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BETWEEN INTERGOVERNMENTALISM AND SOCIALISATION:  
THE BRUSSELISATION OF ESDP

Fabian Breuer



**EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE**  
**ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES**

*Between intergovernmentalism and socialisation:  
the Brusselisation of ESDP*

**FABIAN BREUER**

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## **Abstract**

In general, ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy) and its policy- and decision-making process pose a challenging puzzle for the theoretical research agenda of European integration studies. Even though ESDP is intergovernmentally constructed, classical (neo-) realist approaches seem to be unable to catch the full dynamics of the project. Institutional and social constructivist approaches, which underline the importance of norms, values and identity in the complex decision-making process of ESDP, add fruitful insights in many regards.

This paper applies institutionalist approaches based on the notion of socialisation and 'Brusselisation', which are analytically rich for analysing the ESDP decision-making process. The notion of Brusselisation is developed further into a theoretical concept that goes beyond the mere transfer of authority and expertise in the area of security and defence to the decision-making machinery in Brussels. This paper argues that socialisation processes of the involved actors constitute a completely new policy-making method and develops an approach to capture this new method. However, the fact that ESDP is intergovernmentally constructed and that the member states remain the main actors in this policy field is not contested. Particularly in the day-to-day management of ESDP, however, the Brussels-based bodies are increasingly in the driver's seat, gain a sort of de facto initiative power and conduct the European defence policy guided by a logic of appropriateness and a new style of decision-making. This new and 'brusselised' style of decision-making is understood as being situated 'between intergovernmentalism and socialisation processes'.

## **Keywords**

European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), theoretical approaches, institutionalisation, Brusselisation, socialisation.





## Introduction\*

Since the break-through at the British-French summit in St. Malo and the formulation of the ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy) at the European Council in Cologne at the end of the 1990s, European integration in the area of defence developed at the “speed of light” (former EU High Representative for CFSP Javier Solana). While integration in the area of defence was a taboo in the first decades of the integration process, this sensitive project is nowadays one of the most far-reaching developments in the European Union. In 2001, the Union established various Brussels-based permanent bodies - such as the PSC (Political and Security Committee), the EUMS (European Military Staff) and the EDA (European Defence Agency), which became central decision-making bodies in the common defence policy. Noteworthy achievements have been reached in the last years: The Union has conducted and is currently undertaking several civilian and military operations in Africa, the Balkans and Asia.<sup>1</sup> In addition, with the formulation of the European Security Strategy and its follow-up, the EU issued for the first time a strategic document sketching the ambitions of the Union as an international actor and many crucial institutional developments in the ESDP were accomplished. With the recent entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the ESDP has been renamed to CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) and the foreign policy will, among other changes, even be expanded with an own diplomatic service and a ‘foreign minister’.<sup>2</sup> Without doubt one can claim that the integration in the area of defence is one of the most ambitious and dynamic areas in European integration.

The analysis of this development and the decision-making of ESDP, however, poses a challenging puzzle for the theoretical research agenda of International Relations and European integration studies. While the *sui generis* character of the Union is in general challenging for political science research, this is particularly the case for its foreign and security policy. Even though the CFSP and the ESDP are intergovernmental constructions/institutions, classical (neo-) realist approaches seem to be unable to capture the full dynamics of the project. Institutionalist and social constructivist approaches, which underline the importance of norms, values and identity in the complex decision-making process of ESDP, seem to add fruitful insights in many regards.<sup>3</sup> Surprisingly there is rather little scholarly literature, which tries to grasp and to explain the development of ESDP and its functioning in a theoretically informed way<sup>4</sup> and “existing academic theories have had enormous difficulty in explaining ESDP” (Howorth, 2007: 24). The research project on which this paper is based, tries to contribute to overcoming this gap.

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The working paper is part of a larger research project that will result in a publication with the VS-Verlag later this year.

<sup>1</sup> For an overview of completed and current operations see

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=268&lang=en> [accessed 2 March 2010]; for a brief and good analysis of conducted operations see Menon (2009) and Howorth (2007).

<sup>2</sup> The research presented in this paper still uses the abbreviation ESDP and does not cover changes implied in the Lisbon Treaty. However, the arguments made and the mechanisms detected, will arguably not be affected by these changes. For implications of the Lisbon Treaty in the area of foreign and security policy, see exemplary Wessels/Bopp (2008) and Whitman (2008).

<sup>3</sup> See below for a short description of existing institutionalist and constructivist approaches and an elaboration which of these are applied in this research.

<sup>4</sup> One can even speak from a ‘theoretical vacuum’ here, see for example Forsberg (2006).

