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## **'Working together, thinking differently?' A presentation on the development of the strategic culture of the EU through the study of ESDP**

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Margaras, Vasilis. 2019. "working Together, Thinking Differently?' A Presentation on the Development of the Strategic Culture of the EU Through the Study of ESDP". figshare. <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/5133>.

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**‘Working together, thinking differently?’**

**A presentation on the development of the strategic culture of the EU through the study of ESDP**

**Paper Presented at The Centre ([www.thecentre.eu](http://www.thecentre.eu)), Brussels, as part of the 2009 UACES Brussels Seminars Series, 31 March 2009,**

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**The author would like to thank Loughborough University and in particular Professor Mark Webber for his support and supervision. Parts of the paper presented in this seminar form part of the PhD thesis which was defended at Loughborough University under the title: ‘The Development of a Brussels based EU Strategic Culture: A Case Study of the European Security and Defence Policy’. The author of the paper would also like to thank the Foundations of Compagnia di San Paolo, Volkswagen Stiftung and Riksbankens Jubileumsfond for their valuable support through the Young Faces Volkswagen Stiftung Scholarship Scheme.**

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## **‘Working together, thinking differently?’**

### **A presentation on the development of the strategic culture of the EU**

#### **Preliminary remarks**

The paper studies the emergence of the strategic culture of the European Union through the development of ESDP. It argues that ESDP should not only be judged in terms of missions and institutions. It should be also studied at a cognitive level. Therefore, researchers should take into account the practices and ideas of policy officials when it comes to the planning and implementation of ESDP police and military missions. The paper examines the development of these ESDP ideas and practices by conducting a study of the strategic culture of the EU. It argues that ideas, beliefs and practices that policy officials hold on the use of force really matter. However, ideas cannot be studied independently but need to be taken into account within a comprehensive framework of study which includes issues related to the question of structure and agency. The evolution of history is important. Ideas on security issues are developed by historic events which enrich the experiences of a particular collective which deals with issues of security. Ideas are also shaped by the deployment of the EU’s ESDP missions. Daily interaction of officials in various crisis spots is an important factor in the shaping of the strategic culture of the EU. This is because the experiences of police and military forces provide feedback to the decision-making mechanisms of the EU which is influencing the strategic thinking of the Europeans.

The aim of the paper is to present some first results regarding the strategic culture of the EU and to suggest a few topics for discussion. The arguments presented in this paper are extensively analysed in my PhD thesis. The paper was presented at a non-academic audience in Brussels as part of the European Lecture Series organised by the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES). Therefore, various academic terms were simplified and difficult methodological and ontological statements were omitted in order to facilitate the audience. The author of the paper does not underestimate the importance of extensive methodological and ontological explanations and would be more than happy to answer questions regarding any of these issues.

The paper highlights major aspects of the strategic culture of the EU. It also opens up the discussion on various ethical and political issues regarding the idea of EU intervention through the planning and implementation of out-of-area missions. The paper does not claim to hold the absolute truth on issues of strategic culture: a comprehensive study of the strategic culture of the EU requires contributions from a wide number of scholars who must include a plethora of variables in their own studies. Furthermore, a comprehensive study of the strategic culture of the EU requires the inclusion of topics which would cover the fields of sociology, political science, history, international relations, European studies and political psychology.

## **Introduction**

Considerable progress has been achieved by the EU in the field of foreign affairs since the establishment of ESDP back in 1999. Ten years of ESDP developments brought a number of achievements in the field of security, most notably, the deployment of various ESDP missions in many parts of the world.<sup>1</sup> These missions constitute an important element of study as they provide considerable information on the way the EU acts in unstable parts of the world. Therefore, these missions constitute an important element of the strategic culture of the EU. Furthermore, the European Security Strategy (ESS) was presented in 2003, thus providing a long summary of ideas and beliefs regarding the EU use of police, military and economic instruments.<sup>2</sup> The European Security Strategy also mentioned the importance of fostering a robust strategic culture for the European Union.<sup>3</sup> As the importance of fostering a robust strategic culture constitutes an official policy priority for the EU, it is important to mention what strategic culture means and what are its main characteristics.

