

# European Security and Defense Policy: Between »Offensive Defense« and »Human Security«

STEFANIE FLECHTNER

**O**n July 30 the European Union started its second largest military operation so far. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) 2,000 EU troops are to help the United Nations to maintain order and security during and after the first democratic elections in Congo since the country's independence. The DRC mission is another strong signal demonstrating the EU's growing commitment to matters of international security. The European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) is already being implemented on three continents and there are a total of 11 ESDP operations currently under way, involving around 9,000 soldiers and approximately 1,000 policemen and civilian experts.<sup>1</sup>

Compared to the large-scale operations of NATO and the UN, these numbers may not seem all that impressive.<sup>2</sup> However, considering that the creation of a common European defense and security policy started only with the creation of the ESDP in 1999, and that its first mission dates from merely three years ago, the extent and scope of the EU's commitment are remarkable. Furthermore ESDP is one of the few areas of the European integration project that continues to grow. The creation of European Battlegroups and a European Gendarmerie force, the founding of the European Defense Agency and the creation of a civilian-military cell operating under the auspices of the EU Council are just some of the projects being currently implemented in connection with ESDP. Even in the face of failed referenda and a general sentiment of crisis concerning the future of the EU, in terms of security policy Europe continues to advance.

---

1. Data based on the official information of the European Council at <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/ESDPoperations.jpg> (last accessed: 25.08.2006).

2. The NATO missions in Afghanistan (ISAF) and Kosovo (KFOR) alone – with 9,000 and 17,500 soldiers respectively – involve more forces than all EU operations put together (<http://www.nato.int>). The UN's 15 current peace missions involve almost 90,000 persons, including over 72,000 soldiers (<http://www.un.org/depts/dpko/dpko/bnote.htm>).

However, the further the EU extends its security capacities and operations, the political and strategic goals of the ESDP project appear vaguer. Defining these goals is an imperative if European security integration is to succeed. At the center of the European debate should be the question whether the common security policy is primarily directed at defending the European homeland or rather at securing international peace and order.

## **ESDP – A »Sui Generis« Security Project**

In June 1999, in Cologne, Germany, the European Council decided to »give the European Union the necessary means and capabilities to assume its responsibilities regarding a common European policy on security and defence« (EU Council 1999/1: 33). The European Security and Defense Policy was born. This youngest EU integration project distinguished itself through two specific characteristics: (a) in reference to its available tools, a comprehensive understanding of security policy and (b) a comparatively narrowly defined political mandate focusing on international crisis and conflict management.

During the conception of the ESDP project, the build-up of independent EU military capabilities was the main concern. However, from the outset the EU member states also realized the necessity of a non-military crisis reaction system and consequently a two tier structure, including military and civilian tools, was created.<sup>3</sup> The range of intervention capabilities, which was developed under the ESDP, is unique in its ability to combine hard military and soft civilian and diplomatic means. In its diversity the EU's range of instruments far outstrips that of other international organizations, for example the OSCE or NATO.

On the other hand, the political mandate of ESDP is somewhat limited. ESDP's missions are laid out in the so-called »Petersberg Tasks« of the Treaty of Amsterdam of 1997.<sup>4</sup> These include »humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management,

---

3. ESDP's civil capacities encompass around 5,000 police, around 300 specialists for establishing the rule of law (judges, lawyers, law enforcement officials), a pool of administrative experts, and various operational capabilities for disaster control (including 2,000 personnel for severe disaster relief missions).

4. This set of tasks goes back originally to the Petersberg Declaration of the Ministerial Council of the Western European Union (WEU) of June 19, 1992, and later on was subsumed by the EU's system of treaties.

including peacemaking« (Treaty of the European Union (TEU) Article 17.2). The ESDP project includes, according to the Treaty, »all questions relating to the security of the Union« (TEU Article 17.1). However, the Treaty also emphasizes that the development of a common defense policy is only a future possibility and does not fall under the current ESDP project.<sup>5</sup>

The EU's responsibilities regarding security issues do not mirror the principle of collective defense of NATO (Article V), where member states are required to assist another member state under attack by a third country.<sup>6</sup> Also other tasks, such as action inside the EU under the umbrella of »homeland security,« is currently not part of the ESDP project. Instead, ESDP is distinguished specifically by its focus on »out of area« missions.

