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Global Strategy and the European Union: Advancing the Debate and Updating the European Security Strategy

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Abstract:

Contemporary security challenges such as the Ukraine Crisis, the threat posed by IS, terrorist attacks on European soil and mass migration caused by political, economic and social upheaval have all raised the question of whether the European Union (EU) has an effective strategy to address these issues. The European Security Strategy (ESS) is the foundational strategic document for which the EU's security policies and strategies are based on. But many have argued that the strategy is out-of-date and needs to be scrapped and replaced by a new *Global Strategy*. However, whilst this paper agrees that the EU needs a global strategy, there is much in the ESS that remains as relevant today as it was when it came into force in 2003. Instead of scrapping it, this paper argues that the ESS needs to be updated, strengthened and integrated with other existing policies to make the ESS an effective and truly global strategy.

Zusammenfassung:

Gegenwärtige sicherheitspolitische Herausforderungen wie z.B. die Krise in der Ukraine, die Bedrohung durch ISIS, Terroranschläge auf europäischem Boden, oder Migrationsströme ausgelöst durch politische, wirtschaftliche und soziale Umbrüche geben Anlass zur Frage, ob die Europäische Union über eine effektive Strategie zur Bewältigung dieser Sicherheitsprobleme verfügt. Die Europäische Sicherheitsstrategie (ESS) ist das Grundlagendokument, auf welchem die Sicherheitspolitik und die Sicherheitsstrategie der EU basieren. Viele argumentieren jedoch, dass diese Strategie nicht mehr zeitgemäß ist und durch eine neue *Globale Strategie* ersetzt werden sollte. Wenngleich hier die Meinung geteilt wird, dass es einer globalen Strategie bedarf, so wird gleichzeitig die Position vertreten, dass die ESS viele Elemente beinhaltet, die heute genauso relevant sind wie zum Zeitpunkt ihrer Verabschiedung im Jahre 2003. Statt die ESS zur Gänze zu verwerfen, lautet dementsprechend die hier vertretene These, sollte sie aktualisiert, gestärkt und mit anderen Elementen besser integriert werden, um sie zu einer wahrhaft globalen und effektiven Strategie zu machen.

Keywords:

Global Strategy and the European Union: Advancing the Debate and Updating the European Security Strategy

The European Security Strategy (ESS) is no longer fit for purpose and is no longer effective enough to meet contemporary security challenges in Europe's strategic neighbourhood![1] This seems to be the growing sentiment among academics and think tanks whose focus is concerned with European Union (EU) foreign and security policy. Contemporary security challenges such as the Ukraine Crisis and the fear of an increasingly belligerent Russia, the threat of ISIS, terrorist attacks on European soil and mass migration caused by political, social and economic upheaval have all contributed to the intellectual and political pandemonium, and the ever vocal calls that the EU needs to be a more effective security actor, that the ESS is out-of-date and therefore we need a whole new strategy to deal with contemporary security challenges.

But moves in this direction means that the EU, its member states and various stakeholders could run the risk of throwing the proverbial baby out with the bathwater. If one examines the ESS, far from being redundant, the strategy actually still retains a great deal of relevance, addressing many of the security challenges that still are as present today as they were in 2003. The solution to meeting the contemporary security challenges of the EU is not to scrap the ESS, but to save the existing policy by integrating, updating, and augmenting the existing frameworks; combing, including and amalgamating existing strategies and policies into one upgraded ESS that makes the best of the old approaches but with new frameworks to meet contemporary challenges.

The EU faces a plethora of contemporary security challenges that are inter-sectoral and trans-border in nature. These include, inter alia, terrorism, global warming, mass migration and the financial crisis. They require strategies that can take this dynamic into account and have the flexibility to adapt to

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[1] Howorth, J. *Security and Defence Policy In The European Union* (Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Dennison, S. Gowan, R. Kundnani, H. Leonard, M and Witney, N. 'Why Europe Needs A New Global Strategy' (European Council on Foreign Relations, ECFR, October 2013). Available at http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR90_STRATEGY_BRIEF_AW.pdf (Accessed 4 January 2015); Biscop, S. 'A New External Action Service Needs a New European Security Strategy' (EGMONT, Royal Institute for International Relations, No 29, November 2011). Available at http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SPB29-New-ESS.pdf (Accessed 3 January 2015); Biscop, S. 'EU Grand Strategy: Optimism is Mandatory' (EGMONT, Royal Institute for International Relations, No 36, July 2012). Available at http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SPB36-Biscop.pdf (Accessed 3 January 2015); Lundin, L. 'From a European Security Strategy to a European Global Strategy: Take II: Policy options', UI Occasional Papers (The Swedish Institute of International Affairs, No 13, 2012). Available at http://www.europeanglobalstrategy.eu/nyheter/publications/from-a-european-security-strategy-to-a-european-global-strategy-take-ii-policy-options (Accessed 5 January 2015).

new and ever changing geopolitical security environments. Considering these factors the most logical type of strategy has to be a *Global Strategy* as this facilitates the maximum inclusion of stakeholders, sectors and levels of security. This, it is argued, should be the approach of a new revamped ESS.

