



# **The Future of ESDP: The British Position and Expectations for Austria**

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Beiträge zur Sicherheitspolitik

Mit der Einrichtung der so genannten Bundesheerreformkommission im Herbst 2003 sollten Grundlagen für die Reorganisation des Österreichischen Bundesheeres erarbeitet werden. Der im Juni 2004 fertig gestellte „Bericht der Reformkommission – Bundesheer 2010“ sieht im Wesentlichen eine aufgabenbezogene Neuausrichtung der Streitkräfte auf ambitionierte Auslandseinsätze vor. Im Bericht, der auf der Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsdoktrin basiert und das Konzept zur Teilstrategie „Verteidigungspolitik“ zugrunde legt, wurden keine sicherheitspolitischen Vorgaben zur Begründung des ambitionierteren Auslandseinsatzes erarbeitet, sondern vielmehr Konsequenzen für die Streitkräfteentwicklung aus den genannten Grundlagen abgeleitet. Der Nutzen von Auslandseinsätzen für Österreich konnte bislang weder in den strategischen Konzeptionen noch in den wissenschaftlichen Beiträgen ausreichend dargestellt werden.

Die Direktion für Sicherheitspolitik im Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung hat in einem Begleitprojekt zur Bundesheerreformkommission erstmals versucht, diese Frage systematisch aufzubereiten, und auch entsprechende Empfehlungen an die Reformkommission übermittelt, wobei die wichtigsten Ergebnisse im Bericht eingeflossen sind. Wichtige Einzelbeiträge dieses Projektes werden nachträglich in der Reihe „Beiträge zur Sicherheitspolitik“ zugänglich gemacht.

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# Introduction

This paper outlines the British position on the future development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). The timing for this topic is appropriate since the British Ministry of Defence published its new White Paper in December 2003, outlining the new priorities for British defence policy. Simultaneously, despite the collapse of the Brussels summit in December 2003, EU governments are reviewing the ESDP. This process includes considering questions such as what missions the EU should prepare to undertake, and what capabilities does the EU need to undertake those missions? In many respects Britain is in a unique position vis-à-vis the future of ESDP. It is the strongest military power in Europe, and plays a leading role in the development of ESDP. But the UK also sees itself as an important military partner of the United States, and if faced with a choice the UK will not jeopardize that relationship in favour of Europe. However, if the EU can and does help countries meet their NATO capability commitments – therefore making them more capable partners of the US – such efforts will receive the full support of the UK.

# 1. Britain's Contribution to ESDP

The European security strategy – approved at the Brussels summit in December 2003 – says that the EU must be prepared to do more to counter terrorists and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) (as well as resolving regional conflicts and preventing the collapse of failed states). However, the UK does not envisage these new priorities as providing a mandate for EU military missions to counter proliferators of WMDs or terrorists outside EU borders. Instead, the UK realistically expects the EU to undertake only Petersberg task-type operations beyond its borders. These missions range from humanitarian assistance to separating sides in a civil war. For external counter-terrorism or counter-proliferation, the UK government assumes that NATO or a US-led 'coalition of the willing' would undertake such missions.

Regardless, the UK is well placed to meet EU and NATO capability commitments. For example, the UK is making a wide range of assets available for the EU's headline goal. The maritime elements include an aircraft carrier, two nuclear-fuelled submarines, four frigates, and one helicopter carrier. The total number of troops Britain is supplying to the headline goal is 12,500 (only Germany is offering more). The land components include a mobile joint headquarter, an armed mechanised brigade, and an amphibious brigade. And the UK will make up to 72 combat aircraft, and 58 transport planes and helicopters available for EU missions.

The European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) – the EU programme designed to help increase member-state's military prowess – matches the similar NATO programme (known as the Prague Capability Commitments), in most areas, with the exception of network-centric warfare capabilities. Indeed, from a British perspective, the ECAP is a valuable extra political tool to help countries to meet their NATO commitments as well.

