

CFSP WATCH 2003

NATIONAL REPORT ITALY

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1. Basic Views on CFSP/ESDP in your country. What are the priorities for your government in CFSP? What are the key issues for your country?

First of all, Italy is currently holding the rotating Presidency of the European Union. For this reason, the priorities of the Italian government for CFSP/ESDP coincide with the priorities of the Presidency, and thus we have mainly examined the documents prepared by the Italian government for the Presidency.

The Italian government has declared in its Presidency of the EU programme that the development of the European security and defence dimension is a central objective and that has to be pursued in accordance with a European Union Strategy. Such a strategy should be drawn up on the basis of the decisions taken by the Thessaloniki European Council. Italy will also work to provide ESDP with more capabilities, which are needed if the EU wants to be credible and effective. Italian Defence Minister Antonio Martino has thus proposed to ease the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact by excluding investment on defence capabilities from overall expenditures. Also the Foreign Affairs Minister Franco Frattini has recently endorsed this proposal.

Another top priority for the Italian Presidency with regard to CFSP is the re-establishment of a climate of dialogue, trust and full cooperation between the EU and the United States. According to the Italian government, transatlantic relations need to be restored to the climate that is natural to them, and the “fundamental strategic partnership” between the EU and the US must be strengthened.

The Italian government attaches much importance to the management of the phase following the military intervention in Iraq. The objectives that the EU should pursue with regard to the post-Iraq war are the following: safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq; granting the UN a central role in the political and economic reconstruction of the country; establishing a government that represents the Iraqi people.

The EU enlargement is one of the priorities of the Italian Presidency of the EU. Considered that the process that will lead to the entry into the EU of ten new members is not supposed to encounter major obstacles, Italy will particularly concentrate on the updated roadmap for the accession of Bulgaria and Romania, as well as on the deepening of the cooperation between the EU and Turkey. The Italian government has been very supportive of Turkey’s ambition to join the Union as early as possible. In addition, Italy will also concentrate on the enhancement of the co-operation and integration with the countries of the Western Balkans. Setting up an accession timetable for these countries is not conceivable. However, Italy has suggested the plan to extend some pre-accession programmes in fields such as education, culture, training and the environment be extended to those countries. Italy has also proposed the establishment of a specific regional forum for political dialogue with those countries, dealing particularly with CFSP issues.

Another basic priority for the Italian Presidency in the field of CFSP is the promotion of cooperation with the countries from the southern rim of the Mediterranean, including the re-launch of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Among other objectives, Italy will concentrate on the long-

term project of creating a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by 2010. For this purpose, Italy will work to accelerate the ratification processes and the implementation of the association agreements with the Mediterranean partners. In addition, Italy plans to transform the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) which is part of the European Investment Bank (EIB), into a real Euro-Mediterranean Bank and to create a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for cultural dialogue.

Concerning the Middle East, Italy will concentrate its efforts on the re-launch of the peace process and the implementation of the Road Map. For this purpose, the EU will have to work in close contact with the other members of the so-called Quartet (the US, Russia, and the UN). Besides long-term goals, such as a sort of “Marshall Plan” and a “Stability Pact” for the Middle East, the Italian government had proposed that a peace conference be convened this autumn in Italy, but this goal appears now totally unrealistic.

Finally, Italy has included EU relations with Russia among its priorities. Berlusconi has been advocating the integration of Russia into the EU as a long-term goal. For the time being, what appears to be feasible is only an enhancement of the cooperation efforts in some specific fields, such as energy and the visa regime.

2. National Perceptions and Positions with regard to CFSP/ESDP Issues

Please describe key positions and perceptions in your country with regard to EU foreign policy, taking into account:

- *The perceived success and/or failure of CFSP/ESDP (e.g. taking into account current developments like the Iraqi conflict, September 11th, the missions in Bosnia and Macedonia)*

With regard to the Iraqi conflict, the Italian Government supported the Bush administration and its decision to wage a war without an agreement within the United Nations Security Council. However, the government position was opposed not only by the opposition parties, but also by a majority of the Italian public opinion. More than three million people took part in a massive demonstration against the war in Iraq. Also the Catholic Church took a strong anti-war stance on that occasion.

After the war, the Italian government has pushed for a rapprochement with the United States and particularly for a better co-operation between the US, the EU and the international organisations in order to manage the post-war situation in Iraq.

With regard to crisis management, the Italian government is generally in favour of an extension of the role of the EU.

As far as the missions in the Balkans are concerned, the Italian government strongly supports the Concordia operation in Macedonia, which is the first autonomous EU operation in the Balkans.

On the other hand, the Italian government is concerned about the lack of progress in the implementation of the Dayton agreement in Bosnia-Herzegovina and has thus some reservations about the idea of the EU taking over the SFOR mission from NATO.

- *The position of your country towards NATO (in relationship with the ESDP)*

The Italian government strongly supports the development of ESDP, but not independently from NATO. The Italian government attaches much importance to the need to avoid that NATO be

sidelined as ESDP progresses. In its Presidency programme in the field of ESDP, the Italian government has also emphasised the need “to ensure consistency between the pledges undertaken in the EU and in the NATO framework, as well as to ensure mutual reinforcement of the EU headline and collective capability goals and those of NATO where they overlap”.

