Abstract

The paper develops against the background of the vigorous discussions about what constitutes normative when it comes to the common foreign policy of the European Union (EU). Additionally, this paper draws insight from analyses suggesting that the dichotomy between interests and norms/values is an oversimplified one that ultimately obstructs attempt to bring these two together – in both policy-making and policy-analysis.

Agreeing with that proposition, here we try to answer the following question: How can we reconcile interests and values? What philosophical link could be established between them? And how can we translate this connection to the way foreign policy is elaborated and perceived? We suggest that an answer to these questions could be sought at the intersection of constructivism as an approach to international relations and pragmatic idealism as a philosophical tradition. In the paper, we discuss pragmatic idealism’s main philosophical underpinnings regarding the connection between interests and values. As to constructivism, its commitment to the analysis of ideational factors for the construction of interests is well-known and offers numerous useful perceptions.

In the second part of our paper, we look specifically at human rights, consistently and firmly proclaimed as a core value of the European Union, and a significant component of the image it has been projecting internally and externally. This paper stems from my PhD research that examines the presence of the concept of human rights in the development and implementation of foreign policy of the United States of America and the European Union, with a specific focus on their counter-piracy efforts in Somalia.

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Introduction

A quote attributed to the Russian writer Anton Chekhov reads: "Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice."¹ One possible initial observation is a simplistic one – the others will never know what I know unless I tell them what I know. Or even, more importantly, until I show them what I know. It is one thing to claim that you know something and a different thing – to demonstrate that you can put your knowledge to action. This brings us to the significance of practice – which we perform to accomplish our goals, motivated by what we want, what we know and how we feel.

The importance of knowledge put into practice is one of the two major staring points of this paper. The second is the dichotomy between interests and values as two possibly contradictory driving forces of action of political actors. These are also in the basis of the main puzzle that concerns us here. For a long time, there have been discussions about the normative elements of the foreign policy of the European Union (EU). Unquestionably, the concept of normative power Europe has been one of the most enduring visualizations of the EU in the past decade. The months leading up to the presentation of the new EU Global Strategy (EUGS) saw an intensification of the debates about whether the EU should continue relying on soft power and whether it should focus more on interests rather than values. Our study supports the argument that the dichotomy between interests and values is an oversimplified one that ultimately obstructs attempt to bring these two together – in both policy-making and policy-analysis.

Agreeing with that proposition, here we try to answer the following question: How can we reconcile interests and values? What philosophical link could be established between them? And how can we translate this connection to the way foreign policy is elaborated and perceived? We try answering these questions with the help of the philosophical tradition of pragmatism, with a specific focus on the system of pragmatic idealism, elaborated by Nicholas Rescher. Furthermore, we draw insight from the propositions of the constructivist approach to international relations.

We argue that if a political actor has deeply internalized certain values, i.e. if they are genuinely embedded in its identity, this actor cannot formulate interests that diametrically oppose the essence of these values. However, there could be a point of contradiction between the values (and interests) on one side and the acts the actor undertakes to uphold the values (and fulfill the interests) on the other. The efforts to align values and actions should be based not only on the knowledge the actor possesses but also on practice, on its experience and on the concrete circumstances of the situation that requires action. This is where the insight of pragmatism could be especially usefully. This is also what we call the optimistic part of our argument.

There is, respectively, a pessimistic one as well. Along a pragmatist line of thought we argue that it is inevitable to accept (by elites, policy-makers, public, etc. alike) that when contemplating upon an action, we might need to observe to a hierarchy of interests and values. Similarly, we should come to terms with the idea that sometimes the promotion of values and the fulfillment of interests cannot be achieved in the short-term but would require more time to be attained. However, these do not mean that a political actor should give up on its values and interests. On the contrary – just as pragmatists suggest, in a given situation that cannot be evaded, the actor must do the absolute best it can, using the entire knowledge it has, with an endgame well-defined and in compliance with its values and ideals.

The paper begins with a discussion of pragmatism and of the ways in which it could be useful to international relations and foreign policy analysis. We then present the main points of Rescher’s system of pragmatic idealism and how it could be possible to translate these premises to the sphere of policy-making. Our analysis commences with a focus on how the pragmatist premises could be applied to the discussion about values, interests and actions, with a particular focus on the European Union. The examples we provide are taken from major European documents on foreign policy like the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) and the 2016 European Union Global Strategy (EUGS). Special attention is paid to human rights, consistently and firmly proclaimed as a core value of the EU, and a significant element of the image it has been projecting internally and externally.

