

# In Search of a European Strategy? From a Normative to a Pragmatic Approach

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In June 2015, the European Council assigned Federica Mogherini, the former High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission (HR/VP), to draw up a new strategy on foreign and security policy for the European Union (Legrand, 2016, p.4). This request was based on the need to update the previous European Security Strategy (ESS) prepared in 2003 by the then HR Javier Solana (European Council, 2003). The revision of the strategy drafted thirteen years earlier was dictated by radical changes in the international situation and within the European Union itself. Even before 2015, there was a need for a renewed EU foreign policy strategy to move resolutely in the international scene (Pishchikova and Piras, 2017, p.103). The drafting of the Global Strategy began with the assessment of the strategic environment. This evaluation observed a complete change of the European and global context. (Tocci, 2016, p.462-465). The process of designing the new strategy took about one year to be completed. During this period, another event shook the European landscape. The referendum held in the United Kingdom on leaving the European Union on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 surprisingly sanctioned the start of the EU exit process of a key economic as well as military actor. Only five days later, on June 28<sup>th</sup>, the final strategic document was presented to the European Council (Tocci, 2016, p.470-471). The document entitled “Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe” became the new Global Strategy for the European Union (EUGS) (EU HR/VP, 2016). Although it was presented contemporaneously to the clamorous result of the British referendum, the new strategy was well received by the European institutions and countries. Once published, the EUGS became the centre of several academic reflections.

The existing literature on the ESS, the first strategic document drafted in 2003, and on the EUGS, published in 2016, mainly covers five points in confronting them. The first one is a discourse analysis, starting from the political values and concepts the strategies convey. The second is the impact of the European strategy on security and defence cooperation between the EU and NATO. The third point of debate is the analysis of the different processes which allowed the creation of the EU’s strategies. The fourth area of the debate revolves around the consequences of the publication of these documents. Finally, as fifth point, existing literature examines the extent of the actual implementation of both strategic documents. Many issues are being debated, however, this essay will only focus on one which is not been discussed. Although the general processes and purposes of the Union may lead to the conclusion that the two strategies are similar, differences prevail. The essay will highlight this aspect and search for factors from which it originates. The central question is “Which are the main differences between the ESS and the EUGS, and which factors determined them?” In order to answer this question, the essay is structured as follows. The first section will examine which are the main formal and substantial differences and similarities, between the ESS and the EUGS. The second part will deal with the “why” question. It will clarify which were the main endogenous and exogenous factors leading to the first EU’s strategic paper in 2003. The same will be done to understand how a change in these factors led to the new EUGS. This structure will clarify the divergence between the two strategies. Furthermore, it will be understood whether these differences originate from a change in conditions within the EU or mainly from the changed international context. Moreover, answering the central question of this essay is important in the long-term framework of the European Union’s foreign and defence policy. In fact, to highlight what changed in the document setting out the guidelines of the European strategy and why allows us to better understand what challenges the Union expects to face in the future. Furthermore, it gives us an important indication of the political direction the European institutions see as the best way to deal with them.

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## ESS and EUGS: Similarities and Differences

The EU's strategic documents are characterized by some similarities and multiple differences. This paragraph will deal with the identification of these elements. The methodology used is based on the textual analysis of the documents and the academic secondary literature on the subject. Particularly, it is with reference to the EUGS, compared to the previous ESS, that the most interesting elements can be found. Similarities and differences are linked to formal elements of the documents, such as the articulation and drafting process, or to elements that can be defined as substantial, therefore linked to the ideas presented in the text.

The comparison between the ESS and the EUGS reveals four similarities. The first is the intention to promote the emergence of a common narrative for the European Union. In both 2003 and 2016, albeit in a profoundly different context, the aim was to clarify shared priorities and strategic directions, hence relaunching European unity (Tocci, 2017, p.489). The ESS and in particular the EUGS can be seen as identity-building exercises. The identity is built in the EUGS by taking a certain distance from the exclusive identification of the Union as a normative power. The ESS did the same by placing, for the first time, the emphasis on the starting process of militarisation of the EU's external action (Pishchikova and Piras, 2017, p.110-117).

