EU It Yourself

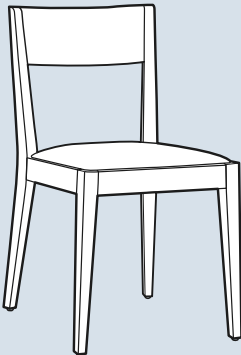## A Blueprint for a European Security Council

Niklas Nováky

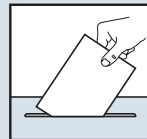# EURÖPEÅN SECURITY CÖUNCIL
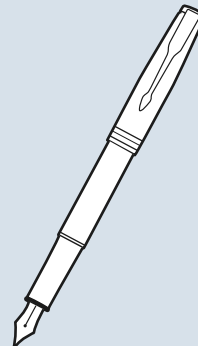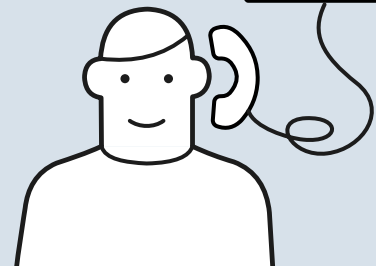
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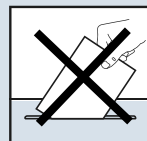
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STRATEGY

EU It Yourself

Yourself

A Blueprint for a European Security Council

Niklas Nováky

Credits

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About the Martens Centre

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About the author

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Executive summary

This paper lays out a blueprint for a European Security Council (ESC). This is an old idea that has recently been resurrected by those seeking to transform the EU into a more effective international actor. The current discussion of the issue was initially started by French President Emmanuel Macron during his 2017 presidential campaign. But since then it has been taken over by leading German politicians such as Chancellor Angela Merkel and Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, the new leader of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany party. The basic premise behind the idea is that the EU should have a new structure for strategic reflection and deliberation on foreign, security and defence policy, a forum that would not have seats for every EU member state. This would—so the argument goes—help the EU act more quickly and more decisively when a crisis or challenge emerged that required action from the Union. However, those calling for an ESC have hitherto been frugal when it comes to details about what such a structure would look like and how it would function in practice. The clearest blueprints have so far come—unsurprisingly—from think tanks. Yet these plans are drastically different from each other and often do not correspond to the (rather limited) visions articulated by those leaders who have called for an ESC in public.

This paper provides a blueprint for the creation of an ESC, a plan that political leaders could follow in the coming months. It envisages an intergovernmental ESC based in the Council of the EU. Its day-to-day operations would be handled by the Council Secretariat, which would make the ESC relatively resource-neutral in terms of the additional staff and funding it requires. Hence, it would be not so much a new institution as an additional structure within an existing institution, which also means that it would not require separate mechanisms to handle its interactions with NATO or France's new European Intervention Initiative. The ESC would have seats for 10 member states, five of which would have permanent seats (i.e. France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Poland), three rotating and two case-specific seats. In addition, the ESC would have seats for a chairman, a military and civilian advisor, representatives from the European Commission and the European Parliament, and representatives from the relevant EU agencies, depending on the nature of the item being discussed. However, only the member states with permanent and rotating seats would vote on ESC decisions. The ESC would have the power to adopt resolutions on international challenges and to establish a new European Security Strategy (ESS) every five years without further input from non-ESC countries. It would also be able to make proposals for executive EU action to the Council (e.g. the deployment of an operation or the issuing of sanctions), but such proposals would still require the approval of the full Council, although through an expedited process. The ESC envisaged here would not be the silver bullet that would solve all of the EU's problems on the world stage in one go. But it would help steady the aim of the person holding the gun loaded with that bullet.

Introduction

In 1991, then Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens observed that, as an international actor, Europe was 'an economic giant, a political dwarf, and a military worm'.[1] He made this observation in connection with Europe's virtual irrelevance in solving the then-unfolding crisis in the Persian Gulf, which had been caused by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and eventually led to the first Gulf War. Since then, and egged on by additional demonstrations of its irrelevance in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s, the EU has taken significant steps towards becoming a credible international actor that can be relied upon to play an active role in solving international crises. These steps include the appointment of an EU foreign policy chief to represent the Union on the world stage (i.e. the creatively named High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy), the creation of the Common (formerly European) Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to provide the EU with an autonomous framework for civilian and military crisis management, the creation of a type of EU foreign ministry (i.e. the European External Action Service (EEAS)), and the deployment of over 30 civilian and military operations around the world under the EU flag. The mere thought of these steps would have seemed utopian at the time Eyskens made his observation.

All the same, the unfortunate reality remains that the EU has a long way to go to become a credible international actor. In 2011 the EU failed to step up when Libya, a country only a short boat trip away from Italy, became engulfed in civil war. In 2014 it declined Ukraine's request for a military crisis-management operation in the eastern part of the country, sending instead a small civilian security sector reform mission. These developments, along with other factors (e.g. Brexit and the election of Donald Trump as US President), have given rise to a new sense of urgency to address this problem. This has already led to the establishment of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the creation of a European Defence Fund (EDF) and the setting up of a Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). These and other initiatives launched since 2016 seek to facilitate the EU's journey towards 'strategic autonomy'—an ill-defined term introduced by the EU's 2016 Global Strategy, which can perhaps best be understood as the ability to act independently on the world stage without third-party (i.e. American) support.

Most of these recent initiatives have focused almost exclusively on addressing the EU's *supply-side problem* in security and defence—its member states' lack of capabilities (or in any event, up-to-date capabilities), which hinders the Union's ability to act on the world stage. However, it is often forgotten that

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[1] C. R. Whitney, 'Gulf Fighting Shatters Europeans' Fragile Unity', *The New York Times*, 25 January 1991.

the EU has an equally, if not more, serious *demand-side problem* in this area—the chronic unwillingness of most of its member states to act when a crisis or challenge emerges. This problem often manifests itself in EU responses being either excessively slow (as in the Central African Republic in 2014) or insufficient to meet the need at hand (as in Mali in 2013). Whereas the supply-side problem is material in nature and relatively straightforward to fix, its demand-side counterpart is political and ideational in character and therefore much harder to tackle. This is because fixing it would require decision-makers to change their attitudes towards sensitive issues such as the use of force. Addressing this ideational challenge is the purpose of, *inter alia*, France's new European Intervention Initiative (EI2), which is a new forum for defence cooperation. It was launched in 2017 to facilitate the emergence of a common strategic culture among the participating countries that would lead to quicker reactions in times of crisis. The EI2, however, is neither an EU initiative nor linked to EU structures.

