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Towards a Civil-Military Strategy for CSDP

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Executive Summary

CSDP: Strategy Needed

Why does Europe develop the military and civilian capabilities that it does? Why does it undertake the military and civilian operations that it does? And why in other cases does it refrain from action?

The answers to these questions would amount to a *civilian-military strategy* for the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Starting from the EU's vital interests, an analysis of the threats and challenges to these interests, and the EU's foreign policy priorities, a CSDP strategy would outline the priority regions and issues for CSDP and, in function of the long-term political objectives and the appropriate political roadmap for those regions and issues, scenarios in which launching an operation could be appropriate.

Without strategy, we can never be sure that the operations that we do are actually the most relevant and important that we could undertake. We cannot direct the operations that we do undertake to achieve the desired strategic effect. And we cannot focus capability development if we do not know our strategic priorities.

Many of the building-blocks of a CSDP strategy already exist. What remains to be done is to connect the dots and render explicit: (1) for which priority regions and issues we must plan and prepare, (2) for which possible scenarios that may require a CSDP operation, and (3) identify the implications for our capabilities and a roadmap to meet those requirements.

Priority Regions and Issues

The regions and issues on which CSDP ought to focus are those where our vital interests are most directly at stake:

- Defence against any military threat to the territory of the Union.
- Open lines of communication and trade (in physical as well as in cyber space).
- A secure supply of energy and other vital natural resources.
- A sustainable environment.
- Manageable migration flows.
- The maintenance of international law (including the UN Charter and the treaties and regulations of the key international organizations) and of universally agreed rights.
- Preserving the autonomy of the decision-making of the EU and its Member States.

That does not mean that the EU will disregard other regions and issues, but it does provide the focus for early warning and prevention, and for permanent contingency planning for:

- The Eastern Neighbourhood (the Baltic to the Black Sea).
- The Southern Neighbourhood (the Dardanelles to Gibraltar).
- The Gulf.
- Central Asia.
- Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Maritime security.
- Collective security under the UN, notably the Responsibility to Protect.

If the main focus of CSDP is on the external security of the Union, it does have a complementary role to play in our internal security as well, notably in the implementation of the *Solidarity Clause*, and including perhaps, in the future, in our collective defence.

Scenarios for Operations

For the purpose of military planning, as well as to guide military capability development, the EU military bodies have elaborated five illustrative scenarios. These no longer cover all operations that the EU already is undertaking. Five new scenarios ought to be added:

- A Maritime Security Scenario.
- A Cyber Security Scenario.
- A Support Operations Scenario.
- A Counter-Terrorism Scenario.
- An Internal Security Scenario.

Capability Implications

In order to stay in tune with today's higher level of crisis management activity, the existing military Headline Goal has to be interpreted broadly. The aim to be able to sustain a corps level deployment (50 to 60,000 troops) for at least one year should be understood as a deployment which EU Member States must be able to undertake at any one time *over and above* ongoing operations. Then the EU would be able to deal with every eventuality.

Generating the necessary capabilities requires an ambitious approach to pooling & sharing, but also to go beyond it and create a *Permanent Capability Conference* as a durable strategic-level platform for harmonization of national defence planning as such, rather than project-by-project coordination only.

With regard to civilian capabilities, achieving the original civilian Headline Goal would already constitute a significant improvement, but there is a lack of implementation and follow-through by the Member States. If decentralised civilian capacity-building does not work, the EU should have recourse to sizeable *stand-by pools of civilian personnel* which are pre-identified, trained, and ready for deployment.

There is scope for *combining military and civilian capability development* in at least five areas: communications, information, transport, protection and logistics.

The EU could be the first to create a *permanent civilian-military Operational Headquarters* (OHQ), in Brussels, which could plan for and conduct both civilian and military operations and, allowing for close interaction with all relevant EU actors, could implement a truly comprehensive approach to crisis management.

Information gathering, analysis and dissemination are strategic enablers for any military or civilian operation or mission. A real *Intelligence Fusion and Analysis Centre* should replace the scattered poles of intelligence within the EU institutions.

From Strategy to Action

Adopting a strategy for CSDP will not in itself guarantee resolute action in each and every crisis. But forging a consensus on priority regions and issues and drawing the conclusions from that for our capabilities, including planning and conduct, will focus our preventive, long-term efforts, and will certainly make us *better prepared* for action in any contingency.

Being more prepared and knowing in advance what our priority regions and issues are, and why, will then hopefully also strengthen *the political will to generate action under the EU flag* by the able and willing Member States, and will thus make for an EU that carries its weight on the global stage.

Introduction

The crisis in Libya is a textbook example of a situation in which Europe, through the European Union, should have taken the lead and proved that it is an actor of consequence. Security Council Resolution 1973 authorizing the use of force, the most difficult precondition for intervention to fulfil; regional support in the form of an unprecedented request for intervention from the Arab League; absolute clarity in the US that it will not take the lead. What more boxes needed to be ticked before the EU could step onto the breach and take charge of crisis management in its immediate neighbourhood?

Alas, if all external conditions were fulfilled, the vital internal condition was missing: European unity. Given a growing international consensus on the need to protect Libya's civilian population, France and the UK took the lead and with US support raised a broad coalition of North American, European and Arab countries that started military operations, with the participation of EU Member States Belgium, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. But it proved impossible for the EU as such to contribute to the military operations, let alone to take the lead through the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). As a result, the EU is near absent from the scene, in spite of strongly worded statements from the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council requiring Gaddafi to relinquish power. The conduct of the military operations has been entrusted to NATO, and their political direction to the coalition of the willing. Diplomatic efforts at mediation, limited as they are, are in the hands of the United Nations and the African Union. As to a long-term vision for Libya and the region, that remains very much to be discussed.

Fortunately, thanks to French and British leadership, action is being taken. But it is regrettable that it could not be done through the EU. First, the action does serve the interests of all twenty-seven EU Member States – no EU capital will regret the eventual fall of Gaddafi. Furthermore, the issue will end up on the EU agenda anyhow, when the long-term perspectives for the region are to be debated. This demonstrates that collectively, the Member States of the European Union have not yet acquired the habit of thinking strategically about CSDP. Strategy is about connecting means and ends. The means, CSDP, continue to be developed, both civilian and military capabilities as well as a certain capacity for planning and conduct of civilian and military operations. But if the ends are but vaguely defined, capability development and the actual operations take place in a void. *Why* do we develop the capabilities that we do? *Why* do we do the operations that we do? And, why in other cases do we *not* do operations?

