



EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF



GREEN- Global Re-ordering: Evolution through European Networks

This policy brief reports on emerging findings and policy recommendations from the Framework Programme 7 project GR:EEEN, coordinated by the University of Warwick with partners from 16 countries.

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INTRODUCTION

CFSP and CSDP after Lisbon: facing the challenge of a multipolar world

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This policy brief draws on emerging findings and policy recommendations from the Policy Platform on “The EU CFSP in a Multipolar World”, organized in Rome on May 17th-18th 2012 in the Framework Programme 7 project GR:EEEN. This platform brought together 31 globally selected researchers, academics and think tankers.

The Lisbon Treaty entered into force on 1 December 2009. The turbulent process which accompanied its redaction and ratification fuelled expectations of a more efficient system of EU foreign policy making. Since then, the EU has faced important challenges, which reveal the centrality of setting up a sound strategy on how to deal with a mutating international environment. A new constellation of power at the global level, institutional reforms, social and political unrests, economic and financial instability, both in Europe and in its immediate neighbourhood, have profoundly challenged the newly established architecture which deals with foreign affairs.

With the Lisbon arrangements up and running now, both in Brussels and the Delegations, the important task of setting up clear strategic priorities for the EU’s external action seem still to be vague and imprecise. How the EU should deal with instability; how to deal best with NATO and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) assets, and how to reform multilateral international institutions remain open to questions.

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EVIDENCE & ANALYSIS

The International Environment

It is a common place to assume that we live in an increasingly multipolar world: a world in which a growing number of – emergent or well established – poles of power interact. The distribution of power in a polycentric international system is a moving target; it is fast changing, context- and sector-dependent.

Among emerging powers, China, in particular, is widely perceived as a potential challenger to the US-dominated liberal order and its hegemonic position within it. While different hypotheses on the final outcome of this power shift can be drawn, a clear-cut scenario on the new global order is hard to advance. The gap between the US and the EU and emerging powers cannot be exaggerated either, with the US and the EU still maintaining a relatively solid position of strength in terms of GDP per capita or military capability.

The mutating international balance of power has widened the gap between the global governance system and its efficiency to deal with pressing challenges (from regional instability to the environmental dossier). In parallel, this system is more and more undermined by the scant legitimacy of multilateral fora and their ability to represent the mutating international landscape. Accordingly, both established and emerging players regard the reform of multilateral fora as a central component of their global strategies. Growing interdependence among international actors is, in other terms, coupled with the necessity of a global multi-dimensional political framework, able to address urgent questions on the reform of multilateral institutions to deal, *inter alia*, with sustainable growth and development and regional stability.

In this context, increasing multipolarity can be regarded as both a risk and an opportunity for the EU. While the EU has developed a vocal rhetoric and a genuine commitment to multilateralism, the on-going issue of how to reform multilateral organizations constitutes a challenge to the EU's inherited position of strength in these institutions. Multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations (UN) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are still representative of a system which emerged after WWII. This is most apparent in the IMF where the EU member states cumulatively have double the weight of the US and over three times the cumulative weight of the BRICS (Brazil, India, Russia and China, later sided by South Africa).

In parallel, cementing and exerting direction to relations at the bilateral level with emerging powers seems a necessary double track strategy for the EU. To cope with the mutating international environment, the EU has established ten so-

called strategic partnerships with Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the US. While this list accounts for evident heterogeneity and different strategic relevance, a strategic approach to bilateral partnerships can encompass both profit-maximizing and system-shaping goals.² The scope of these partnerships can and should go beyond the bilateral remit, to include a strategy on how to enhance mini-lateral and multilateral cooperation with emerging regional and global players.

The EU is called upon for a stronger ability to act militarily, alongside its capacity as norm setter in multilateral fora. In terms of security, the EU's solid relationship with the US has allowed it to pursue its normative and economically focused agendas in a relatively comfortable position. On the one hand, the EU member states recognized the opportunity cost of American umbrage for much of the Cold War, leaving the Community to build up its "soft" tools of global governance. On the other, with the US calling for slow but continuous military disengagement from Europe and the redeployment of such resources in the Middle East and Asia – expressed, for instance, in its January 2012 "US Defence Strategic Guidance" – the EU has wrestled with the issue of how to deploy its civilian and military capabilities and, more importantly, to what strategic end.

