



NÁRODNÍ KONVENT

Common Foreign and Security Policy: EU Global Strategy

Summary and recommendations from the National Convention on the
EU round table discussion held on 5 February 2016

Recommendations prepared by the European Values Think-Tank analytical team.



Introduction

In June 2015, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini (the “High Representative”) acquired a mandate from the European Council to prepare the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EGS). This strategy is to be presented to the European Council in June 2016, and so an intense debate has been under way for several months concerning the main points of the document that will play an important role, not only because of its content, but also because of the manner of negotiation and communication between EU institutions and Member States.

Compared to the previous (and so far only) security document, which is the still valid European Security Strategy of 2003, the new strategy will be created proactively. The task of the EGS is to define who we are and what we want to achieve globally. In the spirit of “*a more interconnected, comprehensive and competitive global environment*”, the High Representative identified five challenges and opportunities in her strategic revision of June 2015: 1) doubling the commitment towards our European neighbours; 2) rethinking the approach of the EU to North Africa and the Middle East; 3) redefining the relationship between the EU and Africa; 4) reviving Atlantic partnerships, and 5) creating an integrated approach to Asia.

In order to involve all the relevant players, the High Representative is working to create the broadest possible opinion platform; nevertheless, the inputs from the individual EU and national players are ambiguous, partly because the process is not regulated in a binding manner. The main parties involved will be the High Representative, the European External Action Service, the European Commission and the Council. The European Parliament and the national parliaments will be consulted. Federica Mogherini is also planning a so-called consultation semester, during which she will visit the capitals of the EU Member States and collect suggestions directly from national governments. Therefore, the Czech Republic must formulate requirements that could feasibly be incorporated in the final document.

As part of the discussion concerning the position of the Czech Republic vis-à-vis the EGS, the following questions in particular offer themselves:

(1) Where do you see the greatest benefit of the EU in the area of external relations, and where do you see its greatest weaknesses? Which thematic and geographical areas in the EGS do you consider crucial?

(2) What improvements or shifts do you expect from the EGS in terms of the readiness of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) / Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)? What specific proposals should the Czech Republic apply in this area, including strengthening the division of labour between the EU and NATO and reinforcing transatlantic cooperation?

These questions were reflected in the [background material from European Values Think-Tank](#), whose conclusions were presented to the participants of the round table by the chief analyst at European Values Think-Tank **Jan Kovář**. The background material first briefly

summarised the main points of the European Security Strategy of 2003 and outlined the EGS creation process. In the next two parts, the material focused on (1) an analysis of the external environment and (2) the possibilities for Czech inputs into the EGS according to Czech strategic documents, the priorities declared by the Government of the Czech Republic, and priorities enforceable within the Visegrad Group (V4).

Round Table Framework

The discussion was hosted by Deputy Director of European Values Think-Tank **Jakub Janda**. The opening speech was made by Director of the European Policies Coordination Department of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic **Jan Král**. The head analyst at European Values Think-Tank **Jan Kovář** presented the background material, and Director of the Policy Planning Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic **David Král** and Head of the Analysis and Concept Department under the Defence Policy and Strategy Division of the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic **Martin Riegl** presented the positions of their ministries.

A number of guests took part in the subsequent discussion: Chairperson of the Foreign Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic **Karel Schwarzenberg**, Chairperson of the Committee on EU Affairs of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic **Václav Hampl**, Deputy Chairperson of the Defence Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and Chairperson of the Subcommittee for Defence and Security Policy and Strategic Concepts of the Czech Republic of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic **Ivan Gabal**, Deputy Chairperson of the Committee on EU Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic **Helena Langšádlová**, Head of the European Affairs Department of the Confederation of Industry and Transport of the Czech Republic **Vladimíra Drbalová**, Chairperson of the Association of Autonomous Trade Unions **Bohumír Dufek**, researcher at the Institute of International Relations **Vít Beneš**, Head of the Department of Security Studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University **Tomáš Karásek**, Head of the Department of West European Studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University **Tomáš Weiss**, Army Reserve General **Jiří Šedivý**, Czech representatives in the European Economic and Social Committee **Vladimír Novotný** (Confederation of Industry and Transport of the Czech Republic) and **Ivan Voleš** (Czech Chamber of Commerce), and junior analyst of European Values Think-Tank **Jan Zdrálek**.

