

# The Post- Lisbon Scene: the European Union's Aspirations and Commitments in Managing Crisis in Europe and its Periphery

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*Since the Lisbon Treaty came into effect in December 2009, concerns have been expressed that the European Union (EU) policies in the field of crisis management are still not coherent, effective and visible. Aiming to identify the possible role, capacities and potential of the EU in managing the crisis in Europe and its periphery, the paper explores the next commitments and directions of the EU following its stated aspirations for more competitive and leading role in the field of security and defense since the Lisbon Treaty. The paper addresses as well as the issue of positioning of the European Union within the new European security architecture following the new developments with the Lisbon Treaty of 2009.*

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## INTRODUCTION

As the main goal of the Lisbon Treaty in the area of external relations is to develop more consistent EU External Action including primary the scope of diplomacy and defense, the EU's external policy ambitions are expected to be strengthened through a number of institutional innovations. But, that approach seems to leave many puzzles as obviously the European Union (EU) is still not determined to what extent these institutional innovations will go? Therefore, it is still uncertain and unclear if the EU will be open to new ideas for broad pan-European security architecture; or will it once again put its weight behind NATO collective security?

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Since the Lisbon Treaty came into effect in December 2009, concerns have been expressed that the EU policies in the field of crisis management are still not coherent, effective and visible. Still it is not clear what significance and position will the EU give to its age-old affiliations with NATO in the future in several fields including that of the crisis management? The 2010 NATO agreed a new Strategic Concept is as well as silent on NATO's role in the broader security architecture and does not move beyond mentioning current cooperation with the EU and OSCE.

With an aim to identify the possible role, capacities and potential of the EU in managing the crisis in Europe and its periphery, the paper explores the next commitments and directions of the EU following its stated aspirations for more competitive and leading role in the field of security and defense after the Lisbon Treaty of 2009. The paper addresses as well as the issue of the redefining the relationship between the EU and NATO within the new European security architecture following the new developments with the Lisbon Treaty.

#### THE EU'S ASPIRATIONS AND COMMITMENTS IN THE FIELD OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT FOLLOWING LISBON TREATY REFORMS

Since the Lisbon Treaty was launched, it became more obvious that the European Union is much more enthused by a widespread concept of security. Apart of crisis management, this includes as well as conflict prevention, post-conflict restoration and series of military- civilian activities as following: traditional peacekeeping, development aid, policing and institution-reformation and building. This approach was announced somehow much earlier than the Lisbon Treaty was adopted, namely in December 2003 when it was adopted the European Security Strategy. And then later on, with much more extending direct emphasize it was stressed by some new provisions of the Lisbon Treaty. All that announced a new and more ambitious activism of the EU in the field of the crisis management.

Since 1999 already over twenty civilian and military missions are credited to the EU. It speaks out the fast progressing active engagement of the EU in the field crisis management. As a result, this progressing experience within a relatively short timeline has been empowered the EU in influencing more and more the strategic orientations and priorities of NATO. In meanwhile,

the Lisbon Treaty generates definitely much more ground for a more powerful and coherent toolbox of the European Union in the defense and security practices. When one combine all these elements then it is obvious that it directs to the believe that the EU is getting much and much close to a position to provides its credence to making the Alliance a more effective and consistent instrument of strategic cooperation within the new transatlantic security architecture.

As a result of the fast development of the CSDP mechanisms, there is no doubt that in the last decade the EU has became in general much more relevant actor in the field of the crisis management, sometimes on its own capacities and the rest in close cooperation with NATO. These new constellations entail the necessity for a clearer definition of the role of each organization in the field of the crisis management. As Biscop, Gnesotto, Howorth, Keohane, Silvestri, Tiilikainen, de Vasconcelos (2010) pointed out "EU involvement in NATO operations makes projecting a vision of NATO that will resonate with the European public opinion extremely important, all the more since public support for NATO has declined due to the continuation of the war in Afghanistan". It is believed that the entire integration of France into military structure of NATO may help ensure that a unique standpoint of the EU on NATO is not misguided for a fading of transatlantic harmony.

