

CFSP WATCH 2005 – Finland – by Petri Burtsov¹

- 1. What are the priorities for your government in CFSP in 2005? What are the key issues for your country in 2005 (especially with regard to the negative referenda on the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands; after the recent EU enlargement and on behalf of the perspective of the upcoming accession round(s))?**

Finland sees CFSP as a crucial element in strengthening the EU's external capacity. This encompasses, inter alia, improving the Transatlantic Relations, the EU-Russia relations, the European Neighbourhood Policy, EU's role in global arms control, and especially from Finland's perspective, strengthening the Union's northern dimension.

In reference to the constitutional treaty, there is a sense that the second pillar provisions proceed based on earlier treaties even when the ratification of the constitutional treaty is at a standstill, albeit some provisions of the constitutional draft may have to be realized through alternative arrangements.²

Much of the public discussion in the media has concentrated around security guarantees, or the lack thereof, given the constitutional crisis. On the other hand, official sources now point out that Finland agreed to the development of EU's common defence already as it joined the Union in 1995.³ In this respect, the provisions of the constitutional treaty pertaining to common defence are seen as parts of a wider continuum.

In terms of ESDP, the ongoing crisis management operations, Althea first and foremost, are a top priority. New crisis management operations are planned (Aceh, Iraq) and given attention to. The Aceh operation is of particular interest to Finland, because of the role of the former president Ahtisaari in the peace process.

The three consecutive EU presidencies (UK, Austria, Finland) are working together to ensure the continuity and progress of the coordination between civilian and military crisis management, a policy choice, which rates high on the current Finnish agenda. Finland wants to see the Union adopt a more comprehensive approach to crisis management, whereby civilian and military aspect are considered complementary aspects of the conflict resolution process.⁴

- 2. Does your country adopt a more pessimistic or optimistic stance regarding the ratification crisis of the Constitutional Treaty? How might the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands influence the ratification debate in your country and also have an impact on the outcome of the referendum?**

The official response to the crisis has been "wait and see". Prime minister Vanhanen has pointed out on many occasions that Finland shall act in accordance with the legal provisions pertaining to the ratification of the draft. This implies that Finland will wait and see how the ratification continues in other member states and take further action when the final status is clear. No indication of a referendum in Finland has been made, despite some calls (especially from the Left Alliance and the Green League) for the opposite. A recent opinion poll indicated that the ratification debate is set to intensify once the autumn session of the parliament commences and the government presents a report on the proposed constitution to the parliament. When it comes to ratifying the constitution, Prime Minister Vanhanen has stated that the ratification will not commence in Finland before the spring 2006 European Council.⁵

¹ The Finnish Institute of International Affairs

² Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs, 2.6.2005

³ Information from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 26.8.2005

⁴ Information from the Ministry of Defence, 22.8.2005

⁵ Hufvudstadsbladet 23.6.2005

Even if the current crisis of the constitutional treaty is not believed to have a major effect on Finland, some official sources are afraid that the overall feeling toward the Union is becoming more negative as a result of this. A recent opinion poll would support this claim. According to the poll, 46% of the Finns are now opposed to Finland begin part of the EU, while 43% supported Finland's membership.⁶

Furthermore, media has raised fears that it will all fall on Finland to take care of the crippled constitution, but officially the constitutional process is taken to be an issue among others during Finland's presidency.

EU-related discussion in Finland is perceived to have changed from the late 1990s, moving more towards a reactive rather than proactive attitude toward the Union. In terms of the constitutional treaty, this is manifested by the will to take care of Finland's own lot instead of

as revisions on some of the tenets limiting the possibility of the Finnish crisis management actors to use mission-related force, something that has been called for also by Prime Minister Vanhanen.¹² While it is a general consensus that the EU's crisis management shall be carried out according to the United Nations framework, much of public debate has revolved around the

attention, and is approached within the Northern Dimension framework, not as a policy initiative in its own terms.¹⁸ However, the Orange revolution in the Ukraine in particular has led to increasing interest in the area. The main daily Helsingin Sanomat, for one, has paid increasing attention to EU's eastern neighbours. However, a clear emphasis in EU's relations with its eastern neighbours is still on EU-Russia relations instead of the ENP.¹⁹ When it comes to Finland's policy priorities, clarification is needed with reference to the dynamics of the ENP and the Northern Dimension.

- The creation of battle groups and their role for ESDP.

