



POLICY PAPER

THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY OF THE EU: AUDIT AND PERSPECTIVES

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THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT – YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW (A VIEW FROM PRAGUE)

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The development of any society is influenced by the security of the environment in which it takes place. The state of security within the environment is determined by the level of danger to the stability, functionality or even existence of the elements, resulting from relevant security threats. Determining adequate capabilities for the elimination of security threats is of vital interest to each society.

After its establishment in 1993, the Czech Republic was recognized as a separate element of the global security environment; at the same time, due to its geographical position, it was recognised as a restored element of the European security environment. This significantly influenced the time and space frame in which the Czech Republic began to promote its own security interests.

In the 1990s, when the Czech Republic was established as a sovereign state, the European security environment was, in comparison to other areas of the world, very secure from today's perspective. After the two world wars in the first half of the 20th century, the second half of the century saw a period of peace and stability unparalleled in European history.

The creation of the European Union and NATO after World War II as new international institutions and tools for providing collective security played a crucial role in the process of ensuring European (but also global) security in

the second half of the 20th century. In the period of bipolar superpower-based world order after WWII these specific institutions were able to keep possible military confrontation on the European continent at the level of cold war, largely due to the increasing military capabilities of the US and some European states. In this context, an important factor was the threat of a possible nuclear conflict on the European continent that a military conflict between the US and the Soviet Union would probably entail. Due to the conclusions of the Yalta conference about the post-war division of Europe, Czechoslovakia (a predecessor to the Czech Republic) was incorporated into the Eastern block and as a member of the Warsaw Pact could not freely join either of the institutions.

After the fall of the "Iron Curtain" and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the Czech Republic was finally able to join freely in activities of international collective security institutions and, within their purview, look for optimal solutions to ensure internal and, especially, external security.

Unfortunately, it became apparent that, for various reasons, the security environment was again becoming less secure, specifically as a consequence of emerging local and regional conflicts in the 1990s. The major causes of these conflicts are not only long-time social and religious conflicts inside various nation states or between them, but also purpose-led promotion

of political and economical interests mostly by the world's power-players within an ever more globalizing world. Not even Europe avoided conflicts such as those on the Balkan Peninsula, to whose resolution the Czech Republic added by deploying military and other security forces within the zone of former Yugoslavia. Other parts of the world were not spared from conflicts in the last 25 years. Most of these conflicts took place inside nation states rather than between them, and the majority of casualties were civilians. The Czech Republic played a part in the resolution of these conflicts in various capacities as well.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the key factor determining the security of most countries is continuing globalization of the world. The era of gradual opening of borders for the movement of capital, goods and people after the end of the Cold War has led, among other things, to the state of affairs in which internal and external aspects of state security are inseparably interconnected. Fundamentally, it brings huge profit to superpowers and global trade subjects in opposition to smaller and poorer countries which experience social tensions and their growing national debt may give rise to feelings of disillusion and unfairness.

Security is a prerequisite for the development of any state. Security and military conflicts do not only destroy infrastructure – including social infrastructure, but also cause an increase in criminality, dissuade investors from investing and hinder everyday economic activity. A number of countries and regions are involved in a vicious circle of conflicts, compounded by poverty and a lack of security.

Besides globalisation it is the fight for natural resources – mostly water

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– that is expected to become more and more vicious due to global warming and is bound to lead to further turbulences, security conflicts and migration in various regions.

This is already apparent from a growing number of various security conflicts in Asia and Africa. Millions of people have died in military conflicts since 1990, 90% of them civilians. Millions of other people had to leave their homes as a consequence of various security conflicts.

This development has even had a certain impact on Europe, otherwise quite prosperous, reflected in Europe's greater dependence on an interconnected infrastructure, mostly for transportation, energy and information; this, in turn, has made Europe more vulnerable to global threats.

Europe is severely threatened by its energy dependence. The majority of energy resources is transported to Europe from the Persian Gulf, Russia and northern Africa.

Despite all the above-mentioned facts a massive military attack against any European state, including the Czech Republic, is highly improbable at present.

Instead, Europe is facing, and will continue to face, new threats – less visible and less predictable. The major security threats to Europe and the Czech Republic in the years to come are the following:

1) Regional conflicts

Social conflicts often develop from historically unresolved or badly resolved political, economical, national, religious and social problems inside particular countries or between them, and are still a cause for a stability disruption or even military conflicts in particular world regions (Near and Middle East, the Korean peninsula, Indochina, the zone of the former Soviet Union, Africa). The NATO summit in Wales concluded that more and more conflicts have the form

of so-called hybrid warfare. Besides military confrontations, these conflicts may lead to extremism, terrorism and the collapse of states and are a breeding ground for organized crime. Moreover, inadequate state security in the region may incite an interest in weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

2) Failure of states

Non-functional constitutional order and public services, corruption and abuses of power in addition to conflicts for nationalistic, religious, political or social reasons may result in a societal failure. The failure of states may lead to military confrontations inside such states. Recently, the most noteworthy examples of that are Somalia, Liberia, Ukraine and Afghanistan under the rule of Taliban. The failure of a state is always an alarming phenomenon which undermines the political and institutional order worldwide and increases regional and global instability.

3) Failure of international institutions and international law

International institutions and international law are fundamental instruments for the provision of security within the framework of the current world order. When their independence is compromised or their purpose is not fulfilled because their members promote their self-centred interests, this can lead to limitations concerning security guarantees provided to the members, making them vulnerable in all aspects of their security and creating the necessity to look for ways of providing international security on a bilateral basis (unfortunately, the Czech Republic has had bitter experience with the provision of state security on a bilateral basis in its history and, therefore, this security threat is a sensitive issue). Currently, the same development can be observed in the UN, NATO and the EU. It is also possible to perceive a purpose-directed interpretation of

disrespect for international law by certain states and violation of the equality principle within the framework of international relations.

4) Outsourcing and privatisation of security

The world has been trying to make illegal the deployment of mercenaries in advancing the security interests of states. Over the last 30 years, however, a huge expansion of commercial activities has been observed in the provision of security by states as major guarantors of global security. This growing phenomenon is obviously a great threat to global security and another form of ongoing privatisation of public financial assets and global speculation business.

5) Terrorism

Terrorism is based on the assertion of specific social interests by means of public violence. The latest wave of terrorism, which has had an impact on the whole world, is connected, in most cases, to a violent form of religious extremism. Its causes are complex, including pressures linked to modernisation, cultural, social and political crises, and estrangement of young people who live in foreign societies. Europe, at the present moment, serves as a target and also a base for this type of terrorism: European countries are targets of attacks, and have already been attacked. Logistical bases for al-Qaeda have been found in the UK, Italy, Germany, Spain and Belgium. A potential threat from terroristic groups grows with easy access to conventional weapons, the possibility to acquire WMDs, gaining capabilities to launch cybernetic attacks or involvement with structures of organized crime. Nowadays, even a small terroristic group can inflict an amount of damage only states and their armies could cause in the past. ■

A EUROPEAN “ARMY” AND THE STATE SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE: DECISION-MAKING IN THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

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The debate over forming a joint European army and defense cooperation started among the members of the European Coal and Steel Community as early as in 1950. The French proposal to create the European Defense Community was a response to an effort to rearm West Germany and include it in the defense system of the West. However, the signed treaty which planned to establish the office of the European Defense Minister and the joint European army failed to be ratified by the French National Assembly in 1954. The Federal Republic of Germany then joined NATO, which became the platform for all the security and defense issues.

The debate about the security and defense policy returned to European institutions, including the European Council, after 1970 with the introduction of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) in areas where foreign policy coordination concerned security and defense topics. This was only a consultation mechanism which could not result in a binding statement or joint action. The entire cooperation was not part of the institutional framework of the European Communities (EC) until the adoption of the Single European Act, although the Commission could be asked for an opinion if an issue concerned the EC.

The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which led to the creation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), was established pursuant to Article J4 of the Maastricht Treaty, transformed to Article J7 in the Treaty of Nice. The second pillar of the EU was thus created, which has included the CSDP since 1999. The Lisbon Treaty then introduced the post of High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and abolished the pillar structure of the EU. The CSDP ensures the EU's

capacity to organize missions outside the EU territory in order to maintain peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international safety.

The decision-making on CFSP and CSDP issues in the European Council and the Council of the European Union is quite exceptional. Decisions are adopted unanimously. When the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) is in session, it is presided by the High Representative for the CFSP. On the strategic level, the CSDP is formulated by the European Council. The influence of the Commission and the European Parliament (EP) is significantly suppressed if compared with other areas; the EP has virtually no influence, and the European Court of Justice is completely excluded. All the states have one vote during voting in the Council and unanimity is required. However, active consent of the voters is not necessary; any state may constructively abstain and thus enable adoption of a decision. Sovereignty of the Member States is honoured in sensitive national security issues related to the health and lives of their citizens. Therefore, the EU may not adopt any legislative measures in the area of CSDP; all decisions of the Council apply to concrete situations and do not assume general validity. Although the decisions are binding upon the Member States, in fact they are not enforceable and are not subject to any sanction for their violation. It is the political pressure that has certain effect here. If particular steps are necessary, the Council adopts a decision on joint action.

Each session of the European Council regarding the CSDP is preceded by a FAC meeting or, as the case may be, a session of the General Affairs Council (GAC), and by an informal meeting of ministers of defence and foreign

affairs. For instance, the European Council session concerning the CSDP in December 2013 was preceded by two meetings of the FAC and GAC, including the relevant meetings of the Permanent Representatives Committee – COREPER II. Preparatory actions for the Council are also joined by the Political and Security Committee (PSC), which is also in charge of political and strategic management of CSDP military operations. It is in the interest of the Czech Republic that the European Council holds regular meetings on the CSDP, at least every two years.

As regards the European Council's decision-making in the area of the CSDP, such as the situation in Libya and Syria, it is apparent that the prevailing role is played by the large Member States. The algorithm of adopting a decision of the European Council concerning the CSDP may be described as follows: The key factor is the consensus of the United Kingdom and France, these countries bearing the heaviest burden in case military means are deployed. Their political elites led by the British Prime Minister and the French President have the highest ability to perceive and address global security challenges and threats, which is a result of three factors. First, both the British and the French political elites carry certain legacy of global imperial thinking. Second, both countries are permanent members of the UN Security Council and face day-to-day issues of global security. And third: beside Germany, these countries are the only ones in the EU that can match the key global player for the West, the USA, and also other large global players, such as China and Russia.

