

## Chapter 18

# European Foreign and Security Policy and Latin America

European security and defence policy is deeply interrelated with the wider context of Europe's foreign action. Having laid the foundations of a new defence policy, the EU is confronted with a new US administration that has restructured, at least temporarily, the global security agenda, such that anti-terrorism is the core element driving international relations. At the same time, the new American administration is undertaking this task with profound mistrust of multilateral action and integration, thus challenging many of the assumptions upon which the new post-Cold War world order were based, which were those that guided relations between the EU and the Mercosul. The decade of the 1990s constituted a window of opportunity for multilateral action, but it was not fully taken advantage of. Now, in much tougher circumstances it is necessary to ensure the triumph of a vision of the world governed by norms and rules accepted by the majority.

This new situation generates new and heavy responsibilities for the EU. It is more important than ever to determine the rule that the EU will carve out for itself and to know whether the Union will be able to develop its own vision of the international

system and gain the means with which to have a say in the resolution of the most pressing international issues. Success depends on the ability of the EU to combine coherently its economic power and the powerful attraction of its model, with an effective foreign and security policy and credible military capabilities. There is a fair chance that this could happen, but unfortunately still far from certain. The more that Europe becomes a political actor the more it will seek to consolidate relations with other partners that have a similar vision of inter-state relations. This being the case, the survival and consolidation of the Mercosul is essential.

### *The Heritage of the 1990s: A New Multilateral Project*

The 1990s was the decade that signalled the end of bipolarity and heralded a new opportunity to organise international relations according to rules and norms that could limit the power of states. It became possible to speak of a “new multilateralism”, characterised by three main elements: the sense that the international community and the United Nations (UN) in particular were responsible for the protection of the rights of individuals, above and beyond sovereign boundaries; by regionalism, a structural feature of the international system as a whole; and by the emergence of a global public opinion, which expresses the desire of civil society to influence or participate in global decision-making. Like the globalisation of trade, finances and services, this ‘second wave’ of globalisation has pushed the need for global multilateral governance forward. This is a sovereignty-altering multilateralism, which changes the position of the state in the international system (*The New Multilateralism*, Sixth Euro-Latin American Forum Report, 2001).

It was during the 1990s that post-Maastricht Europe established Economic and Monetary Union with the circulation of the Euro, and laid the foundations for political union. This was also the decade of the development of the Mercosul. During the period a series of multilateral initiatives were adopted, the most important of which was the creation of the ICC. Regionalism became an essential component and structuring element of this new multilateralism. The viability of a new kind of mul-

tilateral action was to depend in large measure upon the capacity of the regional groups to become consolidated international actors. These groups, which are essentially civil actors, were confronted with the need to take on foreign policy and defence roles. Since the end of the decade, international circumstances are much less favourable for multilateral and regional projects, as well as for the defence of human rights. This is particularly true given that the election of an administration in the US that is much more unilateral diminishes the incentives for multilateral and regional action, as states tend to attach growing importance to close alliances with the US.

September 11 plays a central role in all this, as the US thereafter defined the fight against terrorism as its topmost foreign and security policy, relegating free trade initiatives such as the FTAA or the protection of ethnic minorities from the threat of ethnic cleansing to a pale secondary position. For the Bush administration, combating terrorism means creating alliances with authoritarian regimes that were under pressure to liberalise during the 1990s. At the same time, the difficulties that the Mercosul has been undergoing have weighed against the regionalist option.

The EU only began to affirm itself as an international actor very slowly, which meant that it was unable to take full advantage of the opportunities open to the European model during the 1990s. This was particularly obvious with the enormous difficulty of the EU in dealing with and learning from the crisis in the Balkans. As far as Latin America is concerned, although priorities were more or less clearly defined, the EU was unable to move ahead with the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy essential for a free trade agreement with the Mercosul, which was considered a priority.

