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ForeSec: Europe's Evolving Security

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Purpose

The objective of ForeSec is to tie together the multiple threads of existing work on the future of European security in an attempt to provide a more coherent guidance, orientation and structure to all future security-related research activities. It aims at enhancing the common understanding of the complex global and societal nature of European security in order to pre-empt novel threats and capture technological opportunities. The project takes a participatory approach in an attempt to facilitate the emergence of a coherent and holistic approach to current and future threats and challenges to European security. ForeSec builds a pan-European network around the European security foresight processes and helps foster a societal debate on European security and security research. As this brief is published, ForeSec still has a few months of project work lying ahead. Accordingly, all results presented here are merely intermediate.

Addressing EU Security Challenges

Global trends and threats have a direct impact on European societies through, for example, illegal immigration, regional instability that spills across borders, or energy shortages causing economic vulnerability and instability, which can lead to radicalisation or social marginalisation. Unless these issues and their root causes are understood in a holistic manner, it will be impossible for the EU and member state governments to properly address them with targeted policies.

Although the international security environment has diversified, the characteristics of the threats to European security should lead to a coordinated response from EU member states as pressures for cooperation mount. In essence, asymmetry, anonymity, de-territorialisation and inter-connectedness *could* be translated as meaning that all EU member states are af-

ected by the contemporary threats to European security in more or less the same way. States are becoming increasingly unable to provide security on a national basis because of the nature of the threats and challenges they face and the degree to which they find themselves inextricably bound to each other.

These developments underline the need to intensify co-operation between different sectors of national administrations and between different EU institutions and Directorate-Generals (DGs) within the European Commission. Traditionally, security policy has been the prerogative of ministries of foreign affairs and defence, but today justice and legal issues, environment, development co-operation, immigration etc. also play a strong role in the security field.

The ForeSec consortium comprises organisations from six member states (Finland, Austria, Sweden, UK, Bulgaria, Italy). Six additional member states were covered in the course of the research phase: Germany, Spain, Estonia, Poland, France and Slovenia – to have a fair representation of large



and small states, new and old member states as well as an equal geographical spread.

World Café as Kick-off

ForeSec takes a participatory approach in the sense that at various occasions stakeholders from all fields relevant to civil security are invited to participate. The ForeSec team has worked out a concise mix of foresight methodologies that includes:

- state of the art scan of security relevant issues, actors, infrastructures and strategies in the twelve countries;
- an inventory of stakeholders who are experts in security related fields (public administration, research, first responders, industry, infrastructure etc.);
- interviews with stakeholders;
- kick-off event to give the stakeholders a chance to learn of security issues in different fields and various member

- states. This was conducted in the World Café format to enable close networking and thematic interaction;
- an online Delphi on the future of civil security in the EU among security experts all over Europe;
- scenario building: sketches of possible futures under the assumption of context chains;
- an Internet platform for exchange and interaction among stakeholders and experts in between meetings; Delphi studies and focus groups where expertise on a specific issue is collected and analysed;
- a report to suggest a shared perspective of what “security” may mean in the future to the EU, its member states and citizens (“concept of European security”);
- a final conference in autumn 2009 to share the findings and recommendations of the project.

Lack of Common European Security Approach

The kick-off seminar with representatives from different stakeholder groups generated very valuable results. Next to taking the first steps for building a European security foresight community, the most prevalent drivers, threats and challenges were named and discussed. The basis for this discussion had been laid in the previous twelve ForeSec country reports and in a report on global challenges. Looking at the EU level, a growing need for concerted interagency processes is recognized across Europe as national security research (and foresight) activities are uncoordinated.

There is increasing overlap of threat assessments across the EU member states surveyed, accompanied by the blurring of internal and external security. Migration, terrorism, social cohesion, natural catastrophes and rising new power centres were seen as the most general trends for threats and challenges most member states have in common. However, the perception of what these key challenges entail differs, often depending on geography and history. In more detail, the following issues came up:

- Demography: migration (within the EU and from the outside from Asia and Africa), growth/decline of population, aging population, brain drain
- Economy: economic globalisation, economic disparities within countries, within Europe and across the world
- Environment: climate change, access to resources (e.g. water, food, energy), environmental problems/pollution
- Science and technology: bio- and genetic technology, information technology, nanotechnologies, surveillance

- Social values and identity, regionalism/nationalism within Europe, radicalisation and marginalisation of social groups (e.g. driven by ideologies), illusion of 100% security
- Governance and order: fragile states, organised crime, composition of EU/lack of political cohesion, failure of global political institutions (World Bank etc.), emerging powers (role of Russia, China in the long-term), changing public-private balance (e.g. ownership of critical infrastructure)

Stakeholders repeatedly identified the following areas as requiring improved collaboration:

- Border security
- Research on radicalization and organized crime
- Research and development of security related technologies
- Integration of civil and military approaches, on the one hand, and of internal and external approaches, on the other
- Integration of the drivers of the member states' national security policies
- Management of diversity – similar concerns but differences in priority and approach
- Development of a widely shared set of liberal values
- Ensuring trust in institutions; good governance
- Building of a European identity
- Discussion of the limits of enlargement

It was indicated that the role of industry with respect to security issues is changing as well. Some country reports indicate that the civilian sector may become the main innovator in the security field – from defence to security industry. The role of industry in terms of defining research priorities is significant –

in some countries user organizations find it difficult to play a role in priority setting.

