

# EU DEFENCE CAPACITY: MAINTAINING CREDIBILITY?

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Within the context of the “Think Global - Act European” project, *Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute* has mobilised a group of 17 European think tanks to explore the ways to attain a more integrated strategy for the EU’s external action. Experts have confronted their analyses in occasion of a series of working seminars (economic interests, strategic resources, migrations, EU neighbourhood and CSDP), organised throughout Europe in October 2012. Policy papers and final report will be available soon.

The third seminar of the project “Think Global - Act European” dedicated to European external action, took place in Paris on October 24<sup>th</sup> 2012. The seminar focused on the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The ensuing debate was shaped by the contributions of the members of working group V:

- **Jean-Pierre Darnis**, Senior Research Fellow, Deputy Head of the Security and Defence Department, *Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)*;
- **Elvire Fabry**, Senior Research Fellow, EU external action, “Think Global Act European” Project Director, *Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute*;
- **Ronja Kempin**, Head of Division, EU External Relations, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)*;
- **Daniel Keohane**, Head of Strategic Affairs, *FRIDE*;
- **Jan Techau**, Director, *Carnegie Europe*;
- **Nick Witney**, Senior Policy Fellow, *European Council of Foreign Relations (ECFR)*.

The debate also benefited from the participation of:

- **Général Patrick de Rousiers**, Chairman of the EU Military Committee (EUMC);
- **Général Jean-Paul Perruche**, Research Director for European and Transatlantic Security at the French Ministry of Defense’s Institute for Strategic Research - IRSEM and President of Eurodéfense-France, former Director-General, EU Military Staff;
- **Captain (Navy) François Rebour**, ‘European Union’ Head of Office of the International Organisations Directorate, Joint Defence Staff - French Ministry of Defence;
- **Andrea Gilli**, Visiting Fellow, EUISS.

For the first time since the 2008 ESS review, discussion on the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is again on the European Council agenda for December 2013. While the Libyan intervention underlined the Europeans’ continuing dependence on American’s military equipment and exposed deep inter-European differences on the use of force, deep cuts in national defence budgets call for a re-evaluation of CSDP aims, tools and lessons learnt. The EU is certainly a geo-economic actor yet barely a geopolitical one capable of anticipating new geopolitical challenges in the world and how these may affect EU security. It needs to determine how to retain the ability to promote European values and interests, shaping an international system that will ensure continued security and prosperity.

Is there a rationale for renewing CSDP ambitions? And what are the prospects for a strengthened CSDP? Within the context of lower financial capacity and the expected implications for EU hard power capacities, are Europeans effectively aligning policies to this new reality? Do political actors sufficiently anticipate the impact of potential capability gaps if budget cuts are not met by more European coordination? Can a role for the CSDP be envisaged as a tool to reinforce the implementation of other EU policies, notably so in the neighbourhood?

Europeans need a more long term strategy and a clearer sense of the EU’s shared strategic defence preferences in order to establish a defined perimeter, be it geographical or functional, for CSDP action.

## 1. Arguments and prospects for a new CSDP?

**Security-related issues are treated by politicians with little seriousness despite the increasing military capacities of new economic powers - particularly China.** Disappointment regarding the Lisbon Treaty external action outputs and the perceived failures in Iraq and Afghanistan contributed to generating 'CSDP fatigue'. European citizens perceive themselves as safe, despite both novel and enduring potential threats (the Russia of Putin, the unsettled situation in the Western Balkans, the evolutions of the Arab Spring and the overlap with the Syrian conflict in the Middle East). Member states officially endorse the logic of pooling and sharing yet cuts in national defence occur with too little consideration for EU coordination or efficiency. Severe cleavages in strategic priorities persist across member states preventing the development of capabilities and policy formulation.

