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Council Meeting, March 2013. Photo: European Council

Global Power Europe: The hidden imperial Agenda behind the European Council, 19./20. December 2013

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For the first time in five years, the European Council meeting on 19./20. December 2013 will exclusively be dedicated to military issues. Advertised as the most important gathering for the future of the "Common Security and Defense Policy" (CSDP) in recent memories, for months if not years a plethora of papers, proposals and committees were busy preparing this European[1] summit. Although other sources will be used when deemed necessary, in order to get some insights what will be at issue at the summit and to shed some light on the strategic debate in the European Union as a whole, in the following, we will largely focus on the three most important contributions in this context: 'Preparing the December 2013 European Council on Security and Defence', written by Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the CSDP (Ashton 2013); the paper 'Towards a European Global Strategy' (EGS 2013), prepared by the 'Global Strategy Project' that had been initiated by the foreign ministers of Italy, Poland, Spain and Sweden; and, last but not least, the report 'Enabling the future: European military capabilities 2013-2025: challenges and avenues' (Rogers and Gilli 2013), published by the European Union's most important think tank, the Institute for Security Studies (EUISS).[2]

Although in those contributions, numerous aspects are touched, they by and large all revolve around the same questions: How can the European Union develop a geostrategy that enables it to become a Global Power? What is the role of the military in order to foster this goal? Where should Europe's military intervene - and for what purposes? And finally, how can the military capacities deemed necessary be generated, in light of a public that is highly skeptical towards any increases in military spending?

As we will see, out of the three reviewed papers, the most dangerous and aggressive one is the EUISS report "Enabling the future" which was authored by James Rogers and Andrea Gilli. It speaks volumes that Europe's most important think tank entrusts a person like James Rogers with the preparation of its contribution to the summit. He is the Co-Director of the 'Group on Grand Strategy',

an association of prominent EU geopoliticians that is vehemently lobbying for a European role as a Global Power. For this purpose they argue that Europe must embrace an ambitious geostrategy which is defined by Rogers (2011: 12) as follows: "The ultimate aim of geostrategy, then, is to link geography and politics to maximize the power and reach of the domestic territory. […] Such an approach must be backed up by a subtle but formidable military posture, which aims to prevent potential rivals from emerging."

By drawing on additional material from other members of the 'Group on Grand Strategy', and particularly by James Rogers himself, this article tries to show that there indeed exists such a coherent European imperial geostrategy and to name its essential elements. Furthermore, it shall be illustrated that the most important elements of this strategy can not only be found in the paper from Rogers and Gilli but also - although more implicit than explicit - in the other two reviewed papers for the preparation of the summit. Thereby this article tries to shed light on the hidden imperial agenda of Europe's defence summit - and also on the obstacles this ambitious and dangerous expansionist project still faces. This hopefully should help to enable us to identify how concrete proposals to 'improve' Europe's military shape fit in the grand picture of a strategic debate that aims to produce an aggressive imperial geostrategy for Europe as a world power.

1. Political Ambitions: Global Power, not Global Peace

From its very beginning, the European Union has tried to pursue two overarching goals, the saying goes: prosperity and peace. We do not have to investigate the truth of this claim as it has become painfully clear that this nowadays clearly no longer holds true. As far as prosperity is concerned, we all know what has happened since the economic and financial crisis broke out. But peace as a guiding vision, holding the European project together, is also increasingly and ever more directly described as a thing of the past. In light of rising powers like China and ever increasing conflicts among the world's most important states, peace is singled out as being a luxury of the past that is no longer affordable. Nowadays, the dominating view is that only by pooling their resources and fully embracing power politics, the European Union will be able to survive in this increasingly competitive Game of Thrones called international relations.[3]

As James Rogers argues together with Luis Simon, the other Director of the 'Group on Grand Strategy': "Today, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, the European Union, its Member States and the European people stand at a cross-roads. As a new generation has started to come to power and new geopolitical forces have begun to reshape the world around us, the political vision that once guided European integration has lost its way. […] We should be under no illusions here; even our shared liberal values are not immune from corrupting foreign influences, particularly in a world where large and potentially predatory autocracies will acquire more and more influence and power. We argue that, increasingly, it will only be through an effective grand strategy and sheer power that we will be able to protect European values – the principles symbolising who we are – from the outside world. […] Europeans currently face two futures: a future of power or a future of ruin. There is no alternative: we can either remain the rulers, or become the ruled." (Rogers and Simon 2011: 1; 8 and 6f.)

