

## *Summary of Proceedings*

# **Assessing the EU's Progress on the Path to a European Security and Defence Policy**

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On 9-10 April 2001, the European Institute of Public Administration organised a seminar entitled, 'Assessing the EU's Progress on the Path to a European Security and Defence Policy'. The seminar built upon an earlier event held in November 1999 which resulted in the publication of *Between Vision and Reality: CFSP's Progress on the Path to Maturity* (EIPA, 2000) edited by Simon Duke. One of the reasons for having a second seminar fairly soon after the initial one was prompted by the rapid development of the Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP).

The speakers included high-level EU officials as well as officials from NATO, the WEU and prominent academics. The audience came from a variety of backgrounds but most represented EU defence ministries or Foreign Ministries as well as a number of academics. It was also heartening to see a number of EU candidate countries represented.

### **Enabling CESDP**

Since the last seminar specifically devoted to CESDP, the adoption of the 'Headline Goals' at the December 1999 European Council,<sup>1</sup> the Feira conclusions of the Portuguese Presidency, which included proposals to enhance the civilian aspects of crisis management, the Capabilities Commitment Conference of November 2000 and the conclusion of the Nice IGC under the French Presidency, changed CESDP dramatically. CFSP also gained a 'face' in the form of the Secretary-General/High Representative (SG/HR), Javier Solana. It was acknowledged that he has made a fundamental contribution to public awareness of CESDP.

In spite of this, the development of CESDP has taken place at an elite level and the task of knitting together CESDP with CFSP remains to be done. All too often the acronym laden CESDP mitigates against public engagement. The importance of ensuring public support was noted and a number of problems with engaging the public were acknowledged. It was felt however that it should not be impossible to engage the public, even if the demands of security mean less transparency regarding the every day workings of CESDP and related areas. The adoption of a communications strategy on military capabilities (to include financial aspects) was

suggested. A communications strategy might also assist in setting down some basic terminology for the broader public debate, such as the scope of crisis prevention and the differences between crisis management and defence.

Turning to the institutional developments in CESDP it was acknowledged that the establishment of the EU Military Committee (EUMC) as a permanent body, soon to be followed by the EU Military Staff (EUMS), was a positive development. However, the proliferation of security-related bodies in the EU also heightens the demands upon continuity and coordination from one Presidency to the next. Specifically on the military aspects of CESDP, little progress has been made in the key areas of weakness (command, control, communications and information, intelligence and strategic lift). The lack of a dedicated command and control structure and an assessment and review process were also noted. At the EU's current level of progress (with less than two years until the implementation of the Headline Goals) the capability exists only for relatively modest operations, such as disaster relief or evacuation procedures. More extensive operations at the more intense end of the Petersberg tasks, like 'tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking' (Article 17 (2)) remain ambitious goals. *Operation Allied Force* in the first half of 1999 also illustrated a number of tactical shortcomings which, by and large, remain on the table.<sup>2</sup>

The question of how much the EU should be able to do for itself and the extent of its reliance upon cooperation measures with NATO was debated at length, with the cautionary note that autonomy is primarily a political concept referring to decision making. It is therefore mistaken to interpret autonomy as necessarily implying an either EU, or NATO, choice. Again, the scope for explaining and clarifying concepts was underlined. It was clear to all that much work remains to be done on the development of military capabilities along the lines of the British-inspired 'Food for Thought' paper presented at a meeting of the EU defence ministers in Sintra, Portugal, on 28 February 2000.

### **CESDP and third parties**

The issue of EU relations with third parties dominated much of the discussion. A number of technical and

political issues (such as security of communications or the relative immaturity of EU counterparts to NATO civil and military bodies) have hampered the development of EU+6 (the non-EU European NATO members) relations.<sup>3</sup> These considerations were however overshadowed by the frequent references to Turkey's position regarding CESDP and EU access to NATO assets. The lack of any notable change in Turkey's stance may well make the conclusions of the Swedish Presidency in this area modest.

The ability of the U.S. and the EU to essentially talk past each other when it comes to defining security threats was also stressed. In part this is due to differing notions of 'security' but also due to the ambiguous geographical terms of reference for CESDP. The EU has yet to develop a vision of a global security environment and its role therein. If CESDP has global aspirations (and some aspects, such as the EU's crisis prevention role, are specifically framed in international terms), one of the most important tasks will be for the EU to develop the will *and* ability to assume global challenges and for both the U.S. and the EU to adjust to a new global partnership. Some in the U.S., most notably Congress, will remain sceptical about CESDP in the absence of proof that the EU is developing the required enabling abilities. This means that any forthcoming EU Declaration on Operational Capabilities will have to convince the American sceptics since it may otherwise harm transatlantic relations. The ambiguity regarding the scope of CESDP and, more generally CFSP, may also have knock-on effects for transatlantic discussions about a variety of security-related issues, such as missile defences.

