

OPEN LETTER TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF EUROPE

This letter expresses a range of the thoughts and aspirations of some sixty or seventy young people, all at the start of their careers, gathered in Paris from eight different countries on the initiative of EuroDéfense France. The purpose of this symbolic gathering was to exchange ideas about the aims of *European Security & Defence Policy* (ESDP) and its future.

Our meeting made us the better aware of our common values. We found a shared wish first to look intensively together at the issues which cause us concern and then, moving forward from that, to discuss what the ambitious structure we see being created might possibly achieve.

A Military dimension of, and for, Europe?

A first question was :

Is Europe able to play the major world political role to which it aspires without having a credible military dimension?

To this our answer was such a dimension is essential.

Fundamental values

We consider as essential the values of Liberty, Rule of Law, Democracy and Human Rights, as set out in Article 6 of the Treaty of European Union, (TEU). The recognition of these values is going to define the new borders of the European Union (EU) and the EU itself must, consequently, maintain an active dialogue with the rest of the world in order to promote these values. It is necessary to propagate these values to develop the European identity; in this there is a special role for the media, for public information activity and for academic programmes. Some of us foresee the possibility that these values could even eventually be included into treaties in order to make them obligatory.

Derived from our rich common history, the principles of respect and solidarity are the foundations of our yearning for peace. All of this is points towards a European Defence Identity (a 'Europe of Defence' or EDI) which would be a source of stability and security beyond its frontiers. Strengthened by our sense of common values, we must think of co-operating with a view to the protection of our interests; aware that our international influence is largely a reflection of our unity. Thus the European Defence Identity contributes simultaneously to the protection of the European Union and to the support of its Foreign Policy.

The European Union should have the character of a beacon of stability and development. It must also provide a recognised and honoured statement of our values, especially so far as the candidate countries for enlargement are concerned. But if this development is to endure it must reflect conditions agreed to be fair by all the member states.

The existence of common vulnerabilities is as important to the construction as it is to European foreign policy. European countries should cooperate to limit the destabilizing effects of the globalization. Following the attacks of 11 September it is necessary to prevent the spectre of international terrorism and from casting its shadow over the people of Europe.

The member States will also have to overcome difficulties associated with technological development and the supply of energy, as their natural resources are insufficient and the supplier regions are politically unstable. The future enlargement of the European Union to countries of Central and Eastern Europe will force them to adopt cross-border policies in field of environmental protection. The same holds true for the control of weapons of mass destruction.

That the European Defence Identity should be a fresh manifestation of European unity is regarded by many of us as one of the most important elements of our future. But a major question lies in whether we have the will to build a common defence that is innovative in concept. The complexity of European diplomacy, where strictly national and/or European interests are mixed together suggests to many of us a new form of non automatic mutual aid, that can be provided as required by the state concerned.

The ways of bringing European defence into play are numerous and include political and military measures. There were a number of possible suggestions put forward for consideration: the drafting of a European Constitution; the creation of a European federal government; the insertion of a military alliance clause into Treaty of European Union; the formation of a common European command structure; the establishment of an Institute of High Studies for Defence and of a European Academy for Defence to strengthen the military co-operation; the strengthening of the European Rapid Reaction Force; and, possibly, the formation of a common European army.

It is obvious that defence and diplomacy are closely linked. It is necessary for Europe to resolve, as a priority and in an autonomous way, the potential conflicts within Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, whilst remaining as a partner of the NATO for the conflicts at a worldwide level, and considering, in longer term, the ways to act independently at a global level; a legitimate ambition of European Union. The links with the Euro-Atlantic partnership, and consequently with NATO, must be clarified in order to consolidate them, and to avoid wasteful and prejudicial tensions between the defence element of the CFSP and NATO.

It is in this shared perspective of the ESDP that the debate that has already begun must be developed in the direction of greater European independence. The fact that the European Defence Identity is an inseparable part of the Common Foreign & Security Policy (CFSP) should contribute towards reinforcing political and military autonomy.

As a matter of priority the future of the European defence industry must be properly addressed by any European Defence Identity to ensure that Europe retains a world class defence industrial base.

Cooperation must develop around common equipment programmes with the aim of producing multi-role and innovative products allowing a reduction in the unit cost price of defence equipment. Furthermore by sharing research and development costs, leading on to a co-operative production programme, proves clearly that the European defence industry could reduce its production costs.

Europe must ensure that the ambitions that she sets herself are in line with the means at her disposal. The catalogue of forces necessary to carry out the Petersberg tasks is a first, promising, step in this direction in addition to sharing and co-operation especially in the field of intelligence. All these innovations and improvements may enable a strong policy which would legitimate an eventual military action and would apply itself with efficiency.

The path towards a true understanding of the potential of Europe is beset with pitfalls. To follow successfully it requires determination and the co-operation of all concerned. We therefore believe it right to state to you our fellow young Europeans our belief in this future and to invite you to join us on this path.

Europe must take again her future in hand, because we, as Europeans, must promote our own social model.