However, an old discussion has recently resurfaced on the possibility of creating a European Security Council (ESC) within the EU to facilitate quicker and more decisive action. The driving forces behind this discussion have been leading German politicians such as Chancellor Angela Merkel and the new leader of her Christian Democratic Union of Germany party (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU), Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer. They have called for an ESC with a rotating membership that would help the EU better define and implement its interests in security and defence policy. So far, however, the leaders who have called for an ESC have been rather frugal on details about what such a structure would look like and how it would function in practice. Unsurprisingly, the clearest blueprints for an ESC have so far come from think tanks,[2] but even these proposals leave many questions unanswered.

This paper seeks to contribute to the current discussion on the matter. It argues that an ESC, if set up in the right way, would help address the EU's demand-side problem in security and defence. Its major added value would be that it could improve the cohesion and coherence of EU foreign and security policy without introducing Qualified Majority Voting (QMV), even in a limited way, in this highly sensitive policy area. The paper then provides a detailed blueprint, which reflects the author's personal view of how an ESC should be structured and what it should do. This blueprint envisages an intergovernmental ESC that

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[2] See, e.g., P. Massart, 'Time for a European Security Council', Carnegie Europe, Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe (3 March 2017); O. Wientzek and C. E. Rieck, *Brussels' New Telephone Number? – How a European Security Council Could Strengthen EU Foreign Policy*, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Facts & Findings no. 311 (Berlin, August 2018).

would consist of a limited number of EU member states, but also contain seats for various experts and representatives from EU institutions. Although it would not be a silver bullet that would solve all of the EU's problems on the world stage, it would help steady the aim of the person holding the gun loaded with that bullet.

The rest of this paper is divided into four main sections. The first provides a review of the existing literature on the idea of creating some kind of autonomous ESC, which dates back at least to the 1980s. It also identifies four existing models for an ESC from this literature. The second section provides an overview of the most recent policy discussion round on the ESC, which began in early 2017. Although it was launched by French President Emmanuel Macron during his presidential campaign, it has sub-sequently been taken over by leading German politicians. The third section provides a blueprint for an ESC that would satisfy those who have been calling for it. It begins by outlining a possible structure for the ESC, then discusses the tasks that it should carry out, and ends by discussing a possible-decision making system for it. The fourth section is the conclusion, which relates the ESC discussion to the EU's grand strategic goal of becoming strategically autonomous, and also to the need to address the Union's demand-side problem in international security.

To conclude this introduction, a note on terminology is needed. Both politicians and academics tend to use the terms 'European Security Council' and 'EU Security Council' synonymously. However, there is a subtle difference between them, as the literature review will show. Although the term 'European Security Council' is most commonly used to refer to a possible EU-based structure, it is sometimes also used to refer to a broader European structure that could also include non-EU countries such as Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. The term 'EU Security Council' is narrower in scope as it refers exclusively to an EU-based structure. Yet given that the current discussion on an 'EU Security Council' derives partly from the older discussion on a broader 'European Security Council', this paper will use the latter term throughout. This issue is, of course, of secondary importance. As Hans-Christian Hagman wrote during the previous incar-nation of the ESC debate at the time of the EU's constitutional convention in the early 2000s, '[t]he actual name of this council is not important, but the function is.'[3]

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[3] H. C. Hagman, *European Crisis Management and Defence: The Search for Capabilities*, International Institute for Security Studies, Adelphi Paper 353 (London, 2002), 81.

Existing models

Since the 1980s, four primary models for an ESC have been discussed in the literature. These are (1) the concert of powers model, (2) the European Council model, (3) the US National Security Council model and (4) the UN Security Council model. It should be noted that these models do not represent an exhaustive overview of existing academic thinking on an ESC. But they do provide a description of the main strands of this thinking.

First, *the concert of powers model* envisages a forum in which the great powers of Europe (not just EU) could discuss, manage and settle major European security issues.[4] It would be situated within the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). It would essentially be an exclusive intergovernmental club for veto-wielding great powers, and in this sense be similar to the nineteenth-century Concert of Europe, the UN Security Council, the Contact Group on former Yugoslavia and the G7/8.[5] The development of this model was driven by a perceived need to restructure post–Cold War Europe's security architecture to accommodate the post-Communist and newly independent states of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Russia. Its advocates argued that the OSCE should create an ESC 'with permanent members possessing veto power and some rotating non-permanent members, representing smaller European and CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] states.'[6] It was also argued that NATO and the now defunct Western European Union (WEU) 'should be subordinated to the ESC and serve as its military arms in maintaining regional security (especially in peacekeeping operations).'[7] Russia supported this model to demonstrate goodwill towards the West, but also because it would have provided Moscow with a way to weaken NATO.[8] For the same reason, most Western countries have been vehemently opposed to it.

Second, *the European Council model* would set up a special meeting of EU heads of state and govern-

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[4] See, e.g., S. Croft, 'The EU, NATO and Europeanisation: The Return of Architectural Debate', *European Security* 9/3 (Autumn 2000); A. A. Sergounin, 'Russian Domestic Debate on NATO Enlargement: From Phobia to Damage Limitation', *European Security* 6/4 (Winter 1997); C. Krupnick, 'Europe's Intergovernmental NGO: The OSCE in Europe's Emerging Security Structure', *European Security* 7/2 (Summer 1998), 33.

[5] S. Croft, 'The EU, NATO and Europeanisation', 7; A. A. Sergounin, 'Russian Domestic Debate', 63; E. Yesson, 'NATO, EU and Russia: Reforming Europe's Security Institution', *European Foreign Affairs Review* 6/2 (2001), 203; C. Schwegman, *The Contact Group and Its Impact on the European Institutional Structure, Institute for Security Studies*, Occasional Paper 16 (Paris, June 2000), 3.

[6] A.A. Sergounin, 'Russian Domestic Debate', 63.

[7] Ibid.

