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WHY AND HOW CFSP IS DEVELOPING: MOTORS AND GOALS

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1. From vicious to virtuous circle in the field of European Foreign Policy (EFP): a short historical overview

- the long-lasting struggle to move from a purely declaratory European Political Co-operation (EPC) to a common foreign policy with a capacity for action and some effective instruments at its disposal. The experience of using economic tools (economic sanctions, essentially) in some crisis situations (Falklands, Iran, etc.) led to successive decisions aimed at reinforcing the credibility of EPC, meant to be a policy capable of moving beyond the stage of pure intergovernmental cooperation among national foreign policies:

- a) the inclusion in the Single European Act (SEA) of the concept of “political consistency” (art. 30.5), that is, coordination between diplomatic and economic activities;
- b) the attempt made with Maastricht to move also toward what one might call “institutional consistency”, that is the linkage between CFSP and EC decision-making systems (e.g., art 228a on economic sanctions);
- c) the gradual addition, since Maastricht, of a few limited instruments of action in the field of security and defence, namely the Petersberg Tasks.

- this progressive move to an EFP was largely due to the changing geostrategic scenario of the post-cold war period and to the completion of Economic Monetary Union, which was bound to force parallel progress in other fields of cooperation, such as CFSP.

2. The way to a consistent EFP

There are three basic principles by which to judge the consistency and credibility of a EFP: efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy.

- the principle of efficiency has largely to do with a smooth decision-making system. Voting rules, permanent bodies, external representation, budget and reinforced co-operation (when necessary) have traditionally been indicated as key elements to improve the performance of CFSP. The Maastricht Treaty has pointed the way (a partial process of “communitarisation” for some institutional aspects of CFSP) and in Amsterdam an attempt was made to correct or complete some of the missing rules and mechanisms, namely by creating the High Representative and the PPEWU and introducing a full-fledged common budget, direct recourse to majority voting for joint actions, constructive abstention, etc.

- the principle of effectiveness is represented by the practical results of EFP activities on the world stage. Still a degree of imbalance in terms of effectiveness in the external projection of the Union can still be witnessed. The dimension of foreign economic policy is well

developed through the processes of enlargement, super-association and association agreements, custom unions, etc. The foreign policy dimension proper is scoring some successes in the field of stability pacts, political dialogue with third countries and declaratory policies, but still lacks the capability (and credibility) to act in the area of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. An improvement could derive from an effective presence of the High Representative, a skilful performance by the PPEWU, extensive use of the new Troika (Presidency, High Representative and Commission) and a larger common budget. However, the current voting rules and the failure to introduce reinforced co-operation might work as elements of functional weakness to a more effective EFP.

- legitimacy concerns not only the role to be attributed to the European Parliament (which might increase in practice), but also the relationship between EFP and national foreign policies. In this field it is particularly difficult to draw a clear-cut line between national sovereignty and the need for a common EFP. Common strategies and guidelines, which are the responsibility of the European Council, should indicate clearly and in detail the areas of common sovereignty and exclusive action for the Union. The use of constructive abstention has to be interpreted in the broader sense, allowing a majority of countries to fix a higher degree of shared sovereignty and to act in the name of the Union.

3. The still missing dimension: defence policy as a necessary completion of a common EFP

- a shared, common opinion is presently emerging inside the Union on the need to deepen the currently still limited policy of cooperation in the field of defence. In this regard the most important news is represented by the acceptance of the EU as the legal and political framework in which to locate the future defence policy of Europe. The St. Malo Declaration and the Final Communiqué of Washington both confirm that European defence is a responsibility to be borne by the EU.

- The political acceleration of the debate on a Common Defence Policy (CDP) is making some of the provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty obsolete. It is paving the way for a new IGC (probably in the second half of the year 2000, under the French Presidency), for the merging of the WEU into the EU and for the decision to absorb it either in the Second Pillar (CFSP) or in ad hoc Fourth Pillar.

- The creation of a common defence capability has to address, among other things, a necessary process of practical convergence both in the economic and military sectors in order to eliminate duplications, the wasting of resources and conflicting defence doctrines. Macro-defence convergence criteria should be fixed and a phased plan (as in the EMU experience) approved, with a strict deadline for the year 2010 for a full-fledged common defence.

- convergence criteria in the defence field will have to be accompanied by an institutional development involving the creation of ad hoc agencies (such as a European Chiefs of Staff and a Common Military Command), the assigning of the political management of defence

policies to the CFSP High Representative, the reinstatement of a mechanism of reinforced cooperation in the Second Pillar, the definition of the meaning of art. 5 of the present WEU Treaty in the context of the Union, the role to be attributed to different categories of member states (fully or partially involved in the common defence policy), etc.

4. Towards a “supranational” CFSP?

- A great deal of institutional progress has been made in the EFP field. Since its inception, EPC has moved through various stages of progressively increasing decision-making complexity. The treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam have introduced a number of elements of “institutional consistency”, which have made a certain degree of “communitarisation” of CFSP mechanisms rather evident;

- nevertheless intergovernmental ideology and practice is still there. It must be remembered that the real “initiating” organ – the one which gives impulse to EFP – is, in the final analysis, the European Council. The Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam officially recognise this reality and it is in this way that the decision-making activity derives its legitimacy. To some extent, even foreign economic activity (in the communitarian field) originates in the European Council (e.g., enlargement policy);

- moreover, the decision to include defence policy in the EU framework in the near future will fuel the intergovernmental method, distancing it, at least in the beginning, from the communitarian decision-making system.

- the real question is not whether the ideological tendency is toward supranationalism or intergovernmentalism, but whether the EFP is effective. Probably the force of events, as has happened in the past, will lead to greater efficiency in the institutional field and therefore effectiveness in policy management.

5. The real challenge for the Finnish Presidency will be:

a) to implement the new rules of Amsterdam with a clear view of the need for a progressively greater “institutional consistency” among the three pillars;

b) to adopt the principle of effectiveness as a basic objective for EFP;

c) to test the “efficiency” of the new rules for EU joint actions in the post-war Kosovo;

d) to start a process of institutional revision in the defence field in the light of a new IGC, to be held in the second half of the year 2000.