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## **The ESDP Contribution to the Fight Against Terrorism**

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### **Group I: Background and summary**

On 7 March 2005, the EU Institute for Security Studies organised a seminar in collaboration with the Luxembourg Presidency and the Council of the European Union entitled *The ESDP Contribution to the Fight Against Terrorism*. The seminar was organised in response to the Council's Conceptual Framework document 14797/04, action point (k). The purpose of the seminar was to identify potential ESDP contributions to the fight against terrorism.

Approximately 100 participants representing academia, law enforcement, the EU and its Member States, NATO, the United States and the non EU European Allies attended the seminar, which provided also a first informal opportunity for the 25 Member States of the EU and the 26 NATO Allies to meet and work together. The seminar opened with interventions by Mr. Luc Frieden (Minister of Justice, Minister for the Treasury and the Budget, Defence Minister, Luxembourg) and Mr. Gijs de Vries (Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Secretariat General of the Council of the EU) during the first plenary session. To facilitate the exchange of ideas, participants were divided into two working groups. The purpose of each working group was to identify policy instruments in key areas of action. Working Group 1 focussed on ESDP instruments in support of prevention, protection, and consequence management measures. Working Group 2 examined ESDP instruments and the international dimension, including support to 3<sup>rd</sup> countries. Among the principal findings of the working groups were:

1. A need to bridge internal and external security. There is a need for a European strategy that addresses the current gap between internal and external security. The European Security Strategy concentrates on the external dimension at the detriment of internal security. ESDP instruments should be made available for use both within and outside the EU when needed in response to terrorist activity.

2. A need for cross-country, cross-pillar, and cross-partner cooperation. Enhanced intelligence cooperation across member states, pillars, and partners represents a crucial requirement for success in fighting terrorism.
3. A need for exercises at all levels covering aspects of prevention, protection, and consequence management. Periodic exercises are important to test response mechanisms and identify weak points. They also help identify best practices which may serve to improve civil-military cooperation in the areas of prevention, protection, and consequence management. Exercises should be carried out at all levels, including those engaging political leaders (e.g. through table-top exercises).
4. A need to consider the entire spectrum of available capabilities – civilian or military – in the fight against terrorism. In the event of a substantial terrorist attack, all available means – either civilian or military – should be considered as building blocks for policy options. A pragmatic approach will diminish current institutional walls.
5. A need to maintain a global outlook, with emphasis on the immediate neighbourhood. Concerning the geographic deployment of ESDP assets, participants stressed that the EU should maintain a global outlook while focussing on its immediate neighbourhood (e.g. the Mediterranean, Africa, and parts of the Middle East).

## **Group II: Working group suggestions**

The following section summarises the main suggestions of working group participants. They are organised according to the four areas of concentration identified in the Conceptual Framework: prevention, protection, consequence management, and the international dimension (including support to 3<sup>rd</sup> countries).

### *Prevention*

1. Improve national coordination among member states. Several participants emphasised that improved national coordination by member states is necessary to facilitate potential ESDP contributions in the fight against terrorism. For example, do member states have sufficient assets and resources to achieve civil protection?
2. Combine ESDP tools with other relevant EU mechanisms. Participants generally agreed that ESDP instruments needed to be combined with other EU tools and methods. Emphasis was placed on coordination with Justice and Home Affairs in order to develop a capacity to deal with a wide range of problems (e.g. cross-border co-ordination and future developments in terrorist tactics and weaponry).
3. Enhance intelligence cooperation. Participants unanimously agreed that enhanced intelligence cooperation is crucial in the fight against terrorism. Various means were proposed for strengthening such cooperation:
  - a. Enhancing EU multilateral intelligence cooperation and sharing of threat assessments and analyses, as proposed by SG/HR Solana.
  - b. Further exploring ways in which civilian and military intelligence can be used to support the Joint Situation Centre more effectively – allowing it to monitor terrorist threats inside or outside the EU more efficiently.

