

The European Union's role in ensuring global security

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Abstract

As a result of globalization the world has become flatter which is why the way the European Union will act regarding its vicinity and the efficiency of its actions will define the Union and its role on the international scene in the future. Unfortunately, while looking to the EU's neighbours there are not too many reasons to believe that the EU is seriously concerned, considering the unresolved bilateral disputes and political games of "all or nothing". The Policy of the Eastern partnership brought a change in the rhythm of the EU's relationships with its post-soviet neighbours and has developed an abyss in the relationship with Russia and the multiple crisis have seriously affected the Europe Union's role as a protagonist in the field of security. The Russian invasion in Ukraine represented a direct and very violent challenge for the juridical and territorial bases of the European region's security. This crisis in Ukraine sort of proved that the European Union has a limited capacity of exporting its model of governing to the territories at war, which leads to an increase in euro.

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I. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that the European Union was initially created as an economic and political union and that it was developed in Europe, currently containing 28 states.

The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 and The European Economic Community in 1958 represent the origins of the current European Union. The following years represented the admissions of new states as EU members but also an increase in power for this community through the adding of new economic, social and political domains to its competences.

It's been known under the name of The European Union starting from 1993 through the adopting of the Maastricht treaty. The constitutional bases for the European Union have been modified to their current form through the Lisbon treaty, on the 1st of December 2009, therefore giving this community its international judicial personality.

Nowadays, nobody can deny the fact that the European Union represents an economical, commercial and even financial power, but regarding globalization, Europe has to survive the new stakes and challenges out of which we can mention the demographic evolution, climate changes, energy supply and even the security threats. The problem that the members of the EU are not capable anymore of promptly replying to these threats and risks regarding the security arises, which is why the idea of a collective effort, on an European level could result in a flexible, useful and innovative response.

Due to these conditions, the idea of a modernization or even internal reformation for Europe has emerged, as result and simultaneously with the process of attracting new members that would agree to become part of the European Union but that would, at the same time, take up the responsibility of finding and

applying new solutions to solve difficult situations as a result of the security risks.

In the current security environment, that is dynamic, complex and filled with risks, the European Union plays a major role specifically thanks to the fact that it has created its own instruments to prevent and solve conflicts and to combat non-military risks.

For a Europe with chances of becoming a global actor, that has to supply with an alternative for the new international order, the problem of security needs to be categorically assumed, the threats to security need to be cautiously and fastidiously evaluated, from a military analysis point of view as well as from a cost for human security point of view (Mostoflei, 2008).

II. The European security strategy - premises, context, necessity.

From an institutional point of view, the European Union is an organization that was formed and continues a complex, dynamic and progressive construction process.

Challenges can be identified in all the activity areas of the European Union, in all of the domains the EU approaches and even under all the dimensions, but the area regarding security and defence is, without a doubt, one of the most complex and the one where the challenge of integration is amongst the biggest and the most difficult ones for the members of the EU but especially for the institutions of the EU community.

Zbigniew Brzezinski once said that “Europe is the perfect ally, but still a subordinate” under the United States of America’s influence (Brzezinski, 2000:89).

Therefore, during the time before the European Security Strategy was developed, The European Union was undergoing a process of transformation with the purpose of getting rid of the

statute of being a subordinate to the United States. The purpose of this process was to get the USA to consider the European Union at least an equal international partner and not just a “regional common market, containing states allied with the US through NATO” (Brzezinski, 2000:90).

The initiative for creating a security strategy came from Germany in the context of the informal reunion of External Affairs Ministers in May 2003 in Kastellorizo. The General Secretary of the European Union’s Council, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy, Javier Solana, was chosen responsible for creating a security strategy and in June 2003, during the EU summit in Salonic, he presented the document entitled “A Secure Europe in a better World.”, which would become the project for the European security strategy concept.

