



Strategic Compass under scrutiny

28.4.2021



On 19 April, the Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) met to discuss with experts on the next steps in the Strategic Compass to better address the threats to the EU's security.

SEDE Chair, Nathalie Loiseau, welcomed :

- Daniel Fiott, Security and Defence Editor, [EU Institute for Security Studies](#) ;
- Nicole Koenig, Deputy Director at [the Jacques Delors Centre](#) , and
- Christian Moelling, Research Director, German Council on Foreign Relations ([DGAP](#)).

Focus on Strategic Compass

Mr Fiott opened the debate by explaining the main focus of the Strategic Compass (SC). He said that it is important to ensure that its outcome is in line with the threat assessment. “If the threats assessment tell us there are high levels of threats to the EU, the SC outcome should address them”, he said.

Most initiatives since 2016 have focused on industrial development and defence capabilities. This progress are important but must now be complemented by a policy focused on the implementation of these capabilities. This implementation involves a reflection on the characteristics of a European force and on the operations it must be able to carry out.

Protecting the Global Commons

Mr Fiott hoped for a wider discussion on what the EU should do to protect the Global Commons - ecosystems, biomes and processes regulating the stability and resilience of the Earth system – as this is vital to EU's economic well-being (role of cyber, maritime and space in securing the Global Commons).

Looking forward, implementation will be the key challenge in March 2022, i.e. on how to move from the final SC document to a clear roadmap with benchmarks. Finally, he underlined the need to manage expectations, with a more concrete clarity from Member states (MS) to the EU on operational direction and their military and civilian planners.

A clear pathway

Mrs Koenig insisted on the necessity to set priorities, and not to repeat the mistakes of the “[Global Strategy](#)”, adding value and directions to this project with clear objectives, means and capabilities.

In this context, she outlined four main points: better joint vision, alignment between the role of the military and the EU ambitions according to scenarios, identification of cyber threats and role sharing with NATO and beyond, and improving synchronisation of the expenditure plan

Finally, she underlined the likely danger of nationalism in the current situation and how it might undermine the EU strategic autonomy.

Mr Moellig explained that the baskets of the SC - crisis management, resilience, capability development, and partnerships- are useful analytical categories, but the key question is how to align the outcome with our expectations, and not just focus on process.

He therefore proposed four different (non-exclusive) options across the baskets in order to improve them:

- new military level of ambition (minimum requirement);
- moving from CSDP to EU Defence, with a strong EU institutional role and MS fully on board;
- a deeper comprehensive approach (resilience, deterrence, defence);
- improving EU-NATO relations and contribution to overall European Defence.

Unit in charge: *SEDE secretariat*

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