

# Consolidation of the European Defence Policy

## Martin Ortega

Researcher

European Union Institute for Security Studies, Paris

The 2005 European panorama will be remembered for the blockade of the European Constitution in the French and Dutch Referendums; with regards to the Mediterranean, for Gaza's Israeli withdrawal, a decision led by Ariel Sharon; and in the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue, the Tenth Anniversary Conference in November will focus on these reports. In 2005 there wasn't much news on European security and defence. There was no major war or crisis, including in the Balkans, there was no spectacular operation, not even any disagreements like the disruption over in Iraq in 2003. That lack of news was a good sign in itself, because it allowed the quiet consolidation of numerous means of action to take place regarding the European Union defence. Slowly, and without kicking up a fuss, the Union placed itself in the centre of the European security scene, and this took place in spite of the constitutional setback.

The year started with President George W. Bush heading up the second term of office, who a little time after, made a historic trip to Europe, in which for the first time he made an official visit to the Brussels institutions. The atmosphere on both sides of the Atlantic was positive, since nobody wanted a repeat of the public disagreements from two years before. This new atmosphere favoured reinforced cooperation in a crucial operation led by NATO in Afghanistan, in which numerous European forces are working alongside the Americans. Equal-

ly, the institutional agreement between the EU and NATO made progress and the transatlantic agreement on the different Balkan files was impeccable. But the intention to rebuild the transatlantic relationship ran into specific questions with regards to different interpretations of some main principles, like for example, transferring prisoners through European airports, and once again problems in Iraq hindered an attempt to reach an adequate political agreement that would have permitted the involvement of all Europeans.

### Different Types of Operations

Meanwhile, in Brussels, they continued working to establish one of the most evident successes on European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in the European Union: military and civil operations for crisis management and peacekeeping. In 2005, the tendency to diversify these missions was confirmed. Given that the Union covers a very wide spectrum of duties and has at its disposal a wide range of means of actions, as already pointed out in Javier Solana's "European Security Strategy" in December 2003, it is logical that the Union carries out all different kinds of operations, which is very much appreciated by foreign spokesmen. Up to eleven operations of the European Union were in process during 2005, which can be classified in the following areas: (a) military, (b) police force, (c) security sector reform, (d) law, (e) financing, (f) observation and (g) border assistance.

The most important Military Operation was, of course, *Althea* in Bosnia-Herzegovina, with more than 6,000 military forces from member states of the Eu-

ropean Union and some foreign countries, Morocco and Turkey amongst some of them. This mission was carried out in cooperation with NATO. Two police operations also took place in the Balkans, Bosnia and in the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia. In both cases, the forces under European command had similar assignments to carry out: to help establish a local police force taking into consideration a criterion of quality, fairness and respectfulness to basic human rights, and to contribute to fighting against organized crime. A European police force was present in another different kind of setting: in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, to help carry out different tasks, including organizing the elections. Lastly, within this area of police assistance in states in reconstruction, a new opportunity opened up with the mission of collaborating with the Palestinian Authority police force in Gaza (the so-called EUPOL COPPS). This operation, which counted on the Quartet Members' consent and on the Israeli Government, set a very important precedent, since in the future the Middle East region will very much need similar support.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a new type of operation was initiated: the security and armed forces sector reform. By working together with the United Nation's operations in this country, the European mission promotes the modernization of the Congolese armed forces, with the aim of integrating different splinter groups. Another means of action are the "law and order" operations, or legal assistance operations, which were directed towards Georgia (Eujust Themis) and to Iraq (Eujust Lex), where more than 700 Iraqi civil servants were

trained as judges, public prosecutors and legal investigators. In Sudan the European Union financed the African Union's efforts to maintain peace. The EU also decided in 2005 to go to Asia for the first time with an observation mission in Aceh, Indonesia, after the political agreement between the concerned parties, which the ex-Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari had managed to achieve. In the end, both border assistance operations took place on the Rafah crossing, between Gaza and Egypt, and at the border between Moldova and the Ukraine. All of these operations took place following, and in close conjunction with United Nation's orders, and in agreement with local government's requests.

### **Establishment of Civil and Military Capacities**

The European Union continued its work in the following areas: Battlegroups and the acquisition of military and civil capacities necessary to carry out future operations. As we saw throughout 2005, the demand is growing, and this requires the reinforcement of capacities. On the horizon, a larger presence could be seen in Kosovo, the need to continue making progress in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the previous assistance to the Palestinian police, which can open the door to other operations in the Middle East region.

The military force's objectives for 2010 (Headline goal) are still being completed, and in 2005 the EU's Member States presented new offers of forces appointments. In November, a conference coordinating the battlegroups took place, which will be put into operation in Ja-

nuary 2007. The new European Defence Agency started its work in Brussels, with its main function of advising Member States on the provision of defence assets, common needs and the investigation and development of this matter. Civil capacities, especially police forces, were equally objected to a continuous study and to advances to reach the threshold in 2008. In turn, the countries that rely on police forces of the gendarmerie kind (Spain, France, Netherlands, Italy and Portugal) created Eurogenfor. The arrival of illegal immigrants on the southern coasts of Europe continued to be a problem throughout 2005, as the spectacular images showed of those native Africans from western Sahel jumping the walls of Ceuta and Melilla. Taking the Spanish initiative to deal with this problem, the EU prepared the establishment of integrated police and humanitarian Units.

### **Euro-Mediterranean Transparency**

It is very important that the Mediterranean partners of the EU are regularly informed of all of these developments, by means of the Barcelona Process and through multiple contacts. The EU civil and military authorities in Brussels are committed to presenting information on the ESDP to the Mediterranean partners. As a member of NATO, Turkey has a special relationship with the European Security and Defence Policy. Numerous seminars and meetings with those in charge of Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and the armed forces (like the meeting which takes place in Barcelona since 2002) took place during 2005, and the five-year Euro-Mediterranean working programme adopted in the Tenth

Anniversary Conference insists on the importance of this transparency. Furthermore, the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue on cooperation regarding civil protection to face natural catastrophes like tidal waves was continued. Other possible areas of cooperation that were also addressed within the framework of the Barcelona Process were for example, the removal of land mines, monitoring sea space, the fight against terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and the protection of the environment. Many point to the great potential of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the security sector reform and in the training.

To finish off, it is worth mentioning the successful initiative taken up by the Ministers of Defence of Group 5 + 5, launched in December 2004. During 2005, they continued to work within the framework of this initiative with meetings in Argel and in Paris.

To summarize, in 2005 European security continued to concentrate on well-known threats as the fight against terrorism, spread, illegal flux and organised crime, without detecting military threats of a different kind. This allowed the Europeans to be able to concentrate on civil and military crisis management in its neighbourhood and beyond. The European Union adopted a main role in Crisis Management, since both the institutional structures and the capacities created to jointly support the Union started to prove their effectiveness in numerous operations. The problem that was foreseen in 2005 and which projects to the future is whether or not there will be enough resources to face the increasing foreign demand and the crisis in which solution Europeans consider they should be involved.