Despite the significant growing ambitions of the EU in the security and defense policy since the Lisbon Treaty, the coherence and development of the EU common foreign and security policy it will depend in a vital way from the future of the NATO-CSDP framework and of NATO itself. The two organizations for the moment have in common 21 member states and this number it is expected to grow up in the coming years either with the prospective new NATO or EU members. Several of them already participate in certain agencies or initiatives, like for instance the European Defense Agency. Furthermore, the TEU (Treaty on European Union) explicitly provides for compatibility with membership of NATO. It states that the common security and defense policy of the EU "shall respect the obligations of certain Member States, which see their common defense realized in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), under the North Atlantic Treaty and be compatible with the common security and

defense policy established within that framework.”<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, for many like Bono and Ulriksen (2004), the actual concept of EU ‘civilian crisis management’ remains vague and it has not been defined in clear way in the EU documents. One of the first reports devoted to the issue defined it as “the intervention by non-military personnel in a crisis that may be violent or non-violent, with the intention of preventing a further escalation of the crisis and facilitating its resolution”. (Lindborg, 2002: 4)

And in fact as far as the approach that the European Security Strategy identifies those civilian capabilities are essential for addressing and solving series of issues related threats that the world faces in the XXI century and that they are still a relevant and maybe the main tool for the long-term management, we have to recognize then that it is exactly the European Security Strategy that only has given shape to the common objectives and norms of the EU regarding the outside intervention, but not defining the issue of the civil crisis management in a clear way.

The Lisbon Treaty embraces a wide range of innovations intended to enlarge the capabilities and coherence of the European Union as an important actor in the field of the security. The new mechanism foreseen with the Treaty PSCiD (Permanent Structured Cooperation in Defense) seems to be designed to let the EU member countries that are willing to build up their cooperation in the sectors of capabilities and equipment. Potentially, a double impact of this mechanism is expected once implemented:

- It makes possible for the member states of the European Union to get involved in a more consistent progress of roughly needed military facilities.
- It releases some kind of a mid-term standpoint for investments in the budgets of the national defense having in mind that in most cases actually they are critically constrained.

In fact, seems that decision-makers in national level find themselves incapable to arrange the financial settings for swift conversion into a structure that is more EU-focused.

If the EU countries fail to make it works the PSCiD mechanism, the risk is not only specific in misleading an important bridge of making work defense cooperation, but as well as the risk is more general- the mechanism

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1 Article 42 of the TEU as amended by the Treaty of Lisbon.

of 'Permanent Structured Cooperation in Defense' is one of the few substantial innovations of the field of Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). The efficiency of CSDP in fact it will depend on how the PSCiD mechanism will be delivered.

In searching the reflections to the institutions and capabilities coming from the EU crisis management tools introduced by the EU Lisbon Treaty, Greco, Pirozzi and Silvestri, add three issues to the current impasse regarding the next directions and commitments of the EU in the field of the crisis management:

First, ambiguous political visions and strategic objectives. Many ideas are in the air, but they are hardly compatible. Furthermore, current debates in policy and academia alike are short of specifics about what PSCiD could achieve for Member States and the EU. Nor do they clarify the benefits of PSCiD for participating states.

- Second, the road to implementation is not clear, since the principles and criteria to define the implementation of PSCiD are rather vague. What is lacking is an evolutionary approach capable of building on existing cooperation projects and integrating the various interests at stake.
- Third is the absence of the necessary financial boost: PSCiD implementation has been hit by the current financial crisis. Given the difficult state of debate the Member States consider investment in PSCiD as a financial risk. (Greco, Pirozzi and Silvestri, 2010).

#### THE POSITIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION WITHIN THE NEW EUROPEAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE AFTER THE LISBON TREATY

Over the post-Cold War period (1991 – 2008), the world has seen several alarming trends that seem to highlight the relevance of the transatlantic relationship. It is not only the financial crisis which hit in 2008 has had a great impact on defense budgets, particularly in European NATO member states, and has resulted in fiscal constraints on both sides of the Atlantic. But, firstly at all, there is occurring a notable geopolitical restructuring occurring in the world, resulting in the rapid emergence of a multi-polar world and a more complex multilateralism.

