European Security: No Strategy without Politics

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Popular support for boosting the performance of the European Union in world affairs is not lacking. Polls suggest that a vast majority of Europeans would like to see the Union become a strong international actor. Considerable progress has been achieved over the last year, since the launch of the European Security Strategy, both on paper and on the ground. The pace of change and the scale and nature of threats in the world, however, make such developments look modest. The common foreign and security policy (CFSP) of the European Union essentially remains a delicate balancing act between 25 national diplomacies, albeit with a growing input from EU institutions.

This Idea argues that the injection of 'politics' into the foreign policy debate at the European and national levels would help enhance policy output, continuity and accountability. It is hardly surprising that national governments, in the absence of a serious debate on the direction and the impact of their foreign policies, do not feel compelled to do more with their partners in Europe. Most national politicians instinctively favour short-term gains over long-term solutions. In short, there can be no coherent common policy without common politics.

Greater democratic accountability is one important factor for addressing the lack of adequate political will to drive the CFSP. The European Security Strategy provides an ideal benchmark to assess the performance of the Union in world affairs. A biannual review of the state of play of the CFSP, assessed with a reference to the key objectives outlined by the strategy, would help trigger a wider public debate. This Idea puts forward a set of proposals designed to involve national parliaments and the European Parliament in carrying out a result-driven scrutiny of the CFSP, based on a report produced by an inter-institutional task force. National public opinion would be mobilised and governments would be held accountable for the conduct of their foreign policies.

I should thank **Sven Biscop**, **Roberto Menotti** and **Gerrard Quille*** for helping me develop this Idea with their always constructive advice. We share the conviction that such a political debate as presented here would trigger new dynamics and would help generate the political will necessary to fulfil the ambitious objectives set by the security strategy.

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Introduction

The first anniversary of the European Security Strategy (ESS) is approaching, but there is a risk that it may go unnoticed. Following the adoption of the strategy, progress has been made in rationalising instruments and procedures. Encouraging developments are unfolding on the ground as well, notably on the counter-proliferation and counter-terrorism fronts. The Union is also undertaking autonomous peacekeeping operations. The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the Union, however, has failed to enthuse the masses or to convince observers and policy makers. Progress has been considerable, but is still insufficient compared to present and potential challenges.

This is not new in the history of the external relations of the Union. It is strong on trade issues where it acts as one body, but weak on foreign policy and security matters where national governments cannot agree to cooperate more closely. Great play was made of the ESS on its adoption, following a major intra-European crisis on Iraq, in a concerted effort to define a set of shared, fundamental objectives, as a basis for new impetus to political action. Has the strategy made a difference? It is commonly held that a new strategy has little value in the absence of political will. This is, however, a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Political will does not grow on trees, but can only come from serious political debate, conducted in public. In the absence of a debate on the EU's CFSP not only at the European level, but also and above all at the national level, national politicians are unlikely to limit their scope for action in favour of a common position. In domestic politics, key legislative or executive decisions – such as welfare reform and painful budget cuts – are only taken after extensive debate in national parliaments and in the media. Foreign and security policy is less and less an exception to this. Diplomacy can bring about progress in coordination or cooperation between national foreign policies. Only 'common' politics, however, can underpin a common policy. Political debate on EU CFSP has to be enhanced across the Union.

A biannual review of the implementation of the ESS can be a useful peg to trigger such debate. The ESS does not include a detailed list of measures or quantifiable indicators but it does identify a limited range of key objectives. Monitoring significant developments in pursuit of those objectives, and relevant policy outcomes, would seem to be a useful exercise. Most importantly, however, a result oriented assessment of the strategy could provide a platform for a debate in national and European parliaments on the successes and the failures of the CFSP. The public, which is already very sensitive to the role of the Union in international affairs, would be better informed, and governments could be held more accountable for their choices, albeit in an informal and non-binding way.

Once again, while workable rules are important, a thriving public debate is the best recipe to create political will. If the politics of the CFSP were more exposed to the public, then in one or two years' time the anniversary of the ESS might well be celebrated in a more adequate fashion.

