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LINKAGE WITH EUROPEAN SECURITY**

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The European Union has through the years used its enlargement policy to increase its importance as an international actor. The greater critical mass and the addition with each enlargement of the foreign policy interests of the new member states objectively expanded the Union's area of geopolitical influence. This was particularly evident with the last enlargement in 2004 to ten eastern and southern countries, which put the Union into direct contact with new areas of strategic interest.

The main objective of the enlargement policy, however, has not been to increase the Union's political weight, but to extend the area of security beyond its borders, progressively including those countries seeking stability and economic prosperity. There can be no doubt, looking at past results, that this policy has been a huge success for all – the Union and the new member states. Suffice it to think of Spain, Portugal and Greece, to mention some of the most important positive examples of the past.

In parallel, starting in the seventies with the first enlargement to Denmark, Great Britain and Ireland, European foreign policy (then named European Political Cooperation – EPC) and, subsequently, European security and defence policy (CFSP/ESDP) has developed.¹ The Union has used these policies not only to raise its international profile, but also to contribute to bringing stability and security to those countries and regions that cannot necessarily be called new candidate countries: this is certainly true of most Mediterranean countries and, for the moment, of countries and regions in Eastern Europe, from Belarus to the Balkans. It was the need to continue to play its role as a supplier of security while for the time being suspending its process of enlargement that gave rise to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). At least this was the motivation that drove several European governments and the Commission headed by Romano Prodi to work out the documents that were later to lay down the conceptual framework for ENP.² Thus, security and ENP are closely linked. Despite this evident origin, the link between CFSP/EDSP and the new ENP must be underlined once again in light of the difficulties encountered by the European integration process and the continuing requests for security and stability coming from the areas surrounding the European Union. Although the reasons for emphasising this link are evident, it might be worthwhile going over them once more:

a) the failure to ratify the Constitutional Treaty has deprived the Union of the prospect of incorporating into its institutional set-up some essential instruments that would in theory make its foreign and security policy more effective and credible: a Foreign Minister with coordination and executive powers; a President of the European

¹ A most recent book on CFSP/ESDP is: C. Hill and M. Smith, *International Relations and the European Union*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005, where several chapters deal with the evolution of the European Foreign and Security Policy, including the defence aspects.

² The two basic documents of the Commission on ENP are: - Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, *Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: a new Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, COM (2003) 104 final, Brussels, 11 March 2003; - Communication from the Commission *European Neighbourhood Policy. Strategy Paper*, COM (2004), 373 final, Brussels, 12 May 2004.

Council elected for two and half years with the task of representing the Union abroad; a Foreign Service; the solidarity clause; the provision for military missions; structured cooperation in the defence field, etc. As a result, the present institutional ambiguity persists and the chances of projecting security more effectively into the periphery remain limited.

b) Enlargement policy which, as mentioned, was a powerful factor in the Union's projection of security beyond its borders, is no longer a vital interest that can be easily presented to the European electorate. In the long run, the negative attitude of public opinion towards further expansion could even have a backlash effect on neighbouring countries' desire and demand to draw closer to the Union, making EU security policy less effective and attractive.

c) For the time being there is still great pressure on the Union to act beyond its borders. Europe is openly requested to act by countries in the East, from Ukraine to the Caucasus countries, and in the South, from countries of the Greater Middle East to those of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean.

Given the weakening of enlargement policy as a credible instrument of the Union's security policy, the EU is called upon to develop a new kind of political strategy, combining as much as possible its newly launched European Neighbourhood Policy with its traditional Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and even defence policy (ESDP). The objective is to secure Europe's borders while projecting security into the neighbouring regions.

Looking at the concepts underlying the ENP, it is clear that the issue of security lies at its core. This can also be seen in the documents laying out the principles on which EU security is developing. Two major documents, among others, illustrate this linkage:

a) The European Security Strategy Paper (12 December 2003), produced by Javier Solana;³

b) European Neighbourhood Policy. Strategy Paper (12 May 2004), based on the Communication of the Prodi Commission of March 2003.