The ESS: Unfit for Purpose or Just in Need of a Makeover?

In October 2013 the ECFR published a policy brief in which it stated that the ESS '*has now outlasted its usefulness: many of the approaches that worked so well for Europe in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War seem to be ineffectual at best and counter-productive at worst in an age of power transition and global political awakening*'.[2] The ESS was adopted in 2003 and provided the strategic bedrock and guiding principles for the EU's foreign and security strategy and subsequent policies, namely the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). As has been expounded on in '*Why Europe Needs a New Global Strategy*', the strategy was designed for a different time. The crisis in the euro has undermined the EU's institutions, Iraq and Afghanistan have discredited liberal interventionism, and the rise of China and other emerging economies are undermining Europe's power.[3]

The opening paragraph of the introduction of the ESS is frequently quoted by many who wish to show the apparent superannuated nature of the strategy.

> '*Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. The violence of the first half of the 20th Century has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history*'.[4]

This may indeed be heavily laden with the language and spirit of the immediate post-Cold War era, but taking this first statement as proof that the entire strategy is antiquated could be interpreted as taking a cheap shot at the strategy. Deliberately shining a spot light on what is supposed to be an inspirational sentiment, and merely a colourful use of language, in order to give an inspirational quality to an official bureaucratic document does smack of desperation. Those who quote this to validate their point seem to miss the point. The opening statement may indeed reflect a different time, but much in the strategy still remains valid.

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[2] Dennison, S. Gowan, R. Kundnani, H. Leonard, M and Witney, N. 'Why Europe Needs A New Global Strategy' (European Council on Foreign Relations, ECFR, October 2013). Available at http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR90_STRATEGY_BRIEF_AW.pdf (Accessed 4 January 2015), p. 2.

[3] *ibid.,* p. 2.

[4] European Union (EU), 'A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Security Strategy' (Brussels, 12 December 2003). Available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf (Accessed 14 December 2014). p.1.

It is a mistake to think that the EU has not tried to develop comprehensive or inter-sectoral security strategies. The ESS itself recognises that '*globalisation has also made threats more complex and interconnected*',[5] and how '*the internal and external aspects of security are indissolubly linked*'.[6] Other initiatives such as the construction of the *Comprehensive Approach* in crisis management operations, which has not been finalised due to differences within the EU, will have to be incorporated within an updated ESS. The 2014 Energy Security Strategy and the Maritime Security Strategy,[7] whilst accommodating greater inter-sectoral and multidimensional approaches, are heavily focused on some areas at the expense of others and still lack true comprehensiveness. These strategies must also be incorporated within the framework of an updated ESS, as well as the EU's Internal Security Strategy (ISS).

However, despite recent strategies the ESS itself is out-of-date, and is so because evolving geopolitics has changed the global security environment, and the strategy has not adapted to these shifts. A strategy that cannot adapt to emerging and evolving security challenges is no longer effective and constrains the ability of the stakeholder as an effective global security actor. The 2014 Energy and Maritime security strategies are, in effect, a symptom of the lack of comprehensiveness in the ESS. Sectoral approaches do have their uses and can be quite an efficacious approach; however, sector specific strategies seem to lack an ability to plan in the long term and are more reactive in their nature.[8] By compartmentalising the problem into a specific sector the strategist cannot foresee the emergence of other problems in other sectors. Analysis, therefore, has to be freed up in order to successfully account for the fluidity of security challenges to be present in multiple sectors and move through different levels of analysis; An approach that must be used within an updated ESS.

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[5] European Union (EU), 'Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy: Providing Security for a Changing World', (S407/08), (Brussels, 11 December 2008). Available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104630.pdf (Accessed 14 December 2014). p.1.

[6] European Union (EU), 'A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Security Strategy' (Brussels, 12 December 2003). Available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf (Accessed 14 December 2014). p.2.

[7] European Union (EU), Council of the European Union, 'European Union Maritime Security Strategy' (Brussels, 24 June 2014). Available at http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2011205%202014%20INIT (Accessed 12 February 2015); European Union (EU), European Commission, 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council', 'European Energy Security Strategy' (Brussels, 28 May 2014). Available at
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0330&from=EN (Accessed 12 February 2015).

