

## The Role and Interests of Small States in Developing European Security and Defence Policy

By *Arūnas Molis*\*

*“Nothing is more terrible than activity without insight.”*

Thomas Carlyle, 1795-1881

### Introduction

The main actors of international politics are competing large states. Smaller states gain significance in the permanent struggle for power only when a certain favourable geopolitical situation develops. However, when the European Communities were founded in the 1950s, a considerable effort was made to allow the small Benelux Member States to feel at ease with the larger members. The small states gained proportionally bigger voice within the decision-making system compared to the larger ones. Each member state has got a right to veto within the Council of Ministers, equal access to European Commission and a proportionally higher number of representatives in the European Parliament. The fact that the new institutions of the Communities were mainly located in small Member States (Belgium and Luxembourg) further strengthened their position.<sup>1</sup> This framework gave the small states the possibility to influence policy at the European level to an extent never seen before.

Today, with the constantly changing strategic security environment and with the increased number of external threats, Europeans are in a hurry to improve their military potential and the image of the EU in the sphere of security and defence. However, the idea of developing autonomous military potential initiated by Germany and France was accepted differently by the EU states. Leaving the disputes and arguments of the large states aside, this article discusses the attitude of small EU states towards the European security and defence policy (ESDP) and circumstances determining policy of small states. The opinion of the small states, once they find a common position, could determine a lot – after all, they make a majority of the EU members. But are they able to unite their efforts in protecting their common interests? Do they have common interests at all? This article gives very general answers to these questions.

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A separate part of this article is designed for Lithuanian attitude towards the development of ESDP. Lithuania in its foreign policy is facing a difficult choice: should it support the strengthening of the global hegemony of the US and the irreversible establishment of the American global power? Or should it support the possible aims of the European core states to create the counter-alliance for balancing the hegemony of the US? The last part of the article is an attempt to answer to these questions.

### **1. Concept of a small state**

Upon analyzing foreign policy of small states it is necessary to define how its smallness is understood and how it could influence the foreign policy of the country. Many theoretical models and different criteria could be used for describing the nature of the state. However, the most important criteria determining the size of the state are its comparative power and geopolitical position. Comparative power of a state includes political, economic, social power. Geopolitical position evaluates this power in a definite geopolitical context. States with limited possibilities to protect their interests and establish geopolitical subjectivity are considered as small. Small states are more vulnerable or, to be precise, weak due to lack of power and independence.

Under this definition of the difference between small and large states one may notice that the power and influence of the EU states mainly depends on the size of the territory and population of the state. This is also reflected by its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and defence budget. Therefore, the distinction of small and large states may be based on B. Thohallsson, who attributes states with a population of 38 million and above to the large states of the EU, and the states with a population below 17 million – to small states. In this way the ratio of the EU small and large states is the following:

**Table 1. Small and large states of the European Union**

|              | Population<br>(in mln, by<br>2004) | Surface<br>(thousands of<br>km <sup>2</sup> ) | GDP (in bn<br>US\$, 2004) | Defence<br>expenditure (in<br>bn US\$, 2004) |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--|
| Small states |                                    |   |                           |  |
| Malta        | 0.4                                | 0.3   | 5.4                       | 0.0524                                       |
| Luxemburg    | 0.5                                | 3   | 31.7                      | 0.243  |
| Cyprus       | 0.7                                | 9   | 15.3                      | 0.274  |
| Estonia      | 1.4                                | 45  | 10.9                      | 0.172  |
| Slovenia     | 2.0                                | 20  | 31.7                      | 0.511  |
| Latvia       | 2.3                                | 65  | 13                        | 0.233  |
| Lithuania    | 3.4                                | 65  | 22.1                      | 0.311  |
| Ireland      | 4.0                                | 70  | 180                       | 0.907  |
| Finland      | 5.2                                | 339   | 184                       | 2.5  |
| Denmark      | 5.4                                | 43  | 239                       | 3.55   |
| Slovakia     | 5.4                                | 49  | 41                        | 0.717  |
| Austria      | 8.1                                | 84  | 290                       | 2.14   |
| Sweden       | 9.0                                | 450   | 340                       | 5.3  |
| Hungary      | 10.1                               | 93  | 99.5                      | 1.53   |
| Czech Rep.   | 10.2                               | 79  | 106                       | 1.97   |
| Belgium      | 10.4                               | 31  | 349                       | 4.36   |
| Portugal     | 10.5                               | 92  | 166                       | 2.83   |
| Greece       | 11.0                               | 132   | 202                       | 5.86   |
| Netherlands  | 16.3                               | 34  | 575                       | 9.6  |
| Large States |                                    |   |                           |  |
| Poland       | 38.2                               | 324   | 241                       | 4.6  |
| Spain        | 41.0                               | 507   | 986                       | 12.5   |
| Italy        | 57.5                               | 302   | 1660                      | 30.5   |
| UK           | 59.9                               | 245   | 2130                      | 49.6   |
| France       | 59.9                               | 552   | 2000                      | 51.6   |
| Germany      | 82.5                               | 357   | 2670                      | 37.7   |

*Source: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 2005-2006, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, London, 2005;*

## **2. Significance of the small states in forming EU Battle Groups and participating in EU international operations**

In order to avoid unilateral manipulation of large actors, small states are sometimes inclined to sacrifice some of their autonomy and join cooperation structures of different natures. These structures may partially eliminate the imbalance of political influence, military power and economic potential in the bilateral relations with the large states. The principle of equality observed in the

supranational institutions gives the small states structural power which is used trying to compensate the deficit of comparative power.