The second element of similarity can be found in their reference to conflict and crisis resolution. In fact, the ESS refers to the fact that "[...] none of the new threats is purely military; nor can any be tackled by purely military means. Each requires a mixture of instruments." (European Council, 2003, p.17). This concept is also made explicit in the form of a "comprehensive approach" in the EUGS (Tocci, 2017, p.497). Indeed, in the EUGS it is reported that "Implementing a multi-dimensional approach through the use of all available policies and instruments aimed at conflict prevention, management and resolution is essential" (EU HR/VP, 2016, p.28).

Regarding the third point, both strategies underline the fundamental role of the relationship between the EU and NATO. The ESS refers to the Atlantic alliance as crucial for the international system (European Council, 2003, p.9). In this regard, the EUGS is placed in continuity with the previous strategy, rejecting any hypothesis of competition between the EU and NATO and rather underlining their complementarity. Indeed, it is highlighted how to improve the credibility of the European defence is to the advantage of the Transatlantic relationship itself (Legrand, 2016, p.15).

Finally, the fourth point is the promotion of a multilateral international system. In this respect, continuity can be traced in the European commitment to promoting the multilateral international system that is centred on the United Nations. The difference lies in the notion that while the focus in 2003 seemed to be on preserving the system, the approach in 2016 is more transformative. There is a reference to the need to reform the United Nations. Indeed, it is proposed to increase the UN's representativeness to strengthen its relevance (Tocci, 2017, p.497). Finally, both documents necessitated a negotiation phase during their drafting (Tocci, 2017, p.491). However, to more careful analysis, this seemingly formal similarity results in a significant difference in the process that gave birth to the documents.

Despite the similarities previously outlined, the differences that can be noted are preponderant. There are four groups of differences. A first group concerns more formal aspects of the strategies. The ESS is significantly shorter and less articulated than the EUGS. Indeed, the ESS has not been designed as an actionable document. Although some policy guidance is given in the final section of ESS, this aspect is addressed more in detail in the EUGS. The 2003 strategy focuses more on outlining the role and vision of the Union. On the other hand, the Global Strategy extensively examines how the EU should achieve its strategic objectives (Tocci, 2017, p.499-500). Indeed, the EUGS is a more policy-oriented document. In its final part, entitled "from vision to action" (EU HR/VP, 2016, p.41-51), the document outlines all possible policy means of implementing the strategy. In doing so, it involves all the institutions established by the Lisbon Treaty. It promotes a "joined-up approach" (EU HR/VP, 2016, p.52). All EU institutions should participate in external actions, notably the Office of the High Representative and the European External Action Service (EEAS). Moreover, in line with the ESS, the process of drafting the document has been centralized, in this case in the office of the High Representative and more generally in the framework of the EEAS. Despite this, the negotiation and consultation process has been much broader for the EUGS than for the ESS (Barbé and Morillas, 2019, p.10-11). In 2003, the strategy was written in a few weeks by a small group of people. Three seminars were held before discussing the document with the Political and Security Committee and then adopted by

# In Search of a European Strategy? From a Normative to a Pragmatic Approach

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the European Council. As reported by Natalie Tocci, who was responsible for the drafting of the EUGS, the process in 2016 was more complex. They wanted a strategy as shared as possible. For this reason, there were also extensive consultations with the representatives of the EU member states. Moreover, numerous conferences, consultations with NGOs, meetings with representatives of NATO and discussions with foreign countries such as the USA, Japan, Brazil, and Georgia were held. Finally, as a consequence of the Lisbon Treaty, both the Commission and the Council were involved in the process (Tocci, 2017, p.491-492).

