

CFSP Watch - Sweden – by Gunilla Herolf

1. What are the priorities for Sweden in CFSP in 2004? What are the key issues for Sweden in 2004 (after EU enlargement, after the Iraq conflict)

The European Security Strategy (ESS) and the build-up of crisis management capabilities are considered crucial for a continued development in which the EU becomes a major actor in the world.

The Foreign Policy Declaration of 11 February 2004 describes Sweden as active in the neighbourhood, in Europe and on a global level, acting in the fields of seeking to prevent armed conflicts, stop ongoing wars and prevent their effects. The EU and the United Nations are seen as the two primary organizations. The Government defence bill of 23 September 2004 gives high priority to international crisis management and repeatedly underlines the need for Sweden to be engaged in international crisis management as well as the need for the EU to take more responsibility on a global level and to increase its capabilities.

In line with the latter aim, one key issue has been the Swedish contribution to EU crisis management capability and in particular the build-up of a battle group under Swedish leadership. The battle group (of 1500 persons) includes 1100 Swedes, and in addition Finns and Norwegians and is to be operational at the latest on 1 January 2008. As expressed in the defence bill, the ambition is that the Swedish armed forces shall be able to lead and participate in two large-scale international missions, each of them requiring the deployment of an entire battalion. At the same time Sweden should be able to participate in three smaller operations.¹

The Swedish forces are planned to participate in all types of tasks, from confidence-building to peace enforcement.² As emphasized by the defence minister, there is no contradiction between non-alignment and peace enforcement.³

(The Government defence bill, which is part of an ongoing change of the military forces from a defence based on the threat of invasion to one that is centring on flexibility with an emphasis on international crisis management, has led to vivid

¹ "Swedish defence policy in times of change", Speech by Ms Leni Börklund, Swedish Minister of Defence, Bern 22 October 2004, <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/1202/a/33192>.

² Regeringens proposition 2004/05:5, *Vårt framtida försvar* [Government proposition 2004/05:5. *Our Future Defence*], pp. 69-74. See also the Parliamentary Defence Commission Report, *Försvar för en ny tid* [Sweden's New-Age Defence], Ds 2004:30, p. 72.

³ "Swedish defence policy in times of change", see ref. 1.

discussions because of the cut-downs on spending and the cancellations of military regiments. While the international emphasis is endorsed, the opposition claims that the cut-downs will make it more difficult to implement the goals spelled out in the proposition.) On 15 December 2004 the Parliament voted in favour of the Government's bill.

Another issue has been the Swedish proposal for setting up particular key goals also for civilian crisis management and establishing rapid reaction civilian crisis management groups. The idea is to have the same level of ambition for civilian as for military rapid reaction – to be able, in some cases, to send out these groups within 5-10 days after a decision has been reached. The civilian rapid reaction groups are envisaged to complement the military ones, to be used for prevention in conflicts where the EU would need to be able to stabilize the situation quickly, and in order to prepare for further major civilian tasks. The proposal was launched at the Council meeting of 22 November 2004 and received positively.⁴

2. National Perceptions and Positions with 'regard to CFSP/ESDP Issues in 2004.

a) The perceived success and/or failure of the CFSP/ESDP

In connection with the Iraq war Sweden (being close to the French position of not excluding an eventual military attack but seeing the mandate of the UN Security Council as necessary) many times expressed its regret that a united EU position could not be reached. Continued positions have been along this line.

Sweden sees the development of the ESS and other efforts as successful in bringing cooperation forward. It is as important to continue to strengthen EU capabilities, seeing this is as equivalent to strengthening Swedish capabilities. Sweden feels strongly for the build-up of increased capabilities to prevent armed conflicts and international peace support and has expressed the view that it wants to see a more solidary EU, which takes more responsibility on a global level. Participating in crisis management operations is a vital part of this.⁵

⁴ "Sverige lanserar civila snabbinsatsgrupper i EU", [Sweden launches civilian rapid reaction groups in the EU] 22 November 2004, <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/649/a/34026>.

⁵ Government bill 2004/2005:5 (see ref. 2), p. 15.

The EU crisis management tasks pursued during 2003 and 2004 are seen as successful. Sweden participated in Concordia and Artemis and is now participating in EUPM, Proxima, EUJUST Themis and Althea. Generally, however, the Swedish participation in terms of number of personnel has been reduced during the last few years. The Government bill, commenting on the fact that at present other Nordic states send proportionately more troops, argues that Sweden has to increase the number of personnel.⁶ In the Artemis mission together with France elite forces were used engaging in peace enforcement tasks.