Generally speaking, ESDP was started as a project of the powerful core states of the EU. However, the intention to fall into the foreign policy strategies of the global actors and to find the place in international system has pushed small states to join the ESDP. Their contribution is seen from the input into development of the EU Battle Groups (BG) and participation in the EU led international operations. Europe decided to create 13 BG, which would be 1,000-1,500 strong and able to be deployed up to 6,000 kilometres. France, Italy, Spain and the UK will form their own groups and another nine groups are to be formed by:

1. France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and Spain;
2. France and Belgium;
3. Germany the Netherlands and Finland;
4. Germany, Czech Republic and Austria;<sup>5</sup> - Italy, Hungary and Slovenia;
5. Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal;
6. Poland, Germany, Slovakia, Latvia and Lithuania;
7. Sweden, Finland and Norway (not an EU member);
8. The UK and the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, out of all the EU only Cyprus, Malta, Ireland and Denmark did not express a wish to join one of the most ambitious projects of the EU defence cooperation. All nine multinational BG will contain at least one small EU state, and the Scandinavian states – attributed to small states – will form a BG without the assistance of the large ones.

A similar situation is seen when analyzing the participation of EU countries in international operations. The larger part of military and civil personnel in the EU operations is made up of the representatives of the large EU states. However in the biggest EU operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (ALTHEA and EUPM<sup>3</sup>) about a third of the military and civil personnel are from the small EU states. That EU led operations are the priority for the small EU states can be seen when comparing participation in the EU operations with participation in operations led by NATO or the US (e.g., ISAF<sup>4</sup> in Afghanistan and “Iraqi Freedom“ in Iraq). Small EU states participate in these operations with such capacity:

Table 2. Number of personnel (military and civilian) in most important EU, NATO and US led operations

| State                        | EUPM <sup>5</sup>                   | EUFOR (ALTHEA) <sup>6</sup>          | ISAF <sup>7</sup>                     | „Iraqi Freedom“ <sup>8</sup>            |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Denmark                      | 11                                  | 0                                    | 122                                   | 496                                     |
| Netherlands                  | 31                                  | 430                                  | 311                                   | 800 (0)                                 |
| Hungary                      | 5                                   | 122                                  | 159                                   | 300                                     |
| Czech Rep.                   | 6                                   | 89                                   | 17                                    | 110                                     |
| Slovakia                     | 6                                   | 4                                    | 16                                    | 105                                     |
| Lithuania                    | 2                                   | 1                                    | 9                                     | 120                                     |
| Latvia                       | 4                                   | 3                                    | 9                                     | 122                                     |
| Estonia                      | 2                                   | 2                                    | 10                                    | 55                                      |
| Slovenia                     | 3                                   | 153                                  | 27                                    | 0                                       |
| Portugal                     | 8                                   | 231                                  | 21                                    | 0                                       |
| Greece                       | 9                                   | 181                                  | 171                                   | 0                                       |
|                              |                                     |                                      |                                       |   |
| Sweden                       | 12                                  | 80                                   | 85                                    | 0                                       |
| Finland                      | 11                                  | 183                                  | 61                                    | 0                                       |
| Austria                      | 7                                   | 202                                  | 3                                     | 0                                       |
| Ireland                      | 9                                   | 52                                   | 10                                    | 0                                       |
| Malta                        | 2                                   | 0                                    | 0                                     | 0                                       |
|                              |                                     |                                      |                                       |   |
| Belgium                      | 5                                   | 58                                   | 616                                   | 0                                       |
| Luxemburg                    | 2                                   | 1                                    | 10                                    | 0                                       |
| Cyprus                       | 6                                   | 0                                    | 0                                     | 0                                       |
| <i>Total small EU states</i> | 141<br>40 % of all EU participation | 1,792<br>31% of all EU participation | 1,657<br>29 % of all EU participation | ~ 2,100<br>11 % of all EU participation |
| <i>Total EU</i>              | 359<br>87% of all participants      | 5,798<br>87% of all participants     | 5,728<br>70 % of all participants     | ~ 19,000<br>15 % of all participants    |
| <i>Total in operation</i>    | 413                                 | 6,656                                | 8,204                                 | ~ 123,000                               |

As can be seen from the data provided, small EU states favour joining the operations led by the EU. In these operations soldiers from the EU member states form the majority. All small states are participating in the EUPM operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their common contribution is rather

significant. At the same time only Denmark, Holland and “new” European states participate in the “Iraqi Freedom” operation led by the US.

However, the conclusion that there is no unanimous policy of the small states or at least a common position towards the ESDP is more than obvious. Only Denmark and the mini-states – Cyprus and Malta – have a categorical position as to in which operations to participate. Three groups of small EU states can be excluded according to their attitude towards ESDP: some give more support to the policy of NATO and the US, others are backing pro-European policy, and the rest, which are based on traditional neutrality, act according to the situation. Arguments of these groups are presented in part three of this article.

