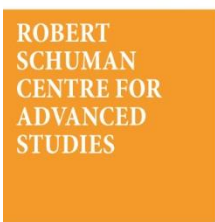




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The European Union: A New Security Actor?

Thomas Renard



European University Institute  
**Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies**  
Global Governance Programme

## **The European Union: A New Security Actor?**

Thomas Renard

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## **Abstract**

Security considerations were at the heart of the European project, but the European Union has started to develop fully-fledged security policies only in recent years. At this stage, the EU is a fledgling security actor, with limited capabilities and strategic clout. This paper analyses the EU's contribution across four key security functions. It concludes that in spite of global ambitions stated in various documents, the EU remains first and foremost a regional security player.

## **Keywords**

European Union, security, foreign policy, neighbourhood, strategic partners





The European Union (EU) is progressively emerging as a security player, in Europe and beyond. Over the last two decades, the EU institutions have been granted more powers in the security area, as well as an extended mandate to defend European interests and shape the EU's global profile. Yet, the EU remains a fledgling security actor. Despite global ambitions, its strategic reach does not extend decisively beyond its neighbourhood. This paper looks into the EU's strategic approach to global security and how it contributes to four key security functions, namely assurance, prevention, protection and compellence.<sup>1</sup>

## Security Challenges to the EU

International relations are evolving under the pressure of major trends, such as globalization which leads to growing global interdependence, and the multipolarization of the international system with the rise of new powers. This new global environment has witnessed the resurgence, evolution, or apparition of new security challenges. These challenges are more fluid and interconnected than ever before.<sup>2</sup> Yet, Europe considers that it has never been 'so secure nor so free'<sup>3</sup>, as goes the very first line of the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS). Peace among European people is generally perceived as the biggest achievement of the EU, and rightly so. This confident assessment is based on the assumption that the EU's territory is virtually safe from a conventional attack from any third country. In the words of the ESS, 'large-scale aggression against any member state is now improbable'<sup>4</sup>. This is due to Europe's own military strength as much as to the US security umbrella, through NATO and its article five. But above all, this assessment is based on the absence of any perceived strategic enemy. To be sure, countries like Russia and China are difficult, even troublesome interlocutors. The situation in Ukraine and the tensions resulting thereof between the EU and Russia are a stark reminder that 'strategic partners' can sometimes become a 'strategic challenge'. Yet, in all logic, we do not go at war against strategic partners.

This is not to say that Europeans can no longer wage war. In fact, European soldiers have been quite active over the last decade in foreign theatres such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali or Libya. European countries stand ready to fight for their interests where they lie, including far abroad. The EU itself has launched a certain number of operations. But all these operations have been essentially of unconventional nature (counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism, counter-piracy, peace-keeping, etc.) – nothing thus similar to a 'large-scale' conflict.

The EU may be an island of peace, but it certainly lies in an ocean of instability. Waves of this instability regularly hit the European shores, in the South and in the East. Europe's near and distant peripheries are still fragile, hence requiring some policing to preserve European interests abroad and to contain chaos outside of the EU's territory.

Potential sources of insecurity and instability have been identified by the EU in a series of strategic documents. The 2003 ESS, which is often seen as a guidebook for European global action, identifies a series of 'external' security challenges. First on the list comes terrorism, which 'puts lives at risk; it imposes large costs; it seeks to undermine the openness and tolerance of our societies, and it poses a growing strategic threat to the whole of Europe.' Second on the list comes the proliferation of

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is part of a broader ongoing project. Since this research is still work in progress, you should not hesitate to send your comments and suggestions to the author.

<sup>2</sup> Ries, T., (2012). *Insecurity in the Post-Liberal Age: Key Security Challenges of the Early Twenty-First Century*. In : Renard, T., Biscop, S., *The European Union and Emerging Powers in the 21st Century*. Surrey, England : Ashgate Publishing.

<sup>3</sup> Council of the EU, 2003. *A Secure Europe in a Better World*. European Security Strategy. Available at: <<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>> [Accessed 29 April 2014] p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), which ‘is potentially the greatest threat to our security.’ There is also a stated link between these two threats as ‘the most frightening scenario is one in which terrorist groups acquire weapons of mass destruction.’ The other threats mentioned in the ESS are (in order of appearance): regional conflicts, which have ‘impact on European interests directly and indirectly’; state failure, which ‘adds to regional instability’ and feed other threats; and organised crime, for which Europe is a ‘prime target’. In the 2008 Implementation Report of the ESS,<sup>5</sup> cyber-security was added to the list as a new source of concern and priority, given Europe’s modern economy vulnerability to cyber disorder, together with energy security and climate change, which are both becoming ever more urgent.

