

Movimento Internazionale della Riconciliazione  
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# A EUROPE MORE DETERMINED IN PROMOTING PEACE?

Evaluations and comments on the document issued on June 28, 2016  
by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy -  
Vice-President of the European Commission



# **A Europe more determined in promoting peace?**

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## A Europe more determined in promoting peace?

On 28 June 2016, Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (hereinafter HR), in collaboration with her staff, has published the document *"Shared Vision, Common Action: a Stronger Europe - A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy"*<sup>(1)</sup>, aimed at updating the overall strategy of the Union in the field of Common Foreign and Security Policy (hereinafter CFSP). More precisely the aim is to indicate a series of principles and priorities on which create a 'unity of purpose' between Member States and thus give a new stimulus to the external action of the Union in a period marked by signs of crisis and weakness.

The document, which, at the time of its issue, has been the subject of a prior debate with the main stakeholders within the Union and the Governments of the Member States, and more in general of a consultation with other categories of subjects, was "welcomed" by the European Council, but not formally approved by the European Heads of State.

The last months of 2016 have however showed a growth of interest right from the heads of the European Governments; interest that however has focused on just one element stated in the document, i.e. the type of actions more properly aimed to ensure the security and crisis management capacity and that therefore fall in the so-called Common Security and Defence Policy (hereinafter CSDP) which we will discuss below on this document.

In fact, as agreed by the Council of Foreign Affairs of the European Union in July 2016<sup>(2)</sup>, the HR has prepared a special "package of proposals" to strengthen European cooperation in the areas of security and defence<sup>(3)</sup>, proposals that were submitted to the European Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence in some meetings held on November 2016 and later submitted to the European Council of Heads of Government/State on December 2016.

These summit meetings ended with an agreement for a greater coordination between the Member States of the European Union in the field of security with particular reference to the military component; a co-operation aimed to avoid duplication of activities and which should take place "in accordance with the NATO" and ensuring complementarity between the EU and NATO.

If it is still too early to establish if this agreement will constitute the basis for the Common European Defence, which has been previously proclaimed many times, someone could easily express some evaluations on the document issued by the High Representative. A document, which, in our opinion, shows positive and negative aspects, with the latter ones probably prevailing. But to go further into the details you need to recall, albeit summarily, the European integration process with regard to the foreign and defence policy.

### **From the CFSP to the CSDP: a brief history**

Apart from the project, conceived in the fifties and quickly left behind, regarding the establishment of a "European Defence Community", the roots of the CFSP can be traced back in the seventies when the European Community moved the first steps toward a European political cooperation. It is only with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and the creation of the European Union (hereinafter referred to as EU), that the CFSP is formally established.

The idea of a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) - which must be placed in the broader context of the CFSP, at least this is what states the art. 42, paragraph 1 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) - takes shape at a later time. As a matter of fact it actually starts in 1999 following the summit meetings held in Cologne and Helsinki, probably also as a result of the bitter experience of the Balkan wars.

From that year onwards at Community level, various political and military bodies with the purpose of increasing the collective ability with respect to the CSDP, have been created and have followed.



It was a very complex process of strategic, institutional and operational enhancement which often guaranteed insufficient results, at least in the first phase. And this was also the outcome for those initiatives that have been designated as more “advanced”<sup>(4)</sup>.

This is the case for the establishment, in the year 2003, of the European Defence Agency (EDA) which should ensure greater cooperation in the field of armaments. Yet for supplies abroad many member states often prefer to go outside the Union. The sequence of events concerning the F35 fighter planes is an example of such a trend.

Another example is that of the so-called “Battlegroups”, namely the small, even multinational, military contingents who should be able to be deployed in a very short time. Several have been the military training operations where these “groups” were involved, but essentially they are not yet operating concretely for crisis situations. As a matter of fact, the document of the current HR urges to work hard to bridge this gap.

The approval in 2009 of the **Treaty of Lisbon** - with its ambitious goals, including that of implementing policies for “preserving peace, preventing conflicts and strengthening international security” (Art. 21 C.2.c) - has been an important opportunity to give a further stimulus to the CFSP and, therefore, also to the CSDP. In particular the Treaty provided that the common defence can be realized only with unanimous vote, but that the European Council of Ministers may decide a permanent cooperation between some Member States in the field of defence.

Even more important was the decision to adopt in this context a new organizational architecture, especially in order to ensure greater continuity of action with respect to the previous six-month presidencies of the Heads of State/Government.