The answers to these questions would amount to a civilian-military strategy for CSDP, which would provide the link between the European Security Strategy (ESS), the overall mission statement of the EU as an international actor, and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) that is based upon it on the one hand, and the practice of CSDP on the other hand. Starting from the EU's vital interests, an analysis of the threats and challenges to these interests, and the EU's foreign policy priorities, a CSDP strategy would outline the priority regions and issues for CSDP and, in function of the long-term political objectives and the appropriate political roadmap for those regions and issues, scenarios in which launching an operation could be appropriate.

The absence of a CSDP strategy has not stopped the EU from being active, witness the more than twenty civilian missions and military operations undertaken. But too often, action has been reactive, ad hoc, ill thought through – the result of the boy scout mentality: we should do something. And indeed, the EU should – but not in each and every case. Because the means are limited, choices must be made and priorities set. Without strategy, we can never be sure that the operations that we do are actually the most relevant and important that we could undertake. We cannot direct the operations that we do undertake to achieve the desired strategic effect if we leave the strategy undefined. And we cannot focus capability development if we do not know our strategic priorities, which is particularly relevant in an environment of declining defence budgets.

As the state of play reveals, many of the building-blocks of a CSDP strategy already exist. The ESS defines the EU's overall preventive, holistic and multilateral approach, and calls on the Union to

contribute to global security. Strategies address specific regions and issues, in varying detail: the eastern and southern Neighbourhood, the Sahel, Africa, Central Asia, terrorism, proliferation etc. The Headline Goals focus military and civilian capability development on expeditionary operations, driven by five illustrative scenarios. What remains to be done is to connect the dots and render explicit: (1) for which priority regions and issues we must plan and prepare, (2) for which possible scenarios requiring a CSDP operation, and (3) identify the implications for our capabilities.

These steps constitute the roadmap for the informal working group convened in December 2010 by Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations (Egmont – Brussels), l'Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'Ecole Militaire (IRSEM – Paris) and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP – Geneva), with the support of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS – London). All members of the group took part in their personal capacity. While all subscribe to the general thrust of this Egmont Paper, the result of our travaux, they do not necessarily agree with every single point. As editors of our collective work, we do express our warm gratitude to every single member, for their insightful and creative contributions. If every reader learns as much from their joint effort, and enjoys it as much, as we did, the success of our project is guaranteed.

Sven Biscop & Jo Coelmont
Brussels, June 2011

The State of Play

Existing Elements of Strategy

The adoption in 2003 of the ESS was a step forward in creating some sort of strategic framework for EU external action, including CFSP and CSDP. One of the undeniable strengths of the ESS is that it defines a number of contemporary and potential threats. It does not, however, name any enemy, let alone any opposing actor that could pose a threat to the EU's interests. Even the interests themselves are not clearly addressed. Furthermore, while the ESS does define the EU's preferred method – preventive, holistic, and multilateral – it remains much vaguer on objectives and priorities. Therefore, even if many use it as a reference, the ESS remains an incomplete strategic document, the implementation of which consequently has not been an easy exercise. The 2008 Report on the Implementation of the ESS has not remedied this. The fact that, in spite of its vagueness, many, especially in NATO circles, have been referring to the Implementation Report as an update of the ESS or even as the new ESS indicates the demand from the outside world for a strategic declaration from the EU.

With only threats in the ESS, and no interests to protect or actors to counter, the definition of the EU's level of ambition in terms of capabilities to conduct different kinds of actions remains very abstract. The translation of the political level of ambition into collective requirements has been based on illustrative scenarios, which at best describe military capabilities (Headline Goal 2010), or even mere indicative numbers (Civilian Headline Goal 2008 and 2010). This already marked a step forward from previous times, when requirements were just based on political legacy (the Petersberg Tasks) and previous operations (KFOR in Kosovo).

In spite of the absence of any prioritization of regions or issues, EU actions – operations and missions – have multiplied, but without this generating any action to fill the missing link between the ESS and CFSP, and the Headline Goals.

Lessons from CSDP and Other Operations

The actions under the aegis of CSDP have resulted in a plethora of lessons to be learned. Many of them are related to the changing nature of crisis management in practical terms, and would thus have been learned anyway, as the character of conflict evolved during the first years of the third millennium. Some however are specific to EU-led operations and missions, indicating shortfalls or incapacities that were not properly taken into account previously, and, therefore, have not been considered thoroughly enough.

One lesson is the weak visibility of CSDP inside as well as outside the EU. The EU public probably has not been very well targeted, and some of the EU's achievements went almost unnoticed by its citizens. Other global actors have reservations about the consistency and determination of EU crisis management, in the absence of any strategic narrative. Clarity and perseverance are very difficult to track either geographically or temporally. This has probably led to a mixed message to the outside world about where, when and how the EU is able and willing to engage. At best, the EU is seen as unpredictable; at worst, as an unreliable partner.

Most of the lessons are to be found in the area of the comprehensive or holistic nature of EU action. Theoretical comprehensiveness is a widely admitted strength of the EU, but it has probably not yet reached the desired level of maturity in operational terms. We are still lacking comprehensive objectives because all CSDP operations and missions and other EU policies, even when working in close proximity to each other in the same area of operations, are pursuing their own objectives. Even within CSDP, actions are not planned and prepared in a comprehensive way, since after the adoption of the appropriate Council decision on the strategic options each element takes forward its planning in a separate – civilian or military – way. The chains of command are absolutely separate; consequently it depends on the judgement of the leaders on the ground as to how far they will co-ordinate their actions. There is no comprehensive effort to address a crisis with all available tools and instruments, beyond CSDP, through its entire lifecycle, from outbreak until settlement. The conclusion is that the EU's theoretical comparative advantage, its potential for comprehensiveness, has yet to be translated

into actionable practice. A preferred strategic modus operandi should be defined, specific to the EU and easily recognisable worldwide, thus contributing to the predictability of the EU as a strategic actor. And this, eventually, may produce better understanding of how to share or delineate tasks with our strategic partners. Elaborate proposals on the comprehensive approach were drafted by the EUMS in 2008-2010, but not acted upon by the Council; that work can be built on.

Other lessons to be learned concern the fact that, in some cases, the reliance on a Framework Nation or Leading Member State is necessary. This is a peculiarity of military EU operations, since they are conducted using only Member State-owned assets and capabilities, and are funded by the Member States, with the exception of a very low proportion of common costs (which, of course, are in any event covered by the Member States, through the ATHENA mechanism). This may also be a source of strategic misunderstanding: others might have difficulties differentiating between EU interests and specific Member State interests when an operation is dominated by the strategic assets of a particular Member State.

More lessons identified concern the technical side of CSDP, specifically the ad-hoc nature of the provision of operational enablers, like intelligence, or the chain of command and control, or other vital assets like strategic airlift. Coupled with the omnipresent shadow of funding issues, these also have heavy strategic repercussions.

Strengths

Previous operations do allow us to identify some strengths in the current set-up.

