Decision-making in security and defence policy: towards supranational intergovernmentalism?
Howorth, Jolyon

WORKING PAPER

KFG
The
Transformative
Power of Europe

Decision-Making in Security and Defence Policy

Towards Supranational Intergovernmentalism?

Jolyon Howorth

No. 25 | March 2011

Freie Universität Berlin

Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft
DFG

DECISION-MAKING IN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

TOWARDS SUPRANATIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTALISM?

Jolyon Howorth

Abstract

For scholars and practitioners of European politics alike, the distinction between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism has always been fundamental. This distinction has underpinned the various schools of European integration theory, just as it has remained crucial for European governments keen to demonstrate that the member states remain in charge of key policy areas. Nowhere is this considered to be more central than in the area of foreign and security policy, which has consciously been set within the rigid intergovernmental framework of Pillar Two of the Maastricht Treaty and, under the Lisbon Treaty, remains subject to the unanimity rule. And yet, scholarship on the major decision-making agencies of the foreign and security policy of the EU suggests that the distinction is not only blurred but increasingly meaningless. This paper demonstrates that, in virtually every case, decisions are shaped and even taken by small groups of relatively well-socialized officials in the key committees acting in a mode which is as close to supranational as it is to intergovernmental. The political control of foreign and security policy, which is considered sacrosanct by member state governments, is only rarely exercised by politicians at the level of the European Council or Council of Ministers.

The Author

Jolyon Howorth has been full-time Visiting Professor of Political Science at Yale University (USA) since 2002. He is also Jean Monnet Professor ad personam and Professor Emeritus of European Politics at the University of Bath (UK). He has published extensively in the field of European politics and history, especially security and defense policy, including, most recently, Security and Defence Policy in the European Union, Palgrave 2007 (2nd edition forthcoming in 2011). Jolyon Howorth was a Senior Fellow at the KFG from January to June 2010 . Contact: jolyon.howorth@yale.edu

Contents

1.   Introduction

The broad field of what we are now learning to call the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) has been a burgeoning academic growth area in recent years.[1] Within that mushrooming body of literature on CSDP, there has also been a growing number of studies focusing on decision-shaping and decision-making in foreign and security policy. This literature has been framed by a wide variety of epistemological and theoretical approaches, including (but not restricted to) institutional dynamics (Smith 2003; Grevi 2007, 2009); socialization theory (Stinchcombe 1965; Checkel 2007); committee governance (Majone 1989; Hooghe 1999; Christiansen/Kirchner 2000); trans-national networks (Slaughter 2004; Thurner/Binder 2009; Mérand et al. 2010); epistemic communities (Haas 1992; Radaelli 1999; Howorth 2004; Cross 2011); European diplomatic analysis (Allen 1998; Cross 2007); CSDP policy creation (Howorth 2000; Salmon/Shepherd 2003; Dumoulin et al. 2003; Mérand 2008); security culture (Meyer 2006; Giegerich 2006; Sjursen 2006) as well as a major focus on negotiation theory (Risse 2000; Dür et al. 2010). In particular, we have now seen the emergence of a substantial body of literature analyzing the main agencies of decision-shaping in CFSP[2] and CSDP: Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) (Noel 1967; Hayes-Renshaw 1990; Bostock 2002; Lewis 1998, 2002, 2003, 2007; Cross 2007, 2011); Political and Security Committee (PSC) (Duke 2005; Meyer 2006; Juncos/Reynolds 2007; Cross 2007, 2011; Howorth 2010); the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) (Cross 2010, 2011); Committee for Civilian Crisis Management (CIVCOM) (Cross 2010, 2011); the Council Secretariat Working Groups (CWGs) (Beyers/Dierickx 1998; Juncos/Pomorska 2006; Beyers 2007; Warntjen 2010); the European Defence Agency (EDA) (Trybus 2006; Bátora 2009). The scholars cited above are all the leading analysts of their particular area of inquiry. What is remarkable about their work in this field is that they all come to broadly similar – or at any rate compatible – conclusions. Any evidence of dissent from the mainstream analysis in the pages that follow will be highlighted.

This rapid growth in academic studies of CSDP contains two major paradoxes. The first is that this is a field in which both public perceptions and scholarly theory would suggest real limits to European integration. Security and defense policy is the first and last bastion of "national sovereignty". Scholarship on European integration has traditionally focused on just about every policy area *except* defense and security policy. Prior to the late 1990s, several member states wielded a firm veto over any prospect of the EU involving itself in military affairs. This was re-affirmed as late as June 1997 at the European Council in Amsterdam, when the incoming Labour government of Tony Blair vetoed proposals to merge the Western European Union (WEU) into the EU itself (EU-WEU). Yet, little more than 18 months later, Blair signed the Saint-Malo Declaration with Jacques Chirac and launched what rapidly became known as the European Security and Defence Policy, involving a determined thrust towards integration of European defense capacity and a new raft of policy-making institutions (Howorth 2000). The second paradox stems from the fact that CFSP and CSDP are very deliberately situated under Pillar Two of the Maastricht (and now Lisbon) Treaties, where

---

1   In preparing for the 2nd edition of my Security and Defence Policy in the European Union, I discovered around 1,000 articles and book chapters on CSDP published since 2006. The acronym CSDP was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty. Prior to that, this policy area had been known as European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). For the sake of simplicity, I shall refer to CSDP throughout this paper, irrespective of periodization.

2   The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) dates from the Maastricht Treaty (1991). Theoretically, it remains the political framework within which CSDP is formulated and operationalized.

intergovernmentalism is considered to be sacrosanct and all decisions are officially taken either at Foreign Ministers or at Heads of State or Government level; whereas, as we shall see, scholars are increasingly agreed that the reality is far more complex. It was clear from the outset that CSDP involved a mix of intergovernmental and supranational procedures. Over ten years ago, I suggested that there were indications that we might be in the presence of a phenomenon I called "supra-national inter-governmentalism" (Howorth 2000: 36, 84). Much of the literature referred to above touches to a greater or lesser degree on the tensions between the intergovernmental and the supranational dimensions of CFSP and CSDP. Naturally, within this growing body of literature, there are significant differences between and among scholars, as well as between the practices of the respective agencies themselves, in terms of the precise location and dynamics of decision-shaping and decision-making. But with very few exceptions, scholars have puzzled over the reality of a growing sense of de facto supranationalism. In the paper that follows, I shall conclude by asking whether we are not in fact witnessing the disappearance of any meaningful dichotomy between intergovernmentalism and supranationalism.

But first, I must introduce an important caveat. In this paper I am not suggesting, still less claiming, that an *EU foreign and security policy* (CFSP and/or CSDP) is either challenging or supplanting whatever *national* foreign and security policies the member states might continue to favor. Powerful states continue to pursue strictly national interests in security and defense. That said, however, one has to ask how many of the twenty-seven member states can be said to possess distinctive national foreign and security policies whose reach extends much beyond their own immediate borders. Almost certainly, only a minority wield significant influence beyond that range. France and the United Kingdom (UK) have global interests and outreach; Portugal and Spain exercise a measure of impact in Latin America and parts of Africa; Germany has special relations with Eastern Europe and especially with Russia. For most of the smaller member states, however, it is no secret that their diplomatic clout – hardly impressive on its own – can be maximized through association with the EU (Thorhallsson/Wivel 2006; Rickli 2008). Moreover, the fact is that thirty years ago *there was no EU foreign or* (still less) *security policy worthy of the name*. Today the EU is (albeit slowly and painfully) generating a series of commonalities in its approach to the outside world which are distinct from (though not necessarily opposed to) the policies of the individual member states. CFSP and CSDP exist. There are growing commonalities in the EU's approach to its neighborhood, to the Balkans, to the Mediterranean, to Africa and to the Middle East. Naturally, the President of France will continue to believe (despite evidence to the contrary) that he (or she) alone has real influence in Lebanon and even Syria; the UK Prime Minister will see British influence in the Indian sub-continent as far more significant than any hypothetical collective EU influence; and Germany is beginning to learn that its market potential in the emerging powers is far greater than its current commercial interests in Europe (Guérot 2010).

But EU commonalities do not evaporate before these assertions of national interest. On the contrary, they continue to develop. In particular, a distinctive EU approach to international crisis management has picked up both steam and cohesion over the past ten years. This also includes an increasingly common approach to armaments procurement and even to defense spending (Maulny/Liberti 2008). It is these *commonalities* to which I refer when focusing on CSDP and when asking probing questions about supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. To repeat, these commonalities are not incompatible with the preservation, in certain capital cities, of a distinctive national take on the world. But there can be no doubt that the national representatives on intergovernmental agencies are proving as adept at persuading their own governments

of the merits of consensus in CSDP as they are at persuading their fellow representatives of the virtue of national preferences.

