



# Which Defence Posture for Austria at the Beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

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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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*Der Autor gibt in dieser Studie ausschließlich seine persönliche Meinung wieder.*

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## Austria's Defence Posture: An Understanding

During the Cold war and in direct contact with the forces of the Warsaw Pact, neutral Austria set up a robust defence policy based on conscription with a heavy reliance on a well-trained militia rapidly deployable on a war footing screened by a small ready-to-go land force. This posture still influences Austria's defence policy, although two significant changes of strategic proportion make a radical transformation of Vienna's military policy inescapable. The first one is obviously the end of the Cold war – and subsequently the end of the secessionist wars in Yugoslavia in Austria's immediate neighbourhood, as a result of which there is no longer any immediate military threat to Austrian territory. The second change, which will probably have more long-term consequences for Austria's defence posture, is Austria's membership of the European Union.

Austria is one of the four member states of the enlarged Union which have no direct access to the sea. Consequently, its armed forces (*Bundesheer*) are structured around two services: land (*Kommando Landstreitkräfte – KdoLdSK*) and air forces (*Kommando Luftstreitkräfte – KdoLuSK*). In common with many other small and medium-sized European countries Austria is also highly involved in peacekeeping activities. From a military stand point this has led to the creation of an original and specific command structure, the *Kommando Internationale Einsätze* (Austrian International Operations Command) with two specialized centres<sup>1</sup> which give Vienna a highly regarded role in the activities of the CENCOOP (Central European Co-Operation for Peace Support). Austria is also one of the 18 members of the enlarged Union which spends less than EUR 5 billion on defence and have fewer than 50,000 personnel in their active forces. Austria therefore has very few military resources devoted to specialised tasks such as air defence where, for example, only about 16 operational pilots are able to fly the J-35 OE Draken.

Like those of many other European countries the Austrian armed forces have a good standard of training and motivation; nevertheless they remain largely based on "legacy" structures and systems aimed at fighting mechanised forces from the Soviet bloc. New and innovative concepts as expressed in the Security and Defence Doctrine adopted by the Austrian Parliament in December 2001 or new structures such as the ZEV are signs of a modernisation of Austria's armed forces. Nevertheless, past structures and organisations are placing a heavy burden on limited resources and constrain the pace of the transformation of Vienna's defence posture. The apparent abundance of structures and garrisons in the Austrian armed forces (HQs, units, schools, etc.) therefore seems questionable. According to data

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<sup>1</sup> *Zentrum für Einsatzvorbereitung (ZEV) and Zentrum für Internationale Kooperation (ZIK).*

provided by the Austrian Ministry of Defence there are at least 100 organisations, installations or barracks in the various provinces, with units or organisations sometimes split between different locations.

As a rough comparison, the complete infrastructure of the French Air Force (880 fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters) is distributed between 32 bases (13 MOB, 11 schools and HQ bases, 8 bases for logistics and miscellaneous purposes). The French army has approximately 170 infrastructure elements (on French soil) with a total of 168,000 personnel manning 106 regiments (13 of which are deployed overseas) forming 15 brigades plus specialised units.

If one considers the various branches of the armed forces (*Waffengattungen*), abundance is also a key feature of the Austrian military: 20 specialties are represented which altogether place a heavy burden on a limited defence budget (1.5 billion euro in 2002) one of the lowest in the EU in terms of percentage of GNP.

If one considers the overall peacetime strength of the Austrian armed forces in relation to its population the ratio is about 1/235, whilst in countries such as France or the UK it is about 1/171. The difference is not significant in itself; but what is significant is the level of military action which is possible with a given force structure. In the case of both France and the UK, those countries maintain organisations and force structures which allow them to act at the strategic and operative level of warfare. Austria is capable of acting only at the upper level of tactical engagement of forces, a characteristic it shares with most EU countries. The issue here is not to draw any comparison between Austria and the two main military powers in the EU, but to draw attention to the relationship between a given military structure and its output in terms of military efficiency. This issue appears to be at the core of Vienna's present political-military dilemma: how to radically transform its military posture for a renewed efficiency without creating internal political turmoil?