A promising start

As was the case in the aftermath of previous setbacks, European leaders rushed to reassert their commitment to the CFSP following the disarray over the war in Iraq. In May 2003, they decided to entrust the High Representative (HR), Javier Solana, with the elaboration of a security strategy in an attempt to identify shared goals and define what the Union stands for in international relations. At the same time, significant progress was made in terms of institutional reform in the Convention and at the subsequent Intergovernmental Conference. The way in which the ESS was elaborated was innovative and provided new scope for cooperative policy making.

A task force was set up within the services attached to Javier Solana, including both national and European officials. Different political sensitivities were represented, but cumbersome drafting by a committee of 25 was excluded from the start. The document was elaborated with relative autonomy from national representatives in the Political and Security Committee (COPS) of the Council, although they were regularly briefed. At a later stage, following the approval of the draft strategy in June 2003, a wide community of experts took an active part in the finalisation of the document in the course of three special seminars. National governments played a decisive role, in close cooperation with the task force of drafters, in striking an acceptable balance between different strategic approaches and policy requirements. Eventually, European leaders unanimously endorsed the strategy in December 2003.

The innovative features of this process teach important lessons for future policy making in the CFSP domain, under the envisaged leadership of the new Foreign Minister (FM). First, national leaders delegated the guidance of this exercise to the High Representative, thereby showing a growing awareness that European institutions should be entrusted with a more proactive role in foreign policy making. Tasks should be shared, and not simply delimited, between the European and the national levels of governance under the CFSP. Second, different national perspectives were duly taken into account and were reflected in the document from the very start of the drafting process. This helped reconcile diverging priorities with a shared strategic posture. Third, active collaboration among experts set negotiations among governments on a much more solid intellectual basis. In time, the involvement of dozens of security experts from across the continent will fuel sound public policy debate at the European level in a thus far strictly national domain.

Against this background, two important actors were relatively marginalised: the Commission and, above all, the European Parliament. Both should be much more closely involved in the follow-up to the ESS and in CFSP policy making more generally.

A much needed follow-up

The strong mandate of the new FM, endowed with a formal right of initiative, and the ambitious vision outlined in the ESS should be regarded as two important factors in shaping a credible CFSP. Institutional as well as conceptual innovations are, however, of little use without the political will to take full advantage of the former, and implement the latter. European institutions can and should play a mobilising role in fostering a sense of 'collective' leadership in conducting CFSP. The ESS is a good platform to focus the minds and provide guidance towards shared goals. National governments, however, must buy into that process, feel a real commitment to match words with deeds, and deliver serious policy outcomes.

It is widely acknowledged that political will is in short supply in most national capitals. Priority should then be given to involving governments in a public political debate on the achievements and shortcomings of the CFSP. Governments should not be challenged, but engaged. In that perspective, a biannual assessment of CFSP policy outcomes could help focus the debate, mobilise political actors and raise media attention. The ESS, and major EU initiatives flowing from it, should become the benchmark of such an evaluation.

Undoubtedly, the periodical review of policy outcomes will not, by itself, entail dramatic change. Although slow and piecemeal, progress under the CFSP is not negligible. What really matters is to build new initiatives on the basis of past accomplishments, thereby adding to the emerging international identity of the Union. Failure to take steps to fulfil the expectations raised by the ESS, however, would deal a serious blow to the credibility of new initiatives. Moreover, it is quite legitimate to expect that national governments are held accountable for the direction, although not necessarily the detailed conduct, of their foreign and security policies, and for their successes or failures.

One year on: work in 'process'

The ESS was intended to become the framework of reference for foreign and security policy making in the EU. It states in clear terms what the Union stands for in international relations. It outlines priorities to counter threats and to shape a safer, and more just, global

environment. The European Council stipulated last December that this *strategie cadre* be implemented along five main axes: the fight against terrorism, action to counter the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), the Balkans, the Middle East and strengthening effective multilateralism. One year on, there is evidence of significant progress, notably in shaping new procedural frameworks in order to maximise cooperation between the national and the European levels of governance. That being said, operational achievements still lag behind. In short, it seems that the change of gear that the adoption of the ESS ought to have prompted has not occurred. Given this mixed picture, some ongoing initiatives contain the seeds for further progress.