The first clearly states:

- "Security is a precondition of development. Conflict not only destroys infrastructure,...it also encourages criminality, deters investments and makes normal economic activity impossible". The economic dimension of security is underlined as a decisive criterion for the Union to intervene and offer its well-known political and economic mechanisms to neighbouring regions: "we need to extend the benefits of economic and political cooperation to our neighbours...".

- "The best protection of our security is a world of well governed democratic states", therefore arguing that the Union's mission should be to promote democracy and human rights in its neighbourhood.

- "The Union should promote a ring of well governed countries to the East of the EU and on the borders of the Mediterranean"; a kind of protective security belt around the Union which was stressed by the concept of "a ring of friends".

- "Spreading good governance, rule of law and protecting human rights are the best means to strengthen international order";⁴ a policy which looks like a peculiar

³ A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy, Brussels, 12 December 2003. For a comprehensive comment on the origin and content of this paper see: A. K. Bailes, *The European Security Strategy. An Evolutionary History*, SIPRI Policy Paper No. 10, SIPRI February 2005.

(and different) European response to the American neocons doctrine on the promotion of democracy.

The second document makes a clear reference to some of the ENP's fundamental goals:

- “to share the benefits of EU’s 2004 enlargement with neighbouring countries in strengthening stability, security, and well-being for all concerned”;
- “to prevent the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours...”;
- “to offer them the chance to participate in various EU activities, through greater political, security, economic and cultural cooperation”

In theory, the linkage between security, foreign policy and defence, both inside and outside the Union, is also underlined by the new core methodology which is the ENP's main innovation: a single, all-encompassing framework covering all basic aspects of cooperation with neighbouring countries, including security and, to some extent, even defence. The intention of the Commission, as clearly expressed by its president, Romani Prodi, in a speech in Brussels in December 2002, was to allow countries neighbouring on the east and south to participate in Union policies, including those relating to foreign and security policy (under the chapter of the political dialogue) on the basis of a single reference framework, the neighbourhood policy.⁵ As regards CFSP in particular, this calls for a drastic change in method with respect to the past: recourse will no longer be made to the old instrument of common strategies towards one country or another (for example, Russia or Ukraine, etc.) but the ENP will be adopted as the baseline for all. Both the Council and the Commission believe that this can make ENP and consequently CFSP more effective and credible.

In addition and in order to make ENP a real policy tool, an implementation instrument called "Action Plan" has been devised for the ENP to be negotiated with each country. As a result, there are actually two instruments: a multilateral one (ENP) and a bilateral one (Action Plans). The framework, therefore, seems to offer both coherence and flexibility.⁶

At the same time, by launching ENP, the EU has tried to dispel some of the ambiguity that emerged in recent years concerning its foreign and security policy and its enlargement policy, making clear that providing security is not synonymous with enlargement and that, consequently, the ENP does not necessarily lead to enlargement. This approach was made evident by the apparently incongruous decision to include both the Eastern and Mediterranean countries in the same policy framework, even though it is well known that the prospects for future adhesion to the Union may be more feasible for the former than the latter. This decision, establishing the ENP as a new tool in Europe's foreign and security policy kit, obliges the EU to seek new instruments for collaboration with its neighbours that are no longer simply a promise of future adhesion

⁴ Solana's Strategy Paper (cit.) devotes a full paragraph of part II to “Building security in our neighbourhood.

⁵ R. Prodi, “A Wider Europe – A Proximity Policy as the Key to Stability”, speech given at the Sixth ECSA World Conference on peace, stability and security, Brussels, 5 December 2002.