First, due to its consultative and peaceful nature, there is a wide perception of the EU as one of the most impartial players in the settlement of international or national crises. Admittedly, this might also be considered a weakness, as the EU does wish to pursue its political objectives when acting in a particular crisis. However, as EU objectives always constitute a compromise of 27 sovereign nations, they should be – in general terms – more balanced than any one national objective. This makes for a huge difference when the political motivations of actors are assessed, and accepted or rejected, by the warring – or suffering – factions in a crisis.

The EU also has a great strength in that it is the wealthiest and most equal bloc of nations worldwide, and therefore able to project a picture of an ideal to the less developed parts of the world. Contrary to other international interventions, which may only focus on putting out the fire in a crisis situation, the EU does not – or at least should not – only intervene with operations and missions but should also be considered as a partner and donor for development for the days after the conflict. While nation-building has proved most difficult, there are situations in which it must be undertaken. Strengthening this already existing image might be a unique strategic advantage for the Union in the future.

The present set-up is also inherently strong in that it allows for great flexibility. In fact, a common decision of the 27 may not always mean that all the 27 are willing to take action; in many cases it rather is a green card and non-veto from some Member States that are not willing to take an active part in the operation or mission in question. On the one hand, this should mean that EU action is possible in more cases; on the other hand, it implies that EU action does not exclude individual efforts by Member States in the same conflict if they so wish. This is also an added value when the EU wishes to act together with other international partners in a concerted way, while preserving at the same time the cohesion among the Member States.

The greatest strength of the EU lies in having the variety of instruments to prevent or address conflict under one roof. This includes different instruments, with effects of a different scope, nature and duration, before, during and after a crisis, whether caused by a disaster or by a human conflict. The EU possesses both executive and non-executive, as well as “hard” and “soft” instruments, enabling punctual intervention or actions of long duration, aiming at short-term or long-lasting effects, to prevent or resolve a crisis situation or alleviate the humanitarian or other consequences of a natural or man-made disaster. The EU certainly needs to work with partners in order to strengthen its efforts, but probably, due to its inherent comprehensive capacity, it does not need partners just to complement its capabilities.

Weaknesses

The consultative and compromise-seeking nature of EU decision-making represents a weakness as well. Making a decision to act sometimes takes too much time, because of the need for lengthy deliberations and also, occasionally, because of the procedural steps to be taken in order to finalise a decision. The EU thus risks acting too late, as in fact in the past it has, especially in cases of disaster relief outside of Europe. Admittedly, this weakness applies to other international organisations as well, but in the EU, where the integration of the Member States is undeniably greater than in any other case around the world, decision-making is logically supposed to be more seamless and speedy.

Another drawback of this compromise-based decision-making is that the objectives of specific interventions are carefully crafted around the lowest common denominator among the Member States. This leads to less ambitious and sometimes self-limiting objectives, sometimes without appropriate prioritization with respect to the tasks to be accomplished during a specific operation or mission. This over-prudence carries with it the risk of mission creep.

Financing military operations especially has always been one of the crucial aspects for Member States. It could also be the reason why in some cases the generation of forces necessary for an operation has been so painful and lengthy. In fact, in at least one military operation it has risked halting the planning and therefore jeopardized the launching of the operation itself, in spite of having all the necessary Council decisions on time. Neither did it help that the well known major capability shortfalls, identified through the Headline Goal processes, have not been successfully mitigated. This is probably not a comparative weakness though: these shortfalls also negatively affect the capabilities of other international players.

Until recently, actions under the aegis of CSDP were only very sporadically supported by other EU instruments, like trade and development. This indicates a formidable challenge that is probably one of the best arguments in favour of real strategic reflection in the EU. Reconciliation of other external policies with EU operations and missions requires a more strategic approach to the CSDP and its instruments. The nexus between security and development has become a mantra of the EU, but needs to be translated into practice.

Finally, security is indivisible. As threats are not bound by borders, and can materialize in any of the global commons – sea, air, space or cyberspace – EU efforts to counter them cannot be compartmentalised. In other words, internal and external security should be addressed at the same time, and a strategy – and not separate strategies – considered to provide better security for the Union and its citizens.

On to Strategy

Acting on these lessons identified, remedying the weaknesses and building on the strengths: this requires a more strategic approach. More strategy in itself guarantees neither more action nor success when the EU does act, but will certainly enhance the chance thereof. Without strategy, action and success can only be accidental.

A strategy for CSDP, which like CSDP itself would naturally be civilian-military, would start from the EU's vital interests, an analysis of the threats and challenges to these interests, and the EU's foreign policy objectives and priorities, in order to outline the priority regions and issues on which CSDP should focus. In function of the long-term political objectives and the appropriate political roadmap for those regions and issues, illustrative scenarios in which launching an operation could be appropriate can then be refined and added. These in turn would guide capability development.

A CSDP strategy would be a *tool* at the service of Member States' decision-making about when to intervene, and when not. Perhaps even more importantly, pre-defined priorities would provide a focus for early warning and preventive action. If intervention nonetheless imposes itself, a CSDP strategy ought to function as an enabler of the political will of the twenty-seven to mandate rapid and resolute action with clear objectives under the EU flag, in order to safeguard the interests of all, by the Member

States that are able and willing to act in that particular case, thus making full use of the flexibility of CSDP decision-making. A strategy would provide the focus of long-term forward planning for such interventions. With a border rife with potential conflict – from the Baltic to Gibraltar – the EU cannot allow itself not to think ahead. Finally, a clear strategic narrative would simultaneously promote consistency and coherence in the EU effort and promote its image with the European public and third parties.

Fully aligned with overall EU foreign policy priorities, a CSDP strategy would be an indispensable element of an effective comprehensive approach. For the priority regions identified, comprehensive strategies for a permanent policy of stabilization and prevention integrating all instruments of external action, including the preventive use of CSDP, can then be crafted. At the operational level, the *modus operandi* or doctrine for the whole cycle of crisis management can be refined, again integrating all available instruments.

Starting point of the exercise: identifying the EU's vital interests.

Priority Regions and Issues

Vital Interests

Vital interests are those that determine the very survival of the EU's social model, which is based on the core values of security, prosperity, democracy and equality. These are:

- Defence against any threat to the territory of the Union.
- Open lines of communication and trade (in physical as well as in cyber space).
- A secure supply of energy and other vital natural resources.
- A sustainable environment.
- Manageable migration flows.
- The maintenance of international law (including the UN Charter and the treaties and regulations of the key international organizations) and of universally agreed rights.
- Preserving the autonomy of the decision-making of the EU and its Member States.

Interests and values go hand in hand. The fundamental idea of the ESS is that the best protection for our social model is to promote the values on which it is based in the rest of the world, because that directly affects the root causes of instability and conflict. On the one hand therefore, upholding at least the core values as enshrined in international law is itself a vital EU interest. On the other hand, all EU external action must self-evidently respect those same values.

