

# **FAILING EUROPE? THE PRESENT REALITY.**

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*The article is concerned with the performance of the European security strategy and differentiated views of individual areas of assessment. The table contains comparison of unfair assessment by Brussels and the real situation. In conclusion, the author claims that the contents clearly indicate that the European Union is failing in the area of security.*

**Key words:** *security, strategy, migration, terrorism, globalisation.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

On May 1, 2004 the Slovak Republic became a full member of the European Union. Together with the Slovakia's entry to the NATO it was the fulfilment of the most important objectives to which our efforts were directed. By obtaining a full membership in the EU, we also had the ability to play an active role and influence European policy.

Our common vision is that by 2020 Europe should be successful and prosperous for all Europeans, it should be an integrated region of independent, equal states creating conditions for high living standards of its citizens and to ensure their rights, freedom and security. A successful fulfilment of these targets is never assured and to achieve them it will be necessary to further reinforce the basic principles and values on which the European Union is based. Our expectations have even risen on December 12, 2003 when the European Security Strategy was adopted in Brussels [1]. To prove an affirmation that security analysts may be wrong we will compare the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy of 2009 with the current situation.

## **2. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EUROPEAN SECURITY STRATEGY**

Several years after the adoption, we can say that the European Union carries on its

shoulders a greater responsibility than ever before. The EU still remains an anchor of stability. Democracy and prosperity on the continent has increased through its expansion [2]. The situation is improving also in the Balkans. The Neighbourhood Policy has established a solid framework for relations with partners in the south and east. A new dimension has been given to these relations through the Union for the Mediterranean and the Eastern Partnership. Since 2003 *the EU has brought a new dimension to the EU also into dealing with crises and conflicts in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq.* Despite this fact, twenty years after the termination of the Cold War, Europe faces increasingly complex threats and challenges. There have still remained some unsolved conflicts in the Middle East and others have occurred even in our neighbourhood. A new threat which affects us within our societies comes from the terrorism and organized crime.

Globalisation brings new opportunities.

Many people have come out of poverty thanks to the rapid growth in the developing world led by China. Moreover, globalisation is accelerating redistribution of power and it uncovers differences in values. The recent financial turmoil has shaken developed and developing economies [2].

*The EU has been contributing to a safer world through a unique file of tools.* So far, we have been building human security by trying to reduce the poverty and inequality, we have

promoted good governance and respect for human rights, strengthened development and addressed the root causes of conflicts out of which conflicts and low security arise.

The EU is still the greatest granter for countries in need. To achieve lasting stabilisation a long-term commitment is needed. Over the last decade under the European Security and Defence Policy, which is an integral part of our common foreign and security policy, more than 20 missions have been conducted to cope with a wide range of crises.

To be able to guarantee the security of our citizens and meet their expectations, *we must be ready to shape events. That means that we have to think more strategically and our actions have to be more efficient and visible worldwide.* Our success is bigger if we act on time and in a uniform manner, use suitable capabilities and if we have permanent support. It is necessary that all countries follow the fundamental principles of the UN Charter and the principles and obligations of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The international system is headed by the UN. All activities of the EU related to the security are interconnected with the UN objectives. Cooperation with the United States and other partners around the world offers us a unique opportunity to renew multilateralism. In order to promote better cooperation in managing crises the EU and the NATO have to deepen a strategic partnership.

A process of expansion is still a strong mechanism leading to stability, peace and reforms in our continent. Negotiations with Turkey started in 2005 and since then several chapters have been open. The progress in the Western Balkans has been continuous despite its slow pace. The accession negotiations with Croatia have progressed well. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has gained a candidate status. The other Western Balkan countries have signed agreements on stabilisation and association. Serbia is close to meeting all conditions for approaching towards the establishment of deeper relations with the EU. A necessity in the region is the cooperation and good neighbourly relations.

This process is supported by the *European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) which commenced in 2004.*

*The Mediterranean area, which is an area of major importance and opportunity for Europe, still raises complex challenges, such as insufficient political reform and illegal migration.* Due to its role in the Quartet, cooperation with Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the Arab League and other regional partners, the EU was also at the centre of efforts to settle the Middle East conflict. It has been fully engaged in the Annapolis process to build two states and provides continuous financial and budgetary support to the Palestinian Authority and capacity building, including the deployment of judicial, police and border management experts working on the ground. The EU Member States make a significant contribution to the NATO missions, and the EU is engaged in governance and development at all levels. The EU extends its police missions as well. These efforts will not succeed without the full Afghan engagement and support from neighbouring countries – particularly Pakistan, but also India, countries in Central Asia and Iran. The improved prospects for good relations between India and Pakistan in recent years have certainly been a positive element from the point of view of the strategic balance.