Consequently, James Rogers (2012) was not pleased, when the Europen Union was awarded with the nobel peace price. In his opinion, this did send the wrong – peaceful – message: "As for the European Union: if it has a future at all, it is less as a European peacekeeper but as a global power, an instrument to allow Europeans to speak – as Valéry Giscard d'Estaing put it in his opening speech to the European Convention in 2002 – 'as a political power which will talk on equal terms to the greatest powers on our planet, either existing or future'. [N]o pro-European should congratulate themselves with respect to winning the Nobel Peace Prize; rather, they should see it more as a wake-up call, a means of encouraging more sophisticated geopolitical thinking about security in their own continent, and the role played by hard geostrategic power in the enforcement of order."

As many publications of the 'Group on Grand Strategy' often positively refer to him (e.g. Rogers 2012a: 16; Rogers and Simón 2011: 3), it is helpful to take a short view at the works of Robert Cooper. As the former Director-General for External and Politico-Military Affairs at the General Secretariat of the Council, one of the most influential posts regarding Europe's foreign policy, Cooper had been the lead author of the European Security Strategy which vehemently advocated that Europe must become a "Global Actor" – which is only a nicer way to demand a role as a leading world power.[4] Cooper is said to be one of the most influential EU strategists (Foley 2007) and he has vocally called for a European strategy he calls "liberal imperialism": "Postmodern imperialism takes two forms. First there is the voluntary imperialism of the global economy. This is usually operated by an international consortium through International Financial Institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. […] The second form of postmodern imperialism might be called the imperialism of neighbours. Instability in your neighbourhood poses threats which no state can ignore. Misgovernment, ethnic violence and crime in the Balkans poses a threat to Europe. The response has been to create something like a voluntary UN protectorate in Bosnia and Kosovo." (Cooper 2002: 18) In Cooper's view, those who do not share his enthusiasm for the "voluntary imperialism of global economy" will be targeted by Europe's military: "The challenge to the postmodern world is to get used to the idea of double standards. Among ourselves, we operate on the basis of laws and open cooperative security. But when dealing with more old-fashioned kinds of states outside the postmodern continent of Europe, we need to revert to the rougher methods of an earlier era – force, pre-emptive attack, deception, whatever is necessary to deal with those who still live in the nineteenth century world of every state for itself. Among ourselves, we keep the law but when we are operating in the jungle, we must also use the laws of the jungle." (Cooper 2002: 16)

The notion that the European Union has to (militarily) prepare itself for new geopolitical competitions has nowadays nearly become commonplace in virtually every strategic document. Ashton's paper, for example, also claims that "Europe's geostrategic position today is marked by increased global volatility, emerging security challenges" and it refers to an "increased competition for energy, water and other resources both at a national and international level." (Ashton 2013: 1) Likewise, the 'European Global Strategy' (2013: 11) predicts: "In the years to come there will be even greater competition from other powers for influence and resources in the strategic neighbourhood." Finally, Rogers and Gilli (2013: 6) are, as usual, more blunt in their assessment: "It is therefore imperative to identify and define the common 'strategic interests' of the Union. […] This begs the question: what sort of armed forces are Europeans likely to have (and need) by 2025? Moreover, how might Europeans better organise themselves to take part in the new global competition for wealth, influence and power?"

Notice that in this view, the strategic interests of the European Union are inextricably linked with military questions and the global struggle for power and influence – a view that has become

deeply entrenched within Europe's political elites. In short, as Ashton (2013a) emphasized in a speech in March 2013, the military has two roles, a more general one as a primary and indispensable tool to acquire power, and a second – quite obvious – one, as the necessary means to wage wars: "The first is political, and it concerns fulfilling Europe's ambitions on the world stage. The second is operational: ensuring that Europe has the right military capabilities to be able to act." By arguing that the military is necessary for "fulfilling Europe's ambitions on the world stage", Ashton exposes herself as having embraced a similar view like, for example, Nick Witney, the former Head of the European Defense Agency: "The value of Europe's armed forces is less in countering specific 'threats' than as necessary instruments of power and influence in a rapidly changing world, where militaries still matter." (Witney 2011: 1; see also Rogers 2013)