Although Finland is fully committed to developing EU's battle groups and sees them as rectifying the Union's deficiency in rapid reaction capacity, there is a realization that rapid response is only the first step in a much wider continuum of crisis management. At the same time, the Union's rapid reaction capacity has to be put into perspective, argues a recent study by the National Defence College.²⁰ It is not likely that forces of the planned calibre will deliver the politically aspired results, the study holds.

The public discussion concerning the battle groups follows the lines of the EU "militarization" – debate mentioned above. Instead of seeing rapid reaction capacity in terms of its implications for crisis management, media and the general public by large have raised concerns over the risks of deploying Finnish soldiers by way of offensive action.

4. The Constitutional Treaty and its future – National perceptions concerning a 'plan B'?

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

Constitutional Treaty or some version of 'Nice Treaty Plus'?

Describe (briefly) the position of your country on the following key issues and the possibility of their realisation without a Constitutional Treaty as a 'plan B', 'C' or 'D':

- External Representation: What is the final position of your country on the European foreign minister and the President of the European Council? Will / should there be a post resembling that of the Foreign Minister based on the Nice Treaty (something like an enhanced High Representative)? How could this be realised?

Finland did not support the post of a council president in the convention or in the IGC. However, Finland did support a foreign affairs figurehead for the Union, although was not in favour of the so-called "double-hatting". Foreign minister Tuomioja believes that the post of EU's foreign representative will be formed around Solana, irregardless of whether the constitution is ratified or not. In a recent interview, he has also stated it very unlikely that the planned position of the Council president will now materialize.²¹ One prominent EU expert has argued that it is CFSP in particular in which Nice Treaty Plus –type arrangements could become a reality.²² However, it is recognized that some of the institutional reforms in reference to EU's external representation cannot be realized based on the existing treaties (e.g. double-hatting), and that some degree of reform is necessary, as the current institutional arrangements are both inadequate and tension-prone.²³

- Basic structures of the European External Action Service have already been developed. Now that the Constitutional Treaty might not enter into force, is your government in favour of developing such a body in order to support the High Representative?

as itself, could take part in all aspects of defence cooperation. In retrospect, the official sources claim that Finland's opposition was not so much due to selfish considerations, but rather that Finland wanted to ensure that the EU does not divide itself into a Union of many tracks.³⁰ Along similar lines, Foreign Minister Tuomioja stated in a recent interview that he would not regret it if the failure of the constitutional treaty would result in the abandoning of the permanent structured cooperation.³¹ This statement would seem to contradict both the government's official line that was expressed in last year's government report Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2004, which clearly states that Finland 'will actively contribute to the shaping of permanent structured cooperation which is aimed at promoting the Union's military capability.'³²

- Would your country support the creation of core groups inside or outside the EU in CFSP/ESDP if the Constitutional Treaty finally failed?

While some have pointed out that this is the inevitable direction of the Union³³, current political leadership does not favour development of many speeds. As with QMV, Finland is in favour of creating equal opportunities for all member states to contribute to CFSP. Official sources also want to stress that a development of many speeds and commitments remains a prospect more in theory than in practice. The battle group concept, to which practically all member states have now agreed, is now taken to be proof this.³⁴

5. Mapping of Activities in CFSP-related Research

- Please indicate major experts, universities and research institutions working in the CFSP field in your country.
 - Finnish Institute of International Affairs (Hanna Ojanen)
 - Finnish National Defence College (Tommi Koivula)
 - Tampere Peace Research Institute (Jouko Huru)
 - Helsinki University (Teija Tiilikainen, Tuomas Forsberg, Burkhard Aufferman, Kari Laitinen)
 - Jean Monnet Centre, Turku University (Esko Antola)
- Recent Doctoral dissertations:
 - Juha Jokela, "The Discursive Construction of EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in Britain and Finland?"
 - Katja Keisala, "The European Union as an International Actor: Strengths of the European Civilian Power."
- Please feel free to add specific remarks on your country (e.g. on the relation between national foreign and security policy and CFSP, on costs/benefits of one country's membership in the EU with regard to CFSP/ESDP)

³⁰ Information from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 26.8.2005

³¹ Aamulehti 02.06.2005

³² Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2004, p. 80 (<http://www.vnk.fi/tiedostot/pdf/en/88861.pdf>)

³³ Peter Ekholm, "EU vuonna 2020", Sitra report series 42, SITRA (the Finnish National Fund for Research and Development), 2004.

³⁴ Information from the Ministry of Defence, 22.8.2005