

EU's Security Strategy

Mihai Christopher Marian Radovici¹

Abstract

The EU seeks to affirm itself as a major actor within the realm of international relations, trying to promote key democratic values throughout its network of diplomatic missions. Thus, EU's foreign and internal policies are constructed as to commonly represent member states in global issues as a well-defined political entity of its own. It is through these lenses that we can observe the ways in which EU's efforts, to remain a major global actor, are diminished because the entity lacks the force (self-reliant army) through which it could efficiently represent its military interests. The only military might, at EU's disposal, being member state's own troops, which can be deployed in emergency-related situations through the common security policy. As such, there are some foreign and defence ministers from the community block which are demanding, after the Afghanistan chaotic developments, an increased military independence for both the EU and its intervention forces. On a similar tone, Josep Borrell Fontelles, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, believes that it is the right time for EU to form its own military corps. Furthermore, overseeing the emerging security contexts, to which NATO responded by engaging into an ample transformation and adaptation process, we can underline some key developments, which showcase the need to reevaluate EU's military efforts, especially in terms of using its capabilities and capacities as a primordial source of credibility. As citizens' security remains one of Brussels' main objectives, and one of the primordial European institutions' responsibilities, they have put forward and accepted, almost two decades ago, the European Security Strategy, which has established, for the first time, tangible goals, and objectives when it comes to protecting EU's interests in terms of security and defence. It is this document which transforms the current approach across the continent, and its analysis can prove a starting ground for punctual optimizations to take place, to gain resilience in the face of alternative or emerging threats and risks.

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1. Introduction

The European Security Strategy was completed in 2010, during the Spanish-led semestrial presidency, as the Council proposed a series of improvements to the original documents, alongside their adoption. Amongst these we can find the

¹ PhD candidate, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania,
radovici.christopher@yahoo.com

inclusion of elements regarding internal security matters, thus changing it to *EU's Internal Security Strategy*, the latter being adopted by the Council on the 25th and 26th of March 2010 (European Council, 2010).

Similar endeavours can be traced all they to the emergence, on the 25th of March 1957 in Rome, of the European Economic Community, which first brought forward ideals related to the safeguarding of European citizens' liberties and safety (Presidency of the Council, 2010).

As such instances are too many to exhaustively present, we can simply observe that, during ISS' creation and adoption phases, the core elements or prospective actions were constructed based on the analysis of existing activities, mechanisms, and processes. Thus, the ISS' baseline, would be to prevent or limit criminal activities and to increase the efficiency of fast-response interventions during emergency or crisis situations. These anticipatory and operational functions are implemented both through the development and maintenance of unitary and efficient management structures, and the deployment of adequate, resilient or inter-operable instruments (General Secretary of the Council, 2017).

If we take into account the inter-sectorial character of EU's internal security, in parallel with its multilevel complexity, and in combination with the fact that major threats or risks can produce powerful reverberations across a wide array of nations and states, all with their own specificities, it is safe to oversee how difficult constantly ensuring it, on the continental plateau, can be (Bossong and Rhinard, 2016).

As there are no member states capable of properly addressing, through individual efforts, trans-continental, or even simply regional, multilevel, multi-actor, multi-dimensional, threats and risks, be them pre-existing or emergent, the ISS creation seeks to resolve exactly such challenges. Furthermore, through its array of interconnected mechanisms and nodal points, ISS seeks to identify common principles and prospective developmental pathways – in full compliance with EU's subsidiarity principle – which are fundamental to the European security model, all while implementing renewed instruments and common policies through an integrated approach (European Commission, 2010a).

From the Commission's remarks, regarding ISS, five core strategic objectives, both for the EU and its member states, can be identified: organized criminality, terrorism, cyber-related safety, border security and disaster or crisis management and prevention. (European Commission, 2010a) As such, in 2011 and subsequently in 2013, the Commission created a suite of extensive reports,

regarding the applicative measures needed to further implement ISS, alongside the adaptation of its actions and recommendations to emergent risk contexts. At their core, these documents focus on the EU's capabilities to tackle new threats, as they offer insight into the progress registered across the board vis-à-vis absolute or relative resilience gains, side by side with prospective challenges and opportunities analysis. In one of the more recent communication packages, which the Commission has put forward, Brussels' concluded that „the next and final report, regarding the application of ISS, will be presented on the second half of 2014. The report will evaluate whether the ISS' objectives have been met and it will also interpret the future challenges that might appear in the field of internal security” (European Commission, 2014).

