Introduction

On 28 June 2016, after a one-year-long public consultation process, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission (HRVP) tabled a new European Union Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (European External Action Service 2016a), replacing the European Security Strategy (ESS) of 2003 (European Council 2003). The first strategy, written by a small team around the EU High Representative, Javier Solana, bore the characteristics of its historical context. It was elaborated during optimism about the Union’s evolution, in the euphoric backwash of the successful introduction of the Euro as common currency and on the eve of the ‘big bang’ enlargement of 2004. A famous and, from today’s perspective, overly confident or even self-congratulatory opening statement set the scene: ‘Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. The violence of the first half of the century has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history’ (ibid.: 1). With the ESS, Solana and the Council Policy Unit ventured for the first time into strategizing at the level of the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in a globally favourable climate for Europe, and, equally important, before the end of the ‘permissive consensus’ (Norris 1997; Hurrelmann 2007; Hooghe and Marks 2009) within the EU Member States and the negative referenda on the EU Constitution (in France and the Netherlands in 2005) and on the Lisbon Treaty (in Ireland, in 2008). Despite a persisting and heavily debated ‘capabilities–expectations gap’ (Hill 1993) in the realm of the CFSP, it was then quietly assumed that the European model was the ideal to emulate for the 16 neighbouring countries on their way to association with, or even integration into, the Union (Smith 2004; Lavenex 2004; Manners and Whitman 2003).

The ESS, which also informed the ‘old’ European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), stated that ‘[t]he best protection for our security is a world of well-governed democratic states’, and set itself the ‘task to promote a ring of well governed countries to the East of the European Union
and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations’ (European Council 2003: 8). The EU then considered itself a ‘normative’ or ‘civilian power’, committed to defend and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law – also in its neighbourhood (Manners 2002; Aggestam 2008). European self-perception has since evolved: The European Union’s Global Strategy (EUGS) adopts an approach of ‘principled pragmatism’ (European External Action Service 2016a: 8), much more modest and limited in ambition, which was already labelled as a form of European ‘Realpolitik’ (Biscop 2016). The pragmatic element in this refers to European interests, while principles include the EU’s values such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Providing a long list of threats and challenges to Europe’s security and prosperity, the 2008 Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy noted ‘that the EU remains an anchor of stability’ for its neighbourhood (Council of the European Union 2008: 1). Among the means for playing this role as a partner have been the CFSP, development cooperation, humanitarian action and the EU’s trade policy. However, the logical and most prominent place for promoting regional cooperation has been the ENP, together with the EU’s enlargement policies. Institutionally, these policy areas and competencies have been neatly separated by, and divided into, different organizational entities. The 2008 Report recognized this and called for ‘more coherence, through better institutional co-ordination and more strategic decision-making’ in order ‘to be more effective – among ourselves, within our neighbourhood and around the world’ (Council of the European Union 2008: 9). The report was also an important step in the building of an EU security identity and examined the state of affairs with regard to a number of security objectives, such as the European Defence Agency (EDA), as well as the Helsinki Headline Goals in the area of rapid reaction capacity and civilian response. It also offered an assessment of several sub-strategies, notably regional approaches to East Asia, Latin America – and the EU’s neighbourhood. Compared to the ambitious goal setting in earlier documents, such as the Commission Communication ‘Wider Europe’ of 2003 (Commission of the European Communities 2003), there is now an obvious shift towards an approach of integrated security governance vis-à-vis the ENP countries (European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 2016; Council of the European Union 2016a, 2016b).

In 2011, then HRVP, Catherine Ashton, jointly with Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Füle, published a communication entitled ‘A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood’ (High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/European Commission 2011). This review did not question the assumptions at the basis of the ENP, nor did it change the original enlargement framework. It was conceived as a reaction to the transformations in the Southern Mediterranean, known as the ‘Arab Spring’, and offered some, though limited support to democratization in the region. As already acknowledged in the ESS, Europe has inherent incentives to be a point of reference for the establishment of political order in its neighbourhood and an anchor for its stability:

It is in the European interest that countries on our borders are well-governed. Neighbours who are engaged in violent conflict, weak states where organised crime flourishes, dysfunctional societies or exploding population growth on its borders all pose problems for Europe.

