



Security through knowledge.

Euro-View: Clingendael Institute on the future of EU defence

To reach "European Defence 2.0", a real step-change is needed



More than 15 years ago defence was brought within the ambit of the European Union. Since then the world has changed dramatically. Today, the EU's common security and defence policy (CSDP) needs an overhaul. It has to be adapted to the

new security environment, characterised by complex threats and challenges of a military and non-military nature. Furthermore, the capacities underpinning CSDP can no longer be developed on the basis of the crisis management scenarios of the 1990s.

In June 2016 the EU's foreign and security policy chief, Federica Mogherini, will present a new "Global Foreign and Security Policy Strategy" to EU leaders. It is expected that the strategy will underline the importance of a strong CSDP and credible European military capabilities by making better use of the wider palette of instruments which the EU has at its disposal. The idea is that this approach should serve the EU in defending its security at home and support the Union in providing security abroad.

But the Global Strategy is unlikely to offer how these strategic interests and needs should be translated into concrete objectives and more detailed capability requirements – let alone how to realise these in the future. The EU's current Dutch Presidency is campaigning for a CSDP "white book" to fill the gap between the new strategy and national defence efforts. Together with the European Commission's forthcoming European defence action plan, the white book should steer the Global Strategy's implementation in the defence area.

The white book will have to define the outline and content of the revised CSDP. Contours have to be set for the types of operations and missions the EU is willing to carry out and for the geographical priorities of deployments. Should the latter be far away, nearby or even on the EU's territory?

Its content must embrace which kinds of capabilities and how much of them are needed

– for both military and civilian purpose – and how to develop these by deepening defence cooperation among the 28 EU nations.

More concretely: while CSDP will still contribute to crisis management and conflict resolution in Africa and elsewhere, it will also



have to be used to strengthen Europe's border security (under leadership of civil actors) and to reinforce the EU's territorial security. In the latter case one could imagine CSDP civil-military deployments to counter hybrid threats to supplement NATO's military response forces. Such CSDP deployments could be invoked under the Lisbon Treaty's mutual assistance clause, known as Article 42.7. The latter was activated for the first time by France after the November 2015 terrorist attacks against Paris.

Looking to Europe's southern region the EU's comprehensive approach to security remains essential. However, the increasing need for Europe to assume its own responsibility for security as a result of the US strategic "pivot" to Asia implies that EU member states have to improve their military capability efforts. Their well-known shortfalls must be tackled in areas such as intelligence and strategic reconnaissance, air-to-air refuelling, medical evacuation and precision munitions.

To reach this "European Defence 2.0", a real step change is needed.

European capitals must start shifting from voluntarism in defence cooperation to more binding arrangements by applying a new system of political peer pressure and accountability to solve the shortfalls. This would, of course, be combined with bottom-up practical cooperation projects as well.

Elsewhere, the full potential for using alternative financing formats should be explored to help defence ministries overcome their budgetary constraints. For example, many assets related to communications, intelligence and strategic reconnaissance, transport, medical ser-

vices and protection serve military and civilian customers; EU financial support could be made available to serve both.

EU-funded research has a role to play here too. The successor to the EU's current 2014-2020 "Horizon 2020" R&D programme should set aside substantial funding for CSDP-related research. Information-sharing between civil and military actors – already established in maritime surveillance – should become the norm in other areas to help close the situational awareness gap between the EU's external and internal security actors.

Finally, harmonising demand and connecting civil-military requirements must be mirrored by more consolidation of Europe's defence industries in Europe. At stake is not just the survival of companies and hundreds of thousands of jobs: if Europe is to be a serious security provider its needs credible military capabilities. In-

deed, without autonomy in key industrial and technological capacities, the EU's armed forces will not have guaranteed supplies. That is why the Commission's defence action plan will be an essential building block for a stronger CSDP.

If our 28 political leaders are truly serious when they say 'defence matters', then they need to leap forward in June 2016 and commit themselves to real action instead of leaning back and dozing off as in times past. In today's security environment, that is a luxury that Europe can no longer afford.

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