The UK already has much of the equipment that other European countries are trying to acquire through the ECAP programme. Furthermore, the UK has increased its defence spending slightly, in part to ensure it can meet its EU and NATO commitments. And Britain is acquiring useful capabilities that meet EU and NATO commitments, like Storm Shadow cruise missiles, the Eurofighter jet, and the A400M transport plane. Perhaps the easiest way to demonstrate the extent of British military capabilities is by assessing how the UK can contribute to the main aims of the ECAP (and to those of the NATO programme), namely: deployability; sustainability; effective engagement; force protection; and C4ISR.<sup>1</sup>

For deployability, the UK has a professional army with much recent experience of expeditionary warfighting. The UK has both transport planes and helicopters. Furthermore, the UK is the only European country with transport planes that can carry the heaviest loads – the UK is leasing 4 C-17s from the US. The UK is also a participant in the A400M transport plane project and the first deliveries to Britain are expected in 2011. Finally the British navy has 3 aircraft carriers, and landing craft including six roll-on roll-off vessels. For sustainability the UK has a small number of tankers, and some experience with complex air-to-air refuelling-assisted combat operations.

For effective engagement, the Royal Air Force has approximately 400 combat aircraft. The UK is also a partner in the Eurofighter and Joint-Strike-Fighter (JSF) programmes (of which more in section 2). For precision-strike the UK has Paveway missiles, and Britain, like France and Italy, is acquiring Storm Shadow cruise missiles. For suppressing or destroying enemy air defences the UK has some anti-

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<sup>1</sup> C4ISR = command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance.

radiation missiles (ARMs), although unlike Germany and Italy it has no dedicated aircraft specifically for launching ARMs. Finally the UK has a regiment (3,000-5,000) of Special Forces (SAS).

To protect its forces, the UK is re-assessing its combat identification equipment after a spate of 'friendly-fire' incidents in Iraq. Furthermore, the UK also wishes to develop its ability to deal with the threat of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons. Britain has a squadron of search-and-rescue helicopters.

The UK would make its national headquarters available for EU missions, if the EU was not going to use the planners and headquarters assets at NATO's SHAPE. But like all European governments, the UK is seeking to improve its C4ISR assets. The UK depends to a large degree on the US for observation satellite imagery. But Britain has its own constellation of communications satellites, Skynet V, and is investing in digital communications at the tactical level (Bowman), and at the operational level (Falcon). In addition, the British armed forces have four squadrons of reconnaissance aircraft, one squadron of electronic intelligence aircraft, and eight Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). Finally the UK is also acquiring a new airborne battlefield surveillance system (Astor) which will improve its surveillance, reconnaissance, and target acquisition capabilities further.

All together, it is reasonable to say that the UK already meets more NATO and EU capability commitments than any other European government.

Although the results of ECAP process have been mixed, the UK would like the plan to focus increasingly on areas such as rapid deployment and sustainability of forces. That is why, when Tony Blair met Jacques Chirac at Le Touquet in February 2003, they agreed that the EU should be able to deploy air, sea, and land forces within 5-10 days. That would be a great improvement on the EU's current plan for a so-called reaction force that should be able to move at 60 days' notice. Furthermore, at their November 2003 summit, the British agreed with the French to have a 1,500-strong rapid force available for UN-mandated EU missions. The UK would like all EU member-states to contribute to this effort, in part to reinforce NATO's own plan for a response force: the same troops would be available to the EU and NATO.

At the November 2002 Prague summit governments agreed to set up a NATO response force of 20,000 elite troops with supporting air and sea components. The idea behind this force is to make NATO's military organisation more useful for dealing with today's security environment.<sup>2</sup> The UK sees the NATO response force as the catalyst for NATO forces' transformation, since it emphasises flexibility, deployability, technologically advanced and inter-operable forces. Along with Spain, France, and Germany, the UK is one of the main contributors to the NATO force so far. From the British perspective the NATO force is 'quasi-standing', meaning that a country can withdraw its troops at any time and use them elsewhere. For example, if the US does not want to participate in a military intervention close to Europe's periphery, European governments could still deploy their parts of the NATO force.

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<sup>2</sup> H. Binnendijk and R. Kugler, "Transforming European Forces", *Survival*, vol. 44, no. 3/2002.

## 2. Trends in British Military Planning and Procurement

British Ministry of Defence (MoD) planners prepare for a wide range of military operations. There are basically four types of external operations that British armed forces can expect to undertake, with a wide range of scope and partners:

1. autonomous small-scale British-only missions, like the deployment to Sierra Leone in 2000,
2. EU-only operations, like the Congo mission in 2003,
3. NATO operations, which should include the US as a partner, like Kosovo in 1999,
4. as part of a US-led 'coalition of the willing', like the Iraq war in 2003.