Non Proliferation

The ESS defined proliferation, in combination with terrorism, as *"potentially the greatest threat to our security."* Given the focus on counter-proliferation, the EU has deployed a coherent set of initiatives flowing from the separate *"EU strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction"* adopted by the European Council in December 2003. The new position of Personal Representative of Javier Solana for the non-proliferation of WMD has been set up. In cooperation with the Commission, the Office of the Personal Representative submitted a detailed Progress Report to the European Council in June 2004. Compared to the vagueness of earlier EU 'regional' strategies towards the Mediterranean region and Russia, the new EU 'issue-based' strategy is distinctive because of the detailed operational provisions built into the document. The Progress Report lists concrete achievements – and obstacles – in the implementation of each specific heading of the strategy. Cooperation between the Council, the Commission and Member States' services features prominently, underpinning a sense of renewed dynamism.

Counter-terrorism Cooperation

According to the ESS, *"Concerted European action is indispensable"* to fighting fundamentalist terrorism. In the latest in a series of policy packages adopted to counter terrorism since 9/11, and in application of the new security strategy, important reforms were introduced last spring following the deadly attacks in Madrid. First and foremost, a Counter-terrorism Coordinator was created in March 2004 and mandated with the coordination of the Council's activities as well as with overseeing all of the instruments at the Union's disposal and reporting to the Council. At the same time, the European Council adopted a comprehensive Declaration on Combating Terrorism, including a revised and detailed Action Plan. The document provided for a report on the implementation of the Action Plan to be submitted to the summit in June. At the same time, the High Representative presented a report on Intelligence Cooperation to European leaders, stressing the urgent need for practical steps such as integrating an intelligence capacity in the Situation Centre of the Council and empowering Europol to allow it to fulfil its tasks.

European Defence

The ESS provides a framework for the definition of the EU strategic posture in defence matters. According to the ESS, the EU needs to be *"more active, more coherent and more capable."* Progress in equipping the EU with essential assets to carry out military operations was made in parallel to the drafting of the strategy in the course of 2003. Important steps notably included the agreement to set up EU planning cells both within the NATO structure and in the Council – the cradle of a fully-fledged headquarters. In fulfilling the ESS mandate to support *"effective multilateralism"* and in particular the authority of the United Nations Security Council in maintaining international security, EU Member States also agreed to establish 'battle groups', well suited to carry out peacekeeping tasks at the request of the UN. Prominent security experts recently submitted an ambitious proposal for a White Paper on European Defence. This document proved, once again, the room for fertile cooperation between external experts and representatives of EU bodies in shaping policy. It delivered practical recommendations for EU decision-makers on the force requirements needed to fulfil the new Petersberg tasks. The ESS states unambiguously that *"We need to develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention."*

Delay on 'action'

Procedural innovations, enhanced inter-institutional cooperation, new concepts for force deployment and mixed task-forces of experts and officials are surely evidence of progress. When considering, however, developments on the ground, it is hard to deny that the Union has struggled to either anticipate or manage serious crises around the world, including in its own neighbourhood. CFSP policy making is still too reactive, and not proactive enough. Leaving aside the thorny question of the conflict in the Middle East between Israel and Palestine (although the ESS specifically mentions that the two-state solution is the favoured option for peace), a number of crisis situations have deteriorated. The relative impotence or lack of determination of the EU is manifest when we think of the slaughter of civilians in Darfur, the growing tensions in Kosovo and the explosive situation of the Caucasus, among other crisis spots.