This paper argues that constructivist-institutionalist approaches based on the notion of socialisation and a logic of appropriateness provide adequate tools for analysing the ESDP functioning and uses the term of ‘Brusselisation’ to describe the new logic of decision-making and the unique governance system that determine ESDP. *Socialisation* is understood as a process of “inducting actors into the norms and rules of a given community” that leads to “sustained compliance based on the internalization of these new norms”(Checkel, 2005: 804)<sup>5</sup>. Such a process influences and constitutes the various ESDP actors (at the national and the European level) through intensive communication, regular meetings as well as working together on a common project and the related emergence of an *esprit de corps*.<sup>6</sup> This implies as well socialisation based on role playing as well as on the acceptance and internalisation of norms (“the right thing to do”) and the shifting away from a *logic of consequences*.<sup>7</sup> A *logic of appropriateness* seeks to understand action as driven by institutional rules and norms that “regulate the use of authority and power and provide actors with resources, legitimacy, standards of evaluation, perceptions, identities and a sense of meaning”(Olsen, 1998: 96). This means that actors base their decisions on “obligations encapsulated in a role, an identity, a membership in a political community or group, and the ethos, practices and expectations of its institutions”(March/Olsen, 2004: 2). Meyer underlines that the institution of ESDP exerts a strong influence on the involved actors and detects „the ability of institutions and decision-shaping structures created at the supranational level to affect the norms held by delegated national officials through processes of social influence“(Meyer, 2005: 536). Arguing that these mechanisms play a crucial role in the decision-making of ESDP, this research puts forward the notion of Brusselisation to describe and label the ESDP decision-making process. The term Brusselisation was firstly introduced by Allen referring to „a gradual transfer, in the name of consistency, of foreign-policy authority away from the national capitals to Brussels“(Allen, 1998: 54)<sup>8</sup>. While this use of the term mainly points to the shift in composition of officials involved in the foreign and security policy of the EU from actors based in national capitals to actors based in Brussels, this research enlarges the concept. Brusselisation is understood here as a gradual und multi-layered process, which is based on socialisation forces and a growing logic of appropriateness governing ESDP and which includes above all a growing competence and expertise allocation in the area of defence in the ESDP-machinery in Brussels. These factors lead to an increasingly common approach as well as common policies in the area of EU defence policy and have a strong impact on the norms and ideas of decision-takers on as well the European as the national level.<sup>9</sup> In sum and as will be elaborated below, I argue that Brusselisation includes and affects several actors and decision-making logics and leads eventually to a new governance system, with shared norms and rules and to an Europeanisation of ESDP, which is understood as „an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that (EU) political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making“(Ladrech, 1994: 69)<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Checkel builds this definition on various authors in the field of classical sociology and symbolic interactionism.

<sup>6</sup> Such a socialisation process is based on the regular interactions in a particular social and institutional context. In using the term, this research mainly relies on the work of Checkel who puts forward several socialisation mechanisms (above all ‘social learning’). See Checkel 1999 and 2001. Regarding the *esprit de corps*, Meyer describes this concisely as „a group identity and common thinking revolving around the shared commitment to pioneering an ESDP, a high-level of mutual trust and an intimate understanding of each others’ positions“. See Meyer (2005: 537).

<sup>7</sup> See Checkel (2005) for more in this.

<sup>8</sup> For further use of the term see Soetendorp (1999), Howorth (2001), Regelsberger (2001), Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet (2002).

<sup>9</sup> The notion put forward here is close to what Howorth called ‘supranational intergovernmentalism’: a “phenomenon whereby a profusion of agencies of intergovernmentalism take root in Brussels and, through dialogue and socialization processes, reaction to ‘events’ and a host of other dynamics, gradually create a tendency for policy to be influence, formulated and even driven, from within that city.” See Howorth (2007). P. 30.

<sup>10</sup> Cited in Smith (2004), p. 58.

This working paper argues that this new governance and policy-making method in the area of ESDP is of unique character and is not comparable to any other policy field of the EU. However, the presented notion of Brusselisation does not contest the fact that ESDP is intergovernmentally constructed and that the Member States remain the main actors in this policy field. Even though Brusselisation incorporates spill over and supranational dynamics, the ESDP is not at all understood as being directed by supranational bodies. Still, a process of institutionalisation<sup>11</sup> takes place, which goes beyond a pure lowest common denominator logic, and the decision-making process in this policy field involves processes associated with both intergovernmental/rationalist and social constructivist approaches. Particularly in the decision-making and the day-to-day management of ESDP, the Brussels-based bodies are increasingly in the driver's seat, can more and more influence national policy-making and gain *de facto* initiative power. A style and logic of decision-making, for which the term Brusselisation is used. In sum, the Brusselisation of ESDP is used as a concept meaning that the overall policy development is in many regards and ultimately still dominated by the Member States, but that the formulation and implementation of policies is more and more governed by Brussels-based actors and bodies as well by logics being coined in Brussels. This means that the ESDP is ever more 'brusselised' and that we witness a European defence policy situated 'between intergovernmentalism and growing tendencies of Brusselisation'.

The aim of this paper is to describe this new style of decision-making and to provide empirical evidence for it (or at least to summarise research findings doing so). It is argued that relying exclusively on a realist approach, which focuses on bargaining processes between unitary actors, is not sufficient to analyse the decision-making in ESDP. Rather, this analysis presents an alternative approach, which (in addition to and not instead of, a realist perspective) focuses on the role of socialisation processes, values and norms.

To reach this aim, the paper will be structured as follows. In the first section, a brief description of the development of the ESDP and the newly established Brussels-based decision-making bodies will be provided. The second section will sketch rationalist and social constructivist theoretical approaches in IR and European Integration Studies to study the European integration process in security and defence. In the final section, the paper seeks to demonstrate the logic and functioning of the unique ESDP policy process being characterised by an intergovernmental setting and an ever growing tendency towards Brusselisation.<sup>12</sup>

## **The Institutionalisation of ESDP**

With the ESDP currently celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a fact which is often forgotten is that the process of European Integration in the realm of defence started in the 1950s, even before the economic integration process was pushed forward with the signing of the treaty of Rome in 1957. After the

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<sup>11</sup> 'Institutionalisation' here is understood as put forward by Smith (2004 and 2004a) in his analysis of the European Political Cooperation and CFSP. Amongst other processes (which are not of relevance here), he understands institutionalisation first of all as socialisation of involved elites, which produces 'its own rules to fill in the gaps left by the original intergovernmental bargain' (2004a: 98). Second of all he argues that this institutionalised socialisation leads to a 'Europeanisation' of the Member States' policies, meaning that they increasingly adapt national approaches to rules and norms governing the ESDP institution.

