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Book review

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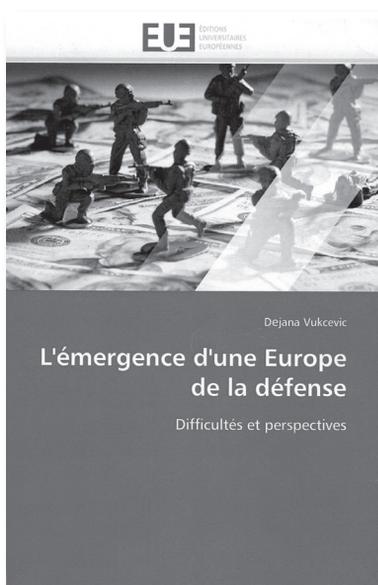
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Book review

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L'émergence d'une Europe de la défense: difficultés et perspectives

Editions universitaires européennes, 2010, 628p.



The evolution of the European Union's role in the area of foreign policy, security and defence over the last decade thanks to the development of its security and defence

policy, points to a new ambition of member-states to remodel the nature of the EU in such a way that it can influence international developments and pursue a proactive policy as a political and strategic power. The originality of this concept is reflected in attempts to Europeanise the EU security policy, rather than maintain a set of national policies, while preserving national identity. This is a complex process of harmonising the national with the European, where concepts of integration, cooperation, togetherness, etc. intertwine.

At the same time, the development and implications of this policy on the nature of the EU raise numerous questions. Are we witnessing the emergence of an EU as a strategic actor and what impact will such development of the EU have on international relations?

What is the role and importance of the EU security and defence policy for the EU's institutional setup? What are the perspectives of the EU defence policy? These issues are examined by Dejana Vukčević in her work: *“L'émergence d'une Europe de la défense: difficultés et perspectives”*, published in 2010 by Éditions européennes universitaires.

The structure of the study points to an original, analytically versatile and comprehensive analysis of the issue in hand. The book is divided into two large parts, each further sub-divided into two large segments. In Part One, the author examines the institutional basis of the Common EU Security and Defence Policy. It is assumed that the EU progress in the area of defence is not free from controversy and ambiguity and the analysis focuses on three key issues. Is national identity an impediment to the development of the European defence policy? What kind of balance can be struck between the EU defence policy and national particularities? What is the influence of the institutionalisation of this policy on the EU institutional framework? As the author points out: „all these controversies are pertinent when it comes to an analysis of the EU's institutional basis“. This part is divided in two large segments. The first one deals with the emergence and development of the security dimension in the European integration process, aiming to point to the main obs-

tacles and difficulties involved in the integration of the security dimension in the EU's institutional system, as well as to analyse the phenomenon of progressive assimilation of the defence domain in the EU institutional system and its impact on the existing EU structure. The author concludes that the emergence and development of the EU security dimension shows significant differences among member-states in defining the direction of their own integration in the area of defence. The consequence of this is a years-long distinction between foreign policy, being developed in the scope of the European integration process, and the defence domain, developing outside this process. However, the institutionalisation of the EU security policy can be perceived as a driving force behind the „Europeanisation“ of this area and the overcoming of exclusively national interests. Yet, the preponderance of intergovernmental cooperation in this sphere and unanimity as a key decision-making mechanism both suggest that “Brusselisation“ in this area is hard to achieve in the short term. Also, great differences exist in the „leverage“ of some states and thus the provisions on different forms of flexible cooperation in the security and defence area, since this appears to have been the only way to introduce security and defence in treaty provisions as competencies vested in the Union. Thus, a balance was achieved between the

„military“ competencies of the European Union included in the treaties and national singularities and interests. In the strictly institutional sphere, the introduction of provisions on EU common foreign, security and defence policy has added complexity to the existing EU institutional structure. This complexity creates competition and overlapping of competencies of its bodies, leading the author to conclude that it is necessary to enhance cooperation of the various actors and coherence of different political instruments.

In the second segment of Part One, institutional arrangements between EU on the one hand and NATO and WEU (Western European Union) are analysed. The underlying assumption in the author's analysis is that the latter two have, more or less, influenced the „shaping“ of the EU's security dimension. Yet, this relationship is not free from controversies and the author attempts to show to what extent the EU, through its institutional arrangements, succeeded to emancipate itself from NATO. Also, the author's opinion is that the role of WEU should not be understated, as it represents an expression of European indecision in the process of EU's „transition“ from the level of dependence to a level of autonomy in relation to NATO.