Similarly, Luis Simón (2013: 5) from the 'Group on Grand Strategy' argues in an article named "No might, no right": "Ultimately, the increasing marginalisation of the military in Europe results from a lack of understanding of the constructive and stabilising role it plays in international politics. Military power is not just an asset of last resort that comes to the fore in exceptional circumstances. It encompasses a wide array of 'silent security' functions, beyond defence or waging war, that is. These include intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance, deterrence, prevention and defence diplomacy. In the words of Alfred Thayer Mahan, 'force is never more operative than when it is known to exist but is not brandished'. 'Broadly considered', Mahan goes on, 'force must be regarded as an inevitable factor in the maintenance of the general international balances'."

But, for sure, in the view of Europe's political elites, the military should also fulfill more 'direct action', i.e. military interventions, in order to enforce the interests of the ruling class. Inevitably this leads to two questions that are prominently addressed in all of the three main papers for the summit meeting: What should be the geographic scope of such military interventions and therefore the contours of an emerging European empire and what are the primary missions to be conducted therein?

2. Geographical Scope: Europe as an Empire

In Brussels, the expansion of the European sphere of power and influence is considered a necessary prerequisite in order to become a truly world power. The crucial point is to proceed step by step: "Of course, if the EU wants to become a global power, it first needs to assert itself as a power in its own region." (Renard 2011: 5) In this context, the American 'pivoting' to East Asia is interpreted as creating the necessity – or in many views: the opportunity – to finally establish the European Union as the regional hegemon in its backyard.

This includes, as is made painfully clear by all three papers, the willingness to use force in order to uphold the European imperial order. As writes the European Global Strategy (2013: 11f.): "The EU's global influence will increasingly be determined by its actions in its strategic neighbourhood. […] The EU should also be prepared to undertake autonomously the full spectrum of civilian and military missions in the strategic neighbourhood in keeping with international law, when and where this is necessary to protect vital European interests. This implies the ability to project both civilian and military capabilities."

Here, Europe's area of (military) interest far exceeds the immediate neighbourhood, a point that is also put forward by Ashton (2013: 2 and 5) when she demands: "Europe must assume greater responsibility for its own security and that of its neighbourhood. […] The Union must be able to act decisively through CSDP as a security provider, in partnership when possible but autonomously when necessary, in its neighbourhood, including through direct intervention. Strategic autonomy must materialize first in the EU's neighbourhood. […] Increasingly also the 'neighbours of the neighbours' are being affected, e.g. in the Sahel or in the Horn of Africa, two regions where the Union is conducting five crisis management missions."

While not advocating 'boots on the ground' in East Asia, Ashton (2013: 9) nevertheless even stresses the necessity for a maritime military presence in the region: "Europe's maritime security is an integral part of its overall security. It is a crucial domain. Modern economies depend heavily on open sea lanes and the freedom to navigate (90% of European trade is by sea): strategic stockpiles are now based at sea, across the globe, on route from supplier to customer. In the near future, new sea lanes could open up with important geostrategic implications. The Arctic in particular will require increasing attention in terms of maritime safety, surveillance and environmental protection. The EU has strategic maritime security interests around the globe and needs to be able to safeguard them against significant maritime risks and threats - ranging from illegal migration, drug trafficking, smuggling of goods and illegal fishing to terrorism maritime piracy and armed robbery at sea as well as territorial maritime disputes and acts of aggression or armed conflict between states."

This coincides with the views of Rogers and Gilli (2013: 32) which are, again, a little bit more straightforward in their statements, as they argue that a) Europe's 'area of interest' extends far beyond the immediate neighborhood stretching deep into East Asia; and b) that in order to control these areas, a number of new military bases will be necessary – as some sort of new outposts of the European empire. "In particular, Europeans should focus on improving their ability to temporarily project and even permanently extend their armed forces into the EU's geographic zones of privileged interest. [T]hese regions include the eastern, northern and southern neighbourhoods – the Caucasus, the Wider North, the Middle East and North Africa – and, importantly, the regions bordering with them, from Sub-Saharan Africa to Central Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Consequently, given the predominantly maritime and littoral nature of these regions, Europeans should – at the broadest level – put greater emphasis on maintaining and enhancing their naval and aerospace capabilities, as well as the logistical means to sustain them."