After consensus between the two countries is found, the support, or at least tolerance, by Germany must be sought. Italy, Spain and Poland are

approached accordingly. The final step involves getting the consent of medium-sized and small EU countries with special respect to their financial strength and military capabilities, in particular of the Netherlands and Sweden, whose neutral status is a special element. Individual interests of medium and large countries in the area of economy, ethnic minorities or extensive personal presence of citizens of these countries in the territory concerned must also be taken into account. The political culture of neutrality typical of Finland, Malta, Cyprus, Ireland and Austria must be considered, which, in the last two cases, often assumes ostentatious nature.

It is typical for European Council sessions dealing with the CSDP that the President of the Commission, the High Representative and the European Council President suppress their opinions, while in other areas their stances are important for the formulation of proposals and reaching compromises. The dominant role here is assumed by large countries, primarily by the triangle formed by the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

The decision-making of the European Council in the area of the CSDP is also influenced by the military capacities of the Member States of which only the United Kingdom has full-fledged armed forces, being the only country whose higher tactic and operational headquarters have some combat experience. French military capacities are more limited, the German ones even more so; in addition, in Germany there are political reservations concerning the deployment of armed forces. The military capacities of Italy and Spain do not play a major role. Poland's ambitions are high; however, they have not been supported by appropriate resources so far. The armed forces of

the Netherlands and Sweden are of a certain value.

From this point of view, the future of a functional CSDP, capable of military action, is contingent upon the United Kingdom remaining and fully participating in the EU. The CSDP would be an empty box without British military capacities. Everyone who cares about the future of the CSDP must be wishing for a positive result of the potential British referendum about the continuation of EU membership. Departure of the United Kingdom from the EU would put an end to an operational EU CSDP.

The European Council's decision-making process regarding the CSDP is strongly marked by the interest of countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands etc. to maintain the strong transatlantic bond and not to create structures duplicate to NATO. In no case can the CSDP replace NATO; it is merely of a complementary nature.

The formation of a "European army", seen from the point of view of decision-making in the European Council, is utter delusion. All countries wish to maintain their control over the military deployment of their citizens and have the final say in the matter. The CSDP also differs from the other EU policies in terms of its institutional characteristics: be it the manner of voting, or the significantly suppressed role of supranational EU institutions. The EU lacks strategic enablers, such as strategic airlift, aerial refuelling, unmanned reconnaissance and combat air vehicles, air electronic warfare means, cyber warfare systems or strategic survey. If someone intends to embark on the path leading to a "European army", they should start with the above strategic capacities and build them on the national principle.

Another step would be to assert the modular principle in forming European battle groups, where more EU Member States would become involved through their national modules.

In recent years, the dominant topics of the European Council's sessions have been economy and public budgets. The debate is related to the CSDP in that it concerns defence spending of the respective Member States. To reduce their budget deficits, all the countries cut their defence expenditure, among other things, and this was seen as a priority. The question whether the reduction of defence spending as a consequence of public budget consolidation does not pose a threat to the Member States' security has never been raised in the European Council. The truth is that disrupted public finance may cause political and economic destabilization contributing to the origination of a security risk. Moreover, countries whose public finance is disrupted lose a substantial part of their state sovereignty to creditors and supranational institutions. After all, the country which faced the most serious budgetary problems, Greece, has had very high defence spending in the long run.

It is apparent that ideas of permanent peace do not correspond to the real state of affairs; not even in Europe. The reduction of defence spending must be understood as a temporary phenomenon and a consequence of the necessary stabilization of public budgets. Stable public budgets must be accompanied by an intelligent increase in defence expenditure, but also by closer cooperation with supranational military capacities. This is a realistic way to go – not dreaming of a "European army". ■

THE CZECH REPUBLIC BETWEEN NATO AND CSDP

Alexandr Vondra | Director, Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations, CEVRO Institute

The shaping of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) has always been influenced by attitudes of individual European countries toward NATO. On the one hand, France traditionally supports building CSDP independently of NATO, and on the other hand, Great Britain makes any progress conditional upon avoiding duplication with NATO and refusing to build new bureaucracy. If Paris and London strike a deal, CSDP usually moves to a new level.

EUROPE BETWEEN NATO AND CSDP

The difference between NATO and CSDP lies mostly in their military capabilities. In a nutshell, NATO is

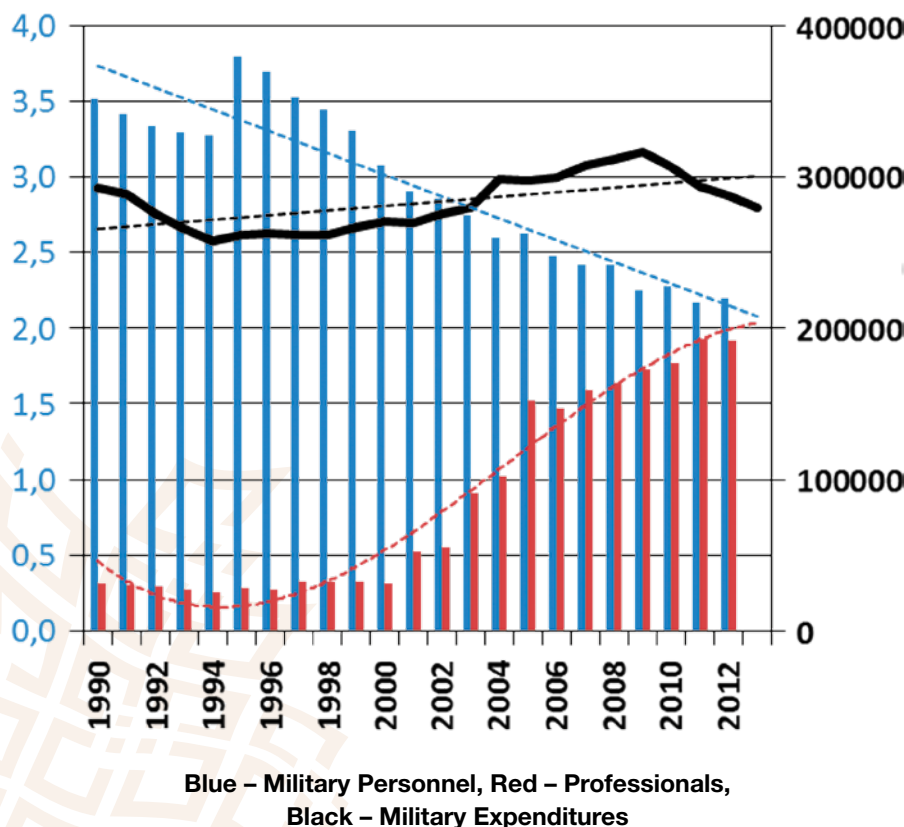
still the only true military organization capable of territorial defence and credible deterrence in Europe. And only NATO is now capable of leading a sophisticated, out-of-area large-scale military operation. The majority of CSDP missions have a civilian or mixed character, while the purely military missions, such as antipiracy operation ATALANTA, are only smaller-scale operations (around 1500 persons). Most European states are comfortable using NATO as the key “hard power” instrument while using CSDP rather as an instrument for projecting EU’s “soft power”.

Traditionally, pro-Atlantic countries have voiced concerns that building CSDP as well as step-by-step departure of the U.S. from Europe might result in declining importance of NATO as a key

security pillar. American expectations towards CSDP were outlined in the policy of the three Ds – no duplicity (regarding capability building), no decoupling (regarding command structures) and no discrimination (against NATO members who are not EU members, such as Turkey).

In the last decades Europeans and Americans have been promoting stronger ties between NATO and the EU. As a result, NATO and the EU reached an understanding incorporated into the Berlin Plus Agreement from 2003, which covers the EU’s access to NATO planning, its command structures and use of NATO assets and capabilities in case NATO or the U.S. decide not to engage. However, the unresolved Turkey–Cyprus dispute has so far prevented NATO and the EU from concluding an important security agreement between the two organizations, which is necessary for their coordination. Unfortunately, the possibility of striking a deal is moving away as the prospect for Turkish EU membership is evaporating and the two sides are drifting apart.

Picture 1: European Union: Defence Spending (mil. USD) and Military Power (mil. persons) in 1990–2013



EUROPEAN SECURITY 2008 AND AFTERMATH

Since 2008, Europe has been facing enormous challenges from within and without. A chronic economic crisis, as well as an effort to hold together the common currency, has made the EU more inward-looking. The prescribed austerity programmes have put member states’ defence budgets under enormous duress. Solely from military perspective, today’s Europe is weaker, not stronger both in absolute and relative terms, if compared with the situation five or ten years ago (see **Picture 1**). At the same time, Europe is seriously threatened by the Ukrainian crisis and assertive power games of

Putin's Russia from the east, and by chaos, terror, radical Islamism and growing influx of immigrants from the south.