In fact, another subject has been added to the **European Council of Ministers chaired by a stable president** (currently is Donald Tusk) which is responsible for deciding the basic policies and the general issues and to the **European Parliament**, which in addition to having the right to be informed and consulted, has a control and drive function and the task to vote the budget. This new subject is precisely the **High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**, a role that also includes the position of Vice-president of the Commission, with wide and important roles and powers, even of an operational nature, assisted by a **European External Action Service** (EEAS)<sup>(5)</sup>.

In this more coherent and defined legal, institutional and strategic framework, in recent years we recorded several official stances by the Council of Ministers, European Parliament resolutions and reports of the former High Representative, Catherine Ashton, always in the logic of increasing cooperation between states. Many “lessons”, mainly focused on the organizational and operational aspects, came also from the missions on field. However, the undeniable developments continue to remain well below expectations.

In particular although it has been acknowledged, even at the institutional level, the need for an adaptation of the civilian component and the development of civilian capabilities of the CSDP, this sector remains, in the opinion of many observers, still one of the points of greatest weakness in the EU interventions in crisis situations. Therefore precious is the action of pressure on the European Union carried out on this issue by the European Peacebuilding Liason Office, an European coordination of non-governmental organizations and research institutes dealing with conflict prevention and management in a nonviolent optics<sup>(6)</sup>.

## **A new vision of security**

The recent document “*Shared Vision, Joint Action: a Stronger Europe*” deals with a very wide range of issues and problems that we cannot - nor do we want - analyse in this context. We will therefore limit ourselves to evaluate some aspects that we think are of great interest and which refer to the role of the European Union as a global peace player.

The impression that emerges from reading the document prepared by the current HR is that the proposed new approach in relation to the CFSP represents a kind of self-retreat on a little more “conservative”

positions, expression of a cautious policy. In fact one can only partially perceive that ideal inspiration present in many documents of the recent past (from the Treaties to simple working documents) in which terms such as Freedom, Justice and Peace were clarified in the titles too.

We can already imagine any possible objections to this interpretation. The first would be that often in the documents of the European Union there was a rhetorical or ideological abuse in the quote of the above values. This is partly true - and previously we stressed that there is also a gap between the ruling and the practical application of those values within the CFSP/CSDP - but we believe that in several cases there was a sincere desire to affirm these principles. As for example when, with the Treaty of Lisbon, in an atmosphere certainly of greater optimism, was stated in the general provisions on external action, that *"The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law"* (art. 21).

And we believe it is not a case that the Norwegian committee for the Nobel Peace Prize has assigned in 2012 the coveted award to the European Union, recognizing the active involvement in the promotion of peace, especially in the European continent.

A second objection might insist on the presence in the document of the HR of numerous references to peace, to freedom and to human rights. This is also true, but the record, also to the number of quotes, goes to other terms: security, stability and interests.

Joshua Massarenti had "fun" to count the terms most often mentioned in the text. The result is that "security" appears 149 times, "development" 67 times, "peace" 60 times, "terrorism/extremism" 38 times, "rights" 35 times, "democracy" 14 times<sup>(7)</sup>. To these we can also add the word "NATO" quoted 17 times (compared with 4 of the previous document issued in 2003 called "European Security Strategy", developed when the Head of the European foreign policy was Javier Solana)<sup>(8)</sup>.

It should also be noted that if in a paragraph of the document they talk of *"idealistic inspiration"*, much more recurring are terms such as: concreteness, realism and pragmatism.

If we take into account the concept of stability - mentioned in the strategies of the Union at least since 2003 - we can say that in itself does not have a negative connotation, if it is seen as a sort of choice other than the pursuit of the objectives of power through the (military) force. But in the document prepared by the HR, you can notice the strong emphasis on the need for the European Union to ensure the "safety of its citizens and of its territory", mainly through the pursuit of stability, the internal one but above all the one of neighbouring countries, because *"the fragility beyond our borders threatens all our vital interests"*.

Following the same line of reasoning we can find in the document frequent references - which in truth are a bit cloying - to the concept of resilience (i.e. the *"ability of states and societies to reform, thus withstanding and recovering from internal and external crises"*) as this idea could represent a sort of magic formula to be able to solve many problems. In reality what is truly important is that the situations of difficulty or crisis of the countries of the neighbourhood do not create dangerous disturbances for the Union. Never mind, and this consideration is ours too, if in these countries democracy and respect for human and civil rights are not at their best.

We would sincerely be glad to be contradicted on this type of reading, but the recent events in Turkey and the substantial silence of the European institutions, with the commendable, yet late, exception of the European Parliament, appear to confirm it<sup>(9)</sup>.

