

**Beyond intergovernmentalism and the quest for unity
Democracy or efficiency?**

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**“Democratic Oversight of the Common Foreign
and Security Policy”¹**

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Introduction

Parliaments traditionally have some difficulty in maintaining effective democratic oversight over foreign policy. While they often have very specific entrenched constitutional rights in terms of Declarations of War or the ratification of international treaties, parliaments usually face political and administrative restrictions when monitoring day-to-day foreign policy. This is due to the fact that;

1. Foreign policy rarely results in formal legislation.
2. It is usually seen as being an area of special Executive prerogative.
3. It is often seen as impinging on national security and national interests in such a way that it is argued that the normal rules of party politics and parliamentary engagement should not apply and
4. It is often argued that the fine arts of diplomacy are best practiced outside the glare of direct public scrutiny.

For all of these reasons, parliaments find themselves struggling for influence over foreign policy. Precisely because it is so important, however, there is an ongoing need to ensure that foreign policy, outside the framework of treaty ratification, commands democratic support and is held to the highest standards of accountability. "It is essential that this sector, which traditionally lacks transparency, be overseen by democratic institutions and procedures"² and democratic legitimacy must take precedence over confidentiality.³

That there is an issue with respect to democratic oversight of foreign policy therefore comes as no surprise. What makes the situation worse is the fact that when the Member States of the European Union cooperate in the realm of the Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy, the distance between policy making and democratic oversight is worsened.

There is a wide familiarity with a general argument that the nature of the European Union itself can serve to distance citizens from policy making. In many of the Union's central policy making areas, it is argued that "European integration has weakened the traditional mechanisms of parliamentary control, posing a serious challenge to parliamentary democracy."⁴ This occurs when political responsibility is devolved to central institutions and where – in particular – Ministers lose the right of veto. There is a further argument that because the Union lacks a definitive constitutional hierarchy and a clear separation of powers, citizens are further disadvantaged in holding policy makers to account. The locus of precise power and responsibility is especially unclear in the Union, where executive responsibility is divided between the Commission and the Council and where legislative responsibility is divided between the Council and the

² Doc. 10567, 2 June 2005, Democratic oversight of the security sector in member states, Report Political Affairs Committee, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Rapporteur: Mr Lluís Maria de Puig, Spain, Socialist Group

³ Doc. 10567, 2 June 2005, Democratic oversight of the security sector in member states, Report Political Affairs Committee, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Rapporteur: Mr Lluís Maria de Puig, Spain, Socialist Group

⁴ Zanon, Flavia(2007)'EU Foreign Policy in the Italian Parliament: The Debates on China and Iran',The International Spectator,42:4,551 — 570

Parliament. The fact that the Council is thus part-legislator and part-executive is symptomatic of this lack of clarity.

These democratic lacunas have at least been part-addressed in the 'Community' pillar by assigning stronger oversight functions to the European Parliament. The traditional literature on the 'democratic deficit' argues that where the institutional locus of policy making shifts from the Member State capital to Brussels – with an associated move from unanimity to the use of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) in the Council of Ministers – a 'gap' in democratic accountability is seen to be opened. Within the community sphere of Union competences, this gives rise to consequent demands for improved accountability before the European Parliament. However, even as these demands for improved European Parliamentary accountability are met (through the extended use of the Co-decision Procedure for example) the Parliament still faces critics of its own democratic bona fides. Much of the academic literature argues that elections to the Parliament are judged to be 'second order' elections by their electorates as they use EP elections as proxy referenda on national government performance, and with little or no regard to the capacity or effectiveness of EP members as either European legislators or as public tribunes holding the Union's executive institutions to account.

For their part, most national parliaments have sought to offset their own loss of democratic oversight capacity through better information management and, in some cases, new parliamentary procedures and mechanisms to hold the executive to account for its (in)actions.⁵ This becomes especially problematic where national ministers, having lost their veto and now subject to QMV can plausibly argue that while they participate fully in the decision making process, they can no longer be held personally accountable in the same way as when they had the capacity to exercise a veto. This is, of course, somewhat disingenuous, knowing as we do, the very limited use of QMV and the very powerful socialized norms towards consensus within the Council and its subsidiary structures.