### *Elements for a Coherent Foreign Policy*

The Mercosul was established with the signature of the Treaty of Asunción in 1991 by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, with the aim of establishing a common market. From the outset, the EU identified the Mercosul as an example of the universal nature of the European model. There has been a clear

tendency in a variety of regions to establish different integration and co-operation schemes, but the majority of such projects have not gone beyond a basic intergovernmental co-operation that is fragile in the absence of true political convergence. The Mercosul appeared to be an exception to the rule. For the EU, the credibility of the Mercosul was based on various factors. The first is that it is an integration project among democratic countries, which introduced a democratic clause in its treaty providing for sanctions, including expulsion, if a member returns to authoritarian rule. The firm and effective reaction of the countries of the Mercosul to the *coup d'état* in Paraguay in April 1996 was an important test that increased the credibility of the regional group. The EU has underlined the international legitimacy of the Mercosul based on this democratic commitment.

Second, the alteration of traditional relations of enmity and rivalry between Brazil and Argentina, which implied the mutual abandonment of national military-oriented nuclear programmes, is seen as a major achievement at a time when proliferation is a dominant security concern. Third, apart from the EU, the Mercosul is the only regional group that goes beyond free trade and has aimed to create a common market. Like the EU, the Mercosul is a "deep" integration process. The group participates as a bloc in trade negotiations. Both the EU and the Mercosul view regionalism as a way to affirm foreign policy autonomy and emphasise the importance of inter-regional links.

Last but not least, the EU and the Mercosul share a similar attitude towards globalisation. The triumph of the neo-liberal vision that has accompanied the unfolding process of globalisation is viewed as a potential threat to deep integration projects as it can force their dilution into vast free trade areas. For the EU the aim has been to make compatible the demands of a new competitive economic order and the system of social cohesion that lies at the heart of the integration model. For the Mercosul, a post-globalisation integration model, the aim has been to create conditions favourable for a pragmatic implementation of liberalisation policies. In sum, the Mercosul seeks a process of controlled liberalisation to allow it to compete globally. The EU and the Mercosul also share the ambition of formulating common multilateral rules to administer the process of globalisation.

Much has been written and many positions adopted about

the position of the EU in the international system and on relations between the Union and the Mercosul, notably within the Commission (at the level of Director General for Foreign Affairs as well as Foreign Trade) and the European Parliament, by European and Latin American research institutions, and within the speeches of politicians and more, albeit few, member States. (It should be noted that the Council has not done this, which would have given greater coherence to the EU position as a whole).

The key ideas put forward can be summarised as follows: The foreign policy of the EU must emphasise a new multilateralism based on regionalism, particularly deep integration that goes beyond free trade. To put this idea into action partners that share the same view are necessary. Of all the regional integration projects, the Mercosul is the closest to the European model. Consequently, it should be viewed as a strategic partner. As Commissioner Patten has stated, the aim of the EU in the negotiation of the association agreement is to establish a strategic partnership.<sup>1</sup> The EU and the Mercosul share a clear interest in promoting multilateral action, be it in the domain of international security, justice, human rights or regarding the environment. The EU and Latin America, with the Mercosul and Mexico as pivotal actors, are the two regions of the world that are presently most committed to multilateral action. The EU has a strategic interest in the reinforcement of the Mercosul and should contribute to its deepening. In the context of a Euro-Latin American policy that favours inter-regional relations, the EU must prioritise relations with sub-regional groups.

The view of the EU regarding the Mercosul differs from that of the US. For the latter, the Mercosul constitutes a form of "trade deviation", and is an obstacle to the creation of the FTAA. The EU must try to prevent the dissolution of the Mercosul within the FTAA, an event that would contradict the interests of the EU and of the Mercosul countries. Reinforcing the Mercosul means creating a biregional agreement. Given that both the EU and the Mercosul are civil powers, an agreement of substance must be based on free trade, with due consideration to political

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1. Speech by Chris Patten to the European Parliament, 1 March 2001, Brussels.

and security issues. A free trade agreement implies concessions on the part of some European states where agriculture is concerned.