[8] Fägersten, B. 'How Grand is Global? Notes on a European Strategy', UI brief (The Swedish Institute of International Affairs, No 14, 9 October 2012). Available at
http://www.euglobalstrategy.eu/tools/News/PageArchive?p=6 (Accessed 10 January 2015), p. 5.

It is a far more prudent approach to update the existing strategy instead of scrapping it and starting from scratch for a number of reasons many of which lie in the fact that a brand new strategy is likely to cause severe organisational headaches and ideological confrontation. One of the main reasons why it is a good idea to avoid a totally new strategy is of the practical realisation that getting a pan-EU agreement is going to be immensely difficult. The reason why, is one of strategic perspectives.

"The 28 member states don't share the same perceptions of threats and don't share the same means with which to respond to such threats". (Vivien Pertusot of the French Institute of International Relations in an interview with Euronews).[9]

In the context of a global strategy perspective, projects such as the European Global Strategy (EGS) project and Notre Europe's 'Think Global – Act European IV' project emerged out of concern for the state of the EU's security strategy and the union's ability to perform as a legitimate security actor. The EGS set out a series of new strategic priorities,[10] whilst Notre Europe's project puts forward 10 key recommendations to strengthen the EU globally.[11] Yet neither document mentions the ESS at all, and it is in so doing that they reveal their point of view. Namely, that the ESS should be scrapped and replaced by an overarching Global Strategy. The EGS proposal may say it wants to adapt the EU's existing toolbox regarding instruments and capabilities,[12] but fundamentally they want to replace the ESS with a new strategy. The Notre Europe proposal on the other hand says the EU's tools are ineffective or that they need new ones. Regardless, both want to scrap the ESS. This approach, however, is a bad strategy and one that will invite political stalemate and member states pitching their ideologies and their perceptions of security against one another. This can be observed in recent efforts to improve security mechanisms.

The ECFR expressed their frustration when noting that the European Council of December 2013 didn't produce any extensive military cooperation plans. '*Military cooperation proposals were conspicuously absent. And it is here that European defence is most damagingly falling short of its*

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[9] "Defence Experts Cool on Juncker's EU Army Scheme," *Euronews*, accessed March 18, 2015, http://www.euronews.com/2015/03/09/defence-experts-cool-on-juncker-s-eu-army-scheme/.

[10] European Global Strategy (EGS),' Towards a European Global Strategy: Securing European Influence in a Changing World', (28 May 2013). Available at http://www.euglobalstrategy.eu/ (Accessed 11 December 2014). pp. 8-17.

[11] Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute, 'Think Global – Act European IV: Thinking Strategically about the EU's External Action' (Paris: Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute, April 2013). Available at http://www.notre-europe.eu/media/tgae2013.pdf?pdf=ok (Accessed 15 December 2014).

[12] European Global Strategy (EGS),' Towards a European Global Strategy: Securing European Influence in a Changing World', (28 May 2013). Available at http://www.euglobalstrategy.eu/ (Accessed 11 December 2014). p. 5.

potential, and its declared ambition'.[13] Instead the conclusions drawn at the summit focused on increasing the potential for pooling and sharing, creating the framework for a cyber defence policy, drafting a Maritime Security Strategy by 2014, and on improving and developing the defence infrastructure. [14] The emphasis on '*pooling and sharing*' may be an example of the influence of the politics of austerity in defence budgets and domestic politics rather than the result of a prudent restructuring of security strategy, but the apparent immovability is also an expression of the fact that member states fundamentally operate on different perceptions of security. It is not that the ESS doesn't need reform; rather it is that any attempt to just throw away what has already been developed is likely to encourage disagreement and entrenched positions rather than serious debate.

The EU has a security strategy, and furthermore it still addresses many issues that are relevant today. The key threats identified of *Terrorism, Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Regional Conflicts, State Failure and Organised Crime* are as relevant today as they were in 2003: Especially if one considers current challenges such as the threat of ISIS and Al-Qaida, The state failure in Libya, the ongoing crisis in Somalia, the DRC and Sub Saharan Africa, and organised criminal gangs smuggling migrants across the Mediterranean. The ESS is out-of-date but not useless, it is not an issue of relevance it is fundamentally an issue of comprehensiveness. Much of what is discussed by the EGS, Notre Europe and the ECFR is very relevant, especially on their outlines of what needs to be included, but the approach is wrong. Rather than starting the whole process from scratch, the EU already has a strategic document to base their negotiations on; a document which each of the 28 member states already agrees upon, and this is a solid foundation with which to begin the process of updating the strategy. By focusing on updating instead of eradicating and remaking, the EU will avoid the organisational headaches that would come from trying to forge an all new strategy; headaches which the EU does not need right now. Updating will also mean less ideological confrontation between member states over the nature of European security if the starting point for reform is built on policy they have already agreed upon. This is also preferable because the EU needs to show as much of a united front as possible, especially between its member states. Updating is much more cost effective in terms of time and energy, and with pressure mounting from various security challenges, the EU must update its strategy quickly.

