



# **EU GLOBAL STRATEGY: A NORTHERN PERSPECTIVE**

April 20, 2016 | Brussels

## **SPEAKERS:**

**Børge Brende**, foreign affairs minister of Norway

**Riina Kionka**, chief foreign policy adviser to Donald Tusk, president of the European Council

**Pierre Vimont**, senior associate at Carnegie Europe

## **MODERATOR:**

**Jan Techau**, director of Carnegie Europe

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**ODA HELEN SLETNES:** Good afternoon, everybody, Minister, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen. On behalf of Norway's Mission to the European Union and the European branch of Carnegie Endowment I am very happy to welcome you to Norway House. More than 70 years ago, in the midst of the second World War President Roosevelt used the now famous expression, Look to Norway; today we invite you to take a look from Norway and we offer you a novel and more specifically a Norwegian perspective on European security and foreign policy, a view based on our experience and our geopolitical situation.

I'm very pleased to welcome a large audience, a full house, and particularly pleased to invite the Foreign Minister Brende to give an introduction to today's topic. He will be followed by comments by our two distinguished panellists, Senior Associate at Carnegie, Pierre Vimont, and Chief Advisor to President Donald Tusk, Riina Kionka. Foreign Minister Brende has been Norway's Foreign Minister since 2013, with previous experience from the World Economic Forum in Geneva, Secretary General in the Norwegian Red Cross, former Minister of Trade and Industry, Minister of the Environment, and also of course former member of the Norwegian parliament. We are very pleased to have you here today, Mr Brende; I give the floor to you for the keynote speech and afterwards Jan Techau will take over and chair the afternoon together with you. Thank you very much.

**BØRGE BRENDE:** Thank you, Ambassador, and I'm glad you see you all here this afternoon and that you took the time to come here to listen to my speech, but also we'll have an interactive session following my speech with great panellists and a great moderator and we'll make sure that there are some juicy discussions. And as you all know with all the challenges we are facing in Europe and in the world there is not a lack of topics to discuss. The ambassador was kind enough to remind you that I started as Foreign Minister in 2013 and since the fall of 2013, at least from the spring of 2014, there has been one challenge after the other. This also means that we will have to of course adjust our foreign policy and security policy and our development policy accordingly but the values behind our policy have not changed. Our values are there but with a changing world and changing circumstances we also have to adjust our policies so I have invited [unclear] to a discussion about major choices moving forward in Norway; we are preparing a White Paper for the spring of 2017 where we will address all the current changes that we are seeing and we will have also an open debate in Norway about this.

So this is kind of the Brussels part of it and we know there is so much knowledge and insight here in Brussels. I had a great day today, lunch with Federica Mogherini, also had a great meeting with Cecilia Malmström on the trade agenda that we know also is so important in the puzzle on how to revive global economic growth, but also growth that is sustainable, inclusive, and job-creating at the same time. But this is really a very tough nut to crack, this is really one of the challenges of this century; growth is not enough, it has also to have these three important components. And to make this really into the real squaring of the circle I had talks with Monsieur Vimont, the Special Envoy of President Hollande, and the Foreign Minister on the Middle East peace process so we'll also have a chance this year to really dig deeper into how to realise a two-state solution. We had the HLC, the donor group meeting for Palestine yesterday that Norway has been chairing since 1993; maybe some of you still remember the Oslo process?

There are still some of us that really think there is no alternative to a two-state solution and we're still working for that.

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What I have clearly seen in the two and a half years that I have had this responsibility is that Norway's fate is strongly linked with the rest of Europe; when Europe's security is challenged Norway's security is challenged too. When the terrorists attack Europe they are not only attacking one city or country, they are attacking common European values. So let me therefore express, as I did with my meeting this morning with both the Development Minister and also with the Foreign Minister express Norway's profound solidarity with the people of Belgium and the victims of the horrific attacks that took place here in Brussels last month. Also our people here at the embassy were of course affected, thank you to all of you that also work for Norway here and the way you handled this. This shows that Europe stands at a crossroads; some countries are seeking a closer integration whereas others are giving priority to national solutions. The choices of the EU member states, the choices we take now, will shape the development of Europe for many years to come.

I think we will have to start on the point that time and again Europe has demonstrated its ability to emerge stronger from a crisis; it is essential that it succeeds this time too. 2012, the discussion, would the euro survive; after 2008 there were some people in Europe thinking that this sub-prime was just an American challenge, this was de-coupled already and after some months we were in deeper troubles than the Americans and they came out of this great recession faster than us, and we're still having real challenges. We're not out of the woods but what it really taught us all was that in a globalised world we are in the same boat. And it should really also remind us about this notion of win/win; if it goes well for one country it goes well also for others. If China does well, we do well, if we do well, China does well, and I could also mention some other countries in that respect, countries that maybe now are more clinching to this old [unclear] regime, thinking of zero sum gain. But I think the economic crisis showed us that we are all in the same boat, and what we are seeing also now on the security side is that we are all in the same boat.

