

The future of EU External Action:

Towards integrated policy responses for global sustainable development?

Report of a high-level conference

Berlin, 1 and 2 March 2016

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Introduction

This report presents a summary of a high-level conference in Berlin on 1 and 2 March 2016 that was convened by the European Think Tanks Group (ETTG). The aim of the conference was to discuss the role of the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy and its linkage to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The event brought together high-level policy-makers and leading experts from different backgrounds and disciplines. The conference was held under the Chatham House Rule to allow for frank and dynamic exchanges among policy makers, civil society actors and researchers. As per this rule, this report presents a detailed account of the main points made by the conference participants without revealing their identity or affiliation. The conference closed with a public session of which a video and additional Storify-reporting is available on our website www.ettg.eu

An overview of the agenda and the main questions guiding the debates at the conference is presented in annex 1 to this report.

Foreword

Europe is facing a period of severe crisis within and outside of the EU. Instability in Europe's neighbourhood (Syria, Libya, Ukraine, etc.) and resulting refugee flows, tense relations with Russia, effects of climate change, and a weak global economy that is again facing headwinds are severely challenging Europe's role as a global power. Domestically, the EU is facing a protracted Euro crisis, heightened insecurity as a result of terrorist attacks and growing populism.

On 2 and 3 March, we brought together a group of high-level policy-makers and opinion leaders to debate the role of the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy and its linkage to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (or the 2030 Agenda). Two main questions framed our discussions:

- What should EU external action look like in 2020 and what is needed from the EU Global Strategy to get there?
- How and to what extent should the EU Global Strategy and the EU's implementation of the SDGs be linked?

Debates during the conference confirmed that the 2030 Agenda provides a new global normative framework for the EU's foreign and domestic policies, dissolving the artificial boundary between internal and external action. None of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – be they goals related to social development, environment, climate, governance, or peace and security – can effectively be promoted by individual policy fields or institutions acting in isolation.

Moreover, the EU strongly supported the universal nature and thematic scope of the 2030 Agenda and is now expected to lead by example in translating the SDGs into its domestic and external engagement. This approach requires a fundamental change in how internal and external EU action is organised, and how coherence and collective action can be improved.

Success in EU foreign policy will not be determined by short term responses to long term crises in the immediate neighbourhood. It is the 2030 Agenda that can provide the basis for a long-term vision for EU external action. EU support for global sustainable development needs to be made a core priority of EU external action.

Debates during our conference confirmed that Europe's strategy for long-term security and prosperity requires concerted action across the full range of EU external and internal policies – from trade, climate and development policy to security, defence, democracy and human rights. The Global Strategy provides a key opportunity to bring these various policy fields closer together with a view to supporting security and prosperity within Europe and globally.

Simon Maxwell, ETTG Chair

Dirk Messner, German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)

Ewald Wermuth, European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)

Teresa Ribera, Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI)

Kevin Watkins, Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

Introductory session – A vision for EU External Action 2020: responding to internal and external reform pressure

The purpose of this introductory session – and the conference as a whole – was to make explicit links between the EU's foreign policy and its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The moderator introduced the session by highlighting four global trends:

- The year 2016 presents a tipping point for foreign policy. Both the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change were concluded the preceding year, while increasing and intensifying global crises challenge these multilateral advances.
- The 2030 Agenda represents a new social contract for development, a universal agenda that aims to promote the wellbeing of nine billion people within planetary boundaries. Pursuing it requires a change in the way we cooperate.
- State fragility is both a security and development issue. Fading democracy and high rates of unemployment can delegitimise governments and societies.
- Contesting worldviews are dominating the political debate on development: international law and the idea of the world citizen are being challenged by the rise of fundamentalism and nationalism. Which worldviews are going to lead the way in Europe?

A speaker argued that Europe's crisis can be typified as a crisis of values and self-confidence. Although there are success stories to acknowledge – such as setting up the European External Action Service (EEAS) or the EU's decisive role in reaching the Iran nuclear deal last year – there is also a lot of bad news. The EU has not been able to develop its instruments in a comprehensive and meaningful way to position itself as a globally relevant actor that represents more than 500 million people.

