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The European Defence Agency and the discursive construction of European defence and security

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Introduction

Created in 2004, the European Defence Agency has had a moderately successful record thus far, rising as both a discussion forum between governments, industry and the military, and as a promoter of measures and policies within the framework of its four main areas – defence capabilities development; armaments cooperation; defence market and industrial base; and research and technology. Attached to the creation of the EDA is the notion that in the face of a globalised world (and its threats), coordinating efforts regarding the acquisition, research and procurement of defence equipment is the best way to achieve a more efficient European defence.

Building on previous work from the author (Barrinha, 2010) this chapter examines, from a critical constructivist perspective, how the agency is discursively justified by some of the key actors in the European defence field. By doing so, it attempts to understand the EDA's *raison d'être* within the European defence.

Following Meyers and Strickmann (2010: 63-65), constructivism has attempted to explain CSDP in three different ways: first, through the understanding of social interaction between relevant actors within the European institutions and between them and member states; second, by focusing on strategic and security cultures as crucial factors in explaining the developments in European defence; finally, by placing a particular emphasis on discourse analysis. This chapter should be understood within the context of this last set of constructivist literature.

In terms of structure, this chapter will start by briefly delving into critical constructivism, justifying its importance within the context of European security research. This will be followed by the contemporary contextualization of the field, highlighting three particular dynamics that the EDA has to deal with: consolidation, blurring between internal and external security and defence budgetary cuts. Given the

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context, the third section of the chapter attempts to understand the agency's existence within the broader context of Europe's defence by proceeding in three steps: first, it highlights the origins of the agency; then it sets the conceptual framework; and, finally, it looks into how the EDA is more than a *mere* agency: how it helps to sustain a particular security context that goes much beyond its direct competencies.

Constructivism and European defence

This chapter is informed by a social constructivist ontological approach, in which the world that we live in is understood as being constructed and reproduced by human agents (Risse, 2004: 160). However, constructivism can be seen through different prisms and different approaches. In this case, the 'version' taken into consideration is what some authors call 'critical constructivism' (*idem*) or what Karin Fierke (2007) labels as 'consistent constructivism', an approach that distinguishes itself from the 'middle ground' approach of authors such as Alexander Wendt (1999) by focusing on the importance of language as central to our apprehension of the world, as its epistemological basis.

Epistemologically, this constructivist ontology leads to the study of social phenomena not as truth-seeking, in which actor's discourses are put in contrast with what 'actually happened', but rather as an interpretation of an intersubjectively constructed 'reality'. As argued by Klotz and Lynch,

> [b]ecause constructivist ontology rejects the notion of an objective reality against which analysts test the accuracy of interpretations, "falsifiability" cannot be the goal. Researchers can do no more than contrast interpretations against other interpretations (2007: 106).

Discourse analysis is at the basis of a constructivist approach. It can be done in several different ways, depending on the authors one follows. Nonetheless they all have, as a common notion, the idea that discourse matters, and that it is more than the mere description of a reality (Risse, 2004: 164).

Indeed, discourse is a constitutive feature of our world, not just an expression of it. According to Jennifer Milliken (2001: 138), there are three main theoretical claims linked to discourse analysis. The first claim tells us that discourses are "structures of signification which construct social realities" *(idem)*. The second claim tells us that discourses produce, reproduce and define things, meanings, and knowledgeable

practices. Finally, the third and last claim is about the play of practice, that is, discourse analysis entails the study of "dominating or hegemonic discourses and their structuring of meaning as connected to implementing practices and ways of making these intelligible and legitimate" (*idem*: 139). This implies an understanding of language in which it describes our world embedded in other discourses and dependent on an ever, even if slowly, changing context. As put by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe:

> The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has nothing to do with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism/idealism opposition. An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of 'natural phenomena' or 'expressions of the wrath of God' depends upon the structuring of a discursive field (1985: 108).