**Pragmatism, Pragmatic Idealism and Constructivism**

The most appropriate beginning of this section would be discussing pragmatism's possible and most beneficial contributions to the analysis and practice of international relations (IR). In a recent collection of essays on the topic, Bauer and Brighi point out three such contributions. The first one consists in offering an alternative to some constructivist propositions because of its exclusive interest in practice. The second lies in its fruitful inclination for interdisciplinarity, imagination and creativity, while the third contribution is connected to its ability to "remind IR of its forgotten political, ethical and normative vocation" and bridge "the gap between the worlds of IR intellectuals and the global political community." We daresay that the last contribution is especially important in the highly interconnected but also insecure world of today. Several recent events (such as the success of BREXIT, for instance) have shown how essential it is to decrease the rifts not only between the wider society and the elites but also between the scholarly community and the latter two.

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3 Ibid., 2.
‘Fathers’ of the philosophical tradition of pragmatism are considered Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey and to some extent George Herbert Mead. However, its roots go back to the ideas of Kant, Hegel and Mill among others. Two main interests of pragmatism stand out immediately – the interest in knowledge and the interest in practice. For the most part, pragmatists are concerned with “what kinds of knowledge are worth pursuing, in what manner, and with what aims.” The acquisition of knowledge, however, cannot just happen. We come to know things as we actively engage with the world around us. When we encounter a problem, we devise solutions, at the end choosing one of them. Later, for different reasons, we might regret taking this direction, but even so, we have acquired new knowledge in the course of this process. Knowledge also provides the necessary insight for studying practice. A major pragmatist stance is that “the meaning of a proposition is to be found in the practical consequences of accepting it, and that unpractical ideas are to be rejected.” This notion as well takes us to the importance of action and its subsequent study and analysis.

Pragmatism faded from significance after the two World Wars, but is now witnessing a revival – amidst not only political philosophers, but also sociologists, historians and political scientists and IR scholars. Some scholars identify convergences and possible nexus for future cooperation between pragmatism and social constructivism as an approach to study IR. For example, Gould and Onuf observe that “some constructivists are beginning to realize they have been pragmatists all along – if by pragmatism we mean an anti-formalist sensibility emphasizing complexity, intersubjectivity and contingency in social relations.” Peter M. Haas and Ernst B. Haas talk about pragmatic constructivism which "seeks to locate ideas about politics and the world within the social conditions from which they emerge, or are constructed." These are only some suggested fields of collaboration between pragmatists and constructivist. Here, we hint that some propositions of pragmatism, and pragmatic idealism in particular, might be useful when studying the importance of non-material drivers of action and the relationship between interests and values.

Before the discussion of the main features of pragmatic idealism, a distinction has to be made. The pragmatic idealism of Nicholas Rescher, which we present below, develops as a philosophical deliberation. On the other hand, when talking about the expectations about a new EU Global Strategy, Sven Biscop uses pragmatic idealism as a principle that could inspire this

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7 Peter M. Haas and Ernst B. Haas, “Pragmatic constructivism and the study of international institutions,” in Pragmatism in International Relations, by Harry Bauer and Elisabetta Brighi (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 103.
strategy by balancing between EU's idealism and the need to pragmatically adapt it, in order to meet geopolitical challenges. Yet, this distinction does not automatically mean that some connections cannot be established between the two 'uses' of pragmatic idealism. Indeed, it is also our intention to demonstrate the transferability of certain assumptions of pragmatism and pragmatic idealism to the practice of IR, foreign policy and some unresolved issues within these fields.

Within the rich universe of pragmatic idealism that Rescher offers us, we are especially interested in the role he ascribes to reason and knowledge, the place he assigns to values and ideals and the way he negates relativism. Reason and knowledge are crucial when it comes to uncovering and coming to terms with our place in the world. According to Rescher, "](r)ationality consists in the intelligent pursuit of appropriate objectives." He points out that rationality does not have a cognitive dimension only, but also practical and evaluative one, connected respectively to practice and values. In fact, this trinity of reasoning is directly reflected in the statement above. Rescher explains that ""intelligent" bespeaks knowledge, "pursuit" indicates action, and "appropriate ends calls for evaluation." Our rational behavior and overall existence then is reflected in the way we act, assisted by the things we know and encouraged by how we feel about things.