Thus ESDP combines a comprehensive understanding of security, given the available resources, with a political mandate limited to the specific area of international crisis and conflict management. This particular structure and orientation distinguishes ESDP from other international security regimes, as well as from the security and defense policies of its own member states. Consequently, European integration is »sui generis« also in terms of its security and defense policy. Yet what is the political and strategic rationale behind this specific approach to security?.

## **The Lack of a Clear Political and Strategic Concept in ESDP**

Though the necessity of an independent European security policy is continually emphasized by the EU and its member states, the political concept behind ESDP remains vague. The official arguments promoting the common security project only rarely focus on security itself. Instead, the EU tends to present ESDP as an integration and foreign policy venture.

The foreign policy argument runs that if the EU is to assume its role as a major player on the international stage it needs an independent security

---

5. »The common foreign and security policy shall include all questions relating to the security of the Union, including the progressive framing of a common defence policy, which might lead to a common defence, should the European Council so decide.«

6. In Article I-41.7 the Constitutional Treaty, passed by EU heads of state and government in June 2004 but still not ratified, foresees a mutual assistance clause which commits the member states to military assistance though not in the same way as NATO or the WEU.

policy (EU Council 1999/1: Annex III).<sup>7</sup> Only the strengthening of its security and military capabilities will enable the EU to take on the role of a leading global actor – as a partner with the United States or as an independent actor in a multi-polar world order. Proponents of the integration rationale believe that a common European security and defense policy is necessary to complete the Union's political integration. The integration of member states' security and defense policies, which traditionally are viewed as the basis of national sovereignty, is the final missing piece to complete a truly unified EU.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast, actual *security arguments* play a lesser role in the discussions surrounding ESDP. This is clearly voiced in official declarations and ESDP documents. For example, the Cologne declaration refers exclusively to the contractual obligation of the EU (Maastricht Treaty) »to preserve peace and strengthen international security in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter as well as the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the objectives of the Charter of Paris, as provided for in Article 11 of the TEU« (European Council 1999/1: 37). It is noteworthy that another goal of the Union laid down in the same article, namely »to strengthen the security of the Union in all ways« (TEU Art. 11.1) is not mentioned in ESDP's founding document. Neither the Declaration of 1999, nor any subsequent documents<sup>9</sup> create a direct link between the ESDP integration project and the security of the Union itself.

This missing step was taken only in December 2003 with the approval of the European Security Strategy (ESS). ESS not only analyzes risks and threats to European security,<sup>10</sup> but also identifies the responsibilities of the EU in that regard. According to ESS »addressing the threats« to European security is a »strategic objective« of EU security policy. Thus the idea of defending European security appears for the first time as a prominent

---

7. »[I]n order for the EU to be in a position to play its full role on the international stage, the CFSP must be backed by credible operational capabilities« (European Council 1991/1, III/33).

8. See, for example, Joschka Fischer's reasoning in his policy speech »From union of states to federation – thoughts on the finality of European integration« in Berlin (Fischer 2000).

9. See the declarations of the European Council from Helsinki 1999, Feira 2000 and Nice 2001.

10. According to ESS the main threats to Europe are: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state collapse and organized crime (ESS 2003: 3ff).

argument for ESDP. At the same time, the two other strategic objectives of ESS, »building security in our neighborhood« and »an international order based on effective multilateralism« reemphasize ESDP's earlier commitment to international security.

Thereby, ESS maintains two distinct approaches to European security policy: a defense-oriented argument and, alternatively, an understanding of EU security policy underlining the commitment to international peace and order. In the European security strategy both approaches are presented as equal and independent missions. A strategic and argumentative connection of the two approaches does not exist. The civil and military capabilities of ESDP are not directly associated with either one of the missions, and the role ESDP capacities will play in the implementation of the new security strategy remains unclear.