Beside the more general description of 'necessary' military missions (see box), Rogers and Gilli (2013: 32f.) also make some forecasts in this context: "[I]n addition to disaster response, stabilisation and peacekeeping missions – not dealt with in this Report, given the extensive experience already accumulated by the EU in this sphere over the past decade – EU armed forces may need to mount the following kinds of military operation by 2025:

Forward presence missions, such as:

1. Naval patrols to enhance regional confidence, protect trade routes or prevent piracy, such as in the Indo-Pacific region or the Gulf of Guinea
2. Command of the sea to dissuade foreign aggression during periods of tension.

Offensive missions, such as:

1. Force projection to stop a civil war in Central Africa or elsewhere
2. Expeditionary warfare to constrain an aggressive regime in the wider Middle East.

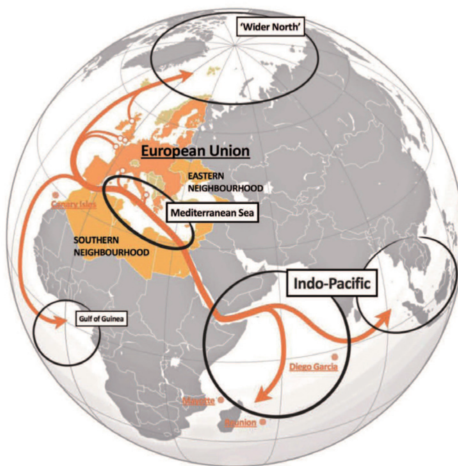
Defensive missions, such as:

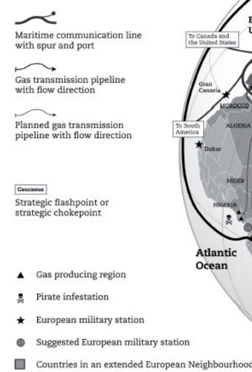
1. Defending against (or better, deterring) cyber and ballistic missile attacks on the European homeland

2. Protecting overseas territories or critical infrastructure (e.g. the Suez Canal)."

Yet, being able to conduct such missions 'autonomously' – i.e. largely independent from the United States – requires large military capacities: "Defining such 'autonomy' once and for all may be challenging, of course, but it surely entails the ability to assess a crisis situation independently of foreign intelligence (or at least the capacity to evaluate its truthfulness and reliability); the possession and control of the capabilities required to fulfil a given mission; and relative security of supply of the relevant equipment as well as access to the enabling technologies." (Rogers and Gilli 2013: 14)

James Rogers' Imperial Designs





Europe's Military Missions

"A tentative checklist of common EU objectives and 'strategic interests' […] may well include, along with a peaceful, stable and prosperous neighbourhood:

1. Safeguarding the European 'homeland' from foreign conventional, CBRN or cyberattacks, as perpetrated by (surrounding or distant) state or non-state actors
2. Securing maritime communication lines and strategic communications infrastructure – including maritime chokepoints, energy transmission pipelines and computer systems (which are all vital for the European economy and way of life) – from blokkade or hostile actions
3. Protecting supplies of energy and raw materials in overseas territories and remote lands (including their trading systems) from exploitation or annexation by foreign players, while developing ways to guarantee the 'global commons' by including ever more stakeholders
4. Maintaining regional balances of power(s) which favour European values and requirements, namely through international law and an inclusive multilateral system, starting with the UN Charter and the treaties, regulations and regimes of other key international bodies." (Rogers and Gilli 2013: 17f.)

Rogers' Grand Area

"Given that certain powers have sought to take advantage of key regions and entrench themselves – often to the disadvantage of others – the European Union should do more to ascertain the minimal geographic area required to sustain the continued expansion of its own economy. From a geopolitical perspective, this zone would have to meet five criteria:

1. It would have to hold all the basic resources necessary to fuel European manufacturing needs and future industrial requirements;
2. Contain all the key trade routes, especially energy transmission pipelines and maritime shipping routes, from other regions to the European homeland;
3. Have the fewest possible geopolitical afflictions that could lead to the area's disintegration and thereby harm future European economic development;
4. Show the least likelihood of significant encroachment by powerful foreign actors, relative to its importance to the European economy and geopolitical interests;
5. Represent an area the European Union Region can work towards defending most cost-effectively through the expansion of the Common Security and Defence Policy – in other words, without mandating an excessive and draining defence effort." (Rogers 2011: 21)

