

Speech by HR/VP Mogherini at the 2017 European Union Institute f

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Check against delivery!

You won't be surprised if I skip my formal speech and simply tell you how I feel exactly one year after the presentation of the Global Strategy [for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy] and a couple of days after having presented to the foreign ministers the report on the first year of implementation; and tomorrow and the day after tomorrow in the European Council the Heads of State and Government will also have a look at that. I would not expect that this will be their first priority, but most of the things that will be discussed at the European Council actually are part of the implementation of the Global Strategy, because if you work on counterterrorism or you work on migration that all refers to the way in which we changed our work in this last year.

This time last year was quite difficult, still quite ok, but on the edge of a complicated time. I remember very well with many of you, we were together in the beginning of the process of even thinking of a Global Strategy two years ago. And last year around the end of the month many were having doubts whether it was the right time to come out with the new strategy for the European Union as one of the Member [States] decided to leave and I remember it was a difficult decision to take, but I think that one year after that time we can say without any doubt that in this year we have needed our common Global Strategy much more than we would have expected and we have managed to implement much more than what we have expected one year ago.

I was realising that it is a bit like the parallel, if I can make the parallel, to the Iran deal [JCPOA]. Many sceptics before we managed to get the deal were saying 'you will never get there' and we got there. Then everybody was saying 'you will never implement it' and we implemented it and then now many are saying 'it will never survive' and still it is surviving and I am sure it will survive. I think it is more or less the same. Many were sceptical about the fact that it was the right time to have a Global Strategy and I have seen in this last year that not only the European citizens, not only the European leadership or the European institutions, but also our partners around the world have used the Global Strategy – using it to make the European Union one of the very points of reference across the globe.

We have lived in the last year a bit of an identity crisis: How many are we? Where are we heading to? Why are we together? Then I believe that also thanks to the Global Strategy partially, not only, we rediscovered the value of being together, the added value, the existential value of being together that was clearly referred to in Rome on the 25 March. That to me is the internal strategy, the re-launch of the reasons why we are stronger together and, in the meantime, we have seen that our partners in the world, even those that

are not necessarily partners, but our interlocutors in the world, have in parallel realised that you can like the European Union or not – sometimes we put a lot of emphasis in things that are not particularly welcome, sometimes it can be rules, or human rights, or other things -, but there is a value that in these times it is quite essential which is that you always know what can come from us. We are quite predictable and in these times I think this is essential and a positive element.

We are there for our principles, our values, our interests that, as we discussed last year, are not in contradiction, we are there for partners. We stay true to our partnerships. And I think more and more people around the globe realise that we are an indispensable partner, be it on security, be it on climate, be it on trade, be it obviously in development and humanitarian aid, in diplomacy, be it for the power of peace. The power of the European Union is projected especially in the regions that feel and realise that making peace can make your economy, but also your connections, your living standards much better off than they were before.

I think that in this year of implementation of the Global Strategy, first of all we realised that yes, we definitely needed it, that actually we needed it much more than we realised when we had it and that it was a useful tool to work together, put together different institutions and starting to work across the board; and also we implemented much more than we expected. Now, I can give you plenty of examples: I would say that 2 examples are maybe the most evident ones.

One is the example of Mali and the Sahel. I was there 2 weeks ago, visiting our 2 missions and operations – a civilian and a military one –, and our delegation. The terrorist attack in Bamako on Sunday had two victims – one working for the EU delegation and one for the EU training mission, reminding us that there is a heavy price that our men and women pay daily, but also reminding us that we actually do the job on the ground and sometimes we do not even realise how much of a European Union flag is there in conflict or crises situations. But there you have a military training mission, a civilian mission that is training the police and the security forces, an enormous amount of development work done, you have the diplomatic work on the peace agreement, you have the regional approach with the G5 Sahel – I was announcing there €50 million support to the G5 Sahel joint force to tackle terrorism and smuggling and trafficking of not only human beings but also drugs and arms.

That it's really the laboratory of the common approach where you have all parts of the work that needs to be done, from security to development, to peace and diplomacy put together. And actually you realise that no one has the same kind of mix of instruments and that is exactly what we wrote one year ago in the Global Strategy: that the European Union has to move from a fragmented approach of all the instruments we have to using them all together to specific strategic aim. This is I think the perfect example.

It is a strategic objective because the security, peace and development of the Sahel, in Mali in this case, is key to the European Union security on counterterrorism, but also on migration and on the other side, it helps

regional and global cooperation. This is one example of how we accelerate it – because part of it was already done – the coming together of different angles of work. This is true for Mali, the Sahel but this is also true for many other situations where I see more and more that we use our economic instruments, our trade instruments, our climate, energy or economic investment instruments, or even cultural diplomacy we started, in an integrated work towards the strategic objective.

The second field is clearly security and defence. This was the field that was probably subject of scepticism the most one year ago, and especially at the time of the British referendum when everybody was saying: “Now that the major military power is gone, what do you want to do?”. It is quite clear that we managed to move in this last year to a level that even a couple of months ago many were saying this is going to be impossible even in 10 years. I think we have moved more in 10 months than in the last 10 years. Some say more than in the last 60 years, maybe that is a bit too much. For sure, we have managed to overcome a series of psychological blocks that were there.