To respond to the changing security environment we need to be more effective – among ourselves, within our neighbourhood and around the world. Our ability to meet the challenges of the past five years has developed and needs will be developed further. We have to strengthen our own cohesion through institutional coordination and more strategic decision-making. The provisions of the Lisbon strategy provide a framework to achieve this objective.

Concerning military missions, we have to continue to strengthen our efforts on capabilities as well as mutual cooperation and arrangements for the allocation of costs. Based on the experience there is a need to do more, particularly in the area of key capabilities, which include air transport, helicopters, space assets, and maritime surveillance. These

efforts must be supported by a competitive and strong European defence industry, which invests more in research and development. Since 2004 this process has been successfully lead by the European Defence Agency since 2004 which is expected to continue this work.

### **3. A SECURE EUROPE IN A BETTER WORLD**

As a union of 25 states with over 450 million people producing a quarter of the world's Gross National Product (GNP), and with a wide range of instruments at its disposal, the European Union is inevitably a global player. In the last decade European forces have been deployed abroad to places as away as Afghanistan, East Timor and Democratic Republic of Congo. The increasing convergence of European interests and the strengthening of mutual solidarity of the EU makes us a more credible and effective actor. Europe should be ready to share the responsibility for global security and to build a better world.

#### **3.1. The secure environment, global challenges and key threats**

Large-scale aggressiveness against a Member State is now improbable. Instead, Europe faces new threats which are more diverse, less visible and less predictable.

Terrorism remains a major threat to life, it is cost demanding, it is aimed at undermining the openness and tolerance of our societies and represents a growing strategic threat for the whole Europe. Terrorist movements have more and more resources, they are interconnected with electronic networks and do not hesitate to use unlimited violence to cause massive casualties.

*The most recent wave of terrorism is global in its scope and it is linked to violent religious extremism. It arises out of difficult causes. These include the pressures of modernisation, cultural, social and political crises and the alienation of young people living in foreign societies. Europe is both the target and a base for such terrorism. Logistical bases for Al-*

*Qaeda and the Islamic State cells have been found in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, Spain and Belgium.*

The European Union has been actively involved in solving the key threats. After September 11 it responded with measures that included the adoption of the European arrest warrant, actions against terrorist financing and an agreement on mutual legal assistance with the USA. The EU continues to develop cooperation in this area and improves its defence.

#### **3.2. Migration crisis in 2015 – 2016**

The European Union has failed in dealing with migration crisis. At a time when the EU decides to take any action, it has become obsolete and the development of the crisis has already been elsewhere [3].

*"Europe cannot handle the situation, it will not be such a safe place to live as it was before. All mechanisms have failed and the vast bureaucracy that goes with it. "It appears that Europe might not manage coherent national relations which have been made tense by this wave of migrants and refugees. "It might have been integrated at great speed." "But the European Union comprises 28 states, therefore we can say that those 28 states, among which we belong, have failed."*

### **4. ASSESSMENT OF SECURITY STATE IN 2015**

2015 was undoubtedly one of the most difficult years in the history of the European Union. On the one hand, we saw the revival of the economy, the successful launch of the Juncker investment plan and Energy Union, the Digital Single Market, as well as important global agreements on sustainable development and climate changes. On the other hand, there were armed conflicts outside the Union, the consequences of which were reflected also within the Union. From the European perspective following tasks are considered to be the most important [4].

**a. Global agreement Agenda 2030 for sustainable development**

This agreement was approved at the Extraordinary Summit of the United Nations in September 26, 2015 in New York. It establishes a general framework for all countries that aim to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development by 2030. The new strategy established 17 fundamental objectives, including the *eradication of extreme poverty*.

**b. European year of development**

The European Union declared 2015 the European Year for Development to communicate the importance of development and get this issue into the attention of the professional and the general public. *It also aims to encourage Europeans to help people in need and promote fair approach to life. The European Union and its Member States are the largest donors of development aid in the world, only in 2014 they spent more than € 58 billion.*

**c. Agreement on climate change**

On December 12, 2015, 195 countries adopted a new legally binding agreement on climate change. It is the first major multilateral agreement in this century that brings global action plan to combat the devastating impact of climate change and is the result of many years of international community effort. Governments have agreed on a long-term objective of keeping the increase in global average temperature well below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels and seek to limit its increase by only 1.5°C.

