

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM ON A EUROPEAN UNION DOCUMENT

A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy

Submitted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 13 July 2016.

SUBJECT MATTER

1. The June 2016 European Council welcomed the presentation of the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, which seeks to provide the EU with a high-level strategic vision over the medium term, and invited the High Representative, the Commission and the Council to take the work forward. It is the culmination of a strategic reflection process launched by the December 2013 European Council, which asked the HRVP to draw up this report.
2. The document's full title is "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy". It sets out the key shared **interests** of EU Member States – such as security, prosperity, democracy and a rules based international order. It coins the term "principled pragmatism" highlighting the need to marry the EU's values with a realistic assessment of the current strategic environment. It also highlights the **principles** by which the EU will conduct itself in its external action – such as unity, engagement, responsibility and partnership.
3. It sets out six broad priority areas for the EU. "*The Security of our Union*" focuses on the need to boost security and defence capabilities, enhance cooperation (including with NATO) and tackle a set of new threats. "*State and Societal Resilience to our East and South*" addresses the need to combat fragility in enlargement, ENP and other neighbouring states. "*An Integrated Approach to Conflicts*" expands the comprehensive approach concept aimed at a coherent use of all policies at the EU's disposal. "*Cooperative Regional Orders*" advocates the promotion of voluntary forms of regional governance better able to tackle transnational issues. "*Global Governance for the 21st Century*" restates a commitment to a global order based on international law.
4. A final section "**From Vision to Action**" identifies the need for a credible, responsive and joined-up EU. Action highlighted includes urgent Member State (MS) investment in security and defence capabilities, diplomatic action fully grounded in the Lisbon Treaty, and coherence across EU external policies, between Member States and EU institutions, and between internal and external dimensions of policies, and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

SCRUTINY HISTORY

5. There is no scrutiny history on this document.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

6. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs is the Minister with overall responsibility for UK policy on the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

INTEREST OF THE DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS

7. The UK's Foreign Affairs policy is a reserved matter under the UK's devolution settlements and no devolved administration interests arise. The devolved administrations have therefore not been consulted in the preparation of this EM.

LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL ISSUES

8. Legal Basis: None. The document sets out a high level strategic vision for the EU over the medium term. The UK has been clear that any specific policies emanating from the Global Strategy must follow the normal procedure, requiring negotiation and agreement, in accordance with the relevant procedures set out in the Treaties.
9. Voting Procedures: Not applicable.
10. Impact on UK Law: Not applicable.
11. Application to Gibraltar: Yes.
12. Fundamental rights analysis: No fundamental rights issues apply.

APPLICATION TO THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

13. None.

SUBSIDIARITY

14. Not applicable.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

15. On 23 June, the EU referendum took place and the people of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. It will be for the next Prime Minister to begin negotiations to exit the EU, and until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the European Union and all the rights and obligations of EU membership remain in force. During this period the Government will continue to negotiate, implement and apply EU legislation.
16. The EU Global Strategy (EGS) was born out of a growing concern amongst a number of Member States that the EU lacked strategic direction in its external action. Many felt that the strategic environment was changing, and that the challenges the EU faced were evolving.

And that while the 2003 European Security Strategy (and the 2008 report on the its implementation) was in many ways still relevant, it was nonetheless outdated. As a result, the December 2013 European Council kicked off a process of strategic reflection. This asked for an assessment report on global challenges to the EU, which was presented by the High Representative to the June 2015 European Council. The Council in turn invited her to produce a strategy on foreign and security policy by June 2016.

17. Both tasks were owned explicitly by the High Representative, albeit in close consultation with Member States. The EGS was not negotiated and agreed by Member States. The final version was released to Member States on 26 June and deposited on 29 June following the European Council. This situation is reflected in the language of the Council Conclusions which, while welcoming its delivery, stops far short of endorsement or adoption of the EGS.
18. Member States were consulted throughout the process as stipulated by the Council tasking. Effort was made to reach a consensual text, which is evident. There are also a number of aspects that were championed by individual Member States. Politically, therefore, the document will provide a useful tool for those wishing to pursue specific follow up action. It will also be a useful driver for bringing more coherence to bear across Commission and Council working, and on issues that have both internal and external dimensions (for example counter terrorism).
19. The UK was supportive of HRVP Mogherini's ownership of the text – necessary to avoid an unworkable and divisive negotiation at 28. It also supported her aim to produce a high-level, non-prescriptive document, with a broad focus. The UK engaged fully in the process from the beginning, in recognition of the scale of the security challenges that Europe faces, with conflict and poor governance in its neighbourhood, CT and migration. The UK's own SDSR process helped formulate UK input. The UK sees the strategy as an opportunity to achieve improvements across the full range of the EU's external tools; and to focus on policy coherence (rather than, for example, on institution-building).
20. The UK supported the strong references to Russia, in particular the recognition of it as a strategic challenge, and that future EU relations with it must be premised upon full respect for international law and the principles underpinning the European security order. This will help ensure a continuing and robust united front. It usefully proposes greater coherence between institutions, especially between Council and Commission including embedding the comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, stabilisation and crisis-management and work on migration. If implemented effectively this should increase the EU's flexibility (such as on capacity building in support of security and development) and impact.
21. Regarding security and defence, there are critical restatements as to the centrality of NATO, the importance of coherence with the EU and Member States, and Member State sovereignty. It usefully mentions the need for a sufficient level of expenditure for defence and highlights the 20% EDA targets devoted to procurement of equipment and on Research and Technology and 35% of total equipment spending in collaborative procurement.

At the same time there are references to the EU as a security community and the need for greater defence investment and cooperation. It stops far short however of language that hints at a "Euro army" as has been misreported in the media.

22. The European Council Conclusions explicitly invite the High Representative, European Commission and Member States to take work forward. The document suggests potential follow on work in a number of areas. This process will be debated at subsequent Foreign Affairs Councils. The UK has been clear that any specific policies emanating from the EGS must follow the normal procedure, requiring negotiation and unanimity for agreement.

REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

23. Not applicable.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

24. None.

TIMETABLE

25. HRVP Mogherini presented the document to the 2016 June European Council.



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