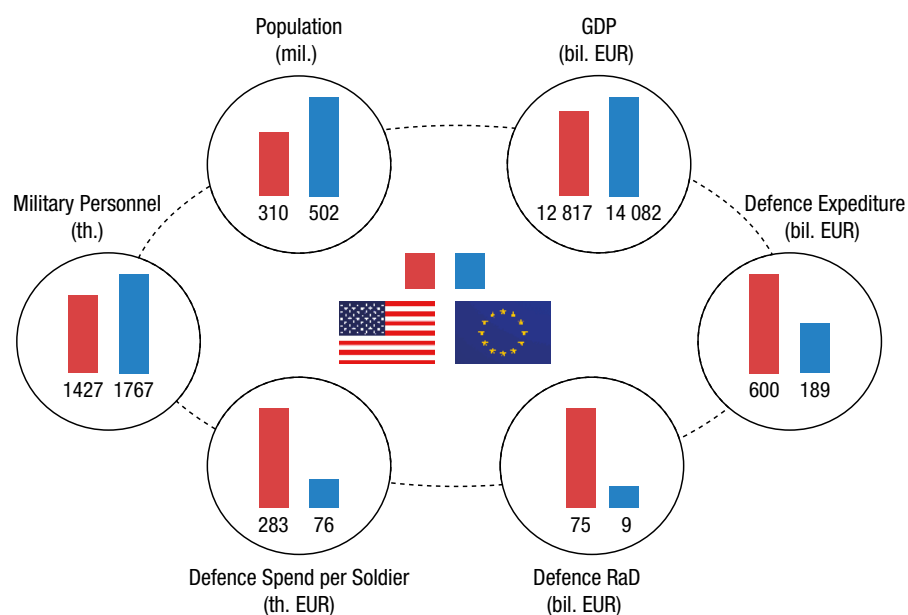
This new situation has caught Europe unprepared to tackle challenges of our era. There was a kind of “a transatlantic bargain” between Europeans and Americans after the end of the Cold War. The U.S. has kept their common defence commitments in Europe in exchange for Europe's willingness to help the U.S. in fighting the war on terror and maintaining stability around the world. This silent understanding seems to be creaking on more fronts now. Some of the out-of-area operations (Iraq) had led the transatlantic relations into a crisis. Although Europeans have partially transformed their armed forces (specialization, expeditionary forces, professionalization), they are lagging behind the U.S. even more, not only in defence spending but also in the deployability of their forces. Finally, on the verge of superpower overstretch, the U.S. has decided to substantially reduce its willingness to fight every fire around the world. Lessons learned in the 2011 Libya Operation are clear – operations where the U.S. is just “leading from behind” while the burden of military costs is distributed among Europeans states would face enormous difficulties.

A key problem lies in the fact that the EU including CSDP is lagging behind the U.S. almost in all measured indicators (see **Picture 2**). The EU has a larger population, more military personnel, and has surpassed its transatlantic partner even in terms of GDP. However, the EU's defence expenditures, its defence spending per soldier and its defense R&D spending are much lower than in the U.S.

Even worse, the EU neglects its own development. For example, there has been a steady decline of 8% in the levels of government allocations to defence R&D as a percentage of overall outlays on R&D by EU-28 over the 2000–2013 period.¹

There are deep concerns about the number of troops that are in fact able to be deployed, compared with

Picture 2: USA and EU Compared in 2010*



* according to purchasing power parity (PPP) in 2010
Source: www.defense.gouv.fr

the number theoretically available. According to EUMS, Europe had more than 1.7 million people in uniform, of which only around 4% – 66,000 – were deployed in 2012. EDA statistics suggest that land forces available for sustainable deployments by EU member states have shrunk from 125,000 in 2008 to 106,000 in 2010.²

EU members are lacking quality military intelligence, surveillance capability, air-to-air refuelling, smart munition and strategic and tactical airlift to lead their own larger military operations. Increased specialization has resulted in many countries lacking entire categories of weapon systems. Common programmes of “pooling and sharing” within CSDP and EDA have generated only modest results because member states do not want to give up their sovereignty in national security matters.

Some European countries are willing to move beyond traditional models of national sovereignty in the organization, structure, and training of their armed forces at the regional or bilateral level. Examples include the BENELUX countries, which have formed a common navy and agreed to merge responsibility for the policing and defense of their common airspace;

and Germany and the Netherlands, with the Dutch having fully integrated their airmobile brigade into the German Bundeswehr's Rapid Forces Division. Furthermore, the European Air Transport Command (EATC) at Eindhoven in the Netherlands provides single integrated operational command for the air transport fleets of Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Spain, with Italy to follow in 2016. In November 2010, Great Britain and France signed a Defence Cooperation Treaty to develop a joint nuclear facility for their strategic sea capabilities.

CZECH INTERESTS BETWEEN NATO AND CSDP

As a member of NATO and the EU, the Czech Republic enjoys full security guarantees and has been actively participating in all major out-of-area operations in the last two decades. It has preferred the U.S.-led NATO

1 *EUISS Yearbook of European Security*. Paris, 2014.

2 *European Defence Capabilities: lessons from the past, signposts for the future*. House of Lords, London, 2012.

Picture 3: Czech Republic in NATO and EU Missions (Military Numbers)

	NATO ISAF	NATO – KFOR, Baltic Air Policing	EU (Bosna, Atalanta, Mali)
2011	720	65	5
2012	640	90	5
2013	333	10	43

Source: Czech Ministry of Defence

foreign missions because the U.S. armed forces have been capable of providing the necessary logistical and surveillance support. The Czech armed forces cannot provide this support on their own (see **Picture 3**).

The Czech Republic's defence doctrine and military strategy are based on the necessity of common defence with our allies. From the legal perspective both NATO and the EU provides full guarantees – Article 5 of the Washington Treaty is equal to the solidarity clause in the Lisbon Treaty.

However, the Ukraine crisis and a growing threat of limited or hybrid wars within the European theatre underline the need for proper military infrastructure to uphold the common defence commitments. The current crisis has vindicated concerns about Russia's strength and Western weakness regarding the military balance of power and the long-term configurations in the region of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). These states have remained vulnerable and exposed to coercive Russian tactics,

from aggressive diplomacy and energy blackmail to cyber attacks, and even nuclear threats.

CEE states have small armies and are habitual under-spenders (with the notable exception of Poland). Now the Czech Republic has rightly (although insufficiently in our opinion) committed itself to increasing its defence spending. A relatively comfortable geopolitical location of our country should not lead the Czechs to become free-riders within NATO and the EU.

But also NATO's and the EU's behaviour has fuelled insecurity in CEE. In 1997 NATO members issued a joint declaration stating that they had "no intention, no plans and no reasons" to deploy substantial military assets (including nuclear) in CEE countries. The result is a de facto two-tiered strategic environment: Of a total of 28 NATO installations, only five are located in CEE states. Of 66,000 U.S. troops in Europe, only 136 are permanently located in CEE states. Of the nearly 200 non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, none are located

in CEE states.³ The EU or CSDP have no military bases or troops within the CEE region.

Both the European Council in December 2013 and the 2014 NATO Summit have tried to respond to these challenges. While the EU's response was only of a general character, NATO has gone more into substance and promised that "the assurance measures include continuous air, land and maritime presence and meaningful military activity in the eastern part of the Alliance, both on a rotational basis."⁴ Recent military exercises in Poland and the Baltic states have outlined that, **as regards joint defense in Europe, NATO and the active U.S. engagement do not have any alternative yet. This applies twice over to the Czech Republic and other CEE states.**

However, the above mentioned conclusions would not discourage the Czech Republic from participating in CSDP. It has been taking, and will continue to take, part in CSDP building, at least as a safeguard for the case that the U.S. would further weaken its future engagement in Europe. ■

³ *Central European Security after Crimea: The Case for Strengthening NATO's Eastern Defenses*. Ed. Edward Lucas and Wess A. Mitchell, CEPA, Washington, 2014.

⁴ *Wales NATO Summit Declaration*. September 5, 2014.

EUROPEAN MILITARY STRUCTURES AND CZECH POSITION AND POTENTIAL

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The Western European Union (WEU) was established in 1954 in Paris as a successor to the Brussels Treaty on mutual defense of France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg (1948), and gave European states a tool for coordinating security issues. To a certain extent, the WEU was designed to replace the abortive European Defense Community (French Parliament failed to ratify it in 1954) and allowed accession of the two formerly enemy states, namely, Italy and the German Federal Republic. During the Cold War, however, the WEU remained overshadowed by NATO because of signatory states also became NATO members.

THE WAY FROM THE WEU TO THE CSDP

A breakthrough in the process of establishing “European” structures came in the debate of the European states during the first Balkan crisis in 1991. The United States were reluctant to get involved (US Secretary of State Jim Baker used to say: “*We don’t have a dog in this fight*”). France wanted to engage the WEU but it failed to reach agreement with the United Kingdom, which was afraid of potential marginalization of NATO, and with Germany, because the German constitution did not allow military deployment abroad apart from a humanitarian mission. For this reason, **Petersberg Declaration** was signed in 1992; it defined three basic tasks of the WEU – humanitarian and rescue operations, peace-keeping operations and combat operations in crisis management. It also defined the forms of military cooperation – logistics, joint training and the establishment of units under the command of the WEU.

However, the WEU did not have any military forces of its own. The member states allocated military forces for individual operations on the basis of the Petersberg Declaration. These were EUROCORPS (composed of ground forces of Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Germany and Spain, with its headquarters in Strasbourg), Multinational Division Central (1994–2002, with participation of the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium), rapid reaction forces EUROFOR (composed of ground forces of France, Italy, Portugal and Spain), marine unit EUROMARFOR (composed of marine forces of France, Italy, Portugal and Spain) and the European Air Group (composed of air forces of Belgium, France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Spain). Special structures were established within the WEU for planning and implementation of Petersberg Tasks; these included a planning unit, a situation centre, a satellite centre and organization of arms and military and political bodies. At the same time, it was presumed that the beginnings of this European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) would be developed within the WEU as the “European pillar” within the NATO structure in order to ensure that Europeans can perform actions using NATO capacities if the US decide not to participate in the operation.

Further development of the European capacities came in 1997 when the Amsterdam Treaty integrated Petersberg Tasks into the contractual framework of the EU. In 1998, the United Kingdom, which had been against establishing any structures outside of the NATO structures, signed the **Saint-Malo Declaration** with France where it states clearly that “the EU must have the capacity

for autonomous action backed up by credible military forces...” On the level of planning, things started to move fast. During the Cologne Summit in 1999, the member states decided to integrate the WEU into the EU, and later that year, the European Council presented a specific, so-called **Headline Goal** in Helsinki. It outlined the following objectives: by the year 2003, to be able to deploy rapid reaction forces of up to 50–60 thousand troops (up to 15 brigades, 500 aircraft and 15 ships including logistical back-up, reconnaissance, command and management), to be deployed within 60 days at the distance of up to 40,000 km and sustained for up to one year, able to implement Petersberg Tasks in full scope.

The planning conference in Brussels in 2000 (*Capabilities Commitment Conference*) resulted in producing the so-called *Helsinki Force Catalogue* which listed 100,000 troops and more than 400 military aircraft and 100 ships. During the second planning conference in 2001, the catalog was complemented by a police force of up to 5,000 men. The above headcount was to be allocated as rapid reaction force by 1 June 2007. However, sustainability of the forces was the problematic part because rotation meant 180,000 troops were necessary. Therefore, the EU postponed implementation of the Headline Goal till 2010 (*Headline Goal 2010*).

