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INSTITUTE REPORT

ESDP: from Cologne to Berlin and beyond **OPERATIONS — INSTITUTION — CAPABILITIES**

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The German Presidency of the European Union and the EU Institute for Security Studies jointly organised a major conference in Berlin to take stock of the achievements accomplished since the launch of ESDP, and define the challenges and priorities for the coming years. Over 130 senior national and European officials, as well as prominent experts, gathered for a rich and productive exchange. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Javier Solana and Jaap de Hoop Scheffer delivered three major policy speeches at the opening session. Following this, three working groups convened, addressing respectively: ESDP operations, institutions and capabilities. The closing session included interventions from General Henri Bentégeat, Helga Schmid and Michael Schaefer. What follows is a report of the debates held in the working groups, including the questions and issues requiring further reflection and action to enhance the performance of ESDP.

Key findings

- Evolving operational requirements clearly demand further civil-military synergy, both for planning and conducting ESDP operations. Steps need to be taken to enhance civil-military coordination all along crisis management procedures. Coherence needs to be fostered between different EU instruments in the field, including the civil-civil dimension.
- The capacity for planning and conducting ESDP operation within the General Secretariat of the Council needs strengthening, including the creation of standing structures. In particular, a civilian Operations Commander could be established to consolidate the line of command of civilian operations.
- A strategic long-term vision should underpin future thinking on capability development post-2010, including clear targets and better use of scarce resources. In this context, governments should also establish closer links between the processes of military and civilian capabilities development.

Working Group I – Operations

The working group on operations discussed the evolution of crisis management operations and its implications for future EU missions. It also identified some of the principal challenges facing policymakers – especially as operations grow increasingly complex. Five general observations were made:

- 1. The nature of crisis management operations is changing** – Several participants noted that crisis management operations are growing increasingly complex. As shown in recent stabilisation and reconstruction operations, missions may require substantial resources spanning the civilian and military domains. Other factors, such as mission support to ‘non-traditional’ operations (e.g. fight against terrorism, efforts against proliferation), media coverage (‘CNN effect’), and engagement with multiple partners can produce additional layers of complexity. Two points for reflection emerged during the discussion:
 - Given the growing complexity of crisis management operations, in which types of missions will the EU be engaged in over the medium- to long-term?
 - To what extent will the EU be able to ‘choose’ in which operations to participate in the future? So far, the EU has been able to ‘size the enemy according to capacity.’

- 2. A more robust structure may be needed in support of civilian ESDP operations** – To date, civilian ESDP has been built ‘as we move along.’ With an increasing number of operations on the ground, some participants argued it may be desirable to improve existing structures so they are more robust and do not depend on key individuals. Could a ‘headquarters-equivalent’ for civilian operations, possibly headed by a civilian operations commander be instituted?

- 3. Additional ‘bridges’ for civilian-military cooperation should be encouraged** – Several examples of existing cooperation were highlighted, including:
 - Military to civilian – provision of technical expertise such as logistics, communication and information systems (CIS), and medical evacuation (Medevac).
 - Civilian to military / military to civilian – provision of analytical support concerning conditions on the ground.

Some participants suggested that such cooperation be deepened and consider a more integrated approach in certain theatres. For example, could specific lines of activity be further integrated on the ground?

- 4. Increased mission complexity places a premium on coherence** – Participants noted that such coherence includes both intra-EU coherence and cooperation with partners. The Commission’s new Stability Instrument was mentioned as a potential vehicle to further facilitate cross-pillar coherence. It was also noted that the Commission currently finances a lot of research relating to security via FP 7.

With respect to cooperation with partners, transparency was identified as a key element to build strong working relations. It was mentioned that certain timelines might be difficult to meet should EU rapid response be required.

- 5. No one size fits all** – Several participants noted that each crisis is specific and requires a tailored approach to achieve desired effects. In a related point, participants discussed whether the EU needs a military doctrine. A small number of participants argued that a military doctrine is needed to guide the EU as it takes on increasingly challenging missions (for example to provide guidance on how to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the local population in a stabilisation and reconstruction operation). Those against a military doctrine at the EU-level thought it would lead to greater inflexibility and result in a complex and long negotiation process. Others argued that existing concepts and the European Security Strategy already provide adequate guidance.