If there is a crisis in Mali, or a crisis in the Central African Republic, or if there's a crisis in Iraq, or in Eritrea, or in Afghanistan, we also have a crisis in Europe after some weeks. This is not only related to migration but is the whole picture; we are all in it, in the same boat, and hence we also have to adjust our foreign and security policy accordingly. Foreign policy has become domestic policy and people are realising this, so if Tunisia is not successful in their transformation and transition this will also be Europe will pay a high price because a weak and divided EU will undermine also Europe's security. It is in Norway's clear interests that the EU member states stand together and find common solutions. Each day European cooperation is put to a test these days; it is challenged by migration, economic crisis, as I still mention, anaemic growth, youth unemployment, and the threat of terrorism. We are really experiencing greater vulnerability and a feeling that the security architecture that we have gradually built over the past few decades is more fragile than previously perceived.

We also have seen, as I mentioned, geographic distance to a crisis no longer implies distance to its consequences. The latest terrorist attacks are a tragic reminder of this, so is the role of criminal networks in the migration crisis. It is really appalling if you go into this modus operandi of these criminal gangs and the human trafficking people. It is a way of operating that is totally unacceptable; people that are fleeing a country and on their way to Europe, the way they are treated, the risk they run, and also the inhuman way the whole business model is operating is just unbearable and we cannot accept this moving forward. There is also no way back in a way, if you regret moving and you feel that you would like not to go on further you are caught into a very, very difficult situation.

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So coming back to the multi-faceted threats, it needs to be approached and met by a comprehensive approach; we must become better at cross-border cooperation and we must combine tools from foreign policy, security policy, home affairs, and development. NATO remains the cornerstone of Norway's security policy. The upcoming NATO summit in July in Warsaw will focus on collective defence and on what NATO must do across the border to adapt to a rapidly changing security situation. The alliance cannot choose between the south and the east, between ground and sea forces, or between deterrence and détente; this of course also applies to the changing security situation in Europe, including in the north. Today there was a meeting in NATO between the NATO Russia Council for the first time in a long time, this gives us an opportunity again in a very candid way to address also the pressing issues. I believe in dialogue but I also believe in dialogue where we stick to our values and the topics that are important for us.

Developments for us specifically of great interest is of course the northern sea areas will have consequences for NATO and for Europe as a whole. In the run up to the Warsaw summit Norway will advocate for a significant strengthening of NATO's maritime capabilities with a strong emphasis on the North Atlantic. And as you are aware, one of the most asymmetric situations military-wise is the situation in the northern part of Norway; you have the Kola Peninsula and you have the northern part of Norway. But this we have handled during the cold war and we are handling it but with a basis in our NATO membership and also close cooperation with the EU. In Norway's dealings, you know we have this border with Russia, we have clear communication but it is combined with measures by NATO to prevent incidents and growing tensions.

Norway plays a key role in this respect; the complexity of today's security challenges calls for a closer cooperation also between the EU and NATO, and the cooperation between Federica Mogherini and Jens Stoltenberg, the Secretary General of NATO, is very good and it is very inspiring to see that the thinking now is a win/ win thinking, this is really reassuring; the two institutions should agree on a set of joint objectives. Specifically the EU and NATO should take steps to improve cooperation on crisis management, capacity building, and stabilisation efforts. We need better mechanisms for intelligence fusion, I think I am probably preaching to the choir here in Brussels related to this, and sharing and more regular political consultations. And we all stand to benefit from increased cooperation on maritime security as well as on cyber security.

It is my hope that the EU and NATO will identify concrete deliverables on several of these issues in time for the European Council Meeting in June and the NATO meeting in July.

Confronted with a rapidly changing, challenging, and complex security environment strategic thinking and analysis are more important than ever before, I therefore applaud High Representative Mogherini's efforts to fill with content the new EU global strategy on foreign and security policy, discussed also in Luxembourg yesterday by the Foreign Ministers and the Defence Ministers. Unity and cooperation based on common norms are Europe's most important assets when it comes to reducing vulnerabilities and enhanced resilience; the word resilience is important also in Europe today, but also being prepared for the unpredictable. We have a situation where we have to think out of the box when it comes to other new challenges. Who saw this economic crisis coming the way it did? Not many. Who saw what took place in Ukraine? Who saw the stepping up of the crisis in Syria? If you go back to 2008 who saw in advance what took place also in Georgia? And we can even go back to 1989; the Soviet Union was forever until it was no more. So I think all this has shown us that

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we have to adapt, we have to be vigilant, but we also have to be prepared for new challenges all the time.

Before heading north, because I will go a bit north also, I would like to make a few comments regarding Europe's neighbourhood to the south and to the east; many of the crises Europe is facing are emerging from a belt of fragile and failed states on its southern borders. The lack of development in the Middle East and North Africa is contributing to violent extremism and unprecedented numbers of refugees but the challenges we are seeing are also caused by the population growth that has been staggering. Since 1950 the population in the Middle East has increased four times, since 1950. The population in Africa has also increased by four times since 1950 and the population in Africa will go from one billion today to approximately two billion in 2050. Clearly we are in need of a more strategic approach to address issues of security, development, migration, and humanitarian assistance in fragile states so in the fall I will present for the Norwegian parliament a plan how we can also step up our support to fragile states, making sure that fragile states don't end up as failed states but are on the track of development.

We cannot let fragile states, as I said, become failed states by default; every failed state has its own characteristics, it has failed in its own way within a particular regional context. Stabilisation and improved social development require attention to local politics and regional geopolitics that drive forces of polarisation and instability on the ground.

