

## COMPARING THE COMPARISONS:

### **The Security Strategies of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia in the Context of the European Security Strategy**

#### ***The Pre-Histories of the National Security Strategies***

The pre-history of the current security strategies of the CR, Hungary and Slovakia differ markedly in almost all aspects, in their timing, evolution, number, structure and level of adoption. In terms of timing Hungary has been the slowest. Despite of the fact that Hungary had gained full sovereignty in 1990 with the change of regime, it was only by 1993 when two relevant security documents were adopted. On the contrary to Slovakia that became independent in 1993 and adopted its defence doctrine in 1994.

Another obvious difference in the evolution is that while the most important security documents of Hungary and the CR were adopted in accordance with their invitation to NATO – after the invitation in 1997 the previous adopted the *basic principles of security and defence policy* in 1998, and the latter the *security strategy* in 1999 -, Slovakia followed a different time pattern by adopting security, *defence and military strategy* one year prior to invitation (in 2001) and still not having renewed them after more than a year of membership in NATO.

In terms of structure, the Czech case seems to be the simplest, the Slovak is somewhat more complicated, and the Hungarian has been the most non-standard and most incomplete. The two Czech documents – the *security strategy* and the *military strategy* – correspond to the well established Western standards. In the case of Slovakia the *defence doctrine* of 1994 preceded the more general document which is a rather illogical procedure, plus Bratislava introduced a non-standard type of document – the *basic principles and aims of national security* – in 1996. The somewhat complicated character of the structure of the Slovak security documents is also demonstrated by the fact, that, in addition to the two standard documents – *security and defence strategy* – another document, namely, the *military strategy* was also adopted, bringing some confusion between the *defence strategy* and the *military strategy*. The Hungarian case, however, goes way beyond these complications. The *basic principles of security and defence policy* adopted in 1998 occupies a very special place in the hierarchy of internationally established standard national security documents. It is a kind of Hungaricum – it is one level above the classic national security strategies in terms of abstractness. At the same time Hungary did not possess any national security strategy up until 2002, and even now Budapest has not adopted the *military strategy*.

### Hierarchy of security documents

Standard international	Czech Republic	Slovakia <sup>58</sup>	Hungary
--	--	Basic principles and aims of national security – not valid	Basic principles of security and defence policy – still valid
National security strategies	Security strategy	Security strategy	Security strategy
--	--	Defence strategy	--
Military strategy	Military strategy	Military strategy	- under preparation
			Sectoral strategies - planned

As to the level of adoption, we have three different cases. In case of Slovakia, all documents were adopted by the legislative body, in case of Hungary it was the parliament that adopted the first three documents – the *basic principles of security and defence policy* (1993, 1998) and it was the government that adopted the two security strategies (2002, 2004), while in the case of the CR, all security related documents were adopted at the executive level.

### Comparing the structure

As far as the structure of the national strategies of the three countries under analysis is concerned, they are rather similar, but they differ considerably in comparison to the European security strategy. The structure of the Czech security strategy document does not correspond with its European counterpart. The reason for the differences stems from the fact that the Czech security strategy was drafted for the very first time already in the 1999 and it is only being updated every two years while the European security strategy was brought in 2003. The Slovak document's structure, although there is a certain overlap, also differs considerably from this aspect, while the Hungarian security strategy seems the most compatible with the ESS.

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58 In Slovakia the new Defence Strategy (approved by the government in July 2005 but still not approved by parliament) will replace the Defence Strategy of 2001 and the Military Strategy of 2001, therefore from 2005 there will be two valid documents: the Security Strategy and the Defence Strategy.

