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“ESDP@10: what lessons for the future?”

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*Apenas o texto proferido faz fé
Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort*

Speech at the Conference

“ESDP@10: what lessons for the future?”

Brussels, 28 July 2009

Let me start by saying how delighted I am to be able to attend this conference on ESDP and its lessons for the future.

Firstly I would like to thank the Director of the EU Institute for Security Studies (EU ISS) Álvaro de Vasconcelos, as well as the Swedish Presidency of The European Union – Minister Carl Bildt in particular – which jointly put together this conference, with the support of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs. This kind invitation gives me the opportunity to share some brief ideas on the future of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

2009 marks the tenth (10th) anniversary on the launching of the European Security and Defence Policy by the European Council of Cologne. Driven by the Saint Malo French-British bilateral Summit, in 1998, the then 15 EU Member States overcame the “taboo” of the military dimension of European Integration, created by the failure of the original European Defence Community, in 1954. This is how they came into establishing the conditions for the EU to play its full role on the international stage.

With the approval of the ESDP, the EU took the first meaningful step in order to dispose and develop the necessary means and capabilities to assume its responsibilities concerning a European common security and defence. The formal ESDP consecration on the Treaty of Nice, in 2000, embodies a historical moment in the process of European integration.

ESDP has since been one of the most dynamic areas of the process of European integration, regardless of the advances and constraints related with the EU decision-making process and the various Treaties of the Union.

Based on the shared principles and values that lie at the heart of the European Union – as democracy and the respect for basic rights and freedom – ESDP has evolved since 1999 through prudent yet concrete steps at the institutional, operational and doctrinal levels, at times surpassing the treaty which encompasses ESDP.

At the institutional level, the EU is now equipped with the necessary tools, as well as a framework and decision-making mechanisms, to respond to decisions with military implications: the Political and Security Committee; the Military Committee and the EU Military Staff.

In terms of capabilities, significant milestones have been achieved; to start with, the Headline Goal 2003, followed by the Headline Goal 2010, ensued by the approval of the Progress Catalogue, under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU, in 2007, determining the main priorities and strategic gaps to be addressed before 2010. A Capability Development Plan was established, as well as the European Defence Agency (EDA), able to generate, develop and support, amongst other objectives, cooperative projects and programmes in this field.

At the operational level, the EU has been carrying out missions on the ground uninterruptedly, be it in coordination with NATO, within the framework of the 'Berlin Plus' agreements, or autonomously. The EU has promoted more than two dozen ESDP missions around the world – both civilian and military – and there are currently 12

missions underway, deploying more than six thousand men and women on the ground.

Last but not least, at the conceptual level, the European Security Strategy was presented in 2003, identifying the main threats to our common security. It was a groundbreaking document, as it was the first in the history of European integration, to define a common strategic vision, guiding European foreign actions. Last December, the Secretary-General of the Council and High Representative for Foreign Policy, Javier Solana, presented a document to the European Council, assessing the implementation of this Strategy, in light of the current international panorama and the new challenges facing the European Union.

In order to ensure that 'European Defence' is fit enough to deal with the strategic and security challenges of the coming decade; we must firstly determine how ambitious the EU security and defence policy is prepared to be. This level of ambition was defined in the Treaty of Lisbon, signed on December 2007 by the 27 EU Member States.

Secondly, to make this happen, we must turn to the necessary establishment of institutional, operational and conceptual adaptations, which are crucial in order to make this level of ambition real.

If you will allow me, I wish to focus on this second point.

I believe we all pretty much agree that our essential goal is to empower the EU with a broad and coherent vision, allowing it to become a global player, with a decisive role in the promotion of a safer and more stable world. For this to happen, it is essential to consider European Defence as a priority. It is therefore absolutely necessary, in my view, to further strengthen ESDP.

In order to achieve this, and taking into account the challenges that the EU faces in the international arena, it is paramount to instigate a series of changes at the level of institutions, concepts, capabilities and operations.

Firstly, at the institutional level, in addition to defining ‘threats’ – already outlined in the European Security Strategy – we must analyse how these threats may relate to one another, and how the Union can address them effectively.

