# THE EU AS A MILITARY CRISIS MANAGER: ASSETS AND OBSTACLES

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In early 1990s, with the establishment of the 'European Union' by the Treaty of Maastricht, the twelve member countries pledged to have a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Two main reasons led them to replace the EPC with the latter. The first one is related to the wish of incorporating security and defence issues into the community architecture. Conceived and implemented outside the community treaties, the EPC had achieved some success and become an important instrument for European integration over the years. Yet, maintaining the coordination between foreign policy and community acts was increasingly posing problems. CFSP was conceived to establish links between the supranational entity and the foreign policy practices of the member states.

The changes in European security architecture represented the second reason for the passage from EPC to CFSP. Two strategic implications should to be highlighted in this context. Firstly, the monolithic, massive and potentially immediate threat disappeared with the collapse of the communist bloc. The dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and the disintegration of the USSR in 1991 put an end to the antagonism between the free world and the iron curtain countries. Secondly, a security vacuum appeared. Within this new environment, conflicts of a different nature broke out that the security organisations were not ready to deal with.

The first implication could have provoked a divergence of views among Europeans. As Nicole Gnesotto put it, the post-Cold-War-era crises did not affect the vital interests of western democracies. Therefore, *immediate solidarity and convergence of views* related to the Soviet threat were not almost *automatic anymore*.[1] Philip Gordon asserted a parallel view arguing that the end of the Cold War 'eliminated one of the strongest reasons for feeling the need of a collective security in Europe'.[2] In the absence of a common enemy and the simplicity of the cold War's bipolar system, *'security interests were potentially more differentiated'*.[3]

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[1] Nicole Gnesotto, 'Défense Européenne et Partenariat Atlantique' in Françoise de la Serre & Christian Lequesne (Ed.), Quelle Union pour Quelle Europe. L'Aprés-Traité d'Amsterdam, Complexes, 1998, p: 75.
[2] Philip H. Gordon, 'Europe's Uncommon Foreign Policy', International Security, Vol: 22, No: 3, p: 98.
[3] Ibid.

On the other hand, the new international context could be conceived as more favourable for the expression of a 'European dimension' of security. In fact, the new crises entailed serious concerns for the EU member states. Security and defence matters were subject of profoundly renewed discussions in the new era. It was thus the 'hour of Europe' when a period of nearly half a century which had made all attempts to build an autonomous European security architecture inopportune was over. The new politico-strategic environment was characterized by the end of a bipolar dissuasive system and this made the emancipation of the various groups possible.

Within this context, the EU had to undertake a new re-organisation. The substitution of the '*European Security and Defence Identity*' with a '*European Security and Defence Policy*' (ESDP) was a sign that the transformation would have practical aspects, and thus go beyond the conceptual discussions.[4] However, in the words of Hans-Georg Ehrhart, it is not entirely unproblematic to speak of the Union as a crisis manager.[5] It is true that the EU has made some serious achievements in the security and defence field (Chapter I). On the other hand, it has to confront some serious difficulties (Chapter II).

## PROGRESS OF THE ESDP

Since the 'Helsinki Objective' of 1999, the EU has realized considerable developments in the field of crisis management. Related to military structures *(a)* and conceptual underpinnings *(b)*, they are concretised in military and civilian operations *(c)*.

### a. Military structures

The Helsinki Summit agreed to set up a Political and Security Committee (PSC) to deal with all aspects of the CFSP. The Committee helps define the EU's political guidelines. Charged with the preparation of the EU's response to international crises, the PSC is the mainspring of the ESDP. In times of crisis, it provides 'political control and strategic direction' for EU operations. Moreover, it maintains a privileged link with the Secretary-General/High Representative.

Under the auspices of the Council, the PSC takes responsibility for the political direction of the development of military capabilities. It works in close connection with the Military Committee and the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis

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[4] Esra Çayhan, 'Avrupa Güvenlik ve Savunma Politikası ve Türkiye', Akdeniz İİBF Dergisi, 3, 2002, p: 49.

[5] Hans-Georg Ehrhart, 'The EU as a Civil-Military Crisis Manager', International Journal, vol. 61, no. 2, Spring 2006, p: 433.