As a Union of States and a Union of peoples, however, the EU suffers an additional critical weakness. It does not have a strong sense of 'demos' – nor is there a well defined sense of a common European public space. This gives rise, at least in some quarters, to sense that the Union is a realm of the 'foreign' rather than of the domestic and that the Union lacks a sense of 'we-feeling' which generates a public trust in central Union institutions. Thus, to the well established academic literature on the aforementioned 'democratic deficit' can be added that of a 'community deficit'

The fact, however, that cooperation in the realm of CFSP is outside the community sphere of policy competences adds yet another layer of opacity between citizens and policy. At first glance it is odd that this is so. A policy area which retains direct national accountability through the national veto would appear to respect traditional intergovernmental models of bargained behaviour: the Member State minister sets off to negotiate with his/her colleagues with a predetermined hierarchy of national 'interests'.

⁵ See, for example, Barrett, Gavin, (2008) National Parliaments and the European Union *The Constitutional Challenge for the Oireachtas and Other Member State Legislatures* On CFSP see Wessels, W. The Parliamentary dimension of CFSP/ESDP. Option for the European Convention. Brussels: European Parliament, 2002. Born, H. and H. Haßnggi. "The Double Democratic deficit" – Parliamentary Accountability and the Use of Force under International Auspices. Ashgate: London, 2004; Viola, D. European Foreign Policy and the European Parliament in the 1990s. London: Ashgate, 2000.

The salience of these interests, the power of the state and the skill of the negotiator then determines the outcome of those negotiations and the Minister returns to his/her national capital with a 'result' for which s/he is responsible before parliament. In fact, what is seen, is that national ministers, their officials and diplomats, embedded within an epistemic community, struggle towards the creation of a community of information, leading to a community of views and – ultimately – a community of action. Within such a dense and structured policy matrix one can quickly identify policy areas in which Member State foreign policies are adapting, adjusting and evolving towards collective and shared norms. This is certainly not to say that national foreign policy interests are loosing to any definition of a collective EU foreign policy interest – simply that national foreign policies are being constructed through a European lens – being Europeanised – in a way which is outside the domestic or national realm. In practical terms, this means that national Foreign Ministers return to national parliaments with a collectively 'agreed' foreign policy position that can – by definition – accommodate little in the way of national parliamentary accountability, unless Ministers operate within tightly circumscribed (and arguably unrealistic) parliamentary mandates – and held accountable to same.

In sum, therefore, this paper argues that the democratic oversight of the Common Foreign and Security Policy suffers through a three-stage critique: That national foreign policy is already deemed a place apart in national context and thereby removed from well-established means of democratic oversight; That the European Union itself is distant venue from which democratic oversight is problematic and finally: That intergovernmental foreign policy cooperation at European level extends this distance even further.

Effective Democratic Oversight – and the Third Critique

Having argued that foreign policy is a 'place apart' for effective democratic oversight and that policy making within the community pillar of the EU already makes oversight of general policy making problematic – what are the challenges for democratic oversight of the CFSP and associated ESDP?

Of course, we start from a position in which matters of CFSP and ESDP donot usually create traditional European legislative proposals such as Directives and Regulations. Instead, it produced proposals for joint actions in a variety of forms; from simple political declarations, to diplomatic demarches, the use of sanctions or inducements and up to the use of military force for peacekeeping purposes⁶

Certainly, the most profound challenge is the fact that through their intergovernmental cooperation, the Member States diminish even further the capacity of national parliaments to exercise sovereignty. Consensus based decision making within both CFSP and ESDP obviates against very clear national negotiating mandates and effective review. Policy edges are blurred, and a collective and institutionalised path dependency delimits consideration of alternative policy options – even for incoming governments with a distinctive national policy mandate. National governments instead

⁶ These were defined by the WEU's 1992 Petersberg Declaration and incorporated into Article 17 of the Treaty of European Union by the EU's Amsterdam Summit. They are: humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking

rely upon the parsed interpretation of collective policy statements, the use of language and diplomatic symbolism as means to identify their distinctive policy positions. Moreover, due to the density of the negotiating matrix – in effect a permanent structured diplomacy – actual policy bargaining is exceptionally oblique and nuanced.