Furthermore, there has been a paradigm shift with regards to threats, related to the rapid emergence of new technologies over past decades. Access to the global commons is increasing. The recent rise of cyber attacks on military and industrial targets as well as the fragility of satellite systems in the domain of outer space is estimated to be example of this trend as well.<sup>2</sup>

One of the major challenges of the international security that is reflected then to the European new security architecture is the changing character of warfare: from conventional war to asymmetric threats. The war on terrorism it comprises many diverse conflicts which take many forms on many fronts and therefore today no insurgency is a single war, but many few other wars, a fact which becomes even more complex as we consider peace talks in the future and the role of the international organizations in this context and a new setting. Further, as the Group of experts on a new Strategic Concept for NATO has been recommended “the global nuclear non-proliferation regime is under increasing stress; incidents of instability along Europe’s periphery have revived historic tensions; innovative modes of gathering, sending and storing information have brought with them new vulnerabilities; the security implications of piracy, energy supply risks and environmental neglect have become more evident; and a worldwide economic crisis has spawned widespread budgetary concerns”.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, in dealing with the contemporary threats US and the EU have more shared interest now than at anytime since the end of the Cold War. Following World War II, NATO was created to hedge in the former socialist Eastern Europe but also to build up the western society and democracy. It is this element that still connects the EU and US together as they moves towards dealing with new security challenges in the XXI century.

Europe faced several key challenges in the security sphere in the last few years. These include coping with decreased defense spending, implementing the Lisbon Treaty, combating new threats and building stronger partnerships with Russia and Turkey. The EU will need to make choices regarding where it stands in the evolution of a broader European, Eurasian and transatlantic security architecture that comprises a host of organizations,

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2 For more see: “Redefining NATO and the transatlantic relationship” in A *Security & Defense Agenda* Report, 2010: 4.

3 See for this: Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_63654.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_63654.htm)

including NATO and the OSCE.<sup>4</sup> Obviously, there is occurring a changing nature of the relationship between the US and its European partners in NATO. As the global focus on security issues continues it shift towards emerging regional powers and conflicts, many criticize<sup>5</sup> the relevance of the transatlantic relationship.

Although the Berlin Plus Agreement of 2003 as an institutional link between the EU and NATO initially started to guide in effective way the cooperation between the EU and NATO, very soon it stopped to corresponds to the realities of today's EU-NATO relations in the field of the crisis management.

One of the crucial questions in this view is two folds: what are the core obstacles to efficient cooperation between the EU and NATO; and what connotations for the future development of the cooperation between the EU and NATO can be identified? Many scholars argue that the functioning cooperation between NATO and the EU has been hindered by a Turkish-Cypriot double veto. "Although blockades at the highest level are eventually circumvented through informal channels as well as at the operational level, the absence of formal decisions makes cooperation at all levels a complicated affair." (Koenig, 2010: 5) And ironically, though the discrepancies at the political level in many occasions are situated through informal means, the overwhelming potential of collaboration between the EU and NATO remains idle.

The *Berlin Plus Agreement* represents the groundwork of practical cooperation between the EU and NATO in the field of the crisis management. It addresses the provisions of procedures authorizing the EU to accomplish operations in the field of the crisis management with resort to capabilities, planning facilities and assets of NATO. As well as, it addresses the issue of classified information, that is not open to states that have been established security accord with the respective organization and ascertains activities for collaboration in the segments of developing the capabilities and

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4 The broader security architecture was debated at the OSCE summit held in Astana in December 2010. To a lesser extent, it was discussed at the NATO summit in November in Lisbon. The outcomes of these summits need to be synchronized with the Common Security and Defense Policy. Will the EU be open to new ideas for broad pan-European security architecture? Will it be ready to re-invest in the OSCE as an overarching comprehensive security actor? Or will it once again put its weight behind NATO collective security?

5 Ibid.

assets.<sup>6</sup> Had “Berlin plus” been broadened, the EU and NATO could, first and foremost, coordinate and more effectively conduct parallel operations (e.g., Afghanistan, Kosovo and on the waters near Somalia). However, these operations cannot develop sufficient formal ties because of a lack of a politically-negotiated framework. Next, they could harmonize their capability development processes, which is now possible only on a small scale and solely through informal contacts.<sup>7</sup>

The essential obstacles to the Berlin Plus formula appeared when two countries that were not members of the Partnership for Peace Program, Malta and Cyprus joined the EU in 2004. Having in mind the traditional tense political relations between Turkey and Cyprus, the former blocked the sharing of NATO information in the field of the security with both of the new EU member states. At the same time it declined to confer issues of ‘strategic cooperation’ in their attendance. In meanwhile, it was Cyprus’s next step with declining any talks beyond the activities foreseen with ‘Berlin Plus’, when it and Malta were not present. After overall, the NACPSC meetings take place without Cyprus<sup>8</sup>. At the same time, as a result the official talks are limited to common NATO-EU missions, of which there is only one for the time being, Althea operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As it is highlighted by Hofmann and Reynolds (2007: 4) even “routine cooperation between the EU and NATO, including the exchange of documents or joint crisis-management exercises, has become very complicated”.

