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## Table of Contents

**Łukasz Smalec**

*European Military Capabilities. History, Assessment, Practice and Perspectives* p. 5

**Kamil Aksiuto**

*Beyond Utilitarianism? Beyond Democracy?* p. 37

**Jan Szczepanowski**

*A Melting Pot in the United States of Europe? The Modern Concept of Multiculturalism reviewed by Feliks Koneczny and Oswald Spengler* p. 61

**Dorota Stasiak**

*Think Tanks in Poland: Policy Experts at the Crossroads* p. 95

**Iwona Miedzińska**

*The position and role of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – selected issues* p. 141

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## European Military Capabilities. History, Assessment, Practice and Perspectives

### **Abstract**

The last decade was marked by the European growing ambition of an active role in the security sphere *inter alia* increasingly important role as an actor in crisis response missions. Taking into account conclusions coming from the last European Council session, the article analyses a progress that has been made in the development of European military capabilities essential to conducting independent full-scale out of area operations since the foundations of the ESDP. Attention will be given to the efforts undertaken to generate such capabilities at the EU level, their results and the challenges ahead. On the basis of these considerations the Author believes that ten years of the CSDP (former ESDP) have brought a few and above all only minor successes. As Zbigniew Brzezinski aptly pointed out: "Europe remains a junior geopolitical partner to the United States in the semi unified West".

**Keywords:** European military capabilities, CSDP, out of area capabilities, European Union

## Introduction

The last decade was marked by the growing activity of the European Union (EU) in dealing with security threats. It began to play an increasingly important role as an actor in crisis response missions dealing with both regional and global security challenges. This includes a broad spectrum of tasks ranging from crisis management, through conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction (the so called state- or nation-building) to peacekeeping missions. Bound by the foundation and further development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), renamed the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) after the *Treaty of Lisbon* (2009), the EU has obtained new instruments in this field. Simultaneously we ought to take into consideration declining US interest in European affairs (the so called *Pacific pivot*), which might probably be even more important. Washington needs to make an effort to seek the balance between political commitments, military presence and fiscal efficiency on account of the financial crisis of 2007-2008 (the global financial crisis). The so-called transatlantic partnership is at a crossroads in the face of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) withdrawal from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. Mounting pressures over defence budgets and an increasingly complex and uncertain security environment call for renewed efforts in European defence co-operation. Therefore, because of the highly irregular nature of the global environment, for the first time since the entry into force of

the *Treaty of Lisbon* (1 December 2009), the European Council<sup>1</sup> (19-20 December 2013) held a debate concerning defence.

This study is an attempt to assess the progress that has been made in the development of European military capabilities essential to conduct full-scale out of area missions. It seeks to give an overview of the efforts undertaken to generate military capabilities at the EU level, their results and the challenges that lie ahead. Additionally, it outlines a number of points that ought to be taken into consideration when thinking about this issue. The presentation begins by describing the most important steps towards EU independent military capacity. I make an effort to determine whether the EU member states possess relevant capabilities for conducting high-intensity out of area missions without significant American military support. The aim of this study is to shed light on the issue of European military capabilities, in particular its shortcomings and development. Then, I turn my attention to the military capabilities-driven division of labour works in Afghan and Libyan missions and on the basis of these considerations try to better present the complexity of the issue analysed during above mentioned European Council meeting.

## **1. European Military Capabilities – A Glance at History**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991) European security architecture changed dramatically. Two Balkan crises in the early and late 90's exposed the European inability to gather essential forces and

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<sup>1</sup> European Council meetings are called European Union Summits too.

carry out autonomous expeditionary missions. The first one – the Balkan war (1991-1995) revealed European weaknesses. It was the first but not the last bitter pill which demonstrated that European armed forces were ill-equipped for crisis management missions. The “hour of Europe” revealed the old continent’s inability to deal with its own problems. American troops played a key role in resolving the conflict while European units had only little impact on its final outcome. Similarly, the second – the conflict in Kosovo and further NATO Allied Force air operations in 1999 confirmed American predominance and drew attention to the disparities in power between old allies. In fact, the second armed conflict demonstrated that the military gap between the United States and its European allies even deepened<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> “European Military Capabilities”, 2007. *EU Briefings* May 2007, p. 1-3; D. Keohane, 2003. “Needs An Avant-Garde for Military Capabilities. Briefing Note Europe”, *New Ideas for a New Europe*. [http://www.cer.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/pdf/2012/briefing\\_militarydk-5642.pdf](http://www.cer.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/pdf/2012/briefing_militarydk-5642.pdf) (Accessed January 19, 2013), p. 1; J. P. Weiskopf, “Out of Area – Out of Sight? What Role do Gender and Peace Policy Aspects Play in the European Security Policy?” <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/03701.pdf> (Accessed December 20, 2012), p. 12; S. Larrabee, 2012. “Unfinished Business in Europe.”, In *The Agenda for the EU-US Strategic Partnership*, ed. Álvaro de Vasconcelos. Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, p. 10-14; “*EU military Capabilities – some European Troops , but not yet a European Army.*” 2010. In *EU Crisis management: Institutions And Capabilities In The Making* eds. E. Greco, N. Pirozzi, S. Silvestri, Rome: *English Series 19*, Quaderni IAI, p. 12; J. Morel, A. Cameron. 2010. “The EU and Defence Capabilities: Charting the Course”. In *European Defence Capabilities No Adaptability without Co-operation*, ed. L. Simon., London: Royal United Services Institute, Whitehall, p. 2; S. Bowman, 1996. “Bosnia: U.S. Military

