

TOWARDS A WESTERN BALKANS BATTLEGROUP

A Vision of Serbia's Defence Integration into the EU 2010–2020.

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Abstract

The aim of this policy vision is to offer arguments for Serbia's proactive integration into the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) through the implementation of the Battlegroup concept in the period running up to 2020. In the following text, we will first present a short overview of the CSDP and the concept of EU Battlegroups. Next, we explain why it is in the interest of the Republic of Serbia to participate in EU Battlegroups as soon as possible. Special attention is directed to arguments which explain why the creation of a Western Balkans Battlegroup before 2020 is in the interest not only of Serbia and her neighbours, but also of the EU as a whole. Finally, a four-phase model for the inclusion of Serbia into an EU Battlegroup is presented. The model encompasses (1) a preparation and observation phase (2010-2012), (2) an adaptation phase (2013-2015), (3) a phase of advance participation, planning and preparation (2016-2018) and (4) a phase of development of initial operational capability and the formation of the Western Balkans Battlegroup (2018-2020).

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Abbreviations:

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BG Battlegroup

BiH Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Bosna i Hercegovina*)

CBRN Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Weapons

CFSP Common Foreign and Security Policy

CSDP Common Security and Defence Policy

EC European Community

ESDP European Security and Defence Policy

EU European Union

EUMC European Union Military Committee

EUMS European Union Military Staff

GAERC General Affairs and External Relations Council

JNA Yugoslav National Army (*Jugoslovenska narodna armija*)

NATO North Atlantic Treaty organisation

NPI National Programme for Integration (*Nacionalni program za integraciju*)

NRF NATO Reaction Force

ORBAT Order of Battle

OSRH Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia (*Oružane snage Republike Hrvatske*)

PARP Planning and Review Process

PfP Partnership for Peace

UN United Nations

VSM Armed Forces of Macedonia (*Вооружените сили на Македонија/Vooruženite sili na Makedonija*)

WBBG Western Balkans Battlegroup

Introductory Remarks

The process of globalisation has brought the world to a state of interdependence without precedent in human history.¹ The two world wars brought great destruction, but also the belief that peace and security are indivisible. The end of the Cold War, liberalisation of the world economy and the information revolution since the end of the last century have only accelerated the process of security cooperation and integration, particularly in Europe. Of the numerous organisations which compose the architecture of European security in the post-Cold War period, two stand out as the most important. These are the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which still takes care of the collective defence of states in the Euro-Atlantic region, and the European Union (EU), which is responsible for economic and political integration in the European continent. However, over the past ten years the EU has developed its own Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), with which it has become a more visible security actor on the international stage.² Unfortunately, the Republic of Serbia is currently at the back of the queue of Western Balkans countries waiting for inclusion in this policy.

The aim of this text is to present the reasons why it is in the national interest of the Republic of Serbia to begin to take part in the CSDP as soon as possible. The text also proposes a possible method of achieving this through launching and realising initiatives to create a Western Balkans Battlegroup (WBBG). The first section explains the aims and methodology used. The second section presents the development of the CSDP and the concept of EU Battlegroups. The third section gives an overview of the current participation of Western Balkans states in CSDP operations. The fourth section presents deficiencies in the current policy of the Republic of Serbia in this area as well as reasons why it is in Serbia's national interest to participate in the CSDP as soon as possible.³ The fifth section develops a four-phase model for the inclusion of the Republic of Serbia in the CSDP through participation in EU Battlegroups.

1 We are indebted to Miroslav Hadžić, Tanja Mišćević, Srđan Gligorijević, Adel Abusara and Dragana Đurašinović for reading the first draft of this text and supplying useful ideas and comments. The responsibility for all errors and omissions lies exclusively with the authors.

2 Before the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1st December 2009 this policy was known as the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

3 It should be mentioned that participation in battle groups is only one possible way for the Republic of Serbia to be integrated into the CSDP. This document will not deal with other aspects of the CSDP, such as participation in existing civilian and military EU missions, the work of the European Defence Agency etc.

I The aim of the policy vision and methodological remarks

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The text in front of you sets out a vision for the participation of the Republic of Serbia in EU Battlegroups in the period from 2010 to 2020. It should be mentioned that what we have in mind is a *policy vision*, a text which should serve as a long-lasting inspiration for decision making in this field. Its aim is first of all to present the current state of the CSDP and EU Battlegroups. The text also offers reasons for the Republic of Serbia to act proactively to participate in this EU policy. Lastly, it attempts to point out an available route that the Republic of Serbia can take in order to arrive from the present situation, in 2010, where it is at the back of the queue of states in the region waiting for membership of the CSDP to the desired situation where, by 2020, it would not only be an EU member, but also in the advance guard of the WBBG.

This policy vision is particularly intended for decision makers in the Republic of Serbia: both for those with executive power - the president of the republic, the government and the competent ministries - and for those with legislative power - the national parliament and especially its committees responsible for defence and security, European integration and foreign affairs. This document is likewise intended for other actors in the national security system and the security-intelligence community who through their work contribute to the Republic of Serbia's integration into the security systems of Europe and the rest of the world. Finally, this policy vision can also be useful to non-governmental organisations, research institutions, universities, the media and all other civil society actors who take part in public and expert discussions about Serbia's European integration and about her national security policy.

This text also has defined boundaries of which readers should be aware. Firstly, this vision cannot be and should not be used as a complete overview of tasks which must be carried out as part of the process of Serbia's integration into the CSDP over the next ten years. The authors of this text have placed emphasis on Battlegroups, which represent only a small part of the CSDP. Besides, the format of this document does not allow a detailed list of all steps which must be taken in the process of inclusion in the activities of EU Battlegroups, rather only those which currently appear most important. Finally, in this text we are not concerned either with the exceptionally important problem

of the funding of these activities, as this should be the subject of separate analysis.⁴

The basic methodology used in this work is *linear extrapolation*, or making future predictions based on data about the present without taking into account possible risks. This type of methodology is especially problematic as there is a high probability that the basic trends from which one starts will change significantly in the future. For this reason it is advisable to present here our basic assumptions about trends in the domestic and international political environment in the period from 2010 to 2020 underlying this policy vision.

First, it is assumed that the peace and stability of the Western Balkans will not be brought into question. Second, it is expected that the Republic of Serbia, like the rest of the region's states, will not abandon its foreign policy determination to attain EU membership. Third, it is assumed that over the given period the process of democratic transition and internal reform in the Republic of Serbia, as in the other states of the Western Balkans, will develop in an undisturbed manner and without great difficulty. Fourth, it is assumed that the EU will not stop nor significantly slow down the process of enlargement for the states of the Western Balkans. The correctness of the above assumptions will partly depend on how Serbia and the EU link the status of Kosovo to the process of European integration. If these processes are treated separately, as they have been so far, the possibility exists that this difficult problem will not stop the process of the Western Balkans' integration into the EU. Fifth, it is expected that the EU will gradually strengthen its security role on the international stage. Sixth, it is assumed that the EU will continue to gradually develop the institutions and capabilities of the CSDP. Seventh, it is understood that the EU will gradually increase the intensity of its activities in the field of crisis management, including the carrying out of military operations outside the EU's territory. Eighth, it is expected that in the period under consideration, EU Battlegroups will start to be used to carry out crisis management operations within the framework of the CSDP.⁵ If one or more of the aforementioned assumptions is significantly brought into question in the period 2010 to 2020, the realisation of this policy vision will be hindered, and perhaps made entirely impossible. Before we turn to the arguments for the Republic of Serbia to take a proactive approach towards the CSDP, accomplished by taking part in Battlegroups, it is necessary to take a look at the development of this EU policy.

4 While the military components of the CSDP are financed by participating states, the civilian components are financed from the EU budget. This justifies the supposition that the Republic of Serbia will in the upcoming period show more interest in participating in civilian rather than military missions.

5 At the time of this text's publication the EU had still not used any of the existing Battlegroups. The challenges faced by Battlegroups are *operative* (funding, training, strategic air transport etc.) and *political* (relations with the UN and NATO and its rapid reaction force – the NRF).

II The development of the Common Security and Defence Policy and the concept of EU Battlegroups

Since it was founded at the beginning of the 1950s, today's European Union, formerly the European Community (EC), has had a significant role on the international stage. Due to the failure of the idea of creating a European Defence Community in 1954, its role during the Cold War was above all economic. However, the end of the Cold War created a new reality in Europe which required, among other things, the strengthening of the political and security role of the EU in its international relations. Because of its reluctance to play a significant role during the war in Iraq in 1991, Belgium's then foreign minister Mark Eyskens described the EU as "an economic giant, a political dwarf and a military worm".⁶

However, by 1992, after the Maastricht Treaty came into force, the EU had begun to develop its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Article B of the treaty defined as one of the goals of the EU as being, "to assert its identity on the international scene, in particular through the implementation of a common foreign and security policy including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence."⁷ Nevertheless, over the following years, in attempting to prevent bloodshed in former Yugoslavia, the EU CFSP sadly recorded a series of diplomatic failures. One of the basic reasons for these failures resulted from the fact that the EU, unlike the USA, was unable to back up its diplomatic efforts with a credible military force.

