

# 13 EU GLOBAL STRATEGY EXPERT OPINION

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The fundamental priority of EU Global Strategy on foreign and security policy (EUGS) should be the defence of stability and prosperity that the EU has enjoyed since its inception, which is currently under existential threat.

69 years have passed since the adoption of the Treaty of Rome and it has been 27 years since the fall of communism in central and eastern Europe. Yet the EU is in no mood to celebrate, as it has never been as insecure and vulnerable as it is today.

When the EU adopted its first Security Strategy in 2003, its main concern was the stabilisation of its neighbourhood and the projection of its values around the globe. Today, with the European homeland facing multiple threats, the EU no longer has the luxury of focusing on promoting its vision and pressing its norms on others. Instead, the EU needs to concentrate on securing its own borders, deterring potential external aggressors and eliminating the threat of terrorism.

Should the EU fail to face up to these challenges

its very existence will be put in question. This will embolden external aggressors and Europeans themselves will become more susceptible to anti-EU rhetoric.

### Borders and terrorism

The threats and inadequacies that need to be addressed are all well-known and fall into three major areas – managing migration flows, securing the continent against terrorist threats, and deterring Russian aggression against EU member states.

Managing the influx of refugees and securing the EU's external borders are essential for the maintenance of freedom of movement inside the EU and the continued existence of the Schengen area. It is also vital if the rise of Eurosceptic and populist parties is to be stemmed. This will not be achieved without the serious efforts of all EU member states to secure the Union's external borders, especially to the south. At the very least, this would require regular contributions by all member states to border monitoring and border

patrol missions. It would also require the powers and resources of Frontex to be boosted.

The EU also needs to revisit the idea of creating European Border Guards, which should be urgently deployed to Greece and Italy. In the meantime, the networks and logistical capabilities of human traffickers should be hit and dismantled. Unfortunately, there is little time to apply these measures, as the end of winter is likely to see Europe hit by new waves of migrants.

The fight against terrorism requires efforts on many fronts. First and foremost, it requires greater coordination between counter-terrorism departments of the member states and enhancing the powers of the EU's counter-terrorism coordinator. Establishing trust between counter-terrorism bodies will take time and effort: left to their own devices, they tend to hide behind a veil of secrecy and follow their own familiar ways. The impetus to cooperate across borders must therefore come from the very top and be constantly monitored and encouraged.

The military campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is another vital aspect of counter-terrorism efforts. The EU does not have a direct role in this operation and it is difficult to foresee one being established in the future. However, since France invoked Article 42.7 of the Treaty of Lisbon following the attacks last November, the solidarity of all member states is required. It is essential that member states provide the resources and capabilities requested. Defeating ISIL in northern Iraq and Syria – or at least stopping its recruitment drives and slowing its momentum – would undoubtedly weaken terrorist cells operating in Europe.

## The Russian challenge

Finally, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, a conventional threat to EU territory is a real possibility. Following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its actions in eastern Ukraine, elements of hybrid warfare are being tested in

the Baltic states. At the same time, Russia is making regular incursions into the airspace and waters of northern member states. There is no denying that Russia's behaviour towards the EU's eastern flank is growing ever more

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In responding to the Russian challenge, it is important that the EU cooperates closely with NATO. With the July 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw set to discuss improving deterrence in eastern Europe, it is important that the alliance is supported by adequate EU measures – including the maintenance of sanctions as long as the Minsk agreement remains unfulfilled. The EU should also continue its efforts to diversify its energy mix away from Russia, which tends to use its energy dominance for political purposes.

The threats and challenges facing the EU are now far greater than they have ever been since the end of the Cold War. A failure to confront them now and act together would ultimately prove catastrophic for the Union.