### **1.1. First Steps towards Efficient European Military Capabilities**

The above-mentioned European weakness led to the strengthening of bilateral French-British cooperation culminating in the *St. Malo Declaration* of December 1998 – a cornerstone for further cooperation in the area of security and defence at the EU level. Two strongest European forces/armies – the only European nuclear powers, called other EU members to establish “the capacity for autonomous action, backed by credible forces, the means to decide to use them and a readiness to do so”<sup>3</sup>. Next year at the European Council meeting in Cologne (3-4 June 1999), the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was formally conceived. It was important, but merely the first step of the European Union on the road to playing a more important and independent role on the international stage in the field of security. To achieve this goal “the Union must have the capacity for autonomous

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Operations December 16, 1996”, <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/93-056.htm> (Accessed December 20, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> “Common Security and Defence Policy. Development of European Military Capabilities”. 2011. [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/1222506/110106%20updated%20factsheet%20capacites%20militaires%20-%20version%208\\_en.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/1222506/110106%20updated%20factsheet%20capacites%20militaires%20-%20version%208_en.pdf), (Accessed January 3, 2013), p. 2; C. Major, Ch. Mölling, 2010. “EU Military Capabilities – Some European Troops , but not yet a European Army” *In The Making* eds. E. Greco, N. Pirozzi, S. Silvestri, Rome: *English Series 19*, Quaderni IAI, p. 12; “Military Capabilities – A Step Forward in ESDP?”. 2012. [http://www.isis-europe.eu/sites/default/files/programmes-downloads/2009\\_artrel\\_322\\_esr46-military-capabilities.pdf](http://www.isis-europe.eu/sites/default/files/programmes-downloads/2009_artrel_322_esr46-military-capabilities.pdf) (Accessed December 22, 2012), p. 1.



action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises, without prejudice to actions by NATO”<sup>4</sup>.

During the European Union Summit in Helsinki (December 2000), member states decided to set themselves a target of creating the European Rapid Reaction Force known as the Helsinki Headline Goal (HHG). Immediately it should be noted that the purpose of the HHG was but a formation of a pool of national armed forces of up to 60,000 personnel (15 brigades) at the disposal of the EU, on a basis of voluntary involvement<sup>5</sup>. The units would be able to fully deploy within less than 60 days and remain in the theatre of operation for up to one year. These forces were supposed to undertake the so-called Petersberg tasks<sup>6</sup> adopted in 1992<sup>7</sup>. Based on arrangements of the Washington NATO Summit (1999), a joint declaration was announced on 16 December 2002.

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<sup>4</sup> D. Braddon, 2010. “Operational, Structural and Procurement Expenditure in European Defence Budgets: Trends, Patterns and Reform.” In *European Defence...*, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> This would involve the need to ensure additional units (at least 60 thousands) together with the associated military equipment in order to ensure the regular troop rotations in theatre.

<sup>6</sup>They include: joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peacekeeping tasks, tasks of combat forces undertaken for crisis management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilization.

<sup>7</sup> *Common Security and Defence Policy. Development...*, *op.cit.*, p. 2; C. Major, Ch. Mölling, *op.cit.*, p. 12-13; J. P. Weiskopf, *op.cit.*, p. 11-12; 2004. “EU as Military Actor—The Role of the European Defence Agency” [http://www2.tku.edu.tw/~tiexm/conference\\_paper/session5/Fuchang.pdf](http://www2.tku.edu.tw/~tiexm/conference_paper/session5/Fuchang.pdf) (Accessed January 9, 2013), p. 8.

Next year an agreement was adopted on 11 March 2003, which became the cornerstone of official WEU<sup>8</sup>-NATO cooperation, known as the “Berlin Plus” formula. What is most important in this arrangement is the EU getting access to NATO planning capacity and the establishment of a list of its assets and capabilities available for use in EU-led missions<sup>9</sup>.

The next step on the road to greater independence of Europe in this field was an adoption of the European Security Strategy *Draft for a Global Security Strategy – A Secure Europe in a Better World* in June 2003. This document, recognizing the importance of new security challenges, was a symbolic step. In that strategy the EU’s High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy – Javier Solana would rather concentrate on presenting security challenges and threats than analysing them. Another crucial shortcoming and probably

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<sup>8</sup> The acronym WEU stands for Western European Union.

