

Chapter 12

Towards a Common European Army?

Editors' Introduction

In April 2011, Libya, one of the many countries in the Arab world that witnessed protests against decades of oppression during the so-called 'Arab spring', descended into bloody chaos as aging dictator Muammar al-Gaddafi clung to power with the help of his well-equipped army. Immediately, intense debates erupted in EU member states on whether they could stand by idly as many people were slaughtered in the immediate neighbourhood of the EU, just because they exerted their democratic rights. In the end, France and Britain were at the forefront of the countries that actively intervened with their militaries whereas countries such as Germany and Poland refused to participate. Once more, a common security and defence policy of the Europeans seemed to be more of a fata morgana than a real prospect. Libya has now turned into a failed state, plagued by warring factions, unable to govern its borders that are crossed by huge numbers of refugees who try to leave Africa towards the shores of the EU. Furthermore, external powers such as Russia and Turkey began to intervene, supporting different actors with arms.

While few would argue against the idea that more European cooperation in the area of security and defence policies is a desirable end, doubts have accompanied the idea since its first manifestations, such as the doomed European Defence Community of the early 1950s, the rather ineffectual European Political Cooperation (EPC) of the 1970s or the botched response of the EU to the breakdown of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. However, the end of the Cold War and the problems in dealing with the drama in Yugoslavia have led to the formal integration of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) into the European treaties as part of the Maastricht Treaty. Following an important Franco-British understanding at Saint-Malo in 1998, a formalized European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) supplemented CFSP and was added to the treaties in 2001, if only after long and intense debates.

Ambitious goals regarding forces and capabilities were formulated. In December 2003, the EU published its first European Security Strategy, modelled after the regular U.S. government practice of summarizing in a comprehensive document the challenges to U.S. security and the responses of US defence policy to a changing security environment. However, huge questions about the EU's will and capacity to become a full-fledged military actor remained. These concerned, for instance, the lack of credible capabilities given shrinking defence spending in Europe, technological limitations, divergent strategic outlooks

and cultures among EU member states, as well as fears of decoupling from and duplication of NATO. In a famous book, American political analyst Robert Kagan drew a sharp dichotomy between the United States comfortable with the use of force, and a Europe essentially mired in a culture that prevents the development of real military capabilities (Kagan 2003). The EU's efforts at creating credible structures in this area, renamed Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in the Lisbon Treaty, continue to face challenges from many sceptics, not least from member state governments hesitant to transfer decision-making power in defence matters to the EU.

Hanna Ojanen and Luca Ratti represent this debate on the pro and cons of CSDP. Ojanen, a Finnish national who has worked in Swedish and Finnish think-tanks on EU defence policies, maintains that these policies should not be judged only for their specific contribution to Europe's security but also for various other functions they serve. Luca Ratti from the American University in Rome thinks that the CSDP consistently failed to live up to its promise. For various reasons, EU member states are currently not able to effect a working common defence policy.

The arguments in these chapters also bear on other important themes in this volume, for example, the conflict between supranational and intergovernmental decision-making in the EU (chapter 2), the controversy over whether the EU acts as normative power (chapter 10), and the future of the transatlantic alliance (chapter 15).

12.1 The European Union's CSDP: The Great Illusion

Luca Ratti

12.2 Defence Integration in the EU: From Vision to Business-as-Usual

Hanna Ojanen

Many observers of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), both from the media and academic literature, are pessimistic about its potential. The doubts originate from the idea that security and defence are the policy fields closest to the core of national sovereignty, fields in which states would never totally relinquish their decision-making rights. The continued dissonance of member state positions and the vitality of various national discourses on security

and defence policy seem to confirm the sceptics' view that any agreement on common policies or steps ahead in defence integration will be frail and merely exist on paper. Member states will always continue to defend the priority of their national interests in this area.