Rescher asserts that values "provide us with guidance for the management of our lives in all of its practical dimensions, as there is "nothing false or fictitious" about them; in fact "their pursuit is something that can be perfectly real – and eminently productive." Values are essential to an individual's being because of their significant place in deliberation process. Without the guiding light of values, an individual would not know if the goals one is pursuing are appropriate or not. Appropriateness is a key notion for Rescher and it helps him make an interesting connection between values and interests. After reiterating that we cannot make a choice without resorting to evaluative reason to "appraise the values of our practical options", he concludes that "values that impede the realization of a person's best interest are clearly inappropriate." This brings us back to the persistent and difficult question – which comes first, values or interests? And is there tension between them?

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10 Ibid., 385.


12 Supra, note 9, p. 378.

13 Supra, note 11, p. 51.
In one of his papers, Rescher rightly notes that “value-imputations have a double aspect: both verbal and behavioral.” It will be believable and proven that an individual adheres to a given value only if one speaks or acts in a way consistent with the value. If respect for human rights is part of my value set, it is expected that I will proclaim it to the world around me or try to persuade the others how important it is to adhere to this value. Moreover, I could take actions to prove that I share the value, for example volunteer in human rights organizations.

Rescher also warns that we should not mistake values for goals and preferences, although “the goals one adopts or the preferences one has are reflections of – and indicators for – one’s values.” Then, making a reference to an argument about personal traits and goals, he hints at the possibility that values affect the choice of ways to pursue a goal even more than the setting of the goal itself. Thus, if I inherently respect human rights, I would not define as a goal mass violation of human rights. Again, the problem is what acts do I undertake to pursue the goal – should they be strictly related to human rights or am I allowed a deviation?

We believe at least part of the answer could be in a point he makes in an essay entitled Practical Reasoning and Values. There, Rescher adopts Aristotle’s idea of practical reasoning, namely the “reasoning involved in rational deliberation leading up to and providing the reasoned grounds for acting.” Values are the “means of arbitration” to choose between incompatible alternatives, as these alternatives – and this is very important – might not be so much “abstractly incompatible” but rather “circumstantially incompatible in the face of finite resources of time, money, etc.” The strength the value holds for me and the priority I ascribe to it, will help me decide whether to stick to actions consistent with human rights when I pursue the goal of respect for human rights. However, I should never forget that my decision cannot be isolated from the circumstances I am in and from their limitations – spatial, time-related and so on.

Thus, we finally reach a very central element of pragmatism in general, stressed also by Rescher. This is the idea of making the most of the situation you are in, trying to achieve the best you could. Discussing the applicability of pragmatism to IR, Kratochwil notes that its focus on practice rests on the realization that in reality we cannot postpone making decisions until we know everything – we are always pressured by circumstances. Related to this is to foster the

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15 Ibid., p. 133.
17 Ibid., p. 135.
ability to never give up despite uncertainties and insecurities. A key pragmatist message is that our attempt at practice may turn out to be very much unsuccessful. Both at cognitive and moral levels, individuals should accept that “perfection is unattainable”, therefore we must be “doing the best we can with the tools that come to hand.” But that does not mean that we should stop striving for perfection. In fact, Rescher asserts, “the fact that perfection is unattainable does nothing to countervail against the no less real fact that improvement is realizable – that progress is possible.” Importantly, the determination to go on and strive for the unattainable perfection is provided by our ideals. They “urge us to do the best we can”, as having them is perfectly legitimate and appropriate. It is this significance of ideals that drives Rescher to formulate the tradition of pragmatic idealism.