At the Franco-British summit held in the French port Saint-Malo in December 1998, it was decided that the EU needed to play a more significant role on the international stage. The Declaration signed by Jacques Chirac and Tony Blair anticipated that "the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them and a

6 The New York Times, „Gulf Fighting Shatters Europeans' Fragile Unity“, January 25, 1991, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/01/25/world/war-in-the-gulf-europe-gulf-fighting-shatters-europeans-fragile-unity.html> [accessed 6th December 2009]

7 The full text of the treaty is available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/11992M/htm/11992M.html>

readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises.”⁸ In June of the following year, at a meeting of the European Council in Cologne, heads of state and government made the historic decision to establish the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and to begin building its institutions. In December of the same year, in Helsinki, the European Council also defined the *Helsinki Headline Goal 2003*. This target foresaw that by 2003 the EU would be capable, within 60 days of a crisis breaking out within a four thousand kilometre radius of Brussels, of sending up to six thousand troops and to keep them there for at least a year. Besides this, the conclusions of the summit dedicated particular attention to „rapid reaction capabilities“. This was the foundation of what would later become known as the EU Battlegroups.

In 2003 the European Union adopted the *European Security Strategy* under the title *A Secure Europe in a Better World*. This document, with which the EU tried to formalise its united security identity, defined five main threats to Europe’s security. These were terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, state failure, and regional conflict and organised crime. Likewise, in the *Strategy* the EU gave its primary security interests as the strengthening of security and stability in its neighbourhood and the creation of an international order based on effective multilateralism, international law and the strengthening of the UN.⁹ The same year, EU member states agreed on a plan of structural collaboration, the creation of EU Battlegroups.

The year 2003 was crucial for the implementation of the *European Security Strategy* as this was when both its first civilian mission - EUPM in Bosnia and Hercegovina, and its first military mission - EU CONCORDIA in Macedonia began. Since then the EU has begun or completed as many as twenty three missions on three continents.

8 The text of the Saint-Malo Declaration: <http://www.atlanticcommunity.org/Saint-Malo%20Declaration%20Text.html> [accessed 6th December 2009]

9 A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy, Available at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf> [30th May 2010]



Figure 1: EU CSDP Missions

The EULEX mission deployed in Kosovo in 2008 represents the EU's largest civilian mission, while the EUFOR ALTHEA mission deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina is for now its largest military mission. The operations the EU has conducted in the Western Balkans and the Near East are evidence of an ambition to concern itself with both its own backyard and the immediate neighbourhood. On the other hand, from 2003 to 2010, the EU has shown the ability to behave as a global actor. The ARTEMIS mission in Congo showed that the EU is capable of launching small but an autonomous military operation, independently of NATO, far from its own borders. Moreover,

in 2008 the EU's first naval mission, named ATALANTA, was launched along the Somali coast. With this operation, the EU joined the fight against piracy in the Gulf of Aden, which represents an ever increasing global threat to free trade on the seas. According to the former High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, with each new operation the ESDP has developed by learning from its own experience.¹⁰

The Lisbon Treaty and the European Security and Defence Policy

The Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force on 1st December 2009, introduces some important innovations in the fields of foreign, security and defence policy. In foreign policy, the previous rotating presidency was replaced by a newly established president of the European Council, taking the role of representing the EU in international relations. Likewise, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy who succeeded the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy at the same time took over the role of the European Commissioner for External Relations, and became Vice President of the European Commission. The High Representative also has at her disposal the European External Action Service, consisting of officials from the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and national diplomatic missions.¹¹

Likewise, in the field of security and defence policy, a series of innovations were introduced. First, the ESDP underwent a change of name to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Secondly, although defence and security has remained in the domain of intergovernmental collaboration, where consensus is the main means of decision making, from now on some decisions can be made by a majority vote. This is based, above all, on making possible "Permanent Structured Cooperation" with which the preconditions are created for a group of states, if they wish to make a majority decision to

10 Xymena Kurowska, „The Role of ESDP Operations“, in: Michael Merlingen and Rasa Ostrauskaite, *European Security and Defence Policy: An Implementation Perspective*, London: Routledge, 2008, p. 27.

11 In December 2009 Herman Van Rompuy took office as President of the European Council. Catherine Ashton took office as High Representative on the same date.

accelerate mutual cooperation in defence.¹² In this way it also truly becomes possible to intensify and facilitate defence integration within the framework of EU Battlegroups. Thirdly, the Petersberg Tasks (see Table 3) are widened with new tasks such as joint disarmament missions, military consultation and aid, peacekeeping and post-conflict stabilisation, conflict prevention and aid to third states in the fight against terrorism. Fourthly, the European Defence Agency, founded in 2004 in order to coordinate the European defence industry, is now included in the framework of the treaty. Finally, the Lisbon Treaty contains ‘mutual defence clause’ and ‘solidarity clause’. Although these clauses do not affect states’ existing obligations or defence policies, they oblige EU member states to offer each other assistance in cases where one state falls victim to armed attack, terrorism or natural or industrial catastrophe.

The changes provided for in the Lisbon Treaty create conditions allowing the EU to implement a more coherent and effective foreign, security and defence policy and to act more convincingly in the international arena.¹³ Particularly significant for the subject of this text is also the introduction of the concept of permanent structured cooperation which creates important space for the development of EU Battlegroups. If this will really happen depends not only on the political will of member states, but also on detailed operational stipulations left somewhat undefined in the Lisbon Treaty.¹⁴

EU Battlegroups

In 1999 in Helsinki member states took on the obligation to develop “smaller rapid response elements available and deployable at very high readiness”. Following this, the theme was on the agenda of several subsequent European Council meetings.¹⁵ Operation ARTEMIS in Congo in 2003 provided

12 The Maastricht Treaty enabled *Enhanced Cooperation* between at least nine member states in foreign and security policy, but not in defence. The Lisbon Treaty removed this limitation and introduced the possibility of *Permanent Structured Cooperation*, allowing narrower cooperation in defence between any number of member states whose defence capabilities fulfil strict criteria and who wish to take on certain mutual responsibilities. See: „The Impact of the Lisbon Treaty on CFSP and ESDP“, http://www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2008_artrel_150_esr37tol-mar08.pdf

13 See: Steven Blockmans and Ramses A. Wessel, „The European Union and Crisis Management: Will the Lisbon Treaty Make EU More Effective?“, *Journal of Conflict & Security Law*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2009. p. 265–308.

14 Above all this relates to the jurisdiction of the European External Action Service, and to the division of work between the High Representative and the President of the European Council.

15 Helsinki Headline Goal <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Helsinki%20Headline%20Goal.pdf> [accessed 6th December 2009]

important stimulus to this process, showing the significance of relatively small forces capable of responding in distant regions. In June 2004 the *Helsinki Goal 2010* came into force with the assertion that “The European Union is a global actor, ready to share in the responsibility for global security” and with member states committing themselves “to be able by 2010 to respond with rapid and decisive action applying a fully coherent approach to the whole spectrum of crisis management operations covered by the Treaty on European Union”.¹⁶ In November of the same year, member states committed themselves to developing thirteen EU Battlegroups, a concept which became operative on 1st January 2007. Although from 2003 until the present day the EU has deployed twenty three civilian and military missions, at the moment of writing, they have not yet been used.

In the EU jargon, a Battlegroup represents a “minimum militarily effective, credible, rapidly deployable, coherent force package available of stand-alone operations”.¹⁷

It is foreseen that EU Battlegroups consisting of around 1500 troops will be ready for deployment ten to fifteen days after a decision by the EU Council.¹⁸ A Battlegroup should be capable of remaining deployed for at least thirty days, with a possibility of extending deployment for up to one hundred and twenty days. The EU currently has seventeen Battlegroups and is capable of committing two of these concurrently.

The *Battlegroup Roster* denotes two Battlegroups as on duty for each six-month period, and is agreed at a biannual conference for Battlegroup coordination. The last such conference was held in April 2009. The Battlegroup roster has been fully decided for the period up to 2011, and in part up to 2013.

16 Helsinki Headline Goal 2010 <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/2010%20Headline%20Goal.pdf> [accessed 6th December 2009]

17 An excellent introductory text about the Battlegroup concept is Gustav Lindstrom, *Enter the EU Battlegroups*, Chaillot paper 97, EUISS, February 2007.