It is true that a considerable degree of ambiguity over CSDP remains. Even the Lisbon Treaty refers to the specificities of certain member countries' policies and to the important role played by other organisations in the field, notably NATO. The specific CSDP structures are of a relatively recent origin: the European Defence Agency (EDA) from 2004, the European External Action Service (EEAS) from 2010. The Lisbon Treaty of 2009 added important solidarity and mutual defence clauses. There is, in particular, the mutual defence clause 42.7 that was activated by France in 2015. The Lisbon Treaty also introduced the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO); its implementation began in 2017. Critics note many shortcomings. The EU crisis management operations have been rather small; it has been difficult to gather enough capabilities from the member states, for instance for civilian crisis management; and until now the EU Battle Groups were not used at all. The creation of the institutions has spurred tensions and controversies. Many observers therefore conclude that CSDP has not meant much in practice at all (e.g., Menon, 2009; Ratti, in this volume).

These critics, however, suffer from two fallacies. First, there is the lure of numbers. Big numbers are not always the right solution, whether one tries to solve a crisis by augmenting the number of troops in action or spends more money on defence. Second, there is the lure of narratives. Scholars often try to compress political developments into a story with a logical end. More often than not, this logical end is closely modelled on similar developments in the past. Thus, the CSDP is compared with NATO, and it is found short of efficient military structures and capabilities. Or the EU is compared with powerful nation-states, and its efforts at creating an effective military, or a 'European army', are seen as a potential reality in lofty political speeches only. CSDP, however, is not about achieving what others have achieved previously. CSDP has many drivers, it is needed for various different reasons, and the specificity of the EU's supranational features are increasingly visible in this domain, too.

Drivers and interests behind CSDP

A typical way of analysing the CSDP is by looking at the interests of the EU member states. Sometimes these interests converge, but different member states also have their specific reasons for signing on to and benefiting from it. CSDP serves their interests – not of *all at all* times, but rather of *most* and for *most* of the time.

Traditional defence cooperation, for instance in a security alliance, usually is explained by the existence of a common enemy, or the need to respond to a shared threat. However, there is no clear external threat that would compel the member states to cooperate, nor is there a lack of existing arrangements for cooperation in the field, as most of the CSDP countries are also in NATO. Still, defence integration has started to grow. Why? The drivers of CSDP are not necessarily those that one would first think about, and not the same as for security and defence cooperation traditionally (see also, e.g., Smith, 2003 and Howorth, 2007: 52–57). It is the context that matters, and the context of CSDP development is that of European integration. The internal logic of integration, the links between different policy fields, and the creation of new norms, notably those concerning state sovereignty, are factors that pave the way for CSDP. These processes, while lacking a direct link to defence, lead to increasing convergence of security and defence thinking in Europe.

If we look closer at the role of member states, we find that different countries have benefitted from CSDP in different ways. For Germany, the added legitimacy provided by the common European framework has been the major historic reason to further cooperation. The United Kingdom, particularly in the late 1990s, saw in CSDP a way of strengthening its position in the EU, and it might even do so in the future by cooperating with it. France has viewed it as a European alternative to transatlantic defence cooperation and, during Macron's presidency, as a field in which France can assume a leadership role. For a country like Finland CSDP is a means to strengthen national security in a rather tangible way given its close proximity to Russia.

In recent years, smaller groups of member states have been instrumental in taking integration forward, first by new steps among themselves, then by drawing in a growing number of followers. An important example was the Saint-Malo summit between France and Great Britain in December 1998 that soon led to a Union-wide push to define the steps to reach an autonomous military capacity for the Union. The Lisbon Treaty opened new possibilities for this kind of development within security and defence: new core groups can emerge through PESCO that allows groups of countries to move ahead in defence cooperation. When inaugurated in 2017, almost all EU countries have joined several PESCO initiatives. They include, for instance, military mobility and various capability-developing projects.

