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ESDP and Gender - implementing gender mainstreaming in the EU context of ESDP

First of all I would like to thank the CWINF for inviting the EU Council Secretariat to speak on the activities and the framework that has been put in place to integrate the gender perspective in the ESDP operations and am hoping that my briefing might be beneficial and informative also for the further work of this committee. I also very much welcome the opportunity to hear more on the experiences of the other speakers present, as well as our further exchange of views during the discussion(s) here today!

Introductory remarks/background

The crucial role of gender in security related issues was formally acknowledged in 2000, with the adoption of UNSCR 1325. The debate on gender and security is relatively new, and this conference will of course also contribute to deepen the understanding of this issue.

ESDP is, as you are well aware of, a relatively recent field of activity in the EU. The objective of implementing UNSCR 1325 in the context of ESDP is to ensure coherence between this field of activity and the EU's gender equality policy.

According to the European Security Strategy, adopted in September 2003, the framework for the development of ESDP missions is that; "An active and capable European Union would make an impact on a global scale; ... would contribute to an effective multilateral system leading to a fairer, safer and more united world."

ESDP launched in 1999 as an integral part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) allows the EU to undertake security related operations across the spectrum of crisis management; military operations, security sector reform and governance, Police and Rule of Law operations/missions. In this respect, the EU has developed a defence strategy outside of, but complementary to, NATO and other international organizations.

ESDP has through its rapid development become the EU's first tangible strategy for identifying and responding to common security concerns. ESDP enhances

the EU's ability to act quickly in the face of global or regional security threats. The first ESDP mission was launched in 2003 and since then the EU has launched 18 military and civilian missions, in different regions ranging from the Western Balkans, to Congo and Aceh.

In this context a reference to the gender perspective was first made in the "EU Generic Standards of Behaviour", a document developed in order to ensure that all categories of personnel involved in ESDP operations maintain the highest standards of behaviour. The document specifies that "pre deployment training of personnel, carried out nationally or by the EU, should include training on the standards of behaviour. Particular attention should be paid to international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights issues, gender issues and child rights issues."

The need to integrate a gender perspective in this field of activity was explicitly articulated by the Gender Equality Ministers in February 2005. The General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) later confirmed that the EU should develop measures in order to integrate UNSCR 1325 into ESDP. It is on this basis that the debate on gender and security, or rather 1325 and ESDP was initiated in 2005.

UNSCR 1325 deals in a comprehensive manner with issues related to women, peace and security and serves as an excellent framework for the integration of a gender perspective into the security sector in general, including in ESDP missions. The General Secretariat of the Council of the EU was in 2005 tasked to develop an operational paper on the implementation of 1325 in the context of ESDP.

When the Council Secretariat developed the paper, it was based on the structure of the UNSCR, and inputs from some Member States. It soon appeared that there was some reluctance with regard to the development of this paper; not least with regard to why "the EU" should for example deal with issues like the recruitment and training of men and women in national security services, which was a national responsibility. But despite a degree of reticence, the overall reactions were positive.

Implementing UNSCR 1325 in ESDP

In view of the different levels of implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the EU Member States it appeared difficult to develop the ambitious action plan that some Member States was in favour of. However, as the Member States could agree on a step by step approach, including a number of non binding measures, the paper was endorsed by the Political and Security Committee; and the Council took note of it in November 2005.

Among the issues addressed in the paper were: measures to increase women's representation at all decision making levels, including the improvement of the gender balance in ESDP missions; increase dialogue with local and international women's groups; incorporate a gender perspective into ESDP operations and; ensure gender training.

A number of activities have been conducted so far on the basis of this paper. One example is the exchange of national practices; where a list of questions in view of facilitating an exchange of good practises were sent out to and replied on by Member States on a voluntary basis. A key element from the analysis of this exchange (which took place in the spring of 2006) was the fact that there was a growing awareness of the need to integrate a gender perspective into the field of security and defence and a strong interest in measures taken by other states. Even though the EU structure may facilitate the process, the fulfilment of the commitments of UNSCR 1325 is a joint responsibility of all actors involved.

One of the conclusions of this exchange was the need for coordination between the different national ministries involved, where some have created an inter-ministerial task force, others an office for gender issues. The coordination aspect is further developed in the National Action Plans that some Member States have developed, of which we also will hear more on during this conference. Particularly for ESDP missions, it is crucial that Member States integrate and implement gender mainstreaming and UNSCR 1325 into national policies, as it is primarily Member States that are responsible for nominating mission members and pre-mission training.

Checklist to Ensure Gender Mainstreaming and Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Planning and Conduct of ESDP Operations (2006)

In practical terms, it was suggested to elaborate a check list including the following elements; include gender perspective in the fact finding mission, the definition of mandate, the training, the lessons learned, the exercise scenarios, etc. The aim of the check list is to facilitate the inclusion of a gender perspective from the outset of a crisis management mission. The suggestion to have a gender focal point or gender adviser in each mission was also launched.

On the basis of the follow-up of the exchange of national practices, a checklist for integrating gender aspects into missions was developed in 2006, to be used by civilian and military planners in the Member States as well as in the Council Secretariat. The check list is available as a public document. It includes i a the following elements: advance planning (where fact finding missions and planning teams should include gender expertise and the report of fact finding missions should include a section on gender issues (and situation assessments should include a short summary of gender related issues in the area of operation)); ESDP operations/missions should include personnel with responsibility for

gender issues; and pre deployment training as well as during mission training should include gender training. Additionally gender mainstreaming and implementation of UNSCR 1325 should be included as a specific item in the lessons learned process.

