



# CFSP

## and Serbian Accession to the European Union

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## CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

On 12-13 May 2015, the International and Security Affairs Centre - ISAC Fund, organized the international conference "Common Foreign and Security Policy and the accession of Serbia to the European Union". The conference was opened by a panel consisting of Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić, former Swedish Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Carl Bildt, former EU Commission Counsellor Sir Robert Cooper and the EU Ambassador to Serbia, Michael Davenport. This was followed by further three panels on the following topics: "Common Foreign and Security Policy: Current Challenges and the Position of Western Balkan EU Candidate Countries"; "The Experiences and Contributions of post Big Bang Enlargement Member States within the CFSP framework", and "Common EU Foreign Policy Approach-Future Perspectives".

The aim of this conference was to address various sensitive political and security issues and create better understanding of what exactly is Chapter 31, as well as identifying what are the obligations which stem from it. It also served as a good platform for raising awareness on what is the EU's CFSP and Serbia's current and future role within that framework.

The conference was attended by current and former officials of EU member states, representatives of the Government of Serbia and officials from various ministries, members of the European Parliament, representatives of the diplomatic corps of the EU member states, representatives of other candidate countries, experts from the EU and Serbia, as well as representatives of civil society.

You can find the detailed conference agenda with all of the speakers on ISAC's website [www.isac-fund.org](http://www.isac-fund.org)

The following are the conclusions and recommendations that were reached at the conference:

## ***Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union and the prospects for deeper integration***

- The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), after the enlargement policy, probably represents the most important EU policy, since it allows the alignment of standpoints in the field that is considered to be the fundamental expression of sovereignty of EU Member States. CFSP was created because of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia and represents a policy that is still emerging and in a constant reform, aimed at greater coordination of national foreign policies of Member States. CFSP, however, does not imply a unified foreign and security policy, but the formation of a common position on issues of common interest. CFSP therefore is based on consensus, which presents a challenge, as the Member States often have different views. However, on the basis of the Treaty on the European Union, members are obliged to support EU policy when a consensus is established.
- Candidate countries need to develop awareness about the complexity of the institutional system underlying the CFSP. The Treaty of Lisbon has brought many changes: it strengthened the role of the High Representative (linking it institutionally with the European Commission) and the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS). Also introduced is the political position of President of the European Council. The Lisbon Treaty also introduced a mechanism for establishing a consensus among member states.
- CFSP is not as inefficient as it is often perceived, and has considerable power, which needs to be directed. One of the most powerful instruments of the common foreign policy approach are the EU sanctions, resulting from the existing “communitarian” parts of the EU.
- Harmonization of foreign policy is a challenge not only for candidate countries but also for Member States. Basically it represents a very complex process, which involves harmonizing attitudes and translating them into practical measures.
- CFSP is not the only part of the EU foreign policy approach, and there are other policies that act in the foreign policy domain outside of this mechanism: the EU Neighbourhood Policy, the enlargement policy, economic cooperation with third countries, etc.
- One of the challenges facing the CFSP is a certain level of a lack of understanding for the goals they want to achieve, not only in the candidate countries, but also among the elites and the citizens of the Member States. It is therefore necessary to develop within the CFSP and the additional system for improved communication about decisions and measures to be adopted.
- One of the features of the CFSP is the “learning process”, i.e. Member States converge their views and standpoints through interaction and debates with one another.
- It should be noted that the majority of EU Member States are small, and it is exactly those which most insist on CFSP. It is possible for a small state to have global goals, but the only possibility for their realization is in cooperation with others. The greatest significance of the CFSP is precisely the possibility for the EU to articulate a common voice on certain foreign policy issues.

## ***Common foreign and security policy and future prospects***

- CFSP should continually be developed and reinforced by the presence of the EU in the Western Balkans so that it could be felt by those states in the region. Through the CFSP and other instruments, the EU needs to take some responsibility for what happens in its immediate neighbourhood. Also, the EU approach should be based on the so-called “tailored policies” for each of the regions and states. In other words, the approach to each region and country has to be created on the basis of concrete and specific challenges.
- The European Union has accumulated vast experience in the domain of civilian missions and military operations over the last 15 years, which lays the foundation for future enhanced EU action in this field.

- CFSP and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) should develop a more formidable policy aspect in combating terrorism, and be part of the answer to the challenges that come primarily from the Eastern Mediterranean.