### **3. Arguments of small states: blocks’ formation**

The tendencies of foreign policy of the small states often depend on their relations with large neighbouring states and the extent to which the small states would like to transform or preserve these relations. It depends on what threat large states pose for the national interests of the small states or vice versa – how large states can defend those interests. Today there is no possibility for any of the EU states, especially a small one, to contribute equally successfully to international operations led by NATO (or US) and the EU at the same time. This is possible as long as there are no several intensive operations taking place at the same time and there is no need to separate the forces. Thus, small states do not have any other option but to set their priorities because of the limited military capabilities. Upon setting them, small states take all possible measures to be included into the strategies of the chosen large states. This is the only way for them to get an opportunity to develop their own foreign policy.

As it was already mentioned, the priorities of the small EU states determine their division into three groups. This depends on different reasons, but the most important one is different relations with the large states of the EU, the US and Russia. The following parts will review the “coalitions” of small EU states.

#### **3.1 Euroatlantic view towards ESDP**

Among the small states of the EU, Denmark, Netherlands, Portugal, Greece, Slovenia, Baltic and Visegrad states are known as the euroatlantists, who are doing their best to keep the US in Europe. They consider Europe and the US as inseparable parts of Western civilization. Above-mentioned euroatlantic states are seeking to disbalance the Russian-French-German axis, which is very often

directed against the interests of the US, and to improve the transatlantic relations. According to their point of view, the EU's foreign and security policy should be oriented towards the implementation of common interests with the US and it must not harm, dub or even subvert this unity<sup>9</sup>.

However, the euroatlantists are used to having benefits from their EU membership and structural power, provided by this membership. Therefore these states do not refuse to take part in taking common decisions. They are not satisfied with the current passive role of the EU member states in the defence policy and, therefore, speak out for better co-ordination of CFSP<sup>10</sup> and for the increasing the potential of ESDP.<sup>11</sup> According to the euroatlantists, federal proatlantic Europe could be very useful in advocating the values of euroatlantic community through the Greater Middle East and CIS<sup>12</sup> countries. Besides that, even symbolic participation in ESDP (including the military and civilian operations) provides for euroatlantists at least a theoretical chance to influence the decisions in this sphere. However, once they have chosen transatlantic relations as a priority, their input in ESDP development is as big as it does not contradict their further mentioned choice. There is no surprise that for all the states belonging to this group NATO is the main security provider. Their priority is NATO (or the US) led operations. During the Iraq invasion all of them without any doubt supported the US policy. However, three subgroups can be excluded in this group of states: first group of states are the traditional euroatlantists, the second – reflexive euroatlantists and the third – conjunctive euroatlantists.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.1.1 Traditional euroatlantism

Denmark is a state with traditional euroatlantic orientation, not participating in the military dimension of the EU cooperation even formally. During the Cold War Denmark was one of the most sceptical towards the European defence dimension amongst all European NATO members. The military aspects of security were considered to belong firmly to NATO, therefore European defence dimension linked to WEU or EC was considered highly problematic. European defence dimension was considered as jeopardizing the functional balance between the NATO, the UN, EC and Nordic countries cooperation. The dominant view of the EC was that it should be concerned with economic cooperation and have no significant political dimension.<sup>14</sup>

Before the ratification of the Maastricht treaty in 1992, the Danish government formulated an opt-out in military matters in order to make the treaty acceptable

for voters. Now this opt-out can only be undone by referendum. Therefore, Denmark's participation in ESDP is limited to sending military observers and provision of certain logistic support to the EU led operations. Passing the Parliament's resolution in 1997, Denmark repeated its decision not to participate either in taking or implementing decisions related to ESDP. On the other hand, this resolution states that Denmark believes in successful development of ESDP and will not hinder EU partners to pursue ambitions in the military sphere. Thereby, though the position of Denmark is mainly determined by domestic reasons, it may be evaluated as an example of correctness – Denmark decided not to participate in ESDP but is not going to destroy it from the inside.

The Netherlands is not as categorical as Denmark, but in the beginning it also viewed the creation of ESDP very sceptically. However, later it became moderate and intensified its relationship with Germany (creation of a common EU BG). Despite that, the Netherlands strongly supported the policy of the US and UK in Iraq. Though the Netherlands is withdrawing its soldiers from Iraq, it is related more to relocation of resources as the Netherlands has established a Province reconstruction group (PRT) in one of the provinces in Afghanistan.

### 3.1.2 Reflexive euroatlantism

There is no wonder that the Baltic States, which have a close relationship with Denmark, have also chosen the atlantistic view towards NATO and ESDP. However, the support of the Baltic, Central and Eastern European (CEE) states to the US is determined not by independent foreign policy traditions but historical reasons. The said states have been trying to prove that they have been reliable partners to the US for nearly a century. Membership in NATO has always been their most important security guarantee. This is related to the support of the US during the years of the Cold War and the threat of Russia that encouraged them to put more effort into acquiring strong international security guarantees. If ESDP would push the US out from the European security system, this could condition more extensive influence of Russia. Therefore, the Baltic States constantly emphasize that they view ESDP in a wider framework of transatlantic relations, where the actions of the EU should complement the actions of NATO. Such an attitude is consolidated in the Security Strategy of Lithuania of 2004, which states that Lithuania “participates in the development of European civil and military capabilities. This will contribute to the strengthening of transatlantic partnership and more effective participation of the EU when ensuring security and stability, as well as when responding to crises in the world”<sup>45</sup>. An agreement of ten political parties of Lithuania of March 17,



2004, states that “Lithuania will seek for non-duplication of NATO and EU military structures, which should complement each other”<sup>16</sup>. Thus the position of the Baltic States may be defined as a goal not to create new military forces for the EU defence, but to coordinate the military contribution of the state to NATO and the EU.