Security has also a major domestic dimension. As a result, Europe is peaceful but not necessarily safe. In the 2010 Internal Security Strategy (ISS)<sup>6</sup>, which was designed as the internal counterpart to the ESS, the EU identifies a series of *internal* security challenges. These challenges are not completely disconnected from the *external* ones, given that ‘internal security cannot be achieved in isolation from the rest of the world, and it is therefore important to ensure coherence and complementarity between the internal and external aspects of EU security.’ Hence, a certain redundancy appears between the challenges identified in both the ESS and ISS. Indeed, the ISS lists the following threats (in order of appearance): terrorism in any form, serious and organised crime, cyber-crime, cross-border crime, violence itself, natural and man-made disasters, and other items such as road traffic accidents. Comparing the internal and external security strategies, some challenges stand out as priority areas for the EU, either due to a high level of threat and urgency, or alternatively due to their ubiquity in both the internal and external security dimensions. These challenges are: non-proliferation, terrorism, organised crime and cyber-security. An assessment of the EU as a global security actor should therefore pay particular attention to these challenges, while not completely overlooking the others.

Most European citizens agree with the security priorities identified by the EU. Indeed, according to a Eurobarometer,<sup>7</sup> Europeans identify terrorism and organised crime as two of their top concerns. Cybersecurity, nuclear disasters and environmental degradation are also perceived as security challenges to a lesser extent – though cyber-crime is seen as an emerging challenge, likely to increase in the medium term. Looking more closely at these polls, it appears that perceptions vary widely across Europe. For instance, terrorism will be perceived as the most fundamental security challenge to Danes, Brits and Germans, whereas it appears less threatening to Bulgarians, Slovenians or Lithuanians. Organised crime is preoccupying Czech and Irish people, but less the French and Estonians. The lack of a common threat perception across Europe is not difficult to understand, as it is influenced by geographical, historical and cultural factors.

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<sup>5</sup> Council of the EU, 2008. *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy – Providing Security in a Changing World*. European Security Strategy. Available at: <[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104630.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104630.pdf)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>6</sup> European Council, 2010. *Internal Security Strategy for the European Union. Towards a European Security Model*. Available at: <[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/udocs/cms\\_data/librairie/PDF/QC3010313ENC.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/udocs/cms_data/librairie/PDF/QC3010313ENC.pdf)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>7</sup> European Commission, 2011. *Internal Security Report*. Eurobarometer 371. Available at: <[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_371\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_371_en.pdf)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

**Table 1: Comparing external and internal security challenges**

Threats listed by the ESS	Threats listed by the ISS
Terrorism	Terrorism
Proliferation of WMD	
Regional conflicts	
State failure	
Organised crime	Organised crime
Cyber-security	Cybercrime
Energy security	
Climate change	Natural and man-made disasters
	Border security

Another interesting lesson from such polls is that European citizens tend to have a broad understanding of security, as they feel mostly threatened by the economic and financial crises, or by poverty. Such results undoubtedly reflect the general context of austerity, but they should also serve as a reminder to policy-makers and policy-advisers that a comprehensive security policy should go beyond traditional security issues to encompass non-traditional issues and to bridge the gap with other policy areas and departments that often remain disconnected (e.g. trade, employment, environment, climate, etc.).

Finally, polls reveal that the EU's common foreign and security policy (CFSP) enjoys a wide support among European populations, and the support for the European defence policy (CSDP) is even higher, above 70 percent. Overall, a large majority of Europeans want the EU to exert 'strong leadership in world affairs'.<sup>8</sup> These figures indicate that the EU's global security policy enjoys a large popular legitimacy, which can then be translated into specific policies and concrete actions.

Public legitimacy is one thing, but strategic relevance is yet another. The EU's security policy should rely on updated threat assessments and strategic documents. This is not the case, particularly in the external dimension. Since the ESS and the ISS were published, some long term trends have further accelerated whereas major events have occurred. On the one hand, the economic crisis has exacerbated a certain amount of challenges and the way we look at them. For instance, Europol notes in its annual report on organised crime that criminal groups have successfully taken advantage of the economic context to adapt and develop their activities.<sup>9</sup> The economic crisis has also accelerated the transition towards a multipolar order, given that emerging powers resisted the crisis better than Western countries, while adding further constraints to European defence and security budgets. The rising multipolar configuration is a security challenge in itself, since destabilised regional and global orders are already triggering vivid tensions, which could turn into open conflict with negative consequences on European interests. The Asia-Pacific region is an obvious illustration of this: the rise of China gives way to confrontation, diplomatic and military manoeuvres, as well as a new arms race. Multipolarity is also further complicating the resolution of existing security challenges, as illustrated by the positions of Russia and China in the Syrian conflict. On the other hand, some international developments have fundamentally affected the EU's security posture. The Arab spring, deeply destabilizing the southern periphery of Europe, is clearly one such development. Syria, to take just one example, is now attracting large amounts of young fighters from European countries – much more than Afghanistan

<sup>8</sup> Data cited in Olivier de France, What EU citizens think about European defence. Available at: <<http://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/detail/article/what-eu-citizens-think-about-european-defence/>> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>9</sup> European Police Office, 2013. *SOCTA 2013, EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment*. Available at: <<https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/socta2013.pdf>> [Accessed 29 April 2014] p 6.

ever did.<sup>10</sup> The risk that these trained and radicalized youths could return to Europe and seek to do harm is not to be neglected.