As mentioned before, discourse analysis distinguishes itself from cognitive approaches that try to figure out how people think and perceive (Wæver, 2004: 199). It tries to "find the structures and patterns in public statements that regulate political debate so that certain things can be said while other things will be meaningless or less powerful or reasonable" (*idem*). It draws attention to the communicative resources through which the socio-political sphere is produced and reproduced (Jabri, 1996: 90); it draws attention to the fact that language is not just used to describe politics, it makes it possible (Wæver, 2006: 11). It does not claim that there is nothing else than discourse, just that discourse is "the layer of reality where meaning is produced and distributed", and, as such, it deserves to be analysed (Wæver, 2004: 199). This does not mean that material conditions do not matter: they do "play a key role in making certain courses of action more or less likely, and by doing so, can either spark debates about appropriateness of pre-existing beliefs and norms or reinforce them" (Meyer and Strickmann, 2011: 74); however, it is only through discourse that those practices and material conditions are meaningful.

Discourse analysis is weak in finding 'real' motives or intentions (Buzan et al, 1998: 177). Nonetheless, besides the advantage of allowing for the possibility to study in depth the production and reproduction of political discourse and practices – the visible, public dimension of politics – by focusing on what is communicated, it also allows for the study of how words can create unintended effects from which it is difficult to get out of, even if

one would like to, or even if those words were not deliberate (Wæver, 2004: 212), something a cognitive approach would overlook. As summarised by Hannah Arendt,

> [t]here may be truths beyond speech, and they may be of great relevance to man in the singular, that is, to man insofar as he is not a political being, whatever else may be. Men in the plural, that is, men insofar as they live and move and act in this world, can experience meaningfulness only because they can talk with and make sense to each other and to themselves (1998 [1958]: 4).

Discourse is thus fundamental to apprehend the political character of institutions and processes.

In recent years, several authors in the field of Security Studies have focused on the analysis of discourse as a relevant if not essential feature within their field of inquiry. Authors such as David Campbell (1998), Ole Wæver (2002), Lene Hansen (2006), Karen Fierke (2001), Michael Williams (2007) or Jeff Huysmans (2006) have highlighted the importance of discourse analysis in their works. In terms of European security literature, there's also a growing literature focused on discursive approaches (cf. Barnutz, 2010; Barrinha and Rosa, 2013; Gariup, 2009).

The same cannot be said about both the role of defence industries in the European context or the specific role of the European Defence Agency. As argued in previous work (Barrinha, 2010), that is an important gap in the literature, for two main reasons. First, because discourse analysis is fundamental to understand the political implications and meanings of both the EU as a political project and of the defence industry as a sector intimately related to that project. Second, because the specific character of agencies such as the EDA (underfunded, understaffed, but influential in terms of shaping policy-making) makes an analysis that emphasises the ideational over the material more pertinent for the understanding of its political influence within the European security field. In that sense, the following section will set the ideational context in which the political construction of the EDA is framed.

EDA in the context of European defence

Though ample in competencies, the EDA is limited in terms of its budget and human resources. With a budget of just over 30 million euro and about 120 employees, the EDA faces the additional task of dealing in an area that is still pretty much (mis)understood as an exclusive domain of state sovereignty (Bátora, 2009: 1084). In

that regard, the EDA closely resembles other EU agencies, such as Europol and Frontex in that their ideational role largely surpasses their institutional one. As Carrapico and Trauner highlight regarding Europol: "With member states increasingly adhering to Europol's policy recommendations, Europol has expanded its (*de facto*, not *de jure*) role in EU organised crime policy-making" (2013: 5). Also regarding Frontext, the EU's border management agency, its work in knowledge production through risk-assessment and intelligence reports can "be seen as securitising practices that contribute to the securitisation of asylum and migration in the EU" (Léonard, 2010: 244).

For the EDA, that capacity is even more important as it is "[s]hort of the ability to act on a par with the regulatory agencies in the EU" it "has to rely upon a number of alternative procedures supporting intergovernmental networking in the defence sector" (Bátora, 2009: 1084). This implies encompassing different ongoing dynamics, namely the push for the liberalisation of the defence industry, the progressive blurring between security and defence equipment and needs and the different national interests and priorities within the European space, particularly in a time of strong financial constraints.