"New European military stations may be required in the Caucasus and Central Asia, the Artic Region, and along the coastlines of the Indian Ocean. The intention behind these installations would be […] to exercise a latent but permanent power within the 'Grand Area'." (ibid.: 23)

3. Military Means: Pooling to generate more Capacities

Some 20 years ago, Belgian economist and politician Mark Eyskens coined a phrase that is heavily cited these days: "Europe is an economic giant, a political dwarf, and a military worm."[5] As should have become clear so far, Brussels' political elite is dead set to become a political giant which in their view necessitates a gigantic military apparatus. With this in mind, the fans of a European empire face a serious problem: Actually, the large majority of the European population is arguing for rigorous cuts in the military budgets instead of continual reductions in social spending – in a survey in Germany it was an overwhelming majority of about 82 percent (ZDF-Politikbarometer 2012). In France and other European countries, there is a similar mood: "If faced with a tradeoff between funding entitlements, such as pensions, health care, and social welfare payments versus defense, the choice would be obvious. In Europe, 'abstract notions of national security and defence mean little when fundamental issues of social existence are at stake.'" (Flanagan 2011: 15[6])

Against this background, Ashton (2013: 2) tries to emphasize the benefits of the armaments sector – and therefore of high military budgets - to the public. "[T]he European defence market is also feeling the effects of the financial crisis. Europe's defence industries are not only important for our security, by providing capabilities for our armed forces, but also for jobs, growth and innovation." This claim is complete nonsense: For one, nowadays new technologies are almost exclusively developed by civilian companies, and the arms industry draws on their know-how and not vice versa, as has been documented by a number of studies (see e.g. Barrinha 2010: 473; Mawdsley 2011: 17). Furthermore, it is a particular bad idea to throw money to armaments companies in the hope that this would create jobs: "Many research studies show that investment in the military is the least effective way to create jobs, regardless of the other costs of military spending. According to a University of Massachusetts study, defence spending per US$ one billion creates the fewest number of jobs, less than half of what it could generate if invested in education and public transport. At a time of desperate need for investment in job creation, supporting a bloated and wasteful military can not be justified given how many more jobs such money would create in areas such as health and public transport." (Slijper 2013: 3)

So, while there had been a significant increase in the European military budgets – as well as in corporate profits[7] – between 2000 and 2012[8] and although the recent budget cuts are way less severe than one would think in light of the constant moaning from politics, industry and military, a substantial *increase* is currently not in the cards. Rogers and Gilli (2013: 15) point to this problem as well as to what they regard as the possible solution: "As there is little hope of any increase in national spending for the foreseeable future, the only solution to counter such a risk is to do more together. This may well be the only way not only to maintain core capabilities but also to develop new ones – *together.*" In the view of Rogers and Gilli (2013: 5), the stakes are incredibly high: "Failing to act, therefore, means that a mixture of acute budgetary pressures, lack of investment in research and development, and widespread reluctance to make the maintenance of effective armed forces a political priority could cause additional reductions in EU military capacity as well as a potential exodus of the defence industry and a loss of technological leadership. Demilitarisation and deindustrialisation risk going hand-in-hand." In their view, this would be a major setback: "Europeans will need to preserve a minimum of strategic autonomy in key sectors of the European armaments industry in order to maintain (and further develop) the operational and technological capacity to collaborate with allies and partners and to compete (also militarily) with emerging global players." (Rogers and Gilli 2013: 18)

Catherine Ashton (2013: 20f.) quite similarly argues: "Declining defence budgets, combined with the fragmentation of European demand and supply requirements jeopardise the sustainability of this industry. […] Apart from a few notable exceptions, no European government alone can launch major new programmes: the necessary investments are too high and the national markets are too small. With defence budgets under pressure, further market-driven industrial restructuring and consolidation is inevitable." For Ashton (2013: 20), this is a highly unfortunate perspective as she sees a strong and autonomous armaments industry as a key strategic asset and therefore a valuable tool of a state's power: "A strong, healthy and globally competitive European Defence and Technological Industrial Base (EDTIB) is a prerequisite for developing and sustaining defence capabilities and securing the strategic autonomy of Europe. […] Declining defence budgets, combined with the fragmentation of European demand and supply requirements jeopardise the sustainability of this industry."[9]