The world is changing fast. Europeans should constantly reassess their security environment. For this reason, the EU's reluctance to re-initiate a reflection on its new strategic posture to confront an evolving internal and external security environments is fairly surprising. After all, most member states carry such exercises regularly. The French White Book and the British National Security Strategy are perfect instances thereof. Some scholars have openly called for such debate at the EU level,<sup>11</sup> and a pan-European reflection was even developed at the level of policy institutes, with the backing from Sweden, Poland, Spain and Italy.<sup>12</sup> But divergences of interests and threats perception between member states, as illustrated by the polls above, render this exercise highly difficult.

### **The Three Axioms of the EU's External Security Policy**

This section presents three key axioms. First, the EU's external security policy is built upon an implicit logic of 'concentric circles', according to which the closer neighbourhood matters more than the distant abroad – although these circles are somehow permeable and interconnected. Second, the EU's security policy approach is multi-layered. Indeed, it must accommodate a variety of co-existing security actors, although it can equally rely on them to develop an effective security policy. Finally, at the operational level, the EU has developed the so-called 'comprehensive approach'.

The EU's historical contribution to peace and security in Europe is well-known – for which it has even been granted a Nobel peace prize. The enlargement of the Union towards former Soviet republics remains in line with this major heritage. This policy is perhaps the EU's most absolute contribution to regional and global security. It has allowed the EU to expand in a peaceful and voluntary manner, making obsolete the concepts of colonialism and conquest. Countries that have joined the EU have developed positively, economically and politically. Overall, the European continent has become more prosperous and secure – even if imperfections subsist here and there. The EU's enlargement policy has not ended, and it continues to leverage a positive conditionality on candidate countries.<sup>13</sup> Yet, enlargement is not unproblematic. To begin with, it raises fundamental questions about the EU's identity – current and future. Europe's unique openness is perhaps indissociable from its own dilution and, henceforth, its possible decline. But more concretely, through enlargement, the EU has brought in new member states with different security concerns, while redrawing its borders and therefore changing its neighbourhood.

The EU's neighbourhood policy (ENP) was precisely crafted to deal with a new and challenging neighbourhood. It provided the EU with a framework and tools to promote its interests and manage security on its eastern and southern borders, beyond the traditional dichotomy of accession/non-accession that had started to show its limits. The ENP has long been criticized, but it is now cracking from all parts. To the East, the unfolding Ukrainian crisis is showing the limits of the EU's power, while highlighting geostrategic rivalry between Brussels and Moscow.. To the South, the so-called 'Arab spring' has fundamentally changed the socio-political landscape, and the regional security dimension has deteriorated into chaos in many places. The EU's inability to foresee and subsequently manage this grave situation on its borders was perhaps the most powerful signal that the ENP is not

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<sup>10</sup> Hegghammer, T., 2013. *Syria's Foreign Fighters*. Foreign Policy, 9 December 2013. Available at: <[http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/12/09/syrias\\_foreign\\_fighters](http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/12/09/syrias_foreign_fighters)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>11</sup> See notably Biscop, S. *The Value of Power, the Power of Values: A Call for an EU Grand Strategy*, Egmont Paper 33, Egmont Institute.

<sup>12</sup> See the European Global Strategy (EGS) initiative, Available at: <[www.euglobalstrategy.eu](http://www.euglobalstrategy.eu)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>13</sup> There are five candidate countries: Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

delivering. There is clearly a need to rethink this policy, with a view to making it more effective and, above all, more strategic. This would entail, among many things, to conceptualize the EU's neighbourhood not only as a border region, but also as a larger geopolitical area, with intricate challenges and developments. The EU has of course devised strategies for regions beyond its neighbourhood – such as the Sahel, Africa or Central Asia – but it consistently misses the broader geopolitical picture. In addition, Europe's neighbourhood is increasingly a theatre of conflicting interests between the EU and other powers, which constrain the EU's strategic *marge de manoeuvre*.<sup>14</sup>

Beyond its direct neighbourhood, the EU defines its strategic environment in terms of regions, sub-regions, and strategic partners. In Africa, for instance, the EU has a regional policy,<sup>15</sup> as well as a strategy for the Sahel<sup>16</sup> and another one for the Horn of Africa.<sup>17</sup> But the EU has also a strategic partnership with South Africa since 2007. The Asian continent, on the other hand, is divided between Central Asia<sup>18</sup> and East Asia,<sup>19</sup> thus somehow neglecting South- and Southeast Asia, while the EU has established strategic partnerships with Russia, China, India, Japan and South Korea.