Since the EU's December 2013 special summit on CSDP, a new phase of development has specified the ideas of autonomous action capacity in many ways. In addition to the operationalisation of PESCO, central elements in this "relaunch" have been the concept of a European Defence Union, the decision to go ahead with a Military Planning and Conduct

Capability (MPCC), the launch of the European Defence Fund, and new financial arrangements for Battle Groups (Howorth 2018).

Often, the impetus for steps forward has come from states outside the Union. Interestingly, the United States have moved from opposing the creation of CSDP to formally welcoming it because of the opportunities it offers for increasing the EU's self-reliance and thus more equitable burden-sharing in defence matters (Howorth, 2007: 137). Now, uncertainty about the US commitment to European defence through NATO under the Trump administration is a key driver of what has come to be called "European strategic autonomy". Under that label, various new ideas are being aired on how to decrease the EU's dependence on outside actors for its security and defence, and how to strengthen it to become an international actor able both to act alone, when needed, and choose its partners where cooperation is beneficial. Many analysts underline the need for a comprehensive vision of this autonomy, comprising political, operational and industrial dimensions (Howorth 2019) but also a clear institutional dimension (Järvenpää, Major and Sakkov 2019.)

For Lippert et al. (2019), strategic autonomy means being able to set, modify and enforce international rules, as opposed to being a rule-taker subject to strategic decisions made by others, like the United States, China or Russia. Increased autonomy is called for also because of Brexit: it suggests a new emphasis on military capability development but it may also open up new possibilities for carrying on initiatives that the UK as a member state would have opposed.

Institutions are, indeed, central in this new phase of CSDP development. They have played their role previously, too. Different EU institutions see their own position within the Union enhanced by getting a voice in this field. The EDA, seemingly a rather weak actor and controlled by the member states, is emerging as a network-builder that sets rules as to the standards of efficient regulation or desirable outcomes (Merlingen, 2011) and shapes the political order of European defence (Bátora, 2009). The EEAS also has a stake in the development of the policy as its own legitimacy as a new EU organ depends on the success of its initiatives. It has the right to put forward policy proposals and has potential to become an agenda-setter (Vanhoonacker and Pomorska, 2013). In a longer term, the EEAS opens a door for new actors that can see their interests served by CSDP and turn into its proponents, including EU citizens and national diplomats.

Thus far, CSDP has been of low practical consequence for citizens. It has not had budgetary consequences that a European taxpayer would directly feel. It has not been an issue of heated political debate, neither at the national nor the European (parliamentary) level.

However, the EU delegations around the world may become a concrete manifestation of the added value of EU policies for a citizen in an emergency situation. National diplomats, in turn, get the possibility to join the proponents of integrative efforts if they feel they benefit from the new career possibilities offered in the European diplomatic service – in a similar way to what their counterparts in national armed forces and defence administrations in European military structures. The European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) of 2016 differs from the previous European Security Strategy of 2003 in that it highlights the security of the Union and of its citizens as a first priority and also emphasises the resilience of societies. The Eurobarometer poll results continuously show citizens' positive view on the EU's role in security policy.

Not only EU institutions, but the European defence industry has a considerable stake in CSDP, particularly so as the goals of enhancing the competitiveness of European defence industry and a European defence market figured prominently on the agenda of the special EU Defence Summit in December 2013. The summit also underlined the active involvement of the Commission (Coelmont 2015). The European Defence Fund is to coordinate and increase national investment in defence research and also improve interoperability between national armed forces.

Among the external actors supporting the EU's development, there are also other organisations. NATO and the UN share an interest in getting the EU to play a more active role. Because of its supranational features, the EU can make its members comply and deliver better than any other organisation, and this benefits other organisations when their goals coincide.

For the UN, an EU with increasing capacities is a fundamental ally in UN peace support activities, but also in sustaining multilateralism and international order. The operations against piracy in the Gulf of Aden (EU NAVFOR Somalia) have been serving the UN and its specialised agencies, notably the World Food Programme (WFP).