Willingness to undertake a large-scale peacekeeping operation in Bosnia by replacing NATO in December 2004 marks an important step forward, following the Berlin-plus type operation in Macedonia and the first fully EU-led intervention in Congo in 2003. Moreover, the Union is now actively supporting efforts by the Organisation for African Union to deploy a peacekeeping force in Sudan. These

operational developments are to be welcomed but remain meagre achievements compared to the scale of present and potential challenges. Peace has not been brought to the Balkans by the EU, but essentially by US-led interventions in the framework of NATO. The EU is not present as such in Afghanistan, although a number of Member States have provided troops. In the event of a new serious humanitarian crisis around the world, and in the neighbourhood of the Union, it is unlikely that the latter could play a decisive role in the years to come. The achievement of the 'headline goals' to equip the Union with much needed military assets, in order to back soft power with hard power, has been postponed to 2010.

The impact of recent institutional innovations, including for example a new Counter-terrorism Coordinator, is at best unclear, and certainly under-debated. The serious delay accumulated by Member States in adopting key instruments – most notably the European Arrest Warrant – and in enhancing the role of bodies like Europol speaks volumes. Likewise, grand statements aside, Member States are notoriously reluctant to adopt a common stance in their relations with major global players and prefer to pursue distinct, and sometimes heterogeneous national approaches. Recent disagreements over the lifting of the arms embargo on China are matched by the largely irrelevant role played by the Union in relations with Russia, not to speak of divergences on transatlantic relations and on the situation in Iraq. When it comes to strengthening effective multilateralism, the approach of larger European countries to the reform of the UN Security Council shows that the time for a pioneering role of the Union in the management of global security is not yet ripe.

It would be unrealistic to expect that the structural flaws undermining the CFSP will fade within a year or two. It is, however, legitimate to push for steady progress in the right direction. Such direction is fleshed out by the ESS. All Member States subscribed to it. It is not unreasonable to call for consistency over time, once precise commitments have been made. It is, not least, a matter of credibility: an increasingly scarce asset for European governments both on the world stage, and domestically.

The missing link

How to account for the gap between considerable progress on paper and still inadequate, although improving, performance on the ground? Most importantly, how to ensure that such a gap is bridged in the foreseeable future? This requires a closer look at the two dimensions of the problem – institutional reform and political will to act – and a careful assessment of the linkage between them.

On the one hand, in a Union of 25, the importance of introducing workable procedural innovations cannot be overestimated. Traditionally, the focus has been on replacing unanimity with qualified majority voting. Although symbolically important, the formal adoption of majority voting to overcome divergence in the CFSP domain would be, at this stage, of questionable added value. Serious disagreements cannot be papered over with a vote, and most countries would simply reject a decision adopted against their own will when vital interests are perceived to be at stake. There is a point at which institutions break under the burden of intolerable political divergence. It is perhaps more interesting to introduce reforms that enable joint policy-elaboration and encourage a culture of cooperation between European and national officials. In this context, bargaining gives way to joint problem solving.

This is the major lesson to be drawn from the elaboration of the ESS. New positions were created to foster joined-up policy making and to ensure that decisions are followed up in the field of counter-proliferation and counter-terrorism. Although deprived of 'supranational' powers, these bodies can play an important role in ensuring that governments match words with deeds and that progress is made. At the same time, a 'new generation' of policy units is proliferating in the Council, mandated with early warning, intelligence gathering, and military-civilian planning for the Petersberg tasks. These bodies draw their strength from an increasingly dense web of trans-national and trans-governmental networks. Many of these are set up and empowered by European institutions, but can only play a constructive role in policy-making if governments buy into them, and actively participate. In this perspective, it is not even necessary that all governments are represented at all times, which is of considerable advantage. New procedures and new bodies are shaping a new culture in CFSP policy-making, which is beginning to deliver real added value.