[8] S. Croft, 'The EU, NATO and Europeanisation', 7; Krupnick, 'Europe's Intergovernmental NGO', 33.

ment—the highest decision-making level in the Union—dedicated to the issues of security and defence.[9] It aims to improve the EU's ability to develop strategies and respond to crises through better top-down steering of the Union's foreign, security and defence policy. This model was discussed as early as the 1980s as a way to extend the competences of the European Council to include the then still highly sensitive area of security and defence. In the run-up to the 1984 European elections, the Union for French Democracy party (Union pour la Démocratie Française, UDF) suggested that the European Council should start discussing defence matters 'and assemble in a "European Security Council" which would be assisted by a permanent ad hoc secretariat and by a committee of the chiefs of staff.'[10] The idea was revisited in 2016 by then French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault and Frank-Walter Steinmeier, his German counterpart at the time and now President of Germany. They proposed that, to help the EU develop a common understanding of its strategic environment, 'the European Council should meet once a year as a European Security Council, in order to address internal and external security and defence issues facing the EU.'[11] Under their proposal, this special meeting would be 'prepared by a meeting of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Interior Ministers.'[12]

Third, *the US National Security Council model* envisages an advisory body that—like its American namesake—would advise and assist the EU's top leadership on foreign, security and defence policy matters, and help coordinate the different institutions and agencies.[13] It would be a technical forum where EU diplomats, civil servants and experts could take both a short- and the long-term view of the challenges facing the Union, discuss them, and develop strategic advice for EU leaders. Before the abolition of the Union's pillar structure, which had been set up by the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, it had been argued that an ESC would facilitate coordination between pillars one and two—that is, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)—and make it easier to coordinate the military and civilian aspects of the EU's foreign and security policy.[14] It would consist of member states' ambassadors from

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9   See, e.g., M. C. Smouts, 'France: Its Defence and European Security', *International Journal* 40/1 (Winter 1984/1985), 99; EUISS, 'European Defence: Ambitions, Visions and Deliverables', EUISS Workshop (17 October 2016), 3.

10   M.S. Smouts, 'France', 99.

11   J. M. Ayrault and F. W. Steinmeier, 'A Strong Europe in a World of Uncertainties' (28 June 2016).

12   Ibid.

13   See, e.g., H. C. Hagman, *European Crisis Management and Defence*; J. Howorth, 'The Case for an EU Grand Strategy', in S. Biscop, J. Howorth and B. Giegerich (eds.), *Europe: A Time for Strategy*, Egmont Paper 27 (Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), 21; P. Massart, 'Time for a European Security Council'.

14   H. C. Hagman, *European Crisis Management and Defence*, 82.

the Political and Security Committee (PSC), which even at that time dealt with the everyday implementation and aspects of EU foreign, security and defence policy. The Lisbon Treaty entered into force in 2009 and abolished the EU's pillar structure. The model was modified accordingly, so that it envisaged an advisory body that would provide strategic advice to the high representative, the president of the European Council, and the president of the European Commission.[15]

Fourth, *the UN Security Council model* would *see the ESC set up as an intergovernmental directorate or nucleus within the EU to formulate strategies and coordinate policies. It would—like its namesake—consist of both permanent and non-permanent members.[16] The model is based on the premise that the EU needs a way of making decisions on foreign, security and defence policy that is more effective than the current 'General Assembly' of the 28 member states in the Council, as Asle Toje describes it.[17] The reason for this is that the EU's responses to previous crises (e.g. Iraq in 2003, Georgia in 2008, Libya in 2011 and Ukraine in 2014) have made it clear that the Union finds it difficult to go beyond the lowest common denominator when deciding on how to respond to an event. The ESC envisaged by this model would be a new body consisting of a core group or nucleus of influential and ambitious member states. Its objective would be to boost the effectiveness of the EU's foreign and security policies in times of crises by speeding up the Union's decision-making process. It permanent and non-permanent members could be chosen on the basis of various geographical and functional criteria.

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[15] J. Howorth, 'The Case for an EU Grand Strategy', 21.
[16] See, e.g., O. Wientzek and C. E. Rieck, *Brussels' New Telephone Number?*
[17] A. Toje, 'The 2003 European Union Security Strategy: A Critical Appraisal', *European Foreign Affairs Review* 10/1 (2005), 123.

Contemporary discussion

The contemporary ESC discussion has focused mainly on the UN Security Council model. This model calls for the establishment of an intergovernmental directorate of a limited number of EU member states that would develop strategies and coordinate policies. At the same time, it contains traces of the European Council and US National Security Council models. For the most part, this discussion has been dominated by Paris and Berlin. But although it was put in motion by France, German politicians have more recently taken ownership of it and become its loudest proponents. Interestingly, however, the ESC discussion has so far resonated very little outside Paris and Berlin—even in Brussels.

The current discussion was set in motion by Macron in 2017. During his presidential campaign, Macron published a programme for Europe. Among other things, it included an ill-defined proposal for an ESC that would bring together the member states' main military, diplomatic and intelligence officials.[18] A month after Macron's election as French president in May, Merkel responded to parts of his proposal for the future of the EU in an interview she gave to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*.[19] She explained that she considered the creation of an ESC to be a real possibility and that it could have a rotating membership consisting of some of the EU member states. She saw that an ESC could act faster than the EU28, and that it would cooperate closely with the high representative and with those EU countries that have a seat in the UN Security Council.[20] Since then, Merkel has reiterated her support for the establishment of an ESC with a rotating membership several times, including before the European Parliament in November 2018.[21]

The goal of creating an ESC also made its way into the Franco-German Meseberg Declaration on renewing the EU, which was the outcome a meeting between Merkel and Macron in June 2018. According to the document, France and Germany agreed to 'look into new ways of increasing the speed and effectiveness of the EU's decision making' in the area of *CFSP.[22] The two countries saw the need for 'a European debate on new formats, such as an EU Security Council* and means of closer coordination, within the EU and in external fora.'[23] German Foreign Minister Heiko Mass has also elaborated that an ESC 'could define

[18] En Marche!, 'Le programme d'Emmanuel Macron pour l'Europe: Une Europe qui protège les Européens' (January 2017).

[19] T. Gutschker and E. Lohse, 'Kanzlerin Angela Merkel F.A.S-Interview: "Europa muss handlungsfähig sein"', *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 3 June 2018.

[20] Ibid.

[21] A. Merkel, 'Speech by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 13 November 2018'.

[22] Germany, Federal Government, 'Meseberg Declaration' (19 June 2018).

[23] Ibid.

the framework for a coherent strategic EU foreign and security policy', which would be 'a prerequisite for creating European seats on the UN Security Council.' Mass has stated that, until the new body is created, all EU member states 'could meet once a year as the European Security Council' in a special session of the European Council.[24] Mass, like Merkel, believes that an ESC 'would give a small, rotating group of member states the opportunity—acting on behalf of the entire European Union—to work more rapidly and intensively towards in resolving current crises.'[25]

The creation of an ESC has also been called for by Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, who many think will succeed Merkel as German Chancellor. In her speech at the December 2018 CDU Congress in Hamburg, Kramp-Karrenbauer called for people to leave the traditional comfort zone in policymaking and, inter alia, to create an ESC and a European army that would help Europe both formulate and implement its common security interests.[26] However, like Merkel and Macron before her, Kramp-Karrenbauer did not specify further what an ESC would look like in practice and what it would actually do. The European Parliament also recognises this, which is why it expressed in late 2018 that the concept 'needs to be further defined before an assessment of its added value can be carried out.'[27] Yet it also stresses that an ESC 'could potentially facilitate a more effective decision-making process for the CFSP'.[28]

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[24] Atlantic Council, 'Germany's Foreign Minister Calls for "A Real European Security and Defense Union"' (14 June 2018).