Stabilisation is never a technocratic undertaking, it is primarily a political project. Military engagement is sometimes necessary but the use of force is never a solution in itself. Counter-terrorism efforts also need to be integrated into a broader political strategy. Experience from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya demonstrate that our involvement must be part of a coherent long-term strategy for lasting stability. And we have to bear in mind that the instability in the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond is at the root a failure of governance, that is why we in pursuit of stability always need to think in terms of governance and human right. Some say we have to choose between stability and good governance, I strongly disagree; nation states that must resort to repressive measures to maintain stability are hardly sustainable, I think we also have seen that over time. So the Norwegian government is currently developing, as I said, this comprehensive strategy on fragile and failed states that links foreign policy with security, development, and humanitarian policy.

In a European perspective I would like to reiterate the need for more regional cooperation, coordination, and integration in our approach to fragile and failed states. Our goal cannot only be to combat ISIL and other terrorist groups that are threatening European security today, we must eradicate ISIL and we must prevent the terrorists that will succeed ISIS from finding fertile ground for their extremist ideologies in fragile states. But we need also a comprehensive strategy to make sure that we establish a basis for growth, job opportunities, and vocational training also in the fragile states.

So looking towards the east, we are witnessing a Russia that moves away from democratic and liberal values, a Russia that is every more willing to use surprise tactics and take foreign policy risks. Through its actions in Ukraine and elsewhere Russia has contributed to a greater sense of insecurity in Europe. It is essential that the EU, together with like-minded partners such as Norway, stand united in upholding respect for international law and human rights in its relations with Russia. At the same time Russia is also, as I mentioned, our neighbour and managing our bilateral relationship with Russia is a constant and important element of Norwegian foreign policy. Over the past 25 years Norway and Russia have gradually

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expanded our cooperation, based on mutual interests and international law. Good contact and dialogue between neighbouring countries is not least important when we face challenges that need to find common solutions to resolve.

The influx of migrants and asylum seekers to the Norwegian/Russian border last autumn was an example of such a common challenge; close contact at all levels and cooperation under existing agreements were key to finding a solution. There is no contradiction between safeguarding our bilateral interests in our relationship with Russia and standing firm with our allies and partners on our commitment to international law and fundamental principles. We have dealt with Russia, as you know, as our neighbour for centuries and we have done so with a basis in our values, Russia based on their values, but we also have been able to have important cooperation in many fields, for example we manage the largest cod stocks in the world together. Last year we harvested more than one million tonnes of cod in the Barents Seas, we are having very important cooperation in the field of environment, nuclear safety, and also other core areas.

So now finally I would like to turn really to the north, I started with the [unclear]. In today's volatile world where so many regions are affected by conflict and tension the Arctic stands out as a remarkable exception; it remains a region of cooperation, stability, respect for international law, and sustainable management of resources. The overall goal for Norwegian Arctic policy is to ensure that it stays that way, we don't need another challenge on top of the challenges that we have. And here we have very strong cooperation also with the US, with Secretary Kerry now having chairmanship of the Arctic Council. But stability in the north cannot be taken for granted; Russia's military build up and intensification of military exercises in the Arctic mean we must remain vigilant. For Norway, as I mentioned, NATO membership compensates for the lack of symmetry between Norway and our largest neighbour, Russia. It has made it easier to cooperate with Moscow; this is sometimes a misunderstanding, the fact that we can cooperate is also based on our NATO memberships from 1949.

Having a robust and predictable defence does not prevent cooperation, it enables it. The importance of international law in the Arctic cannot be over-estimated; the strong commitment to the coastal states to the law of the sea is effectively preventing an unsustainable race for resources. Coastal states are reassured that overlapping claims to the continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean will be settled within the established legal framework. This promotes confidence and cooperation rather than confrontation and competition, it highlights the crucial importance of international law for peace, stability, and economic growth, and it is a good example of the way in which adherence to agreed principles benefits small countries and great powers alike. Governance in the Arctic also relies on well-functioning political institutions to address the Arctic issues. Celebrating its 20th anniversary, the Arctic Council has proven instrumental in finding solutions to regional challenges and it has produced ground-breaking reports on climate change in the Arctic and its far-reaching consequences for the rest of the world. Interest in the Council is growing as the Arctic is becoming an area for cooperation between Europe, North America, and Asia; even the EU is now developing its own Arctic strategy. I would say that in an increasingly unstable world the Arctic Council is a contribution to modern security policy. It's a model for global governance and for promoting knowledge, stability, and predictability based on respect for international law.

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So if we succeed the strategic importance of the Arctic for Europe's economy and security will only grow in the years to come. The EU, as I mentioned, is already an important contributor to Arctic research and to the work of the Arctic Council, the Barents cooperation, and the northern dimension. I strongly believe that the well-founded and coherent policy approach in the north is highly relevant for the EU's future global strategy. Never before has security and prosperity in Europe depended so much on security and prosperity elsewhere, and never before has Europe been more in need of a comprehensive and strategic approach to ensuring its security interests. The challenges we are facing can only be addressed through effective leadership, cooperation, and solidarity; these are Europe's strengths and for the sake of Europe's future and security and prosperity it is in our interests to exploit them to the full and we have to just make sure these very challenging times that what has taken place in the past will not be forming our future in Europe. I'm saying this in a very serious and concerned way because it is really the responsibility for the leaders today to make sure that the best of what we have achieved in Europe will also be forming our continent in the years to come. You should stick together and you should also solve all our challenges together in the solidary way, and you should avoid increased nationalism, populism, and protectionism. If we can stay away from these three things I think we will also see more prosperous societies moving forward. Thank you.