<sup>12</sup> The results presented in this part are mainly based on various case studies and numerous expert interviews with national and European actors in the ESDP-process. The case studies include the set-up of ESDP operations (Artemis in DR Congo) and AMM in Aceh) and institutional changes of the ESDP machinery (the development of the European Defence Agency, the Battle Group concept and civil military cell). To analyse the case studies and the general logic of the ESDP and its bodies, more than 60 expert interviews have been conducted with national civil servants and politicians of the Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Defence as well as functionaries and ambassadors in Brussels, who work in the ESDP decision-making system. The research was conducted within the framework of a doctoral thesis at the European University Institute in Florence, which was defended in December 2006. The empirical data as well as the research framework have currently been updated and were completed by a new round of interviews in winter 2009/2010.

establishment of the European Steel and Coal Community, the Member States were ready to set up a European Defence Community (EDC) in 1954 which was proposed by the French Prime Minister René Pleven, in order to form a European defence force as an alternative to Germany's proposed accession to NATO. Finally, however, the EDC was never established because the French Parliament blocked its ratification due to concerns of restrictions on French sovereignty.<sup>13</sup> After this failure, the sensitive issue of integration in defence matters disappeared from the European agenda until the establishment of the European Union and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) with the signature of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.<sup>14</sup> Even though the Treaty foresaw the possibility of integration efforts in the area of defence, this issue was never significantly carried forward. Only after the depressing experiences of the Balkan wars in the 1990s where Europe's inability to act was clearly exposed, there arose a growing belief among EU Member States that the Union had to develop a military backbone to make the CFSP more credible (Shepherd, 2003; Howorth, 2003, Howorth 2007).

Alongside these external factors, a fundamental policy shift by Britain finally made the first moves towards a defence component in the European integration project possible. While the British government traditionally objected such a component because of NATO sensibilities, the new Prime Minister Tony Blair signalled, during an informal EU summit in Pörschach in 1998 that his government was willing to give up this position (Gegout, 2002; Howorth, 2003; Howorth, 2007). The decisive break-through in this regard occurred at a French-British summit at St. Malo in December 1998. The two countries adopted a declaration calling for "the progressive framing of a common defence policy" and underlining that "the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises."<sup>15</sup> After this 'sea-change' an enormous momentum was created and the ESDP was constructed at various bilateral and multilateral summits throughout the following years. The main developments were reached at the European Councils in Cologne and Helsinki in 1999 and continued subsequently.<sup>16</sup> The most important institutional developments, for the purposes of this paper, were the proposals of the Cologne Council for an institutional arrangement for the running of the ESDP, which led to the establishment of permanent bodies at the Nice European summit in December 2000.

For the focus of this paper/research, the functioning of the Political and Security Committee (PSC)<sup>17</sup>, which is core body of the ESDP, and the role of the Council bureaucracy are the most important one of these institutional developments.<sup>18</sup> The PSC, which meets at least twice a week, is

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<sup>13</sup> For a detailed analysis of the EDC see exemplary Fursdon (1980).

<sup>14</sup> The CFSP was established as the second pillar of the European Union and followed the loose cooperation of EC-members in international affairs in the European Political Cooperation (EPC), which evolved in the 1970s and 1980s. Regarding a defence component of the CFSP, the Maastricht Treaty states in Article J.4: "The common foreign and security policy shall include all questions related to the security of the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence".

<sup>15</sup> Joint Declaration on European Defence, British-French Summit at St. Malo 3-4 December 1998. For the text see <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029391629&aid=1013618395073> [accessed 7 March 2010].

<sup>16</sup> For a description and assessment of the ESDP-development and institutionalisation from 1999 until today see amongst others Shepherd (2003), Howorth (2003), Gnesotto (2004), Howorth (2007), Anderson (2008), Duke (2008) and Mewnon (2009).

<sup>17</sup> Generally, its French acronym COPS (comité politique et de sécurité) is often used as well. For the formal decision establishing the PSC see Council Decision of 22 January 2001 setting up the Political and Security Committee (2001/78/CFSP), [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/1\\_02720010130en00010003.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/1_02720010130en00010003.pdf) [accessed 7 March 2010].

<sup>18</sup> Next to the PSC, two military bodies have been newly established within the construction of the ESDP. The first one is the European Union Military Committee (EUMC), which is the highest military body of the EU set up within the Council (for the formal decision establishing the EUMC see Council Decision of 22 January

composed of ambassadors of the EU-Member States and is the main preparatory body for the Council in the realm of ESDP. Its main functions are to keep track of the international situation and to define policies within the CFSP and the ESDP. Particularly in the case of crises and operations, the PSC holds a leading role in developing a coherent EU response and in exercising political control and strategic direction.<sup>19</sup> In addition to the PSC, the bureaucracy and the involved bodies in the Directorate-General E of the Council Secretariat and the staff of the High Representative for CFSP, Javier Solana, are of particular interest for this research.