Participants also identified **four general challenges** with respect to ESDP operations:

- **Doing more together** – Several areas for cooperation were identified, including efforts to pool resources, standardise, and train at the EU-level.
- **Improving the ability to define the desired end-state** – Numerous participants observed that defining the end state for an operation remains an important challenge. It is especially relevant for complex operations requiring a mix of civilian and military assets. Operational planning issues, logistics, and arrangements with third parties pose additional challenges.
- **Providing adequate resources** – Two examples were highlighted: 1) the level of financial resources available and 2) planning capabilities. Concerning the latter point, several participants argued that the EU should develop existing planning capacities. For example, to what extent could the Civil-Military Cell be leveraged to produce advance planning / strategic contingency planning? Don't Rapid Response operations require a standing capability for planning and monitoring an operation?
- **Harmonising EU contributions on the ground** – In particular, the civilian side may experience greater challenges as a host of resources (police, rule of law, etc.) are deployed simultaneously or in close succession in the course of an operation. It was noted that EU member states have different concepts at the national level concerning policing. Civilian-civilian coordination is thus likely to grow as an EU challenge.

Working Group II –Institutions

The debate on the institutional dimension of ESDP focussed on the need to enhance the coherence and rapidity of EU decision-making and to strengthen the capacity for the planning and conduct of operations in the Council Secretariat, with an emphasis on civil/military coordination. The relationship between the EU and other major international actors, notably NATO, the UN and OSCE, was also addressed with a view to achieving more effective cooperation.

Crisis management structures: coherence and synergy

1. **Coherence is critical** to maximising the impact and the visibility of the EU action on the ground. Two dimensions of coherence were pointed out, namely horizontal coherence between EU institutions and vertical coherence between the EU and Member States.
 - As to horizontal coherence, progress is being achieved, but not completed, within the Secretariat General of the Council to implement the innovations envisaged in the post-Hampton Court process. These include setting up a Crisis Management Board including senior staff from all relevant services and enhancing the capacity for situation and risk assessment, policy advice, and the planning and conduct of ESDP operations. The goal is to draw on all available resources to plan and conduct crisis management operations of increasing complexity in the most effective way.

There is considerable scope for improving cross-pillar cooperation in this field. Some of the proposals put forward by the Commission – including closer cooperation between the Policy Unit and Commission services and the delivery of more joint policy papers – were mentioned. There is also a need to make better use of EU Special Representatives, who could be given greater responsibility to coordinate all EU actors in the field. Where appropriate, the exercise by the same person of the functions of EUSR and Head of the Commission delegation (so-called 'double-hatting') should be envisaged.

- Vertical coherence should also be reinforced. It was felt that better guidance is needed from Member States in the External Relations Council and the other configurations of the Council of Ministers. Member States should provide more guidance in order for First and Second pillar to work more together. They should enhance the international performance of the Union by

acting coherently in other international organisations, including the UN, NATO and international financial institutions.

2. **Rapid decision-making** needs enhancing. The role of the Presidency and the input of Member States are key to determine whether the EU should intervene or not in a timely fashion. Existing crisis management procedures are rather cumbersome with consultations between different groups and committees taking up a lot of time and resources. While not altering the planning sequence, practical ways should be identified to streamline the procedure, including more parallel planning. Urgent operational decisions can also pose a problem. Crisis management bodies must be able to respond rapidly to emergencies on the ground and decision-making by committee at 27 is not the best suited for that.
3. **Enhancing civil-military coordination** at all levels in the planning and conduct of crisis management operations was considered a priority. Different options to enhance synergy and comprehensive crisis management were put forward, such as bringing together military and civilian planners at different stages in the planning procedure and, in this context, making a more effective use of the CivMil Cell. At the same time, it was noted that the CivMil Cell could not take charge of the planning process of civilian operations, given its institutional position within the EUMS. Different views were expressed on the workability of fully 'integrated' civilian/military operations, including a unified line of command. While achieving maximum coordination between all ESDP activities on the ground was critically important, some felt that the goal of full 'integration' is not achieved at the national level and should not be considered the parameter of success for EU operations either.
4. The need was stressed to **consolidate the chain of command of civilian operations** and, for that purpose, the creation of the new position of a civilian Operation Commander was discussed. The new figure would be responsible for supervising the conduct of all civilian operations and ensuring a smooth, two-way flow of information and instructions between Brussels (the HR/SG and the PSC) and the Heads of mission in the field. The Operation Commander would be integral part of the chain of command of civilian operations, while the EU Special Representatives, where present, would maintain their role of political guidance and advise for ESDP operations.

Cooperation with other international organisations

5. When addressing the **relationship between the EU and NATO**, it was acknowledged that the ultimate success of military engagement depends on civil-military solutions for long-lasting stability. The ability of the EU to deploy a range of instruments across all dimensions of crisis management was regarded as its main added value, while making clear that the EU should not become the 'exit strategy' of NATO. The problems surrounding the political relationship between the two organisations were addressed, with some highlighting the difference between NATO (an inter-governmental alliance) and the EU (an international actor and a project of political integration), but others stressing that the Berlin Plus agreement functions relatively well. The different membership between the two poses another serious problem, especially when two Member states of the EU are not allowed to participate in the dialogue. The actual commitment of the US to NATO was also questioned, and the need for a closer strategic dialogue between the EU and the US restated, for example on post-conflict stabilisation.