How are decisions taken in CSDP? In the remarks that follow, I shall focus predominantly on security and defense policy (rather than on foreign policy as broadly understood). Formally, since we are in the area of unanimity, decisions are taken by 27 national Foreign Ministers sitting as the newly minted *Foreign Affairs Council* (FAC) and, in the case of certain high-profile issues, by the Heads of State and Government themselves, sitting as the European Council. Each member state retains a veto over any collective decision. The principle of intergovernmentalism suggests a process of rational bargaining in negotiations, where each member state seeks to defend the "national interest" and lays down "red lines" which it will not be prepared to see crossed (Moravcsik 1993, 1998). In reality, those quintessentially political meetings are often largely formal occasions which dispatch a huge agenda in short order – typically a three-hour meeting followed by a two-hour lunch followed by three more hours of "deliberations". In reality, policy options and stated preferences have largely been agreed in advance. Ministers and Heads of government do not take kindly to complex issues being tabled for debate at summit meetings where everybody has their eye on the clock. The decisions are actually shaped and formulated by a host of working groups and committees laboring away in the Council Secretariat, the Commission and the national capitals. They are complemented by the expert technical advice formulated in EUMC and CIVCOM. The recommendations of those bodies then go to the PSC and COREPER, which transform them into policy options to be, in the vast majority of cases, rubber-stamped by politicians. Most of these decisions are even taken much lower down the command chain and only comparatively rarely do elected politicians actually arbitrate on important policy issues. Such an approach to decision-making seems, in some ways, closer to the supranational model epitomized by agencies such as the European Commission and the European Central Bank. Although these bodies also contain a representative from each member state, those national agents are formally debarred from defending the national interest and, instead, are expected to work in collegiate mode to achieve consensus, if necessary acting as an important conduit between Brussels and their national capitals in order to explain the virtues of the collective position. While it is impossible to draw absolute distinctions between the reality of decision-making in these two modes, the difference between rational bargaining and consensus seeking is a vitally important one.

In the following pages, I shall address, in a first part, the extent to which the general literature on CSDP agencies is able to reach clear conclusions on the issue of intergovernmentalism "versus" supranationalism. In a second part, I shall focus more narrowly on the available literature on the PSC. This is the key agency of CSDP and, under Article 25 of the Treaty of Nice, it is tasked, among other responsibilities, with monitoring the international situation, delivering opinions to the Council and exercising political control and strategic direction of crisis management operations. I shall then conclude on the issue of how most accurately and most appropriately to formulate the relationship between the two main institutional dynamics at the heart of this paper.

2. What Does the Literature Tell Us about Decision-Shaping and Decision-Taking in CSDP?

One of the key criteria for judging the inner workings of EU agencies is the extent of *socialization* which takes place. Whatever the formal position with respect to the intergovernmental "defense of the national interest", if those involved know one another sufficiently well to begin to form bonds, the strict *rational bargaining* aspect of the interaction becomes relativized. Jeffrey Checkel (2007) has set down some basic prerequisites for socialization processes to work and has theorized the distinctions between three different types of process: "strategic calculation" (intergovernmental logic), "role playing" (mid-point) and "normative suasion" (supranational logic). He suggests that when actors move from conscious strategic calculation to conscious role playing within an institutional setting, *Type I socialization* has taken place. When they go beyond role playing and accept the collective norms of the group as "the right thing to do", they have exhibited features of *Type II internalization*. He also lays out some thoughts about optimum "scope conditions" under which socialization is likely to occur. In particular, he identifies two key sets of conditions under which individuals tend to accept socialization more readily and more speedily. First, when delegates are in settings where contact is long, sustained and intense; second, when they have significant prior experience in international bodies or settings. Other factors can include a common culture and *esprit de corps*; a common expertise; and the nature of the relationship between the agent and the national capital (Cross 2010).

An appropriate place to start this inquiry is with the meetings of the working groups in the *Council Secretariat*. It has been calculated that, at any one time, several hundred such groups exist, for the most part bringing together representatives from all member states – technically in intergovernmental mode. Several leading scholars have offered estimates of the number of decisions which are actually finalized at this level, Wessels (1991) putting the figure as high as 80 percent, and Hayes-Renshaw/Wallace (1995) at 70 percent. Research into the practices of these groups has been spear-headed by Jan Beyers and Guido Dierickx from the University of Antwerp. In an initial study (Beyers/Dierickx 1998) based largely on an analysis of strategies of inter-group communication (examining which delegates speak mainly to which others), these scholars asked whether such group behavior came "closest to a supra-national cooperation style or an inter-governmental negotiation style". They conclude by suggesting that since the communication patterns resemble a spider's web at the hub of which are to be found the institutional actors, this "points to a supranational model". However, they recognize that large states also situate themselves within the hub – which "weakens the supranational character of the networks", yet they conclude that "supranationality has developed further than most outsiders would have expected [and] could develop even further were the regime of qualified majority voting to be introduced in all the working groups" (Beyers/Dierickx 1998: 314). Further development of QMV has in fact happened under Lisbon, although only in closely circumscribed technical areas in the case of CSDP.

Another early study by Anna Juncos (Bristol University) and Karolina Pomorska (Maastricht University) (2006) focused on the extent to which members of the CWGs adopted codes of conduct such as reflex coordination or consensus-building practice. They saw compliance with such codes as betokening strategic calculation "based on legitimacy concerns and the long-term perspective of the negotiation" (Juncos/Pomorska 2006: 1). Their findings were that no internalization of norms could, at that stage, be detected.

However, while recognizing that, in their study, members of CWGs emerge more as "passive national champions" than as closet supranationalists, such actors were nevertheless capable of playing a role in persuading national capitals to be flexible, particularly through the manner in which instructions were formulated.

In a later study which focused on "multiple embeddedness" (the extent to which officials remain conflicted as between their national identity and their European function), Beyers discovered that representatives of member states face various "dilemmas regarding the interests they are supposed to represent" and adopt role conceptions which correspond to Checkel's category of *Type I socialization* (Beyers 2007: 131). But Beyers also concluded that "state representatives adopt supranational role conceptions as norms of appropriate behaviour", thereby confirming that "joint problem solving is an important feature of the processes in the CWGs" (Beyers 2007: 131). In short, it is clear that state representatives engage in decision-shaping behavior which goes far beyond the calculated "defense" of member state interests. However, there appeared to be no correlation between the scope conditions normally associated with the emergence of *Type II internalization* (intensity, duration and density of contact) and behavior which might be construed as supranational. In short, the evidence remains inconclusive. This was also the finding of another, very recent study of decision-making in the Council (Warntjen 2010) where elements of both consensus-seeking and bargaining were detected.

The somewhat bet-hedging conclusions of these in-depth studies notwithstanding, there is no denying that officials in the Council Secretariat working groups do undergo a significant degree of socialization, leading to consensus-seeking behavior. One of my own interviews with a senior Council official confirms this, in particular with respect to CWGs in the area of CSDP: "the working groups in Brussels function extremely well. COWEB [Committee on the Western Balkans] meets five times a week if necessary. They tackle something and they give an enormous finished product to PSC and COREPER." Moreover, the CWGs have learned increasingly successfully to work in tandem not just with their own fellow committee members, but also with their counterparts from the Commission:

> "The staff to staff contacts are so frequent that we don't need special meetings. We are meeting every day anyway. Meetings are focused on a dossier rather than being general. This reflects – over the last few years – a big improvement in staff to staff contacts. This is due to demand but also because people have learned to work together. The Commission has realized that it is a lot better not to have the Council against it and vice versa." [3]

This view was echoed by a member of COWEB:

> "The main WG in DGVI is COWEB. We have two formal meetings per week, Mondays and Thursdays. We also have pre-meetings. The respective desks will meet the Presidency in advance of the PSC meeting in order to discuss what exactly will be discussed, what the tactics should be, what is really the outcome that we seek from that particular meeting […]. In most cases we draft the outcome of proceedings even

---

3 Interview with Cesira D'Aniello, Brussels, 14 August 2007.

prior to *the meeting in order to discuss it with the Presidency. We know what kind of conclusions we need to reach in order to make them operational for the PSC to take action." [4]*

There is little testimony in these accounts of state representatives seeing their task as defending at all cost "the national interest" (whatever that might be). They may officially remain the representatives of their nation-state, but they increasingly act as Europeans.