## **Theoretical Approaches and Academic Debate**

The question arises how the construction and above all the decision-making of the ESDP can be explained applying theories of International Relations and European Integration Studies. Classically, both fields of Political Sciences tend to explain integration in the high-politics of security policy with an intergovernmental approach, based on rationalist and realist premises. Being the dominant theoretical approach in International Relations in the last decades (amongst other Baylis/Smith, 1997: 109 ff.; Soetendorp, 1999: 4), the neo-realist approach stresses the anarchy of the international system and considers states as crucial, unitary actors. The neo-realist approach underlines the importance of structural features in the international system, considering power as a zero-sum game and claims that states form their interests exogenously (exemplarily Waltz, 1979). An explicit approach for analysing the EU is provided by the Liberal Intergovernmentalism of Andrew Moravcsik. According to this approach, the European integration process has to be understood as a bargaining process between the Member States, who form their preferences at the national level and negotiate them at intergovernmental conferences (Moravcsik 1993 and 1998). Liberal Intergovernmentalism puts forward that these preferences are formed in kind of a black box and focuses on „major steps toward European integration“ (Moravcsik, 1998: 4). Concerning decision-making processes, rationalist approaches stress a rational choice logic and neglect that institutions and inherent norms have an influence on the preferences of states. Instead, actors strive for a maximization of their interests and act according to a logic of consequences. For the European integration in security and defence, realists either assumed that proper European defence cooperation would be rather impossible and that above all after the disappearance of uniting threat in the Cold War, the EU Member States would fall back into nationally dominated policies (classically Mearsheimer, 1990). When this was proven to be a wrong prediction, realist scholars reacted to the steady development of integration in foreign and security policy with focusing on classical balance of power explanations and argued that states cooperate in order to ensure their national interests – obviously in a process that remains strictly intergovernmental.<sup>20</sup>

(Contd.)

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2001 setting up the Military Committee of the European Union (2001/79/CFSP), [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/1\\_02720010130en00040006.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/1_02720010130en00040006.pdf) [accessed 7 March 2010]. It consists of the Chiefs of Defence of the Member States (or their permanent military representatives) and provides the PSC with advice and recommendations on all military questions (In addition to the EUMC, the PSC is advised by CIVCOM (Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management), which gives recommendations and gives its opinion to the PSC on civilian aspects of crisis management). The second military body is the European Union Military Staff (EUMS)<sup>18</sup>, which is composed of military and civilian experts seconded to the Council Secretariat by the Member States (For the formal decision establishing the EUMS see Council decision 2005/395/CFSP of 10 May 2005 amending Decision 2001/80/CFSP on the establishment of the Military Staff of the European Union, [http://www.eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/l\\_132/l\\_13220050526en00170024.pdf](http://www.eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/l_132/l_13220050526en00170024.pdf) [accessed 7 March 2010]). The EUMS performs early warning, strategic planning and situation assessment and provides in-house military expertise for the CFSP High Representative Javier Solana.

<sup>19</sup> Rather surprisingly, this rather unique body has hardly been analysed and researched. For exceptional descriptions and analyses of the development, the tasks and the functioning of the PSC see Duke (2005), Howorth (2007) and Juncos/Reynolds (2007). Above all the latter offer a good description of how the PSC works.

<sup>20</sup> For an exemplarily explanation of ESDP from a realist perspective see for example Posen (2006) and Jones (2007).

Constructivist theoretical approaches emerged in the theoretical debates of International Relations and stress the intersubjectivity and the social construction of state interests and identities.<sup>21</sup> Neglecting the theoretical and ontological premises of rationalist approaches, the ‘constructivist turn’ underlines that rules and norms play a crucial role in international politics and that rationalist theories ignore many important factors. Actor’s decisions are understood as being influenced by rules, norms and interaction processes, which can lead to the transformation of interests and to the socialisation of actors. In this regard, particularly sociological institutionalism, based on social constructivist ideas, is being applied in this paper.<sup>22</sup> This institutionalist approach underlines the constitutive influence of institutions on actors along with social context, and opposes a logic of appropriateness to a rationalist logic of consequences. This means that actors are influenced by institutional rules and norms in their decision taking and that they strive for ‘appropriate’ problem solving.<sup>23</sup> March and Olsen, two main proponents of the sociological institutionalism put it like this: “Expectations, preferences, experiences and interpretations of the actions of others are all constructed within political institutions”(March/Olsen, 1989: 39) and “Human actors are imagined to follow rules that associate particular identities to particular situations, approaching individual opportunities for action by assessing similarities between current identities and choice dilemmas and more general concepts of self and situations”(March/Olsen, 1998: 951). According to this logic, rules „regulate the use of authority and power and provide actors with resources, legitimacy, standards of evaluation, perceptions, identities and a sense of meaning“(Olsen, 1998: 96) and social behaviour „cannot be reduced to aggregations or consequences of individuals motives and attributes“(DiMaggio/Powell, 1991: 8).

### **Overcoming the Dichotomy: Between Intergovernmentalism, Socialisation and Brusselisation**

The present paper strives to contribute to overcoming the strict dichotomy between the two theoretical strands and argues that only the combination of the two can fully capture and explain ESDP.<sup>24</sup> Without doubt the construction of ESDP and the decisions on the basic development of ESDP are governed by the Member States and the European Council and such negotiations on Treaty level can be mainly analysed with intergovernmental/rationalist approaches.<sup>25</sup> In the daily management of ESDP, however, such an approach does not suffice and the application of a constructivist-institutionalist approach can overcome the blind spots of rationalist approaches in explaining ESDP decision-making. In general, a constructivist perspective can gain rich analytical insights into the European integration process: „What then makes constructivism particularly well-suited for research on European integration? A

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<sup>21</sup> For fundamental contributions to constructivist approaches in International Relations see Kratochwil/Ruggie (1986), Wendt (1992), Adler (1997), Checkel (1998).

<sup>22</sup> In general, three branches of institutionalism exist in political sciences: a rationalist, a historical and a sociological institutionalism; for details and categorisation see Hall/Taylor (1996). However, this research follows here as well the logic that the different variants should not be handled in a too orthodox or excluding way. As with regard to other theoretical approaches, empirical reality very often can only be grasped and explained when combining various approaches.