Some analysts have gone even further to claim that this is not simply the outcome of a complex bargaining system and a feature of a new style of Europeanised policy making. They claim that there is, in fact, a conscious bureaucratic impulse to escape parliamentary oversight and thereby to free themselves of accountability and responsibility so as to pursue an unfettered foreign, security and defence policy. At its extremity, such an argument might even lay claim to a fundamentally undemocratic or anti-democratic ambition. This feature of “collusive delegation” among state elites⁷ does assume that there is some effective parliamentary control at national level. Several analysts have pointed out that national parliaments differ substantively in their capacity to influence/determine foreign policy. Among the old 15 EU member states, the countries with the power to approve ESDP military-type operations prior to their launch were Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. Those countries where respective parliamentary European Affairs committees have some formal right of access to CFSP documents are: Austria, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden.⁸

Notwithstanding the heterogeneity of national parliamentary controls, the fact that national governments and ministers can invoke a collective ministerial consensus at EU level as an effective bar to parliamentary oversight, does underscore the pathway to Member States cooperate with each other against their respective democratic societies.⁹ At a minimum this level of intergovernmental consensus-driven politics contributes to an ongoing elite critique of democratic control over foreign policy – where the fickle winds of public opinion are deemed too transient, too ill-informed and too open to irrational passion to act as an appropriate appellant in the diplomatic courts. As against that argument, of course, must be set a democratic peace thesis which insists that there is a verifiable and inverse relationship between democratic oversight and diplomatic and military adventurism.¹⁰

It is also argued that the enlargement of the Union is further weakening democratic oversight. According to Juncos and Pomorska, enlargement has led to significant changes in processes and procedures by which the Member States debate, discuss and agree foreign policy. This has resulted in a greater reliance on informal channels of communication, the proliferation of ‘like-minded’ groups and a consequent attrification of formal, open negotiation among all partners. They insist that “This is because more is done secretly, in the shadow of the corridors, and in ‘closed’ groups.”¹¹ These new practices have managed to maintain absolute levels of substantive CFSP outputs –

⁷ Koenig-Archibugi, Mathias (2002) ‘The Democratic Deficit of EU Foreign and Security Policy’ *International Spectator* 4/2002

⁸ Giovanna Bono, ‘National Parliaments and EU External Military Operations: Is there Any Parliamentary Control?’, *European Security* 14/3 (2005), pp. 203–229.

⁹ K. D. Wolf, “The New Raison d’État as a Problem for Democracy in World Society”, *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1999.

¹⁰ B. Russett, and J. Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organisations* (New York: Norton, 2001).

¹¹ P.494 Juncos, Ana E. and Pomorska, Karolina(2008)‘Does Size Matter? CFSP Committees after Enlargement’,*Journal of European Integration*,30:4,493 — 509

declarations, demarches, diplomatic initiatives etc., but arguably at the cost of an even further distancing of policy from accountability.

There are a range of further issues which complicate effective democratic oversight. First, the distinction between the legal bases of pillar one (Community-based External Relations) and pillar two (CFSP and ESDP) make democratic oversight by the the European Parliament problematic. While the Parliament has its traditional range of tools to hold the Commission and Council to account – it is possible, and there have been instances, where the Parliament has insisted that it has certain rights and responsibilities which the High Representative and/or the Member States have argued did not apply since the matters were arguably the province of CFSP treaty provisions with tightly circumscribed and limited Parliamentary access even to information. While such disputes have thus far been resolved on a case by case basis – this is not a satisfactory basis on which to proceed.

In addition, a broadened CFSP/ESDP engagement with multilateral and other institutions of NATO, OSCE, UN, African Union etc has already raised oversight issues. Can, for example, military or simply operational exigencies of inter-institutional cooperation override institutional and even treaty-defined rights of EU institutions? Can NATO security demands, for example, require the Union to alter or otherwise undermine its own commitments and procedures to transparency? If not, will this entail a critical weakness in the EU as an international partner? If so, will it not allow institutions of the Union to negotiate away even the limited existing framework for transparency and oversight?

The broadened menu of civilian/military cooperation within and between CFSP, ESDP and traditional Community External Relations is also problematic. Holistic approaches to security challenges entail a lifecycle of foreign policy responses: from existing trade and political engagement, through diplomatic contacts, aid and assistance, potentially coercive economic tools and – ultimately – the threat or use of force. In the Union's engagement with some third parties, this entire policy menu may have to be tabled – if even in a speculative or policy planning sense. The fact that different legal bases apply, that different and sometimes cross-cutting procedures exist and that institutional actors and capacity vary across these realms – sometimes substantially – makes the task of oversight all the more difficult.