Since the adoption of the EU Security Strategy in 2003, the EU has relied on the idea of a ring of well-governed states to create the security environment it needs. Now an unprecedented number of refugees fleeing war and oppression in the EU's neighbourhood have made it clear that the EU has failed dramatically. Too many EU Member State capitals view a national response as the best way forward. If Europe keeps moving in this direction, it will become dysfunctional and incapable of providing support to those in need. Europe is bigger than Russia in terms of size, population and power, yet it behaves as if it were less significant. The following approaches were suggested to address the situation:

- a) Majority voting should be introduced in foreign policy. This would help forge a unified EU foreign policy. The 'big three' Member States (France, Germany and the United Kingdom) have little to risk because it is unlikely that they will be outvoted.
- b) A credible foreign policy requires a credible defence policy. The EU defence policy remains completely nationalised, but also highly under-resourced. A saving of €13 billion could be made through joint procurement alone.
- c) Despite its use in recent crises, Europe should avoid relying on a permanent intergovernmental approach, but should upgrade the institutions to be able to manage crises.

One speaker encouraged further German investment in the European project, also emphasising the need for its efforts to be in line with a strong consensus among EU governments. In the absence of such a consensus, the overreliance on the intergovernmental approach for immediate crisis response has made it function as a vehicle of ideological imperialism. Whilst rhetorically committing to the Sustainable Development Goals, the EU has in recent years shown fundamental disregard of justice through austerity policy, and through its fundamental disregard of solidarity.

Another speaker highlighted the increasingly visible consequences of foreign policy failure which add to a loss of faith in multilateralism. A lot of emphasis is being placed on the 'big picture', and insufficient attention is given to what we can actually do despite the fact that what needs to be done is

blindingly obvious: agree on burden sharing and act collectively. This would entail linking security, foreign and development policy as well as furthering the SDGs in Europe. It entails operationalising the concept of ‘Leave No One Behind’ into Europe’s reality. The EU’s inability to agree on burden sharing and collective action is illustrated by the debate surrounding the upcoming UK referendum on EU membership. Arguments advanced by those in favour of leaving the EU are frequently irrational and not based on evidence. Yet the case for Europe is not made in a clear and honest manner either.

The final speaker emphasised that the EU has learned the hard way that geopolitics still matters and that it does not know how to deal with it. Equality and solidarity were added into Article 2 of the EU Treaty, yet the overall narrative is under pressure – particularly from nationalism, but also from extremism. The EU needs (1) a pro-active and focused multilateral agenda; (2) a strategy for its relations with emerging powers; (3) a closing of the gap between what Europe says and what it does in the Neighbourhood; and (4) a definition of its level of ambition on hard security questions.

Following these inputs, participants stressed that solutions need to take the current situation as a starting point. Concrete and decisive action is needed to achieve anything, rather than just plans and strategies. The refugee crisis serves as a case in point. Furthermore, solutions should go beyond governments and reach out to the private sector and civil society.

The EU’s broader response to the misalignment of challenges and institutions should also be informed by recent success stories. The Paris Agreement on Climate Change was adopted as a result of very intensive diplomatic efforts, with strong guidance from the EU. Member State leaders and ministers should be encouraged to engage with the media about the EU’s plans and ideas, as opposed to simply focussing on how they have defended their national interests.

There are implications for think tanks as well: they should reorient their work from a technical ‘insider’ focus towards communicating broader visions on the future of the EU, with particular emphasis on ideas that are good for citizens.

Europe in crisis: tackling the wicked problems of prosperity, people and planet

Thematic session 1 – The security-democracy-migration nexus: how to combine the EU's interests with its values?

The complex links between development, security, democracy and migration are at the heart of the discussion on the EU Global Strategy, not least because they challenge Europeans to ask themselves whether their interests and values are consistent with each other. This session focussed mainly on whether the EU’s priority should be short-term crisis response or longer-term conflict prevention, and how European actors might work better together.

The first speaker pointed out that foreign policy needs a renewed focus on conflict prevention at the EU and Member State levels. The idea that development has something to do with conflict resolution has become mainstreamed to such a degree that if the EU engages in development or ‘governance’ activities, it is assumed this will benefit conflict prevention in the longer run. The EU institutions have access to specific conflict prevention instruments, yet Member States also need to consider pooling their military and civilian resources to increase collective effectiveness in this area. Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) is a long-standing ambition of the Union, but it is more crucial in the peace and security area than ever.

The EU has to be clear that repressive regimes are part of the problem and not the solution. Although lines of communication need not be severed, the EU has to be clear that cooperation on issues of mutual interest should not be interpreted as condoning bad behaviour. In the long-term, it is in our best interest to work with partners who respect human rights.

