

Ten Years of European Security and Defence Policy

Javier Solana

The year 2009 is a landmark year for the European Security and Defence Policy. As we celebrate the first decade of EU crisis management under the ESDP, this is a good moment to take stock of our achievements and to assess our aims and ambitions for the coming decade. We can be justly proud of our success. Who could have foreseen, in 1999, that in the course of the next ten years we would deploy 23 civilian and military operations, spanning three continents? Since the Franco-British Summit at St Malo and the Cologne and Helsinki European Councils, when the ESDP was born, the development of our crisis-management capacity has made the EU a global provider of security.

ESDP is Reality

Ten years ago, ESDP was an aspiration; now it is a reality on the ground, with crisis-management operations making a real difference to people's lives across the world. We have demonstrated repeatedly that we can respond rapidly to a crisis and operate in the most inhospitable of terrains. Through the ESDP, the European Union is making an effective contribution to international peace and security. Until a decade ago, EU foreign policy consisted of making declarations. Since then, we have been steadily building up our capacity to take action in crisis zones in order to help people. This year, we have 12 operations running concurrently – more than ever before. All over the world, from Kabul to Pristina, from Ramallah to Kinshasa, we have men and women from EU Member States, wearing the familiar EU badge of stars, working together to monitor borders, oversee a peace agreement, train police forces, build up criminal justice systems and protect shipping from pirate attacks.

We were ahead of our time in 1999. The comprehensive, multi-faceted nature of our approach was novel. And the EU is still the only organization that can call on a whole range of stabilization instruments, both to preempt or prevent a crisis and to restore peace

and rebuild institutions after a conflict. This is where our added value lies – in our unique ability to bring to bear the whole panoply of instruments and resources that are available to us and that complement the traditional foreign policy tools of Member States. We can combine support for institution-building and good governance in developing countries, and humanitarian aid with crisis-management capacities and technical and financial assistance, as well as the more specifically diplomatic tools, such as political dialogue and mediation.

We first cut our teeth in the Balkans. We learned from the hard school of failure during the Balkans crisis in the 1990s. We saw, when the Balkans descended into violence, that we did not have the instruments to react. We realised that we had to have the means to respond to such crises. The handling of our periphery is essential for our credibility in international politics. We have to be able to stabilise our own neighbourhood. In 2003 we intervened with a military operation (Operation Concordia/fyrom) to prevent war in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

develop their capacities and it has staff working in the police and judicial system and in mobile customs teams. From 2005 to 2006, in Aceh, Indonesia, we worked closely with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in monitoring the peace agreement between the rebels and the government reached after the 2004 tsunami. Not only was this operation a great success in helping to restore peace after decades of civil war but it drew us closer to the countries of South East Asia and provided an excellent model for future cooperation with other regional organisations.

Of the 23 crisis-management operations conducted since 2003, six have been military operations. The other 17 have been civilian, deploying police, judges, border guards, customs officials and other experts from the EU Member States and also from third countries that take part in operations under the EU flag, such as Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine, Croatia, Turkey and even the United States.

Our purpose is to promote peace and security world wide; the *raison d'être* of our operations is crisis management; our hallmark is our



Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the CFSP (right) and Jerzy Buzek, the new President of the EU Parliament.

Pictures: EU

Lessons Learned

Today, we are still heavily engaged in the Balkans. EULEX Kosovo, launched in early 2008, is the largest civilian ESDP mission to date. It is a rule-of-law mission, with the central aim of supporting the Kosovo authorities

holistic approach and our key attribute is our flexibility. We seek to offer tailor-made solutions to complex problems. Today's conflicts demonstrate more clearly than ever that a military solution is neither the sole option, nor the best option, particularly during the stabilization of a crisis – a truth which President Obama and his administration have also emphasised.



Polish Soldiers (left) of the EUFOR-Mission talking with Representatives of the Tschad.

political community based on democracy, freedom and the rule of law and these are the values that underpin our action abroad. Our missions are motivated by concern for the common good, whether we are trying to improve the situation for victims of sexual violence in Congo, helping the Palestinians build the structures of their future state or training police in Afghanistan.

