

2018/6/1: Possibilities of design for the Austrian presidency of the EU Council in the framework of “Common Security and Defence Policy”

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On the occasion of Austrian presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2018, this essay is supposed to give an overview of the legal basics of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and at the same time explain the tasks of the Federal Ministry of Defence (FMoD) in the framework of the council presidency. This is to be realised by contrasting the legal anchorage of the CSDP with the determined tasks of the council presidency. In the first part of the article, the legal framework of the CSDP, the council itself, and the council presidency are discussed. In the second part the question “quo vadis” arising for the Austrian council presidency is picked up on. At the moment, the implementation of numerous defence initiatives in the CSDP is on the EU agenda. The tasks implied by the council presidency can be divided into two strands: working presidency and national state emphases. In the framework of the working presidency, the further implementation of the CSDP and the different defence initiatives are expected, which are to be accomplished by the presiding nation in the role of the so-called „Honest Broker“. The kernel program of the presiding nation, which offers the member states in the framework of the presidency to mention or even to foster own selected focal points in the EU-agera, is to be regarded perspectively. In this respect, the FMoD has selected two focal topics for the CSDP: 1. Synergies and military support for institutions. 2. Reinforcement of the resilience in West Balkan/Southeast Europe. Considering the numerous new defence initiatives the EU and CSDP are placing on the international pedestal, this role of a neutral negotiator must certainly not be under-estimated. Constant dialogue as well as good communication between the member states as well as abroad are to be fostered by means of informal meetings. In any case, Austria takes part in all defence initiatives and will also support them as Honest Broker. Within the kernel program of the FMoD, integrating all member states and imparting the topics are a chance to put own focal points on the EU conference table and to give new impulses for new discussions. Both topics are gripping, offering good opportunities to emphasize own features as well as to lead new topics, or perspectives concerning tricky topics, such as civil-military cooperation, onto the EU floor. Whether the FMoD will be able to give a textual impulse for the CSDP with its focal topics, and in which direction these topics will develop in choreography of the member states, still remains to be awaited. The current phase of implementation is decisive for the CSDP, and many defence initiatives are negotiated and implemented in the framework of the Austrian council presidency. Which concrete tasks will appear here ad hoc in the framework of the working presidency for Austria, and how Austria will be able to support future challenges will be proven in the course of the chairmanship.