Part Two of this book explores the progressive concretization of the EU as a strategic power. The author emphasizes that institutio-

nal bases of the EU security and defence policy reflect the ambition of a Europe-power, but also raise the question on how this ambition will be concretely achieved. This part is divided into two large segments. The first one covers the research of the EU's military and civilian operations carried out in the scope of its security policy with a purpose to show to what extent these operations have influenced the credibility and efficiency of the EU deployment and its increasing importance on the international stage. Based on this analysis, the author reaches a conclusion that the EU institutional mechanisms have exerted an influence on the political will of the member-states, namely, that the institutional framework of the EU security policy „compelled“ member-states to pursue a certain direction in developing their defence policies. It is also pointed out that a foreign policy lacking a security dimension is doomed to failure. Furthermore, the EU's institutional rearrangement through the development of security and defence policy points to an aspiration by the EU to become a fully-fledged international actor. It is, therefore, seeking to define its position within the international system. Hence, the author also examines the issue of the development of the EU's strategic concept, based on the assumption that the common strategic concept among the EU member-states is necessary for determining the direction of

the EU security and defence policy development and action of the EU as strategic player. The author points to certain shortcomings in the strategic conceptualization of the EU, particularly taking into account its deployment in Africa, the Balkans, Middle East etc., which, as the author points out, raises the issue of the criteria on which these EU policy priorities are based. The focus of the analysis is the contribution of the European Security Strategy, which the author views as a result of a minimal consensus among member-states, since it fails to define common versus national interests and does not associate resources with the political goals, underscoring further the necessity for developing a European strategic concept. The EU strategic concept also implies a redefining of the relations with the U.S., whose aim would be for the EU to become more “independent” from the U.S. However, as the author emphasizes, the Union is finding it difficult to resolve the strategic autonomy vs. Atlantic alliance dilemma and the national factor remains crucial to the EU-U.S. relations.

Part Two of this book is dedicated to the EU’s capacities and resources as strategic actor. The starting assumption is that autonomy of action is not possible without adequate strategic capacities which represent the key element of the EU credibility as strategic partner. Hence, the focus of the research is on the degree of convergence in

developing the EU’s operational capacities. The analysis includes the member-states’ financial efforts in the area of defence, military reform, and the main shortcomings in the development of the EU strategic capacities. This particularly refers to strategic transportation and military intelligence. A separate chapter deals with the arms industry and the development of a sound technological and industrial armament base for supplying member-states with appropriate military and civilian resources and capacities. The author’s assumption is that the creation of the European military industry is a pre-requisite for the EU security and defence policy development and its strategic restructuring since without adequate strategic capabilities, the EU cannot act as a political and strategic power. The principal difficulties in the Europeanisation of the military industry are, in the author’s view, manifested in the absence of will by member-states to forgo their national interests and, as a consequence, the European military industry is caught up in a conflict of national preferences and market economy logic. Through an analysis of the current state of the arms industry development, the author notes that this area is subject to the will of member-states to harmonise their policies and that, except for some joint projects, we cannot yet refer to a common policy of the EU member states in this area.. The preponderance of national in-

terests has its consequences for the development of Euro-Atlantic cooperation since European industry is faced with a dominance of the American military industry which greatly slows its development. Euro-Atlantic relations in armament are based on competition rather than cooperation and are a result of attempts to win a dominant position in the process of arms supply. Hence the author's view that European arms industry cannot be built by relying on Euro-Atlantic cooperation and that the creation of the so-called "Fortress Europe" is a better solution than the present situation, as it is necessary for the EU to create a genuinely European arms industry as the basis of the EU's strategic autonomy.

In the conclusion, it is suggested that the EU security policy will continue to "juggle" European and national components: tensions between these two components will be recurring as the European dimension will face difficulties in shaping a common vision on issues related to security and defence. This tension will be continuous. In other words, the EU security policy will largely remain in the hands of member-states. It does not aspire to replacing national policies with a single common security and defence policy. However, the transfer of competencies in this area to the Union indicates that national sovereignty is not absolute. The concept of a communitary Europe in which: "with the development of

the EU, and particularly of its security dimension, we are moving towards a kind of a post-modern state whose government relies upon multi-level governance, and which is founded on both national and supra-national institutions. In the area of security and defence, we are between two concepts: traditional definition of security and defence policy which is exclusively national and which proves inadequate in a new environment requiring closer links among states, and a new definition implying multi-level governance. The European ambition in the area of security and defence will move in this direction».

The author of this book demonstrates research innovativeness and clarity of the subject presentation. This is a substantial, original and analytically comprehensive scientific work clearly presenting the EU security and defence dimension. It is a book which, by its quality, should become mandatory reading on the subject of the security and defence aspect of the European integration process, but also on the perspectives of this process on the whole.