The EU/NATO cooperation still in September was the main point of argument, with many saying that if we develop European defence this will be seen as an hostile act on the other side of Brussels. A couple of months afterwards and with the election of [Donald] Trump we proved these people wrong, because the European defence has become the strongest pillar for NATO and the strongest reassurance for the transatlantic alliance that Europeans will be there and will continue to be there to keep the military alliance strong from our own perspective, with our own differences.

We are not a military alliance and we have Member States that are not NATO allies but it is the best guarantee for NATO to hold a strong position and we have taken decisions in the last four, five months – including the Military Planning and Conduct Capability here in Brussels, coordinating all the military training missions we have – including by the way the one on Mali that was facing a loss on Sunday. We took decisions on beginning the work on PESCO [Permanent Structured Cooperation], the coordinated annual review on defence or the beginning of the work to have a better financing of the battlegroups – after ten years of establishing them. In these months, a matter of months and not years, and by unanimity.

Now we feel a little bit more self-confident than six, seven months ago. We digested – abbiamo elaborato il lutto – how do you say it in English? We managed our own mourning and we realised that the prophecy of the British referendum being the beginning of the end was simply not true. And we are now more than ever determined to go on at 27. And you see the last, all the last, election results proving the myth of the end of the European Union wrong. And so this gives confidence.

There is another issue, the huge unpredictability of the political positions of others in the global scene – and here I am exercising all my diplomatic skills, has proven to the European citizens and the European leaders that we need to rely on ourselves and we need to take decisions and follow them up with some determination and courage.

And this is why I think we have managed to implement so much of the Global Strategy, including on security and defence. So this brings us to an interesting place now because we have done a lot. We have recovered, I think psychologically and emotionally, all the trust in ourselves that was shaken last year. And we can now offer, I believe, not only to the European citizens but also to our partners in the world, the European Union not only as a global player but also as a strong and reliable and predictable global player.

If you look at climate change – we managed not only to keep our unity and insist on implementation and preserving the agreement in Paris, but also in building global alliances to make sure that state and non-state actors, including in the United States [of America], reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris Agreement. And this can bridge the difficult years we have ahead of us. Making sure that the important decisions that need to be taken – that by the way, out of our own experience we know very well are also compatible with economic growth and investments in the green sector – can bridge these difficult years we have ahead of us together with others. From China to Latin America, from India to Africa – after the announcement by [US] President Trump that the United States [of America] would withdraw from the agreement, we had joint statements or demarches or agreements with the African Union, Chile, China, and I could continue.

Building global alliances, being a point of reference for some in the world, or for many in the world, is one example, while the other one I would like to make of that is multilateralism and the UN system. I believe the European Union in these years, also thanks to the implementation of the Global Strategy and our strategic vision, has managed to position itself as a point of reference for those that want to seriously invest in multilateralism and the UN system. Be it peacekeeping, be it conflict prevention, be it the investment on humanitarian front – I think we managed and we will continue to manage to put together those in the world that believe security is not just military and that you need to have a sustainable security approach, that security is also the rule of law, human rights, democracy, good governance, but also humanitarian aid, development cooperation, conflict prevention and so on.

And there are not many in the world that can interpret this role at this stage. If you look around – very few. If you consider who is in this world of today a diplomatic power, investing in multilateralism and diplomacy? Who is a humanitarian major donor, always reliable, not only pledging but also delivering? Who is the major development aid provider – more than all the rest of the world together? But also, who is there every time that multilateralism needs support? And who is there to advocate for human rights? And who is there to advocate for free and fair trade? And the list continues. If you put together all of this – difficult to find anyone else. Which is sad – it is not a point of pride. It is a point of warning. But in the meantime we encourage others in the world to partner with us on each and every of this field. We constitute in the world a point of reference. For many more than we realise.

And I think with the Global Strategy in this year – also thanks to your

collective work, and thanks to you also because you have accompanied us in this process from the very beginning – we have managed to position the European Union in a place where we would not be if we did not have the Global Strategy as it is. And again I think it is not something that is relevant just for me and my work but is relevant for the work we have done together. Because this has been really, both the work leading to the Global Strategy itself and implementation, a collective teamwork. A collective true European teamwork.

So I would like to thank you for that. I am glad to share this moment with you and I remember well previous meetings we had last year. I was always saying do not expect that the work is finished with the Global Strategy because I will come back to you when it comes to the implementation because we also need to implement this together. This continues also after year one. So we will continue to work together on defining the priorities for the implementation of next years and we are doing that already in July with the foreign ministers to keep the rhythm very fast, very ambitious and still very much united, as we have proven to all those that say and think that the European Union is bureaucratic and slow.

In these last weeks I have had the strange feeling of hearing people say: “Could we slow down a bit, please?” And you know – no. No, not really. Not really because it is not the time for taking things slowly. It is the time for putting all the energy in it, thinking carefully, strategically – as we always say and think – but going fast.

Thanks.