Management (CIVCOM). Heads of crisis management operations, such as military commanders or EU special representatives, may attend its sessions.

The European Union Military Committee (EUMC), the highest military body established within the Council, is composed of the member states' chiefs of defence who are represented at the weekly meetings by their military representatives. The EUMC gives military advice and makes recommendations to the PSC. Monitoring the progress of military operations and evaluating the strategic options also belong among the Committee's responsibilities. There is also a working group (EUMCWG) performing the preparation of its work.

The European Union Military Staff (EUMS) is the source of military expertise for the ESDP. The EUMS is to carry out early warning, situation assessment and strategic planning for Petersberg missions. This task includes the identification of the European forces, either national or multinational, as well as the implementation of policies and decisions as directed by the EUMC. At this point, it is worth pointing out that the EUMS ensures the link between the EUMC and the military resources available to the EU. It also '*contributes to the process of elaboration, assessment and review of the capability goals*'.[6]

In addition to the above-mentioned bodies of the Council, the contribution of some agencies to the EU's crisis management efforts is also worth mentioning. Based in Torrejon (Spain), the Satellite Centre is the successor of the WEU Satellite Centre meant to strengthen the EU's early warning and crisis management functions.[7] The PSC has been operational since January 1. 2002 and is responsible for the political supervision of the centre's activities related to information and analysis based on satellite imagery. Having its own legal personality in order to fulfil its mission, the centre also conducts research and development projects.

The EU Institute for Security Studies (EU ISS) is another agency that was initially set up within the WEU structure. Established by the same Council Joint Action as the SATCEN, it aims to '*help create a common European security culture, enrich the strategic debate, and systematically promote the interests of the Union*'.[8] As an autonomous agency, the EUISS performs three functions: research and debate on the major security and defence issues that are of relevance to the EU; forward-

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[6] Council Decision 2001/80/CFSP of 22 January 2001.
[7] Council Joint Action 2001/55/CFSP of 20 July 2001.
[8] www.eu-iss.org

looking analysis for the Union's Council and High Representative; development of a transatlantic dialogue on all security issues with the countries of Europe, Canada and the United States.

The Council established a European Security and Defence College in July 2005 in line with the decision taken at the Thessaloniki Summit of June 2003. Operational since 2006, it aims to develop a common security and defence culture among the EU member states. The ESDC is organised as a network of national academies, colleges and institutes in the EU that are concerned with the above fields. Within this structure, the EU ISS will have an important role to play.

The European Defence Agency was created in 2004 to help EU member states improve their defence capabilities for crisis management operations under the ESDP. There are two main pillars to assist the Agency achieve its objectives. The first one is based on the encouragement of EU governments to increase defence expenditures in order to meet tomorrow's challenges. The second is related to *'helping them identify common needs' and to 'promoting collaboration to provide common solutions'*.[9] The Agency performs four functions covering the development of defence capabilities; co-operation in armament; the European defence, technological and industrial base and market of defence equipment; research and technology.

### b. Conceptual underpinnings

In Thessaloniki the European Council adopted the paper entitled 'A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy' prepared by the Secretary General / High Representative Javier Solana. This document is meant as an antidote for criticisms on the lack of a doctrine underpinning the EU's foreign and security policy.

The strategy paper devotes its first chapter to global challenges and key threats to European security. It then puts forth the three objectives that the EU should achieve in order to defend its security and promote its values: extend the zone of security around Europe; strengthen international order by building effective multilateralism; counter the threats by combining military and non-military instruments.

In the last chapter, J. Solana affirms that EU members should be more active, more coherent and more capable in order to make a contribution to world peace that will match their potential. He goes on by emphasising the necessity to co-operate

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[9] http://www.eda.europa.eu

with partners, not without mentioning the irreplaceability of the transatlantic relationship. Before concluding on its contribution, he underlines the necessity for the EU to improve its capacity to work with other key actors and to extend the network of partnership.

By adopting the ESS, the EU declared the responsibilities it intends to take in the international arena. In line with this development, the member states pledged themselves to become capable of responding to crisis management operations, by 2010, in a rapid and decisive way. Interoperability of the forces, their deployability and sustainability are the focal points of the document called Headline Goal 2010.