Given the size and capabilities of its armed forces, its large defence budget, and a global strategic culture – unlike most European countries – the UK can afford to plan for such a wide range of military tasks around the world. This does not come without its challenges, such as ensuring the UK can fight alongside the more developed American armed forces, and avoiding troop overstretch with numerous external deployments.

The British MoD produced a new White Paper titled "Delivering Security in a Changing World" in December 2003. The 2003 Iraq war had a clearly had a major impact on the thinking in the White paper. For example, the British Ministry of Defence has drawn some lessons from the British capture of Basra in the Iraq war – an operation that would be at the upper end of the range that the EU is likely to undertake. The British only just had enough mortar-locating radars, transport helicopters and roll-on roll-off ferries.

In addition, it is clear from the Iraqi conflict that the transatlantic equipment gap is widening and Europeans are finding it increasingly difficult to fight with the Americans. For example, most European armies lack the new communications technologies that allow the Americans to engage in "network-centric warfare" – meaning that a commander can watch on a single screen the deployment of friendly and hostile forces in a battlespace, in real time, and then order precision strikes. That is why the British White Paper places so much emphasis on acquiring "network enabled capabilities", so that the British armed forces can carry out so-called "effects-based operations". In his introduction to the White Paper, the British Defence Secretary, Geoff Hoon, explains this vision:

"We have also had to look at how we can best take advantage of the opportunities offered by new technologies to deliver military effects in different ways. Our focus is now on delivering flexible forces able to configure to generate the right capability in a less predictable and more complex operational environment. This will require us to move away from simplistic platform-centric planning, to a fully 'network-enabled capability' able to exploit effects-based planning and operations, using forces which are truly adaptable, capable of even greater levels of precision and rapidly deployable. This implies significant changes to the way we plan, prepare and execute operations, placing different pressures and demands on our people, equipment, supporting infrastructure and processes."<sup>3</sup>

"Effects-based operations", are operations that can involve delivering up to eight different types of military effects – namely to prevent, stabilise, contain, deter, coerce, disrupt, defeat, and destroy. A "network enabled capability" is the UK's term for the capability enhancement achieved through the effective linkage of platforms and people through a network. It replaces the expression "network centric capability" used in the Strategic Defence Review New Chapter, drawn up in 2002.

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<sup>3</sup> UK Ministry of Defence, "Delivering Security in a Changing World", Defence White Paper, December 2003, p.1. Available on <[www.mod.uk](http://www.mod.uk)>.

Furthermore, The UK only plans to undertake major operations with the US, as part of a coalition or in NATO. Thus, the White Paper is explicit when it says the primary focus of UK defence planning and acquisition is interoperability with the US:

"To exploit this effectively, our Armed Forces will need to be interoperable with US command and control structures, match the US operational tempo and provide those capabilities that deliver the greatest impact when operating alongside the US. Continuing exchanges with the US on issues such as rapid deployment planning, developing doctrine and concepts, and new technologies, will remain important. The key to retaining interoperability with the US, for our European allies as well as the UK, is likely to rest in the successful operation of NATO's new Allied Command for Transformation."<sup>4</sup>

There is an open question – yet to be answered – as to what effect the focus on acquiring "network enabled capabilities" will have on the UK's procurement plans. The British Defence Secretary points this challenge out in the White Paper:

"Resources must be directed at those capabilities that best deliver the range of effects required, while we must have the determination to dispense with those capabilities that do not. We expect to be in a position to announce significant changes to the current and future capabilities of the Armed Forces and supporting infrastructure next year. These will be considered in the continuing work to establish the nature of a sustainable and affordable future force structure."<sup>5</sup>

The UK does not expect to take on a major military operation unless it is conducted with the US, but there is recognition in London that the Europeans will almost certainly run more military operations in the future – even without American help. That is why the UK has advocated that the EU needs new rapid force goals.

The EU will take in 10 new members in 2004, and will have a new frontier. New borders mean new responsibilities, particularly with fragile states such as Moldova, and unstable regions like the Caucasus and Africa on Europe's doorstep. Across the Atlantic, US priorities are still focused on North Korea, Iran and Iraq. America will therefore often not want to be involved in conflicts in the arc of instability that runs around the EU's eastern and southern flanks.

