



**Europese Beweging
Nederland**



Report of the EURODEFENSE conference

Europe as a Security and Defence Actor

Objectives – Capabilities – Cooperation

The Hague, 10 October 2013

Session 1: Europe as a Security and Defence Actor: Political and military aspects

The conference was opened by **Wim Geerts**, Director-General for Political Affairs of the Netherlands ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, who welcomed the participants in the Hague. Geerts emphasized that the European countries cannot take a secure world for granted. The unique selling point of the European Union (EU) is its cooperation with the private sector, a notion that was going to be mentioned many times during the conference. For the Netherlands, the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) matters, and Geerts underlined that the Dutch government is seeking to further develop the comprehensive approach. Next, cooperation between other countries of the EU is important to keep the defence of Europe both at a high level and affordable. An excellent example of cooperation of the Netherlands with other EU member states is the intensive cooperation between the Dutch and Belgium navy.

Dr. **Willem van Eekelen**, chair of the congress, added to this by stating that cooperation on defense issues is a relatively new development and sometimes considered as sensitive by individual countries. Nevertheless he regards it as very important and something to be pursued.

The keynote speech of the conference was held by **Claude-France Arnould**, Chief Executive of the European Defense Agency (EDA). Arnould highlighted the

importance of the meeting on defense of the European Council in December 2013 for the future of the EU's defense capabilities. Heads of state should see the importance of defense and therefore budgets should be released to support EDA. However, clear choices should be made on which programs and projects will be funded and which are less relevant. At the moment the strategy of EDA actually consists of several strategies that partly overlap each other. Also, not everyone is aware of the presence of these strategies. They should be considered when designing a new 'comprehensive' strategy, which is the aim of Arnould. However, European politicians are usually more interested in programs that deliver more concrete, tangible results. This is not always in line with the needs of EDA.

Some individual European countries no longer have the financial means to be active in the full spectrum of escalation. This forces them to cooperate more extensively. Cooperation is not only necessary from a financial perspective; it can also contribute to a more efficient allocation of R&D investments when countries can pool resources instead of each country pursuing their own programs. This is necessary to keep the technological advantage of EU military equipment intact. Nevertheless some constraints on cooperation are present. On the technological side, standards and requirements are not harmonized, leading to large inefficiencies in defense industry research and production. On the political side, it requires political courage to suggest more cooperation, as it requires the granting of sovereignty to Europe, which is a precarious subject in most member states.

Lt. Gen. **Wolfgang Wosolsobe**, Director General EU Military Staff, the third speaker of the day, largely addressed the same topics as Arnould and added some insights of his own. Issues that are or will become relevant for Europe's defense capabilities are the shrinking national defense budget, an enemy that is less predictable and visible and the 'pivot to Asia' of the US. This leads to more responsibility for the EU, not only to maintain its own security but also to be the leading actor in interventions in neighboring countries which includes the volatile Middle-East & North Africa region.

The characteristics an army should have in such a context are flexibility, speed and clarity in both ambitions and priorities. Speed manifests itself into the possibility to act, but also in the capacity to be able to quickly decide on whether and which type of action is required and the speed in which a final decision is actually made. To be able to reach a 'comprehensive' strategy, which Arnould also mentioned, several conditions need to be met. First of all, the goals of this strategy should be clear. Secondly, these goals should translate itself to clear policy. And thirdly, these goals and policies should be evaluated on their effectiveness and efficiency. All of this should be executed in an EU framework, because only then will a truly comprehensive strategy be possible. So far, what has been agreed upon in the Lisbon treaty has not been enough to fulfill these objectives.

The importance of the ability to project power should not be underestimated. The EU has a good reputation in the world for adherence to the rule of law. But its possibilities to employ soft power are largely dependent on its military capabilities. However, budget cuts in EU member states are damaging this potential to project power. Especially since countries are cutting back unilaterally, which means some specific capacities of the military are become rarer in the EU. However, only focusing on technology is not enough. It is not the only thing necessary for a well-functioning EU military. Equally important is communication between member states and the attitude towards cooperation. More specifically, in response to a question raised by the Belgian delegation, more intensive naval cooperation is difficult because in practice countries are still reluctant to surrender sovereignty to the EU. Therefore, what is needed the most is a change in attitude to EU defense cooperation, not necessarily another plan or strategy.