Though the historical experience of Visegrad countries differ, all of them also consider NATO as their most important security guarantee. A belief that “there should be no contradictions between obligations to NATO and support to strengthening the European military defence capacity”<sup>17</sup> prevails in Hungary. Even though Hungary has recently withdrawn a considerable part of its soldiers from Iraq, the existence of NATO and the US is essential for the security of Hungary. On the other hand, situated near the problematic Balkan region, Hungary is interested in ensuring security additionally through ESDP. Therefore though in the beginning of developing ESDP Hungary was concerned with duplication, later its attitude became more moderate and creation of ESDP was started to be viewed positively.

The support of the Czech Republic to the US and the aim to strengthen NATO and the transatlantic relations are also obvious. It has already become a tradition that CBR (chemical-bacteriological-radiological) specialists from the Czech Republic participate in all operations led by NATO or the US. On the whole, the Czech Republic, in comparison to Hungary, faces serious difficulties of generating forces for operations, thus its active participation in ESDP is practically hardly possible (it took a long time for the Czech Republic to formally decide to participate in creating EU BG).

The position of Slovakia, in comparison to other Visegrad countries, is exceptional in that it was not invited together with the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary to join NATO. It is natural that after such a surprise membership in the Alliance became an especially important strategic goal of the state. The attitude of Slovakia towards ESDP is the same as of its neighbours – it is said in the security strategy of Slovakia that “ESDP is considered a process complementing collective defence of NATO”<sup>18</sup>.

Because of a lack of resources and capabilities, all the mentioned countries have contributed only minimally to the development of ESDP until now. Their policies may be assessed as an attempt to strengthen their positions in CFSP, to

influence the decisions strengthening the transatlantic relations and to get an additional measure of influence in the area of the EU foreign policy.

### 3.1.3 Conjunctive euroatlantism

The second group of euroatlantists countries is set by those who officially declare NATO as their priority, but practical support depends largely on domestic political situation. Slovenia, Portugal and Greece treat ESDP as a complement to NATO; therefore they regard its development with care. However, they contribute rather insignificantly to the operations led by NATO and the US. The arguments of the said three countries for such behaviour differ only slightly.

The appearance of Slovenia in this group may be affected by different historical experience of this country in comparison with others CEE countries, members of NATO and the EU. Slovenia is the only former part of Yugoslavia, which has successfully integrated into NATO and the EU during the last 10 years. Slovenia was the only CEE country that did not support the US led operation in Iraq. On the other hand, the attitude of Slovenia towards ESDP reminds of the positions of the other CEE countries. The Government of Slovenia emphasizes that “these two structures complement each other and Slovenia does not support the development of ESDP as an alternative to NATO”<sup>19</sup>. Such a twofold position could be best explained not by lack of military capabilities, but by negative public opinion on the Iraqi conflict and reluctance of politicians to risk their reputation.

Portugal is most often attributed to traditionally euroatlantistic states, for which support to the US is a constant characteristic of foreign policy. However, the present behaviour of Portugal is similar to conjunctive euroatlantism, when everything depends on the position of the majority in the parliament and public opinion. For example, after unconditionally supporting the actions of the US, in February 2005 Portugal decided to withdraw its soldiers from Iraq. This decision was made at the same time when this was done by Spain and several other countries. Spain remained a close ally of the US and established a PRT in Afghanistan, while Portugal remained not understood on the other side of the Atlantic. Besides, Portugal supports many of the EU initiatives in the sphere of security and defence. It participated in the EU operations in FYROM, in Congo and in Bosnia, expressed its wish to join the EU BG. According to the Portugal Government, operation “Arthemis” in Congo was supported by the country in an attempt to contribute to the development of the “global” aims of the EU. Other “euroatlantistic” states are rather inclined not to support the ESDP

because of its claims for a global role. Thus Portugal may be attributed to euroatlantic states due to historical relations with the US, but not due to the current policy.

The euroatlantic tendencies of Greece are weakest in this group of countries. Partially it is related to constant tension between it and a close ally of the US – Turkey. On the other hand, traditionally weak administrative capacity of Greece prevents it from formulating and adhering to a consistent policy. This could be a reason why it looks like euroatlantic Greece is more concerned with the EU military potential and not with the strengthening of NATO and transatlantic relations. This became especially obvious in 2002, when Greece chaired ESDP military dimension for two terms.

### **3.2 Traditional neutrality and its transformation**

The second big group of the small EU countries includes traditionally “neutral” states, demonstrating “flexibility” of the foreign policy and not joining any alliances. Finland, Sweden, Austria, Ireland and Malta<sup>20</sup> chose balancing between the EU and NATO as a means for accumulating its structural power. They strive for achieving an overlapping mechanism of Western security structures, which would satisfy their security needs. It should be noted that the future of the ESDP as such may significantly depend on the positions of these economically strong states in the future.

For Finland, Sweden, Austria and Ireland neutrality during the years of the Cold War meant independent foreign and security policy. Independence, reliable national defence and even a certain self-isolation were the key features distinguishing the neutral states from the other Western countries. When the large neighbours fought for influence in buffer states, the neutral states tried to minimize the threats in the areas of foreign and security policies, to defend their territories and political independence. But the nature of threats has changed and concepts of sovereignty started to force the small states to look for new ways of cooperation and to reconsider their neutrality doctrines.