Taking one step up the hierarchical ladder (and engaging in a sideways shuffle), we can examine the work which has been done on the EUMC and CIVCOM – largely by Mai'a K. Davis Cross of the University of Southern California (Cross 2010, 2011). This work has been based very largely on interviews and we must bear in mind the specific peculiarities of this methodology (Campion et al. 1994). Her analysis is influenced by sociological institutionalism and cautiously suggests that "the group dynamics, shared norms and evolving world-views within these committees at least in part contribute to whether consensus is possible and play a part in determining what that consensus will be" (Cross 2010: 9). Her conclusions with respect to the EUMC are nevertheless unequivocal. This is a committee where the role of expertise, the impact of a pre-existing common recruitment pattern and common culture, the intensity and sustained periodicity of meetings (especially informal meetings), shared professional norms and the ability to persuade capitals of the wisdom of EU consensus is exceptional. Citing evidence from the decision-shaping in the run-up to two important military missions (EUFOR Chad and NAVFOR Atalanta), she demonstrates how the *esprit de corps* of the military representatives in EUMC enables them "to find military solutions that contribute to overcoming political obstacles stemming from the capitals (Cross 2010: 22)". The importance of the permanent presence of these military representatives (mil-reps) in Brussels also comes home when, once a year, they are temporarily replaced by the Chiefs of the Defence Staff (CHODs). Their superior officers, immersed in national debates, are highly dependent on the mil-reps to brief them on the niceties and potentialities of EU cooperation. Cross concludes that

"since their primary goal is to execute successful ESDP operations, and provide for the common security of EU citizens, they realize that working together will be necessary for the EU to have efficient and effective planning and procurement, particularly in the light of declining populations and defence budgets" (Cross 2010: 23).

In the longer study (Cross 2011), she notes that

"despite the fact that EU military power is still a relatively new aspect of EU security integration, the impact of the military epistemic community on the trajectory of security integration has been quite[5] strong, and is likely to grow. The professional norms, culture, and worldview of the military epistemic community indicate that it is a highly cohesive transnational network of experts. In particular, their tactical expertise is for all intents and purposes the same, and this enables them to come to agreement very quickly" (Cross 2011: 257-258).

---

4   Interview with Rasa Ostrauskaite, Brussels, 14 August 2007.

5   Note that in American English "quite" normally denotes "very".

There is no doubt whatever that this key military committee of experts plays a fundamental role in the shaping of policy options on CSDP. Its intergovernmental structure in no way impedes its capacity to deliberate in supranational ways.

CIVCOM, the civilian equivalent of EUMC, offers a somewhat different picture, for a number of reasons. First, the members of this committee are drawn from a wide range of civilian and diplomatic backgrounds and lack the cohesive recruitment patterns and culture which characterizes the military. Second, they meet more frequently in formal settings and less frequently in informal settings (where socialization theory argues that bonding works best – Puetter 2003; Lewis 2010). Third, by its very nature, the work of CIVCOM is relatively new and experimental and little can be taken for granted about the outcome of committee discussions. However, Cross has demonstrated that CIVCOM representatives nevertheless succeed, just like their EUMC counterparts, in focusing on the achievement of consensus rather than on the defense of national red lines. The socialization processes work in a variety of ways. First, CIVCOM members (like the initial cohort of PSC ambassadors) are conscious that they are breaking important new politico-diplomatic ground. This helps considerably in the forging of an *esprit de corps*. Second, there is "a common desire to move the EU forward" (Cross 2010: 28) which contributes in important ways to the generation of a shared mindset. Third, representatives on CIVCOM tend to be younger than those on other committees and consider it an exciting opportunity to create something new together.

All in all, despite the obstacles to socialization outlined above, the workings of CIVCOM also tend to gravitate towards consensus-seeking rather than red-line defending. Cross even reports delegates "text messaging each other across the table to informally resolve conflicts before they are formally aired in the negotiation room" (Cross 2010: 30). They have all developed appropriate strategies for handling their respective national capitals, which, in any case, given the relative newness of this policy field, tend to have fewer red lines than in other more sensitive or complex areas of negotiation. Cross nevertheless details various ways in which the committee as a group navigated around the complexities of the EULEX mission in Kosovo, which was rendered especially sensitive given the deep divisions within national capitals over the issue of recognition of Kosovo. Her conclusions are that there is "a common expectation that some type of consensus should be found by the end of the proceedings" and that they "are driven to leave the meeting room with a completed paper in hand". The bottom line is that "their advice is rarely rejected by the PSC, and in that sense they are able to carve out compromise solutions against the backdrop of competing interests" (Cross 2010: 30-35). Here again, the distinction between intergovernmental negotiating and supranational consensus-building becomes blurred to the point of being virtually meaningless.

Rather different conclusions have been reached by scholars working on the *European Defence Agency*. In a pioneering study written at the time the agency was being established, Martin Trybus, from the University of Birmingham Law School, (2006) contrasted the supranational aspirations of the *European Defence Community's* 1950s approach to weapons procurement, with the determinedly intergovernmental approaches adopted ever since – including in the case of the EDA. Noting that defense procurement is recognized by member states as a policy area where European cooperation is essential if the EU is to avoid sub-contractor status to the US industry, and stressing that the European Commission has in recent years introduced a number of measures to facilitate Europeanization of the defense equipment market, he concludes that the resolutely intergovernmental terms of reference of the EDA are likely to clash fairly

constantly with the requirements of procurement rationalization. "For many of the policy fields the new agency is intended to cover, Community law offers an alternative model with clear advantages over the current intergovernmental approach." (Trybus 2006: 682) He argues that the Agency "represents a paradox" in that its explicit objective is to make Community progress, but its method bespeaks stagnation. He proposes the abandonment of the rigid "all or nothing" attitude towards the intergovernmental/supranational dichotomy and a pragmatic move towards differentiation between those weapons systems which are inextricably tied to national interests (for example, French and UK nuclear weapons) and those which could easily be put into a collective EU pot (such as light arms and transport vehicles). A significant third category in-between could be up for negotiation. Trybus's bottom line is that if the member states see the EDA as a way of ring-fencing intergovernmentalism, then they are really wasting their time in creating the agency in the first place.

In a more recent assessment of the "clash of institutional logics" involved in the EDA's existence and work, Jozef Bátora, from Comenius University, Bratislava, (2009) seeks clues as to how the Agency will evolve and how it will impact on the eventual political direction taken by CSDP. Echoing Trybus's frustrations with the logical contradictions between the determinedly intergovernmental structures of the EDA[6] and its cooperative and even integrationist ambitions, Bátora detects three additional clashes of institutional or functional logic within the EDA: between the logic of defense sovereignty and the logic of pooled resources; between the Europeanist and the Euro-Atlanticist logics; and between the logics of liberalization and of Europeanization of the defense market. He detects clear evidence that the EDA has been making significant efforts to transcend the logic of defense sovereignty by introducing a raft of procedures and rules into the *Code of Conduct on Defence Procurement* which will, in effect, facilitate cooperation and even integration in the procurement process. Where the appropriateness of partners is concerned, the Agency has found itself unable to resolve the tensions between the Europeanist and the Euro-Atlanticist proclivities of its member states, the more so in that these are in a state of constant flux within the member states depending on the electoral fortunes of political parties with contrasting approaches to this dichotomy. On the liberalization versus Europeanization conflict, the EDA has made a robust pitch to break down national monopolies and to introduce mechanisms for cross-border tendering. The maintenance of national tendering for national contracts has been roundly denounced as "no longer economically sustainable […] and operationally unacceptable" (EDA 2007: 1). Yet, the logic of liberalization runs up immediately against the logic of European preference, and here the EDA has hitherto been unable to resolve the contradiction.

Bátora's conclusions remain tentative, but they also suggest that the resolution of these conflicting logics will either lead to the disbandment of the EDA or to the triumph of integrationist dynamics. In other words, the intergovernmental approach is something of a non-starter. He recognizes that "as a carrier and shaper of the political order of EU defence, the Agency may serve as a litmus test of the emerging nature of that order". And he goes on to suggest that

---

6   Whereas most EU regulatory agencies, even intergovernmental ones, are blessed with Steering Boards comprising a mix of member state representatives, the Commission, scientific experts, professional organizations and representatives of clients, the EDA Board is comprised solely of the 27 Ministers of Defense. Similarly, where most Agency Directors are normally appointed by the Commission, the EDA Director is appointed by the Steering Board. Thus the intergovernmental nature of the beast is explicitly ring-fenced (Bátora 2009: 1083-1084).