**d. Refugee crisis**

The migratory pressure on the European Union has reached unprecedented proportions. Over a million migrants have joined the European Union, most of which were people escaping from the war, violence or political persecution. The massive influx of refugees highlighted the weaknesses of the Schengen area and led to the unilateral restrictions of free movement within the EU by several Member States. *The European Commission has introduced complete steps to strengthen the management of migration crisis. The establishment of the common border and coast*

*guard, a common list of safe countries, strengthening the rescue operations would help to stabilize the situation and prevent the uncontrolled influx of migrants.*

**e. Security threats**

The terrorist attacks in Paris and other European cities have revealed safety concerns and the need for closer cooperation between European countries. In response to these threats, the European Union has adopted rules for monitoring data on air passengers and prepared proposals for the strengthening of surveillance of dangerous weapons and more strict controls at the external border of the EU. *Among Member States there is an increasing belief that they should intensify also the cooperation of intelligence services.*

**f. Investment plan for Europe**

*The economic crisis has caused a severe reduction in investments across Europe. To reverse this negative trend and to put Europe back on the path towards the economic recovery it is necessary to make joint and coordinated efforts at European level. The Commission has identified an approach based on three pillars: **structural reforms, fiscal responsibility** and start-up of **investment for sustainable growth**. The core of this strategy is the investment plan for Europe.*

**g. Energetic union**

In February 2015 the vice – chairperson of the European Commission Maroš Šefčovič introduced an ambitious project of the Energetic union. The aim of this project is to ensure safe, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy for all Europeans. *A common European approach to the construction of the gas pipeline Nordstream 2, which has been strenuously opposed by Slovakia and other six countries of the European Union, will also test the European cohesion.*

**h. The single digital market**

The Internet as well as digital technologies is changing our world – in all areas of our lives, in each business area. *In 2015 the Commission introduced detailed plans to eliminate barriers and build a single digital market. These plans include the rules for the digital contents support, modernisation of*

copyright, protection for consumers when shopping online.

**i. European means for Slovakia**

The European Commission has approved all operational programmes for utilization of European structural and investment funds. 15.3 billion EUR has been allocated to Slovakia for the development of several important areas – to enhance transport infrastructure, environment, energetic efficiency, research, innovation and to develop human resources.

Resources from the European funds will also be used for the development of the Slovak countryside. In addition, 3 billion EUR will be designated for direct payments to Slovak farmers.

**j. Threat of Brexit**

Brexit is becoming a reality. *The European Commission will support an agreement which will be fair to Britain and other 27 countries of the European Union.*

Let us confront the intentions of the European Security Strategy with the report on its implementation and the reality of the present day. According to a simple table it is clear that the message from Brussels is not objective, it highlights the merits of Europe, simplifies the view of reality and does not bring new proposals to address the situation (**Table 1**).

**Table 1.** Report, assessment and reality on European security strategy implementation

Number	Report on European security strategy implementation	Year 2015 from the point of view of security assessment	Reality
1.	A new dimension in dealing with the crises in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq	Positive development	Expansion of Islamic State – solved not by the EU, but by the USA and Russia.
2.	Efforts to form events the world events	Positive assessment	We do not form. On the contrary, we always just correct negative development.
3.	Building the peace in Europe	Positively evaluated European Neighbourhood Policy	Instable development – Greece, G. Britain, V4 Group countries, Balkans
4.	Designation of the Mediterranean region for possible conflicts.	Positive assessment	Instability- Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Turkey, Greece, refugees.
5.	Israel and Arabic states – a relation identified as problematic	It is possible to keep the peace.	Unresolved area, continuous violence and conflicts.
6.	Terrorism identified as the greatest threat	Effective but insufficient measures	Expansion of terrorism in Africa, Asia and in Europe.
7.	There has been an unprecedented increase in migration crisis	The adoption of complete steps to manage the crisis: - Common border	All is the secondary absolute failure – problem solving in the countries – who is

Number	Report on European security strategy implementation	Year 2015 from the point of view of security assessment	Reality
		guide - List of safe countries - Rescue operations	responsible for the security system failure in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, and Algeria.
8.	Europe has never been safer	Security threats Intensifying cooperation among intelligence services.	It should have been done a long time ago, Europe is more dangerous.
9.	Economic policy	Decline in investment	The growth of GDP of all countries.
10.	Energetic project of the EU	Discrepancy between countries – Nordstream 2	Natural interest of the EU countries in profit from transit.
11.	Use of the EU funds	Allocated funds per year	Obsolete approach-transfer to next years.
12.	Threat of leaving the EU- Great Britain	Search for a fair solution	What is a fair solution?

## 5. CONCLUSION

**We must realistically assess that EU is failing.** Europe will have to face a lot of above mentioned challenges also in 2018 and in the next years. The understanding of the Member States that these challenges can be managed only through joint efforts will be the key to their successful management. The reforms should fulfil the expectations of the EU citizens – the provision of safety area without internal borders, mutual cooperation and economic prosperity. 2018 will have a special flavour for Slovakia. Not only from the perspective of a member country which will be contributing to seeking and adopting the solutions together at the same European table.

After the second half of 2016, when Slovakia for the first time in its history learned first-hand the difficulty in seeking a consensus among often disparate interests of

member countries and security, this applies doubly.

Evaluation of the fulfilment of strategic tasks, intentions or strategies cannot be made by officials in Brussels, but it should be made by each country based on real results and benefits for them and the citizens of those countries.

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