The idea of H. Lauterpacht (expressed in 1936) that “the more collective security is in the international system, the less space is left for neutrality”<sup>21</sup> started to be very true for the neutral states by the end of the previous century. In 1992 Finland and Sweden reviewed their security doctrines. “Neutrality” was replaced by “not joining” of military Alliances. The changed security doctrine of

Finland supposed not joining alliances, but the legal basis was ordered so that Finland could participate in all EU crisis management operations. In 1992-1995 Sweden, Finland, Austria and Ireland became observers in WEU, in 1994-1996 they joined the NATO PfP program. Today all four countries are trying to contribute to international security and are expecting assistance from NATO in case of threat.<sup>22</sup> Only Ireland has kept a part of its “true” neutrality in this group of states. Under the Constitution of the state, a UN Security Council mandate, approval of parliament and government are necessary for any deployment of its military forces. However, certain steps are taken even by the Irish Government: in 2000 a White Book was published, in which a possibility to participate in peacekeeping operations not only within the framework of UN, but also with a UN mandate is discussed.

Therefore none of the traditionally neutral states *de facto* is neutral anymore. Though the participation of the mentioned countries in collective respond to global threats does not mean mutual military assistance principle, changes to the security environment determined that they are included into the system of collective security.<sup>23</sup> “Neutral” states participate in taking decisions related to security, their soldiers go to international operations, but the states have no obligations on the military side and the politicians of the countries gain more popularity in the eyes of the public. However, such a position of the neutral countries creates a possibility to form conditions encouraging competition between atlantistic and eurocentristic countries of the EU.

### 3.3 Pro-European view of small EU states towards the ESDP

The only view of small EU countries favours strategic relations with the EU core states but not with the US. These are traditionally under the influence of France positioned Belgium and Luxemburg and with close US partner Turkey confronting Cyprus. These states belong to the group of eurocontinentalists, for which federalised Europe is the value itself. Their long-term interest is not the preservation of the transatlantic community, but the strategic independence of Europe. According to them, the federal structure of the EU and the formation of the area of the EU’s specific interests are the guarantees of the independent future of Europe<sup>24</sup>.

Eurocontinentalists’ approach toward further EU integration says that the only possibility for the emergence of the EU as the consolidated political subject is through consolidation of European continental “core”, which consists of Germany, France, the Benelux countries. In other words, “political Europe”

could only be formed through the neutralisation of influence of the pro-transatlantic EU member states on the EU integration process or by altering their geopolitical orientation. In their view, Europe through the common and effective foreign policy must structure the space around itself, in order to achieve the status of global power. For achieving this it should dissociate from the US at first.<sup>25</sup>

Supporting France and Germany as their closest partners, the states of this group were the initiators of the process, which could mean “the start of the separation”. These states are supporting the new “competition for power” and joined the states that infringed the domination of the US. As a proof of this may serve their active participation in the EU led operations and refusal to join the operation in Iraq. Besides that, Belgium and Luxemburg, together with France and Germany are the states of so called “chocolate four” group, which April 29, 2003, proclaimed their agreement to develop the ESDP. Seven initiatives were foreseen in this declaration:

1. The development of rapid European reaction capability. The progress made in this field may help to strengthen the European contribution to developing a NATO Reaction Force (NRF) and to guarantee their interoperability;
2. The creation of a European command for strategic air transport, available for European and NATO operations, by June 2004 at the latest. The A400M-program was meant to be crucial for the development of such a European capability for strategic air transport. Creation of a common command for strategic transport (sea, air and ground) was also considered;
3. The creation of a joint European NBC protection capability in charge of the protection of both civilians and troops, which are deployed within the framework of European operations;
4. The creation of a European system for first humanitarian aid during disasters (EU-FAST – European Union First Aid and Support team) which would make possible for the EU to combine civilian and military assets in order to engage first emergency humanitarian aid within 24 hours;
5. The creation of European training centres: a common tactical training unit for A400M-crews; a training centre for helicopters crews; harmonizing sea training curricula for marine CO’s in the prospect of the creation of a European school-fleet; harmonizing training for Air force pilots by enhancing ongoing initiatives, notably in the field of tactics;
6. The strengthening of European capabilities with regard to operational planning and conducting operations. To this end “chocolate four” proposed the creation of a nucleus collective capability for planning and conducting operations for the EU;

7. With a view of improving command and control capabilities available to the European Union as well as to NATO, our four Defence Ministers will take the necessary steps to establish, not later than 2004, a multinational deployable force headquarters for joint operations, building on existing deployable headquarters.<sup>26</sup>

Though Cyprus does not belong to the “chocolate four“, its arguments to support ESDP are also related to the wish to lessen the influence of the US in Europe. The pro-European position of Cyprus is mostly determined by its tense relationship with a US ally Turkey. Being afraid of the invasion of EU forces into the Turkish part of Cyprus Turkey blocked the Berlin Plus agreement in 2001<sup>27</sup>. This incident shows that Cyprus cannot be sure about the support from the US in its sensitive relationship with Turkey. However, the EU format gives for Cyprus more than one instrument to influence and pressure Turkey, especially bearing in mind its goal to become a member of the EU. Thus, there is no surprise that not participating in any operations led by NATO or the US, Cyprus participates in EU operations in the Balkans, declares being ready to allow the EU forces to use its air base, ports, training grounds, plans to join the BG.