The focus on constant improvement through practice and the accumulation of knowledge could be employed to analyze events developing on individual level, but also at the level of society and polity. Of help could also be the grounds on which Rescher rejects relativism. He accepts that pluralism is inevitable, in cognitive and evaluative matters alike, but refuses to equate it to “irrationalistic relativism.” Rescher distinguishes between universal validity and universal endorsement and claims that the fact that the unacceptance of something universally does not eliminate its universal validity. We remain tempted to apply this line of thought to the old debate of universality of human right. Not everybody shares my respect for human rights but that does not mean they do not hold universal value. Achieving greater respect for them is part of the road of improvement.

To repeat, Rescher’s contentions are deeply philosophical in nature and then usually relate to the individual’s quest for knowledge and choice of courses of action. However, we believe and argue that elements of his line of philosophizing could be successfully applied to the study of how a political actor reasons about its role in the world and chooses the path to achieving the ends it has set for itself. The next two sections are an attempt to demonstrate how Rescher’s observations could be adapted to the analysis of EU foreign policy formulation and execution.

### Of Values and Interests

A vital part of decision-making is being aware of one’s place in the world. And this includes awareness of all features of the environment that surrounds you. One should be conscious about one’s skills, abilities, material and non-material resources. Another important ingredient of
decision-making is the essence of who we are, how we feel about others and the world around us, what we value the most and what we can forsake. But decision-making and for that matter – existence itself – includes some familiarity with the intentions and the potential of others, the external risks and threats. Simultaneously, we are quickly taught that while we will mostly know our capabilities and values, we will never dispose of information about the world outside of us in full. And yet, we have to make decisions here and now – and not later and not somewhere else.

Institutions, organizations, and polities are founded and run by individuals. Therefore, it is admissible to assume that institutional decision-making shares at least some of features of the respective individual process. Pragmatist suggestions about the importance of rationality, reasoning and practice imply also the importance of knowing your place in the world. The things are not radically different when it comes to a political actor. It should always have a coherent, consistent and comprehensive conception of itself and of the role it wants to play on the international scene. This is especially needed, having in mind the impossibility of knowing for sure what conception the others have of the actor or how they conceive of themselves.

The fullness and the pervasiveness of the self-conception are valuable when the actor sets its goals and formulates its interests. Pragmatic behavior and rational reasoning favor the setting of attainable goals. Furthermore, in line with the focus of this paper, it could be argued that deciding on the goal should not precede reasoning about interests and values. It is misleading, at best, to define the goal first, and only then try to tie it somehow to values and interests – for instance, by modifying their interpretation. Instead, the goal is defined and justified on the basis of pragmatic evaluation of interests and skills and deep internalization and understanding of knowledge and values.

A distinction has to be made between values and ideals. The two notions are closely related but not identical; the link between them is reciprocal. On one hand, values could be seen as deriving from ideals. For example, an ideal is to live in a world where all human rights are respected by everyone unconditionally. The respective value is respect for universal human rights. Simultaneously, most probably an actor would not aspire to a world of universal protection of human rights, were this not of great value to it. As we have seen, ideals push us forward and make us strive for improvement and progress. Values in a way inform our decisions, as through thinking about them we determine what an appropriate goal is and what acceptable actions we should undertake to achieve that goal. Political actors also declare their allegiance for certain values. The EU refers to human rights, democracy and rule of law as its ‘founding values.’ Therefore, it would be natural if it conceives of itself as a supporter/protector/defender of those values and if it tailors its actions accordingly.

Thus, we return to the significance of actions and practice. They matter because they embody our desire to progress and even fulfil our ideals. But to a certain extent they also represent who
we are and what we stand for. Therefore, it might be argued that the means through which we achieve our goals are as important as the goals themselves, the intentions and the values they are backed by. They are as indicative as them of the actor's self-conception and the principles he declares to follow. It is, therefore, more vital that the actions, the practice, are aligned with our values, not the interests per se. The reason is that, at least on a philosophical level, both interests and values should have the same source. Therefore, they could not and should not be inherently conflictual.