Moreover, this legal, procedural and institutional heterogeneity is only due to increase. Under the provision of the yet to be ratified Lisbon Treaty, the pass has also been opened to both ad hoc coalitions of the willing and structured frameworks of military cooperation within the EU which might well establish hard cores in defence and security. How can effective democratic oversight be exercised in such a context and in the face of such options and possibilities?

Traditional Parliamentary Scrutiny

We know that in so many cases, Parliament is the servant of the Executive rather than its master. How can we ensure in a multinational institutional framework, that effective democratic oversight is executed where, so often, speed, flexibility and confidentiality is argued to be necessary criteria to a successful foreign and security policy. Too strict a

supervisory regime at national level might in fact tie the hands of national ministers to such an extent that the national interest in such fast-moving negotiations might suffer as a result. It has already been argued that the practice of some Member States, most notably Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Spain and Sweden) in requiring parliamentary engagement has militated against the success of particular missions in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

Parliamentary Oversight and CFSP

In practice, as we have seen, exercising democratic accountability over CFSP is problematic. There is an inevitable tension between those arguing for democratic accountability to be exercised at EU level and those who insist that it can only be effectively conducted at national level. Second, even if the proposed Lisbon Treaty is ratified, the lines of demarcation and political control between the First Pillar Community institutions and the new foreign policy structures (High Representative, External Action Service, European Defence Agency, etc etc) are unclear. While, for example, the EU High Representative is accountable to the Council of Ministers for his/her CFSP and ESDP functions – how is a national foreign minister to be held accountable for the actions of the High Representative – or should they?

This issue is especially acute vis a vis the European Rapid Reaction Force and its associated 'Battlegroups'. With the transfer of the WEU's operational activities to the EU in 2000, the WEU's Parliamentary Assembly acts *de facto* as an inter-parliamentary forum with a treaty-based watching brief over ESDP. It has even – in some eyes controversially – sub-titled itself as the "European Security and Defence Assembly". Even though the link is tenuous, it is the only inter-parliamentary forum available to oversee the Union's development of strictly intergovernmental civil and military crisis-management capabilities. The challenge for national parliamentarians in all Member States is to devise ways by which this collectively constructed ESDP can be effectively held to democratic account by 27 or more national parliaments.

There would therefore appear to be at least five challenges in ensuring appropriate democratic accountability in CFSP:

- Organic - the nature of foreign and security policy is such (see above) that it is traditionally not amenable to the same kind of parliamentary scrutiny procedures as other areas of public policy
- Bureaucratic – the existing and proposed division of political and administrative responsibilities for EU foreign policy (including CFSP and ESDP) does not lend themselves to clear lines of political responsibility and accountability. Parliamentary oversight is therefore divided between European and national levels and is again divided between individual national parliaments and inter-parliamentary bodies (WEU Assembly and COSAC)
- Popular – a significant danger exists that the connection between EU citizens and the key tools by which those citizens' values and interests are pursued overseas is lost. On whose behalf will the 'Battlegroups' be acting- Europe's citizens or its national governments?

- International – in employing the mechanisms of CFSP and ESDP overseas does the Union act unilaterally or multilaterally? Subject to UN charter provisions for member states to act in their own self-defence – will the Union place its use of military capacity or other punitive sanctions within the exclusive framework of multilateral institutions?
- Parliamentary – the lack of *locus standi* and/or of resources necessary to effective supervision

Legally, both now and under the proposed Lisbon Treaty, CFSP and ESDP is essentially controlled by the national governments – each of whom wields an effective veto over the conduct of any common foreign, security and defence policy. Traditionally, where national governments retained veto powers over EU decision making the assumption was that national parliaments might be expected to exercise effective democratic oversight – or at least ‘effective’ in the relative terms of national parliamentary culture and constitutional tradition. As has been implied above, that spectrum was quite wide. However, in the case of CFSP and ESDP this is not the case – even despite the very best efforts of well-resourced, motivated and determined national parliaments

In effect, the vesting of political responsibility amongst national ministers acting collectively – as opposed to within shared EU political institutions – has netted national governments additional executive power vis a vis their own national parliaments. Even if there is effective coordination and cooperation between a national parliament and its executive on an opening position going into CFSP or ESDP negotiations, there is no way that parliament can exercise scrutiny over the often intricate and inevitably secret diplomatic interplay that results, leaving parliaments faced – essentially – with a *fait accompli*. Moreover, this is not a theoretical danger. We have recently seen significant politico-military decisions being taken at EU Council level without effective parliamentary oversight being exercised at either national, inter-parliamentary or European Parliament level. Such decisions have included EU-commanded military intervention operations in Congo and Macedonia.

