



CYPRUS PRESIDENCY
OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPEECH BY CYPRUS PSC AMBASSADOR LOUIS TELEMACHOU

“Climate & Security Envoys – New Developments in Climate Change and Security”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to address this conference which is under the auspices of the Cyprus Presidency and which deals with a subject close to the heart and interests of the EU in general, but also of the Cyprus Presidency in particular. I would like to thank the Institute for Environmental Security for their initiative and their invitation extended to me to speak on the role of the EU in dealing with the Security aspects of Climate Change. I would do so focusing more on the external aspects and cross-border challenges, rather than within the EU borders.

I would like from the outset to congratulate MEP Mr. Indrek Tarrant, whose report is set as a background for this meeting; it is an excellent initiative which brings to the surface the ever so important subject of the role of the Common Security and Defense Policy in cases of climate driven crises and natural disasters.

I would also like to take this opportunity at the beginning of my intervention to stress that I believe that Parliaments and Parliamentarians, both at national and European level, have an extremely important role to play. This is why I consider the fact that this event takes place today in the European Parliament as very very important. It is also of paramount importance that this issue continues to be discussed in other parliamentary forums like it was done in the Euro-Med Parliamentary Assembly in 2009.

With the US elections taking place today in a devastated east coast, the consequences of super-storm Sandy are a loud reminder of the scale of destruction (that is growing more than ever in intensity and frequency) that extreme climatic events can bring to prosperity and security. And with the echoes of Hurricane Katrina, and the clear

failure of one of the most advanced countries in the world to minimize the toll and react efficiently in the heart of such crisis, I find this discussion timely.

The EU has pioneered on the issue including in the European Security Strategy in 2003. Global warming and its effects were highlighted as an emerging security challenge. And the implementation report for the European Security Strategy in 2008 stated that this issue, along with the challenge of energy supply, had risen in significance in the 5 years since the adoption of the strategy.

As it has been mentioned by previous speakers, the EU has identified 6 areas in the world that climate change is fuelling one or more security threats and where climate change is multiplying existing pressures in various regions around the world. The areas identified in most cases could have a direct impact on the European security "hard security" as is called in our world but also an indirect impact on issues like migration, demography and on Europe's energy supply routes or "soft security". These areas are the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, Arctic and Latin America. I don't need to go to the specificities, just to mention the names of rivers and the potential instabilities that water flow changes can bring. The Jordan River and the Nile River.

The UN, realizing these threats, has brought the subject for an open discussion in the Security Council following an initiative of 2 EU m-s (the UK Presidency of the UN Security Council in 2007 followed up by the German Presidency of the UN Security Council in 2011). In 2008, from the EU side the joint Solana/Commission paper on Climate Change and International Security was endorsed by the European Council. So the issue is not new to the European Union but needs further elaboration and discussion.

During the Cyprus Presidency, a few landmarks have been reached, or initiated in terms of the subject of Climate Change and Security.

Following on the most recent FAC Conclusions of July 2011 and the Joint reflection paper "Towards a renewed and strengthened EU climate Diplomacy", there is indeed an urgent need to mainstream the linkages between Climate Change and Security Policy, also in relation to energy security and resource security.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Starting this debate, there are those who maintain that this is an exercise about militarizing the debate on climate change and the environment. I would argue in a different way. This can become an exercise of “greening” the military and its operations on one hand and using the knowledge, expertise and technology of the military/Security domain, in a comprehensive way, along with the foreign affairs, environment, development energy sectors, to create viable strategies and capabilities for the future.

Let me give you an example from my country on what we have tried to do. Although being small with comparatively limited security sector and we do not have a great number of experts, technocrats and specialists; neither do we have previous experience. Yet, nothing prevents us from being diligent, serious and responsible; from having ideas, proposals, suggestions; from taking initiatives; from being creative.

And we do take the issue seriously, believing that the military has an important role to play in this comprehensive effort to tackle the security related effects of climate change. This is why in the context of the organization of the European Defense College session which took place in Cyprus in September 2009 this very -subject was part of the curriculum.

Last week we co-organised in Brussels with the Bavarian Representation and the Egmond institute a seminar “On the Road with CSPD”; this, was one of the initiatives aiming at looking at the CSDP, taking stock and, providing a forum to look into the future of ESDP including all new challenges lying ahead of us, from cyber security to climate change and energy, and promoting a shared vision for a better Europe and a better World.