18 If we include staff providing operative and strategic support, the number of personnel totals more than 2500.

Battlegroup Roster 2009-2014		
<i>Semester</i>	<i>Member States</i>	<i>Lead Nation</i>
2010-1	Poland, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia Great Britain and Netherlands	Poland Great Britain
2010-2	Italy, Romania and Turkey Spain, France and Portugal	Italy Spain
2011-1	Netherlands, Germany, Finland, Austria, Lithuania Sweden, Finland, Norway, Estonia, Ireland („Nordic BG“)	Netherlands Sweden
2011-2	Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus, Ukraine (tbc) - HELBROC or „Balkan BG“ Portugal, Spain, France and Italy	Greece Portugal
2012-1	France, Germany, Luxembourg Undecided	France
2012-2	Italy, Slovenia, Hungary Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Macedonia, Ireland (tbc)	Italy Germany
2013-1	Poland, Germany, France (Weimar BG) Undecided	Poland
2013-2	Great Britain and Sweden Undecided	Great Britain Belgium
2014 -1	Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus (HELBROC „Balkan BG“) Undecided	Greece
2014 - 2	Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, Estonia Spain, Italy	Spain

Semesters: 1 = From January to June; 2 = from July to December of the given year

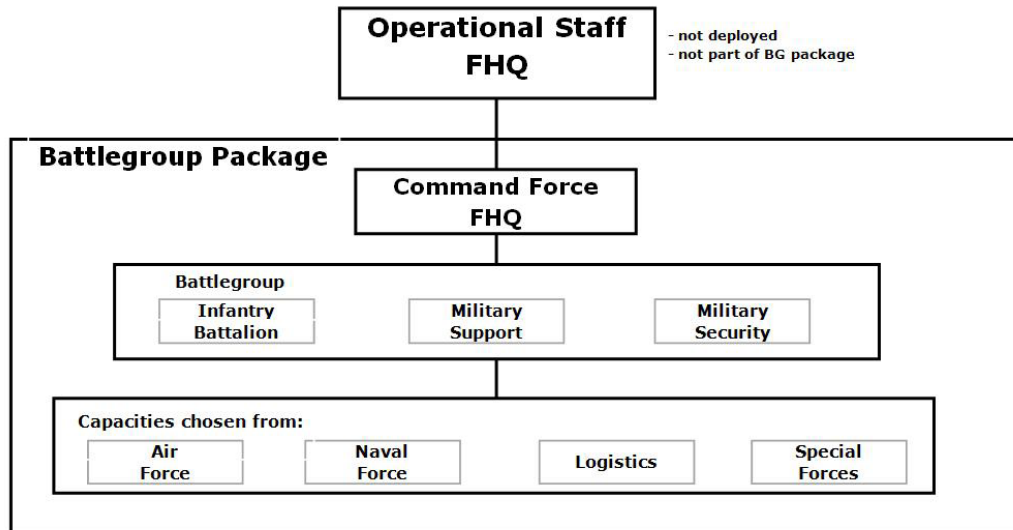
Table 1: Battlegroup Roster¹⁹

In order for a state to deploy its EU Battlegroup, alone or in cooperation with other states, it must satisfy certain standards. The “certification” of EU Battlegroups is the responsibility of the states themselves, although it takes place under the supervision of the EU Military Committee (EUMC), with the help of the EU Military Staff (EUMS), and according to procedures agreed at the EU level.²⁰ Before an EU Battlegroup takes on its six-month tour of duty, its members must take part in joint military exercises for the group to gain certification.²¹

EU Battlegroup structure is flexible and depends on decisions made by participating states. The makeup of an EU Battlegroup depends on the selection of military capabilities which depends in turn on the nature of the EU operation (see Diagram 1). The training of the EU Battlegroup components is likewise within the jurisdiction of member states. When a Battlegroup is activated in order to carry out an EU mission, the commander of the operation is appointed by the EU Council, which is able to adapt the command structure and capabilities to fit operational needs. Member states are not responsible for operational command of EU Battlegroups, rather this is organised at the level of the EU. However, they are entirely responsible, together with their partners, for tactical command of their own units on the ground.

20 The process of standardisation and certification of EU Battlegroups is in progress. The current flexible certification procedures are reflected in a degree of interoperability. Contributing states are free to form Battlegroup packages and devise training according to their requirements. „Standards, practical methods and procedures will be compatible to those defined within NATO (NRF), wherever possible and applicable in order that EU members are able to make available their capacity for both Battlegroups and the NRF. EU Battlegroups Concept, doc.10501/04 Council of the EU, 20/7/2005.

21 For example, in May 2007 and September 2008 the HELBROC Battlegroup, under Greek leadership, carried out the military exercises EVROPI I and II. Source: European Union, EU Battlegroups, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/090720-Factsheet-Battlegroups_EN.pdf [accessed 5th December 2009]



Taken from <http://www.consilium.europa.eu>

Diagram 1: Generic Battlegroup Structure

EU Battlegroups can be used in carrying out the tasks specified in Article 17.2 of the Treaty on European Union, known as the Petersberg Tasks, and in carrying out those tasks specified in the *European Security Strategy* (see table 2).²²

Petersberg Tasks	Aims specified in the European Security Strategy
Humanitarian and rescue tasks Peacekeeping	Joint disarmament operations Provision of support to third states in the fight against terrorism
Battle tasks in crisis management including peace enforcement	Taking on operations for implementing security sector reform as part of broader efforts in institution building.

Table 2: Tasks for EU Battlegroups

22 See: A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy, Available at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf> [30th May 2010]

Depending on the situation, EU Battlegroup missions can be *bridging operations*, *operations of initial and rapid entry* and *autonomous operations*. Bridging operations refer to operations in which the Battlegroup is required to replace or strengthen forces already deployed on the ground, as was the case in Operation ARTEMIS in Congo. *Operations of initial and rapid entry* represent operations in which the EU Battlegroup is required to enter the battlefield as the vanguard a larger force scheduled to arrive later. Finally, *autonomous operations* are operations of limited duration and scope which the EU Battlegroup would be required to execute independently.

Finally, it should be mentioned that not all EU member states are involved in EU Battlegroups. Denmark takes part in none of the military aspects of EU activity as it was granted an opt-out in the Edinburgh Agreement, signed in 1992.²³ Malta, despite being a full member of the EU since 2004 and of the “Partnership for Peace” (PfP) programme since 2008, does not take part in EU Battlegroups for the moment.²⁴ Cyprus takes part in EU Battlegroups, but as it is still not a PfP member it cannot take part in operations which rely on NATO capacities. All other EU members, including even militarily neutral states such as Ireland, Sweden, Finland and Austria, take part in Battlegroups. However, participation in Battlegroups is not limited to EU member states only. States which are NATO members but not members of the EU, such as Norway and Turkey, may also participate. Likewise, other interested states which are taking part in the process of European integration may participate. This is currently the case for Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro.

23 *Opt-out* denotes an option available to any EU member not wishing to join other members in the implementation a particular Union policy. The Maastricht Treaty introduced the opt-out as a way of preventing any delay to further integration. A member decides to “opt-out” when it judges that complying with a particular EU decision would threaten some of its vital interests or when for whatever reason it disagrees with the adopted decision and its priorities. On this basis, Great Britain, for example, is not participating in the third phase of economic and monetary union (EMU). Also, Denmark is not participating in EMU or in the areas of defence or (EU) citizenship law. Similarly, the Schengen agreement includes all members except Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark. The latter two states decide on its implementation on a case by case basis. See: Filip Ejduš, Marko Savković (eds.), *Rečnik evropske bezbednosti*, Centre for Civil-Military Relations, Belgrade, 2010.

24 According to an agreement made at the EU summit in Copenhagen in 2002, states which are not members of NATO or the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme may not take part in ESDP operations in which NATO capacities are used. Malta was accepted into the PfP at the NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008, but still does not participate in EU Battlegroups.

III A survey of the participation of Western Balkan states in the CSDP and in EU Battlegroups

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) was formed in large part as a reaction to security challenges coming from the Western Balkans. The policy took its first steps in just this area, before missions were deployed to other geographical regions. Although not yet EU members, individual West-Balkan states are currently beginning to participate in this increasingly important policy. For the moment, these states are Croatia, Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro.²⁵

Croatia

According to data from March 2009, 3.4% of the total Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia (Croatian: *Oružanih snaga Republike Hrvatske* - OSRH) are engaged in 14 operations on four continents.²⁶ Of this number, 12 operations are being conducted under UN command, one under NATO command and one was deployed by the EU. Of 433 Croatian troops currently engaged in these operations, 283 are engaged in the NATO mission ISAF in Afghanistan (it is expected that a further 12 members will be added to the Croatian contingent during 2010), 135 in UN operations and 15 in EU operations.²⁷

When it comes to committing its troops, the priority mission for OSRH is ISAF in Afghanistan, unsurprisingly given that the strategic goal of this state's foreign policy in recent years has been NATO membership. The second most important by allocation of resources is the UN mission to the Golan Heights (UNDOF), where the Croatian contingent consists of 95 OSRH troops. As the process of

25 Montenegro signed an agreement with the EU on 24th March 2010 to deploy three soldiers on the EU naval operation NAVFOR ATALANTA.

26 NATO, „Topics: Commitment to Operations and Missions: Croatian Armed Forces in Peace Support Operations“, <http://www.nato.int/issues/commitment/docs/090409-croatia.pdf> [Accessed 8th September 2009]

27 Ibid.

European integration has progressed, decision-makers in Croatia have begun to consider seriously the option of deploying civilian and military personnel on EU operations.

In accordance with a decision adopted by the Croatian Parliament on 15th July 2008, and with an agreement signed with the EU, the OSRH joined operation EUFOR in Chad and the Central African Republic at the beginning of October 2008, deploying 15 scouts from the Battalion for Special Operations.²⁸ The aim of this operation, launched on the basis of an EU Council joint action of 15th October 2007, was to bridge the one-year period necessary for deployment of the UN mission in that area (MINURCAT).²⁹ However, due to problems encountered in gathering together the troops, this predominantly military operation, the second largest in the history of the CSDP by number of participants, was not launched until the end of January 2008.