<sup>23</sup> Smith underlines the influence of shared norms on national actors in the European foreign and security policy: “Although they are primarily national agents of foreign policy, they find themselves in a boundary position from which they must mediate between two worlds of foreign policy-making: one in the national capital, the other centred in Brussels”. See Smith (2004), p. 118.

<sup>24</sup> That said, I fully agree with the assessment of Howorth, who argues that the two camps believing that its dominant explanations trumps that of the other and that “it is not clear why scholars would wish to detect mono-causal or even dominant drivers behind complex political and historical processes”, with ESDP certainly being such a process. See Howorth (2007), p. 28.

<sup>25</sup> Even here, however, an exclusive reliance on intergovernmental/rationalist approaches is too short-sighted. For an exemplary analysis demonstrating the added value of constructivist approaches on this level see Howorth (2004).

significant amount of evidence suggests that, as a process, European integration has a *transformative* impact on the European state system and its constituent units. European integration itself has changed over the years, and it is reasonable to assume that in the process agents' identity and subsequently their interests and behaviour have equally changed. While this aspect of change can be theorized in constructivist perspectives, it will remain largely invisible in approaches that neglect identity formation and/or assume interests to be given exogenously" (Christiansen/Joergensen/Wiener, 1999: 529. Emphasis in original text). Following such an understanding, this paper argues that the mere fact of EU/ESDP-membership influences the preference and identity formation of the Member States and the national ESDP-actors.<sup>26</sup> The conducted research has indeed shown that such a logic and a logic of appropriateness play a crucial role in the ESDP decision-making and that actors are more than just utility maximizing individuals with exogenously formed preferences as intergovernmental approaches tend to assume.<sup>27</sup> While such a finding does not neglect the basic intergovernmental character of the ESDP decision-making system, it allows to underline interactions and social powers in the system that strongly influence the identities and interests of the involved actors. In sum, a logic of consequences as well as a logic of appropriateness prevails.<sup>28</sup> In the ESDP decision-making, the work of the permanent ESDP-bodies and the network of the wider ESDP-bureaucracy (as well in Brussels as in and between the Member States) lead to socialisation processes of the actors and a process of Brusselisation, which increasingly establishes a European thinking in security and defence politics. This development includes the emergence of a *corps d'esprit* among the national and European actors involved, who strive increasingly for the successful implementation of the ESDP and adapt their role conceptions accordingly. In sum, the classical supranational-intergovernmental dichotomy is no longer valid in order to analyse the ESDP. Instead, the decision-making system of the ESDP is governed by a new mode of governance, which is coined by intergovernmental structures as well as by institutionalist tendencies.

The following summary of this research's empirical findings<sup>29</sup>, which provide empirical evidence for the ideas formulated above, underline that the growing ownership feeling of the actors is of crucial importance in the analysed bodies and institutions. All the national agents and civil servants as well the European functionaries develop a growing determination to work on a common project and commit themselves to the aims and the success of the project. This feeling leads on both levels to an emerging European thinking and a successively common approach and common culture in ESDP.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Checkel develops convincingly the argument that interactions in the EU lead to socialisation processes, which transform identities and interests of actors. See Checkel (1999) and Checkel (2001).

<sup>27</sup> As Sandholtz rightly criticises: „the intergovernmentalist arguments assumes that states form their preferences via some hermetic national process, then bring their interests to Brussels“. Sandholtz (1993).

<sup>28</sup> In this regard I follow March and Olsen, who argue that „...the two logics are not mutually exclusive. As a result, political action is generally explicable neither as based exclusively on a logic of consequences nor as based exclusively on a logic of appropriateness. Any particular action probably involves elements of each. Political actors are constituted both by their interests, by which they evaluate their anticipations of consequences, and by the rules embedded in their identities and political institutions. They calculate consequences and follow rules, and the relation between the two is often subtle“. March/Olsen (1998), p. 953.

Simplifying one can say that the decision-making and the day-to-day management, tends to follow a logic of appropriateness, while the construction of ESDP and institutional developments are ruled by a logic of consequences. Nevertheless, even in the process of institutional development, which is mainly negotiated directly between the Member States, ideas and rules play a crucial role. See for an analysis of this influence Howorth (2004).

<sup>29</sup> The methods employed to gain data were mainly case studies, process tracing and expert interviews, a combination of which is especially well suited to detect scope conditions and causal mechanisms. Due to the space constraints in the framework of this paper, I cannot highlight the case studies, but can only present their results and will focus on the role of the PSC and DG E of the Council Secretariat and on socialisation processes between national actors and ministries. For more on the methods and the case studies, see the forthcoming volume mentioned earlier.

<sup>30</sup> A French diplomat underlines this as follows: „In the young ESDP-project a European security culture is emerging, which is based on a growing confidence between all the involved actors. Such a feeling grows in particular with successful ESDP-operations and will even increase in the future“. Interview in Brussels, May 2005.

## The Main Actors and Bodies in the Brusselisation Process

### DG E Council Secretariat

In general, the Council Secretariat has in many policy fields the mere function of a secretariat, but this is different in the area of security and defence. While in sensitive questions concerning institutional developments the Council Secretariat mainly has the task of coordinating the different positions of the Member States and to facilitate the finding of solutions, this looks different in the day-to-management of ESDP. In this realm, and particularly in the establishment of operations, the DG E bureaucracy and the Policy Unit play a crucial and often very proactive role.<sup>31</sup> The High Representative and the bodies of the Council Secretariat have in this policy field a *de facto* initiative, or at least a strong agenda-setting power and one can almost compare the bureaucracy's role in this policy field with that of the Commission in the first pillar of the EU.<sup>32</sup> They have such a central role because they can draft many influential papers, detect possibilities and options of Member States, suggest and develop positions and because they are equipped with high-ranking functionaires and diplomats. These dispose of an immense expertise in the area of ESDP.<sup>33</sup> In brief, the Secretariat can often fulfil the role of the 'spider in the web' and has the ability to keep all loose ends together and to initiate and channel particular developments. An important point is furthermore the development of an increasing feeling of ownership as well the fact that ever more high-ranking and competent people work in Brussels, who have their own agenda and put forward their own interests to successfully develop ESDP.<sup>34</sup> In addition, many national civil servants get seconded to the ESDP-bureaucracy of the Council. These agents get socialised by this bureaucracy and when they return, they import the dominating common spirit that governs the ESDP-machinery in Brussels back to their capitals. In sum, an institutional spill over effect can be assessed: once the institutions are set up and working, they strive to widen their