STRATEGY, PLANNING, ABILITIES AND THE BATTLEGROUPS CONCEPT

After the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) was formulated in 1999, the need arose for a coherent strategic framework, especially, with regard to defense planning. In 2003,

the European Council adopted the first **European Security Strategy** (“A Secure Europe in a Better World”) prepared by the team of the High Commissioner for the Common Security and Defense Policy. This strategy is still valid, and the need of its review is being discussed at the moment.

The European Institute for Security Studies in Paris was established in 2002 as a supporting think-tank and the **European Defense Agency**, EDA, was established in 2004 in Brussels. Although defense policy, planning and investment remain areas in the discretion of the member states, the goal of the EDA is to enhance and coordinate cooperation in the fields of planning, defense acquisitions, defense industry development and its research and development base.

Further institutional development came in 2009 with the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty which established the *European External Action Service*, EEAS, introduced the “solidarity clause” allowing mutual defense of EU member states, and created space within the EU for the so-called permanent structured cooperation in defense (PSCD) allowing a group of member states, should they wish to do so and meet the set criteria, to establish closer cooperation. ESDP was also renamed the **Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP)**.

After the powers and tasks of the WEU were gradually transferred onto the relevant EU bodies, the WEU ceased its activities by 31 March 2010.

The problem of the EU, however, lies in the fact that, on the one hand, it increases expectations by establishing new institutions, new structures and new obligations, but, on the other hand, it fails to implement the declared goals in practice to the full extent. This gap between expectations and the reality became obvious after 2009 when the EU was hit by the economic crisis. The Helsinki goals on sustainability of larger rapid forces were not implemented by 2010.

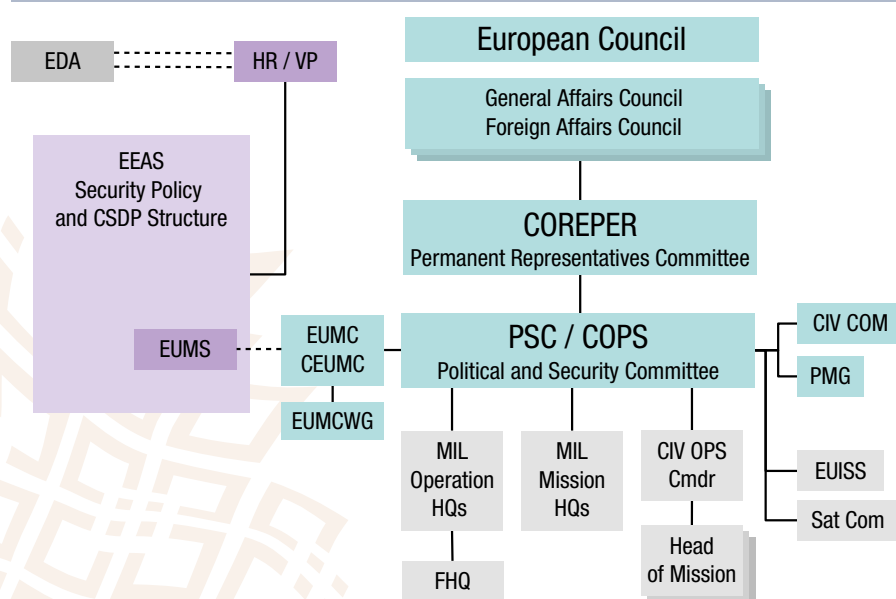
It is clear that the EU was aware of this problem before. From the point of view of crisis management, it needed at least a small force which could be deployed very fast (within 5–10 days), so it introduced the concept of the so-called **Battlegroups** (EUBG). The plan of creating Battlegroups was presented in 2003 (in Helsinki Goals 2010) and the Battlegroups were supposed to become operational by 2007. The goal was to carry out combat operations independently from NATO and to support transition processes in the EU member state armies. The Battlegroups had to have a permanent prepared headquarters, headcount of 1,500 troops and adequate logistics

and transport capacities. This logistical capacity had to back up operations on the ground for up to 30 days and provide supplies for up to 120 days. The main goal was to ensure rapid reaction in response to a request from the UN, conflict stabilization and ensuring conditions for subsequent deployment of UN units.

Each Battlegroup is headed by a so-called **framework nation**. This nation is in charge of preparation and training. At the same time, it is necessary to mention that any specific Battlegroup is not a permanent structure. It is formed after the decision is made on its deployment. Until then, the troops and the equipment of the Battlegroups remain a part of their mother armies. In accordance with the original plan, two Battlegroups had to be on call every half-year; currently, they are formed at the rate of one Battlegroup per half-year. Large states are usually selected as “framework nations” complemented by two smaller states, the so-called 1+2 model. Until today, the Battlegroups have yet to see action.

The EU is trying to compensate a certain level of its military weakness by combining its military and civil potential. The term “comprehensive approach” is used. A good example is the **EU missions**, the majority of which, both in the past and today, have had civil nature (for more details see a separate article or **Picture 8**).

Picture 4: CSDP Structure



PERMANENT MILITARY STRUCTURES OF THE EU

Already in the year 2000 in Nice, the European Council decided to establish permanent political and military structures in order to contribute to implementation of the CSDP. Beside the highest political bodies (the European Council, the Council of Ministers and the Political and Security Committee, PSC, which prepares proposals for decisions of the European Council at Ambassador level, the following relevant military structures were established (see **Picture 4**):

- the EU Military Committee, EUMC, since 2001,

■ the EU Military Staff, EUMS, since 2005,

■ the Crisis Management Planning Department, CMPD, since 2009.

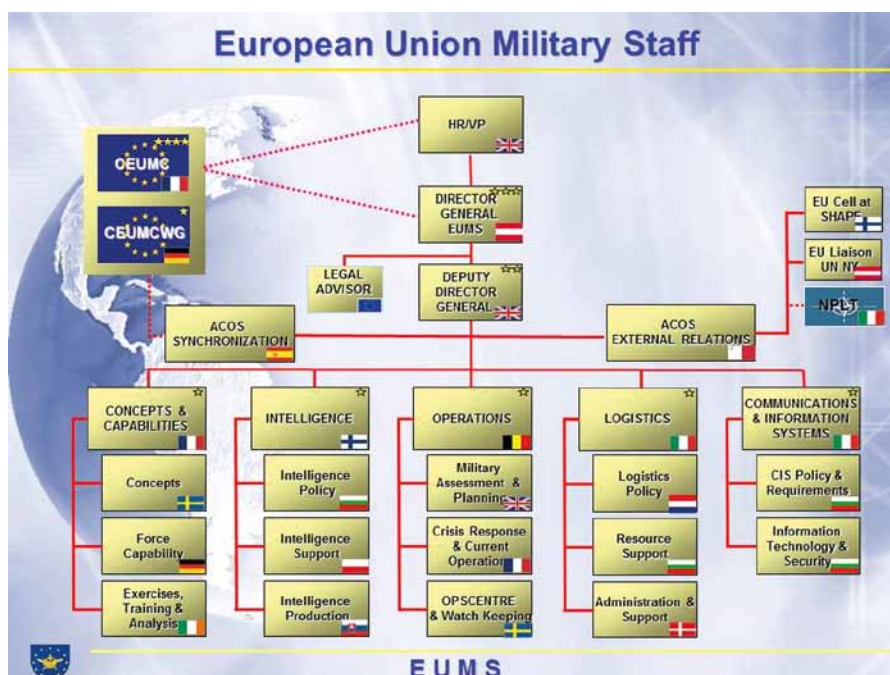
The **EU Military Committee (EUMC)** is the most significant military body of the European Union. It is composed of the highest military officials of the EU member states (Chiefs of Staff/Chiefs of Defense) represented by authorized representatives, the so-called MILREP. It is chaired by a head elected by the EU Committee and nominated from amongst the chiefs-of-staff. His/her mandate is for three years. The EU Military Committee is a forum for military consultations and for coordinating cooperation at the EU level, primarily with the aim of conflict prevention and crisis management. Recommendations and proposals are submitted to the PSC. Conclusions are made on the basis of consensus.

The EU Military Staff (EUMS), following its transition from the WEU to the EU capacities is composed of military experts from the individual member states or the EEAS. It provides monitoring capacities and expert evaluation of the security situation including early warning and defense planning for the EUMC. It is a body which is authorized for cooperation with the national military staffs of the member states or their partners outside of the EU. The Military Staff manages implementation of the decisions taken with regard to the military operations of the EU in the whole scope of the Petersberg Tasks (see **Picture 5**).

CMPD was established in 2009 within the EEAS framework and it is responsible for strategic planning and crisis management concepts (CMC). On the basis of the mandate from the Council of the EU, it produces the concept of the operation (CONOPS) and the operation plan (OPLAN). In cooperation with the EUMC and the CPCC (The Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability) which is responsible for civil missions within the EEAS structure, it performs the special task of coordination of civil and military units.

The Operations Centre (*OpCen*) has existed in the EUMS structure since

Picture 5: EUMS Structure



2004 but it was activated as a military Operational Headquarters (*OHQ*) for EU autonomous operations only in December 2011. Otherwise, the EU has been using national operational headquarters of five member states – Northwood (the United Kingdom), Mont Valérien near Paris (France), Potsdam/Ulm (Germany), Centocelle near Rome (Italy) and Larissa (Germany). The problem of the OpCen is its ability to command only small-scale operations (BG). France and Germany have been trying to expand it but the British are against; the United Kingdom doesn't want to create competition for NATO insisting that, if necessary, the above mentioned national operational headquarters are available. This is another example when a joint London–Paris initiative is expected – in accordance with the obligation from 2012, British-French Combined Joint Force Headquarters are to become operational in 2016.

THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN THE EU STRUCTURES

A major change happened when the Czech Republic became an EU member state. Until that moment, Czech representatives had observer

status in the military structures and, as such, did not participate in the work of the military bodies. On 1 May 2004, the position of the Czech Republic in the military structures changed significantly.