Consequently, ESS does not provide answers to core strategic questions of the common security policy project. This is especially evident when looking at the important issue of intervention. A central demand of ESS is: »We need to develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid and, when necessary, robust intervention« (ESS 2003: 11). Yet, in which specific security-related cases must the EU intervene, in what way do intervention policies advance the strategic objectives of the Union and, most importantly, in which cases and under which conditions must the Union rely on hard military power? Answers to such questions ultimately depend on how the EU defines its security policy project. ESS consciously avoids confronting these issues and is therefore rightly described as merely a »pre-strategic concept« (Lindley-French/Algieri 2004: 9).

## **The Development of Strategic Options for ESDP**

The lack of clear and concise strategic and conceptual statements in the documents and declarations regarding ESDP means that the European security policy project is ill-defined; it may therefore be interpreted in a variety of ways (Biscop 2005). This observation is reinforced by the development of ESDP missions and capability goals. Thus, in practice, the strategic focus of European security policy has not only changed over time, but is also becoming increasingly vague with the growing number of ESDP deployments.

## The First Phase: Comprehensive Peacekeeping à la Balkans

At the time of the creation of ESDP at the end of the 1990s, Europe was still under the impression of its ineptitude in dealing with the Yugoslav wars. The lessons the Europeans learned from the subsequent successful NATO and UN missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo did not simply bring about the project for a common European security policy, but also shaped the strategic orientation during the early stages of ESDP (cf. EUISS 2004: 37ff.). This is reflected in the first capability goals of ESDP. In 1999, the »EU Headline Goal« envisioned the creation of the »European Rapid Reaction Force« with an EU military capacity of 60,000 soldiers that can be available for long-term interventions in a matter of 60 days (European Council 1999/2). This would move the EU's capacity for peace peacekeeping into the range of the UN stabilizing mission (SFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>11</sup> The creation of the civilian crisis management capacities also centered on the ability to successfully cope with long-term peace missions. The emphasis was placed in the areas of a police force and the strengthening of the local government and judicial branches (European Council 2000).

The establishment of peace in the Balkans was also the initial priority of ESDP operations on the ground. On January 1, 2003, the first ESDP mission began in Bosnia-Herzegovina, followed by four subsequent missions to the former Yugoslavia.<sup>12</sup> The EU Balkan missions all follow a common model for intervention: they are designed to be long-term,<sup>13</sup> and civil and military engagements take place in parallel or in close coordination with one another, as well as with various international actors on the ground (NATO, UN, OSCE).

- 
11. With the 60,000 ESDP soldiers envisaged in the Headline Goal, military intervention involving 20,000 soldiers for at least a year is possible (taking into consideration rotation and logistical support exigencies only around one-third of the total available troops can be deployed). At the beginning of 1996 NATO's SFOR mission involved 32,000 soldiers but over time this was reduced to 12,000 ([www.nato.int/sfor/index.htm](http://www.nato.int/sfor/index.htm)).
  12. The »EUPM« police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (ongoing since January 2003); the »Concordia« military mission in Macedonia (March–December 2003, completed); the »Proxima« police mission in Macedonia (December 2003–December 2005, completed); the »EUFOR-Althea« military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (since December 2004, as follow-up mission to SFOR, ongoing); the »EUPAT« police consultant mission in Macedonia (since December 2005, ongoing).
  13. Completed military missions were replaced by appropriate follow-up missions, mostly of a civil/police nature.

The most important aspect of the ESDP interventions in the Balkans, however, is that they are part of a comprehensive political process and are subject to a clear political strategy. Through the stabilization and association process (SAP) the EU is able to provide the affected countries with a wide array of support mechanisms to institute the necessary economic, judicial, and political reforms. Still, the overall goal of the Union is the future integration of the entire region into the EU. This political perspective is not only being used as a catalyst for stabilization and transformation,<sup>14</sup> but it also legitimizes the EU's involvement in the Balkans in the eyes of the affected populations.

