

Summary of Third Plenary Session on EU Non-Proliferation Policy and Implementation

The third session was a microcosm of the entire conference and of the central purpose of the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium: to promote EU policy as it pertains to non-proliferation and disarmament, and to offer recommendations on how these objectives can be more effectively met. The session offered examples of what the EU had done right in this field and of how it might now revisit the policies of the 2003 WMD Strategy was nearing its ten-year milestone.

[Annalisa Giannella](#), former director for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament of the European External Action Service (EEAS) gave a historic perspective of EU policy, starting with the first Joint Action in 1994 in support of a ban on anti-personnel landmines. The EU did not become a major player in the field, however, until the 2003 Strategy and the appointment of a personal representative with a mandate to coordinate and help implement it. A series of Joint Actions and Council Decisions implied both political support for the multilateral instruments and financial support for the international agencies in charge of their verification. The activity that flowed from these actions and decisions made a considerable contribution to preventing proliferation, including by expanding the implementation of international norms, securing sensitive materials and facilities, and enhancing national capabilities. Among other good results scored by the EU, multilateral instruments such as the Biological Weapons Convention and Hague Code of Conduct had been salvaged, the EU contribution on the WMD-free zone in the Middle East had positively impacted the NPT review process, and the EU had launched an innovative initiative on security of space. In addition, the WMD clause that was included in cooperation programmes with a number of third countries conveyed to them the image of an EU which played a role in political and security affairs. There were also a number of concrete initiatives in the area of conventional weapons. The fact that the WMD strategy referred in the title to non-proliferation only did not preclude EU action in disarmament, such as projects contributing to the dismantling of weapons in the chemical and nuclear fields, and in the area of small arms and light weapons. Finally, the 'speaker' role that the EU High Representative was entrusted with in the engagement with Iran was an important recognition of the role that the EU could play.

Gianella deemed only a partial success the effort to increase the weight of the EU in the decision-making process of international meetings, in particular the review conferences of the multilateral instruments. This was because on the one hand, many third countries viewed the EU Common Positions as preventing real negotiation, and, on the other hand, EU member states interpreted Common Positions as the smallest common denominator and sometimes negotiated independently in ways that did not contribute to the EU's credibility. The situation on cluster munitions was an example of this lack of coherence. Gianella also contended that the EEAS had not yet taken full advantage of the Lisbon Treaty and of the new structures, in that the focus was on assistance programmes and financial instruments

rather than political initiatives. In her view, assistance programmes could achieve good results only if they were carried out in the context of political cooperation. As an example, the EU should focus on including non-proliferation in its strategic plans in the follow-up to the Arab Spring. She wondered if the EEAS had planned any follow-up to the seminar hosted in July 2011 in Brussels.

[François Rivasseau](#), Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to the United States, spoke from an overseas perspective about current implementation of EU non-proliferation policy. As the world entered the third decade following the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was characterised, inter alia, by more financial constraints, a relative reduction in Western influence, and a tendency to reduce high-level focus on non-proliferation at a time when the problems remained as great as ever. For its part, the EU was building up its capacity through better-structured governance. Creating the EEAS from scratch within two months was a bold move, and it would take some time to overcome the shortcomings, including such practical matters as unifying various communication channels. Noting some of the problems that had been raised, he said the Union should not be paralysed by complexities. The EU had a number of cards to play, including a new, positive image in the US after the recent far-reaching EU sanctions imposed on Iran. The EU had also acquired credibility through its commitment to the global and complete range of non-proliferation issues. The EU could play the most beneficial role in areas where there was consensus within the union. That EU states had their own interests could not be forgotten. The EU had proven particularly adept at building up its home-grown expertise in trade sanctions and export controls on the one hand, and capacity-building and assistance programmes on the other. The EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament conference itself was an example of the EU's strength at outreach.

[Werner Bauwens](#), Special Envoy for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation at the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, offered a view to the future. He argued for revisiting the EU WMD Strategy at its ten-year mark in 2013. Revisiting did not mean criticism and not necessarily redrafting, but re-analysing. And because the WMD Strategy was part and parcel of the overall EU strategic concept, reopening one should mean reopening the other. In revisiting the 2003 Strategy, he envisaged the consideration of objectives, the environment and the tools. With regard to objectives, a mission statement should be developed as a better narrative, such as 'Work for a safer world for all, in which we protect the safety, the interests and the values of the EU and its citizens'. Among other examples, he said the relationship between diplomacy and force should be revisited, with a balance between non-proliferation and disarmament, and clear reference to the rule of law, and respect for the authority of the Security Council. As to revisiting the environment, more focus needed to be given to relations with emerging powers and to interactions outside the usual forums of

treaties and conventions. In words that provoked debate, he opined that the theme of 'efficient multilateralism' that ran throughout EU strategy was an outdated concept; the EU could act most efficiently in a purely national format and in ad hoc coalitions such as the G20. With regard to tools, an impressive amount of money was budgeted for support programmes, but the EU should have the courage to evaluate the return on investment. The consequences of the non-proliferation clauses in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement also needed to be revisited. Were they, indeed, essential clauses, and what were the consequences if trade partners did not respect these clauses? Finally, the new lines for action, which come to an end in December 2012, offered the ideal opportunity to open, with 27 member states, this issue of revisiting the 2003 Strategy.

In the ensuing [discussion](#), more than one comment was made concerning the need to fill the position vacated in 2011 by Giannella, so that the EU would have a focal point for international organisations, as **Rogelo Pfirter**, former Secretary General of the OPCW, put it. The EU needed a way to keep the non-proliferation radar on the agenda for everybody, **Lars-Erik Lundin**, former EU Ambassador to UN Organisations in Vienna, said. Colleagues from all over the world wanted to interact with the EU across all of its instruments, on the entire range of technical cooperation and non-proliferation topics. In response to the latter comment, Giannella said assistance programmes could achieve really meaningful results only if they were put in the context of political cooperation; if the EU financed assistance programmes the beneficiary should be required to come closer to international norms.

As to effective multilateralism and a question about when EU multilateralism since 2003 had made a difference, Giannella pointed to the success of the EU in persuading a number of countries to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention and the IAEA safeguards Additional Protocol and in making the Hague Code of Conduct relevant. Rivasseau added the example of the Space Code of Conduct, where a strong EU consensus led to a significant success. EU sanctions against Iran and other countries might also make a difference. Bauwens applauded the EU's role in engagement with Iran, but lamented that the Union was absent in the context of the North Korean nuclear issue. In answer to a question from **Joachim Krause**, University of Kiel, as to whether the different categories of WMD ought to be disassociated, given the different strategic value of nuclear weapons compared with chemical and biological weapons, Bauwens pronounced himself open-minded about revisiting the 2003 Strategy in this regard but noted that in the case of the Middle East, the opposite approach was taken: the objective now was a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMD.

Finally, comments were made about whether, in terms of the EU non-proliferation policy, the glass was half empty or half full. Session Chair **Peter van Ham**, of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael), said 'we must be very careful to make sure that we have a glass at all; i.e. to keep the EU relevant and engaged and to have the right personnel in the right place'.