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<sup>31</sup> While at the beginning of its set-up, the work of the Policy Unit was kept separate from the work of DG E, this separation never really worked and dividing lines became increasingly blurred. In the last years, members of the Policy Unit have *de facto* been integrated in the DG E unit (see Christiansen/Vanhoonacker, 2008 and Duke/Vanhoonacker, 2006).

NB: As noted before, research findings presented in this paper are based on the pre-Lisbon set-up of ESDP and do not reflect changes

<sup>32</sup> As two high-ranking EU-diplomats interviewed put it: "In the third pillar the Council Secretariat has a very particular and crucial role. In ESDP this role can be almost compared to that of the Commission in questions of the internal market" and „DG E has under Solana a *de facto* initiative power. Of course this is *de iure* not the case and nobody would admit it, but this is just like it is". Interviews in Brussels, June 2005.

At the same time, however, Member States do not like it when the Secretariat goes too far in pushing own initiatives. It is a balancing act of informing relevant Member States beforehand, picking the right topics at the right time and about using the Secretariat expertise in the right way. All interviewees confirmed that Solana was mastery in taking the right decisions in these balancing acts.

<sup>33</sup> A German diplomat says in this regard: „The Secretariat supplies the whole ESDP-machinery at all levels with good papers and ideas, which show solutions to problems, initiate fruitful discussions and prepare and shape decisions. They are much more than just a secretariat and follow an own policy. The main reason for this is that there a good people working with sound expertise, whose knowledge is often needed for the Member States and the PSC". Interview in Brussels, July 2005. Another one stated: "These guys are sometimes just too quick and convincing, manage to put the strings together and take the ambassadors [of the PSC] with their almost always well worked-out plans by surprise. Without us even knowing what to think, all of a sudden an idea is then on the agenda, a momentum is created and things go their way. And for smaller Member States, with smaller staff and ministries, this of course is even more the case". Interview in Brussels, January 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Regarding the commitment to successfully work on a common project a German diplomat underlined: "Of course almost all of us have some kind of ownership feeling and want to see ESDP to succeed. However, the *corps d' esprit* is particularly strong in the Secretariat." Interview in Brussels, January 2010.

Clearly, this driver of individual actors can be understood as strategic and rationalist behaviour, but as one being embedded in a socialised environment that is guided by a logic of appropriateness. Here again it becomes clear that a strict dichotomy or delimitation of the two theoretical approaches is not valid and that a logic of appropriateness can perfectly entail strategic elements.



mandate and today the bodies of the Council Secretariat are in many respects, involved in an institutionalised policy-planning. The actors and bodies of the Council Secretariat being involved in ESDP differ considerably from the character of the classical Secretariat bureaucracy and can be regarded as a “new Secretariat” or even a “politicised executive agency”, which has for the first time proper executive as well as initiative functions and have an active role in policy-making and -implementation.<sup>35</sup> In this way, they have a crucial impact in developing the new and unique ESDP decision-making logic that is assessed in this paper. This development of the Secretariat is much more than the purely intergovernmental explanation of ESDP would predict.

### ***COPS: The Political and Security Committee***

A similar development is assessed in the empirical analysis of the PSC, even though there are obviously some major differences to the structures of the Council Secretariat, as the PSC consists of national ambassadors, while the functionaries are mainly employed directly by the EU.<sup>36</sup> However, all the PSC-ambassadors interviewed confirm that there is also a very strong ownership feeling present in the committee. This is above all expressed in the shared wish to develop a successful ESDP and to avoid deadlock. Decisions in the PSC have to be taken by unanimity and a strong desire for consensus dominates – some interviewees even spoke of “consensus coercion”. This results in the fact that there exists an institutional logic, in which nobody wants to be responsible for blocking a development or a decision, which is supported by a majority of the other members.<sup>37</sup> However, it should be stressed that questions which are too sensitive are not decided in the PSC, even though the Committee is doubtless the “linchpin” of ESDP (Duke 2005). When a question is too difficult to be decided between the PSC-ambassadors, a solution is found directly between the national capitals or at Council meetings. Also, in this regard, the PSC-ambassadors have the important function of communicating the positions of the others to their capitals and to signal their ministries where the red lines of other Member States are and which negotiation positions can or cannot be followed. Here, the PSC fulfils an important function: it serves for individual Member States as an antenna. Of course a PSC-ambassador receives instructions formulating a nationally defined aim on issues debated in the PSC from his/her capital, which he/she then tries to reach. At the same time, however, all interviewed PSC-ambassadors stated that they sometimes convince their capitals to adapt a national position based on what they deem appropriate and on competence and knowledge gained in Brussels’ ESDP network.<sup>38</sup> In addition to the membership in this network, the permanent character of the PSC, its regular meetings as well as many informal meetings play an important role here. In sum, the often overlooked PSC is a powerful player in shaping ESDP<sup>39</sup> and can be considered as “strategic steering element and ESDP-motor”<sup>40</sup>. And even

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Christiansen and Vanhoonacker (2008) who come to a similar conclusion and introduce the two used terms. They underline above all that this particular role of the Secretariat in CFSP and ESDP is based on the strong presence of seconded experts, its exceptional role in policy formulation and implementation as well as its executive responsibilities. See Christiansen and Vanhoonacker’s article as well regarding the “power of ideas” and an *esprit de corps* in DG E’s involvement in ESDP.

