

idn E-Briefing Papers

Strategic Compass - The Way Ahead

Report of the international conference organized at the
National Defence Institute (IDN) on 1 June 2021 under the framework of the Portuguese
Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Isabel Ferreira Nunes

idn Instituto
da Defesa Nacional

Os *E-briefing Papers* do Instituto da Defesa Nacional visam proporcionar o acompanhamento de temas e debates atuais nos planos da segurança internacional e das políticas de defesa nacional, incluindo resultados da investigação promovida pelo IDN, sobretudo na sua vertente aplicada e de apoio à decisão política, bem como contributos de outros analistas e investigadores associados do Instituto.

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Helena Carreiras

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Isabel Ferreira Nunes

Editor

Luís Cunha

Centro Editorial

António Baranita e Luísa Nunes

Propriedade, Edição e Design Gráfico

Instituto da Defesa Nacional

Calçada das Necessidades, 5, 1399-017 Lisboa, Portugal

Tel. + (351)211 544 700

Fax: + (351)211 548 245

Email: idn.publicacoes@defesa.pt

<http://www.idn.gov.pt>

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Introduction

The future political orientation of the European Union, in the framework of security and defense, claims for a more realistic approach to crisis management, to resilience, capacity building and renewed partnerships based on values and interests. The international context of geopolitical rivalry demands a resolute political will and the resources needed to better promote European coordination and external cooperation. International geopolitical competition confronts Europe with its own diversity, in terms of strategic and security culture and capabilities, for which the Strategic Compass is expected to be a groundbreaking initiative for European security and defense. A renewed commitment in crisis management has to be translated into military forces and civilian resources generation in the domain of security and defense sector reform, support for the consolidation of rule of law and public order, gender equality, as well as training and capacity building in the inland, in coastal areas and on the high seas, notably in support of the recently launched concept of Coordinated Maritime Presences. Preventing and mitigating crises will create better security conditions, thus enhancing the resilience of states and societies.

In the face of non-traditional threats, European resilience to new and complex emergencies is currently a lasting theme in the international security agenda. This challenge has been aggravated by other contingencies, that often occur beyond the security and defense realm, such as the worldwide spread of COVID-19, the effects of hyper urbanization, international organized crime, irregular migrations or climate change, with consequences over the security and prosperity of states and communities. In the context of cyber resilience and hybrid threats, including disinformation, the protection of European institutions and Member States calls for a more comprehensive action by the intelligence, military, civilian, industry and entrepreneurial communities.

In order to meet current security challenges, the European Union needs a political narrative backed by better resources. Such efforts cannot be achieved without capabilities. The European Union's defence initiatives will constitute an opportunity to forge a solid industrial and technological base, contributing to the development of the capabilities needed to ensure peace and stability, in Europe and in the neighbourhood. The full implementation of the European Defence Fund (EDF) and the development of a fourth wave of PESCO projects may result in three positive consequences. First, it will foster European research and innovation in the domain of defence. Second, it will contribute to

the development of national collective skills and knowledge. Third, the European Defence Fund and PESCO, will provide the incentive for an inclusive participation of public and private sectors of participant Member States.

Last, in the framework of the multilateral relationships with strategic partners, the EU benefits from a long-lasting cooperative relation with the United Nations, NATO and the African Union. Cooperation and policy articulation with these organizations should be strengthened, where the European mandate is limited and complemented by the Union, where it has specific competences, namely those that will arise from the Civil Compact to be operationalized in 2023.

On the 1st of June, the National Defence Institute organized a high-level conference under the framework of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. This event was held under Chatham House. The conference addressed and discuss the most recent developments leading to the Strategic Dialogue phase of the Strategic Compass. The seven guest speakers examined ways of fostering the EU's capacity to act as a security provider through the discussion of the four clusters envisaged by the Compass: crisis management, resilience, capability development and partnerships and how they will add tangibility to European Union security and defence toolkit, in support of EU Level of Ambition in security and defence. This report outlines the main conclusions of the conference.

The outlook of PPUE2021 over the Strategic Compass

In the context of the Portuguese Presidency three areas were identified where European consensus is broad and three others where further improvement is still needed.

There is a broad consensus on three key areas. First, in a context of multiple crisis in the neighbourhood, of growing geostrategic competition and major technological disruptive developments, consensus on timing to achieve a final document by March 2022 is crucial to retain the document's relevance.

