

# The European Security and Defence Union

## European Borders

### Border Security

How to secure our borders while helping those in need of protection?



**Bratislava Summit – roadmap for the EU's future**

Miroslav Lajčák,  
Slovak Minister of Foreign and European Affairs



**Greece takes up the challenge**

Albrecht Broemme,  
President of the German Technical Relief Agency (THW)

## Opportunities for reforming the Common Security and Defence Policy

# The future of CSDP

by Arne Lietz, Member of the European Parliament, Brussels/Strasbourg

Notwithstanding foreseeable challenges in many areas of EU-UK relations, for the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Brexit provides a welcome opportunity for long-overdue progress and reform. European decision-makers should finally act upon the fact that Europe's citizens are largely in favour of a truly European foreign, security and defence policy. According to a Eurobarometer poll in June 2016, half of them would like the EU to intervene more than it currently does. 66% are in favour of a bigger role for the EU in the field of security and defence. We should therefore use Great Britain's foreseeable exit from the EU to reform and strengthen the Union's capabilities in this field.

Several strategy and position papers, which I will briefly present below, provide concrete proposals as to how this could be done in practice.

### Global Strategy: the EU as a credible security actor

In July 2016, just a few days after the Brexit referendum, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy presented a "Global Strategy" to the EU Heads of State and Government. The document has far-reaching implications for CSDP, which needs to be made fit for purpose in a changed security environment. With the UK preparing to leave the EU, other member states that used to hide behind or emulate the British anti-CSDP integration stance in the Europe-

an Council now have to adopt a clear position: do they want to prevent the EU from becoming a credible security actor or are they willing to commit to this objective?

### What a reformed CSDP could look like

In a joint paper entitled "A strong Europe in an insecure world" the Foreign Ministers of Germany and France, Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Jean-Marc Ayrault, give numerous concrete examples to illustrate what a reformed CSDP might look like. For instance, they propose that the EU develop a common analysis of its strategic environment and a common understanding of its security interests, while highlighting member states' differing levels of ambition. As a consequence, more ambitious member states should be free to develop a more integrated foreign and security policy that makes use of all available means.

**Permanent Structured Cooperation:** The Foreign Ministers recommend that groups of member states work together more closely on defence in the framework of "Permanent Structured Cooperation", a mechanism for which the EU Treaties already make provision. Their proposal to introduce a "European semester for defence capabilities" that would create synergy among national capability development processes and help member states in setting priorities, also aims at further integration in the field of CSDP. These proposals are in line with the aforementioned Global Strategy adopted by the member states on 17 October 2016.

**Conflict prevention, crisis response and defence:** I agree with Messrs Steinmeier and Ayrault that reforms should not only serve to strengthen defence-related aspects of CSDP, but also enhance the EU's capacities in the field of conflict prevention and crisis response. This corresponds to the statement in the Global Strategy that in the future, the EU will be active "at all stages of the conflict cycle, acting promptly on prevention, responding responsibly and decisively to crises, investing in stabilisation, and avoiding premature disengagement". The new strategy further stresses that the EU is the best international player in the field of "soft power", but that it must also be prepared to defend its member states against external military threats, despite NATO remaining the principal guarantor of security for most of them.

**A binding European weapons export regime:** I am in favour of integrating national armaments policies and exports, and of

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is a Member of the European Parliament Foreign Affairs and Development Committees and a Substitute in the Human Rights Committee and the Committee of Inquiry into Money Laundering, Tax Avoidance and Tax Evasion. Born in 1976, Mr Lietz studied history, politics, and educational science at Berlin's Humboldt University and the University of Cape Town in South Africa. After finishing his studies he worked for the educational organisation Facing History and Ourselves in the US, Germany, and United Kingdom (2004-2006), and for Germany's Federal Centre for Education. He began his political career in 2007 as a parliamentary assistant to SPD member of the German Bundestag Engelbert Wüst. Before joining the European Parliament in 2014, he was a personal assistant to the Mayor of Lutherstadt Wittenberg, Eckhard Naumann (2010-2014).



“ For the CSDP Brexit provides a welcome opportunity for long-overdue progress and reform.”

*Arne Lietz MEP during a meeting in the European Parliament*

photo: European Union 2014 – EP

using them conceptually as instruments of a European foreign policy. To my mind it also makes sense to coordinate investments in security and defence and to provide public financial support for defence research at the EU level, as proposed by Messrs Steinmeier and Ayrault and High Representative Mogherini. However, this needs to be linked to a changed approach to the export of weapons and defence equipment to third countries – one that uses such exports as a political instrument rather than an economic activity.

**EU headquarters for civilian and military CSDP missions:** The discussion on the future of European security and defence is also in full swing in Germany. In the White Paper on Security Policy and the Future of the German Armed Forces, “pooling and sharing” of capabilities at the EU level is a central theme. This is positive, as it would increase the interoperability of Europe’s national armed forces and weapons systems without increasing national budgets through parallel defence research. Furthermore, I support the call for an EU headquarters for civilian and military CSDP missions, which was already included in the “Position Paper on Europeanising the Armed Forces” produced by the SPD’s Security and Defence Working Group in November 2014.

**Civil-military planning and conduct capability:** Messrs Steinmeier and Ayrault and HR Mogherini also call for the creation of a civil-military planning and conduct capability – an idea that Great Britain repeatedly prevented from materialising in the past. It is important to stress in this regard that given the CSDP’s focus on conflict prevention and crisis response, an EU headquarters would not mean a replication of NATO

structures, as has been claimed by the detractors of this idea. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg confirmed this assessment after an informal meeting of EU Defence Ministers in Bratislava in September, stressing that “a strong Europe makes NATO stronger”.

### **Institutional consequences**

Interestingly, neither the Global Strategy nor the Steinmeier and Ayrault paper discuss the role of the European Parliament. This is regrettable, as a stronger parliamentary involvement is needed to give legitimacy to the proposed reforms. One way to realise this could be to turn the EP Sub-committee on Security and Defence (SEDE) into a full-fledged committee. The aim is not to impinge upon the competences of the national parliaments, for instance when it comes to authorising the sending of military forces to take part in CSDP missions. Rather, the European Parliament should be strengthened so that it can shape and scrutinise common policies on weapons exports, EU-supported defence research or CSDP missions and operations in a democratic way. In addition, we should upgrade such formats as the Interparliamentary Conference on CFSP/CSDP, where Members of the European Parliament and their peers from the national parliaments of the member states come together to discuss foreign affairs and security policy. To achieve this upgrade of the European Parliament, a change of the EU Treaties is needed, which in turn requires an agreement among all EU member states. It is not clear that Great Britain’s exit from the EU would clear the way for such a step, but it would at least weaken the group of countries that has opposed any integration in the field of CSDP in the past.