(European Council 2003: 7)

The EUGS added a list of governance goals to provide in the medium term, several public goods, such as human security, rule of law, education, health services, investment and a sound income base for neighbouring countries (European External Action Service 2016a).
The question is, whether the EU and its Member States, even taking all their capabilities at the organizational intersection of foreign, neighbourhood and development policies into account, have the legitimacy and the capacity, that is, material means and the instruments, as well as the institutional equipment, to do so. Does the EUGS provide sufficient guidance on how to go about it and, finally, does Europe have the political will and operational capacities to determine the appropriate course of action and to adopt the necessary measures? The chapter will address these questions by first sketching out the parallel evolution from the ESS to the EUGS and of the ENP between 2003 and 2015. In tracing elements of path-dependence in the development of the ESS/EUGS and the ENP, the chapter analyses the extent to which the EU’s foreign and security strategy and the ENP have co-evolved into a coherent framework for guiding policy action, before drawing some conclusions on the changing normative dynamics at the institutional intersection of the EUGS and the ENP.

The EU Security Strategy, the Global Strategy and the ENP: path-dependent and co-evolving strategies

Even though the ESS and the old ENP were adopted in the same year and struck a similar chord as to the importance of political stability, democratic governance and economic development in the European neighbourhood, they largely existed in two parallel universes. Wider Europe was conceived as a Commission policy framework for the post–2004 enlargement phase. Some months later, the ESS was published, written by the Council’s Policy Unit, a small team of officials around the then EU-HR, Javier Solana. There was little institutionalized communication or consultation between the two realms, neatly separated in their confinements, left and right of the Rue de la Loi in Brussels.

By contrast, the documents presented in November 2015 and June 2016, respectively the Review of the ENP and the EUGS, were the result of institutional learning and communication. Although the EUGS is supposed to be the overarching top-level strategy for the EU’s foreign and security policy, it does not introduce hierarchies among other external policy areas. The ENP remains a compatible yet independent field of EU action. Strategies need to be underpinned by institutions able to translate them into concrete policy action. These institutions, especially in the field of the ENP, have only been developed after 2003 and have matured since. In the period since the establishment of the EEAS, the learning curve has been steep: the institutionalization of hybridity in policy-making allows for more and better coordination between Brussels-based (including EU Delegations) and Member States’ diplomatic services (Henökl 2015).

More than in the days of the ESS and Wider Europe, today the ENP is the policy area where the Global Strategy is put to a test. The aim is to achieve better coordination of instruments and services, not only administratively but also in view of having stronger political impact. For this purpose, Brussels has endeavored to strike a balance between community instruments, such as trade, aid, migration and the CFSP, as well as actively seeking support by the Member States. This is necessary since the ENP concerns several individual policy areas, theoretically clearly divided but in practice frequently overlapping competencies between administrative units and governance tiers.

Virtually the same Commission officials were dealing with the same policies – the ENP countries to be ever more closely associated with Europe, with practically the same tools, instruments and methods (resources, expertise, rules, drafts and models) readily available. The path for the ENP’s evolution was set: for nearly a decade after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, and two years after the merger of DG ELARG with DEVCO’s Directorate F, the new DG NEAR continued what it had been successfully doing, namely trying to get the
countries around the EU to reform according to the EU model, comply with its legal order and to conform to the *acquis*. To the ‘genetic soup’ (Olsen 2010) of enlargement policy, a few new ingredients have been added over time in a way of ‘institutional layering’ (Streeck and Thelen 2005). Next to the staff and tools from DG DEVCO, some new elements pertaining to mission and tasks were added and reassembled, which determined the shape of the things to come in DG NEAR. Some clarifications about the relations between DG NEAR and DG DEVCO were established in the service-level agreement of 27 February 2015, which regulates the working relations between the services and the administrative support to be provided by DG DEVCO. The ENP also combines financial instruments applying different administrative and operational methodologies inherited from the predecessor structures of DG NEAR (Maass, this volume).

With the Lisbon Treaty, the HRVP has obtained far-reaching powers to formulate, coordinate and implement EU external policies, traditionally a prerogative of the Member States. In the exercise of these delegated powers, since 2010, the HRVP is assisted by a dedicated administrative body, namely the EEAS. Formal decision-making over the EU’s CFSP remains with the Council, while the European Neighbourhood and Trade policies, as well as international cooperation, largely remain the competencies of the EU Commission. Being responsible for the implementation of the EUGS, and to achieve coherence between the actions in the different fields of external affairs, the EEAS is situated within several, partly overlapping and conflicting, competence areas and accountability relationships (Henökl 2014a; Henökl 2016). The reform of the ENP in 2015, entailing a readjustment of the EU’s approach and ambitions in the two (heterogeneous and diverse) country-groupings, that are frequently lumped together as European neighbourhood(s), has been focusing on problems of consistency and coherence, and is shaped to match established and learned coordination practices. The inter-service consultation between the involved DGs is an example of such learned and institutionalized coordination practices at the EU level.