## Options for Transformation

Various avenues are open, at least in theory, to Vienna to transform its armed forces. The first one is obviously the perpetuation of the present status quo with some adjustment such as the development of a ready-to-go force of about 2,000 personnel, earmarked to fulfil Austria's commitment to the European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF). This self-defence policy with a limited participation in ESDP (European Defence and Security Policy) appears to be an option which corresponds to the orientation of the major political parties in Austria at the end of 2001, even if a large part of the Austrian population remains strongly committed to the concept of neutrality which is still the legal position of Austria. Such a legal position can occasionally lead to awkwardness in Austria's relations with its EU partners: overflights by allied planes (including those of its EU partners) were not allowed during the Kosovo war as the NATO operation had not been authorised by the United Nations Security Council; on the contrary purely American overflights to support national US operations in Afghanistan were permitted since the UNSC had provided legal cover for the campaign.

A second option to transform Austria's military posture may be to redirect Vienna's military potential towards a kind of "blue helmet" type of force. The absence of any direct threat to Austria, the fact that the country is now surrounded (with the exception of neutral Switzerland) by countries which are members of the EU and NATO has deeply modified Austria's strategic environment: land and air threats are now practically non-existent. In addition to "blue helmet" missions, border control activities to prevent illegal immigration could also be assigned to the military. Overall, this kind of evolu-

tion could lead to what the Swiss call the "constabularisation of the armed forces". The result of this type of transformation may be a greater difficulty, in the long term, to justify the militia system which found its *raison d'être* in the defence of the homeland against the Eastern bloc. The attachment of the Austrian population to its armed forces could however be perpetuated under that kind of transformation and a stronger commitment on the part of Vienna to peacekeeping/peace support forces could represent a valid national option. This option presupposes the transformation of the nature of the armed forces from their current status of "fighting forces" (1., 6. und 7. *Jägerbrigade*; 3. und 4. *Panzergranadierebrigade*; *Jagdkommando*; *Luftstreitkräfte* whose professionalism has been demonstrated in Austria's participation in international air exercises such as *Amadeus 99* or *Amadeus 2002* with French, Italian (for *Amadeus 2002*) and Swiss air forces) to low-intensity/blue helmet capabilities without real combat capabilities. What Austria would gain in terms of greater international visibility for its armed forces it might lose in terms of medium/high intensity warfare knowledge and capabilities.

The total absence of any direct military threat to Austria in the medium and long term could also lead to a third option, namely the total disbandment of military forces compensated by an increase in security forces for internal and border duties (gendarmerie and police force). This solution might satisfy part of the Austrian population, but it would be a significant shift toward total pacifism, a solution that no other nation dare to adopt and which would isolate Austria in the EU. It would be difficult to measure the gain drawn from such a choice in terms of influence. It would also contradict Vienna's aim to provide forces, although in limited number, to the ERF or for peacekeeping duties. The fourth choice, which appears to be the one able to bring the most important dividends to Austria, is a full participation and commitment to ESDP. This is outlined in detail below.

## **ESDP: From Phase One (1999–2003) to Phase Two?**

For almost 50 years, at least in the case of the initial six signatories of the Treaty of Rome, each country of the Union has undergone substantial political, economical, juridical, structural and even "cultural" transformation as part of the process of European integration. Sparing very few domains, this integration has reached a qualitative dimension that makes the Union a centre of power in a multilateral world. Indeed, European integration is above all a political project. It is aimed at the creation of an unprecedented historical union, probably the most innovative regional integration ever seen in history between countries which have waged war against one another so many times and which now confront challenges with shared, integrated and homogenous policies, also in the fields of defence and foreign affairs. The European construction is thus a complex network of interrelated policies whose implementation is transforming the nature of the Union. As such, it remains a painful process which may, sometimes, lead outsiders to think about its potential if not probable failure. As French President, Jacques Chirac recently put it: "*Europe ... is not a freeway on which everyone can move fast. It is a steep and difficult mountain ... some walk a bit faster, some more slowly because they are tired, others twist their ankles in a hole. But, we have never turned back*"<sup>2</sup>.

The EU is now becoming the key actor on the Old Continent as well as a world player. Accordingly, US analysts have acknowledged that transatlantic relations are affected by such developments: "*the transatlantic relationship is in the midst of a wrenching transformation ... the current tensions in the transatlantic relationship stem more from the changing internal balance of power between the*

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<sup>2</sup> Jacques Chirac, interview with *The New York Times*, 22 September 2003.

