

# Foreign and Security Policy

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The legal basis of the Foreign and Security policy is Title V of the Treaty on European Union.

The idea that the European Union should speak with one voice in world affairs is as old as the European integration process itself. But the Union has made less progress in forging a common foreign and security policy over the years than in creating a single market and a single currency. The geopolitical changes following the collapse of communism, and the outbreak of regional crises in the Balkans and beyond, have led EU members to redouble their efforts to speak and act as one

## **A new push**

In the last 15 years the Union has renewed its efforts to perform a political and security role more in line with its commercial and economic power. One of the problems was to agree how much authority for vital issues of foreign policy and security should be vested in the EU and its institutions and how much should be retained by member states. In the end, essential authority remains with the member states, although the European Commission and, to a lesser extent, the European Parliament, are associated with the process. However, the formula agreed still requires that key decisions be taken by unanimous vote – hard to achieve when there were 15 EU members, even more difficult with 25.

## **More decisive diplomacy**

To give it diplomatic clout and visibility, the Union has created the post of High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy. One major innovation, agreed by the 25 member states but not yet implemented, is to raise the EU's diplomatic profile further by creating the post of European foreign minister.

The EU maintains a strong presence on the ground and has dispatched special representatives to several of the world's hotspots, including the Great Lakes (Africa), the Middle East, the Balkans and Afghanistan.

## **Credible intervention capacity**

As part of the CFSP, the Union also created a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) with the potential, if agreed later on, for creating a common defence structure. In December 2003, EU leaders adopted a European Security Strategy and have since agreed on its basic mission and priority areas for action: the fight against terror; a Middle East strategy; a comprehensive policy on Bosnia-Herzegovina. To give it a credible intervention capability, the EU identified a number of tasks a military force could undertake, including humanitarian and rescue missions, peacekeeping, crisis management and even peacemaking. To implement these tasks, the Union created a rapid reaction force, whose military strength will be built up gradually over several years.

It also agreed to provide up to 5 000 police officers for civilian aspects of crisis management of whom 1 000 could be deployed within 30 days.

## **First ESDP missions**

The first three ESDP missions have been in the former Yugoslavia. The first began on 1 January 2003, when the European Union Police Mission of 500 officers took over in Bosnia-Herzegovina from the UN's International Police Task Force. The mission, which will remain for a period of three years, is training local police officers and establishing sustainable policing arrangements in line with European standards and practice.

The second operation followed later in 2003, when a small Nato force in Macedonia was replaced first by an EU military force, and subsequently by a 200-strong EU police mission, which is still in place.

The biggest of the three started in December 2004, when an EU military force (EUFOR) took over from the previous Nato-led Security Force (SFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina. SFOR had been in place since the end of hostilities in 1995. EUFOR has a total of 8 000 troops.

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### **Where to go from here**

With the CFSP and ESDP, the Union is creating a political dimension to add to its international role as a major commercial and economic power. But there is still a long way to go before the scale of this political dimension becomes clear. Despite their commitment to making a success of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, member governments sometimes find it hard to change their own national policy regarding a particular country or region in the name of EU solidarity.