## **Definition of the Strategic Culture of the EU**

The academic term strategic culture has been used in order to describe ideas, beliefs, values and practices of a particular planning body regarding the use of force through the deployment of police and military instruments<sup>4</sup>. The PhD thesis includes a number of issues on the theory and potential of the term of strategic culture. For the purposes of the paper I define the strategic culture of the EU as: “the ideas, beliefs, values and practices of Brussels based

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<sup>1</sup> For further info: [www.esdpmap.org](http://www.esdpmap.org)

<sup>2</sup> A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy, Brussels, 12 December 2003, <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion on strategic culture see Gray (1999a, 1999b), Johnston (1996, 1999), Longhurst (2005), Giegerich (2006)

ESDP officials regarding the current and potential use of force which is manifested in the way ESDP officials think during negotiations in ESDP institutions as well as through the deployment of police and military instruments in various ESDP missions”. Therefore, the strategic culture of the EU consists of an ideational element which is manifested in the way missions are discussed and planned. Furthermore, the strategic culture of the EU is also made up of ideas and practices which are manifested in the every-day implementation of ESDP missions. The strategic culture of the EU is also characterised by various structural and behavioural elements which are manifested through the interaction of ESDP officials in EU institutions and their personal policy networks. Elements of strategic culture are also developed through the historic evolution of the European security debate and especially through the marks that this debate left on the shaping of the foreign policies of the EU member states in the 1990s.<sup>5</sup>

The paper will underline the achievements of ESDP that underpin the strategic culture of the EU but will mostly focus on the weaknesses of such a particular strategic culture that characterises the EU. The first part of the presentation will mention the main positive elements that characterise the strategic culture of the EU. These elements have been consolidated due to the positive record of ESDP and will be analysed below. The second part of the paper will deal with the challenges in the development of a cohesive EU strategic culture by mentioning the most important problems in detail. The paper will also provide a basic categorisation of the strategic culture of the EU as compared to the strategic forms of actorness that characterise other states and institutions. The presentation will end up with a few summary points as well as with points for further discussion and reflection.

### **ESDP achievements that affect the strategic culture of the EU in a positive way**

The European Security and Defence Policy experienced considerable progress since its establishment in 1999. The success stemming from ESDP missions so far contributed to the consolidation of the idea that the European Union can be an additional actor in security affairs. This is an achievement on its own if one takes into account the failure of the EU to deal with the crisis of the Western Balkans in the 1990s. Therefore, the implementation of ESDP missions contributed to a ‘pro-active’ mentality amongst ESDP officials that encouraged further interaction in security issues. This was an important development as the

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<sup>5</sup> For Further information see: The Development of a Brussels based EU Strategic Culture: A Case Study of the European Security and Defence Policy, Thesis by Vasilis Margaras, Loughborough University, 2009

idea of actorness can be seen as the basis of the strategic culture of the EU. Although much remains to be done in the field of security, the EU managed at least to move away from the first phase of strategic inertia that characterised its actorness during the breakup of the violence in the Western Balkans in the 1990s.

Due to the emergence of ESDP new EU security institutions had to be established (e.g. PSC, CIVCOM, EUMS, EUMC) that remain in charge of the strategic parameters of ESDP, thus facilitating permanent dialogue, interexchange of security practices and the planning of various police and military ESDP missions through the continuous interaction of ESDP officials. These institutional practices facilitate a 'bridging' of different security views thus slowly contributing to the shaping of an EU strategic culture. Without such permanent institutions the birth of strategic culture would have been an impossible mission. For instance, Po.Co, the predecessor of the PSC, which was a body that met randomly in Brussels, did not manage to produce tangible results. A more permanent institutional structure was necessary not only for the development of the strategic culture of the EU but also for the cohesive implementation of its security policy initiatives. This structure was gradually implemented since the establishment of ESDP in 1999. Although far from perfect, the structural framework of ESDP managed to perform the necessary tasks in order to put the first ESDP missions on the ground.

The establishment of a permanent institutional dimension had a considerable impact in the development of various behavioural elements that facilitated a better understanding amongst ESDP Brussels based officials. These behavioural elements were important in the shaping of a 'primary' strategic culture, although as we shall see later, this is not a totally cohesive one. These behavioural elements are the development of trust, solidarity and understanding amongst ESDP officials. They can be observed in various ESDP mechanisms as well as during the implementation of missions. Policy coordination and the harmonisation of national policies are also taking place and can be seen as important mechanisms in the shaping of a common strategic culture. Nevertheless, the pace of change is slow due to the predominance of national sensitivities, peculiarities and priorities. Frequent interaction amongst policy officials contributed positively to the development of ESDP as every-day communication within ESDP institutions had an impact on the convergence of ideas in the field of security.