This brings us to the essence of the values-interests dichotomy, or rather the negation of its contradictory nature. From a discussion of pragmatism, two possible connections between values and interests emerge – one of convergence and one of divergence. If an actor values respect for human rights, his interest ought to be promotion/spread/popularization of human rights internally and externally. In this case, there is no conflict between value and interest. Hence, it is a relation of convergence. But what about the following case: an actor values respect for human rights but has an interest in achieving stability in region X. The achievement of stability might (hopefully not, but probably) involve closing one's eyes to a regional regime's practices that violate human rights standards. In this case, at first glance, we have a relation of divergence between value and interest. But where is this divergence rooted in? We could hypothesize about two possible reasons. The first, linked to Rescher's thoughts on values, is that formulation of a genuine interest cannot remain uninfluenced by a genuinely internalized value. The key word here is genuine. If in the case of divergence, the value takes prevalence over the interest, we have to consider the possibility that the essence of the interest is not precisely and correctly defined. Or, if the interest takes prevalence over the value, we have to consider the possibility that the value was not genuine in the first place. Therefore, it could be deducted that the divergence resulted from the uncertainty surrounding the value or the interest.

But there could be a second outcome – hypothetically, both the interest and the value could be genuine. In this case, we could pose the following question: 'Does this value originate from the same place as the interest? Or is this an interest associated with a different value?' In the example discussed above, the answers to these questions are respectively 'No' and 'Yes.' In fact, we have an interest which is not directly relatable to the value respect for human rights, but rather, let us say, to the value respect for stability (at any cost). There cannot be a conflict between a value and an interest that share a source. If there is such a conflict, one of these is either not genuine or not well formulated. But there could be a conflict between a value and the interest associated with a different value.

Prior to concluding, another reading of the divergence case could be made. We should also think about the possibility of it being caused by the unsuitableness or inadequacy of selected course of action. We always have to try and find the 'right' means that fulfill the interest, without
going against the value. The definition and employment of the proper action could eliminate the divergence between value and interest. Returning to our example, an actor shares the value respect for human rights and has interest in promotion/spread/popularization of human rights internally and externally. How likely is this actor to pursue his interest by imprisoning, persecuting or murdering innocent people, if he is not burdened by any external circumstances that are beyond his control? A natural answer would be ‘Not very likely.’ The deep embeddedness of the value in the actor’s value set guarantees that it will not take any such step. If, despite the lack of any external burden, the actor violates human rights, then it does not genuinely share the value respect for human rights. Disregarding the value means that it was never truly part of the actor’s value set. One consequence is that the actor cannot any longer claim that he cherishes this value. If it does, the actor risks being exposed by others as a liar.

An important clarification needs to be reaffirmed here. In this simplified situations, we exclude the possibility that external circumstances influence decisions. For example, the actor might be forced to take radical measures if it finds itself under risk. Then, the actor faces a difficult choice with two options – to disregard the value because it is forced to or find a way around this situation. In real life, as in international relations, vagueness, unsurmountable external constraints and limited time for decision-making are usually at hand.

Several ways to resolve the tensions between values and interests might be formulated. These do not contradict or mutually exclude each other; rather they complement one another and could be regarded as one whole strategy of pragmatism. The first step includes clear and comprehensive definition, explanation and justification of both values and interests. In terms of policy-formulation pondering on the philosophical foundations of human rights might not be as important as it is for scholars of political philosophy, sociology or political theory. But making clear what exactly the decision-makers understand by respect for human rights is important.

Second, great attention should be paid to establishing the right connection between values and interests. This could be done by using all available knowledge, skills and expertise, which the actor has accumulated through existence. One example, not claimed to be the most adequate one, is found in the National Security Strategy of the United States of America (USA). There, the popularization and protection of values is formulated as a specific and important interest of the USA. Among the main American values are human rights and democracy. However, the USA is often criticized for not being consistent in terms of the actions it undertakes to spread those values.

This brings us to the importance of finding the right means – or in the words of Nicholas Rescher – the appropriate, intelligent means. Ensuring that not only the interest but also the course of action are consistent with the underlying values is the third way to eliminate any tension between interest and value. If the actor values respect for human rights and believes it is
in his interest to achieve universal respect for human rights, then its international behavior and initiatives must be consistent with human rights, at least as much as possible. Unfortunately, the uncertainty about the intentions and actions of others cannot be eliminated and often affect the outcome of actor’s decisions.