The Libyan campaign, Operation Unified Protector, was formally a NATO mission, under the direction of France and the UK. The limits inherent in the CSDP call into question the ability of the EU to pursue autonomous military actions and call for a reflection on if and whether to further integrate with NATO and under what conditions. In this context, it is the structure, nature and role of the CSDP that is questioned. The Eurozone crisis bore witness to drastic cuts in defence budgets in most European countries. As was reported, the EU member states cumulatively underwent a cut in their combined defence spending from \$276,784m in 2009 to \$254,886m in 2010. The Libyan campaign found the EU politically divided and militarily unprepared, with big member states, such as France and the UK unable to sustain military commitment of a limited kind at the EU direct borders.³

The EU is still dealing with the institutional adjustments of the Lisbon Treaty. These pose both incredible institutional challenges and issues to ensuring political direction to an EU torn apart from deep economic crisis and internal disagreement. In this overall framework, the EU is still struggling with the on-going effects of the Eurozone crisis, with challenges connected not only to the overall stability of the Eurozone, but to the overall legitimacy of the European

² See Giovanni Grevi (2010), Making EU Strategic Partnerships effective, Madrid, Fride.

³ See Jolyon Howorth (2012), CSDP and NATO Post-Libya: Towards the Rubicon?, Egmont Security Policy Brief, No 35.

integration process. While the EU seems to be destined to an era of slow growth and financial austerity, the financial crisis shows the relatively stable growth of emerging powers. The unhealthy state of the Eurozone questions the ability of the EU to find a space in the process of redefining the system of global governance.

The New External Relations Template

The 2009 Treaty of Lisbon was welcomed as an attempt to dismantle the Pillar Structure, inaugurated with the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. As in a temple, the Maastricht system created a policy-making structure based on three pillars: the European Communities; Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP); and Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). CFSP and ESDP were maintained under intergovernmental control, while other fields of external action were managed under the so-called Community method.

Notwithstanding the changes brought about by the Lisbon Treaty and the setting up of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU foreign policy system remains highly fragmented, involving different procedures and actors. This plurality of actors and decision-making centers results in a windmill of actions, faces and declarations, which blurs the EU's overall external visibility and coherence.

The EEAS represented an unprecedented institutional merger between the part of the Commission's Directorates General (DGs) dealing with External Affairs, and parts of the Council Secretariat General dealing with foreign and security policy matters. With the provision of also integrating diplomats of the member states, the new organizational chart of the EEAS is, in principle, better equipped for guaranteeing a more pronounced foreign policy and strategic role.

But important hurdles remain. Decision-making still follows different logics. In the case of CFSP and CSDP, the system evokes past institutional arrangements, whereas an enhanced European Council sets up the general guidelines for CFSP and CSDP, and the Council of Ministers adopts most decisions and actions on the basis of unanimous votes. In parallel, the European Commission maintains its power of initiative in its areas of competence, such as trade, development and humanitarian aid.

Accordingly, a plurality of actors is still entitled to speak on behalf of the EU, and competition between different EU bureaucracies remains part of the daily business of EU foreign policy. The new structure continues to reflect the distinction between the so-called security and economic aspects of foreign policy. In this framework, the Commission still holds the bulk of financing management of foreign policy instruments and strategically important DGs – such as trade and humanitarian aid and civil protection. To further complicate the picture, key areas such as development are

scattered between the Commission and the EEAS. Coordination mechanisms between the EEAS, DG TRADE and DEVCO have still to be fully worked out, notably when it comes to the programming of instruments.

Cooperation in CSDP matters is moving in the direction of finding mechanisms to implement common actions on the ground a stronger logistic cooperation. In this framework, different “pooling and sharing” military and civilian operations have been launched in order to join member states’ (limited) resources for common endeavours.⁴ The 2004 established European Defence Agency (EDA) can and should carry on analysing the potentials for “pooling and sharing” military and civilian assets to support and implement member states’ specific projects. In March 2011, the EDA Steering Board individuated ten clear top priorities to enhance joint military/civilian assets.⁵

As the December 2010 European Defence Ministers Council in Ghent witnesses, the EU member states are jointly working on how to increase military capabilities and civil-military synergies, both in the framework of CSDP and NATO. As reported,⁶ the meeting individuated three headings for cooperation in matters of defence assets: 1) those remaining under national control, focusing on a stronger interoperability at the EU level; 2) those that offer margins for pooling; 3) and those offering potential for a re-examination on the basis of role and task-sharing. In this context, the German and Swedish joint paper on “Intensifying Military Cooperation in Europe” can be welcomed as an attempt to set out the goal to “preserve and enhance national operational capabilities: - with improved effect, sustainability, interoperability and cost efficiency as a result”⁷.

