



## Which Strategy for CSDP?

*Jean-Paul Perruche*

**General Perruche identifies which elements would be required to craft a strategy for the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, and why in the EU this exercise is particularly difficult.**

If we refer to the definition of what a strategy is when it comes to defence and security, the following requirements emerge:

1. *Identification of the political objectives to be reached.* This implies a common vision of the global security context and of the EU's security interests (which must include the common and specific interests of the individual Member States). Considered from various perspectives (geography, economy, security...) this must lead to a common definition of the EU's ambitions. That requires answering the questions: what, how and where? This includes the necessary level of the EU's autonomy of action, partnerships, the transatlantic link, relations with the neighbouring countries etc.

2. *Identification of effects to be achieved* in order to answer to our security requirements. As an example, the 2008 French White Book mentions: anticipation, prevention, protection, intervention and deterrence.

3. *Definition of the combination of actions to be undertaken* and of the required assets and capabilities. A roadmap must list the types of

action to be undertaken within an appropriate time frame; of course, this global action plan should be flexible enough to be adapted to new events.

Applying this definition to the EU, it immediately becomes clear that the Union has a long way to go to establish a strategy for CSDP.

### **Political Objectives**

The definition of clear political objectives for CSDP has proved very difficult.

First of all, Member States have divergent views on the end goal of the European construction. Those who are motivated are neutralised by those who want a low key EU.

Second, the Lisbon Treaty restricts EU competences regarding CSDP, which is embedded exclusively in CFSP. Consequently, the natural and necessary link between *defence* issues related to vital interests and the consequences of external *security* issues, does not exist. The core responsibility for defence stays with the Nations and NATO, while the EU is limited to crisis management outside its territory, even though de facto the EU is going to be concerned more and more by defence aspects through its neighbourhood policy, maritime surveillance or the fight against terrorism. 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.

Third, convergence between EU Member States in foreign policy is difficultly achieved since the external action of the EU is but little linked to their vital interests. It is easier to create a common approach and to motivate the Member States to defend their most important interests together when the geographic or economic link is more obvious, than to look for this in the area of long range foreign policy, where national interests are so diversely affected. It has been easier to find agreement and contributions to the EU operation in the Balkans or in Georgia than to those in Africa or more recently in Libya. This highlights the weakness of the solidarity between Member States when it comes to launching EU operations.

Fourth, the lack of a common approach is reflected in the difficulty to define priority areas for foreign policy. Budgets do not reflect strategic priorities but rather the delineation of competences between the Commission and the Council. €5,7 billion is allocated for the external action of the Commission, but only €400 million for CSFP. There is no unity of view between the Commission and the Member States, and cooperation between the Commission, under the control of the European Parliament, and intergovernmental CFSP/CSDP structures remains difficult, in spite of the recent establishment of the European External Action Service under the leadership of the High Representative / Vice-President of the Commission.

Fifth, it is difficult to marry EU and national perspectives. There is agreement on values and on general principles (human rights, democratic rules...) but divergence of motivation, interests, accepted costs, the acceptance of risk etc. in EU initiatives. The level of ambition of the EU cannot be the result of the simple addition of the national ambitions of its Member States.

Finally, EU actions and operations lack visibility, because Member States prefer to show their national efforts rather than the EU image.

### Effects

As Member States have divergent views on the political objectives, there cannot be but a similar divergence on the effects to be realized to achieve the agreed political objectives (Russia, the Middle east, Africa, Kosovo, Libya...).

*Anticipation* would require to strengthen the EU capacity to follow the world security situation and a better integration of intelligence. *Prevention* would require to have an effective early warning system, a policy of cooperation in defence and security (SSR/DDR), border surveillance, a reaction force for natural or man-made disasters etc. *Protection*, of population and critical infrastructure, would require specific capabilities to be streamlined at the EU level. *Intervention*: the desired level of EU autonomy in crisis management should serve as reference to define the minimum military and civilian capability requirements.

### Actions

The lack of a strategic approach in the definition of the objectives of CSDP entails a difficulty to define, plan and implement, in a proactive manner, the necessary combination of actions or course of actions. It also prevents an effective definition of the appropriate assets and capabilities the EU should be equipped

with. This in turn affects the EU's comprehensive approach, the effectiveness of which is hampered due to the restrictions on EU competence in defence matters.

### Conclusion

What can be done to improve this situation? And what are the limits?

First, on the basis of an analysis of the national white books (of France and the UK, among others) it can be assessed what can be done collectively at the EU level and what cannot.

Second, one can define what can be done strategically *within* the area of competence accorded to the EU by the Lisbon Treaty. Then the initiatives to be taken to give the EU a strategic approach in CSDP can be listed.

Third, more coherence between external action, CFSP and CSDP must be ensured.

Finally, the EU's identity must be strengthened. The overall EU interest must be taken into

account in each national decision in the area of security, and national citizens must be informed accordingly so that gradually they become European citizens as well.

*Lt-Gen. (ret.) Jean-Paul PERRUCHE was Director-General of the EU Military Staff from 2004 to 2007. Currently he is Research Director of the Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'École Militaire (IRSEM) in Paris.*

The Security Policy Brief is a publication of Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations

**EGMONT**  
Royal Institute for International Relations  
Naamsestraat 69  
1000 Brussels  
BELGIUM

> [www.egmontinstitute.be](http://www.egmontinstitute.be)

*The opinions expressed in this Policy Brief are those of the authors and are not those of EGMONT, Royal Institute for International Relations*