

Poland's Objectives in European Security & Defence

Congress on European Security and Defence . Roadmap to a Security and Defence Union – Political Initiatives and Procurement.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Please let me first thank General Scherz for the invitation to this conference. I am honoured to have the opportunity to speak to you today about Polish objectives in the area of European security and defence.

During my intervention, I will present an overview of Poland's security and defence policy; in particular, I will focus on the importance we attach and expectations we have in relation to European Security and Defence Policy.

[I. Pillars of Poland's security]

Let me start with the following question: how does Poland frame its response to contemporary threats and challenges? The answer is quite simple - we base our security on two main pillars: the Euro-Atlantic one – NATO, and the European one – ESDP. These two strands are supplemented and further strengthened by our strategic partnership with the US. As a fourth element in this framework, let me point out to relations with our neighbours. In a real world, national security is a combination of all these pillars.

It is clear that NATO and the EU are strategically close and complementary to each other. This is not the case just because the two organisations have a partially overlapping membership. What is more important, in terms of security, NATO and the EU have similar basic values and strategic goals. Even further, both organisations are guardians of peace and stability in Europe; in this respect

– despite developments within the EU – the role of NATO as a hard security provider has not dramatically changed in its merit, although the Alliance has evolved and expanded.

[II. Objectives]

[Objective 1 – strengthening the two pillars of PL security]

NATO plays an unique role in our security and defence policy. It provides solid security guarantees. It constitutes a strategic forum of transatlantic dialogue and cooperation in security matters as well as develops links with Partner nations from different continents. However, nowadays the Alliance is getting through a process of transformation and reaches beyond its responsibilities related to collective defence. It broadly engages in stabilisation and reconstruction tasks in remote and volatile areas of the world, also beyond the Euro-Atlantic area.

We support this direction of NATO transformation. Nonetheless, Poland remains attached to the core function of this organisation. The last developments in the South Caucasus have shown that there are still traditional threats and challenges for security. We are obviously concerned about that. Therefore, we must support maintaining the importance of article 5 of the Washington Treaty. In our view it should be reflected much broadly in defence planning and exercises. I think this view is common for many nations represented here today.

Let me now turn to the issue of **ESDP** development. Poland is very committed to the advancement of the CFSP and ESDP. In fact, following the EU's increasing importance in world affairs, the European Security and Defence Policy is experiencing a very dynamic growth. This is a very welcome development.

In this process, the development of EU capabilities plays a premier role. Activities of the European Defence Agency in this regard serve the purpose very well. EDA has launched many valuable projects and member states should assist it in its mission of providing guidance on the development of EU capabilities. Here, I would like to stress – again – that such a development needs to be done without

a duplication of NATO capabilities. A single pool of forces and capabilities and single national budgets are keywords that illustrate our position.

Still, there are challenges to cope with. One of the areas for improvement could be found in the use of the EU rapid response elements (notably the Battle Groups). The development and preparation of the Battle Groups is reasonable only when we are ready to use them. Hence, it would be profitable to take a more flexible and pragmatic approach to the principles governing use of the Battle Groups.

If I had to define Poland's *general* objectives in the area of European security in just one sentence, I would say: we are dedicated to having strong NATO, based on the principle of collective defence as its core value and capable of contributing to the development of international peace and stability, and strong EU, capable of conducting a wide range of crisis management activities.

[Objective 2 – strengthening ESDP-NATO cooperation]

This leads me to one of our most important objectives in European security and defence: in order to better address current security challenges, it is necessary to improve EU-NATO relations.

In fact, for some time already, we have been witnessing a crisis in the relations between NATO and the EU. Despite the fact that in BiH, Kosovo and Afghanistan the two organisations cooperate on a daily basis, this working-level cooperation has not been translated into a more substantial political dialogue. Thus, an impasse in strategic cooperation between NATO and the EU leads to practical difficulties in the theatres of operation.

It can be argued, however, that some specialisation has already started to develop: NATO concentrating on high-intensity military operations, while the EU focusing mainly on civilian missions and lower-intensity military operations. Such a burdensharing has a promising potential. For example, EU engagement is particularly necessary in areas such as security sector reform, institution-building efforts, or development aid, where NATO capacities are limited or non-existent.

