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TURKISH PERSPECTIVE ON COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY (CSDP): LESSONS LEARNED

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This is not the first seminar on the topic of Security and Defence in the Mediterranean, while it is the first one after the Lisbon Treaty entered into force in December 2009. The European Union (EU) is evolving with new structures to deal with security and defense issues, as the new figure of the President of the European Council, the important role to be played in foreign affairs and security issues by the new EU High Representative, or the new EU External Action Service becoming functional.

Hence, the Turkish perspective on Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) will be presented briefly, to focus on the lessons learned.

It goes without saying that Turkey, a large and proud European Mediterranean country, has a unique relationship with the EU. It is a candidate to EU membership and it is negotiating for accession. It is also a non-EU European NATO Ally participating CSDP activities based on specific arrangements which are part of the EU acquis. Turkey has supported from the outset the development of the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), after the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and the last Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Our support has not been limited to a pat on the back of the EU or simple words of encouragement. However, it has rather been a solid contribution by making available to the EU solid assets and capabilities. We have, thus, actively participated in major CSDP operations and missions and we have dedicated substantial human and financial resources to this end. It is noteworthy that Turkey has taken part in almost all of the Berlin Plus or autonomous CSDP operations which it has been invited to. It is still the largest non-EU contributor to EUFOR ALTHEA and second largest among all EU nations. Furthermore, we have also supported the EU Headline Goal and we are currently waiting on call as part of an EU battle group.

Our support to the EU has been an outcome of a strategic decision, a choice if you will, inspired not only by the fact that we are on our way to full EU membership and that we are a non-EU European NATO Ally, but also by a rather simple philosophy, where CSDP operations provide an

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added value to international peace and stability. This certainly overlaps with our national interests as well.

In perspective, this could be deemed quite relevant from the stand point of our Mediterranean neighbors as well. Therefore, I would argue that supporting and participating in CSDP activities may also be a strategic choice for our Mediterranean neighbors, if they so decide.

We arrive though to the lessons learned. From the Turkish perspective, retrospectively, I could tell with ease that Turkey is content with the decision it made to support CSDP. We have no regrets and we will continue our support to the best of our ability. That said, one cannot deny the fact that we are not satisfied at all with the way in which we are included in the decision making process of the EU concerning the operations that we make a contribution to. Turkey is quite frustrated in that sense. The EU has still a long distance to cover to reach the level of inclusiveness and transparency that, for example, NATO is generously extending to its partners.

Turkey pleads for nothing less than a reciprocal treatment. Our men and women get in harm's way to contribute to EU efforts. Until we become a full member we want a full seat at the table even if we cannot vote, when it comes to decision-making concerning the activities that we participate in.

NATO has a specific partnership with the Mediterranean nations under the name Mediterranean Dialogue. This is a comprehensive partnership tool enabling cooperation between the NATO and the Mediterranean countries to exchange views and cooperate on a host of issues on international peace and security. When it comes to crisis management cooperation, NATO has, over the years, accumulated a considerable amount of experience in working with the Mediterranean partners. To give an example, Jordan is a contributor to the operation ISAF, as well as Morocco in KFOR. These countries are able to sit with NATO Ally's when key documents are being negotiated, to the extent that there is almost no difference between a NATO Member and Morocco or Jordan, in their respective cases.

The EU is not there yet. And I believe that if a genuine partnership is being sought between the EU and Mediterranean countries (and again, Turkey is not included in this equation due to its unique relation with the EU), it will require an inclusive, comprehensive approach by the EU. This is especially so when it comes to some important areas of cooperation such as crisis management, maritime security or civil emergency planning where EU will seek Mediterranean contributions. Again in this field, NATO has a remarkable experience in partnership with the Mediterranean Dialogue nations. It has also developed a very progressive concept called Comprehensive Approach. This concept suggests that there needs to be synergy between civilian and military means, as well as among all international actors to bring about positive results in crisis areas. Such a concept, if adopted also by the EU, would definitely benefit an enhanced EU-Mediterranean cooperation.