The next speaker, Gen. (ret.) Jean-Paul **Perruche**, former Director General EU Military Staff and president of EURODEFENSE-France, pointed out that the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) has functioned well in the past, given the number of EU missions that have taken place. But there are also some negative points. For instance, there is no clear strategy for the future which would state the capabilities of the CSDP; what possibilities to project power abroad it should have. Also, the relationship with NATO is not entirely clear. There appear to be cases where competition or duplication exists.

CSDP should be improved by incorporating the following points. Firstly, solidarity with the CSDP, which does not only include a change in attitude towards CSDP, as Wosolsobe mentioned, but also a fairer way of burden-sharing in which countries that deploy the most troops should not be the one also paying the largest share of its costs. Secondly, CSDP should be able to work more independently. Thirdly, its credibility should be increased. This includes the acceptance and understanding of member states that missions can be dangerous. Acceptance from the general public is also necessary. In order for that to happen more communication with the general public is necessary. This is clearly an important point as all speakers and several delegations mention this. And lastly, CSDP should be of service to the member states.

Cooperation should also manifest itself in analyzing the requirements of the national and EU military. By doing this together the potential of the EU military becomes much clearer. This is basically the same point Arnould and Wosolsobe also made, but in a slightly different form. Where Arnould stressed the harmonization of standards and requirements of equipment and Wosolsobe the combined efforts to evaluate the goals and policies to achieve them Perruche stressed the need to analyze the requirements of a European strike force as a whole. To give an example of one such requirement he highlights the importance of rapid reaction forces. Lastly, in accordance with Arnould he urges the

European Council that the EU should keep its technological edge and therefore extra funding is necessary.

After the speeches the chair gave the participating EURODEFENSE delegations from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom the opportunity to react.

EURODEFENSE UK raised the point that cooperation can only work properly when there is consensus on when to act and when not to. It is no use of having a powerful military when the conditions of when it should be deployed are unclear. In answer to this question, it was raised that national parliaments should have more contact with each other to ultimately converge in their opinions on the use of force.

EURODEFENSE Austria made a case for the procurement of more helicopters because they are lacking in most missions although they can be a very helpful tool.

EURODEFENSE Spain mentioned that the 'comprehensive' strategy and the spirit of cooperation is not really practiced in reality. An example is Libya, where France and the UK acted without consensus in the EU.

EURODEFENSE Belgium raised the point that in order to 'sell' defense to the public more emphasis should be put on operations and less on defense planning itself. It also raised the issue whether CSDP actually has the tools necessary to plan operations. As examples the situations in Mali, Syria and the arctic were mentioned. It is questioned whether CSDP is analyzing and planning operations before a decision is made whether to act or not. Member states surely are. CSDP should do this too. In answer to this, it is mentioned that budgets are limited.

EURODEFENSE Germany stated that EURODEFENSE itself should also show the importance of defense to the EU public.

The chair thanked the speakers and the delegations for their input and invited all participants for lunch.

Session 2: Europe as a Security and Defence Actor: Economic and industrial aspects and the EC Communication of Juli the 24th 2013

After the lunch, the second session began. **Auke Venema**, Director International Affairs and Operations of the Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands was the first speaker after the break. He illustrated the Dutch perspective in relation to the EU defence debate. For the Netherlands, it is important that the EU-NATO relationship is going to be spelled out and they should work closely together. Secondly, regional operations should get a strong focus, just as common EU battle groups. Thirdly, the minister of Defence of the Netherlands is keen on including national parliaments in the decision making process, since this will not only increase the credibility of missions that are commonly undertaken but will also increase the support of citizens for defence issues.