The basis for U.S. security engagement in Europe has been and will continue to be NATO and it is therefore important to Washington that the European Security and Defence Initiative (ESDI) and CESDP should be presented as mutually supporting. In this regard the growth of practical cooperation in EU-NATO operations on the ground, such as those between the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) and NATO in the Presovo Valley, or the close liaison between Solana and NATO's Secretary General, Lord George Robertson, in Macedonia, is encouraging. The ability of the EU to provide for many kinds of 'soft security' (such as aid and assistance) has the potential to provide a real-life answer to the transatlantic burdensharing debate if agreement on the 'harder' aspects of security is reached. In order to do this adjustments will have to be made in EU-U.S. relations which will initially involve the EU in demonstrating the necessary political will and vision to assume global challenges.

Other significant third parties, such as Russia, the Ukraine and Canada have all been very active in pressing for a permanent and institutionalised CESDP. In particular, the importance of working through the EU and NATO forums with Russia was underlined. The EU's ability to assist in addressing some of the soft security issues of mutual concern, such as the Kaliningrad *oblast*, was also noted.

Finally, the issue of whether Europe has essentially wasted a decade by jumping from one vehicle to another

was considered in the context of the WEU. The WEU's history was seen as a process of maturation that contains a number of valuable lessons for the EU, not the least of which was the WEU Assembly, its inclusivity and its exertion of direct democratic control. Although the future of the interim European Security and Defence Assembly (the WEU Assembly's preferred name) is up in the air, their role has nevertheless reinforced the need for more attention to concerns about CESDP's democratic legitimacy within the EU.

It was observed that the EU is a more complex security actor than the WEU, whose full members were all members of the EU and NATO. The EU continues to struggle with the institutional asymmetries between those who are EU but not NATO members and those who are NATO, but not EU, members. It was also pointed out that the WEU performed a unique function: namely, the preparation of plans, options and political-military support for European military operations in pursuit of crisis management activities in which the U.S. chose not to be involved. The WEU had also developed by the mid 1990s a formula for effectively linking NATO and the EU in an operational middle ground. The WEU Council's Marseilles Declaration of November 2000 essentially ended the WEU's operational role leaving only a vestigial organisation. Time will tell us whether the EU is able to benefit from the WEU experience, its flexibility and political inclusiveness that wove together all European countries willing to cooperate in crisis management.

### **Conflict Prevention**

One of the aspects of CESDP that has grown since the last EIPA CFSP seminar is conflict prevention (CP) although it remains marginal. A number of important documents on CP, including the SG/HR's contribution to the Nice Presidency conclusions, have been issued in the interim period. The Commission's growing role in CP was discussed extensively, with reference to the Commission's initiative on conflict prevention.<sup>4</sup> Basic difficulties in deciding on the limits of CP were encountered (at times, it seemed easier to ask what is *not* CP), as was the notion that CP is necessarily cheap.

CP is in its early stages in the EU context and the record is therefore mixed. Encouragement was evident from the use of various structures, such as the Presidency *troika*'s trip to the Caucasus. Preparations to integrate conflict indicators and the objectives of CP more closely into the programming of Community external aid programmes, were also welcomed. Inevitably, the building of structures for CP has to be finely balanced with the ability to react in a timely manner, which led to a call for less centralisation and comitology (especially less discussion in plenary format).

Other teething problems with CP that were evident were reaction time and the ability to deploy personnel and assistance rapidly compared to, for example, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The difficulty of the Community addressing the Feira goals (outlined by the Portuguese Presidency in June 2000) was also highlighted since the main responsibility was attributed to the Council. This opened

up the more difficult, and unresolved, issue of how to avoid turf battles between the Community (primarily with a CP role) and the intergovernmental second pillar, with its crisis management focus. Concerns about possible duplication between the Community and the Council were also expressed in the context of how the Joint Situation Centre might work with the Crisis Cell. The ability of Commission delegations to report directly to the SG/HR may also provoke sensitivities.