The EU has thus organised the world according to three concentric circles: (1) candidate countries; (2) neighbourhood; and (3) the beyond-neighbourhood, including regions, sub-regions and strategic partners. It is interesting to note that the EU's categorization does not seem to allow overlap between circles, at least in principle. This prevents for instance Turkey (a candidate) or Ukraine (a neighbour) from becoming strategic partners, although they are sometimes closer to the idea of a strategic partner than some established partners. Within the third category, it is remarkable that some strategic partners are found in a region for which the EU has also a strategy (South Africa/Africa or China/East Asia, for instance), hence creating some redundancy which can lead to positive synergies, but also to confusion and the undermining of European efforts if bilateral and regional policies are not coordinated. Some other partners are not found in such 'strategic' regions (India or Mexico, for instance), which can equally be seen positively as a means to anchor the EU in a more distant region via a powerful partner, or negatively as strategically incoherent.

The main trouble with the third 'circle', however, is that it is so broad and vague that it does not provide with any sense of priority for the EU's global action, including its security policy. The various regional policies, to begin with, do not give any sense of geographic prioritization in the EU's external action. Whereas the US has clearly indicated its 'pivot' towards the Asia-Pacific, it remains unclear whether the EU intends to operate a similar re-orientation or not, and to which extent. In a similar manner, the number and diversity of the EU's strategic partnerships tarnish their strategic purpose. In security terms, it is obvious that some partners have more to offer than others. One cannot compare the US with South Africa or South Korea. The scope of these partnerships varies as well in practice, with some partners having primarily a regional clout and others a more global one. Both types of

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<sup>14</sup> Grevi, G. and Keohane, D., 2014. *Challenges for European foreign policy in 2014. The EU's extended neighbourhood*. Madrid: FRIDE.

<sup>15</sup> European Commission, 2005. *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee - EU Strategy for Africa - Towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa's development {SEC(2005)1255}*. Available at: <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52005DC0489:EN:NOT>> [Accessed 29 April 2014]; Council of the European Union, 2007. *The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. A Joint Africa-EU Strategy*. Available at: <[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/97496.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/97496.pdf)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>16</sup> EEAS. *Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel*. Available at: <[http://www.eeas.europa.eu/africa/docs/sahel\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/africa/docs/sahel_strategy_en.pdf)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>17</sup> Council of the European Union, 2011. *Council Conclusions on the Horn of Africa*. Available at: <[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126052.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126052.pdf)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>18</sup> Council of the European Union, 2009. *The European Union and Central Asia: The New partnership in Action*. Available at: <[http://eeas.europa.eu/central\\_asia/docs/2010\\_strategy\\_eu\\_centralasia\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/central_asia/docs/2010_strategy_eu_centralasia_en.pdf)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>19</sup> Council of the European Union, 2012. *Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia*. Available at: <[http://eeas.europa.eu/asia/docs/guidelines\\_eu\\_foreign\\_sec\\_pol\\_east\\_asia\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/asia/docs/guidelines_eu_foreign_sec_pol_east_asia_en.pdf)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

partnerships can prove important to the EU's security policy, depending on the objectives, but global partnerships are inevitably superior since they apply to the EU's actions in its neighbourhood, in the partner's region and in third regions altogether. Some partnerships appear also more difficult to handle than others. China and Russia are both major security actors, but a certain normative disconnect, competing visions of the world order and, more pragmatically, competing interests make security cooperation rather elusive. The transatlantic partnership appears more natural. The US contribution to European security has been essential since the Second World War. The US umbrella has in fact reached well beyond European territories, through NATO regional and global contributions, but also through direct US contributions to security in the EU's extended neighbourhood. The EU-US partnership is not unproblematic, however. As many European countries have been able to free-ride on US security guarantees, the incentives for crafting an autonomous European security policy were diminished.<sup>20</sup> Today, the transatlantic security community is still often pictured as a 'followship' more than a fellowship. The 2012 joint statement on the Asia-Pacific region<sup>21</sup> was largely perceived, in Asia, as yet another sign of European bandwagoning and inability to devise an autonomous security policy for the region.<sup>22</sup>

The complex interactions between the EU's (sub-)regional policies and its bilateral partnerships illustrate a second dimension of the EU's global strategic approach: multi-level engagement. The EU can of course act bilaterally. In the security realm, the EU might not be a full-fledged actor yet, but that does not prevent Brussels from establishing joint dialogues, carry joint exercises or implement joint programmes with third countries, including its strategic partners.<sup>23</sup> Bilateral practices complement broader (inter-)regional efforts in which the EU cooperates with regional partners, such as the African Union or ASEAN. The regional approach is deeply embedded into the EU's genes, but it is insufficient to fulfil the EU's global security objectives due to the lack of regional integration worldwide and the limited security role of these organisations. Above all, the EU favours 'effective multilateralism'. In its 2003 ESS, the EU stated that it wants 'international organisations, regimes and treaties to be effective in confronting threats to international peace and security'. This multilateral approach was meant to be a distinctive feature of the EU's security policy, in contrast to the US approach. After all, the ESS was drafted in the context of the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq. If one adds the role of EU member states at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, we get the picture of the EU's complex multi-level security engagement.

