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Common Security and Defence Policy and the Lisbon Treaty Fudge:

No common strategic culture, no major progress

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Abstract

With the establishment of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in 1999, the EU aimed to tackle challenges in the field of security by deploying various police and military missions in troubled crisis areas. The consolidation of the CSDP raised hopes for the EU's role in external affairs. However, the majority of CSDP missions are still on a small scale. Strategic disagreements among EU partners persist on issues of UN legality, NATO-neutrality and the geographic deployment of missions. This lack of consensus is due to a lack of common ideas, values and practices regarding the use of police and military force in Europe. In short: there is no common strategic culture.

This paper analyses some of the major provisions of the Lisbon Treaty that impact upon the CSDP. It argues that although some of these provisions sound positive on paper, they will not necessarily enhance the development of a common strategic culture. And without the consolidation of such a culture, the CSDP cannot deliver ambitious results. A strong commitment to invest in capabilities and the political will to assume more responsibility in the field of security are necessary prerequisites for further progress in the CSDP.

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NO COMMON STRATEGIC CULTURE, NO MAJOR PROGRESS

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1. Introduction

With the establishment of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in 1999, the EU achieved considerable progress regarding the institutionalisation of its foreign policy. Over the years, the EU security and defence framework became equipped with its own institutions such as the Political and Security Committee (PSC), the EU Military Committee (EUMC), the Committee of Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM) and the EU Military Staff (EUMS). Ten years of ESDP evolution has led to a number of achievements in the field of security, most notably, the deployment of various missions in many parts of the world.

Although the Lisbon Treaty partly addressed some of the issues that hinder the development of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), it did not remedy to the problems that affected the actorness of the EU in the field of security and defence. The new Lisbon Treaty developments in the field of CFSP/ESDP are summarised in this paper. The Lisbon Treaty renames ESDP to CSDP as the first letter of the former acronym that stood for 'European' is substituted by the word 'Common'. Still, the EU is far from possessing a truly 'common' security and defence policy as it has no cohesive strategic culture. The paper concludes that the CSDP needs a clear set of common values in order to become more cohesive and successful.

2. The impact of the Lisbon Treaty on CFSP/CSDP

Previously, the competencies of the EU in external relations were divided between the competencies of the European Community and the other intergovernmental pillars. This division created various problems as the allocation of responsibilities in inter-related areas was not clear. For instance, there were at least four different Directorates-General (DGs) involved in the external relations of the EU. Lack of transparency, a rigid bureaucracy and institutional competition among different DGs were common obstacles to the shaping of coherent EU foreign policies.

Various provisions in the Treaty of Lisbon aimed at addressing the lack of cohesion and effectiveness, with the establishment of various new institutional developments. The rationalisation of external competencies brought by the Lisbon Treaty may have a positive impact in the field of security and defence. For this reason, the most important developments in

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the field of CFSP/CSDP will be looked at in this paper: the upgraded post of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the provision of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PermStrucCoop), and the extended version of the Petersberg Tasks (see section below for a definition of these tasks).

The post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European External Action Service

First of all, the post of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy brings together all aspects of EU external action. The post of High Representative was established in 1999 in order to provide a better focus for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The High Representative is now a member of the Commission and in charge of External Relations. The new High Representative is charged with the important role of ensuring coherence between EU institutions and between the institutions and member states. The High Representative replaces the rotating Presidency as CFSP 'director' and represents the EU to third parties and within international organisations. The High Representative is supported by the newly established European External Action Service (EEAS), which will consist of personnel from the Council General Secretariat, the Commission and staff from national diplomatic services. It is expected that such a post will play a positive role as it combines the functions of the previous post of CFSP High Representative, along with those of the Commissioner for External Relations in the European Commission.