The Balkans remain the most important area of interest for ESDP missions and continue to take up a large part of its resources (7,000 soldiers and approximately 500 civilians). Because of the proposal of the EU to take over the UN police mission in Kosovo, the political and military involvement of the EU in this region may even expand.<sup>15</sup> However, it is questionable whether this type of operation, which mirrors the original ESDP model for interventions, will continue to dominate. In response to the terror attacks in the United States and in Spain, and the debate surrounding the war in Iraq and the European Security Strategy, a new direction for ESDP, while still ill-defined, is likely to evolve.

### The Realignment of ESDP: More Global, Flexible, and Robust?

The realignment of European security policy concerns ESDP capabilities, as well as operations on the ground. Its focus is on expanding ESDP to become more robust, flexible, and, most of all, more globally engaged.

In February, 2003 France and Great Britain proposed for the first time the concept of European »battlegroups.« A »battlegroup,« a fighting force of approximately 1,500 soldiers, is a unit that is able to deploy rapidly for small-scale and robust fighting missions in distant regions. »Artemis,« the EU military intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo from June until September 2003, mirrored precisely this mission

---

14. As, for example, Javier Solana emphasizes in relation to ESDP's EUFOR mission in Bosnia: »European Union engagement on the ground has been vital. But in recent years, the prospect of eventual EU membership has been the overwhelming transformational force in Bosnian politics. That has been the decisive factor« (Solana 2005: 3) (see also Calic 2005).

15. On April 10, 2006 the EU Council decided to establish an EU planning team regarding a possible future EU crisis management operation in Kosovo.

profile. This was the first time that the EU had intervened in an acute crisis situation. The intervention force was equipped with a robust UN mandate (Security Council Resolution 1484) that allowed the approximately 1,800 ESDP soldiers to use military force. Additionally, »Artemis« was the first EU mission outside Europe and the first EU military operation without the support of NATO structures. Within the EU the mission was generally seen as a success<sup>16</sup> and may provide a good model for future EU interventions. In June, 2004 the European Council voted to support new military goals under its mission statement »Headline Goal 2010«. According to this statement, ESDP should encompass 13 »battlegroups« by 2007 that can be deployed within 10 days for a duration of 30 days in a 6,000 kilometer radius.

In addition, the new civilian headline goals point to more flexible and robust missions. Accordingly, in September 2004, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands agreed on the creation of a European Gendarmerie Force (EGF).<sup>17</sup> With this police force designed for robust missions, the EU should be able to conduct operations in between classical military intervention and civilian missions. Future ESDP initiatives are designed to encourage further integration and rapid availability of civilian structures and personnel. Consequently, »Civilian Response Teams« are to be created through which experts in various areas of crisis management can work collectively and hand-in-hand with »battlegroups« in regions of conflict (CIVCOM 2005: 3ff).

In terms of operations the realignment of ESDP is evident, yet not as consistent as in terms of future capability planning. Thus, the scope and number of ESDP missions has increased significantly over the past few years. In addition to the Balkans, ESDP has become engaged in Georgia, the Ukraine-Moldavian border, Aceh/Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Sudan, Iraq, and in the Palestinian territories. However, robust military interventions, as in the DRC, are still the exception. Instead, most missions remain low-scale civilian undertakings that vary significantly in their operational objectives. Within these new fields of engagement, and in contrast to the Balkans, the EU usually only plays a

---

16. See the German government's statement on the Congo intervention in the Bundestag of November 10, 2003 (<http://dip.bundestag.de/btd/15/019/1501956.pdf>) and Javier Solana's speech on the termination of the mission (Solana 2003).

17. The limitation to these countries can be explained by the fact that most EU countries do not have a police force with military status.



minor role in the political peace and transformation processes. A clear politico-strategic concept within the broadened European security engagement is not identifiable. Decisions whether to engage in particular missions seem to be made on an ad hoc basis and to be influenced strongly by the pressure of third parties (UN, USA, target countries), rather than initiated on the basis of independent European security concerns.

The EU is a young, and without doubt very ambitious, actor in the global security sphere. However, by basing its intervention policy on a »it's better to participate in a mission than to do nothing« principle, the EU runs the risk of confusing its own strategic objectives and overextending its civilian, military, and political resources.