## ***Common foreign and security policy and the Western Balkans - The importance of regional cooperation for the CFSP***

- Regional cooperation is the key to better coordination of the candidate countries in the framework of the CFSP, as well as the convergence of views. Enhanced regional cooperation presents both an exercise and test for cooperation within the EU.
- Due to the region's conflict prone past, the Western Balkan countries should, as soon as possible, enter into the framework provided by the CFSP. The process of reforms and economic development are also connected with the CFSP, as an improved security framework provides guarantees to investors that their investments will be safe.
- The Western Balkans remains a neuralgic point in Europe. The role of regional cooperation, as well as individual countries, such as Serbia, could be important for reducing tensions in Macedonia as well as in other parts of the region.
- Regional cooperation needs a new format, and in this respect the so-called "Western Balkan six" should develop new practical dimensions. This would strengthen the political coordination that may be important for the targets set under the CFSP.
- It is necessary to find a mechanism for improved notification of candidate countries in the region about the decisions and measures taken in the framework of the CFSP, and that those countries have the ability to inform the EU Member States about their standpoints.
- The EU could consider a new approach to the region and the situation in Macedonia could be a kind of "wake-up call" for the Union. New policy towards the region would certainly provide a better convergence of views within the Western Balkan states with that of the EU in the area of CFSP.

## ***The importance of a Common Security and Defence Policy***

- The EU has opened participation in civilian missions and military operations by states that are not members of the EU. Serbia as a candidate country for membership participates in four EU military operations in the framework of CSDP, placing it in first place in the region and seventh in Europe in the number of soldiers in the missions (in proportion to the military size). It certainly shows Serbia's commitment to EU membership, and cooperation within the framework of CFSP and CSDP.
- The EU to a certain extent provides possibilities for a security response for some issues that Serbia is facing, since there is a clause on collective defence under the Lisbon Treaty (Article 42.7). However, the practical dimension of collective defence is not yet developed, and in this sense for the majority of the Member States it is not a substitute or an alternative to NATO.
- There are key aspects of why it is important for Serbia to cooperate within the framework of CSDP:
  - a) foreign policy reasons - if there are common risks, it is necessary to demonstrate the awareness and willingness to participate in the response to these risks;
  - b) security - as Serbia is not part of NATO, cooperation within the CSDP gives a certain security umbrella for Serbia. Also Serbia can offer specific contributions within the CSDP - Serbia specialises in the area of battlefield medicine which now comprises its largest contribution within the CSDP;
  - c) strengthening of the staff - participation in missions involves strengthening interoperability on the professional and individual level (introduction to the environment, to establish cooperation with other participants missions, etc.).

- Participation in CSDP military operations improves general interoperability of the Serbian Armed Forces with that of the EU and NATO. This includes the strengthening of military and defence capacity.
- Serbia in the following period should focus on developing the capacity for participation in the EU civilian missions. Also, Serbia should be actively involved in some of the existing EU battle groups, even with minimum capacity. Participation in collective efforts indicates willingness to share the risk burden.
- Joint cooperation helps to strengthen military capabilities, since small countries have problems financing defence capacities - a common system of procurement, training and logistics somewhat reduces military expenditures.

## ***The importance of the Common Foreign and Security Policy for Serbia's EU accession - negotiations in Chapter 31***

- Harmonization of decisions and measures taken in the framework of CFSP, Serbia shows that it is a reliable partner for the EU and its Member States, as well as being committed to its values. For Member States reliability in partnership with future member states is a key political issue, which goes beyond the technical aspects of the adjustments and reforms required by the EU.
- To confirm the partnership, it is essential to implement the achieved foreign policy agreements with EU Member States, as well as those which have been reached due to EU mediation.
- The political significance of CFSP for Serbia is that it will be able to ensure that its foreign policy priorities are more easily achieved through the CFSP. CFSP and CSDP are frameworks that can provide an answer to part of the current security challenges for Serbia.
- The EU's foreign policy approach is based on values, influencing the Union's "measurement" of third countries' alignment with the CFSP. For example, Serbia's good relation with Russia and some other countries does not represent a problem for the EU, but rather the principles on which the relationship is based on.
- While percentages in the area of harmonization with foreign policy declarations and measures of the EU are of importance, even more important are the specific questions and challenges that are the focus of some the declarations and measures. The challenges that are closely related to the security of EU borders of course have a much greater importance, and are perceived differently by the Member States.
- Serbia's relation with the EU depends mainly on Serbia itself, namely its decision as to whether membership is a priority or not. It is essential that Serbia has a vision of its future, as well as ways to achieve those goals.