Nor should Europeans wait for the US to put out their fires: this was, after all, the principal rationale for the Anglo-French initiative at St. Malo in 1998 to develop a robust EU defence policy. In addition, these conflicts may not always require peacekeeping deployments, but more dangerous interventions as well. For example, the British capture of Basra in the Iraq war is an operation that would be at the upper end of the range that the EU is likely to undertake. In those situations the UK will fight with French, German, Italian and Spanish soldiers, not Americans. That is also good for the US. If the Europeans are able to look after their own backyard, that would mean one less region for the US to worry about.

But to help ensure the success of Europe-only missions, EU governments need to think about developing a European military doctrine for high-end interventions. Moreover, a more effective EU defence policy that results in much-improved European military prowess might even convince the Pentagon to use NATO for military interventions and not just peacekeeping.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.8.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p.1.

### 3. British Expectations of Structured Co-operation

EU governments are currently negotiating a constitutional treaty. One of the most contentious issues was EU defence policy, but thanks to a compromise between France, Germany and the UK at the Naples foreign ministers meeting on November 28<sup>th</sup> 2003, that issue will no longer make or break the constitutional negotiations.

But until the Naples agreement it looked like defence would be the most difficult issue to resolve at the inter-governmental negotiations. At their summit on April 29<sup>th</sup>, Germany, France, Belgium and Luxembourg agreed to co-operate more closely on defence matters in seven ways. Six of these were not particularly controversial. But the seventh idea was the establishment of an EU operational planning staff in the Brussels suburb of Tervuren.

There are many technical arguments for and against an EU operational planning cell. For example, if the EU is to conduct autonomous operations, it will need its own operational planners. The argument against is that the EU can rely on NATO planners at SHAPE for a so-called Berlin-plus operation, like that in Macedonia, when it decides to work with NATO; or the EU can use a national headquarters, duly modified to reflect the nationalities of those taking part in the mission, as it did for the mission to Bunia in the Congo, when a French headquarter was in charge.

These technical arguments, however, were not the issue. The headquarters proposal, strongly backed by Gerhard Schröder and Jacques Chirac, was of huge political importance. The four governments involved were the same four who opposed the Iraq war. Those European countries that supported the US on Iraq (Britain, Spain, Italy, and the new member-states) were suspicious of its real motives. Many in the Bush administration in Washington saw a European military headquarters as a direct competitor with NATO, and perceived that the idea was nothing more than an anti-US proposal.

However, during the summer of 2003 emotions started to subside. Tony Blair was worried that the French and Germans might go ahead without the British, thereby denying the UK influence over European defence policy – the one policy area where Britain can lead in Europe. At the same time, Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schroeder came to the conclusion that a European defence policy without the British would not be credible. Meeting in Berlin in September, Schröder, Chirac and Blair sketched out the framework for a compromise on European defence, and in late November the details were finally agreed. The deal involves three elements.

First, the EU will deploy a small group of operational planners to SHAPE, NATO's planning headquarters near Mons. This group will work on ensuring a smooth relationship between the EU and NATO on 'Berlin-plus' missions, when the EU borrows NATO assets. There will also be a new unit of about 30 operational planners for the EU's military staff, which currently consists mainly of 'strategic planners' (their job is to advise EU foreign ministers on the operational plans that may come out of SHAPE or a national military headquarters). The new unit will help with the planning of EU military missions. It has been agreed that, when the EU conducts an autonomous EU mission, a national headquarters will normally be in charge. However, if there is unanimous consent, the EU may ask its operational planners to play a role in conducting an autonomous mission. They would need to be beefed up with additional resources before they were able to run a mission on their own.

Second, the governments should agree that the constitutional treaty includes articles on 'structured co-operation', so that an avant-garde group can be established for European defence. But the wording is clear that this avant-garde group will take the lead on developing military capabilities, rather than establishing a politicised "European Defence Union" in competition with NATO.



As currently worded, the constitution allows a group to establish structured co-operation without the consent of all EU members. The new wording will also make it clear that all member-states which meet prescribed criteria will be allowed to join the avant-garde. The Italian government – which held the EU presidency at the time of the Naples meeting – drafted a protocol that would define the criteria for deciding who can join the structured co-operation. These criteria are based on military capabilities and member-states have until 2007 to meet them. Given that EU countries have very different military capabilities, closer co-operation amongst a smaller group of states makes sense as it could do much to improve the EU's overall military effectiveness.