The Armed Forces of the Czech Republic identified the following main goals for the process of integration into the EU military structures:

- to ensure adequate participation of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic in the EU military structures and operations,
- to use the lessons learned and to avoid the mistakes made during the process of integration into the NATO structures,
- to achieve a position in the EU military structures and operations which would reflect the significance of the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic is represented in the EU military bodies at the national level by the Military Unit of the Permanent Delegation of the Czech Republic to NATO and the EU (the WEU before 2010). Its head is the military representative of the Czech Republic in NATO and the EU who delegates his/her power with regard to the EU to his/her representative. For work in the EU bodies, there are subordinate liaisons for the EU (2). They are responsible for

the military agenda. The organizational structure of the Czech representation in the EU military structures is listed in **Picture 6**.

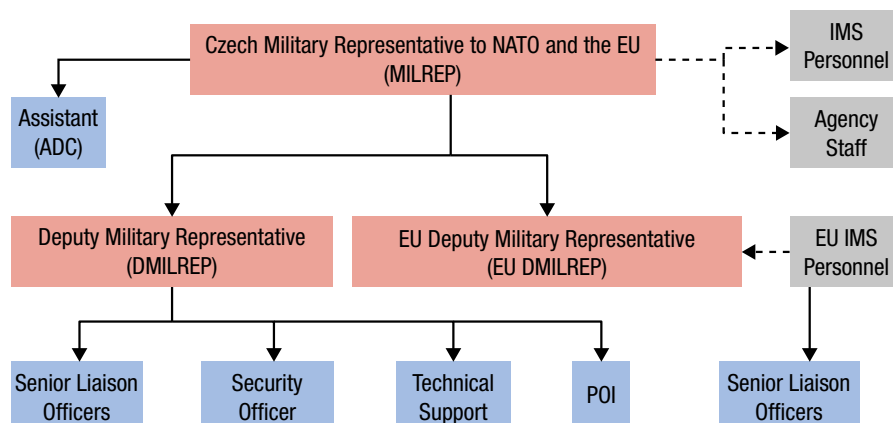
A national contribution is also expected to enhance the capacities of the EU forces operational headquarters for military operations. The military representatives are responsible for performing their tasks and ensuring communication with the Czech Republic as shown on the **Picture 7**.

From the beginning, the Czech Republic has participated in building **EU Battlegroups**:

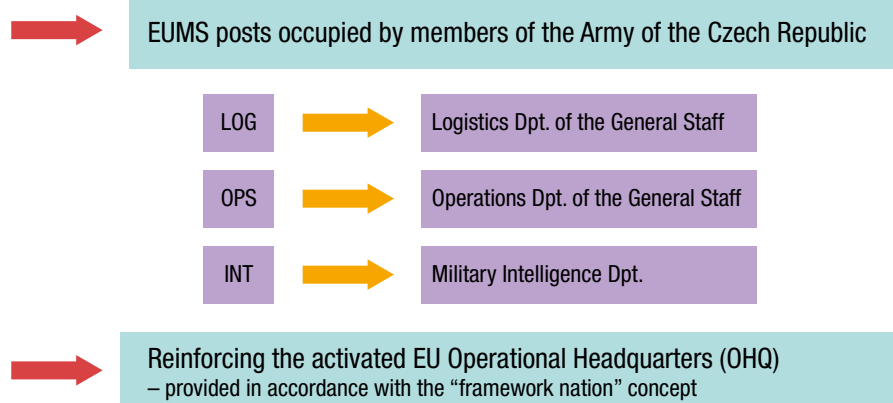
- In 2009, it established a Battlegroup in cooperation with Slovakia. The Czech Republic was the lead state which carries out the largest part of the construction.
- In 2012, the Czech Republic participated in the establishment of a Battlegroup under German leadership together with Austria and Ireland (in cooperation with Croatia and Macedonia).
- In 2016, a V4 battle group under the leadership of Poland is planned.
- Currently, the member states are debating the Polish proposal to declare this group a permanent element of the EU military capacity.

In accordance with the EU Battlegroup directives, the Battlegroups have the following structure: headquarters, commander with his/her staff, a mechanized battalion and three mechanized companies, a logistics company, a fire support company, an engineer squad, an air defense

Picture 6: Organization of the Czech Republic's Representation in the EU's Military Structures



Since 2005 the Czech Republic's representation in the EU Military Staff has been as follows:

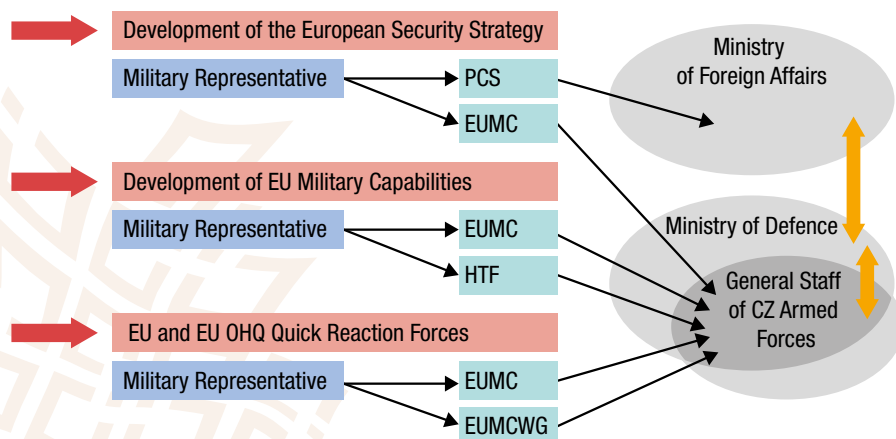


squad, a reconnaissance squad, an intelligence squad, a helicopter support unit, a medical squad and a military police squad.

CONCLUSION

The process of building European defense capacities has been suffering from problems which persist till today. The reason for that are the imperfect, obsolete command systems, which are dispersed amongst individual member states, incompatible means of communication which are not powerful enough, insufficient logistics and means of strategic and satellite reconnaissance, monitoring and early warning; limited ability of troops to survive on the battlefield and the related equipment and focus of training. One of the critical issues is the insufficient amount of various kinds of ammunition, quality special forces units, strategic air and marine transport and in-flight

Picture 7.



refueling; the abilities of strategic bombers, stealth aircraft and aircraft and helicopter ships are virtually missing.

These deficiencies manifested fully during the operation in Libya in 2011. Until today, Europe is not able to carry out two simultaneous operations. For this reason, Europe has very limited abilities to fight a war of high intensity. For a number of states, this

would also be unacceptable politically. From the point of view of the use of military capacities, there are different opinions on conceptual management, doctrines and strategic approaches. Especially the two main actors have different opinions – the United Kingdom considers the ESDP to be a part of the NATO capacities which should be developed as such; France, on the other hand, regardless of the higher

costs, demands a higher level of independence from the USA.

In 2013, the European Council called upon the member states to intensify their defense cooperation within the CSDP and to build their military and civil capacities in such a way that the EU would be able to meet its declared objectives and obligations. The next evaluation will be carried out at the next summit in June 2015. ■

EU MISSIONS

Jan Österreicher | Director, Military Health Institute of Armed Forces of the Czech Republic

The first EU military mission under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was the EUFOR Concordia mission in Macedonia in March 2003 which, based on the 2002 “Berlin Plus” agreement, relied on NATO’s structures and capabilities. The second large EU mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, EUFOR Althea, followed the same pattern. This mission started in December 2004 by taking over the mandate of NATO’s SFOR mission.

The first mission carried out without NATO support was the EU’s Artemis operation in Congo in the summer of

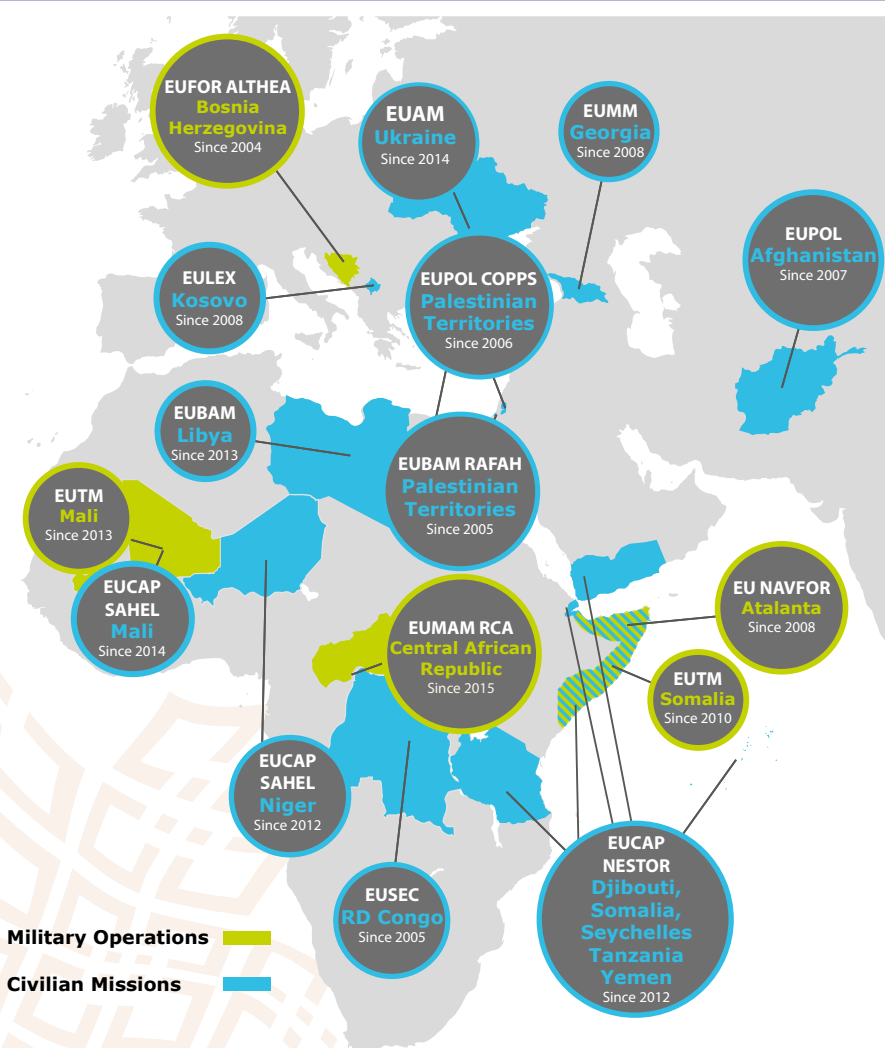
2003. This was a time-limited operation under the command of France, who also provided most of the capabilities. This mission later led to the creation of EU Battlegroups.