Therefore, the "fragmentation" of demand (too many different national procurement programs) and supply (too many and too small companies) is identified as the key problem.[10] Low margins are the result, leading to high prices and risking the competitiveness of Europe's companies in the global market. To avoid the fate of being "demilitarized and deindustrialized", in recent years 'Pooling and Sharing' (P&S) – the collective procurement and use of military equipment - has become the most important initiative, as Ashton (2013: 15f.) makes clear: "Cooperation in the area of military capability development has become essential to the maintenance of capabilities and to the success of CSDP. Cooperation allows Member States to develop, acquire, operate and maintain capabilities together, making best use of potential economies of scale and to enhance military effectiveness. Pooling & Sharing was launched to address this, and good progress has been achieved. […] A strong impulse is required at European Council level, both to embed Pooling & Sharing in Member States' defence planning and decision-making processes, and to deliver key capabilities through major cooperative projects." Therefore Ashton (2013: 15) proposes various incentives in order to 'encourage' European armament cooperation: "In order to make cooperation more systematic, the European Council should also decide on incentives for defence cooperation in Europe or collaborative projects, including of a fiscal nature such as VAT exemption. Protecting cooperative projects and initiatives from budget cuts would act as a real incentive. Innovative financing arrangements (Private Finance Initiative or Public Private Partnerships) should also be considered."

Pooling & Sharing shall foster the consolidation of the industrial supply side as well: As fewer programs will mean fewer orders for fewer companies, a wave of mergers & acquisitions is to be expected. The whole logic and endpoint of this consolidation process – a Transeuropeanized defence industry, concentrated in the hands of a few so called Eurochampions - has been aptly summarized by Stefan Zoller, former Chief Executive Officer of EADS' armament subsidiary Cassidian: "The survivability of the European defense and security industries is endangered against the background [of] global challenges, which, however, at the same time are also the decisive factor in Europe's positioning as an actor in world politics. Consolidation by concentration […] is as necessary as it is basically also possible. […] This aim stands or falls, however, with the political readiness to support and flank corresponding industrial-political measures. […] The objective of a consolidation of the European defense and security industry, however it might be designed, must

be focussed on a dimension which at least tends to correspond to that of the U.S.-American market.“ (Zoller 2011: 239-249)

According to a recent study, conducted by the consulting firm McKinsey, the European Union has high expectations: in the future it hopes to save approximately one third of its equipment spending due to Pooling & Sharing (Handelsblatt 2013[11]). Although it is unclear, weather increased armament cooperation will be able to save money at all (see Wagner 2012: 48ff.), even more important is the fact, that the expected savings are not meant to be used for reductions of the military budgets – quite the contrary: The goal of Pooling & Sharing is to free up money to buy more and 'better' military equipment. In short, it is all about more bang for the buck, as Claude-France Arnould, Chief of the European Defence Agency, points out: "Pooling & Sharing cannot be an alibi to further reduce efforts. It is a way to harness and maximise investment. Pooling & Sharing is not an excuse to invest less; rather, it offers a way to acquire together what is out of reach individually and get more efficiency in the deployment of these capabilities." (Arnould 2012)

4. Potential Obstacles: Sovereignty, Oligopolization or Superstate?

As argued above, a concentration of political and industrial power is seen by a huge majority of Europe's elites as the only way to generate 'sufficient' military capacities. But, at the same time, every state tries to hold a grip on as much political influence as possible and to ensure the survival of its own armaments industry. As the former Head of the European Defence Agency, Nick Witney, complained: "Governments generally insist that it is up to industry leaders to consolidate their companies according to commercial considerations. But the same politicians […] try to ensure that, when the inevitable industry contraction and consolidation occurs, their own 'national champion' is amongst the last men standing.“ (Witney 2008: 38.)

As Europe is still composed out of competing nation sates with different interests, this could serve as a potential stumbling block for those who aspire a 'European Superpower': "[D]espite a decade of rhetoric and initiatives for more cooperation and less national influence on EU defence, national prerogatives still dominate", laments a study, prepared for the Directorate General for External Policies of the European Union (Mölling and Brune 2011: 15). On the other hand, one should not underestimate the extent to which Europe's elites are unhappy with their – as they call them – "bonsai armies" (Rogers and Gilli 2013: 52). That's why there are a number of urgent calls to overcome national reservations and to take bold steps at the summit meeting. For example, Jolyon Howorth (2013) from the 'Group on Grand Strategy' argues: "Prognoses for the success of the December Council range from pessimistic to dire. Most commentators predict minimal progress on essentially technical issues. This is a recipe for failure. The summit is too necessary to risk being a non-event. It should not be about fine-tuning. If CSDP is to develop into a policy area with a future, it is time to ask some probing, fundamental questions."