> *"the rules and norms set up by the EDA in its effort to bring about greater coordination and cohesion in the field of defense provide a framework for trans-governmental regulation and socialization among participating member states and* thereby possibly a transcendence of the inter-governmental nature of second pillar agencification" (Bátora 2009: 1092-1094, emphasis added).

Not quite the triumph of supranationalism, but, given the strenuous efforts undertaken to ring-fence the intergovernmental essence of this particular Agency, these developments suggest at the very least a recognition that the sovereignty of the nation state, even in this last bastion of sovereignty (defense procurement) is reaching its sell-by-date.

These tentative conclusions are confirmed in discussions and correspondence between this author and Nick Witney, the first CEO of the Agency. Witney notes that the "agency itself is/was definitely supranational in spirit, i.e. its staff were genuinely committed to the common cause and ready to resist attempts by national capitals to use them as inside agents". However, he bitterly went on to note that a key issue was

> *"whether whatever was under discussion risked resulting in action or incurring cost, or was just hot air. In the latter case – e.g. agreeing strategies – then pretty much all member states (Cyprus of course always excepted) cooperated dutifully to find the middle ground, the European answer. But were there a risk of anybody being required to do anything, or pay for anything, then national interest was unashamedly to the fore."* [7]

These comments concur with the findings of the academics cited above. Witney has himself proposed a number of essential steps to be taken by defense ministers in order to capitalize on the entire investment in the EDA (Witney 2008: 32-35). A new book (De Neve 2010) examines what it considers to be the remarkable successes of the EDA in pushing forward defense industrial integration in the context of such inter-governmental ring-fencing. A similar conclusion is reached by Kaija Schilde from Boston University in a 2010 Ph.D. dissertation. She notes that the EDA has been reasonably successful at breaking out of the intergovernmental straight-jacket imposed upon it by member states, especially as a result of the direct input of industry and the common mindset linking industrial lobbyists to the EDA officials.

> *"While the EDA is careful not to tread on the sovereignty of national governments and defense ministries to procure a secure defense supply chain, they also see their mission as breaking up the relationship between defense ministries and their national industry champions, whom they see as the ones holding up the integration process."* (Schilde 2010: 324)

Formally, at the apex of the CFSP/CSDP decision-making agencies lies COREPER. This body has been subjected to intensive analysis. In 1958, when the Committee was created, the permanent representative of each member state was described as "the servant, the eye and the ear of his government" (Noel 1967: 223). However, less than ten years later, the Committee was already being attacked as a "third executive", which had risen to challenge the decision-making powers of both the Council and the Commission. While such a charge was roundly dismissed by an analyst as sophisticated as Emile Noël, he did nevertheless recognize

---

7   E-mail correspondence between author and Nick Witney, November 2010.

that the Permanent Representatives and their Committee "have always been in the front rank of the defenders, not only of the Community's existence, but of its principles, its rules and its Institutions" (Noel 1967: 249-251). Fiona Hayes-Renshaw (1990: 179-180), in the first substantial evaluation of the committee, noted that its members shared a "sense of belonging to a club whose rites seem to verge on the masochistic spending entire days and often evenings together in noisy, smoke-filled rooms doing battle over words". She also noted the strong element of socialized bonding which characterized the group.

David Bostock, from the European Court of Auditors and himself a former deputy Permanent Representative, published a 2002 article in which he assessed COREPER's role in the growing realm of co-decision (essentially with the European Parliament). He also attempted to tease out the circumstances under which the committee makes a significant contribution to decision-taking. On co-decision, he outlines a growing tendency for COREPER to establish a "reasonably harmonious and cooperative relationship with the European Parliament" and cites Michael Shackleton's comments on the growth of a "shared culture" between the two sides, particularly in the Conciliation Committee. He recognizes that the extent to which COREPER is increasingly responsible for taking decisions across a range of policy areas, and in particular in negotiating compromises with members of the European Parliament (MEPs), "is a far cry from the classic image of the relationship" between the Council of Ministers and the Permanent Representatives, in which it was the former who were explicitly to decide on policy. Co-decision, he concludes, is not only a "good example of successful inter-institutional cooperation" but also a "good illustration of evolutionary institutional development" (Bostock 2002: 220-221). It has long been recognized that COREPER has Janus-like features, with a dual perspective turned towards both Council and Commission. Bostock concludes on co-decision that "a god with a third face" (turned towards the Parliament) is now needed. However, Bostock warns against a tendency to exaggerate the decision-shaping importance of COREPER. Noting the staggering breadth and scope of policy areas dealt with by the EU, he observes that "the permanent representative, recovering from a surfeit of bananas and intergovernmental conferences, will not be up to speed with the latest developments in the regulation of telecommunications markets or the liberalization of ground-handling at airports". Concluding that the committee has significant influence over "issues which are both politically sensitive and technically complex", he notes at the same time that, since Maastricht, "the four most frequently meeting formations of the Council [now] have their own senior committees" (EMU, CFSP/CSDP, JHA and agriculture). Bostock offers a guarded assessment of the undeniable expansion of the decision-shaping powers of this fundamentally intergovernmental committee and wagers that it will be enlargement which will either drive or constrain its further influence as a pivotal body within the Union (Bostock 2002: 232-233).

The most sustained in-depth analysis of the workings of COREPER has been produced by Jeffrey Lewis from Cleveland State University in a succession of publications over a ten-year period. In a 2007 study, he encapsulated the essence of this work by examining "how COREPER offers an unambiguous example of interstate negotiation in which state actors' range of motivations include a blend of appropriateness and consequentialist logics" (Lewis 2007: 138) – in other words, how permanent representatives succeed in combining their functions as intergovernmental bargainers and as a socialized consensus-forming entity. What is notable about the work of Lewis is that he goes to extraordinary lengths not to overstate the extent to which cohesiveness and group dynamics among permanent representatives constitute a clash between the two institutional functions they perform. He offers a variety of alternative explanations for

socialization which might be seen as compatible with the normal workings of diplomacy. The article studies two key aspects of COREPER's institutional functioning: first, the scope conditions for socialization of permanent representatives, including "high issue density/intensity and insulation from domestic politics" (Lewis 2007: 144), as well as the shift from strategic calculation, to role playing, to normative suasion (following Checkel's criteria); secondly Lewis offers a case study of COREPER in action by examining passage of the 1994 Local Elections Directive which allowed EU citizens to vote in local elections in a third EU member state where they are resident.

His conclusions fully support the contention that it is increasingly meaningless to draw rigid distinctions between "national" and "supranational" agency. COREPER permanent representatives "nicely illustrate how the logics of consequences and appropriateness can interface, which in turn suggests that national and supranational identifications can become complexly intertwined" (Lewis 2007: 164). Indeed his evidence suggests that permanent representatives "do not self-reflexively see these as competitive or contradictory role/identity sets" and that "what one sees in COREPER is a cognitive blurring of the sharp definitional boundaries between the national and the European" (Lewis 2007: 165), not in the sense that the former is being overridden by the latter but in the sense that, increasingly, at least among permanent representatives, the two become merged. Although Lewis found "hard evidence" of *Type II internalization*, particularly in the way in which certain representatives "went out on a limb" to convince their capitals of the merits of a certain group consensus, he nevertheless rejects any notion that socialization within COREPER is in some way hard-wired into the committee itself or inevitable. Under certain scope conditions, he suggests, the socialization mechanisms could actually be reversed. Nevertheless, the situation revealed by this in-depth research, involving interviews with some 118 members of the permanent representations, is one in which it is impossible to deny that COREPER functions as a powerful epistemic community which increasingly forges common European positions across a wide range of issues. The bottom line is that COREPER has ultimate authority to give the green light to all EU policy issues, including CFSP and CSDP, before sending them up to the Council for approval.

