

What European foreign policy to address today's and tomorrow's geopolitical challenges?

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**UNIVERSITY OF
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**MIDDELBURG
(THE NETHERLANDS)**



**GIGS, GENEVE
(SWITZERLAND)**

Introduction



The EU, a strange superpower

External Trade

20% of the world's trade
19.1% world trade goods
24.3% world trade services

Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)



FOREIGN POLICY

'... to enable the EU to assert its identity on the international scene'

Development

'sustainable development & eradicating poverty'
55% total ODA
2/3rds of specific aid

Enlargement

Most of the challenges with which our European societies currently are being confronted are multidimensional:

- energy ↔ environment**
- security: external ↔ internal**
- geo-economy ↔ geostrategy**
- security: hard ↔ soft approaches**
- Brexit: geo-economic ↔ geopolitical**

Institutional



**Progress in the EU with
regard to foreign policy**

Progress within EU foreign policy:

- Permanent Structured Cooperation**
- EU-NATO joint declaration**
- Coordinated Annual Review on Defence**
- European Defence Fund**

Strategic priorities for implementing the New EU Global Strategy:

- Security and Defence**
- Building Resilience & Integrated Approach**
- Addressing the Internal / External Nexus**
- Updating existing strategies & new ones**
- Enhancing Public Diplomacy**

Geopolitical



**Today's & tomorrow's
geopolitical challenges**

1. Europe's Anglo-Saxon allies are (temporarily) out of service

- The US still seems to be committed to NATO, but this partnership has come under strain...**
- European defence cooperation will gain relatively compared to the trans-Atlantic strategic relationship.**
- The American geostrategic agenda for Eurasia does not always completely match with the continental European one.**

2. The need to review the relationship with Russia

- EU failed to realise that the negotiations for a geo-economic Association Agreement with the Ukraine could also have geostrategic consequences for the EU's relations with Russia.**
- On paper, both actors need one another.**
- The question can thus be raised how the relations between the EU and Russia could be reinvigorated.**

3. The inevitable rise of China

- Beijing is using its excess capital to invest in new initiatives such as the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road. In time, many countries in Europe could benefit from these investments.
- As a result of the more global geopolitical changes, the EU will increasingly need to adopt a “*balance of power*” approach both in geo-economic and geopolitical terms.

4. Structural instability in the Middle East and Northern Africa (1)

- The French-British intervention in Libya in 2011 on the basis of the principle “Responsibility to Protect” may well have been a mistake**
- The Western stance in the Syrian crisis de facto supported the agenda of the rivals Saudi-Arabia and Qatar**
- Clear tensions between the EU and the US with regard to Iran.**

4. Structural instability in the Middle East and Northern Africa (2)

- The second phase of stabilisation of Northern Africa and the Middle East will take more than a generation.
- The EU will need to refocus a large part of its development cooperation to this region.
- If the EU is unable to “stabilise” this so-called “*ring of fire*” in its own neighbourhood, the Union will have failed at providing one of its core missions; *providing security*.

5. Internal stability as a means to bring the EU together

- Eurozone: tensions richer North ↔ poorer South
- neoliberal Europe vs. a Social Union
- Third Industrial Revolution: major promise for a European renewal if governments invest wisely.

Through such a process of renewal, the EU could once again become a beacon in a New World Order that is more fluid and unpredictable.