

Arbeitskreis 1

„Europa hilft: Das Krisenmanagement der Europäischen Union“

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Professor Lendvai:

My question is, if you want to summarize the conclusions, was it rather pessimistic expectations or optimistic or realistic? Which adjective would you chose to describe the atmosphere?

Thank you very much. Well, as a Belgian I always have to be an optimist otherwise we do not survive in our kingdom. I heard yesterday, that strong regions make for a strong Europe. They do not necessarily make for a strong Belgium, but not to worry, we solve our problems and otherwise ... dann führen wir doch einfach die Doppelmonarchie ein. Das wird uns gelingen.

Contrarily to my name Biscop – Bishop, might lead you to believe I do not normally speak in abbys and monastries on Sundays, I speak from the pult at the university but I see some similarities: I am also a teacher about the book „Titel?“, I have written the book myself and the interpretation of the book I claim infallibility which my students accept intact until they have passed the examen, on which point my commandments are gladly rejected.

To be a rapporteur is not an easy task, I find, because let's face it at this point of the conference enthusiasm for the rapporteurs is usually limited.

You were not in the working group on crises management which probably means you have a very good reason to and you are not quite interested in the summary. Well if you were in the working group, well, you have heard the whole thing, so why would you want to hear the summary? If you would take the trouble you were in the group and listen to the summary you would either feel irritated because I misquote you or you feel irritated because I don't quote you at all. So I thought I circumvented all these

difficulties by just giving you my very own personal point of view and indeed at a good diplomatic conference the report is written beforehand.

So we will just focus on one of the questions which the chair François de Kerchove d'Exaerde raised which is "crises management". What are the priorities? Why do we do the operations that we do? Why do we not do some of the operations that we do. As one of the speakers said, sometimes we seem to intervene, we seem to act, just because we want to show an intent, we want to show that we are doing something, but we are not realizing fully well which effects we want to achieve, which are the broadest strategic objectives of intervention. I think this calls for some more strategic thinking. What are the priorities for Europe? What are the priority regions, priority issues that we need to care about more than others, because our interests can be more directly at stake in such regions. But thinking in such terms provokes reluctance in Europe for three reasons.

One, it's often felt that if I say we need to think about priority regions, people think I am about to delineate the sphere of influence in which Europe through gambled diplomacy will appeal law and order. That's, of course, not my point. The point is the comprehensive approach, the regions of focus should first of all focus on prevention, early warning, and the comprehensive effort, but we need to know that there are places on earth where if things go wrong we might need to act militarily.

Secondly, it is not because we have regions of priority defined at an EU level, that we always need to act upon them as EU. Sometimes you will act through NATO, sometimes we will act through the United Nations, sometimes it will be the CSDP. I think that the key thing is that the political act behind it, the political expressions for us Europeans is always the European Union. Think about Libya! Our troops might be there on the NATO-flight, but it's not NATO, that will determine long-term policy for Libyan regions, not the contemporary group, the EU is always the long-term comprehensive actor behind it. So it is at the EU level we need to think about it.

And finally even if we decide to intervene in a given case through CSDP, it does not mean that everybody has to take part in every operation. But it does mean that if an operation is in the interest of all of us, all 27, at least all 27 should be of a deep political backing for intent implement by a coalition of able and willing member states.

So my concluding sentence would be - borrowing from one of the interventions in the audience - a process of strategic reflection I think is in order because the Libyan case has demonstrated the limits of the debt of our strategic refractor. And the process here is very important. We have a new tool, we have a new the European external action service and to engage them all with their various backgrounds, in a really thorough strategic reflection might be some way of binding them together. I rest my case.