Furthermore, a certain concern arises by the explicit availability - almost like an invitation - to enlarge the Union to other countries, strategy which, according to the document, would be an investment for safety and that *"has already contributed greatly to peace in formerly war-torn areas"*. It is probably true that the relatively recent enlargement of the EU to the East - also for many political and economic interests - has

contributed to soften a series of self-evident crises or conflicts. However this process paid a high price in terms of weakening of European cohesion and the current serious internal divisions will certainly not make the Union a subject more strong and credible<sup>(10)</sup>.

In short, as Lorenzo Vai points out in an effective synthesis on the news of the “Mogherini doctrine”, the European security strategy of Javier Solana “*aimed to a more secure Europe in a better, and consequently more democratic, world*”. The new global strategy aims “*to a safer Europe, in a world that is more stable because resilient before the crises*”. Therefore the processes of democratisation in other countries are important but not a priority, as in the new pragmatic approach, these processes could also become an obstacle to the achievement of an appropriate level of security for the European Union<sup>(11)</sup>.

## **Recipes for handling a difficult world**

If the cornerstones of the EU in international relations are identified in the “strategic partnership” (especially of transatlantic type and in particular with NATO), in the “Regional cooperation” (i.e. targeted support for regional organizations of various continents) and in “global governance” but only if effective and reformed (explicit reference to the UN), another strategic aspect for the safety of the EU, according to the HR is given by its credibility, particularly in the defence sector as the only power of persuasion is not sufficient<sup>(12)</sup>.

The document based on the premise that Member States retain sovereignty in matters of defence, hopes on the one hand for an increase in their defence expenditure (in particular more money for supplies and in research and technology), on the other hand for their willingness to make available the new acquired capacities for the EU, NATO and the UN. Moreover, in the context of the EU, the cooperation between the states will be systematically encouraged so that it becomes “structured”, pointing to a coordination/synchronization between the defence plans (and therefore the spending plans) of the various countries and by creating a strong European defence industry.

Actually, this desire to make the EU a “power”, with its own autonomous capacity even in the defence sector, is strongly mitigated if not contradicted by several explicit references to the need to undertake a close collaboration with the NATO structures. Therefore the claim to become independent could be merely window-dressing and the risk of a relationship of subordination of a future European defence structure is real. On the other hand relations between the EU and NATO are currently so strong that we can speak of a stable institutionalised cooperation<sup>(13)</sup>.

In the context of primary prevention the document then guarantees the European commitment to promote disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and the harmonisation of the various regulations on the export of arms. And so far no problem: who would not (theoretically) agree on these objectives?

The “road paved with good intentions” becomes impervious when entering in specific details stating that the EU “*will strengthen common rules governing Member States’ export policies of military– including dual-use– equipment and technologies, and support export control authorities in third countries and technical bodies that sustain arms control regimes*”. The reference is certainly to a number of important provisions that regulate or should adjust the activities related to the export of arms and that constitute a regulatory framework legally binding for the EU countries<sup>(14)</sup>. Unfortunately the interpretation regarding the observance of these provisions is entrusted to the (discretionary) decision by the Member States, with the results anyone can imagine.

For instance the “Council Common Position 2008//944/CFSP” identifies eight impedimental criteria to the export of military technology and equipment - such as violations of human rights or that the exported arms could cause or prolong conflicts - but those criteria very often remain ineffectual so that even the European Parliament criticized the frequent violations of the same by various Member States of the Union and the lack of sanction mechanisms (Resolution of the European Parliament of 17.12.2015 on the application of the “Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP”).

Therefore the rules are there and are clear and it is neither indispensable to “enhance” them, as indicated in the document of the HR, or even support the monitoring authorities” if these are not independent<sup>(15)</sup>.

In the document it is also stated the willingness to support the respect of international law in its various meanings, and in particular to support bodies such as the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice. The future will tell us if this, very generic indeed, commitment to support the instruments of international law will find really application also in consideration of the fact that it may become an area of friction with the United States.

A discrete attention is instead dedicated to the strategy for the management of crises and conflicts. The document indicates the adoption of a type of “integrated” approach. With the term “integrated” it means “multidimensional” (which uses a wide range of instruments: political, diplomatic, legal, commercial, economic and military), “multiphase” (which intervenes at all stages of the “cycle of conflict”: from the early detection of crisis situations to post-conflict stabilisation), “multi-level” (taking into consideration the local, national, regional and global level) and “multilateral” (which involves multiple actors, including the UN, in the management).

The judgement on this “integrated” approach can only be positive, although it must be stressed that it is the confirmation of an orientation by now consolidated by the European Union. An approach which is largely the result of the findings and therefore of the commitment of so many institutions and researchers for Peace<sup>(16)</sup>.