This leads to the forth strategy, which above we referred to as the pessimistic element of our argument. In the real world of IR, an actor might need to prioritize between values, interests and courses of action. In the worst case scenario, it might need to accept a hierarchy of values and a hierarchy of interests. The latter is neither new, nor that problematic. To return to the US NSS, through the years the documents have distinguished between several categories of interests. Unsurprisingly, there are vital interests, ranking higher than others. They relate to the preservation of the survival and security of American citizens and the American state. Similarly, it is natural that some values matter more to a political actor. For example, it might value preservation of peace more than respect for human rights. This is not a breach of the constructivist proposition that agents are driven by non-material factors. The application of this premise does not involve evaluation of the agent’s value set or value-driven behavior as good or bad, as right or wrong. The fact that an actor values security more than respect for human rights does not mean that the actor is not influenced by values. It means that the actor prioritizes among the values he has.

Another part of the pessimistic argument concerns the immediate success of our actions. Some values and interests might not enjoy the possibility of immediate or short-term fulfillment. This is especially true in the complicated and globalized domain of world politics today. Thus, we come to the last strategy to relieve the tension between values and interests. It originates from one of the main ideas of Nicholas Rescher. An actor must always try to do the best he can. The decision on the best possible course of action involves a good understanding of one's values, excellent formulation of one's interests and a detailed analysis of one's practice and accumulated experience.

To consider how these propositions could be applied to the study of a particular political actor, we briefly turn to the case of the European Union. Ideally, this could help translate some pragmatist premises into policy-formulation and decision-making.

As a Way of a Case-study

The EUGS was a much expected document. For some time, it has been clear that the EU needed a new, detailed and action-oriented strategy to help it deal with global complexities. To pinpoint starker its contributions to the notion of EU external action, we need to say a few words about its predecessor – the 2003 European Security Strategy. In comparison to the 2016 EUGS, the ESS is much more concise and rather descriptive in nature. More importantly, and having in mind the
topic of this paper, the latter is vaguer on the concrete actions the EU is expected to undertake. The ESS also leaves out the issue of prioritization among values and interests.

While the document mentions the interests of the EU often, a partial attempt to connect them to values is made only once. The ESS states: “We need both to think globally and to act locally. To defend its security and to promote its values, the EU has three strategic objectives”, identified as addressing the threats, building security in our neighborhood and an international order based on effective multilateralism. The text also does not go into detail about which interests hold prevalence. As priorities are identified: fighting climate change, completion of the Doha Round, the resolution of the Arab/Israeli conflict and the strengthening of the United Nations. The specifics of possible courses of action are rather scarce. Importantly however, the ESS acknowledges that the EU has to be more active and more coherent. We also need to give this document a serious credit. Despite its descriptive and general nature, it is one of the best options that could have been possible at that point in time. The EU still had 15 members and the pillar system, and was a relatively new player.

The EUGS however, has built up on the promises of the ESS and tried to fill some of its voids. As a result, we have a document, which is much more concrete about European intentions and possible strategies. It also takes a few key steps related to the propositions of pragmatic idealism presented above. First, we should note that the authors of the Global Strategy are open about pursuing a different approach to strategizing about EU’s foreign policy – they name it ‘principled pragmatism.’ Our analysis shows that the approach shares similarities with the philosophical tradition of pragmatism.

To begin with, this recent text is more confident to establish a connection between values and interests. This is best exemplified by the following statement:

“Our interests and values go hand in hand. We have an interest in promoting our values in the world. At the same time, our fundamental values are embedded in our interests. Peace and security, prosperity, democracy and a rules-based global order are the vital interests underpinning our external action.”

Values and interests are inseparable and the relationship between them is clearly twofold. We get the impression that it is impossible to have an interest, detached from fundamental values. The interest is deeply rooted in the values. Furthermore, the phrase ‘vital interests’ should be noted. Its use presupposes that there are interests upon which is contingent the very

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27 Ibid., p. 7-9.
survival of the European Union. Interestingly enough, democracy, prosperity, security, peace and the rules-based order could be identified as values as well.

Importantly, priorities join values and interests in a tripartite foundation, upon which actions are decided and undertaken. “We will navigate this difficult, more connected, contested and complex world guided by our shared interests, principles and priorities,” states the EUGS. Even more straightforwardly – “(w)e know what our principles, our interests and our priorities are.” These three are parts of a whole and each of these parts is not adequate and full without the other two. The strength of this short sentence however, lies in the formulation ‘We know.’ It reflects the worth of realizing what one’s priorities are – any insecurity about them will lead to wearisome decision-making.