<sup>9</sup> “Berlin Plus Agreement”. 2009. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004\\_2009/documents/dv/berlinplus\\_/berlinplus\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/berlinplus_/berlinplus_en.pdf) (Accessed December 29, 2012); “The EU-NATO Berlin Plus Agreements.” 2009. Paris: European Security and Defence, p. 1-2, [http://www.shape.nato.int/resources/4/documents/14E\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Berlin\\_Plus\[1\].pdf](http://www.shape.nato.int/resources/4/documents/14E_Fact_Sheet_Berlin_Plus[1].pdf), accessed on: 9.01.2013; *European Military Capabilities...*, *op.cit.*, p. 3; J. Herz, 2009. “Military Capabilities – A Step Forward in ESDP?”, [http://www.isis-europe.eu/sites/default/files/programmes-downloads/2009\\_artrel\\_322\\_esr46-military-capabilities.pdf](http://www.isis-europe.eu/sites/default/files/programmes-downloads/2009_artrel_322_esr46-military-capabilities.pdf) (Accessed December 22, 2012), p. 1; J. Morel, A. Cameron, *op.cit.*, p. 2; J. P. Weiskopf, *op.cit.*, p. 10-15; C. Major, Ch. Mölling, *op.cit.*, p. 12-13; E. Gross, 2009, “EU-U.S. Cooperation in Crisis Management: Transatlantic Approaches and Future Trajectories” [http://transatlantic.sais-jhu.edu/publications/books/Preventing\\_Conflict\\_Managing\\_Crisis/03.Gross.pdf](http://transatlantic.sais-jhu.edu/publications/books/Preventing_Conflict_Managing_Crisis/03.Gross.pdf) (Accessed December 20, 2012), p. 38.

even more important one, is the lack of resources essential to implement the strategy<sup>10</sup>.

## **1.2. European Military Capabilities. Lessons Learned from Early Failures**

Following the failure of the first, a new Headline Goal 2010 was approved at the meeting of the European Council in Brussels (17-18 June 2004). During the meeting EU member states announced that they want to “commit themselves to be able by 2010 to respond with rapid and decisive action applying a fully coherent approach to the whole spectrum of crisis management operations covered by the Treaty”<sup>11</sup>. The key element of the new HG 2010 was the presence of high-readiness forces based on the concept of Battlegroups. This shift from the HHG to the HG 2010 was a step forward. Its aim was the removal of the capability shortfalls of the previous initiative. While the HHG was focused on quantitative targets, the new HHG presented a more qualitative approach. The HG 2010 included the following scenarios of military actions: separation of parties by force; stabilisation, reconstruction and military advice to third countries; conflict prevention; evacuation operations and humanitarian assistance<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> J. P. Weiskopf, *op.cit.*, p. 19; J. Morel, A. Cameron, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Common Security and Defence Policy. Development...*, *op.cit.*, p. 2; C. Major, Ch. Mölling, *op.cit.*, p. 12-14; J. P. Weiskopf, *op.cit.*, p. 12-16.

<sup>12</sup> J. Herz, *op.cit.*, p. 1; J. Morel, A. Cameron, *op.cit.*, p. 2; C. Major, Ch. Mölling, *op.cit.*, p. 12-14; J. P. Weiskopf, *op.cit.*, p. 10; Fu-chang Chang, *op.cit.*, p. 8; “Headline Goal 2010 Approved by General Affairs and External Relations

The “Battlegroup Concept“, prepared on the basis of a common Franco-British proposal, had its origins in the experience of the Artemis Mission (2003) and was approved during the meeting of the Council of Ministers in 2004. Finally, in November that year European member states decided to establish 13 Battlegroups which were meant to acquire full operational capability by 2007. These highly trained battalion-sized units (up to 1,500 soldiers) which would be deployable within 15 days and sustainable in the field for up to 120 days will make up the core of EU high readiness forces and be able to undertake autonomous rapid response operations. This concept presented a significant improvement of existing European capabilities<sup>13</sup>.

Last but definitely not least, the *Declaration on Strengthening Capabilities* was adopted by the EU Council in 2008. This declaration outlined ambitious goals for the EU *inter alia*: the capacity to conduct two major simultaneous operations involving up to 10,000 troops for 2 years, two rapid response operations using EU Battlegroups, a civilian-military humanitarian assistance operation for up to 90 days and one civilian mission involving up to 3,000 experts. Despite the EU taking steps in the right direction, one major important problem has not changed, the gap between European available and desired capabilities remained significant<sup>14</sup>.

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Council on 17 May 2004 Endorsed by the European Council of 17 and 18 June 2004”. 2010. <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/2010%20Headline%20Goal.pdf> (Accessed December 20, 2012), p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Fu-chang Chang, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> C. Major, Ch. Mölling, *op.cit.*, p. 18-19; J. Herz, *op.cit.*, p. 2-3.