Second, relates to the acknowledgment that defense is essential to deal with the effects of pandemics, complex emergencies and security crisis and to ensure access to global commons in space, cyber space and maritime space.

Third, guarantee access to joint capabilities notably strategic enablers, thus allowing the EU the status of global leader. There is a need to invest in the ability to mitigate the effects of disruptive technologies, increase interoperability among allies and create innovation hubs on automated capabilities, maritime security capabilities and artificial intelligence.

The European Union tool kit is unique and diverse, but it requires a robust military dimension to be complete. The European Peace Facility (EPF) can and should provide better aid packages to equip those trained in the context of CSDP training missions and mitigate the manipulation of fragilities in crises.

The other three key areas still need further clarification and agreement. First, there are still limitations regarding the fulfillment of the EU Level of ambition with respect to force generation and the planning and conduct of CSDP missions and operations. Force generation has been a challenge, in particular due to the lack of sufficient strategic enablers. It is necessary to better staff Military Planning Conduct Capability (MPCC) enhancing planning for crisis, improve force generation and promote a closer dialogue between the MPCC and the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE).

Second, to level the implications of European strategic autonomy so it will not affect the relations with NATO and US. This concern is particularly relevant considering the EU and NATO face the same challenges and threats, share common allies and have a single set of forces.

Third, on strategic specialization some degree of specialization is already taking place, as in the case of Portugal on maritime security, but that choice should be of voluntary nature and not an imposition.

Crisis Management

Effective crisis management depends on the political will of Member States, a clear threat assessment and the existence of military and civilian means to address them.

A common approach to crisis management needs to take into account different perceptions of threat, based on a wider scope of vulnerabilities that may affect Member States. This may be one of the greatest challenges the Strategic Compass will have to overcome. It will have to reflect some degree of strategic unity, without loss of inclusive focus, substance and practical utility.

The Strategic Compass will offer an opportunity to appraise where the European Union stands today, after various defense initiatives such as CARD, PESCO and EDF were set in motion, prompting some degree of European cooperation.

Stronger defense cooperation implies adaptation of Member States strategic cultures, an assessment of Europe's defense needs and an improvement of European awareness on strategic culture, among Member States. The development of such culture is essential to strengthen the ability to protect and to affirm Europe as a security provider. This cultural awareness about risks requires the inclusion of the public, societal and private sectors of societies into the debate on European defense. This is crucial to mobilize collective efforts, mitigate unconventional conflicts and crisis, and address this new constellation of threats and risks.

Managing crisis, in a world full of man-made or non-man challenges, requires a global perspective, beyond our immediate neighbourhood, the so called "security belt", but also a narrow approach considering the growing probability of threats moving beyond a defined geography, namely on cyber space or outer space.

It also means to engage actors outside the defense community of Ministries of Defense, such as Finance or Economy a needed change to build on the resources necessary to defense.

A different collaborative culture is also on demand. EU complex decision-making system should work faster, without losing the opportunity to address crises and influence the course of international events.

From the operational point of view, CSDP faces greater challenges in the face of a EU that wants to act globally. Robustness of mandates for CSDP missions and operations requires a more flexible approach and full integration of Member States that have different perspectives of security and defense, for instance under Article 44. With respect to crisis and conflict prevention, Europe needs to be present to protect common spaces: cyber, space, and sea. The control of maritime spaces has to translate into a wider presence at sea, namely on the Gulf of Guinea on the fight against piracy and organized crime. The newly agreed concept of Coordinated Maritime Presences will help ensure this goal, protecting values, principles, and countering of spaces denial. The control of the maritime domain should be reinforced by legislative measures that signal presence and protection.

With respect to the capabilities needed for armed, security forces and civilian actors to conduct CSDP missions and operations, there is a need for a common strategic culture along with a culture of professionalization and career management in support of European security and defense.

In terms of robust forces to be deployed in case of emergency, the EU should better use the Battle Groups, overcoming limited political will and the financial obstacles surrounding them.

The existing command and control structures do not correspond to the current level of ambition set by the EU, which requires better decision-making structures, more human resources and a proper methodology of secondments to overcome this problem.

Successful crises management also depends on the enhanced resilience of others in cooperation with UN and NATO. In this cooperative context the use of the European Peace Facility may contribute to stability and improve the ability to cooperate.

There is a need for an inclusive European industrial and technological base that could help harmonize equipments and defense-related products under an approach of “single set of equipments”. Europe needs to be at the forefront of technologies based on a solid innovation programme, which will also contribute to the resilience of European states.