Goal 16 in the 2030 Agenda (Peace, justice and strong institutions) provides a great foundation in that respect, even though the diplomatic language used avoids saying what the goal really is about. Criticism claiming that the goal is not actionable neglects the fact that it provides a necessary frame of reference. Goal 16 should be referenced in the Global Strategy because it is universal and not just European.

The second speaker argued that the EU has to focus on crisis response rather than conflict prevention. Unfortunately, the strategic environment is incredibly difficult and characterised by hybrid crises, mixing the dark side of globalisation with the return of geopolitics. Cooperation has been renationalised. EU cooperation will be fitful until Germany, France and the UK manage to work together or at least stop blocking each other.

The speaker warned that we should not expect too much from the Global Strategy. The 2003 European Security Strategy was driven politically by the Iraq war, which emphasised the need for the EU to work together.

Nevertheless, the Global Strategy should lead to more cooperation among Member States, the Commission, the EEAS and the European Parliament. This is not only a technical issue, but also a cultural one. There needs to be a less divisive culture in Brussels, where even different Directorates-General are in competition.

The Global Strategy should help Member States understand their differences so they won't prevent other from acting. This would be particularly useful during crisis response. The problem is not values, but interests: we have to be clear about our interests when proposing military force as a solution.

Instead of focussing on the threats posed by Islamic State and Russia, the EU should focus on what it can do about fragile states. Preventing states from failing is a key strategic challenge and a real opportunity for the EU. The EU has proven experience in building institutions, yet has neglected its security aspects. The EU has the potential to be a state-building superpower, but this would require going beyond puny Common Security and Defence Policy (CDSP) operations.

The EU should provide more targeted assistance. For instance, more can be done to help secure democracy in Tunisia. More financial investment is also needed for the refugee crisis, in particular in supporting Jordan and Lebanon.

During the discussion, a delegate questioned whether development cooperation is the right instrument for dealing with conflict prevention and the root causes of migration, or whether these tasks are 'overloading the boat' of European development policy.

Furthermore, some European states, such as Greece or some of the Balkan countries, are at risk of failing themselves. Should development cooperation instruments be used to help them?

Europe cannot solve all the problems in the world and by not focusing on what can realistically be achieved, too much is expected of the Global Strategy. The EU cannot be transformed into a 21st century global superpower.

The 2030 Agenda is not playing a major role in the security-development nexus discussion yet. Universality means that the domestic performance of China and India will have a huge impact on global sustainability, and yet conversations still revolve around bureaucracies and diplomacy. If we approach the new agenda in the old way, we will fail. This goes far beyond Goal 16. We should not miss the opportunity to build on this consensus.

Thematic session 2 – Managing transformation: the EU's response to the climate challenge

Despite the widespread optimism about the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (or COP21), the outcome remains fragile and relies on trust. The moderator of this panel noted that the main challenge now is to move from people to policy machinery, especially since the implementation will be the responsibility of a different set of people to the ones involved in the negotiations.

Opening the discussion, the first speaker noted that while most of the focus is on the risk of earth system change – which is a long-term challenge – we should not neglect the short-term problems. Climate change, security and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) are interrelated. Climate change poses a security risk, and the EU should invest in the social contract to ensure a strong position.

The speaker identified four challenges:

1. Achieving carbon neutral development requires a complete paradigm shift and although it is practically possible, it is not politically feasible at present.
2. Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) together represent only 30% of what is needed to achieve rapid decarbonisation. EU Member States have to take their trajectory commitments seriously and build a coalition of the willing by mobilising the pioneers of decarbonisation. This should involve diplomacy and foreign policy, as well as a range of policy actors, including trade actors and the research and science community.
3. The INDCs are focussed primarily on the energy sector (which is responsible for around 70% of global emissions), which leaves other sectors unrepresented. For instance, there is no mention of moving away from coal, transforming transport systems, managing urbanisation, or dealing with carbon capture and storage (CCS). The EU needs to look at a longer list of items in order to successfully address climate change and convince actors that solving the energy problem is not enough.
4. Climate policy can be seen in a positive and in a negative light. Compared to other current crises (e.g. Syria, failed states, migration), addressing climate change is straightforward: we have the necessary technologies to make a difference, we know what to do and we know what it will cost. On the other hand, it is seen by the public as a longer-term issue, which makes it more difficult to capture the necessary political and financial investments.

