

*A Future Agenda for the European Security and Defence
Policy (ESDP)*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Present state of the ESDP: security policy, not defence policy

Ten years after the inception of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESPD), the European Union (EU) has made major progress in this field; particularly thanks to the launching of 21 civilian and military missions abroad –something unthinkable not so long ago–, some in close cooperation with the United Nations (UN). An instrument of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the ESPD has helped to shape the singular nature of the EU as a global player endowed with so-called “soft power” or, hypothetically, also in possession of the tools of “hard power”, capable of acting in order to maintain international peace and security and/or protect its interests and values. There is a growing culture of security in Europe, along with a recognition of the need for the EU to play a more consistent, active and effective role in the management of crises, as laid down in the European Security Strategy (ESS) of 2003². The EU must be more effective and capable, in the words of the Report on the Implementation of the EES, from last December³.

However, European Defence, as an integral part of a comprehensive security policy, remains a work in progress. The ESDP has resulted in a European Security Policy of sorts, reflected in the deployment of civilian missions and some military missions within the broader framework of the CFSP and the EU’s external action as a whole. *There is no such thing as a European Defence yet*; there is indeed growing coordination of 26 members states in the field of defence and a certain capability to deploy military resources on Union operations, such as the EU-NAVFOR mission in Somalia or EUFOR Tchad/RCA.

There is a collective defence of 21 Union Members within the framework of NATO, an organisation with a different philosophy and nature. But the EU as such continues to fail to take responsibility for *its own defence*, in spite of the fact that the European leaders agreed that, according to the Treaty of the Union in its successive modifications until

² “A Secure Europe in a Better World”, European Security Strategy (December 2003).

³ Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy, “Providing Security in a Changing World” (11 December 2008), at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=266&lang=EN&mode=g.

Lisbon, the ESDP “*shall include* the progressive framing of a common European defence policy, which *will lead* to a common defence...”. These latter goals have not been achieved, nor will they be achieved until European leaders show the resolve to take truly significant steps in this field.

In this respect, there are well-known limitations and structural problems which undermine efforts to erect this ESDP pillar, hindering the EU’s capacity to exercise true influence on the dynamic strategic stage of the 21st century –a stage on which relations of power and multi-polarity are key elements. These obstacles on the road to a European Defence (e.g., in the field of capabilities, the absence of coordinated expenditure among the different national defence budgets, etc) have been highlighted with precision by experts and think tanks. Moreover, the costs of non-Europe in defence are indisputable – especially when the €200bn or so that the EU Member States as a whole spend on defence is taken into consideration.

In spite of what is often argued regarding the reaction of public opinion in Europe to bolder defence commitments, it has been registered that European citizens lend greater support to increasing the role of the EU in these matters than what is sometimes taken for granted⁴.

Should it finally take effect by the end of 2009 or in 2010, the Lisbon Treaty could mean major progress for European Defence –particularly thanks to the implementation of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PSCoop)– and, above all, in the broader sphere of the EU’s external action. However, there is a series of channels which can be explored *from this very moment* by those Member States that wish to advance more swiftly on defence, reaching an agreement on the European Defence Agency (EDA), and which do not depend on the coming into effect of the new Treaty, although that eventuality would reinforce those options institutionally.

⁴ See, for example, the questions on defence put to Spanish citizens in the survey, “¿Qué Europa queremos?” (Fundación Alternativas and Office of Secretary of State for European Affairs, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008, at <http://www.falternativas.org/la-fundacion/documentos/libros-e-informes/informe-que-europa-queremos>). For example, an average 74% of respondents were in favour of European Armed Forces –way beyond the current scope of the ESDP; 87% backed the member states of the EU committing themselves to collective defence in the face of an armed attack on any one of them and 49% would maintain defence budgets at their present levels, but with improved allocation and coordination of expenditure.

2. Goal: towards a true Defence Europe

This working paper –the result of a general consensus among several European institutions and think tanks listed above– seeks to stimulate debate and policymaking in the immediate future by means of a series of concrete proposals in those fields which most concern European defence. The authors believe that many of them are feasible, despite the Union’s lengthy institutional crisis, and could comprise a Future Agenda for the ESDP. It pays due attention to advances made during the French Presidency of the EU, while seeking to pave the way for fresh progress.

Although the paper accepts modern notions about security (covered in Chapter 1), its priority is the specific area of defence as an element of the former –to be precise, to provide content to the generic commitment gathered in the Treaty on European Union (TEU) that the ESDP “shall include the progressive framing of a common European defence policy, which will lead to a common defence...”. In short, a true Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which the Lisbon Treaty envisages.