On the other hand, the second group of differences refers to the most important and substantial ones, the change from a normative to a pragmatic approach. Indeed, a novelty of the EUGS is the approach that should guide the Union's foreign policy. This is clearly stated, "Principled pragmatism will guide our external action in the years ahead." (EU HR/VP, 2016, p.8). This concept indicates that the EU should act guided by its liberal values, but then adapt its foreign policy actions to existing circumstances and power balances. This is called a pragmatic approach. This must be based on a realistic assessment of the international scene. Consequently, after assessing costs and benefits, the EU should choose which strategy to apply to achieve the desired results (Juncos, 2017, p.1-13). As defined by Nathalie Tocci, this does not mean that the Union should undermine its guiding principles. Respect for human rights and international law remain the cornerstones, but the reality outside of the Union must be understood to promote them (Tocci, 2017, p.499). According to Biscop, this is a return to Realpolitik as defined by Ludwig von Rochau in 1853. In other words, it is a question of rejecting liberal utopianism without rejecting its principles. This concept is at the basis of the increased realism of this strategy compared to the ESS. In fact, in that document, optimism about the spread of democratic principles was still strong and the approach was more imbued with ideals. This change in the EUGS is reflected in other concepts such as security and resilience (Biscop, 2017, p.1-2). The pragmatic approach is a big reassessment of the transformative scope of the EU's external action as expressed in 2003. The vision of the Union as a civil power and promoter of liberal values is well exemplified by the title of the ESS itself. "A secure Europe in a better world" (European Council, 2003) reveals the transformative approach of European external action. This approach to international relations outlined in the ESS has been at the heart of the European Union's definition as a unique international player. In this sense, Ian Manners defines it as a normative power. This is due to its propensity to act in a normative way. This is due to the historical and political context in which the process of integration originated, leading to the establishment of a supranational body that uses its political and legal foundations as a guarantee of peace and stability. Using different methods of diffusion of its norms in the international context, the Union acts to change the international system influencing its normative system (Manners, 2002). Mario Telò, on the other hand, defines the EU as a civilian power. In fact, it is not currently possible to predict its future as a military power because of the many internal differences between member states and their different attitude towards military means. At the same time, the Union acts in the economic and social spheres of the international system, preferring multilateral forums. Examples of this civilian inclination are general support for the UN, the promotion of the Kyoto Protocol and the innovation of the International Criminal Court (Telò, 2007). In general, the priorities that Europe intends to promote include good governance in neighbouring regions, regionalism and multilateralism. In particular, the first is the core of these transformative proposals, which then was translated into the ENP. Therefore, the ESS proposes external action as a means of ensuring security within the Union. On the contrary, the EUGS puts the internal security of the Union and its citizens first. The transformative scope of external action is diminished and the need to make Europe stronger and strategically more independent is underlined. In a Europe that feels more threatened, the importance of promoting the Union's values to ensure international security gives way to a bottom-up approach, protecting European citizens. In the same way, integration gives way to cooperation. (Barbé and Morillas, 2019, p.5-9). The Union "will not strive to export our model, but rather seek reciprocal inspiration from different regional differences" (EU HR/VP, 2016, p.32). In a nutshell, if in 2003 the EU was trying to shape the world, thirteen years later it adapts to it in the light of a more conflictual geopolitical situation.

Linked to the second, there is a third difference concerning the security concept. In the first document, the security mission had a more normative and general scope. It stressed that the main threats to security, such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and criminal organisations, required EU action at the global level. In the EUGS, the focus is more, in line with the pragmatic approach, on taking responsibility for security within the Union and in its neighbouring regions. The optimistic prospect of a strategic partnership with Russia in 2003 leaves room for a more pessimistic one in 2016, as a result of the Ukrainian crisis. The EUGS also refers to the need for developing the EU's cyber-actor dimension. The EU must be able to improve its cybersecurity capabilities and defend free access to the

# **In Search of a European Strategy? From a Normative to a Pragmatic Approach**

Written by Luca Nicosia

Internet (Mälksoo, 2016, p.180-181). Another difference is how security is related to development. Indeed, if the ESS indicated security as a precondition for development (European Council, 2003, p.2), in the EUGS the relationship is reversed. Development is identified as a useful tool to promote resilience and therefore security for the Union (Wagner and Anholt, 2016, p.416). Indeed, the EUGS lacks the reference to military crisis resolution through decisive intervention which exists in the ESS. Rather, the military means are seen as a possible complement to other approaches (Tocci, 2017, p.497).