Resilience

Resilience regards the ability of states and societies to reform and recover from internal and external crises. In the EU case, resilience has a broader meaning pertaining to protecting critical infrastructures, disinformation, mitigation of hybrid threats, and access to global commons. Due to its broadness how best to frame the concept of resilience, in order to better define the EU areas of intervention? How to identify coherence between different policy areas, enhance effectiveness and ensure that initiatives in one policy area, do not undermine other policy areas? It will be also important to identify whose resilience we are talking about.

On the identification of whose resilience, the panel focused on the EU resilience and the resilience of the neighbourhood. As stated on the EU Global Strategy, the resilience EU and its citizens lays beyond the EU geography and the divide between internal and external dimension of European security. Structural changes in resilience are important due to technological developments and the

current context of geopolitical competition affected or affecting health, climate change and the protection of critical infrastructure.

Resilience does not necessarily rest on cutting flows and interrelations between EU and the outside world on trade and economic relations. Resilience is also about how the EU manages existent interdependences.

With the pandemic, health became a focus, but it is unclear how defense relates to it. The European Council conclusions refer to the civil-military coordination for disaster relief and humanitarian assistance and it frames what role civilian and military could take on the delivery of medical equipment and assistance, but also on climate resilience.

This basket is perhaps one the baskets where the European Commission has a wider role, whether through exclusive or shared competences with the Member States. The European Commission has supported the development of a “Cyber Security Strategy”, helping to recover from malicious activity through cooperation among Member States and it has adopted an “Action Plan on Synergies between Space and Defense, Cyber Defense Research, Innovation and capabilities” and an upcoming review of the “Cyber Defense Policy Framework”. These initiatives should be supplemented by full use by Member States of PESCO and EDF with respect to cyber domain.

The implementation of the EU space programme is another domain of participation of the European Commission with its contribution to security and defense policy with the Galileo program “Egnos” and the Copernicus with the “Earth Observation Data” space situation awareness and gov.satellite.com programmes. In this context, it is important to count with the commitment of the Member States, stable financing, and the contributions from the Union budget in support of the space sector on security and environmental monitoring, security communication, and positional navigation.

Resilience intelligence pertains to the ability to adapt, absorb and prevent threats. In the face of a fragmented intelligence among Member States, the SC threat analysis with a single point of contact and analysis is a significant advancement. Resilience indicators could also be a good measure to identify needs and evaluate progress applied to security and defense, providing an actional measure to European strategic foresight.

There have been developments on EU-NATO cooperation with the “Structured EU-NATO Dialogue on Resilience” based on contacts between EU and NATO International Staffs, with concrete results on disinformation, cyber and hybrid threats, military mobility and exercises. On the resilience dimension of climate and defense, progress has been attained in the field of energy efficiency, innovative technological solutions and reduction of carbon footprint of CSDP missions and operations. The European Council requested a “Roadmap on Key technologies to security and defense” from the European Commission to address vulnerabilities hoping to reduce dependence on critical technologies and boost technological innovation targets to be delivered at the European Council, in October 2021.

Different crisis mechanisms available for the management of natural and man-made crises, besides Article 42.7 Mutual Assistance and Article 222 Solidarity Clause, comprehend the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and the Emergency Coordination Centre without the activation of Article 222, a provision difficult to use due to Member States conditionalities to its activation.

Resilience is also about protection and access to global commons, maritime security, cyber, space and air domains and to lines of communication, to which the Coordinated Maritime Presences pilot concept, with a military and civilian component of security, will contribute to protect. The global common space and maritime domains are complex and highly congested, thus prone to hybrid threats. In this context, critical infrastructure protection becomes essential, with reference to undersea cables, essential to European digital economy, to offshore platforms and pipelines, which can be targeted and infiltrated by third states.

Finally, strategic communication should be a core feature of the Compass. Europe will only be strong if citizens support organizations.

Capacity Building

Capacity building is central to strategic autonomy and a main drive for the European Defence Fund (EDF) and PESCO in helping to overcome capability gaps and align European and NATO defense planning closer.

Capability development and crisis management will help mitigate fragility and increase stability in Europe’s security belt in Sahel, Africa, Asia, and the Indo Pacific region.

There is a requirement for a balance between crisis management, level of ambition, capacities, advance planning and command and control structures. Additionally, an adequate level of shared information, secured lines of communication and effective means of mobility in partnership with other organizations are needed to ensure strategic autonomy, while acknowledging the single set of forces principle.