<sup>36</sup> However, this does not go for members of the Policy Unit, which are seconded by the Member States. As noted, this goes as well for some other high-ranking functionaries in DG E.

<sup>37</sup> An interviewed PSC-ambassador puts it like this: “A particular fact in the PSC is that it is not so easy to just say ‘no’ and to make something fail. One remains much more silent or looks for compromises and practical solutions”. Interview in Brussels, May 2005. This assessment was shared by all national and European interviewees and the reaching of a compromise is in the PSC often more important than defending a national position by all means. One PSC-diplomat even said: “Sometimes you finally even agree to something, of which you are convinced that it is nonsense”.

<sup>38</sup> “This clearly is a two-way process: we receive instructions from Berlin, which we defend in Brussels, but at the same time we communicate to Berlin what is possible and what’s not. When receiving an instruction, which we deem completely inappropriate, we say that this position has to be adapted and suggest a modification. With our knowledge gained in the daily Brussels work and the competence we have developed, we sometimes just have a ‘Wissensvorsprung’ to Berlin.” German diplomat, interview in Brussels, January 2010. Cf. as well Duke (2005).

<sup>39</sup> To a similar conclusion come Juncos/Reynolds (2007), who argue that the PSC is „governing in the shadow“.

if the PSC is based on an intergovernmental set-up and its process remains in the end dominated by Member States, we do not see exogenously formed national positions and bargaining process dominating the PSC, as rationalist approaches would predict.<sup>41</sup> On the contrary, sociological institutionalist and constructivist accounts seem more appropriate, the PSC is affected by Brusselisation and contributes at the same time to ‘brusselising’ the ESDP decision-making process. Without doubt, socialisation forces<sup>42</sup> and a growing logic of appropriateness, combined with a growing competence and expertise allocation, can be detected. The detected processes in the PSC, contribute to the increasingly common European approach in the area of ESDP and the PSC is an important factor in the described new governance system.

### ***Contacts and networks between capitals***

It is not only in the PSC and in the Council Secretariat that the intense cooperation in ESDP questions and socialisation processes lead to an increasing Brusselisation and an increasingly common approach to European integration in security and defence matters. In the responsible ministries of the Member States (mainly the ministries for foreign affairs and defence) there exists a dense network and institutionalised cooperation between the Member States themselves. Particularly in the case of the big three member states, the last years of ESDP (and of course of CFSP as well) led to almost daily communication and a growing sense of collegiality.<sup>43</sup> Preparing major decisions for Councils as well as the daily management of ESDP in the PSC, the respective civil servants know each other very well and work together closely. This dense and cooperative framework on several ministerial levels leads to an increasing materialization of shared norms and values between the capitals. This is of utmost importance for the successful development of ESDP, because this leads to an ability “to [be] better able to explain and understand one’s position as well as the reasons and the central aim behind it”.<sup>44</sup> In sum, a socialisation process and an institutionalisation of contacts, communication and deliberations between national actors working on the formulation and implementation of ESDP have taken place. The institutionalisation led to a transformation of the modes of operation and of the actors at the national levels, which establishes a new approach and judgement of ESDP related questions.

### **Socialisation Processes, Brusselisation and Europeanisation**

Overall, the case studies conducted based on numerous expert interviews and extensive document analysis proved that Brusselisation takes place at all levels and with all actors involved in the ESDP-process. This goes for the PSC-ambassadors, the functionaires in the Council Secretariat and for the national actors in the capitals. Complex networks and close ties increasingly emerge between all ESDP-actors, which leads to the actors knowing and understanding each other better. In these

(Contd.) \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>40</sup> German diplomat, interview in Brussels, January 2010.

<sup>41</sup> Interesting in this regard is the analysis of Juncos and Reynolds, who demonstrate why the style of negotiation in the PSC is dominated by problem-solving rather than bargaining and by persuasion instead of package deals. While intergovernmentalists and above all Liberal Intergovernmentalism (see Moravcsik, 1998) would not expect this and would assume that the interests of the ‘Big Three’ would prevail, this is not the case in the PSC. See Juncos/Reynolds (2007), pp. 141 ff.

<sup>42</sup> One diplomat even said the following: “Socialisation forces are particularly strong for the ones of us being here for very long. Sometimes it even happens that we feel closer to the PSC colleagues than to our ministry and that we defend the ministries instructions à la ‘I think this is a stupid position, but I present it here because I have to... Of course this is done in a way that the loyalty to the national employer is not damaged’”. Interview in Brussels, May 2005.

<sup>43</sup> A French diplomat describes this as follows: “One can say that the contacts to our German and British counterparts working in ESDP are as close as contacts to other national ministries. A feeling of mutual understanding and collegiality are increasingly growing which leads to a European approach to many questions and projects”. Interview in Paris, January 2006.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem.

networks a shared set of norms and ideas grows, gradually leading to common European strategic thinking and shared action options in questions of security and defence matters.<sup>45</sup> As assumed by Checkel, an internalisation of norms and ideas through socialisation, learning and persuasion processes takes place (Checkel, 2001). These mechanisms and the stabilising effects of the ESDP-bodies and their internal norms lead policy- and decision-making based on a logic of appropriateness and the emergence of particular 'rules of the game'. However, as Smith rightly argues, such a process of socialisation and institutionalisation does not imply that the states act irrationally (Smith, 2004).