The functions of harmonisation and coordination that are assigned to the post of High Representative will help to consolidate a more dynamic EU presence in external affairs. The High Representative will work closely with the EEAS, which should bring an 'ambassadorial' status to the institutional framework of the EU. Consequently, it is expected that the new post will have a positive 'spill-over' effect on the field of security. In terms of CSDP structures, the HR will act under the authority of the Council and be in close contact with the Political and Security Committee (PSC). The Treaty of Lisbon does not alter the institutional dimension of the CSDP, as the PSC remains the main body that discusses and manages CSDP missions. However, it mentions that the High Representative, acting under the authority of the Council and in close contact with the Political and Security Committee, shall ensure the coordination of the civilian and military aspects of such tasks. The High Representative therefore has a more important role to play in CSDP affairs.

Whether the Lisbon Treaty developments will lead to more efficiency and coherence or, on the contrary, to institutional blockages, overlapping competencies and inter-institutional tensions is a question that so far cannot be answered.[1] The organisational details of these new institutional inventions are not yet decided, and diverging views among member states and EU institutions already appear on how these institutions will be created and what exactly their functions will be. Unfortunately, the struggle regarding the creation of the EEAS between states and EU institutions only serves to demonstrate that such newly established institutions can become the epicentre of 'internal power struggles' that go far beyond the question of securing efficiency in the field of EU actorness. The process of 'clarification' of some of the Lisbon Treaty provisions may already lead to the further bureaucratisation of CSFP/CSDP by creating complicated structures. Such an outcome might reflect the internal power balance of the EU but would fail to provide rapid and efficient responses to the emerging geopolitical challenges.

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[1] For instance, see Wessels & Bopp (2008), *The Institutional Architecture of CFSP after the Lisbon Treaty – Constitutional breakthrough or challenge ahead?*, CHALLENGE Research Paper No. 10, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels, June.

It is also interesting to see how the relationship between the High Representative and the President of the European Council develops in order to achieve a coherent division of tasks. According to the Lisbon Treaty, the President of the European Council needs to ensure the external representation of the Union on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy, without prejudice to the powers of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The manner in which the President of the European Council will 'ensure' the external representation of the Union is important, as a working relationship with the Higher Representative needs to be clarified. In this respect, personalities are important. So far, EU member states have chosen 'low-profile' figures – Herman Van Rompuy and Catherine Ashton – for the two key EU posts. It remains to be seen whether these nominees will deliver more than a 'low profile' external policy on behalf of the EU.

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PermStrucCoop)

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PermStrucCoop) is another important provision included in the Lisbon Treaty. According to the Treaty, PermStrucCoop shall be open to any member state that undertakes more intensively to develop its defence capacities in multinational forces. Participating member states shall be involved in pooling together and harmonising their security and defence resources. The European Defence Agency (EDA) is also becoming part of the Treaty. Nevertheless, although the Treaty legally recognises the EDA, it does not necessarily empower the role of the institution with additional competencies. The EDA has been undermined by particular national hindrances and, especially, the intransigent policy positions of the UK on certain aspects of defence capabilities. Furthermore, according to the Treaty, it is expected that the EDA will play an important role in evaluating the performance of member states' commitment to PermStrucCoop. Such an evaluation may prove useful if projects materialise. However, it is clearly stated that the participation at EDA projects depends on the will of the EU member states. So far, there has been no major enthusiasm on the part of the member states for further strategic integration through PermStrucCoop involvement.

In theory, the inclusive nature of PermStrucCoop will permit as many member states as possible to participate in common defence plans. Articles 27 (6) and 30 of the Treaty reflect upon the idea of PermStrucCoop among EU member states. The Articles provide details on the expansion of group membership as well as punishment in the form of suspension for failing to satisfy group obligations. PermStrucCoop may help to create caucuses of states that want to deepen their cooperation in defence-related tasks. It can work on the basis of common requirements and help to motivate neighbouring countries to cooperate together in common projects. Military budgets have been severely cut in recent years and will probably be reduced even further in order to save resources in hard financial times. Pooling resources is now an imperative task. If successful, PermStrucCoop may lead to less duplication and more unity in defence capabilities by creating pooled projects and joint R&T initiatives. Closer cooperation in technical matters may have an important 'added value', leading to common training, and the definition of common doctrines. However, it is imperative that concrete criteria and objectives be set so that the PermStrucCoop framework can produce tangible targets.