On the other hand, the EU and NATO face common challenges in very difficult theatres such as Afghanistan and Kosovo, and enhanced pragmatic cooperation on these two issues would go to the benefit of both. At the institutional level, most agreed that the current frameworks for dialogue and cooperation between the two institutions, including NAC/COPS meetings and ongoing work on capabilities, fall short of what is required. It was proposed that new, informal, ad hoc mechanisms, perhaps task forces, could be set up to address specific issues, such as the coordination between NATO and forthcoming ESDP operations in Afghanistan and Kosovo.

6. **Cooperation between the EU and the UN** has been growing in quality and scope over recent years, and ESDP operations proved a major trigger in this context. The idea was put forward to revamp and bring up to date the Joint Declaration on EU/UN cooperation in crisis management of September 2003. Two sets of initiatives were sketched out. First, new issues could be addressed in the EU/UN framework, including a focus on civilian crisis management and the new types of missions required, and further cooperation in planning, training and information exchange. Second, consultation mechanisms should be established at a higher level than it is currently the case, involving the SG of the UN and the HR/SG of the EU as well as senior directors in respective structures. The idea was also floated to grant the HR/SG with a right of attending the meetings of the Security Council, while not being a member of it.

Working Group III – Capabilities

There were two general themes that pervaded the discussion in working group III on capabilities. The first was the need for governments to co-ordinate their capability goals for both civil and military capabilities. Even though there are some major differences between civil and military capabilities in terms of equipment and personnel, some types of equipment could be shared, such as communications and navigation. The second theme was the need for governments to match their EU military capability goals with those of NATO as much as possible. In particular the group discussed two main questions: Which capabilities does the EU need; and how should governments generate those capabilities?

1. Which capabilities does the EU need?

There was a general consensus that governments already know what capabilities they need (both civil and military) to carry out EU missions. The civilian Headline Goal 2008 and the military Headline Goal 2010 spell out clearly which capabilities governments should acquire and/or develop. The greatest difficulty on the civil side is finding enough trained personnel for EU operations (i.e. policemen, judges, administrators etc.). On the military side there are still large gaps in expeditionary equipment, such as transport planes and ships and communications technology.

EU governments also need to start thinking about what capabilities they will need in the longer term, beyond the two Headlines Goals of 2008 and 2010. For example, based on the European Defence Agency's Long Term Vision document, governments should think about what specific military capabilities they would need to acquire and/or develop over the coming decades.

2. How should governments generate those capabilities?

Civil capabilities: It was apparent from the discussion that the EU can help governments to develop their civil capabilities in a number of ways. Some of the ideas proposed by delegates included:

- **Personnel:** The EU should help governments to share best practice on how to find, train and organise personnel and equipment for civil missions.
- **Training:** EU governments should encourage inter-operability through joint training of personnel.
- **Shared assets:** The EU could store some common assets, such as communications equipment for policemen.
- **Civil-military operations:** EU governments should share best practice on how to 'join-up' civil and military personnel for joint operations
- **A civil capabilities agency:** The EU should set up an agency for civilian capabilities, similar to the role of the European Defence Agency for military capabilities.

Military capabilities: Everyone agreed that EU defence budgets would not rise for the foreseeable future. Given the increasing number of operational demands on EU defence ministries, governments have little choice but to find ways of spending the €193 billion they collectively spend each year on defence more efficiently. Delegates proposed the following:

- **More joint procurement of defence equipment:** In the past joint procurement has been difficult, since joint programmes have been dogged by delays and budget over-runs. However, a number of delegates said that they saw little alternative to joint procurement for more expensive types of equipment, plus member-states should explore jointly purchasing some types of equipment 'off-the-shelf'.
- **Role specialisation:** For some countries it may make sense to specialise in certain military roles and capabilities, if they have already developed expertise in particular military tasks, i.e. defence from chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attack. Not all governments may like the idea of role specialisation, since they may not wish to depend too much on their EU partners for other types of equipment, but it is an option that some countries may wish to adopt.
- **Pooling of equipment and forces:** Many delegates suggested that EU defence ministries should pool more of their existing and future military assets, sharing the cost of maintenance and training in particular. One example cited was the possibility for some of the countries that are purchasing A400M transport planes to share some of their support costs. Some delegates said that governments should be more ambitious with pooling and start thinking of Europe's defence assets as a 'single set of forces'. Governments could build on the battle-groups initiative, and form larger multinational formations. However, others pointed out that the problem for defence ministries is that they only have a single set of national forces to meet their national, EU, UN and NATO demands and this makes both the practicalities and politics of pooling forces into multinational units very difficult.