Political and security co-operation also implies concerted action to deal with the security problems faced by the countries neighbouring the Mercosul, notably Colombia. An approach that differs from that of the US is necessary, however, in much the same way that a different policy was adopted towards Central America in the 1980s during the Reagan administration. The EU and the Mercosul share common attitudes regarding democracy and human rights. The Mercosul adopted a democratic clause, and the EU did the same at European Council in Amsterdam. Both actors must find ways to co-operate to promote those values, not only within their own borders but also beyond them.

The US is essential for a successful multilateral project that enables the international community to prevent crises and ensure security, as well as to intervene militarily when other alternatives have been exhausted. Indeed, for both regions the US is an "inescapable" partner. The EU must achieve more balanced relations, however, reinforcing the EU-Mercosul side of the "Atlantic Triangle". The aim is not to create a Western Bloc, but to create the conditions for a world internationally determined rules. In this context, the "multilateralisation" of the US is in the interest of both regions. In short, the dominant ideas of the pre- September 11 context were to consider that the EU should become the driving force of a new multilateralism to organise the international system, and that it should cultivate its ties with the Mercosul as well as other regional groups like ASEAN or SADC, to reinforce the tendency towards regionalism in the world. This vision is still valid, even though it is more difficult to put them into practise today.

### *European Actors and Initiatives*

Relations with the EU clearly illustrate the role that the Commission can play in EU foreign policy. The EU signed an inter-institution agreement with the Mercosul in 1992, only a year after the creation of the regional group. It clearly stipulated the aim of the transference of integration know-how. In 1995, a

framework agreement was signed in Madrid between the two parties, with the aim of establishing a future association based on free trade. Both initiatives are largely the result of the work of the Commission, although they also reflect the influence of some member States. Throughout the 1990s, Portuguese and Spanish officials primarily dealt with Latin American issues within the Commission. The first informal ministerial meeting between the EU Twelve and Mercosul Four took place during the Portuguese presidency of the EU, and the framework agreement was signed during the Spanish presidency. Undoubtedly, the accession of Portugal and Spain to the Community gave renewed impetus to European relations with Latin America.

The Commission views the free trade agreement as a strategic instrument. It was this that led the EU to present a substantial negotiating proposal at the Montevideo Round in July 2001, even in the absence of a Mercosul counterproposal. The EU proposal was viewed as a way to encourage the Mercosul in its consolidation efforts during a crisis period for the group resulting from Argentina's financial troubles. It is a proposal that will force the Mercosul to forge a common response to negotiate as a bloc.

The obstacles turned out to be significant however, revealing the problems of a policy dictated essentially by the Commission and a small handful of member States. A free trade agreement requires the liberalisation of agricultural trade to which France (along with other less vocal member states) is opposed. The agricultural issue is paradigmatic of the lack of coherence in the policy priorities announced by the EU. France is the country that experiences the greatest difficulty in maintaining a coherent posture, as it is constantly torn between the need to contain the farm lobby, its relations with certain Latin American countries, such as Mexico, and the awareness that the Mercosul is an essential part of its vision of the world. The French president expressed this problem in Brazil thus: "the future of Latin America is not within a North-South axis. It is in Europe for historically and culturally grounded reasons, for shared values, the same kind of humanism, but also because of economic complementarity".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Extract from "Jacques Chirac sets out to conquer Latin America", *Le Monde*, 12 March 1992.

There are many European countries, however, notably those with an eminently commercial vision of European foreign policy, that view the Mercosul in merely commercial terms. If Europe limits its ambition to its current status as a regional power of a mercantile nature, this will reduce the countries of the Mercosul to a backyard of the US in a reversed Monroe Doctrine<sup>1</sup> whereby Latin America is left no other alternative but an umbilical relationship with the US. This perspective could yet win the day in the negotiating process with the Mercosul.

Within CFSP relations with the Mercosul are insignificant compared with other non-European regions, notably the Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa, or even Asia and other Latin American regions such as Central America. This illustrates the difficulty of putting forward a pro-active agenda. Among the rare declarations by the EU and its member States, it is worth mentioning the condemnation of the coup attempts in Paraguay in 1996 and 2000. Notably, however, there is no reference to the threat that this could pose to the Mercosul nor to any action that might be taken to prevent coups in Paraguay.