Until December 2003 the document had been revised with the help of research institutes, but the document didn’t suffer radical or important modifications, instead being just refined and having changed the order of priority objectives and courses of action. The result was a perfectly put together document that kept its original name given by Javier Solana, “A Secure Europe in a better World. The European Security Strategy” The Solana Strategy started from the premise that “The Union is a global actor” and that “It should be ready to take responsibilities in the field of global security” (Solana, 2003:1).

The main idea about the security of the continent and global security, written in the European Security Strategy, are marked by the triplet security environment - strategic objectives of the European Union - political implication for Europe.

After analyzing the global security environment, there have been established the main threats and challenges to the security of the European Union through the European Strategy of

Security, as well as certain objectives and courses of action with the purpose of strengthening the European security. Thus, the main threats identified by the strategy are:

- International terrorism - it is seen as a threat that is permanently developing and is mainly linked to violent religious extremism;

- The proliferation of mass destruction weapons - considered the most important threat towards the European security;

- The regional conflict in the immediate vicinity (Middle East, Northern Africa, Caucasus, Transnistria), as well as in areas further apart - they can create insecurity and instability, violence and they can create the opportunity for organized crime and international terrorism;

- State instability - poor governing, corruption, power abuse, weak institutions, lack of responsibility, civil conflicts - these are threats that strike from the inside and lead to a degrading of the national authority, to state collapsing and regional instability;

- Organized crime - the main target of this is represented by the European states; it is an internal threat but it also has an external side manifested through cross-boundary traffic (drugs, human trafficking, weapons, etc.)

The European Security Strategy has the ambition of embracing all of the existing fields, but I cannot agree with dr. Alexandra Sarcinschi who said “The Solana Strategy identifies some threats and vulnerabilities, but does not offer any details about them.” (Sarcinschi, 2005: 18) when vulnerabilities such as global warming and Europe’s energy dependence are identified, but at the same time there are identified as vulnerabilities the elements that would be better considered risks: poverty, famine, the failure of economic growth.

The European Union has established, through the European Security Strategy, the following strategic objectives:

- The reactions to threats and fighting against them. The EU's Strategy reverts to moving the "first defence line" outside of its area but at the same time it is taken into consideration the fact that there is no solely-military threat, which is why a multilateral approach on the threats against security is considered the future solution.

- Creating security in the immediate vicinity. The main interest for the EU, in this case, is to have at its borders well-governed and well-managed states so that in the case of a possible enlargement of the Union, there wouldn't be any dividing lines. Moreover, there is also the idea that if the countries in the immediate vicinity are characterised by a state of security, the EU's efforts can be canalised to fight the internal factors that cause insecurity.

- The substantiation of the international order on effective multilateralism, which implies a strong international society, fully-functional international institutions as well as a governing in accordance with international law.

Regarding the implications on the European Union's policies, the European Security Strategy identifies four major aspects:

a. A union more active in following its objectives, wishing for the EU to become more than it has ever been.

b. A union more active not only in transforming the armed forces so they become capable of responding to new threats, as well as a better correlation between the civil, military and the capacities in other domains as well.

c. A more coherent union regarding the coordination of existing capabilities and instruments, starting from the idea that "we are stronger when we act together".

d. A union that is capable of cooperating with its partners, the transatlantic relationship being of utmost importance.

As a result of the analysis of the European Security Strategy, Fraser Cameron made the following statement: “The European Union is an actor with an increasing influence on the international and it has to take more responsibility in the field of its own security, as well as the regional and global security” (Cameron, 2003:20) in the context of “External relations that have to be mainly oriented towards the immediate vicinity of the European Union” (Cameron, 2003:20).

In conclusion, we can assess that the European Union has a privileged position, based on global organization, having all of the means - economical, diplomatic, civil and military - for external action, as well as a global vision and a security strategy moulded on its efforts of militarily-strategic modernization, in a world that has greater expectations from other international actors such as the United Nations and NATO (Mostoflei, 2008:31).