**JAN TECHAU:** We have with us Riina Kionka, who is here the Chief Foreign Policy Advisor to Donald Tusk in the European Council, and who has an impressive CV and a lot of very interesting things she's done before that. I will only pick a few; she was the Estonian Ambassador to Germany, and also the EU Under-Secretary for EU Affairs in the Estonian Foreign Ministry, worked for Javier Solana, and was also the Head of the Central Asia Division in the EAS, so a very colourful, wide horizon. Riina is also one of the most discreet foreign policy people in this town and I actually hope that we can actually stretch that discretion to the limit today here on the panel.

And then we have Pierre Vimont who really doesn't need too much of an introduction, I guess, in this town; Pierre is just back from Saudi Arabia in his function as Special Envoy, the French Envoy for the Middle East peace process. He has slightly lost his voice on the trip back but if you lose your voice in 40 years of foreign policy, it's only the voice that you lose, not your mind, which you clearly haven't lost; that's a great thing that you've pulled off already. You were present at the creation of the EAS, you were the French Ambassador to the United States, you were the Chief of Staff of three Foreign Ministers in France, and you were also an Ambassadeur de France, which is a dignity and not a title. So these are the things that Pierre brings to the table, so we are kind of heavily stocked up on strategic knowledge here on the panel, which is always great for the moderator.

Let me ask you a quick question first, Mr Minister, something that I would really like to hear from you; you mentioned fragile states, failed states, the risk in the neighbourhood of Europe and how this is really a great task of great, enormous strategic importance; now on behalf of the Europeans we've had a very ambitious transformative agenda for our neighbourhood, the neighbourhood policy, development aid, military interventions, non-interventions, we've had all kinds of approaches that we've taken and we're not quite happy with the outcomes. Now you are currently building a Norwegian strategy on these issues, how we can stabilise this, how we cannot be just technocratic about it, as you just said, but eminently political, so now my question to you is when it comes to our transformative agenda, our ability to create outcomes in our neighbourhood, and positive outcomes, what is it that we have been missing? What is the one thing that needs to be added as an ingredient

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to the potion so that it turns into a magic potion? I was just wondering because everybody in this town is quite eager to find out and you're conducting your own strategic review on these issues, you might have seen a few things that we've omitted in the past.

**BØRGE BRENDE:** Thank you for that question; I think if I had a silver bullet it wouldn't have been necessary to develop a strategy. So we put some of our best people on developing this strategy and we're not intending to reinvent the wheel. We have knowledge in some of these areas but I think it also takes a lot of political courage to invest in fragile states because there is weak governance, there are security issues related to it, we know there is a lot of corruption, and it is tough to get it right. But we know that the alternative is even worse; the future of Mali, the future of Niger, the future of Burkina, the future of Chad, the future of Sudan, South Sudan that has now become close to a failed state will also influence us a lot and we have to use ODA more strategically moving forward.

When it comes to the EU I would say that the EU has been quite successful in integrating parts of the neighbourhood; remember a lot of the states that are now EU members were countries with profound challenges; look at for example Poland, where we will have the NATO summit this summer. In 1990 the GDP per capita was the same in Poland as in Ukraine and now it's four times that of Ukraine in Poland. So the fact that EU and when EU is setting standards this is also standards that if they are followed up it can lead to development and more prosperous societies.

**JAN TECHAU:** A second question from my side and then I will hand it over to Riina and then to Pierre; your country is exposed in a strategic way that few other European countries are actually, sometimes you're more exposed than some of the bigger European countries. I mean you are very active in the diplomacy over the Middle East peace process that was mentioned, you are an energy producer which means that the oil price, which is made elsewhere, not in your region, is eminently important to you, of strategic importance, you have the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world, you have a border with Russia, you've handled Russia quite smartly in the past, even settling territorial disputes with them, and the sea lanes of communication that will open up because of climate change in your north will expose you even more strategically. Now given all of this, and given the strategic importance of what's decided in the other capitals of Europe, can you say what Norway expects from the strategy process, the outcome? What is it that you expect from the EU in its strategic positioning that's currently going on?

**BØRGE BRENDE:** That's a really large question; as I said in my speech we are at a crossroads in Europe today, I think we have to admit that there are monumental challenges. So for Norway of course it is crucial that the EU gets it right when it comes to reviving economic growth and competitiveness and innovation because we know that there are still too high youth unemployment and [unclear] growth also in the EU and we have used a lot of the tools we had on the fiscal side and also on the monetary side. Then we need that the EU handles the migration crisis and that we re-establish the borders off Schengen, at the same time of course take responsibility in the areas that are creating these challenges. This is a huge undertaking and to secure convergence in the EU on this migration issue is really a tough nut. Then we will also have a big challenge this summer when the sanctions question is coming up; this is about dealing with Russia, we meet Russia in the Syria negotiations, we meet Russia in the Ukraine, and we just have to make sure that we stand together and stick to what we have said. We have said that there are pre-conditions for lifting the sanctions and this is compliance with Minsk Two. Minsk Two compliance should not be that big a deal

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because this is an agreement one has agreed on. So now we have to walk the talk; if we are lifting sanctions without walking the talk we just have to reflect on the consequences and what kind of precedent this is setting. These are challenges, on top of it we will have the Brexit referendum; I hope that my friends in the Slovak Republic will not take over the EU Presidency on 1st July and face a Brexit challenge and also increased challenges on the understanding and implementation of the migration deal with Turkey. These are the challenges we are faced with and Norway is solidaric [sic] and we are there also supporting all the measures of the EU in this and contributing as much as possible because if the EU is not successful in handling this this will also have severe effects for Norway.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much for these first two quick answers; now I would like to hand it over to Riina first, who of course has listened very carefully and will have a few comments, and then, after that, to Pierre. Riina, please.