The focus of CP is international. Many other organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, have a stake in CP the problem lends itself to an international approach but also poses challenges regarding coordination between, for example, the UN and the OSCE and the EU. A further challenge lies in the fact that, in order to be effective, CP should be complemented by crisis management. However, the ambiguous geographical confines of the latter and the international focus of the former risks disjuncture for the EU. The complex nature of CP was also discussed with the observation that a number of factors, such as multinationals or the media, may be part of the problem but could also be part of the solution. Similarly, in a dose of *realpolitik*, it was also recognised that the effectiveness of CP depends critically on who the objects are. In this regard the Union's inability to influence events in Chechnya was regretted. The EU's ability to extend its 'value system' to the Southern Caucasus was seen as reasonably high in contrast to the Northern Caucasus or Chechnya.

Finally, the apparent emphasis upon crisis management, as opposed to CP, was challenged. Concern was voiced that the current (reactive) emphasis on crisis management may face the EU with more Yugoslavia-type situations. As a matter of conjecture, the audience was invited to consider whether things might have turned out differently had there been a Stability Pact for the Balkans in the 1980s.

### **Economic and industrial perspectives**

Economic concerns were certainly present in the November 1999 seminar. Since then the Headline Goal, the Capabilities Commitment Conference and ongoing discussions about the nature of 'autonomy' has kept the discussion to the fore. Unlike the debate over the costs of enlargement of NATO, which produced three sets of figures, the debates surrounding CESDP continue to take place with no reliable public data.

Figures, based on informed estimates and NATO data, were tabled for the purposes of discussion and, inevitably, questions ensued about the methodology of reaching the final figures. One of the key frustrations remains the veracity of the political assumptions that underpin any figures. For instance, to what extent does one assume access to NATO assets? Should we assume synergy effects through the emergence of an EU system of defence procurement or even the emergence of a European armaments industry? A further critical variable lies in the ambitions of CESDP; is the ambition global power projection and the maintenance of European global status or essentially a regional role?

In spite of these issues, it was constructive to have

ballpark figures on the table. The figures assumed EU build-up costs for a European global power projection of some EUR 230-70 billion (primarily C<sup>3</sup>I capacity and air and naval transport) and additional build-up costs for a European global power status of EUR 60-150 billion, expressed in 2001 prices. The real budgetary increase for global power capacity compared to 1999 figures could amount to EUR 290-520 billion, or a total increase of 260-390%.<sup>5</sup> With a synergy premium, of twenty percent, the figures could be reduced to 230-330%. Over a period of fifteen years (2001-16) this might imply an increase in defence expenditure of EUR17.5-32.0 billion or +11-12%, with a synergy premium. In GNP terms this would mean that defence budgets of the European NATO members would increase from an average of 2.2% (1999) to somewhere in the region of 2.5-3.0% over a fifteen year period. Although the figures were debated, the notion that enough could be done within the current defence expenditure levels to realise an effective CESDP, was not seriously entertained. Clearly, achieving the Headline Goals and linking the Union's more general efforts to project stability and peace into a coherent package, *will* mean in increase in expenditure.

The economic costs are only part of the problem. The political problems incumbent in selling defence expenditure increases to the EU publics, candidate countries and interested third parties, such as Russia, could be formidable. Public acceptance will have to battle the 'no threat syndrome', domestic political priorities that focus on social and economic modernisation and a tendency towards symbolism or tokenism. The prospects of long-term EU involvement in Kosovo (and perhaps elsewhere in the Balkans) may also lead to donor fatigue. Better and clearer communications are essential to address the political costs.

A potentially significant underpinning for CESDP is often seen as the European Defence Industry. The term though is confusing, if not fanciful, and really refers to the European aerospace and defence electronics industries. Some sectors, such as naval ship building, remain obdurately national while others, such as land armaments, show tentative signs of integration. To talk of a European Defence Industry at the current juncture is a triumph of desire over reality. The slow progress in European defence industrial collaboration means that a Common Armaments Market or procurement policy, are a long way off.

Nevertheless, the case for accelerating the push towards a Europe-wide armaments and procurement policy was made on the grounds that many individual Member States are facing shrinking or static defence budgets. Not all of the answers lie within the EU of course and an increase in transatlantic cooperation at the sub-system level holds promise. A further spur, if it is not too late, may come from the lack of political will within the EU to come to defence-industrial arrangements which has facilitated U.S. market dominance. If this is to be avoided the EU governments will have to start thinking the unthinkable. Namely, they will have to start considering what role the Commission might play, the EUMC should receive a mandate to harmonise military requirements and there should be an EU budget

line for certain projects. The risk of creating a 'fortress Europe' in defence industrial terms also has to be avoided and it is for this reason that the merger of BAe Systems and EADS was seen as unlikely.