### *Internal Conditionality*

If one is to prevent the negotiations with the Mercosul from being taken over by the interests of lobbies within the member States, it will be necessary to define a common European vision of the international system, to which the negotiators can refer as a form of “conditionality of interests”. This means defining the essential and vital common interests of the EU, just as Jacques Delors proposed in the negotiations that preceded Maastricht. The state of EU relations with the Mercosul shows how far this debate is from ending.

The ambiguities of European Members State’s vision of the world order are notorious. The EU does not project a multipolar model (or a pentagonal model based on continental powers like the EU, the US, China, Japan or Russia, eventually joined by

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1. The “Monroe Doctrine” announced by President Monroe in 1823, proclaimed the end of European colonialism in the New World, the “prohibition” of European intervention in hemispheric affairs, as well as US non-intervention in European affairs.



India and Brazil, or the Mercosul), a reproduction of the pre-Second World War European balance of power system on a planetary scale. Even if some European leaders like Jacques Chirac have explicitly referred to the need to build a multipolar world as an alternative to unipolarism, in speeches in China, Brazil and India, all countries with international power ambitions. France supports the creation of a multipolar order that could balance the "hyper-power" of the US (an expression coined by Hubert Védrine). There would be a system of clearly defined poles, inspired by the European balance of power system before the Second World War, within which the EU could seek to affirm its sovereignty and autonomy, although the negative impact on world security would be partly reduced thanks to the existence of multilateral institutions. A case in point is the Russian-Chinese declaration on the promotion of a multipolar world of April 1997.

The European model suggests a third way. As Jean-Marie Guéhenno put it, it "would be based neither on the indefinite supremacy of the United States, nor on the pursuit of independence and sovereignty as the ultimate goal of a political entity".<sup>1</sup> The European model presupposes that the EU will not become a "super State" contributing to a world of antagonistic blocs but rather that it will be able to influence the creation and adoption of international norms accepted by the largest number of states possible to weave a network of interdependent multilateral institutions, such as the WTO or the ICC, based on the growing weight of international law. In the final analysis the aim is to build a multilateral system based on multiregionalism. In short, for the European Union the idea is to replace the unstable world of unipolarity not with an even more unstable world based on a traditional multipolar balance of power system shaped by the frequent dissolution and reversal of alliances. Rather, it wants to build a new multilateralism based on regional integration groups, whose experience with the supra-national regulation of relations between states can be put to good use. In other words, it seeks the transformation of the international system into a community that is based on the

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1. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, "The impact of Globalisation in Strategy", 40th Annual IISS Conference, Oxford, 3-6 September 1998.

success of its own experience and on the reinforcement of international institutions, particularly of the United Nations. In other words, it is about the institutionalisation of interdependence. This system is also the most appropriate for the administration of a world that could lead towards multipolarity with the emergence of great powers that have adopted a power politics perspective of foreign relations. For this to be possible, the supranational axis must gain greater capacities for political intervention, and new and similar axes must develop elsewhere. This is why the EU attempts counteract the dissolution of the Mercosul into a hemispheric free trade area or even by the global market, and why it supports its consolidation as an open, supranational axis of multi-regionalism and multilateralism.

### *A Regional or Global Actor?*

Over the next decade, it is clear that the EU will be concentrating primarily on the consolidation of democracy and stability in the European continent, implementing a policy of inclusion (with positive results in the case of Portugal and Spain) through widening, which will finally embrace the Balkans. Widening this policy to include North Africa will be a second foreign policy priority for the EU. This is the action of an eminently regional power. Yet a variety of factors suggest that the EU must ensure that its Latin American policy and all other regional policies are compatible with a global policy:

- The EU needs to gain influence within multilateral organisations to ensure the triumph of policies that serve regional interests and regional integration.

- The EU needs to sustain an internal balance between members that have an essentially continental foreign policy and those with strong interests and relations outside Europe, including Latin America.

- The importance of relations with the US means that the EU is drawn into areas of US foreign policy interest and priority and must take in consideration also American concerns.