The SC should address how to ensure the necessary availability, deployability and interoperability of the capabilities declared to the European Union to fulfil the EU Level of Ambition. It was acknowledged that force readiness depends on logistic infrastructure, support to deployments, transportation helicopters, development of aerial and maritime means, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities to support a first entry force.

European research and technologies need to address the six focus areas, as foreseen by the European Defense Agency and to ensure defense related production and sustainability. Capabilities must be met by effective capacity to decide in an information environment where disruptive actors disrespect law with a negative impact on efficient decision-making.

Current European defense relies between defense cooperation and shared security from the three possible defense scenarios. However, it is still far from a common and fully integrated approach.

Capability development must result from a joint effort at a national and collaborative level among Member States and EU institutions. The SC should provide the political and strategic guidance regarding capability planning to meet external crises. The military dimension of crisis management is essential to identify the number, time, and type of missions and operations envisaged, while the resilience basket requires capabilities to meet external and internal challenges.

The capabilities basket should prioritize how to plan, to develop and to procure capabilities able to fulfill the EU Level of Ambition and Coordinated Annual Review on Defense (CARD). The SC should connect capabilities to threats, enhancing coherence and balance between contributions and standardize capability development tools.

The High Impact Capability Goals (HICG) should also streamline the connection between Capability Development Plan, EDF, PESCO and national capability development plans in order to produce a full spectrum force package. Coherence and substantial integration between the Headline Goal and the Capability Development Plan must be preserved. EDA and the European Commission must take into

consideration the HICG in the way the European industrial and technological base is being developed.

SC should streamline the full capabilities force package of the EU to fulfill the EU Military Level of Ambition and promote EU-NATO dialogue in addressing strategic capabilities shortfalls, focus on complementarity, promoting synergies and avoiding duplication by respecting the principle of a single set of forces.

EU missions are an essential foreign policy instrument in support of stabilization of international crises. Member States are particularly fitted to work on the so called “evolving challenges” from organized crime, to cyber, hybrid, radicalization and terrorism and to connect the internal-external security link in Europe and beyond. However, cooperation between the civilian and military EU structures allow a more structured, efficient and integrated approach to security.

Implementing the Civilian Compact and the Civilian Capabilities Development points to the need to improve secondments, especially regarding law enforcement, prosecutors, justice and home affairs, and correction probation. The policy experts networks need to be revitalized and the mini concept analyzed to provide better ideas for lines of operation and improve the civilian planning process.

Updated training curriculum and predeployment training are necessary to the conduct of CSDP missions. The Mission Module Structure was revised to improve the Force Generation Handbook on job descriptions and better define requirements and profiles of civilian staff to assignments. The core of civilian capability development must develop around standardized mission structures and job descriptions.

Closer cooperation between internal security and CSDP actors is essential to successfully implementing the EU Global Strategy.

The SC needs to integrate the civilian aspects of internal security actors, ministries and agencies in relevant Council working groups dealing with such matters, because resilience needs this close interaction.

Partnerships

Partnerships are an important part of the EU role as a global leader and security provider. It is essential to assess what strategic partnerships mean in practice, in material terms concerning

resource allocation, duplication, complementarity, but also in design and trust entailing partnerships with countries and organizations. European security architecture is a process and the SC will offer guidelines for the EU strategic autonomy.

The Partnerships basket leads to the question who are our partners, with whom do we want to dialogue and how to articulate partnerships with other baskets? Partnerships have been developed with international organizations and bilaterally with third states. Working with partners is essential, if the EU is to assess threats in the threats analysis. The EU needs to be more strategic, more tailored and more adaptable on what regards partnerships in the context of defence.

Enhanced modalities for the participation of third states on CSDP operations, include informal meetings with partners, increased participation in training activities, and timely share of information with partners.

What do we mean by partners and cooperation in the overarching partnership architecture?

First, partnerships with international organizations, namely NATO, need concrete steps to improve cooperation on military mobility, maritime security, crisis management and look at the challenges pose by hybrid, cyber threats and emergent disruptive technologies. There is space for improvement on new policy areas like climate change, space, communication and information sharing between NATO and EU.

In the political and strategic field of cooperation with the United Nations, from the 17 CSDP missions and operations, 13 are undertaken in cooperation with the UN. New opportunities for cooperation on crisis management and peace operations may offer new security and defence challenges about climate change, hybrid threats and new technologies. The SC should also be used to reflect on better cooperation with OSCE, Africa and Asia.