Lewis's analysis is shared by Mai'a K. Davis Cross, the most recent academic scholar of COREPER who has also conducted extensive interviews among permanent representatives and their deputies (Cross 2007, 2011). Cross has specifically focused on the role of permanent representatives in driving forward internal security policy (their purview over external security policy having been assumed by the PSC after 2001). She argues that COREPER constitutes "a relatively strong transnational network that is expertise-driven and held together by strong professional norms. Together, these diplomats are a major force in shaping internal security integration." (Cross 2011) The existence of an *esprit de corps* among European diplomats goes back to the seventeenth century (Cross 2007), but the more recent type of socialization that is to be found in COREPER goes much further than anything experienced previously. There are, according to Cross, four key factors which bind this group of ambassadors into a tight epistemic community. First, in terms of professional selection and training, they derive from very similar backgrounds in a context where European diplomats are almost always career professionals rather than political appointees, and they are experts in the art of negotiation and consensus-building. Second, in terms of the intensity of their informal meetings and shared norms, they develop and epitomize a collective mindset. They do everything possible to avoid having to send a problem up to the Council of Ministers by, *inter alia*, becoming involved in the policy-making process some way downstream in order "to ensure that their preferences are incorporated into

any new document before it is even circulated" (Cross 2011). They also demonstrate a commitment to one another which seeks to avoid any one of their group losing out and they will go to extraordinary lengths to generate an unanimously acceptable consensus. Cross claims that 90 to 95 percent of the results of a European Council summit "are determined by COREPER or the GAC". Third, they show abundant evidence of forging a shared culture which emphasizes individual equality irrespective of the size of the different member states. This group culture believes deeply in the intrinsic merits of European integration and is confident that a shared expertise can "bridge both technocratic and political decision-making". Finally, the capacity of COREPER members to exercise decisive influence over their national capitals is considerable. Cross concludes that "ambassadors find themselves negotiating with their capitals just as much as they deliberate among themselves". They enjoy a high degree of flexibility where interpretation of their instructions is concerned and really only have difficulty in persuading their political directors of the wisdom of a collective view in situations of coalition government, of weak parliamentary majority government or in the event of a switch of electoral fortunes. She concludes that "CORPER has transcended its formal duty of preparing the work of the Council, to in many ways *taking over* the Council's role as a key knowledge-based network" (Cross 2011: Chapter 3, emphasis added).

This is a remarkable claim, the more so in that the policy area under investigation – Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) – is a "hard test" for COREPER. In the internally focused, nationally constructed context of JHA officials, resistance to European alignment is exceptionally strong (Monar 2010). But Cross substantiates her claim with a revealing case study in which she compares the various drafts of a major text before and after the revisions introduced by COREPER. The case examined was the 2005 *Strategy on Radicalisation and Recruitment* defining the terrorist threats to the EU. The final draft of the strategy, it transpires, was virtually identical to the version incorporating the committee's revisions – in other words, the "revisions were accepted as-is" (Cross 2011). COREPER was responsible for three substantive changes in the very philosophy behind the measure: 1) that the EU needed a comprehensive rather than a piecemeal approach, including a clear strategy for integrating Muslims into European societies; 2) that it needed to elevate the perception of the threat and bring the public's attention to the many different sources of radicalization; and 3) that it needed to legitimate the action taken by the EU as a whole rather than leave counter-terrorism to national agencies. All three of these approaches enhanced the Europeanization of the Strategy itself. Cross comes closest of all the analysts of COREPER to arguing that it has shed its formally intergovernmental skin to approximate the role of a supranational organism. At the very least, her work demonstrates that the distinction between these two forms of institutional behavior is effectively meaningless.

Since 2001, most of the policy-shaping and policy-making in CFSP and particularly in CSDP has gravitated away from COREPER and towards the Political and Security Committee. It is to the work of this committee that I now turn in the second section of this paper.

3. The Role of the PSC in CSDP Policy-Shaping

Current work on the Political and Security Committee produces contrasting conclusions about the extent to which it is possible to see this key committee as an example of a strong consensus-seeking epistemic community. Most scholars who have analyzed the workings of the committee agree that it fits into the pattern already observed in the first section of this paper (Duke 2005; Meyer 2006; Juncos/Reynolds 2007; Howorth 2010). Paradoxically, Cross, whose work on various other groups of CFSP and CSDP decision-shapers detects, as we have seen, strong patterns of socialization and group dynamics, demurs in the particular case of the PSC (Cross 2011).

The first substantial analysis of the PSC was carried out by Simon Duke from the European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht, in 2005, in the very early stages of the PSC's existence. He situated the committee in its historical context (as the logical successor to the Political Committee – PoCo) and provided an initial analysis of its *modus operandi*. Noting that PSC was already considered to be the "linchpin" of the entire institutional and political mechanisms behind CFSP and CSDP, he stressed its growing significance in the field of crisis management missions and hypothesized that its very existence would generate tensions both with COREPER and with the national capitals. But he concluded, insightfully, that "the need for consensus will tend to reflect whatever constraints exist" (Duke 2005: 32).

Christoph Meyer, from Kings College, London University, produced the first scholarly analysis of the workings of the Committee (Meyer 2006: Chapter 5). His research set out to establish to what extent the working of the PSC had "set in motion dynamics of social influence that c[ould] mould a group of national officials into a socially cohesive policy community with shared objectives and increasingly shared attitudes concerning the use of force" (Meyer 2006: 112). His conclusions were based on considerations of group characteristics, discursive dynamics and the capacity to persuade. First, the PSC ambassadors have felt themselves to be pioneers in a very important policy area and, given that their remit was to seek consensus, their propensity to compete with one another has been kept in check. Meyer considered that the PSC constitutes "an unusually cohesive committee with a club atmosphere, high levels of personal trust and a shared 'esprit de corps' driven by a common commitment to pioneer cooperation in a new, labour-intensive and particularly sensitive policy-field" (Meyer 2006: 124). He detected a consensus-seeking discursive approach which results in even envoys from major countries shifting their initial stance in the greater cause of forging an EU policy. Although both Paris and London are keen to micro-manage their envoys, they are also keen to ensure that ESDP be made to work. Thus, the language and codes through which the meetings are conducted were rapidly established in a form which actively promotes group cohesion. Finally, individual ambassadors, for a wide variety of reasons, have found that they have considerable potential to influence the group by the strength of their argument, so long as it is couched within a collectively recognized normative framework. Meyer's overall conclusion was tentative but unequivocal: The PSC

> *"has developed into a multiplier of social influence, both through informational influence as well as peer pressure. It has managed to manufacture consent and broker compromises even in areas where national strategic norms would initially indicate incompatibility. [It] remains one of the most important ideational transmission belts of a gradual Europeanisation of national foreign, security and defence policies."* (Meyer 2006: 136-137)

The first systematic attempt to evaluate the influence of the PSC was conducted by Ana Juncos and Christopher Reynolds (2007). They sought to assess the committee with reference to the methodological and theoretical debates between rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism (Hall/ Taylor 1996; Schmidt 2010[8]). After a thorough presentation of the origins and logic behind the existence of the committee, they present their conclusions based on some twenty interviews with a variety of actors in Brussels (including some PSC ambassadors and their deputies) and in the national capitals. Recognizing that rational approaches fail to grasp the significance of the permanence of the PSC in Brussels, they state that their interviews

> *"suggest that national representatives are expressly not in Brussels simply to represent and bargain over rigid, predefined national positions. Rather, they adopt a problem-solving approach [...] and are there to sound out other national positions, gain information and find out what is and is not possible." (Juncos/ Reynolds 2007: 144)*

Taking issue with a rationalist or even a liberal intergovernmentalist perspective on EU decision-making processes, Juncos and Reynolds note that PSC ambassadors (depending to some extent on the member state) have considerable margin of maneuver in decision-shaping and conclude that "interaction [in PSC] can and frequently does impact upon the definition of preferences". Furthermore:

> *"we cannot understand the definition of national interest in the field of foreign and security policy among EU Member States without reference to institutional environments in Brussels and the interaction that takes place within them. From such a perspective, the national interest is not defined in an isolated manner in a national capital and brought to Brussels to be bargained over, as intergovernmentalist approaches suggest. Instead, it is constructed in an institutional context/space in which the national cannot be easily separated from the international, nor the self from the other."* (Juncos/Reynolds 2007: 145)

The Juncos and Reynolds analysis removes any residual doubt that might have existed in the literature. Although the authors use the somewhat ambiguous notion of "government in the shadow" as the subtitle of their article, the intention behind this notion is to argue that the members of the PSC *do take decisions* in the manner of governments and to some extent operate, in their words, "outside the charmed circle of diplomacy". The committee, they conclude "remains a forum where informal norms and rules play an important role and in which routine interaction can make a difference, both to the representatives them-selves *and to the actual substance of national foreign and security policies*" (Juncos/Reynolds 2007: 147, emphasis added). Once again, we see the cognitive and political distinction between intergovernmental-ism and supranationalism fading into meaninglessness.