#### **4. Lithuanian interests in developing relations with NATO and ESDP**

Defining its relations with NATO and ESDP Lithuania first of all looks for an answer to one crucial question – should it commit to play an equally important role in both NATO and the EU? Though Lithuania strengthens its structural power by integrating into both organisations, the power is gained not from being a member, but from the ability to form the alliances. Lithuanian view concerning the formation of alliances is approached in the last part of this article.

##### **4.1 Lithuanian interest to limit the development of ESDP**

Lithuanian foreign policy has traditionally been oriented towards the strengthening of transatlantic relations and strategic partnership with the US. There is no wonder that such an attitude is greatly influenced by the US: Lithuania considers it as the only power which can neutralize the geopolitical influence of Russia in the Baltic Sea region.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the wish to increase the role of the US in the region, to neutralize sources of threats from the East and to gain more space for an action in foreign policy area are the main factors which determine Lithuanian shift towards euroatlantists. The presumptions of this are laid down in the main security related documents of Lithuania: Security Strategy of Lithuania, Military strategy of Lithuania, An agreement of political

parties of Lithuania on defence policy, Law on the Basics of National security and others. Desire not to get the status of the “exchange object” is one more very important factor which influences Lithuanian euroatlantic choice. To become the “exchange object” would be possible in case of the redistribution of the spheres of influence between Russia and the US or between the EU and Russia. This could more likely happen in case of the domination of the eurocontinentalist security system.<sup>29</sup> If France and Germany fail to transform the EU into a unanimous global centre of power and Russia preserves sovereignty for its domestic policy, Russia may take over the control of the EU internal processes. This would endanger the independence of Lithuania.

As the predominance of the eurocontinental security system may condition drifting to the sphere of Russia’s influence, Vilnius is intended to limit the development of ESDP. Officially this is presented as a wish to preserve transatlantic relations. However, preservation of the solid US role in the region is crucial, but not the only reason to stay cold towards the ESDP development. ESDP is a clear move towards the federal model of the EU, which limits the autonomy of decision making for small countries. That is why the intergovernmental model of the EU reflects more the interests of Lithuania, at least in security and defence matters. Lithuania has no interest to become the province of the federalized Union, which can not provide security guarantees and duplicates the organization which can do this (NATO). Besides, participation in ESDP means new highly costly commitments, which may not be in line with commitments to NATO. It may result not only in hard pressure for an economically weaker state, but also lead to a “problem of double loyalty”<sup>30</sup>. Because of these reasons Lithuanian interest is to strengthen the transatlantic link and to ensure the US attention in Europe. The US participation in the European security system makes it possible for Lithuania to control the political relations with other big states - Germany and Russia. Finally, in case of transcontinental security system, Lithuania may acquire the status of the link between the West and the East and become the geopolitical connection<sup>31</sup>. It means more space for an active foreign policy and a possibility to stimulate the democratisation and the geopolitical orientation towards euroatlantic powers countries of Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova).

## 4.2 Lithuania's relations with NATO and ESDP: search for an optimal model

Vilnius is very much interested in preserving the US as a strategic partner of Europe. However, the US itself may be forced to limit its participation in European security system. A vacuum of its political and economic resources may appear because of "getting stuck" in the Persian Gulf, Middle East or other places in the world. Therefore, Lithuania at some degree is interested in the processes of deepening and widening the EU integration.

After becoming a member of the EU, Lithuania is trying to use this status and take part in making common decisions. Lithuania is interested in participating in the activities of ESDP on the following reasons:

1. ESDP is an additional tool for ensuring security. If an effective EU crisis management system is created, it would be an additional tool for managing conflicts and ensuring security and stability in the EU and by its borders. Besides this, the creation of EU Battle Groups can serve as an additional impulse for Lithuania to fasten its defence reform and to create more capable forces;
2. Involvement provides opportunity to influence decisions. Participation in the process of ESDP development provides at least theoretical possibility to influence the decision making. This possibility would especially increase in case small EU states or CEE states manage to unite their efforts and defend interests together. For Lithuania involvement gives an opportunity to require extension of ESDP activities into the states which are considered as top priorities of Lithuania's foreign policy (Georgia, Moldova, etc.);
3. Successful ESDP is a chance to involve Russia into productive cooperation with the West. ESDP is a progressing area of EU integration, which might promote real cooperation of the West with Russia (common operations, training, consultations). The EU could use the fact that its relations with Russia were always better than NATO-Russia relations and take a lead in Russia's liberalization and democratization processes;
4. Supporting ESDP Lithuania supports the interests of potential partners. Supporting ESDP Lithuania can expect, for example, EU core's support by solving the problems related to Kaliningrad and Belarus.

As it can be seen from the arguments presented above, ensuring national security Lithuania is interested in consolidating as much resources as possible. The best way to do this is not to choose a security organization, but to develop an integral security policy. As both organizations can help to implement national interests, participation in the activities of NATO and/or ESDP should not



depend on preferences to a certain organization. Participation should comply with the political, economic and military interests of Lithuania. This would be a way to reduce the dependence on conjunctive processes on the global level and the probability to become an “exchange object” in the hands of large states. Besides that, upon the EU crisis management and democracy development mechanisms, Lithuania could claim for a role of “coordinator” of EU Eastern policy.