The regions and issues on which CSDP ought to focus are those where our vital interests are most directly at stake. That does not mean that the EU will disregard other regions and issues, but it does provide the focus for early warning and prevention, and for permanent contingency planning.

Core Regions and Issues of Focus

In defining priority regions and issues, geopolitics are crucial. Because of its proximity, the most important priority area undoubtedly is the Neighbourhood: any crisis in the area from the Baltic to Gibraltar will have immediate spill-over effects on the EU, in terms of political and economic disruption, refugees, and possibly even violence. Lines of communication and energy supply are obviously at stake; migration is also an issue, especially but not exclusively in the Southern Neighbourhood. In this region, the EU itself is the most powerful actor, hence it should take the lead in safeguarding peace and security, which is, not without coincidence, what our most important ally, the US, expects from us.

- (1) The Eastern Neighbourhood (the Baltic to the Black Sea): With the persistence of the “frozen conflicts”, which as the Russian-Georgian War of 2008 showed, can easily be sparked into open war, the region remains fundamentally unstable. The priority is to step up conflict prevention and stabilization efforts, but crisis management may be required, as in 2008. In view of Russian aspirations to maintain a sphere of influence, any operation or mission will be highly sensitive. Nevertheless, crisis management, including extricating EU citizens or civilians deployed on a CSDP mission, must be planned for in addition to preventive measures and peacekeeping.
- (2) The Southern Neighbourhood (the Dardanelles to Gibraltar): The everlasting Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also disputes between Southern States, and the inherent instability of authoritarian regimes and their unpredictable succession all contain serious potential for conflict. While we rejoice at the Arab Spring, it does not automatically solve any of these issues and might complicate some of them even more. Here too, any intervention would be highly sensitive and ideally would take place with political, and preferably military, support from the region. Besides stepping up prevention, crisis management, evacuation and

humanitarian operations must be planned for, as well as peacekeeping, notably in the event of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Three regions immediately adjacent to the Neighbourhood also merit our particular attention. The Gulf and Central Asia are of obvious importance for energy supply, and the former also for trade routes; furthermore, crisis in either region risks generating important spill-over effects. In security terms, both regions probably form part of the EU's "broader Neighbourhood". In Sub-Sahara Africa vital interests are less directly at stake, but Europe does have essential interests there as well as a continued responsibility, in view of its historic legacy, to assist the African Union in maintaining peace and security.

- (3) The Gulf: The emphasis has rightly been on preventive diplomacy, notably in the Iranian nuclear dossier, but the fact that some actors might see a *casus belli* here, even if the EU does not, should inform prudent planning. Like in the Southern Neighbourhood, inherently unstable authoritarian regimes are a potential source of conflict. While our leverage is more limited, notably as compared to the US, and operations at the higher end of the scale less likely, various scenarios may demand some contribution to crisis management. The EU could build on coordination between British and French pre-deployed assets.
- (4) Central Asia: The region is somewhat off the radar screen, but the same instability that comes with authoritarianism applies. While high-end operations are unlikely, other operations and missions might be called for.
- (5) Sub-Sahara Africa: There is as yet no end to the security problems from which Africa itself suffers first and foremost. The EU can support the African Union and local actors with operations and missions across the spectrum, but would probably have more impact if it concentrated its efforts on a limited set of priorities rather than contributing piecemeal. In the long term the key is of course development.

Finally, two less region-specific issues also demand to be prioritized. The security of shipping lanes worldwide is vital to Europe as a trade power; migration and trafficking are issues too. Because maintaining international law is a vital interest, the EU must contribute to its enforcement by the UN when it is violated.

- (6) Maritime Security: Except to the East, the EU has maritime borders, but planning ought to have a global focus, notably on the crucial zone from "Suez to Shanghai", and increasingly on the Arctic. The EU should build a presence and contribute actively to the patrolling of key maritime routes in order to prevent other powers, or conflict between them, from dominating or disrupting them. Supporting operations and missions on land is another key task.
- (7) Collective Security: The collective security system of the UN can only work if it addresses everyone's security. In view of its vital interests as well as its values, the EU must shoulder its share of the burden, but cannot of course contribute to each and every operation. The "Responsibility to Protect" can guide setting priorities.

If the main focus of CSDP is on the external security of the Union, it does have a complementary role to play in our internal security as well, including perhaps, in the future, in our collective defence.

Internal Security

Internal security priorities as identified in the EU's Internal Security Strategy (2010), such as the prevention of criminal illegal immigration, combating organised crime and terrorism, have a clear external dimension. Moreover, they are of direct concern to Europe's citizens and therefore have a potential legitimising effect and add to the visibility of the EU's added value. The external dimension of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ) is particularly visible in civilian CSDP missions,

most notably in the areas of border control (Ukraine/Moldovan border), rule of law (Kosovo, BiH, Afghanistan), and security sector reform (Kosovo, BiH, Guinea Bissau). Staff and expertise from the internal security realm have been in high demand and will probably continue to remain a prominent feature of EU crisis management (the North African Neighbourhood is one example).

This externalisation of internal security threats also works the other way around: CSDP can function as a toolbox to assist in AFSJ-concerns. Assisting in disaster-relief, addressing crises of external border management, securing vital infrastructure against immediate terrorist threats are examples of where this could be further developed. Furthermore, the Solidarity Clause (Art. 222 TFEU) has created a legal obligation of assistance for all Member States and the Union as a whole when a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or a natural or man-made disaster. Apart from the clear external dimension of terrorism, the clause is relevant to CSDP because it refers explicitly to the use of military resources. The implementation of the Solidarity Clause offers a window of opportunity to coordinate and pool Member States' disaster response capabilities and to prepare scenarios for contingencies within the borders of the EU where an auxiliary military role is called for. There is a need to clarify though what constitutes a threat which may trigger the Solidarity Clause. Large scale forest fires and a terrorist attack on a train are events for which the Clause is relevant. But what about a Europe-wide cloud of volcanic ash, life-threatening bacteria on food products or terrorist threats against critical infrastructure? The criterion for evoking the Solidarity Clause should be the inability of the Member State to deal with the threat to its security itself and the request for assistance.

Collective Defence

Since the end of World War II, European countries have more or less de-nationalized their territorial defence. During the Cold War, NATO under US leadership was the framework for European defence. Gradually, this created a culture of dependency. In the absence of a new vital threat against Europe and of a more cost effective option to organize their defence, European countries have maintained this situation until now. The Lisbon Treaty maintains the restriction on EU competences regarding CSDP: territorial defence is excluded from the Petersberg Tasks. The core responsibility for defence stays with the Member States and NATO, while the EU is limited to crisis management outside its territory. Consequently, the natural link between *defence* issues related to vital interests and the consequences of external *security* issues, does not exist in the EU. De facto however the EU is going to be concerned more and more with defence aspects: through its neighbourhood policy, maritime surveillance, the fight against terrorism, and the increasing link between internal and external security. At the same time the US – rightfully – expect Europe to assume a greater share of the burden for security and defence issues in its own region, as the Libyan crisis demonstrates.