On the other hand, institutional reform cannot replace, but only enhance and sustain political will. To this day, there is no better recipe to 'produce' political will than triggering an authentic, open, democratic political process. The absence of such a process at the European level partly explains the underdevelopment of the Union's stature in world affairs. Most observers acknowledge that traditional nation-states lack the resources to pursue an effective foreign policy and defend their interests in the world. People increasingly realise that national politics and national means are inadequate to confront pressing global challenges. Most European citizens are in favour of a stronger role of the Union in security and even in defence matters. The problem is that, although potential solutions lie at the European level, the political debate on foreign and security policy is mostly conducted at the national level.

The intra-European crisis sparked by the intervention in Iraq introduced an important exception to the rule. Those supporting the intervention and those opposing to the war – a large majority – shared arguments that went well beyond national borders. Confrontation ran along similar lines all over Europe. Many went as far as to argue that popular mobilisation against the involvement in US-led military operations marked the emergence of a European *demos*. That is perhaps exaggerated. Certainly, however, that experience proved that people are increasingly sensitive to key decisions in foreign and security policy. To be sure, popular interest does not necessarily translate into suddenly acquired expertise. Most importantly, vociferous protesters, even when reflecting widespread feelings, should not dictate foreign policy to governments. Conversely, however, governments too often operate in a democratic vacuum when they carry out foreign and security policy: unaccountable to the public, unaccountable to their partners, with insufficient checks and balances to monitor and assess their action, short of national elections.

The missing link between progress on institutions and stalemate on the ground is politics. Political debate nurtures political will. Incentives must be provided to politicians at both the national and the European levels, for them to take action and ensure consistency over time. Fostering a public political debate at the European level on the shared priorities of the CFSP and on the major initiatives undertaken to pursue them seems an important contribution to bridging the gap between words (and norms) and deeds.

A visible, simple benchmark…

The ESS has a natural vocation to become an instrument of public diplomacy. As a 'mission statement' defining its fundamental values and objectives, it portrays the international profile of the Union at a glance. There is no reason why the ESS should not be used for similar purposes in domestic debates. The strategy can be used to illustrate what the Union stands for in international relations to an increasingly disoriented public. Most importantly, the strategy should become the benchmark to express a broad political assessment of the performance of the EU, and of European governments, in the CFSP domain.

It should be clear that this is not about a detailed investigation of specific initiatives and statements. That would entail an excessively cumbersome process and would impose undue constraints on government action. In fact, such in-depth scrutiny would be counter-productive if applied to policy domains where political discretion plays a bigger role than in purely domestic areas, often subject to detailed regulation. Moreover, as the faltering progress of the Lisbon

Agenda demonstrates, an excessive proliferation of objectives and indicators would undermine the effective pursuit of a few key goals. The strategy, however, although sometimes blamed for lack of specific prescriptions and for excessively vague statements, lends itself to becoming a platform for political debate. For example, on the basis of an accurate interpretation of the text, 14 or 15 key objectives can easily be identified. Under each of these headings, the indication of key action plans, strategies, decisions and actions adopted by the Union should not require too much effort either. A result-driven assessment could be provided in clear and simple language to evaluate the outcome of EU initiatives and operations. The overall report, which could be submitted to EU and national institutions and presented to the public at large, need not be longer than 40/50 pages – the average size of the conclusions of the European Council.

This process could be undertaken every two years – the minimum to appreciate the direction of change in international affairs (short of major and unpredictable crises) and the impact of the EU's external action.

…for a new political process

A public political process should to be established in order to:

- monitor the follow-up and implementation of the ESS and the performance of the Union in the world at large
- involve the European Parliament and national parliaments in effective democratic scrutiny of the strategic guidelines and of major achievements or failures of the CFSP
- enhance a sense of team spirit between different institutional actors in Brussels, in the perspective of the appointment of the FM and of the creation of a European External Action Service (EEAS)
- build upon the mobilisation of a wide community of experts to underpin a sound public debate
- raise public awareness of achievements and failures, measured against the commitments made in the adoption of the ESS
- add pressure on governments so as to stop sterile debates and simply account for governments' actions against their commitments.