- c. Leveraging bilateral collaboration which has been useful in various terrorist situations (e.g. Franco-Spanish cooperation vis-à-vis ETA, UK-Irish cooperation with respect to Irish terrorism, etc.)
  - d. Recruiting highly qualified intelligence service personnel and training them in the language and cultural skills needed to monitor extremist Islamist movements.
4. Explore means through which ESDP instruments can strengthen border control. The role of border controls was stressed as a vital part of any preventive strategy. A few participants wondered if the establishment of a coordinated Euro-wide Border Control Agency would bring substantial benefits. Reference was also made to the use of ESDP maritime and air control type operations. Several participants warned that the EU faced a potential threat of increased terrorism as a result of the departure of hardened terrorist operatives from Iraq and their return to their homes in EU countries.
5. Examine whether ESDP exercises and events can be used to prepare counter-terrorist agencies and emergency services. It was stressed that comprehensive exercises were not always the best means for learning lessons. Exercises testing different components of emergency response are needed before engaging in all-inclusive exercises. Several participants noted that there must be systematic audit of exercises so that lessons could be drawn by all member states.
6. Enhance the use of country-level analysis to identify areas of concern as early as possible. Analysis at the country level was deemed important to identify potential warning signs as early as possible. With respect to ESDP operations, a participant suggested that at least one anti-terrorism intelligence officer be designated in the framework of forthcoming missions to facilitate the collection of information on the ground.

### *Protection*

1. Collect, maintain, and implement best practices from current operations for protection purposes.
2. Consider widening force protection for certain ESDP missions. Force protection should be expanded to include certain civilian components. Working group participants provided two examples: a) the protection of civilian assets and critical infrastructures in areas of operations and b) the protection of EU assets abroad in times of elevated threat. While work in this area is presently being carried out in the framework of the Headline Goal 2010, participants underscored the need to move beyond current force protection concepts.
3. Contemplate the use of ESDP assets to bolster the protection of critical infrastructures within the EU. Participants recognised that national assets would generally be used to protect critical infrastructures in most cases. However, several participants noted that ESDP assets could play an important role if military instruments were needed to protect against transborder effects.
4. Strengthen the anti-terrorist dimension in the mandates of ESDP operations on the basis of experience gained from operation ALTHEA. Several participants noted

the anti-terrorist mandate of operation ALTHEA and suggested such mandates be included in future ESDP missions. Not all participants agreed on this recommendation, arguing that an anti-terrorism dimension should only be implemented in relevant cases.

### *Consequence management*

1. Develop cross-pillar scenarios for civil protection tasks. Previous anti-terrorism exercises at the EU level have been ‘pillarised’. For example, EURATOX (2002), Common Cause (2002) and the EU Response Exercise (2003) were all Commission exercises without CFSP involvement.
2. Advance the establishment of a CBRN centre of competence in the EU. The creation of a CBRN centre of competence would serve to boost civilian and military expertise in the CBRN area – an important element for ESDP. It was noted that work in this area is currently underway in the ECAP NBC Project Group.
3. Contribute to civil protection assistance in the aftermath of a non-conventional terrorist attack according to need. Several participants observed that military resources can provide value added in the aftermath of a non-conventional attack (such as a chemical attack) for specific roles such as evacuation and decontamination. Such assistance should be available in case of events either inside or outside the borders of the EU.
4. Leverage national expertise in consequence management. Beyond best practices, leveraging national expertise in consequence management would serve to inform policymakers across the EU about national niche capabilities while highlighting proven means and methods. A speaker mentioned Belgium’s rapid deployment emergency teams combining military and civilian resources as an example of such niche capabilities.

### *International Dimension*

1. Identify areas in which ESDP instruments can serve as an ‘enabling factor’ for third countries and international organisations. Participants emphasised the value of having ESDP instruments serve as ‘enablers’ by offering third countries and international organisations the means to help themselves. Participants noted that the entire spectrum of civil and military tools should be available for such purposes.

