

UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA, CAMPUS OF FORLI'

DEFENCE WORKING GROUP

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The articles of the draft Constitutional Treaty concerning the European defence policy, I-15, I-39 and I-40, do not show any substantial change from the current situation in that respect.

The achievement of a European defence does not seem to be one of the main objectives pursued by the Member States' (MS, from now on) governments.

Even though some concessions in this field have been made, defence is still an all-national prerogative.

Several obstacles hinder the achievement of a common defence policy: not only are there political disagreements, but there also exist several differences between the MS' respective situations concerning:

1. Status
2. Military Capabilities
3. Defence Budget

1. Of the current 15 MS, only 11 are part of NATO; the remaining 4 (Austria, Finland, Ireland, Sweden) are "neutral" or "non-aligned" countries.

Such differences exist among the new-comers also.

2. MS differ in their capability to draw up military forces: only a few of them, today, are capable of operating outside of their territory.

3. There are clear differences among the MS' defence budgets as a share of their GDP. Only 5 of the 15 MS spend more than 2% of their national GDP in defence, and this figure does not include the gap with the new-comers.

In our opinion, artt. I-15, I-39, I-40 show little flexibility in the implementation of decision-making processes:

- Unanimity is required in the General Affairs Council, on a proposal by the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs (UMFA) or by a MS
- the European Parliament (EP) is given too marginal a function: mere consultation.

The figure of the UMFA, in relation to the functions he/she is assigned by the draft Constitutional Treaty, does not respond to the needs and objectives the EU sets for itself.

The UMFA's positive role of coordination and external representation is inadequate and it will not manage to lend credibility and quickness to the external action of the Union.

A central role might very likely be played by the future "European Armaments, Research and Military Capabilities Agency" whose task is "to contribute to identifying and [...] implementing any measure needed to strengthen the industrial and technological base of the defence sector, to participate in defining a European capabilities and armaments policy, and to assist the Council of Ministers in evaluating the improvement of military capabilities" (Art. I-40, comma 3).

In our view, this agency should try to work jointly with the following young institutions:

- The standing “Political and Security Committee” (PSC), which exercises, under the Council’s responsibility, “political control and strategic direction of the EU’s military response to a crisis” (Annex of Council Decision of 22 January 2001 setting up the Political and Security Committee – 2001/78/CFSP);
- The “European Union Military Committee” (EUMC) which is responsible for providing the PSC with military advice and recommendations on all military matters within the EU and it exercises military direction of all military activities within the EU framework, including the European Union Military Staff;
- “European Union Military Staff” (EUMS) which, within the Council structure, provides military expertise and support to the CESDP, including the conduct of EU-led military crisis management operations.

Since military operations cannot be financed by the Union’s budget, the need of some kind of mechanism for sharing and supporting common expenses is clear.

In order to guarantee a better interoperability, it is necessary to strengthen military training cooperation. As far as such a cooperation is concerned, we deem appropriate the “Defence Working Group” proposal to set up a Common Military Academy.

The setting up of a common defence depends on a unanimous decision by the European Council; until then, the draft Treaty provides for an ever closer cooperation within the Union’s framework in mutual defence matters.

Our hope, then, is that the unanimous decision is taken by the European Council as early as possible.