*United States and Europe*"<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, Washington circles sometimes have difficulty fully understanding the meaning of the EU integration process. The ESDP is a good example of one such misunderstanding.

At the end of the 80's the idea of establishing a system of "European defence" was resurrected, becoming a new goal for West Europeans after past failures in the 50's and 60's. In 1987, leaders of the WEU countries agreed that "*we are convinced that the construction of an integrated Europe will remain incomplete as long as it does not include security and defence*"<sup>4</sup>. The new international strategic landscape resulting from the collapse of the former Soviet bloc, combined with greater European assertiveness on the world scene, explained in large part why security and defence matters became part of the European construction project. Indeed, the Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties provided the legal framework to move on. Both treaties defined in broad terms the scope and the purpose of the ESDP.

However, if the legal framework was there the content did not immediately follow. After several years of semi-paralysis, a creative move for actually developing European defence arrangements became possible following the Franco-British declaration of Saint-Malo in December 4, 1998. London and Paris agreed to jointly and actively work to make the European Union "*able to carry out some security tasks on its own*"<sup>5</sup>. Subsequent agreement with Germany and the others members of the Union triggered the first concrete move to develop ESDP.

A first cycle was then opened. Although it has been closed with the Iraqi crisis the dynamics of the process are far from dead. ESDP as it was conceived does meet a need in the present international system. According to various opinion polls (notably the Eurobaromètre polls) it is also welcomed by a majority of Europeans. Political leaders are aware of those aspirations.

The first phase of establishing an EU defence policy has been marked by a number of noteworthy characteristics. Firstly, it has been accomplished in a period in which there has been, by and large, a deep rooted perception in most of Europe that now the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the Balkan crises of the 90's have been tackled, there is no longer any pressing conventional military threat to the continent. Of course terrorism, particularly after "9/11", and weapons of mass destruction are often mentioned as major concerns. However, the former is largely viewed as an issue for the police and intelligence services, and the latter is less immediate after the intelligence failure concerning Iraqi WMD and the progressive normalization of political relations between the Western world and Libya, Iran and, possibly, North Korea. This state of affairs goes a long way to explaining the limited financial resources currently devoted to defence spending in most European states, with the exception of a very few countries, such as France or the United Kingdom, and in contrast to the US. In terms of threat perception, there is a widespread – and possibly mistaken - feeling that Europe has entered into a period of "strategic pause". As a consequence, the key parameters used to frame, for example, French defence policy as restated after "9/11"<sup>6</sup> have remained almost unchanged since 1994, when they were defined and outlined in a White Paper on defence: deterrence, prevention, protection and projection of forces.

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<sup>3</sup> "Friends by Necessity" Craig Kennedy and Stephen Grant, Worldlink, <<http://www.worldlink.co.uk/story>>.

<sup>4</sup> Preamble of The Hague Platform on European Security, WEU, 27 October 1987.

<sup>5</sup> Tony Blair, Speech, RUSI, 8 March 1999, London.

<sup>6</sup> Loi de Programmation militaire 2003–2008, adopted by Parliament in 2002.

The current situation does not mean however that European military forces are not involved in operations. In October 2003 some 36,000 French soldiers were deployed overseas, either for military operations (5,200 in Ivory Coast; 3,200 in Kosovo; 1,200 in Bosnia-Herzegovina; 1,000 in Central Asia in connection with Afghanistan where French special forces are operating under US command) or permanently based according to the concept of prevention. Britain's conventional force deployments abroad were proportionately even greater with their various commitments, including occupation duty in Iraq. Projection, which implies the possession of expeditionary forces, is also a principle which has been prioritised by German Defence Minister Peter Struck who recently proposed a significant overhaul of the Bundeswehr<sup>7</sup>.

The second characteristic of the first round of ESDP has been the strong desire in many European countries not to alienate the Americans. The differential of power between the two sides of the Atlantic during the Cold War called for US leadership on West European security affairs. Such a position made America the "indispensable country" in the words of former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Old habits take a long time to die. Fascination with the US has remained widespread in Europe and continues to be translated into a quiet, although effective, acceptance of America's priorities and agendas in most parts of Europe. In several countries in the eastern part of Europe, there is an unreserved and unequivocal fascination with the US model as witnessed during the recent Iraqi crisis. However, the Iraq crisis, and the subsequent WMD "debacle", has begun to change this state of affairs, possibly most spectacularly in Germany, traditionally an unquestioningly Atlanticist country.