**RIINA KIONKA:** Thank you very much, Jan; first of all I should say thank you for pointing to the discreet nature of my job, in that vein I should say that I'm speaking for myself. Nothing that I say should be held against my boss. It's great to have Norway here, a good friend; it's important for the EU to have friends around these days, we're feeling a bit beleaguered, but it reminds me a little bit of one of your Scandinavian colleagues' policy in 1992 or 1993 when Prime Minister Carl Bildt of Sweden came out with this phrase that your security is our security. I was at a think tank conference shortly after that with one of his closest advisors and I asked the advisor, who shall remain unnamed, what does that mean really, your security is our security? And he said well, Riina, what it really means is when you're scared shitless, we're scared shitless. And so I take it as a new expression, a neo-expression of the same sort of question.

I'd like to pick up on three angles; there's a lot of convergence in what you have said, obviously, with what the EU does, thinks, and is planning, the three things I would like to pick up on are the NATO angle, a bit on fragility and the tools, so playing a bit on Jan's question, and finally what you termed as the east. On NATO you said that NATO is the cornerstone of Norway's security policy, surely that's the case for many of the EU member states who are also NATO allies but I would point out also that the EU is increasingly a security provider, not only just in the classical way of building capacity and having CSDP, crisis management operations, but also today increasingly in a situation in which we have hybrid threats that we're dealing with. And now the European Commission has just come out with a terrific paper, a terrific communication on this last week and it's all about actually when we speak of hybrid we're talking about internal issues, internal EU resilience, and this is all good to focus on it. But what I wanted to pick up on specifically is your call, your appeal, for more cooperation between the EU and NATO, and that's certainly something that's close to my boss's heart as you well know. This is something that we're working on and this is something, of course, that is highly important for the citizens of the countries of the EU and the countries of NATO. 22 of the member states of the EU will be sitting also at the NATO summit; they have to be consistent in their views between the two tables, there's only two weeks between the two summits and so they need to be consistent within their own views but they also need to respond to increasing fears of their citizens, our citizens, who are asking for more security. And so I think this is actually going to be one of the big stories of the summer, how the EU and NATO signal a political willingness to work more closely together and keeping in mind and bearing in mind all the specific decision-making processes of each organisation but still signalling politically that this is something we want to do. I completely agree with your description of defining the same goals but we have

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different means to get there, so one aim or one objective and many ways, many voices; we should use all the tools at our disposal.

The second thing that I would like to pick up on is where you spoke of fragility, in particular in the south; you know that resilience will be a big part of the global strategy as I understand it and I was overjoyed that you paraphrased Tolstoy, in fact, when you said that every failed state has its own characteristics and it's failed in its own way, it's just like the Anna Karenina principle that all happy families are alike but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. So well done, I agree. But what I wanted to ask about was the issue of stabilisation as a political project, it's not a technocratic project; absolutely agree, Jan picked up on this on his question before, do you see also development assistance as a means, as a tool to use to harness behind political ends? This is something that has been in Brussels, in the EU, always something of an ideological football between people who believe that development assistance should be apolitical, it should be done no matter what the situation is, no matter what our goals are, and those who think it is a tool like any other tool. So I would like to hear what your take is on that.

Finally, on the eastern angle, I'll resist the huge temptation for me, being from Estonia, to pick up on Russia but I would like to pick up on what was left unsaid about the east, and that was the eastern neighbourhood. For the EU eastern policy means Russia but it also means policy regarding the eastern neighbourhood, the eastern partnership countries, to be specific; again if we talk about resilience then we're talking about strengthening the societies, strengthening the institutions and governance in these countries so that they are better able to withstand external pressures. But for the first time, I think this is a new element that when the Foreign Ministers had a discussion last month, in March, at the Foreign Affairs Council of Russia policy then one of the points, one of the five principles that was brought out was the need to strengthen the eastern partnership as a function of Russia policy, which is something quite new and unusual for the EU. So I wonder where the eastern partnership finds its place in Norway's world view. Thank you.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you, Riina. I want to hand over straight to Pierre so that he can toss in his observations into the mix and I think then we have to give you a chance to respond and then we'll take it from there. And I can see already some people kind of shifting around nervously in their seats so I'm sure there will be questions as well. Pierre, you're next.