In any case, various questions emerge from the provision of the PermStrucCoop. Can potentially conflicting/duplicating groups exist under the banner of PermStrucCoop? How will PermStrucCoop relate to the various bilateral and multilateral projects that already exist in the field of security and defence? In addition, the idea behind PermStrucCoop is not new. It has been practised in the past in similar forms (e.g., the creation of various groups, such as Eurocorps, as well as with the creation of the Battlegroups concept). Will existing security projects among EU countries simply be renamed as PermStrucCoop projects? It remains to be seen whether PermStrucCoop will make a difference, when experience from the past shows that similar projects produced modest results.

In addition, the PermStrucCoop concept may prove divisive if implemented without clear guidelines. For example, could it be the case that member states that participate at a certain PermStrucCoop group may facilitate an *ad hoc* mission outside the framework of the EU (i.e. participation in an operation without an EU mandate)? Furthermore, different groups of states may emerge. Such an outcome may lead to a tricky synchronisation of activities, and potentially to a division among the group of countries that are moving forward in a more dynamic way and the ones that are lagging behind. Of course, this is not the first time that such a scenario emerges, as member states have already adopted a two-speed model for the European Monetary Union. However, the impact that such potential development may have on the sensitive domain of CSDP is unknown.

In order to access the prospects of the PermStrucCoop provision, we have to see how it will work in practice. Progress on the implementation of PermStrucCoop is relatively slow, however. Although various brainstorming sessions have been taking place in the defence ministries of the EU member states and in the EU Council, there have been few tangible results on how the concept should be put into practice. Precise qualitative and quantitative criteria should be set but no one has yet come up with concrete guidelines on what PermStrucCoop should include. This is not an easy task if one takes into account that there is no common strategic thinking among the Europeans that may lead to a division of labour through the PermStrucCoop. The introduction of PermStrucCoop can be seen as an innovative element as it may facilitate further cooperation among those member states that want to work closely on issues of security. However, it is up to the EU member states to adopt PermStrucCoop in practice by pooling resources together. This will require an important change of state mentalities; adding a notion of 'commonality' to the sovereign nature of defence projects. It is up to the EU member states to make PermStrucCoop work; the issue is whether they want to make it work. The lack of any strong commitment to CSDP has been part of the problem and persists today.

The Petersberg Tasks and other CSDP related issues

According to the Lisbon Treaty, the EU subscribes to the Petersberg tasks, which are defined as:

> "...joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilisation. All these tasks may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories." (Article 28 of the Lisbon Treaty).

These tasks are the primary focus of the CSDP as far as its present and future missions are concerned. They constitute an important strategic consensus among Europeans and it is positive that the EU has agreed upon them as a point of strategic reference. However, the list of tasks constitutes a very broad description of aims and allows for considerable divergence in their interpretation. The problem of different national interpretations on priorities and ideals regarding foreign and security policy is a considerable one as it puts a number of brakes on the development of CSDP.

Other institutional dimensions, which have not been addressed by the Lisbon Treaty, could have made the functioning of CSDP simpler. The Lisbon Treaty is characterised by small institutional changes that show that progress in the field of security and defence is indeed slow. In the CSDP institutional structure, there is still no single Operational Headquarters but the possibility of establishing five Operational Headquarter structures in various capitals of the EU member states when an EU-led mission materialises. This 'incomplete structural framework' functioned well for small CSDP projects in the past but does not guarantee efficiency in the event of a major crisis. It is only a matter of luck that with the undertaking of so many CSDP missions so far, no

major crisis has put the CSDP institutional framework into question. Nevertheless, successful strategy cannot rely on pure luck. Pro-Atlanticist countries such as the UK must cede the right to a fully-fledged institutional dimension to the CSDP.

In addition, although various institutional amendments form part of the Lisbon Treaty, the Treaty itself does not alter the spirit of external relations of the EU since unanimity regulates CFSP/CSDP affairs. Nevertheless, the Lisbon Treaty also mentions that the qualified majority voting provision may be used when member states decide to do so. Constructive abstention is mentioned in the Treaty with the addition that the existing blocking minority of one third of member states now also needs to comprise at least one third of the population of the Union. The Treaty also includes a Solidarity Clause in case a member state becomes the object of a terrorist attack or natural/man-made disaster. However, there are no sanctions if member states decide to pursue their own initiatives in the field of external affairs.