The operational cooperation between the EU and NATO in the framework of the ‘Berlin Plus’ operations was hampered whenever the quarrels at the political-institutional level impacted on the operational level. (Varwick 2006, 190-191). In advance to the Concordia operation, Greek-Turkish discrepancies made the talks on the ‘Berlin Plus’ Agreement to be long-lasting and thus deferred the European lead. Under these circumstances especially when the Cyprus and Malta joined to the EU, it happened

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6 Until now, two CSDP operations have been conducted under the ‘Berlin Plus’ framework: 1). operation Concordia which replaced the NATO-led operation Allied Harmony in FYROM from 31 March 2003 until 15 December 2003; and 2). the operation Althea that replaced the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina that was launched on 2 December 2004.

7 More, see: M. Terlikowski, “EU-NATO Partnership and its Prospects,” *PISM Bulletin*, Polish Institute of International Affairs no. 105 (181), 19 July 2010. 383.

8 Currently, Turkey tolerates Malta to share NATO information and to take part in some of the meeting with a planning character. That happened since in 2008 Malta has get involved within the Partnership for Peace program.



throughout the period of September 2004 to March 2005, to be halted any meeting of NATO military committees and the EU. Since then the responsibilities between NATO and the EU in practice can't be marked out in a very clear way when it come to certain missions in the field of the crisis management.

From another hand, it is obvious that the European Union will need to make more concrete progress on redefining the European security architecture. Debates on how over-lapping security organizations should relate to each other have been in limbo for several years. This situation cannot continue much longer.

The EU seems is now determined to act carefully in further developing its own security apparatus while also remaining active in the OSCE and NATO and forging stronger security relations with Turkey and Russia.

In the very beginning of the XXI century it is obvious that the European Union is showing more and more growing aspirations for getting involved in dealing not only with the regional security challenges, but with the global ones as well. Within the framework of these growing ambitions of the EU, the subsequent development of the CSDP (Common Security and Defense Policy, and previously called European Security and Defense Policy) has enabled the EU to obtain new institutional mechanisms for the field of the crisis management.

A major involvement of the European Union in the field of the defense and security has attained an ever more high profile, due to several subsequent essential steps made in the plan of capability progress, institutional establishment, policy making process and operational practice. This evolution of the scope and nature of the involvement of the EU has led to a continuing emergence of a common military-civilian approach. However, according to Greco, Pirozzi and Silvestri (2010) "the European architecture for crisis management and its operational capabilities still present several shortcomings and fall short of the ambitious goals declared in various official documents."

The EU Lisbon Treaty, which came into effect in December 2009 marked the end of a difficult period of EU internal reform providing a legal framework and new institutions that should enable the EU to become a more coherent, credible, effective and visible actor in the world.

The main goal of the Lisbon Treaty in the area of external relations is to develop more coherent EU External Action. However, since the Lisbon Treaty came into effect, concerns have been expressed that the relations between NATO and the EU in the field of the crisis management should not be minored by other goals of the foreign policy of the European Union.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that that whiles the Lisbon Treaty from one side presents opportunities, from another side it as well as harbors jeopardy to development. Therefore it is of high importance for the EU to be evaluated in systematic way how the Lisbon's prospective can be employable to gain both the European Union itself and its partners? That is one clear question with no many difficulties in providing an answer when one compares to the following tricky and complicated question: what place and importance will the EU give to its enduring partnerships with the NATO as a whole and particularly in the field of the crisis management when one have into the consideration as well as series of factor that may reflect the dynamics of the designing the new European security architecture?

The first three years of the Lisbon Treaty didn't provided any break-through advances in European cooperation and influence that motivated its crafting (although that in fact it was not expected from it any such significant role).

Recent changes in the security environment are key driving factors of NATO's transformation. Additionally NATO since 2010 has its new strategic concept which is realistic and modest and with it the NATO's core tasks are preserved and ambition is lowered on issues like energy security and the environment. The new Strategic Concept is largely silent on NATO's role in the broader security architecture and does not move beyond mentioning current cooperation with the EU and OSCE. Many argues that that there was little new concerning the NATO partnerships that feed into this larger security architecture (Koenig, 2010).

NATO's new strategic concept announced a new profile of NATO in terms of the collective security concept to be launched gradually. On the one hand, NATO is a defense alliance, but in the new world of globalized security threats and challenges, the Alliance seems it will have to design a new focus on cooperation. Linked to this notion of cooperative security is the need for a comprehensive approach, both in future missions as well as in the broader sense of NATO planning structures.