This situation is detrimental to the relevance of CSDP, as the EU is not only prevented from acting in the area of defence but also from discussing defence issues in an EU format. That means that CSDP is expected to play only a complementary role in defence and security, as if these issues were too important to be dealt with in the EU. It is quite schizophrenic to look for more European integration of assets and capabilities and simultaneously decouple the competence for security from that for defence. The Lisbon Treaty does introduce the Mutual Assistance Clause though: “if a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power”. At the very least, that merits a thorough reflection on the long-term future of European defence.

Being Prepared

Setting priorities for CSDP does not imply rushing into operations, nor does it mean that if an operation is decided upon it will necessarily be implemented through CSDP. First and foremost, these priorities would be the focus for monitoring, early warning and, if crisis threatens, preventive action, using all available instruments. Simultaneously, they would be the object of permanent contingency

planning, so that if crises do occur a maximally informed EU can decide swiftly about which action to take, without having to rely on the goodwill, which cannot be guaranteed in advance, of an individual Member State or NATO to have started the necessary planning instead.

If an operation is decided upon, it can be undertaken through CSDP (with all or some Member States taking part), NATO (notably in the case of joint action with the US), the UN, or an ad hoc coalition. In all scenarios the EU Member States actually participating in an operation would benefit greatly from permanent EU contingency planning, which if the EU's assets are put to good use will be more informed than that of any single Member State, and which will ensure that planning is available even when NATO, for political or other reasons, is not involved. Indeed, our North American allies increasingly expect us to take the lead in crisis management in our Neighbourhood, which concerns European interests more than American interests.

Identifying the priority regions and issues of focus for CSDP planning, subsequently allows us to identify the types of operations and missions that CSDP, as one of the options for launching operations, might be called upon to undertake.

Scenarios for Operations

In the broadest sense, the possible operations and missions that can be undertaken through CSDP are defined in the Treaty, which as amended in Lisbon, comprises an extended, non-exhaustive list of types of operations, the so-called Petersberg Tasks. Legally speaking, the EU today can launch any operation, with the sole exception of operations linked to the collective defence of the territory of the Member States, but including combat operations in the context of crisis management. The EU should obviously not seek out combat operations just for the sake of engaging in them. The priority is conflict prevention: in the ideal scenario, EU strategy manages to avoid the need for coercive intervention in the first place. But the Union should be prepared to deliver force when it is *necessary*. The alternative, i.e. limiting CSDP to the lower end of the spectrum, makes sense neither politically nor militarily, as it would make the EU dependent on other actors who are not necessarily willing or able to engage, especially in the Union's Neighbourhood and in Africa.

For the specific purpose of military planning, as well as to guide military capability development, the EU military bodies (EUMC, EUMS and the Headline Goal Task Force) have translated the "extended" Petersberg Tasks into five illustrative scenarios, taking into account the ESS and the level of ambition of the successive Headline Goals:

- Separation of parties by force
- Stabilisation, reconstruction and military advice to third countries (including peacekeeping, election monitoring, institution-building, SSR, and support in the fight against terrorism)
- Conflict prevention (including preventive deployment, embargoes, counter-proliferation and joint disarmament)
- Evacuation operations
- Assistance to humanitarian operations

The scenarios as they have been elaborated until now no longer cover all operations that the EU already is undertaking, and certainly not those that it might be called upon to undertake, in view of the increased expectation that Europe itself will deal with crises in its own neighbourhood, besides contributing to or leading crisis management efforts beyond that region.

One major group of tasks that conceptually has not yet been covered is highlighted by the "double nature" of Operation Atalanta, i.e. the double requirement to escort humanitarian shipments to Somalia and, at the same time, ensure the freedom of navigation on the high sea. Brought together under the heading of maritime security operations, these tasks logically require the elaboration of an illustrative *Maritime Security Scenario*. While elements of this, like the support of humanitarian efforts or preventive deployment at sea, can be and are easily accommodated into the existing scenarios, other elements, like counter-piracy, have yet to be addressed. Such a scenario ought to be based on a maritime security strategy, the development of which is blocked however by turf battles between the various actors involved.

With the global access to cyberspace an entirely new area has emerged, which has not yet been fully considered in the existing illustrative scenarios. While the main focus of CSDP is the external security of the Union, as a result of the indivisible nature of security CSDP cannot ignore the cyber dimension either. Any conflict in cyberspace could in fact provoke a crisis in the closer or wider EU neighbourhood that may endanger vital interests. Addressing this threat, therefore, constitutes a cause for a *Cyber Security Scenario*.

Recent operations have clearly demonstrated the need of a better formulation of tasks related to supporting the efforts of international partners. The Aceh Monitoring Mission, the support to AMIS in Darfur or EUTM Somalia show that such operations require specific capabilities and command and control arrangements. This may not change too much at the general level of overall requirements, but may indicate the need for special or niche capabilities that should be addressed in a structured way in a *Support Operations Scenario*.

Without prejudicing Community responsibilities as far as the internal aspects are concerned, the external dimension of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ), already addressed earlier in this paper, is also worthy of further reflexion. Beyond the law enforcement narrative, the specific case of support to the fight against terrorism, primarily by military CSDP means, outside of the EU territory, might need to be included in the “to do list” when considerations are taken in order to review the possible scenarios. This might imply the elaboration of an eventual CSDP *Counter-Terrorism Scenario*.

Finally, the complementary role of CSDP in the internal security of the Union needs consideration as well. An *Internal Security Scenario* should take into account assistance to the implementation of the Internal Security Strategy and the potential invocation of the Solidarity Clause.

Capability Implications

Military Capabilities

The Level of Ambition

Once objectives and priorities have been defined and the potential types of operations agreed, the EU must translate this into the scale of effort required to be successful. Quantitatively, CSDP is based on the 1999 Headline Goal. The aim is to be able to deploy up to an army corps (50 to 60,000 troops), together with air and maritime forces, plus the required command & control, strategic transport and other support services, within 60 days, and to sustain that effort for at least one year. That objective is quite ambitious: if rotation is taken into account, sustaining 60,000 first-line troops requires 180,000 deployable troops.

50 to 60,000 was about the number of troops needed to stabilize Kosovo or, earlier, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Today, the EU and its Member States are actively engaged in many more theatres at greater distances than in 1999, a trend which is likely to continue as Europe strengthens its foreign policy, and as the US is looking for burden-sharing with its European allies. As a result, EU Member States now usually deploy troop numbers equivalent to the HG or even more (up to 83,000 in 2006), if all ongoing CSDP, NATO, UN and national operations in which they participate are counted.