This type of complementarity is already in place in Kosovo. On the other side, there is much space for improvement in the case of Afghanistan.

Of course, we are fully aware of the political sensitivities related to the issue of EU-NATO cooperation. The relations between the two organisations will not improve overnight. Still, we need to search for compromise solutions and gradually increase the number of areas where NATO and the EU cooperate. Conduct of operations, exchange of information in the area of risk assessment, development of capabilities – these are just examples of issues that could be tackled in the first place.

We believe that the United States have a very important role to play in the area of improving the political relations between the two organisations. In fact, in our opinion, America could contribute by helping to upgrade the EU-US dialogue, which would - in turn - translate into improvement to the EU-NATO one. In this respect, we hope that the new US administration will provide fresh impetus to make this relationship more visible and dynamic.

[Objective 3 – securing geographical balance]

Now, in order to foster the development of EU cooperation with NATO, an open and sincere discussion between the member states about their general national priorities is necessary. Such a discussion should also pertain to the problem of defining ESDP *geographical* priorities.

The activity of the EU in the framework of the ESDP appears to be centred mainly around Sub-Saharan Africa. So far, the majority of EU civilian missions and three out of the five EU military operations have taken place in this region. I would like to emphasise that we fully understand the need for the EU to take action in Africa. The fact that Poland was involved in the EU operation in Congo and now constitutes the third biggest contingent in Chad is a proof of our commitment.

But we also believe that it is crucial to make ESDP more geographically balanced; this is another of our major security goals. The EU needs to become

more active in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Our Eastern neighbourhood is the area where EU actions could make a significant change: ESDP offers tools required for contribution to crisis-settlement, institution-building efforts or solution to the so-called frozen conflicts. We strongly believe that the Eastern Partnership, operating within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy, is very much needed.

The EU has missed some opportunities to engage more in Eastern Europe and Central Asia a few times already. Most of the times, our inability to reach an agreement on launching an ESDP operation was caused by the fact that there is no consensus between member states on whether a possible EU engagement would not be seem too controversial to other key players in the region.

In this light, Europe's firm reaction and rapid launch of an ESDP operation in Georgia is particularly welcome. The EU mission in Georgia could become an important step for the EU towards a more active involvement in the region.

[Objective 4 – responding to new challenges: energy security, others]

To be successful in contributing to the development of peace and stability, a state or an organisation needs to be aware of and respond to new threats and challenges. Yet, so far the EU has done little to tackle one of the most fundamental problems of contemporary world affairs: energy security.

I would like to emphasise that this omission does not result from a lack of capacity to act; on the contrary, the EU has the political instruments required to tackle this issue. We believe that the EU is capable of taking actions towards securing diversification of energy resources. Similarly, it has the potential to stimulate wider use of alternative sources of energy. Knowing this, we strongly encourage initiatives targeted at developing an inclusive EU energy security strategy. Such a strategy would help Europe in finding common solutions for securing energy supplies, which would make any potential third states' blackmail meaningless, if not outright impossible.

Cyberattacks are another non-military threat that could be higher up on the ESDP agenda. The attacks in Estonia have made clear that the EU needs to develop common initiatives aiming at countering cybercrime. Here, again, it could constitute a possibly fertile ground for cooperation with NATO.

[III. Conclusion & Way ahead]

To sum up, the European Security and Defence Policy can provide a framework within which current security challenges can be tackled more and more efficiently. Therefore, Poland supports the development of ESDP and European military capabilities.

We believe that in order to increase its efficiency, the EU needs to work out ways to cooperate more closely with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The EU's area of interests in the framework of CFSP/ESDP should be expanded, both in geographic terms (to cover Europe's eastern neighbourhood) and in functional terms (to respond to contemporary challenges, such as energy security). These are examples of what the EU could do to better respond to security challenges and be more proactive on the international scene. Therefore, as a very first step, the issues of NATO-EU cooperation, Eastern policy dimension and energy security should be adequately reflected in the updated European Security Strategy.

We also stand for the development of EU military capabilities; hence, we support most of the propositions of the French presidency in this respect. But, in the meantime, we should also become more aware of the fact that the EU already possesses various instruments that could improve its current capabilities. Yet, how efficient it will be in building upon these instruments depends on the political will of the EU member states. I would like to reiterate that Poland is ready to take its share.

Thank you for your attention.