

CFSP WATCH 2003

NATIONAL REPORT FINLAND

by Emmi Helle, Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA)

1. Basic views, priorities and key issues

According to the official position, Finnish government is firmly committed to developing and enhancing the CFSP/ESDP. It is the first priority of Finland to ensure the operability and efficiency of an enlarged Union in external relations, because the strengthening of the role of the EU as an international actor contemporarily enhances the Finnish position on the international scene.¹

The development of the CFSP/ESDP should, according to the official view, be carried out by making the decision-making processes more efficient and improving the existing structures, in a way that promotes further unity and integration between the member countries. Finland has been worried about the creation of a closed inner core in EU defence and has consequently underlined that the current principles of the CFSP/ESDP should remain unchanged and that co-operation in the CFSP/ESDP field should be flexible and open for every member state.²

Finland finds itself currently in a rather complicated situation because of its policy of non-alignment. It is unwilling to participate in the EU defence plans if it means mutual defence guarantees or direct involvement with NATO.³ Nevertheless, Finland underlines the importance of transatlantic relations and functioning co-operation between EU and NATO.

Finnish government emphasizes the strengthening of crisis management and is in favour of increasing the available resources needed for it. Finland pays special attention to civilian crisis management and wishes a separate paragraph to be devoted to it in the new Constitutional Treaty of the Union.⁴

It is essential for Finland that all the solutions that will be found in the CFSP/ESDP field will respect the institutional structure of the EU and equality between the member countries.⁵ Furthermore, Finland finds it important to enhance the role of the Political and Security Committee in supervising the integrity of the functioning of the EU.⁶ It is clear that Finland, as a small country, promotes equality between the member

¹ The present inquiry is based, as for the official positions, to the information given by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, by the Prime Minister's Office and by the government's representative to the European Convention.

² Information from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in relation to present inquiry

³ Hanna Ojanen, "EU:n puolustuspolitiikka ja suhteet Natoon: tervetullutta kilpailua", UPI raportti 3/2003.

⁴ Information from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in relation to present inquiry.

⁵ Minister for Foreign Affairs, Erkki Tuomioja, speech at the Finnish Parliament (Eduskunta), 14.5.2003. Same priorities are mentioned in the program of the government of Matti Vanhanen (24.6.2003).

⁶ Information from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in relation to this inquiry.

states and is concerned about the developments that could increase the power in the EU of the big countries in relation to the small ones.

2. National perceptions and positions

2.2 Success and/or failure of the CFSP/ESDP

It is difficult to find any official positions that would clearly criticize CFSP/ESDP for having failed at a certain stage or matter. This is because Finnish political elite is traditionally cautious in its statements and prefers instead conciliatory and constructive tones in the EU debate. According to the Finnish Foreign Ministry, the CFSP/ESDP has in principle functioned well and the EU has – and has had – a common line in most international questions. Despite of the young age of the ESDP, Finnish official position considers its development rapid and the first operations successful.⁷ Also the Berlin+ agreement with NATO has been welcomed by Finland.

However, it was clear also in Finland that the EU was incapable to act in crises that succeeded the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 90's. Especially the Kosovo crisis revealed the weakness of the EU's ability in political decision-making in foreign and security policy. Nevertheless, instead of emphasizing the negative side of the situation, in Finland it was often considered that Kosovo crisis, by revealing the vulnerability of the EU foreign policy, functioned as a further stimulator for the development of the CFSP/ESDP.

Finnish security and foreign policy continues to rest on the UN Charter.⁸ Since September 11th Finland has been contributing actively to prevention of terrorism in the framework of the EU and the UN.

Finnish political elite acknowledged, and was concerned with, the rift in the CFSP between the EU countries during the Iraqi conflict. Finland did not publicly stand for any of the two major blocks of opinion in the EU and underlined the role that the UN should have had in the conflict solution.⁹ The official position regretted that the US and its' partners started a military action against Iraq without a UN Security Council authorization.¹⁰

Finnish media and public opinion were against US military intervention in Iraq. The newspapers defined the Iraq crisis as a failure of the EU and of its foreign and security policy. It was feared that co-operation in the EU and the work of the European Convention were threatened by the conflict.¹¹

⁷ Information from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in relation to present inquiry

⁸ Presentation by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Erkki Tuomioja, at the Paasikivi Society of Pori, 18.1.2002.

⁹ See e.g. column of former Prime Minister, Paavo Lipponen, at Turun Sanomat, 13.3.2003, or speech of President Tarja Halonen at the Parliament, 26.3.2003.

¹⁰ "Finnish position on the war in Iraq", Government Information Unit, press release 82/2003, 20.3.2003.

¹¹ See e.g. the editorial of Kaleva, 23.3.2003.

2.2. Finland's position towards NATO

As for the Finnish position towards NATO in relationship with ESDP, there has been a lively debate in the Finnish media on the subject, in connection with the proceeding of the work of the Convention.

