



## The EU and NATO

### Introduction

On 12 September 2001, less than 24 hours after the attacks on New York, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) invoked Article 5 for the first time in its 52-year history.

Although many of the 19 member countries were apprehensive, this declaration “that an armed attack against one or more of the Allies in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all”<sup>1</sup> exhibited solidarity between the members of the military alliance against the common threat of terrorism. Despite this, the war in Afghanistan was carried out on a bilateral basis rather than on a multilateral level. Thus, the idea of a collective defence forged within NATO faded and gave way to transatlantic tensions over Iraq.<sup>2</sup>

A significant number of the Member States of the EU are members of NATO, but NATO has not become a strong anti-terrorism vehicle for the European Union. In fact, NATO has been weakened by divisions within Europe and the subsequent inability to make important, quick, and decisive decisions over the defence of Turkey and the invasion of Iraq. Thus, many EU Member States have preferred to work bilaterally on military matters with the United States rather than through NATO or through the European Union.

### EU-NATO Permanent Relations

Yet, as NATO's goals shift to counter-terrorism measures, the EU and NATO have established a framework of strategic relations. On 16 December 2002, the EU High Representative Javier Solana declared that co-operation between the EU and NATO must be based on the following principles:<sup>3</sup>

- “Partnership: ensuring that the crisis management objectives of the two organizations are mutually reinforcing, while recognising that the European Union and NATO are organisations of a different nature”
- “Effective mutual consultation, dialogue, co-operation and transparency”
- “Equality and due regard for the decision-making autonomy and interest of the European Union and NATO”
- “Respect for the Charter of the United Nations ... and ... for treaty rights and obligations as well as refraining from unilateral actions”
- “Coherent, transparent and mutually reinforcing development of the military capability requirements common to the two organisations.”

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<sup>1</sup> Art. 5, North Atlantic Treaty

<sup>2</sup> Bensahel, Nora. *The Counterterrorism Coalitions: Cooperation with Europe, NATO, and the European Union*. Santa Monica: RAND, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Please note the following 5 points are cited from the *EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP*

## 'Berlin Plus'

The Berlin Plus is a series of documents on co-operation in crisis management between the EU and NATO in order to avoid unnecessary overlap. The term stems from the 1996 meeting in Berlin that established a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI). Since then the Berlin Plus agreements are based on four basic principles:<sup>4</sup>

- "EU access to NATO operational planning;"
- "The presumption of availability to the EU of NATO capabilities and common assets;"
- "NATO European command options for EU-led operations" such as the responsibility for peacekeeping in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- "Adaptation of the NATO defence planning system to incorporate the availability of forces for EU operations."

In addition, the EU and NATO have agreed on mutual *crisis consultation arrangements* and an *arrangement on the security of information*.

## Concluding Remarks

Despite the European Union and NATO's continuing dialogue and co-operation, their responses to terrorism have remained quite different and autonomous. This is particularly because NATO still remains a military entity while the EU holds a much larger political and economic role in Europe. There are those, for example Elmar Brok, Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy, who believe that "NATO remains not only a fundamental guarantee for Euro-Atlantic stability and security, but also the essential framework for coalition operations." Yet in order to use NATO effectively as a bridge of co-operation and coordination with the US, the EU must develop consensus among its Member States and forge a strong Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).<sup>5</sup>

## References

- EU-NATO Background - <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/03-11-11%20Berlin%20Plus%20press%20note%20BL.pdf>
- NATO Official Site - <http://www.nato.int/>
- North Atlantic Treaty - <http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/treaty.htm>
- The Counterterror Coalitions - Bensahel, Nora. *The Counterterror Coalitions: Cooperation with Europe, NATO, and the European Union*. Santa Monica: RAND, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Please note the following 4 points are cited from NATO Briefing, *Crisis Management*, Oct 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Brok, Elmar, *Agenda for a New Transatlantic Relationship: The EU's To-Do List*. Brussels: EP 28/4/03. <[http://www.europa-web.de/europa/03eunif/12EP\\_BER/eusbrok.htm](http://www.europa-web.de/europa/03eunif/12EP_BER/eusbrok.htm)> [Accessed 11/10/2004]