This much increased rate of deployment has two major implications. On the one hand, a lesson learned is that to achieve durable results, operations have to last ever longer – usually much more than one year. On the other hand, at the current level of European capabilities, in the event of a crisis occurring in addition to ongoing operations, EU Member States could not, or only with great difficulty, deploy significant additional troops, except by improvising (as in case of an emergency threat to vital interests they would, accepting the increased risks for the forces deployed which this would entail) or by withdrawing forces from ongoing operations.

In order to stay in tune with this higher level of activity, the HG has to be interpreted broadly:

- (1) The ambition in terms of sustainability ought to be increased. Today, the aim is to be able to sustain a corps level deployment for *at least* one year, which already indicates that longer deployments may be necessary – that target should now be upgraded explicitly and planning revised accordingly.
- (2) The HG should be understood as a deployment which EU Member States must be able to undertake at any one time *over and above* ongoing operations. Having expeditionary capabilities equivalent to a second corps available, the EU would be able to deal with every eventuality.

This broad interpretation of the level of ambition may seem fanciful, but it amounts to nothing more than adapting to today's actual level of operational involvement and logically adding to it the capacity to deal with a crisis in an ongoing operation or in another theatre.

Implicitly, the need to increase the quantitative level of ambition is even recognized by the EUMS, which has drawn up a number of “concurrency suites” indicating which of the illustrative scenarios the EU must be able to deal with simultaneously, some of which demand more than 50 to 60,000 troops, as the sole scenario of “separation of parties by force” can demand as many. The more ambitious interpretation of the HG cannot seriously be considered unrealistic when measured against the total number of troops at the disposal of the EU-27, i.e. 1.6 million.

Capability Shortfalls

On 9 December 2010 Ministers of Defence launched the “Ghent Initiative”, encouraging Member States to “systematically analyze their national military capabilities”, aiming at “measures to increase interoperability for capabilities to be maintained on a national level; exploring which capabilities offer potential for pooling; intensifying cooperation regarding capabilities, support structures and tasks which could be addressed on the basis of role- and task-sharing”. “Pooling & sharing” became the new buzzword.

Member States have now identified more than 300 possible areas for pooling and sharing. However, that was the easy part. Now, Member States will have to prove that they are willing to move from ideas to action. Pooling & sharing is of course not new: many countries already engage in it. There certainly is scope to do more, but for the Ghent Initiative to yield significant added value, Member States must be ambitious and go for critical capability areas – they cannot limit themselves to peripheral areas only. Existing examples of pooling & sharing prove that far-reaching cooperation is possible while maintaining full sovereignty over deployment decisions.

Furthermore, Member States must be aware that pooling & sharing what they have, does not get them *more*. Pooling & sharing will allow them to make existing capabilities more cost-effective, but does not automatically lead to solutions for the capability shortfalls. The Ghent Initiative therefore has to be a long-term process, and has to create a platform to launch new capability initiatives. This can be set up as a “permanent capability conference” where the willing Member States engage in a durable *strategic-level* framework for systematic exchange of information on national defence planning, as a basis for consultation and top-down coordination, on a voluntary basis. This functions in effect as a peer review mechanism of national defence planning: provided with a bird’s eye view of all participants’ plans and intentions, Member States can then reliably assess the relevance of their national capabilities.

This will allow Member States:

- To focus their defence effort on those capabilities required for crisis management operations that are in short supply and therefore critical at the EU level.
- To do away with redundant capabilities, of which there is over-capacity between the 27, or which are obsolete and non-deployable.
- To identify opportunities for increased pooling and sharing of capabilities.
- To create budgetary margin to launch multinational programmes to address the strategic shortfalls and generate *new* capabilities.

It is crucial that those Member States willing to subscribe to a permanent and structured process can do so within the EU and can make use of the EU institutions, notably the European Defence Agency (EDA). That will ensure that something like a “permanent capability conference” remains fully in line with the overall development of CSDP, and will easily allow other Member States to join at a later stage, whenever they are able and willing. To allow that, the Protocol on Permanent Structured Cooperation annexed to the Lisbon Treaty could be activated, or Member States could agree to consider this as one of the subgroups established in the EDA. As long as the experience and expertise of the EDA can be put to use.

Civilian Capabilities

Since 2003, the EU has conducted 21 civilian CSDP missions of which 11 are ongoing, ranging from police, military police, rule of law, border security, security sector reform, monitoring and advisory missions. EU civilian crisis management is unique in the world and can only be expected to be even more sought after in the future. At the same time, civilian missions are becoming more demanding, witness the encompassing task of EULEX Kosovo and the dangerous environment of EUPOL-Afghanistan. The EU civilian crisis management tool will have to be adjusted to be able to engage in longer-term commitments, with more executive tasks, in a potentially high-risk environment, dealing with complex multisectoral development challenges.

The current level of civilian deployment for the 11 ongoing missions is 2400; many missions are (and have been) smaller than fifty personnel. To improve mission impact a much more ambitious deployment of civilian staff is needed, but the EU actually faces a recurring problem of understaffing. The mandates for the ongoing missions e.g. allow for 2950 personnel, so 550 posts remain unfilled. The shortage of qualified civilian personnel must be addressed urgently as the necessity, intensity and scale of the EU's "civilian security" tool will only be increasing.

Achieving the original civilian Headline Goal would already constitute a significant improvement:

- Police: 5000 available of which 1,400 within 30 days, not counting the capacity within the European Gendarmerie Force for delivering military police.
- Rule of law: 600 judges, prosecutors, prison officers.
- Civilian administration: 550 experts.
- Civil protection: 600 plus 4,500 rapidly deployable in two intervention teams.
- Monitoring: 500 personnel.

The problem has been recognised and sensible measures have been proposed. Member States have notably been urged to devise a National Strategy on Civilian Crisis Management (2008), but there is a lack of implementation and follow-through by the Member States.

If decentralised civilian capacity-building does not work, the EU should have recourse to sizeable stand-by pools of civilian personnel which are pre-identified, trained, and ready for deployment. The Crisis Response Team pool, the pool of Security Sector Reform experts and the Integrated Police Units already exist, at least on paper. A pool of potential Heads of Missions should be added to be able to involve this person (and his immediate team) in the planning and preparation phase of the mission. All these schemes now need to be translated into actual available capabilities. The Commission in its areas of competence could conclude "dormant contracts" with the private sector providing a stand-by capacity (both staff and assets) for immediate deployment in order to bridge the arrival in theatre of more elaborate EU and Member State capabilities.