3. Main themes of the paper

3.1 A true Defence Europe

The basic assumption of the institutions represented here derives from the idea that Europe must advance towards a **common system of defence** by means of a gradual integration of national policies and capabilities, developing a completely autonomous ESDP capable of meeting the collective aspirations of the EU. NATO will not be replaced, though it will strengthen the case for changes in this organisation as the EU acquires greater defensive capabilities. On the other hand, the transatlantic bond will be given a boost as Europe assumes greater responsibility in the management of global affairs, as it has already done in other key areas, such as trade.

3.2 Inclusiveness and a multi-speed Defence Europe

In order to further that goal, the paper considers different priority options for the EU Members as a whole and then what is feasible for smaller groups of states which wish to proceed more rapidly in this field, within the general framework of the EU. The paper thus develops i) measures which would have to be backed by Union Members as a

whole, in the interests of the idea of inclusiveness, defence policy being a policy in the common interest of all its members, and ii) options for more reduced groups of states in the bosom of the Union.

Therefore, it backs the idea of a multi-speed Europe, as it has sometimes been described: just as those states which do not wish to incorporate their defensive capabilities into the European framework are within their rights not to do so, it is also legitimate that other states should be able to agree to advance more rapidly towards that common goal, in the interest of the Union.

3.3 With Lisbon or without Lisbon

In this respect, and with those premises, the paper contains proposals for implementing specific sections of the Lisbon Treaty which deal with the ESDP (or CSDP), such as specific criteria for Permanent Structured Cooperation or Enhanced Cooperation. It considers different scenarios, depending on whether the Treaty takes effect or not. As stated previously, there are some options –and priorities– which do not depend on its taking effect since defence remains the intergovernmental area par excellence.

4. Basic conclusions

The paper proposes several practical courses for making a Defence Europe a reality in the context of the Union's protracted institutional uncertainty. The point of view put forward seeks to combine inclusiveness and the legitimacy of a multi-speed Europe to overcome stale debates over the goals of the ESDP in relation to NATO, a supposed "militarisation" of the EU, etc. As the US ambassador to NATO said in a well-known speech last year, "...the world, the United States and Europe need a stronger, more capable European defence capacity to act independently... since a Europe with soft-power is not enough", something which is increasingly true.

There is a pressing need to draw the necessary conclusions about the present limits of the ESDP and the cost of the absence of a Defence Europe, as well as to raise awareness of what the Europeans can achieve together in operations to promote their common values and interests. Now that the first decade of the ESDP's existence has come to a close, it is time to move on from St Malo.

An EU with a real, effective system of defence will not materialise in the near future, but it could surely come about with the implementation of the series of measures (at a doctrinal, operational, institutional level, etc) proposed here .

The ultimate outcome will be an EU as a stronger global player, with a common foreign and security policy based on a “holistic” or integrationist approach to crisis management, as the European Security Strategy states. An EU, therefore, with all of the tools required to maintain international security, the security of European citizens and/or the collective interests of the Union.

5. Summary of proposals for the immediate future

In the awareness that this working paper and the “road map” it proposes need to be discussed and developed in greater detail by policymakers and defence chiefs, below is a brief summary of the main proposals which would comprise the Future Agenda for the ESDP.

5.1 For EU members as a whole

- Preparatory work on a **European Defence White Paper (EDWP)**, as the logical development of the implications of the European Security Strategy (ESS) in this area. It would comprise a civilian-military strategy on the criteria for the intervention of European military forces (in foreign scenarios as well as for the defence of the European population), the foundations of an EU crisis management doctrine, the extent of common ambition as regards the number and type of civilian and military operations, etc. It would also include the ultimate goal that the EU will advance towards a collective system of defence. This work could be carried out after the election of the new European Parliament, and in the course of 2010, taking advantage of the current climate of strategic reflection on the basic principles of European security (reflected in the 2008 Report, the possible new Strategic Concept of NATO this spring, various national papers, and so on).

As for the ESS itself, given that a limited review has already taken place in 2008, it seems only natural that the European leaders and institutions, on the basis of the Solana paper and the 2008 Report, should focus on its implementation. In order to do so, it would be helpful to deal with the dimensions raised in Chapter 1 (such as regions of immediate interest for the EU, key organisations and partners) and develop the ESS via policy plans or action plans. Such a strategic review would be helped by the inception of the European External Action Service and the appointment of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy provided for by the Lisbon Treaty

In this last respect, there appear to be two clear priorities. Firstly, within this general process a **US-EU Security Summit** could be called in 2010. Said summit could provide impetus for a renewed transatlantic alliance, defining common goals and interests, candid dialogue on the distribution of responsibilities between the ESDP and NATO and other similar issues. Secondly, within the framework of this enhanced role of the Union in security and defence, it is necessary to bolster the EU-UN partnership on the maintenance and consolidation of peace.