The liberalisation agenda

In the United States, the end of the Cold War signalled the need for a significant resizing of its defence industry, leading to the significant reduction in terms of companies operating in the field. In Europe it would take longer, but eventually, there was also a merging process between key companies that led to the constitution of a few industry giants, namely BAE Systems and EADS.

This meant that relations between states and industry were further complexified with pan-European companies, such as EADS, sharing the field with 'national champions', and other smaller companies focused on niche sectors. The discourse was also progressively defined by economic criteria, as defence budgets across Europe were suffering significant cuts. As put by the Economist at the time: "Whereas it used to be about weapons performance, it now is about economies of scale" (The Economist, 1997).

Even though a market-oriented discourse progressively took hold, that happened in a field in which "contracts are few but huge, and customers are few but powerful, so market forces do not work" (The Economist, 2002). One can thus register this

paradoxical evolution in the defence sector in which there's been a progressive push for the liberalisation of what used to exclusively be state-owned national companies – very similar to what has been happening in other economic sectors –without the necessary open markets in which these companies could operate, and with a significant public investment in research (Hammarström, 2006: 10).

Blurring the divide between security and defence

Not only is the EDA developing within a context of increasing liberalisation dynamics and market oriented discourses and policies, but it is also part of the constitution of an a security field where the distinction between the external and the internal is less and less clear:

> Defence is sometimes viewed as being military and focused on external security, whereas contemporary homeland security is predominantly internally focussed and civilian. The reality is that divisions are not clear cut. Policing, intelligence and border control customs vary considerably within the EU as does the role of the military in internal security (Mawdsley, 2011: 11).

Crisis management, technological developments, and the need to seek economies of scale are taking military forces and industries in the direction of homeland security and vice-versa, as recognised by the former head of Finmeccanica, Pier Francesco Guarguaglini: "A peculiar feature of the evolving security dimension is the more and more blurring distinction between homeland and international security, as well as between civil and military applications" (2010: 4). In Britain and France, recent reviews of their respective strategic documents directly acknowledge those changes (Mawdsley, 2011: 11) and within the EU institutions that has certainly become a key motto in how to approach CSDP[1].

Crisis management. As the core business of CSDP, a successful EU crisis management lies, in the words of Catherine Ashton, "with its ability to combine military and civilian means in support of our [EU's] missions" (Ashton, 2010: 5). In that regard, the Council approved in 2009 a Comprehensive Approach to crisis management that "underlined

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[1] According to the former Chairman of the European Union MIlitary Committee, "Security measures, military as well as civilian, are inextricably linked to strengthening governance structures and economic development" (Syrén, 2010: 7).

the need to identify synergies between civilian and military capability development - in particular referring to the Agency's efforts in the research area" (Weis, 2010b: 6). As a consequence, "[t]he Ministerial Steering Board in November launched the European Framework Cooperation (EFC) for Civilian Security, Space and Defence-Related Research with the aim to systematically synchronise R&T investment by EDA, the European Commission and the European Space Agency" (idem). Making the EU more efficient in this field is a priority for High Representative Ashton, which means that these "synergies between civil and military capability development" (Ashton, 2010: 6) will certainly be further "fostered" (idem) in the foreseeable future.

Technological development. This civ-mil discourse on crisis management is, to a large extent, the result of over two decades of European peace operations that have certainly produced lessons learned by on the field, namely the need for comprehensive approaches that go beyond the military use of force.

However, this discourse is equally related to a broader tendency that merges the internal and the external, of which the increasing use of hybrid gendarmerie forces in peace operations is but an example. This pattern is potentiated by technology, with security forces being endowed with the means to undertake 'militarized' tasks (and vice-versa).

That is the case with the use of UAVs (a.k.a. drones). Even though designed for military purposes, as a sign of the increasing overlap between internal and external security, there seems to be in the Justice and Home Affairs field a significant enthusiasm for the use of drones, particularly, for border surveillance. A document presented by the European Commission recently proposed the use of the Southern Mediterranean in the framework of the project EUROSUR (Franceschi-Bicchieri 2012) and countries such as Austria are using them for the surveillance of its Eastern borders.

