The principal aims of the European Union are to promote its shared values, peace and the well-being of its peoples. Achieving these aspirations depends heavily on developments beyond its borders. On-going transformations at the global, regional and European levels create opportunities as well as challenges for the Union and demand strategic thinking on an ambitious and assertive external agenda. This report on a European global strategy offers guidance on this long-term endeavour.

By deriving long-term interests from the EU’s principal aims, Europeans will be better able to live and act in accordance with their values. This report therefore identifies six preconditions, or vital European interests, for protecting Europe’s peace, well-being and shared values.

In order to secure these vital interests, eleven strategic objectives are suggested along with the necessary adaptations to the EU’s existing toolbox:

- **At home**, the EU needs to reduce the barriers between its internal market and the world beyond across all four freedoms – capital, services, people and goods. Its energy market needs to be developed to improve efficiency, resilience, independence and sustainability. Trade and innovation are key to sustaining the EU’s societies and its global role, and should be further developed by way of beneficial conditions for imports and exports and enhanced educational and scientific cooperation programmes beyond its borders.

- **At the regional level**, the EU should continue the enlargement process, but change the guiding rationale for relations with its neighbours. It should look on its surroundings as a strategic neighbourhood: a geopolitical space that includes not only its traditional neighbourhood, states whose geographical proximity connects them to the EU, but also broader areas that are functionally linked to vital European interests. In this space, the EU should work in partnership with local governments and societies for democratic transition, human rights and free trade and take security responsibility. This will demand the ability to deploy effective military and civilian capabilities and the political will to use them. The EU should permit smaller groups of member states to initiate and implement EU policies, but must sharpen political coordination by strengthening the High Representative’s coordinating power and by developing the role of its external delegations.

- **At the global level**, the EU should combine formal and informal avenues when it comes to fighting climate change and managing the world economy. The EU should also seek to anticipate the demand for governance in fields of activity such as cyberspace and outer space where technical, natural and societal developments risk creating conflict. In order to improve both the efficiency and the legitimacy of global governance, the EU should reinvest in region-building and inter-regionalism, and work to increase the participation of regional organizations in global governance structures. Development policy should be clearly geared towards supporting the strategic objectives of the EU and increasingly focus on thematic issues such as climate change, food security and support for democracy and human rights. The division of labour between the EU and its member states should be clarified.

By pursuing these strategic objectives the EU and its member states will secure European influence and engage with its surroundings and partners worldwide in a way that is proactive and not just a response to the actions of others; realistic about what can be accomplished; and adaptive to changes in the global environment. A European Union that is able to cope with external challenges will also be able to provide a new driving narrative for its citizens.