



Five years of ESDP in Action: Operations, Trends, Shortfalls

No. 39, July 2008

At the beginning of 2003, European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) became officially operational. The first period, after the establishment of ESDP at the European Council in Cologne (June 1999), was characterised by basic institution building, the creation of fundamental structures as well as the definition and implementation of civilian and military capability headline goals. Simultaneously, however, since the launch of its operative phase in 2003, a number of different ESDP deployments have been initiated, among which many have already been successfully completed. So far 15 civilian missions¹, 5 military operations as well as two civilian-military interventions have been conducted within the framework of ESDP.² Based on the missions undertaken so far by the EU, this article aims to deduce a number of operative trends and identify the main developments and shortcomings that have characterised the first five years of operational ESDP.

Despite the EU's relatively nascent history in the field of defence and security policy, one can already today sense a particular demand directed explicitly towards the EU for more civilian and military security commitment. The most obvious reasons for the attractiveness of operational ESDP are the comparatively high political credibility and impartiality of European institutions and representatives as well as the economic power which is associated with the EU. At the same time, another important factor might be identified in the EU's identity as a comprehensive security provider. Thus, the breadth of the political, economic and operative instruments at its disposal has enabled the EU to face the complex security challenges of today in a demand-oriented and integrated way. Nevertheless, a pressing need for improvement unquestionably exists with respect to both qualitative and quantitative capabilities as well as strategy in civilian and military interaction.

Operational trends in ESDP

Based on the first ESDP operations (2003-2008), one can deduce a number of operative trends: globalisation of the operational area; expansion of the operational spectrum; increasing civilian-military border interaction; growing intertwining of the first and second EU pillars; and evolving capability development processes.

Globalisation of the operational area

The clearly noticeable concentration on the Western Balkans as the most important geographical area for EU security efforts with the commencement of ESDP, has been replaced in practice by an increasingly globally oriented perspective. Although the Balkans still represent the most important operational area for ESDP in both mission commitments and in size and depth of operation. Hence, the tasks of the police mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina (EUPM) were revised in January 2006, to give a stronger impetus to fight against organised crime. The military operation EUFOR ALTHEA was launched in December 2004, with the aim to actively contribute to the further stabilisation of the Western Balkans through provision of up to 7,000 strong troop contingent and recourse to NATO-capabilities through the Berlin Plus mechanism. In FYROM, following the European military engagement with operation CONCORDIA in 2003 and the civilian police mission PROXIMA

¹ Not counting the two border missions, EUSR BST Georgia and EUBAM Ukraine.

² For a regularly updated overview on the latest operational ESDP activities visit:
http://consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=268&lang=en.

concluded in 2005, the EU deployed another civilian mission, EUPAT, whose goals are to support local police forces - through mentoring and monitoring – towards the development of European policing standards.

Other areas that also became increasingly important for ESDP engagement throughout its development include: the Middle East (EUBAM Rafah ensuring a crossing point between the Egypt and the Gaza Strip³; EUPOL COPPS supporting reform of the Palestinian police; EUJUST LEX contributing to the restructuring of the criminal justice system in Iraq), Central Asia (EUPOL Afghanistan) and Eastern Asia (AMM Aceh), as well as Africa (particularly DR Congo and Sudan/Darfur). Three new missions started during 2008: two in Africa (Chad/Central African Republic and Guinea Bissau) and one in the Western Balkans, where EULEX commencing from the work of the EU Planning Team and assisting in the transition of authority to the Kosovar government from the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Whilst the expanded theatre of intervention has significantly contributed to the image of the EU as a global security actor, the lack of a clear strategy of intervention and common priorities has negatively impacted on the coherence and effectiveness of the actions conducted.

Expansion of the operational spectrum

During the first 5 years of ESDP, the EU has assumed an increasingly broad range of security-related tasks, with mandates becoming more diverse, particularly in the civilian sector. Besides police, rule of law, and border control missions, an increasing number of tasks in the area of the Security Sector Reform (SSR) as well as the active support of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes are signs of a growing range of action within ESDP. For the time being, doubts remain concerning the EU's ability to act autonomously in high-intensity conflicts: in fact, all operations up to date have had a manageable troop size (ARTEMIS), whereby the largest to date (EUFOR ALTHEA) was carried out with simultaneous recourse to NATO capabilities under Berlin Plus.