In connection with the strengthening of the EU, Sweden also supports the ongoing reform work of the UN, the other organization that is considered crucial for Sweden. Sweden sees it as important that the UN, as the only organization that can give international legitimacy for using violence, becomes more efficient to meet the new challenges.⁷

b) The position towards NATO after enlargement (in relationship with the ESDP as well as NATO' s role in Afghanistan and Iraq)

Sweden sees itself as having a very good relationship with NATO, participating in the majority of NATO tasks, article 5 being the exception.

The role vis-à-vis NATO has changed after the enlargement of 2004, after Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which were previously receiving Swedish support in the area of security are now members of the organization. Swedish contacts with NATO continue within the EAPC and the PFP, which are still seen as important as part of the transatlantic link and as a means for standardization and interoperability. There is, however, a Swedish interest to be more involved in technically advanced exercises and to have officers more centrally placed in NATO. At the NATO Summit in Istanbul in June 2004, the organization was said to have recognized the need for partner countries to be more involved.⁸ At the moment Sweden is serving under NATO command in Afghanistan and Kosovo.

As the role of the EU is gradually enhanced also within the area of security, NATO is becoming less central for Sweden. After the Berlin plus agreement the government

⁶ Ibid. p. 26.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 14-16. See also Parliamentary Defence Commission Report, Ds 2004:30 (ref. 2), pp. 43-44.

⁸ Government bill 2004/2005:5 (see ref. 2), pp. 15 and 29.

foresees relations with NATO as increasingly being defined through the Swedish membership of the EU.⁹

NATO is, however, still very important, not least as a forum for cooperation between the United States and Europe. Sweden supports NATO's role in Afghanistan. Participation in ISAF is seen as important and Sweden welcomed the decision to expand its area of operation to the PRT's in northern Afghanistan. A further Swedish contingent was declared ready to join the PRT and the Forward Support Base in Mazar-e-Sharif as soon as the transfer of authority to NATO had taken place, bringing Swedish presence up to about 115 troops.¹⁰

Not being a NATO member the issue of NATO's role in Iraq is not a vital one. When Iraq is mentioned the possibilities and the preconditions for UN and EU efforts are instead in the focus.¹¹

c) The role of the EU in crisis management e.g. in Europe and Africa

Sweden sees EU crisis management as important not only in Europe but also globally. It is seen to be in Sweden's and all other countries' interest that the crisis management capabilities are strengthened. Effective multilateral cooperation is considered as central for Swedish security policy. A geographically wider role is also relevant for the Swedish contribution: "special consideration should also be given to the possibility to act in other conflict prevention operations and crisis management operations globally, including Africa, the Middle East and Asia."¹² (Apart from the EU crisis management task Artemis, Sweden has also participated in the UN operation MONUC in DRC Congo and is now participating in the UN mission in Liberia).

Swedish initiatives and particular Swedish interests pursued in the EU have often been of global character, for example, the initiative of 2003 of establishing an EU policy against weapons of mass destruction, policies on human rights and on developing countries.¹³

⁹ Ibid. p. 17.

¹⁰ Statements by H.E. Ms Laila Freivalds, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, at the EAPC Summit, Istanbul 29 June 2004, see, http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/1288/a/27086;jsessionid=a_WAFGAF7ul9

¹¹ Parliamentary Defence Commission, Ds 2004:30 (see ref. 2), p. 35.

¹² Government bill, 2004/2005: 5 (see ref. 2), p. 25.

¹³ Minister for Foreign Affairs, Laila Freivalds, "Statement of Government Policy in the Debate on Foreign Affairs", Wednesday 11 February 2004., <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/108/a/18897>.

d) The perceived impact of EU enlargement on CFSP/ESDP (old versus new Europe)

The perception of old versus new Europe is nowhere to be found. The impact of EU enlargement is seen as that of increasing security for the whole of Europe. By deepening cooperation with the new neighbours of the EU this development will be further strengthened.¹⁴

e) View of the ESS as an instrument for enhancing coherence in the EU's security policy:

The development of the ESS is considered as a good step forward for the EU: Sweden welcomes the fact that EU members have formulated a common view on the international order built on multilateralism, cooperation with the UN and respect for international law. The EU should meet the threats that are identified in the ESS: terrorism, spread of weapons of mass destruction, environmental catastrophes, organized crime, regional conflicts, civil war and disintegrating states. The government wants to take advantage of the cohesion and cooperation that has developed within the EU to deal also with the basic reasons to threats like crimes against human rights, lack of democracy and safety, injustice and poverty.¹⁵

3. The Results of the Intergovernmental Conference 2003/2004 on the Constitutional Treaty Contributions concerning the CFSP/ESDP

There was a strong Swedish interest in such areas a cross-border crimes and asylum policies. A Swedish proposal within the latter concerned the possibility to refer difficult issues to the European Council, which made it easier for some states to accept increased cooperation in this area.

a) External representation

The Swedish policy has wavered on the issue of an elected President of the European Council. The Swedish Prime Minister had initially launched a proposal for a chairperson (supported by a group presidency). However, the Prime Minister had not brought up this proposal before the Committee on EU Affairs and it also lacked support in this Committee. The Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs

¹⁴ Government bill 2004/2005:5 (see ref. 2), p. 24.