⁴ The 2010 European Air Transport Command (EATC, based at the Eindhoven Airbase in the Netherlands, offering a joint set of assets to the air transport fleets of France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium), or the 2012, the EDA Steering Board-sponsored Franco-German-Dutch project for the joint procurement of air-to-air refueling aircraft being an illustrative example.

⁵ These priorities include: Counter Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED); Medical Support; Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance; Increased Availability of Helicopters; Cyber Defence; Multinational Logistic Support; CSDP Information Exchange; Strategic and Tactical Airlift Management; Fuel and Energy; Mobility Assurance. Information available at: <http://www.eda.europa.eu/Capabilitiespriorities/Top10priorities>

⁶ Jolyon Howorth (2012), CSDP and NATO Post-Libya: Towards the Rubicon?, Egmont Security Policy Brief, No 35.

⁷ The paper identified six areas of cooperation: (a) harmonization of military requirements; (b) research and development; (c) acquisition; (d) training and exercises; (e) command structures and procedures; (f) operating costs. Defence Ministers and Development Ministers - BACKGROUND1 FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL - Brussels, 9 December 2010.

Successful and Unsuccessful Cases in the Aftermath of Lisbon

While strategic partners do not necessarily share the EU vision, stronger tenets to build these partnerships are urgently needed in order to set up viable strategies to cope with global challenges. The Copenhagen summit in 2009, for instance, demonstrated that neither the US nor the BRICS were keen to let the EU lead the environmental dossier at the multilateral level any longer. The failure of the summit was unanimously interpreted as a failure of the EU's environmental project. In retrospect, the EU probably did not choose the most suitable venue to pursue the objective of reducing CO₂ emissions, a goal which could be better pursued by targeting countries like the US and China at the bilateral level.⁸

In contrast to the Copenhagen summit, the widely acknowledged success of the 2011 COP-17 climate negotiations in Durban, highlighted the necessity for the EU to seek convergence over shared objectives. This ultimately means to acknowledge the importance of having emerging powers like China, India or Brazil on board when advancing global proposals. Durban showed that the EU needs to be ready to make concessions and to lower its normative stake when needed. The Durban lesson also points at the ability to deploy strategically both bilateral and multilateral diplomatic instruments for the sake of achieving desired outcomes. Bilateral diplomacy therefore remains crucial to enhance the EU's international stance. The EU-India Maritime Agreement is a case in point, whereas bilateral engagement with strategic partners can sustain the emergence of a shared vision, based on a concerted response to common challenges.

In contrast, the Libyan intervention has been vocally recognized as a failure: not only did it show the limits of the institutional engineering and the lack of a centralized planning system, but it witnessed a tendency towards renationalization of foreign policy on the part of most member states. As main drivers, France and the UK struggled to decide whether to act as members of the EU, strengthen their individual position within NATO or to establish themselves as key independent players in the South Mediterranean Rim. Lengthy planning, internal coordination misfits; the reluctance of many member states to deploy the EU's rapid reaction instruments show the inability of the EU to act autonomously when the military option is at stake.

⁸ See, for instance, O. GEDEN, *Leading by Example, Revisited: Can the EU still serve as a model to lead global climate policy?*, 2010, available at: <http://hir.harvard.edu/women-in-power/leading-by-example-revisited>.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Improved Cooperation and Clearly Set Strategy and Priorities

The magnitude of the global changes outlined above obliges the EU to reinforce both legs of the EU's external action, by improving institutional coordination and delivery of policy measures in the short term, while defining and enforcing long-term strategic objectives in the European Council.