Essentially, there are two ways to create a European military superpower, one would come at the expense of the small and medium Member States, the other would cost the most powerful ones much of their current influence – both involve a massive transfer away from the (or from some) nation states, although in very different ways. The first option would be to lay Europe's military policy completely in the hands of a Tri-directorate of Germany, France and Great Britain. Thereby, taking bold steps would no longer be hindered and blocked by the reservations (and interests) of the small and medium Member States. For example, according to Chrisitan Mölling, who was involved in the preparation of the highly influential EUISS report (Rogers and Gilli 2013: 4), this is Europe's only chance to escape what he calls its current crisis of defence: "As the political decisions necessary for the structural change and their implementation will increasingly depend upon those three states, they should create an informal leading trio. […] The task of this trio would be to foster the defence-political focus of Europe along the lines of effectiveness and efficiency. As a matter of fact, the three would work out a consensus over topics among themselves. Due to their political influence und to the means of the three lead nations, this consensus would have to be understood as a clear recommendation to other states of Europe." (Mölling 2013: 30)

Yet, attempts leading to a quasi Oligopolization of Europe's military policy are met with great skepticism if not outright hostility from those countries that could quickly find themselves deprived of a say over Europe's (and their own national) military policy.[12] This is also the reason, why the details how to activate a 'Permanent Structured Cooperation' (PSC), a new option created by the Lisbon Treaty to form 'core groups' out of the willing and military capable that can exclusively deal with specific aspects of Europe's CSDP, have not been hammered out so far. As Ashton (2013: 16) writes: "[T]he Treaty provides for an opportunity for an enhanced form of cooperation through Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). While there have been initial exploratory discussions in 2009 and 2010 on the implementation of PESCO, the appetite to move forward remains limited at this stage."

Yet, the current financial and economic crisis could turn itself out to be a blessing in disguise for a transfer of power to such a Tri-directorate as financially strapped small and medium states could come under immense pressure to give up parts of their sovereignty in the military area, maybe in exchange for 'cheaper' equipment or whatever, like many of them had already to do in the economic sphere. Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine that most of the Member States could be willing to fully entrust their sovereignty to Germany, France and Great Britain. That's why a second option for 'Superpower Europe' comes into play, which on the one hand tries to address the reservations about national sovereignty and on the other those about being subordinated to the will of a few European powers.

In this context, Rogers and Gilli (2013: 53) argue that Europeans are already loosing their sovereignty because they are increasingly unable to wage war. Therefore transferring – Europeanizing – the military policy from the nation state to the European Union (and not to some powerful nation states) is described as a prerequisite for regaining some sort of sovereignty, not for abolishing it: "[C] oncerns about the possible loss of national sovereignty – legitimate though they may be – that managing and developing military capabilities together (as argued in this Report) may imply, seem somewhat beside the point. Europeans are already losing sovereignty by not consolidating, not optimising, not innovating, not regionalising and not integrating their military capabilities. They are also losing 'strategic autonomy', and (re)gaining at least some requires action and determination. Generating both requires, in turn, appropriate enabling mechanisms." In this view, there is no alternative to a fully communitarised – i.e. fully laid into the competences of the European Union – military policy, if one wants to become a 'Superpower Europe': "Needless to say, the level of interdependence and integration among the member states in the European Monetary Union (EMU) framework is hardly comparable to that in defence policy – in legal, institutional and political terms. Yet is it really inconceivable to imagine (and sketch out) a similar process in the security and defence domain?" (Rogers and Gilli 2013: 55) Where

this should end – and why - Rogers and Simon (2011: 4 and 8) made unmistakably clear: “The old European nation-states are no longer big enough to make their voices heard in a rapidly changing world, and [...] the best way to protect the values that those national communities hold dear is through a greater and more potent grouping. […] In short, the European Union must become a superstate and a super-nation, which should enable it – in turn – to become a superpower.“