Additionally, we appreciate the importance of the military **boot print** and welcome the EDA’s GO GREEN initiative, aiming to analyze the potential of the Armed Forces to use renewable energy sources.

We also welcome the process that is evolving through the efforts to green the military, and consider the recent European Union Military Concept on Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency for EU-led military operations, (agreed on 12 September 2012) as a good

step forward.

To this respect, the Ministry of Defense of Cyprus, as a major employer, land user, and consumer of natural resources, acknowledged its environmental and social responsibilities as well as the importance of having a solid environmental policy. The commitment of Cyprus MoD to act as a leader in sustainable environmental management is clearly presented in its Environmental Policy, which is implemented through MoD's Environmental Strategic Plan. As a first step of this commitment, the first ECO-military campus was inaugurated on the island in May 2012 under the European Eco-Management System on a pilot basis. This is the first time, as far as I understand at least, that at European level an EU member state's military camp implements an environmental management system and this is the first certified green military map.

The ECO campus is incorporating a system of ecology management that includes energy and material efficiency, water consumption, waste management, biodiversity and control of greenhouse gas emissions.

This military camp will be listed on the EMAS environmental database and will be used as an example for other such bases. Some of the most noted green policies being followed are the use of photovoltaic or solar cells for creating electricity and the recycling of wastes, including the use of recycled water.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me now turn to a more specific issue of climate change and security, that of "Water Security". The inclusion of the issue "Water Security" by HR Ashton - which is one of Climate Security's crucial component-, as one of the main topics for discussion at the informal MFA meeting (Gymnich) held in Cyprus last September, shows also how seriously concerned the EU is about the issue.

For Cyprus we give a special focus to the Mediterranean region and more precisely the eastern Mediterranean neighborhood. One of the most water scarce areas on earth.

As an island country with limited water resources, and with bitter knowledge of water scarcity-, (in 2008 we were at the breach of thirst and we had to import water by ships), we appreciate the vital importance of water, while at the same time realising the challenges

that it entails, in terms of access, scarcity, disaster, risk, vulnerability and its potential for socio-economic and political/strategic purposes. There is scientific evidence that by the end of this century, Cyprus can expect an extra two months of days with temperatures exceeding 35 degrees centigrade on top of the present summer months of June, July and August; this can likely mean less rainfall and increased evaporation because of higher temperatures. This would also lead to an eventual desertification- of a big part of the island-, making it as one of the most significant environmental, economic, social problems that Cyprus would face in the future.

So for us, it is essential to promote transboundary cooperation on water if we are to ensure international peace, security and long term prosperity in the Mediterranean area.

This is why we believe that action needs to be taken to strengthen our strategic comprehensive approach to water through the EU Foreign Policy. This could be done by building bridges across our existing policies, linking EU Economic, Political and Diplomatic capabilities at all levels and through closer and more efficient cooperation between the EU institutions and Member States.

We believe that, as EU, we need to strengthen our Natural Resources Diplomacy, specifically on water, and formulate a new strategy on water in our foreign policy encompassing resilience, social protection, transition and food security.

It is our position that a reinforced “EU Natural Resource Diplomacy “will require better synergies between our existing administrations, our policies and efforts. And this is also true for the Climate Change and Security Policy.

Coordination is imperative in order to achieve sustainable horizontal strategies. Especially on issues and challenges that span over the spectrum of previously unrelated competencies of national and European administrations. This is also why we believe that the informal Steering Group that was formed in 2008 should be strengthened and facilitate the process of both research planning and mainstreaming of the issue, while also providing the FAC with follow up reports for discussion and subjects for reflection and debate. The Special Envoy position for Climate Change from the UK is clearly a notion to be researched and followed at national and European level.

I can say with confidence that in the running of the Cyprus Presidency since July, a few events and developments have touched upon this important issue, and hope that this report will be received and acted upon and that the forthcoming Irish Presidency will continue on the same path. I personally find that the report of Mr Tarand, can act as an excellent reminder to the urgent need to transform our words and **texts into action, providing -solid mechanisms for this process.**

Concluding I would like to thank the IES for this initiative again.

Thank you.