

## COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

# The Need for an Open System to Evaluate European Union CSDP Missions

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The European Union (EU) has launched 24 Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions since 2003, but very little is known about them. The information available from open sources is limited to the information provided by the Council through its website, and only in the last few years have external evaluations begun to appear. Compared to the uncritical and complacent descriptions of official reports, independent evaluations coincide in pinpointing common deficiencies in the missions. Among other factors, they point to a lack of strategy in the mandates, limited results in terms of solving the underlying problems, a democratic deficit in management, difficulty in coordinating interventions, differences in strategic cultures among Member States and a lack of military planning capacity.

Now that the Lisbon Treaty is in force, European presidencies no longer need to continue promoting CSDP missions as they did in the past, but they do need to articulate new measures that will consolidate them in the future. As well as improving the operating and doctrinal aspects of the missions, future presidencies will have to turn their attention to two structural conditioning factors linked to their affordability and accountability. While the missions have served as a laboratory for the gradual development of the EU's procedures and civilian and military crisis management bodies, they have not been subject to critical assessment and monitoring processes as stringent as have been established in some countries. This paper contends that CSDP missions will not be able to rely on such a tolerant framework in the future and that they will be subject to more criticism and more thorough evaluation. Consequently, the forthcoming Trio Presidency must start implementing mechanisms to strengthen the legitimacy and transparency of the CSDP missions and prevent European citizens and their representatives in the European Parliament from becoming distanced from them.

## Reasons for concern about the missions' affordability

The number of, and international demand for, CSDP missions has not stopped growing, due to the proliferation of crises and the European aim of contributing to international

governance, exerting its responsibility to protect and provide humanitarian aid as a global security player. However, the resources available to the EU do not live up to these expectations. New needs are constantly arising and priorities must be set in crises. As the 2008 report on the implementation of the European Security Strategy of 2003 highlighted, the EU must "prioritise [its] commitments, in line with resources".<sup>1</sup> The concept of affordability refers to undertaking only those missions that can actually be conducted and that, furthermore, produce the expected results in acceptable cost and efficiency terms. Affordability means earmarking expenses in accordance with the global priorities and resources of the CSDP and Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

Experience reveals that political support for CSDP missions is out of step with contributions to launch them, since the Member States that approve the missions are not obliged to provide the necessary resources to implement them. Several of the missions approved in Brussels have seen their roll-out delayed because they did not have the necessary resources (C.f.: Concordia, EUFOR Chad/Car, EULEX Kosovo and EUPOL Afghanistan), while others were deployed quickly due to the sponsorship of some states (Cf.: Artemis Congo, EU NAVFOR Atalanta and EUMM Georgia). The practical consequence is that despite appearing to be acting collectively, the EU actually acts like a coalition of the willing, in which the available means and participants define the mission.

Because the EU wields a range of civilian and military instruments that other players do not have, most official evaluations highlight the EU's capacity to implement missions requiring comprehensive management. However, some evaluations question this comparative advantage because many missions have experienced difficulty in assembling military, civilian and financial resources. The European Defence Agency (EDA) data shows that the difference in military capabilities among Member States continues to increase and, unless future presidencies make real efforts to introduce convergence criteria, there will be increasingly few countries able to operate jointly. The Trio Presidency could also sustain efforts to meet civilian and military headline goals. These goals were not achieved by the 2003 and 2010 deadlines – while resources have been launched, such as the EU battlegroups, so far they have not been used in CSDP missions.

The EU has shown a capacity to generate civilian capabilities in technical, development and humanitarian aid missions, but not in missions like those of Kosovo or Afghanistan, which required sizeable police contingents, or in missions to reform the security sector in complex scenarios, such as in Guinea Bissau or Somalia (perhaps this explains why missions like EUJUST LEX Iraq, EUSEC DR Congo and EUTM Somalia do not even feature on the Council's website). Similarly, experience shows that, in order to achieve results, peace-building and

1. Council of the European Union, Executive Summary, "Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy", S407/08, 11 December 2008, available at: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/reports/104630.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/reports/104630.pdf)

nation-building missions require more resources, strategic patience and management capacity than the EU can provide.

The funding of these missions is another source of uncertainty. Civilian missions can be funded using CFSP funds (€327 million for 2011), but this is barely 3 to 4% of the total EU external affairs budget. In military operations, states involved assume most of the expenses (costs lie where they fall), except some common costs covered by the Athena mechanism and others to launch the operations, which only cover approximately 10% of the real expense. Despite the financing mechanisms and the budget increase applicable to CSDP missions, the funds are insufficient and their management by the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Services needs to be made more coherent.

Reliance on national military, civilian and financial contributions gives major European countries extraordinary power to reject those missions or mechanisms that oblige them to make significant contributions (Germany and Sweden in EUFOR Chad, for example) or to demand – in exchange for their contributions – a control of the decision-making process, a more prominent role and greater visibility in the missions (France contributed 53% of EUFOR Chad/CAR troops, for example).

So that missions are not approved unless their necessary resources are guaranteed, the Trio Presidency must aim for synchronisation between the political decision-making processes, operation planning and the generation of forces. When this synchronisation worked in the past, it has been possible to conduct missions as demanding as the Concordia mission in the Balkans or Atalanta in the Horn of Africa. But when common decision-making has underestimated the availability of resources, either it has not been possible to deploy the missions (in Darfur, for example), or they have been delayed (it took 6 months to assemble 16 helicopters and 10 transport aircraft for EUFOR Chad/CAR, for example), or they have been deficient, as was the case of Kosovo and Afghanistan. The Trio Presidency must also continue to support initiatives, such as permanent structural cooperation, the division of tasks, functional specialisation, the pooling of resources or outsourcing, which could increase the collective resources and reduce dependence on individual countries.

