



Miriam Álvarez de la Rosa Rodríguez

*Diplomat, Deputy Director for International Security, MFA
Law Degree*

Towards a more integrated European Defense: CSDP and NATO

Since the end of WWII, Europe has slowly built a common security and defense policy that, according to the Treaties of the EU, might eventually lead to a common defense policy.

We are approaching a more integrated European defense, that needs to be compatible with NATO. It is still work in progress.

To reach that conclusion, we need to know in the first place what CSDP is and how it has developed during the last decades, along with the institutional development of this policy. The European Union Global Strategy (June 2016) is a key document, together with its Implementation Plan on Security and Defense. Both papers help to understand the role the EU wants to play as a foreign policy actor.

Finally, it is worth giving a thought to what might be the future evolution of the CSDP in the context of its relation to NATO, Brexit, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are more questions than answers.

WHAT IS CSDP?

CSDP is an intergovernmental policy, part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The EU member states keep their sovereign power on security and defense. This power is not, it cannot be, in the hands of the supranational institutions of the EU.

The aim of the CSDP is to reach one day a common defense of the EU by increasing the military capabilities and strategic autonomy of the Union. It is an integral part of the EU's comprehensive approach towards crisis management, drawing on civilian and military assets that may be used in operations and missions outside the Union, using capabilities provided by the Member States. It abides by the UN Charter and respects the compromises of the EU Member States that are also NATO Allies (art. 42.1 TEU).

HISTORY

The origins of the security and defence architecture of Europe can be found in the post-World War II situation with a number of initiatives that set the stage for increased cooperation across Europe. Among the, the Marshall Plan, the Franco-British Treaty of Dunkirk (1947), the Brussels Treaty (1948) sowing the seeds for a Western European Union, and the Washington Treaty (1949) that founded the North Atlantic Alliance, NATO.

The European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community merged in 1967, highlighting the trend to move European co-operation forward.

Follow-on treaties would develop closer collaboration in the areas of security and defence. But if economic integration seemed beneficial to all States, the same did not happen with European Defence. The creation of a unified European army in the 50' failed with the veto to the "European Defense Community" by the French Assembly.

The idea of a European Political Cooperation (EPC) was introduced in the Davignon Report (1970), but defence issues are still excluded. The Single European Act, 1986, incorporated the EPC into the Treaties and gave way to a European foreign policy.

The signing of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) in Maastricht in 1991 opened the door to closer collaboration between the EU and the WEU, which is recognized as an integral part of the development of the Union to elaborate and implement decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications.

In 1992, the WEU Council of Ministers in Petersberg outlined a new operational role for the organization, declaring its readiness to make available military units for a range of tasks (humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping, and crisis management, including peacemaking) that became known as Petersberg tasks.

In 1996, the WEU was involved in the establishment of a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within NATO that would "permit the creation of militarily coherent and effective forces capable of operating under the political control and strategic direction of the WEU". ESDI would eventually serve as a template for the Berlin Plus Arrangements adopted in 2003 between NATO and the EU. With the gradual incorporation of WEU assets and functions into the European Union, it slowly entered a closure phase and in June 2011 WEU formally ceased to exist.

The Treaty on European Union – Maastricht Treaty – created a single institutional framework (the European Union) based on three pillars. These pillars encompassed community affairs (1st pillar), common foreign and security policy (CFSP, 2nd pillar) and justice and home affairs (3rd pillar). Article J4 of the TEU states that CFSP includes "all questions related to the security of the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence". The Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997, improved the institutional arrangements and the decision-making process of CFSP. It created the post of a High Representative for the CFSP.

The St. Malo Franco-British Joint Declaration on European Defence, 1998, was a turning point in European public diplomacy, with the UK and France jointly underlining the growing need for greater European engagement in the areas of security and defence. It called on the EU to have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use these forces and a readiness to do so in order to respond to international crises. ensure security in Europe.

After St. Malo, a number of European Council meetings from the late 1990s onward focused on providing CSDP with the necessary tools to strengthen crisis management capabilities.

At the Cologne European Council (1999), EU heads of state and government reiterated the message contained in the St. Malo Declaration, calling on the EU to acquire the necessary means and capacities to engage in EU-led crisis management operations. Serving as the steppingstone for CSDP, they also made it clear that the EU's efforts in this area should not challenge the role of NATO as the basis of collective defense of all NATO members.

The Helsinki Summit (1999) focused mainly on the development of the EU's military crisis management capability (Helsinki Headline Goal Catalogue).

The Santa Maria da Feira European Council (2000) developed the EU's civilian crisis management capabilities with four priority areas for civilian crisis management: police, strengthening the rule of law, strengthening civilian administration and civil protection. Many (erroneously) believe that CSDP only covers military missions but it is not so. Given the EU's strong emphasis on civil-military co-ordination and the recognition that new security threats cannot be addressed through military means alone, many recent CSDP crisis management operations include both military and civilian components.