**Sufficient strategic guidance? Translating strategies into action**

The EUGS is a strategy document that needs to be broken down into sub-strategies, policy and action plans, with the ENP ideally adding a geographic and operational sub-layer for regions bordering the EU. Connected to both are several agendas, which are being updated and adapted to interact better and articulate with each other and with the EUGS, such as the revision of the European Consensus on Development in 2017 and the future of the ACP–EU Partnership post-2020 (see Figure 46.1). Beyond the EU’s own reform processes, there are several global governance undertakings, including the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Convention on Climate Change with yearly summits, or the G20 process, which under German leadership in 2017 and under the headings ‘resilience’, ‘sustainability’ and ‘responsibility’, focuses on the causes of migration and promotes cooperation with Africa (German Federal Government 2016: 5–13).

As shown in Figure 46.1, the specific multi-level character of the Union, adds complexity to the coordination between governance and administrative levels – involving different EU institutions at several hierarchical layers, as well as political and bureaucratic bodies within Member State governments (Henökl 2014b; Egeberg and Trondal 2015). With the ENP being a central pillar of the ESS and later EUGS, one should expect increased coordination between the two political figures, Commissioner Johannes Hahn and HRVP, Federica Mogherini, as well as between their administrations in charge of the neighbourhood agenda, DG NEAR and the EEAS.
While the second reform of the ENP has been presented in a Joint Communication by the Commission, spearheaded by Commissioner Hahn and HRVP Mogherini in November 2015, and despite increased inter-organizational exchange between NEAR and EEAS, the ENP is far from being an organic part of EU external action. More than in the ESS, the neighbourhood ranks high on the list of the five priorities that are identified in the EUGS. These are: (1) the security of the EU itself; (2) the neighbourhood; (3) how to deal with war and crisis; (4) stable regional orders across the globe; and (5) effective global governance. While the ENP has always been the EU's most developed regional strategy, the connection from the strategic level to implementation has been further strengthened over the years. Compared to the relation between the ESS and the old ENP, there is an improvement, to the extent to which the EUGS provides strategic guidance for a differentiated and targeted ENP. The main development concerns the degree of convergence of EUGS and the new ENP, propagating similar and compatible approaches and instruments, such as flexibility, differentiation, ownership and resilience. Concomitantly, new agendas targeting migration and security illustrate the actual transformation of EU action and the implementation of the EUGS in the neighbourhood regions. As the institutional structures evolved, the division of tasks at EU level has become clearer and the coordination has increased, also the Global Strategy and the ENP have become more complex, more nuanced and more converging – but not necessarily more ambitious.

Consider the resilience approach, which is central to both documents. The EUGS claims that ‘[s]tate and societal resilience is our strategic priority in the neighbourhood’ (European External Action Service 2016a: 25). Similarly, the ENP Review reads, ‘the measures set out in
this Joint Communication seek to offer ways to strengthen the resilience of the EU’s partners in the face of external pressures and their ability to make their own sovereign choices’ (European Commission and High Representative 2015b: 4). Resilience can be an inherently dynamic concept, distinct from ‘stability’. Resilience is defined as ‘the ability of states and societies to reform, thus withstanding and recovering from internal and external crisis’ (European External Action Service 2016a: 23). While the resilience concept may thus be progress vis-à-vis the focus on ‘stability’, the concept has been criticized by scholars for being vague and putting the burden for crisis management on the shoulders of the already distressed countries (or entities), inciting them to build capacities and develop resilience by themselves (Wagner and Anholt 2016).