Finally, at the operational level, the EU's approach to security is characterized by an attempt to combine civilian (including law enforcement, but also diplomacy) and military tools. This is called the 'comprehensive approach' in EU jargon, which was designed to best deal with complex security situations in their different stages.<sup>24</sup> This was also a manner for the EU to assert its ability to do both civilian *and* military operations, particularly as it profiles itself as a rising security actor.

## Analysis of the Four Security Policies

This section assesses the EU's role as a global security provider. Drawing from the analytical framework established by Kirchner and Sperling, we look at the EU's contribution to four key security

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<sup>20</sup> Kagan, R., 2002. Power and Weakness. *Policy Review* 113 (June–July 2002).

<sup>21</sup> US Department of State, 2012. *US-EU Statement on the Asia-Pacific Region*. Available at: <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/07/194896.htm>> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>22</sup> Van der Putten, P., F., 2013. *The European Union and decreasing regional stability in East and South –East Asia*. Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, March 2013. Available at: <[http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20130326\\_noref\\_putten.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20130326_noref_putten.pdf)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>23</sup> See the series of papers on 'EU strategic partnerships and transnational threats' published by the European Strategic Partnerships Observatory (ESPO), available online: [www.strategicpartnerships.eu](http://www.strategicpartnerships.eu).

<sup>24</sup> Drent, M. and D. Zandee, 2010. *Breaking Pillars*, Clingendael Institute.

functions, namely assurance, prevention, protection and compellence. Within the analysis of each security function, we make a distinction between the EU's regional and global policies, in line with the 'concentric circles' identified above and the EU's stated global ambitions.

### ***Assurance***

Over the last decade, the EU has launched nine civilian missions under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to foster security in its neighbourhood. The first such mission was the EU police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from January 2003 to December 2009. The objective of this mission was to assist in establishing a professional police and criminal justice system. All member states contributed to this mission which had a total budget of €122 million, and more than 500 staff deployed at peak time of the mission. Another police mission was carried out in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia from 2003 to 2006, although more modest in staff and budget. Other EU missions in the neighbourhood included: two rule-of-law mission, in Georgia (2004-2005, €2 million) and in Kosovo (since 2008, more than €500 million) to assist with the development and the reform of the criminal justice system; three border assistance missions, in Moldova-Ukraine (since 2005, €80 million), in Palestinian territories (since 2005, €20 million) and in Libya (since 2013, €30 million) to advice border guards and customs officials; one police mission in Palestinian territories (since 2005, €35 million); and one monitoring mission in Georgia (since 2008, €75 million) to ensure the conflict parties compliance with the 2008 six-point agreement that ended the war with Russia. Overall, the EU has thus spent close to €1 billion, with a deployable strength of about 3000 civilian personnel. If the scope of missions varies, the geographical scope is mostly limited to the EU's eastern neighbourhood, the only exception being Libya.<sup>25</sup> However, this does not mean that the EU has completely ignored its southern neighbourhood. Several projects were launched under the security pillar of the so-called Barcelona process, framing relations among Mediterranean neighbours. Several millions were spent to reinforce the justice system of these countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean (EuroMed Justice) and to facilitate cooperation between police forces around the Mediterranean basin (EuroMed Police).<sup>26</sup> In addition to this, between 1994 and 2013, the EU has carried out eight election observation missions in what constitutes its current neighbourhood. These missions were also mostly in the East, with Tunisia (2011) and Libya (2012) as the two exceptions.<sup>27</sup>

Beyond its neighbourhood, the EU has launched five CSDP civilian missions at the global level. These missions included: two police missions, in Congo (2005-2007, €11 million) and in Afghanistan (since 2007, €258 million); one rule of law mission in Iraq (2005-2013, €60 million); one monitoring mission in Aceh (2005-2006, €15 million); and one capacity-building mission in Niger (since 2012, €24 million) to reinforce regional capacities in the Sahel to deal with terrorism and organised crime. There have thus been less civilian missions in the world than in the narrower European neighbourhood. The EU has also spent only half the money it spent in its neighbourhood on similar missions, with a deployable strength of approximately 600 personnel. In terms of election observation missions, however, the EU has been extremely active at the global level. It organised more than 100 missions in the world since 1994, on every continent, but with a high concentration in sub-Saharan Africa.