ESDP institutions had a 'convergence' impact on ideas regarding the use of force. Some of these common ideas are manifested in the European Security Strategy (ESS), a core

document regarding EU security issues. The ESS mentioned the importance of human rights, multilateralism, security dialogue, the respect of human life and democratic norms as points of ideational convergence. Indeed, these can be seen as the ideational basis of the strategic culture of the EU. Furthermore, interviewees mentioned that ESDP has an important 'humanitarian' dimension. In terms of missions this is a justified claim if one takes into account that the first ESDP missions have been developed in the Western Balkans in order to tackle humanitarian crises. My personal study on the strategic culture of the EU points to the fact that these ESS ideas are indeed a point of departure when it comes to the establishment of a dialogue on security issues amongst the EU counterparts.<sup>6</sup> The idea that Europeans should intervene in the internal affairs of third states (even if such action goes against the primacy of its sovereignty) also forms part of an EU consensus that was developed during the crises of the Western Balkans in the 1990s.<sup>7</sup> However, it is important to mention that the existence of such consensus does not necessary mean that these ideas are equally internalised or respected amongst the Europeans but that they are accepted as a point of reference for further strategic dialogue.

Which tasks underpin the strategic culture of the EU? As interviewees mentioned, the Petersberg Tasks continue to define the remit of strategic culture of the EU. I take the extended list of strategic tasks as defined by the Constitutional Treaty as a point of reference which has been mentioned by the large majority of the interviewees. These tasks were established as a point of consensus amongst EU elites and are not likely to change even if the Treaty was not ratified. The Petersberg tasks include joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crises management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilisation (Article I-41 (1) of the Constitutional Treaty). These tasks will shape the strategic culture of the EU for some time to come.

Furthermore, it is important to say that ESDP managed to acquire its own style through the missions that have been developed on the ground of various fragile spots. When it comes to the implementation of missions on the ground it is important to say that Europeans do not want to be seen as occupying forces. In this respect there have been considerable differences amongst EU and US troops in Bosnia Herzegovina with the US troops being heavily

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<sup>6</sup> For Further information see: The Development of a Brussels bases EU Strategic Culture: A Case Study of the European Security and Defence Policy, Thesis by Vasilis Margaras, Loughborough University, 2009

<sup>7</sup> Ibid



equipped in terms of armaments. The European forces carry less ammunition and lighter arms. On the question of policing, the EU has a consultative role on structures and policy issues rather than a 'police on the street' involvement. Furthermore, due to the very establishment of ESDP, the EU made efforts to involve civil society, regional actors and humanitarian NGOs in its missions. In addition, due to various contributions from Nordic countries there have been considerable discussions on gender issues and how they can be incorporated into the ESDP agenda. All the above demonstrate that the EU has particular 'sensitivities' on the use of force.

As mentioned above, the strategic culture of the EU is characterised by points of ideational convergence. These points of convergence are important elements of an emerging European identity in security and need to be reinforced. Unfortunately, the strategic culture of the EU is also characterised by considerable internal divergence which limits its actorness. Unless the EU deals with the issues of internal strategic divergence it will not be able to possess a cohesive strategic culture and a dynamic presence in strategic affairs. These problematic points will be analysed further in the following section.

## **Important Challenges to the development of a cohesive EU strategic culture**

### **Sovereignty over Supranationalism**

The Europeans share some similar (although not identical) ideas on the use of force. They discuss the implementation of various missions and deploy together their police/military resources in various parts of the world. However, the strategic culture of the EU is still a culture which is limited by the belief of the ESDP officials that national sovereignty should be above EU prerogatives. ESDP is an intergovernmental policy in which the states have the upper hand. Defence is a field that remains under national auspices and the actorness of the EU is only manifested in the deployment of out-of-area operations. Furthermore, although various EU member states have transformed some of their national resources into troops/police instruments ready to be deployed in out-of-area missions, progress in terms of out of borders deployment is still low.<sup>8</sup> Although this can be seen a policy related issue it also has an ideational dimension: the fact that the Europeans are in general unwilling when it comes to the deployment of force structures limits the strategic actorness of the EU.