- The global nature of EU trade interests and competition for markets and investments make the Mercosul an essential sub-region (the EU is the main trade partner of the Mercosul,

and the impact of the FTAA as well as all 4+1 agreements between the Mercosul and the US are a source of concern for the EU. The Mexican example highlights how appropriate are such concerns. After the creation of NAFTA, US exports rose from US \$41 million in 1994 to US \$79 million in 1998. European exports in 1998 represented only 9 million Euros. According to the Commission, European exports to the Mercosul, grew more than exports to all other regions between 1992 and 1998.

*Adding the defence dimension to foreign and security policy*

The European Union needs a strong voice and a solid position in crisis resolution to exert influence on the evolution of the international system, not only in its periphery but also at a global level. This aim can only be achieved through a clear-cut policy, which should be derived from a definition of common interests, setting forth the main priorities and guiding principles in what concerns the use of the military instrument, i.e. the newly-created intervention force. The emphasis on the construction of a military apparatus –the “putting capabilities first” position adopted since St. Malo and then Helsinki, is not enough. Nor is the emphasis on institutional arrangements and mechanisms that followed, at least not in the absence of a clearly formulated set of policy goals. In order to make the defence dimension and the military instrument both useful and usable, these shall have to be clearly set out. This is all the more so since the military might of the European Union, if we were to consider the armies of all EU member states combined, comes second only, in strength and modern equipment, to that of the United States. Even though the European Union has proved it is capable of achieving consensus on internal affairs– of which measures in Justice and Home Affairs related to fight against terrorism within its boundaries are one example –the truth is in the wake of the 11 September the Union’s difficulty in achieving consensus on foreign policy has become glaringly apparent. This is especially true when the latter can lead to the use of the military instrument or the adoption of any kind of coercive measures, and becomes acutely apparent whenever the European

Union's approach differs from that of the United States. The bland, hesitant reaction of the Europeans to Ariel Sharon's scorched earth policy, which seems more concerned to avoid causing any irritation to the Americans than to act in order to resolve a rapidly deteriorating crisis at its very doorstep.

Security issues are central to the role of States when a grave crisis occurs, and effective action has to be taken swiftly. It makes little sense to structure foreign and defence policy without or against member States. CFSP and ESDP, moreover, are a domain where inter-governmentalism will prevail. The main guidelines of European foreign policy have to be commonly defined by the Fifteen member States. This also applies to specific policies and measures to put them in practice, in a coherent and integrated way on all dimensions: political and security as well as economic, namely trade and cooperation and aid. These guidelines should preside over the external action of all member States, including those with a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council.

From a military action perspective, it is not acceptable that those who cannot or will not commit forces have the right to veto of the remaining countries. In other words, one must accept, in the area of security and defence, the principle of reinforced co-operation and exploit the potential of the "contributors' committee" as previewed in the Treaty. In order to prevent the reinforced co-operation from facilitating, in the long term, the emergence of a new directory of European powers -absolutely contrary to the spirit of the European construction- it is necessary that the cores in reinforced co-operation have precise goals and are open to every country that wishes to participate. In response to the 11 September crisis it was blatant, on the one hand, the singular role of States in security matters, and, on the other hand, the lack of means to "Europeanise" their individual action. Tony Blair acted like a Brit and not like a European. Could he have acted like a European, had enhanced co-operation in security and defence issues not been specifically barred at Nice? Nothing could be more unlikely. Conversely, had enhanced co-operation in security and defence been approved and the Nice Treaty ratified, it would have made it considerably more difficult for the United Kingdom to legitimise its go-it-alone policy. Evidently, everything will ultimately depend on the policy that the governments of the member States

decide to subscribe in any given crisis, especially when its resolution implies any sort of military intervention. If the European Union displayed its utter impotence for four years in Bosnia, this was not due to the lack of military capabilities of member States, which actually deployed troops in significant numbers under UN command. The reason was the majority of EU states, including those who committed troops to the UN operation were set on a course of appeasement towards Serb nationalism. This appeared to Milosevic as an encouragement to the campaign of ethnic cleansing for which he was ultimately brought before the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

