

*The speakers:*

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From left to right: Mr Arnaud Danjean, Mr Michael Palmer, Mr Ioan Mircea Pașcu

*The Bridge – Forum Dialogue serves as a platform for interdisciplinary debates. The President of the Board is Mr **Gaston REINESCH**, Governor of the Central Bank of Luxembourg; the Vice-Presidents are Mr **Vassilios SKOURIS**, President of the European Court of Justice, Mr **Vítor Manuel DA SILVA CALDEIRA**, President of the European Court of Auditors and Mr **Werner HOYER**, President of the European Investment Bank.*

## **Where do we stand?**

The European Council summit of 19 – 20 December 2013 will be dedicated to security and defence issues and hopefully will give fresh impetus to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

The Lisbon Treaty affirms Europe's ambition for a common security and defence policy, giving legal recognition to the European Defence Agency, upholding the principle of mutual assistance and adding a solidarity clause. However this aspect of the Treaty is not applied and no thought has been given to the operational consequences of this clause.

The threat to Europe has changed, from massive conventional attacks to nuclear missiles from Asia, chemical attacks and suicide attacks by terrorists, cyber-warfare and the destabilisation of the Middle East. It is developments of this kind which have caused Mr Van Rompuy to place discussion of European defence on the agenda of the December meeting of the European Council.

It is time for Europe to become a provider rather than a consumer of security; all the speakers are convinced of this. The theoretical distinction between a federalist view and the wider intergovernmental nature of European defence should not stop Europe from engaging in discussion about its future defence policy.

## **The options**

Institutionally, maintaining the status quo is not a viable solution since the Americans are reducing their input and the Europeans are back-sliding in their budgetary contribution. It seems sensible to obtain a wider NATO framework in future, in which the US is less prominent. This could be achieved through a step-by-step approach and the grouping of states in different projects.

Unfortunately, there seems currently to be an insufficient political will to establish European defence unity by means of a new Treaty. Another option could be to act on the basis of existing bodies and optimise their capabilities.

In this context, we should, first of all, mention the High Representative of the EU and the European Defence Agency in the implementation of military cooperation projects and, most promisingly, the development of Eurocorps into a European Army.

Another institutional option could be to create a real European defence industry. This industry could be headed by a European Parliament's agency. Moving to a European defence industry would mean abandoning nationalist policies and allowing financial savings at national level.

### **Europe: a global military power?**

The European nations are collectively a global military power. However they do not seem to realise this.

Over the last three years, three successive crises have occurred on Europe's doorstep, in Libya, Mali and Syria. These three crises nevertheless represented so many missed opportunities for creating a tangible European defence policy.

In Libya, the Europeans intervened under the NATO flag. Mali was another missed opportunity, despite the fact that Europe had set up a security and development strategy for the Saharan region and had collectively identified the threats facing the Saharan states in the form of terrorist and criminal activity, and political and social collapse. Europe is currently dealing with the crisis in Syria and, here again, European positions are far from agreed.

### **Europe and the United States**

The United States is encouraging Europe to become more involved because it is itself changing its priorities. The policy of "leading from behind" in the Libyan war is typical of the American approach to all the crises taking place in close proximity to the European continent.

A redistribution of power is taking place, with the centre of decision moving from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Europe and its centrality in the system are being challenged. Europe is caught between the need to increase its participation, in order to make up for this strategic re-orientation by the US and the lack of a political will to do so.

The idea that Europe has never been so secure, so prosperous, so free, is an illusion. Europe should be aware of the situation and boost its defence, compensate for the strategic reorientation, face the increasing challenges, preserve its technological edge and bolster its military industry.

There is complementarity in NATO-EU relations, and as NATO plans to strengthen the civilian side of the intervention instrument, Europe must be ready to increase its military footprint.

### **What should be done?**

A White Paper on security and defence may possibly lead to common educational and training standards, common projects and common operational requirements for equipment and materiel. Europe needs proper logistical support and a CSDP warehouse, as well as a start-up fund for man-made crises or natural disasters. But above all, political decision-making must be streamlined. The pooling and sharing of military instruments makes sense but requires a willingness to cooperate.



When it comes to industry, the most important thing is to consolidate demand in Europe and stop slashing defence budgets. Europe must move towards a single defence market, with responsibilities and benefits for all concerned.

There is great disparity in Europe with regard to defence budgets, capacities and the political will to move forward on defence issues. The problem of national sovereignty is clearly part of this, but, today the European states have an unrivalled opportunity to produce a common policy. Europe must learn to prioritise across the 28 Member States and overcome national concerns.

#### **What can be expected from the European Council summit?**

The objectives in the conclusions of the previous European Councils on defence, such as rapid reaction forces, are excellent, but purely theoretical.

A more realistic approach would be to produce an initial roadmap of objectives, which would then stimulate some structural or institutional proposals and these might result in military cooperation projects.

#### **Eurocorps**

With regard to the budget for a common defence policy, all military operations carried out as part of the common security and defence policy are currently financed by the participant states. This is a double handicap. Firstly because it excludes a certain number of states which can no longer participate in external operations because they do not have the means to do so. Secondly because some states are major contributors to military operations and are beginning to wonder if it is fair that they should shoulder both the financial and human cost by committing a large budget to defence, and are then hauled up by the Commission in Brussels because of an excessively large deficit.

A system must be devised to spread the cost between Member States and produce some type of community budget for military operations in the same way that we shall gradually have the Commission that takes an interest in defence, itself hitherto a taboo subject.

*The reader is referred to the article published in the September edition of the Journal about the presentation on contemporary strategic thought given at the ECA by Colonel Michel Goya, Director of the "new conflicts" section of the French Military Academy's Institute of Strategic Research, and the interview with Colonel Goya entitled "The problem is that of a vision of the use of force and military culture".*