## 2. Current European Military Capabilities. Assessment

The idea of establishing a European Army had its origins in the European Defence Community – the idea was born in the early 50's and finally abandoned in 1954. After more than two decades since the end of the Cold War, the European military capacity for expeditionary missions has remained unsatisfactory<sup>15</sup>. Shortly after a quick and overwhelming victory in the *Iraqi Freedom* Operation, this military campaign was hailed as a model of modern combat intervention. Even then there were a few different opinions in this matter. Professor Boleslaw Balcerowicz rightly pointed out that it could be considered as such only in relation to operations involving the US military because of the shortcomings of European military capabilities. A similar position was represented *inter alia*: by Julian Lindley-French and Franco Algeri<sup>16</sup>.

We should not forget, that the EU as a whole takes the second place in the ranking of the largest defence spenders in the world. However, merely counting money spent on defence does not provide an accurate outlook of the range of the military capability gap. Qualitative comparisons are more important and confirm American undoubted dominance of the many cutting-edge dual-use military technologies, which are supported by a leading information technology sector and

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<sup>15</sup> B. Seibert. 2010. „The Quest for European Military Capabilities.” In *European Defence...*, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> B. Balcerowicz. 2006. *Siły zbrojne w państwie i stosunkach międzynarodowych*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, p. 138-139; Fu-chang Chang, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

governmental research and development programs. The crux of existing differences reflect the opinion of political science analysts from the European Union Center of North Carolina. They believe that “European forces are said to possess only 10% of US capabilities for 60% of the US budget”<sup>17</sup>. Simultaneously, they admit that “Europe’s defence industry maintains considerable capabilities and European armies are gradually acquiring many of the same types of high-tech equipment and munitions that are employed by the US”<sup>18</sup>. Nevertheless, this progress remains rather slow, particularly with regard to military equipment required for high intensity out of area missions. The effectiveness of the EU approach to security issues was undeniably compromised by the lack of a common position concerning foreign policy priorities among members. Actually, merely 10% of European soldiers are ready for rapid response missions overseas. Consequently, the EU will probably play second fiddle in the US-led out of area operations, concentrating on peace-support operations<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> *European Military Capabilities...*, *op.cit.*, p.1-2.

<sup>18</sup> *European Military Capabilities...*, *op.cit.*, p.1-2.

<sup>19</sup> *European Military Capabilities...*, p. 1-7; S. Coonen, 2006. “The Widening Military Capabilities Gap between the United States and Europe: Does it Matter?”

<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/USAWC/parameters/Articles/06autumn/coonen.pdf> (Accessed December 22, 2012), p. 77.

## 2.1. Different Views or Ways of Response

A brief look at the strategy of the EU and the United States of America takes into consideration Robert Kagan's observation that the allies have different/ disjointed views of the world<sup>20</sup>. This difference lies elsewhere, namely in the ways of response to these challenges. In spite of an existing military gap between the United States and Europe, the "old continent" possess a comparatively significant military capability and, what is more important, a will to use it. Since 2003 – a critical point for transatlantic partnership as well as intra-European relations ( the split was so severe that some observers doubted the survival of the perennial alliance as a result of American preparations to war with Iraq), the EU had conducted 28 operations, both civilian (20) and military (8). All of which differed very much (greatly) from Operation *Allied Force*, Operation *Iraqi Freedom*, Operation *Enduring Freedom* or the *ISAF Mission* in Afghanistan. Generally speaking, lightly armed EU-forces consisted of EU-Member States units are able to conduct "low-intensity" Petersberg missions. On the basis of previous experiences, it is possible to point out existing European challenges. From the military point of view, European combat units are not developed well enough to lead full scale armed missions. In such operations they played only a secondary role. The majority of the most sophisticated and at the same time decisive weapons used in the latest wars were U.S. assets. The EU

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. A. I. Zakharchenko, 2007. *The EU and U.S. Strategies against Terrorism and Proliferation of WMD: A Comparative Study*, Garmisch-Partenkirchen: George C. Marshall Center for Security Studies.

still does not possess military capabilities required for today's combat operations. In order to attain a larger global range, European forces will have to acquire sufficient capabilities at least in the following areas: strategic lift; aerial refuelling; C4SIR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Surveillance, Intelligence, and Reconnaissance Systems); ISTAR (*Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance*) and power projection (inter alia Stealth Aircrafts and Bombers, Strategic Lift and Air-to-Air Refuelling) and PGMs (Precision Guided Munitions). In addition to the above-mentioned shortcomings, there is another concern – an unprecedented fragmentation and intra-European duplication of weapon systems among European states which are not compatible (roughly 125 different types of weapon systems exist, in particular in the area of air-force there are at least 40 systems) with each other<sup>21</sup>.

