# The European Union as a Security Provider

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The EU was originally established with the aim of bringing peace in Europe by creating an economic interdependence among european countries. Military cooperation was excluded by the original objectives of integration and the military defence of western european countries has been provided by Nato and USA.

The notion of Europe as a "civilian power" has been theorized in 1972 by Duchêne and it is geberally refered to the concentration on non-military, primarily economic, means adopted by EU in exerciting its international role.

Neverthless, from 1970's European Union has has developed several types of policies towards third states ranging from economic policies to foreign and security policy. Even if the institutional arrangements and intervenient actors are different from policy to policy and EU is not a traditional unitary actor with a stable set of preferences and interests, nevertheless the EU is provided with a stable set of formal and informal rules and procedures for the decision making process in the field of foreign, security and defence policy that has developed the "habit of working together" limiting Member States in their autonomy and promoting convergence of competing interests (Bulmer 1991). The nature of European external action results to be  not a temporary convergence of Member States' interests, but a continuous process of redefinition of the member states' interests at the light of the existing institutional structures. Even if the nature of involved actors, the nature of decision-making process and the efficiency of the policy instruments depends upon the considered issue and the involved pillar, nevertheless it is possible to affirm that institutions, rules and procedures strengthen the EU capability to promote convergence of interests and to define collective external policy strategies towards external actors.

In 1999 the European Council of Cologne decided to provide EU with the capacity for military autonomuos action, backed up by military forces, the means to decide to use them in order to respond to international crises. From 1999 to 2001 a militar and political structure was estabilished in order to implement that declaration.  This new military complex has  added  the issue of the "EU security actorness" to the issue of common foreign policy and has changed the perception of the EU as "civilian power". Consequently  the question arises as to whether *Civilian Power Europe* retains its theoretical purchase or if a new concept is needed to define the EU's international role.

More recently there has been the emergence of the notion of the EU as a **normative power**. The notion of  normative power  (Manners, 2002;2006) generates attention for analysts because of it captures the main characteristic of the EU international action: EU has developed a domestic model for conflict resolution based on shared values and pacific negotiation and it exports these values and model to the outside world, influencing both the structuring of global cooperative processes and the issues relating to the soft security.

In the latest period a new theorethical perspective has been emerged aiming to link the concept of UE as an international political actor with the study of  European model of governance. The bridge between European Union international actorness and European governance is based on the idea that "*The EU is emerging as a key regional actor in certain global affairs, particularly in such areas as finance, trade,*

*environment and development, and current policy is directed towards enhancing the role of the European Union in the global governance system*"[1]. The research agenda of this new perspective is focused on the role of Europe in the world, the possible application of european governance in external relations, and the relevance of the European model of governance for international and global governance.In this perspective, a relevant research question is arising on the EU capabilty to provide security to its member states and to contribute to the european and global security governance. In sum, is the European Union a **security provider**?

If the Franco-British joint statement issued in Saint Malo in December 1998 had open the way for a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), and had permitted the estabilishment of the military complex named "common defence and security policy", neverthless there are fewer consensuses on theorizing the EU as a traditional security actor. European military capabilities remain modest and the operational activities of the European Rapid Reaction Forces remain small-scale military operations. Moreover Europe remains absent from important conflicts and dependent on Nato and US army for its military security.

Nevertheless, criticism towards european security actorness fails to consider two different orders of arguments.

The first is related to the fact that, even though European Union is far from having a military capability comparable with the USA, in the latter decade it has developed a level of progress in the field of military cooperation that would have been unthinkable even a few short years earlier.

The development of the ESDP is a very innovative project. For decades security and defence were taboo subjects for European Integration, but since the Cologne European Council in 1999 European Union developed a complex institutional and political complex formed firstly by the "Rapid Reaction Force" (RRF).

RRF consists in the capability of Member States to deploy within 60 days and sustain for at least 1 year military forces up to 50,000-60,000 persons capable of the full range of tasks. Member states have proposed their contributions on a voluntary basis and according to their discretion and capability. But declaration of availability, by which MS engaged temselves, is binding and there is no possible to retire the declared avalability. RRF is politicaly and military dependent from common institutions: at political level from the Council of the Union at level of foreign and defence ministers, coadiuvated by COREPER, by the The European Union Military Staff (EUMS) the only permanent integrated military structure of the European Union, by the European Union Military Committee (EUMC), composed of the Chiefs of Defence of the Member States and by the The Political and Security Committee (PSC) formed by national experts at ambassadorial level.

The latter has a focal role in ESPD. First of all the PSC exercises 'political control and strategic direction' of the EU's military response to the crisis and, day by day, it keep track of the international situation in the areas falling within the common foreign and security policy. It send guidelines to the Military Committee; receive the opinions and recommendations of the Military Committee, and in the event of a crisis the PSC is the Council body which deals with crisis situations and examines all the options that might be considered as the Union's response. To prepare the EU's response to a crisis, it is for the PSC to propose to the Council the political objectives to be pursued by the Union and to recommend a set of options aimed at contributing to the settlement of the

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[1] Farrel M., (2005)

crisis. In particular it may draw up an opinion recommending to the Council that it adopt a joint action.