However, this would be possible if European states coordinate their ambitions, actively implement decisions and do not compete with the US on crucial transatlantic security issues. While this is not the case, Lithuania chooses participation in the activities of NATO as its priority. It means that NATO in Lithuania is perceived as the only instrument for collective defence. As a consequence, according to NATO force planning procedures Lithuania negotiates and fulfils its security related commitments to NATO, but is not so much worried about the implementation of the EU Headlines Goals. At the same time Lithuania takes part in all the most prominent NATO and the US led operations and plays only tight role in the EU led operations. Extensive participation in “Iraqi freedom” and challenging creation of PRT under the framework of NATO ISAF operation in Afghanistan are the best evidences of Lithuanian choice.

On the other hand, this does not mean that ESDP is ignored. In May 2005 Lithuania together with Poland (as a leading nation), Germany, Slovakia and Latvia signed a political declaration about the creation of the EU BG. It will be ready to contribute the EU Rapid reaction forces in 2010. Company size unit with all the supporting personnel is considered as possible Lithuanian input. This is different from what Lithuania offers for NRF in 2006, however, supporting the single set of force principle Vilnius asks for the harmonization of EU BG and NATO NRF rotation cycles and hopes to provide the same troops for the next NRF rotation.<sup>32</sup> This endorses the statements that Lithuania prefers to participate in ESDP to the extent these activities contribute to the strengthening of transatlantic relations and coincide with national foreign policy goals. Though Lithuanian voice is not very loud, Vilnius always speaks for coordinated ambitions and political aims of NATO and the EU, single capabilities planning process and not duplicative structures.

According to the Lithuanian view, the EU and NATO should cooperate more closely in capabilities development process: to adopt the same standards,

harmonize the certification requirements and to develop more interoperable capabilities. Lithuania supports the proposal to separate (functionally and regionally) duties between NATO and the EU. While NATO could remain as a central collective security organization, the EU should concentrate exclusively upon small crisis management, peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. The special interest of Vilnius is to seek more active crises management role of the EU in the post-soviet areas, especially if NATO is not interested in participating there.<sup>33</sup>

**Instead of conclusions:  
potentially powerful, practically polarized**

Taking into account the changing nature of threats, small states as well as the large ones started to think and act globally. With the strengthening of the ESDP all of them expressed their wish to contribute to the development of ESDP in one way or another. Belgium and Luxemburg even managed to break into the EU “club of leaders” and become the participants of the new struggle for power between Europe and the US. This determined specifics of ESDP – from the closed “elite club” planned in the beginning ESDP became a more legitimate policy of the EU.

On the other hand, 19 states in a block of 25 members using the current voting rules could achieve much more than they do now. However, the resources of small EU states dedicated to ESDP development in most cases are very tight. CEE countries do not plan to allocate significant additional expenses on ESDP development at all. Therefore, first of all, the initiative to develop ESDP is given over to the main driving forces of this integration – the large EU states. Besides that, the smallness of the country did not become an influential factor determining the formation of coalitions implementing ESDP. Geopolitical orientation, national identity, issues of domestic policy and public opinion are much more important than the size of the state. All this determines the division of small EU states into those who really support closer EU cooperation in security and defence matters and those who simulate the support, but actually attempt to “stay on board” when decisions are made.

The position of Lithuania in the context of behaviour of the small EU states is not exceptional. In order to acquire allies for neutralizing the arising threats, Lithuania is trying to join the dialogue of the US and the large Western Europe states concerning NATO and ESDP. Lithuania speaks for the existence of two euroatlantic security structures (NATO and the EU), which complement each

other and coordinate their actions. However, weak comparative power of Lithuania (limited economic and military potential) prevents it from effective participation in both security formats at the same time. Therefore, by strengthening its security and structural power, Lithuania chooses an organization which ensures security today - NATO. Lithuania participates in the activities of ESDP only to the extent such activities contribute to the strengthening of transatlantic relations.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> B. Thorhallsson, 'Can small states influence policy in an EU of 25 members?' 2004, retrieved 23 June 2005, <[http://secretariat.efta.int/Web/conference\\_iceland04/EFTAAtAGlance/socialpartners/041021/InsideConferencePapers.pdf](http://secretariat.efta.int/Web/conference_iceland04/EFTAAtAGlance/socialpartners/041021/InsideConferencePapers.pdf)>.
- <sup>2</sup> A. Beatty, 'EU Defence Ministers finalise 'Battle Groups'', *EUobserver*, 2004, retrieved 22 November 2004, <<http://euobserver.com/?aid=17822&print=1>>.
- <sup>3</sup> EUPM - European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- <sup>4</sup> ISAF - International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.
- <sup>5</sup> By November 2005, according to EU Police mission. Contributors, 2005, retrieved 12 October 2005, <<http://www.eupm.org/Documents/Weekly.pdf>>.
- <sup>6</sup> By August 2005, according to EUFOR. Contributors, 2005, retrieved 12 October 2005, <[http://www.euforbih.org/organisation/050810\\_strength.htm](http://www.euforbih.org/organisation/050810_strength.htm)>.
- <sup>7</sup> By February 2005, according to International Security Assistance Force, 2005, retrieved 15 October 2005, <<http://www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan/040628-factsheet.htm>>.
- <sup>8</sup> By March 2005, according to Global security, 2005, retrieved 15 October 2005, <[http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq\\_orbat\\_coalition.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_orbat_coalition.htm)>.
- <sup>9</sup> Ch. Patten, 'A Security Strategy for Europe', *Oxford Journal on Good Governance*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2004, p.16.
- <sup>10</sup> CFSP - Common Foreign & Security Policy.
- <sup>11</sup> T.G. Ash, *Free World: Why a Crisis of the West Reveals the Opportunity of Our Time*, Allen Lane, London, 2004, p. 45.
- <sup>12</sup> CIS - Commonwealth of Independent States.
- <sup>13</sup> A. Menon, & J. Lipkin, 'European attitudes towards transatlantic relations 2000-2003: an analytical survey', 2003, retrieved 15 November 2004, <[http://www.eu2003.gr/multimedia/pdf/2003\\_5/917.pdf](http://www.eu2003.gr/multimedia/pdf/2003_5/917.pdf)>.
- <sup>14</sup> H. Larsen, *Denmark and the EU's defence dimension: Opt-out across the board?* ECSA, 2003, retrieved 30 November 2005. <<http://www.ecsa.dk/larsen.pdf>>.
- <sup>15</sup> Lithuanian Parliament, *Security Strategy of Lithuania of 2004*, 2004, retrieved 10 November 2005, <<http://www3.lrs.lt/cgi-bin/preps2?Condition1=249517&Condition2=>>>.
- <sup>16</sup> Lithuanian Parliament, *An agreement of political parties of Lithuania on defence policy*, 2005, retrieved 10 November 2005, <<http://www.kam.lt/index.php/lt/35628/>>.
- <sup>17</sup> L. Poti & J. Takacs, *The Case of the Schizophrenic Musterknabe: Comparing the Hungarian and the European Security Strategy*, Bratislava, 2005, retrieved 15 October 2005, <[http://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf\\_pool/publikationen/05\\_secstrat\\_40.pdf](http://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/05_secstrat_40.pdf)>.