Finally, the pragmatic and less transformative approach results in the emergence of the concept of resilience. This concept, which was absent in 2003, is repeatedly recalled along the EUGS (Wagner and Anholt, 2016, p.414). The concept of resilience as understood in the EUGS is based on the recognition of the complex and uncertain current state of international affairs. For this reason, the Union should have a different goal, compared to the past, in its interaction with non-EU regions. Instead of external coercive intervention, the resilience approach aims to develop the internal capacities of such regions. Pure regulatory conditionality is to be replaced by a more pragmatic approach. Resilience should be promoted in cooperation with any public or private strategic partner (Juncos, 2017, p.4-12). Leveraging the promotion of institutional, political and social development of EU partners improves their security and ultimately protects the EU itself. In opposition to the optimism of the ESS which aimed to protect communities from the outbreak of the crisis, the strategy now accepts their existence. For this reason, it proposes the development of internal capacities aimed at minimizing their negative effects (Wagner and Anholt, 2016, p.425-426). In doing so, there is less emphasis on democracy and democratisation than in 2003. For instance, if the difficulty in democratising Egypt is acknowledged, cooperation should not be excluded. However, undemocratic countries are defined as fragile in the long run and democracy is identified as a positive value in neighbouring countries such as Tunisia and Georgia (Biscop, 2016, p.2).

## **The ESS and the EUGS between the influence of endogenous and exogenous factors**

In the previous section, the analysis of differences and similarities between the ESS and the EUGS revealed a predominance of differences. This characteristic can be traced back to the profound change in the European and international context in the thirteen years between the two strategies. During this period, several external and internal factors within the European Union brought light to the need to draw up a new strategy and determined the existence of numerous differences. In this section, these determining factors will be clarified. The first part will analyse the context and factors that have influenced the ESS. The second part will address the shocks suffered by the Union which shaped the EUGS.

The drafting of the ESS was influenced by endogenous and exogenous factors. The ESS opens with the phrase: "Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure, nor so free" (European Council, 2003, p.1). This well represents the historical period of which this first strategy is the offspring. In 2003, confidence in the European project was at its peak. The year before, the EU took the biggest step forward since the 1957 Treaties of Rome. The new common currency, the euro, spread strong optimism for the future and gave the impression of strong acceleration in the European project. Besides, preparations for the biggest enlargement of the Union since its establishment were taking place that year. In 2004, 10 countries, most of them from Central and Eastern Europe, joined the European Union (Tocci, 2017, p.488). In addition, other countries of Eastern Europe or the Balkans were also approaching the Union. At that time, Russia was regarded with confidence by talking about a possible free trade area from Lisbon to Vladivostok (Spiegel Online, 2010). This optimism about the future of the integration process was an important endogenous factor in the push for the adoption of a European strategy. On the other hand, the context and events outside the Union also played a role. In the 1990s, the Balkans were devastated by war during the dissolution of Yugoslavia. For the first time since 1945, war returned to inflame Europe. Despite the conflict at the front door, the EU was unable to intervene and in the end the intervention was carried out within the NATO framework. The shock of this standstill led the EU to focus on defence. The process began with the St. Malo Declaration in December 1998 and led to the creation of the ESS. On the other hand, the first years of 2000 represented the moment of maximum expansion of the so-called international liberal order. The United States enjoyed such hegemony that it was difficult to resist it. In Europe, therefore, it was believed that if the EU took a well-defined strategic position, it could rebalance American unilateral excesses. At the same time, the Union had to focus on its expansion to consolidate the prosperity of the continent (Tocci, 2017, 496). In fact, one of the objectives of the ESS was to contain American unilateralism.