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<sup>25</sup> EEAS, 2014. *Ongoing Missions and Operations*. Available at: <[http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/index_en.htm)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>26</sup> EEAS, 2014. *Euromed*. Available at: <[http://www.eeas.europa.eu/euromed/index\\_en.htm](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/euromed/index_en.htm)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>27</sup> EEAS, 2014. *EU Elections observation missions*. Available at: <[http://eeas.europa.eu/eucom/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/eucom/index_en.htm)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

## **Prevention**

At the regional level, the EU is a major development actor. The enlargement process has largely contributed to regional development. The economic trajectory of a country like Poland, which joined the EU in 2004, is the perfect example thereof. In addition to this ‘collateral’ development policy, the EU is a key regional aid donor. Its regional ODA is channelled through two specific instruments called the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI), which had a budget of €12 billion for 2007-13 (or €1,4 billion in 2011), and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), with a budget of €1,2 billion in 2011. Turkey and Serbia – two candidate countries – are the main recipients of EU ODA. In many neighbouring countries, this aid represents a significant part of the overall financial assistance to the state. The EU’s aid is complemented, and sometimes surpassed, by aid from its member states. For instance, France is the main donor in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Spain and Germany are two other important aid actors in the Mediterranean. These national contributions make the overall European aid to its neighbourhood even more preponderant – although it should be said that not all neighbouring countries are equally dependent upon aid in general, and upon European aid more specifically.<sup>28</sup> Beyond aid, the EU has been an active player in prevention at the regional level. The new European External Action Service (EEAS) and its chief Catherine Ashton had a rough start, with unrest in the Arab world. Since then, however, the EU has scored some diplomatic successes by meeting with ousted Egyptian leader Mohamed Morsi in July 2013, or by sealing a deal between Serbia and Kosovo in December of the same year. In a 2011 joint communication, the EU’s High Representative and the European Commission pledged to ‘enhance’ the EU’s involvement in solving protracted conflicts in its neighbourhood.<sup>29</sup> Yet, the eruption of new crises on the Eastern (Ukraine) and Southeastern (Syria) borders of Europe, and the EU’s apparent inability to address them promptly and decisively has once again questioned its role as a regional security actor. The EU’s discreet diplomatic role in Syria was somewhat counter-balanced by increased aid and the additional funding (€12 million) channelled to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for the destruction of chemical weapons.

At the global level, the EU is also a major development actor. Its overall ODA was €13,6 billion in 2012. Excluding the neighbourhood, the main recipient region is sub-Saharan Africa, which receives about a third of all EU assistance money. Together with its member states, the EU spends more than €50 billion on aid annually – making Europe the main global donor, accounting for half the aid to developing countries.<sup>30</sup> Naturally, this hides discrepancies between major donors (in proportional terms) such as Luxembourg, Sweden or Denmark, and marginal ones such as newer member states.<sup>31</sup> Having said this, spending 0,42 percent of its GNI on ODA, the EU is still far from its 0,7 percent development aid target. With regard to mediation, the EU’s diplomatic efforts with Iran over its alleged nuclear programme seem to be moving in the right direction, and the EU remains in the driving seat, although the road remains long and bumpy. Finally, as said earlier in this paper, the EU has identified non-proliferation as a major security challenge. As a result, it is active in a number of forums and organisations. It is also a major funder of many initiatives or organisations, such as the OPCW or the G8 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. Although the EU sees the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone of its

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<sup>28</sup> Kausch, K. 2013. The end of the (Southern) neighbourhood. Papers IEMed 18, *European Institute of the Mediterranean*.

<sup>29</sup> EU. 2011. *A new response to a changing neighbourhood: a review of European neighbourhood policy*. Joint communication by the High Representative of the Union for foreign affairs and security policy and the European Commission, Brussels, 25 May.

<sup>30</sup> European Commission, 2013. *Commission Communication "Beyond 2015 - towards a comprehensive and integrated approach to financing poverty eradication and sustainable development" and EU Accountability Report 2013 on Financing for Development*. Available at: <[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/development-policies/financing\\_for\\_development/accountability\\_report\\_2013\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/development-policies/financing_for_development/accountability_report_2013_en.htm)> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

<sup>31</sup> For all ODA figures, see: <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLE1#>



external action, it has developed bilateral cooperation with a certain number of strategic partners, such as the US, Canada, Japan or South Korea.<sup>32</sup>