Obviously, the Alliance still enjoys an identifiable reputation of organization that is commonly perceived as a main transatlantic actor of security and peace. As international and national surveys show, regardless growing ambitions of the EU and the need for the re-designing of the European security architecture, NATO is still perceived by many European countries as a synonym of defense and security. For instance, referring to the Transatlantic 'Trends' survey published on 15 September 2010 by the German Marshall Fund: majorities (59%) in 11 European countries and the USA (60%) still believe that NATO is essential for their security. And furthermore, 62% of the 11 European nations would also support a NATO's role outside Europe, compare to 32% of those who prefer NATO to focus on Europe itself. The trend of support for NATO is even higher in the US with 77% claiming that NATO should operate outside the Old Continent, if need be. Interestingly, a growing trend about NATO is notable as well as in Russia. While in 2009, only 24% of Russians showed a positive outlook of NATO; one year later 40% of them expressed a favorable view on NATO, and no more than 40% of the Russians still percept NATO unfavorably.<sup>9</sup>

Until the end of 1980s and early 1990s NATO used to be the main security shield for the Europeans from the former USSR. But, since the fall of the communism, the security environment in the post- Cold War Europe has considerably altered. The communism threat coming mainly from the former USSR is vanished a long time ago and a growing number of much more complex challenges in the field of the security and defense have appeared come to the forefront. These challenges since then have showed to be more diffuse in the European and transatlantic security system.

Under these circumstances and major developments within the security architecture, it was expected eventually that the focus of US security policy was shifting somehow from Europe in terms of its top priorities, and responded by launching their own toolbox in the field of the security and defense, the CSDP (Common Security and Defense Policy).<sup>10</sup> Of course, this new approach does not mean that the European Union has developed away from its transatlantic partners and NATO. They have still in common

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9 Stefanie Babst in "NATO's communication strategy and public support" at the web site of the Atlantic Council of the US available at: <http://www.acus.org/natosource/natos-communication-strategy-and-public-support>, September 22, 2010 last time accessed June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

10 Since the Lisbon Treaty has come into force, the term Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) replaced the former term 'European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP)'.

many issues starting from the issue of the need for common partnership initiatives and missions of the two organizations regardless the level of overlap in many issues including the field of the crisis management, and to the fact that 21 members of the two organizations are in common.

And even more important, the contemporary threats and challenges in the field of the security in both sides of the ocean may be identified as noticeably similar by both NATO and the EU. As a consequence, not only many experts, but many policymakers as well in the recent years have been stressed the issue of the interdependency between the two organizations. And finally, at the same time they have been called in continuity on the importance of the 'strategic partnership' between NATO and the EU.<sup>11</sup>

### CONCLUSION

There are a few conclusions to be drawn in relation to the challenges in front of the common security and defense policy of the EU and its aspirations in the field of the crisis management. The European Union seems to be in need of much more wide-ranging approach to its security and defense policy. At the same time, there is necessary for the EU of synergizing its internal and external security policies. In a new perspective it will help for more efficient planning of its defense policies as well and it will eventually contribute for reducing at least to some extent the national sensitivities of certain member countries of the EU or/and NATO when it comes then to the ambitions and plans of both organizations in taking their aspired role in the field of the crisis management.

The EU will need to make more concrete progress on redefining the European security architecture. While the EU will need to act carefully in further developing its own security apparatus, at the same time it will need also remaining active among others in NATO lead initiatives and operations. The EU and NATO have to work in more coordinated way to develop military capabilities required by both organizations, especially by the EU. In long-term plan, the cooperation in this segment should broaden to the conception of coherent and common planning assessment procedures in the field of defense which is a multiple sphere where the Alliance has proven apparatus and achievements.

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11 For example: J. de Hoop Scheffer, "NATO and the EU: Time for a New Chapter", Berlin, 29 January 2007.

For the EU's growing ambitions there would be enough room of the business as well having in mind that the EU already has some relevant capability in responding to the non-military aspects of unconventional threats like are terrorism, environment vulnerabilities, cyber-attacks and piracy, even though the distinctive line between military and non-military threats is becoming vague. In fact, the European Union would have to live up to the aspirations stated in the ESS and get more coherent, capable and active. There are no major reservations that the European Union might accomplish these objectives in the long term plan, there is more possible to be seen a distribution of work in the foreseeable prospect.

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