As Jeffrey Bialos aptly pointed out: “American and European forces do not necessarily require the same types of capabilities to be interoperable, but at a minimum they must be able to communicate with each other via secure modes in order to exchange information”<sup>22</sup>. As a matter of fact, European military capabilities do not lag behind. An undeniable gap in military capabilities does not prevent interoperability

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<sup>21</sup> Fu-chang Chang, *op.cit.*, p. 9; S. Coonen, *op.cit.*, p. 70-79; E. Gross, *op.cit.*, p. 38; “EU Common Security and Defence Policy.” 2012. <http://www.civitas.org.uk/eufacts/FSEX/EX4.htm> (Accessed January 10, 2013); O. Croci, A. Verdun, 2006. “Security Challenges in the 21st century: EU, USA, and Canadian Approaches.” <http://canada-europe-dialogue.ca/events/Workshop-June12-2006/Croci-Verdun19-June2006.pdf> (Accessed December 29, 2012), p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> S. Coonen, *op.cit.*, p. 77.



between allied forces. Moreover, the cost of demanding European investments in the C4ISR systems is not overburdening or even overwhelming. However, several important steps should be taken. Europeans ought to modernize their forces with aforementioned networks, develop new weapons systems, among them modern precision-strike munitions, WMD defence, mobility and logistic support assets. These existing disparities have constituted a *sui generis* division of labour wherein the USA plays the main role during “hot phases” of operations and conflicts, while in the meantime European forces become more visible in the stabilisation and reconstruction phase. Each “partner” will focus on those military missions which bring them a comparative advantage. Already during the Balkan crises the vast majority of combat units was provided by the American superpower. The EU had taken over command of the operation from NATO when the focus has shifted to the state-building tasks<sup>23</sup>. In the public debate this qualified division of labour is described by the phrase: “Americans making dinner and the Europeans washing the dishes”<sup>24</sup>. In this context it is worth recalling one more quite often quoted motto: “US combat, the UN feeds, the EU pays”<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> S. Coonen, *op.cit.*, p. 77-8; “Affordable Defense Capabilities for Future NATO Missions. A National Defense University Special Report”. 2010. [http://www.ndu.edu/CTNSP/docUploaded/NATO\\_Affordable%20Defense%20Capabilities.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/CTNSP/docUploaded/NATO_Affordable%20Defense%20Capabilities.pdf) (Accessed December 20, 2012).

<sup>24</sup> S. Schmemmann, 2003. “Some Are Cooks, Some Are Dishwashers.” <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/30/books/some-are-cooks-some-are-dishwashers.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm> (Accessed December 30, 2012).

<sup>25</sup> Fu-chang Chang, *op.cit.*, p. 1.

## 2.2. CSDP. Main Achievements and Plans for the Future

More than ten years of the ESDP (renamed the CSDP after the Treaty of Lisbon) have brought a few and above all only minor successes which were overshadowed by a lot of unfulfilled promises. The main achievement is definitely the EU Battlegroups initiative, which significantly intensified military cooperation among EU states. Since 2007 two such units have always been on stand-by. Although the Battlegroups are presented as the most significant success of the CSDP, we ought to be aware of some important limitations. First of all, the EU has never deployed any Battlegroup so far. No one is able to assess the level of interoperability between European forces and their effectiveness in dealing with combat tasks. Second, the EU member states used to prefer creation of *ad hoc* coalitions in accordance with the Donald Rumsfeld principle: “missions define coalitions”. Unfortunately, in these cases military lessons learned from the field are few and seldom taken into account, because of the reluctance of state actors. Thirdly, the Battlegroups are capable to conduct only low-intensity small crisis management missions. If the EU has ambitions to conduct full scale operations, these battalion-sized units ought to be extended to include more troops and encompass diverse capabilities (military units exhibiting various levels of readiness)<sup>26</sup>.

Being meticulous is essential to indicate that the EU is far from the capability hubris. On the contrary its member states are aware of

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<sup>26</sup> D. Braddon, *op.cit.*, p. 25-26; J. Herz, *op.cit.*, p. 2-3; C. Major, Ch. Mölling, *op.cit.*, p. 15-16.

their weakness. Concerning the existing military gap between Europe and the US numerous essential analyses have been conducted and several measures have been found in early 2000. Even a cursory analysis of European ambitious plans allows to draw at least two conclusions (see the table below). On the one hand, these armaments programmes were prepared on the solid foundation of European military shortcomings and desired strategic capabilities. On the other hand, they were just as ambitious as unrealistic in a given time frame<sup>27</sup>.

**Table 1. Selected European Armaments Programs**

Program	Description	Number of Units	Deliveries	Current progress
A400 M	Transport aircraft	180-planned (in fact 160 ordered by EU members so far <sup>28</sup> )	2009-2010	Successfully completed the 300 hours of F&R (Function & Reliability) flight-testing in December 2012 <sup>29</sup> .
Eurofighter	Combat aircraft	620-planned (almost 500 ordered by EU members so far)	2003-2015	First Eurofighter entered to service in August 2003 <sup>30</sup> .
Tiger	Attack helicopter	180-planned	2003-2008	Significant delays in deliveries, program is still underway
NH-90	Transport	300-planned	From 2006	The total volume of orders

<sup>27</sup> *European Military Capabilities...*, *op.cit.*, p.5-6; "Strength in Numbers? Comparing EU Military Capabilities in 2009 with 1999". 2009. Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> C. Gauntier, 2012. "A 400M Program Update 2012." <http://www.slideshare.net/robbinlaird/a400-m-program-update-2012> (Accessed January 10, 2013).