III. European Union’s implication in global security

The European Union is an organism in a permanent evolution, regardless of the part of the history we are talking about. It is a well-known fact that one of the major objectives of the EU is the safeguarding of its values and interests, which is becoming somewhat dependent of a global governing through the prism of external affairs and the political-military dimension, thanks to the multidimensional nature of security.

Six years after legitimating the European Security Strategy, but before implementing the Lisbon Treaty, Javier Solana declared: “The role of the EU as a global actor has changed considerably in the past ten years. The European Union has become a global producer of security. There is an increasing

demand in the world for Europe and we have to continue developing instruments that are more capable of answering this demand. Once the Lisbon Treaty is implemented, we will be able to work more efficiently in the domain of crisis management, which means a better jointing of civil and military capabilities.”

The creation of a cooperation mechanism in the field of security and defence had been a permanent wish but it only appeared with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty (1992) and the Amsterdam Treaty (1997). Thus, the Maastricht Treaty established a new pillar for the European architecture, the Common Foreign and Security Policy that also contained “the eventual creation of a common defence policy that in time, could bring the formation of common defence” (Dutu, 2011:39).

The Amsterdam Treaty continued the on the steps of the Maastricht Treaty, creating the position of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and giving the European Council increased competences in its role as an authority that guides the measurements regarding security and defence, adopted on an European level.

By adopting the Lisbon Treaty, the solving of the multiple problems that the members had wanted to be solved, but especially, they wanted to increase the efficiency and the coherence in action, therefore changing the European architecture on three pillars, by fusing the first pillar (the European Communities) with the third one (Justice and Foreign Affairs).

The pillar referring to the field of security and defence has undergone some special rules and procedures.

In this context, security and defence remained one of those attributes and functions essential to the members, which made relevant the following paragraph of the Reformation Treaty: "The European Union's competence in foreign policy and common

security includes all of the fields of foreign affairs as well as all matters regarding the security of the Union, including the gradual creation of a defence policy which could lead to a common defence" (The Lisbon Treaty, 2007).

All in all, according to the Lisbon Treaty, the institutional framework for the Security and Defence Policy, as a part of the Foreign Affairs and Common Security, although it remains the same, a new series of novelties emerges, referring mostly to the external representation of the EU on an international scene. We must keep in mind that the additional value that the Security Policy and Common Defence brings to the international arena doesn't come from its capacity of military intervention, but from the civil dimension of crisis and international conflicts management.

I'm referring to it this way because, although the capacity of military intervention of the EU cannot be questioned, it is clearly surpassed by the military capacities of NATO.

In this sense, it is relevant the information according to which out of the twenty-five operations that have taken place until 2011 under the Security Policy and Common Defence, only eight have been military operations. Therefore, the EU Reformation Treaty created a favourable framework that would lead to an increase in the EU's coherence, efficiency and visibility on the international arena.

Although initially, the majority of the analysts have considered at the moment of EU's enlargement (2004 - 10 new states have joined; 2007 - Romania and Bulgaria joined; 2013 - Croatia joined), that it might become a new obstacle in the way of a good functioning of the institutions; time has proved that the enlargement had a strong impact on the security, unity and stability of the whole continent, but at the same time it positively influenced the world stability and security.

Part of the European specialists have assessed that the extension of the unique European space would strengthen the stability and the security of the continent thanks to having the superior political and structural capacities, therefore developing a proper environment regarding the strengthening of the geostrategic balances in the sphere of world stability and security.

Therefore, the EU acts on a regional scale through new instruments that, however have implications in the global security and stability, such as:

- The Instrument of Pre-Adherence Assistance - used for candidate or potential candidate countries;

- The European Instrument for Vicinity and Partnership - that will cover Third World countries such as Ukraine, Moldavia, Belarus and it is meant to support the strategic partnership of the EU with Russia.

- The Instrument for Stability - it guarantees a response to the crisis in Third world countries and even to trans-boundary problems;

- The Instrument for Economic Cooperation and Development - it is destined for the states and regions that cannot benefit from assistance through the first two instruments.