One of the common perceptions has been that the deepening of the European defence dimension – and the Finnish involvement in it – brings Finland closer to NATO membership.¹² Another common way of thinking in Finnish public debate has been that the development of the European defence dimension would mean duplicating the military structures and resources of the two organisations, which would not be rational. It is also feared that an independent EU defence capability could harm transatlantic relations.

Although the Finnish official line puts emphasis on EU-NATO co-operation and on transatlantic relations, many experts have questioned the future of NATO: the EU seems, in their view, to be on a much more solid ground than the Atlantic Alliance.¹³

The political elite does not consider it topical for Finland to join NATO, nor does it see it necessary to reconsider the non-alignment policy for the moment. The public opinion is against NATO membership, while Finnish commitment to the development of common European defence gets more support from the population.¹⁴

2.3. Role of the EU in crisis management

According to the Finnish official view, the EU is suitable for soft crisis management tasks like those currently going on in the Balkans. The Union is, given its multilateral character, adapted to conflict prevention, peacekeeping and disarmament as well as to reconstruction and post-conflict stabilisation. The advantage of the EU is that it can make good use of the variety of tools and resources from the whole sector of security policy, which contributes to the elaboration of permanent solutions in crisis situations.¹⁵

The Finnish political lead is of the opinion that the development of the CFSP/ESDP has strengthened the Union's international role. Consequently, the Union has to take international security responsibilities and has to have a central role in the Middle East and in the Western Balkans.¹⁶ As EU crisis management capabilities are gradually increasing, it would be in Finnish view practical that also the complexity of the operations given to the EU would be gradually increased.¹⁷

2.4. Perceived impact of EU enlargement on CFSP/ESDP (old vs. new Europe)

¹² See e.g. Paavo Väyrynen, "EU:n puolustusydin olisi enemmän kuin sotilasliitto", Helsingin Sanomat, 4.6.2003.

¹³ "Yhteinen puolustus on Suomen etu", Suomen Kuvalehti, 21/2003.

¹⁴ 65 % of the population is against and 16 % favourable for NATO membership. 51 % of the population is for joining the European defence union (if founded), 35 % against. Suomen Gallup/STT, reported by Kaleva on 22.6.2003.

¹⁵ Presentation by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, at the Paasikivi Society of Pori, 18.1.2002.

¹⁶ Information from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in relation to this inquiry.

¹⁷ Information from the government's representative to the European Convention in relation to the present inquiry.

The Iraqi conflict revealed differences of opinion in the sphere of CFSP/ESDP not only between the EU member states but also between the present and future members of the Union. Finnish media reported about this rift between the “old” and “new” Europe in connection with the Iraqi conflict, but this did not create significant public debate in Finland.

In Finland it has been recognised that EU enlargement will have a clear influence especially in the EU-Russia relation. Some of the new members of the Union could have a different perception about it than what the actual EU’s policy is. Especially Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania consider Russia as a security threat, and prefer to take distance from the big neighbour.¹⁸ Poland, too, is expected to require more distance from Russia, while it would probably like to improve relations to Ukraine.

It is foreseen in Finland that those new member countries that are also new members of NATO will at the beginning of their EU membership lay more emphasis on the Atlantic Alliance.¹⁹ NATO is seen to offer them the security guarantees they need in order to feel protected against Russia.

The Finnish government foresees that EU enlargement may also complicate the decision-making. Therefore it is of the opinion that the decision-making procedures of the CFSP have to be made more efficient.

3. European Convention: reform of the EU external relations, CFSP/ESDP ²⁰

3.1. Finland’s official proposals in the Convention

In the Convention Finland supported the extension of the qualified majority rule to CFSP. The unanimity rule should, however, be maintained in decisions that have great national importance. Unanimous decision-making should be maintained also in security and defence policy.

Finland made a proposition to eliminate the rules concerning enhanced co-operation in the sphere of defence from the proposal of the Presidium of the Convention, because it considers problematic the creation of a separate “core”.

Finland proposed the addition of a separate paragraph concerning civilian crisis management to the chapter devoted to the CFSP. For Finland it is crucial that the constitutional treaty is completed by adding civilian crisis management tasks to Petersberg tasks and by requiring that the member states are committed to gradually increasing their civilian crisis management resources.

Finland supported the inclusion of a solidarity clause in the treaty concerning terrorist action or other types of catastrophes. It proposed also the application to the CFSP of the existing, general transparency rules.

¹⁸ Sven Arnswald, “EU Enlargement and the Baltic States. The Incremental Making of New Members”, in “Programme on the Northern Dimension of the CFSP”, n. 14, Finnish Institute of International Affairs and Institut für Europäische Politik, Helsinki and Berlin, 2000.

¹⁹ Hiski Haukkala and Hanna Ojanen, “Ulko- ja turvallisuuspolitiikan haasteet”, in “Euroopan rajat”, (ed. by) Tapio Raunio and Teija Tiilikainen, Helsinki, 2002.