<sup>29</sup> "Airbus Military A400M Completes Critical Flight-Test Phase." 2013. [http://www.airframer.com/news\\_story.html?release=19966](http://www.airframer.com/news_story.html?release=19966) (Accessed January 10, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> "A History of the Programme.". 2013. <http://www.eurofighter.com/eurofighter-typhoon/programme/history.html> (Accessed January 10, 2013).

	helicopter			exceeded 570 machines, both NH90 TTH transport version (Tactical Transport Helicopter) and sea one NFH (NATO Frigate Helicopter) <sup>31</sup>
Future Carrier	Aircraft carriers (United Kingdom/France)	3-planned	2012-2014	HMS Queen is to be launch in 2016 and HMS Prince of Wales in 2018 <sup>32</sup> , the future of second French aircraft carrier - PA2/CVF future in doubt <sup>33</sup>

**Source:** "European Military Capabilities", 2007. *EU Briefings* May 2007, p. 6

I recognize that both the EU as a whole as well as its members will not possess the capability essential for conducting successful major combat operations without significant US support. Given budgetary pressures, some countries will have to reallocate funds and other resources from defence to other sectors. On the other hand, it could be a strong incentive to strengthen European cooperation on a larger scale on the basis of the cooperation between the UK and France. Ambitions are always huge, here the I will confine myself to one issue which is the establishment of a Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF) which is to achieve full operating capability in 2016<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> „Portugalia zrezygnowała z NH90”. 2013. [http://www.altair.com.pl/news/view?news\\_id=8089](http://www.altair.com.pl/news/view?news_id=8089) (Accessed January 10, 2013).

<sup>32</sup> „Ślepka pod Prince of Wales”. 2013. [http://www.altair.com.pl/news/view?news\\_id=6215&q=lotniskowce%20brytyjskie](http://www.altair.com.pl/news/view?news_id=6215&q=lotniskowce%20brytyjskie) (Accessed January 10, 2013).

<sup>33</sup> “France’s PA2/CVF Carrier Project Stalled Until Whitepaper Verdict” 2013. <http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/france-steaming-ahead-on-pa2cvf-carrier-project-01621/> (Accessed January 10, 2013).

<sup>34</sup> “Britain and France Will Share Aircraft Carrier to Combat Defence Cuts, Says Admiral.” 2011. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1394185/Britain-France->

### **3. European Military Capabilities in Practice . European Military Contribution to the Out of Area Operations in Afghanistan and Libya**

The Libyan operation and the final stage of ISAF's Mission in Afghanistan were conducted in a completely new security environment. After years of unprecedented dominance, the current position of the US has significantly changed and now looks a lot more complicated. Washington's freedom of strategic action is constrained by its prolonged combat commitment to Afghanistan (2001-2014?), the trauma of the *Iraqi war* (2003-2011, somewhat reminiscent of the so-called "Vietnam syndrome"), never ending budgetary problems and last but not least the situation in the Middle East, especially the "New Deal" in the field of security and the rising tide of anti-Americanism in Gulf area<sup>35</sup>.

#### **3.1. "Afghan War"**

Americans still bear the majority of the burden of the Afghan mission both in terms of the number of soldiers and military equipment in the Afghan theatre as well as expenditures. This does not mean that

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share-aircraft-carrier-combat-defence-cuts-says-admiral.html (Accessed January 10, 2013); New Declaration Agreed at the UK-France Summit; Production for the United Kingdom." 2012. [http://www.targetlock.org.uk/typhoon/production\\_uk.html](http://www.targetlock.org.uk/typhoon/production_uk.html) (Accessed January 10, 2013); "Business Plan 2012-2015 Ministry of Defence 31 May 2012". 2012. <http://www.number10.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/MOD-2012-Business-Plan.pdf> (Accessed January 10, 2013).

<sup>35</sup> *Testimony of Admiral..., op.cit.* p. 82.

the EU members participating in the operation behave as “free riders”. Over the last few years the EU member states made significant contributions to US-led combat operation in Afghanistan. Europeans compose roughly 90% of the 40,000 non-US troops serving in Afghanistan. Three out of six regional commands and several of the 29 Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan are led by European allies<sup>36</sup>.

However, merely counting troops does not provide an accurate outlook of the European contribution to the operation. US European Command (EUCOM) actively supported European allies during their preparations for troop deployment to Afghanistan. Americans provided them pre-deployment training programmes, including among others: C-IED (Counter-Improvised Explosive Device) procedures, counterinsurgency intelligence analysis tailored to the Afghan security environment, operations of MRAP (Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected) and HMMWVs (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles) and finally – battalion-level counterinsurgency exercises. This is not the end of US military allies with equipment essential for the ISAF Mission in Afghanistan *inter alia*: communications systems, night vision devices and above mentioned C-IED systems (i.e. robots). The main objectives of these activities were to provide links and increase the level of interoperability between the allied forces being deployed and US forces in Afghanistan. Moreover, EUCOM ensured essential logistical capability to dislocate European troops and equipment to and from Afghanistan. In

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<sup>36</sup> *Testimony of Admiral...*, *op.cit.* p. 82.

spite of all European shortcomings, its contribution to the ISAF Mission, including troops, equipment and funding, is critical to meeting its current goal, which is the transition of security responsibility in Afghanistan by 2014<sup>37</sup>.