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<sup>8</sup> Towards Integration? Unifying Military and Civilian ESDP Operations, Stephanie Blair, ISIS-Europe newsletter 44, [http://www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2009\\_artrel\\_272\\_esr44-civmil-integration.pdf](http://www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2009_artrel_272_esr44-civmil-integration.pdf)

## **A cautious development of Civilian Crisis Management Instruments**

Most of the interviewees mentioned that there is a gap between the rhetoric of ESDP and its everyday implementation. This gap between rhetoric and reality inhibits the development of a fully fledged EU strategic culture in the field of civilian crisis management. ESDP representatives claimed that the civilian capabilities of the EU need to be developed further. Because of the limited resources that EU member states invest in the EU Civilian Headline Goals progress in ESDP is still slow. This is a demonstration of the cautiousness of EU member states when it comes to investing further in ESDP. However, although difficulties exist, it is possible to talk about a ‘civilian turn’ in ESDP as there is an ongoing discussion about reinforcing the civilian aspects of crisis management and investing more in them. It can be argued that the strategic culture of the EU is characterized by a strong military dimension but also by a developing civilian dimension. This dimension in the future may turn out to be the added value of ESDP as no international policy actor has managed so far to combine successfully both military and civilian instruments into a long-term cohesive strategic action.

## **The fear of getting involved in risky missions**

The humanitarian dimension of ESDP is a good point of departure but so far the evolution of ESDP demonstrates that the EU countries will intervene in various selective cases whereas they would neglect others. Furthermore, when it comes to missions that need to be implemented in far abroad areas, one can detect an important ‘capabilities gap’ between small states which possess limited resources and the bigger EU states (such as France and the UK) which possess the necessary means in order to deploy demanding long-term missions. This division creates a planning gap between the ones that have instruments and the ones that do not. Unfortunately, this capabilities gap also creates different perceptions in terms of strategic thinking as various EU officials envisage a ‘narrower’ field of strategic action than others. In addition, there is a general attitude of cautiousness to participate in far away missions, especially if a particular mission is perceived as a risky one. The fear of risky missions combined with the ‘capabilities’ gap are obstacles to the development of a robust strategic culture as the EU mostly focuses on ‘small’ missions.

On this point though, it should be mentioned that the unwillingness to get involved in risky missions is not necessarily a negative one. It demonstrates that certain EU states have developed a high degree of responsibility when it comes to the protection of the lives of their own troops and civilian personnel. It is a sign that Europeans have finally learnt their lessons from the bitter wars that so much divided Europe in the past. However, the cautiousness of involvement renders the EU the repository of small symbolic humanitarian missions. In parallel to ESDP missions, various EU states are free to get involved in missions such as the Iraq War (whose ethics and overall contribution to the security of the Middle East are much disputed). In this way, the EU may act as a smokescreen for EU member states who want to cover their inertia in crucial parts of the world (e.g. Africa) by deploying small missions whereas at the same time they will continue to participate in other missions of ambivalent nature (such as the one of Iraq).

### **The Division of Old/New Europe**

Furthermore, the division between ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Europe on the question of Iraq in 2003 highlighted –once more- the different belief systems amongst the Europeans. The uncritical support of many EU countries to the over simplistic choices of the Bush administration not only undermined the fostering of a cohesive European understanding in the case of Iraq but also hindered an in-depth discussion on peace-keeping and conflict resolution that could lead up to the shaping of a cohesive strategic culture. The case of Iraq is another proof of the existing conflicting priorities and different national interests as national reflexes prevailed over a united EU stance. Unfortunately, although the question of intra-European divisions on the Iraq War seem to be somehow forgotten, divisions on important strategic issues are still evident today. For instance, one can detect different strategic approaches when it comes to the question of Russian inclusion in the European security architecture.<sup>9</sup>

### **Lack of Clearly Defined Interests**

Although EU states agreed on the drafting of the ESS, this particular document can be seen as a loose description of ideas rather than a concrete strategy of what the EU is decided to do. The lack of a clearly defined European interest in which all EU member states can subscribe to is a hindrance to the development of a cohesive European strategic culture. However, new geopolitical challenges arise that may bring the Europeans closer together in terms of

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<sup>9</sup> ‘Old’ and ‘new Europe divided at NATO Summit, 2 April 2008, EurAktiv Online, <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/old-new-europe-divided-nato-summit/article-171288>

strategic thinking. The cases of piracy in the straits of Somalia and the European contributions in this particular area show that in a frenzy globalised world new security threats may push Europeans to a definition of new common economic interests such as the protection of free trade routes. These interests may form the basis of a new strategic culture which may include a clearer version of both humanitarian and economic priorities. Strategic change is not a new phenomenon as most studies in strategic culture of states and organisations point to the fact that the process of strategic culture formation is open to new challenges and new threats. Established security ideas are continuously questioned. If existing ideas do not fit with new security challenges they will have to be reconsidered or substituted by other more updated beliefs. Therefore, it is not unlikely to see considerable changes in the way ESDP is shaped and conducted.