When it comes to the defence industry, the Netherlands is focussing on specialization. Since the country cannot produce all equipment itself, the Netherlands is focussing on areas wherein they can play in the 'champions league'. The key in other areas is partnership with other countries, for example, to commonly buy materials or end products. The Dutch government believes that economy of scale is the only solution to keep an expensive 'business' as the defence 'business' affordable. Without partnerships with other countries, expensive military means such as jetfighters cannot be developed and produced in the near future. When cooperation in the development and production of military means is lacking, the problem is twofold. First of all, like Venema was explaining, each product becomes cheaper when it is produced in a larger scale. The other side of the medal is that production of small numbers is very expensive. Secondly, when every country is doing its own R&D, the problem of duplication exists.

Slawomir Tokarski, Head of Unit Directorate General Enterprise European Commission, elaborated on showed the problem of duplications during his presentation. The EU is using more military platforms than the USA. The EU has almost three times as many military platforms in use and two times as many in production. The development is thus more cooperation and less military platforms in the future, which is a positive development. This will save money, but will also facilitate common operations since different countries can combine their military means. However, the EU is still using more military platforms than necessary and thus the situation of duplication will not be solved for the next decades.

Joost van Iersel, Rapporteur of the European Economic and Social Council and member of EURODEFENSE-Nederland, argued that the only way to attain a real common defence approach in the EU is to get the European Commission actively on board. An active role for the Commission and EDA is absolutely necessary if the EU member states really want to develop and achieve common goals, if not for all Member States, at least for the willing among them. Until now all intergovernmental arrangements – St. Malo 1998, Treaty of LoI countries 2001, and others – failed. Europe badly needs a 'common defence language'. This asks indeed for a shift from national to shared European thinking on strategic needs, which would promote that national interests are fulfilled through the pursuit of EU strategic objectives. A framework for the future is needed: a strategic European concept, a Common Security and Defence policy, and a European Defence Industrial Strategy (CSDP). A CSDP will provide the most appropriate framework for effective cooperation in the area of military capability, but such cooperation will also be a condition for a credible CSDP. Europe should develop an independent defence sector, commensurate with its economic weight and other interests in the world.

For all these reasons, the European Council next December which for the first time will discuss strategic outlines of defence issues, and in particular European defence industry, is most important. It should set an agenda for the Commission and the Member States. The Council should also identify some concrete projects. The Council should thus adopt tangible actions and measures to strengthen competitiveness and cooperation in the European defence sector. A pro-active industrial policy in selected areas, carried out by Member States and/or the Commission is indispensable to attain up-to-date technology and production. Ways of improving conditions for investment and its application in concrete

projects should be put in place in the overall concept. In addition, the need for industry to be competitive, combined with shrinking financial resources, necessitates cost-efficiency. A political and civil engagement must also ensure that public opinion is properly informed about the importance of European strategic and industrial interests in order to foster active support of citizens and taxpayers. The contribution of a healthy Europe-based defence industry to European manufacturing industry must not be underestimated.

The final word on the session about the defence industry was for representatives of the industry. The panel of industrial representatives was chaired by **Ernst van Hoek**, member of EURODEFENSE-Nederland. The panel consisted of **Hein van Ameijden**, Managing Director of Damen Schelde Naval Shipbuilding BV; **Bettina Tammes** of Thales Nederland BV, and **Arjan Vergouw**, Vice President Public Affairs of Fokker Technologies BV. Their joint message was that the EU market for defence industry is not an open market. A lot of regulations still have to be met when defence products of material are transported; exchanged or bought between different member states. This is creating a problem for the defence industries and withholding them of becoming fully competitive. On the other hand, each industry has a close relation with their government, which means, that the industries also benefit of the defence market not being completely open.

The chair thanked all speakers and participants and ended the conference. The day was concluded by a reception followed by a dinner at the Royal Institute of Engineers (KIVI NIRIA) including speeches by **Godelieve van Heteren**, president of the European Movement of the Netherlands (EBN) and **Jan Wind**, chairman Defence and Security Division KIVI NIRIA and president Federation of European Defence Technology Associations (EDTA).