

The Europe of the south-east and the ESDP

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Synthesis

1 The Romanian French seminary on « The perspectives of the ESDP - the visions of a member nation and a candidate nation » organized to the National Military Center in Bucharest showed the interest of the Romania for the development of the ESDP and the feeling among its ruling elite that they are often comparatively poorly informed about the developments discussed within the EU (for example, concerning the future battle groups and the prerogatives of the future European Agency of defense). The organisation of such manifestations, on a bilateral or multilateral basis, presents therefore an interest that should not be underestimated.

2. Differences appeared within the Romanian elite who attend the seminar (principally military officers and diplomats) on the relative importance granted to NATO and to the ESDP in the creation of a security and stability environment. The importance attributed to NATO - an organization that remains perceived as the only structure able to guarantee Romania's security, to shield the country against potential destabilizations to the East of the future greater EU and to fight energetically against terrorism - was particularly evident in the minister of the National Defense, Ion Mircea Pascu's contribution. Other participants - less prominent - defended more nuanced positions. In general, the new Romanian rhetoric on security strives to espouse NATO's new terminology in a way that is sometimes all too obvious - while also referring itself to the European Security Strategy -.

3. Terrorism was presented by the Romanian participants as a major threat. The nature of the phenomenon and responses to terrorism are in line with that of the United States. Laying the stress on the social and economic roots of terrorism is sometimes understood as an alibi that serves to mask the relative European powerlessness. In any case, it is not seen as an approach that might provide a concrete and efficient response to the current terrorist networks. The Romanians participants were looking forward to seeing the UE specify its own definition of terrorism as well as the tools that the Europeans intend to mobilize to fight against terrorism.

4. From the standpoint of the Romanian participants, a credible European policy towards the East of the future 27 member EU - notably towards Ukraine, Russia, Moldova and in the Caucasus - will constitute a major test of credibility for the ESDP. The disagreement with Ukraine over the construction of a new canal that could have disastrous consequences on environment in Romania ranks high on the security agenda. The frozen conflict in Transnistria figures equally among the sensitive questions, as political developments in Russia do.

5. The Romanian participants showed a marked interest for the most concrete aspects of the ESPD, that is capacities. The credibility of the ESPD will depend on its advances in this field (the consolidation of a European military HQ, battle groups, military R&D...). The Romanian participants expressed their wish to participate in the future European Defense Agency (and, notably, to develop partnerships in the arms industry) and to contribute to the future European Gendarmerie. Romania envisions to put at the disposal of the future European force (after 2007) capacities similar to those offered to NATO (Rapid Reaction Force). Issues of interoperability are therefore of key importance.