²⁰ This chapter is based on the information given to us from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, from the Prime Minister’s Office and from the government’s representative in the European Convention in relation to the present inquiry.

3.2. Finnish perspective of the external representation of the EU

Finland approves the proposal to create a post of the EU's Foreign Minister, which would combine the tasks of the High Representative and of the External Relations' Commissioner. This should not, according to the official view, weaken the Commission's role in external relations nor destabilise the existing balance between EU institutions. This requires that the EU's Minister for Foreign Affairs acts as a vice-president of the Commission and is a full member of the collegium when it examines the questions that currently belong to the 1st pillar. The Commission should continue to represent the Union in other questions than those of the CFSP, and the CFSP questions should not have any influence on the other policies of the Union. Finland would prefer that the Minister for Foreign Affairs would not act as President of the Foreign Affairs Council. Finnish official view is that the Presidency of the Foreign Affairs Council belongs to the member states and that an equal rotation system should be conserved also in the future.

Finland maintains a reserved position towards the nomination of a permanent President for the European Council. Finland's objective has been clarification of the institutional structure and conservation of the institutional balance, which would not be promoted by the creation of a new institution. If the post of the President is however created, his/her tasks should at least not be increased from the present proposal of the Convention.

3.3. Decision-making

Finland is of the opinion that qualified majority voting should be extended to CFSP. Qualified majority voting should become primary rule in decision-making, with the exception of security and defence policy where unanimity should continue to prevail. The rules of "emergency brake" and "constructive abstention" included in the proposal of the Convention correspond to the Finnish official line.

On the contrary, the proposed new regulation that would make it possible for a restricted group of member countries to proceed to mutual defence commitment does not correspond to the Finnish position. The most significant disadvantage of this proposal would be the splitting of the security identity of the Union. If the possibility for this kind of enhanced co-operation will however be included in the new constitution, Finland requires the existing general regulations for enhanced co-operation to be applied.

3.4. Crisis management

Finland is favourable for the updating of the Petersberg tasks. According to the official view, many of the proposed new tasks correspond to the needs of modern crisis management. The list of tasks should be completed by adding to it the civil crisis management tasks. The realisation of single operations should be decided case by case, unanimously.

Finland supports the development of crisis management resources. It should continue to be a common, and commonly agreed, goal of all the member states, to the realization of which all the member states could participate according to their own

possibilities. Military resources should be improved by increasing co-operation in the field of armaments. Consequently, Finland supports the creation of a European Armaments, Research and Military Capabilities Agency. Finland underlines that co-operation in the field of armaments should be open to all member countries.

3.5. Defence

According to the Finnish position, mutual security guarantees do not belong to EU defence. Finland, as a non-aligned country, does not promote the inclusion to the new constitutional treaty of a formulation on common defence that would go further than the formulation in the present EU treaty. Finland is of the opinion that the development of the military competence of the Union is a justified and timely question. Nevertheless, it is likewise important for Finland that the creation of unnecessary, double military structures in Europe is avoided.

The official Finnish position as regards the “mini-summit” on defence organised by Belgium, Germany, France and Luxembourg on 29 April was critical. Both the former Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen and Minister for Foreign Affairs Erkki Tuomioja were of the opinion that the organisation of the meeting on defence only between a few countries was harmful for the integrity of the union and that the timing of the meeting was not appropriate. Finland did not think that the proposals had any important value added, because the choices of the member states in defence policy rely either on credible security guarantees provided by NATO membership or on military non-alignment.

4. Activities in CFSP-related research

4.1. Major experts and research institutions working in the CFSP field in Finland

Institutions that seem to have a relatively long tradition in conducting research in the CFSP/ESDP matters are

- Finnish National Defence College
<http://www.mpkk.fi/englanti/index.html>
- Tampere Peace Research Institute (Tapri)
<http://www.uta.fi/laitokset/tapri/>
- Finnish Institute of International Affairs
<http://www.upi-fiia.fi/>

Also the universities of Helsinki, Turku and Tampere have conducted research on the CFSP.

Helsinki University:

<http://www.helsinki.fi/english/>

Turku University:

<http://www.utu.fi/english/>

Tampere University:

<http://www.uta.fi/english/index.html>

The CFSP/ESDP researchers who have – and whose researches have –recently gathered most media attention in Finland have been research director Teija Tiilikainen (Centre for European Studies, University of Helsinki), who was also the Finnish government’s representative in the Convention, professor Tapio Raunio (University of Tampere) and senior researcher Hanna Ojanen (Finnish Institute of International Affairs). Also Alexander Stubb, professor at the College of Europe in Bruges, and Esko Antola, professor and Jean Monnet Chair in the Turku University, are appreciated experts in CFSP/ESDP in Finland.

4.2. Additional remarks

It is worth mentioning that the government’s next White Paper on Security Policy will be published in 2004.