The third characteristic of the first round of ESDP is the creation of key foundations to anchor the project. Between 1999 and 2002, the Europeans set up the relevant political-military structures to assess, decide, plan and implement military operations. Although in their infancy, these structures were tested in 2003 on the occasion of two military operations: *Concordia* in Macedonia and *Artemis* in Congo-Kinshasa; the first of these operations was made possible by the use of NATO equipment under the "Berlin plus" agreement, the second by using essentially European capabilities. In the case of operation *Artemis*, the operation was fully controlled and managed by the Europeans. The successful operation involved approximately 2,000 men deployed in Africa, including Swedish special forces<sup>8</sup>, and ended on schedule on September 1, 2003. France acted as the "Framework Nation" for the operation. It used a fraction of its new strategic command structure (the CPCO- *Centre de Planification et de Conduite des Operations*), a part of which was "Europeanised" with the inclusion of some 30 officers from other EU countries to complement the 50 French officers assigned to set up the EU's headquarters. An operational EU headquarters was also established in Entebbe (Uganda) to directly command the operation.

Military co-operation and integration in the EU has made substantial progress in recent years. However, the Europeans seem to have reached a plateau in that field. If they seriously want to move ahead and open a second phase of ESDP development, clear objectives will have to be defined in order to justify and organize new military cooperation and integration within the EU. Let us examine one issue in the domain of military operations as an example: if the EU wants to move ahead it will have to acquire the capacities and capabilities at the strategic and operative levels to independently assess a crisis, its potential military implications, and if necessary plan a military operation and then execute it using European assets. In order to reach that level of military capability, the EU will need a

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<sup>7</sup> Defence Minister Peter Struck and General Wolfgang Schneiderhan, press conference 13 January 2004, Berlin.

<sup>8</sup> The Swedish special forces later undertook different exercises with their French counterparts notably early 2004 in Djibouti.

capacity to analyse situations, multiple sources of intelligence, and a capability for relevant strategic planning. If they are to move ahead, the EU and ESDP will need to take up at least three important challenges.

The first one concerns the purpose of the overall project. ESDP's objectives need to be clarified. If ESDP is conceived only as an adjunct of NATO; if its prospects are limited to the lower end of military operations where the US "has the lunch and the Europeans wash the dishes"; and if one refers explicitly to the "Petersberg tasks", much has already been done regarding ESDP. From this perspective, it may not be absolutely necessary to move on. The prospects for military cooperation and integration in the EU will then remain limited to specific projects and occur on an ad hoc basis. If however, the goal of ESDP is of a higher amplitude commensurate with Europe's economic, financial, technological and diplomatic weight in the world, advances in cooperation will have to enter the real business of military affairs. Then, the EU will be confronted with second challenge.

The second factor that needs to be taken into consideration if one supposes that ESDP must move forward is how to reconcile heterogeneity and efficiency. There are huge military differences between the 25 members of the EU. Here are just a few brief examples: Three European countries have already developed a form of reinforced cooperation on defence matters with the United States through the MIC (Multinational Interoperability Council)<sup>9</sup>. These same three countries are also the only ones to possess a proper structure of command for understanding and conducting military operations at the strategic and operative level<sup>10</sup>. Two of them continue to rely on nuclear weapons as a key component of their defence.

Those elements are not, in themselves, an indication of any lack of resolve on the part of the other countries; they merely indicate that in military affairs most EU member states, including Austria, can operate only up to the upper level of tactical operation. Most of them have consequently lost their ability to conduct modern warfare above that level and no longer possess the necessary force structure and materials. This will have grave consequences for the prospects of military cooperation and integration in the EU unless the development of ESDP gives smaller countries the opportunity to acquire such ability as part of a multilateral coalition.

The third factor that will have a major bearing on the prospects for military cooperation and integration in the EU is the necessity to build EUs' defence policy in a manner which preserves an ability to cooperate with US forces while these are undergoing an ambitious and complex process of "transformation". Transformation aims at developing a new way of conducting warfare – as implied in the military concepts inherent in "transformation" such as Rapid Decisive Operations (RDO). Transformation, US style creates multi-faceted problems for America's allies since transformation is aimed at revolutionising the concept of warfare itself. As such it transcends national boundaries. For Europeans, it is of the greatest importance, from a purely military perspective, to understand its implications for defence and develop cooperation with the US. NATO is not necessarily the best vehicle for that cooperation: as already mentioned the MIC seems to offer better perspectives to Germany, the UK and France and, through a trickle-down effect, to the others members of the Union, including of course Austria, if they are ready to engage in a second round of ESDP development.