Whilst from its incipient the CSDP was meant as an intergovernmental track, this has not helped reconcile member states differences. **The policy has attained the maximum possible outputs from the current design of its governing bodies. In order to move forward, the Community method is called for.**

A clarification of the **relevant shared interests that may require Europeans to use force in the future is necessary.** The EU strategy is over-reliant on values, lacking a diagnostic of threats, interests and relative challenges. These interests could be geographic (e.g. neighbourhood; should European renounce to being a security provider in Asia?); functional (e.g. protecting energy supplies; keeping sea lanes open); or existential (e.g. promotion of international law; traditional defence). **The importance of refocusing European security by rebalancing threats against their geographical component calls for the neighbourhood to receive particular attention.**

**An overly comprehensive approach risks emptying the CSDP of all strategic ambition.** The tendency to generate a never-ending list of threats in the name of comprehensiveness (displacement theory) is to be counterbalanced by **a clear definition of what CSDP is able to do and particularly, what it is unable to do.** The strength of the 2003 ESS was precisely that of presenting a broad spectrum of security threats. Yet, ranging from economic security to

pandemics to climate change, the concept of security is suffering from being over-elastic. Whilst larger policy aims must be comprehensive (e.g. democratisation), when it comes down to **specific policies, it must be clear whether CSDP tools can be legitimate and effective.**

## 2. Tailoring the means to the end: adapting CSDP instruments to its strategy

**The EU does not have a defence policy *per se*, and re-defining the role of military forces either as an integration or defence project (or both) are possibilities.** Consensus-building is necessary on the scope and role of civil and military forces in crisis management and on the identification of situations requiring CSDP intervention. The potential for CSDP to move beyond *ad hoc* reactive responses is another question. However, is there sufficient political momentum for the necessary cooperation? The Westerwelle's *Future of Europe* report suggested that there is a desire to step out of the mushy EU foreign policy agenda, clarify priorities and develop further differentiation within CSDP.

The question of whether Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and pooling and sharing (P&S) are truly mutually-reinforcing is raised. Whilst the former constitutes a project, the latter is a process and the two are governed by different logics (integration versus cooperation).

**Implementing PESCO would provide a viable platform for differentiation and further integration.** It outlines a project for moving beyond an intergovernmental approach. A comprehensive PESCO could be envisaged. **Expanding the scope of PESCO to include civilian components would allow it to evolve beyond being an instrument solely dedicated to militarily potent states.** The capacity to deploy police forces, constabulary-like units or constitutional experts could **compensate for an intentionally limited military commitment.** The necessary institutional structures are already in place, the persisting issue is understanding what we want. But PESCO embodies more generally an EU integration challenge and not merely a defence integration process. And it is not clear whether more political integration within the euro area - as currently discussed - may act as a catalyst for more defence integration, as key defence actors, notably the UK, remain outside the euro area.

**Nevertheless, Europeans will only be able to stay in the security business both at home and abroad, if they are able to ensure a sound security and defence market.** The surfacing capability gap and overreliance on NATO has thwarted EU ambition and confidence. The relevance of pooling and sharing and rationalisation are manifest now more than ever. In times of austerity Europeans cannot afford wasteful employment of resources (the Rafale-Eurofighter case). Common programs and requirements are to be undertaken in order to push for industrial consolidation in Europe. Maintaining safety of supply and the development of cutting edge technologies are to be pursued. Rationalisation can push for more complementarity between civilian and defence portfolios and bolster security research. Military forces as users of civilian dual-use technologies are to be encouraged, opening up the potential for the EU to finance the latter. The failed BAE-EADS merger underlines that the industry was ready for consolidation yet progress was blocked by national political interests. The defence industry is defined by the intertwining of industrial, business and political logics, the latter can lead to irrational decision making. Politicians can and should play a constructive role.

**Successful integration for capability development needs top-down capability generation, led by a centralised agency in Brussels.** P&S as presently formulated is a mid-term solution rather than long term, as it will attain full potential only with the creation of a European army. In the absence of political will to move in that direction, **P&S remains subject to serious problems of operations coordination.** A platform for the harmonisation of operational structures is desirable to overcome inconsistent deployment procedures. **Relaunching pooling and sharing requires more focus on information sharing and planning.** Embracing a more functional approach and increasing visibility of political involvement in P&S may build the necessary momentum for pooling and sharing of resources at a subsequent stage.