In respect to the conclusions of the last two reports, the third, and last one, regarding ISS (2010-2014), had a double objective. Firstly, the report analysed, over a four-year period, the efficiency of actions or processes that were implemented in accordance with ISS' five main strategic objectives. Secondly, the report identifies, *in extenso*, prospective risk patterns, transversal objectives and emergent threats, alongside other strategic nodes. These were bound to serve as a fundament for a renewed internal security strategy, in accordance with the Commissions' position papers entitled „An open and secure Europe: making it happen!”, which included several proposals for EU's future agenda for internal affairs. (European Economic and Social Committee, 2014)

Brussels' had to face numerous challenges, when it comes to ISS' application, for instance the financial crisis, and its connex budgetary retractions, altered the availability and fluidity of resources. Furthermore, technological or digital advancements, including exponential growth rates registered in terms of innovation, adoption or implementation of such elements, represented a double-edged sword for ISS. Thus, at the same moment these new elements enabled security enforcement approaches to become more efficient, uniform, or expansive, they also generated a spectrum of alternative threats, in the form of digital and informational criminality. (O'Neill and Swinton, 2017)

It is exactly these processes that triggered a suite of debates, albeit unrelated directly with legislation uniformization, especially as the public space was filled with accusations about large-scale information extraction and analysis programs, in regard to the conditions in which citizens' digital security should be guaranteed within the union' space. In relation to ISS, these narratives led to the consolidation of member states' engagements towards the construction of collective trust, new security policies which facilitate multi-actor inclusion and cooperation, and the necessity to better integrate fundamental rights into the former (Shepher, 2021).

Another significant vector of change for ISS was the external dimension of EU security and defence approaches, as the European community faced the effects of regional and international changes, from conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, to dissensions in Eurasia; all of which have generated ripple effects in a non-linear way, even in matters of international security. (Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, 2012).

2. Interpreting the ISS

One of the heavily researched and regulated fields, from the array of domains related to community development, takes the form of nation-states' security, as the latter generates profound interdisciplinary changes, or even alters, in practical and punctual ways, geopolitical and geostrategic developments, military-industrial complexes, socio-economic assemblages, technological advancements, amongst other key areas.

Two of ISS' primordial theoretical and empirical concepts, which often converged or diverged, took the form of sovereignty and subsidiarity balancing in internal affairs. Relevant pieces, showcased that both concepts can be mobilized to facilitate the positions took by decisional actors, which were afraid of political influence or power losses. While the calls for sovereignty were largely motivated by nation-states' desire to maintain exclusive control or power over internal security matters, those related to the subsidiarity principle were anchored in collective incentives for decision-management at supra national or domestic levels (Voskopoulos, 2021).

Moving onward, from the paradigmatic and empirical literature, related to ISS, we can underline some of the main aspects which were encompassed by the strategy.

- **ISS' scope and range**

From the original normative framework, we can oversee that EU's internal security strategy, and its subsequent branches, was elaborated and adopted in order to help Europe, *per se*, increase its security and resilience mechanisms. As such, it represented a coagulation of already existent activities, processes and entities, under the same umbrella, alongside the establishment, at the continental level, of prospective directing principles and strategic areas of intervention. Its main purpose was to ensure that efficient ways to prevent or reduce criminality, alongside with resilient crisis or disaster fast-response elements, were put in place, through the cooperative development and management of inter-operable, replicable, scalable and malleable instruments (European Council, 2010). In terms of range, the ISS was constructed in such a way as to allow the EU to properly

face constantly existent or emergent threats and risks, for the European society, its citizens, and organizations, in a multi-level and regional or even continental manner.

- **ISS' general objectives**

In ISS' development process a primordial factor was the consolidated expansion of member states' cooperation, as a mechanism to collectively tackle new threats. As such, one of ISS' normative features regarded the gradual construction of a security policies network, while it enabled its implementation to take place at the level of every member state. This is because, in order for the EU to properly adapt to systemic developments, it needed to allow adjustments to be made, within the policies' key areas, based on the nation-states own particularities, such as ethno-communal specificities, geostrategic influences, ideological differences, infrastructure disparities, economic and resources distribution etc., all of which leave a mark on the ways in which public and private internal security affairs are conducted (Kaunert and Leonard, 2012).