Second, in terms of the EU partnerships with Canada, US and Norway, the dialogue is close and well developed, helping to reinforce the transatlantic link and the EU defense initiatives, such as the military PESCO projects. A tailored approach to the UK is envisaged as well as with a variety of countries in Eastern Europe, which have contributed significantly to CSDP missions and operations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Third, the SC has a key role in mapping which kind of partnership we wish to have in the future and which cooperation activities can be made attractive in maritime security, counter terrorism, and

mitigation of hybrid and cyber threats. Dialogues on issues of common interest should be guided by concrete results. The implementation of the European Peace Facility to develop capacities is an important element in the EU toolbox to help our partner countries.

Fourth, a new partnership architecture offering an overarching and flexible construction is needed to guide EU partners on security and defence for instance, by promoting regular security and defence partnership conferences among decision-makers.

In the end, the SC partnership basket will answer who, for whom and with what the EU wants to develop partnerships in the near future.

Main takeaways

- Enhance European awareness on strategic culture, among Member States to strengthen the ability to protect and to affirm Europe as a security provider.
- Level robustness of CSDP mandates with a flexible approach and full integration of Member States, that have different perspectives on security and defense.
- A more resilient Europe needs to ensure the commitment of the Member States, stable financing, and contributions from the Union budget in support of the space sector on security and environmental monitoring, security communication, and positional navigation.
- Strategic communication should be a core feature of the Compass.
- There is a need to balance crisis management, level of ambition, capacities, planning and command and control structures, ensuring that strategic autonomy preserves the single set of forces principle.
- Capabilities must be met by effective capacity to decide in an information environment prone to disinformation and hostile propaganda.
- The capabilities basket should prioritize how to plan, to develop and to procure capabilities in order to fulfill the EU Level of Ambition.
- A common strategic culture should be strengthened by a culture of professionalization and career management, in support of European security and defense.
- Civilian capability development must develop around standardized mission structures and job descriptions.

- The EU needs to be more strategic, more tailored and more adaptable to partnerships in the context of defence.
- SC should map which kind of future partnership we wish to have, and which cooperation activities can be made attractive in maritime security, counter terrorism, and mitigation of hybrid and cyber threats.

Recommended readings

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International Conference “Strategic Compass – The Way Ahead”

National Defence Institute, 1 June 2021 09:00-17:35 (Lisbon time)

The purpose of this seminar is to examine ways of fostering the EU’s capacity to act as a security provider, as foreseen in the Strategic Compass (SC) initiative. The seminar will address the four clusters envisaged on the Compass: crisis management, resilience, capabilities and partnerships and it will discuss how each of these clusters will enable better tangibility of the security and defence toolkit in support of crisis management, how it will improve Member States’ solidarity and common responsibility and how it will encourage joint development of capabilities able to meet a desired EU Level of Ambition and needed strategic autonomy in Security and Defence.

09:00 - Welcome Remarks

Helena Carreiras, Director National Defence Institute

João Gomes Cravinho, Portuguese Defence Minister

09:30 – 11:00 Crisis Management

José Costa Pereira, Permanent Representative to the Political and Security Committee, Portugal

Claire Raulin, Permanent Representative to the Political and Security Committee, France

Chair: Isabel Ferreira Nunes, Director Research Centre, National Defence Institute

11:05 – 12:35 Building Resilience

Diego de Ojeda, Representative to the Political and Security Committee, European Commission

Daniel Fiott, Security and Defence Editor, EU Institute Security Studies

Chair: Raquel Freitas, Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology, University Institute of Lisbon

14:30 – 16:00 Capacity Building

Claudio Graziano, Chairman of the European Union Military Committee, EEAS

Georgios Bikakis, Director of Concepts and Capabilities Branch, European Union Military Staff, EEAS

Birgit Loeser, Deputy Civilian Operations Commander, Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability, EEAS

Chair: Luis Valença Pinto, Former Portuguese Chief of Defence

16:05 – 17:35 Partnerships

Pawel Herczynski, Managing Director for CSDP and Crisis Response, EEAS

Chair: Maria Raquel Freire, Centre for Social Studies, Faculty of Economics, University of Coimbra

Closing Remarks: Isabel Ferreira Nunes, Director Research Centre, National Defence Institute