[25] Germany, Federal Foreign Office, 'Europe Must Take On More Responsibility in Security Policy' (9 October 2018).

[26] A. Kramp-Karrenbauer, 'Vorstellung der Kandidaten zum Parteivorsitz, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer', speech at the 31st CDU Congress, Hamburg, 7 December 2018.

[27] European Parliament, 'Annual Report on the Implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy', 2018/2099(INI) (12 December 2018).

[28] European Parliament, 'Annual Report on the Implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy', 2018/2097(INI) (12 December 2018).

Further definition

The European Parliament is correct in calling for further definition of the hitherto ill-defined ESC concept. With few exceptions, those who have publicly called for it have done very little to elaborate what it would actually do, how it would be structured and how it would fit into the EU's existing institutional framework. However, the discussion also suggests that a consensus is emerging on the appropriate level of ambition for an ESC. More specifically, there is considerable agreement on the following three goals: (1) improving the speed and decisiveness of EU decision-making in security and defence; (2) defining a strategic framework for more coherent EU external action; and (3) improving coordination between EU actors, and between EU actors and the member states.

In current discussions the ESC is seen as a way to address the EU's *demand-side problem* [29] in security and defence: that of most member states' unwillingness to act decisively (or at all) when the Union is faced with an international crisis or challenge. Since becoming operational in 2003, the EU's CSDP has achieved a great deal and has unquestionably showed that the Union can make a difference in international security when it acts. One of the CSDP's best-known success stories is Operation Atalanta, a naval force operating off the coast of Somalia to combat maritime piracy. Since its launch in 2008, Atalanta has played an important role in reducing pirate attacks in the strategic shipping routes near the Horn of Africa from a record of 176 in 2011 to virtually zero in 2018.[30] However, the story of the CSDP has also been one of indecisiveness, buck-passing and unwillingness to take action. Even when crises have erupted in the EU's own immediate neighbourhood, the Union has more often than not been reluctant to get involved, preferring to leave the hard work of dealing with them to others. The EU did not, for example, play a meaningful role in responding to the eruption of civil war in Libya in 2011, nor did it prevent the country from subsequently descending into anarchy and lawlessness. In 2013 it failed to act in Syria, thereby giving Russia and Iran free rein to increase their influence in the war-torn country and leaving the Syrian people at the mercy of the regime of President Bashar al-Assad. Those calling for an ESC believe that it could help address this demand-side problem.

It is crucial to focus on ways to address the EU's demand-side problem in international security. This, in the author's opinion, is the right way to go about designing an ESC that can make a real contribution to

[29] For a broader discussion on the supply- and demand-side aspects of EU security and defence, see Y. Reykers, 'No Supply without Demand: Explaining the Absence of the EU Battlegroups in Libya, Mali and the Central African Republic', *European Security* 25/3 (2016), 346–65.
[30] EUNAVFOR, 'Key Facts and Figures' (21 December 2018).

the Union's ability to act on the world stage. There are three main reasons for this. The first is that the most significant EU initiatives in the area of security and defence since 2016 have focused almost exclusively on addressing the Union's *supply-side problem* in international security: that of capability shortfalls that have prevented the EU from taking care of security problems within its own borders, in its immediate neighbour-hood and further abroad. The EDF, PESCO and CARD all aim to address the EU's capability shortfalls. The EDF seeks to do this by providing co-financing from the EU budget *towards joint capability development and acquisition programmes, PESCO through member state–driven capability development projects that focus on specific niche areas in which existing capabilities are out of date or in short supply, and CARD through harmonising the member states' defence procurement cycles. Thus, the EU needs an innovative demand-side solution that would improve the likelihood that the new capabilities that the EDF, PESCO and CARD will bring about will actually be used to realise the EU's aspirations in the world.

The second reason why an ESC should be designed to address the demand-side problem is that the most prominent recent initiative in this area, the EI2, is not an EU instrument. It was launched in June 2018 by France and eight of its European partners.[31] The EI2 seeks to facilitate the development of a shared strategic culture among the participating countries, and (in the short term) to intensify and deepen coopera-tion between the participating states' armed forces and defence ministries. The ultimate goal is to make the countries participating in the EI2 more willing to intervene when necessary in crises and to use force in Europe's neighbourhood and beyond through different institutional frameworks (e.g. the UN, the EU, NATO and coalitions of the willing). The EI2 was created outside the EU because France was frustrated with the EU's sluggishness when it comes to military intervention; and also because it enabled both the UK, which is expected to leave the Union in 2019, and Denmark, which has an opt-out from EU defence cooperation, to participate as well. And yet it is precisely because the EU needs to overcome its intervention wariness and because Brexit will deprive the Union of one of its most experienced and capable members militarily that the EU also needs an innovative solution to its demand-side problem in security and defence. An ESC, if properly designed, could be an important part of that solution.

The third and final reason why the ESC should be designed to address the EU's demand-side problem is that it would lead to more effective EU decision-making in foreign and security policy without introducing

[31] In addition to France, the founding members of the EI2 are Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the UK. In November 2018 Finland became the first non-founding country to join the EI2. That increased the total membership to 10 countries.

QMV in this highly sensitive area. There is currently an on-going discussion in Brussels on the possibility of introducing QMV in the Council for a limited number of CFSP issues. In his 2017 State of the Union address, for example, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker urged the member states 'to look at which foreign policy decisions could be moved from unanimity to qualified majority voting.'[32] Since then, the Commission has proposed introducing QMV in three areas of foreign and security policy to improve the effectiveness of EU decision-making. These are (1) international human rights abuses, (2) the establishment of sanctions and (3) the launch and management of EU civilian missions.[33] But even a limited introduction of QMV in foreign and security policy would be controversial and would likely create more problems than it would solve. Given that such a move would undermine the very essence of the member states' statehood, it would risk inflaming the already high internal tensions within the EU. It is easy to imagine the national media onslaught that would follow if, for example, a member state found itself on the losing side of a QMV decision on an issue that directly impacted its national security. The ESC, if created in accordance with the blueprint outlined in this paper, would allow the EU to overcome this issue because it would lead to more effective EU decision-making in foreign and security policy without introducing QMV.