<sup>18</sup> Slovakian Parliament, *Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic*, 2004, retrieved 10 November 2005, <[http://www.mosr.sk/dokumenty/eng/security\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.mosr.sk/dokumenty/eng/security_strategy.pdf)>.

<sup>19</sup> S. Kajnc, *National Report Slovenia. CFSP WATCH 2003*, Centre of International Relations, Faculty of Social Sciences, 2003, retrieved 21 October 2005, <<http://www.fornet.info/CFSPannualreports/SLOVENIA%202003.pdf>>.

<sup>20</sup> The smallest EU state under all parameters - Malta – is also traditionally neutral. But its position has little influence on both ESDP and transatlantic relations; therefore Malta's view will not be discussed in greater detail. It can just be emphasized that Malta's priority is the EU initiatives. Sometimes Malta even contributes to the EU international operations.

<sup>21</sup> E. Reiter & J. Frank, 'The European Security Strategy from the Austrian Perspective. A Valuable Contribution to the Further Europeanization of Austria's Security Policy', in M. Overhaus, H.W. Maull, S. Harnish (eds), *German Foreign Policy in Dialogue*, Trier, 2004, p.10.

<sup>22</sup> In 1995, Austria, Sweden and Finland became EU members; today they participate in creating the EU BG.

<sup>23</sup> Ireland (after rejecting the Nice agreement) and Malta (accessing EU) demanded that the EU acknowledge their specific status with respect to EU CSFP, i.e. that participation in CSFP would not mean rejecting their traditional neutrality. At the initiative of all four countries the article of the Constitutional Treaty of EU on collective defence was softened considerably and does not mean automatic help.

<sup>24</sup> M. Emerson, 'The Wider Europe as the European union's Friendly Monroe Doctrine', *CEPS Policy Brief*, vol. 27 no. 10, 2003, retrieved 25 October 2004, <<http://www.ceps.be>>.

<sup>25</sup> F. Guessgen, 'It fires back! The Impact of the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) on the Evolution of a European identity', in European Political-economy Infrastructure Consortium (EPIC), *Ionian Conference 2000 - Challenges of the New Millennium, Corfu, 20-22 May, 2000*, EPIC, Corfu, 2000, retrieved 5 November 2004, <<http://aei.pitt.edu/archive/00000642/01/ICGuessgen.pdf>>.

<sup>26</sup> Foreignpolicy.org. *Conclusions of European Defence Meeting*, 2003, retrieved 5 May 2003, <[http://www.foreignpolicy.org.tr/eng/eu/egmontpalace\\_290403.htm](http://www.foreignpolicy.org.tr/eng/eu/egmontpalace_290403.htm)>.

<sup>27</sup> According to it, the EU when carrying out independent military operations, may use NATO planning assets.

<sup>28</sup> Russian factor in this context becomes so important because of its historical-cultural ambitions towards its western neighbours.

<sup>29</sup> Č. Laurinavičius, E. Motieka, N. Statkus, *Baltijos valstybių geopolitikos bruožai XX amžius*, Lietuvos Istorijos institutas, Vilnius, 2004, p. 167.

<sup>30</sup> "Double loyalty problem" means that those states, which can not afford to maintain double military capabilities (one for NATO, one for EU) must choose in which operations (NATO or the EU) they are going to take part in case several serious crises arise at the same time.

<sup>31</sup> Č. Laurinavičius, E. Motieka, N. Statkus, *Baltijos valstybių geopolitikos bruožai XX amžius*, Lietuvos Istorijos institutas, Vilnius, 2004, p. 184.

<sup>32</sup> Considering the different nature and size of EU BG and NRF forces this would be complicated but still possible if some adjustments are made.

<sup>33</sup> Especially in "frozen" conflicts in post-soviet areas – Transdnestria, South Osetia, Abkhazia, Nagorno Karabakh.