The Treaty of Nice, 2001, formalized European Security and Defense Policy (now the Common Security and Defense Policy) by bringing it into the EU's institutional structure.

The Lisbon Treaty, 2007, is a cornerstone in the development of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). The treaty includes both a mutual assistance and a solidarity clause and allowed for the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) under the authority of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP).

Many years have elapsed since 1948. It's been a long way until we have been able to talk about a CSDP. This has been so largely due to the very nature of the policy we are talking about, which falls on the sovereign powers of the State: defense. National policies and interests weight heavily in the development of this policy.

But towards 2008 the economic crisis, the rise of populism and the challenges that the EU had had to face in previous years in foreign and security policy will accelerate the process. "Arab springs", the rise of the DAESH, the threat of Russia in Ukraine, the Syrian civil war and Iraq and Libya as failed states put the Schengen border system on the ropes and even the EU itself with more than a million refugees arriving in Europe. Terrorism has hit the streets of France, Belgium and Germany. Energy security, cyberattacks, hybrid warfare and disinformation are also part of the new challenges Europe must face. Borders between internal and external security have been erased. Common European policies are necessary.

Furthermore, in June 2016 Brexit came to culminate the European crisis; and in November of that year Donald Trump won the elections in the United States. The need for Europeans to advance in defense cooperation became clear, if there was still any doubt.

INSTITUTIONS

CSDP is regulated in arts. 41 to 46, as well as Protocols 1, 10 and 11, and in Declarations 13 and 14 of the Lisbon Treaty. Several institutions or positions falling within the CFSP/CSDP framework are established, with the aim of enhancing the institutional coherence and the overall effectiveness of EU action:

- the European Parliament,
- the Commission,
- the Foreign Affairs Council (for military aspects, the Defense Ministers meet twice every six months for the Presidency in Defense Foreign Affairs Council FAC-Defense- and informally in ad hoc meetings in the country that holds the Presidency; but there are no formal meetings only of Defense Ministers),
the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, assisted by a European External Action Service (EEAS),
- the European Defense Agency, operational since 2004 with the mandate of harmonizing defense spending, supporting defense research, and assisting member states to meet the capability commitments,
- the Political and Security Committee (PSC, a permanent body, composed by ambassadorial-level representatives from all the EU Member States in charge of keeping track of the international situation, and helping to define EU policies within the CFSP and CSDP), and
- the Military Committee (EUMC) that gathers the Chiefs of Defense Staff of the member states at the level of Permanent Military Representatives and plays a key role in planning and monitoring the Union's military operations.

Finally, political and military solidarity among EU Member States is boosted by the inclusion of a mutual assistance clause, and a 'solidarity clause'. The mutual assistance clause (art. 42.7 TEU) states that 'If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter'. The importance of the clause is watered down by the provision stating that it 'shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defense policy of certain Member States', in reference to the role of NATO and its collective defense provisions. France asked for mutual assistance after the terrible November 2015 terrorist attacks in its territory. The 'solidarity clause' (art. 222 TFEU) was introduced in the context of the terrorist attack in Madrid in March 2004, and states that 'The Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster.

The unanimity rule prevails in the CFSP/CSDP decision-making processes

THE EUROPEAN UNION GLOBAL STRATEGY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The "Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union" (EUGS) was presented by HR / VP Mogherini in June 2016.

It defines the "level of ambition": what the Union wants to do internationally and its role as a global actor.

The Strategy outlines three major strategic objectives:

- First, being able to respond to external crises: our security begins far from our borders, and thus, managing conflicts that sometimes happen thousands of kilometers away, is how we can best protect ourselves.
- Second, making our neighbors more resilient: avoid failed states around us and work with the governments of our Eastern and Southern partners to make them more resilient.
- And finally, protect Europe and its citizens: it is time to transmit to the citizens that the Union is also a symbol of security, not only of social welfare.

These three strategic objectives are developed by the EUGS Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, November 2016, with a series of measures in the areas of security and defense:

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). All EU member states participate except 3, Denmark, Malta and the United Kingdom. PESCO is enhanced cooperation, just like the euro and Schengen. It is an instrument of the CSDP, and constitutes a crucial step towards strengthening the common defense policy. What does the PESCO imply? projects: the participating member states have approved until now a list of 47 projects on defense training, capacity building and operational readiness. The military capabilities developed through the PESCO remain in the hands of the member states, they belong to them, so that they can make them available to NATO or the UN. The Council will agree on the general conditions under which third states may be exceptionally invited to participate in PESCO projects.

The Capabilities Development Plan (CDP) provides a vision of future needs, taking into account the impact of future security challenges, technological development and other trends. The European Defense Agency assists Member States in their national defense plans and programs, so that they are consistent with what the EU needs.

A Coordinated Annual Review on Defense to improve defense cooperation between Member States (CARD); it is like a "mapping" that will allow a clearer overview at EU level of spending, national investment and defense research effort. It will increase the transparency and political visibility of European defense capabilities, making it possible to detect shortcomings, intensify defense cooperation and plan defense spending more coherently.