However, radical changes that may 'energise' ESDP are not yet to be seen in the near future. For the time being ESDP can be characterised as a policy of limitations. Various CFSP/ESDP officials continue to hide behind the delay of the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in order to justify the inertia and lack of dynamism that characterise much of the EU's external policies. However, although the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty may bring some positive amendments in CFSP/ESDP<sup>10</sup> (such as the External Action Service and the PermStrucCoop formula), it is highly unlikely that these will provide a stimulus for further robust external action on their own. Institutional mechanisms are important but they have to be topped up by a clear sense of political leadership and direction that is much lacking in ESDP.

### **Different Geographic Approaches**

The Europeans need to coordinate their geographic priorities in order to encourage the development of a cohesive EU strategic culture. The geographic space of the Western Balkans is the one where so far Europeans have acted in the most coordinated way through ESDP- although with considerable limitations.<sup>11</sup> This process of coordination did not happen immediately and took considerable time in order to come to what Jacques Poos called 'the hour of Europe'. Traumas stemming from the lack of a common EU approach in the Western Balkans during the 1990s have contributed to the consolidation of a common European thinking vis-à-vis this particular region. With the enlargement of the EU, many of the new

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<sup>10</sup> For an analysis of the impact of the Lisbon Treaty on ESDP see: The Lisbon Treaty and ESDP, Transformation and Integration, Egmont Paper, June 2008.

<sup>11</sup> For instance on the latest EULEX mission, One year on: what is next for Kosovo, Vibeke Brask Thomsen, ISIS Europe, Newsletter No, 43, [http://www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2009\\_esr\\_68\\_esr43-mar09.pdf](http://www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2009_esr_68_esr43-mar09.pdf)

EU Eastern countries also contributed to the Balkan missions and gave high priority to them as they either share borders with the area of the Balkans or are affected directly by various security trends stemming from this geographic spot (e.g. issues of trans-border law and order, ethnic disputes, human and drugs trafficking, illegal immigration, organised crime).

Therefore, the area of the Western Balkans is a space where Eastern and Western European priorities meet (although strategies on the ground may differ on certain issues).

The relatively large number of operations in the area of the Western Balkans (two missions in BiH, one in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the implementation of the EULEX Kosovo mission) had a positive impact on the development of an EU strategic culture as EU officials have met and discussed these operations on a regular basis. For instance, ESDP missions in Bosnia Herzegovina have brought various officials together for a period of over four years. During this time, ESDP officials have had the chance to get to know each other in depth, discuss various issues concerning the future of the area and take common decisions. However, the case of the Western Balkans is the exception to the rule as a similar process of ‘claiming responsibility’ did not happen in other parts of the world.

Therefore, the Europeans have not yet fully ‘internalised’ the idea of a global responsibility for other areas of the world neither have they fully agreed on common strategies for areas outside the Western Balkans. Furthermore, contributions regarding ‘far away’ missions still depend on an ad hoc cooperation amongst groups of countries that express an interest in participating at them. Unfortunately, there is still not a global comprehensive EU approach in security issues.

### **The Limits of Multilateralism**

As mentioned previously, the European Security Strategy mentioned the importance of multilateralism. PhD fieldwork data also validates the fact that officials believe that ESDP is characterised by multilateralism and needs to continue in such way. Various ESDP missions were (and still are) open to contributions from third countries and institutions such as ASEAN, the African Union, the UN and NATO. However, the modalities of cooperation with other actors are not always clear and, as we shall see below, pose limitations to the strategic culture of the EU.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, cooperation with third countries and institutions is

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<sup>12</sup> For a discussion on security institutions see ‘Time to reassess the European security architecture?’ The NATO-EU-Russia Security Triangle, Sandra Dias Fernandes, CEPS EPIN Working Paper 22, March 2009, [http://shop.ceps.eu/downfree.php?item\\_id=1820](http://shop.ceps.eu/downfree.php?item_id=1820).

not always easy. This is because the priorities and structures of third countries/institutions are not similar to the ones of the EU.