### **What Are the Limits of EU Security Ambitions?**

The actual realization of the recent capability goals of ESDP will take time.<sup>18</sup> So far, according to many experts, ESDP is only fully operational in the area of peacekeeping missions, that is, in post-conflict situations, during which the stabilization of security and political reconstruction are the primary objectives (see EUISS 2004: 71ff.). In contrast, in areas that deal with the more challenging Petersberg Tasks, the EU is deemed to have only limited capacities (EUISS 2004; International Crisis Group 2005). However, the Union's ambitions to become a major player in global security are rapidly growing, and as a result European politicians have begun discussing the engagement of the EU in operations that extend not only far beyond its past missions and current capabilities, but also beyond the initial political mandate of ESDP.

This is particularly the case regarding a new and ever broader definition of the Petersberg Tasks. As early as 2002, Spain,<sup>19</sup> in face of the terror attacks of 9/11, campaigned for an expansion of ESDP tasks to include fighting terrorism (Ortega 2004: 76). Initially, the Spanish initiative did not advance, but the Constitutional Convention readdressed the

---

18. At present the EU is still lacking above all central strategic and logistical capabilities (command and information structures, air transport capabilities) for the realization of the battlegroup concept, but also appropriate common training and equipment (interoperability) (see International Crisis Group 2005: 24ff).

19. The Seville European Council (2002) issued a declaration which also made reference to the role of ESDP in the context of fighting terrorism, although of course without including expansion of the range of ESDP intervention.

question of a redefinition of the Petersberg Tasks. The Constitutional Treaty, which the heads of state signed in 2004, expands the original definition of the Petersberg Tasks to include »joint disarmament operations,« as well as »military advice and assistance tasks.« Additionally, »All these tasks may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories« (Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, Article III-309). The wording of the Constitution does not reveal any groundbreaking new interpretation of the original mandate of EU security policy. However, it does significantly expand the possible range of missions.

Due to the »No«-vote in France and the Netherlands regarding the Constitution, the revision of the Petersberg Tasks has foundered. However, this is not restraining the EU from already considering additional mission scenarios. An example of this is the report published by the Union's own EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) »European Defense – A Proposal for a White Paper« (EUISS 2004),<sup>20</sup> which introduces the following five intervention scenarios that are to be part of the future European security policy:

- ▶ large-scale peace support operation
- ▶ high-intensity humanitarian intervention
- ▶ regional warfare in the defense of strategic European interests
- ▶ prevention of an attack involving WMD
- ▶ homeland defense

The authors of the report emphasize that the intervention scenarios that they developed are based on political consensus within the EU, and that they are in congruence with the contractual mission statement of ESDP.<sup>21</sup> This statement must be viewed with skepticism, at least regarding pre-emptive strikes and the proposed military engagement within EU borders in terms of homeland defense.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, the proposed scenarios of the EUISS show that there are few limitations within the strategic debate

---

20. A »white paper« is a basic document in which a government outlines the general directions of its foreign and security policy organization and planning.

21. »Furthermore, the scenarios reflect agreement within the Union: They are in conformity with the Petersberg tasks or treaty language concerning the objectives of both the CFSP and the ESDP« (EUISS 2004: 70).

22. Cf. the discussion of pre-emptive military intervention and the UN Charter (see Schaller 2004) or the very restrictive possibilities concerning intervention in domestic affairs recently laid down for the German Bundeswehr by the Federal Constitutional Court.

surrounding European security and defense policy.<sup>23</sup> It also emphasizes the growing importance of defense related issues within ESDP. Next to strengthening and stabilizing international security, more and more mission scenarios are gaining in importance that directly address the security of the European homeland and the defense of EU interests.

