

CFSP WATCH 2005 – BULGARIA – by BECSA

1. Priorities for the Bulgarian government in CFSP in 2005. Key issues for Bulgaria.

1.1 General considerations

- Bulgaria is generally very supportive of CFSP. The country's representatives statements consistently back making the external action of the EU more effective and raising the EU's international profile to a higher level, to better correspond to the economic weight of the member-states and to the strength and attractiveness of the values they share. Participation in the CFSP is perceived as a way of increasing the country foreign policy potential and realising its national interests.
- Declares its readiness to be actively involved in CFSP matters, as well as to contribute to joint efforts, in line with its status, resources and expertise.
- Backs increasing EU role in preserving international peace and security, including ESDP, while insisting at the same time on the need to ensure complementarity with NATO actions and on strengthening of the transatlantic links.
- EU Enlargement is perceived as increasing EU's international weight and bringing the EU in a more direct contact with regions that are of traditional interest for Bulgaria, as well as helping improve EU-US relations.
- Supportive of further EU enlargement towards the Western Balkans. Also supportive of Turkey's accession process, subject to fulfilment of the necessary conditions.
- Positions and attitudes to CFSP determined by the above-mentioned considerations and by the circumstance the Bulgaria is now an acceding state. With the signing of an Accession Treaty on the 25th of April 2005, it obtained the status of an "active observer". An Information and Consultation Procedure is in place, allowing the country to have a say in newly adopted aquis. More importantly, since spring 1995, Bulgaria receives almost all Council documents and has started to participate in Council working groups, including all groups involved in CFSP matters.
- Desire to avoid clashes between European and Euro-Atlantic foreign policy imperatives. Aligning with the EU on issues such as Kyoto, the ICC, multilateralism, the role of the UN in general, etc.
- In EU matters, generally a cautious, open and flexible approach; avoidance of firm or too outspoken stances on issues that may be controversial among the member-states. Explained in part by the unfinished process of ratification of the Accession Treaty and a pending evaluation whether safeguard or postponement clauses may be invoked. After accession could be more clear and outspoken on issues of important national interest, however a change in style and tone is not expected.

1.2 CFSP priorities

- No outspoken statements on general CFSP priorities from a specific Bulgarian point of view. Inclined to follow the consensus. Track record of synchronising its positions, adopting joint declarations, demarches etc.
- Pronounced interest in the Western Balkans. Emphasis on the Black Sea region. Insists on keeping a clear European perspective for all the countries of South-East Europe. Regards this as a framework to ensure regional stability and prosperity, to help resolve outstanding problems, and as a key incentive for further reforms needed in the Western Balkans.

- Maintains balanced regional foreign policy, excellent relations with all neighbours, active and supportive stance in favour of initiatives of regional cooperation. Helps stabilise the region and bring it closer to the EU - contribution to peace and stability in Europe and to CFSP goals in this area. Has established formal agreements for cooperation in European integration matters with the Western Balkans countries and is ready to share experience and assist them.
- Emphasis on cooperation in the fight against terrorism, counteracting organised crime, improvement of border controls (assistance, solidarity and burden sharing)

2. Bulgaria's stance regarding the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty.

- Supports the European Constitution. Believes the Constitutional Treaty would help make the Union more efficient, democratic and understandable to its citizens. Text responds to the challenges both of EU enlargement and of globalisation.
- Bulgaria ratified the Constitution. Approval by the National Parliament, through the act of ratification of the Accession Treaty which refers to the Constitution.
- No outspoken stance on the general way ahead and in particular whether the ratifications should continue. Expresses hope that the Constitution will eventually enter in force. Cautious approach. Awaits the results of the reflection period.
- Expresses expectation that changed climate after the negative votes in the referenda in France and the Netherlands, increased euro-scepticism and reticence towards enlargement will not influence Bulgaria's timetable of accession to the Union - the 1st of January 2007. Stresses that the country should not endure negative consequences because of issues which are beyond its control. Stresses that it is part of the current fifth enlargement.
- Would not object to an eventual renegotiation of the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, possibly in view of separating its political and more technical provisions, eventually by splitting the document in two parts. Suggests the political part could be short and be approved by referenda, with the other part to be ratified by the national parliaments of the member-states.
- Stresses that in legal terms the Constitution and the Accession Treaty are not interlinked. No connection between the entry in force of the Constitution and accession. The Accession treaty includes provisions, allowing Bulgaria to join the Union by acceding either to the Constitution, or to the treaties currently in force.

3. Bulgarian perceptions and positions with regard to CFSP/ESDP issues in 2005

3.1 Perception of the development of CFSP. EU Enlargement impact on CFSP/ESDP

- Perception of success, of and positive development and strengthening of the CFSP and ESDP in 2005, despite general uncertainty about further development of integration in the EU (problems with the ratification of the Constitution; next financial framework, starting accession talks with Turkey, uncertainty about pace of future enlargement)
- EU Enlargement is perceived as beneficial for CFSP/ESDP, bringing it in direct contact with regions of traditional Bulgarian interest, as helping improve EU-US relations.

3.2 Positions on the EU role in crisis management

- Supports EU role in crisis management. Stresses complementarity with NATO and the need to avoid duplication. Welcomes arrangements for closer consultation and cooperation between EU and NATO,
- Participates in EU operations, for now mainly in the region of South Eastern Europe - the EU Police Mission and operation "Altea" in Bosnia. Was present in "Concordia" and welcomes "Proxima" in Macedonia; believes EU involvement is key in Kosovo, where it is present under the UN auspices.