# In Search of a European Strategy? From a Normative to a Pragmatic Approach

Written by Luca Nicosia

Indeed, one of the reasons for the genesis of this strategy in 2003 was the need to remedy the problems that the transatlantic relationship had just suffered from the Second Gulf War. Besides, this external factor had also divided the EU itself. In fact, on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003, when the US launched its offensive against Iraq, the Union was divided over the support to be offered. Considering the largest EU countries, the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy supported the offensive while France and Germany opposed it causing frictions inside and outside of the Union. In addition to repairing these divisions, the ESS wanted to be a reaction to the American National Security Strategy issued a year earlier and representative of the American interventionist and unilateral instances, relaunched by the tragic events of 9/11 (Balla, 2017, p.4-5). The factors described above have been decisive in outlining the main characteristics of the strategic document. In fact, the transformative nature of the external action of the Union was a consequence of growing optimism. There was also the need for a shared strategic narrative to repair the internal divisions. On the other hand, the reaffirmation of close cooperation with Washington aimed to repair the Transatlantic relationship. Finally, the call for effective multilateralism was a response to the growing American unilateralism.

The situation described above and the factors that influenced the ESS had completely changed in 2015/2016. From that came the need for a new global European strategy and the differences between the two. In the thirteen years that separated the drafting of the two strategies, new exogenous and endogenous factors appeared and shaped the EUGS. An examination of the main ones provides a better understanding of the origin of the 2016 strategy. Finally, it is possible to see whether there is a preponderance of external or internal factors leading to the adoption of the EUGS. The international situation, from which the EUGS results, changed profoundly compared to 2003. Indeed, any discourse concerning American unipolarity had lost its charm in a world that has seen the emergence of new powers such as China and the return of old ones as Russia. In general, the first two decades of the 21st century have shown the centre of gravity of power moving further east. The hegemony of the West over the rest of the world could no longer be taken as a fact. For this reason, the role of the European Union had to be re-established through a new strategy (Tocci, 2017, p.496). This overall situation is the result of several exogenous factors impacting the EU and influencing its strategic narrative. In 2003, the Union assessed that “our task is to promote a ring of well-governed countries” (European Council, 2003, p. 8). Eleven years later there were talks about a “ring of fire” surrounding the Union (The Economist, 2014). The analysis of this ring of fire can provide an idea of the exogenous factors that have contributed to make the international context more difficult. Therefore, calling for a strategic rethink.

One of the factors was the increased instability in the Middle East. In 2003, this area of the world, so close to Europe, was already unstable, the situation only worsening in the years to follow. Following the “Arab Spring” of 2011, Libya and Syria entered a tragic spiral of internal armed conflicts that Europe and the international community were unable to contain. What shocked Europe at that time was the brutal re-explosion of terrorism. It was in Iraq that the political instability consequence of the Second Gulf War led to the emergence of the so-called Islamic State. Proclaimed in June 2014, the Caliphate was able to expand enormously since the capture of Mosul (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2017). Its conquests arrived in Syria and its deadly fury hit Europe, the Paris attack of November 2015 being an example. On the other hand, these events contributed to a wave of refugees entering Europe, which shocked the public opinion. In 2014 more than 200,000 refugees reached Europe, reaching 1,032,408 in 2015 (UNHCR, 2019). This fuelled the populist narrative which at that time was growing in Europe. Another exogenous factor can be found on the eastern borders of the EU. Relations with Russia have deteriorated rapidly since 2003. The eastward enlargement of the Union increased tensions with Russia. Indeed, since 2003 tensions between Russia and the Baltic States have been on the rise. However, it was in 2014 that things became worse. In fact, during 2013, Ukraine was moving closer to the EU and consequently to NATO. However, the Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich, with an unexpected move, renounced talks with the EU to reconnect with Russia. This led to protests in November 2013, the largest of which in Kiev, called Euromaidan. This resulted in the President fleeing Ukraine in 2014 to find refuge in Russia. Then, through irregular troops and a referendum held in a few days, Russia annexed Crimea. This episode led to an escalation of tensions which ended with a package of economic sanctions against Russia (Haukkala, 2015, p.33-36). Another factor that has increased multipolarity and calls for a rethink of the EU's role is China's rapid rise to world power. From all points of view, in those years China transformed from an emerging power to established world power. An example of this was the presentation in 2013 of a huge infrastructure project. It is the *One Belt, One Road* project (OBOR). It is a Chinese investment plan, especially in terms of infrastructure, aimed at making China's role even more central in international trade. The project involves 65 countries all around the world and its total cost is estimated at more than one trillion (Kuo and Kommenda, 2018). Increased instability