Third, the treaty articles on mutual military assistance will be amended. The article has been watered down, with a references to members aiding each other "in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter", and to NATO remaining "the foundation of members' collective defence and the forum for its implementation". Thus the EU will not be making claims to be a collective defence organisation of the sort that could rival NATO.

It is worth remembering that until the treaty is signed the defence articles and the structured co-operation entry criteria can still change (the new headquarters arrangement was approved at the Brussels European Council in December 2003). Some or even many of the new ESDP provisions tentatively agreed upon at the IGC could well be put in place before, and if necessary without a new constitutional treaty. The enlarged Union may decide to put into practice whatever the Nice treaty does not explicitly forbid.

This applies, first and foremost, to the Agency (Art. III-212 of the draft Treaty). Formally open to every member state, it is expected to constitute an 'umbrella' for different undertakings in the field of armaments (OCCAR, WEAO, LoI) from the identification of shortfalls in assets and capabilities for all, to proposing specific industrial projects of a more exclusive nature, and perhaps encouraging some degree of market liberalisation. It remains to be seen to what extent its provisions and spin-offs will be fully compatible with the relevant restrictions that the Nice Treaty still enshrines (Art. 27 and Art. 296).

This applies also to the Convention's Art. III-211, whereby the Council "may entrust the implementation of a task to a group of member states having the necessary capability and desire to undertake" it. This is already the prevailing format of actual operations, as was the case in Congo in 2003. ESDP arrangements entail no obligation for all the member states to participate actively in ground missions. In fact, 'coalitions of the willing' tend to vary in size and numbers according to the geographical location and functional nature of each mission: from EUPM to Concordia, from Artemis to Proxima, the Union's crisis management operations conducted so far have already taken very different formats and formations. To a certain extent, therefore, Art. III-211 could be considered almost superfluous, though certainly welcome in terms of legitimacy. Moreover, if "a group of member states" is willing to develop a specific policy (albeit without "military or defence implications") towards, for instance, a given neighbourhood of the Union – from the Caucasus to the Mediterranean – the Nice Treaty's Art. 27 would already provide a legal basis for such 'enhanced cooperation' in external policy and civilian crisis management.

This could also apply to 'structured cooperation', although the same Art. 27 explicitly rules out 'enhanced cooperation' on defence and military matters. If all member-states were ready to subscribe to the revised Art. III-213 and the attached protocol, then the key elements could be incorporated in the new 'Headline Goal for 2010' and be made common policy targets for all EU members.

The protocol includes general benchmarks – in terms of expenditure on equipment, participation in defence industrial projects, and availability and readiness of forces for high-end operations, especially in

response to requests from the UN – that could be met by many countries within a reasonable time frame. The protocol says member-states should try to meet these goals by 2007, although this date may be pushed back, depending on when the new treaty might be ratified.

Since it seems to be unrealistic to push member-states to increase their defence spending in the present political and budgetary climate, this is why the protocol focuses on how defence money is spent rather than how much is spent. The protocol is not specific beyond saying that member-states will be expected to spend a certain amount on new equipment, and presumably on certain types of equipment based on the goals of the ECAP process. What is also unclear is what is meant by a member-state being required to participate in a "main European programme". This could mean that only those states that participate in major Europe-only equipment programmes – like the seven countries in the A400M programme – could be part of 'structured co-operation'. Another interpretation might include smaller bilateral projects which clearly help certain member-states meet ECAP goals. Or it could also include transatlantic programmes such as the Joint-Strike-Fighter, in which 4 EU members are participating and is clearly a major capability to have available for EU missions.

The other central aspect for participation in 'structured co-operation' is to provide a combat unit of roughly 1,500 rapidly deployable troops for EU missions, including transport assets. Member-states have two options for meeting this goal: they can either try to supply troops and assets as a national unit or contribution; or member-states can do this in co-operation with other member-states through a multinational formation. The protocol is unclear about what types of support assets member-states should provide – for example do transport capabilities mean that member-states have to have transport planes or ships, or would helicopters alone suffice?

While the criteria will probably remain rather general in the constitutional treaty's protocol, they may be further qualified – in quantitative terms, for instance, and possibly by specifying the nature of the relevant "main European equipment programmes" – in the new Headline Goal. In doing so, the Union would also kill the claims of exclusion that marred the IGC debates. If only some EU members end up meeting those specific requirements, there will be a very solid case for shifting to some form of 'structured cooperation' – but after having exhausted the collective option.