⁶ On the origin and development of ENP, the Istituto Affari Internazionali (Rome) has promoted a research which has been published: R. Alcaro and M. Comelli, *La politica europea di vicinato*, IAI Quaderni, Rome, No.22, March 2005. One chapter of the book has been published in English: M. Comelli, “The Challenges of the European Neighbourhood Policy”, in *The International Spectator*, 3/2004, pp. 97-110.

to the Union. The Commission document, mentioned above, sets out the areas on which to structure Action Plans so as to give concrete substance to the ENP.

Cooperation can involve a broad spectrum of interests common to the Union and third countries:

- the prospect of partial integration in the common market;
- trade and economic cooperation, promotion of foreign direct investments;
- several aspects of EU external actions: fight against terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, conflict resolution, crisis management, etc.
- liberalisation of visa regimes, cooperation in migration policies, fight against organised crime.

In the Commission document on strategy, the security aspects dealt with are mainly internal issues of justice and the fight against crime. The objective is to make the Union's borders safer and to keep application of the Schengen regime to the circulation of individuals from creating an unsurpassable barrier to economic and trade relations with third countries. The Union does not want to seem like a "Fortress Europe", but at the same time it must not underestimate the risks of instability that could arise from difficult or uncontrollable situations in neighbouring countries.

Projection of security to problem areas in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean is a different matter which falls into the CFSP/ESDP sphere. Here, possible actions described in the Commission document are linked to those set down in the European Security Strategy paper drafted by Javier Solana, in which the emphasis is put on participation in crisis management or conflict prevention missions carried out by the European Union. It is clear that the confines of the cooperation that can be envisaged in this sector, unlike the internal security sector, are not so precise. This is a field strongly affected by the halt in the Constitutional Treaty ratification process. For the moment, ESDP is wholly intergovernmental; the Constitutional Treaty envisages procedures (military missions, reinforced cooperation, etc.) that could make it more credible and open it up to contributions from third countries. At the same time, both CFSP and ESDP have always been viewed rather circumspectly by some groups of countries, in particular, Mediterranean countries which fear that their interests could be damaged by possible Union military or security operations, even if carried out for peacekeeping purposes. Finally, certain European security operations could be undertaken without the assent of the third country directly affected by the conflict or risk, as could be hypothesised in the Balkans in the absence of a legitimate government or after a coup d'état. Apart from these limitations, ENP Action Plans are political agreements, capable of ensuring stability and security around Europe by taking into consideration the specific security interests of the third countries.

The ENP is meant to be a credible alternative to enlargement policy as a security instrument and tries to move from the concept of integration as the final step in a cooperative process with a high degree of conditionality to a looser concept of regionalism, in which sub-regional cooperation and broad partnership are the main objectives. In ruling out accession to the European Union as the ultimate goal, the ENP relies on policies and mechanisms with less conditionality.⁷ A comprehensive policy like ENP, addressing a wide range of countries both in the East and to the South of the

⁷ A. Missiroli, "The EU and its changing neighbourhoods: stabilisation, integration and partnership" in J. Batt, D. Lynch et al, *Partners and Neighbours: a CFSP for a wider Europe*, Chaillot Paper 64, IIS, Paris, September 2003, p. 11.

continent cannot be based on the strict Copenhagen criteria used for candidate countries. That is why ENP Action Plans are tailored to individual circumstances to make conditionality working more effectively. Conditionality can then be relaunched on the basis of cooperative individual and/or sectorial policies with each country.

This leaves the door open, in individual cases, for the implicit possibility of future integration into the Union, but the main goal is to encourage forms of regional cooperation with the European Union and among third countries in regions close to the Union.⁸ The opinion of the Commission, as expressed on its Strategy Paper is that ENP can really “reinforce existing forms of regional and subregional cooperation and provide a framework for their further development”. A strategy of regionalism therefore seems most suited to the Union's interests. It has three advantages: the first is that it returns to a well tested model of Union foreign policy called “group to group policy”, with which the Union developed and worked out effective cooperation mechanisms. The second advantage is to familiarise third countries with forms of multilateral cooperation: *de facto*, the Union is exporting an integration model, albeit secondarily, which in any case provides a good exercise in dialogue for both the Union and the neighbouring countries. Third, regional and sub-regional cooperation creates more security on the Union's borders, as it is based on instruments of good governance and regulations that are more advanced than those generally in force in the third countries themselves. And finally, through regionalisation, ENP “will reinforce stability and security and contribute to efforts at conflict resolution”.