In addition to the growing importance of dual use, or related to it, there is the increasing role civilian companies play in the development of technology that is then used by the military sector as expressed by the British government, for whom "[a]dvanced technology development, which was once the realm of Government research organisations, is now carried out almost exclusively in the civil and commercial sectors" (MoD 2012: 38). That is also recognised by the EDA itself when it asserts that technological development is increasingly "proceeding outside the control of governments and with the commercial sector fully in the driving seat" (EDA 2008:

22).

The liberalisation push is here added by the progressive blurring between external and internal security, creating a context in which companies that produce military equipment find their business either mostly reliant on civilian equipment (such as the case of EADS) or dependent on civilian produced technology (Mawdsley, 2011: 17). Be it a cause or a consequence, there seems to be a progressive interest on the part of the industry to further contribute to the blurring between (internal) security and (external) defence.

Industry interests. Doctrine changes in crisis management and events such as 9/11 have contributed to the increasing visibility of a homeland security sector that, nowadays, deserves more attention from the common citizen (and, therefore, willingness to spend) than the classic defence sector. The above-mentioned technological developments have allowed industries to increasingly focus on the homeland security market, in search for further business opportunities (Sköns and Surry, 2007: 346). In that sense, blurring the internal and the external has also acquired a strategic interest for companies working in defence.

This industry lobby was quite visible in 2004, when the European Commission asked a Group of Personalities to draft a report on security research. Mostly composed of defence related industry and officials, the final report "unsurprisingly [...] contended that there should be no division between military and civilian research and argued for €1 billion per year (minimum) to be spent on security research" (Mawdsley, 2011: 13). This would, in their view, allow Europe "to get a much better return on its defence research investment" (The Group of Personalities, 2004: 13).

It is in this context of shifting borders between what is defence and security; between what is a sovereign prerogative and a private domain; and between commercial priorities and national interests that the defence field – the privileged ground in which the EDA operates – is faced with an additional dynamic: financial cuts.

Financial constraints
Defence budgets across the continent have been facing significant cuts, with obvious consequences in terms of both research and defence procurement. This situation is leading to an inter-related discourse in which financial constraints are leading to a disinvestment in R&D with potentially existential consequences for Europe's defence.

As in the words of the Chairman of the EU Military Committee, Hakan Syrén: "Low levels of R&D and low renewal rates implies that we are mortgaging the future in ways that raise fundamental questions of leadership responsibilities" (2010: 8).

To this, we should add the value-for-money discourse, in which it is necessary to find alternative ways of investing 'smarter' in the sector. Both discourses have, in turn, contributed to a growing advocacy, on the part of both policy elites and industry, for "pan-European solutions" (Meyer and Strickmann, 2010: 76). This is a context that is certainly favourable to the further development of EDA as both a promoter of this pan-European discourse and the facilitator of its implementation.

In short, the EDA nowadays operates in a context that is characterised by the increasing importance of the private sector and liberalisation tendencies, by the progressive lack of clarity regarding what constitutes the (internal) security field and what constitutes (external) defence and by national budgetary constraints that might contribute to facilitate pan-European solutions in terms of arms acquisitions and collaborative development projects. How the EDA negotiates around this context is the focus of the following section.

The EDA and its origins

Though initially proposed within the works of the European Convention, the EDA did not have to wait for the eventually scrapped Constitutional Treaty to come into existence. The Joint Action of 12 July 2004 created the EDA with the explicit aim of helping to improve the EU defence capabilities. It should, in that sense, be a "capability-driven Agency" (Weis, 2010b: 5) supporting "the Council and the Member States in their effort to improve European defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to sustain the ESDP as it stands now and develops in the future". What that exactly meant was (and arguably still is) a cause for division between Europe's two main military powers – France and the UK. Whereas for Paris, the EDA should focus on the consolidation of a European industrial base, for London, it should help "improving the military capabilities of member states" (Guay, 2005: 13), namely by creating the conditions for a more open and competitive European market as well as by promoting joint research and training projects between member states. Regardless of eventual divisions, the EDA was, according to its first Chief executive, established by the member

states "to be their instrument or tool for taking forward what they begin to sense must be, increasingly, their shared agendas" (Witney, 2005).