Before 2010, only missions fulfilling the “Petersberg tasks” (humanitarian and rescue missions, peacekeeping missions and missions of combat forces in crisis management) could be organized under the ESDP. The ratification of the Lisbon Treaty made it possible to add joint disarmament operations, advisory and training missions in the military area, and

stabilization missions after the termination of conflicts. Under the solidarity clause, EU Member States may participate in military and humanitarian missions and may establish closer cooperation using the concept of structured cooperation.

There are currently 16 EU missions, 5 of which are military missions (EUFOR Althea in Bosnia; EU NAVFOR Atalanta and EUTM in Somalia; EUTM in Mali; and EUFOR RCA in the Republic of Central Africa) and 11 are civilian missions. The total number of soldiers and civilians deployed is approximately 7000. An overview of the military and civilian missions currently under way is provided in **Picture 8**.

Picture 8.



THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN EU MISSIONS

The Czech Republic’s Armed Forces have taken part in EU missions since their very beginning. For operation **EUFOR Althea**, whose aim was not only to keep peace and security in the area of responsibility, but also to help the government institutions integrate in EU structures, as well as fight against corruption and organized crime, a total number of ca. 400 Czech soldiers, divided into one-hundred-strength rotations, were continuously deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina. As regards the use of sophisticated weapon systems, the action of 2 Czech Mi-17 helicopters is worth mentioning. Since 2010 only two members of the Czech Republic’s Armed Forces have been deployed to the mission, occupying non-executive posts at the Sarajevo operation headquarters (ammunition storage and WMD expertise).

Operation **EUFOR Concordia**, which took over the operational task from NATO’s mission Essential Harvest on 1st April 2003, was joined by the Czech Republic as a non-member

state with 2 staff soldiers at the mission headquarters (until 15 December 2003, when the operation was terminated).

The first official deployment of two Czech soldiers to the African continent in the **EUFOR Tchad/RCA** mission took from September 2007 to March 2009. The aim of the mission was to stabilize the borders of the two countries, which were repeatedly breached by Sudanian armed groups as well as refugees. The two Czech soldiers worked at the mission headquarters.

Since January 2010 three members of the Czech Republic's Armed Forces have been participating in the anti-piracy operation **EU NAVFOR Atalanta**, working at OHQ in Northwood, UK.

As their most recent activity within EU missions, the Czech Republic's Armed Forces are participating in the ongoing training mission **EU TM Mali**, where a task force of 38 Czech soldiers has been operating since March 2013, rotating every six months. Out of this number, 34 people fulfil tasks related to the protection of the headquarters in Bamako and the escort of convoys; and four instructors train Malian armed forces as part of a French infantry training company. The training instructors are recruited from mechanized and parachute units.

CAPABILITIES AND SPECIALIZATION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC'S ARMED FORCES WITHIN NATO AND THE EU

The EU and NATO both ask their members to specialize. In addition, the concepts of pooling and sharing (EU) and smart defence (NATO) have been frequently discussed in recent years. The reasons are obvious: cuts in Members States' defence budgets, technological development lagging behind the US, and a natural effort of national armed forces to keep their key strength units. In a climate of fast EU integration, the idea of a future EU army that would be strong and operational, possessing the necessary expertise

and technology, also used to play an important role.

During the Prague NATO Summit in 2002, the Czech Republic claimed responsibility for 3 areas of specialization. These are:

- Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Defence (CBRN Defence)
- Passive surveillance systems
- Military health service

Within the EU Capability Action Plan the Czech Republic has selected its **specialisation** and participation in several areas (project groups):

- Protection against weapons of mass destruction
- Health service
- Special forces
- Strategic air transport

Even before joining the EU, the Czech Republic declared it would **contribute** to the EU's tasks by allocating the following forces:

- A mechanized airborne battalion
- A special forces company
- A helicopter unit with 4 Mi17/171 helicopters
- A chemical protection company
- A field hospital
- A rescue team

At the same time, the above-mentioned forces are allocated for tasks within the Czech Republic's commitment to NATO, as the Czech Republic wants to avoid duplication. The Czech Republic's Defence Strategy and the follow-up Concept of Build-up of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic define the build-up of individual **task forces** which can be deployed to EU and NATO operations and missions:

- a) A brigade task force based on mechanized forces (Article 5)
- b) A battalion task force with a chemical and biological protection battalion at its core
- c) A battalion task force with a field hospital at its core
- d) A battalion task force with a helicopter squadron at its core
- e) A company task force with a medical evacuation unit at its core
- f) A special forces task force
- g) A company task force with a transportation company at its core

h) A company task force with a flight of transportation helicopters at its core

Already in 2004, Czech analysts and strategists such as Vlastimil Galatík and Bohuslav Víšek⁵ predicted further development and suggested that the build-up of specialized forces should not be undertaken at the expense of national defence and military capabilities. Furthermore, they anticipated that the development of specialized forces would require sufficient interest on the part of decision-making officials of the State and the Ministry of Defence. The actual development fully confirmed their predictions.

The Armed Forces of the Czech Republic even created a dedicated task force command for specialized forces in order to fulfil the above-mentioned international commitments. The first official mention of a Specialized Task Force Command was made in the 2002 Concept of Build-up of the Armed Forces. However, only a year later, after the first budget cuts, this task force command was made part of the Joint Task Force Command.

THE DOWNSIDE OF SPECIALIZATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Specialists are a common denominator of any capability. They are soldiers and civilians who actively work on extending current levels of knowledge and implementing new technologies in practice. To do this, they need to have a high level of expertise, be capable of independent scientific work, and know how to apply military forces and systems not only in the area of their specialization, but also in the framework of joint operations. In addition, they also have to be aware of the opportunities and limits of the use of military means. These people are a key element of the specialization capability! A capable expert is able to deal creatively with any

5 Galatík, V., Víšek, B.: *Některé aspekty specializace v ozbrojených silách*. Obrana a Strategie, 2004 (2): 65–70.

threat, even under existential or time pressure and with scarce resources. Such experts are self-confident and also fully aware of their abilities. And civilian companies operating in the area of specialization forces means and devices know very well who has know-how and can develop practical implementations. In the last decade, we have seen an exodus of such specialists to the civilian sector. Many of them left the Armed Forces, demotivated, after the Specialized Forces Command was dissolved and specialization capabilities eroded. Some of them silently waited for a better offer from civilian companies.

Research and development, which was massively supported at the turn of century, nowadays receives only a nominal level of support, and many distinguished scientists have left the Armed Forces. As it is research and development that has the highest added value, the fact that scientific teams are dissolved is an indicator of capability erosion. The scientific team developing passive surveillance systems did not even exist long enough to see the foundation of the University of Defence in 2004. CBRN defence research had a dual character. The physics and inorganic chemistry part was under the remit of the CBRN Defence Institute of the University of Defence in Vyškov, and the organic chemistry and medical aspects were researched at the Faculty of Military Health Sciences in Hradec Králové. In Vyškov, job reductions, inhibition of scientific effort, and loss of active-age personnel (mainly post-docs under 35) have gradually diminished the capabilities to a level of miserable existence. Hradec Králové finds itself in

the pre-terminal phase with know-how developers leaving, especially those aged between 30 and 40.

It is worth noting that the biological agents research team was eroded by transfer from the Faculty of Military Health Sciences in Hradec Králové to the special infection hospital in Těchonín. The team's work was undermined by a change of research culture: the team was not able to work properly outside academic environment, with the status of a standard military unit doing research under military bureaucratic rules which had not been created to support scientific effort. For instance, it was extremely difficult to obtain official approval for the team's cooperation with their colleagues from the Faculty of Pharmacy in Hradec Králové. It took a whole year for the cooperation agreement to be approved by the Ministry of Defence, until it was finally signed by Minister Vondra. Unfortunately, some of the scientists did not have enough patience and changed their employer.

The military health service is also in a complicated situation, and has difficulty resisting the pressure of market forces. State administration human resource officers are not able to distinguish between people who just have a diploma and those who have genuine know-how. The same holds true for the military health service, especially as regards medical doctors.

Czech Armed Forces observe the principle of salary equality for any service, distinguishing just the ranks and positions. In comparison to the civilian sphere, salaries are lower in the military. Therefore, a huge pool of specialists is gradually leaving the

Armed Forces. If this trend continues, we can expect the Czech Armed Forces to become specialization-free armed forces. Subsequently, infantry battalions and homeland defence will become their only ambition.

The gradual decline of the military health service can be illustrated with an example from last year. A request from the UN, made through general secretary Pan-Ki Mun, to send Role 2 Enhanced Hospital to the Republic of Central Africa for 2 years was rejected due to a lack of personnel. The Military Health Service is still involved in NATO ISAF operations with its Forward Surgical Team and several general practitioners sent with other troops. If we consider the gradually diminishing number of military doctors in stationary military hospital facilities, then we can conclude that this specialization capability is already eroding.

To summarize this chapter we have to admit that specialization forces and their capabilities are gradually **eroding**. In addition, the Czech Republic considers EU military operations as a marginal issue. Furthermore, the Czech Armed Forces are suffering from what we can call **de-sophistication**, which means smaller numbers of specialists able to develop and/or implement new cutting edge technologies and research of new technological tools and devices. This causes the Czech Armed Forces to significantly lag behind their stronger partners, especially the USA, and to reach a state of **technological dependency**. If the status quo continues, the Czech Republic will only have several **infantry and lightly mechanized** units, its highest ambition being to develop its Active Reserve as **homeland** forces. ■

CSDP AND VISEGRAD GROUP

Michal Kořan | Deputy Director, Institute of International Relations

The Visegrad cooperation has gradually become an important factor in integrating the ESDP/CSDP into Czech policies, as well as an important tool for promoting Czech priorities within this policy. Roughly from 2008 until the Russian-sponsored outbreak of the crisis in Eastern Ukraine in the spring of 2014, the Visegrad cooperation went through a gradual process of strengthening its focus on defense and security cooperation on the one hand, and the process of “Europeanising” this agenda on the other. Yet, gradual escalation of the crisis in Ukraine has helped to bring into light existing political differences in the region and, at least for now, has contributed to the fact that many of the achievements and results of the Visegrad cooperation have been obscured by political misunderstanding and opposing approaches. Therefore, doubts about the future of Visegrad are expressed more and more often – and partly rightly so.