My own work on the PSC (Howorth 2010) is entirely consistent with that of Juncos and Reynolds. It is based on substantive interviews with all 28 full ambassadors to the committee, plus several of their deputies, as

---

8   The classic reference on this debate has long been the Hall/Taylor article. However, Vivien Schmidt's more recent piece massively updates the discussion and introduces a new perspective which has especial relevance in the context of the deliberations of the PSC – discursive institutionalism.

well as with some forty additional decision-shapers in CSDP from the General Secretariat of the Council, the European Commission, and national officials in Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) and Ministries of Defense (MODs) from five large countries. The interviews were conducted from January to September 2007. They were reinforced by a structured questionnaire which all interviewees were invited to fill out. Some forty of these questionnaires were returned by the subjects. The data contained in these question-naires offers hard evidence of the profile of PSC ambassadors as well as of their approach to their function and to CSDP policy issues and indeed, to some extent, of their own political preferences. In a paper of this length, space does not permit a full development of the argument, but the following basic points should be underscored.

The profile of PSC ambassadors reveals an extraordinarily homogeneous background, all having a first degree in (overwhelmingly) Political Science, History or Law, the majority also having completed a Masters degree in these subjects and two having a doctorate. All are totally fluent in English and French and the average number of languages spoken is 3.7. In terms of identity, 53 percent declared that they feel "very attached" to the EU and the remaining 47 percent "fairly attached"[9]. They believe that CSDP is important in the construction of a European identity, which, in response to separate questions, 80 percent believed to be *necessary*, 86.6 percent to be *desirable*, and a surprising 86.6 percent also believed to be *likely*. Although all 27 member state ambassadors saw their function on the PSC as that of *representing* their home country, there was unanimity in feeling that there is no incompatibility between national interests and European interests. When asked about their role as members of PSC, a large majority saw it as being to devise "feasible solutions", while only 12 percent felt they were supporting "specific interests". As far as the working style of PSC was concerned, 63 percent defined it as "cooperative and consensus-seeking" while 37 percent felt they were engaged in "rational bargaining".

My interviews with the members of the PSC reveal an unanimous sense that, above all, the Committee seeks to achieve consensus. All ambassadors felt strongly that the PSC is a forum in which consensus can usually be achieved. Ambassadors were asked to think of an example of an initiative taken by PSC which had been illustrative of the search for this consensus, if possible showing how an initial *tour de table* had re-vealed a wide diversity of national viewpoints, whereas further discussion, and several iterations between Brussels and the national capitals, had succeeded in narrowing the gaps or even in achieving unanimity. The answers varied widely, but that very variety illustrated the point. Between them, the ambassadors cited missions as diverse as the Aceh monitoring mission, the EUFOR-Congo military mission, the Ukraine-Moldova border mission, the rule of law mission in Iraq, the Afghanistan police mission and one or two others. The reality is that, in most cases, the starting positions of EU member states are at variance. But the process involved in decision-making via the PSC most often ends up with a broad consensus or even unanimity. There was, naturally, a range of opinion as to how *deep* the consensus actually was. But none disputed that consensus emerged, or that the quest for consensus was the basic stock in trade of the PSC members.

The degree of socialization which obtains within the committee is a major factor in generating compromise.

---

9   It is noteworthy that, in terms of attachment to their home country, only 64 percent said "very attached", while as many as 36 percent only recorded "fairly attached".

The members know one another extremely well. Their average tenure is around three years. One stressed that when, for example, the French ambassador would lay out her country's position on, say, the EU mission in Afghanistan, the others knew immediately how to read that position, how to react to it and how to work with it and around it to achieve consensus. The key element is a deeply-rooted sense of *mutual trust*:

> "I think we all have a trust in each other that whatever compromise is possible we will find it. [...] And so, even if you have instructions where you have to cross your own red lines, you can then get back to capitals. It is really true that there is a trust among colleagues that they try to find wherever a common basis is possible. It would be a different thing altogether if you always met 26 different colleagues. You simply would not have that crucial element of personal trust that everybody is doing their utmost, whatever is possible to find the best compromise. That is the main element which helps."[10]

Several ambassadors noted that it is often sufficient for one of the group to be replaced by his or her deputy for the trust-based group dynamics to break down and for consensus to be more difficult to achieve.

In many instances, the majority of member states are unlikely to have a very strongly held national position on a given proposal (say, to mount an ESDP mission in Indonesia or in Congo). In that case, they see it as their function to assist those who do have strongly held positions to reconcile their differences. Here we encounter very strong evidence of the switch from strategic calculation to role playing which Checkel sees as fundamental to *Type I socialization*. For those states which do have strongly held positions, the object of the PSC exercise is to try, through an astute mix of personal persuasion, subtle "pitch" and reasonable argument, to find a way of persuading those holding a different line to shift their position. And, when the proceedings reach an impasse because an ambassador has received strict instructions from his or her MFA Political Director to defend a given "red line", then a telephone conversation to the national capital can often be sufficient to get the discussion moving forward again. But the quality of the arguments deployed is also crucial:

> "There is something which struck me when I first came and it was rather unexpected. You have to defend your case very well. The argument counts. The rational discourse is very important, because there is a clear dynamic. If you just have a certain position and you say: 'Ah, but my minister wants this, and that is that [...]', that, obviously, is not convincing. So you have to prepare your case and you have to present it well and then sometimes a certain dynamic comes into play. Because countries come in which don't necessarily have any interest in the case, and say: 'Yes, this seems a very good argument, a sensible line to follow' and then you see that a general mood arises. And then it is very difficult if you are against it. If a wave of consensus starts and you are the only obstacle, then you have to have exceptionally good arguments to turn the tide. Sometimes, colleagues have to say: 'Yes I understand everybody else, and I would love to agree but I simply have to call home.' Then everybody will agree to let him/her call home. Very, very often, I would say, it is also the case that the colleague will come back and say: 'Yes, OK we agree!' Because if there is a very strong sense of consensus, if common sense suggests that such and such is a good compromise, so let's go for that, unless it is some absolutely essential policy point for a

---

10   Confidential interview with a PSC ambassador, Brussels, 24 April 2007.

minister, then colleagues can and do convince their capitals. So argument counts and you can create a certain wave where opinions go."[11]

Here we see the crucial importance of the normative suasion which Checkel identifies as the first sign of a shift towards Type II internalization.

That national capitals are prepared thus to compromise is so for several reasons. These reasons give us insight into the scope conditions which allow socialization in this particular committee to take place. First, although member states retain their longstanding autonomy in national foreign-policy making, they all know that they have a strong vested interest in *making CFSP and CSDP work*. In these policy areas above all, there is recognition that, most often, the whole will prove to be greater than the sum of the parts. Secondly, there is a strong collective desire to achieve results. For this reason, it is rare for a proposal to come up to the PSC which is clearly going to run up against some strongly entrenched national interest on the part of one or more member states. What the PSC is in effect doing is writing on a blank sheet of paper the limits of the possible in CFSP/CSDP (and, by the same token, the profile of the impossible). It is, in a sense, *creating* an entire policy area from scratch. It is a kind of script-writer for the CSDP narrative. Debates thus tend to turn around proposals that have a realistic chance of success. In this context, knowing intimately the sense of the prevalent collective mindset, ambassadors will sometimes pitch their initial bargaining positions slightly closer to what they feel would be a consensual position than might have been the case in, say, the PoCo. Thereafter, as they feel their way through the ensuing discussion, they know rapidly what margin of maneuver exists and are in a good position to contact the national capital with a suggestion as to how best to progress business.