The framework of Headline Goal 2010 incorporates the missions envisioned in the ESS (joint disarmament operations, the support of third countries in combating terrorism and security sector reform) and, thus it goes beyond the Petersberg missions. The document also points out the necessity for the EU to be capable of conducting *'several operations simultaneously at different levels of engagement'*.[10]

A high readiness of force deployment is also envisaged. The units may be of a stand-alone type or parts of a larger operation enabling follow on phases. In what concerns the rapidity of decision-making, the aspiration of the EU is to be able to decide on the launch of an operation *'within 5 days after the approval of the Crisis Management Concept by the Council'*. Concerning the deployment of units, the goal is to make it possible *'no later than 10 days after the EU decision to launch the operation'*.

The concept of battlegroups was announced in Headline Goal 2010, but other forums have also put it on their agenda. During the Le Touquet summit of February 4. 2003 France and the United Kingdom affirmed their conviction of the necessity to improve, in order to meet the needs of immediate reaction forces, additional European capabilities 'in planning and deploying forces at short notice, including initial deployment of land, sea and air forces within 5-10 days'.[11] The discussions on establishing joint tactical groups composed of around 1,500 soldiers were renewed after the *Artemis* operation.

Such a mechanism would allow the EU to improve its rapid reaction capability, to contribute to the initial phase of large operations, to carry out autonomous missions and to support United Nations operations. EU battle groups are to conduct two operations nearly simultaneously by 2007. They will be sustainable for 30 days; but

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[10] Headline Goal 2010 as approved by General Affairs and External Relations Council on 17 May 2004 endorsed by the European Council of 17 and 18 June 2004.

this timeframe can be extended to 120 days by rotation. The distance of deployment may reach out as far as 6,000 kilometers from Europe. The establishment of these groups is based on the principle of multi-nationality. A 'framework nation' may prevail in its formulation. It is not surprising  that the key criteria are the concept of 'interoperability'and 'military effectiveness'.

The European Capability Action Plan was another significant step for the EU. In November 2001, EU defence ministers agreed to meet the capability gaps. This decision conforms to the declarations made since the Helsinki summit. The main objective of the plan is to improve the capability of dealing with international crises. The importance of rationalizing the member states' defence efforts and increasing the synergy between their projects for enhancing European military capability is highlighted in the plan.

ECAP is based on three principles. The first one is related to enhancing effectiveness and efficiency of European military capability efforts. The second is the bottom-up approach to European defence co-operation—which refers mainly to the voluntary basis of the member states' commitments. The last principle is related to the coordination between EU member states and co-operation with NATO—the latter is meant, in a broad sense, to avoid wasteful duplication.


**c. Military operations within the ESDP framework**

After the disagreement on the Berlin plus agreement was solved, the EU could launch military operations. The first one is known as FYRM/Concordia.[12] On 27. January 2003 the European Council adopted a joint action to take over from NATO the military operation known as Allied Harmony in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRM).[13] The decision was taken in conformity with the demand coming from the Macedonian government. Following the Macedonian government's request, the mission was prolonged until 15. December 2003.[14] The mandate was not subject to change.

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[11] Franco-British Summit Declaration on Strengthening European Co-operation in Security and Defense, Le Touquet, 4 February 2003.
[12] Concordia is the first military crisis management operation launched by the EU but it is the second in the ESDP framework.
[13] Council Joint Action 2003/92/CFSP of 27. January 2003.
[14] Council conclusions on Operation Concordia in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.Bulletin EU 7/8-2003 (http://europa.eu/bulletin/en/200307/p106097.htm).

According to a Council document the mission had two main objectives.[15] The first was to guarantee security and stability in the region and to allow the implementation of the framework-agreement signed in Ohrid in 2001. The second was to stabilise Macedonia to the extent that no international presence should be needed on its soil any more.

Concordia had a modest size of 400-strong force, including a staff of 80 civilians. It was also the first concretization of the strategic partnership between NATO an the EU in this field. Within the ESDP framework, the EU then continued to contribute to stability in the region with the EUPOL Proxima police operation as will be shown below.