For those states that cannot participate in structured co-operation – even through multinational formations – this will undoubtedly have an impact both politically and operationally. Politically, it will be very difficult for a member-state that doesn't participate in 'structured co-operation' to have influence – if any – over the future development of ESDP. This is because the member-states participating in the 'structured co-operation' group will set down the capability standards for fulfilling EU objectives, and therefore will also form the group that takes on high-end EU military interventions.

Operationally, excluded member-states cannot expect to perform much beyond regular peacekeeping tasks, like the Macedonia mission. This also means that that excluded member-states' armed forces have less incentive for reform than those participating in 'structured co-operation'. Also, exclusion from 'structured co-operation' could mean less influence for a member-state – even if they have a vote in the Council – in some aspects of CFSP, where an EU CFSP action in a particular region or towards a particular country may require at least the threat of a high-end intervention, thereby depending exclusively on those member-states that do participate in 'structured co-operation'.

The UK expects to make available a national combat unit of 1,500 troops for high-end EU missions. And the UK is committed to contributing to the NATO Response Force, because it sees it as the catalyst for NATO force transformation. However, aside from the NATO response force, it is difficult to imagine what other types of standing multinational formations the UK would be willing to contribute to. This is for

political and operational reasons. First, a Europe-only force formation would smack of a "Euro-army", which is anathema in the British public debate. The right-wing press would say that the UK is turning its back on its trusted ally – the US – in favour of militarily weak and unreliable continentals. Since the Labour government may hold a referendum on British entry to the Euro currency – if it wins the next general election – force integration on a Europe-only basis may prove too politically sensitive for the foreseeable future. For the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to have any chance of winning a euro referendum, he cannot afford to be perceived as damaging the "special relationship" with the US in any way.

On a more practical level, the UK would only be interested in a standing Europe-only multinational formation as long as it was modelled on the NATO response force, i.e. technologically advanced, flexible, and rapidly deployable. To consider such an option, the British MoD would need to be convinced that it would not divert resources away from the UK's efforts to develop network enhanced capabilities (NEC). Indeed the British MoD would probably only agree to participate in a Europe-only force, if it helped to develop British, and other European allies', network enhanced capabilities. Otherwise the concern in the British MoD would be that a Europe-only formation might adversely affect the ability of the British armed forces to interoperate with the US armed forces.

## **4. British Expectations of Austria**

The British armed forces have worked successfully with Austrian peacekeepers in places such as the Balkans. However, given that Austria is not a member of NATO, and that Austrian defence policy is formed in a very different political environment to that of Britain, nor does it have extensive military assets, the UK would not be surprised if Austria did not participate in 'structured co-operation'. Although the UK would prefer for all EU member-states – including Austria – to participate if at all possible.

The British want the capability criteria for entry into 'structured co-operation' to match those for the NATO response force as much as possible. Thus, the criteria should emphasise above all deployability; sustainability; effective engagement; force protection; and C4ISR. From a British perspective it would seem to be difficult for Austria to participate in 'structured co-operation', which aims to give the EU a robust high-end intervention capability. Austria still has conscript troops – which tend not to be very useful for external missions –, very few elite or special forces, although Austria does have some air transport and air combat assets.

This is not to say that Britain would not value the input of Austrian soldiers in EU peacekeeping missions – where they have already acquitted themselves well. Britain, in fact would look to Austria to be a contributor to EU peacekeeping missions. However, if Austria wishes to participate in 'structured co-operation', and therefore in high-end EU military missions, from a British perspective perhaps Austria should consider co-operating with its EU neighbours, like the Czech Republic and Hungary, to develop a multinational force formation for EU high-end missions. That way Austria could participate in 'structured co-operation'.

Finally, there is an understanding in London that Austria may be also constrained – especially in what types of missions Austria can undertake, such as high-end military interventions – by the way its defence policy is shaped by domestic politics, and its policy of non-alignment. Britain, as a member of NATO, and with a very different political-military culture and tradition does not face such political constraints. However, even if Austria could not participate in 'structured co-operation' in the beginning (whether it be 2007 or later), the hope in London would be that Austria would have enough incentive to participate at a later stage.