However, the more ambitiously EU security policy projects itself onto the outside world, the more obvious become the flaws of this project. Without a clear, and most importantly collective, definition of what the EU can and should accomplish in the security policy field, new expectations and demands will continue to be added to the current model. On the other hand, to realize its security-related ambitions, the EU is missing not only crucial technical and financial resources but also the political will and the support of the EU population for a rapidly growing European international security commitment.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, some demands of the continuously widening EU security agenda stand in tension, even opposition to one another.<sup>25</sup> It is therefore obvious that the deepening and widening of security integration do not easily occur simultaneously. The larger its commitment in the security field, the more strongly the EU will be confronted with tough decisions regarding the future direction of its security and defense program. As so often in the history of its integration, European politicians are focusing on the technical aspect of cooperation between member states rather than on the actual political goals of integration, postponing the more difficult debates and decisions. Yet with politically sensitive subjects such as security and defense, and at a time when continued integration is viewed with increasing skepticism by the European population, the Union would be well-advised to discuss openly the concept and political objectives of a common European security and defense policy.

---

23. The so-called Venusberg group, an expert forum set up by the Bertelsmann Foundation, has come up with a similar, if somewhat more developed set of interventions in its report »A European Defence Strategy« (Lindley-French/Algieri 2004).

24. In his analysis of the attitudes of the European public to ESDP Wolfgang Wagner asserts: »It is important to note [...] that such an [benevolent] attitude towards ESDP as a project does not necessarily extend to a European defense policy in practice« (Wagner 2005: 15f.).

25. The EUISS report (2004: 7) states: »[...] there is a growing tension between two types of military requirements: on the one hand, the ability to provide very mobile, flexible and rapid forces for expeditionary intervention; on the other, the necessity to deploy and sustain for a very long period substantial peacekeeping forces for crisis management«.

## Europe Caught between »Offensive (Self)-Defense« and »Human Security«

The issue of the political concept of European security policy can be boiled down to a single question: Does ESDP define itself in the twenty-first century primarily as a project oriented towards European defense or towards international peace and order?

In the European debate these two approaches tend to be presented as complementary parts of a comprehensive EU security policy, not as separate entities (see ESS 2003). However, if one considers closely the specific realm of ESDP, in particular its political mandate and its civilian and military capabilities, the two approaches often yield very different and even downright conflicting actions and decision-making principles.

According to the defense-oriented approach, the primary task of ESDP is to safeguard the EU population from immediate threats and security challenges. However, in the twenty-first century such a task has little to do with the traditional, territorial defense concepts of the past. In terms of defense Europe is no longer primarily concerned with an invasion of its territory by enemy forces but with non-territorial and asymmetric threats. According to ESS, international terrorism combined with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction represent the greatest threat to European security (ESS 2003: 4). The safety of the EU population can accordingly no longer be guaranteed through traditional strategies such as more secure borders and deterrence. Instead, new defense thinking is »offensive,« focusing on action beyond one's own borders and before a hostile attack occurs. This concept may therefore be defined as »offensive self-defense.«

The strategic implementation of such an »offensive self-defense« strategy can range from secret service and policing operations to the options of pre-emptive military strikes to destroy a specific threat<sup>26</sup> or large-scale military intervention in terms of regime-change. A security policy based on such a defense concept requires specific capabilities in regard to the above-described high-intensity intervention scenarios. Currently ESDP has only limited capacity in this field (cf. EUISS 2004; Lindley-French/Algieri 2004). Even though the most recent capability

---

26. A military strike is generally called pre-emptive if it precedes a directly imminent aggressive act on the part of the enemy. See the following paragraph for more on the problems of international law related to pre-emption.

goals do point toward more robust and flexible operations, the concrete implementation of the described defense strategy would require a much higher financial and political investment on the part of the EU to be able to project its political and military power autonomously and far beyond its borders.

The importance of being an autonomous actor in the security field is of such importance because the decision to defend oneself must be made independently.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, this unilateral decision-making rationale raises questions concerning the legitimacy of such actions. The proponents of the concept of »offensive self-defense« point to the UN Charter which guarantees a right of self-defense in case of an imminent attack by an enemy (preemption). However, in the face of the new asymmetric threats of the twenty-first century the objective determination of whether a threat is imminent or not is difficult. The line between pre-emptive self-defense, covered by international law, and »preventive warfare,« considered as an illegitimate use of force, is in danger of being breached.

