

EMI Briefing Note

A fresh impetus to the Common Security and Defence Policy? State of play after the 2013 European Council on Defence

At the European Council of 19-20 December 2013, the future of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) was discussed for the first time since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. In anticipation of this European Council meeting, the European Movement adopted a resolution with recommendations on the CSDP at its Members Council on 29 November 2013 in The Hague, the Netherlands. The start of a new legislative period, with a new European Commission and High Representative, brings with it new priorities and plans. In addition, almost a year after the European Council, the Foreign Affairs Council will discuss Defence issues at its meeting on 18 November 2014. These developments give the opportunity to assess the state of play regarding the CSDP.

The December 2013 European Council: results and implementation

In December 2013 the European Council identified priority actions for stronger cooperation built around three axes: increasing the effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP; enhancing the development of capabilities; and strengthening Europe's defence industry.¹ The European Council laid down a list of specific measures, and set the deadline for reviewing the progress on CSDP at the European Council in June 2015. However, the results of the European Council fell short of expectations. Responses characterised the results as lacking any overarching vision or proposing any fundamental reorientation; postponing a decision on Europe's leadership role in global security; or, as a measured and systematic response, but one with many unanswered questions and lacking direction. Nevertheless, the European Council created a window of opportunity by laying down specific measures and assigning tasks to the European Commission, High Representative (HR/VP), European Defence Agency and Member States.

In response to the conclusions, the European Commission presented the roadmap "A New Deal for European Defence" to implement its 2013 Communication "Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector."² This roadmap responds to several calls in the European Council conclusions: it proposes a roadmap to complete the Single Market for defence and security; a roadmap for a comprehensive EU-wide Security of Supply regime, to be finalised in June 2015 along with a Green Paper on the control of assets before the end of 2014; the development of a more competitive defence industry; a Preparatory Action (PA) to test the added value of an EU contribution in CSDP-related research and to prepare for a CSDP-related research theme under the next multi-annual framework; measures to support SME's and dual-use research through developing networks and clarifying the conditions under which European Funds could be used to support dual-use projects.

At the same time, various measures mentioned by the Council are either missing in the roadmap, or else are not given sufficient attention, such as the expected implementation of the PA only in 2018. The European Defence Agency (EDA) and HR/VP did not present a work programme or any other clear response to the calls of the European Council. EDA is developing policies to stimulate dual-use research, with its "Project Turtle" becoming the first dual-use research initiative to access European Structural Funds. Yet it has not presented a common approach to standardisation and certification, which was expected in mid-2014 - and mentioned in the Commission's roadmap. The EDA is also expected to report back to the Council by the end of 2014 on pooled procurement projects, on which nothing has yet been published. The HR/VP also has not yet produced a report on the financing of CSDP missions or published a review of the Athena Mechanism.

¹ [European Council Conclusions 19/20 December 2013](#)

² [Communication Implementation Roadmap 24 June 2014](#) / [Defence Communication 24 July 2013](#)

Despite all this, following-up on its own conclusions, the European Council did adopt a Maritime Security Strategy in June 2014.³

A new High Representative and European Commission: new priorities and plans

With the new European Commission taking office, a new set of political guidelines is in place. In Jean-Claude Juncker's political guidelines, he writes that "we need to work on a stronger Europe when it comes to security and defence matters."⁴ He stresses the need for integrated defence capacities, use of the permanent structured cooperation clause, and more synergies in defence procurement. The restructuring of the European Commission, with the HR/VP Headquarters in the Berlaymont building, formal HR/VP coordination over the Commissioners responsible for external relations and a deputy system, also indicates a stronger integration of foreign affairs and security and defence issues into the general work of the new Commission.

In her written answers and hearing for the European Parliament, the new High Representative Federica Mogherini also addressed security and defence issues, as well as the December 2013 European Council. Mogherini writes that the need for a far-reaching look at the global landscape and strategic approach will guide her in her work as high Representative. She repeatedly reiterated her intention to keep the Parliament informed of her work on the CSDP, but also of her intention to work closely with the Member States to coordinate and set strategic priorities for the EU foreign policy. Mogherini's commitment to take cooperation in foreign policy as well as security and defence issues forward is plain from her statements, in particular that she will "support deeper defence cooperation among the Member States in line with the guidance from the European Council of December 2013."⁵

Furthermore, Mogherini "greatly welcome[s] the mandate from last December's European Council to 'assess the impact of changes in the global environment' and report back next year on 'challenges and opportunities arising for the Union'."⁶ She aims to stimulate a wide and inclusive debate, including EU institutions, Member States and the wider foreign policy community, and expresses her hope that this will eventually lead to a new European Security Strategy. Mogherini writes that she will ensure that the EDA does everything in its power to help the Member States achieve the tasks they set in the December 2013 Council Conclusions, with a focus on the priorities set in 2013 as well as in the June 2014 European Council.⁷

Concluding

The EMI resolution adopted at the Members Council in April 2013 called for deeper integration in the field of defence and security, including the development of a strategic approach and a solid follow-up. The December 2013 European Council has disappointed in this respect, and the lack of an overarching vision and absence of plans for a new European Security Strategy have been the main criticisms. On the measures that have been put forward, the record of implementation is mixed.

Despite this, the plans laid out by the European Council create a window of opportunity in the field of European policy on defence and security. By interpreting the assessment of the global environment (to be presented in 2015) as a chance to set out a new European Security Strategy, the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini seems determined to make use of this window. Mogherini's first opportunity to convey her vision is the Foreign Affairs Council on 18 November. She has until the European Council in June 2015, which will assess the progress in CSDP, to put her plans into action.

³ [Maritime Security Strategy 24 June 2014](#)

⁴ [Juncker's Political Guidelines 15 July 2014](#)

⁵ [Answers to the European Parliament - Federica Mogherini](#)

⁶ [Answers to the European Parliament - Federica Mogherini](#)

⁷ [Opening Statement Hearing Federica Mogherini 7 October 2014](#)

On the agenda

18 November 2014: Foreign Affairs Council on Defence issues

On the agenda:

- Cooperation on military capabilities in the format of the European Defence Agency Steering Board;
- Briefing about state of play of EU military operations;
- Discussion of the security situation in the EU's broader neighbourhood;
- Lunch debate on the outlook for the CSDP in preparation for the 2015 June Council;
- Adoption of conclusions on the implementation of the tasks set by the European Council in 2013;
- Approve an EU cyber defence policy framework;
- Approve a policy framework for systematic and long-term defence cooperation;
- Agreement on the 2015 budget for the European Defence Agency.

20 November 2014: SEDE debate on EDA's implementation of the defence summit conclusions

Parliamentary Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) will debate the implementation of the 2013 European Council conclusions by the European Defence Agency with its Chief Executive Claude-France Arnould.

June 2015: European Council

On the agenda: review of the progress in CSDP

Other sources / further reading

[EPRS Briefing – Federica Mogherini](#)

September 2014

[European Parliament Factsheet - Common Security and Defence Policy](#)

Ulrich Karock, April 2014

[CEPS Commentary - Common Security and Defence in 2014: Revise and resubmit](#)

Giovanni Faleg, 27 March 2014

[Egmont Policy Brief - An Industrious European Council on Defence?](#)

Daniel Fiott, February 2014

[SWP Comments - The CSDP after the December Summit](#)

Nicolai von Ondarza and Marco Overhaus, January 2014

[EurActiv Opinion - Lacklustre EU summit did little to spur defence and security momentum](#)

Lisa Watanabe, 13 January 2014