As the text advances, the significance of greater knowledge is stressed repeatedly. For instance, when discussing the need to adapt the EU to today’s unpredictable world, the document calls for “...investment in the knowledge base underpinning our external action.” The EUGS repeatedly emphasizes how crucial it is to have a credible EU that uses the instruments it disposes of reasonably and coherently. Achieving credibility would be difficult if a clear understanding of who one is and what one wants is lacking. Of course, deeper knowledge is easily obtained if one skillfully uses diverse and multiple channels. At a certain point, the EUGS talks about the future development of “more creative approaches to diplomacy.” Elsewhere, the Global Strategy rightly points out that fulfillment of interests will be made easy by the fact that “the pool of talent available to us is unrivalled. To make the most of this, we will invest in people, particularly those on the ground.” This reminds of Rescher’s suggestion to always seek the most intelligent means and try to do the best you can.

The fact that perfection is impossible and that solutions to some problems might come slowly is also touched upon. When talking about support for civil society, the document states the inevitable: “Positive change can only be home-grown, and may take years to materialize.” Most of the problems in the world today cannot and do not have an easy resolution. But this does not mean that the international community should give up. Another important point is made with reference to relations with regional organizations. The EUGS ensures that “(w)here possible and when in line with our interests, the EU will support regional organisations.” It is plain and simple – the EU will not offer support at any cost or because it believes in the success of regionalism. It is the interests that would have the last call.

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29 Ibid., 07.
30 Ibid., 03.
31 Ibid., 46.
32 Ibid., 31.
33 Ibid., 48.
34 Ibid., 27.
35 Ibid., 32.
Probably the strongest and much expected message comes in the following form: “We must now swiftly translate this vision into action.”\textsuperscript{36} It is a direct reply to a common critique of the EU – namely, that it uses words skillfully but fails to put them to practice. This is also among the greatest challenges that the European Union will face in the wake of the EUGS – to move even further away from statements and jump into the dangers but also opportunities that practice presents.

**Conclusion**

The goal of this paper was to present the premises of pragmatism and pragmatic idealism and to examine their potential as an approach to foreign policy formulation and analysis of international relations. We then provided a short reading of the European Union Global Strategy following these philosophical traditions. The analysis developed against the broader framework provided by constructivism as an approach to IR.

Prior to outlining the main conclusions, we should consider the limits of this study and, respectively, several directions on which future research could develop. First, here we talk about the EU as a whole, as one single actor. However, it might be useful to investigate differences in interest formulation and value explanation among the separate EU bodies. Furthermore, we do not consider the personality and leadership traits of individual leaders. Behavioral studies and personality-oriented foreign policy analysis could also offer valuable insight when examining pragmatism-influenced decision-making.

The points where pragmatism and constructivism touch bases also need more exploration. For instance, pragmatism and pragmatic idealism might suggest new perspectives for constructivists researching language and speech acts. The pragmatist concentration on knowledge acquisition and development are linked to the constructivist awareness of discourse as a transmitter of ideas and a builder of knowledge.

As a conclusion to the present paper, it is sufficient to say that the philosophical tradition of pragmatism has a promising future in the future study of world politics. If transferred adequately to foreign policy decision-making, it could contribute to the development of coherent and comprehensive strategies for external action. This is made possible by an important message contained in Rescher’s pragmatic idealism: the pragmatic and reasonable assessment of the circumstances that influence an actor’s decision does not equal the disavowal of ideals. While perfection might be impossible outside the philosophical realm, the striving towards improvement is natural for an actor, well-aware of its priorities and interests.

A high level of such awareness could not be achieved without other two components of importance to pragmatists – knowledge and practice. It is through these that the actor

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, 51.
crystallizes the conception of itself and the others in any given situation it faces, as well as in the world in general. Knowledge-gathering is essential to self-understanding, while practice is essential to progress. The EU Global Strategy promises more in terms of concrete actions and specific priorities. However, it does not leave behind – at least on paper – the values the ideals that lie at the heart of the EU. Now it is up to its leadership to forge an even stronger bond between values and interest and put the immense arsenal of knowledge that the EU disposes of into practice.
Bibliography


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