The second speaker reiterated that COP21 was a great success; providing an action agenda as well as an agreement which helped mobilise the press and civil society into a strong coalition.

Nonetheless, there is a lack of capacity in developing countries to implement their INDCs, and it would be in the EU's best interest to mobilise its technical ministries to support them in doing so. As such, the EU should think about how it can link climate policy with foreign policy to help achieve this.

There are three long-term goals: decarbonisation; reducing vulnerabilities; and improving resilience. Right now, the focus should be on securing the financing required to achieve these goals. China has set up a working group on green finance under its presidency of the G20. This innovation offers a big opportunity to create a positive narrative in the EU. It is crucial to change the narrative from one of 'burden sharing' to one of 'sharing opportunities'.

During the open discussion, the important role the EU played in reaching a positive outcome at COP21 was emphasised. The partnership with the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states, for instance, could reshape the way the G77+ work and create a new standard for international diplomacy.

By showing how diplomacy can work, the world is now looking towards the EU to see how it will respond to the Paris agreement. The Commission should not water down its commitments, but show the world that it is ready to implement these commitments. To reduce climate risk, the Paris commitments have to be mainstreamed, the entire process risk managed, and the EU should support the creation of clean economies, both locally and abroad.

The challenge here is that many developing countries rely on the incomes from fossil exports to the EU. The EU has a responsibility to help these countries diversify their economies. There is a risk of creating a potentially banal – and untrue – narrative by insisting that acting on climate change will mean there will be no losers and that the benefits will be shared between the North and South. A complete industrial revolution is needed, while considering the potential impact this would have on developing countries. Lower oil prices indicate that fossil fuels are not a prime business anymore. This could be a fantastic opportunity to reorganise tax systems in a way that reduces the global economy's dependence on the fossil industry. Lower oil prices can potentially also lead to the scrapping of subsidies, which will benefit developing countries.

Although climate change is seen as a long-term challenge, failure to transform the current system will require a crisis response soon enough. In addressing the current emergencies of the world, we should look for solutions that consider climate change adaptation. The cost of producing clean energy such as solar panels and wind farms is going down, while fossil and nuclear fuel is becoming more expensive. Even Germany is conscious of the potential short-term crises related to a collapse of certain industries as a result of this transformation. We need to fully understand the co-benefits, as well as the trade-offs.

In light of all these elements, it is clear that the world has reached a moment of crisis, as we consume natural resources at a faster rate than they can regenerate. We are beyond the time of voluntarism. Now is the time for progressive and decisive policy.

Thematic session 3 – The future of European trade policy: between self-interest and global interests?

The moderator noted that trade policy plays an important role within the two meta-themes of the 2030 Agenda and the EU Global Strategy. The panellists respectively talked about (1) the trade dimensions that should be included in the Global Strategy; and (2) the role of multilateralism, especially by comparing negotiations at the Nairobi World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial with the Paris Climate Conference, and the lessons learnt from each.

The first speaker encouraged the audience to consider trade in a political context. Growth is predominantly taking place outside Europe, so we have to look outwards and be more active in economic diplomacy. Suddenly strategic and diplomatic interests become interlinked with trade and business interests. The EU is adopting various measures to combine the sustainability and development dimensions with trade, such as constructive engagement and responsible business. There is a certain tension between values, vested economic interests, and protectionist interests. As such, there is a need for a clear strategy and objectives to balance interests and values, as well as the security, development and trade questions.

The speaker questioned whether the EU has the same coherence approach in economy and trade in different areas of the world. For instance, does it apply different standards in least developed countries, than in middle-income countries, or in industrialised countries as opposed to non-industrialised countries? Also, is it easier for strong trade partners to enter the European market? Are conditionality and the governance focus counterproductive and what specific impact do they have on development?

The EU is an economic giant, a leading trade actor, the world's largest market and its most committed aid provider. The EU should play more on its economic strength in its Global Strategy, yet it is often viewed as a political dwarf. Trade matters are frequently under national leadership, while prosperity is at the core of the EU agenda and negotiating international trade agreements is an EU competence, with DG Trade in the lead. Yet, there are a number of political and institutional tensions surrounding the trade agenda. For these reasons, the EEAS prefers to leave trade questions to DG Trade. The speaker

argued that this is a mistake, as trade is essentially political. It is about choices and societal development and applying only a technical lens misses the big picture.