An enhanced system of policy-coordination and clearer rules on diplomatic representation, both in multilateral and bilateral frameworks, should be the first priority to pursue to both recreate a sense of unity among European actors and enhance the EU's international role. In times of crisis, institutional engineering calls upon more than random adaptation. It requires a real project, coupled with bravery and imagination. The Commission and, with its enhanced staff, the EEAS, can offer incredible know-how and experience in relevant policy-sectors. Enhancing synergies in all stages of the policy-cycle and setting up a credible system of information sharing between institutions and member states could allow the EU to overcome the long transitional stage of the reform. Enhancing synergies also means better coordinating EU and member states' policies in those areas where they share competences.

Clarifying Leadership

The current institutional arrangements are not necessarily clarifying the famous "EU telephone number" issue. With the growing importance of financial and economic issues at the global level, the EU is not still equipped to speak with one voice.

The newly appointed High Representative/Vice President was called to pursue the difficult task of a) setting up the new EEAS from scratch; b) making the EEAS work in the overall system to deal with external affairs; c) respond to external challenges, such as those posed by the Arab Spring in the immediate aftermath of the establishment of the EEAS. As was reported, the leadership capacity of Catherine Ashton was severely questioned. While it is probably too early to assess her performance, this confirms the difficulty to perform this new institutional role in a satisfactory way. If this is the case, the overall institutional architecture should be massively and openly re-discussed.

More generally, in a moment of undeniable international weakness, the EU should consider a massive change in its public diplomacy. A less declaratory and more concession-oriented public diplomacy could help the EU to make up for a deficit of international credibility.

Reform of Multilateral Organizations

The EU still needs to develop a coherent strategy on how to reform international fora, one which combines a fairer distribution of seats, with consideration of how to pursue its goals in an increasingly multipolar context. The EU should concert a cohesive strategy on how to obtain the most. This implies deciding what kind of concessions need to be made, while acknowledging that if we do not stand united then “together we’ll fall”. Through its voluble support for effective multilateralism and good (global) governance, the EU has unwittingly set itself a test in the light of the demand from the BRICS for fairer representation in the international institutions. The time has come to readdress these “inherited” positions of strength, while negotiating the best options for the EU as a whole.

This is why the EU should focus on how to reform multilateral institutions strategically and to make concessions where needed, if it wants to maintain credibility on the international scene, defending the common interests of the member states and pursuing coherently its multilateral vocation. Being unprepared to meet such challenges implies that the EU will not be able to negotiate better deals.

CSDP – A Better Organization

Should the EU want to be in the security and defense business at all, it needs to make choices. Therefore, it is a priority to solve ambiguities and duplication with NATO and to enhance logistic cooperation among the member states in the framework of CSDP.

The US progressive redeployment of military assets outside Europe is massively impacting the future of CSDP. Whatever the combined arrangement between specific targets and general strategy will be, the EU needs to forge a clear EU-led response. Common strategic objectives and means need to be clearly defined, in an exercise that focuses on issues of organizational and logistical assets alongside issues of leadership.

It is commonly agreed that CSDP should remain on the EU agenda, but the way forward remains contentious. On the one hand, some observers argue that the EU should prioritize the development of its own military and civil capabilities *within* the framework of CSDP. This would allow the EU to pursue “pure EU objectives” and to affirm its autonomous role vis-à-vis third parties on the ground of a renewed solidarity among the member states. On the other hand, others emphasize the necessity to enhance the EU leadership *within* NATO as a way to both empower its overall ability to act in the military field and to cement the transatlantic alliance. This recalibration of the EU role within NATO would allow the EU to avoid duplications and to make the most of NATO assets. Whatever direction will be taken, the EU should clearly set the priority of designing a better architecture for CSDP.

In order to craft the way forward, the EU should set up a clear leeway on how to implement CSDP measures. With debates on both the institutional location of the EEAS and the general definitions of CSFP objectives monopolizing the attention of both the EU and its member states, narrow room has been left to define, in operational terms, what treaty provisions – such as mutual defence (art 42.7 TEU) and solidarity (art 222 TEU) – mean in practice. “Pooling and sharing” exercises between member states are contributing to enhance the EU ability to act in the military and civil fields, despite the scanty level of institutionalization of the policy field. The December 2010 European Defence Ministers Council in Ghent seems to point in the right direction: the EU member states’ need to build upon these kinds of meetings to expand the scope of their cooperation. In this context, “pooling and sharing” exercises cannot be any longer left to the initiative of few member states: enhancing shared assets require common effort and responsibility.