

## **Workshop C**

### **On the way towards a European Defence Union: A White Book as a first step**

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#### **Introduction**

Despite new regional and global security challenges EU responses have mainly come from the Member States (MS), with few concerted actions at EU level. Moreover, the EU as such has a limited budget in defence and security and collaboration among Member States in this area is far from sufficient.

Any state or polity needs a strategy to address multiple security challenges and a description of the capabilities needed to achieve its strategic security objective. Although EU MS regularly publish national security and defence strategies and operational guidelines, there is no such document at the EU level. It is why the European Council of June 2015 requested the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP) to present an EU Global Strategy.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Why do we need an EU-level White Book on European defence?**

EU Global Strategy aims to steer the Union's global action and set priorities in order to protect EU citizens while promoting the Union's interests. According to it, the MS '...remain sovereign in their defence decisions: nevertheless, to acquire and maintain many of capabilities, defence cooperation must become the norm.'

And an EU document that would address what capabilities are needed and how Europe will achieve them is, in addition to the abovementioned reasons, precisely the issue behind a White Book (WB). The EU should describe how the EU MS can contribute to collective and common priorities and the WB, framed in the Lisbon Treaty, could push European defence forward in this field. The WB will be also used to set priorities more definite and collectively to identify corresponding capabilities shortfalls and remedies, including institutional and programmatic changes at the EU level.

#### **White Book concept and a historical summary of different EU defence documents**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/eugs\\_review\\_web.pdf](https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/eugs_review_web.pdf)

The idea of an EU-level WB on defence emanates from the 2013 European Council on defence when the Heads of State and Government adopted conclusions in the form of three major objectives:

- a) to increase the effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP;
- b) to enhance the development of their capabilities; and
- c) to strengthen the European defence industry.

The different European Union institutions invoked by the 2013 European Council have responded to the requests and produced several advancements in the form of new communications, strategies, policy frameworks and reports.

All these documents should be taken into consideration during the drafting process of the White Book in order to better know the current starting point and the bridges already created for CSDP enhancement. These documents are the following:

- EU Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crises.
- Joint Communication — of the Commission and the High Representative — on Capacity Building in Support of Security and Development.
- European Energy Security Strategy.
- EU Maritime Security Strategy.
- Action Plan to implement the EU Maritime Security Strategy.
- EU Cyber Defence Policy Framework.
- European Agenda on Security.
- EU in a Changing Global Environment: A more connected, contested and complex world.

In terms of civilian capabilities, the implementation of the Civilian Capability Development Plan is ongoing. The Council of the European Union adopted the Policy Framework for Systematic and LongTerm Defence Cooperation in November 2014. In relation to industry, the Commission is currently financing research under the Horizon 2020 programme, and it will launch a Preparatory Action in 2017. Lastly, with regard to the European Defence and Technological Industrial Base (EDTIB), the central actions have been aimed at reiterating the need for the implementation by the MS of two directives already adopted: Directive 2009/43/EC and Directive 2009/81/EC on defence and sensitive security procurement.

### **The defence-related legal and institutional set-up established by the Lisbon Treaty**

The Lisbon Treaty gives the solid legal ground on which a WB process could be based. The right of initiative of the HR/VP, the EEAS's strategic and military expertise, the supervision and budgetary control of the EU Parliament, the EDA's work on capabilities and operational needs, and the role of the European Commission regarding the defence industry are considered to be essential competences to successfully elaborate the WB.

Concerning the available legal tools, the Lisbon Treaty includes relevant clauses for defence issues like the Enhanced Cooperation Clause (Article 20 TEU), the Solidarity Clause (Article 222 TFEU), the Flexibility Mechanism (Article 44 TEU), the Mutual Assistance Clause (Article 42.7 TEU), and, perhaps the most powerful, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (Article 46 TEU).

### **The possible impact and constraints on the EU relationship with both United States and NATO**

EU-level WB should not be, in principle, a problem for the EU-US relationship. The WB will probably ask for an increase of EU capabilities and this will lead to a higher level of military autonomy, but the United States seems to prefer a unified and active European Union in several security and military matters, rather than a fragmented or passive EU. Finally, as stated by the NATO Wales Declaration on the Transatlantic Bond of September 2014, it is clear that 'a stronger European Defence will contribute to a stronger NATO.

### **Attitudes of EU MS towards an EU-level White Book**

The attitudes of the various EU MS towards a WB in security and defence can be quite diverse. There are different understandings in relation to defence matters, and there are many national interests at stake when it comes to increasing the level of integration at the EU level.

On the other hand one can build on the apparent consensus concerning the identification of some risks and threats in geographical terms, common values under which the EU was founded and the need to act in line with other organisations such as UN and NATO.

It is evident that, in the context of attitudes of EU MS towards an EU-level WB, there is a need to begin by clarifying the identified commonalities and differences among them in order to determine the possible ways forward.

### **Some points for discussion:**

- Should not EU, in relation to NATO, strive after more independent security and defence policy, at least in EU region and in the vicinity of the EU's borders?
- Impacts of brexit on the future of CSDP.
- A position of smaller MS within a stronger and more centralised CSDP.
- The issue of defence capabilities of MS at the national level v. specialisation resulting from the strengthening of collective defence in the context of the internal MS policy.
- WB's capacity to respond to new security challenges such as terrorism or cyber threats.