Another positive dimension of the Lisbon Treaty is that the EU acquires a legal dimension, thus making it feasible for the Union to sign international agreements. Still, all these clauses can only function if there is a 'pro-active European spirit' to assume the global responsibilities befitting the size of a big (wealthy) club like the EU.

Nevertheless, there has been no major policy re-orientation through the use of the Lisbon Treaty arrangements. The problem with the effectiveness of EU action in the field of security is not only a legal or institutional one. Unfortunately, even the most innovative aspects of the Lisbon Treaty risk becoming dead letters if they are not followed up properly. EU politicians have shown in the past that whenever there is political will, there is also a solution to security problems that emerge. The question though is why there has not been such political will in the field of EU security and defence. Part of the answer lies in the fact that Europeans have different views on the use of force, different defence traditions and diverging geopolitical interests; none of which makes for a common strategic culture.

3. Are there common EU ideas and values in the field of security and defence?

No matter the degree of Lisbon Treaty institutionalisation, CSDP is not going to develop further unless there is a consensus on the values that underpin it. The Lisbon Treaty also makes an explicit claim on values and foreign policy by claiming that the principles of the Union's external action are described as those that:

> "have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations and the Charter of international law." (Article 21).

Only if there is a commonly accepted EU normative space through the development of a common strategic culture, can the CSDP flourish. Indeed, even the European Security Strategy (ESS) (2003, pp. 12-13) mentioned that the EU needs to develop its own strategic culture in order to become a more effective player.

Based on consideration of various academic works, the strategic culture of the EU might be defined as: "the ideas and values of Brussels-based ESDP officials regarding the current and potential use of force as well as their practices on the deployment of police and military instruments in various ESDP missions". The strategic culture of the EU consists of ideas, values and policy practices, which are manifested in the way missions are discussed and planned. Strategic culture is influenced by the policy decisions of CSDP as well as by the interaction of

CSDP officials in CSDP institutions. The implementation of CSDP missions is another important process in the shaping of strategic culture. Ideas stemming from operations that are implemented on the ground are fed into the Brussels-based CSDP decision-making process. Elements of strategic culture can also be traced in the historic evolution of the European security debate and especially in the marks that this debate left on the shaping of the foreign policies of the EU member states in the 1990s.[2]

Main ideas and values in the strategic culture of the EU[3]

Various scholars claim that a particular EU strategic culture is under construction.[4] The development of this culture is an ongoing process that has brought small but positive results in the field of security and defence. The 'soft' approach on the use of force, the development of a selective humanitarian agenda, the Petersberg Tasks and the acceptance of a Civilian Crisis Management as tools of intervention are the cornerstone values of the strategic culture of the EU, but the acquisition of a UN Security Council Mandate and the question of the NATO-EU relationship constitute grey areas in the cognitive map of this common culture. In addition, the belief in the intergovernmental nature of CSDP, the lack of clearly defined interests and the existence of different geographic priorities among the EU member states constitute considerable obstacles to the development of a vibrant strategic culture.

A 'selective' humanitarian agenda

ESDP missions have been developed in various parts of the world in order to tackle various humanitarian crises or to contribute to post-conflict measures of confidence. This consensus influences the shape of the CSDP and thus underpins its strategic culture. Nevertheless, divergences exist when it comes to the 'interpretation' of the Petersberg Tasks some member states are less willing to engage with 'combat forces' than others, for instance; the so-called body bag syndrome' refers to the fact that most European publics are 'casualties'-sensitive.

In addition, the idea that Europeans should intervene in the internal affairs of third states (even if such action goes against the primacy of their sovereignty) also forms part of an extensive consensus that was developed within the EU policy establishment during the 1990s humanitarian crises in the Western Balkans. The EU is very selective when it comes to intervention. A careful study of the cases where ESDP missions were deployed shows that humanitarian crises will be tackled only if they emerge on the doorstep of the EU (e.g., Kosovo/Bosnia Herzegovina) or if there are powerful agents within the EU that push for the implementation of particular missions (e.g., the case of France regarding CSDP missions in Africa).