In December 2001, at the European Council of Laken, the ESPD was declared partly operational. The rapid reaction forces have been collected and the aim of this force has been decided (the so called Petesberg task, that are: humanitarian action, peacekeeping and peacemaking operations).

In May 2002 the first joint military exercise was launched and served for a first test of the decision making procedures and for improving pre-decisionmaking phase of crisis management.

The explanation for this change in the European attitude towards defence cooperation is to be analysed as an effect of the Balcans' crisis. The lack of internal consensus among members on the Balcan crisis, even if Balcans are a very sensitive area for European security, and the need to ask the military intervention of the United States made clear that the cooperation network of the second pillar was not effective in managing crisis and that it needed an amelioration of proceudres.

Neverthless, the issue of improve CFSP in term of abolishing the unanimity vote and adopting the qualified majority was not inserted in the agenda of European Union. After the failure of international action uf the EU in former Yugoslavia, in Kossovo and Bosnia, Member states preferred to address debate towards the issue of military capabilities and discussion was focused on the need of a common military force. After 11 September made credible the hypothesis that USA were no longer willing to intervene in a crisis at the periphery of Europe, and the estabilishment of military capabilities in order to manage crisis was perceived as an urgent need to safeguerds European security.

The second crucial argument has to be consider in order to evaluate the security actorness of the European Union is that from the early 1990s, the the nature of security characteristics changed dramatically. From Kossovo to Iraq, new dimensions of security concept were arised such as soft security, human security, comprehensive security. This implies the need to develop new forms of security guerantiees that can not forget military capabilities but that consider other security tools, as dialogue, confidence building, civilian cooperation in crisis management, highly relevant.

In this context Europe is demanding to develop a new security strategy drowing a new visions of security and a consequent EU role able to provide this new form of multidimensional security.

In that sense, the "European Security Strategy" (ESS) drafted by the High Representative of EU Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, and approved by European Council in December 2003 is to be consider a first attempt to draw a common vision of EU's role in international security enviroment underpinning of the military tools created from 1999 to 2001.

Solana's security strategy starts from the new security situation: the end of a direct military threat to Europe's security, the raise of a new form of inter and intra-state armed conflicts in the European periphery, the diffuse threat posed by international terrorism and the new menaces as organized crime, illegal immigration, socio-economic underdevelopment, regional conflicts, lack of democratic institutions and respect for human rights, failed states, failing multilateral institutions, enviromental problems.

The ESS, stresses the new multidimensional nature of security. The document emphasizes that 'as a union of 25 states with over 450 million people producing a quarter of the world's Gross National Product (GNP), the European Union is, like it or not, a global actor' that 'should be ready to share in the responsibility for global

security', while noting at the same time that already in recent years 'European forces have been deployed abroad more often than in any previous decade'.

The document focuses the main key threats to international security and identifies a three way- strategy for the EU in order to deal with the new security environment.

Firstly, it suggests of "'addressing the threats" with a strategy of 'pre-emptive engagement' for European Union since 'conflict prevention and threat prevention cannot start too early'. Neverthless, pre-emptive engagment is a concept based not on the preventive use of the military force, but a strategy based on the pre-emptive use of 'a mixture of instruments', for 'none of the new threats is purely military; nor can any be tackled by purely military means'. This mixture comprises a multiple menu of different tools, as the promotion of the rule of law and respect for human rights; trade and development, in combination with conditionality; and the readiness to act when multilateral commitments are not lived up to or when states place themselves outside international society.

Secondly, Solana addresses European Union to "building security in our neigbourhood", stressed the validity of the collective security approach, and to estabilish 'a ring of well-governed countries', 'with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations': the Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, the Southern Caucasus, and the Mediterranean.

The third aspect of Solana's strategy is the strong and active european support for an effective multilateral system' and for 'a stronger international society, based on the central role of international institutions, well functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order'. At this end ESS calls for european misures aiming at strengthening the decision-making mechanisms of the UN and providing it with standby forces, in order to create an effective crisis management capacity; contributing to the building of local conflict prevention mechanisms and crisis management capabilities in key regions, reinforcing the verification mechanisms of the non-proliferation treaties and export control regimes and establishing a counter-proliferation committee under the Security Council to monitor compliance with relevant agreements and resolutions.

Finally, the Solana document identifies the policy implication for Europe and calls for a 'more active' and 'more coherent' Europe 'able to sustain several operations simultaneously', with 'a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention'.

Document identify capabilities needed to implement strategy and calls for transforming "our militaries into more flexible, mobile forces" and for using pooled and shared diplomatic and intelligence capabilites" .