In that regard, an important dimension of the Agency's work has been the elaboration of voluntary codes of conduct regarding the regulation of the defence market. The first document was approved in 2006 - the Code of Conduct on Defence Procurement that, through the EDA created Electronic Bulletin Board (EBB), attempted to give more transparency to Europe's defence market. The same year, the Code of Best Practice in the Supply Chain was created, covering industry to industry relations in an attempt to also make them use the EBB in cases of sub-contracting of services and equipment. Finally, it elaborated the Code of Conduct on Offsets, in 2009, also with the aim of making the defence market more transparent by limiting the form and amount of counter-incentives involved in defence deals. In practice results have been mixed, at best, with companies and states still widely engaging in deals outside these codes of conduct. Again, this is something that should be put into context both historically and horizontally. Fulfilling the demands inscribed in these codes imply a significant change in the practices of the defence industry, which certainly will not change overnight. However, by engaging member states in voluntarily subscribing to them the EDA is contributing to the definition of a behaviour patter that progressively distinguishes what is acceptable from what is unacceptable. It asserts an Europeanising (and liberalisation) trend that is progressively set as the norm. For that, the EDA is also sided by the European Commission, increasingly interested in regulating the defence market. This does not mean that both institutions have shared interests when it comes to how this regulation should proceed; it however indicates that they are both pushing towards a similar trend, by adopting a very similar language.

Though still within its first decade of existence, its self-assessment points towards a fast maturing institution that "has started to produce concrete results to improve European defence capabilities in different areas" (Weis, 2010b: 5). The President of the EU Council assumes the same position when he says: "the European Defence Agency is a young institution, but in the eight years since its creation, you have made your mark. Knowing well the challenges of setting up something from scratch, I can say this is no small achievement!" (2013: 1).

Understanding the EDA's *raison d'être*

A quick glance at the EDA's website allows one to see all the areas in which the agency is contributing, in its capability-driven approach towards a more integrated and operational European defence. However, and this is why critical constructivism is important to understand bodies such as the EDA, this only tells us a self-written narrative of its *raison d'être*. It misses the political goals it helps to achieve within the context of European defence and how it contributes to either reify or change the status quo of the context in which it was created and developed.

Agency and actor

In order to understand the EDA's existence this paper will now proceed in a two-step analysis that goes from the lower to the higher level of generalisation: from the role of the EDA as an EU Agency to the EDA as an agent for change/continuity of a particular security context. As seen above, the EDA, as a EU intergovernmental agency, "does not possess any instruments to bring about coercive isomorphism in the defence sectors of the member states" (Bátora, 2009: 1094). However, following the footsteps of agencies such as EUROPOL and Frontext, the EDA "is in the position to foster normative isomorphism by setting common standards for defence production and equipment acquisitions" (Bátora, 2009: 1094).

In that regard, one could think there is a thin line separating the EDA as a EU agency from the EDA as a security and defence actor. After all, it is a defence agency; therefore, one goes with the other. For this paper, though, there is an important difference that is reflected in the distinction between its functionalist and its normative dimensions. Regarding the former, the EDA plays a number of expected roles that reflect its competencies as an agency: to conduct research, to propose, to develop, to facilitate, among others. As a defence actor, the EDA fits within a larger European defence field (Williams, 2007; Mérand, 2010) to which it actively contributes through the discourses it attaches to particular issues and practices. Thus, by looking into what the EDA is for, we end up also gathering pieces of a larger puzzle about what European defence, at large, is too.