Since its Strategic Concept from 2010, NATO has also underlined the importance of the EU that it characterizes as 'a unique and essential partner for NATO'. NATO recognises the importance of a stronger and more capable European defence and an emerging 'strategic partnership' between them. In recent years, NATO-EU cooperation has become tighter and more concrete as both organisations face new kinds of threats, notably cyber and hybrid threats. The European Global Strategy of 2016 refers to 'deepening' the EU's 'partnership' with NATO. The organisations' joint statement from 2016 has paved the way for a long list of common measures in various fields. This cooperation profits both organisations and is one example of how they impact one another (Ojanen 2018). The EU, however, also develops as a reaction to

NATO, resisting division of labour and hierarchies to retain its own autonomy and develop its capabilities further (Biermann 2017).

The existence of a multitude of different drivers makes the process probably not quicker, but in the long run more stable. This panorama of proponents also shows that CSDP cannot be explained only by traditional security interests. It develops for many other reasons, too, internal and external, material and ideational, and in interaction with other actors.

Impact and significance of CSDP

The long list of drivers of CSDP also means that there is a multitude of actors interested in trying to influence its development. They are interested because of the impact that the development of a common security and defence policy already has had on them, or is expected to have.

Among these actors are, first, other international organisations. Some authors argue that CSDP challenges NATO, unduly duplicates its functions, causes unnecessary spending and inefficiency, and constitutes a liability to the security of the member states as an unreliable alternative to existing structures (see, e.g., in Howorth and Keeler, 2003). However, a closer look at the relations between the EU and NATO (or between the EU and the UN) shows the importance of the EU for these organisations (see more in Ojanen, 2011a, Ojanen 2018). A strong CSDP is positive for them as it makes the EU a more efficient and important partner. In addition, it challenges prevailing practices, and thus can spur change in its partners. CSDP has clearly inspired NATO when it comes to needs to enhance civilian crisis management, and the new consultative way in which the 2010 Strategic Concept was prepared. It has also challenged the UN system in claiming for a special enhanced observer status in the General Assembly to better suit its unique character somewhere between an organisation and a state.

CSDP also has important effects on states outside the Union. Among the big outsiders, CSDP is of growing importance particularly for the United States as a way to decrease the need for American presence in Europe. At the same time, outsiders may actively try to downplay CSDP, portray it in a certain way, or purposefully ignore it and keep turning to the member states instead. This has lately been the case of Russia. Such efforts do but reveal that the EU and CSDP are becoming increasingly consequential.

Like any EU policy, the impact of CSDP is visible first and foremost within the member states. The EU Battle Groups, rotating military units that deal with crises, are an example of activity that has hitherto had most impact on the level of member states and the development of their defence capabilities, while its impact on the EU's crisis management capacity is still to

be seen. EU member states have also developed more similar views on crisis management, armaments procurement and defence spending (Howorth 2012). Increasing convergence is visible even in the traditionally divisive question of use of force (Coelmont 2015). On a deeper level still, the EU and CSDP are transforming the state, altering in a fundamental way how the essential elements of a state, territory, citizens, and security functions, are seen. The EU frames both the internal and the external security of its Member States (Ojanen, 2011b). Increasing awareness of shared external borders and border management, preparedness to assist in natural catastrophes, and even to defend the territory of other member states under attack are signs of how national security is being europeanised. Boosting a shared European strategic culture is one of the goals of the French European Intervention Initiative (EI2) in which 12 EU member states as well as Norway and the UK participate.

Finally, what is particularly striking is that CSDP brings with it elements of supranationalism and democratic decision-making rarely associated with defence issues. Decision-making still remains for the most part strictly intergovernmental; qualified majority voting is possible only in matters of implementation. Yet, the Commission and the European Parliament are becoming more central in this realm – as in any other policy realms of the Union.