In a Europe where citizens' welfare is being scaled down and where many are questioning their governments' decisions to intervene in international missions, presidencies must turn their attention to streamlining EU intervention criteria. An international player's influence is not gauged by the number of missions it conducts, but by its missions' results. Presidencies must help change the mentality of those in charge, to shift the focus on the missions' quality and not their quantity. The EU must take advantage of the emergence of new global and regional players and share with them the responsibilities of international security, within the complementary framework implied by a comprehensive approach.

## Reasons to demand accountability in respect of the missions

European governments are finding it increasingly difficult to justify involvement in international security missions to their citizens – this is especially true regarding missions where costs do not translate into results. Because of the need to secure and maintain political and societal support for these missions, many countries established democratic supervision mechanisms to authorise involvement in international initiatives. These mechanisms apply mainly to military missions, but they have increased the influence of parliamentary debates and opinion polls in the approval of, and continued involvement in, missions. The general tendency of governments asking for prior approval before sending troops abroad forces them to justify the reasons for their involvement in such missions, the goals thereof, results to be obtained, and human, material and financial resources necessary to realise them.

It is true that not all 27 EU Member States have accountability mechanisms, that these mechanisms vary from one country to another and that they are all in the test phase. But it is also true that they have become widespread and that the governments that were previously opposed to being scrutinised are now benefiting from the support and legitimacy it affords them. At the EU level, there are not yet similar mechanisms in place, due to the democratic shortfall of the CSDP in general, and missions are not subject to public scrutiny. However, it will not be long before societies and parliaments that are used to demanding accountability from their governments with regard to missions start insisting on the same from Brussels. It would therefore be a good idea if the coming Trio Presidency began preparing the institutions and changing the procedures so as to improve accountability.

A first step would be to increase the information available regarding the status, results and lessons learned from the missions. Official civilian and military evaluations do not transcend to civil society and the constraints on open information are compounded by the lack of methodological instruments for assessing CFSP missions, which has hampered self-criticism and learning. Accordingly, it would be advisable for the coming Trio Presidency to present initiatives to boost information flow and to develop more transparent evaluation mechanisms and indicators. This would enable increased interaction between national parliaments and the European Parliament, Europeanising the defence commissions, in order to foster greater societal involvement, as suggested by the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS).

Until now, most CSDP missions have lacked a strategy that clearly marks out the EU's vital interests and priorities at play, its strategic objectives, the resources needed and how these resources will be used. European public opinion and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) do not have this information because the available public documents are too general and because crisis-management concepts and operation plans (OPLANS) are confidential. Without this information, it is very difficult to know why missions are approved and what strategic effects they have. Nor are there efficient reporting mechanisms for MEPs to receive

this information confidentially, since governments avoid being accountable to the European Parliament by arguing that they are accountable to their own national parliaments, and they avoid being accountable to the latter by arguing that the decisions are made in Brussels. As a result, missions are as likely to be as out of step with societies at the EU level as they already are at the national level. The way to prevent this is for those responsible for the missions to provide transparent and systematic accounts of their results.

Entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the launch of the European External Action Service represent an opportunity to introduce reporting and assessment mechanisms that would render CSDP missions more democratically legitimate and accountable than at present. The European Parliament now has more capacity to supervise and interact with the High Representative and the European External Action Service, to have them provide more information on missions financed with European funds, and respond to requests from the president of the Parliament or the External Affairs Committee concerning the CFSP. The European Parliament also receives periodical reports and can draft non-binding recommendations with the information received during visits, hearings and open sources. However, European institutions have little capacity to demand accountability from those responsible for CSDP missions whose financing and resources come from governments.

Consequently, although it hardly seems logical to ask the Trio Presidency to promote the transparency and supervision of the intergovernmental system, it must do exactly that. Establishing a European open evaluation system would help European citizens better identify with CSDP missions and would nurture the European strategic culture. In a strategic context such as that of the next few years, in which the available resources will shrink, there will be no shortage of people questioning the wisdom of the EU continuing to expand the number and complexity of CSDP missions without those responsible for managing them being asked to explain their goals and results. As well as official assessment mechanisms, a more open and transparent evaluation system must be implemented to enable governments and institutions to share the lessons learned with MEPs and civil society. Furthermore, the implementation of such a mechanism would help advance towards monitoring procedures based on the best national practices and strengthen democratic supervision by national parliaments, which would be able to verify the information they receive from their governments against the information received from Brussels.

Since this is a long-term process, the immediate step for the Trio Presidency is to create evaluation, supervision and communication instruments for those CSDP missions that do not have a significant military component. The Trio Presidency must try to put an end to the current dilution of responsibilities throughout the institutional universe and the various decision-making levels, and start defining and personalising responsibilities. In the long term, in order to do the same with military missions, the presidencies must foster cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments, in order to consolidate accountability and accessibility principles, regulate open or classified information systems, harmonise

evaluation procedures and methodologies, and promote strategic communication between European leaders with regard to CSDP missions. Now that the Trio Presidency has lost much of its prominence in CSDP missions, its work must be aimed at consolidating the missions by fostering the EU's credibility and efficacy as a leading player in global security.

### Key recommendations:

- Recast the Trio Presidency's role in CSDP missions towards monitoring and supervision.
- Introduce intervention criteria to synchronise political decision-making, operations planning and generation of resources (affordability).
- Introduce transparency, evaluation and supervision mechanisms for the missions (accountability).