

World Inequality: A Challenge to Globalisation
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According to the EU Security Strategy, the best protection for Europe's security would be that we live in a world with well governed democratic states that respect human rights, that care about economic prosperity etc. The subtitle is "A secure Europe in a better world".

There are a number of global public goods to which everybody is entitled and which are in fact universal. The link with thinking of human security is that the individual is the point of reference. These goods are public. It is the responsibility of government at all different levels of authority, from the UN down to your local city council to make sure that individuals have access to these global public goods.

We can divide the global public goods in four categories: physical security, economic prosperity, political freedom (respect for human rights etc.), and social wellbeing (access to health services, education, a clean environment...). These dimensions are interlinked and they cannot be separated. The core of the EU thinking is that using an integrated or holistic approach looking at these four dimensions at the same time is needed.

There is of course a huge gap between those who have access to these global public goods and those who haven't. Addressing this gap should be the core task of the EU as a global actor. The fact that the gap exists means that the system of multilateral institutions, of states, NGOs, doesn't really work. They don't manage to create equality.

On the other hand, doing nothing about it, the system is being undermined by the gap. The negative consequences are that the have-nots are feeling excluded, marginalised. Radicalisation emerges. You there find the roots of conflicts within and between states, of massive migration, economic instability, etc. If the negative consequences become too large, the system might fail. This could result in a failed state or a failed region. In a very worst case scenario you can have a failed global system such as the situation during the crash of 1929. This is not the scenario of today, but it can happen.

It is necessary for Europe to deal with the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Europe is not an island! The main task is to define a policy of conflict prevention and stabilisation by addressing the root causes of instability which are inequality in access to these global public goods. In every foreign policy problem the four dimensions will be there and they must be addressed to achieve durable results. The problem will not be solved focussing exclusively on the hard security dimension, using only military instruments while ignoring the political economic background of a conflict!

Vice versa, if you wage a policy that is exclusively trade-oriented then again the problems will not be resolved. There is a need for a holistic approach.

Implementing the concept is difficult and we can point to three problems.

Waging a holistic policy means to coordinate between all the instruments of foreign policy. What we do in one policy area is sometimes contradictory to what we do in another policy area. For example our trade policies are not always in line with our development policies. Problems of coordination exist between the EU level and the level of Member States, as well

as between the Commission and the Council.

Has the rhetoric of the European Strategy really been mainstreamed throughout the EU operators? I am not sure that a functionary is always aware of the larger political picture and overall strategy. In this sense the new Lisbon Treaty creates interesting opportunities. By creating the European external action Service, which should bring together different parts of the apparatus dealing with different dimensions of foreign policy, it gives the EU the potential to increase coordination. Of course, this depends on how large the External Action Service will be. It is necessary to include the necessary services in the External Action Service; otherwise the exercise has no added value.

Second problem of implementation is double standards. The perception that the EU is applying double standards is a key problem. The EU often takes action when actors are not respecting human rights, don't make steps towards democracy and sometimes this is not the case for other actors. After fraudulent elections for example, the EU sometimes condemns the elections and in another case, the EU congratulates the president of that country. This is a problem. This is linked to the fact that the EU wants to speak with everybody. The EU thinks that through dialogue we can have more impact, but the dialogue cannot be uncritical. We need to find a balance, especially when we talk with authoritarian states, between continuing relations and at the same time being sufficiently critical.

Does the EU know what it wants? The holistic approach is important, but we should be aware that not all the objectives can be achieved simultaneously. Democratisation, enforcing human rights standards, respect for the rule of law etc. :is all that achievable? Is there not a certain dilemma between peace and stability on the one hand and wanting to change other states on the other hand? The EU has not yet decided for itself what it wants. If the EU is building a partnership with a country like Syria or now with the Central Asian states, will the EU give priority to stability or to democratisation? If the EU chooses the latter, does the EU have the instruments to achieve that and will it accept any instability that every change might bring?

A third remark is that the EU cannot do this all alone. It has to work with other multilateral organisations, which is very difficult. The EU as a comprehensive actor can, like a state, deal with all aspects of foreign affairs, while many multilateral organisation deal only with a specific part. NATO does security and defence, but it cannot do development, as it is discovering in Afghanistan for example. The coordination between these organisations could be better. Also, the degree of importance that the EU attaches to them is different. Surprisingly, the EU can manage to create enforceable standards, e.g. in the context of the WTO, where the EU is very good at creating liberalisation almost without conditionality. It seems to be more difficult to create equally enforceable standards in the International Labour Organisation. Could the EU make better use of the organisations that are better performing and where the enforceability is higher to build the holistic approach and to create the links between the political, social and security dimensions?

Finally, it is necessary to work with existing global actors (Russia, US) and emerging actors (China, India, Brazil). Here, the question rises whether they are convinced of the EU's comprehensive view? Further, the model the EU tries to export is not always seen as legitimate by the population. So, much more PR should be done.