To these four instruments, two more older but still functional ones are added: The instrument for Humanitarian Assistance and The Instrument for Macro financial Assistance.

Continental and global security is the priority objective for the European Union as well as for NATO and this makes the reports between the two organizations to be cohesive and makes their basis the principles which would turn their partnership beneficial to both parties, but especially to the security and defence of Europe. As a part of this strategic partnership, each organization keeps its specifics, respects each other, is equal in decision making and is based on the necessity of mutual

consultation, dialogue, transparency and cooperation, respecting the interests of its members.

Thanks to the fact that the European Union and NATO have common responsibilities regarding the stability and security of the European and the global areas, this strategic partnership extended to a larger and larger display of problems, including crisis management, the fight against terrorism, against mass-destruction weapons proliferation and even in the sense of extending the two organizations.

The European Union exhibits a solid structure against the complexity of the world and the downfall of the old international balance or terrorism and the base that assured its role as a world power is represented by its gradual enlargement of the organization policy. An extension process like that, although considered by the European commissioner, Olli Rehn, as “our great European challenge” (Rehn, 2007), it can only keep on developing the peace, freedom and prosperity area that the European Union builds and to increase the organization’s role as a stabilizer in global security.

The European Union has made decisive steps towards a globalization of the security through adopting the document entitled “The New European Vicinity Policy”, which lead to an extension of the security, stability and the well-governing inside as well as outside the geographical borders of the Union. The New European Vicinity Policy, closely related to the strategy of the partnerships has helped in securing the southern border of the EU and in supporting the need of development and stability for the neighbours in the Middle East and Northern Africa, by creating an extensive cooperation and an advanced partnership.

With this initiative, the countries neighbouring the extended Europe are proposed a global objective: to develop to a level identical to the ones of the EU members, including in the field of

cooperation in security but excluding the financial obligations and the institutional participation. Considering the dimension of the European Vicinity Policy, the EU acts in the field of problems regarding conflicts and promotes similar reforms on both sides of the borders, hoping to increase the convergence of the political and economic systems, therefore contributing at the instauration of a climate based on trust.

IV. Conclusions

With a view to realising its objectives of security and defence the EU must not contest the necessity of privileged relations with the USA concurrent with the development of collaboration with other globally important actors: China, Russia, Japan, Canada or even India. Moreover, the EU should manifest an opening to developing partnership with any state which shares the same scopes and values and which is ready to act for their protection.

In the context of the new security challenges, a political frame of the EU regarding defence against cyber-attacks must be adopted, and co-operation in dealing with problems of energy security must be consolidated, alongside the development of new military capacities. The strategic and geopolitical environment of the EU is now more agitated and unpredictable than it has ever been in the last decades, the EU now being surrounded by an arch or crisis instead of the “circle of friends” from Romano Prodi’s vision.

In the context of this crisis, the major problem is that European leaders have repeatedly shown that they do not have the will to use the means they have at their disposal in order to stop Russia’s recurring infringement of international law. Putin has managed to successfully exploit the breach in security at NATO’s and EU’s Eastern borders. This collapse of the capacity of discouragement represents a serious threat to the European

order protected by NATO and built by the European Union, and a re-establishment of this capacity of discouragement would be a lot harder to achieve than it would have been to protect from the beginning.

The EU must resist the pressure coming from Russia, but the main problem in this context is that of maintaining its internal unity, a problem becoming more and more difficult. Treating Russia as a strategic rival, but occasionally as a tactical ally will be a challenge for the member states. The EU benefits from a strategic vision, as well as from the necessary means to play an operational role in crisis management, which leads to the organisation's active involvement in the development of a global profile for the architecture of international security.

In my opinion, an interesting attempt to define the EU is the affirmation that "the European Union is a project, not a territory" (Dumont, 2012:9). Therefore, the EU cannot simply stay a geographical object or territory, and the project of the European Union will only succeed if the organisation will know how to define its geography and to develop a project useful both to its citizens and for global peace and prosperity.

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