By acting in the defence field, the EDA is also defined by its security and defence actorness, with the capacity to shape the field, both by its actions and policies, but also by the narratives it constructs and sustains regarding how other actors should behave. In that regard, the EDA was created within a particular socio-political context; a context

that defines what defence is, what the limits of the field are, and what ideological, political and technological driven best practices should be implemented. As a producer of discourses on itself and on its field, as well as an agent about who whom discourses are produced, the EDA contributes to the evolving dynamics - liberalisation, blurring of the internal and the external, and financial constraints - of this broader context whilst contributing to its progressive change.

In that sense, the EDA is a social agent defined by this double identity of being a EU agency (with all its limitations) and a security and defence actor (with all its ideational possibilities).

As the visible institutionalisation of this European defence, CSDP is most of all a EU's power projection tool. As argued by Catherine Ashton: "To be a credible player on the world stage, you need not only will but also the capability to act" (Ashton in Platteau, 2013: 15). The EDA thus works as a "a key facilitator and coordinator of efforts in the area of defence capability development" (Ashton, 2010: 6) so that the EU can act globally. In addition to being a 'facilitator' and a 'coordinator' the EDA can also be seen as a "incubator for future European cooperative armaments projects, which must become an ever-growing share of the equipment of European armed forces in the future" (Morin, 2008: 3).

These are attributes that are related to the EDA as an agency that reflects directly on what European defence should be. The EDA is at the centre of a Europeanisation process of European defence that aims to, progressively move this sphere from the national to the European level, at all levels – from the procurement policies to the military doctrines in use. As put in EDA's own language: "The core role of the EDA is to help governments attain their defence objectives by outlining the efficiency gains that could be a result of doing things together" (Runde, 2013: 36).

As mentioned above, the EDA was created and developed within a security context defined by three main trends: liberalisation, security overlapping and budgetary constraints. The EDA's discourse and the discourse on the EDA has done nothing but to contribute to the normalisation of these dynamics:

> Government has a very special relationship with the defence industry – as customer, regulator, and principal source of research and development funding. But less and less does it remain owner; and, as defence companies move progressively from government to private ownership, and as shareholder funds become increasingly

> prominent in the control of companies, so one may expect the normal laws of globalised economy to apply; capital will flow to optimise returns (EDA, 2006: 31).

Following the EDA, it is expected that 'the normal laws of globalised economy' will apply in the defence sector, despite governments' 'special relationship' with the industry. The agency thus operates from the standpoint that defence will increasingly be a private business, while remaining a market entirely financed (and supported) by taxpayers' money. However, even if accepting this logic, the EDA faces a paradox as, on the one hand, it promotes a stronger intra-European market, stimulating the development of joint European projects and clear codes of conduct; while, on the other hand, the market logic promotes a global search for the best 'value for money', which often implies purchasing US products (Bátora, 2009: 1080).

In both cases it is solidly framed in a neoliberal rhetoric (Oikonomou, 2006) that reproduces a particular discourse about how the public sphere should be governed, including the defence sector. The (increasingly private) defence industry is seen as a stakeholder of prime importance within the EDA's activities. In the 2010 conference, the President of AeroSpace and Defence Industries Association of Europe, Pier Francesco Guarguaglini, were, together with Catherine Ashton (recorded), and the already mentioned General Hakan Syrén, the keynote speakers of the event. It is symbolic that there was only one speaker external to the EU and that it was the representative of the defence industries' lobby in Brussels. As argued by Oikonomou, the EDA could be, in this regard, seen in this regard as "the meeting point and the decision-making centre for the EU military-industrial complex" (2006: 13).

This normalisation is complemented by a discourse focused on the 'strategic' importance of the aerospace and defence industries (ASD, 2011b: 2) and on the relevance of constituting a solid European DTIB. Ideas such as "[t]he need [...] is to accept that the DTIB in Europe can only survive as one European whole, not as a sum of different national capacities" (EDA, 2006: 32) are quite common in EDA's documents: not only they reveal this normalisation, but they link it with the idea that such has to be Europeanised in order to succeed.