Alongside, there are new financial tools developed to assist Member States and the European defense industry: the Commission's European Defense Action Plan", EDAP, and a European Defense Industrial Development Program in 2018.

Another financial instrument is the European Defense Fund, June 2017, with 5.5 billion euros per year; it is EU budget to complement national funds that serves to coordinate, complement and expand national investments in defense research, prototype development, and the acquisition of military technology and equipment.

Finally, a new instrument called “European Peace Facility”, EPF, is being finalized, which is intended to replace the current EU operations and missions financing framework. It will be a new extrabudgetary fund, which is included in the multiannual financial framework.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CSDP RELATIONSHIP WITH NATO

21 member countries of the EU are also Allies in NATO. Cooperation between the two organizations has known a boost in the last four years, although EU and NATO began their cooperation more than fifteen years ago.

In July 2016, at the Warsaw Summit, the EU and NATO signed a first joint declaration, a shared vision on how both organizations will act together to face common security threats. New joint declarations have been signed in the following years.

Both organizations focus their cooperation on 7 strategic areas: cybersecurity, hybrid threats, operational cooperation -including maritime issues- defense capabilities, industry and research, coordinated maneuvers, and capacity building.

EU and NATO Councils have endorsed, in parallel processes, a common set of 74 proposals for the implementation of the Joint Declaration signed in Warsaw. Those declarations are followed by regular progress reports from which the following elements can be highlighted:

- Political dialogue has further intensified at all levels and settings, including in virtual formats during the COVID19 pandemic.
- Structured Dialogue on military mobility at staff level continues to contribute to information sharing in the key areas of military requirements, transport infrastructure, transport of dangerous goods, customs and cross border movement permissions.
- In the area of strategic communications, the cooperation is focused on strengthening mutual alerting on disinformation incidents.
- Efforts continue to ensure the coherence of output between the respective EU and NATO defence planning processes.

The first half of 2020 has been affected by the COVID-19 crisis. This pandemic has put all EU Member States and NATO Allies under tremendous strain and brought new vulnerabilities to the surface, which could have an impact on the broader security of the Euro-Atlantic community and its partners. That is why EU and NATO staffs are also looking at how the COVID-19 crisis could be factored into other ongoing working strands, such as resilience, exercises and lessons identified or supporting partners in security and defence capacity-building.

But NATO and the EU are two very different organizations. One of them is a political-military organization, based on collective defense (Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, only activated once in history, after the attacks of 9/11); whereas the EU is a much larger project, with a far more tangible impact and consequences on citizens' daily lives. A stronger European Defense will not be to the detriment of the Atlantic Alliance, what we are doing in the EU does not harm what NATO does, but rather reinforces it: it is about taking advantage of synergies and exchanging supports and information.

Spain's role

What about Spain's role? Along with France, Germany and Italy, Spain has been at the forefront of efforts to deepen the CSDP. We support the implementation of the security and defense part of the Strategy. Furthermore, Spain is the only country that has made a permanent and substantial contribution to nearly all EU military operations. In the past two years, we have been in command of four out of the six EU operations (EUNAVFOR Atalanta, EUTM Mali, EUTM RCA and the extinct EUNAVFORMED Sophia).

How will the EU's CFSP evolve? What will happen to the CSDP?

The evolution of CSDP is subject to external factors such as the future demand for CSDP operations, the level of financial or human resources made available for CSDP operations, the speed at which new capabilities are acquired, the EU's relations with third states and international organizations, and internal EU specific developments (such as Brexit or economic crisis). What will Brexit entail? Brexit will undoubtedly have an impact. UK will not participate in decision making processes, but the relationship with the EU will always be close.

The EU, through the CSDP, must be prepared, among other tasks, to guarantee the distribution of humanitarian aid, to guarantee safe and stable environments for the populations, to prevent the complete destruction of the State and, finally, to train the security forces of the countries so that they can progressively assume that security.

The objective of the future CSDP should be to maintain and protect the lifestyle of EU citizens, to maintain security in the southern and eastern neighborhoods of the EU, to contribute to keeping open the maritime communication routes between Suez and Shanghai and finally to complement the United Nations peacekeeping activity.

What is the greatest difficulty? Probably the fact that the Member States do not have a common vision of the strategic environment, of threats and risks. The Union is a very particular universe in which countries with completely different histories and perceptions of their role in the international community coexist. Nevertheless, overall, we are managing to build a European Defense that will benefit all of us.

Perhaps in a few decades we can already talk about strategic autonomy of the EU (which means having the necessary capacities to act, without having to resort to external actors, but acting in concert with the two main security organizations of which we are part: NATO and the UN). Probably the transatlantic link will benefit from this development, balancing burden and responsibility between the two shores of the Atlantic.

Given the volatile nature of the policy, it is likely that the future evolution of the CSDP will not be linear and that there will be ups and downs, marked by events both international and internal, of the Union itself, which complicate the formulation of a CFSP or a CSDP; but there is no alternative. We are moving towards a more integrated European defense, no doubt about it.