### **The structure of the security strategies**

European Security Strategy	Hungarian Security Strategy	Slovak Security Strategy	Czech Security Strategy
Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
--	--	--	Principles of the security policy of the CR
--	Values and interests	Security interests of the SR	Security interests of the CR
Security environment	Security environment	Security environment	Security environment
Strategic objectives	Objectives and tasks	--	--
Policy implications for Europe	Instruments to implement	Security policy of the SR	Strategy for promoting the security interests
--	--	--	Security system of the CR
--	Sectoral strategies	--	--
Conclusion	--	Conclusion	Conclusion

As we can see similarity between the three countries under analysis begins with - something what is logical in national security documents – the definition of interests. The European union as a non-state entity obviously cannot present such a section. It is the section on the security environment that is to be found in all security documents, but further the different strategies deal with the policies, tasks and means in very different manner. Finally, the Hungarian and the Czech documents contain such sections that are completely missing in the case of Slovakia or the EU, namely, the previous elaborates on the so called sectoral strategies, and the latter describes the security system of the CR.

### ***Comparing the content***

The central parts of the four strategic documents, i.e. the chapter dealing with challenges, threats, and risks are practically identical. This concerns, first of all, the hierarchy and the list of threats. All three national security strategies repeat the first four points of the ESS, namely terrorism, proliferation of WMD, regional conflicts, state failure, the Czech and the Slovak documents coincide even on the fifth item, namely, organised crime.

### Threat perceptions in the documents

<b>European Security Strategy</b>	<b>Hungarian Security Strategy</b>	<b>Slovak Security Strategy</b>	<b>Czech Security Strategy</b>
<i>Global level</i>	<i>Global level</i>	<i>Global level</i>	<i>Global level</i>
Terrorism	Terrorism	Terrorism	Terrorism
Proliferation of WMD	Proliferation of WMD	Proliferation of WMD	Proliferation of WMD
--	Unstable regions	Regional conflicts	Regional conflicts
State failure	Failed states	Failing states	Failed states
Organised crime	Organised crime	Organised crime	Organised crime
		Growth of influence of non-state actors <sup>59</sup>	
			Corruption
	Economic instability	Economic imbalance <sup>60</sup>	Imbalance between North and South
		Dependence of vital resources <sup>61</sup>	
	Civilizational,		Global warming
	Natural,	Natural disasters	Infectious diseases
	and health risks		Industrial accidents
	Illegal migration	Illegal and uncontrollable migration	
	Challenges of information society	Vulnerability of information and communication systems <sup>62</sup>	
		Foreign security services	
		Radical nationalism	
<i>National level</i>	<i>National level</i>	<i>National level</i>	<i>National level</i>
			Terrorism
	Organized crime		Organized crime
			Illegal migration
	Drug proliferation		Drug trafficking

59 It is in the part dealing with challenges rather than in the part dealing with threats

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61 It is in the part dealing with challenges rather than in the part dealing with threats.

62 It is in the part dealing with challenges rather than in the part dealing with threats.

European Security Strategy	Hungarian Security Strategy	Slovak Security Strategy	Czech Security Strategy
	Shadow economy, corruption		Corruption and economic crime
	Political and religious extremism	Political and religious extremism	Xenophobia, racism and political extremism
	--	--	Illegal weapons and dual use materials proliferation
	Demographic challenges	Unbalanced demographic developments <sup>63</sup>	--

The obvious difference between the EU and the three member state under analysis is the fact that the EU does not identify any “national level” threat. There is a certain difference to be found in the list, sequence and the place of specific items among the “national level” threats of the CR, Hungary or Slovakia, but basically they reflect the same security perception.

As to threat number one defined as terrorism in all documents, certain comments have to be made. Although all the documents literally borrow from the EU the term “strategic threat” when referring to terrorism, they treat terrorism as a rather abstract phenomenon, linking it to globalization or in the Czech case to the allied status of the country due to which “the risk of terrorist attack in the CR has increased”. At the same time the Hungarian document avoids any references to Hungary as either a transit or target country. Thus, the occurrence of terrorism as a strategic threat in the security strategies seems to be resulted by an alignment to the European interpretation, by making a “homework” of foreign policy. The general impression – best detectable in the Hungarian case – is that terrorism is put on the first place rather mechanically copying the European document.

There is only one issue that does not allow for complete identity of the major threats of the security strategies of the EU on the one hand, and the CR, Hungary and Slovakia on the other, namely regional conflicts/unstable regions. The EU does note the regional conflicts as security problems, but does not put it into the top three priorities, when stating: “Europe faces three key threats” (terrorism, proliferation of WMD, failed states and organized crime). The three countries under analysis, however explicitly put the question of regional conflicts on their threat priority list as number three.