### 3. Re-assessing the evolving strategic and military contexts to set new priorities for the CSDP

**The EU, and particularly certain unaware member states, need to acquire a better understanding of both the transatlantic relationship and the neighbourhood within the changing geo-strategic context.** Tracking the impact of a US pivot

to Asia and the evolution of the US presence in the Middle East is thus essential. Monitoring such and similar changes is crucial.

**The rise of non-Western powers represent at the same time a challenge and an opportunity for CSDP. In the neighbourhood particularly, these are increasingly active.** The EU has worked closely with non-Western powers in the past (China and Russia on Iran's nuclear plan; China, India, Russia, and Japan in Somalia fighting piracy). Brussels should build on these experiences and **engage with non-Western governments on issues of joint concern in Europe's broad neighbourhood.**

**If Europeans wish to maintain international power and influence - then they must be able to effectively engage with their partners on issues of importance to them.** The Arab Spring is a striking illustration. The crisis-ridden EU can no longer offer substantial economic aid, nor would this be desirable. The understanding missing within CSDP is how military can be used as a tool of statecraft. **Europe's ability to offer defence assistance and training, intelligence and arms, should be a key conduit of influence.** Indeed new North African leaders are deeply concerned by security (border control, lawlessness and extremism in the Sahel) - presenting an opportunity for a vigorous use of EU defence capacities and calling for more CSDP.

**A genuine European strategy can't be obtained by simply adding national interests.** A top-down formulation of a global vision for the EU - what are the core issues (vital resources, neighbourhood, etc.) and what role to play - must be reconciled with bottom-up national interests. It is essential for the CSDP to be considerate of these interests. The CSDP is to remain realistic and reasonable above all else.

**In addition, too often strategic objectives and policies are tackled via project management instead of politics** and strategic reflection. Why this is so, and how to step out of this fatal mechanism is a question that urges further consideration. The so-called three Ms - money, mobility and market access - of the European neighbourhood policy are an example. The extent to which these are firmly inscribed within a more long-term strategic vision for the region is uncertain. Why this is so, and how to step out of this fatal mechanism is a question that urges further consideration.



The project “**Think Global - Act European**” (TGAE) organised by *Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute* is focused on the EU’s external action.

A more integrated global strategy would allow the EU to better respond to the substantial changes that are affecting the international arena. More coherence and coordination between internal policies and external policies as well as mitigation of institutional discrepancies through reinforced dialogue between EU institutions on those new challenges are thus scrutinised by the [17 European think tanks](#) involved in this project:

*Carnegie Europe (Brussels), CCEIA (Nicosia), CER (London), CEPS (Brussels), demosEUROPA (Warsaw), DIIS (Copenhagen), ECFR (London, Madrid, Berlin, Paris, Sofia), EGMONT (Brussels), EPC (Brussels), Real Instituto Elcano (Madrid), Eliamep (Athens), Europeum (Prague), FRIDE (Madrid, Brussels), IAI (Rome), Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute (Paris), SIEPS (Stockholm), SWP (Berlin).*

They confront their analyses on key strategic issues: economic interests, sustainable development, migration, the EU neighbourhood and security.

After a series of policy papers, the [final report](#) will be published in March 2013 under the direction of Elvire Fabry, Senior Research Fellow at *Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute*.

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Elvire Fabry and Chiara Rosselli, *TGAE Synthesis, Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute, December 2012*

*Other syntheses of TGAE seminars on economic interests and migrations available soon.*

EU’S NEIGHBOURHOOD AS AN OPPORTUNITY?

Elvire Fabry and Chiara Rosselli, *TGAE Synthesis, Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute, November 2012*

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Bertrand de Largentaye, *Policy Paper No. 59, Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute, October 2012*

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Elvire Fabry, *Synthesis, Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute, October 2012*

DEFENCE SPENDING IN EUROPE: CAN WE DO BETTER WITHOUT SPENDING MORE?

Fabio Liberti, *Policy Paper No. 46, Notre Europe, June 2011*

THINK GLOBAL – ACT EUROPEAN REPORTS

First edition (2008), second edition (2010), third edition (2011), fourth edition (*to be published in March 2013*)

Elvire Fabry (dir.), *Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute*

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