The joint action stipulated that operation EUFOR in Chad would start the moment operational capability was attained.³⁰ This occurred on 15th March 2008. EUFOR forces were mandated to protect the population, particularly refugees and internally displaced persons, ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance and free movement of staff involved in humanitarian work, and offer protection to UN staff, their infrastructure, installations and equipment.³¹ In this, the largest military operation the EU has undertaken to date in Africa; commanders have at their disposal a total of 3700 troops from twenty three EU member states as well as from Albania, Croatia and Russia. Forces were organised into three multinational battalions: “North” (Iriba region) under Polish leadership, Centre (Forchana region) led by France and “South” (Goz Beida region) led by Ireland.

Deployed for a six-month period, and assigned to the area of multinational battalion “North”, members of the Croatian contingent were responsible for patrol, reconnaissance and surveillance of

28 Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Croatia on the participation of the Republic of Croatia in the European Union military operation in the Republic of Chad and in the Central African Republic (Operation EUFOR Chad/RCA), Official Journal of the European Union L 268/33, October 10, 2008, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:268:0033:0035:EN:PDF> [Accessed 8th September 2009]

29 The Council of the European Union, „Council Joint Action 2007/677/CFSP on the European Union military operation in the Republic of Chad and in the Central African Republic”, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2007/l_279/l_27920071023en00210024.pdf [Accessed 9th September 2009]: 2

30 Initial operational capability should guarantee effective use of a weapon, item of equipment, or system of approved specific characteristics that is manned or operated by an adequately trained, equipped, and supported military unit or force. It differs from „full operational capability” Taken from www.thefreedictionary.com/initial+operational+capability [Accessed 8th September 2009]

31 Council of the European Union, „EU Operations: EUFOR TCHAD/RCA”, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=1366&lang=en> [Accessed 8th September 2009]

their area of responsibility as well as providing escorts for convoys and protecting important persons. At the same time, the activities of the Croatian contingent were intended to demonstrate EUFOR's presence. This obliged the Croatians to carry out planned military exercises with the aim of both strengthening the trust of the local population and deterring hostile actors.³² In 2008, UN Security Council 1834 approved the replacement of EUFOR forces with a special UN operation. On 15th March 2009, the UN operation MINURCAT took over responsibility from EUFOR for implementation of the mandate in the Central African Republic and Chad entrusted to them by the Security Council.³³

There are several reasons for OSRH's participation in this operation. In the words of Minister of Defence Mate Raboteg, by participating Croatia above all expresses her determination as a future EU member to actively contribute to long-term CSDP objectives.³⁴ So, through this action, Croatia is attempting to confirm that it is a reliable partner for EU member states, thus showing that it is capable, in collaboration with them, of responding to the security challenges listed in the European Security Strategy. Taking part in EUFOR and other similar operations enables OSRH to "test not only its own interoperability, but also its preparedness to conduct remote and logistically demanding operations within the framework of both EU and NATO missions".³⁵

The most recent *Progress Report* on Croatia's path to European integration, published by the European Commission together with the *Strategy for Enlargement Policy* in November 2008, bears witness to this. This report asserts that Croatia was maintaining the process of capacity building in the relevant state organs and continuing to actively participate in civilian crisis management operations, thus contributing to improving the EU's practice.³⁶

32 Croatian Defence Ministry, „Sudjelovanje pripadnika OSRH u mirovnim operacijama UN-a i EU-a“, <http://www.morh.hr/hr/smos-sudjelovanje-pripadnika-osrh-u-mirovnim-operacijama-un-a-i-eu-a.html> [Accessed 8th September 2009]

33 For more information see <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/minurcat/index.html> [Accessed 9th September 2009].

34 Republic of Croatia Ministry of Defence, „Državni tajnik Mate Raboteg na sastanku sa ministrima obrane EU Trojke“, <http://www.morh.hr/hr/vijesti-najave-i-priopcenja/vijesti/drzavni-tajnik-mate-raboteg-na-sastanku-s-ministrima-obrane-eu-trojke.html> [Accessed 8th September 2009]

35 Republic of Croatia Ministry of Defence, „Pripadnici hrvatskog kontingenta u misiji EU u Čadu i Srednjeafričkoj Republici“, <http://www.morh.hr/hr/vijesti-najave-i-priopcenja/vijesti/pripadnici-hrvatskog-kontingenta-u-misiji-eu-u-cadu-i-srednjeafrickoj-republici.html> [Accessed 8th September 2009]

36 Commission Staff Working Document Com (2008) 674, „Croatia 2008 Progress Report“ Accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2008–2009, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/key_documents/reports_nov_2008/croatia_progress_report_en.pdf [Accessed 8th September 2009]: 67

For now, the Croatian contribution to EU civilian operations is modest. In July 2007, two police officers who had been members of the German Provincial Reconstruction Team in Faizabad, Afghanistan, were sent to serve in the civilian police mission EUPOL.³⁷ The EU has been running this mission, aimed at training Afghan police, since June 2007. Likewise, Croatia is offering logistical support to operation EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina, similar to the support offered to the previous NATO mission SFOR.

Finally, in June 2009, five OSRH members began participation in ATALANTA, the first naval operation undertaken by the EU in its history. In this operation, aiming to combat pirate attacks on merchant shipping in the Gulf of Aden, OSRH members will be under Belgian command.³⁸

Lastly, during a meeting with the defence ministers of the presiding „Troika“, Croatian defence secretary Mate Raboteg announced the creation of a Battlegroup with Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Macedonia. On this occasion he expressed the expectation that the Battlegroup would become operational in the first half of 2012. The Croatian defence ministry offered to supply a motorised unit and an engineering platoon. According to the current roster, this Battlegroup will be on duty in the second half of 2012.³⁹ Finally, twelve members of the Croatian Ministry of Internal Affairs are currently engaged as part of the EULEX mission.⁴⁰

Macedonia

As with Croatia, Macedonia is yet to participate in EU Battlegroups, although it has announced its participation in the above-mentioned Battlegroup, expected to be under German leadership. Macedonia has, though already taken part in the CSDP operation EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In chapter 31 of the *Progress Report* on Macedonia's route to European integration, which applies to foreign, security and defence policy, Macedonia's contribution to operation EUFOR

37 EU Police Mission in Afghanistan Fact sheet http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/missionPress/files/090708%20FACTSHEET%20EUPOL%20Afghanistan%20-%20version%2015_EN.pdf

38 Jutarnji.hr, 10th March 2009, „U borbi protiv pirata i pet časnika HRM“, <http://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/clanak/art-2009,3,10,,155358.jl> [Accessed 9th September 2009]

39 Republic of Croatia Ministry of Defence, „Državni tajnik Mate Raboteg na sastanku sa ministrima obrane EU Trojke“, <http://www.morh.hr/hr/vijesti-najave-i-priopcenja/vijesti/drzavni-tajnik-mate-raboteg-na-sastanku-s-ministrima-obrane-eu-trojke.html> [Accessed 8th September 2009]

40 EULEX Staff Info, <http://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/?id=36&m=2> [Accessed 8th December 2009]

ALTHEA is commended. Likewise, the institutional capacity of Macedonia's defence ministry is described as being at a satisfactory level.⁴¹

For Macedonia, as a candidate for EU membership, this operation represents an expression of its willingness to harmonise its foreign policy priorities with those of the EU. On 3rd July 2006 Macedonian defence minister Jovan Manasijevski signed an agreement with the EU on participation of troops.⁴² The success of the Armed Forces of Macedonia (Macedonian: Вооружените сили на Македонија - VSM) is all the greater considering that only three years previously, this former Yugoslav republic had been a "consumer" of the security provided by EU CONCORDIA, the first EU military mission.⁴³

With 6000 troops and more than ten "third countries" which have participated since the mission's outset, ALTHEA is the largest operation the EU has ever undertaken. Its mission includes supporting the implementation of the mission of the Office of the High Representative, which is responsible for, among other things, helping BiH's economic development and strengthening the rule of law. Macedonia's first concrete contribution to this operation was the sending of two Mi-17 helicopters along with 21 VSM members. Following this, in November 2006, a medical team consisting of ten doctors and other medical staff was assigned to Butmir airbase in order to provide troops with basic medical support. The importance of helicopter transport necessitated the continued involvement of OSM members also in the following two rotations.

The next step in the Macedonian army's increased involvement came in June 2007 when a legal adviser - a military lawyer - was sent to EUFOR headquarters. This brought the number of VSM members involved to 32, to which should be added the two helicopters mentioned above.⁴⁴ After an evaluation by the Ministry of Defence of Macedonia from January to June 2008, a fourth six-month

41 Commission Staff Working Document Com (2008) 674, „Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2008 Progress Report“ Accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2008–2009, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia_progress_report_en.pdf [Accessed 2nd September 2009]: 72

42 „Signature of an agreement on the participation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in Operation ALTHEA“, Brussels, 3 July 2006, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/declarations/90366.pdf [Accessed 9th September 2009]

43 For more information about CONCORDIA's mandate, see: ESDP Operations: Concordia FYROM, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=594&lang=en> [Accessed 9th September 2009]

44 Republic of Macedonia Ministry of Defence, „Contribution of the Republic of Macedonia to the EU Crisis Management Military Operation ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina“, <http://www.morm.gov.mk:8080/morm/en/ARM/missions/althea.html> [Accessed 8th September 2009]

rotation with only one helicopter was announced.