Considering the state of the EU’s neighbourhood, the narrative on resilience sounds euphemistic, if not inspired by a neo-liberal idea of self-reliance or self-empowerment, ‘whereby the responsibility for security is transferred from the government to (civil) society’ (Schmidt 2015: 406). It may be argued that resilience is to some extent the external expression of the subsidiarity principle, leaving responsibility for problems within the jurisdiction where they are best and most efficiently taken care of. This approach may seem adequate for problem-solving in the case of ungoverned spaces, collapsing social contracts and weakened state institutions of the MENA region but the resilience theme makes much less sense in the eastern neighbourhood, since it is not state structures that are missing in the East – during the first years of the ENP it was the neighbours lacking the determination to engage in the prescribed reforms, whereas today it is the power politics of Russia as the regional hegemon that deliberatively undermines EU neighbourhood ambitions.

Putting some flesh to the resilience bone, a draft ‘Roadmap on the follow-up to the EU Global Strategy’, circulated by the EEAS’ Policy Coordination Division to the Antici Group of the Committee of the Permanent Representatives (Coreper), on 19 September 2016, outlines an ‘Initiative on resilience’, which

would aim at developing a common narrative on the EU’s enhanced approach to state and societal resilience, on governance building and accountability as well as enhancing links with civil society which will be developed in relation to implementation of relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

This initiative ‘would target in particular the EU’s surrounding regions, in synchronisation with the revised European Neighbourhood Policy’ with the consequence that it ‘would also contribute to enhancing the EU’s own resilience and that of its citizens’ (European External Action Service 2016b: 2). In practice, there seems to be a strong emphasis on security related measures, but for the time being, it is not clear how this narrative will be filled with life, other than with stricter measures in the field of migration.

The problem is, of course, that the ENP review of November 2015 (European Commission and High Representative 2015b) was realized before the overarching EUGS was elaborated, with some degree of inconsistency programmed into the process. This is replicating the situation of 2003, when Wider Europe was released by the Commission roughly eight months ahead of Council’s publication of the ESS. Strictly speaking, in both cases the ENP should have constituted a regional sub-strategy to the EUGS, but, at least in the case of 2015 ENP review, the document was presented in the form of a Joint Communication by the Neighbourhood Commissioner and the EU High Representative, which suggests that there was better and closer coordination between them.

As an intermission belt to take this coordination further, the Roadmap for Implementation suggests therefore that ‘it would be complemented by an update of the relevant sectoral
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sub-strategies to align relevant EU policies with the goal of a multifaceted and tailor-made approach to resilience’ (European External Action Service 2016b: 2). As indicated in the Roadmap, this applies to all strategies that have been elaborated over the last years, and notably to the European Agenda on Security of 2015, which again makes direct references to the EU neighbourhood (Council of the European Union 2015). In 2003, the ESS was more of a ‘stand-alone strategy’ and did not have such a detailed plan to ensure the follow-up.

Also, in contrast to the ESS, which was less explicit about it, the EUGS now puts the emphasis on Europe’s own security, setting the ambitious target of reaching ‘strategic autonomy [. . .] to promote peace and security within and beyond its borders’ (European External Action Service 2016a: 9). The neighbourhood, next on the list, is a sort of ‘resonance room’ of the EU’s priorities of security, prosperity and democracy – de-emphasising democratization and expressing a certain preference for stability: ‘We will take responsibility foremost in Europe and its surrounding regions, while pursuing targeted engagement further afield’ (ibid.: 17). Actively promoting democratization is no longer a compulsory part of the package, instead the EU would support democracies where they emerge, for ‘their success [. . .] would reverberate across their respective regions’ (ibid.: 25).

The idea is that the neighbourhood is the inner most of several ‘concentric circles’ of the EUGS, closest to its centre – Europe itself. The neighbourhood thus receives strategic priority, ahead of all other partners. The main concern in the neighbourhood is its fragility, a problem intimately linked to the recurring resilience theme of the EUGS (Henökl and Stemberger 2016). ‘State and societal resilience to our East and South’ (European External Action Service 2016a: 6) and fragile states have been dragged into the centre of EU attention – the word ‘resilience’ is mentioned forty times in the EUGS. Both concepts, fragility and resilient societies, are of growing importance when dealing with the neighbourhood – certainly in the South but increasingly also in the East. To foster ‘resilience in our surrounding regions’, it ‘will nurture societal resilience also by deepening work on education, culture and youth to foster pluralism, coexistence and respect’ (ibid.: 16-17).