In this respect it would have been appropriate to at least dedicate a few lines to the role of the new European Institute for Peace (EIP)<sup>(17)</sup>. Is that a simple omission? We are afraid this is not the case because in the document there are references to the promotion of “mediation” and “facilitation” activities i.e. the main scope of the work of the aforementioned Institute (to support the agenda for peace of the European Institutions), but the Institute itself is never quoted.

Within the section dedicated to “conflict resolution” the idea to work not just through top-down interventions, but also through actions performed at all levels (and therefore also starting from the “base”) is certainly valid. In this case too it is probably a belief borrowed from the search for peace<sup>(18)</sup>.

As regards more specifically the CSDP, the document does not focus very much its attention on that. Once acknowledged the need for a coordination with other policies - such as those on cooperation/development help and the commercial ones (but here we should talk more about the CFSP sphere of influence) - it is discussed the need that the CSDP takes on a more quick and efficient nature. About the quickness of the action, the solution would be to rely on increasing the abilities of the rapid reaction structures, in particular of the already mentioned “Battlegroups”. Regarding the effectiveness of the action, the suggestion is to strengthen the civilian missions and guarantee a greater integration between the structures and civilian and military missions (which could also be placed at the service of the UN).

But from this point of view, we have just to wait for any developments after the recent meetings of the European Heads of Government/State.

### **Some observations as a conclusion or...as a fresh start**

If compared to other types of policies, there is a stronger concern of democratic control when it comes to the strategies and policies in the field of CFSP/CSDP. And this not only due to an old legacy that traditionally imposed to this sector forms of secrecy and confidentiality.

A detailed analysis on the reasons for the considerable lack of control, and therefore of democratic legitimacy, on the CSDP was performed by Michele Comelli<sup>(19)</sup>. Very briefly, this researcher highlights how the CSDP develops as a result of decisions and interventions/operations attributable to different levels (intergovernmental, community and individual country level). This fact raises an obvious difficulty both



for the European Parliament but especially for the National Parliaments (that even more depend on their own governments for the information in this context) to acquire an overall view to be able to effectively exercise their privileges of control.

Obviously even more essential the need to provide an adequate information towards the European civil society and more in general towards the public opinion stands out. This way the popular sovereignty can be exerted on the security and defence policies.

In this respect it should be noted that there is an inter-parliamentary conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) i.e. a body composed of members both national and European, which should follow closely the evolution of these policies. However it does not appear that the Italian components of this body have in turn particularly distinguished themselves in raising awareness among the civil society. But this applies to the majority of the Italian members of the European Parliament which always showed a lack of commitment on this matter.

The HR Federica Mogherini must be given anyway proper credit in choosing a procedure of greater transparency in the drawing up of the document *"Shared Vision, Common Action: a Stronger Europe"*. However it should be added that it is very difficult - at least for us - understand if changes or additions with respect to the original text, i.e. *"The European Union in a changing global environment"* (drawn up exclusively by Mogherini in collaboration with her staff), have been made also by non-institutional actors.

In Italy information on the creation of the document *"Shared Vision, Common Action: a Stronger Europe"* was very limited and, as always, the prerogative of the restricted circle of insiders.

Part of the responsibility it is also due to a certain lack of interest of the Italian voluntary organisations, including those involved in the peace issues and in particular in the development of structures and instruments of positive management of conflicts. European policies in the field of CFSP/CSDP constitute a *"framework"* which we must all refer to. To ignore this *"framework"* means greatly reduce the effectiveness of even the most willing commitment for peace.

Giampaolo Frison



**List of acronyms quoted in the text:**

HR	EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
EACA	European Arms Control Authority
EDA	European Defence Agency
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EPI	European Institute for Peace
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
UN	United Nations Organization
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
TEU	Treaty on European Union
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union

## **NOTES**

(1) For the full text in English language see:

<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10715-2016-COR-1/en>

(2) In the same month of July in Warsaw a joint declaration between the leadership of the EU and the Secretary General of NATO was signed. This declaration identifies a series of threats or issues regarding safety, perceived as such by both institutions.

(3) This document indicates three priority objectives; a) give response to external crises and conflicts; (b) strengthen the capacity of the partners; c) protect the Union and its citizens.

(4) On this first CSDP time phase, see: "Le capacità militari dell'UE – alcune forze, ma non ancora un esercito europeo" by Claudia Major and Christian Moelling in VV.AA. "L'Unione Europea e la gestione delle crisi – Istituzioni e capacità" by Ettore Greco, Nicoletta Pirozzi and Stefano Silvestri. Istituto Affari Internazionali, 2010.