Furthermore, it is important to mention that the existence of such a humanitarian consensus does not necessarily imply that these humanitarian ideas are equally internalised or respected by the different EU member states. It is rather the case that these ideas are accepted as a point of reference for the undertaking of strategic action. For instance, the 'respect for human rights' that is mentioned in EU documents may imply different tools of power in the mindsets of each European policy-maker. This is also the case for the key threats as described in the ESS.

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[2] For a discussion on the European security debate, see K. Longhurst & M. Zaborowksi (2005), *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*, London and New York: Routledge.

[3] The data provided in this article is extracted from 66 interviews conducted in the period between January and December 2007-9 on this subject by the author. The findings of the study point to the conclusion that the strategic culture of the EU is characterised by its own values but also by its particular weaknesses.

[4] See the works of Cornish & Edwards (2001, 2005), Rynning, (2003), Hyde-Price (2005) on this subject.

A cautious development of Civilian Crisis Management instruments

The idea of tackling security issues through an integrated approach that includes civilian and military instruments is widely accepted by all EU member states. After 10 years of CSDP missions, one can observe that the 'civilian' agenda is well-rooted in this particular policy as civilian missions outnumber military missions by a ratio of two to one. The conduct of Civilian Crisis Management (CCM) implies that out-of-border interventions may take place in order to deal with a humanitarian/political conflict or a natural/environmental disaster. Cooperation between the military and civilian instruments is necessary in order to tackle the complexities of particular crises. However, there is a gap between the rhetoric of CSDP and its practical implementation. Because of the limited resources that EU member states invest in the EU Civilian Headline Goal, progress in this field is still slow. In this respect, the Lisbon Treaty constitutes a major paradox: despite the fact that the majority of the CSDP missions are civilian, it mostly commits member states to undertake measures in order to improve only their military capabilities, whereas there is no equivalent measure regarding civilian capabilities.

The importance of national sovereignty in the fields of security and defence

The fields of security and defence have remained stubbornly under the auspices of the member states. Decision-making in the CSDP field is subject to member state veto and requires unanimity. Achieving unity and cohesion in issues of security is difficult. Problems of synchronisation and synergy are not only part of CSDP but also haunt one of the oldest and most stable security institutions of post-World War II Europe: NATO. A new way of thinking needs to take hold. Such thinking is not encouraged by the Lisbon Treaty, which maintains the intergovernmental nature of security and defence. The Lisbon Treaty should have paid attention to how member states prepare their procurement strategies so that harmonisation could have started at the national level. Although various EU member states have transformed some of their national resources into military and police instruments ready to be deployed in out-of-area missions, progress in terms of 'out of borders' deployment is still limited. Out of more than two million staff in uniform in the EU27, only 10-15% is estimated to be deployable.[5] Duplication of resources, conscription and various technical gaps constitute major weaknesses and affect the progress of the CSDP. The fact that the EU member states are in general unwilling to invest further in 'out-of-area' deployment of forces limits the potential strategic action of the EU.

Furthermore, the Lisbon Treaty also mentions that if an EU member state becomes a victim of armed aggression then "the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power". However, the article does not mention the use of 'military' assistance to tackle such aggression, which is another sign of cautiousness on the part of the Europeans when it comes to engaging with the question of defence.

Lack of clearly defined EU interests

The failure to draft a new updated version of the ESS that would address its shortcomings demonstrates the existence of different (and even conflicting) opinions of EU states in the field of geopolitics. Unfortunately, EU unity in security is not the norm. Various EU member states still deploy missions unilaterally, in order to satisfy their own geopolitical interests, before reaching an agreement with their EU counterparts. National reflexes prevail over a commonly defined EU interest. However, new geopolitical challenges arise that may bring Europeans closer together in their strategic thinking. Strategic change is not a new phenomenon as many studies in strategic culture point to the fact that the process of strategic culture formation is open

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[5] Biscop (2008: 2) in S. Biscop & F. Algieri (eds) (2008), *The Lisbon Treaty and ESDP: Transformation and Integration*, The Egmont Institute, Brussels.

to new interpretations of emerging challenges and threats.[6] For instance, the case of piracy in the straits of Somalia shows that, in a globalised world, emerging security threats may push Europeans to a definition of new common economic interests, such as the protection of free trade routes.