For instance, there is a very good understanding between Canada and the EU which is manifested in good interaction and frequent exchange of policy practices. ESDP officials claim that there is a positive common basis on security issues and a similarity in 'style and substance' on the use of force that does not exist with Russia. This is a sign that Europeans prefer 'softer' and highly professional uses of force to the brutal Cold War related deployment of military troops. The differences in deploying force are also manifested when it comes to cooperating with the African Union (AU). The EU gives emphasis to the fact that the AU should be empowered to deal with regional security issues. However, when it comes to everyday dealings with the AU, the bilateral relationship is not always easy. Cases of human rights abuse and different practises in policing highlight a different perception on the role of police and military instruments between the EU and the AU.

### **The EU-NATO Relationship**

Another important cause of content is the depth of the EU-NATO relationship. For instance, although the importance of NATO in ESDP is undisputed, there is no point of convergence on the issue of NATO dependence/European autonomy. Issues of transatlantic importance have caused various tensions in the past and rendered the forging of an internal EU consensus on security issues even more difficult. It remains to be seen whether the new Obama era will ease the tensions of the past by bringing a new approach in the transatlantic relations. The idea that in certain cases, an ESDP mission should, take place under an EU flag (independent of NATO) is slowly being consolidated in the minds of ESDP officials. However, Atlanticism is still very strong amongst EU circles and no EU state wants to take any major risks that may bring further alienation to the EU-US relationship.

The question of Turkish participation in ESDP is also of vital importance as it is inextricably linked to the future of the ESDP-NATO relationship. There is a basic consensus amongst ESDP officials on allowing Turkish participation in ESDP missions. However, EU Member States are divided on how far EU-Turkish cooperation should go, with some of them (Cyprus, Malta and Greece) being openly hostile to the Turkish blockage of the PSC-NATO relationship as well as frightened of the Turkish ambitions over ESDP. The exchange of information in joint NATO-EU operations is a major unresolved issue as Cyprus and Malta want to have access to NATO information and participate in an ESDP of 27 member states as

this is a right that every sovereign state possesses. However, Turkey blocks any EU-NATO initiative that includes these two nations. The problematic dimension of the Turkish cooperation poses challenges to the strategic direction of ESDP and consequently to the development of the strategic culture of the EU.

### **The Importance of acquiring the UN Security Council Mandate as a legitimizing tool for ESDP missions**

The issue of acquiring a UN mandate is still important as it provides public and political legitimacy to the undertaking of security missions. However, for some member states the UN mandate is an important prerequisite in order to participate in a security mission whereas for others it is less so.<sup>13</sup> This difference is the proof of an important division on the legalisation of the use of force. It demonstrates that there are countries that want to have the ‘green light’ of intervention by an international body whereas others prefer to collaborate in coalitions of the willing in order to promote their own strategic plans. If this is added to the cumbersome bureaucratic structures of the UN and the difficulty in finding an efficient working mechanism between the EU and the UN then one can understand the difficulties of forging an effective multilateralism between the two institutions. This example also demonstrates that behind the flashy ideals of multilateralism lie the difficult modalities of cooperation. All this tells a different story from the one narrated by the official idealistic discourse of the EU.

### **Categorising the Strategic Culture of the EU**

Where does the strategic culture of the EU stand when it comes to comparing it with the strategic cultures of other states and international institutions? If one could invent a scale of strategic actorness that would start with a ‘Swiss type Passive non interventionist Europe’ model and would end up with a ‘US Superpower pro-interventionist’ model where would the EU fit? The answer is that the EU could be categorised somewhere in the very middle of this scale.

The strategic culture of the EU mostly fits with a type that in the PhD thesis has been named as ‘Cautious Interventionist Europe’. The PhD thesis provides more details on the different types of categorisation and their particular characteristics. The ‘Cautious Interventionist Europe’ type is characterised by a low/medium willingness to act, manifested in the

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<sup>13</sup> Towards Integration? Unifying Military and Civilian ESDP Operations, Stephanie Blair, ISIS-Europe newsletter 44, [http://www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2009\\_artrel\\_272\\_esr44-civmil-integration.pdf](http://www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2009_artrel_272_esr44-civmil-integration.pdf)

deployment of mostly short-term small/medium and low risk missions. This type also displays a limited geographic remit with a concentration of major forces in its near abroad (e.g. Western Balkans). According to this type of strategic culture, the strategic culture of the EU is still a culture which is characterised by the belief that national sovereignty should be above EU prerogatives. Therefore, the decisions of EU member states do matter a lot and have a big influence on the development of ESDP. Defence is a field that remains under national auspices and the strategic actorness of the EU is limited to some 'out-of-area' operations. The consensus on the use of force is moderate as opinions amongst EU states vary over geographic and political priorities.