During the discussion, the speakers touched on the following basic points:

- The European Security Strategy of 2003 is unsatisfactory, and as a global player the EU needs a new strategy, one that is proactive. The EU has a number of tools, which are extremely diverse and which must be better coordinated for the strategy to be properly implemented. In this respect, the CFSP and the CSDP are crucial. This is associated with

several other questions – for example, the interconnection with other EU policies, funding options, discussion concerning the sovereignty of EU Member States, or a single European army.

- There was no agreement on how to achieve suitable implementation of the EGS. On the one hand, the need for a CSDP implementation strategy was highlighted. On the other hand, there was also the opinion that the creation of sub-strategies and other documents is primarily an academic exercise, which will ultimately not lead to the desired objective.
- The Czech Republic took an active role in the EGS formulation process; it defined the key priorities in the preparatory process it will promote in the EGS negotiations.
- Since NATO is the guarantor of European security, the EU must cooperate with it better. Given the fact that 22 of the 28 EU Member States are also NATO members, the transatlantic link and EU-NATO cooperation are the foundation on which the EU must build. The main interest of the EU remains focused on its immediate neighbours (the Southern Neighbourhood Policy, the Eastern Partnership) and relations with the key players. An important area agreed upon by most EU players with respect to the near future is the so-called broad neighbourhood, meaning for example the Sahel or the Horn of Africa. The main strategic partner of the EU is the United States, which shares not only similar global interests, but also values (for example liberal democracy, normatively enshrined international order etc.).
- The Czech Republic and other Central and Eastern European Member States naturally want the new strategy to sufficiently focus on the areas of the Eastern Partnership and the western Balkans as our closest non-EU partners, and also to define the relationship with Russia, which has recently frequently intervened in the aforementioned areas through its policies and targeted misinformation campaigns (Georgia 2008, Ukraine 2014).
- Subsequently, the participants repeatedly mentioned that the EU should insist on preserving the basic rules of international law on which the global order must be based.
- The need for effective implementation of the strategy was stressed several times. The EU must be ready to meet current challenges, to be proactive, to anticipate possible crisis scenarios and to solve any crises before their escalation in order to prevent scenarios such as the annexation of Crimea and the current migration crisis. The EU should also be able to speak unanimously to strengthen its credibility internationally.
- As part of funding for research and innovation, the EU should work to interconnect the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme and the defence and security sectors in terms of research and development.

- The requirement for compliance with NATO member states' commitment to devote at least 2% of GDP to defence was repeatedly highlighted. EU Member States should increase defence spending and strengthen their defence and security capacities. This is necessary for NATO's action readiness as well for the CSDP.

Recommendations

Discussions on such broad topics as the EGS naturally often generate differing opinions; nevertheless, two main areas were successfully defined, within the framework of which similarly themed contributions were made. The first of these was related to the overall image of the European Union and its global ambitions as a proactive player in today's world; attention was therefore focused on the general characteristics of the EGS. The second area already included a debate concerning the priorities of the Czech Republic that could be pushed through into the final document, while the role of the Czech Republic's membership in V4 was also mentioned. The discussion led to the identification of the following recommendations for the CFSP and the interests of the Czech Republic during the creation of the EGS.

1. General Characteristics of the EGS

The strategy being prepared is to depict the EU as a proactive player which defines the world around it. This vision was regarded as ambitious in the discussion – current global trends and the rise and greater assertiveness of regional players like China and Russia must be taken into account. The discussion also included a polemic as to whether the EU – as an internally complicated and heterogeneous player – is able to become a global powerhouse like the USA, as it aspires to such a role and also in a certain sense currently fulfils it.

The EGS can thus serve as something akin to a global vision through which the EU will be able to publicly declare its strengths, such as the effectiveness of the rule of law and the economic power of the EU as a whole. However, the credibility of the EU in relation to the outside world is based not only on compliance with national and international law, but also on unity of behaviour through a common foreign policy. One unambiguous recommendation was for a unified voice for the EU to clearly declare the binding nature of international standards. This position should naturally be held by the High Representative, whose legitimacy could increase with the adoption of the final document.