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[13] Witney, N. 'Despite the Brits, a modest defence summit success', European Council on Foreign Relations, ECFR's blog, (22 December 2013). Available at
 http://www.ecfr.eu/blog/entry/despite_the_brits_a_modest_defence_summit_success (Accessed 5 April 2015).
[14] European Council, 'European Council, 19/20 December 2013, Conclusions' (Brussels: European Council, 20 December 2013).

The announcement at the informal meeting of EU Defence Ministers on 18th February this year in Riga stated that,

> *'The Ministers agreed that Heads of States and Government will need to address current security and defence concerns and open a revision of the European Security Strategy.'*[15]

The idea of reforming the ESS is now being circulated at the level of member states and EU governing bodies. This, therefore, is the perfect opportunity to reignite the academic debates on the European Security Strategy. It is unlikely that the European Council meeting in June will deliver a brand new ESS, but it will begin the process of reconsidering the EU's approach, and the member states already have a basis on which to start. The ESS does need to be updated and made more comprehensive and adaptable, but rather than trying to formulate a whole new strategy it is a wiser idea to take the ESS, keep what is relevant, and transform it into a European Global Security Strategy.

Expounding Global Strategy

Global strategy is developing a greater, more expansive literature which is branching into many areas of study. Within the context of EU foreign and security policy this has meant an expansive approach to security issues away from the traditional military/ state-centric approaches to security challenges and a broadening of the referent objects. This is clearly illustrated within the contemporary debates on European global strategy. The EGS, Notre Europe and publications by the ECFR all include a greater focus away from traditional military security and member state security to more inclusive and broader interpretations of security such as economic security, development, energy security and human development. These ideas and proposals reflect a multi-sectoral approach with a departure toward newer perspectives of referent objects, an approach that can be found in Security Studies within the Copenhagen School.

The Copenhagen School: Facilitating Global Strategy Formulation

In their landmark text '*Security: A New Framework For Analysis*' Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde approach the traditionalist approaches to security by adopting a multi-sectoral, multi-level approach

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[15] European Union External Action Service (EEAS), *Security and Defence on the agenda at Riga Informal Meeting*. Available from: http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2015/190215_eu_defence_ministers_in_riga_en.htm (Accessed 19 March 2015).

that uses a constructivist approach in order to analyse how the perceived threats to certain referent objects have been constructed by the process of securitization. [16] This approach allows for a far greater inclusion of stakeholders, levels and sectors without losing coherence and represents a foundation text for the wideners in the Traditionalist versus Wideners debate in Security Studies. It also represents the most practical theory to apply in the formulation of global strategies.

Global strategies by their nature also have to distinguish themselves as multi-sectoral, accommodating a greater range of sectors that expands away from the traditionalist military/ state-centric based approaches. This can be seen in the contemporary debates surrounding the formation of a new European foreign and security policy.[17] The Copenhagen School, with its widening approach, therefore represents the best theory to use in the formulation of global strategies. It is important for a global strategy to be truly comprehensive, allowing for the inclusion of multiple stakeholders, levels of analysis and sectors in order to deal with a security challenge effectively thus mitigating the worst effects or preventing a security challenge from becoming a much larger problem. By tackling the security challenge in a comprehensive manner the worst of the effects can be prevented thus reducing costs for a stakeholder to deal with the problem.

For these reasons the Copenhagen School represents the best approach to use in the formulation of global strategies. Therefore, the approach of the Copenhagen School must be used and enshrined in the global strategy formulation processes of the EU in the creation of an updated ESS, and indeed be the foundation theory of the ESS.