**PIERRE VIMONT:** Thank you, Jan. To maybe make three observations which are questions, or maybe not questions, but I think it would be very interesting certainly for all of us to hear from you with your experiences as Minister. The first one, listening to what you were saying, and I think Jan insisted on that, very rightly so, all you said seems so close to what the European Union is doing, you seem to be so close a partner to the 28 member states; how do you feel yourself in that position? In other words when we are discussing a global strategy for the European Union it's all very well for you to come here today in Brussels, have, I am sure, quite an interesting discussion with the High Representative, but you should be totally part of our process, I think, to some extent and therefore rather than having this kind of process where we put Norway in a small box, to some extent Switzerland and others also in their own little boxes, what is your feeling about trying to get rid of some of these small boxes and having a more open process whereby you are much more engaged in some of the important thinking that we're going on with the global strategy? Because, after all, if we're really serious this global strategy should be about the future of the whole continent and not only about the EU because everything is totally interlinked, intertwined,

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today, as you were rightly saying. And I was wondering while listening to you if here again we shouldn't be more bold in the kind of process we're trying to set up. In other words, do you feel comfortable with the contacts we have from time to time or would you go for something that would be maybe more audacious?

Second point, and there if you allow me, this is really one of the questions I ask myself all the time these days looking at our neighbourhood policy, whether it be south, whether it be eastern partnership; I think we are all in a kind of contradiction today and I was wondering whether you were feeling the same way when you're managing Norway's foreign policy? We know very well when for instance the Arab Spring just popped out, end of 2010, beginning of 2011, that this was a major issue and that we needed to face this challenge and to be able to work on this one, but honestly our answer has been to some extent rather weak; think about Tunisia, think about Egypt and others, we came up with re-vamping and presenting in a new way what we were doing already, we tried to find as many loans as we could from the European Investment Bank and the EBRD, a few grants here and there, and we knew when we were doing that that we were not up to the challenge that we were facing. But at the same time can you try to build a long term policy when events are unfolding on the ground in the way they were doing, with huge problems such as the one you very rightly mentioned, unemployment for the young people, radical movements slowly moving in, a total change of the society in many of these countries.

And it's not only about North Africa, you're very rightly on the line that all the countries in that area are very much linked together, the Sahel country, North Nigeria, we could go on, Somalia etc. the Horn of Africa. So I feel that we are in a sort of contradiction where we have to face the day to day urgencies that we're facing with these countries and at the same time trying to build up and define a much more longer term strategy which is the only way to answer. And we're facing our own contradiction, the fact that we have been supporting for many years through our development assistance, you alluded to that, a country like Mali was supposed to be the model of what we were doing in terms of development assistance and suddenly, on a nice Sunday morning in 2013, February 2013, we discovered that this country is more or less totally crumbling down in front of the radical movements' progress up to the [unclear] and then it becomes a very difficult challenge that we're still facing today. So this contradiction between the short-term, the need to answer very quickly short-term priorities and urgent matters and thinking about much more long-term strategies that we need to face with these countries, which is once again what the whole global strategy we're trying to define here today in Brussels for the European Union is all about. And how do we manage to put these two things together and to move along? I'm quite stuck by the fact that we are having great difficulty and struggling with these two issues that are there, these two challenges, without knowing exactly how we handle this.

The third observation, which may be also a question, is about Russia; I'll be more audacious than Riina on this one, for me, and I think we can all only agree with what you were saying, this need to be firm on one side but also on the other side not close the door to dialogue; I wonder sometimes if the real issue we're facing, while I totally support your policy, but the real issue it seems to me we are facing at the moment is that we're facing Russia with our own narrative. Russia has its own narrative and these two narratives don't fit at all; this is why we have lack of trust, lack of confidence between us, and I don't know how to dispel this misunderstanding or bridge the gap between these two narratives. Riina was alluding to hybrid war and I very much agree with her but it reminded me of attending a conference where we had Russian speakers and we were telling them hybrid war is all about what you

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did in Crimea, in eastern Ukraine, and their answer was not at all, hybrid war is what you did with the Maidan revolution; you were there and you supported it and you found these extraordinary ways of supporting the Maidan revolution, and for us this is hybrid war. And I was thinking, god, how do we bridge the gap between these two ways of looking at things? Is it through the usual diplomatic channels? Is it through people to people and civil society dialogue? Because a lot of our interlocutors in Russian civil society just share the view, quite often, of the Russian leadership, that they are facing some kind of encirclement from western Europe and the western world, and that they have the right to protect themselves and this is Europe and America trying to move on on the whole sphere of influence in Russia and pushing them back. How could we try to create a common ground for a common narrative when we are so far apart? And the way we are going to discuss the whole issue of sanctions in the few months ahead, the whole issue of the Minsk agreement and the implementation of the Minsk agreement seems to be very much related to this deep and sharp schism between the two narratives, just like two small pipelines that never can connect together. So that was my last observation and I apologise for being too long.

**JAN TECHAU:** Mr Minister, that must have been the most elegant question about Norwegian membership in the EU that you have ever heard in your life. And so I'll leave it to you to give an elegant answer.

**BØRGE BRENDE:** Thank you for the trust. For us the EU is, together with the US, our closest ally and there are very few countries in Europe in itself that is relying so much on the EU economy, on the single market. I think there is almost none exporting so much to the EU as Norway so we also rely a lot also on the development in the EU in the coming years. And I think as you strongly underlined we are also partners when the EU is being challenged in the Mediterranean, there are two Norwegian vessels supporting Frontex, we were one of the first also volunteering to be part of a redistribution system, and we take our responsibility. We are also partnering with the EU on humanitarian assistance, the fund stabilisation and all this, but we have to form our foreign policy on the basis of two referendums as you know, one in 72 and one in 94, and these are the basis for our foreign policy. But we are making the most out of this. You know that it is not possible to answer this in a very elegant way because this is realpolitik; it's so much realpolitik that both our former Foreign Minister and myself, he was the Secretary General of the European movement in Norway in 94, I was the Deputy Leader of the European movement in 94, so there is no secret that we didn't have our best political day when we woke up to a no majority in Norway in 94, but at the same time it is our responsibility to make, in my view, the best out of this result and also trying to be a real partner for Europe.