(5) On this point see also:

- "Il Servizio Europeo per l'Azione Esterna e la Politica di Sicurezza e Difesa Comune (PSDC)" by Gerrard Quille in VV.AA., op. cit.
- M.I.R. Padova "La nascita e l'evoluzione della Politica Estera e di Sicurezza Comune (PESC) e della Politica di Sicurezza e Difesa Comune (PSDC) dell'Unione Europea" in "Proposte per una politica europea di pace". Proceedings of the seminar on 10 May 2014 by the M.I.R. in Padua.

(6) See EPLO "Riformare la Politica di Sicurezza e Difesa Comune Civile" in "Proposte per una politica europea di pace". Proceedings of the seminar on 10 May 2014 by the M.I.R. in Padua.

(7) Joshua Massarenti "La nuova politica estera dell'UE riassunta in parole chiave" in Vita, July, 8th 2016 (Website: [www.vita.it](http://www.vita.it))

(8) Data taken from "EU Global Strategy: Strategic Autonomy and Globalism" article published by Katehon on July, 1st 2016 .

(9) To be honest, in the last weeks there has been a slightly critical statement by the HR on the internal situation of that country but to the harsh Turkish response it looks like there was no reply by the European institutions.

(10) On this topic see: "Il problema dell'allargamento dell'Unione Europea" by Lea Ypi in [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/il-problema-dell-allargamento-dell-unione-europea\\_%28XXI-Secolo%29/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/il-problema-dell-allargamento-dell-unione-europea_%28XXI-Secolo%29/)

(11) Lorenzo Vai "La Strategia Globale dell'Ue: pensare agli altri per trovare se stessi?". In "Commento" no. 84 - 6 July 2016 - <http://www.csfederalismo.it>

(12) Other strategic instruments are identified in the fight against terrorism, in energy security (in particular in the context of supply), in information security and in the ability of strategic communication (also to communicate better with the citizens and partners).

(13) Cooperation that takes place not only through a permanent consultation but also in "operating theatres" (for instance Afghanistan and the Mediterranean region).

(14) The principal rules are given by:

- The "Common Position 2008/944/CFSP" on the export of conventional arms;
- The "Common Position 2003/468/CFSP on the control of arms brokerage;
- Regulation (European Council) n. 428/2009 governing exports, transfer, brokerage and transit of dual use (civil/military) products.

(15) It should be mentioned that in the initial text (rapporteur Bodil Valero), of what has become the European Parliament Resolution on 17.12.2015 on "Common Position 2008/944/CFSP", invited the Member States to support the creation of an independent European Arms Control Authority (EACA). This recommendation was not approved by the Plenary Assembly.

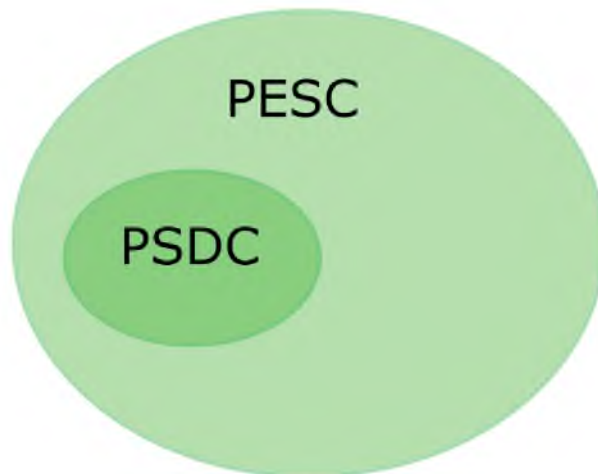
(16) On this topic cf.: Ian M. Harris, Larry J. Fisk, Carol Rank, Peter Wallensten, Kakonen Jyrky, Stuart Rees, Ralph Summy, Movimento Internazionale della Riconciliazione - Padua Offices: "Gli Istituti e i Centri Internazionali di Ricerca per la Pace" edited by M.I.R., Padua Offices, independent printing, Padua, 1999.

(17) For information on EIP: <http://www.eip.org/en#1>

(18) On the idea that peace is built both from below and from above cf. Johan Galtung: "Peace by Peaceful Means", Sage Publications Ltd, 1996.

(19) Michele Comelli: "The Common Security and Defence Policy and the Issue of Democratic Accountability: what Role for the European Parliament?" in "European Democracy and Cosmopolitan Democracy", (The Ventotene Papers), edited by Daniele Archibugi and Guido Montani.





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