

## *Network of European Strategic Studies Institutions*

### TERMS OF REFERENCE <sup>1</sup>

The geostrategic environment of Europe has deeply worsened over the past ten years. The return of strategic competition poses in new terms the question of the continent's strategic autonomy. Europe's ability to influence a balance of power is important. Its prosperity, its security and the maintenance of a rules-based international system depend on it..

Especially since 2017, European defense cooperation is experiencing a new dynamic. Several initiatives have helped to give it new content and directions, whether it be the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defense Fund (EDF), the European Intervention Initiative (EI2) or EU-NATO partnership. The future of this European dynamic depends in particular on the convergence of European strategic cultures.

In this context, the structuring of exchanges between strategic research centers linked to defense or governmental institutions offers prospects for contributing to the development of a European strategic culture. As with cooperation in armaments, defense innovation or military interoperability, but this time in the field of ideas, cooperation in strategic research can gradually lead to the establishment of a shared vision of defense and security stakes for Europe and, on the basis of this common strategic culture, to offer participating institutions, opportunities to reflect and discuss new policy orientations for developing Europe's defense and security policy and convey them as appropriate to national or European authorities new policy orientations for developing Europe's defense and security policy.

Most European countries have a research service or center specializing in strategic research, whose work focuses in particular on global and regional security issues, the development of the armed forces and the transformation of warfare. Their status and orientations may vary from country to country, but all are responsible for research, analysis and advice, without, however, engaging the political authorities.

#### *1 - Objectives*

- a. The establishment of a Network of European Strategic Studies Institutions (NESSI) aims to foster mutual knowledge, trust and exchange between research centers, the

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foundations of free thinking geared towards developing a common European strategic culture, while respecting differences.

- b. The NESSI promotes exchanges on strategic issues related to European security interests and encourages the development of joint research, exchange and joint publication projects.
- c. The development of a shared vision of defense and security issues for Europe, present and future is the guiding principle of the network's activities.
- d. NESSI reports on its work aimed at establishing a common vision of security issues for Europe and makes recommendations in this regard for national and European political authorities.
- e. It facilitates exchanges of researchers between member institutions of the network.
- f. The members of the network endeavor to widely disseminate common reflections and proposals in order to animate the public debate on European security issues.

## *2 – NESSI operating principles*

- a. The network is open to strategic study institutions from member countries of the European Union and European member states of NATO, as well as Switzerland. It preferably brings together the strategic study institutions of the defense ministries of these countries.
- b. Participants are encouraged to designate a person in charge (PoC) for NESSI's activities.
- b. Each institution may invite researchers from other European research centers to participate in activities on their own behalf.
- c. Participants can present the official positions of their country but are encouraged to express themselves freely in order to encourage creative thinking for the benefit of national and European political authorities.
- d. A rotating presidency of the network is established and the annual meeting decides on the presidency for the following year.
- e. NESSI activities obey to Chatham House Rule. The public report on activities, drawn up by the rotating presidency of the network, must be tacitly approved by all members. The member institutions of the network are encouraged to disseminate the reflections from joint work as widely as possible.

- f. Participants are encouraged to disseminate NESSI's reports and activities on their website as well as relevant information such as web links of participating institutions, calendar of activities, etc.
- g. The terms of reference are reviewed on a need basis and approved by consensus at the annual meeting.

### *3 - Activities and projects*

- a. The rotating presidency organizes an annual meeting, preferably in person. It is responsible for the meeting agenda and its practical organization; the meeting decides on new members.
- b. NESSI members cover their travel and accommodation expenses. The host country covers the costs related to the organization of the meeting, including possible social events.
- c. A thematic workshop may be organized by the rotating presidency on a theme agreed between members. Its organization is subject to the same rules as those specified in point b above.
- d. Any NESSI member institution may request an ad hoc workshop provided that the given institution is ready to organize it.
- e. The member institutions of NESSI are encouraged to facilitate exchange of personnel and the granting of visiting fellowships among participating institutions.
- f. NESSI encourages translation of important works about matters of strategy between the languages of its member institutions.