- Implementation of the officer exchange programmes introduced by the French Presidency of the EU, as well as an assessment of how to get more out of the European Security and Defence College and transform it into a genuine unifying force for European security culture. In particular, it would be very helpful if by 2011 there was the creation of a **European Military School**, linked to the former and funded initially by contributions from the Member States
- Creation by 2011 of an EU **Operations Headquarters** (EU-OHQ) based in Brussels and merging existing structures of the Council and Secretariat. The OHQ should at least have the capacity to carry out autonomously the operations anticipated in the level of ambition approved by the European leaders at the European Council of December 2008 –including more peace-enforcement operations and others entailing a similar risk.

- Definitive review of the **Athena mechanism** –which funds a minimal part of ESDP expenses–, broadening the concept of common costs. If the Lisbon Treaty takes effect, following its ratification by all the members of the Union, the Council should make it a priority to take the necessary steps for the application of Art. 41.3 of the TEU, on the creation of a start-up fund for financing the preparations for missions. In the medium term, said start-up fund could form the basis of a **European Fund for ESDP missions**.

- Building on the initiative of the Battle Groups, engage the European Union Military Staff (EUMS) and the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) in the assessment of the steps required to move towards fully combat-capable and sustainable European rapid reaction forces. This work should also establish goals with regard to other models of joint forces which could be employed in longer stabilisation operations (lasting two years or more), as envisaged in the Declaration on Strengthening Capabilities.

- The Members States of the EU should develop more, more efficient and more interoperable capabilities, moving towards pooling and specialisation.

- A list of vital technologies for the future of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB). This task should involve the European Commission and the EDA. Moreover, a new phase of **industrial** consolidation, particularly in the field of naval and ground armaments appears to be vital.

- A **European Code of Conduct** on public/private ownership of defence companies is required. This code should include a ban on states exceeding 50% of the capital of a defence company and on public interference in strategies of private companies, as well as the possibility of taking preventive measures in the event of a hostile takeover bid for the company.

- Other measures in the area of the defence industry which the paper proposes are the following: the creation by 2015 of a European Defence Equipment Market, the signing of a Pan-European Agreement for Security of Supply and a joint effort in research and technology (R&T).

5.2 For different groups of pioneer Member States

- **Pioneer Member States** could agree among themselves on the creation of different cooperation groups coordinated by the **European Defence Agency (EDA)**. The paper offers a series of criteria which could serve as a reference, such as, for example, allocating 2% of global expenditure to R&T, specific regulations regarding pooling and specialisation of capabilities, etc. In particular, the Member States in favour of creating these pioneer groups should undertake cooperation programmes with the aim of tackling shortages in key capabilities identified by the EDA. Said states should also support the creation of a sub-group working on the convergence of operational needs within the EDA.

Several groups cooperating more closely on the basis of specific criteria would comprise a model of “**case-by-case Permanent Structured Cooperation**”.

- In connection with the above, some of said pioneer groups should create military units, building on the initiative of the Battle Groups. A **Capability Development Plan of multinational units** is required. The ultimate goal should be to place the European armies within a coordinated framework. National strategic plans should be coordinated with the aim of obtaining a common strategic plan by 2020.
- This series of specialised groups of states (taking part in what would actually be *various* examples of Permanent Structured Cooperation) would prepare the ground as regards standards, goals and criteria for the establishment in 2010 of a *single* **Permanent Structured Cooperation (PSCoop)**, if Lisbon becomes law. Should the PSCoop be established, the European leaders of participating states should get involved at a political level via the European Councils, trying to encourage other countries to join this collective initiative, in conjunction with the High Representative.

- In the same fashion, and once again working on the assumption that Lisbon takes effect, another available option –compatible with the former– would be the establishment of **enhanced cooperation** for a group of Member States which wish to engage in even greater integration of their policies and instruments of national defence. They could start preparatory work (goal, benchmarks, etc), including informal talks with the High Representative. Said enhanced cooperation would be open to other Member States in the future, provided, of course, they meet the required conditions. Some of the most demanding elements and criteria for the pioneer groups included in the working paper could be taken on by this specific group, if the conditions for its establishment in accordance with the Treaty really do exist.

- If the Lisbon Treaty does not come into effect –or the circumstances for enhanced cooperation do not arise (in accordance with Art. 329 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union– TFEU)–, that same group of states, taking part in the above-mentioned EDA specialised groups, could agree on the basic premises of a **political vanguard** in defence with the aim of making closer progress towards European defence. This group would pave the way for future advances of the EU as a whole, as has often been the case with certain matters in the process of European integration.

This political vanguard could provide itself with, among other things, a legal clause of mutual assistance, a common defence policy, common military units and mandatory goals in order to further the process of capabilities.

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