Structure

To design an ESC that would meet the level of ambition that political leaders have set for it and to address the EU's demand-side problem in international security, this paper proposes a hybrid approach that combines elements from both the UN Security Council model and the US National Security Council model. It can be called the *Whole-of-the-EU model* because it brings to the same room relevant actors across the EU that deal with military or civilian aspects of security and defence policy. At the same time, the model gives a privileged role to a limited group of EU member states, which would wield all decision-making authority in the ESC. This group would consist of both permanent and non-permanent members.

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[32] European Commission, 'President Jean-Claude Juncker's State of the Union Address 2017', SPEECH/17/3165 (13 September 2017).
[33] European Commission, 'State of the Union 2018: Making the EU a Stronger Global Actor – European Commission Proposes More Efficient Decision-Making in Common Foreign and Security Policy', Press release, IP/18/5683 (12 September 2018).

Like the US National Security Council, the ESC should be physically close to the EU's main executive authority in foreign, security and defence policy. In the US this authority belongs to the White House, whereas in the EU it belongs to the member states in the Council. Thus, the ESC should be based within the Council to reflect the intergovernmental nature of security and defence as an EU policy domain. As a Council structure, the ESC would be relatively resource-neutral in terms of the funding, staff and office space it would require. The reason for this is that it could rely on the Council Secretariat to take care of its day-to-day operations. The ESC would consist of a permanent chair, five member states as permanent members, another three as rotating members and two as case-specific members. In addition, the ESC would have seats for a military CSDP advisor, a civilian CSDP advisor, a Commission representative, a European Parliament representative and representatives from the relevant EU agencies. Meetings of the ESC would be chaired by the high representative, who is currently Italy's Federica Mogherini. In the event that the high representative was not available to chair an ESC meeting, a chair could be deputised by a representative from the rotating Council Presidency, a practice that is currently followed in the Foreign Affairs Council. The chair would be responsible for preparing the agenda of each ESC meeting; presiding over discussions, debates and votes; and leading the process for drafting any documents that the ESC might produce. He or she could also participate in ESC debates and discussions, but would not have a right to vote on any items on the agenda.

The main actors in the ESC, and the only ones with a voting right, should be EU member states. They should be considerably fewer in number than the total number of member states in the EU. There are three reasons for this. The first and most important one is that having fewer decision-makers deliberating around a table facilitates quicker decision-making and more decisive action. This point was already expressed in the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, written by Thucydides in the fifth century BC. According to Thucydides, Pericles responded to a Spartan ultimatum on the Megarian decree as follows:

> In a single battle the Peloponnesians and their allies could stand up to all the rest of Hellas, but they cannot fight a war against a power unlike themselves, so long as they have no *central deliberative authority* to produce *quick decisive action*, when they all have equal votes, though they all come from different nationalities and every one of these is mainly concerned with its own interest—the usual result of which is that nothing gets done at all, some being particularly anxious to avenge themselves on an enemy and others no less anxious to avoid coming to any harm themselves.[34]

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[34] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 120, italics added.

The point that Pericles made is that, all other things being equal, a unitary actor with a centralised decision-making system (i.e. Athens) enjoys a competitive advantage over a composite actor with a decentralised decision-making system (i.e. Sparta and its allies) because the former is able to act more quickly and more decisively. In the contemporary world, the most eloquent expression of this point has come from George Tsebelis, who has argued that the potential for policy change in a political system decreases as the number of 'veto players' goes up.[35] The EU suffers from the challenge identified by Pericles and Tsebelis to a much greater extent than most other international actors because, unlike the US, Russia and China, it does not have a single executive branch for foreign, security and defence policy. Instead, the EU's executive (i.e. the Council) is a composite of 28 veto players. Since decisions must be unanimous, each member can unilaterally block EU action if it so chooses. The second reason for capping the ESC's membership is that it would improve the quality of the discussions and debates held within it. When foreign policy cooperation first began in the 1970s between the members of the then European Communities through European Political Cooperation (EPC), it was seen as a 'gentlemen's club' in which foreign ministers from the nine nations met to discuss topical international challenges. Since then the membership of the EU has grown to 28 and the Union's competences in security and defence have increased, but the quality of strategic debates between the ministers has decreased. Today, ministers meeting in the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) tend to read pre-prepared statements around the table, leaving very little room for in-depth discussion on major long-term strategic challenges. The ESC proposed here would be a forum for genuine debate and strategic reflection on major international challenges and on the EU's place in the world more generally.

Any cap on ESC membership is bound to be arbitrary to some extent, and there will always be some who say that it is either too small or too large. The key challenge in deciding the number of members is to reconcile two competing pressures: (1) the need to make the ESC small enough that discussions within it can be substantive and decisions can be reached more quickly than they can in the Council and (2) the need to make the ESC large enough that it would be sufficiently representative of the EU in its entirety. In other words, the ESC needs to be both as small and as big as possible. In this author's opinion, the appropriate maximum would be 10 or approximately one-third of EU members. Like EPC when it was first created, an ESC with 10 members would be small enough to allow everyone around the table to be well acquainted with each other. It would also be large enough to sufficiently reflect the EU's various geographical, historical and

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[35] G. Tsebelis, *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

sociopolitical diversities. The ESC would have three types of members. The first category would consist of five permanent members, who would be appointed to the ESC for an indefinite (but not necessarily infinite) period based on objective, quantifiable criteria that would identify the EU's most influential and powerful member states. This could be done crudely by, for example, calculating the member states' relative power in security and defence. There is no entirely objective way to determine how powerful a nation is. Still, one can rank the member states on the basis of how powerful they are by assigning to each member state a score arrived at by averaging the following two ratios: (1) the ratio of the member state's population to the population of France (as the most powerful member state in the areas of security and defence) and (2) the ratio of the member state's defence spending to France's spending in this area. These scores would then form the basis for ranking the member states. The results are presented in Table 1, which shows that the initial permanent members of the ESC should be France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Poland. The scores could be recalculated every five years, after the European Parliament elections. In this way, if there were significant changes in EU member states' populations and defence spending, some of the permanent members could be replaced.

