

Summary

Working and close relations between European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Alliance) has always been considered as essential. Despite the fact that both organizations perceive their relations as crucial and recognize the need to enhance them, the official cooperation had to (and still has to) face many obstacles. There are many limitations to closer EU-NATO relations, among the most significant is ranked the still unsolved Turkey-Cyprus dispute, forming the real obstacle to strategic partnership between Union and Alliance, and also the issue regarding the potential establishment of the European permanent operational headquarter.

The current deadlock is foremost caused by Turkey strictly interpreting the Berlin Plus agreement. The situation became much worse with the accession of southern Cyprus into the EU resulting in nearly absolute impossibility of any official contacts due to the restrictions to collaborate under the agreement only for the members of NATO or PfP.

Turkey was not alone playing the obstructive role, the other „trouble maker“ and Turkey's traditional counterbalancer from the Union side was France. EU and NATO were perceived by France as rivals and their relations as „zero-sum game“. French attitude from the Union's side was matched by the Turkey's from the side of the Alliance.

These obstructions ended when Nicolas Sarkozy became the French president. He was well aware of the harmfulness of the French blocking attitude not only for the relations between Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and NATO but France itself. France used to prefer CSDP to the Alliance, this strategy however did not generate any progress in CSDP, France achieved only minor results. Therefore blocking closer ties between EU and NATO was no longer an option that might result in CSDP development. It did not work.

The hope for a new way forward was embodied in two new impulses that were to influence significantly the European security framework. The first one was the full French reintegration into the NATO military structure (that France left in 1966), the second one was the Franco-British cooperation on defence and security.

The main thesis of this analyse is that these two impulses may trigger progress in the current deadlock resulting in closer relations between EU and NATO.

This thesis was analysed on the background of the attitudes of two main European security forces, France and United Kingdom. These two states not only form the key security actors within Europe, they also represent two main positions towards EU and NATO. France has always been for-CSDP and United Kingdom preferred Alliance. The two positive impulses embodied in the abovementioned events are also strictly connected to these two European military powers. The influence of French fully re-joining the NATO and Franco-British security and defence cooperation was also explored in relations to the two obstacles to EU-NATO relations, on Turkey-Cyprus dispute and European operational headquarter.

The thesis was confirmed only to a limited extent. When France fully re-joined the Alliance, the overall atmosphere between EU and NATO improved considerably and the possibility of enhancing the relations and improve contacts between the two organization was in the air. The cooperation is especially in the current state of austerity badly needed. The economic crises is closely connected with the budgetary constraints.

Regarding the two main problems causing complications in EU – NATO relations, there has not been almost any progress. In case of Turkey-Cyprus dispute, the deadlock is still in place and unless the two disputing sides are willing to solve it, no progress is to be expected. The issue of permanent European operational headquarter underwent a significant progress. France with other like-minded countries pushed hard for the realisation of the European OHQ resulting in infuriating Britons and thus significantly worsening relations between the two countries.

Nevertheless the future of EU – NATO relations lies in cooperation and collaboration, either by agreement or by coercion. This is closely linked to the fact that both organizations are operating with the same set of forces. Therefore pooling and sharing is necessary and compose the only way towards progress.