



THE 15TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
**EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES**

**Intelligence College in Europe - a New
Challenge for the European Union?**

Tache Bocaniala¹

Abstract: For the European Union, the issue of ensuring security, coupled with the defense of citizens' rights and freedoms, is becoming increasingly important in the context of amplifying serious threats such as terrorism, extremism, corruption, fund fraud or the one of the current pandemic Coronavirus, requiring new action forms and tools. Thus, although since its first manifestations it has been claimed that the newly established Intelligence College in Europe is not a community structure of the European Union, in fact it can be observed that it has been added practically to the other agencies with attributions in this field, besides the European Public Prosecutor's Office, as a body dedicated to improving cooperation between information structures subordinated to the governments of European countries. In this study we discuss and try to determine to what extent, such an entity can and should contribute to the rebuilding Europe and the revival of European construction by contributing to strengthening the security of the European Union and defending the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

Keywords: European security; information structures; protection of citizens' rights and freedoms

1. Introductory Aspects

Today's society, in an effervescent transformation, cannot be conceived without a general collaboration between the states of the world, taken individually or already associated in various forms, such as the UN at global level, NATO or the European Union at regional level, but also at the level of various bodies or institutions that belong to them. The information services cannot be missing from this process either, no matter how discreet is the activity that they carry out.

The European Union, defined as the most complex form of interstate integration, is currently experiencing a series of developments imposed by the risks looming over it, such as the escalation of terrorism in its various forms, uncontrolled migration, increased Euroscepticism and, as a result of Brexit, disengagement declared by the United States of America and implicitly by NATO in Europe, etc.

More and more authorized voices in the field have highlighted the need to create an autonomous military structure in Europe, complementary to NATO, with its own doctrine and budget, different from those of the component countries, but also with its own specific strategic culture². Such a military capability should have been supplemented by an indispensable intelligence entity. According to a special

¹ Senior Lecturer, PhD, Faculty of Law, Danubius University of Galati, Romania, Address: 3 Galati Blvd., Galati 800654, Romania, Tel.: +40372361102, Corresponding author: tache.bocaniala@univ-danubius.ro.

² Nicolae Iancu, <https://monitorulapararii.ro/armata-europeana-mai-mult-decat-o-piatra-aruncata-in-lac-dupa-care-am-sarit-cu-totii-1-14550>.

Eurobarometer survey in the field of security and defense, published in 2017, about three quarters of Europeans were in favor of increasing the EU's role in this field¹.

If in terms of European military capability, with the exception of the EU Battle Group (EUBG²) no concrete steps can be highlighted, and probably no such steps will be taken too soon, due to divergent political views, but also the enormous required expenses, the intelligence approach had a completely different evolution.

Although experts in the field almost unanimously agree that the best operational cooperation is bilateral, the practice of intelligence agencies knows several forms of multiparticipatory cooperation, designed to bring more efficiency and effectiveness in their work.

One such example is the existing collaboration between the intelligence services within the Bern, TREVI and Vienna clubs.

The multitude of intelligence services in Europe, internal, external, civilian or military, with police powers or without such attributions, and other hybrids, feeling the need for cooperation in a more organized framework, responded favorably to France's proposal to participate in the establishment of Intelligence College in Europe.

As a result, even this year, 23 states³ in the European Union and abroad, responding to the initiative launched by the President of France, Emanuel Macron, launched in 2017, have officially started the activity of a body entitled in various ways until the establishment such as “entity”, “academy”, “network” and ultimately called The Intelligence College in Europe.

According to its website, The Intelligence College in Europe is “*is a collective endeavour of European intelligence communities. It generates professional and academic views on a wide range of intelligence-related topics and disseminates those in order to contribute to the development of a strategic intelligence culture in Europe, without being prescriptive*”⁴.

2. Elements Regarding the Organization and Functioning of the Intelligence College in Europe

As stated above, and as mentioned in its own definition on the website *Intelligence College in Europe is a unique intergovernmental initiative designed to improve European security*.⁵

Thus, although it declares itself to be an entity of an intergovernmental nature, in other words, governed rather by the norms of international law, a series of characteristics that foreshadow, and on which we will refer later, entitle us to consider that in its functioning will rather prevail the specific framework of the European Union and implicitly the defense of its interests, but not only.

Since the launch of the Intelligence College in Europe, it has been envisaged that this project will operate without legal personality and will not have an established physical location. Instead, as a multi-

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/search/defence/surveyKy/2173>.

² http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Battle_groups.pdf.

³ Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

⁴ <https://www.intelligence-college-europe.org> accessed on 05.04.2020.

⁵ Among the Member States of the European Union, Greece, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Ireland and Luxembourg did not join the initiative.

participatory institution, it will be led by an annual rotating presidency provided in turn by each of the signatory countries of the letter of intent regarding its creation¹.