Italy strongly opposed the idea put forward by France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg to create a European military planning independent of NATO, as well as an autonomous European military command headquarters. In the opinion of the government, this would lead to a decoupling of European defence from American. They might also lead to the downgrading of NATO’s role as a security and defence organisation and a forum for transatlantic dialogue and cause costly and unnecessary duplication.

Concerning a possible role of NATO in Iraq, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Franco Frattini has been very positive.

- *The role of the EU in crisis management, e.g. Kosovo, the Middle East*

The Italian government is in favour of a more important role for the EU crisis management activities in these regions, in particular with regard to State-building and post-conflict management. Concerning the Middle East, Italy would like to contribute effectively to promote the EU role in the re-launch of the Middle East peace process and to the implementation of the Road Map. In its Presidency programme, the Italian government has also reaffirmed the importance of a plan for the reconstruction of the Palestinian economy (the so called Marshall Plan for the Middle East).

It is to be recalled that the Berlusconi government has taken a position on the Middle East conflict that is more sympathetic towards Israel than the other EU governments and the previous Italian governments. In fact, the refusal by Berlusconi to meet the President of the Palestinian Authority Yassir Arafat, during his visit to the Middle East in June 2003 was criticised by some EU countries.

The perceived impact of EU enlargement on CFSP/ESDP (old Europe versus new Europe): Italy has been very much in favour of the enlargement process, although some Ministers from time to time indulged in populist declarations against it.

Concerning the so called old versus new Europe dispute, although Italy has taken a pro-intervention stance during the Iraq war, as testified by the signing of the Letter of the Eight, and the Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi claims a privileged friendly relationship with the American President George W. Bush, Italy’s position was more nuanced than those of Spain and the UK. This was partly due to the strong internal opposition to the war. For this reason, Italy cannot be considered to be completely in the “new Europe” camp, if the expression is to mean a European country more interesting in the relationship and partnership with the US than in progressing in European integration, including in the security and defence fields.

3. European Convention: Reform of EU External Relations, CFSP/ESDP Have there been any official contributions or proposals brought to the Convention by your country’s representatives with regard to External relations, CFSP and ESDP?

With regard to the reform of EU External Relations and CFSP, the Italian government supports the creation of a European Minister of Foreign Affairs, who should take over the existing functions of both the High Representative and the Commissioner for External Relations. It is of the view that he/she should be a member of the Commission, but should also report to the Council (double-hatting) and chair the Foreign Affairs Council.

Deputy Prime Minister Fini has repeatedly spoken in favour of the proposal to extend qualified majority voting to CFSP issues, while allowing the member states to “opt out” from implementation of the decision taken.

The government does not consider it realistic to create a single seat within the UN Security Council representing all members of the Union, although many prominent politicians have argued that this remains a fundamental longer-term goal for Italy. The emphasis, therefore, is placed above all on the need to ensure more regular and effective coordination of the member states’ positions and actions within the international organisations and in international forums.

Concerning ESDP, The Italian Government has always supported the inclusion into the Treaties of other tasks, such as the fight against international terrorism, in the ESDP field, besides the Petersberg tasks. It also favours a common commitment to solidarity against terrorist threats. The Italian government has also supported the set up of forms of structural cooperation in the defence field.

The Italian Government is in favour of establishing a European Armaments and Strategic Research Agency. It considers that this should be combined with greater market openness in the defence sector, which would require revision of existing Article 296.

The Italian government has not actually presented any official contributions to the European Convention with regard to CFSP and ESDP. However, Italian representatives to the Convention have presented individual positions on these topics. No major differences could be found between the intervention of the members from the governing coalition and those from the opposition. In fact, also the opposition shares most of the views of the governing coalition with regard to CFSP and ESDP.

4. Mapping of Activities in CFSP-related Research

- *Please indicate major experts, universities and research institutions working in the CFSP and ESDP field in your country*

Research centres

Aspen Institute Italia

<http://www.aspeninstitute.it/>

Marta Dassù

Roberto Menotti

Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale

<http://www.cespi.it/>

Rosa Balfour

Istituto Affari Internazionali

<http://www.iai.it/>

Gianni Bonvicini

Ettore Greco

Giovanni Gasparini

Michele Nones

Stefano Silvestri

Istituto Studi di politica Internazionale (ISPI)
<http://www.ispionline.it/>
Serena Giusti

Universities

Filippo Andreatta (University of Bologna)
<http://www.unibo.it/>

Fulvio Attinà (University of Catania)
<http://www.unict.it/>

Luciano Bozzo (University of Florence)
<http://www.unifi.it/>

Alessandro Colombo (Università Statale, Milan)
<http://www.unimi.it/>

Carlo Jean (Università LUISS, Rome)
<http://www.luiss.it/eng/>

Lucia Serena Rossi (University of Bologna)
<http://www.unibo.it/>

5. Country specific remarks (e.g. on the relation between national foreign and security policy and CFSP, on costs/benefits of one country's membership in the EU with regard to CFSP/ESDP)

Italy has traditionally been a very keen supporter of European integration, including in the security and defence sectors. In line with the previous governments, the Italian government is in favour of further progress in the field of CFSP and ESDP, even if the Italian position is at the same time very supportive of NATO. For the Italian government, as well as for the Italian opposition, the benefits of belonging to the EU, and having CFSP and ESDP are far bigger than the costs. This has always been a characteristic of the Italian attitude to the European construction. "Being in Europe", meaning being a part of the European supranational institutions, has always been a standpoint and a goal of Italy's foreign policy over the past fifty years, and this holds true nowadays.