### Conclusions

A number of conclusions from the wide ranging presentations and discussions may be reached without, I hope, over simplifying the proceedings. The first is the need for better communications strategy to sustain support for CESDP and to provide accurate information regarding the purposes and parameters of CESDP within the wider context of the EU's external relations. This is a critical aspect since increases in defence expenditure appear to be unavoidable and the political task of communicating the rationale for this to the public at large will be facilitated by an effective communications strategy.

The second general conclusion is that the creation of new structures and CESDP-associated tasks within the Council Secretariat and the Commission poses the question of how crisis management, civilian crisis management and crisis prevention will be linked. No firm conclusions were reached on this issue but it is clearly a matter of concern that the rapid advances in CESDP contrast with the relative stagnation of CFSP and that the potential for *communautaire* and intergovernmental turf battles clearly exists. Any effective mechanism to address crisis scenarios will require a seamless web to link together the Community aspects of crisis prevention, including economic leverage (positive and negative) and the role of the 128 Commission delegations, with the credible threat of the use of military and the actual ability to use military force. The solution to most crisis scenarios depends upon the effective cooperation of all EU pillars. Much work remains to be done in this regard.

The demands for internal consistency need to be matched with external consistency. This implies that the EU must define its role in both regional and global terms. Concern was voiced about the potential contradiction between the Community's assertive conflict prevention role, which is framed in international terms, and the crisis management role which appears to be more regional in intent. It is therefore essential that the EU develops the vision and the political will to assume global challenges if the desired goal is to become an actor on the international scene.

Third, much work remains to be done on the EU's relations with other organisations and third parties. The balancing act that has to be accomplished between institutional autonomy on the one hand and, on the other, to maximise CESDP's inclusivity will not be easy. These tensions were most visible in Turkey's case. It is clearly essential that Turkey should be included in any security arrangements for Europe, given its strategic location and its NATO membership, but it is also vital that the EU's decision-making autonomy should be respected. The failure to reach a satisfactory accommodation with Turkey threatens the indefinite paralysis of EU-NATO relations. It was also felt that the WEU should not be dismissed too quickly, even if the

Marseilles Declaration of November 2000 left only a vestigial organisation. More attention needs to be paid to the best practices of the WEU and the resultant lessons incorporated into the EU.

Fourth, relations with the U.S. are critical. The current administration is broadly supportive of CESDP. The key reservations, or even scepticism, are to be found in Congress. In particular Congress remains doubtful that the EU Member States will come up with the capabilities, even for lower level Petersberg tasks. The key to ensuring continued U.S. support for CESDP lies in dialogue. The EU could reassure some of the doubters by explaining more effectively exactly what it is that CESDP hopes to achieve, how this complements NATO and the continuing importance of U.S. military contributions to Europe (most notably in the Balkans). The somewhat rarefied world of CESDP could usefully be opened up to more general discourse and, in particular, to transatlantic exchanges of view not only on CESDP but other issues such as MD. An enhanced EU-U.S. dialogue on CESDP does not obviate the need for clearer and more effective communication with Moscow and other interested parties.

Finally, the economic and industrial aspects of CESDP indicate, respectively, that an increase in defence expenditure for the EU Member States is unavoidable and that further defence industrial integration may eventually occur, but any common armaments or procurement policy remains in the distant future. The common factor linking both themes (and, implicitly, those above) is the question of political will. In the absence of the necessary political will to match rhetoric with resources, CESDP runs the risk of undermining the EU's credibility and damaging relations with NATO. So far, CESDP has been developed at an elite level and the general aims and objectives have not been communicated effectively to a broader audience which includes the EU candidate countries. Elite dialogue may not ensure the critical broader public support necessary for CESDP's continued development. Seminars, conferences and other public fora play a critical role in opening up the debate and it is hoped that, in a modest way, this seminar contributes to the broader debate.

### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Building on the guidelines established at the Cologne European Council and on the basis of the Finnish Presidency reports, the European Council agreed to the 'Headline Goals' at their Helsinki meeting of 10-11 December 1999. The Member States agreed that they should be able, by 2003, to deploy within 60 days and sustain for at least 1 year military forces of up to 50,000-60,000 persons capable of the full range of Petersberg tasks.
- <sup>2</sup> These include the ability to suppress of enemy air defences, air to air refuelling, combat search and rescue and precision guided munitions.
- <sup>3</sup> The Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Poland and Turkey.
- <sup>4</sup> *Conflict Prevention: Commission initiative to improve EU's civilian intervention capabilities*, IP/01/560, Brussels, 11 April 2001.
- <sup>5</sup> The figures use 1999 NATO expenditure data and applies to European NATO members. □