However, having completed the fourth rotation, the Macedonian authorities made the decision to withdraw this helicopter too, and so end this type of involvement in the operation. The medical team at Butmir airbase was retained, as were the legal advisor and the non-commissioned officer assigned to EUFOR headquarters and responsible for preventative healthcare. In total, 12 members of VSM participated in EUFOR.

The withdrawal of VSM's military capacity from operation ALTHEA was noted in the „Progress Report“. However, Macedonia's readiness to participate in the Battlegroup scheduled to be on duty in 2012 was particularly emphasised. Alongside Macedonia, members of the armed forces of Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Croatia will make up this Battlegroup, while the role of framework nation will be taken by Germany.⁴⁵

Albania

Troops from Albania's armed forces have been part of the makeup of the German contingent in Bosnia and Herzegovina since as long ago as 1996. That was when two officers and thirty three troops underwent the required training in Germany where they were also armed and equipped. Their primary task was to guard the Franco-German base "Captain Carreau" in Rajlovac, 12 km northwest of Sarajevo.⁴⁶ The Albanian contingent in the EUFOR ALTHEA mission currently numbers thirteen troops.⁴⁷ Albanian troops found themselves with a similar task in Chad in the second half of 2008. On 13th July 2008 in Paris, the EU's then High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana and the Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha signed an agreement on the participation of Albania's armed forces in operation EUFOR in Chad and the Central African Republic. At that time

45 Commission Staff Working Document Com (2009) 533, „Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2009 Progress Report“ Accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009–2010, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/mk_rapport_2009_en.pdf [Accessed 27th January 2009]

46 Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Albania, „Albanian Contingent in Bosnia and Herzegovina“, http://www.mod.gov.al/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=33 [Accessed 4th December 2009]

47 EUFOR Althea, „Troop Strength: EUFOR Troop Strength in Theatre“, http://www.euforbih.org/eufor/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=145&Itemid=62 [Accessed 4th December 2009]

the operation had been active for somewhat less than six months. Six days after the agreement was signed, 62 Albanian troops were deployed to Chad. After a period of adaptation, they were given the task of guarding the base “Europa” in N’Djamena and the base “Star” in Abéché. The example of Albania, the first non EU member to participate as a “third state” in this mission, was followed by Croatia and Russia.⁴⁸ To the authors’ knowledge, Albania has not yet announced participation in EU Battlegroups.

Given Albania’s status as a potential candidate for membership, the 2009 “Progress Report” does not treat participation/harmonisation with EU foreign and security policy as a separate theme.⁴⁹

48 Council of the European Union, „EU Operations: EUFOR TCHAD/RCA: News in Brief, Third Quarter of 2008”, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=1531&lang=en> [Accessed 4th December 2009]

49 Commission Staff Working Document, „Albania 2009 Progress Report”, accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010. COM (2009) 533, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/al_rapport_2009_en.pdf [Accessed 27th January 2009]

IV The Republic of Serbia and the Common Security and Defence Policy

The European component of security integration

- an unused possibility?

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, almost all former communist East European states first of all sought, and later gained, membership of the EU and NATO. While the rest of Europe was becoming more unified during the 1990s, the Western Balkans was undergoing a process of political division. As soon as armed conflict was over, the new states in this region recognised inclusion in Euro-Atlantic security systems as their primary national interest. Until the end of 2007, Serbia was no exception to this. However, In December of that year, shortly before the unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo, the Serbian parliament declared Serbia to be a militarily neutral state. This meant that the Atlantic component of Serbia's security integration was limited to membership of the NATO programme Partnership for Peace (PfP). The European component of security integration remained open to Serbia, although it is still an unused possibility.

Following Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in February 2008, the Republic of Serbia continued its journey towards EU membership. This was confirmed most of all by the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) in April 2008, following which, in December 2009, the Interim Trade Agreement was unfrozen and the visa regime was liberalised. It is expected that Serbia will be granted the status of EU membership candidate in the first half of 2011. EU membership is a key foreign policy priority of the Republic of Serbia. The current government has placed EU membership alongside preservation of Serbia's territorial integrity and regional cooperation as one of its three foreign policy priorities. At this stage of integration, harmonisation with European

legislation is also a priority in other policy areas. However, in contrast to almost all other Western Balkan states, with the exception of reforms in the areas of justice and home affairs which were prerequisites for visa liberalisation, Serbia has so far made no significant effort to engage in security integration processes within the EU. This is especially true of the CSDP, which may be understandable at this stage in the integration process. Although, formally speaking, this could be postponed until full EU membership is gained; the authors of this text consider that it is in the national interest of the Republic of Serbia to begin participation in the CSDP as soon as possible.

The assertion that proactive participation in the CSDP is in the Republic of Serbia's national interest derives indirectly from the *National Security Strategy* adopted by parliament in October 2009. This document, which defines basic national interests in the field of security, states that "preservation of internal stability, the rule of law and the development of democracy and democratic institutions and integration into the European Union and other international structures have particular significance for Serbia's development and progress."⁵⁰ The document also asserts that, "through her foreign policy, the promotion of cooperation with neighbouring countries and building joint capacity and mechanisms for resolving contradictions, disputes, and all types of challenges, risks and threats on the regional and global levels, the Republic of Serbia is contributing to the creation of a peaceful, stable and safe security environment".⁵¹ Likewise, the Strategy points out that "the Republic of Serbia supports and is committed to regional cooperation in the areas of joint training and deployment of elements of the security services in multinational operations, crisis management and border control".⁵² Further, the document states that "through the process of European integration, the Republic of Serbia expresses its readiness to build the capacity and capability of the national security system, in accordance with the standards and obligations deriving from the European Security and Defence Policy."⁵³

Unfortunately, other strategic documents in the Republic of Serbia have not recognised this possibility as sufficiently important. The *National Strategy of Serbia for EU Accession for Serbia and Montenegro*, adopted by the government of the Republic of Serbia in June 2005, states that „Serbia will endeavour, as far as possible, to keep its foreign policy in line with the principles of the

50 Republic of Serbia, *Strategija nacionalne bezbednosti*, October 2009, p. 13.

51 Ibid, p. 11.

52 Ibid, p. 16.

53 Ibid, p. 16. Such strategic commitments were confirmed in Defence Strategy (2009) The authors of this text consider it necessary to confirm and make concrete this commitment through the drafting and adoption of other strategic-doctrinary documents, which are currently being drafted, and for their adoption to be announced in the "National Integration Plan" before the end of 2010. These are the Strategic Defence Review, the Military Doctrine, the Long-term Plan for Defence Systems Development and the Medium-term Programs and Plans for Defence Systems Development.

Common Foreign and Security Policy“.⁵⁴ However, this document does not even mention the European Security and Defence Policy. The *National Programme for EU Integration*, which was adopted by the government of the Republic of Serbia in 2008 states that “the Republic of Serbia is continuously promoting dialogue with the European Union and reforming its civilian and military capacities in order to be prepared, after attaining full membership to, among other things, take on the obligations arising from the European Security and Defence Policy and to participate in crisis management operations under EU leadership.”⁵⁵ However, as the example of other states in the region make it clear, it is not necessary to delay integration into the CSDP until full EU membership has been achieved. In the final version of this document from December 2009, in an appendix by the Ministry of Defence, it is stated that “the Republic of Serbia is ready, through taking part in the activities of the European Security and Defence Policy, participating in the Partnership for Peace, and within the framework of regional initiatives, to strengthen its own security, and through dialogue and cooperation contribute to peace and stability”.⁵⁶ Likewise emphasised is the Republic of Serbia’s readiness to intensify dialogue with the EU on issues relating to security and defence, once the SAA comes into force.

Despite these statements of at least half-hearted commitment, decision makers in the Republic of Serbia have until now been exceptionally passive when it comes to the CSDP. Until now, as far as is known to the authors of this paper, they have spoken in favour of Serbia’s possible participation in the CSDP on only a few occasions. The first was in November 2008, when the then Chief of Staff, Zdravko Ponoš, following a meeting with the head of the Military Committee Henri Bentegeat in Brussels, put forward a few ideas heading in this direction. On that occasion he announced that it was necessary for Serbia to develop cooperation within the CSDP framework, and potentially also in EU Battlegroups as well as that “in the military field it is possible to go further than in other areas of EU accession” as it had been made “possible for our officers to take part in EU exercises as observers and for EU officers to receive invitation to attend Serbian Army exercises”⁵⁷. Likewise, Ivica Dačić, the minister of internal affairs, indicated, firstly in April and later in July 2009, the possibility of the participation of the Serbian police in EU operations.⁵⁸ The media in Serbia have not paid much attention to this

54 Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Nacionalna strategija Srbije za pristupanje Srbije i Crne Gore*, Belgrade, Jun 2005, p. 43.