Strategic ambiguity in a turbulent environment

While resilience may be a core topos for the EU’s southern neighbourhood, it is not entirely clear what this approach can do for the eastern neighbourhood. The problem for the countries to the East of Europe is an increasingly assertive and aggressive Russia, actively trying to prevent them from associating with and integrating into the EU. This situation contrasts starkly with the scenario projected in the Wider Europe communication, where Russia was a strategic partner in the region and potentially one of the countries within the ENP. Back in 2003, Russia had also been the single most important recipient of Community assistance under the ENP (Commission of the European Communities 2003). Obviously, neither the reviewed ENP of 2011 or 2015 nor the EUGS can reconcile the fundamental strategic inconsistency of grouping not only different countries, but two geopolitical spaces – embedded in totally different cultural and socio-economic contexts – together in a single policy framework. In the eastern neighbourhood, the EU’s ‘power-of-attraction’ approach proved to be counter-productive and a threat to regional stability (Howorth 2016; Smith 2016).

Based on enlargement and the EU’s aquis communautaire, the pre-2015 ENP was premised on the assumptions that the EU had all the answers to political and economic organisation, and that neighbouring countries wanted to transform themselves in Europe’s image. The image was that of a belt of growing prosperity and democracy around a wealthy and thriving Europe at its centre, ultimately resulting in political stability. Under the umbrella of this superficial
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assumption, the ENP included too many, and at times contradictory, goals: market-friendly reforms, liberal-democratic transformation, the advancement of human rights, opportunities for investors, energy cooperation, regional stability, migration management and anti-terrorism cooperation. In order to pursue these goals, the ENP assembled a diverse set of policies into a ‘tool box’, including the ‘enlargement carrot’, soft-power foreign-policy tools, trade and investment policy and foreign aid (Kelley 2006). Institutionally, this led to a layering of approaches and instruments that were both inadequate and incompatible. The main reason for the ENP’s incoherence was that the policy framework reflected too many preferences and tried to pursue them in different country contexts. EU Member States have played a strong role as policy entrepreneurs, while the policy itself has been designed and implemented by the Commission, using the ‘golden carrot’ of EU membership that later turned into a ‘brown carrot’, when it became clear that further enlargement of the Union was no longer a realistic scenario (Del Sarto and Schumacher 2005; Bodenstein and Furness 2009). For various geographic, economic and historical reasons, the ENP was divided into two competing zones of influence, characterized by diverging interests and different levels of ambition and ownership. The division into two influence-zones, regrouped under the ENP-roof contributed to unite Member States and consolidate a common EU approach. To the East, Germany, Poland and Sweden together with Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Romania were in the driver’s seat, promoting association projects with former Soviet states against growing Russian opposition (Wojna and Gniazdowski 2009). In the South, Mediterranean EU Member States, notably Spain, France and Italy, pushed a broad range of measures, from democracy promotion to self-interested arrangements with the region’s authoritarian governments (Schumacher et al. 2016).

With the 2015 refugee crisis, the division of labour between East and South became less self-evident, if not obsolete, since Germany, but also other northern European Member States, got more directly involved in responding to the decomposition in the southern neighbourhood. At least, the EUGS now explicitly recognizes that ‘repressive states are inherently fragile in the long term’ (European External Action Service 2016a: 16). Managing crises and dealing with the consequences of violent conflict, such as in Libya and Syria, according to the EUGS, requires ‘a comprehensive’, ‘integrated’, ‘multi-dimensional’, ‘multi-phased’ and ‘multi-level approach [. . .] acting at the local, national, regional, and global levels’ (ibid.: 18). The security challenges in 2003 were very different – and threats seemed far away. The international community was under the impression of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the US and the division in Europe regarding the invasion of Iraq. The tone was one of uniting the EU Member States behind a narrative of democracy and governance, contrasting and complementing the US-led global war on terror.

The musings of the ESS seem rather abstract compared to today’s fundamental questions of how the EU tackles concrete challenges and how it positions itself vis-à-vis key players in its neighbourhoods, most notably Russia (but more recently also Turkey and its position vis-à-vis the EU). As the Ukraine conflict demonstrates, this issue has the potential to question the EU’s unity and to reduce its response capacity dramatically.

What seems to be an element of continuity between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ ENP – and not repaired by the EUGS – is the strategic ambiguity concerning the question of how precisely to make up for the EU’s limited authority and how to bridge its capability gap to reach its lofty targets of peace, security, prosperity, democracy and rule of law.