This political process should be embedded in suitable institutional mechanisms, using as far as possible existing structures so as to avoid complication and, on the contrary, maximise transparency and

inclusiveness. Some sensitive issues in devising such a process and triggering more political debate are addressed below.

The role of the European Parliament and national legislatures

Parliaments should play a pivotal role in this process. The involvement of national political establishments across Europe in a focussed, regular debate on the Union's performance in the world offers perhaps the best chance to mobilise mass-media and reach out to a vast public. In the perspective of enhancing the public debate, the parliamentary dimension of foreign, security and defence policy will inevitably grow, both at the European and at the national level, for a number of reasons.

- First, it is widely accepted that a clear distinction between security policy on the one hand, and development and trade policy on the other, can no longer be drawn when shaping a common foreign policy for the decades to come. This is also explicitly acknowledged by the ESS. The traditional exclusion or marginalisation of parliamentary bodies from policy making in the sphere of external relations, with an emphasis on security, is therefore difficult to sustain.

- Second, today foreign and security policy occupy a much more central role in the public debate across different countries. Citizens feel strongly that the Union should make a difference in world affairs. Their concerns and expectations, as well as the legitimate debate between partisans of alternative approaches to international politics, should be adequately reflected in the political debate.

- Third, even decisions on the more circumscribed domains of security and defence carry wider implications for public spending, the regulation of armaments markets and trade, and R&D. These issues are of concern to a much wider community than security experts, and affect other relevant domestic and European policies.

- Fourth, and most important of all, the Union's stance in the world will define what the Union itself is. As has always been the case, a global player reflects its internal identity in its external action, and vice-versa. Foreign policy making nowadays is about much more than hard security decisions: it is essentially about who we are and what we want to be.

Pre-empting objections

- One can anticipate the first objection to this idea, namely that the CFSP is not about more procedures or further legalisation, but about political will, taking sensitive decisions under time pressure, and capabilities. The last element, although of great importance, does not belong to the dimension of the CFSP addressed here. Arguably, however, those concerned that ever-new procedures could take the focus away from the consolidation of capabilities, and eventually hold back operational progress, should simply invest more in the latter. Blaming those institutions and procedures in the absence of which a sensible dialogue among 25 would be almost impossible, is of little use to enhance capabilities.

- As to the mantra whereby political will is required to take a common stance and common actions, the truth is quite simple: there is very little of such will on offer. Hence the choice is either to lie back and wait for more inspired leaders, while the global security environment deteriorates, or to try and maximise the output of the institutional framework that we have. By encouraging wide public debate, fresh political blood will be injected into the existing institutional system.

- Furthermore, critics might well maintain that for all the institutions and procedures which exist, the CFSP is a matter for top executive decision. Nobody can put national leaders against the wall and instruct them on how to act on the global stage. This is correct: stark confrontation would not lead very far. On the other hand, leaders do not act, or think, in a void. National leaders and their top advisors are unlikely to firmly and systematically reject any argument brought to their attention, even less so when pressure is brought to bear by other political players at the European and national level.

- The challenge is to help shape a political, institutional and intellectual environment that is more conducive to frank, open debate before strategic decisions are taken. Needless to say, this is not the ultimate solution to overcome the shortcomings of the CFSP. On the other hand, a political process channelled through institutions at the national and European level might unleash new dynamics by holding governments accountable for their action, or inaction. In particular, public exposure can play a healthy role in preventing governments from digging their feet too deeply into pre-determined positions. Finally, such a process would fit very well with the stronger powers of initiative and coordination entrusted with the FM, mandated to chair the Foreign Affairs Council and to make sure that his colleagues at the national level abide by Treaty provisions.

Assessing, not measuring

Measuring the success or failure of the EU's CFSP is unquestionably difficult, perhaps impossible if one takes a narrow approach to the process advocated here. In fact, even where precise indicators are available, measuring policy outcomes and drawing political implications for the future is controversial at best. The annual review of the Lisbon Strategy shows that benchmarking against detailed figures, regularly updated, does not necessarily lead to a constructive political debate. On the contrary, excessive analytical focus on a vast range of parameters often hides the lack of political direction.

