

**Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung  
Department of International Dialogue\***

## **Europe as a global actor**

*10 Theses on a Common Foreign and Security Policy for Europe*

### **Introduction**

Europe is increasingly having to face foreign and security policy challenges that require a collective response: on such issues a Common Foreign and Security Policy for Europe – the joining together of 27 member states – would clearly bring added value as against the bundled foreign policies of individual member states.

### **1. Europe's foreign policy – member states in the spotlight**

The strengthening of CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy) and ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy) must start in the capital cities. In its intergovernmental foreign and security policy Europe has abandoned the previous models of communitisation. Hitherto, Brussels and the 27 capital cities have too often sent out contradictory signals on central questions. If it is to have a global role Europe needs more political will on the part of the member states to strengthen what is *common* in their foreign and security policy.

### **2. Europe too must be under democratic control**

European foreign and security policy must not be conducted in a democratic grey area, however. Functioning democratic control of CFSP/ESDP must be ensured. This area is outside the control of the European Parliament, while national parliaments are able to exercise control rights to only a limited extent. Such a state of affairs undermines the potential acceptance and legitimacy of a common European foreign and security policy. Making CFSP/ESDP answerable to parliamentary control remains a democratic imperative.

### **3. A common foreign policy requires coherence**

Coordination between the European institutions active in foreign and security policy in the widest sense is just as lacking as coordination between the member states. Europe needs greater vertical and horizontal coherence. With the High Representative, who is at the same time Vice President of the Commission, the Reform Treaty creates a bridge between the Commission and the Council. The Africa Strategy, which was worked out jointly by the Commission and the Council, and adopted by the member states, should serve as a model for negotiation of the EU's strategic documents.

### **4. How do things stand with the USA?**

The USA remains Europe's most important reference point and partner in foreign and security policy. The nature of the relationship with the USA is disputed within the EU, however: the options of competition, partnership or subordination all have their advocates and opponents. Conceptual differences between the European and American foreign policy strategies are argued out not only across the Atlantic, but also within Europe. As a consequence, the EU is paralysed on central foreign

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\* The Friedrich Ebert Foundation's Department of International Dialogue has recently concentrated its efforts on the prospects of European economic and social policy, common foreign and security policy, European neighbourhood policy and international energy security. The theses presented here are intended to contribute to the political positioning of these topics, as well as to outline future challenges and areas of work.

policy questions. A regular strategic dialogue between the EU and the USA is needed in order to clarify the role of European security institutions for the USA.

## **5. How do things stand with Russia?**

Relations with Russia constitute a second crunch question for European foreign and security policy. In the member states attitudes vary between fear of Russia as a security policy threat and hope that energy questions and crisis developments in the common neighbourhood can be resolved cooperatively. The corresponding policy approaches are deterrence or integration by means of cooperation. There must be an independent – though coordinated with the USA – European strategy in relation to Moscow. It should reflect both European anxieties and hopes, and make existing national policies transparent. In addition, there must be a European–Russian dialogue on core strategic issues.

## **6. More effective multilateralism needs partners**

From the European perspective, effective multilateralism is a building block of a ‘better world’ (European Security Strategy). If this is to be fulfilled, however, besides stable relations with the USA and Russia (see Theses 2 and 3), as well as the emerging powers China and India, well functioning international and regional organisations will be needed. The United Nations must to an even greater extent become the focus of attention as reference point of European foreign and security policy. The EU should push for UN reform to strengthen its legitimacy and effectiveness. More effective multilateralism also requires well functioning regional organisations, such as the AU and MERCOSUR, which must be supported by capable and cooperative actors. A policy of strengthening regional organisations should therefore go hand in hand with intensification of EU relations with the most important regional actors (Brazil, South Africa, and so on).

## **7. Europe as active participant in disarmament**

Europe should be committed to a strengthening of international agreements on arms control and non-proliferation, and as a first step make the largely ineffective EU Code of Conduct on weapons exports binding, more restrictive and more transparent. The initiative of the UK, France and Germany (E-3) regarding Iran’s nuclear programme shows the outstanding role that Europe can play in non-proliferation. Attractive incentives and effective sanctions, as well as coalition building through the addition of the USA, Russia and China, as well as the other EU states (EU-3+3) constitute the broad apparatus that Europe has at its disposal. At the same time, considerable contradictions remain between Europe’s lofty aims and the reality of the modernisation of the French and British nuclear arsenals and Europe’s aggressive arms and nuclear export policy.

## **8. Intervention policy à la européenne**

Europe’s interventions have so far followed various criteria. The choice of means was usually made on the basis of what the member states offered rather than what was needed. A (strategic) framework of civil and military capacities, as well as the establishment of a civilian headquarters in Brussels point towards a stronger profile for European intervention policy. This should include the coordinated use of all available instruments – civil, military, economic and diplomatic – and orientate their deployment in terms of comprehensible criteria. The cornerstones of a European strategic narrative (primacy of human rights, legitimate political authority, bottom-up approach, effective multilateralism, integrated regional approach, clear and transparent strategic direction) proposed by the Human Security Study Group could be used to construct a more credible and more transparent European intervention policy.

## **9. Take the new challenges seriously**

One of the most pressing global problems is the preservation of the environmental balance on earth. The implications of the greenhouse effect cannot yet be foreseen, but potentially they threaten the stability of countries and economies in different parts of the world. Europe must come up with a common policy here and plead its case to other global actors, above all the USA. A second level of activity, on which the CFSP must prove its worth relatively soon, is energy foreign policy. Europe will be able, in the context of growing competition for ever scarcer raw materials, to ensure the supply of fossil fuels and to pursue its interests as regards competitors and the producer countries only by forming a common front.

## **10. A 'better neighbourhood' is the first step**

The EU's lofty aims, as reflected in the title of the Security Strategy, 'A Secure Europe in a Better World', must in the first instance be met by a 'better neighbourhood'. The EU, furthermore, is surrounded by conflicts, whether it be in the Caucasus, the Middle East or the Balkans. A Union with global pretensions must be in a position to implement its policy concepts in its own neighbourhood. Only success in these endeavours will publicise the Union's capabilities to the world and signal that European instruments are able to deal with crises and conflicts. This also involves the EU playing a constructive and credible role in settling the conflict in the Middle East and being perceived there as an independent actor.