Planning and Conduct

One specific capability is a planning and conduct capacity. The US has an elaborate command and control structure, including permanent regional commands covering every part of the globe. NATO as well has an extensive capacity, rightfully considered the Alliance's prime asset. Even the UN has a certain capacity, be it a much more limited one. The CSDP framework too must be completely operational if Europeans want to be able to act in every contingency and deploy forces in the quickest and safest manner.

Today the EU has three options. The Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD) with the support of the EUMS drafts the initial documents, concerning the political objectives, desired end-state, constraints, and required capabilities for a specific operation. Then, the Operation Plan translating the political objectives into military objectives can be drafted by any of three OHQs, which will also take charge of the conduct of the operation: a NATO HQ under "Berlin Plus," for which purpose the EU cell has been set up in SHAPE; or one of the national HQs made available by the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Greece; or, if no national HQ is identified, the Operations Centre that has been added to the EUMS.

An analysis of the operational reality quickly demonstrates that this compromise does not present a lasting solution. Under "Berlin Plus", even though the arrangement "guarantees" access, the North Atlantic Council has to approve the actual use of NATO assets on a case by case basis; a veto is therefore possible, and in the Libyan case nearly happened. Hence there is no certainty that NATO assets, which furthermore are not unlimited either, will always be available when the EU requests them. Providing for the "multinationalization" of national OHQs for the duration of an operation

demands a lot of energy and resources, and always having to revert to the same few national OHQs is prone to lead to friction. An EU capacity would avoid all of these downsides. But although the availability of the existing EU-owned asset, the Operations Centre, is guaranteed, rather than a fully-fledged OHQ it is a small core that has to be built on for each specific operation. With just five permanent staff, even as a core its capacity remains limited to small-scale (battle group-sized) operations. Clearly, the existing situation is neither the most cost-effective nor the most operationally effective solution.

The crucial strategic factor in crisis management is the ability to act early and, ideally, preventively. That requires that even as political debates on a potential military or civilian intervention are still ongoing, the military-strategic planning must already be started, under the motto: don't ask, don't tell. Increasing the permanent element of the Operations Centre and building it up into a fully-fledged EU OHQ would allow for permanently ongoing contingency planning, so that whenever a political decision is taken to launch an operation, the OHQ can immediately be activated on the basis of a near ready Contingency Plan. It would further allow for a smooth planning process in crisis situations, and the conduct of all types of crisis management operations, including combat missions if necessary. That would offer all Member States, including those incapable of setting up a national structure, the chance to participate, stimulating the harmonization of doctrine, a sense of joint ownership, and the emergence of a European esprit de corps while avoiding additional unnecessary intra-EU duplication. Furthermore, creating a permanent EU structure would allow for the creation of an integrated civilian-military OHQ, which could plan for and conduct both civilian and military operations and could thus implement a truly comprehensive approach to crisis management. The EU would be the first to set up such a civilian-military structure, on the basis of the CMPD, the Operations Centre, and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capacity (CPCC) that now is in charge of the planning and conduct of civilian CSDP operations. Permanent structures would enable the same EU body to remain in charge of the planning and conduct of an operation, rather than having to transfer to a NATO or a national HQ at some point in the crisis management procedure, as is currently the case. Finally, a permanent EU OHQ in Brussels would allow for close interaction with all relevant EU actors in order to realize a comprehensive approach from the outset.

As the NATO command & control structure is being downsized by no less than 5,000 staff, nations would certainly be able to find the 300 or so officers that would have to be seconded to the EU for the purpose of a permanent OHQ. At the same time, a permanent EU capacity would be a lot cheaper for those five EU Member States that now always have to multinationalize their national headquarters to run CSDP operations. Nevertheless, a permanent EU OHQ does constitute a certain degree of duplication with NATO, but not an unnecessary one in view of the need to be able to launch operations when NATO is but difficultly available for either political or capacity reasons.

Information Gathering and Analysis

Planning & conduct rely on information gathering, analysis and dissemination; these are strategic enablers for any military or civilian operation or mission. The EU does not possess an overarching architecture to fully meet this requirement, as its core information and intelligence bodies are heavily dependent on Member States services. Therefore, EU analytical and prognostic endeavours cannot be but limited. Mitigating this shortfall needs a careful and systematic approach. On the one hand, the undeniable sovereign security needs of the Member States must remain untouched, but on the other hand, intelligence at the European level is indispensable.

As a priority, a real *Intelligence Fusion and Analysis Centre* should replace the scattered poles of intelligence within the institutions. Information gathering must be included in the tasks of the EU Delegations, in order to benefit from the wide EU presence in the world. This in turn leads to the need for a secure and overarching EU intelligence network with appropriate communications architecture. In the long run, pooled and shared technical gathering platforms, such as space assets, will also be

necessary. Finally, openness and willingness to share intelligence on the part of the Member States is crucial to create a trustworthy “need to share” environment.

Such common European intelligence architecture would serve as a secondary “failsafe” net to those Member States with strong and widely present national information and intelligence services, but, at the same time, would allow those Member States which cannot afford to maintain a wide collection and analysis capability access to prime information.

Civilian-Military or Comprehensive Approach

Despite the fact that the EU is a natural actor for combining civilian and military approaches, the effectiveness of this linkage has proven difficult. The necessity of an integrated civilian-military Operational Headquarters has already been mentioned; other measures for arriving at a comprehensive approach are presented here.

A first issue blocking comprehensiveness is the way crisis management is financed, which the Lisbon Treaty has not altered. Civilian missions remain funded through the EU-budget, and military operations by the Member States, with only limited common costs covered by the ATHENA-mechanism. Different budget holders across the Commission and the EEAS, different requirements and disbursement mechanisms, as well as a fragmentation of funds that can be earmarked for crisis response impede coherence. The Treaty now caters for a start-up fund, made up of Member States’ contributions for preparatory activities for the Petersberg tasks ‘not charged to the Union budget’ (Art. 41 (28) TEU), i.e. military operations. While the fund should stimulate rapid deployment, as such it does not improve comprehensiveness. A modest improvement in this regard is the transfer of the programming of the Instrument for Stability (IfS) from the Commission to the EEAS, both its long-term (mostly capacity-building) and short-term crisis response dimension.

A second area is coordination of military and civilian capability development. As our armed forces, including through CSDP, take on complementary tasks in internal security, while civilian capabilities are deployed on external missions, military-civilian interoperability becomes essential and capability requirements overlap. There is scope for combining military and civilian capability development in at least five areas: communications, information, transport, protection and logistics. Some existing capabilities already serve both dimensions, e.g. space-based observation and communications assets. In some cases, civilian operators can hook onto mechanisms on the military side, which are already operational. In other cases, the military could make use of civilian-led capabilities, such as the satellite observation capacity of the Global Monitoring for Security and Environment System (GMES). Another area is pre-deployment training. Several courses have e.g. been launched by the EDA, such as on Open Sources Intelligence, with participation of civilians from EU institutions and Member States. There is tremendous scope for combined courses in areas such as communications, road-side bombs awareness and others. The Council has also identified that storing equipment (the ‘warehouse’ concept) can help to ensure rapid deployment of civilian personnel. Again, the military can help in developing and planning such concepts.

