



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



Natolin

Department of EU International Relations
and Diplomacy Studies, 2010-2011

Département d'études en Relations internationales
et diplomatiques de l'Union européenne, 2010-2011

The Eu as a Civilian Power Plus in the Post 9/11 International Security Environment

A Critical Assessment of the CSDP Missions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia

Roderick HARTE (NL)

Supervisor: Professor Stephan Fröhlich

Abstract

It has been nearly ten years since al-Qaeda attacked the United States on 11 September 2001 and almost eight years since the European Security Strategy prescribed the need for the European Union to take part in the fight against international terrorism abroad and to share in the responsibility for global security. This thesis accordingly assesses the results of the Common Security and Defense Policy in supporting states threatened by al-Qaeda in the first decade after 9/11. Specifically, it answers two research questions on the basis of a literature study as well as expert interviews: first, to what extent has the CSDP contributed to stabilization efforts in the post 9/11 international security environment, in particular in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia, and second, to what extent has the EU transformed itself into a global security actor in this new international security context.

With respect to the first question, the thesis determines that the impact of the EU's CSDP has been limited: while its missions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia have made some useful civilian and military contributions to support those states in their efforts to combat al-Qaeda, their overall impacts have been small, especially compared to those of other international actors. The CSDP's unique added value to the international community's stabilization efforts has also been limited to its expertise on Interior Ministries. Moreover, while the EU was the first to develop a 'comprehensive approach' to security, including in its CSDP, this generally did not serve as a model for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation or the US when they developed comparable approaches to stabilization missions in the post 9/11 era.

Regarding the second question, the thesis argues that the EU has not transformed itself into a global security actor in the post 9/11 international security environment, because its missions have mainly been civilian in nature with only one being a very limited military operation. Thus, the EU should in the first decade of the post 9/11 era be conceptualized as a 'civilian power plus' that primarily pursues civilian ends through civilian means and only to a limited extent uses military capabilities to reach military goals. The EU's slow development in this respect should not be surprising, because the EU is not a natural actor in the global security arena like the US or NATO. The events of 9/11, as well as US pressure, nevertheless forced it to develop in that direction, even though its CSDP capabilities were still very limited at that time.