Skepticism towards Visegrad is neither new nor rare. If, however, we look at how the Visegrad region responded to the multiple crises and other adverse moments that hit Europe and the world in the years 2008 to 2014, it appears that the Visegrad cooperation emerged surprisingly strengthened. The Visegrad group reacted to the Russia–Georgia conflict by reinforcing coordination in the Visegrad security and defense areas; similarly, the V4 reacted to the Russia–Ukraine gas dispute by strengthening cooperation in the field of energy. Furthermore, the EU enlargement fatigue encouraged the V4 to increase their joint emphasis on the Eastern and South-Eastern dimension of the EU’s external policy. The four states have also seen an unprecedented improvement of their ability to ensure coordination, or at least share information, when working on the European Union’s agenda. In response to the United States’ relative

drop of interest in Europe as a whole and Central and Eastern Europe in particular, the V4 has been able to search more effectively for a new content of its relationship with the United States.⁶ It is the reinvention of balance and consensus among the four countries that appears to be the crucial task for contemporary Central European governments. However, this goal presupposes enough political will, determination and confidence that the Visegrad format will continue to benefit the countries involved.

Questions of security and defense have been an integral part of the Visegrad cooperation from its very inception. However, with regard to the V4, one can only speak of an EU dimension (CFSP and ESDP/CSDP) since around 2008. Especially in the last two to three years efforts to overcome the V4 obstacles to cooperation in the defense and security areas have increased significantly. The aim, among others, has been to better handle negative effects of budget cuts and to improve joint defense capabilities.⁷ Since 2011 the four countries have managed to shape plans for the preparation and realization of the Visegrad Battlegroup (V4BG).⁸ In an ideal scenario this group would set an EU-wide example of a new approach to the concept of the Battlegroups in two ways: the V4BG is planned to continue as a permanent task force after its usual six months of combat-readiness and, above all, the V4 hopes for a more inter-operational approach of the EU Battlegroup, making it more compatible with the purposes of NATO.⁹ It was Poland that gave the V4 a considerable impetus in the area of security and defense cooperation during its V4 Presidency in 2012/2013.¹⁰ A clear increase could be seen in the quantity and partly also quality of meetings at the highest level, dedicated to security and defense policies. Moreover, the entire issue

began to be viewed more conceptually and strategically. In May 2013 the Visegrad Foreign Ministers committed the four countries to strengthening their contribution to the CSDP, and this commitment was reaffirmed by the Prime Ministers in Budapest in October, where they adopted a very ambitious Declaration (first of its kind in the area of defense and security).¹¹ Other important events took place throughout 2013, for example a meeting between the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad countries, France and Germany, as well as a meeting of the Defense Ministers of the same countries (the Defense Ministers adopted a joint declaration, advocating a deeper cooperation between the V4 and Germany and France within the CSDP and NATO).

It is the **Visegrad Battlegroup** that, for several years, has been the cornerstone of cooperation. The

6 See, for example. Kupiecki, R. (2013): *Visegrád Defense Cooperation: From Mutual Support to Strengthening NATO and the EU. A Polish Perspective*. Report No. 35, Washington: CEPA.

7 Kořan, M.: *Visegrad Group in the EU: the concept of the past or the future?* CI Time, March 2013.

8 Madej, M. (2013): *Visegrad Group defense cooperation: what added value for the European capabilities?* Note 19/13 Nordeka Programme FSR.

9 Kořan, M.: *Regionalization and Europeanization of Czech foreign policy: the case of Visegrad cooperation* (2014). Unpublished text for the project “10 years of the CZECH REPUBLIC in the CFSP”

10 *Report of the Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group July 2012–June 2013*. Online: (<http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports>)

11 *Budapest Joint Statement of the Visegrad Group Heads of Government on Strengthening the Security and Defense Cooperation*, the V4, 14. 10. in 2013. Online: (<http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2013/budapest-joint-statement>)

V4BG will consist of the main combat forces and air capacities (Poland), a medical and logistics module (Czech Republic), a sapper unit (Hungary), and a chemical and biological protection module (Slovakia).¹² However, the Visegrad Battlegroup is not and should not be viewed as a single project of Visegrad defense cooperation. The aforementioned declaration of the Prime Ministers from October 2013 therefore commits the Ministries of Defense to a number of other tasks: to draft a long-term vision (strategy) for defense cooperation (this task was accomplished in the spring of 2014); to conduct (in cooperation and compliance with the EU and NATO) annual exercises of the Visegrad armies and to find a space for improved cooperation in defense planning, among others. Joint exercises and common defense planning would first contribute to the desired interoperability and, secondly, to sharing regional defense capabilities, which is the best (and perhaps the only) way to strengthen regional defense while downsizing expenditure rationally.¹³

However, a closer look beyond the declaratory level of cooperation reveals **serious limitations of cooperation**. For example, within the framework of the EU Pooling & Sharing initiative the V4 countries are not present together in any of the joint projects; within NATO's Smart Defense Initiative they only joined for two projects.¹⁴ Similarly, the efforts to cooperate more closely in joint procurements and in common armament projects have so far ended in vain.¹⁵ Even with good political will, when it comes to concrete initiatives, there have been almost zero outcomes so far. There are not only administrative and economic obstacles.¹⁶ Progress is also made difficult by particular lobbies' interests or persisting inability to reconcile defense and acquisition plans of the individual Visegrad countries. Therefore, it is important to begin consistently with progressive harmonization of defense and acquisition planning.

A second important limit is of a political nature. The Visegrad

countries have different ambitions in defense policy, and the gap has only widened in recent years. On the one side there is Poland, whose determination to invest in its defense by far exceeds the political resolve of the other three smaller partners. At the opposite pole there is Hungary, which openly declares its little or no will to raise its defense funding. Obviously, these differences do not contribute to mutual trust and willingness to actually engage in building and sharing joint defense capabilities.

The aggressive Russian behavior towards Ukraine that began in 2014 represents a challenge Central Europe has not faced since the Balkan wars; only this time the challenge is by far greater. While we could quite easily talk about essential strategic-political conformity until the end of 2013, this elemental conformity has ceased to exist since the spring of 2014 onward. At the Prime Ministers' meeting during a Globsec conference in Bratislava in May 2014, strategic disagreement occurred on two major points: Russian aggression and the views of the future of defense capabilities building. These differences are politically motivated. The political reluctance to invest more in defense capabilities stems from differing perceptions of threats. To sum up, the year 2014 therefore brought about deep differentiation in Central Europe. This is a fundamental reversal of a trend that, at least from 1998, meant continuous strengthening of the region's cohesion.

How did the **Czech diplomacy respond to this reversal?** The Government of Prime Minister B. Sobotka set two goals to be pursued – to strengthen a strategic link with Germany and find a new (strategic?) relationship with Austria. As one of the results, some alternative ideas of regional cooperation or formats parallel to the Visegrad Group emerged. In the case of Germany it is a clear step in the right direction. Germany is, or can be, a key player in the CSDP. If the Czech diplomacy is able to help foster dialogue between V4 and Germany in this field, both

parties will clearly benefit – even knowing that there are obvious and considerable obstacles. In the case of Austria it is also a step in the right direction as long as this new strategy confines itself to improving the still cold and strained *bilateral* relationship with the Czech southern neighbor. At the same time, however, it is necessary to bear in mind that in terms of foreign, security and defense policies, Austria is in a completely different situation (and not only due to its neutrality). It is recommendable to try to search for specific project cooperation in the framework of CSDP (knowing that Austria is facing fundamental undervaluation of their expenditure on defense); however, it is difficult to imagine in-depth strategic defense cooperation that would also reflect the long-term priorities and goals of the Czech policy. In the same vein, efforts to create a parallel or alternate regional cooperation format need to be very carefully considered and perhaps rejected in the current situation. Regional cooperation is based on trust and confidence built in the long term (even decades), and

12 The defense cooperation between V4. The thematic information material to the Ministry of Defense, November 2013. Online: (www.mocr.army.cz/scripts/file.php?id=175829&down=yes)

13 Kořan, M. (2014): the Visegrad cooperation, Poland, Slovakia and Austria in Czech foreign policy. In Kořan, M. a kol.: *Czech foreign policy in 2013: analysis of ÚMV*. Prague: Institute of International Relations.

14 *The defense cooperation between V4*. The thematic information material to the Ministry of Defense, November 2013. Online: (www.mocr.army.cz/scripts/file.php?id=175829&down=yes)

15 Kupiecki, R. (2013): *Visegrád Defense Cooperation: From Mutual Support to Strengthening NATO and the EU. A Polish Perspective*. CEPA Report No. 35.

16 Kořan, M. (2014): the Visegrad cooperation, Poland, Slovakia and Austria in Czech foreign policy. In Kořan, M. a kol.: *Czech foreign policy in 2013: analysis of ÚMV*. Prague: Institute of International Relations.

with a dense network of working and informal contacts which go beyond any political discord. Under the current circumstances, where the very V4 cooperation (the only working format of regional cooperation so far) is being distorted by a lack of trust, the search for alternative regional formats might have a very disturbing and negative impact on existing projects.

There are **several recommendations** with regard to the future of the Visegrad group under the recent circumstances.¹⁷ Since the political preferences of the individual countries shifted worryingly apart during 2014, it is crucial to take advantage of the progress that has already been made. It is of key importance to focus all of the forces on the implementation of projects that have already been agreed

and approved. This project level should not be subject to differing political preferences and, conversely, these projects would strengthen defense capabilities and regional cohesion despite general political disagreements. Secondly, the Visegrad countries should focus more on cooperation in the framework of CSDP with Germany, which seems to be currently looking for (and partially finding) its strategic vision in a dialogue with the V4. Germany is capable of contributing both to the mutual balancing among the views of all participating countries, but also to the progressive fulfilment of specific defense projects. Yet another binding element in the Visegrad cooperation should lie in the continuation of the (even if often futile) pursuit of the interconnection and interoperability

of components between the NATO and the EU to prevent duplication of capacities.