The second speaker promoted the new EU Trade Strategy as ‘pertinent, provocative and propositional’ and elaborated on the role of trade policy within the Global Strategy and the EU’s foreign policy in its broadest sense. He argued that trade policy is subject to the explicit attempt to be more political since the Seattle Ministerial in 1999. Jobs, growth and value chains have gained in political salience. The Commission is trying to get the jobs and growth agenda moving and to link the global value discussions to trade, development and wider foreign policy agendas. Sustainability issues have to be addressed today. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was never considered in terms of sustainable development.

The multilateral process that led to the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement is a good example for successful EU negotiations. The speaker compared the approaches and constraints of the main negotiators from the EU’s DG for Climate Action and the Trade delegation at the Nairobi WTO Ministerial in order to determine how to achieve progress in multilateral negotiations and how to learn from each other:

- Major problems at the final stages of a long process of adopting a text with 186 signatories are rare. If there were no broad support, a motion would not get that far.
- Informal gatherings, humour, gavel diplomacy or enigmatic cases are important.
- The ‘climate world’ has managed to reach a situation where governments, NGOs, business and the wider civil society agree on more things than they disagree. Trade negotiations are often characterised by conflict and policy-makers should consider how agreement can be achieved considering the topic is less clear-cut, and the outcome has unintended consequences. Both issues are highly complex, though.
- Whereas a spirit of inclusion permeated the Paris conference, Nairobi was ‘solved’ by a Big 5 *‘fait accompli’*. The former is probably more diplomatically sustainable than the latter.
- The ‘group of lead negotiators’ format for EU representation in climate change negotiations is a triumph of creativity and innovation, in spite of formal legal rigidities: it may have been *sui generis*, but it worked. And the French hosts did an outstanding job in climate diplomacy.

Yet, an important difference remains with regard to the nature of the policy fields and its immediate effects on national policy discussions in the Member States: climate policy can agree on the nature of the problem (although not necessarily on the solutions); trade policy, in contrast, frequently cannot agree on the problem, and solutions to these unidentified problems are in many instances trumpeted as being national actions. Today’s WTO rules, dispute settlement mechanism and the possibility of sanctions make it more difficult to achieve agreement and progress. What is true for both fields in a sustainability perspective is that ‘the world as it was does not exist anymore’ and policies and their effects become increasingly complex and intertwined.

Questions from the floor focused on institutional arrangements, background and the philosophy of EU trade policies and vividly commented on dilemmas and contradictions, such as the primacy of interests over values. Delegates also wondered what role trade should play in the Global Strategy (for instance as an instrument to achieve desirable outcomes such as democracy or rule of law), what contribution trade can make in fragile states and ungoverned spaces, and how to integrate trade measures in crisis and stability strategies. It was debated whether the neighbourhood or LDCs should be the beneficiaries of preferential trade strategies. Trade agreements tend to offer the biggest advantages to the strongest countries and have an air of imperialism (e.g. the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)).

Despite its importance and the efforts made to achieve coherence and transparency, the Global Strategy cannot achieve its governance goals through trade alone. But trade policy has to be factored in as a set of crucial instruments (and inhibitors) among others.

Closing session – Making the EU Global Strategy and the SDGs a success: required next steps

The first speaker gave an overview of the SDGs and considered how it can be connected to the EU Global Strategy process. It is important that the EU has a strong, coherent implementation response to the SDGs, but this will have extremely complicated policy implications for the EU institutions. Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) is an important principle of the 2030 Agenda, and more comprehensive than the concept of PCD, which the EU committed to in 2005. To honour the universality principle, every ministry must take responsibility for the implementation of the SDGs.

The 2030 Agenda is also concerned with overcoming silos and increasing joined-up action. As discussed in the thematic discussions of this conference, this will be no easy feat. The Global Strategy can help connect these silos, but this alone will not be sufficient.

The first panellist talked about the process of drafting the Global Strategy. There has been an extensive consultation and outreach process and although drafts will not be open for discussion, inputs from Member States' national parliaments, governments and citizens will be incorporated. Four aspects of the Global Strategy's content were highlighted:

1. It will be a strategy of engagement, not of closure or 'building walls' – especially important in the current atmosphere of closure and risk aversion.
2. It will aim to avoid a confrontation between values and interests and inject a sense of realism and pragmatism that policy-makers need when dealing with certain situations. Although defending our values remains important, Europe has to be flexible and work with partners with different values.
3. It will not contain geographic chapters, but be clustered around themes with varying implications for different geographical regions. Besides the aspects of multilateralism, global governance and partnerships, the issue of institutional and societal resilience will be of importance.
4. It will be mainly aimed at the EU institutions and their global action in the future, rather than at Europe in a broader sense.