In the CFSP domain, these problems are compounded by the absence of objective reference criteria. While the ESS makes great strides, it is fair to say that the international identity of the Union is 'work in progress'. Foreign and security policy cannot be constrained in a regulatory cage either: room for discretion and radical twists should to be left to cope with unpredictable developments. No general criterion applies: delicate decisions adopted under time pressure should be judged on their own specific terms. Gains and losses are often intangible: emphasis on influence as opposed to sheer power makes, for example, a precise evaluation of the EU performance highly questionable, and open to counterfactual reasoning.

The lack of a suitable basis to 'measure' the performance of the Union in the world does not rule out, however, that policy guidelines and main initiatives under the CFSP can be subject of legitimate political scrutiny and assessment.[1] There is no way to measure the impact of the EU on the stabilisation of the situation in Congo in the same way as one could measure the growth of GDP per capita. Arguably, however, a general political debate across the union on this and other issues can help appreciate whether the Union is delivering against commitments and expectations. The question is, then, what those commitments and priorities actually are. This is where the ESS, and the raft of programmes and actions adopted following the strategy, could make a difference.

As mentioned above, the ESS includes a limited range of objectives that can be easily singled out and are intuitively relevant for the public. Concrete instruments, common positions and common actions can be identified and divided in clusters, depending on the objective that they are aimed to fulfil. Work undertaken to implement the Strategy against WMD proliferation provides, for example, tangible evidence to sustain a political assessment. The same is true in the case of the successful mission *Artemis* in Bunia. The impact of EU initiatives to help define principles guiding humanitarian intervention at the global level also provides grounds for political appreciation and debate. Arguing whether or not this or that measure

can be the subject of a sensible evaluation misses the point. This is not about an in-depth experts' evaluation of specific segments of a policy. It is about using a major policy statement, and its by-products, to encourage political debate on the CFSP and show what the Union is doing well and where it is falling short of expectations. A small, inter-institutional joint task force should be set up to conduct this evaluation, filter the complex web of activities under the CFSP and distil the priorities and initiatives to be brought to the attention of the public in a consolidated report.

Four conditions for success

- National legislatures and the European Parliament have to join forces and overcome the mutual suspicions of the past. Together, they will be taken seriously by national executives, both in individual countries and at the Council level. Separated, they stand a much smaller chance of playing a significant role in scrutinising foreign policy making. The Assembly of the WEU, now Interparliamentary European Security and Defence Assembly, has played an important role in bringing national legislators together. This outfit, however, is inadequate to perform the role described here for four main reasons. First, it does not include members of the EP. Second, it includes parliamentarians from countries which are not EU members. Third, it is focussed on ESDP and not on the wider foreign policy dimension. Fourth, it is detached both from the rest of the EU institutional machinery, and from the public eye. What is needed is for the EP and national parliaments to move in sync, publicly, and to submit powerful recommendations including a strong political mandate to the European Council and the Commission.

- Practitioners, external experts and key observers should mobilise so as to maximise the contribution that an informed public debate can bring to policy-making. The experience of the three seminars held in the course of the elaboration of the ESS is a relevant example of fertile interaction, and should become a model for the future. A possibility would be to delegate one or more think tanks to set up a major brainstorming exercise including the representatives of the foreign and security affairs community from Member States. Participants should produce a result-oriented assessment of the state of play under CFSP and feed that into the work carried out by the task force mandated with delivering the final report to national parliaments and to the European Parliament. Experts could also be called to provide evidence to parliamentary bodies in special public sessions organised in the context of the biannual review of the ESS.