The opportunity to approach collective and individual security matters, from a common prism, through the usage of ISS' mechanisms, was paved by the normative and dogmatic exploratory avenues which were encased into the *Lisbon Treaty* respectively the *Stockholm Programme's* action plans. (European Council, 2009) These two, alongside many other programmatic, paradigmatic, and operational documents, fundament liberty, both in thought and action, in a safe environment, and they reference, in an extensive manner, the need for insecurity reduction alongside governments and authorities' capacity expansion to ensure public order (Niță, 2013). Thus, ISS' was based on the Commission's most relevant five strategic domains, in terms of the risks they posed for EU' security, amongst which we have the following key areas: organized criminality, especially cross-border structures; cybernetic criminality; terrorism and radicalization phenomenon; border safety, control and monitorization; disaster or crisis management, especially regional or continental ones (European Commission, 2020; 2011).

- **ISS' specific objectives**

In order to operationalize ISS' objectives, Brussels established a *policy cycle on serious and organized crime*, whose purpose was to ensure an efficient cooperation between national law enforcement agencies, EU institutions and agencies, and other relevant international actors with competences in this domain (eg. GRECO, OECD, UNDOC etc.) (Busuioc and Curtin, 2011). Also, the policy cycle was structured in a way fostered a coherent course of action to be taken against the threats that were identified. (EUROPOL, no date)

The cycle began in 2013, and it was designed to function over a four-year period, being constructed on the following pillars:

1. Policy development phase – based on in-depth analysis of the situation, like Europol' *Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment*, which provides a holistically-driven overview of serious criminality's development in Europe. (EUROPOL, 2013; 2017; 2021)
2. Establish policies and the decisional process phase – led by the Council, and supported by numerous institutions and organizations, it focuses on pan-European and regional priorities establishment. From the selected priorities, in order to achieve a multidisciplinary, integrated and complete approach (which would cover both pre-emptive and repressive measures), a *Multi-annual Strategic Plan* is developed.
3. Application and monitorization phase – the annual *Operational Action Plans* are harmonized with the strategic objectives defined in the MASP and are approved by the *Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security* (Gălăteanu, 2018).
4. Impact evaluation phase – the *OAP's* efficiency is thoroughly monitored and evaluated, in order to prepare for the next policy cycle

- **ISS' way to tackle the identified challenges**

ISS means the construction and protection, within EU's frameworks, of a space based on the values of liberty, security, and justice. In this precise context the ISS: exposes common threats and challenges, which overpass the national, bilateral or regional capabilities; transparently establishes joint security policies and punctual optimizations; defines an European model, which resides in applicative measures and instruments. (European Commission, 2009) In respect to the latter, ISS actively promotes: a reciprocally consolidated relationship between security-freedom-individual or collective private life; solidarity amongst member states based on a cooperation and co-optation network; involvement of EU's relevant institutions and organizations, side-by-side with other major actors in this area; a proactive approach to mitigate or eliminate insecurity sources, not only their effects; increased resilience, forecast and prevention capacities; construction of interdependent and interconnected processes when it comes to foreign-internal security measures. (Carrera and Guild, 2011)

Due to an increase in serious and organized crime, especially those that penetrate, in a cross-border manner, sensitive areas, such as human, drug or weapon trafficking, infantile sexual exploitation, corruption, private data interception, radicalization etc., common projects, like the ISS, were expanded

as to cover a wide array of activities. For instance, in order to limit or eliminate the above-mentioned risks and threats, ISS' model for European security faced, for every member state, challenges like: the proper and effective protection of fundamental rights and liberties; a balanced way to enhance trans-national cooperation across a palette of actors; continuous discovery, engagement and containment of insecurity sources, even at the grassroots strata; proper indexation and establishment of priorities in terms of prevention; promote alternative ways in which citizens can be involved and well-informed in regards to security affairs; recognize and adjust in accordance to the intertwined nature of internal-external security, when it comes to the development of a „global security” approach towards third parties or countries.

Furthermore, ISS and its member states, need to exploit the potential of existent synergies, in sectors like law enforcement cooperation and integrated border or justice management, as a complementary mean to reciprocally consolidate key areas of the European security model.