55 Ibid, p. 785.

56 This document is revised periodically, meaning that this formulation could be changed in the near future.

57 Serbian Army, „General Ponoš na sastanku vojnog komiteta Evroatlantskog partnerstva“, http://www.vs.rs/index.php?news_article=219be3cc-0cfb-102c-ad2f-79b934d89d8d [Accessed 21st December 2009]

58 RTS, 1st April 2009, „Srpski policajci u misijama EU“, <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/9/Srbija/53278/Srpski+policajci+u+misijama++EU.html> [Accessed 4th February 2010]; RTS, 2nd Jul 2009, „Policija spremna za mirovne misije“, <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/125/Društvo/71345/Policija+spremna+za+mirovne+misije.html> [Accessed 6th December 2009]

theme, their attention being largely focussed on relations between Serbia and the EU. Besides this, with a few exceptions, experts have paid little attention to the problem of Serbia's integration into the CSDP.⁵⁹ Excepting a few academic seminars, this theme is still not being discussed in public or in the wider expert sphere.⁶⁰ Finally, Minister of Defence Dragan Šutanovac started to strongly advocate participation of Serbia in CSDP missions in the second half of 2010 but so far no concrete progress in that direction has been made.⁶¹

The question, then, is whether Serbia must wait for full EU membership before it can begin to participate in civilian and military EU crisis management operations and in EU Battlegroups. Although a proactive approach in this area is not a formal obligation for a state which is not yet even a candidate for membership, it would represent Serbian diplomacy's trump card in the process of European integration.⁶² In addition, integration through the CSDP could partially compensate for opportunities lost through the decision to forego, temporarily or permanently, NATO membership. Finally, in this way Serbia can show it can be a constructive partner and can contribute to Europe's security. As we have seen, this has on the whole already been recognised by other Western Balkan states, which have begun integration into the CSDP and already participate in EU missions. Likewise, even within the EU itself, there is a positive attitude towards Serbia's inclusion in the CSDP. This is borne out by the words of the aforementioned General Bentegeat that „the European Union would very much appreciate it if Serbia joined EU peacekeeping operations“.⁶³

59 One of the first to suggest that Serbia take a proactive stance in this area was Srđan Gligorijević from the ISAC fund. See: Srđan Gligorijević, „Partnerstvo je moguće“, *Evropski forum*, November–December 2006, no. 11–12.

60 Civil servants from the Republic of Serbia have taken part in a series of courses about the CSDP run in cooperation with the defence ministries of Austria, Germany, Hungary and the European Security and Defence College.

See: ESDP Course open to Western Balkan states, <http://www.eu2006.at/en/News/information/2905esvp.html> [Accessed 6th December 2009]

Likewise, in the NGO sector, several courses specialised for the ESDP were held, as for example by the ISAC fund and the Centre for Civil-Military Relations' School for European Security. See: ISAC fund: <http://www.isac-fund.org/lat/esdp.php> [Accessed 6th December 2009]; CCMR: <http://www.ccmr-bg.org/Obrazovanje/3158/Skola+za+evropsku+bezbednost+%282008-2009.%29.shtml> [Accessed 6th December 2009]

61 The Minister's campaign started around the time when the Serbian version of this publication was published in May 2010.

62 In the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, the parties undertake to advance political dialogue in order to bring closer „the stances of the parties on international issues, including matters relating to the Common Foreign and Security Policy.“ However, the Agreement does not even mention harmonisation in the area of the CSDP.

63 „Srbija treba da se uključi u mirovne misije“, interview with General Henri Bentegeat, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/090619_Politika_Daily-Tereza_Bojkovic.pdf [Accessed 6th December 2009]

It should be noted that at this stage of negotiations over Serbia's membership, the EU will not insist on the CSDP, given that there are no inbuilt criteria or standards in this area for this phase of integration. In the previous waves of enlargement, coordination of defence system reform and defence integration took place by means of NATO. Membership of this military alliance was sufficient for the European Union to accept that these former Communist states had carried out the necessary reforms in this area.⁶⁴ However, the Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force on 1st December 2009, will have a far-reaching effect on the EU's ability to cope with the challenges of the 21st century, particularly in the areas of foreign and security policy.

If Serbia wants to speed up the process of European integration and make up for lost time, without doubt it must begin its security integration into the EU long before achieving full membership. One way to achieve this is to develop a Battlegroup with other Western Balkans states in the period from 2010 to 2020. By creating a common EU Battlegroup, the Western Balkan states would be making a symbolic gesture, not only of historic reconciliation between the region's peoples, but also an indication of a new era in which the region has grown from a security burden for the EU into its security asset.

Advantages of and challenges to the Western Balkans Battlegroup

Why would Western Balkan states create a separate EU Battlegroup when they could simply collaborate within other existing EU Battlegroups, and thus avoid a whole series of complicated political, financial and technical challenges? There are a number of reasons why adopting just this type of regional approach is in the interest of all the region's states. First, the cultural and linguistic similarities which exist in the western Balkans would facilitate communication within WBBG. Linguistic interoperability is an exceptionally important factor for cohesion in international military integration. Thus, cultural and linguistic closeness, just as is the case in other EU Battlegroups, could be the connective tissue of effective functioning of WBBG too.

Secondly, participation in numerous regional initiatives, membership of the Partnership for Peace programme and acceptance of NATO standards will make these armies technically and

64 Neutral states are, of course, exceptions to this. When Ireland entered the EC in 1973, the Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy did not yet exist. Austria, Finland and Sweden entered the EU in 1995. By then, the EU had already created the Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy, but not yet the European Security and Defence Policy. Cyprus and Malta, who entered in 2004, still have a rather limited role in the ESDP.

organisationally interoperable. Although they have nationally tinted doctrines, the fact that several Western Balkans armies grew out of the former Yugoslav People's Army (Serbo-Croat: *Jugoslovenska narodna armija* - JNA) influences to some degree the similarity of training. In addition, the Western Balkans armies use similar weapons and equipment, largely inherited from the JNA. Creating a common Battlegroup from Western Balkan states would require a functional division of labour, in which each state would develop their own "niche capabilities" alongside the combat elements. This would reduce costs and further improve the professionalization of the armed forces. However, in order to attain full interoperability, joint training and military exercises would undoubtedly be necessary. This would begin with participation in other EU Battlegroups, and only later with participation in the common WBBG.

Thirdly, this kind of regional approach would contribute to the development of mutual trust between former belligerents. Just as the Franco-German brigade founded in 1987 symbolised a united Europe, so could the WBBG symbolise lasting reconciliation between the states and peoples of a Western Balkan region integrated into the EU. Moreover, this type of activity would contribute to the integration of defence industries in the region and the harmonisation of common modernisation programmes and weapons and equipment procurement. A shared experience in the area of defence policy would have a positive effect on the strengthening of trust both within the Western Balkans, and between Western Balkan states and the EU. A multinational EU Battlegroup consisting of former belligerents could provide an exceptionally powerful symbolic contribution to the EU Common Security and Defence Policy. In this way, the EU would strengthen its position as a "soft superpower", capable of transforming war torn regions into secure communities and "failed states" into successful democracies.

Of course it is necessary to keep in mind the potential difficulties of and challenges to formation of the WBBG. The first challenge is the still fresh memory of the conflicts during the break-up of Yugoslavia during the last decade of the twentieth century. The question arises of why armies which once fought each other would work together in one multinational battalion. However, European experience shows that once reconciliation has been achieved on the political level, armies do not present an obstacle to cooperation. The second, seemingly much larger, challenge is posed by unresolved political problems and territorial disputes. Is it realistic to expect that states whose relations are burdened with unresolved territorial disputes would decide to form an EU Battlegroup together? However, as the experience of European integration shows, it is much easier to solve interstate problems in an atmosphere of cooperation. It is possible to build trust through cooperation in defence, thus ending uncertainty, reducing security dilemma and banishing motives for revisionism. Military integration in the western Balkans is part of the solution, not part of the problem.

The third problem is organisational and revolves around, first of all, the problem of the “lead nation” i.e. the problem of which state will lead the WBBG. For now it is difficult to believe that agreement can be reached over one of the two largest states in the region (i.e. Serbia or Croatia) being the „lead nation“. For that reason it would perhaps be best for Bosnia and Herzegovina to take that role, as in the meantime this option could be acceptable to all. However, if agreement cannot be reached, it would perhaps be possible to find, outside the region, a third state, acceptable to all and with relevant experience of participating in EU Battlegroups. States which could be acceptable to the entire region could be Greece, Romania and Austria.⁶⁵ Internal political resistance by right wing forces in the Western Balkans states could present another challenge in whose view taking part in peace enforcement operations could be unacceptable.

Each state in this multinational battalion would rely on its own special capabilities. Although at this moment it is only possible to speculate, we will set out some of the special capabilities which states in the region can rely on. Bosnia and Herzegovina could make use of its demining forces, proven to be successful, while Croatia could use the experience of its platoon of military police which is currently in Afghanistan. Members of the Macedonian Special Forces have experience of asymmetric warfare in Iraq, and could contribute to WBBG in this respect. In principle, the Serbian Army could aspire to contribute something in the region of the following: one infantry battalion, a military police platoon, a CBRN defence platoon, medical teams and a light field hospital. This list represents structural elements similar to those already declared as part of the Serbian Army’s participation in the NATO Planning and Review Process (PARP).

Likewise, decision makers and planners must, among other things, during the implementation of the EU Battlegroup concept, deal with the question of whether training will be conducted jointly or separately. For example, the training for HELBROC was first conducted separately by the national contingents, so that at a later stage of training, the facilities of the Multinational Peace Support Operation Training Centre in Kiklis, Greece could be used. This model could be followed by the WBBG, with Serbia offering the capacities of its Military Academy, its Centre for Peacekeeping Operations in Belgrade, and the capacities of its newly-built military base „South “ (also known as „Cepotina“).