The second category would consist of three non-permanent members, with a staggered rotation every six months. They should be the same countries that make up the rotating EU Council presidency trio at any given time (i.e. the countries holding the current, previous and next presidencies). This trio is responsible for setting the Council's long-term goals and prepares a common agenda that determines the topics and major issues that the Council will address over a period of 18 months. For this reason, having them in the ESC would help feed strategic discussions and reflections held within it into the broader EU agenda. It would also help adjust that agenda in the event of a major challenge or crisis that would throw specific items on that agenda into question—for example, EU–Russia cooperation after Moscow's illegal annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region in 2014. Furthermore, having the trio countries on the ESC would ensure that every member state could eventually have seat on it, which would help deflect the inevitable yet justified criticism that the ESC was a structure that empowered large member states at the expense of smaller ones. In the event that a trio member was also a permanent ESC member, its seat as a non-permanent member would go to the last trio member that was not also a permanent member.

Table 1 Ratios of EU member states' power in security and defence relative to that of France

Country	Ratio	Country	Ratio
France	1.00	Denmark	0.07
Germany	0.97	Finland	0.07
Italy	0.70	Bulgaria	0.06
Spain	0.47	Slovakia	0.05
Poland	0.37	Ireland	0.04
Netherlands	0.21	Croatia	0.04
Romania	0.17	Lithuania	0.03
Greece	0.13	Slovenia	0.02
Belgium	0.12	Latvia	0.02
Sweden	0.12	Estonia	0.01
Portugal	0.11	Cyprus	0.01
Czechia	0.10	Luxembourg	0.01
Austria	0.09	Malta	0.00
Hungary	0.09		

The third and final category would consist of two case-specific members, which would be member states that, when necessary, could be appointed to the ESC for a temporary period. These would be member states that (1) had specialist knowledge about a specific country, region, challenge or crisis that had found its way on to the ESC's agenda; or (2) were disproportionally affected by an item on the ESC's agenda. Their role would be to bring unique insight and knowledge to the ESC to facilitate better decision-making and policymaking. The countries serving as case-specific members could be nominated by the chairman or any of the permanent or non-permanent members of the ESC. Their seats could be approved by a simple majority. However, not every crisis or challenge discussed in the ESC would require the appointment of case-specific members.

The EU member states in the ESC should generally be represented by ambassador-level officials. They would need to have the authority to represent their countries in high-level discussions on security and defence policy, and a mandate from their governments to reach decisions and agree to compromises. The most sensible solution would be for ESC members' ambassadors to the PSC, a working-level committee in the Council responsible for EU foreign and security policy, to double as ESC ambassadors. The reason for this is that the PSC already monitors the international situation, contributes to the definition of policies by delivering opinions to the Council, monitors the implementation of agreed policies, and exercises political control over and provides strategic direction for the EU's civilian and military operations. Furthermore, PSC ambassadors are seasoned diplomats, often with significant previous experience, and experts in international security, much like the ambassadors who are appointed to the UN Security Council. On extraordinary occasions, the ESC could also meet at the ministerial or heads-of-state-and-government level when this would add political weight to an ESC decision. The heads of state and government of ESC members could, for example, meet in the ESC whenever security and defence policy is also on the European Council's agenda.

In addition to EU member states, the ESC would also have several members that would not be able to vote but would nevertheless play an important role in contributing to discussions and debates within it, and provide expertise that would help draft policies and strategies. One should be an EU military advisor, who would advise the ESC on all matters with military or defence implications. This person should be the

chairman of the EU Military Committee (EUMC), the EU's highest military body, which is comprised of the member states' chiefs of defence, who are often represented by the Brussels-based permanent military representatives. The chairman is also the military advisor to the high representative and the primary point of contact for the commanders of EU military operations. Therefore, having the EUMC chairman on the ESC would not only bring valuable military expertise to the table but also improve the representation of both the member states' armed forces and the broader EU defence community. In addition to the EUMC chairman, there should be a seat on the ESC for the chairman of the EU's Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom). This body advises the PSC on civilian facets of crisis management. It also develops strategies and produces planning documents for civilian crisis management. The CivCom chairman would represent the civilian CSDP community in the ESC and present civilian response options to crises or challenges. Given that a clear majority of CSDP operations since 2003 have been civilian in nature, it would be crucial to have a civilian CSDP representative at the table.

Since the member states would represent the Council and the high representative would represent the EEAS, it would also be beneficial from the standpoint of inter-institutional coordination to have representatives from the European Commission and the European Parliament on the ESC as non-voting members. They would represent the views of their respective institutions, and explain how these institutions could contribute to an EU response to a specific crisis or challenge. Although the high representative is also a Commission vice-president and thus could also represent that institution in the ESC, merging this function with his or her function as ESC chairman would be challenging. In this author's opinion, the Commission should be represented on the ESC by a new commissioner for security and defence. Since 2016 the Commission has gradually acquired competences in the field of security and defence. During this development, it has become clear that there are currently several commissioners whose portfolios touch on these issues. These include Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness Jyrki Katainen, who has played an important role in launching the EDF; Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc, who has dealt with military mobility issues from the Commission's side; and of course Commissioner for Security Union Julian King. For the sake of clarity and coordination, it would be beneficial if the security and defence aspects

of these commissioners' portfolios were handled by a single commissioner who would also represent the Commission on the ESC.[36]

The European Parliament would ideally be represented on the ESC by the chairman of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE), which deals with both civilian and military aspects of EU security policy. The chairman would convey the Parliament's view on a specific crisis or challenge on the ESC's agenda, contribute to discussions and debates, and help draft policies and strategies. Having him or her on the ESC would also be a step towards satisfying the Parliament's calls for the development of mechanisms to ensure that any ESC passes 'democratic scrutiny',[37] and boost inter-institutional transparency in EU security and defence policy. To raise the status of the SEDE chairman to the level of the other ESC members, SEDE should be turned into a full committee that would be independent of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), its current parent committee. An independent SEDE would be responsible for oversight of the CSDP. Moreover, it would have its own members and would not have to report to AFET. Giving the chairman of SEDE a seat on the ESC would also add to the prestige of being a member of SEDE, which is often dismissed as a glorified think tank or talking shop because the Parliament has no formal powers over EU policymaking in security and defence. This would help attract the best-qualified and most ambitious MEPs to SEDE.

It should also be possible to allocate seats on the ESC to the most relevant EU agencies: especially the ones set up under the CSDP, but also others, on a case-by-case basis. EU agencies are spread across Europe and have been set up to perform various technical and scientific tasks to help implement EU policies and decisions. The CSDP agencies include the Brussels-based European Defence Agency (EDA), which is focused on capability development; the Madrid-based EU Satellite Centre (SatCen), which provides the EU with image-based intelligence; and the Paris-based EU Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the EU's in-house foreign and security policy think tank. Of these, the EDA and SatCen could provide valuable insight to the ESC, the former by outlining what capabilities were available to address specific challenges and

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[36] There would of course be practical challenges involved in determining which elements of a given area of policy should be handled by the newly created commissioner for defence rather than by the commissioner currently responsible for that area. However, such challenges also exist at the national level, between the minister of defence and other ministers. They do not mean that a defence commissioner would not be needed. The key added value of the defence commissioner would be that the person holding the position would be responsible for all defence-related issues in the Commission.