Thus, while the ambassadors are involved in a constant *European learning process* through daily interaction with their peers, they also perform a second suasion or didactic function with respect to their national capitals, communicating the sense of collective European opinion in the PSC and suggesting ways in which national positions can be modified in order to achieve collective results:

"We have a really good feeling of what the mood is in the national capitals. This helps them in the decision-shaping process at home. There are a lot of policy fields where our policy is defined along national lines. And there are a lot of others where we really have no national interest, where we just ask ourselves: Is the best option A, B, C or D? When we can see that the mood in PSC is moving towards B, we can argue at home, 'OK let's go with B... This is obviously the majority mood here'. And one can convince one's own capital readily easily, as long as there is no direct national core interest at stake."[12]

Timing is also important. The fact that the PSC is, in some ways, ahead of the game, allows the ambassadors to avoid their ministers being caught off guard by a tricky question from a journalist:

"We can streamline things at an early stage. Because once you have ten foreign ministers and three have publicly said we would like A and three have gone for B and three are backing C and one has said D, then

---

11 Confidential interview with a PSC ambassador, Brussels, 16 August 2007.

12   Confidential interview with a PSC ambassador, Brussels, 22 May 2007.

to bring them back to a common position is very difficult. So early warning is very important – early signaling. They had better not take too early a public position. To be able to inform the capital that the mood seems to be behind B, that helps. Ministers sometimes come up with a position simply because some journalist happens to ask them a question – and then it is difficult to back-track. So that is also one of the functions we can fulfil […].”[13]

In this way, although the PSC ambassadors remain under the hierarchical control of their respective Ministry of Foreign Affairs, their capacity to influence thinking and opinion both at home and in Brussels is considerable. A number of them explicitly made the point that they see themselves rather as "two-way ambassadors", facilitating consensus seeking in both directions. They are involved in a constant, albeit inchoate, process of generating a specifically European strategic culture which amounts to much more than the lowest common denominator of the EU's member states. This poses the question of leadership. Traditionally, all international actors, and especially powerful actors, have developed a hierarchical relationship between policy-making institutions and central leadership. The former may offer divergent and even at times contradictory advice; but the leader – usually the head of state or government – arbitrates, decides and leads. Nowhere is this process clearer than in countries such as the United States, France and the UK. Over the centuries, this has been the *sine qua non* of international great power impact. And yet, the EU is, in a very real sense, *leaderless* (Menon 2007). It is, in many ways, the exact opposite of a great power such as the USA. Ultimate decision-making power rests in the hands of the intergovernmental European Council, represented by its heads of state and government. The EU is hugely constrained by the requirement that its security (and even more so its defense) policies be the object of unanimous agreement between twenty-seven sovereign entities. In this sense, it is – almost inevitably – lacking in strategic thrust or "heroic" objectives. US analysts who, detecting intentions from outcomes, have sensed in ESDP an attempt to balance against the US, have seriously misunderstood the processes involved in security and defense policy-making in the EU (Howorth/Menon 2009). But to the extent to which the definition of "a new EU way of doing International Relations" is being forged, to the extent to which there exists an agency of CSDP leadership, it is primarily within the PSC that this gestation can be perceived.

If there is one somewhat dissenting voice on the PSC, it is (rather surprisingly) that of Mai'a Cross. While she agrees in her (as yet unpublished) substantial chapter on the committee (Cross 2011: Chapter 4) that the PSC does constitute an epistemic community, while she recognizes that it "goes some distance toward fostering cooperation among member states", and while she sees it as "potentially enormously powerful", her own interviews and empirical work suggest that this potential is, to date, far from being realized. She views the committee as a weak epistemic community whose members have relatively little opportunity to meet informally and have limited success in forging professional norms which go beyond what one might expect among diplomats. She regrets the fact that PSC has become bogged down in the minutiae of crisis management (which is, after all, its fundamental responsibility) and is hamstrung by much stronger red lines emanating from the capitals. Cross's verdict contradicts those of other scholars of this committee, but may have been to some degree influenced by the comparisons (which, to date, only she is capable of making) with the other Brussels-based agencies she has studied in depth – particularly COREPER.

In sum, and bearing in mind the dissenting voice which Cross represents, we can only conclude that,

---

13   Confidential interview with a PSC ambassador, Brussels, 22 May 2007.

whatever its current limitations as a charioteer of CSDP integration, the PSC nevertheless conforms to the pattern we have established through this survey of the entire range of decision-shaping and decision-making agencies in Brussels. Formally an intergovernmental institution, PSC acts increasingly regularly like a supranational agent.

4. Conclusions

In a recent article on the significance of institutional environments for decision-making in the EU, Jeffrey Lewis concludes that

> *"variables that impact whether more competitive or more cooperative styles adhere include: insulation; issue scope; interaction intensity; and informal norms. Higher levels of [these variables] deepen the mutual trust and introspection that engenders more cooperative styles of negotiation to take hold and become routinized"* (Lewis 2010: 658).

Most of the institutional agencies studied in this paper correspond relatively closely to the higher levels of scope conditions which he outlines. EU foreign and security policy is a recent policy area which has to coexist with residual "heroic" stances taken on a number of key international issues by a handful of European national capitals (e.g. the Iraq crisis of 2003). But what we have seen over the past ten years is a Union attempting to write a new security script essentially geared to international crisis management which is only challenged around the margins by the larger member states. That script features both a military and a civilian component but is increasingly self-defining as the interface and the synergies between the military and civilian components.

The vast majority of the "spade work" in this policy area is carried out by the many working groups, committees and agencies studied in this paper. All of them, without exception, are formally "intergovernmental" agencies composed of one or more representatives per member state. A rationalist or liberal intergovernmentalist approach to such policy-shaping and policy-making would insist that these representatives are essentially in the business of bargaining around hard and fast national interests or "red lines" and that the outcome will be a reflection of that bargaining. Much of the recent sociological institutionalist literature has challenged that approach and argued that various forms of socialization and inter-subjectivity within the insulated institutional settings typical of the agencies involved in CSDP decision-shaping allows for a different form of political process which equates more closely to what Checkel has called *Type I socialization* or *Type II internalization*. Most of the literature reviewed in this paper suggests that, with varying degrees of intensity, the latter interpretation is much closer to the truth than the former.

A tentative overall conclusion might be the following. While there is no doubt that, within these different bodies, at different moments in time and on different policy dossiers, there is variation in the extent to which the representatives are able to transcend a purely bargaining mode and move towards role playing or normative suasion, there is little or no doubt that such tendencies exist in all of them. In particular in the field of CSDP – which is a work in progress – there is a marked trend towards consensus-seeking which

goes far beyond what one might normally expect of diplomatic practice and which comes close on many occasions to policy-making. Under these circumstances, to continue to draw distinctions between inter-governmental procedures and supranational practices is, at the very least, unhelpful to our understanding of what is actually happening. Even in a body as robustly ring-fenced by intergovernmental constraints as the EDA, the direction – largely driven by the imperative of security cooperation in a rapidly changing world – is clearly towards ever greater cooperation and even integration. Under these circumstances, I might even be tempted to conclude that I was too hasty, ten years ago, in speaking of "supranational intergovernmen-talism". The emerging pattern begins to look more like "intergovernmental supranationalism".

Literature

Allen, David 1998: ''Who Speaks for Europe? '': The Search for an Effective and Coherent External Policy, in: Peterson, John/Sjursen, Helene (eds): A Common Foreign Policy for Europe? Competing Visions of the CFSP, London/ New York, 43-60.

Bátora, Jozef 2009: European Defence Agency: A Flashpoint of Institutional Logics, in: West European Politics 32/6, 1075-1098.

Beyers, Jan/Dierickx, Guido 1998: The Working Groups of the Council of the European Union: Supranational or Intergovernmental Negotiations?, in: Journal of Common Market Studies 36/3, 289-317.

Beyers, Jan 2007: Multiple Embededness and Socialization in Europe: The Case of Council Officials, in: Checkel, Jeffrey T. (ed.): International Institutions and Socialization in Europe, Cambridge, 99-137.

Bostock, David 2002: Coreper Revisited", in: Journal of Common Market Studies 40/2, 215-234.

Campion, Michael A./Campion, James E./Hudson Jr., J. Peter 1994: Structured Interviewing: A Note on Incremental Validity and Alternative Question Types", Journal of Applied Psychology 79/6, 998-1002.

Christiansen, Thomas/Kirchner, Emil (eds.) 2000: Committee Governance in the European Union, Manchester.

Cross, Mai'a K. Davis 2007: The European Diplomatic Corps: Diplomats and International Cooperation from Westphalia to Maastricht, London.

Cross, Mai'a K. Davis 2010: Cooperation by Committee: the EU Military Committee and the Committee for Civilian Crisis Management, in: Occacional Paper 82, European Institute for Security Studies/Paris, in: http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/op82_CooperationbyCommittee.pdf; 25 February 2011.

Cross, Mai'a K. Davis 2011: Security Integration in the European Union, Ann Arbor (forthcoming).

De Neve, Alain 2010: L'Agence Européenne de defense et la cooperation dans le domaine capacitaire, Paris.

Duke, Simon 2005: The Linchpin COPS. Assessing the Workings and Institutional Relations of the Political and Security Committee, in: EUIPA Working Paper 2005/W/05/ European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht.