It is worth mentioning that among the threats the Slovak document is the only one to mark “foreign security services”, while the Czech text is the only one to mention illegal weapons and dual use materials proliferation.

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## ***Approaches to the international order***

The next point of comparison that is relevant has to do with the topics discussed in the ESS's subchapter on the "international order". The first thing to be noted is that the notion of "effective multilateralism" is simply missing from the documents of all the three countries under analysis. It is a very serious divergence from the Union document for this notion reflect a basic philosophical difference to international relations in comparison to the United States' emphasis on unilateral solutions.

In addition, there are differences in the interpretation of the role and function of international law in the four documents. The Hungarian and the Slovak texts deal with in the context of implicit criticism, arguing for the need of "adapting" it "to the new challenges",<sup>64</sup> or as the Slovak document states: international law has to reflect the changes in the character of security threats and shall support also the adoption of new international standards, while the ESS text says "we are committed to upholding and developing" without an emphasis on the required change of it.

In the same manner, important differences can be noted vis-à-vis the role of the UN Security Council. While the ESS regards the UN SC as a body of "primary responsibility" for international security, the Hungarian document puts forward the formula of "primary but not exclusive responsibility" of the UN SC in international security. The Slovak strategy avoids any specific reference to the Security Council, which can be seen as a position very far from the ESS. The Czech documents' approach to the UN SC is closer to the ESS's one, it refers to it as a body whose mandate should be reached in case of coercive actions.<sup>65</sup>

The security strategy of Slovakia doesn't mentioned UN SC specifically. Article 64 states that "... the UN plays irreplaceable role in preserving of stability of transparency and of stability of security situation in the world". This article also states, that the reform of security institutions and international law shall reflect changes in the nature of security threats. Article 70 states, that Slovakia will support the reform of UN that will increase its capability to solve crisis situations .

The role of NATO is perceived very differently in the ESS on the one hand and the three other national security strategies on the other. While the previous refers to the Alliance as "an important expression" of the transatlantic relationship, NATO is regarded as the most important guarantor of security in the national documents. Although it is not explicit in the texts of the documents, the general security policy line on this issue tends to follow a "NATO first"<sup>66</sup> logic, or sees "EU more in economic terms and the NATO as the security guarantee",<sup>67</sup> or as the "primary forum of transatlantic security policy dialogue and cooperation".<sup>68</sup>

Similarly, the role of the US is approached differently in the ESS on the one hand and the three other national security strategies on the other. While the ESS characterizes the US as a country "in a dominant position as a military actor; no other country or group of countries comes close to its capabilities. (N)evertheless, no single country is able to tackle today's complex problems entirely on its own",<sup>69</sup> the Czech, Hungarian and Slovak national strategies put the emphasis somewhere else. For instance, when elaborating on Hungary's role in

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64 Formula of the Hungarian text.

65 The Czech text.

66 The opinion of the authors of the Slovak case study.

67 The opinion of the authors of the Czech case study.

68 The opinion of the authors of the Hungarian case study.

69 ESS p. 2.

transatlantic relations the HSS expresses a fear of being pressed to choose between Europe and the US. In order to avoid this situation the document states that Hungary wants to be “strategic partner of the United States also as a member of the European Union and to be a NATO-ally contributing to a stronger European engagement”. In the case of Slovakia three elements determine the exceptionally high priority of the US in security matters: the document qualifies the US as strategic ally, the support of the formation of ad hoc coalitions and finally it is also a Slovak specifics that the security strategy – on the contrary to the ESS – states the engagement to the systems and programs of anti-ballistic defence. The Czech text is not very specific in this regard the “strong atlanticism”<sup>70</sup> characterizing the general security policy places the US high on the Czech security agenda.

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70 The opinion of the authors of the Czech case study.