Increasing civilian-military border interaction

Another considerable trend in ESDP is that the operational activities seem to coincide less and less with the classical understanding of civilian and military missions. Illustrations include the establishment of the Civilian-Military Cell⁴ within the EU Military Staff; the (civilian) demilitarisation mission in Aceh, carried out primarily by the military; or the activities in Sudan and Somalia, which were explicitly categorised as “civilian-military” support actions. If this trend is to continue, the pressure to better coordinate actions between the different components within the EU would increase. For the time being, civilian missions are directly financed through the collective CFSP-budget, while military missions abide to the principle ‘costs lie where they fall’, with only a small proportion (common expenditures) funded through the Athena mechanism.⁵ In the light of the different sources of funds, a reform of the existing cost distribution mechanism for operations is a pressing issue, particularly for the deployment of larger civilian and military contingents.

Growing intertwining of the first and second EU-pillar

The degree of intra-institutional interlocking between the European Commission and the Council of the EU is also increasing. Examples of this include not only the association of representatives of the Commission with the Civilian-Military Cell, but also a partial inter-institutional operational meshing in activities. In accordance, in December 2005 a Police Advisory Team (EUPAT) was created in FYROM succeeding the first EU military mission, CONCORDIA (which was followed by the civilian police mission PROXIMA). EUPAT's mission was to prepare, over a period of six months, the hand-over to

³ This mission was suspended in June 2008 however. See the ESDP update in this same *European Security Review* no. 39.

⁴ See Gerrard Quille, Giovanni Gasparini, Roberto Menotti and Nicoletta Pirozzi. Editor: Stephen Pullinger. *Developing EU Civil Military Co-ordination: The Role of the new Civilian Military Cell*. Joint Report by ISIS Europe and CeMiSS. Brussels, June 2006. http://www.isis-europe.org/pdf/reports_10.pdf

⁵ See “ESDP Mission Update” in *European Security Review* no. 36. ISIS Europe. December 2007.

the Commission of the remaining tasks. Since 16 June 2006, a team of Commission staff specialised in police-related issues has been successfully integrated in FYROM within the staff of the EU Special Representative. In the justice sector, the Commission, through its efforts to reform the Congolese judicial system, will from now on contribute directly to the accomplishment of the mandate of EUPOL RD Congo, which has been expanded beyond the mandate of reforming the police sector. However, this developing inter-pillar coordination is still hampered by significant obstacles, such as the difference of working methods between the Council of the EU and the Commission and also a certain degree of inter-institutional competition.

Evolving capability development process

Significant achievements in terms of capability development have characterised the last 5 years of ESDP, but the capability development process has only partially addressed specific operational requirements. The main step forward in the EU's ability to link future scenarios of crises and the means required to face them was represented by the Headline Goals, adopted both in the civilian and military fields to respond to the ambitions set in the 2003 *European Security Strategy* (ESS). Nevertheless, it seems they were mainly directed to address the most urgent need of ensuring a 'boots-on-the-ground' capacity to EU crisis management capability, without paying too much attention to its qualitative dimension. A Capability Development Tool software is currently being developed within the Council Secretariat, which will help the planners at the EU level and contributors in the member states to quickly and effectively identify the specific capabilities needed for a planned ESDP mission. On the basis of the key tasks that the EU seeks to accomplish through mandating an ESDP mission, this software will ascertain a series of sub-tasks and concrete posts to be covered by EU personnel, also identifying relevant training possibilities.