Examples of support actions for the civilian side included development assistance, institutional capacity building, rule of law support, Consular support during emergencies, and security sector reform. In addition, support could be infused through planning activities touching critical infrastructure security, consequence management, or training.

On the military side, participants identified contributions such as evacuation assistance to EU nationals in the aftermath of a terrorist attack or direct support

during hostage situations. It could also be worthwhile to leverage EU member state's existing national evacuation plans or facilities in specific countries. ESDP military assets could also be used to train 3<sup>rd</sup> country security forces and personnel for anti-terrorism purposes (e.g. the training of SIPA personnel in Bosnia Herzegovina).

The issue over whether the EU should engage ESDP resources for direct military intervention against terrorist activity was divisive. Opinions ranged from those against such operations to those approving direct action contingent on strong evidence of terrorist activity endangering EU interests and lives and conditional, for some, on the consent of the country concerned. Some participants indicated that direct military action would most likely remain in the hands of individual member states or coalitions.

ESDP may also provide an enabling framework for bilateral support action, e.g. national special police operations. Appropriate cooperative actions in the field of ESDP should be adapted to the needs of each country. Fact-finding missions conducted by the EU could be used to identify such needs. Some participants suggested the use of pilot programmes to deliver time-limited support to third countries. An example given to illustrate such support was the provision of rule of law assistance via short-term embedded national experts.

Concerning collaboration with international organisations, several participants mentioned the need to keep exploring ways in which the EU can support the UN (e.g. through the use of battle groups), NATO, and regional organisations such as the African Union.

2. Sharpen the public affairs and communication dimension of ESDP missions. Several participants suggested this could serve to enhance political support to missions while providing a forum for discussion among EU member states and allies. Moreover, there was general agreement that in the longer term the EU should be devoting more energy and resources to the 'battle of ideas' to combat the violent ideology of terrorist organisations.
3. Identify means for mobilising voluntary contributions by EU member states in the event of a terrorist attack affecting EU citizens abroad. Such efforts should build on the current civil protection mechanism. Specific ESDP contributions envisioned included the use of military transport capacity and/or activating the Athena funding mechanism to cover certain costs associated with an operation.
4. Strengthen methods of cooperation with the United States, especially in the area of early warning. Participants accentuated the importance of preventive efforts to limit the impact of terrorist activity. An important element for doing so would be to expand cooperation with the United States vis-à-vis early warning. Participants wondered if transatlantic cooperation could be used to identify countries in the 'danger zone' at an earlier stage. Several participants stressed that a common understanding of countries at risk could help identify responsive measures, complementing work done at the individual country level. A U.S. participant highlighted the American use of threat matrixes to help policymakers better understand potential trouble spots. A European participant referenced the work carried out by the Joint Situation Centre.
5. Address challenges associated with sharing intelligence, assessments, and best practices with partners. Several participants noted the need for bilateral security

agreements to address challenges in information sharing between the EU and its allies. Specifically, there is a need for a more effective mechanism for the exchange of classified information between the EU and the US, as well as between the EU and the UN with a view to ease exchange of information on early warning, planning, and the conduct of anti-terrorist operations.

6. Assess the possibility of using ESDP exercises and events to strengthen existing cooperation between the EU and non-EU European allies and Mediterranean partners.
7. Harmonise understanding of the terrorist threat among allies and partners to limit the potential for misunderstandings and suboptimal cooperation. A number of participants noted that terrorist organisations are adept at exploiting ‘linguistic’ differences across partners. Examples might be the definition of threats or enemy groups. Harmonising such differences would strengthen the potential for partnerships targeting terrorist activity.
8. Recognise the niche capabilities of certain partners and international organisations to avoid duplication. In the view of one participant, maximizing cooperation in the fight against terrorism requires that partners recognize and not duplicate each other’s capabilities. In general terms, it was stressed that the EU can bring to bear a specific added value, taking into account the following factors: scale and resources (25 Member States and growing), scope (a wide array of tools, military and civilian, provided they are used in a coherent manner) and legitimacy (political acceptability linked to the positive image of the EU).

## **List of Participants**

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