During the negotiations on the EEAS, the European Parliament pushed through considerable changes using its budgetary powers. Control over the EEAS budget also implies control over its activities even when it comes to defence, a field where the EP is formally not competent. Regular question times and consultations prior to approval of strategies and mandates also strengthen the position of the EP. Interestingly, the EP is on the way to accumulating powers that do not exist at the national level – security and defence are hardly a usual topic of parliamentary scrutiny or public debate in many countries. CSDP can strengthen public debate because of the nature of the substance itself: security and defence is more likely to raise public awareness and consequently political pressure than matters of ordinary foreign policy (Wagner, 2003). The CSDP, thus, has the potential of making security and defence policy more democratic (see also Kietz and von Ondarza, 2010). In the long run, CSDP could change the locus and mode of decision-making on security and defence, including an increase in parliamentary accountability and overall democratic legitimacy.

The EP's budgetary powers will be particularly visible in the near future as for the first time, the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 will include defence-related funds. The Commission's Preparatory Action on Defence Research and the EU-funded joint defence industrial projects are a precursor for making defence cooperation under the budget a reality.¹

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/european-defence-fund-2019-mar-19_en

The role of the Commission is striking in other realms, too. Strikwerda (2018) shows how the Defence and Security Procurement Directive of 2009 redefines the CSDP from intergovernmental to supranational. The Commission shaped the process making member states comply with a non-legally binding guidance note, and member states recognized the authority of the Commission – not because of coercion or economic gain, as could be expected, but because of contextual rationality. Member states were following the existent rules, in particular, on the internal market.

What many might see as a complication is the fact that several of the new defence initiatives are open to non-EU countries, too. The EI2 is such a structure. Even the Aachen Treaty of January 2019 between France and Germany comprises cooperation that can be extended to other states, also outside the Union. While the exact relationship of these structures to EU institutions and decision-making seems unclear, they can be an important bridge to non-EU European countries, such as Norway and Britain. It is in particular the United Kingdom, a country which frequently has realized the logic of defence cooperation, whose participation in initiatives such as EI2 can be an important element in a new constructive relationship once the immediate fall-out from Brexit has become less charged.

Conclusion

When assessing the CSDP, it is important to look at what is there, not at what is missing. Then we can see that this policy actually is consequential, both internally and externally. Internally, it is a feature of the EU's internal governance system and a crucial part of the broader integration project which sustains the enduring cooperation of the 27 member states. Externally, it is part of broader system of European or global governance, whereby the EU is a contributor to a safer world order as well as a provider of European regional governance. CSDP is working on a practical day-to-day level of security and defence integration. No more just a vision, it is becoming business-as-usual. It is an indispensable part of EU's external relations and a crucial component of the credibility and comprehensiveness of its policies towards the neighbours and the world.

Over the years, CSDP has mattered in different ways for EU member countries: as a provider of legitimacy, leadership, and security through capacity improvement. It has made its way into the formulation of national policies to the extent that its collapse would weaken the security of the member states (Faleg, 2013). But it also changes national debates on security and defence as it creates peer-pressure and introduces elements of a joint scrutiny on what today's security and defence needs are and how they can be met in new ways. National policies

no longer exist in a vacuum. In changing the nature of the debate, CSDP also enhances citizens' stakes by offering them new ways to take part in policy-making.

CSDP has become an indispensable part of EU's external relations, a crucial component of the credibility and comprehensiveness of its policies towards the neighbours and the world as well as central for the notion of 'European sovereignty'. Increasingly, the way towards strategic autonomy seems to move in a way specific to the EU: with the help of supranational institutions.

Summary of main points:

The CSDP is not working (Ratti)	CSDP is a crucial part of the EU (Ojanen)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CSDP is ineffective and advances have been illusory• It suffers from a lack of leadership and capabilities• Divisions among member states fosters continued reliance on NATO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CSDP is a crucial part of European credibility• Its aims go beyond defence matters and it fulfils different objectives for different member states• It introduces democratic elements in decision-making about defence
