them meet the challenges of building functioning state institutions and democracy in an extremely volatile security environment. As argued in this paper, this will require a substantive commitment from the EU in terms of political will, financial and human resources, and finding new, flexible instruments for implementing the relevant programmes, focusing on capacity-building. As constructing defensive walls around Europe in the modern global world seems both costly and futile, this is the only way that the EU can dry up the pool of instability that surrounds it.

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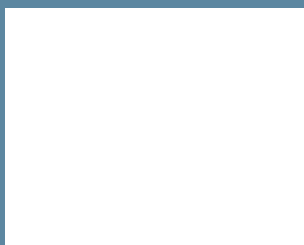
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The current Western liberal order is in danger of becoming vulnerable to threats posed by political systems which have no regard for universal values, such as human rights, and are willing to use brutal force—as is the case with Putin’s Russia and aggressive Islamist movements. The spill-over effects of instability in the regions outside of the EU are taking a significant toll on the Union. Unless the West succeeds in making a case for the universality of the values underpinning its institutions and shows the capacity to defend those values, in the medium and long term, the West could lose this battle. Europe has no better way to defend itself than by expanding the geographic reach of its ideological sphere of influence.

This is why the EU has to invest in state-building and security in its Eastern and Southern neighbourhood. This paper argues that the EU needs to rethink the focus of its European Neighbourhood Policy; it needs to go beyond the limited scope of technical cooperation or the project of economic integration, and must invest in itself as a ‘geopolitical’ actor. The best way to do so is through the Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy. The EU has to prioritise its role as a ‘stabiliser’ and security actor in its immediate neighbourhood.



Wilfried
Martens Centre
for European Studies