### Points of divergence on the international order

European Security Strategy	Hungarian Security Strategy	Slovak Security Strategy	Czech Security Strategy
Effective multilateralism	--	--	--
Committed to international law	Need for adjusting international law	Need for changes in international law	More effective UN
Primary responsibility of UN SC	Primary but not exclusive responsibility of UN SC	No mention of UN SC	UN SC mandate for coercive actions
NATO: important expression of transatlanticism	Primary forum for transatlantic cooperation	“NATO first”	Security guarantor
US: dominant, but “don’t go alone”	US: strategic partner	US: extraordinary position, Support of ad hoc coalitions, Partner in anti-ballistic defence program	Strong atlanticism

### Regional dimension

Besides the fact that the relevant regions are treated in different places in the security strategies, it is also important to note that there is a substantial overlap among them. The overlap covers the Balkans, parts of the post-Soviet space, the Mediterranean and the Near and Middle East. The ESS does not mention the whole CIS region, but limits itself to referring to the countries of the former Soviet Union as “our neighbours in the East”.

The Balkans and South-Eastern Europe are of a similar importance in all documents. In this respect one can refer to the emphasis in the Hungarian document on the commitment to support the ultimate goal of EU accession in the case of these countries, and the support for “the admission of countries that are prepared and fulfil the respective criteria”.

The ESS show significant difference when dealing with Russia and Ukraine in comparison to the three national security strategies. Whereas the previous speaks modestly of “neighbours in the East” and refers to Russia only as a strategic partner but not as a challenge to European security, and does not mention Ukraine at all, the HSS eg. takes account of Russia and Ukraine by identifying “durable stability based on the set of democratic values of Ukraine and Russia and their *rapprochement* to the organisations of Euro-Atlantic integration” [emphasis added] as a national security interest. Both the Czech and the Slovak strategies show markedly higher interest in the Eastern dimension, especially the latter. In comparison with previous strategic documents, the Slovak draft security strategy formulates more concrete attitudes to Ukraine, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Russia. In



comparison to the ESS, it expresses the interest that Ukraine, following the fulfilment of criteria, should become the member of the NATO and the EU. In the relation to the countries of the CIS, the SS of SR considers as important their wider involvement in the cooperation with transatlantic and European structures, the solution of crises in Transcaucasian and Central-Asian regions and the strengthening of democracy and rule of law in Belorussia and Moldova. Russia is evaluated as an important subject, which shall influence the security situation in the Euro-Asia region. Slovakia intends to support the development of strategic partnership of Russia with the NATO and the EU. As to Ukraine, the Hungarian document puts strong emphasis on the country's co-operation with European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, the completion of its democratic reform processes, and its successful socio-economic transformation. The HSS even puts its policy towards Russia and Ukraine in a European context by referring to the EU–Russia co-operation and the EU's neighbourhood policy as means by which Hungary is able to help these countries' rapprochement to Euro-Atlantic integration.

## **Conclusion**

The general conclusion of the above analysis can be formulated, as follows. In spite of the fact that the pre-history of the current security strategies of the CR, Hungary and Slovakia differ markedly in almost all aspects - in their timing, evolution, number, structure and level of adoption -, from the point of view of the vision of the preferred international order, all three EU-member states represent a distinct group within the Union by considerably differing from the document adopted in the end of 2003 prior to the accession of the countries under analysis.

To sum up, the explicit differences include the approach to effective multilateralism, the adequacy of the international law, the role of the UN SC, the function of NATO and, finally, the relationship towards the US. In addition, in those parts of the documents where the threat perception is characterized, the striking coincidence of terms, hierarchy, structure does not, at all, change the distinctiveness of this group of countries' security vision vis-à-vis the ESS, because here the sense of mechanic copying, remaining too vague, sticking to abstract formulas and fulfilling a kind of "homework" prevails.

The most astounding conclusion of such a reading of the situation is that the three countries under analysis succeeded in differentiating themselves from the ESS, which represents a consensual bottom-line common denominator of all the member countries including both pro-atlantists and pro-Euro-autonomists. In other words, the CR, Hungary and Slovakia have proven to be more "new Europeanists" than the diehard old Atlantist part of the old continent.