There can be no doubt that the ENP is a very ambitious policy, much more so than those who drew it up may ever have thought. The central challenge is to combine the various elements that compose it: the multilateralism of the reference framework; the bilateralism of the Action Plans for each country; the regionalism or sub-regionalism to be encouraged with and among third countries; and finally a high level of conditionality (with respect to human rights, good governance, free market, democratic institutions), without which it is difficult to promote sufficient security on the Union's borders. Given these complex tasks, ENP presents itself not only as the continuation of the European security policy but also as an essential dimension of the Europe's broader foreign policy. It contemporarily encompasses instruments for economic cooperation and for border sharing, as well as policies for immigration and asylum, for participation in certain security actions, civilian and military crisis management, the fight against terrorism, to mention just the main elements of the Commission's communication on ENP and of Solana's European Strategy Paper.

It follows that it will be up to the Union to ensure consistency between its policies towards third countries and between the various decision-making procedures that mark the “three pillars” of the Nice Treaty – an old problem that has become topical once again, given the stall in the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty which seems to offer greater guarantees as far as consistency in the Union's procedures and institutions is concerned.⁹ Therefore, consistency must be the guiding principle in effectively combining the two documents, the European Security Strategy and the ENP Strategy Paper referred to at the beginning of this brief comment: it is no coincidence that they

⁸ On the issue of regionalism and security see the comprehensive paper of: F. Tassinari, Security and Integration in the EU Neighbourhood. The case for Regionalism, CEPS Working Document, Brussels, No. 226, July 2005.

⁹ On consistency as a key element for CFSP effectiveness see: S. Nuttall, “Coherence and Consistency”, in C. Hill and M. Smith, International Relations and the European Union, op. cit., pp. 91-112.

were formulated at the same time; the ENP could become the litmus test for a broader concept of European security and the Union's foreign policy.

Nevertheless, above and beyond an overall positive assessment of ENP, it should be remembered that it is a far from perfect policy. There are several risks inherent in it, some of them are already evident:

- it does not curb the tendency, particularly among Eastern countries, to consider it as the starting block for future entry into the European Union;
- it downgrades the objective differences between Eastern and Southern countries;
- it emphasises the exception of Russia as a privileged partner of the Union, raising further anxiety and competition with Eastern neighbours;
- it does not eliminate the ambiguity between regional/sub-regional and integrative policies;
- the effectiveness of Action Plans still has to be proven.

In any case, for the security of Europe, the ENP represents one of the few reasonable instruments of foreign and security policy, aimed at making its borders more stable while avoiding the risk of being considered a "Fortress Europe" by third countries.

ENP therefore constitutes a necessary factor;

- to keep the Union open,
- to avoid further indigestion from enlargement (with the exception of Rumania and Bulgaria) in the foreseeable future;
- to maintain a positive long-term prospect for neighbouring countries of closer links with the Union;
- to make CFSP/ESDP more attractive both for the Union's members and for neighbouring third countries.

But in order for this to happen, the Commission, the Council and High Representative – the Troika provided for by the Treaty of Amsterdam – have to work out urgently and in close collaboration all the Action Plans needed to concretise the ENP. This will call for an enormous effort, taking account of the current bilateral and multilateral agreements for cooperation and the different framework envisaged by the ENP. The Union's activity must not come to a standstill until the process of ratification of the Constitutional Treaty picks up once again. Security is also a top priority for the European public and the EU "government" is called upon to give precise signals in this direction. The ENP must put uncertainty and debate behind it and demonstrate its effectiveness in the field and the contribution that it can offer the security of Europe and the Mediterranean.