- The units attached to Javier Solana, as well as the other Council services, should accept full cooperation with Commission officials in paving the way for the ESS implementation, and vice versa. In the domain of foreign and security policy, differences between the 'supranational' institutional architecture and 'intergovernmental' bodies are fading away. National officials are seconded to the Commission and bring important know how in those policy areas traditionally outside the remit of the community framework, such as anti-proliferation and anti-terrorism. The growing range of units attached to Javier Solana is charged not only with facilitating negotiations among governments, like traditional Council committees, but with policy elaboration and a sort of informal initiative. Under the CFSP, the tasks of the Commission and of these new bodies do not seem essentially different. This is the reason why, in the medium term, the distinction between the Commission and the Council services is likely to be overcome by setting up a joint EEAS. This process could be to some extent anticipated by establishing a joint task force, under the authority of the HR, mandated with reviewing the progress in implementing the ESS on a biannual basis and preparing a result-driven report for parliaments.

- The European Council must take charge of ensuring the implementation of the ESS. No other body in the Union carries the same political weight. According to both insiders and external experts, however, the European Council seems to have lost its grip on the agenda. Quarterly meetings of a day and a half are grossly insufficient to master the important dossiers needing careful assessment and prompt decision. This is particularly sensitive in the sphere of the CFSP, where strong policy input can only come from the top executive branch of the EU framework. Against this backdrop, the envisaged EU Foreign Minister should play a delicate balancing role. The Minister is supposed to perform essentially a role of initiative and coordination, as well as implementation of Council's decisions. This could amount to an impossible task in front of 'irresponsible' governments, reluctant to engage in joint policy-making. The development of a public debate on EU foreign policy and the production of key policy recommendations by elected assemblies could conceivably help the Foreign Minister to hold governments accountable and remind them their Treaty obligations. The European Council should also dedicate a 'thematic' session to the CFSP matters every two years, along the lines of the spring summit on Lisbon.

A schedule

Summing up, the process of political scrutiny of the implementation of the ESS could be held every two years and could include the following steps:

- **June:** the joint inter-institutional task force produces a result-oriented assessment of the state of play under the CFSP. The report is sent to national parliaments and to the European Parliament.

- **September - October:** the foreign affairs committees in each national parliament and in the European Parliament carry out an in-depth analysis of the report and call experts and top officials to give evidence. Hearings at the ministerial level may also be envisaged.

- **November:** with a view to the European Council in December, all national assemblies should submit a resolution with policy recommendations to respective governments. The European Parliament should be in charge of submitting a consolidated resolution to the European Council and to the Commission, with essential political recommendations.

- **December:** half of this session of the European Council should be specifically dedicated to the CFSP. National leaders, whose meeting will be duly prepared by the Foreign Affairs Council and the HR/FM in close cooperation with the Commission, should hold a real debate on CFSP priorities, and respond to the recommendations coming from all legislative bodies in the Union. Part of the summit conclusions should be specifically dedicated to the implementation of the ESS, and the Foreign Affairs Council and the Commission should be mandated with the follow-up including specific action.

Annex

The European Security Strategy

The framework of a result-driven assessment[2]

ESS Objectives	Main Policy Initiatives	Outcome Assessment
Addressing the threats		
Countering terrorism		
Non-proliferation		
Conflict prevention		
Peacekeeping operations		
Building security in the neighbourhood		
Stability in the Balkans		
Southern Caucasus		
A two state solution to the Arab-Israel conflict		
Engaging Mediterranean partners		
Effective Multilateralism		
Upholding and developing international law		
Strengthening the UN		
Supporting regional organisations		
Supporting other international organisations		
Confidence building and arms control regimes		
Spreading good governance, supporting reform		

[1] For a convincing attempt at carrying out a result-driven assessment of EU performance in international affairs over the 1990s, see Roy H. Ginsberg, 'The European Union in International Politics', Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, 2001.

[2] Headings under the left column loosely reflect the key objectives outlined by the ESS. Alternative lists, including additional details, could be proposed within the spirit of the strategy.

Ideas do not necessarily reflect the views of individual members of Ideas Factory Europe (IF) and do not commit any of them. All members of IF share the common goal of producing fresh *Ideas* to push the confines of current thinking on the future of European integration further, and thus help to enrich and enliven the debate. Every contribution is agreed in a spirit of open and creative exchange.

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