With our military operation EUFOR RD Congo, we supported the UN in helping provide a secure environment for elections in Congo in 2006. The following year, we sent EUFOR Tchad/CAR to protect refugees, displaced persons and humanitarian aid workers from the fall-out of the Darfur crisis and the resulting regional instability, again in support of the UN.

In 2008, we showed how quickly we could mobilise when we dispatched over 200 unarmed monitors to Georgia within two weeks, after the war between Russia and Georgia. And at the end of 2008, we launched our first-ever naval operation, EUNAVFOR Somalia, to tackle piracy. Who would have

We offer a combination of military and civilian resources, used separately or jointly, as appropriate. We act autonomously, or in partnership with others. And our action is not re-

stricted to our backyard. Whilst it is clearly in our own security interests to promote stability in our neighbourhood, the EU is a global player with responsibilities to match. We are a

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Javier Solana and the EU Special Representative Ettore Sequi together with Members of the EU Police Mission.

guessed ten years ago that the EU would one day be responsible for thirteen frigates in the Indian Ocean? Here, we have reduced the success rate of pirates by half. And we have protected almost every ship that has followed our directions.

We are now looking at further ESDP actions on land to help Somalia develop into a stable, functioning state that can offer a future for its people. Somalia is a good example of the EU's holistic approach. We are now considering possible security-sector reform measures to complement EUNAVFOR and the humanitarian and political support that we are already giving Somalia. We are working in close partnership with the UN, the African Union and the US to help consolidate the legitimate security institutions of the country.

We Have to be Bold

The situation in Somalia and off its shores is a prime example of the complex challenges in today's security environment that we are tackling through the ESDP. Rising to these challenges means taking increasing risks. We have to be bold and we have to be ready to respond to the growing demands that will be made of us to play our part in the global security environment. Though we have come a long way in ten years we cannot be complacent.

The world in the coming decade will be in a constant state of flux. More than ever, we will have to be adaptable and we will have to develop a more sophisticated understanding of complex situations with sharper political analysis, a clearer set of priorities and more sensible budgeting decisions. The European Union can only be effective if it combines all its instruments intelligently. The key to the future success of ESDP missions is to continue to develop a culture of planning and conducting combined civilian and military operations together. All this is entirely within our reach. All we need is the political will

Our ESDP actions must always remain firmly anchored in political strategies. The solution to any crisis, any emergency, any conflict, must always be political. It is this conviction that underpins our philosophy. And our strength resides in the consensual basis of ESDP. ESDP missions are not based on a single state's interests but on a collective and consensual ethos motivated by concern for the common good. This is where ESDP derives its moral and legal legitimacy.

At the moment, there is a gap between our ambitions and our capabilities which we have to address. We cannot achieve anything without the resources to do the job. We must have the personnel and the capabilities – both civilian and military – to back up our political decisions and we must be able to mobilize them as soon as they are required. The demand for

our engagement continues to outstrip supply. All this remains work in progress. That is why we need the continued investment from our Member States: with people, ideas, capabilities and financial resources. Striving for greater European defence integration and cooperation is part of this. Member States should continue to support the European Defence Agency (EDA) in its efforts to lead this process.

To meet the demands made of the EU and to realize our political ambitions, we must improve the efficiency and coherence of our external action still further. The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty will help by enabling us to make more rational use of the EU's instruments in the field of external relations. We also have to strengthen our civilian and military capabilities and increase their funding and we need to work on enhancing our flexibility, both in deploying rapid reaction forces and in developing a more sophisticated interaction with our partners.

To achieve this, we need above all to strengthen the solidarity between Member States so that the political and economic entity to which they belong can live up to both the European and the international expectations for Europe to be an even greater player on the world stage in the next ten years of ESDP. ■

By Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the CFSP.



Ships of the EU NAVFOR ATALANTA in Somalia.