[37] European Parliament, 'Annual Report on the Implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy'.

which still needed to be developed, the latter by providing satellite imagery on specific crises or challenges under discussion at the ESC. There are also many non-CSDP agencies that deal with issues that have a security and defence dimension. These include the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), and of course the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex). Representatives from these agencies should be heard at ESC meetings whenever an item on its agenda touches on their respective areas of expertise. This would mean, for example, hearing from a representative of Frontex when the ESC was dealing with a migration crisis, or a representative of EASA if the ESC was discussing the hijacking of a European airliner.

Tasks

To facilitate quicker and more decisive EU action in the world, the ESC should have four primary tasks: (1) reflecting strategically on international affairs; (2) helping to set the EU's medium- to long-term agenda on foreign, security and defence policy; (3) adopting resolutions on international crises and challenges affecting the EU; and (4) drafting action proposals for the Council. The ESC's main task would be to engage in strategic reflection on medium- to long-term developments in international affairs and the EU's place in the world. It should be noted that the EU has already gained some experience in this area, namely through the reflection processes that preceded the publication of the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS), the 2008 Report on the Implementation of the ESS and the 2016 Global Strategy. These processes have been rather haphazard, however, and their quality has been tied to the member states' political willingness to engage in the reflection process—something that tends to vary significantly through time. The reflection process for the 2008 ESS Implementation Report, an update but not a full replacement of the 2003 document, was especially weak because most member states lacked the political will to draft a brand new ESS. The main issue here was that they were busy dealing with the initial consequences of the global economic meltdown.[38] To improve the situation, the ESC should become a permanent forum for continuous strategic reflection at the EU level. In particular, the ESC should be responsible for preparing a new ESS every five

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[38] N. Tocci, *Framing the EU Global Strategy: A Stronger Europe in a Fragile World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 10.

years or once under every new Commission. This would help to give strategic reflection a fixed place in the EU policymaking cycle and also help the Union become a more effective international actor.

The ESC's second task would be to help define the EU's medium- to long-term agenda on security and defence. This task is directly related to the previous one about continuous strategic reflection on international affairs. For any international actor, such reflection creates added value only if it is fed into the everyday policymaking process. This means that there needs to be a link between strategic reflection at the ESC and the agenda of the EU's security and defence policy executive. Under the EU's current system, its overall political priorities, including those in the area of security and defence, are set by heads of state and government in the European Council. In addition, the FAC defines and implements practical EU security policy based on the guidelines received from the European Council. Therefore, it should be possible for the ESC to feed the outcome of its strategic reflections on to the agendas of the European Council and the FAC. This would have the effect of improving the link between grand strategy and everyday EU foreign, security and defence policy. In particular, the ESC should have the right to propose items for the agendas of both the European Council and the FAC.

The third task of the ESC would be to respond to international crises and challenges that might affect the EU's security. This response could take the form of an ESC resolution reflecting the collective opinion of its members. At the moment, the EU responds to international crises and challenges primarily through statements issued by the high representative or his or her spokesperson. An ESC resolution would have the advantage of reflecting the opinions of the EU's most powerful member states as opposed to being merely the opinion of a political appointee and the institution he or she represents. It would therefore carry more political weight and would also be more indicative of what the entire EU thinks regarding a particular challenge or crisis.

The ESC's fourth and final task would be to draft action proposals that could be adopted by the Council. If the member states represented on the ESC, after listening to the relevant experts, reached a consensus on how the EU should respond to a specific crisis or challenge, the ESC would have the right to draft Council Decisions to facilitate quicker overall EU action. These Council Decisions could concern, for example, the deployment of a new military or civilian CSDP operation, the imposition of sanctions or the temporarily closing of the EU's diplomatic representation in a country that had been found guilty of gross human rights violations. Given that the EU's most powerful member states would always be represented in the ESC, it

would not be easy for non-ESC members to prevent such draft Council Decisions from being adopted once the ESC had put one on the Council's agenda. The reason for this is that positive peer-pressure would likely push non-ESC members towards supporting the actions proposed by the ESC, even if they did not stand fully behind them.

Decision-making

The ESC would be an intergovernmental body in which the member states would be the key actors. Therefore, all matters would be decided by the unanimous agreement of the voting members (i.e. the permanent and rotating members), and this would give each of them a de facto veto over ESC decisions. This means that for any item on the ESC's agenda to pass, all permanent and rotating ESC members—but not case-specific members, since they would not have a voting right—would have to support it—unless they chose to abstain constructively from the decision-making process. Constructive abstention is currently possible in the Council under Article 31 of the Treaty on EU. It enables those member states that do not wish to vote in favour of a specific item on the Council's agenda to step aside without torpedoing the whole initiative. The basic idea behind constructive abstention is to make it easier for the EU to act when the Council is unable to reach a unanimous decision. It is worth noting that UN Security Council members can abstain from voting if they do not wish to vote against an item on the table. It should likewise be possible for ESC members to abstain from voting if they do not wish to support a specific item on the agenda but also do not want to veto it.

The ESC should be able to adopt resolutions on international crises and challenges, as well as a new ESS every five years, without further input or action from non-ESC members. This would facilitate quicker decision-making and more decisive action. However, the ESC should not have the right to take executive action on behalf of the entire EU (e.g. to deploy an operation or to issue sanctions) without non-ESC members having a say. It would be deeply divisive and undemocratic if the elected governments and parliaments of non-ESC members were forced to support actions that could have significant effects on their national security or resources without having any say in the decision-making process. Although the ESC should

have the right to propose actions to the Council, these proposals should still be approved by the entire Council before they are adopted. However, to facilitate quicker decision-making, ESC proposals should always be adopted through the written procedure, meaning that their adoption would not have to wait until the next Council meeting. In the written procedure, the member states' permanent representations receive a question in writing concerning an act that has been put on the table and requires urgent adoption. More specifically, they need to indicate 'whether they agree to adopt the act concerned, whether they object or whether they abstain.'[39] Once the required number of positive replies has been received, the act in question can be adopted.

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[39] Council of the EU, *Comments on the Council's Rules of Procedure: European Council's and Council's Rules of Procedure* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016), 59.

Policy recommendations

Based on the blueprint set forth above, five policy recommendations can be given. The aim of these recommendations is to set up an intergovernmental ESC that would facilitate quicker and more decisive EU action, and help the Union approach international affairs in a more strategic manner.