Should I say two words about this potential ideological dilemma on the development assistance? I think this is now constructed when it comes to the fragile states, for example in Sahel, because if you look at where are the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world they are in fragile states. So even if you stick to the policies of LDCs and reaching out to the poor the children that have the least access to vaccination, healthcare, education, and all this are in these very fragile states so I think even if you stick to the very principle of least developed unfortunately the fragile states tick off all these boxes. Where there are paradoxes is of course if you go into Maghreb and start a discussion of Tunisia, also we have had this discussion related to Levant but with Levant I'm not accepting that kind of premise; I'm just now referring to the debate [unclear] I've had in Norway because some people say oh, Lebanon is not eligible for this kind of support because it's a middle income country. Now when every fourth person in Lebanon is a Syrian refugee and they're facing this asymmetric

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responsibility they are in every aspect a country that needs our support. When there are 500000 Syrian refugee children in Lebanon and only 200000 of those 500000 is enrolled in school there is a delta there of 300000 and this is really helping the most vulnerable. So I turn it around but I agree that on Tunisia and some very clearly defined middle income countries that is a discussion that is of course relevant, but it is also about investing in stability.

I know there are two other things that came up, one related to the narrative of Europe and Russia, and the other one related to how to get it right when it comes to fragile states, the post-Arab Spring experience. On Russia our experience is that being predictable, clear, but also collaborative in areas where our common interests are in collaboration, is really the way to go forward. I mentioned the Arctic Council; in the Arctic area we have excellent cooperation, we have had no negative developments at all and there we have common interests. I also think when it comes to Russia we have to also look at the way we're dealing with Syria; there is it possible now with the dialogue between Secretary Kerry and Sergei Lavrov. Syria is not in the belt of interests that Putin has defined for himself and Russia so we have to be of course dealing with this also in an ad hoc way but personally I think we just cannot, in the 21st century, accept a notion of interests around a big military power, that would be not the right move forward. But it is challenging.

**JAN TECHAU:** Let me ask a quick follow-up on what Pierre asked you about strategy making, about how it is possible to actually have long-term strategies written down, conceptualised, agreed upon, when at the same time we're all eaten up by the latest kind of news cycle kind of madness that's going on; is there a way that foreign policy can actually be strategized at all? Some people say that not even big countries like the United States have grand strategy any more, it is futile exercise or can we actually do this?

**BØRGE BRENDE:** Thank you for raising that question; my view is that we have to build also resilience in our foreign policy and security policy so it is, as I said also in my talk, that increasing the resilience and the capability for also handling challenges that we have not foreseen, but that capability you have to build in a very strategic way and you have to train yourself for the unexpected. But I think it's hard to identify all the possible up-coming challenges moving forward; as I said, 2008, Lehman Brothers went bust, Georgia in 2008 not respecting the Budapest Memorandum, one day stepping up in Syria, one day then de-escalating. We were, during the 90s, used to a much kinder world, we had exceptions but that kind of made us not so prepared for what we are now seeing. Where there is a struggle between those who believe in a win/win world more of a zero sum game, then we also have this protectionism thing, this nationalism thing. I also mentioned the populism thing, all these are really challenging us and we have to be open and address these things. And we also have to be proud of the results that we have shown based on openness, market economy, and also trading with each other. Since 1990 what have we really achieved based on these things? We have doubled the global GNP, we have increased global trade three or four times, we have halved the amount of people that live in extreme poverty from 40 per cent to 20 per cent, on top of it we added two billion people. So it is totally historic what we have managed, that's why I said we are at a crossroads now. I sometimes feel at that crossroads we really have to get it right or we can see ourselves moving really into a more turbulent and uncharted territory than we have been in for a long time. So it is crucial, very crucial, to increase our own resilience in dealing with this.

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**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much. This is now time for questions; please give me a good wave. I will take three first; I think this gentleman is first, then I will go over here, and then over here, and then I hope that I have time for a second round. Microphone first is here in the second row. Please introduce yourself, make it one quick, short question and not three, and then maybe we have the chance to squeeze as many in as we can.

**MICHAEL SWAN:** Michael Swan, EEAS, personal capacity; Minister, after the suggestions about a more open relationship between Norway and the EU I was wondering about how you feel about the name of Norway cropping up repeatedly in the press as the attractive Scandinavian model who might tempt the UK to break up the happy home?

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much.

**TORBJØRN FRØYSNES:** Thank you; I am Torbjørn Frøysnes, I am the Ambassador of the Council of Europe to the European Union in Brussels. I am representing an organisation where Norway already is a full member but not only Norway, also other important parts of the EU neighbourhood like Turkey and Russia, so this means that most of the important neighbourhood of the EU, they are members in our organisation, which again places the Council of Europe in a role as a perfect partner with the EU for developing the EU's neighbourhood policy and therefore we are also very active in the eastern partnership. I've picked up statistics now on the project cooperation for 2015 that came out today showing that the total volume is now standing at €127 million, that is more than one billion Norwegian krone in 2015, to improve governance and the rule of law, independence of the judiciary institution building, which is so important for stability, and my question to the Foreign Minister would be as a full member of the Council of Europe and as a partner with the EU, would it not be interesting for Norway to add to this cooperation between those two organisations in these eastern countries and southern neighbourhood in order to also make an independent Norwegian contribution to stability in that region, and also develop this as a supplementary form of the Norwegian policy for Europe?