Different geographic parameters among EU member states

The existence of different geographic spheres of interest among EU partners is another point of divergence that helps explain the lack of clearly defined EU interests. The geographic space of the Western Balkans is where, so far, Europeans have managed to act in the most coordinated way through ESDP – although with considerable limitations. However, the case of the Western Balkans is an exception to the rule, as a similar process of 'claiming responsibility' has not occurred in other parts of the world. Although recent trends of African engagement are encouraging, this is mostly due to the French insistence on investing in the CSDP-African dimension rather than a consolidated willingness among EU partners to intervene in the continent. The Europeans have not yet fully 'internalised' the idea of assuming global responsibility. Contributions regarding 'far away' missions still depend on an ad hoc cooperation among groups of countries that express an interest in participating in them rather than on a long-term, well-defined EU strategy.

Furthermore, when it comes to missions that need to be implemented in areas farther abroad, there is an important 'capabilities gap' between small EU member states with limited resources and bigger EU member states (such as France and the UK), which possess the necessary means for deploying demanding long-term missions. Therefore, there is a planning gap between the countries that possess instruments and those that do not. Unfortunately, this capabilities gap also creates different perceptions (and consequently different values) in terms of strategic thinking, since various EU officials envisage a 'narrower' field of strategic action than others. Regarding this issue, though, it is worth mentioning that the provision of PermStrucCoop may play an important role by providing a space for capabilities upgrading.

Multilateralism and its limitations (the EU-NATO conundrum)

Various CSDP missions were (or still are) open to contributions from third countries and institutions such as ASEAN, the African Union, the UN and NATO. However, cooperation with third countries and institutions is not always an easy task. This is due to the fact that the priorities and structures of third countries/institutions are not always similar to those of the EU. For instance, one can detect different strategic approaches when it comes to the question of the Russian inclusion in the European security architecture.[7]

Another important cause of conflict among Europeans is the depth of the EU-NATO relationship. Although the importance of NATO in CSDP is undisputed, there is no convergence on the issue of how far European autonomy should be developed vis-à-vis NATO. The different strands of thinking are reflected in the Lisbon Treaty, which states that the foreign policy of the Union:

> "shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence of certain Member States and shall respect the obligations of certain Member States, which see

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[6] S.J. Lantis (2005), "Strategic Culture: from Clausewitz to Constructivism", *Strategic Insights*, Vol. IV, No. 10, pp. 1-13, Center for Contemporary Conflict, Monterey, California (http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/Oct/lantisOct05.asp, accessed on 20/01/2006).

[7] For instance, on the Europe-Russia relation, see the paper by S. Dias Fernandes (2009), *Time to Reassess the European Security Architecture? The NATO-EU-Russia Security Triangle*, EPIN Working Paper No. 22, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels.

their common defence realised in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), under the North Atlantic Treaty and be compatible with the common security and defence policy established within that framework" (Article 17).

The division between 'old' and 'new' Europe on the question of Iraq in 2003 highlighted the different belief systems among Europeans. Although the divisions on the Iraq war seem now to be forgotten, divergences on other important strategic issues are still evident today. It remains to be seen whether the 'Obama era' will ease the tensions of the past by bringing a new cooperative approach to transatlantic relations. Nevertheless, the idea that in certain cases a CSDP mission should take place under an EU flag (independent of NATO) is slowly being consolidated in the minds of CSDP officials. However, Atlanticism is still very strong in certain EU countries. No EU member state wants to take any major risks that may further alienate the EU from the US. The adherence to Atlanticism also shows a lack of self-esteem and a tendency to avoid the assumption of responsibility on the part of some EU member states. The Lisbon Treaty recognises the role of NATO as a body that is in charge of the defence of its EU member states. However, the Treaty also consists of a Solidarity Clause, which implies that a progressive framing of common security and defence may be possible in the future, thus leaving room for optimism about the assumption of defence duties in the future.

