

## Strengthening Foreign Policy Coherence and the Capacity to Act

Janis A. Emmanouilidis / Franco Algeri

The European Union is one of the few producers of stability in a world of transition. The common currency, the big common market and the impact of the integration model make the EU an important factor in world politics. But the EU still lags behind its citizens' demands and the expectations of third parties.

To date, the EU has not lived up to the demands of the Treaty on the European Union, according to which all foreign-policy measures taken by the EU within the framework of its foreign, security, economic and development policies must be coherent. The split between foreign trade and foreign policy representation of European interests is becoming more and more anachronistic. Deficits are most evident in the spread of competencies within the European Commission, the continuous rotation of Council Presidencies, the sub-optimal position of the Secretary General of the Council in crisis management, the competition of various coordinating committees of the member states, and the delimitation of the division of labour between the European level and the policies of the member states.

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Strengthening the EU's coherence and capacity to act as a holistic, international security actor requires implementing a far-reaching series of measures:

**(1) Overcoming the Anachronistic Pillar Structure**

To translate a comprehensive understanding of security into concrete policies, to link external and internal security, and to apply all available resources effectively, further steps towards integrating the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) into the institutional framework of the Community are required. To a large degree, the separation between communitarian and intergovernmental policy areas can no longer be maintained. The spectrum of foreign policy actions, including foreign trade relations, ought to be brought together to form a coherent common policy so that the resources of the Council and the Commission and the member states' advisory and decision-making bodies can be used more efficiently.

**(2) Commission as Coordinator of the EU's Non-Military Foreign Policy**

At a time when the boundaries between external and internal security are blurring and the coherence of military and civilian measures is gaining importance, an independent Commission committed to a common European interest will increasingly become the central institutional link between pillars and policies. It will play a key role in combining the big security policy goals with the realisation of concerted action in interior policy. If the EU's entire potential for foreign policy action is to be realised, the Commission must be endowed with a stronger role in CFSP.

**(3) Personal Union between the High Representative and the External Relations Commissioner**

In an enlarging EU, rotating presidencies are not adequate to give the Union a foreign policy profile. In a crisis, this system of external representation is completely inadequate. A key actor enjoying the support of the member states and the Commission must be clearly identifiable for third parties.

Thus the functions of the High Representative for the CFSP and the Commissioner in charge of external relations ought to be combined in one person enjoying the right of initiative. The institutional connection between the Council and the Commission resulting from this personal union would strengthen the coherence of the various elements of EU foreign policy and lend an efficient and coordinated external representation to the Union.

**(4) Reform of the Council**

The General Council should increasingly concentrate on its coordinating and legislative functions. This requires that it be relieved mainly of questions related to CFSP, which should no longer be dealt with in the General Council but rather in a separate formation of the Council. With regard to the military dimension of European security policy, there

is a need for a clear assignment of competencies to a Council of Defence Ministers in delimitation to the responsibilities of Foreign Ministers. Overall, the Council could be chaired by an elected president chosen from among the member states, and supported by vice-presidents.

#### **(5) Introducing Majority Voting in Non-military Questions**

In order to strengthen the enlarged EU as a foreign and security policy actor, more efficient decision-making methods are necessary. Beyond the possibility of “constructive abstention”, decisions without military reference ought to be based on qualified majority voting in the Council. Opt-out clauses for EU members which cannot agree to a particular EU foreign policy ought to be taken into consideration.

#### **(6) Stronger Integration of the EP into all Non-military Aspects**

Legitimacy is of major importance if CFSP is to be accepted by the population. For the purpose of twofold legitimisation, and to supplement the primary role of national parliaments, the competencies of the European Parliament need to be reinforced in all non-military questions. Participation of the EP ought to be extended so that it enjoys the right of co-decision concerning all non-military questions of CFSP.

#### **(7) Reforming the Decision-Making and Co-ordination Procedures in the Military Domain**

The deployment of military means within the framework of the intergovernmental ESDP requires the reform of the decision-making and co-ordinating procedures. If *ad hoc* military coalitions outside the Treaty are to be avoided, revised or new procedures and structures will have to guarantee that those states willing and able to cooperate are able to do so efficiently – without, however, neglecting the other EU members’ interests. Possible procedures of such a “regulated flexibility” could work as follows:

- (i) The instruments of *enhanced co-operation* would be extended onto questions with military and security policy context. Enhanced co-operation must already be applied in the decision-making stage and should not merely be limited to the implementation of joint actions.
- (ii) A “*European Security Council*” responsible for the execution of a concrete military action, which has, in principle, been endorsed by all member states in the Council, could be established. States making a substantial military contribution would have a right of veto. Based on the principle of rotation, the other EU members could be represented in the Security Council.

### **(8) Overall Strategy of European Foreign Policy**

Given the experience in the Balkans, the imminent enlargement, the new risks of terrorism and the demands of global peace politics, the concepts and structures of European security and defence policy need to be adapted. The continued development of a common foreign policy culture necessitates a geostrategic orientation for European foreign policy. The EU must clearly define its common interests and the geographic range of its policy, reach an agreement on how to legitimise the deployment of military means and jointly determine, and correspondingly combine, the necessary capacities and resources. A strategic focus for European policy-making requires that the different fields of action, such as trade and economy, development and co-operation as well as aspects of internal and external security, are considered as elements of one sustainable overall strategy and are applied in a coordinated manner that respects the principle of division of labour.