It cannot be expected that the Central European governments will miraculously agree on their attitude to Russia or on the way to build defense capabilities in the future. But past experience clearly suggests that constant engagement in regional dialogue is a necessary precondition for reversing the negative trends of the year 2014 as well as reinventing the necessary regional confidence and balance. ■

17 See also Valasek, T. (ed., 2012): *Towards a smarter V4: How to improve defence collaboration among the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia: DAV4 Expert Group Report*

MILITARY MANPOWER, SPENDING AND PREFERENCES

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The paradigm which had traditionally driven the national approach towards the organization of Czech national security since 1918 changed fundamentally after the Czech Republic joined the European Union in 2004 and the Schengen Area in 2007. Such a shift not only led to further demilitarization of Czech society (see **Picture 9**), but also caused a significant curb in the demand for manpower necessary for the activities carried out by national security institutions, such as the intelligence service, the police, the rescue and fire service and the customs service. The shift also boosted demilitarization of the non-military institutions which, before the 2004 EU enlargement, were organised rather in a way reminding of militant communism.

On the one hand, the incorporation of the Czech national territory into

the European Union resulted in a reduction of the number of customs officers by 2,000 and the transfer of border police officers to other types of police activities; on the other hand, this incorporation made it possible to deploy members of non-military institutions to civilian EU missions (EUPOL, EULEX) abroad protecting the EU from failed state effects. Besides, the shift facilitated free movement of humanitarian aid provided by the Fire and Rescue Service (F&RS) within the EU area. The F&RS can therefore operate extraterritorially, similarly to the armed forces.

However, the entry into the European Union has not changed the position of Czech armed forces. Their transformation was already in progress due to NATO requirements and the operational experience gained

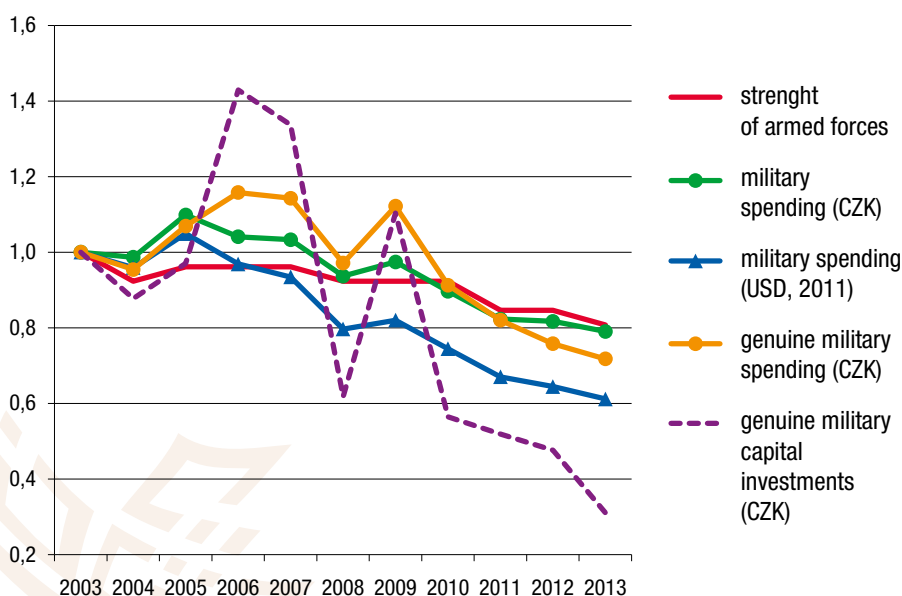
during the Global War On Terrorism in Iraq and, later on, in Afghanistan. Being surrounded by states with strong political, economic, cultural, and historical relations, the Czech Republic needs, above all, to build up military power for the purposes of out-of-area operations. Hence, the armed forces have been withdrawing from their engagement in national internal safety since 2007. Nowadays, the armed forces operate only in cases where their activity supports their military capabilities, e.g. air ambulance, SAR or strategic airlift.

The change of the security paradigm was reflected in the shift towards an All-Volunteer Force in 2005, whereby the armed forces lost their position of the largest national security institution. Military people comprise only 1/4 of personnel serving for national security at present, which is half the strength of the police and double the F&RS (see **Picture 10**). Although the armed forces do not have the function of a manpower reserve for national security any more, the ability of the state to protect the health, lives and property of people staying on the Czech territory remains unchanged. Moreover, the armed forces have retained their capability of mobilization needed for activation according to article V of the Washington Treaty.

In summary, the manpower has been reduced by more than 20,000 people over the last 10 years, half of whom were professionals. The job cuts were most significant in the police force and the armed forces. Any other cuts in the number of staff are undesirable due to the predicted risks within the shared security environment; the threat of illicit activities related to organized crime and terrorism is still considerable.

In order to sustain the mobilization capabilities as well as an adequate ability to protect critical infrastructure, the demilitarization of society

Picture 9: Strenght of military power, Czech military spending, and genuine military spending as an index (2003=1.0), 2003–2013



	2003	2013
Strenght of armed forces (1000 persons)	26.0	21.0
Military spending according to NATO/SIPRI (bn CZK)	53.2	42.0
Genuine military capital investments (bn CZK)	12.1	3.7

Source: Czech Ministry of Finance (database: ARIS, ÚFIS, and Monitor)

should stop and more citizens should participate in force reserves. Furthermore, substantial support for volunteering in the integrated rescue system is necessary, as well as more lessons on security during compulsory education. It is necessary to provide minimum military knowledge to young people, at least as pre-service military training.

The armed forces and the non-military security institutions both keep their doors open for female manpower, but more stress should be placed on an integration strategy for national and ethnical minorities, because the Czech Republic is still not able to use its armed forces as a means of social integration.

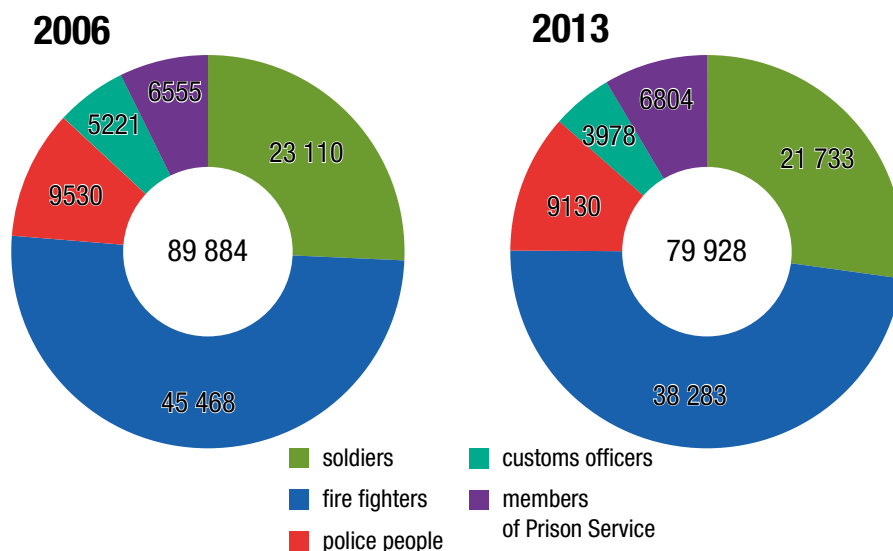
Over the last 10 years, defence and security spending has decreased from 3.3 to 2.2% GDP (CZK 86,000 m.). Most of the money is spent on security and public order and defence which are under the remit of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence. Due to the demilitarization of Czech society the proportion between spending on security and public order on the one hand, and defence on the other, is roughly 4 to 3; nonetheless, the political willingness to raise military expenditure is shrinking.

The rise of international terrorism, the ageing of equipment purchased in the 1980s and the demilitarization of civil service triggered modernization in the police, F&RS, and armed forces. However, due to the global financial crises and austerity measures the modernization has been strangled temporarily excluding the F&RS which gained access to European funds.

The modernization program is expected to continue after 2015; its objectives include better interoperability of the intelligence service, the police and the F&RS within the EU, and technological convergence of the armed forces with Western standards, attainable through acquisitions of new weapons and technology systems.

Purchasing military equipment on a monopolized security and defence market will require doubling capital investments and raising defence

Picture 10: Professionals serving in the defence and security branches in 2006 and 2013



Source: Czech Statistical Office

spending to 1.5% GDP. Acquisition of helicopters and aircraft of dual use will be a priority; such aircraft is deployable abroad in regions of instability or can serve civilian purposes as part of the integrated rescue system.

As an open and developed economy, the Czech Republic has vital interest in free and smooth international trade, as well as in getting access to oil and gas. Therefore, the Czech Republic is willing to support the fight against piracy and temporarily deploy some capabilities in the area of the opening of the Northern Sea Route. In order to support consolidation in the European defence and security branch, the Czech Republic will strive to avoid being the only one end user in the world using an entirely unique military product purchased from the national defence industry.

The Czech Republic has abandoned the idea of specialized forces, as it has become impossible to achieve such a goal. The Czech armed forces have become too small and too old; restoring the original project of professionalization would require too much money which could be invested into more consequential military capabilities. On the other hand, it is necessary to support the idea of European armed forces. Such support

is required on the level of infrastructural background which could be a base for future European armed forces under the EU political lead. There is a large number of capabilities that could be shared on a multilateral contractual basis, e.g. anti-aircraft capabilities, supply, storage, shipping and transport capacity, military diplomacy capabilities and capacity for testing and certifying defence industry products. In order to boost European defence and security policy integration, it is necessary to ensure sharing and exchange of information among the European Union countries, free movement of military equipment, free movement of military personnel within the European Union without the constant need to ask permission from national parliaments.

Due to a considerable increase in the capabilities of the integrated rescue system and due to the fact that support for the armed forces within the Ministry of Defence has dropped below the threshold of acquisition effectiveness, the outsourcing of assistance tasks from the armed forces to non-military security institutions will continue. Likewise, there is no need for particular self-supporting administrative activities, such as fire service in military training areas and fire inspections. ■

