

**Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Security and Defence.**

Public Hearing

**The European Security Strategy and the Future of the European Security and
Defence Policy.**

Thursday, 13 July 2006

Title of section: How can we improve the ESDP?

Speaker: Claude-France ARNOULD, Director of Defence Aspects in the European Council, substitute for Mr Robert Cooper.

SUMMARY

Mrs Arnould emphasised the need for the EU to have both military and civilian power that is the ability to deploy police and judges, when 'rule of law missions' are envisaged, and to join them with other military resources, when required. In her view, the resources have to be adequate for the kind of operations that the EU plans to conduct. This implied that there was a need for interoperability - to ensure that forces can work together with others, NATO or other groups -, along with the need for rapid reaction, i.e. the ability to react quickly using a small force. Other shortcomings, which were well-known, included strategic lift, transport aircraft, information, intelligence etc.

She underlined that there was often a gap between the forces promised by Member States and those made available. She explained this gap by identifying two key issues: the budgetary issue and the question of unanimity.

Budgetary Issues

She argued that the EU needed a defence budget because there was a problem with the cost of operations. She explained this problem with an example: a state might decide to undertake an ESDP operation and to make available men and equipment for it. When a state does so, it also bears most of the financial costs. In other words, the cost of operations is not evenly spread among Member States. She maintained that in the future this might have an impact on the ability of Member States to become involved in ESDP. She said: "If Member States invest a lot in an operation, then they have less resources available to invest in defence budgets the following years".

Question of unanimity

She doubted whether the EU would have sufficient commitment from Member States to make available resources to carry out missions. She said: "We need the willingness of Member States to make available the military, police, judges or whatever resources needed. This cannot be taken for granted. There is no awareness that the operations are necessary."

Mr Arnould was concerned about the training for the battlegroups. She explained that it had been decided that the EU could not train battlegroups at a European level and that this would remain a responsibility of Member States. From her perspective, this has created challenges because the battlegroups have to be multinational and interoperable. She pleaded for the need to train battlegroups at the European level because it was at that level that they were going to be deployed in the near future. She was also concerned about the approach adopted by the EU to foster civil-military cooperation. She argued that "the training is done on paper, not on the field.... we have reached the limits of that kind of paper exercise".

She reminded the audience that at Hampton Court in November 2005, Javier Solana, the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, had argued that the EU needed a very solid planning and Operation Centre for civil and civil-military operations. She claimed that, as the ongoing civil and military operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo demonstrate, the EU needs a minimum planning capacity in Brussels so that the Member States that have been asked to lead the mission and to make available their headquarters have a clear view, before they take on the operation, and are confident, that a certain amount of planning would be done in Brussels. She dismissed criticisms expressed in the media that the planning undertaken in Brussels was amateurish.

She criticised the approach adopted towards the establishment of the European Defence College for failing to create the basis for the growth of a corporate EU culture. In addition she argued that another limitation of the ESDP, which needed to be addressed, was the fact that the resources for the ESDP can at present only be used outside of the EU. From her perspective, this has hampered the EU's ability to react to national catastrophes. She asked: "Would it be possible to use the military capacity developed under the ESDP if an earthquake happens in Nice rather than Rabat?...Why can we operate in Morocco, Rabat, if an earthquake takes place there, but not if an earthquake strikes Nice?"

In her conclusion she stressed that the ESDP should not be understood as something which needs to be proven or justified. Nor does it exist to extend the reach of the EU. The EU has already four military operations and ten civilian operations going on in very sensitive geographical areas. She described the ESDP as one of the ways in which the armed forces are available at the national level. She said: "The ESDP is there to achieve a national objective as being defined clearly in political terms to respond to real foreign affairs problem or security problem." For this, there was a need to make community and national resources available for the ESDP and make them coherent with one another.