The ESS: What to Keep and What to Remove

The ESS desperately needs to be updated, but there are many good aspects to be kept from the strategy. All five identified key threats of *Terrorism, Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Regional Conflicts, State Failure and Organised Crime* remain highly relevant and must be kept in and

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[16] Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

[17] European Global Strategy (EGS),' Towards a European Global Strategy: Securing European Influence in a Changing World', (28 May 2013). Available at http://www.euglobalstrategy.eu/ (Accessed 11 December 2014); Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute, 'Think Global – Act European IV: Thinking Strategically about the EU's External Action' (Paris: Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute, April 2013). Available at http://www.notre-europe.eu/media/tgae2013.pdf?pdf=ok (Accessed 15 December 2014); Dennison, S. Gowan, R. Kundnani, H. Leonard, M and Witney, N. 'Why Europe Needs A New Global Strategy' (European Council on Foreign Relations, ECFR, October 2013). Available at http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR90_STRATEGY_BRIEF_AW.pdf (Accessed 4 January 2015).

will form the basis for the addition of new threats. The problem in the ESS essentially lies in the limited number of identified threats, but also in the weak and vague 'Strategic Objectives' of the strategy. These were divided into *Addressing the Threats, Building Security in our Neighbourhood,* and *An International Order Based on Effective Multilateralism*. The general theme of these objectives is to increase cooperation with countries and regions in the EU's strategic neighbourhood, reinforcing international institutions, building consensus and agreement on various issues, engaging with and strengthening the EU's strategic neighbourhood and reinforcing cooperation within the EU on pan-European issues like terrorism and coordinating and combing efforts.

These aspects are all relevant, but what are lacking are in-depth detailed specifics. It mentions partners and key countries and institutions to engage with, and talks about using diplomacy, trade etc to achieve goals and does mention specific problems and that they need resolving. But crucially the lack of detailed specifics is one of the underlying weaknesses of the strategy. The limited number of identified security threats also hampers the strategy. The overall strategy is vague. Some might argue that it needed to be vague to provide a general basis for future strategic planning, but without in depth detailed specifics it is less of a strategy and more of a general 'to-do' list. The 2008 review, which represents the one and only time the strategy was reviewed, essentially stated that the ESS was valid, but more needs to be done. It did, however, raise additional emphasis on the need to address cyber security, energy security and climate change, mentioning them specifically in the text. To update the ESS, the highlighted key threats must be kept and the extra areas highlighted in the 2008 review must be incorporated. From here the ESS can be updated by expanding the range of potential threats and to include detailed and precise strategies within it on a per stakeholder, per threat and sub-threat basis to create a comprehensive security strategy.

Policy Recommendations

There is a great deal of truth in the statement that '*Europeans seem to be losing power and influence in the world at a startling speed*.'[18] However, instead of scrapping the ESS it should be updated, consolidated and strengthened; saving the relevant parts and incorporating it with other existing policies and strategies, and then adding further frameworks will make the ESS effective and relevant

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[18] Dennison, S. Gowan, R. Kundnani, H. Leonard, M and Witney, N. 'Why Europe Needs A New Global Strategy' (European Council on Foreign Relations, ECFR, October 2013). Available at http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR90_STRATEGY_BRIEF_AW.pdf (Accessed 4 January 2015), p. 2.

again. In addition to the suggestions made of what to keep and what to remove from the ESS, it is recommended that the following policies be implemented to review and update the strategy.

Recommendations to the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS)

➢ To establish a committee, jointly run by the Commission and the EEAS, to access and collect data on the security priorities, perspectives of security and the referent objects that need securing of every member state. This data once collected will be used to map and identify potential areas of conflict in the negotiations to update the ESS.

➢ The Commission and the EEAS will coordinate with each member state on each other's strategic priorities and referent objects. This must be done before any formal meeting to allow time for negotiation. This will enable each member state to regard every other member states' priorities and allow for negotiations to avoid stagnation and conflict at the official review stages of the strategy.

➢ Establish an inter-departmental/ inter-institutional committee to review the ESS with the idea of formulating potential draft proposals to the member states, their respective ministries and the European Parliament. This is in order to avoid conflict at official meetings for the review of the ESS. **NB:** This same committee will at a later date be responsible for the entire coordination process between EU institutions and member states before, during and after official meetings on the reform of the ESS.

➢ The aforementioned committee will also be responsible for the following tasks:
  o To review the other security strategies and to assess how they can be integrated into a comprehensive strategy.
  o This committee will also review and assess potential inter-departmental/ inter-institutional conflict at the EU level. This is in order to streamline internal relations within the EU structure.

➢ After the new updated ESS has been agreed upon, and in order to ensure regular updating of the strategy, a new committee will be established to review the strategy every 5 years to

member states and institutions on whether further updates need to be implemented. A report will be issued every year to ensure continuity.

- o Within this committee there will be two secondary task forces. One shall focus on current global security threats and situations around the world and analyse their impact on the EU and asses potential action. The second will concentrate on potential and future security threats and will concentrate on crisis simulation and scenario building.

➢ A group consisting of academic institutions and think tanks should be established to continually asses the EU's security strategy. This group and the aforementioned committee will meet once a year to assess the current and potential future challenges facing the EU and report their findings in a yearly report to all relevant stakeholders.