It is very hard to predict which path the European project will take, as we can currently see a strange mix of proposals and initiatives. Some of them, for example the relentless drives to finally hammer out the details of PSC or pressure to introduce majority voting in the area of CSDP[13], suggest that we are moving in the direction of an ‘Oligopolistic Superpower’. On the other hand, especially the growing role of the European Commission which has been de facto charged with the task to create a truly European defence market, an area where the Member States up to some years ago would never have given it a say (Lösing and Wagner 2013), or the renewed debate over establishing a truly European Army (Major 2012) tend to favour the concept of a ‘Europeanized Superpower’. This rather schizophrenic dual-track-approach is reflected in the Final Report of the Future of Europe Group (2012: 2), prepared by the Foreign Ministers of eleven Member States: “In the long term, we should seek more majority decisions in the CFSP sphere, joint representation in international organizations, where possible, and a European defence policy. For some members of the Group this could eventually involve a European army.”

Yet, these two different visions for Europe’s future are essentially only two sides of the same militaristic coin. Stressing the need for a more efficient – i.e. more deadly - military policy, both demand a transfer of power and competences away from most (Oligopolization) or all (Europeanization) of the nation states. But as every step in one of those directions will inevitably lead to an even more aggressive foreign policy, they have to be met with outright resistance – at the European Summit as well as in its aftermath.

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Endnotes

1 When reference is made hereinafter to "Europe", the author is well aware of the fact that the European Union by no means comprises all countries and people of the continent. Although reference should therefore actually rather be made to "EUrope" and "EUropean", the other spelling is used because it is much easier to read.

2 This sample is justified by a combination of the facts that those three reports were the most frequently cited in the debate and because all three have a highly prominent institutional background.

3 For example, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair argues: "For Europe, the crucial thing is to understand that the only way that you will get support for Europe today is not on the basis of a sort of post-war view that the EU is necessary for peace. […] The rationale for Europe today therefore is about power, not peace. […] In a world in particular in which China is going to become the dominant power of the 21st century, it is sensible for Europe to combine together, to use its collective weight in order to achieve influence." (Hough 2011)

4 The European Security Strategy (2003: 1) claims: „As a union of 25 states with over 450 million people producing a quarter of the world's Gross National Product (GNP), and with a wide range of instruments at its disposal, the European Union is inevitably a global player."

5 http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Mark_Eyskens

6 The quote is from Jack Treddenick.

7 In December 2012, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) published the "European Security, Defense, and Space (ESDS) Index" which is composed of 21 defence and security companies: "The analysis shows that, between 2001 and 2011, revenue for companies in the CSIS ESDS Index grew from 58 billion to 91 billion euros (in constant 2011 euros), a 57.7 percent increase overall…" (Hofbauer et. al. 2012: 35)

8 According to SIPRI (2013), the combined European military budgets (in constant prices) rose from $250 billion (2000) to $286 billion (2012).

9 Likewise the European Global Strategy (2013: 21) claims: „The preservation of effective military capabilities will continue to depend on the maintenance of a competitive European defence technological and industrial base, acting in keeping with the global arms Trade Treaty. This requires more than just a deepening of the EU's defence market. coordinated investment in dual-use technologies can boost both security of supply to the armed forces and European economic growth."

10 Rogers and Gilli (2013: 6) demand: "Implementing consolidation to generate military efficiency. This suggests a coordinated reduction of redundant and obsolete capabilities to generate immediate and future savings. In order to facilitate this task, member states may consider asking the EEAS and its specialised bodies to undertake, in close cooperation with the EDA, a targeted EU Military Review."

11 Outright ridiculous is the upper end of the savings the European Added Value Unit (2013: 8) thinks possible in its "Cost of Non-Europe Report": "The spread for the cost of non-Europe in defence is thought to range from €130 billion, at the higher end, to at least €26 billion, on a more conservative calculation."

12 Although this would go beyond the scope of this paper, it should be mentioned that another problem is created by the heavy conflicts between Germany - that in recent years vocally claimed a leading role in Europe – with France as well as with Great Britain (see Lösing and Wagner 2013).

13 Ideally, PSCs, for example, would be a major exception, a CSDP decision has to be taken unanimously which gives the small and medium ones enormous influence in this policy area (see Wagner 2012: 18f.).

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