Artemis is the second military operation implemented by the EU. On 30. May 2003, the United Nations Security Council adopted unanimously Resolution 1484 on the deployment of an interim multinational force in Bunia (Democratic Republic of Congo). As a reply to the call made by Kofi Annan on all UN member states to provide for a temporary force, the Council of the EU adopted a joint action in order to intervene in the region.[16] The aim was to improve security conditions and the humanitarian situation in Bunia.

The mission in Congo, albeit accomplished in three months, is an important step for the EU towards becoming a global actor. It was the EU's most rapid response ever given to an international crisis. Europeans worked in co-ordination with the United Nations Mission in Congo, without recourse to NATO assets.[17] This was the first out-of-Europe mission which combined civil and military dimensions of crisis management.[18]

EUFOR-Althea is the biggest operation conducted by the EU, comprising around 7.000 troops seconded by 33 countries. Launched in late 2004[19] as a follow-on to NATO's Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the mission is still continuing. It is carried out with recourse to the transatlantic organisation's assets. EUFOR aims to *contribute to a safe and secure environment*' in the region, and support it to achieve its long-term political objectives.[20]

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[15] EU-Led Operations in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – Master Messages, Council of the European Union,, 6916/03, Brussels, 28/02/2003 (http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/03/st06/st06916en03.pdf).

[16] 'Council Joint Action 2003/423/CFSP of 5 June 2003.

[17] Michéle Bacot-Décriaud, 'La PESD: Montée en Puissance et Perfectibilité' in Patrice Buffotot (Ed.), La Défense en Europe. Avancées et Limites, La Documentation Française, Paris, 2005, p:197.

[18] Alessia Brava, L'Union Européenne, Acteur Global? Potentialité et Limites de la PESC et de la PESD, Institut Européen de l'Univérsité de Genéve, 2005, p:92.

[19] The operation is based on the Joint Action 2004/570/CFSP adopted in 12/06/2004 by the Council.

[20] European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (http://www.euforbih.org/sheets/fs050103a.htm).

To date the latest military operation of the European Union—within the framework of the ESDP—was launched in support of the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) during the election process.[21] The operation is known as EUFOR RD Congo. The Council decision was taken two days after the UNSC Resolution 1671 authorizing the EU to deploy forces in the region. More than 130 people were seconded from 20 EU member countries and Turkey.

**WEAKNESSES OF THE ESDP**

There are some serious weaknesses that stand against the EU's capacity to deal with international crises: the lack of political will *(a),* difficulties relating to the reconciliation of national and community interests *(b),* financial problems *(c)* and transatlantic ambiguities *(d).*

**a. The absence of a common will and a common strategy**

One of the major problems of ESDP is the reluctance of member states to give up their political decision-making monopoly within a supranational entity. At present, risk evaluation in foreign policy remains a nation-state priority in which specific perceptions dictated by geographic, historic and political considerations play an important role. Policy makers can hardly overcome the priorities of national interest in favour of the Union's interests.

The rule of 'political Europe' remains the preservation of the principle of 'national'. As a corollary, the European treaties on which governmental representatives agree reflect a complex architecture. In fact, the majority of governments accept that the CFSP must be provided with the necessary means to build a powerful Union. However, member states can agree neither on the institutional structure to be adopted nor the operational capabilities to be set up—not to mention the speed or the range of the reforms to be introduced.

The former British Foreign Minister Malcolm Rifkind was right in saying that the Union does not have a vision of world that is coherent and shared by all its members. His argument that this vision is not bolstered by instincts that are profoundly infused within a nation-state, being thus—at the origin of foreign policy making—also pertinent.[22]

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[21] Council Joint Action 2006/319/CFSP of 27 April 2006.

[22] Quoted in Peter Van Ham, 'La Construction d'Une Europe Politique: La Politique Etrangčre et de Sécurité Commune' in Anne-Marie Le Gloannec (Ed.), Entre Union et Nations. L'Etat en Europe, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris, 1998, p:230.

Foreign and security policies of the member states continue to rely mainly upon 'national reflexes'. Political visions and cultures differ from one country to another—a fact that obstructs the definition of a unique and coherent CFSP.[23]

The reason why substantial progress was not made in terms of security and defence policy during treaty revisions is the lack of agreement among member states. Some prefer a pragmatic approach with reluctance to let community method extend to intergovernmental procedures. Others opt for a closer connection between European integration and the political domain. Even the countries that have closer views may not agree on how far to deepen the Union.