A short discussion followed about the trade-offs between values and interests, as well as the notion of pragmatism. Some participants were of the opinion that the EU has a responsibility to promote its values in the world and should use its entire toolbox to do this, while others considered the distinction between values and interests less clear and the use of conditionality problematic. It was noted that the Global Strategy will not be a move away from upholding common values, but that the EU needs a pragmatic approach in defending these values.

The second panellist emphasised that sustainability is about long-term issues and that foreign policy successes will not be immediately visible. Other regions regard Europe as a successful model, but domestically, it is heading towards some unsustainable paths. As such, the SDGs (in particular Goal 17 – Revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development) have to be guiding principles for the Global Strategy. Sustainability cannot be achieved from a foreign policy perspective only: the EEAS and all the relevant Directorates-General have to commit to the implementation of the SDGs – yet not everyone appears ready to integrate long-term external thinking.

Although Europe needs a long-term vision and strategy, it cannot ignore short-term crises. It is not useful to shift the dialogue between resilience and sustainability. Resilience is necessary to deal with

unavoidable shocks, but if we do not address the issues that drive these shocks, our systems will be constantly on alert. Sustainability should be about creating a policy environment that prevents the bubbles that cause shocks to emerge in the first place.

The third panellist noted that the SDGs can be considered a European agenda, as they promote common values such as human rights, gender equality, democracy, education and health. As such, Europe should lead by example in implementing it. Although the Global Strategy will cover global governance beyond foreign policy, the text will not outline what has to be done in specific policy areas (e.g. trade, gender or environment). Nevertheless, it has to find a way to connect with those themes. The HR/VP cannot lead on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a whole; to achieve the envisaged transformation, Member States will have to take responsibility at national level. If Europe fails to do this, it will lose credibility in the UN. Significant EU private sector investment is needed to achieve the SDGs and as such, there needs to be a framework and incentives in place to encourage business investments that support the SDGs. Additionally, the EU needs a strategy for engagement with middle-income countries.

During the discussions it became clear that there are different views on how broad the Global Strategy should be. Some argued for a strategy that defines the role of Europe in pursuing global sustainable development – an umbrella for all foreign relations that can guide both external and internal action. Others noted that if the Global Strategy focuses on foreign policy and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) more narrowly, an additional sustainability architecture and strategy is needed to guide the implementation of the SDGs.

A further message from the floor pointed toward the need for the Global Strategy to have a people dimension: if the European people do not believe in it, governments will feel no pressure to implement it. In order to connect with the 2030 Agenda, it should also have a human security component as part of its conceptualisation of security.

Public high-level panel – The EU’s Global Strategy: linking foreign and security policy with sustainable global development

During this public panel, four speakers shared their thoughts on the relationship between the Global Strategy and the promotion of sustainable global development as per the 2030 Agenda.

Stephan Auer (Director of Multilateral Relations and Global Issues, EEAS) noted that the new world order is defined by new challenges such as globalisation, the surge of human mobility, the rise of non-state actors, the growing number of fragile states and ungoverned spaces, and the rise of extremism. It is a more complex, contested and interconnected world putting a strain on nation states. Global challenges like climate change or the growing scarcity of natural resources further complicate matters. The EU has significant assets in order to respond to this new world order and leverage influence: it has the biggest diplomatic network in the world and is the largest economic bloc and development donor. The Global Strategy provides a vision for the EU to make full use of its foreign policy instruments in response to these challenges. It considers both the internal and external dimensions of policies and the need for a coherent, unified action by the EU institutions as well as within and among Member States. The Strategy will take into consideration internal policies, strengthen global governance and stand by the EU’s international commitments, such as the 2030 Agenda. Goal 16, for instance – which covers the human rights, rule of law and democracy dimension – will also be reflected, making the Global Strategy and 2030 Agenda processes very complementary.