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<sup>9</sup> In addition to the three European countries and the United States, Canada and Australia are also part of the MIC which was created in 1999.

<sup>10</sup> The UK, PJHQ (Permanent Joint Headquarters); the German *Einsatzführungskommando* and the French CPCO (*Centre de Planification et de Conduite des Opérations*).

If Washington is "transforming" part of its military forces, what should be the European attitude? Should the Europeans, for the sake of interoperability, follow the US lead when no single European nation has sufficient resources to develop a full "transformational" force? Would it be satisfactory to develop only "niche" capabilities in the US "system of systems" and serve as a "toolbox" for American political-military coalitions? Or should they develop a "European" way of warfare tailored according to their needs, commensurate with their resources, militarily efficient and co-operable with US forces?

Future military cooperation and integration within the EU will have to confront these challenges. The answers no longer lie in the continuation of "traditional" cooperation. Cooperation now has to be qualitative and substantive rather than quantitative or cosmetic, going beyond only the diplomatic and architectural issues that were necessary for defining and implementing the first round of ESDP. Strategic and military realities now have to be faced, and although this will be a very painful endeavour it will also be a rewarding one. For small and medium-sized EU countries, such as Austria, the solution will be to work in a more integrated manner than is the case in the "first phase" of ESDP, in which only a limited number of European countries have any ability to act at the strategic and operative military levels. However, this is no zero sum game, as with the deepening of ESDP, namely when it focuses upon building up relevant mechanisms and structures for planning and conducting military operations, these countries will regain access to the higher level of warfare and also be able to play a role in the decision-making process. For many European countries, Austria included, it will represent a kind of Copernican revolution in the sense that what appears to be a divided military establishment on the European issue will have to move decisively towards ESDP. France, for its part, will have to acknowledge that in the future she will have to rely on her European partners in order to cover the full spectrum of the military domain. The principle of autonomy of action, which has been at the core of her military posture for decades, is no longer sustainable on a national basis. France's future defence is increasingly being seen through the prism of ESDP, implying a significant repositioning by the French military. For Austria, an investment in phase 2 of ESDP may imply a smaller force structure but with more specialised and more deployable forces.

Already the Europeans are, either nationally or collectively, developing tools that will be of paramount importance in the future to fulfil the goals of strategic autonomy. As an example, in the domain of intelligence satellites, they will have some 15 reconnaissance satellites (including dual-use ones) in the next five years. The development of the Galileo satellite system will tremendously improve the capacity of European forces to act autonomously in areas ranging from pure navigation to planning long-range strikes. Step by step European defence policy is moving forward.

Besides reaching a political consensus to move forward in the domain of ESDP, the second challenge will be to reconcile the varying situations in military affairs throughout the European Union. Indeed, how will it be possible to make further progress when there is such a degree of heterogeneity in this domain in Europe: in manpower, in defence spending, and in capabilities. Of course, although each member of the EU has an equal say in the development of the European defence strategy, in reality the outlook will also be determined by objective facts. As mentioned earlier, only a very few EU states have the capabilities to plan and execute military operations at the strategic and operative levels. This objective situation places huge responsibilities in the hands of a very small number of countries. The three key European military players will have to carry out three tasks at the same time. The first is to continue to adapt and modernize their own military apparatus in order to maintain their capabilities to project forces and to plan military operations at the various levels of warfare, primarily for external operations (from peace-keeping to combat operations), and secondarily, to provide support for the

civil authorities in the face of a terrorist atrocity on EU territory. Secondly, they will have to move toward a "Europeanisation" of their forces insofar as the complexity of modern weapons, notably in the field of enablers, will compel them to find solutions within the framework of the ESDP. Lastly they have to work on maintaining appropriate channels with the American ally in order to maintain their ability to operate worldwide with US forces. This may be a fundamental by-product of working together in the MIC. In doing so, the European members of the MIC may also help accelerate the workability of a fully-fledged ESDP co-operable with US forces but tailored to the political, cultural, historical, technological and doctrinal realities which are "European" in essence.