Disagreement over the importance of acquiring the UN Security Council mandate as a legitimising tool for CSDP missions

So far, it can be claimed that military action within the framework of CSDP takes place only when mandated by international law. Indeed, the issue of acquiring a UN Security Council (UNSC) mandate is still important, as it provides public and political legitimacy to the undertaking of security missions. For some EU member states the acquisition of a UNSC mandate is a valuable prerequisite to participate in a security mission, while for others it is less so. The difference of opinion on the priority of the UNSC mandate is proof of another important division among EU states when it comes to the legalisation of the use of force. It demonstrates that there are countries that demand the 'green light' of intervention by an international body whereas others prefer to cooperate within 'coalitions of the willing' in order to promote their own strategic plans. This division created various problems of ESDP cohesion in the past and will resurface every time a challenging crisis occurs. On this particular issue, the Lisbon Treaty recognises the importance of the 'rule of law' but does not go into detail about what this term means. Therefore, the necessity of the UNSC mandate is another issue that depends on the preferences of EU member states, Still, it is important to mention that CSDP trends so far point to the fact that acquiring a UNSC mandate is a facilitating factor in order to reach a consensus among EU member states.

4. Conclusions

Various institutional innovations have been included in the Lisbon Treaty in order to address the cohesion and effectiveness problem of the EU. However, this policy paper adopts a more 'constructivist' approach, arguing that 'ideas matter'. Unless the EU acquires its own solid strategic culture, it will not be able to act in an efficient way in the field of security and defence. The acquisition of such a strategic culture is no easy task. Member state strategic cultures have been strongly consolidated, since they have followed the identity formation of their own national identities. The EU needs to engage in a construction of its own strategic culture that will combine elements of the strategic cultures of its member states, but since the strategic cultures of EU states are somewhat contradictory (e.g., 'Atlanticist' versus 'Europeanist'), the difficulty of such a task can be appreciated.

Nevertheless, due to the successful development of CSDP, it can be argued that the EU possesses its own nascent strategic culture, characterised by certain values and ideas. This strategic culture has the Petersberg Tasks at its epicentre and is characterised by a selective approach to humanitarian crises. The strategic culture of the EU is based on a selective protection of human rights and the promotion of law. The EU humanitarian agenda is still important, as most CSDP missions have a humanitarian background. However, these terms have not found their way into clearly defined EU strategies and remain loose and open to interpretation, as may fit the different (and conflicting) interests of the EU member states.

Although the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty may bring some positive amendments to the CFSP/CSDP, it is highly unlikely that these institutional developments alone will provide the stimulus for further robust external action. The strategic culture of the EU suffers from a lack of defined EU interests as well as from the insistence of EU member states on maintaining intergovernmentalism as the main form of decision-making. Different geographic approaches among EU states and the cultural differences between 'new'-er and 'old'-er EU nations constitute a hindrance to its development. Other issues also manifest its weakness; the Atlanticist strategic culture of the EU being one, and the nature of the EU-US relationship still needs to be properly defined. Furthermore, the importance of a UN Security Council mandate prior to the undertaking of CSDP missions remains important but is not accepted by all countries as the primary prerequisite for strategic action.

The strategic actorness of the CSDP is mostly limited to relatively small missions. Such cautiousness risks rendering the EU a repository of small symbolic humanitarian missions with little impact on the global geopolitical agenda. If the CSDP is to succeed it needs both the political will to proceed with the CSDP agenda and a concrete signal of engagement in its capabilities. The era of being content with mini-institutional developments at EU level is over. The EU needs firm commitment to common projects and a generous dose of self-criticism in order to move forward. The EU cannot simply hide behind the gaps in the Lisbon Treaty. It has to assume more responsibility if it wants to count as a global actor.

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