### **Protection**

Terrorism is another key security challenge identified by the EU. The threat is particularly acute in its southern neighbourhood, with direct ramifications on Europe's internal security. The EU has thus deployed a certain amount of efforts to bolster counter-terrorism capacities in this region and to enhance cooperation across the Mediterranean. The EU's Sahel strategy had an important counter-terrorism component, and embryonic efforts have been initiated through missions in Niger and Mali. Several of the EuroMed initiatives are also directly related to counter-terrorism (see part on *assurance*). At the bilateral level, the EU has funded a regional counter-terrorism centre in Algeria, and it seeks to deepen its counter-terrorism cooperation with this pivotal partner.<sup>33</sup> Having said this, major hindrances remain. To begin with, the EU remains a marginal actor in this field and the member states carry most of the work – following their own priorities and agenda. More importantly, given that the various protracted conflicts in the Near East (Israel-Palestine, Lebanon, Syria) are continuously fostering terrorism, it is difficult to envision an effective EU counter-terrorism policy without a coherent broader external policy vis-à-vis these conflicts. The challenge of organised crime is partly related to the terrorism challenge in the southern neighbourhood. Indeed, there are many evidences of a merging of criminal and (the financing of) terrorist activities in the Sahel region. Organised crime is also a major challenge in the Eastern neighbourhood. The EU has developed some structures to address this challenge, such as Europol, Eurojust, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), Frontex (the external borders management agency), the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), or the Commission's Anti-Trafficking Coordinator. Among these structures, Europol and Frontex have seen their activities increase significantly in the last few years. Europol is now in charge of cyber-crime, for instance. In 2013, with an annual budget of €90 million, Frontex has become an important actor in Europe's protection policy. Overall, despite a limited role in the fight against organised crime, the EU is increasingly cooperating with some strategic partners, bilaterally, and it is one of the main funder of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).<sup>34</sup>

Beyond the neighbourhood, the EU aims to contributing to global counter-terrorism efforts, according to its 2005 strategy.<sup>35</sup> Although the EU's role remains modest, it has become increasingly active on a global scale. At the multilateral level, it has been a staunch promoter of the UN conventions, and the two organisations meet annually to discuss counter-terrorism issues. But the EU has also developed bilateral partnerships, with the US mainly, but also with other strategic partners such as Canada, Japan or South Korea.<sup>36</sup> With regard to the geographical scope of its policy, Brussels has identified a number of priority countries and regions: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, the Horn of Africa, in addition to the neighbouring Maghreb and the Sahel.<sup>37</sup> Similarly to counter-terrorism, the EU's global activities against organised crime and to enhance cyber-security have been developed over the last decade, but the EU remains a fledgling actor in these areas.

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<sup>32</sup> Renard T. 2013. Partnering for a nuclear-safe world: the EU, its strategic partners and nuclear non-proliferation. *ESPO Working Paper 3, European Strategic Partnerships Observatory*.

<sup>33</sup> De Kerchove, G. 2014. *EU 'looking forward to deepening counter-terrorism cooperation with Algeria'*, theparliament.com, 29 January.

<sup>34</sup> Renard, T. 2014. Partners in crime? The EU, its strategic partners and organised crime. *ESPO Working Paper 5, European Strategic Partnerships Observatory* (forthcoming).

<sup>35</sup> Council of the EU. 2005. *The European Union counter-terrorism strategy*, Brussels, 30 November.

<sup>36</sup> Renard, T. 2014. Confidential partnerships? The EU, its strategic partners and international terrorism. *ESPO Working Paper 4, European Strategic Partnerships Observatory*.

<sup>37</sup> Council of the EU. 2011. *Council conclusions on enhancing the links between internal and external aspects of counter-terrorism*, Luxembourg, 9-10 June.

European member states remain the real players in these fields. EU efforts have taken place at the multilateral and bilateral levels, with the transatlantic partnership remaining always a key element of Europe's global security policy. Finally, with regard to health security, the EU makes a significant financial contribution to the World Health Organisation (WHO) annually, and it also contributes more modestly to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

### **Compellence**

The EU has launched two CSDP military operations in its neighbourhood. The first one was in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2003, €6,2 million) with a view to contributing to a stable and secure environment with a force of 350 military personnel. The second operation is still being carried out in Bosnia-Herzegovina (since 2004, €71 million) to maintain peace and stability with a force that went down from 7000 in 2004 to 600 in 2013. The EU is also active via its member states in the main UN peacekeeping operation in its neighbourhood, UNIFIL in Lebanon, where it provides more than a third of troops on the ground (3632 out of 10585 military), mostly coming from France and Italy.

In addition to its regional peacekeeping role, the EU has been active worldwide with eight CSDP military operations. These operations included: three military operations to maintain peace and stability, i.e. Operation Artemis in RD Congo (2003, €7 million), EUFOR RD Congo (2006, €23 million for common costs) and one operation in Tchad/RCA (2008-2009, €120 million for common costs); two security sector reform missions, in RD Congo (since 2005, €45 million), and in Guinea-Bissau (2008-2010, €5,6 million); two armed forces training missions, in Mali (since 2013, €23 million), and in Somalia (since 2010, €11,6 million); and one naval operation in the Gulf of Aden (since 2008, €40 million for common costs). There were also two modest civilian-military supporting actions to African Union operations in the Darfur and in Somalia. Altogether, this means that the EU was able to deploy close to 10.000 military personnel over the past decade, mostly on the African continent. To this specific EU contribution to global security, one could add the large member states contributions to the various UN and NATO operations, as well as military operations carried by a coalition of member states, such as most recently in Libya or in Central Africa Republic. At the multilateral level, EU member states are not major troops contributors to UN missions, but they cover 40% of the UN budget for peacekeeping operations.