Despite the fact that CSDP structures and instruments are not militarily involved in Afghanistan, the majority of EU member states are. In most cases their participation in the mission meant to incur significant efforts. At the very beginning their governments sometimes had to struggle to legitimize their decision to participate in this operation. During the mission they suffered from a lack of significant successes and a few losses, *inter alia* the need to extend the military presence of their troops and a quite significant number of casualties. Summing up, it has reduced both readiness and the willingness for future large-scale expeditionary missions<sup>38</sup>.

### **3.2. *Odyssey Dawn and Unified Protector***

The crucial role of Europe both in terms of basing, military infrastructure and force contributions was even better visible during the operations in Libya (*Odyssey Dawn* and *Unified Protector*). However, also in this case USA played an important role. Initially, Washington decided to take a seemingly secondary role in the intervention. American support for UN resolutions 1970 and 1973 was not unconditional and excluded an involvement of US ground troops. The

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<sup>37</sup> *Testimony of Admiral...*, *op.cit.* p. 4-9, 89.

<sup>38</sup> C. Major, Ch. Mölling, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

coalition agreed on US leadership without debate, because of the necessity of unity of the command (joint command) and essential capabilities to command and control (C2) as well as the significant logistical support of this air campaign<sup>39</sup>.

The operations in Libya provide at least one important example of current European military capabilities to conduct out of area crisis response operations. The USA was forced to step in to refill European weapon stocks. US Defence Secretary Robert Gates chided the allies for having an insufficient inventory of weapons. Maybe it overshadowed real EU power a bit, but at the same time shed light on their huge deficits. The Libyan air campaign has brought additional important conclusions and lessons for the future. Gen. Stephane Abrial, the Commander of Allied Command Transformation had no doubt that European air forces “could not have performed to the same level of effectiveness without heavy contribution from the US”. Moreover, the Libyan case also highlighted European shortages in terms of C2, logistical support, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance equipment and assets essential to carry out combat as well as rescue tasks. Without US participation it would be difficult to ensure the same interoperability and coordination as has been seen during the Libyan operations.

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<sup>39</sup> J. Tirpak, 2011. “Lessons from Libya.” Air Force Vol. 94, No. 12, p. 34-36, <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Documents/2011/December%202011/1211libya.pdf>, accessed on: 10.01.2013; *Testimony of Admiral...*, *op.cit.* p. 1, 10-11, 31, 84; E. Fojón, ‘2011. “‘Odyssey Dawn’ – Beyond Libya” <http://europeangeostrategy.ideasoneurope.eu/2011/03/30/odyssey-dawn-beyond-libya/> (Accessed January 10, 2013).



Conclusions of these short deliberations seem to be quite simple. European states have to develop their own military capabilities independently – without US involvement<sup>40</sup>.

On the other hand, the Libya missions are another example of the weakness of transatlantic partnership not only on the line of US-Europe, but within the EU as well. The Iraqi crisis had proven that the transatlantic alliance is not an automatic mechanism. When it comes to Libya, while France and the United Kingdom were the founders of Security Council Resolution 1973, Germany abstained during voting and did not participate in the Libyan air-campaign. Moreover, we ought to remember about limited Italian contribution. The above mentioned examples highlight that the CSDP exist only in theory and the level of distrust as well as difference in foreign policy among allies remain meaningful<sup>41</sup>.

#### **4. The European Council (19-20 December 2013) – Step Forward or *nihil novi***

Since the above mentioned *St. Malo Declaration* a few initiatives have been presented, but the CSDP played undoubtedly merely a secondary role in the European integration. It is lagging far behind EU's economic and trade dimensions<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> E. Fojón, *op.cit.*; J. Tirpak, *op.cit.*, p. 34-38.

<sup>41</sup> E. Fojón, *op.cit.*

<sup>42</sup> Cf. P. Schellinck, 2013. "Conclusions of the European Council 19/20 December 2013." <http://www.european-news->

Antonio Missiroli from the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) thinks that the final conclusions coming from the last European Council meeting “can be considered a major step forward, also because it indicates a way forward, with explicit deadlines and responsibilities for reviewing, researching, and reporting”<sup>43</sup>. It is worth noting that the first part of *Conclusions* of the European Summit is devoted to CSDP. Almost ten out of twenty six pages of the document are dedicated to the security dimension of EU’s integration<sup>44</sup>. However, merely counting pages does not provide an accurate outlook of the importance attributed to the CSDP in the EU. Despite the hopes for a breakthrough text of the declaration it was not announced<sup>45</sup>. In the document the EU leaders highlighted the importance of defence and recognized the CSDP as a tool, which enhances “the security of European citizens and contributes to peace and stability in our neighbourhood and in the broader world”<sup>46</sup>. Moreover, it seems that they appropriately assessed the currently rapidly evolving European security environment. Due to restrictive austerity measures European countries are not able to develop desirable military capabilities. Another important issue is indicated in the document – the fragmentation of

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[agency.de/special\\_interest/conclusions\\_of\\_the\\_european\\_council\\_19\\_20\\_december\\_2013-57332/](http://agency.de/special_interest/conclusions_of_the_european_council_19_20_december_2013-57332/), (Accessed January 15, 2014).