¹⁵ Laila Freivalds, 11 Feb. 2004, (see ref. 13) and Parliamentary Defence Commission, Ds 2004:30, p. 39.

were consequently criticized by the Parliament and the Committee on the Constitution for having bypassed the Committee on EU Affairs.¹⁶ The policy later changed towards that favoured by the majority within the parliament and by other small states.

The appointment of a **Foreign Minister** is seen to contribute to increased efficiency and a more visible external representation of the EU, even though the double hatting is seen as problematic. Sweden does not believe that it would be suitable for him to chair Council meetings when decisions are taken on issues where he himself is responsible for initiative and implementation.¹⁷

b) Decision-making

Sweden is for unchanged decision-making rules within the CFSP, i.e. unanimity.¹⁸

c) Crisis management

Petersberg tasks. Sweden is for the Petersberg tasks being defined widely: from conflict prevention to peace enforcement. This is also in accordance with Sweden's own participation. In terms of geographical regions the enumerations of problem areas in need of EU attention include many, without any preferences indicated, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Caucasus being frequently mentioned.

d) Civilian-military cell

Sweden supported the creation of this cell. It should, however, not become a standing headquarters.¹⁹

e) Sweden supports permanent structured cooperation in the version that it appears within the constitution, an important element being that all are invited to join. In connection with rapid reaction capability Sweden has declared that it is positive and wants to participate.²⁰

¹⁶ Konstitutionsutskottets betänkande 2002/2003:KU30 [Report by the Committee on the Constitution].

¹⁷ Europeiska konventet om EU:s framtid: Resultat och utgångspunkter inför nästa regeringskonferens [The European Convention and the Future of Europe – Results and Starting points in View of the Next Intergovernmental Conference], Ds 2003:36, July 18 2003, p. 97.

¹⁸ Committee on EU Affairs, 16 June 2004, p. 11.

¹⁹ Committee on EU Affairs, 11 June 2004, p. 11.

²⁰ Parliamentary Defence Commission, 2004: 30, p. 195.

As regards the *mutual defence clause*, the wording of the Government's defence bill of September 2004 is that even though Sweden is non-aligned and thereby not entering any binding agreements defending other countries, the Government finds it hard to imagine that Sweden would stay neutral in case another EU country is attacked.²¹

Sweden supports the establishment of the *European Defence Agency (EDA)*. This is an important area for Sweden with its comparatively large defence industry. One of the four directors of the EDA is a Swede. The agency is seen as an important step on the way to develop the work to remedy the deficiencies and make it more efficient and thereby increase the crisis management capability of the EU.²²

In the discussions within the parliamentary Committee on EU Affairs all parties except the Left Party and the Greens were positive to the establishment of the EDA. Representatives of the Moderates and the Liberals, while positive, warned against European protectionism in connection with its work to increase European capabilities.²³ The issues of the EDA being an institutional nucleus for European procurement and a single EU budget for defence were not mentioned in the discussions. It is highly unlikely that Sweden at this stage would endorse these ideas.

The new Government defence proposition, although outlining the defence of a non-aligned state, underlines the membership of the EU as very important for Sweden, also for security reasons. International crisis management within the EU is vital for Sweden and in no competition with Swedish interests. The solidarity clause is important as well and commits countries to each other. While being non-aligned and thereby not forced to help others, Sweden sees it as unlikely that it would be passive if a member state is attacked. While these phrases are new as an expression of Swedish commitment, there is still among the population a strong endorsement of non-alignment, those preferring NATO membership amounting to only slightly above 20 per cent of the population. At the same time many people do not see non-alignment as connected to security: Sweden is neither more secure or insecure by remaining non-aligned

²¹ Government bill 2004/2005: 5 (see ref. 2), p. 23.

²² Parliamentary Defence Commission, Ds 2004:30 (see ref. 2), pp. 118-130.

²³ Committee on EU Affairs, 11 June 2004, pp. 13-17.

The Swedish Government believes that a strong transatlantic link is necessary. A continued American engagement is important and a strong and united Europe is a precondition for a close and well-developed cooperation across the Atlantic.²⁴

4. Mapping of activities in CFSP-related research

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²⁴ Government bill, 2004/05: 05, p. 29.

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