# In Search of a European Strategy? From a Normative to a Pragmatic Approach

Written by Luca Nicosia

and competition between powers is the reason why new concepts such as the pragmatic approach and resilience have found their place in the EUGS. Another external factor, because outside the control of the EU, was Brexit. As sanctioned by the result of the referendum of 23 June 2016, 52% of British citizens chose to leave the European Union. This factor created a feeling in European public opinion that the EU was risking its very existence (Tocci, 2017, p.489). This external factor is closely linked to an endogenous one. In fact, if the Euroscepticism in the UK has always been present, the same cannot be said for the rest of the EU. The difference is that several endogenous factors between 2003 and 2016 led to the growth of the Euroscepticism in the continent. In the same way, they fuelled the rise of the British Euroscepticism, leading to the climate of vital threat felt by the EU in the aftermath of the referendum.

Endogenous factors such as the consequences of the European economic crisis started in 2010, high levels of unemployment especially in southern European countries, stagnant growth rates and difficulties with the management of the refugee crisis in 2015 led to the growth of populism and Euroscepticism throughout the EU. The sovereign debt crisis in Greece and the economic response based on austerity measures influenced confidence in the EU of public opinion. While austerity-affected countries like Greece suffered enormous economic and social upheavals, in others, like Germany, the feeling of paying the price for the mistakes of other countries spread. What followed, was a general recession of the European economy and subsequent slow growth rate. This fuelled scepticism towards the European institutions. The immigration experienced in Europe during the refugee crisis and the lack of management at European level led various national communities to feel more threatened. Terrorist attacks made this perception even stronger. All these factors were in action for years before the drafting of the EUGS. The Brexit was, therefore, the most striking episode of Euroscepticism. However, it was already spreading in other European countries. This resulted in divisions between the Member States on the norms to be adopted at the European level, for example concerning the refugee crisis. In fact, the Visegrad countries were opposed to any distribution plan for refugees within the Union (Tocci, 2017, p.489). This immobilised the EU and further fuelled the Eurosceptic spiral. The anti-EU feeling was also manifested by the process of politicisation of EU foreign policy, which is a novelty for Europe. There was an increase in the political polarisation around the European institutions. Therefore, this created a new political cleavage in Europe between those in favour of the EU and those against. The anti-EU parties began to take polarizing positions on issues such as political asylum, security, and trade, claiming more national sovereignty on these issues. This narrative endangered the very existence of the Union. (Barbé and Morillas, 2017, p.2-6). That is why the EUGS seeks to preserve the existence and relaunch the action of the EU. In fact, these endogenous factors determined the demise of the ESS's optimism. For the same reason, the EUGS considers internal security within the Union to be a priority. Because it is precisely to this phenomenon of populist and Eurosceptic impulses that the strategy is intended to respond. Consequently, it seeks a European response to the endogenous factors underlying these reactions in European society and while trying to build a new common narrative.