Solana's strategy represents the first attempt of the Union to substitute the "civilian power approach" with a "multidimensional power" equipped with a complex of tools useful to faced the multidimensional nature of actual threats

The question arises if EU will be able to implement this strategy or if Solana's document will increase the "capabilities-expectation gap" (Hill 1993;1998).

European Union is increasing its capabilities in the field of defence and, in line with the ESS, has The Union has decided to develop **the civilian aspects of crisis management, to estabilish** a "civilian component" for crisis management and has launched a new headline goal for 2010 aiming to create a more flexible organisation for RRF.

## Civilian component and new headline goal

The <u>civilian component</u> , developed at the Feira European Council (1999) and Gothenburg European Council (2001) with extensive contributions by the Commission, aims to implement those parts of ESS stressing the multifaced nature of contemporary crisis and the need to add civil assistance to people and governments in crisis management mechanisms. At this end Civilian component consists of four main instruments that are mutually dependent.

- police cooperation: possibility of providing up to 5 000 policemen, including 1 000 within 30 days, for tasks ranging from restoring order in cooperation with a military force to the training of local police.
- strengthening the rule of law: possibility of providing up to 200 judges, prosecutors and other experts in the field;
- civilian administration: possibility of providing a team to establish or guarantee elections, taxation, education, water provision, etc.;
- civil protection: possibility of assisting humanitarian actors through emergency operations, etc. The EU will have to be capable, within three to seven hours, of providing two to three assessment teams consisting of ten experts as well as intervention teams consisting of 2 000 people.

Furthermore, a committee for civilian aspects of crisis management has been created in order to improve relations between the military and civilian components. Incorporating instruments from the first pillar, this committee ensures cooperation with the Commission whilst highlighting that the success of an operation is closely linked to the reciprocal nature of the military and civilian actions.

At the informal Defence Ministers Council of 2004 a new headline goal has been launched for 2010. Member States have therefore decided to set themselves a new Headline Goal, reflecting the European Security Strategy.  The new EU 2010 Headline Goal is based on the Battlegroups concept. A Battlegroup is based on combined arms, battalion sized force (1500 troops) and
reinforced with combat support elements. It could be formed by a framework nation or by a multinational coalition of Member States. This model is based on the need of a rapid (re)action in case of crisis management and it implies the ability to act upon the whole spectrum of crisis management operations covered by the Treaty on the European Union. This includes humanitarian and rescue tasks, peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking. As indicated by the European Security Strategy thismight also include joint disarmament operations, the support for third countries in combating.  On the deployment of forces, the ambition is that the forces start implementing their mission on the ground, no later than 10 days after the EU decision to launch the operation.

## Conclusion: is the EU a security provider?

Very soon after its creation the EU suffered from the fact that is was mailnly conceptualised as an economic actor and the creation of European Political Cooperation in the 70's was a timid attempt to speak with one voice in the international arena and the CFSP in the 1990s was the instrument aiming to improve the international presence of EU. Even if CFSP was able to create a strong framework for the national decision making processes in the field of foreign policy, it demonstrated to be unable to work when a strong rivalry among interests and position of member state is at stake.

The ESDP at the end of the century initiated a process of retinking the role of EU in international system and retinking the relationship among member states in the field of foreign policy.

But, at the outset of the new century international credibility and security of the EU had to face a further challenge: the Iraq crisis.

In this occasion the CFSP did not work at all. EU was absolutely absent as an entity and Memebr States were fragmented in their position towards the Iraq's invasion. Common institutions and procedures were ignored by member states. Coalition for and coalition against invasion were organised out of the common institutions. Iraq crisis was a clear demonstration that armed force can not represent substitute for a policy. The whole ESPD project was focused exclusively on the institutions and the strategic level, concerning the objectives of the ESDP, has been absent from the agenda. The absence of a strategic concept driving ESPD and, more generally, international activity of the European Union created not only technical problems of policy making (lack of a political guideline for institutions and bodies when these latter have to make the day-by-day activities) but also a lack of general guideline driving the political and security integration among member states. With the estabilishment of ESPD EU has changed its international role passimg from a civilian power to an international actor able to use the full range of international capabilities, but this change of attitude must be provided with a strategical document that, starting from the values and interests, outlines the long-term objectives that are to be achived and the instruments that are to be applied at this end. The identification of a clear set of shared interests and a common strategy should force Member States to align their national security policies and promote a gradual harmonization of national foreign policy attitude. ESS has been written with the main aim to provide ESPD with a strong guideline; neverthless institutional reforms are needed now in order to fill the capabilities-expectation gap. The EU at 25 countries can not have an active, rapid and robuste foreign and security policy if it mantains the current mode of collective decision-making based on unanimity. A step beyond is necessary to permitt EU to serve as security provider: reform of CSFP-ESDP decision - making process.

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