The post-11 September has evidently brought forth the question of whether the European defence policy will have a regional or a global dimension. One may think that the British consider that it is the European Union's responsibility to solve conflicts in the European continent, and that European security and defence policy should not have a global reach. In this case, without the contribution of the UK, there is at present no capability to project forces in case of some major crisis with some military significance, all the more so because Germany still struggles with existential doubts every time it has to send in troops. It is probable that the British consider, as other former colonial powers –France, Portugal, Belgium– do, that there will be crises in Africa where intervention, even military intervention, will become necessary. It appears that Sub-Saharan Africa may be the exception in an essentially continental security and defence policy.

This is no impediment to other co-operation possibilities to be exploited with other regions in the domain of security and defence, which certainly is a necessity felt with particular emphasis in the Mediterranean and a stimulus to relations with Latin America. Euro-Mediterranean relations implicate a serious effort to contradict the negative perceptions that grow on both margins, and that the 11 September has negatively influenced. European defence policy, if it is not complemented by transparency and information measures that make its priorities clear, may be perceived by opinion sectors in third countries as having for a main goal the projection of power in the south in particular in North Africa and the Middle East.

Regional integration in Latin America, namely with Merco-

sul, represents an opportunity for the European Union to affirm its conception of the world as based on multilateralism and regionalism, a vision of the international system that has been called "new multilateralism". The domains for co-operation between the European Union and Mercosul in the domain of defence reach from peacekeeping operations to the weapons industry, as well as the more specific operations of transnational security such as the war on drugs. But the essential feature resides in both regions' support for the United Nations and in the common interest in providing them with the instruments to assume a central role in security, which has been absent. By globalising its commitment to security, the European Union might take advantage of the vast diversity of international interest of its member States. For the countries of the Union with a global agenda, the European defence policy it is an opportunity to promote a more assertive and active role of the Union beyond the continent's boundaries and the "near abroad", towards a truly global role.

Latin America and the European Union would both stand to benefit from closer security and defence co-operation in international peacekeeping and the promotion of democratic security in both continents. The fact that the European Union has added a defence and security dimension to its foreign policy should favour a "mulilateralisation" and a region-to-region approach towards the existing bilateral channels and mechanisms for security and defence co-operation, and adding a security dimension to the existing bi-regional political dialogues.

The new defence dimension and the increasing "communitarisation" of the second pillar open up two new areas where it is of particular relevance to ensure overall coherence and compatibility of European Union external action as a whole. In what concerns European Union-Mercosul relations, the following areas should be of particular concern:

- Joint "declaratory" action for the promotion of multilateralism, issuing joint statements and raising the level of concern and awareness towards issues pertaining to the protection of human rights and the promotion of international justice, as well as the protection of the environment.

- Building the ICC into a true, credible and strong instrument of universal justice. It cannot become a merely symbolic instrument, strong enough to prosecute only the leaders or citi-

zens of states too weak to resist it, while strong states who oppose the ICC altogether are able to impose *de facto* limits to its jurisdiction.

- Although Latin America, unlike Europe's closer neighbours, has no misgivings in what concerns ESDP, regular exchanges of information in security and defence aspects, including progress in ESDP, should form part of the political dialogue. The central aim of these exchanges should be to promote a common language, in order to facilitate consensus on major international security issues. No less importantly, the dialogue should allow frank exchanges, including at experts' level, on the links between democratisation, fundamental rights and security.

- Enhancing bi-regional co-operation in the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and other forms of transnational organised crime, in particular human smuggling, building on the progress already achieved in Euro-Latin American co-operation. A serious and focused dialogue on common security concerns implies a realistic assessment of risks and threats to international security, which must include regional conflict and asymmetric violence, as well as issues such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which have a global dimension and will place the debate into a wider framework.