It is important to further develop a coordinated inter-pillar action, so that the strategy can be practically translated in the policies and mechanisms to be adopted in order to promote global and integrated action. As we know, although complementary, *Security and Development* policy domains are split in two pillars of European integration: the Community pillar, managed by the Commission; and the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP pillar), which is under the guidance of the Council and the Member States, following the ground of the intergovernmental approach.

Therefore, increasing emphasis should be placed on EU internal coordination: both among the institutions with security and developmental competences (the Council and the Commission), as well between the Member State’s national policies.

Furthermore, it is not only vital to ensure that the civil society, as a whole, supports ESDP, as it is necessary to improve the public and parliamentary overview of the military and ESDP instruments at the disposal of the EU. The European public needs to be made aware of the importance of security and defence issues, not just at the international level, but also for the process of European integration itself.

Secondly, a conceptual change is needed. The European Union must recognize and face new challenges and risks, keeping in mind, not just the prevailing and evolving international context, but also the need to affirm the EU as a global player. A player that is willing to share the burden of international security responsibilities, more coherently and effectively.

Concerning present and future challenges, the EU should look into strengthening its partnerships and relationships with other international actors. First and foremost, stands NATO - as the single most important military strategic partner. But also other major international actors, namely Russia, and emerging powers such as India, China and Brazil, as foreseen in the “revised” European Security Strategy of 2008.

It is also necessary to define the rules and framework for military intervention, namely in high-level risk environments and emerging crisis scenarios. We cannot pretend the international system is free of uncertainty, or ignore growing calls for EU civilian and/or military intervention. We must consider that options for EU intervention may increase, namely with the introduction of the mutual defence and solidarity clauses, as provided by the Treaty of Lisbon.

Additionally, the EU must take on increasing security and defence tasks and activities, not just within its own borders, but also to promote stability within its ‘near neighbourhood’, or in regions of strategic importance, particularly Africa and the Mediterranean. For this reason, the EU cannot depend, exclusively, on the military capabilities of the Atlantic Alliance, which would anyway constitute a denial of its own defence responsibilities.

We should state things clearly in this regard: the goal is not to establish a rivalry with the Atlantic Alliance but, on the contrary, to

ensure that capabilities are complementary and autonomous, so that Europe becomes a useful and credible ally in the task of bringing peace and stability to the international system.

Thirdly, we need to further improve capabilities. European Defence is also about the development of autonomous, credible and adapted military capabilities, which take into account the dynamics of the new international strategic environment.

In this regard, I would like to congratulate the Swedish Presidency's initiatives on the development of civilian and military capabilities synergies, which Portugal follows with great interest.

Given the challenges the EU faces, it will be necessary to deepen Europe's rapid response capabilities to address crisis situations in three major ways: forming land, air and naval Battle Groups; reinforcing the capacity for autonomous planning and operations; and creating a European Defence technological and industrial base.

Finally, regarding the operational level, the EU has played an increasing role in conflict-prevention, conflict-management and conflict-resolution missions, namely in Africa. Certainly much more needs to be done. In this respect we welcome the work foreseen by the Swedish Presidency regarding mediation and conflict prevention mechanisms related to ESDP.

These missions increasingly have a civilian as well as a military component, often involving various state institutions (military, police forces and judiciary-related), and instruments (such as the development assistance). In other words, the goal is to promote integrated security, state-building and development capacities.

On the other hand, we must also try to optimize the operational results of European military forces. The EU needs to focus on further deployability of its forces, as well as to improve

interoperability in order to better respond to the current and new missions, which have an increasingly expeditionary nature. Efforts could be focussed as well in finding and developing more efficient financial mechanisms to ESDP missions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The EU must raise up fully to its responsibilities, if it is to exert influence and guarantee a future as a respected international player. It will remain an economic power, and it will still be a civilian power, but it must also ensure its military dimension. There is no doubt this is Europe's way ahead, and it is one that Portugal subscribes to entirely.

Three decades ago, the idea that the European Community might become an international player was nothing but short of Utopia. Today, the EU has become paramount for European security and global stability and makes the difference in some parts of the world. We should not spare efforts in making the EU a global player with broad capabilities. This is precisely what should guide our efforts to consolidate Europe's Security and Defence Policy.

Thank you.