Also highly important is the question of tactical and strategic transport. As mentioned above, EU Battlegroups should be able to be deployed up to 6000 km from their home region. In the case of HELBROC, this problem was resolved through Greece’s armed forces supplying Antonov An-14 and Hercules C-130 transport aircraft. The region’s armed forces could address this problem jointly, and


65 The inclusion of an extra-regional state to act as a lead nation would have its benefits but also costs. One of them is the loss of linguistic and cultural interoperability.

through concerted efforts and investments together with other EU states develop capabilities for tactical and strategic transport.

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It is necessary to begin informal negotiations over the formation of WBBG as soon as possible. It is difficult to say how procedures for forming, training and certification of EU Battlegroups will look in a couple of years, given that the decision making procedure in the CSDP is undergoing a process of adjustment to the changes brought by the Treaty of Lisbon. Thus, the well known theory that the EU is a moving target for all states in the process of accession is true of both adjustment in this area, and of attempting to meet set standards.

In any case, until the formal founding of the EU Battlegroup, it is certainly necessary to successfully complete negotiations with the EU Military Committee as well as talks with partners participating in the creation of the EU Battlegroup. Following this, the lead nation must be selected, and harmonisation of standards for forming, training and certification of EU Battlegroups completed. In the following section, we will provide a four-phase road map for the formation of WBBG by 2020.



A road map for the Republic of Serbia's inclusion in the CSDP

1. Preparation and observation phase (2010-2012)

For a number of reasons, 2010 is perfectly suitable for the commencement of the first phase. Firstly, the Lisbon Treaty came into force on 1st December 2009, opening the door for further enlargement of the EU. Relations between Serbia and the EU improved when the decision on visa liberalisation came into force on 19th December 2009, as well as the Interim Trade Agreement, which came into force on 1st February 2010. On 22nd December 2009, Serbia filed a request for candidate status, and it is expected that this request will be granted in the first half of 2011. Besides this, Štefan Füle, the Czech Republic's former ambassador to NATO and minister for European integration was chosen as European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy. The Czech Republic strongly supports Serbia's EU entry, and Commissioner Füle himself has on several occasions made clear his support for Serbia's rapid Euro integration.⁶⁶ The region's other states can also expect an acceleration of European integration in 2010. During 2011, Croatia could complete negotiations, and Macedonia begin them. Finally, the world economic crisis and the European monetary crisis have undoubtedly strengthened scepticism in certain European capitals towards enlargement proceeding any further than Croatia. The creation of WBBG will be the strongest card for the region's states to play against such negative tendencies.

Spain, with whom Serbia has excellent diplomatic relations, holds the EU presidency for the first half of 2010, a period in which Serbia could complete all the preparatory work necessary for members of Serbia's armed forces to be sent as observers in the ranks of the Spanish Battlegroup due to be „on duty“ in the second half of 2010.⁶⁷ This process can continue in the second half of 2011, within the framework of the Greek Battlegroup HELBROC,

66 For example, the first delegation received by Commissioner Füle, at the beginning of February 2010, was that of the Republic of Serbia.

67 Miguel Ángel Moratinos, the Spanish foreign minister, visited Belgrade on 12th December 2009, and the following day the Serbian Defence Minister announced that Serbia intends to take part in a UN mission to Lebanon, alongside a Spanish contingent, and that preparations for these activities will begin very rapidly. See: „Šutanovac o budžetu za Vojsku“, 13th December, 2009, http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyy=2009&mm=12&dd=13&av_category=11&nav_id=398049 [Accessed 13th December 2009]

which also bears the name „Balkan Battlegroup“. Greece and Spain, as members of the EU and NATO who have not recognised the independence of Kosovo, and with whom Serbia has exceptionally good diplomatic relations, could become key partners for the long term in Serbia's integration into the CSDP.

In the *Preparation and observation phase* the Republic of Serbia must aim its efforts in three directions. The first direction would be institutional preparation for inclusion in the CSDP. This should be understood to mean all activities directed towards the building and strengthening of institutional and human capacity within the Ministry of Defence. It is particularly important to achieve full functionality of the organisational unit responsible for CSDP matters within the Serbian Ministry of Defence. The Ministry of Defence, along with the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Finance Ministry, the Ministry for Economics and Regional Affairs and the Office for European Integration, is responsible for implementation of the activities of the Republic of Serbia in the area of European security and defence policy (a subgroup of technical group 31). From an institutional viewpoint, it is necessary to create conditions for horizontal cooperation between these institutions. The appendix to the NPI (National Programme for Integration) written by the ministry of defence states that an institutional priority for 2010 is the creation of a department for European Integration and Regional Initiatives, which in the defence sector will concern itself with analytical and operational tasks in the area of cooperation with EU institutions. In addition, “having in mind the defined mission of the army, the Centre for Peacekeeping Operations of the Joint Operational Command of the Serbian Army Headquarters has intensified its activities in preparation for members of the Serbian Army to take part in multinational operations.” Recognising the relevance of such a commitment, it is also desirable to form the core of a domestic element of personnel from EU missions based at Headquarters. Besides which, it would be desirable to develop a communication strategy for Serbia's EU accession in the area of the CSDP. Likewise, the process of education and training of Ministry of Defence employees in the field of the CSDP should be intensified. This process should focus on practical training, i.e. on the practice of EU/CSDP institutions, ministries and military headquarters of EU member states. Likewise, it is necessary to train officers and other officials who, on Serbia's accession to the EU, would be seconded to EU military headquarters. For this reason, the annual educational plan for the Ministry of Defence and Serbian Army should include training related to the CSDP. The EU organises and carries out such training for both member and candidate states. It is also desirable to begin preparing a permanent military representative from Serbia to the EU Military Committee. Furthermore, it is possible to begin equipping, training, preparing and certification in preparation for Serbian Army forces to take part in EU Battlegroups. Parallel to this, the Serbian Army must reach full compliance with NATO

standards and procedures. Finally, it is necessary to begin to include planned Serbian Army activities in EU Battlegroups in the Annual Plan for use of the Serbian Army and other defence forces in multinational operations. This way, the legal and technical prerequisites for Serbia's inclusion in EU military operations, carried out with the help of NATO capacity, and within the framework of the Berlin Plus agreement, will be met.⁶⁸

The second direction in which efforts must be directed in the initial phase would be towards achieving a series of political and military forms of cooperation with the EU. This relates above all to the establishment of regular consultations with the Political Security Committee, the EU body which manages the CSDP. This can be followed by initiating a "twinning" project, i.e. placing EU experts at the Serbian Ministry of Defence. As a rule, the user state chooses a partner from EU member states; this type of project contributes to achieving concrete operative results in the area of specific EU policies (in this case the CSDP). It would also be a good idea for the selected individuals to undertake internships in institutions in which they can observe the work of their colleagues engaged in tasks related to the CSDP. These internships should take place both in EU states and in regional states participating in this policy. Additionally, it would be desirable to begin regular consultative meetings with defence ministers of EU member states and of Western Balkans states under the auspices of the EU Military Committee, as well as to initiate contacts with EU Military Staff representatives. During this period it would be desirable to complete negotiations and sign a security agreement with the EU, enabling the exchange of confidential data between the Republic of Serbia and the EU.⁶⁹ Finally, it would be useful for the Defence Committee, and possibly the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Serbian parliament, to establish contact

68 This is in agreement with the NPI, in which the Minister of Defence says that „within the framework of NATO's Partnership for Peace, the Republic of Serbia is gradually fulfilling the commitments it had undertaken, and developing cooperation with the other members of this Programme. In 2009, the PARP Assessment came into force, listing 19 goals of partnership for the Republic of Serbia. It is planned that by 2012 the Republic of Serbia will have prepared the declared forces for engagement in operations within the Partnership for Peace programme.“ As the PARP document is not available to the public, it is not possible to judge whether these forces are also suitable for participation in EU crisis management operations or in Battlegroups.

69 State Secretary for Defence Dušan Spasojević talks of this in his interview with the newspaper „Danas“, „We have also initiated the conclusions of an agreement on secure procedures for the exchange of confidential data with the European Union, which will enable us to engage in EU missions.“ <http://www.mod.gov.rs/novi.php?action=fullnews&id=1968> [Accessed 30th May 2010]

Besides this, it is perhaps necessary to compare legal formulations of the region's states for dealing with the presence of foreign armed forces on their territory (e.g. joint exercises, manoeuvres etc.) This applies to cases where it is necessary to hold joint exercises or training. Similarly, the exchange of confidential information should be regulated in an appropriate manner.

See: <http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/vesti-dana/Sporazum-o-vojnoj-saradnji-Srbije-i-Hrvatske.sr.html> [Accessed 30th May 2010]

with the Subcommittee for Security and Defence (part of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee)⁷⁰, as well as to begin sharing experience in the area of the CSDP with relevant parliamentary committees of the region's states.⁷¹ In this way, capacity building for democratic control of the Serbian Army's participation in EU operations would be started in time. Finally, the domestic defence industry at this stage would already be able to begin to find a place in the plans of the European Defence Agency. The *preparation and observation phase* would be crowned with the placement of Serbian Army Forces on the duty roster of operational Battlegroups according to the decision of the EU Political and Security Committee, and on the suggestion of the EU military staff.

