

Strategic Culture: an elusive but necessary foundation for EU security and defence?



An online seminar co-organised by the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) and the Direction générale des relations internationales et de la stratégie (DGRIS), French Ministry for the Armed Forces.

09:00-12:30 CEST - 18 June 2021, Online, via Zoom

CONCEPT

What is the meaning of 'strategic culture' in EU security and defence? In what ways is having a common strategic culture crucial for security and defence? How can this be achieved in a timely fashion and how can it give the EU the extra touch of a "defence spirit" that it needs? How can Europe do more and ensure its strategic relevance worldwide?

Despite the good reception of the convincing cases made in favour of a common strategic culture in Europe, the practical meaning and contours of the term is still elusive in some circles. In broad terms, culture can refer to a community bound together by common worldview, customs, interests, beliefs and destinies. "Culture" is also a way of overcoming threats, challenges and risks and it can relate to difference, or complementarity, with other communities.

In defence, a "strategic culture" is built firstly through concrete achievements, from the common perception of threats to the involvement of troops in combat action, from the quietness of studies in war colleges to the havoc of the battlefields. For the EU, it is through tangible joint initiatives – in both political, operational and capability fields –, that the reconciliation of perceptions and the emergence of *de facto* solidarity between Member States will be achieved. In this respect, the engagement of European countries in the Sahel region is a good example and evidence of a common threat perception and lived solidarity within the European Union.

With the participation of the current Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU and the future Slovenian and French presidencies, the purpose of this seminar is to explore in detail the practical ways of fostering a common EU strategic culture in security and defence.

To this end, a number of questions can be raised:

- > To what degree does the EU already have a strategic culture and, if so, what does it look like? What steps have been taken under the Portuguese EU Presidency to advance towards a strategic culture in security and defence?
- > What are the main barriers to achieving a common strategic culture? Which vectors can help overcome hesitation, doubt and hostility to that goal? How will Slovenia and France seek to continue fostering it? In particular, how can we build on the Sahel example to go further?
- > What tangible efforts and initiatives can be developed to create and sustain a strategic culture over the longer-term? How can Europe do more?

PROGRAMME

09:00-09:10

Welcome address

Gustav LINDSTROM

Director, EU Institute for Security Studies

09:10-09:30

Keynote address

Alice GUITTON

Director-General, DGRIS, Ministry for the Armed Forces, France

09:30-10:45

Session I – the evolution of the CSDP in 2021

Moderator

Dirk HAMANN

Colonel, DGRIS, French Ministry of the Armed Forces

Speakers

Joanneke BALFOORT

Director, Security and Defence Policy, European External Action Service

Diego DE OJEDA GARCIA-PARDO

Head of Unit, Foreign, Security and Defence Policy, Secretariat-General, European Commission

Paulo LOURENÇO

Defence Policy Director, Ministry of National Defence, Portugal

Guillaume OLLAGNIER

Director European, North American and Multilateral Affairs, DGRIS, Ministry for the Armed Forces, France

Uros ZORKO

Defence Policy Director, Ministry of Defence, Slovenia

10:45-11:00

Break

11:00-12:15

Session II – strategic culture and defence

Moderator

Daniel FIOTT

Security and Defence Editor, EU Institute for Security Studies

Speakers

Alessia BIAVA

Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Associate, Global Studies Institute, University of Geneva

Hervé DELPHIN

Head of Division, Strategic Planning, European External Action Service

Ulrike FRANKE

Senior Policy Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations

Jean-Pierre MAULNY

Deputy Director, Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques

12:15-12:30

Concluding remarks

Gustav LINDSTROM

Director, EU Institute for Security Studies