The United States is the international actor that has most clearly defined its intentions to pursue a strategy of »offensive self-defense,« highlighted in its 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS).<sup>28</sup> Therefore this approach is often also referred to as the »Bush doctrine.« However, parts of the US strategy can also be identified in the European security debate, in particular regarding the necessary reformation of national defense policy in Europe. There is a broad consensus that the security of the EU population must be pursued beyond the homeland.<sup>29</sup> An example of this attitude is the statement of former German Minister of Defense Peter Struck: »the security and safety of the Federal Republic of Germany is

---

27. Cf. on this the line of the US government: »While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting pre-emptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country« (NSS 2002: 6).

28. »As a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed. We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. So we must be prepared to defeat our enemies' plans, using the best intelligence and proceeding with deliberation. History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action« (NSS 2002: 3).

29. Cf. UK Defence Ministry 2003, French Defence Ministry 2005, German Defence Ministry 2003.

also being defended around the Hindu Kush.« This post-territorial approach to defense approach is also found in the ESS.<sup>30</sup>

Equally, the concept of dealing preventively and pro-actively with threats plays an important role in the European security debate. However, large parts of Europe are still opposed to a US-style defense strategy of pre-emptive strikes and regime-change. This is clear from the opposition of many EU countries and populations to the US intervention in Iraq. ESS leaves much to debate regarding which defensive strategies will be employed to counter the new threats, and what the limits will be of possible preventive military operations. However, the room for maneuver seems limited because ESDP is bound by the principles of the UN Charter (TEU Article 11). Furthermore, the concept encompasses a degree of unilateralism that stands in sharp contrast to the multilateral orientation and commitment of the EU. In conclusion, the impact of the concept of »offensive self-defense« on European security policy is still limited. The EU has integrated some principles and ideas of the concept in its security policy strategy and agenda. However, the more controversial aspects of this concept remain the subject of heated debate in Europe as they conflict with basic principles of the EU.

If one considers the European security policy to be primarily oriented towards international peace and order, then the mandate and goals of ESDP change accordingly. In this case, the primary focus is no longer the defense against immediate threats, but the implementation of stable and peaceful political structures in the EU's regional and global surroundings. With this approach, the security of the EU population still plays a significant role, but is only addressed indirectly, in the context of establishing international stability. ESS emphasizes accordingly that »the best protection of our security is a world of well-governed democratic states.« (ESS 2003: 10).

In recent European and international debates, this approach to security is primarily discussed under the term »human security.«<sup>31</sup> The »human security« concept was originally developed as a comprehensive

---

30. »Our traditional concept of self-defence – up to and including the Cold War – was based on the threat of invasion. With the new threats, the first line of defence will often be abroad.«

31. This approach also manifests itself in other variants in the European debate – see, for example, the »civil power« approach of Hanns W. Maull in which EU foreign and security policy is understood as a project for »civilizing politics« (Maull 2006).

development and security policy under the guidance of the UN. However, this concept is now also discussed in the context of ESDP in a »narrower«, more security policy focused version. This concept assumes »human security« as the primary norm of the international order and relegates the traditional principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention. In contrast to the concept of »offensive self-defense,« the »human security« approach does not call for a *unilateral right to intervene* but a *collective responsibility to intervene and protect*. According to this new concept, each state has the responsibility to safeguard the citizens living within its borders from threats to human security. If a state does not comply with this responsibility— because it is not able or willing, or because the threat emanates from it— this obligation is transferred to the international community (ICISS 2001).

The international »responsibility to protect« includes the obligation to prevent and avert threats to human security (including the option to react militarily if necessary). Accordingly, the implementation of a »human security« approach encompasses civil crisis prevention and conflict management, political mediation, socio-economic stabilization, and state-building, all the way to military operations. As a consequence, the demands on EU security-related capabilities are high. Compared to the »offensive self-defense« concept, civil structures play a more prominent role. However, at the same time, in case of a humanitarian intervention, a high-intensity and robust military capacity is also needed. The use of hard military power is viewed as a legitimate tool to achieve »human security« though its deployment should be limited to cases of severe human rights violations, for example in cases of genocide. Furthermore, the use of military power is bound by the rules of a respective UN mandate (ICISS 2001; High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change 2004; Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities 2004).<sup>32</sup> Multilateralism is an important component of the »human security« approach. The protection of human security and the strengthening of international law go hand in hand.