The development of a genuine European defence system does not, thus, avoid the traditional political difficulties related to the European project. Differing understandings of the nature of the EU are not only related to divergent interests: they are also directly linked to different historical experiences within the European construction process. Some countries have been involved in the process for almost fifty-five years, some have opted out of various EU activities such as ESDP, the Euro and Schengen.

For a certain period of time heterogeneity will prevail in defence affairs within the EU. With regard to ESDP this will almost certainly lead to the emergence of a "pioneer group". The meeting in Brussels in April 2002 at which Germany, France, Belgium and Luxemburg decided to create a "strategic headquarters", which was also to be opened for the other members of the EU, such as Austria, was the first step of that evolution.

Britain, due to the present limitations on its strategic freedom of manoeuvre as a result of its special relationship with the US, had reservations about this process, but ultimately decided to join rather than obstruct it. The British authorities now acknowledge that the type of "structured cooperation" outlined in the draft of the EU constitution should be possible in defence. At a meeting in September 2003 between Gerhard Schröder, Jacques Chirac and Tony Blair, the three leaders agreed that "*The European Union should be endowed with a joint capacity to plan and conduct operations without recourse to NATO resources and capabilities. Our goal remains to achieve such a planning and implementation capacity either by consensus with the 25 [members states] but also in a circle of interested partners*"<sup>11</sup>. On the eve of the European Council of December 2004, the approach suggested by Britain, France and Germany was endorsed by the EU as a whole.

Such cooperation would allow those members of the EU who wanted to move ahead with defence initiatives to do so without waiting for the agreement of non-participants. Thus, following the first phase of establishing the EU defence process, between 1999–2003, a second cycle of European defence construction has now been opened. Only a few countries will initially take part, but sooner or later the others will join. This is certainly not a "war machine" directed against any country or alliance. It is the continuation of the European project. In the process most member states will, within an EU framework, regain their lost capacity to think strategically, to understand a crisis strategically and, if necessary, to protect the collective interests of the EU with an unsurpassed efficiency.

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<sup>11</sup> Internal document approved at the Berlin meeting between Tony Blair, Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder, 20 September 2003, "Blair backs more EU defence co-operation", Bertrand Benoit, Ben Hall, *Financial Times*, 22 September 2003.

## Recommendations Concerning Austria

Taking into consideration that ESDP is moving into a new phase, Austria could resolve to commit its military capacities and resources to ESDP, with a view to providing benefits to Vienna as well to its partners within the Union. This implies a radical transformation of the Austrian armed forces.

- One of the most important benefits will be the access through the ESDP military apparatus to real-time strategic information, currently unavailable at the national level to small and medium-sized European countries.
- A second benefit will be participation in the planning and conduct of military operations at the strategic and operational level of war, a capacity currently lacking in most EU countries, including Austria.

Securing such benefits will imply a set of Austrian military initiatives such as:

- Greater involvement in the EU's defence policy process in selecting key areas where the comparative advantage of Austrian forces is manifest: *Gebirgsjäger* and *Jagdkommando*. In a medium term perspective, this process of force specialisation is unavoidable for most if not all European countries. This specialisation could be accompanied by more extensive training with similar troops in the EU, for example in the form of exchanges at the company level of *Gebirgsjäger* with their European counterparts (*Chasseurs alpins*, *Alpini*, etc.)
- Transform the *Theresianische Militärakademie* into a high level European school of applied military history. This function is desperately needed to allow the Europeans to better scrutinize military history not only for the purpose of officer education, but also in order to create new concepts and new doctrines. This is a task that the Soviets performed efficiently (e.g. the creation of the Operational Manoeuvre Group during the 1980s on the basis of a revisit of tsarist and World War II experiences). Similarly, the US has had long and effective experience in this field (e.g. the exploitation of German military experience from World War II). Indeed, historical studies are of paramount importance for the development of current and future military doctrine. If one assumes that sooner rather than later the Europeans will have to create their own concepts and doctrines of warfare, military history will take on considerable importance.
- Transform the curriculum medium for junior/middle ranking Austrian officers both by making attendance at the higher military schools of the major European countries (UK, Germany, France, Italy, etc.) compulsory and by assigning them to the strategic headquarters of those nations (*CPCO/PJHQ/EinsatzFührungsKommando*)