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much for that question; the microphone goes over here to the other side.

**AUDIENCE:** Thank you very much.[unclear]; I understand that the Minister has been seeing also Commissioner Malmström today so my question is would you say there is a foreign policy dimension of the Norwegian demand, or regional interest, in becoming part of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Pact, the TTIP agreement?

**JAN TECHAU:** Three excellent questions, Brexit, Council of Europe, TTIP; Minister.

**BØRGE BRENDE:** So first to the question of Brexit; our view is that Europe, the EU, needs Britain and I think also Britain needs the European Union. I think we have seen also during the last weeks how much both the EU and the UK really rely on each other. When I've been visiting in the UK of course this question that was phrased is there a Norwegian model for the UK has come up by I think this discussion has also shown that there are very few countries in Europe that are a de facto part of the single market as we are through the European Economic Area, there are very few that implement directives as fast as Norway, there are a few countries that also support EU funds and also EU policies in many ways the same way as Norway. We feel that this is in our national interest because a successful single market is the best for Europe, it's the best for prosperity, jobs, and all this, but of course it

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comes with a caveat or addendum and with the paradox that when the formal decisions on, for example, directives that also have a lot of impact for Norway, we are not formally around the table. But we have to weigh this up and we have to make a pros and cons assessment and our conclusion is that it is in our national interest to be part of the single market and then of course the directives come as part of it. We try to influence it when there are core national interests but we're not formally a part of the decision-making process. And then I will leave it to the UK voters to assess if it's this kind of increased national sovereignty they are looking for or not. But for us this is pretty much among the leading Norwegian parties a consensus that this is the way we follow our national interest in the best way, and I'm positive it is.

I think the results for Norway of course are pretty good but these are not so much interlinked to this but, you know, contrary to some other countries with great natural resources we have decided that we are not going to allocate that kind of revenues into our national budget, we decided that this is entered in the sovereign wealth fund. We have rightly, as the moderator said, built the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world, owning on average 1.4 per cent of all globally listed companies, \$1000 billion US. This comes in handy when the oil price is now declining but it is also a reminder for us that we have to broaden and diversify, but we are also the sixth largest producer of hydro in the world and we decided quite early that the revenues there and the governmental rent belongs to the people of Norway so we have been able to invest this. So I think we have a comprehensive strategy on these things.

Secondly, on Council of Europe, also eastern partnerships and partnering with the countries in the west Balkans, also the Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and these countries, we have for example increased our partnership with Ukraine six times. In the last years we are major partners with the west Balkan countries. I think we are a bit complacent currently on the challenges that we can also see coming out of west Balkans if we don't get it right. So we have a real focus on this and we also have partnerships with all these countries. And if you look at this also in monetary financial terms I think we're not doing that badly, at least not per capita.

So then to the meeting with Cecilia Malmström, a very constructive meeting; we have a common interest in developing the multi-lateral trade system. Our main priority is to get WTO back on track and Malmström and myself were working extremely hard during MC10 in Nairobi to get a deal, a WTO deal. We will host a conference in the fall from [unclear] to make sure that we also have a successful outcome of the WTO; that I think is in all interests. But then we had the mega-regional deals as you referred to that is a result of lack of progress in the multi-lateral track. I vividly remember the Doha round started in 2001, last time I was in government, and when we left government in 2005 I was Trade Minister but when I took up again the position in 2013 it was the same instructions to the civil servants as when I left in 2005 and this is a bit depressing, It showed that we have under-performed on the trade agenda.

I think the TTIP is the result of finding pragmatic solutions to move the trade agenda; let us see now first when the US Congress will accept the TTIP, I think that has to be done first because that is finally negotiated. On the TTIP, if that emerges as a reality we will have to also assess from Norway's side how we best can manage this. And as you will have heard from my answers on EA and single market and all this, we're pretty good at muddling through when it's necessary so we'll probably manage that too. And of course both the US

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and the EU, even if we're not the largest economy around, we're among the 30 largest economies in the world so I think there is a win/win situation to find common ground.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much. We have pretty much exhausted our time here; it's now 6:30 sharp but let me squeeze in one final question from my side, it's very short and it's very inelegant; which country will be a member of the EU sooner, Norway or Ukraine?

**BØRGE BRENDE:** I thought you were going to say Albania or something, that's the usual question.

**JAN TECHAU:** I'm going for the easy points here.

**BØRGE BRENDE:** Next question. I think it's a rhetorical question.

**JAN TECHAU:** Duly noted; thank you very much. We have exhausted our time but we have not exhausted Norwegian hospitality here. Thank you very much also for accepting the inelegant questions. Thanks to my panellists as well. And as I said earlier we will now have a little bit of a reception going on here just outside this room, and then I hope that most of you will stay and mingle and the Minster has agreed to stay with us for a little longer and I'm sure that you have more inelegant questions for him in the informal part of this gathering. Thank you very much, Ambassador, also for giving us your splendid location. Thanks to all of you; we'll invite you back again on the strategy debate in Europe. Thank you.