Karl Falkenberg (Hors Classe Senior Adviser, EPSC) argued that Europe fought very hard to make the SDGs universal, as it understood that while Europe has had a successful past, the world is growing dramatically and demanding the same quality of life. In terms of resources, we would need between

2.5 and 5 times the planet Earth to accommodate 9 billion people living at European standards. The SDGs can help us address this by changing how people live in Europe. The Global Strategy can highlight a path forward on this. All three pillars of sustainability in Europe appear to be going in the wrong direction:

- On the environmental pillar, too much water is absorbed compared to the regeneration capacity, arable soil is eroded, air and oceans are polluted.
- On the social pillar, there are growing income disparities that create more unrest in societies.
- On the economic pillar, far too much energy and materials are absorbed in production processes.

The 17 SDGs highlight these different aspects and are conscious of the impact they have on each other. The sustainable goals are defined up to 2030, providing a perspective of where we want society to be in 15 years. As Willy Brandt once said: *'Europe will not survive as an island of wealth in a sea of poverty'*. This calls for many changes in and outside the EU which the Global Strategy can help frame.

Lotte Leicht (Director Europe, Human Rights Watch) referred to the historical relationship between Germany and Europe to illustrate Europe's accomplishments and challenges. First, in 1915, Germany represented 20% of the global population; in 2050 it will be around 7%. Second, history shows that when Germany needed support to rebuild, it was able to count on others' generosity to do so. Third, since Adenauer's time, German leaders have understood that short-term decisions had to consider long-term implications. These three things are true of the EU and its external action today and require consistency between what we do internally and externally. Four lessons can be drawn from the Paris climate negotiations in that regard:

1. There was a common internal understanding and an appetite to act in a unified way. All Member States agreed that transforming toward a low carbon future is inevitable, and that it is much better to manage the transition now rather than deal with the consequences later, and that this is consistent with our values and interests.
2. The EU was perceived as united and credible: a bloc that had already done things and was willing to do more; a region that could deliver confidence based on individual and joint capacities to take action.
3. The EU avoided treating issues in silo, but took an ecosystem perspective.
4. There was an aim to put a positive push into the system to raise the minimum common denominator to the maximum one.

The last speaker, **Teresa Ribera (Director, IDDRI)**, noted that fear is driving development in negative ways. The fear of being killed, tortured or persecuted is driving millions from their homes. Fear – and sometimes manipulated fear – of what the influx of refugees would mean for our societies leads to the building of fences. Fear of terrorism is driving leaders to curtail rights. As political and economic pressures rise, authoritarian leaders' fears of being held to account has led to a crack-down on people's rights to congregate and ask for change, their freedom of expression, and their means of communication. These are negative developments, but perhaps also a reflection on the success achieved by activists, trade unionists, journalists, lawyers and civil society. An effective Global Strategy will have to reflect on that and consider the value of tackling these issues, which are a source of instability and can lead to violence and further unrest. The Global Strategy should map out ways to engage with governments as well as other actors. It needs to be a global strategy to make freedom work in repressed societies. It also needs to map out ways in which the EU communicates with people around the world. The Global Strategy needs to be communicated and disseminated.

Three questions dominated the open discussion.

1. What are the most important changes needed in the Global Strategy compared to the 2003 European Security Strategy?

As High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini has a much broader mandate than Javier Solana had as High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. This means that the Global Strategy can cover sectoral policies other than security to help achieve EU foreign policy objectives. The focus needs to change, as the European Security Strategy was very much framed in terms of threats e.g. climate change. Such a challenge needs to be presented as an opportunity as well as a threat. The Global Strategy needs to create a common perspective of where we want to go as the EU.

The Global Strategy needs to focus much more on governance. This has often been overlooked in the past, but it is crucial to attract investment and to guarantee employment and social wellbeing. Dealing with authoritarian regimes is important and requires strategic behaviour: we need to know what a particular regime wants or does not want in order to use this information to press for better governance. Solana developed this idea around three pillars: environment, security and human rights and rule of law. Unfortunately, the last pillar tends to be treated as the soft one.

The EU also needs to be coherent in addressing its needs. For instance, the problem of an ageing population can be addressed by opening borders to people from other parts of the world that can live, work and consume here. The EU should also be more strategic and make more of being a union of institutions and 28 Member States. When something is decided at the EU level, there needs to be more follow up. There are monthly Foreign Affairs Councils (FACs); perhaps more of the FACs should be dedicated to follow up rather than adopting new sets of conclusions. What is missing is strategic thinking about making things happen rather than declarations and intentions.

2. What is the status of the Global Strategy; will it be signed by the European Parliament, European Council and the Commission?