In the end, many factors influenced the EUGS. However, rather than a preponderance of exogenous or endogenous factors, there seems to be a correlation between the two. Indeed, exogenous factors caused changes that encouraged a more pragmatic approach and the promotion of resilience outside the Union. Moreover, the changed international context paired with endogenous socio-economic factors led the EU to feel threatened internally. Therefore, the focus shifted to the internal defence of the Union.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this essay shows the existence of multiple differences between the two strategies, reflecting the changed geopolitical conditions under which the two were written. Despite their formal significant differences, the strategies differ more in their conceptual approach to the Union's foreign policy. In this sense, optimism about the EU's perspectives is replaced by a sense of threat to the very existence of the Union. The transformative approach leaves room to a more pragmatic one which looks at increasing the resilience of the European Union's foreign partners. Finally, to ensure the security of the EU, the EUGS gives priority to an internally stronger Europe that can then project its actions on the international scene. What is similar about the two strategies, such as the search for a common identity, derives from the need to find a clear role for the EU in the world. On the other hand, the differences are the result of both exogenous and endogenous factors. For the former, some factors destabilise the border regions

# In Search of a European Strategy? From a Normative to a Pragmatic Approach

Written by Luca Nicosia

of the Union and, in general, make the international scenario more complex. Civil wars and terrorist groups add other dimensions to the already complex situation in the Middle East. The annexation of Crimea increases tensions with Russia eastwards. China assumes a central role in the world and a key member of the EU decides to leave. These factors lead to the changes in approach to foreign policy identified in the first section. Furthermore, the pragmatic approach to the Union's security and the need to defend an EU which feels threatened in its existence derive from endogenous factors within the Union. These include the economic consequences of the sovereign debt crisis and the response to the refugee crisis. This fosters the spread of Eurosceptic political positions and the politicisation of European foreign policy issues. Understanding these factors and how they determined the differences between the strategies clarifies how the EUGS attempts to give a new dimension and renewed effectiveness to the European role in the world. Indeed, there is a necessity for a response in this regard after years of immobility. While in 2003 the European Union had an optimistic and transformative approach to international relations, thirteen years later the situation reversed. Since 2016, in a much more complex and conflictual geopolitical context, Federica Mogherini has proposed a more pragmatic approach to maximize the influence of the Union in the world. That is the fundamental difference between the two strategies. There is a major shift in the Union's approach to its foreign policy from a normative to a more pragmatic one. This change is then reflected in all the other differences identified. Turning to the origin of this shift, it can be found in both endogenous and exogenous factors resulting from a more complex and conflictual situation inside and outside the EU. The new approach is aimed at making European foreign policy more effective and the Union more influential internationally.

During the five years of Mogherini's mandate, however, little progress has been made in this direction. Of the greatest successes, the only one that still stands are the economic sanctions against Russia for the annexation of Crimea, on which there is a unity of intentions of the member states. The causes of these difficulties can be attributed in large part to external factors to Mogherini herself. Relations between the major powers are now increasingly competitive, and the multilateral institutions on which the EU's action is based seem to have lost their attractiveness. Indeed, national interest and unilateral initiatives increasingly determine the approach of the EU Member States themselves. Moreover, in terms of security and defence, the Union does not have the means to conduct a strong foreign policy. With the renewal of the European Parliament and the European Commission, following the elections in May 2019, the new High Representative, Josep Borrell, will have the difficult task of bringing a new dimension to the Union's foreign policy. This should start with a more charismatic and decisive guide that can involve the member states, in which the real decision-making power in terms of the foreign policy lies, in pursuing common policies and strategies. (Pagliarin, 2019). Willingness and means should be found to ensure that decisions taken unanimously at the European Council are not just the lowest common denominator between the various national interests. On the contrary, the European Union should act according to an integrated strategic vision, with the support of the European Council and of the Commission, to assume a more important and autonomous role in the international system. The dangers and complexities identified in 2016 are all still there. The great powers seem to be increasingly entering a geopolitical competition. In all this, the dilemma about the role of the European Union as an international player has yet to be solved.

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# In Search of a European Strategy? From a Normative to a Pragmatic Approach

Written by Luca Nicosia

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# **In Search of a European Strategy? From a Normative to a Pragmatic Approach**

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