Also, for the coordination of the activities of the Intelligence College in Europe, within it will function a secretariat that will be provided by France, as the initiating country².

The activity of the College is materialized by holding meetings two or three times a year, with the participation of representatives of intelligence services from European countries, European institutions and academia and European relations. The works will be conducted in English or French. Beyond the expected sensitive nature of the discussions that will take place, the own rules for carrying out these activities also provide for the possibility that some of them be open to the public and published in the Events section of the website.

The letter of intent signed by the participants in the establishment of the Intelligence College in Europe expressly stipulates that it consists of the signatory members of the letter of intent, but also of partners and has no legal personality of its own.

Also, in order to achieve the proposed objectives, the College will have its own publications as well as “*an academic program dedicated to information professionals*”.

3. Assumed Objectives / Perspectives

Starting from the premise that the foundation of a political community is security, one of the main objectives assumed by the Intelligence College in Europe is to transmit the culture of intelligence services among policy makers on the continent, in a geostrategic context in turmoil, along with other generous goals, such as:

- creating a dialogue platform in the field of intelligence education that promotes the exchange of academic expertise and knowledge within the European information community;
- stimulating the strategic dialogue between the information communities, between them and the national and European decision-makers, but also with the citizens;
- selection and generalization of non-intrusive methods of surveillance of certain categories of citizens so as not to infringe their democratic rights and freedoms;
- establishing a common strategic culture at the level of information structures but also of decision-makers in order to anticipate crises, to prepare the response to them and to facilitate joint intervention;
- management optimization in the European security sector.

Since the beginning of 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, against the background of serious crises, medical but especially economic, a series of weaknesses regarding the functionality of the European Union have been highlighted. They aimed in particular at ensuring adequate information of the specialized institutions in the member countries, a unitary approach to the threats and problems created by the crises and without a doubt that the existence of a common culture of intelligence structures could have contributed substantially in overcoming this critical period.

¹ This year's Croatian presidency will be followed by Great Britain and then Italy.

² <https://www.euractiv.ro/brief-eng/European-states-set-up-Intelligence-College-for-better-cooperation-of-intelligence-community-17594>.

Undoubtedly, the biggest challenge for the newly established Intelligence College in Europe is to find the best ways to put into practice the targeted forms of cooperation without including the operational exchange of information¹ or the effective training of specialized personnel in intelligence services, components related to the independence, respectively the national sovereignty of those participating in this project. To this is added the need to find answers to the increasingly difficult requirement to be met in an operational plan to maintain the balance between the growing need for surveillance of the population and the preservation of democratic conquests in the field of citizens' rights.

Even if the initiators of the project explicitly wanted to specify that we are not in the presence of a community approach, pending by the European Union, they still consider it “a step forward in the trend of maximizing integration, reshaping Europe and relaunching European construction”.

In fact, in another vision, the initiation and institutionalization of the Intelligence College in Europe by France is considered an attempt to poise the balance of power within the EU, after Germany imposed its point of view regarding the establishment and functioning of the European Public Prosecutor's Office.

4. Brief Conclusions

The current crisis triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic that appeared in Europe immediately after Brexit and which, in addition to the intrinsic threats, amplifies other threats to security in general, but especially to European security such as illegal migration, terrorism, cybercrime, extremism in all its forms has highlighted the fragility of the European Union and the need to find new ways to prevent, counter and annihilate these phenomena.

The approach of security as a common good by the information structures in European countries, the sharing of knowledge between them and the decision-makers constitute, we consider, strategic targets for the achievement of which the Intelligence College in Europe can contribute substantially in the next period. We can appreciate that this new platform will allow the representatives of different communities to come together and compare their experiences at a non-operational level, to complete the expertise and achieve an exchange of knowledge and good practices in the academic field of information.

Last but not least, it is expected that through its contribution, the Intelligence College in Europe will contribute to a harmonization of the solutions to the security problems of the member countries of the European Union. Being an institution just at the beginning of the road, we can consider that an exhaustive analysis of the newly established Intelligence College in Europe is premature.

5. References

Micossi, Stefano & Tosato, Gian Luigi (ed.) (2009). *The European Union in the 21st Century. Perspectives from the Lisbon Treaty*. Brussels: Center for European Policy Studies.

Maior, George Cristian (2014). *Despre intelligence/On intelligence*. Bucharest: RAO.

Duțu, & Bogzeanu, Cristina (2010). *Provocări actuale pentru securitatea europeană/Current challenges for European security*. Bucharest: Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare “Carol I”.

<https://www.intelligence-college-europe.org>.

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/>.

¹ The only information exchange cooperation frameworks in the European Union are the European Police Office (EUROPOL) and the Joint Evaluation Center (SITCEN).