In November 2006 the Council adopted a ten point document addressing gender mainstreaming in the context of ESDP. The November 2006 Council GAERC conclusions on crisis management also acknowledged that gender awareness and sensitivity contribute to operational effectiveness and stipulated that a gender adviser or focal point should be appointed for all EU missions and operations. As such, the Council stipulates that gender sensitivity must be assured throughout the operational chain of command, and that training should be undertaken at all levels and address stereotypes to redress gender equality. In particular, it stresses zero tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse, gender based violence and prostitution, and calls for retribution for any violations (although this is the responsibility of EU Member States, hence the need for National Action Plans on 1325).

Practical implementation/examples

As such, the EUFOR DRC operation - of which we will hear more here from the former Operation Commander, Lt Gen Viereck, and the gender adviser of EUFOR DRC, Charlotte Isaksson - has set a successful and important precedent by the deployment of the first gender adviser in an EU operation (to its EU Operational Headquarters) and conducting more training and gender awareness than previous missions - including explaining gender perspectives and articulating zero-tolerance of gender based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and prostitution on the EUFOR "soldier card".

Further activities that have been carried out since the first discussion on gender and ESDP at the EU level include i a a case study of the Bosnia and Herzegovina ESDP missions (discussed in the EU-Institute for Security Studies (EU-ISS) Chaillot paper on Gender and Mainstreaming in ESDP) and a 2-day training for all civilian heads of mission. Furthermore, the first EU training course on gender and ESDP was organised by Hungary in April 2007, with the support of the German Presidency. The Council GAERC conclusions from May 2007 pointed to "broadening the scope of gender equality", including fragile states, peace building and reconstruction, and highlighted that gender issues had started to be systematically included in the planning and conduct of all ESDP operations.

Moreover, gender mainstreaming is subsequently being evaluated in the lessons learned processes.

EULEX Kosovo

A relevant example is also the planned Kosovo mission (EULEX Kosovo), which will have a full-time Human Rights and Gender Unit, and is conducting gender pre-mission training for all new personnel.

Within the broader framework of human rights issues, gender equality is and will be given particular attention. Thus gender-related issues will be addressed and policies designed and implemented in line with the EU standards, aquis communautaire and best practices. The EU Planning Team for Kosovo is committed to full implementation of the UNSCR 1325.

Key planning documents include gender mainstreaming as a core philosophy that the EUPT has incorporated in the design of the EULEX Kosovo Mission's Concept of Operation, the Operational Plan and Annexes and other essential documents.

EUFOR Tchad/RCA

Building on the experiences and lessons learned from EUFOR DRC, in the most recent ESDP operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA, the gender adviser appointed to the Operational Headquarters is conducting training, has proposed a structure for monitoring and reporting, set up a network of focal points at all levels, and developed a FAQ/Briefing notes for Mainstreaming Gender issues into the EUFOR Tchad/RCA operation, encompassing i a the following:

An explanation of what gender means - namely a concept that describes the socially constructed roles; behaviours; activities and attributes that a given/specific society considers appropriate for men and women (also meaning that it will change both over time and space).

Furthermore, that it is important to remember that gender is about both men and women. To have a gender perspective is to be able to detect *if* and *when* men and women are being affected differently by a situation due to their gender. To mainstream gender is to allow for such a gender perspective to be a part of all stages and levels of a process or organization. This means that awareness of these issues and how they may (or may not) affect operations should be part of any planning, execution and evaluation.

Gender issues are important to the EUFOR Tchad/RCA operation because working with a gender perspective will ensure that the operation takes into account that different groups in the Area of Operation (AOO) will have different threats to their security, needs, rights and resources. A gender perspective will therefore contribute to the operation in the following ways:

- It will contribute to the achievement of the overall operation's objectives;**

- **Ensure additional and useful information and intelligence of use to the operation;**
- **Ensure greater measures of force protection;**
- **Win the hearts and minds of the civilian population.**

Conclusion

There has been a relevant shift in the understanding of the relationship between gender and security and the knowledge and the tools for integrating a gender perspective into conflict prevention/management are more readily available today than previously.

EU actors have a collective responsibility to ensure that the knowledge and the tools are used in the best, and most effective, possible way. Rhetoric and the development of political documents are not enough, and there is a continued need to keep the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on the agenda (and ensure a deeper understanding among personnel dealing with crisis management). A continual integration of gender in the security framework and EU missions is not simply a question of equality, but also of improving the effectiveness of conflict management by bringing to bear the perspectives of both "halves" of the population. There is a growing recognition of the strategic and operational value of gender perspectives and sensitivity.

Part of the problem, with regard to the limited knowledge of what gender mainstreaming actually is and what purposes it serves is that the EU can only provide guidelines for gender training and awareness(, but it is the Member States responsibility to conduct the actual training).

In the end it is important to take firm note of that gender is not a "woman's issue", and that it encompasses not just women, but that addressing gender "issues" is acknowledging and understanding the bias, experiences, challenges and perspectives as affecting - and effected by - men, women, boys and girls.