- It is of particular consequence that the European Union should be able to firmly set defence policy into the wider frame of its own foreign policy agenda, including in relation to the Mercosul. Argentina has shown a consistent interest in cooperating with Nato, notably in peacekeeping operations, and the Brazilian Navy has taken part in Nato manoeuvres in the Atlantic. As noted above, peace operations offer a potentially interesting field for European Union-Mercosul security co-operation. Latin American countries have a strong tradition of participation in multilateral peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations. As ESDP comes into being, it is of interest to both regions to develop a security and defence dialogue as part of the bi-regional dialogue, with a focus on training and related matters for peacekeeping and nation building, as far as both military and police forces are concerned. It is also important to bring the bilateral dimension into play, and take advantage of the existing defence co-operation agreements, and tradition in military and police academy exchanges to bolster co-operation in the bi-regional arena. There is also scope for launching new

Euro-Latin American initiatives, such as a permanent seminar on security and defence, as part of the dialogue at experts' level. This should be tasked, among other things, with identifying opportunities for co-operation among defence industries. The participation of Latin-American forces or observers in future ESDP exercises should be encouraged, and form a natural complement to the security dialogue.

- Special, joint training for peace operations and support to nation-building, exploring the commonality of language, for example, is a case in point. National initiatives to this end, such as the military training centre in Argentina, should be encouraged, including through the participation of EU military personnel as trainers and trainees. The importance of military and defence-related exchanges in forging a common political and security culture should not be underestimated. Bi-regional dialogue on security, on the other hand, should include civil-military relations, as well as the implications of involving the military in the fight against terrorism and against crime, drug trafficking in particular, or in establishing the authority of the state over the national territory.

- Developing a common approach on how to deal with internal security issues, especially when these have a clear transnational dimension, should currently be defined as a priority in the security dialogue. In spite of its current predominance in the international agenda, terrorism is not the only problem affecting international security and the fighting terrorism does not have equal relevance to the security and stability of all regions of the world. Common to all, however, is the need to establish a clear link between security, in all its aspects including the fight against terrorism, and human rights and international justice. Strengthening judiciary co-operation between both regions is also important in this light.

- The issue of immigration is clearly rising in the hierarchy of concerns of European Union member states, and concomitantly becoming more relevant in Europe's external relations. At the same time, migration is acquiring increased relevance in inter-state relations world-wide, and an unwarranted link with security issues is quite often established. Migration is certainly another issue to be developed at group-to-group level, with the aim of developing a new approach to migration (emigration and immigration alike). The experience of most Latin American



countries can be particularly helpful to Iberian countries and others who are experiencing a rather abrupt transition from countries of origin to host countries. In any case, the issue of migrants should be included in bi-regional agreements.

The European Union identifies the Mercosul as a potential privileged partner for the establishment of a more balanced, more multilateral international system based on the essential pillar of regionalism. For the European Union, the greater the affirmation of the identity of the Mercosul within the Americas the better it will be suited as a partner. By the same token, the main problem with the Mercosul –beyond the current crisis– is its institutional deficit, the absence of a system of checks and balances that can help to balance power equitably among the participating states. Equally important is the lack of macro-economic convergence among its member countries. Crises are thus inevitable and their devastating effects cannot be averted. The grave financial and political crisis in Argentina threatens to seriously affect Brazil. Should the temptation to “re-nationalise” commercial policies prevail, with the consequent effect of going back to an individual approach to trade negotiations with and the European Union, and the whole future of the Mercosul could be compromised. The current crisis in Argentina in fact illustrates the need for greater macroeconomic convergence in the Mercosul and for the creation of a tribunal to settle trade disputes. Bold steps towards deeper integration are often taken at times of crisis and adversity. Only time will tell however whether this will be the case for the Mercosul.

In Europe, xenophobic and populist trends are growing and with them the trend towards a more closed European space, more protectionist in terms of trade and more restrictive in terms labour movement. This creates an environment in which self-centred security concerns could be detrimental to the wider sphere of external relations affecting Europe’s regional partners. Be that as it may, the future agenda of Euro-Latin American relations will be shaped in no small measure by the US factor. Indeed, for both regional groupings and their individual member states, the relationship with the United States is likely to top the political, economic and security agenda.

Álvaro de VASCONCELOS