Because of their differing diplomatic traditions, the member states adopt different attitudes in a crisis situation. Making an exhaustive list goes beyond the aim of this paper, but pointing out some cleavages seems to be a pertinent effort. For instance, although all of the EU member states agree upon the legitimacy of an independent Palestinian state, some of them are more pro-Israeli than others. An autonomous European defence structure is not the best option for all member states, the transatlantic links being more fervently defended by some of them. There is no agreement among EU capitals on the regions of the world that require priority treatment either. One can also argue that permanent member status in the UN Security Council puts two member states on a distinct platform in international relations.

## b. Difficulties of reconciling community and national interests

The sophisticated structure of the European Union is one reason for the inefficiencies observed in the field of ESDP at the institutional level. This is due to the peculiarity of the EU, which is a sui generis polity where national interests are to be reconciled with supranational (community) ones. As a result, the configuration of the CFSP/ESDP includes competing institutions. The Council has competence over the entire three-pillar-structure while the Commission's initiative prerogative is limited to the first community pillar although it is involved in the CFSP process.

The Treaty on the European Union states that the Union shall '*ensure the consistency of its external activities as a whole in the context of its external relations, security, economic and development policies*.' The Treaty provides that co-operation between the Council and the Commission is necessary for such consistency. Each

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[23] Ibid.

of theses institutions, '*in accordance with [their] respective powers*', will ensure the implementation of these policies.

However, the implementation of the above-mentioned article poses some problems. Pascal Gauttier points to the differences in the interpretation of the two institutions:

> '*[T]he Community approach advocated by the Commission, based on the mutually reinforcing nature of the CFSP with the first pillar, argued for a strengthening of its role in the CFSP; on the contrary, the Council's intergovernmental approach held the CFSP to cover all aspects of foreign policy and security, and favoured adopting general positions to define strategies without going into specific details for their implementation. The Council of the EU thus deemed it possible to determine measures falling under the first pillar at the outset, while clearly imposing CFSP decisions on the Commission.*' [24]

He also underscores that, in addition to this divergence of interpretations, there is also a competition between the administrative structures, exacerbated by the development of the ESDP.[25] It is hard to refute his assertion. That institutional rivalries go against the will of the TEU in what concerns the harmonious functioning of the CFSP is a matter of fact.[26]

### c. Financial questions

Article 28 of the TEU, distinguishes between administrative and operational expenditures of crisis management operations. The Treaty stipulates that '*administrative expenditure, which the provisions relating to the areas referred to [the area of Common Foreign and Security Policy] entail for the institutions, shall be charged to the budget of the European Communities*'. The same financing procedure goes for the operational expenditures, unless they arise from '*operations having military or defence implications and cases where the Council acting unanimously decides otherwise*'.

If, in a given case, the expenditure is not undertaken by the budget of the European Communities, it will be '*charged to the Member States in accordance with the gross national product scale, unless the Council acting unanimously decides*

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[24]  Pascal Gauttier, 'Horizontal Coherence and the External Competences of the EU', European Law Journal, Vol. 10, no. 1, January 2004, pp: 27-28.

[25]  bid, p: 28.

[26]  Jean-Michel Dumond & Philippe SETTON, La Politique Etrangčre et de Sécurité Commune (PESC), Collection Réflexe Europe, La Documentation Française, Paris, 1999, p. 22.

*otherwise*'. The TEU provides for the possibility to opt out from operations having military or defence implications. If member states resort to such a 'constructive abstention',[27] they will not be obliged to contribute to the financing of the decision taken by the Council.

Obviously, the TEU sets up a clear demarcation between administrative and operational expenditures. Yet, setting a common budget is of crucial importance for the efficiency and success of the rapid deployment of forces. For this reason, the Council has made some efforts in this field. On 18, June 2002, it published a report on military operations, which mentions three different schemes for military expenditures. The first one can be summarised as 'costs are paid where they are incurred': the operations with military or defence implications will be financed by national budgets. The second shows some intervention by the Community on a case-by-case basis. The last one is related to common costs.