Conclusions

Among the narratives invoked to mobilize and justify political action at the EU level, the dominant arguments revolve around security and migration being the direct result of conflicts,
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instability and governance failure in Europe’s wider neighbourhood. The rationale behind this refocusing is that, especially after a series of terrorist attacks (notably in Paris 2015 and most recently in London, Berlin and Manchester in 2016 and 2017), in Nice, Brussels and Berlin in 2016, and with record numbers of refugees arriving in Europe, EU leaders perceived as urgent the need to protect the external borders and deliver on citizens’ security concerns. Furthermore, the reasoning involves human security in the ENP countries themselves, which has long since been a topic for the EU’s international engagement but was not explicitly mentioned in the ESS. More than in 2003, Europe is seen an anchor point for the stability of its surrounding countries as well as a destination for migratory flows, emanating from or transiting through them. Where the ESS stated that ‘even in an era of globalization, geography is still important’ (European Council 2003: 7), ENP Commissioner Johannes Hahn in a speech, in November 2016, reaffirmed that ‘geography is destiny’ (Hahn 2016). Quite different from 2003, today’s neighbourhood is a global hotspot of war and crisis, and it profoundly challenges the EU’s willingness and aptitude not only to co-define regional orders but also to uphold its own European political order (European Commission 2017: 6). To this end, the ‘Roadmap on the follow-up to the EU Global Strategy’ urges the ‘implementation of the Partnership Priorities and Association Agendas’ with an emphasis on security cooperation (European External Action Service 2016b). This shift of focus was clearly expressed in the Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of 14 November 2016, where a three-fold priority is outlined: (a) responding to external conflicts and crises, (b) building the capacities of partners, and (c) protecting the Union and its citizens’ (Council of the European Union 2016a: 4).

To give itself a veritable strategy, the EU would need to develop a common understanding of what it is willing and able to invest in regional and global political orders (Howorth 2016). There is also a clear link to other parallel processes of global governance, such as the UN 2030 Agenda or the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The Sustainable Development Goals feature prominently, under heading 1 of the EUGS, ‘Shared Interests and Principles’, stating that ‘[p]rosperity must be shared and requires fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals world-wide, including in Europe’ (European External Action Service 2016a: 5). As demonstrated in the chapter, it is institutional building blocks and organizational boundaries within the EU’s governance and administrative system that heavily bear on the content and on the impact of strategy-making and other reform processes. However, the case of EUGS and ENP as intersecting policy fields of EU external action displays the evolving character of both the EU polity and policy-making, resulting over time in institutional emergence transforming normative dynamics. Whereas in the early 2000s the original ENP and the ESS were existing in two parallel, institutionally neatly separated universes, adjustments and reform efforts over the years have led to an increasing convergence of the EUGS and re-jigged neighbourhood policy. In addition, the crisis in the European neighbourhood after ‘Arab Spring’ in the South, and following the annexation of Crimea in the East, led to a more developed and differentiated policy framework, better harmonized with the EUGS. The implementation plan is now putting security and development, as well as neighbourhood instruments, more directly to use for European interests (European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 2015a; Council of the European Union 2016b). The EU’s new strategic guidance redirects and extends the EU external action, and particularly the ENP, to include capacity building in security and migration management. Accordingly, the scenario of ‘doing much more’ in the Commission’s White Paper on the Future of Europe presented on 1 March 2017, projects that: ‘[t]he EU’s broad-ranging foreign policy leads it to reinforce its joint approach on migration. Closer partnerships and increased investment in Europe’s neighbourhood and beyond help to create economic opportunities, manage regular migration and tackle irregular
channels’ (European Commission 2017: 27). Considering the overlapping domains of the EUGS and ENP as intersecting policy areas, we may understand the increased security focus as an instance of changing norm dynamics in a gradually or (even abruptly) transforming and increasingly turbulent international environment (Youngs 2004). These changing norm dynamics are the result of combined pressures on the EU polity from both endogenous and exogenous forces, as much as they are the product of the realization of the limits to Europe’s power and capacities. Confronted with such pressures, institutional change can occur in two forms, that is, either as gradual, slow and path-dependent adaptation by institutional layering – where transformation is managed and integrated into the political decision-making process – or a radical and unsettling transformation – where, therefore, a polity faces a severe institutional or legitimacy crisis and is unable to adapt. The ENP and the EU as a polity might be at such transformative crossroads. Developing adequate policy responses and combining ambition with realism to address problems in the European neighbourhood will by no means be an easy task.

References
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