As already mentioned, the »human security« approach is centered on the United Nations. However, especially recently, this approach is

---

32. This dependence on the UN Security Council and its decisions represents a central dilemma of the »human security« approach since the Security Council is neither a representative nor a democratically legitimate body and common decision-making can be blocked in disregard of the facts by a veto based on individual interests.

gaining more and more recognition in the European political arena.<sup>33</sup> For example, the report »A Human Security Doctrine for Europe« produced by an independent study group at the request of EU secretary-general Javier Solana encourages the EU to make »human security« the foundation of the future European security policy (Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities 2004). This view is based on the assumption that the EU will maintain a certain moral and judicial responsibility regarding international peace and order, but also regarding security-related European interests. »The whole point of a human security approach is that Europeans cannot be secure while others in the world live in severe insecurity« (Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities 2004: 10). In the eyes of the Study Group, during these times of new and dynamic global threats, the collective security concept of »human security« remains the only viable security concept for Europe. So far this concept has not been adopted in any official ESDP documents. However, according to the information available to the author of this paper, the Finnish government is planning to place »human security« on the ESDP agenda during Finland's EU presidency (second half of 2006). What form this initiative will ultimately take and whether it will be supported by other member states, remains to be seen.

## Conclusion

Today Europe agrees on one central issue: its security concepts of the past are no longer effective in the face of new challenges and threats that confront Europe in the current period of immense changes in the international security arena. The creation of ESDP is an important, perhaps the most important, result achieved through this new awareness. However, apart from this basic consensus, there is little agreement on how to proceed further. Tony Blair addressed the core question of the European security debate already in 1999 in the context of the Kosovo conflict: »The most pressing foreign policy problem we face is to identify the circum-

---

33. Several EU member states are also committed to the idea at national level. For example, the Netherlands, Greece, Ireland, Slovenia, and Austria are members of the Human Security Network, an international government network aiming at the promotion of »human security« by means of joint campaigns and policies; see <http://www.humansecuritynetwork.org>.



stances in which we should get actively involved in other people's conflicts« (Blair 1999). To answer this question, Europe must decide whether to promote the integration of national security policies primarily as a project oriented towards defense or towards international peace and order. A comparison of the concepts of »offensive self-defense« and »human security« highlights the conceptual and strategic alternatives that ESDP is faced with.

It is still unclear where the EU's political actors stand with reference to the different conceptions of ESDP. No clear dividing line is discernible between the different political actors of the Union, particularly concerning the individual member states.<sup>34</sup> Instead, the security-policy debate in Europe is characterized by the discussion of both approaches in parallel but independently of one another. There is no confrontation or even politicization of the different security concepts. The European public remains on the sidelines of the debate.

However, the most basic conceptual and strategic questions facing Europe's security policy cannot be resolved on a technocratic level. The model of security policy that Europe will adopt, where, when and for what purpose European security forces will be deployed, are political questions that will form the EU's identity and Europe's image in the world. The fact that ESDP is one of the few »booming« integration projects should not hamper but encourage Europe to undertake a period of reflection, during which the goals and strategies of the EU security policy project can be more extensively considered.

---

34. See, for example, the conflicts within Europe concerning the Iraq war: the governments of the UK (a sponsor of the Human Security Centre) and the Netherlands (member of the Human Security Network) justified their participation in the military invasion at first by means of arguments related to the concept of »offensive self-defense« (threat of weapons of mass destruction). Later on, they argued on the basis of the human rights abuses of Saddam Hussein's regime in a manner closer to the »human security« approach. France rejected the US government's justification of the war on the basis of defense arguments but in contrast to most EU states cites military pre-emption in its national security strategy as an option for national defense (French Government 2002: 24f.).