3. ISS' economic facets

As the economic vectors are (almost) in a symbiosis position with the security ones, since they are entangled in a state of constant reciprocal consolidation, any major modulations can cause reverberations across the whole spectrum to emerge, and even enable the spill over or trickle down into other sectors as well. Thereafter, the global economic-financial-monetary crisis hit one of EU's fundamental domains for security and equilibrium, its competitive prosperity. Moreover, although the economic sphere was the spearhead of cooperation and coordination, the centrifugal and centripetal forces at play have surfaced numerous security issues, throughout the continental plateau, related to the member states disparities in terms of economic elasticity, adaptability, complexity, reserves, flows, mobility etc. As such, the ISS was adapted as to better integrate EU's economic security challenges: the development and efficient deployment of mechanisms designed to enable member states to face any economic-financial-monetary perturbations, based on measures that are adapted to their specificities; the coordination of these processes through European lenses and at the bloc's level. (Duțu and Bogzeanu, 2010; Boin, et al., 2014)

Furthermore, the European community was built upon a distinct social and economic model, presented across numerous documents, even in the *Lisbon Treaty*, as a social market economy with a high competitiveness dynamic, which aims for social progress and full workforce occupancy. In this sense, if we underline key points, from across a suite of interpretation lenses that were

anchored in this socio-economic model, although as different as they are from a qualitative standpoint, we can observe the emergence of a common pattern. (Shepherd, 2021) Thus, almost all gravitate towards the idea that the continent's economic growth should focus on free market capitalisation oriented towards social bottom lines or societal development. Through these approaches, the applicative measures taken helped Europe become a powerful industrial and service-led hub, with high marketplace mobility, adaptability, and occupancy rates, across a palette of innovation-oriented competitors, all of which in turn generated a web of equitable social safety and welfare policies. It is precisely processes like these that have created a virtuous circle which encompassed, and intertwined, solidarity, responsibility and competitiveness, as ways to secure a prosperous and free environment. It is exactly these junctures that have been the most exposed when the global crisis struck, as the EU's absolute or relative potential to generate economic growth and marketplace stability, respectively to further increase living standards accordingly, began to stagnate. (European Commission, 2010b) Furthermore, when confronted with the increased complexity, dynamic and competitiveness of emergent or recovering markets, the EU had to introduce a new set of reforms, as to efficiently consolidate its economic dimension. (Reflection Group on the Future of the EU 2030, 2010) In this note, ISS' role began to be expanded into connex fields, as a way to ensure the stability of the financial-economic-monetary fields, and indirectly to maintain, due to its intertwined nature, the social security of the continent as well. For instance, ISS' mechanisms were deployed to ensure that the unitary efforts, to gradually adjust budgetary deficits across the reference horizons, without any disturbance or risks to macroeconomic equilibrium and sustainable development, were not side-tracked or altered by indirect criminal activities (European Commission, 2010c).

4. Conclusions

European internal security cooperation is often filtered through the prism of normative debates, such as the proper balance between liberty, albeit collective or individual in nature, and security. As such, this complex domain becomes, at certain times, quite volatile, especially in the face of large-scale crises or fluctuations, since everyone looks up at „*An union which protects*”, even though the bloc's member states remain fully responsible for any operational or administrative steps taken in this direction. (Tusk, 2016)

Even if, on average, EU citizens favour a more robust and integrated security policy framework, in order to maintain efficient border controls and fight

against terrorism, we can identify a large spectrum of narratives that question EU's legitimacy into these matters. (Murray and Longo, 2018)

It is from a combination of these factors that ISS came to be, in order to indispensably complement the *European Security Strategy*, and other programmatic documents, as a way to promote social, political and economic development through durable and efficient security and stability measures. (European Council, 2010) Although, its roots can be found all the way to the ideals embedded into the *Lisbon Treaty* or *EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights*, and other subsequent applicative measures. In this sense, as a mechanism to ensure that such principles are properly upheld, we can identify that ISS' activity was closely linked with articles of *EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights*. (Abrisketa, et al., 2015)

Furthermore, as ISS had to adapt, in order to optimize its operations, based on various member states' specificities and the emergence or expansion of new threats and risks, it ended up encompassing missions related to economic, financial, societal, military, judiciary, informational, ecological, energy etc. security. As such, ISS represented not only a reactive but also pre-emptive mechanism, whose inter-operability and applicability across a wide spectrum of areas, made it turn into a complex assemblage of security vectors, which acted in an omnidirectional way through multi-faceted, multi-actor and multi-level cooperation, integration and co-option. (Bogdan, 2015) One which paved the way towards the construction of a more intricate and intertwined operational, paradigmatic, and programmatic security environment in Europe that would be more efficient exactly due to its united in diversity approach.

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