Alongside the economic and legal-political attributes of the EU, which are perceived as its strengths, there is also however the security policy aspect. The fact that NATO, in which the USA significantly participates, is the guarantor of European security indicates that the EU as such does not have an efficient military defence mechanism. The participants mentioned a single European army several times: they mentioned the possibility for better cooperation

between the armies of the EU Member States and the establishment of a voluntary military force with 30 000 to 50 000 members, which would be recruited, paid for and managed directly by the EU. In terms of European security, it was agreed that the defence spending of the EU Member States is too low compared to the rest of the world and so, the following recommendation stems from the discussion: on the one hand, the European Union must be able to improve cooperation with NATO, which means in particular compliance with the commitment for defence spending, which should be 2% of the GDP of the individual states. At the same time, we can take into account that this cooperation may have a synergic effect supported through an improvement of transatlantic relations. On the other hand, the EU should be able to create a functional political mechanism to assemble its own military units which could be deployed in the event of a threat.

In these respects, it is in the interest of the Czech Republic to strengthen the national security and defence capacities of the EU Member States and to ensure the effective functioning of the European External Action Service and civil missions and military operations under the CSDP. One appropriate requirement could also be the establishment of an analytical and evaluation mechanism for the annual evaluation of the CFSP and its specific tools (activities of the European External Action Service) by the EU Member States.

2. Czech Priorities and Role of the Czech Membership in V4

As a medium-sized state, the Czech Republic has a certain opportunity to enforce its priorities within the European Union in the final EGS document. The Czech Republic may strengthen its negotiation role through cooperation within V4. On the other hand, V4 is not exclusively perceived positively. V4 provides the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and eventually other cooperating partners with space to define common objectives and a stronger voice in enforcing them. However, there are also opinions that the activities of V4 deepen the gap between the post-communist states of Central and Eastern Europe and the founding members of the European Communities. These different views should be taken into account when promoting Czech objectives within V4.

In terms of geography, more or less all EU Member States agree on the need to improve relations with the USA, with which the EU should be an equal partner. Some of the participants were concerned that the attention of the USA could in the future turn towards the transpacific direction, and the EU might pay the price for this unless it acts in a sufficiently confident manner. The strategic link with the USA is important not only because of the similar global interests, but also because the USA and the EU share values such as liberal democracy and a normatively enshrined international order.

Two dimensions of the European Neighbourhood Policy constitute another area on which the EGS will focus. The Eastern Partnership and the relationship with Russia and the western Balkans are naturally more important to the Czech Republic and the V4 states. Russia has been increasingly assertive in recent years, and the Czech Republic can see its influence on

the Eastern Partnership states. It should be in the Czech Republic's interest to promote an explicit definition of hybrid threats (namely misinformation campaigns) to EU Member States and NATO in the final EGS document. Likewise, the stabilisation of existing EU structures for analysis of this threat and an expansion of their capacities (East STRATCOM Team under the European External Action Service) are in the interest of the Czech Republic. The states of the western Balkans are currently at various advanced stages of the accession negotiations, and it is important that they become EU Member States as soon as possible.

Recommendations of the National Convention on the EU:

1. In order to maintain and strengthen the defence capabilities of Europe, it is necessary to continue cooperating with NATO and increase the defence spending and capacities of the individual EU Member States. In this sense, the Czech Republic should – at the political level – reconsider an increase in defence spending to enable more serious involvement in the European security infrastructure in the context of the worsening condition of the European neighbourhood. Both existing spending and the outlook for its increase are insufficient.
2. The Czech Republic should strive to ensure that the EU's interest and the related capacities and funds do not shift too much from the Eastern to the Southern Neighbourhood. Another priority is to bring the states of the western Balkans into the EU.
3. The Government of the Czech Republic should intensively address the issue of the future of the CFSP, including an assessment of its position vis-à-vis the individual key aspects, such as sovereignty, funding and new challenges such as hybrid threats.
4. The Czech Republic should promote an explicit definition of hybrid threats, such as the misinformation campaign against EU and NATO states, into the final EGS document. The stabilisation and expansion of the capacities of the European External Action Service (East STRATCOM Team) is in the Czech Republic's interest.

This text does not constitute the minutes of the individual contributions presented in the discussion. Therefore, it does not contain everything that was said and does not express the opinions of all the participants on all the discussed topics. It is a summary of the most important points and the formulation of recommendations on the basis of the discussion, prepared by European Values Think-Tank.

The National Convention on the European Union is a permanent venue for debate on European issues in the Czech Republic.

The project, coordinated by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, brings together representatives of the Government, both chambers of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and the European Parliament, academia, the non-profit sector and social partners, and other relevant stakeholders.

More information on the National Convention can be found at www.narodnikonvent.eu and on Twitter: [@KonventEU](https://twitter.com/KonventEU).