Another initiative of the Council came out in 2004, with the 'Athena' mechanism.[28] It administers the early financing of the EU Military Rapid Response operations. The payment system functions in two ways. Member states can pay contributions to Athena in advance. Or, they can pay their contributions to the common costs of the operation decided by the Council, within five days following the call—unless the Council decides otherwise. A special committee has also been set up to guarantee the proper functioning of the system.

The significance of Althea lies in its capability to translate political solidarity into financial one. But it illustrates how hard it is to overcome the financial problem which slows down progress in the security/defence sphere. One can legitimately argue that the financial contributions of the member states do not match the ambitions that are declared.

**d. Transatlantic ambiguities**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has been of crucial importance for the Old Continent's security ever since its establishment. After the end of the Cold War, its raison d'etre was questioned in various circles. But, contrarily to some gloomy expectations, NATO has not ceased to exist. Instead, it has been involved in a

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[27] Article 23 TEU.
[28] Council Decision 2004/197/CFSP of 23 February 2004.

process of reorganisation and incorporated new members from the former enemy bloc, leaving its doors open to new enlargements.

However, Europeans and Americans do not agree upon all aspects of European security. The degree of 'Europeanness' of the latter constitutes one of the discords. Although successive US governments have encouraged the EU members' efforts to share financial burdens, they have strong reservations on what Madeleine Albright called the three 'D's: duplication (of NATO assets), decoupling (from NATO) and discrimination (of NATO members that are not in the EU). Unlike defenders of a more 'Europeanist' approach, some EU member states are also unwilling to lead the EU in that direction.

Besides, transatlantic partners face ruptures on several international issues. The National Security Strategy promulgated by the Bush administration in September 2002 is an important example for this problem. The document relates the US strategy to the 'Islamic Arc', which has major implications for transatlantic links. The latter may cause problems due to the disparity between the interests and policy perspectives of the European and American allies, and the role attributed to NATO, again in the centre of the discord.[29]

In fact, as argued by Anne Deighton, the EU has *'neither the military capacity nor the political will to create a security or defence profile that is independent from NATO in the short term*'[30]. For more than half a century, Europeans have relied on the security guaranteed by the United States. Giving up on this comfort is very unlikely for most European states. This reality is intensified by limitations both in financial and military terms.

Nonetheless, the uncertainty raised about Europe's future engagement in NATO could be a source of rivalry between the two organisations.[31] Both Europeans and Americans have some question marks concerning each other's position.[32] How can the US make the EU's foreign action remain within the framework of a structure over which the Union has a limited control? On the other side, the EU has doubts about the US sincerity in the light of NATO's strategic reorientation towards out-of-area and not-strictly-military missions.

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[29] Ted Galen Carpenter, 'The Bush Administration's Security Strategy: Implications For Transatlantic Relations', Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Vol. 16, Issue 3, Oct 2003, pp: 515-520.

[30] Anne Deighton, 'European Security and Defence Policy', Journal of Common Market Studies, Vol. 40, No. 4.

[31] Christian Houdet, Colomban Lebas, Gérard Dréville, Une Défense Plus Globale «Par et Pour» Une Europe Plus Prospčre, Collection des Chercheurs Militaires, Les Editions de Riaux – CEREMS, Paris, 2005, p:81.

[32] Ibid.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The fact that the ESDP has been subject to significant progress is undeniable. It provides the EU with the opportunity to play a key role on the international platform and to contribute to world peace outside its territories. As a legitimate objective, the ESDP may build on concrete achievements in its future development.

However, any contemplation on the future of the EU as a crisis management actor must take into consideration two important facts. The first is that, at present, the ESDP is in an embryonic stage. All the achievements that have been accomplished within the EU's framework required long-term efforts. The same holds for a qualified progress of the ESDP, which will be slow and arduous.

The second fact, which is closely related to the previous one, is the need for considerable determination on the part of the EU member states. The EU is certainly capable of establishing a framework to develop a common defence. Yet, the biggest challenge the Union has to face in the development of its crisis management capabilities is the divergence of its member states' foreign policy preferences. In the absence of a common strategy, the aforementioned framework cannot be of use.