Finally, civilian-military coordination at the institutional level can still be improved. In the external action realm, re-labelling and transferring directorates to the EEAS in itself will not create more coherence. To some extent, the EEAS has added another layer of complexity; the EU now also has an ‘EEAS-method’, introducing a decision-making mode in which there is a cut between communitarian and intergovernmental competences within the same policy area, e.g. development. Within the EEAS, the professional cultures of the Commission and Council and the civilian and military employees now need to be reconciled for the development of a culture of coordination. Specific attention needs to be given to the extent in which “comprehensiveness” is built into the way staff is recruited, trained, given, incentives and promoted. Coordination must also be improved between the external action realm and Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). A stronger JHA contingent of expertise in the EEAS can be created and the JHA Council structures can be more involved in the planning and conduct of CSDP

operations. Coordination can also be strengthened between the Commission's civil protection mechanism and the Council's crisis management institutions, and e.g. between the Political and Security Committee and the Committee on Internal Security (COSI). The *Intelligence Fusion and Analysis Centre* proposed above should cover both internal and external situation awareness, in order to achieve a truly comprehensive overview.

Conclusion

Overcoming Prejudice Against Strategy

Defending our vital interests requires strategy. The first strategic choice is to prioritize the regions where those interests are most directly at stake, and prepare accordingly. Although the building-blocks of such a strategy already exist, there still is a reluctance however to explicitly think in strategic terms about priority regions. Three factors explain this.

First, strategy is too closely identified with the military. The aim is not to delineate a sphere of influence in which gunboat diplomacy will uphold Europe's interests. Rather the idea is to identify regions where our vital interests are most likely to be challenged in order to provide a focus for a long-term strategy of *prevention*, which in a holistic and multilateral manner puts to use *all* instruments of external action, in *partnership* with local and regional actors, to create long-term stability. But we must be aware that, as a last resort, precisely because these are priority regions for our vital interests, we might be required to take military action if no other means can work, and must do our permanent military planning accordingly.

Second, the military option is too narrowly identified with EU-only military action. In fact, in crises demanding military action, depending on which partners want to support us, it can be implemented through NATO, CSDP, the UN, or an ad hoc coalition. Whichever is more likely to be effective in the case at hand. But the framework for the command and control of the military operations is but a technical matter. Regardless of the option chosen, as far as Europe is concerned the foreign policy actor directing the operation at the strategic level will always be the EU, for it is through the EU that we make our long-term policies towards these priority regions. In Kosovo European troops are deployed under NATO command; in Lebanon, under UN command; but in both cases Europe's comprehensive long-term political strategy for the country is defined through the EU. So it ought to have been for Libya: up to the EU, not to a coalition of the willing, to assume strategic control and political direction of all actions, even though the military operations are under NATO command, for eventually we will review the Neighbourhood Policy and our specific Libya policy at the EU level as well.

Third, military action is wrongly identified with automatic participation by all Member States. In fact, as the record of CSDP proves, exactly the opposite is true. There is no expectation in the EU that all Member States take part in all operations. But there is a justified expectation that those not seeking to participate in a particular operation under discussion do not block, but provide political and possibly financial support to those proposing it, if it serves the vital interests of the EU and all its Members. Thus in the case of Libya, especially as the EU did adopt strong language calling for Gaddafi to leave, it could also have decided on implementing UNSC 1973 through a CSDP operation, under French or British command, without obliging all twenty-seven to take part.

Adopting a strategy for CSDP will not in itself guarantee resolute action in each and every crisis. But forging a consensus on priority regions and issues *and* drawing the conclusions from that for our capabilities, including planning and conduct, will certainly make us better prepared for action in any contingency. Being more prepared and knowing in advance what our priority regions and issues are, and why, will then hopefully also strengthen the political will to generate action under the EU flag by the able and willing Member States, and will thus make for an EU that carries its weight on the global stage.

Strategy Now

Indeed, the ESS in the section on “policy implications for Europe”, rightfully stresses that “if we are to make a contribution that matches our potential, we need to be more active, more coherent and more capable”. A strong emphasis is notably put on preventive engagement.

Eight years after the adoption of the ESS, we can only conclude the failure to reach this target. The high number of CSDP operations and missions conducted might give the impression of an EU that is “more active”. But in reality nearly all interventions were motivated by the urge “to do something”, to be seen to do some good in an area where, by coincidence, we were capable of doing so. Durable effects were rarely explicitly aimed at, just welcomed if they happened to materialize. Not exactly the level of ambition of a global actor... Our interventions have not been preventive either. At most, we have been able to react quickly, like in Georgia and Libya. In both cases, a lot of improvisation was required, with all that it implies. Why is evident: the lack of any strategy worthy of the name.

The focus of a real, more elaborate strategy for CSDP, must be to render the EU more active, coherent and capable, and to generate preventive engagement. A civilian-military CSDP strategy would be the glue that brings together the many building-blocks that exist already and thus enables a comprehensive approach. This is easier said than done, especially in the case of the EU. European integration has always been characterized by the progressive Europeanization of policy areas *without* defining an explicit strategy beforehand. But *de facto* such a strategy does always emerge – and now is the time for CSDP. For a lot has changed in foreign, security and defence policy since the wars in former Yugoslavia and St-Malo, since the Iraq crisis and the European Convention. Libya is the latest, and perhaps the last wake-up call, which we better do not miss. Much is expected from the EU, by the US, among others, as well as by public opinion. The EU still has some credit – but for how long?

Strategy therefore, and strategy now! And why at the EU level? For many decades, most European countries have been focusing on the military dimension of their security and defence policy, which was seen as an area to be dealt with at the level of an alliance: NATO. Many countries did not really participate in the strategic debate at the NATO level, but followed the consensus forged by “more influential” allies. Strategic questions thus never really took centre stage in these countries. Consequently, now that they are more directly confronted with security and defence issues, they still look to a level above the State to address them. Other countries, which did engage in the strategic debate, and still do, cannot but conclude that increasingly they can only realize their sovereignty – i.e. the ability to have their views taken into account and to achieve their objectives – in a broad international context where all dimensions of security and defence are dealt with holistically. That automatically leads them to the EU, where the reinforced structures have all the potential to do just that. Hence there is a need for a collective and holistic strategy at the EU level. The alternative is to subserviently follow the strategies set by other, “more influential” players. *To be or not to be.*

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