### **Assessment**

First, the EU still punches below its weight. Indeed, according to its own rhetoric, it has the ambition to become a global power, with the ability to promote and defend its interests worldwide. It has also a tendency to depict itself as a benevolent power, or as a provider of global public goods including security. Illustrating this self-perception, the 2003 ESS recognized that the EU is a global player, which 'should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security'. But in spite of a series of important developments in the past decade, the EU remains first and foremost a regional power with regard to security policy. The EU's assurance and protection policies indicate a heavier emphasis on the neighbourhood. Beyond its region, the EU seems to be mostly oriented towards sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle-East in all four security functions studied above. This suggests that, contrary to its American partner, the EU has not 'pivoted' its security policy towards the Asia-Pacific yet. In fact, some European scholars take the counter-point to common discourses on 'global Europe', and recommend the EU to leave Asia's boiling troubles at bay, to focus better on its own troubled neighbourhood.<sup>38</sup> One can thus conclude that, to a certain extent, the scope of the EU's security policy

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<sup>38</sup> See for instance Holslag, J. (2012), *Crowded, connected and contested: security and peace in the Eurasian sea and what it means for Europe* (Brussels: Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies), available at:

diminishes with distance. Having said this, it should be noted that some countries on the ‘outer concentric circles’ play a significant role – as partners or competitors – in the ‘inner concentric circles’ of the EU’s external action. This is particularly true for the US, China and Russia, but also for some other strategic partners of the EU.

Second, the EU is a nascent security actor. The basic ‘structures’ of the EU’s security policy, i.e. the CFSP and the CSDP, were only established in the 1990s. These structures continue to be further developed, but they remain largely below the expectations of many Europeans, including EU citizens as mentioned above. The first CSDP operation was only launched in 2003 and all the following operations have remained of relatively small scale. There have also been a certain number of missed opportunities for CSDP as well, in Libya or in Mali for instance where some European member states acted outside the EU framework, whereas some available capabilities such as the EU battlegroups continue to be simply ignored. Beyond CSDP, the EU is also an emerging player in cyber-security, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, or the fight against organised crime. Since 2003, it has adopted ambitious strategies to cope with all these security challenges, but it remains essentially a marginal actor. As a result of all this, the EU is not yet perceived as a security player in most regions of the world. A lot of work has still to be done internally before Brussels can really start shaping the global security environment.

Third, the EU is not the sole regional security actor. NATO and the OSCE, to name just these two institutions, play an important role in regional security – and even beyond for NATO. Mechanisms of cooperation have been developed, such as the EU-NATO Berlin Plus agreement that allows the EU to draw on NATO’s assets. There are certainly enough security challenges in the region for these organisations to co-exist for a little while longer, but the spirit of competition between them is clearly counter-productive.<sup>39</sup> Another major security actor in Europe is the US, which remains extremely present in regional security despite its ‘pivot’ to Asia. This security role is visible through NATO, but also in the US engagement in the European neighbourhood, or less visibly through intelligence cooperation with its European counterparts. Eventually, the main actors in regional security remain European states, and more specifically France and the UK. For instance, the 10.000 troops deployed over a decade of CSDP contrast with the 21.000 French soldiers deployed in 2013.<sup>40</sup> Security capabilities remain thus in the hands of national governments, which can then decide to use them in various frameworks. As one security actor among others in Europe, the EU finds it extremely challenging to define a security policy that is bold enough to be autonomous from the US and NATO, but consensual enough to count on the support from its member states – which have sometimes divergent interests. This tricky exercise has led to the so-called multi-level engagement, which was our second axiom.

Finally, we observe that if the EU is a nascent security actor, it is not necessarily a fundamentally different one in its operational approach to security. Indeed, it has resorted to civilian and military means in its various policies, but there have been very few instances of ambitious civ-mil operations in the past decade. CSDP means have also entirely neglected for less traditional tasks, such as counter-terrorism or cyber-security.

(Contd.) \_\_\_\_\_

[http://www.vub.ac.be/biccs/site/assets/files/Jonathan%20misc/201210%20%20Crowed,%20connected,%20and%20contested%20\(final\).pdf](http://www.vub.ac.be/biccs/site/assets/files/Jonathan%20misc/201210%20%20Crowed,%20connected,%20and%20contested%20(final).pdf)

<sup>39</sup> See Bailes, A.J.K., J-Y. Haine and Z. Lachowski, 2008. Reflections on the OSCE-EU relationship. In *OSCE Yearbook 2007, Yearbook on the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe*, Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlag, pp. 65-77.

<sup>40</sup> Ministère de la défense, 2014. Available at: <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/> [Accessed 29 April 2014].

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