

---

## Editorial

---

### Uncommon Foreign and Security Policy?

The complete disarray in which the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) now finds itself over Iraq and Turkey in particular, demonstrates the major weakness of the intergovernmental model of decision-making and emphasises the attractions of the Community method. As long as national interests – historical interests in a region, commercial interest of major companies, and national-oriented development aid – prevail among the Member States, consensus in foreign and security policy simply means that little or nothing else gets done. Of course some Member States are more openly cynical than others, but it appears that even among the representatives at the current IGC there is now consensus that an improved approach is necessary in this field. There also appears to be a consensus that the administrative support needs to be increased from the present Political Committee into a serious planning and analysis unit. That would at least permit the preparation of briefings for ministers free from the tint of national spectacles, the shade of which considerably affects the perceived policy image. At the head of such unit would be a European figure, although opinions are apparently divided as to whether it should be a politician or a senior civil servant. Given that the Commission has had a very successful role in policy formation over the years, it seems quite remarkable that there is still such resistance in national capitals to entrusting it with a key role (as opposed to the subsidiary role it now fulfills) in CFSP.

Conferring a central role on the Commission would

certainly strengthen the unity of approach between commercial and economic aspects of the Union's external relations policy (Community external relations) and the more global political and defence aspects. It would also lead inevitably to the European Parliament having a greater grip on CFSP than it presently has. Moreover, it could also lead to a role for the Court of Justice, although this is certainly anathema to many, perhaps in relation to the respect for fundamental rights in particular (which have to be respected in CFSP, but there is no mechanism to enforce compliance with the obligation).

But some feel it unnecessary for the Union to speak with one voice. With contradictory views, foreign policy consultations are undertaken bilaterally, with the United States in particular contacting the United Kingdom, France and, increasingly, Germany, to seek support for its views. The inability of the Union to provide an effective central point of policy determination means in effect that it becomes an irrelevance, and that the major driving force in foreign affairs has no discussion partner having both equal economic strength and equal, or at least adequate, foreign policy status. As long as CFSP is primarily in the hands of the Member States, it will be condemned to ineffectiveness. Even if not all the partners using the Community method always dance enthusiastically to the same tune, deciding on a common position or on joint action by qualified majority, on a proposal from the Commission may be the only method to achieve some results. That method is the Community method, not the intergovernmental route.

*Laurence Gormley*