3.3 Positions on the European Security Strategy (ESS) as an instrument for enhancing coherence in the EU's security policy.

- Welcomed the European Security Strategy adopted in December 2003. Assessment of the ISS as a well-thought, politically important and practically very useful document, which has already contributed to improving CFSP and making it more efficient.
- Assessment is that the European Security Strategy defines well the risks and challenges facing European security and makes good suggestions how to tackle them.
- Not highlighting issues of particular importance in the context of ESS. In general, stressing the importance to combat the threats of terrorism, organised crime, regional conflicts.

3.4 Positions on the European Neighbourhood Policy and its implications;

- Supports the European Neighbourhood policy. Shares and stresses in particular the ENP goal to create a stable, secure and prosperous area in Europe and to avoid the creation of new dividing lines between the EU and its new neighbours, especially to the East, but also to the South.
- Stresses the importance of shared values and mutually agreed common goals as the basis of deepening relations with EU neighbours and welcomes the elements of flexibility and differentiation in the ENP approach.
- Intends to play an active role in ENP, as an acceding candidate and as member. Focus on the Black Sea region. Highlights that has specific expertise in the area. Has signed agreements on cooperation in the area of European and Euro-Atlantic integration with Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Ukraine.

3.5 Position on the creation of battle groups and their role for ESDP.

- Welcomes the adoption of the Headline goal 2010. Builds on the Helsinki Headline Goal 2003, while taking into account lessons learned from recent EU missions.
- Welcomes the decision to establish Battle groups. Assessment this will improve the EU's capability for a rapid reaction in case of crises. Believes acceding countries participation in the Battle groups would have a positive effect.
- Has expressed intention to participate and is discussing a contribution to a battle group headed by Greece.

4. The Constitutional Treaty and its future – perceptions concerning ‘plans B’

4.1 Official positions on the Constitutional Treaty provisions on CFSP/ESDP and external relations

- Has supported and ratified the Constitution.
- Supports all its provisions concerning CFSP / ESDP. Supports the creation of the post of a double-hatted Foreign Minister and the establishment of an EU External Action Service irrespective of the entry in force of the Constitution.
- Accepted the establishment of the President of the European Council post.
- Expressed support for the Mutual Assistance clause (art. I-41), the Solidarity Clause (art. I-43 and III-329) and supported Permanent Structured Cooperation, while welcoming the criteria keeping it open for participation by all member states that want to join and fulfil the conditions.

4.2 Positions on elements of a possible Plan B

4.2.1 External Representation: Position on the European foreign minister and the President of the European Council

- Supports the introduction of the new post of EU Foreign Affairs Minister, to be assisted by an EU external action service. Believes that an EU Foreign Affairs Minister will contribute to making the external action of the Union more effective.
- Supports creating the EU Foreign Minister post as soon as possible, irrespective of the entry in force of the Constitution. Believes that there is a political agreement on the subject, it could be possible to find a legal base without treaty change.

4.2.2 Position on the development of the European External Action Service

- In light of 4.2.1, supports to continue without delay the work that has started on the creation of the EU external action service. Expects to be fully associated in this work.

4.2.3 On Decision-making and extension of qualified majority voting in the CFSP field.

- At the convention and the IGC has supported expanding QMV in the area of CFSP.
- Has not officially expressed positions on whether the Nice Treaty provisions are sufficient for an efficient CFSP/ESDP decision-making within the enlarged EU. In general supports further treaty changes in this area (see 4.1). In general, notes that the current enlargement is a success and has not led to deadlock in the institutions; notes the importance of joint developing common approaches and joint political will in the area of CFSP.

4.2.4 Positions on Crisis management and on expanding the Petersberg tasks.

- As in 3.2 above, supports EU role in crisis management, stressing at the same time the need for complementarity with NATO. Supports expanding the Petersberg tasks to meet new challenges.
- Stresses the importance of EU involvement in Kosovo, and participation in the efforts to solve the "frozen conflicts" in the CIS and in the Black Sea region

4.2.5 On Defence. On the establishment of the civilian-military cell at the EUMS.

- As a future EU member, supports further development of the ESDP as a means to a more effective Common Foreign and Security Policy and strengthening of the international role of the EU; sees ESDP as contributing to the transatlantic partnership, not as an alternative to NATO; views NATO as a pillar for the European Security and Defence Policy, in accordance with the Declaration of Strategic Partnership, and the "Berlin Plus" agreements.
- Supports the establishment of the civilian - military cell in the EUMS in order to improve the EU capacities for early warning and strategic planning.

- Did not express a position on the establishment of a full-fledged operational EU headquarters.
- Supports the European Defence Agency. An effective instrument to consolidate the European technological and industrial basis of a credible ESDP. Expresses strong interest to be progressively associated in all of the agency's activities. We are currently identifying national priority areas for an effective future input in the research & technology field and in concrete industrial projects for developing specific European capabilities. We follow closely the achievements and ambitions of the EDA for the next year.

4.2.6 **On permanent structured cooperation even** without the Constitutional Treaty

- Has not expressed a position. Supported Permanent Structured Cooperation in the IGC (see 4.1 above), stressing preference to keep it open for member - states that fulfil the criteria for participation.

4.2.7 **On the creation of core groups** inside or outside the EU in CFSP/ESDP if the Constitutional Treaty failed

- Has not expressed a position. In the Convention and the IGC opposed the ideas for core groups, especially outside the framework of the treaties.