Even where – for reasons of political tradition and/or constitutional requirement – there is close coordination between a national government and parliament, there is no *collective* parliamentary oversight being exercised as any national government can only be held to account for its own political decisions and the actions (or inaction) of its own military forces. This opens the very real possibility that in a case of malfeasance or misfeasance on the part of a national military force within an EU-led operation which adversely impacted upon the mission as a whole and other national forces – there might, in fact be no effective forum of democratic accountability and/or responsibility.

European Parliament

For its part, the European Parliament (EP) has only the most limited capacity to secure information on and to review the conduct of the CFSP/ESDP. While some limited budgetary powers give the Parliament some access, all of the key institutions and offices (EUFM, EAS, EDA etc) lay outside its purview. Parliament has only the capacity to inform, advise and question. It has no right to initiate or to impact policy or its implementation – and member state governments have worked very hard, such as in the creation of the ATHENA funding mechanism for military operations – to ensure that this remains the case.

Even the Parliament's right to consultation is limited to only the most basic aspects of CFSP and it is the Presidency that decides on the nature and kind of information that is to be provided. While the Commission President and the College of Commissioners are accountable before Parliament, their impact on CFSP and ESDP is very limited. The Commission participates in neither the formulation of Common Positions nor in the adoption of Joint Actions

The proposed treaty does very little to address this situation. It retains the Parliament's right to question the Presidency and specifies that the nominated Special Representatives must brief the Parliament on their own activities. Nor, even though he is a member of the College of Commissioners, can the Parliament sack the proposed EU High Representative. In the event of a College resigning or being sacked en masse – the High Representative remains, appointed by and responsible to the Council.

National Parliaments

What the proposed treaty does provide for, however, is marginally improved information flows to national parliaments. It requires, for example that Council Minutes and Agendas should be distributed to national parliaments at the same time as they are sent to national governments. Similarly, it requires that the Commission distribute legislative and policy details to parliaments when it sends these to the Council and European Parliament and it provides for a six-week period before such proposals are discussed by the Council to allow national parliaments to exercise their own scrutiny functions.

The absence of a dialogue between national parliaments and the Union's executive bodies is a significant weakness – undercutting the potential for real democratic accountability. In the only visible innovation in this area is the proposal to convene ad hoc inter-parliamentary conferences – and CFSP/ESDP is specified as an area for attention – but such conferences would have no decision-making role and their opinions and findings would bind neither the European Parliament nor respective national parliaments.¹²

What might also have been provided for are the steps that were proposed by Philippe Morillon MEP on behalf of the EP Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy Committee. He suggested a specific division of labour between national parliaments and the European Parliament which would have provided for the former's responsibility for procurement, expenditure and the essential decision to participate in a joint EU military action and then EP responsibility for the democratic authorization of the specific operational mandate of that military force as well as the ultimate conduct and costs of that operation. He also argued that the EP should have responsibility for the democratic oversight of the common defence policy. At this writing, however, with or without the Lisbon Treaty, the Union continues to operate its CFSP and ESDP on the basis of temporary coalitions of the willing.

It must be borne in mind that national parliaments retain significant responsibilities that will impinge on the capacity of the Union to develop an effective and coherent common foreign, security and defence policy. In most member states, parliaments have final

¹² “Draft Protocol on the role of national parliaments in the European Union”, Section III, paragraph 8 and 9: European Convention. (26 May 2003). *Draft constitution, Volume 1 - Revised text of part one*. Brussels, European Convention.

responsibility for deploying troops overseas, for defence procurement decisions and for approving defence budgets. They need to be brought into the European policy loop in a meaningful way if the Union's policy is to be effective and if it is to be grounded in democratic legitimacy.