At the same time, government's exclusive responsibility for security is decreasing and private sector ownership of critical national infrastructure is on the rise.

Potential of Positive Effects

Discussions with stakeholders either in interviews or at the kick-off workshop not only brought threats and challenges to the fore but also opportunities for the following developments:

- Diversity of cultures: migration might have positive impacts; change of behaviour is probable, giving rise to a more community-oriented culture

- A Europe speaking with a single voice in security matters and building shared capacity and common approaches for crises management
- Rise to the state of the art in the development of new technologies for problem-solving and economic benefit
- Reaching social cohesion among Europeans through dialogue
- Filling the power gap left by the US

First Delphi on Civil Security

The ForeSec Delphi is the first Europe-wide Delphi on civil security and is expected to be finished in March 2009. It involved two rounds and was conducted among different stakeholders with expertise on civil security in almost all member states. About 270 experts participated. They were asked to assess approximately 70 statements on Europe's future of civil security in the fields of societal changes, political changes, economic changes, environmental changes and technological changes.

Only a few preliminary findings and trends can be indicated here:

- Almost half of the respondents (48%) were of the opinion that **continued US focus on Asia and the Middle East** up to 2025 is *very important* (and 33.9% that it is *rather important*) to European security.
- A clear majority (58.3%) thinks that it is *very important* for Europe's security to benefit from **secure resources and stable conditions for economic growth**. Another 17.3% finds this *crucial*. The vast majority also thinks that it is *rather probable* or *very probable* that these conditions will stabilize.
- If **Russia were to experience continued economic growth** and domestic support for a strong and centralized political leadership, this would be *very important* to European security, find 55.1% of the respondents – plus another 11.8% consider this *crucial*.
- Almost the same percentage of respondents (52%) find it *very important* to European security if the **EU were to be confronted with a more assertive Russia**, having considerable influence on European politics and economies. An additional 17.3% find this of even *crucial* importance.
- Opinions on the future of EU decision-making processes and institutions concerning security issues are less definite. For instance, it is contested among the participants whether **the EU will be able or unable to reform its de-**

cision-making structures by 2025 and if that would cause a loss of support for the EU among its citizens.

- A more definite tendency of opinion came out on the question whether **fragile states neighbouring the EU will be unable to control their borders** and will increasingly find themselves unable to offer basic services to their populations. 46.5% think that this is *rather probable*, plus an additional 31.5% find this *very probable*. 54.3% consider this as *very important* (plus, 13.4% that this is *crucial*) for European security issues of the future.
- Rather contested were also a few statements on societal issues, for instance, on the probability of **shrinking birth rates and an aging population that is able to live longer**, meaning that the proportion of workers compared to individuals reliant on state support in the EU will decrease substantially compared to 2008.
- With regard to **brain drain**, where poor prospects at home lead to a significant number of highly educated people emigrating from the EU, the respondents answered to 51% that this was *not probable* by 2025. On the other hand, it was undecided whether the ability of top European research institutions to continue attracting highly educated students from the developing world and a global process of 'brain drain circulation' leading to the replacement of emigrated European researchers would be of importance to European security.
- With regard to environmental changes, almost half of the respondents (49.5%) expressed the opinion that the occurrence of **sudden and severe natural disasters like storms and floods leading to the devastation of entire regions** within a few hours or days are *very important* to European security (plus, 9.7% think they are *crucial*). However, on the probability of such events the opinions were much less unequivocal.
- With regard to modern technologies and their impact on security, an overwhelming majority of respondents think that **surveillance technologies are deployed substantially** in the EU (39.6%: *very probable*; 42.6%: *almost sure*). 49.5% find this *very important* for European security and an additional 13.9% find it *crucial*.

- Almost the same degree of consensus is reached concerning the **illegal reproduction of sensitive personal data**, which is becoming a major business opportunity for IT criminals: 50.5% think that this development is *very*

probable, 25.7% think that it is *almost sure!* We have the same picture with regard to importance: 47.5% believe that this is *very important* to European security in the future, plus 28.7% that it is *crucial*.

Towards a European Concept of Security

As the project has conducted about 50% of its tasks, there are still a few milestones to reach and several workshops to organize in order to get input for what in the end will produce the report on the 'European Concept of Security'. A tentative definition of security has been formulated by the ForeSec team as an input to stimulate further discussion:

EU security refers to the ability and efforts of all sectors of society to protect individuals and infrastructure within the EU from threats, risks, and hazards that may endanger their survival.

Concerted efforts from the ForeSec team and the community of experts and regular feedback from the European Commission will support the process of defining a new concept of civil security in Europe that will be able to respond to today's challenges and hopefully to those that are lying ahead as well.

Sources and References

Project website: www.foresec.eu

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About the EFMN: Policy Professionals dealing with RTD, Innovation and Economic Development increasingly recognize a need to base decisions on broadly based participative processes of deliberation and consultation with stakeholders. One of the most important tools they apply is FORESIGHT. The EFMN or European Foresight Monitoring Network supports policy professionals by monitoring and analyzing Foresight activities in the European Union, its neighbours and the world. The EFMN helps those involved in policy development to stay up to date on current practice in Foresight. It helps them to tap into a network of know-how and experience on issues related to the day to day design, management and execution of Foresight and Foresight related processes.