Furthermore, the strategic culture of the EU has a strong Atlanticist aspect, although the nature of the EU-US relationship still remains to be identified in detail. Cautious interventionist Europe has a strong multilateral nature although there are still issues of clarification on the synergy between the EU and its partners. Furthermore, the importance of a UN Security Council mandate prior to the undertaking of missions still remains important but not accepted by all countries as the primary prerequisite for strategic action. Furthermore, the strategic culture of a Cautious Interventionist Europe is based on the protection of human rights and the promotion of law. However, these terms have not found their ways into clearly defined EU strategies and can be seen as very loose terms, open to various interpretations that may even fit the different (even conflicting) interests of EU member states. Nevertheless, the EU humanitarian agenda is still important in issues of security as most EU missions have a humanitarian background. Furthermore, as seen with the Somalia mission, there is also a potential for the development of an 'economic interest' oriented type of EU actorness. However, it is still early for the emergence of such scenario.

## **Conclusions**

With the establishment of ESDP, the EU member states accepted the fact that the EU had a role to play in security and defence issues. This fact on its own is a great achievement if one takes into account the lack of commitment on behalf of the EU member states to assume leadership in the Western Balkans during the early 1990s. However, ESDP has a long way to go. There is still no clear definition in the minds of Europeans on what a European role in security consists of. ESDP is still a 'learning by doing' exercise rather than a comprehensive policy aiming at tackling major security threats. ESDP is still suffering from a clear lack of vision and ambition. In addition, it remains anchored to the implementation of small missions



which, although successful, they have a limited impact on the long-term security status in their geographic areas of deployment. Therefore, ESDP is characterised by many limitations and so does the strategic culture that it generates.

Although considerable progress has been achieved in ESDP the EU needs to make further steps in order to acquire a robust strategic culture that is much needed in order to render ESDP more effective. An upgrade of institutional structures, the integration of civilian and military instruments and a program of investment in the EU's civilian and military capabilities are more than necessary. However, these on their own are not enough to solve the 'capabilities-expectations' gap that characterises ESDP. Increasing levels of interaction amongst ESDP officials, concrete moves towards national policy harmonisation and higher levels of engagement in ESDP initiatives are necessary in order to make further steps towards a common EU security thinking. EU member states have to gradually harmonise their security priorities and especially find a consensus on the question of NATO synergy/EU autonomy. They also have to find a consensus on the depth and nature of third party involvement when it comes to the strategic partners that were mentioned in previous sections of this paper.

One more crucial step is necessary in order to achieve further integration in the field of security: EU member states need to become less selfish by 'sacrificing' part of their 'sacred cows' if such cows cause major problems to the development of ESDP. One of the major problems in the establishment of a robust strategic culture is the insistence of the member states on the idea that they should have the upper hand in issues of security ('Sovereignty First' approach). A higher level of manoeuvring in the hands of the EU would facilitate the development of ESDP and its strategic culture.

After ten years since its establishment, ESDP is far from perfect. ESDP is another original project of the EU: small, slow and bureaucratic but also a functioning one and with a good potential. What can European citizens do in order to influence ESDP? ESDP should be seen as a policy of scrutiny and as a point of debate on what the EU can do and should do. In order to tackle the democratic deficit of the EU; think tanks and civil society should have a role in the shaping of the ESDP agenda. In addition, public opinion is also vital in the long-term success of ESDP. An unwritten public perception on the use of force has given strength to new movements that have expressed their anger against the uncritical following of Bush's brutal wishes in the international arena. New forms of active citizenship have been

manifested against the use of force in Iraq. On the other hand, Eurobarometer studies have been extremely positive when it comes to ESDP, thus demonstrating that the EU model of force (with all its weaknesses) has been widely accepted by the Europeans (and even welcomed by them). This can be seen as a point of identity consensus of the European 'demos' and should be taken as an opportunity in order to invest further in the 'EU model' of force.

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