The third direction of activity in the Preparation and observation phase would be the opening of the political dialogue leading up to the creation of WBBG. In order for WBBG to be certified and deployed by 2020, it is necessary to begin talks about it in 2010. In the words of Terje Haaverstad, the Kingdom of Norway's one time military attaché in Belgrade, „it is certainly too soon for the realisation of this vision. However, this should not prevent decision makers in the Western Balkans from even now beginning talks about how this vision can be realised. Much time is required due to great complexity, the investment required and the political issues which need to be resolved.“⁷²

2. Adaptation phase (2013-2015)

In order to begin the second phase of planning and adjustment, two conditions must be fulfilled. Firstly, the Serbian Army must have at its disposal qualified forces, trained and certified to engage in EU Battlegroups. Secondly, political agreement must be reached with the EU over Serbia's participation in some EU Battlegroups.

In this phase, Serbian Army units would be gradually adjusted to integration in one of the existing EU Battlegroups. Due to NATO's military action against Yugoslavia in 1999, and

70 Related to this, it is certainly appropriate to follow the practice of other EU member states and appoint a representative from the Serbian parliament to the European parliament, at least on an informal basis. More on this at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/webnp/cms/lang/en/pid/18/cache/offonce> [Accessed 30th May 2010]

71 One of the most effective forms of interparliamentary cooperation in this field, without doubt, will be to hold interparliamentary conferences (on a regular basis) to consider CFSP/CSDP matters, as foreseen in Article 9 of the Protocol of the Lisbon Agreement on the role of national representatives of member states. It is expected that representatives of candidate states will be invited to these meetings (e.g. COSAC).

72 Online interview 13.10.2009

also the unresolved status of Kosovo, Serbian public opinion had become fairly sceptical when it comes to the Serbian Army's participation in multinational operations.⁷³ For this reason, it is recommended that during the adjustment phase, the Serbian Army's participation in EU Battlegroups is limited. This primarily means that only services not directly involved in combat duties will take part.

Likewise, it would be desirable for Serbian Army units to be integrated into Battlegroups whose contributing states are militarily neutral (Sweden, Austria, Finland and Cyprus) or states which have not recognised the independence of Kosovo (Spain, Slovakia, Greece, Romania). The Republic of Cyprus is the only state which is both militarily neutral and has not recognised the independence of Kosovo, meaning that any military cooperation with this state within the HELBROC Battlegroup has a good chance of meeting with public approval. The Balkan Battlegroup will be on duty during the first half of 2014, which is an excellent opportunity for the participation of a Serbian contingent. This contingent could have up to 50 members from the ranks of the military police, demining teams, medical teams and, of course, staff officers.

During this phase, political preparations for the creation of WBBG must also be intensified. This question may be addressed through bilateral contacts both with other states in the region, and with EU member states. If the idea is accepted, it will be possible to convene a regional conference at which it will be necessary to reach consensus on the creation of WBBG by 2020. It is desirable to organise the regional conference in cooperation with Greece, who will hold the EU presidency during the first half of 2014. At this conference, as well as expressing general political will, a decision will be made as to which state will be the BG Point of Contact for coordination of planning and preparation of the Battlegroup, and also which state can play the role of „lead nation“. According to existing procedures, the process of formally founding a Battlegroup begins at a meeting of the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (or GAERC). Following this, defence ministers of the participating states sign a letter expressing the intention to offer the European Union the services of their fully operational Battlegroup by a given date.

73 For more on this, see: Miroslav Hadžić and Milorad Timotić, *Javnost i vojska*, Centre for Civil-Military Relations, Belgrade, 2006.

3. Phase of advance participation, planning and preparation (2016-2017)

During this phase, the Republic of Serbia can advance its participation in Battlegroups by including other branches of the Serbian Army, such as infantry, artillery, transport aircraft and helicopter units. One of the most difficult challenges in the phase of advanced participation will be winning public support in Serbia. This will be especially complicated if the EU Battlegroup in which Serbia is participating is used in implementation of an EU mission. There is a risk that, if the Battlegroup is used for a CSDP operation, the Serbian Army may suffer casualties. Professionalization of the Serbian Army, along with added investment in training those who will participate in the EU Battlegroup may reduce, but cannot entirely eliminate, this risk. For this reason, if events play out in this way, a strategy for communication with the public must be devised in time. A detailed plan for social care of casualties and their families must also be devised.

During this phase, *planning* for the creation of WBBG must be begun.⁷⁴ With this aim it is desirable to continue dialogue with prospective contributor states. Special attention should be paid to politically sensitive issues, such as the decision-making process for Battlegroup deployment, the legal mandate and national responsibilities. This dialogue would be crowned by the signing of *Memoranda of Understanding* between the prospective contributing states. These documents can deal with the following matters: decision making on Battlegroup deployment; consultation between contributing states during planning and preparation for WBBG, as well as in the so-called *stand-by* phase following certification; command and control during operations in which the Battlegroup is involved; exercises and training; and other legal and financial matters. Alongside the *Memoranda of Understanding*, and based on them, *Technical Agreements* are also signed by the contributing states, defining how staff are placed within the Battlegroup structure and dealing with training and exercises as well as the use of the Battlegroup. If some issues remain unresolved, alongside the *Memoranda of Understanding* and *Technical Agreements*, other multilateral or bilateral agreements may be concluded at this stage. This process is coordinated by the BG Point of Contact.

⁷⁴ For a standardised guide to the creation of Battlegroups, see: Council of the European Union, Military Staff, *EU Battlegroup Preparation Guide*, Brussels, 8th September 2009

4. Phase of development of initial operational capacity and formation of the Western Balkans Battlegroup (2018-2020)

In this phase, Serbia would, together with other contributing states, continue its preparation of WBBG. First, the development process for the WBBG package must be started. From this process should derive the composition and capabilities of the Battlegroup package, the so called ORBAT (Order of Battle), including national responsibilities. Similarly it is necessary to agree the standard operation procedure for the functioning of the WB Battlegroup. The BG Point of Contact is also responsible for planning training of WBBG force command. It is also necessary to establish a well coordinated decision making process over the use of WBBG, to be followed by participating states. It is desirable for this process to be carried out at maximum speed in order for WBBG to be able to comply with the foreseen timeframe for rapid deployment in a period of 5 to 10 days after a decision by the EU Council. It is necessary to develop a WBBG intelligence section, which would meet twice yearly. It would be good for these meetings to be attended by intelligence officers from other Battlegroups, if possible from the Battlegroup scheduled to be on duty alongside WBBG, as well as those due to be on duty in the six month periods before and after WBBG.

Training and exercises are key for successful certification. The BG Point of Contact coordinates the process of training, exercises and certification. These must be in harmony with NATO procedures set for NATO Response Forces (NRFs). The training process consists of four levels: individual training, training of units, training of the BG core (the infantry battalion) and training of the WBBG package. Interoperability and operational effectiveness are achieved through joint combined exercises. Participating states are responsible for Battlegroup certification, but it takes place in accordance with procedures agreed at the EU level. The European Union Military Committee is the organ which monitors the process of evaluation and certification of the Battlegroup. The BG Point of Contact is required, at least one month before WBBG is put on standby, to certify that its package meets the agreed Battlegroup criteria. Other EU member states may also be invited to observe the certification process, which would be particularly desirable given that WBBG will be largely or entirely composed of states which are not yet EU members.

This phase would be completed first with the placement of WBBG on standby during Finland's presidency in the first half of 2020, and then on the EUBG roster during the next scheduled Coordination Conference. Thus, the Western Balkan states, upon entering the EU,

would be showing much more than that they can provide security individually. The creation of the WBBG would be the best way to prove that they have overcome past conflicts, and are in a position to integrate their defence capabilities and so contribute to European security.

V Conclusion

Serbia has already lost a lot of time on the road to European integration. The states of Central and Eastern Europe signed an agreement on association with the EU only one year after the change of regime, and submitted candidacy applications only four or five years later. Croatia, only one year after its political changes, in 2001 to be more exact, signed a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU. It submitted a candidacy application in 2003, and received candidate status in 2004. Serbia signed its Stabilisation and Association Agreement eight years after its own changes, and in the best case scenario will achieve candidate status at the beginning of 2011.

The reason for Serbia's slow progress towards the EU can be found in its exceptionally difficult and complicated post-authoritarian and post-conflict heritage. However, a large part of the reason also lies in the way the state has been run since 2000. Reforms have been carried out exceptionally slowly, Serbia's foreign policy has been reactive and its security policy vague and often very confusing. If things continue at this tempo, there is a danger that changes within the EU and neighbouring Western Balkans states will continue to proceed faster than changes in Serbia. It is true, though, that the last two years have seen encouraging movements. A proactive policy by Serbia towards the Common Security and Defence Policy could accelerate Serbia's integration into the EU. The creation of WBBG would lay the foundations of a security community in the western Balkans, and of a more secure Europe in a better world. Realisation of the vision of the Western Balkans Battlegroup by 2020 would be in the best interest not only of the Republic of Serbia and the other Western Balkans states, but in the interests of the entire European Union.

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