Achievements and future requirements

ESDP developments so far demonstrate how within only a few years, the EU - through the integration of civilian and military elements - has managed to expand its field of action in foreign and security policy, thereby allowing it to gain more credibility and political weight as a security actor with global reach. An undoubtedly positive overall assessment can be made as measured from a perspective of pure diversity of mandate and geographical spread of the operative ESDP actions to date. However, the trends and developments which have been analysed clearly show that there are important problems which must be dealt with if the EU and its member states want to reach their objectives as a robust global security actor. The limited mandate of ESDP operations, the partially contradictory interests of the European states linked to these operations, as well as the overall ESDP development make it necessary to sound a note of caution. Particularly the fact that the extent to which ESDP operations can survive under serious political or military pressure remains for the time being uncertain. A potential dilemma can be identified in regards to the operative aspects of ESDP: the success stories create expectations which the EU can only meet if it is willing to accept higher risks than those experienced up until now. On the other hand however, a setback in an ESDP operation would cause a loss of political power for the EU. The fact that the EU is able to act only in "tailored" crises for which the limited instruments and capabilities at its disposal are adequate and sufficient, shows that ambitions and realities of the EU as a globally active security provider still do not go hand in hand.

Qualitative aspects of civilian and military capabilities developed within the framework of ESDP need further improvement in order to enhance the ability of the EU to deploy well-trained personnel and adequate assets at short notice - an augmentation which would also respond to the required interoperability standards and sustainability of forces in the field. Only by gaining improved qualitative requirements would the EU be able to cover the full spectrum of tasks it is called to perform in crisis responses. That is: in connection with increasingly complex interventions such as SSR, DDR, institution building; to be able to implement actions that cover the entire crisis management cycle - not only rapid reaction but also follow-on phases, including long-term engagement and exit strategies; to effectively interact with other international, regional and local actors in the field - not only more

traditional partners such as the UN, NATO and the OSCE, but also other emerging security actors such as the AU and civil society organisations.

In this regard the new EULEX Kosovo mission represents a litmus test for the EU - due to the vast responsibility for regional development, the complexity of the problem and the environment which will remain virulent in the medium-term, as well as the high – partially excessive – expectations directed towards the ESDP mission by large parts of the population. A failure would cast a damper on the development of the operative side of ESDP. A greater risk of failure for ESDP can be seen in the police mission in Afghanistan, EUPOL, where the security environment has “worryingly regressed”⁶ within the last year.

The way forward

The negative outcome of the Irish referendum on the 13 June has put into question the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty⁷ and the implementation of the provisions which were expected to attempt a more coherent and effective EU foreign and security policy system. These provisions were: 1) the replacement of the rotational EU Presidency in external relations by an elected president of the European Council, based in Brussels for two and a half years (renewable once), and by a double-hatted High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; 2) the nomination of a new High Representative, which would combine the current functions of Javier Solana and those of the Vice President of the Commission, to be assisted by an European External Action Service (including functionaries from the EU Council, the European Commission and the diplomatic services of Member States); 3) proposed creation of the Permanent Structured Cooperation in the area of defence, through which willing and able EU member states would work together to improve their military capabilities, vis-à-vis the most demanding crisis management missions.

However, on an entirely positive note, it can be established that so far, the lethargy of the EU that followed the constitutional crisis in 2005 seems not to have had an impact on the operative engagement of the EU. Whereas other EU policy fields have been largely paralysed, ESDP has not lost any of the dynamism that has characterised it since its very beginning. This could be again the case after the Irish ‘no’ to the Lisbon treaty. A positive signal in this direction could come from the ongoing process for the revision of the European Security Strategy, aimed at assessing its implementation and proposing elements to improve it by the end of this year, which is likely to open new perspectives in the field of security and defence.

***By Nicoletta Pirozzi, Researcher, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) and Research Fellow,
European Foreign and Security Studies Programme; and
Sammi Sandawi, Researcher at the Bundeswehr Transformation Centre (ZTransfBw),
Berlin/Strausberg.***



international security information service, europe

Rue Archimède 50, 1000 Brussels Tel: +32 (0)2 230 7446 Fax: +32 (0)2 230 6113
E-mail: info@isis-europe.org Internet: www.isis-europe.org

⁶ Citha Maass: Afghanistan: Staatsaufbau ohne Staat, Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWP-Studie, 2007 Berlin, p.5.

⁷ For more information see for example Sophie Dagand, “The impact of the Lisbon Treaty on CFSP and ESDP”, *European Security Review* no 37. ISIS Europe. March 2008.