Dumoulin, André/Mathieu, Raphael/Sarlet, Gordon 2003: La Politique Européenne de sécurité et de défense (PESD). De l'opératoire à l'identitaire, Bruxelles.

Dür, Andreas/Mateo, Gemma/Thomas, Daniel C. (eds.) 2010: Negotiation Theory and the EU: The State of the Art, Journal of European Public Policy, Special issue17/5.

EDA [European Defence Agency] 2007: A Strategy for the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base, Brussels, 14 May.

Giegerich, Bastian 2006: European Security and Strategic Culture, Baden Baden.

Grevi, Giovanni 2007: The Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy of the European Union: Ever-Closer Cooperation. Dynamics of Regime Deepening, Doctoral thesis, Free University of Brussels, June 17.

Grevi, Giovanni 2009: ESDP Institutions, in: Grevi, Giovanni/Helly, Damien/Keohane, Daniel (eds.): European Security & Defence Policy: The First Ten Years, European Institute for Security Studies, Paris.

Guérot, Ulrike 2010: Germany Goes Global: Farewell Europe, European Council on Foreign Relations, in: European Council on Foreign Relations, 16 September 2010, in: http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_germany_goes_global/; 25 February 2011.

Haas, Peter 1992: Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination, in: Interna-

tional Organization 46/1, 1-35.

Hayes-Renshaw, Fiona 1990: The Role of Coreper in the Decision-Making Process of the European Community", Ph.D. Dissertation, London School of Economics.

Hayes-Renshaw, Fiona/Wallace, Helen 1995, "Executive Power in the European Union: The Functions and Limits of the Council of Ministers", in: Journal of European Public Policy 2/4, 559–582.

Hooghe, Liesbet 1999: Images of Europe: Orientations to European integration among Senior Commission Officials, in: British Journal of Political Science 29/2, 345 -367.

Howorth, Jolyon 2000: European Integration and Defence: the Ultimate Challenge?, Chaillot Paper 43, Paris.

Howorth, Jolyon 2004: Discourse, Ideas and Epistemic Communities in European Security and Defence Policy", in: Special Edition of West European Politics: Europeanisation, Policy Change and Discourse 27/2, 211-234.

Howorth, Jolyon/Menon, Anand 2009: Still Not Pushing Back: Why the European Union is not Balancing the United States, in: Journal of Conflict Resolution 53/5, 727-744.

Howorth, Jolyon 2010: The Political and Security Committee: a Case Study in 'Supranational Inter-Governmentalism'?, in: Cahiers Européens 1/2010, Sciences Po, Paris.

Juncos, Anna E./Christopher Reynolds 2007: The Political and Security Committee: Governing in the Shadow, in: European Foreign Affairs Review 12/2, 127-147.

Juncos, Anna E./Pomorska, Karolina 2006: Playing the Brussels Game: Strategic Socialization, in: European Integration Online Papers 10/2006.

Lewis, Jeffrey 1998: Constructing Interests: The Committee of Permanent Representatives and Decision-Making in the European Union, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Lewis, Jeffrey 2000: The Methods of Community in EU Decision-Making and Administrative Rivalry in the Council's Infrastructure, in: Journal of European Public Policy 7/2, 261-289.

Lewis, Jeffrey 2002: National Interests: Coreper, in: Peterson, John/Shackleton, Michael (eds): The Institutions of the European Union, Oxford, 277-298.

Lewis, Jeffrey 2003: Institutional Environments and Everyday EU Decision-Making: Rationalist or Constructivist?, in: Comparative Political Studies 36/1-2, 97-124.

Lewis, Jeffrey 2007: The Janus Face of Brussels: Socialization and Everyday Decision-Making in the European Union, in: Checkel, Jeffrey T. (ed.): International Institutions and Socialization in Europe, Cambridge, 137-170.

Lewis, Jeffrey 2010: How Institutional Environments Facilitate Cooperative Negotiation Styles in EU decision-making, in: Journal of European Public Policy 17/5, 648-664.

Majone, Giandomenico 1989: Evidence, Argument and Persuasion in the Policy Process, New Haven/London.

Maulny, Jean-Pierre/Liberti, Fabio 2008: Pooling of EU Member States' Assets in the Implementation of ESDP, European Parliament Directorate General External Policies of the Union Study, in: http://www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2008_artrel_142_08-02epstudy-pooling.pdf; 25 February 2011

Menon, Ananad 2007: Security Policy: the logic of leaderlessness, in: Hayward, Jack (ed.): Leaderless Europe, Oxford, 131-146.

Mérand, Frédéric/Hoffman, Stephanie/Irondelle, Bastien 2011: Governance of Governments: The European Security and Defense Policy Network, in: Journal of Common Market Studies Special Issue 49/1, 121-147.

Mérand, Frédéric 2008: European Defence Policy: Beyond the Nation State, Oxford.

Meyer, Christoph O. 2006: The Quest for a European Strategic Culture: Changing Norms on Security and Defence in the European Union, London.

Monar, Jörg 2010: Institutional Dimensions of the European Union's Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, Brussels.

Moravcsik, Andrew 1993: Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach, in: Journal of Common Market Studies 31/4, 473-524.

Moravcsik, Andrew 1998: The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht, London.

Noel, Emile 1967: The Committee of Permanent Representatives, in: Journal of Common Market Studies 5/3, 219-251.

Puetter, Uwe 2003: Informal Circles of Ministers: A Way out of the EU's Institutional Dilemmas, in: European Law Journal 9/1, 109-124.

Radaelli, Claudio M. 1999: The Public Policy of the European Union: Whither Politics of Expertise?, in: Journal of European Public Policy 6/5, 757-774.

Rickli, Jean-Marc 2008: European Small States' Military Policies after the Cold-War: From Territorial to Niche Strategies, in: Cambridge Review of International Affairs 21/3, 307-325.

Risse, Thomas 2000: 'Let's Argue': Communicative Action in International Relations, International Organization 54/1, 1-39.

Salmon, Trevor C./Shepherd, Alistair J.K. 2003: Toward a European Army, Boulder.

Schilde, Katja 2010: Embedded in Brussels: Public Agendas and Private Actors in the European Union, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania.

Sjursen, Helene (ed.) 2006: What kind of power: European Foreign Policy in Perspective, in: Journal of European Public Policy, Special Issue 13/2.

Slaughter, Anne-Marie 2004: A New World Order, Princeton.

Smith, Michael E. 2003: Europe's Foreign and Security Policy: the Institutionalization of Cooperation, Cambridge.

Stinchcombe, Arthur 1965, Social Structure and Organisations, in: March, James G. (ed.): Handbook of Organizations, Chicago.

Thorhallsson, Baldur/Wivel, Anders 2006: Small States in the European Union: What Do We Know and What Would we Like to Know?, in: Cambridge Review of International Affairs 19/4, 651-668.

Thurner, PaulW./Binder, Martin 2009: European Union Transgovernmental Networks: The Emergence of a New Political Space beyond the Nation-State, in: European Journal of Political Research 48/1, 80-106.

Trybus, Martin 2006: The New European Defence Agency: A Contribution to the Common European Defence Policy and a Challenge to the Community Acquis?, in: Common Market Law Review 43/3, 667-703.

Warntjen, Andreas 2010: Between Bargaining and Deliberation: Decision-Making in the Council of the European Union, in: Journal of European Public Policy 17/5, 665-679.

Wessels, Wolfgang 1991: The EC Council: The Community's Decision-Making Center, in: Hoffmann, Stanley/ Keohane, Robert (eds): The New European Community: Decision-Making and Institutional Change, Boulder.

Witney, Nick 2008: Re-Energising Europe's Security and Defence Policy, in: Policy Paper, European Council on Foreign Relations, July 2008, London.

The Kolleg-Forschergruppe - Encouraging Academic Exchange and Intensive Research

The Kolleg-Forschergruppe (KFG) is a new funding programme launched by the German Research Foundation in 2008. It is a centrepiece of the KFG to provide a scientifically stimulating environment in which innovative research topics can be dealt with by discourse and debate within a small group of senior and junior researchers.

The Kolleg-Forschergruppe „The Transformative Power of Europe" brings together research on European affairs in the Berlin-Brandenburg region and institutionalizes the cooperation with other universities and research institutions. It examines the role of the EU as promoter and recipient of ideas, analyzing the mechanisms and effects of internal and external diffusion processes in three research areas:

• Identity and the Public Sphere
• Compliance, Conditionality and Beyond
• Comparative Regionalism and Europe's External Relations