<sup>43</sup> A. Missiroli, 2013. “European Defence – to be Continued.”, *EU ISS Alert No 44*, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> European Council 19/20 December 2013. 2013. “*Conclusions* EUCO 217/13”, p. 1-10.

<sup>45</sup> A. Missiroli, *op.cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> *European Council 19/20 December 2013...*, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

European defence markets, which undermines its competitive strength on the global scale<sup>47</sup>.

European leaders introduce a fairly optimistic assessment of progress in areas connected with the CSDP. They emphasize that nowadays EU contribution to the stabilization of the current security architecture *inter alia*: “7000 staff in 12 civilian missions and four military operations” and “EU unique ability to combine, in a consistent manner, policies and tools ranging from diplomacy, security and defence to finance, trade, development and justice”<sup>48</sup>. I only partially agree with the optimistic assessment and would like to emphasize once again that a gap between available and desired capabilities remained significant.

Regardless of the optimistic opinions on past achievements in the field of the CSDP, European leaders are aware of de facto their secondary role in the “old continent’s” security architecture. The only way to ensure stability and security in Europe is close EU collaboration with NATO, as described by the authors, “in a spirit of mutual reinforcement and complementarity its global (?)”<sup>49</sup>. Moreover, they called for improvement and aptly pointed out priority actions connected with the CSDP. They have identified three main so called axes:

- increasing the effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP;
- enhancing the development of capabilities;

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<sup>47</sup> *European Council 19/20 December 2013...*, *op. cit.*, p. 1-2.

<sup>48</sup> *European Council 19/20 December 2013...*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> *European Council 19/20 December 2013...*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

- strengthening Europe's defence industry<sup>50</sup>.

I share the pessimism of A. Missiroli who summarized the *Conclusions* of the last European Council in these words: "European Council meeting may disappoint those who expected either a big leap forward in terms of political ambition or a series of specific and quantified decisions to be implemented right away"<sup>51</sup>. It would be very difficult to recognize the final document as a revolution in EU military affairs. However, the last European Council meeting gives a few reasons for hope and optimism<sup>52</sup>.

Nevertheless, a great deal of truth remains in Frederick the Great's statement: "Diplomacy without military force is like music without instruments". Thus, European states have to develop military capabilities which allow them to perform a full catalogue of combat missions or tasks – from high-intensity, through nation- and state-building military operations to traditional peace-keeping tasks. In essence, European states are forced to cooperate more than they used to in the past<sup>53</sup>.

I attempted to outline the crucial issue connected with a development of European military capabilities to conduct full-scale

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<sup>50</sup> *European Council 19/20 December 2013...*, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> A. Missiroli, *op.cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> A. Missiroli, *op.cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> D. Braddon, *op.cit.*, p. 24; F. Burwell, D. Gompert, L. Lebl, J. Lodol, W. Slocombe, 2005. *Transatlantic Transformation: Building a NATO-EU Security Architecture*. Washington: Atlantic Council of the United States, p. 7-8.

combat missions. Conclusions coming from these considerations allow to draw several important findings. Firstly, apart from an adoption of specific institutional solutions more than ten years of the CSDP (former ESDP) have brought a few and above all only minor successes. As Zbigniew Brzezinski pointed out: "Europe remains a junior geopolitical partner to the United States in the semi unified West"<sup>54</sup>. Secondly, there is a fairly broad judgment that a significant military combat or even crisis management operation, especially one that must be sustained over time and at a substantial distance from home bases, will require US involvement through NATO. Thirdly, only limited military capabilities do not prevent EU from playing a significant role in meeting new security challenges. A Venusian Europe possess assets essential for peace-keeping and state-building tasks, which is complementary to American assets. Finally, the EU will be able to play the role of one of the most influential perhaps even number two or three on the globe in terms of military power. Prerequisite for an implementation of this optimistic scenario is a closer integration, especially in the field of security<sup>55</sup>. The document analyzed above adopted on December 2013 by the European Council seems to be merely the first, but significant step of the EU on the road to becoming an important global military power.

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<sup>54</sup> Z. Brzeziński, 2012. *Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power*, New York: Perseus Distribution, p. 53.

<sup>55</sup> S. Coonen, *op.cit.*, p. 67-68; F. Burwell, D. Gompert, L. Lebl, J. Lodal, W. Slocombe, *op.cit.*, p. 7-8; A. I. Zakharchenko, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

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