It is too early to say who will sign the Global Strategy, but Ms Mogherini has been tasked to prepare and present it to the European Council for adoption by the Heads of State and Government. She is reaching out to various stakeholders to consider their concerns.

3. How can the Global Strategy help reconnect the EU and its citizens?

We need to understand why support for the European project has diminished and whether the Global Strategy can help rebuild confidence. It most probably can, but it seems the loss of confidence relates to the current migration situation. The EU has to overcome this challenge with more integration; this is particularly difficult at a time when two of the major European integration processes are in crisis: the Euro and the common migration and asylum policy.

Although a good compromise really is the art of living together, it has become a dirty word. The negotiating parties should start explaining how compromises have been reached in order to create an appreciation of the outcome. Governments should stop blaming the EU for their own failures. Greater transparency is needed and important discussions on matters such as military interventions or economic sanctions should be public to help people understand the nature of the compromises.

Annex 1: Overview of conference programme

1 March 2016 - Day 1

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 10:30 h-10:45 h | Welcome |
| 10:45 h-12:30 h internal | A vision for EU External Action 2020: Responding to and external reform pressure <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What should EU external action look like in 2020 and what is needed from the EU Global Strategy to get there?• What are the major institutional, political and instrumental stumbling blocks for EU collective action and integrated policy approaches?• Is Agenda 2030 a suitable instrument for fostering coherence across EU external (and internal) action? |
| 12:30 h-13:30 h | Lunch |
| Afternoon sessions: | Europe in crisis: tackling the wicked problems of prosperity, people and planet <p>Europe is in crisis. Its position as a global leader and its capacity to implement domestic reforms are severely undermined by centrifugal forces within Europe and a risk of disintegration. Against the background of the multiple domestic and global crises, the EU is more than ever required to step up its engagement and to strengthen vertical and horizontal coherence of its policies. The drafting of an EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy provides a unique opportunity for the EU to reposition itself as a global leader and to foster greater unity and joined-up approaches in its external action.</p> <p>Each session focuses on two overarching questions: How can the EU overcome the stumbling blocks for better integrated policies? How do these areas need to be linked to and reflected in the EU Global Strategy?</p> |
| 13:30 h-14:45 h the | The security-democracy-migration nexus: How to combine EU's interests with its values? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is needed from the EU Global Strategy to increase the EU's capacity in crisis prevention and response (with a view to addressing the migration and refugee crisis)? |

- How do foreign and security policy and democracy promotion need to be linked to other areas of EU external action (e.g. trade, development) to promote more coherent approaches and sustainable solutions in conflict situations?
- What is the role of the SDGs in addressing the security-democracy-migration nexus?

14:45 h-15:15 h **Coffee**

15:15 h-16:30 h **Managing transformation: The EU's response to the climate challenge**

- What are the implications of the Paris Agreement for European climate policies, internally and externally?
- How does the EU need to link its climate diplomacy and foreign policy action to ensure coherent responses to climate risks?
- How can and should the Paris Agreement be embedded in the Global Strategy and the EU's implementation of the SDGs?

16:30 h-17:45 h **The future of European trade policy - Between self-interest and global interests?**

- What does the implementation of the EU's trade review mean in light of the EU's wider foreign policy goals and the EU Global Strategy?
- How to combine values with interests?
- How to make the EU's trade policy coherent with the SDGs? How to increase coherence of the EU's trade and investment policy with foreign and development policy for that purpose?

19:00 h **Dinner with speech / debate**

9:30 h-12:00 h

Making the EU Global Strategy and the SDGs a success: required next steps

- How and to what extent can the EU Global Strategy and the EU's implementation of the SDGs be linked?
- Putting it into practice: what needs to be done in 2016 with regards to the EU Global Strategy and the SDGs and by whom?
- What do Member States expect from the EU Global Strategy and how should it be linked to the SDGs in their view?

Public High-Level Panel

12:15 h-13:00 h

Light Lunch

13:00 h-14:30 h
policy

The EU's Global Strategy: linking foreign and security with sustainable global development?

Moderator: Imme Scholz (Deputy Director, DIE)

Stephan Auer (Director of Multilateral Relations and Global Issues, EEAS)

Karl Falkenberg (Hors Classe Senior Adviser, EPSC)

Lotte Leicht (Director Europe, Human Rights Watch)

Teresa Ribera (Director, IDDRI)