As noted above, there is within the Protocol on the role of national parliaments appended to the Lisbon Treaty a provision for the European Parliament and the national parliaments to formulate ad hoc structures to foster inter-parliamentary cooperation, and in particular in the area of CFSP and ESDP. According to a former President of the WEU Assembly, Armand De Decker such inclusive cooperation must provide for meaningful consultation, structures for substantive research and debate, an obligation on the Council to inform and reply to such a body and channels for informal and confidential dialogue.¹³

Conclusions

A range of conclusions may be drawn from the analysis above. There is no doubt that in maintaining effective parliamentary scrutiny over the Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy and its European Security and Defence Policy, national parliaments face four sets of cumulative challenges;

- 1) Those arising from the problematic nature of parliamentary supervision of foreign and security policy in general
- 2) Those arising from national parliament's variegated weaknesses vis a vis other parliaments in exercising effective parliamentary control over the Executive
- 3) Those arising from the unique nature of EU foreign, security and defence policy – which encompasses both supranational and intergovernmental decision making frameworks
- 4) Those arising from the fact that in the construction of the CFSP and ESDP, the exercise of Executive power is further distanced from effective parliamentary control and supervision.

It is unlikely that anything substantive may be done to address the first of these challenges. The very nature of foreign, security and defence policy is such that it is widely regarded as being distinct from the general run of public policy. At the same time, national parliamentarians might consider structures and procedures that have been put in place elsewhere so as to get a better handle on this policy area. The use, for example, of closed or confidential committee meetings is used to good effect in a number of parliaments so that sensitive information can be shared between the Executive and members of the legislature. While this is not open to public scrutiny, it may at least have the effect of better informing key legislators on the background to and necessity of policy decisions and thus raise the level of debate and legislative engagement in the policy process. One move in this direction is the confidential briefing of the Chairpersons of appropriate committees. Against this, of course, is the danger of

¹³ Speaking notes for the President of the Assembly of WEU, Armand De Decker, for the ISIS-Europe conference on "Tackling the 'Double Democratic Deficit' and Improving the Accountability of ESDP", Brussels, 29 April 2004 http://www.dcaf.ch/news/Democratic_Deficit/DeDecker_englishversion.pdf

creating a 'golden cage' which serves only to co-opt parliamentarians into the inner policy sanctum – serving further to marginalize other legislators and the general public.

From this research, there is no indication that parliamentarians are in any way unwilling to engage with Ministers and officials on issues related to European foreign and security policy. Moreover, it is clear that the Union's foreign, security and defence policy does not structurally 'fit' easily into any parliamentary supervisory structure – how 'foreign' is it for a start? This is reflected in the policy overlap that often exists between national parliamentary committees covering European Affairs and Foreign Affairs.

Finally, and perhaps most problematically, how can national parliaments and the EP exercise effective oversight of a policy that is formally intergovernmental and yet is conducted by a composite executive which – collectively – answers to no democratic assembly? This is perhaps the toughest issue of all and lays well beyond the capacity of this paper to address. Three basic options are open. The first is to decide that CFSP and ESDP is exercised by and on behalf of the European Union and that as such, it must – over time – become an integral policy of that Union on the same basis as and subject to same democratic checks and balances. This 'federalisation' of CFSP and ESDP would then imply that the European Parliament should be the forum in which democratic accountability is exercised. The second is to determine that the Union's foreign, security and defence policy will remain one of differentiated governance and to agree between the national parliaments and the European Parliament upon some *modus operandi* which would ensure that all aspects of that policy is democratically accountable in one or another context. The third option is to decide that CFSP and ESDP should and will remain wholly intergovernmental and essentially distinct from the rest of the Union's external relations. Thus, it is incumbent on the national parliaments to work together either multilaterally (through, for example, COSAC) or through some delegation of responsibility (through, for example, the WEU's Parliamentary Assembly) to that democratic end.

Certainly some short terms progress is possible but much could yet be done to strengthen the underpinnings of that scrutiny function and to involve parliamentarians more meaningfully in the national and thereby the European foreign and security policy process. At the same time, and by its very nature, CFSP and ESDP pose particular challenges to effective parliamentary oversight – challenges that no single parliament can address. These questions urgently require a robust and meaningful answer from national parliaments acting together and in concert with their colleagues in the European Parliament. Without such mobilisation, CFSP and ESDP will remain a 'place apart' in terms of the Union's own democratic deficit.