

## **Borja Lasheras**

*He is an international lawyer. He graduated from Harvard University and also studied at Deusto University, in Bilbao, and at Leiden University (The Netherlands).*

*His field of professional interest is foreign policy, European politics and security and defence issues in particular. He currently works at the Observatory of Spanish Foreign Policy (Opex) of Fundación Alternativas, a Madrid-based think-tank, as main researcher of the Security and Defence Panel. Mr. Lasheras teaches at the George Washington University-Madrid. He has published in several foreign policy journals and has collaborated with several NGOs.*

## **Abstract**

*In recent international relief efforts, and aside from the humanitarian aid agencies usually present in such scenarios, there is a pattern of foreign military forces increasingly undertaking humanitarian operations, a tendency which particularly came to the fore after large-scale disasters as the 2004 tsunami. The Spanish Armed Forces have also participated in such operations over the last years, as other countries of Europe. Such a rather new role raises issues of coordination, of the effective use of military assets, respect for humanitarian principles, etc. This report examines the relevant national and international framework regarding military support to relief operations in natural disasters, as well as the lessons which may be drawn from cases such as the said tsunami or the 2005 earthquake of Pakistan.*

*It includes a number of specific proposals for the Spanish system aimed at, on the one hand, mainstreaming both the lessons learned and international guidelines into the decision-making process, and on the other, improving coordination in Spain and in the field, in those instances where the Spanish Armed Forces are deployed for disaster relief.*