For Guarguaglini, to this it should also be taken into consideration the EDA's "fundamental role in building a single defence and security market" (2006). The same

idea was more recently expressed by Mr. Guarguaglini's ASD predecessor, Michael von Gizycki when, according to the ASD newsletter, he

> outlined what would be needed to reinforce the competitiveness of the European defence sector. He called in particular for a homogenous market framework, more outsourcing (and not only pooling and sharing, which 'tend to rationalise a shrinking demand'), 'more standardisation and synchronisation' in procurement, 'more collaborative programmes between Member States' and a leading role for the European Defence Agency in the coordination of these initiatives (ASD, 2011a: 2).

That is, the EDA should contribute to the establishment of both a European industrial base and of a European defence market. By avoiding all the necessary ethical dilemmas associated with the private ownership of heavy military equipment, the EDA creates a legitimate basis for the support of the Europeanisation of both industry and states; of both suppliers and customers. This is nicely summarised by Santiago Secades, from the EDA, when he states:

> the EDA is working with governments and industry to reduce the fragmentation and other artificial features of the European defence market, and to develop a research and industrial base that is capable both of meeting Europe's own defence and security needs to the highest standards, and of holding its own in legitimate international competition (Secades, 2011: 35).

By linking the constitution of both an industrial base and a pan-European market (where it is normal that private actors assume key positions) to the future of European defence[2] the EDA is establishing an important link between the interests of these private actors and the potential success of European defence.

It adds to this, the fact that what exactly this European defence is supposed to be becomes increasingly less clear as the distinction between its military and civilian dimension is progressively removed from the discourse. In that regard, serving European defence is no different from serving European security - and thus the type of market and industrial base the EDA is supposed to help create are also not easily defined. This follows General Hakan Syrén's assertion during the same conference that "[m]any of the systems that have been designed for the armed forces are equally useful

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[2] "The maintenance of a strong DTIB is a fundamental underpinning of the European Security and Defence Policy" (EDA, 2007).

in civilian missions. There are also a number of areas where we could draw on the same resources" (2010: 9).

Furthermore, since May 2009, the EDA has an European Framework Cooperation with the European Commission "for maximising complementarity and synergy between defence and civilian research activities" (in Mawdsley, 2011: 16). Thus, not only the EDA's activities go beyond the military sphere, as its aim, its raison d'être, seems to largely (and officially) surpass the field. As argued by EDA's former Chief executive, Alexander Weis, the importance of "standardisation and interoperability between military and civilian users" is "growing by the day" (2010b: 6). This has obvious consequences in terms of defence market, and in terms of the work the EDA is supposed to do in the defence field.

Finally, this discourse is tied by references to the financial constraints of the sector, which legitimises all the above dynamics. The EDA is presented in that regard as aiming to "deliver best value for money for Its Member States and in support of the Common Security and Defence Policy" (Weiss, 2010a: 6). The defence budget cuts that are being felt across Europe are used to insert an existential dimension to the discourse. As uttered by Ms Ashton, "we have no other choice than to cooperate" (Ashton, 2010:6).

Conclusion

At the EU Summit in Thessaloniki, in June 2003, it was agreed to create the European Defence Agency as an intergovernmental agency working under the EU framework. Even though it was firstly supposed to be part of the European Constitution, it ended up being detached from it (Eliassen and Sitter, 2006: 2). The Council established the European Defence Agency (EDA) on 12 July 2004, designed to support the Council and the member States in their effort to improve European defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to sustain the ESDP as it stands now and develops in the future.

As seen in this chapter, by asking the question 'what is the EDA for', a set of overlapping discourses and dynamics are revealed that point towards a more complex view of what the EDA is and does. If, as the President of the EU Council, the EDA is a facilitator just like himself, such as image paints a portrait of an agency with limited impact in the political environment in which it operates. In fact, not only the EDA facilitates, as it also a) Europeanises this field and b) normalises its dynamics without

asking questions regarding the ethical value of attributing a central to private agents, or to acting towards a blurred security field in which there is little to distinguish defence from security. As argued elsewhere (Barrinha, 2010), the EDA does all this supported and supporting an existential discourse that point to the indispensable role it plays, and to the non-existence of viable alternatives regarding the path that should be traced by EU institutions and member states alike when it comes to European security and defence.

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