1. Create an ESC within the Council consisting of 10 member states (five with permanent seats, three with rotating seats and two with case-specific seats). The permanent seats should be given to the EU's most powerful member states, which could be determined, for example, on the basis of each member state's population size and defence spending (using the method described above). This means that the permanent seats would initially go to France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Poland. The rotating seats should be given to the three member states that make up the Council's trio presidency at any given time, and the case-specific seats should be allocated on a case-by-case basis to member states that have special knowledge on or expertise in an item on the ESC's agenda.

2. Give seats on the ESC to a military advisor and to a civilian advisor; and to representatives of the Commission, the European Parliament and the relevant EU agencies. The ESC's military advisor should be the chairman of the EUMC and the civilian advisor, the chairman of CivCom. The Commission should be represented by a newly created commissioner for defence, who would be responsible in the Commission for all issues with a defence dimension (e.g. military mobility, capability development or countering disinformation). The Parliament should be represented by the chairman of SEDE, which should become a full-fledged committee during the Parliament's 2019–24 term. Representatives from the relevant EU agencies should be called to the ESC based on the nature of the item on the agenda.

3. Make the ESC responsible for (a) institutionalising a permanent strategic reflection process that leads to the production of a new and fully revised ESS every five years; (b) helping to set the EU's medium- to long-term security and defence policy agenda; (c) adopting resolutions on crises and international challenges affecting the EU; and (d) drafting proposals for actions to be undertaken by the Council, so as to facilitate quicker and more decisive EU action.

4. Allocate voting rights on ESC decisions to both permanent and rotating members. To ensure the ESC's intergovernmental nature, voting rights should not be extended to the case-specific members, the chairman, the military and civilian advisors, the Commission and the Parliament repre-

sentatives, or the representatives of the relevant EU agencies. All ESC decisions should be taken by the unanimous agreement of the voting members, unless members choose to constructively abstain from a specific decision.

5. Give the ESC the power to adopt resolutions and strategic documents without additional input or approval from non-ESC members. At the same time, all ESC proposals concerning possible executive EU action (e.g. the deployment of an operation or the imposition of sanctions) should be approved by the entire Council before they can be adopted. But to facilitate quicker and more decisive EU action, the Council should strive to adopt through the written procedure all of the proposals for actions that the ESC has approved.

Conclusion

Since 2016 the EU has taken significant steps towards becoming a more credible and effective international actor. It has even been said that the EU has made more progress on security and defence issues in the past several years than it had in the previous 60 years.[40] The steps taken include the launch of PESCO, the establishment of EDF and the creation of CARD. The main purpose of these and other related initiatives is to develop EU member states' defence capabilities, which in many cases have long been lacking or outdated. These initiatives are an attempt to address the EU's supply-side problem in international security: its member states' lack of basic defence capabilities that has prevented them from taking care of crises and challenges without outside assistance, even in Europe's own immediate neighbourhood (e.g. in Libya in 2011 and in Syria in 2013). The supply-side problem is therefore one of the biggest and most difficult to overcome obstacles on the EU's path towards 'strategic autonomy', the grand strategic goal that the Union set for itself in its 2016 Global Strategy.

However, whether the EU actually achieves the objective of strategic autonomy depends in part on its ability to address its demand-side problem in international security: the chronic unwillingness of most of its member states to take care of security and defence challenges even when they have the means to do so. Even when the member states have had the capabilities required to address a particular crisis or challenge, the demand-side problem has often caused EU action to be prohibitively slow (as in the Central African Republic in 2014) or inadequate to deal with the matter at hand (as in Mali in 2013).

Nevertheless, most of the EU's recent security and defence initiatives have focused almost exclusively on addressing the supply-side problem. The existence of the demand-side problem has so far been brushed under the rug or left exclusively for the member states to worry about. The EU's unwillingness to address this problem also contributed to France's decision in 2017 to establish the EI2.

It is therefore vital for the EU's further development as an international actor that steps are taken (also within the Union) to address Europe's demand-side problem. One way of doing this would be through the creation of an ESC. As has been mentioned, various European leaders have called for this. However, these calls have been vague and can hardly be taken as a blueprint for setting up an ESC. Thus, this paper has sought to remedy this by offering a substantive and detailed plan for creating an ESC. To make it suitable for the EU, the model proposed combines elements from both the UN Security Council model and the US

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[40] J. Katainen, 'Vice-President Katainen's Speech at the Press Conference on the Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence, Brussels – 7 June 2017', Speech (8 June 2017).

National Security Council model. It envisages an intergovernmental body based in the Council that would include 10 member states, some as permanent members, others as rotating members and still others as case-specific members. In addition, there would be seats for a military advisor and a civilian advisor, representatives from the Commission and the European Parliament, and representatives from the most relevant EU agencies. Such an ESC would go a long way towards addressing the EU's demand-side problem in international security, and would also signal that the Union is serious about its stated ambition to become strategically autonomous.

Finally, something should be said about the political feasibility of the ESC blueprint outlined in this paper. Any plan that does not include seats for all EU member states will face the inevitable yet entirely justified criticism that it would empower large member states at the expense of smaller ones in the area of foreign and security policy. At least some small- and medium-sized member states will oppose this ESC blueprint because they understandably feel that they should also have seats at the table where common EU policies and strategies are formulated. At the time of writing, for example, Spain is opposed to the E4, an informal group that is made up of France, Germany, the UK and Italy and discusses non-nuclear issues with Iran. Madrid 'cannot accept that people form an informal group and then they pretend that these informal groups have any mandate from the European Union whatsoever.'[41] Therefore, at least some of the countries that would be left out of the ESC are almost certain to raise similar objections. But if the EU is serious about its desire to become strategically autonomous, if it wants to become a more effective international actor able to act on the world stage alongside giants like Russia, China and the US, there is no real alternative to some form of empowerment of the big EU member states in foreign, security and defence policy. The brutal fact is that although all member states are equal on paper, some are more equal than others in practice. EU foreign policy can survive if Belgium, for example, is not willing to support a common EU position towards Venezuela. It cannot survive, however, if France or Germany do not support it. Thus, an ESC would have the important benefit of putting the big EU countries permanently in the spotlight, forcing them to react to and adopt positions on international crises and challenges. That could, over time, make them more willing to act as collective leaders of the EU and help transform the Union from a worm into a hawk.

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41 D. M. Herszenhorn, 'EU's Iran Fight is Not about Iran (or Trump)', *POLITICO*, 30 January 2019.

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