These socialisation processes, the success of conducting common operations and the fact that all ESDP actors on all levels increasingly understand and trust each other lead to a Brusselisation process of national defence policies. Without the Member States losing sovereignty, the permanently Brussels-based bodies and actors cause increasingly Europeanised and Brusselised policy planning and implementation in European defence policies. The preparation and decision-making with respect to ESDP-actions are more and more done in Brussels and even though a transfer of sovereignty does not take place, a clear transfer of competence is going on.

Close and interlinked to this process of Brusselisation is a process of Europeanisation, in which the action and competence of the European security and defence machinery and its actors increasingly determine national actors and national policy-making. The ESDP-logic and its norms, being bundled and primarily developed in Brussels, is internalised in national policy-making. However, this is not a one-way process, but there is a mutual influence between national and European levels taking place: the Member States define the broad lines of ESDP and of course they as well influence the day-to-day European decision-making process, but the European level strongly influences the national politics and decision-making, too.<sup>46</sup> This happens also because of the close contacts between the national ministries and the actors working in the area of ESDP.

## **Conclusions**

The sensitive policy field ESDP and its decision-making system is not dominated by lowest common denominator decisions or according to a zero-sum game, as rationalist approaches would suggest. Even though the ESDP is intergovernmentally constructed and the Member States and the Council remain the key actors in the ESDP-process, common norms and values are emerging, which influence the decision-making of the Member States and all ESDP actors involved. The mere fact that the Member States take part in the ESDP-process influences their interest and identity formation. On the national level, close cooperation between the capitals, the establishment of common ideas and values and the execution of common ESDP-operations lead to the emergence of an ever more common European approach to security and defence questions. Additionally and above all, the Brussels-based decision-making bodies of the ESDP (in particular the PSC and the 'new' Council Secretariat) play a driving role in this development.

These dynamics and developments can be described by the reintroduced notion of Brusselisation: ESDP develops from an intergovernmental policy field based on an intergovernmental construction to

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<sup>45</sup> An EU-diplomat summarises this: „Continuously a growing consensus emerges in the European foreign and security policy. Thus, common beliefs and a growing mutual understanding incrementally facilitate common actions in the area of ESDP.” Interview in Brussels April 2004.

One aim of the research on which this paper is based, is to relate this development to the growing literature on 'European strategic culture' (due to space constraints this can't be taken up here). See the forthcoming monograph with VS-Verlag as well as Meyer (2005) and Meyer (2006).

<sup>46</sup> Particularly national agents are influenced by this dynamic. Aggestam assesses this as well in her analysis of European foreign policy: „Although they are primarily national agents of foreign policy, they find themselves in a boundary position from which they must mediate between two worlds of foreign policy-making: one in the national capital, the other centred in Brussels”<sup>46</sup>. See Aggestam (2004), p. 85-86.

an institutionalised governance system, where socialisation processes and a logic of appropriateness play a crucial role. More and more ESDP-decisions are prepared and taken in Brussels and a competence and expertise transfer from the national capitals to Brussels takes place. The European Security and Defence Policy is governed by a unique governance process, which remains intergovernmental but allows a Brusselised policy-planning process. These processes are strongly influenced by common norms and ideas as well as a strong *esprit de corps* of the involved actors, which find themselves in an ever denser network on a European as well as on the national levels. A network, in which actors get more and more socialized. All of the interviewees underlined in this regard, that one of the biggest and most important factors is that “everybody knows everybody, or at least knows who to call, in the dense network of ESDP. And this goes for all levels: the ministries in the capitals, the PSC and the Council Secretariat”<sup>47</sup>. All these actors increasingly understand each other, share norms and values and anticipate opinions and positions and leads to an institutionalisation of ESDP and a Europeanisation of security and defence policy. And even though European security and defence policy belongs to the field of high politics, there is more to it than just a bargaining of exogenously formed interests, which are then taken to Brussels. Preferences are not fixed, but are open to change and the detected ESDP policy-making process does not only allow, but strives for cooperation and consensual decision-making.

The findings of this research indicate that relying exclusively on rationalist and intergovernmental approaches makes a thorough analysis and explanation of ESDP impossible. To understand the full picture of ESDP, a constructivist-institutionalist approach has to be added to overcome the blind spots of rationalist approaches and only the combination of the two theoretical schools has satisfactory explanatory. The mutual exclusion and orthodox dichotomy of the two theoretical schools and its various strands has to be overcome in order to be able to catch the full picture of ESDP decision-making. Further research should concretise the hypotheses and conceptualisation of socialisation processes presented in this paper. It should try to detect and explain mechanisms that govern socialisation in ESDP<sup>48</sup> and analyse what types and levels of this phenomenon exist. In this regard, it seems as well particularly fruitful to focus on the socialisation of new Member States that entered the ESDP circle and to make comparisons to other international settings such as NATO and the UN.

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with German diplomat in Brussels, January 2010.

<sup>48</sup> Such research has to focus on the question when, why and how socialisation occurs, when actors switch from a logic of consequences to a logic of appropriateness and on what such mechanisms are based. Pioneering research on mechanisms on socialisation in general, which could serve as an example here, is the Special Issue in *International Organization* by Checkel (2005). For socialisation in ESDP more specifically, the works by Meyer (2005, 2006) can guide further research.

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**Author contacts:**

**Fabian Breuer**

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, EUI

Via delle Fontanelle, 19

I-50014 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)

Email: [Fabian.Breuer@eui.eu](mailto:Fabian.Breuer@eui.eu)



