

*Margarita Šešelgytė**

Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University

The Lithuanian Presidency of the EU Council and Common Security and Defense Policy: Opportunities and Challenges**



One of the most important rearrangements provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon is the reorganization of the presidency held by Member States in the area of Common Security and Defense Policy (CFSP), achieved by handing over a major part of presidency-related functions to the newly established institutions: the European Union (EU) High Representative (EUHR) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The redistribution of these functions has caused a fundamental change in the roles of Member States' presidency within CFSP and CSDP. With Lithuania's preparation for the EU Council presidency in 2013, the question arises as to what functions it is going to retain in these areas as a presiding state. The article aims to define the institutional environment of the presidency in CSDP as a constituent part of CFSP, as well as to define the main roles of the presidency after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force and also to foresee possible factors for a successful presidency. The article is based on research carried out in the spring of 2011 under the commission of the Prime Minister's service. During this research, interviews with two representatives of EU institutions and with experts from Lithuania, Poland, Belgium, Hungary, and Ireland, working in the area of CSDP, were conducted.

Introduction

Lithuania is preparing to hold the presidency of the EU Council during the second half of 2013. The presidency, even if a state has no particularly broad objectives and ambitions, calls for efforts and thorough preparation. Lithuania's preparation is encumbered not only by Lithuania's lack of presidency experience,

*Dr. *Margarita Šešelgytė* is a Deputy Director of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science of the University of Vilnius. Address for correspondence: Vokiečių 10, LT-01130 Vilnius, Lithuania tel.: +370 5 2514132, e-paštas: margarita.seselgyte@tspmi.vu.lt.

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but also by the fact that, after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, the environment of the presidency and the roles of the President have not yet been fully established. Thus, in order to properly prepare for the presidency, it is necessary to constantly follow what roles and functions develop in the areas affected by the Treaty of Lisbon, and how the states holding the presidency manage to overcome emerging challenges. The Treaty of Lisbon particularly focuses on Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and its constituent part Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). Their status experiences changes, new institutions, new commitments such as solidarity and common defense conditions, and new cooperation formats (the principle of permanent structured cooperation) are being established.¹ The Treaty of Lisbon has also provided for the reorganization of the order of Member States' presidency of the EU Council within CFSP by delegating a part of external relations to the responsibility of the EU High Representative (previously the state holding the presidency was responsible for this area). These changes create a new presidency environment within CFSP and encourage the possibilities of Member States to operate in this fresh environment in a new way.

This article is based on research commissioned by the Service of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania and conducted by the author in spring of 2011. The aim of the article is to define the roles of the state, holding presidency, within CSDP, to evaluate their significance and to foresee effective factors of the presidency in this area. One of the essential problems in writing this article is the lack of academic literature estimating the presidency in this area after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force. Therefore, both the research and the article are largely based on empirical data, collected in the spring of 2011, i.e. on interviews with seven officials from Ireland, Belgium, Poland, Lithuania, Hungary and two of the EU who supervise presidency issues (or supervised them during the presidency of the respective country) within CSDP.

1. Common Security and Defense Policy after the Treaty of Lisbon: Institutional Changes

The institutional structure of CFSP and CSDP changed after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force. These changes affect the presidency environment and regulate the presidency roles. The main institutions of the highest political level within CSDP are the Council, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs

¹ More in Šešelgytė M., Lelevičiūtė I., "Lisabonos sutarties poveikis ES bendrai saugumo ir gynybos politikai", *Lietuvos metinė strateginė apžvalga 2010-2011*, p. 95-126.

and Security Policy (EUHR) and the Political and Security Committee (PSC). Though the Treaty of Lisbon has in general strengthened the role of the European Parliament in solving different EU issues, its role in CSDP has not essentially changed.² Thus, seeking to evaluate presidency possibilities at the political level, it is worth surveying the changed functions of these institutions after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, the balance of powers between them as well as the role of the state holding presidency in them.

Table 1. The Main Decision-Making Institutions in the Council on CSDP Issues

Council*	EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy	Political and Security Committee
Decisions on CFSP are taken unanimously acting on the proposal of the EUHR or on the initiative of a Member State.**	Under the supervision of the Council and maintaining a close relationship with the Political and Security Committee, ensures the coordination of civilian and military aspects of missions; Executes common foreign and security policy***; Formulates the Council agenda.	Exercises political control of crisis management operations and provides strategic direction for them****.

Before the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, one of the most important players in making decisions concerning CSDP was the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC). The Treaty of Lisbon divided the latter into two independent councils: those of General Affairs and External Relations.³ The External Relations Council (ERC) was granted the possibility to concentrate its activity on foreign and security policy issues the scope of which has greatly increased in the EU during recent years. In addition, the Treaty of Lisbon establishes new institutions: the President of the European Council, the EUHR, the European External Actions

² Treaty of Lisbon, Article 36.

* Though in the Treaty of Lisbon the responsibility for CSDP issues falls to the Council of External Affairs in which the main role is played by Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Member States, after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force *de facto*, a separate Foreign Affairs Council (FAC Defense) is being formed. There are no more common sessions of Foreign Affairs and Defense Ministers, the meetings of these different formats take place at different times. Defense Ministers approve presidency conclusions in the area of security and defense.

³ Treaty of Lisbon, Article 16.6.

** Treaty of Lisbon, Article 42.4.

***Treaty of Lisbon, Articles 43.2; 24.1.

**** Treaty of Lisbon, Article 38.

Service (EEAS).⁴ The EUHR, together with Member States, executes common foreign and security policy, and chairs the ERC at the same time being the Vice President of the European Commission (EC); he has the right of the initiative in developing common foreign and security policy, and ensures the implementation of the decisions of the European Council and the ERC; represents the EU on CFSP matters and in relations with third parties and also expresses the EU position in international organizations.⁵ Thus, the EUHR becomes the key guidelines-setter and implementation supervisor of CFSP. Within CSDP, the EUHR not only sets the guidelines but also, alongside the Council, coordinates EU missions and is responsible for their implementation.⁶ After the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, the Political and Security Committee (PSC) has remained one of the most important CSDP institutions in terms of influence, perhaps even more important than the ERC.⁷ The PSC is essentially the last link in the decision-making process before the submission of CSDP issues to the Council for consideration. The main changes related to the PSC and provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon are that the PSC will be accountable to two “supervisors”: collegially to the Council and to a representative of the EUHR, also that the agenda of the PSC will be drawn up by the Cabinet of the EUHR and the chair person will be a representative of the EUHR (previously chaired by a Member State).

These changes, stipulated in the Treaty of Lisbon, provide grounds for a discussion about the increase in the powers of the Council with reference to other EU institutions. Wolfgang Wessels claims that with the establishment of the Treaty of Lisbon the balance of the powers of the Council and the Commission has obviously changed.⁸ After the separation of the ERC, the latter gained more time and capabilities to concentrate on foreign and security issues; it sets essential political guidelines as well as remains “the last institution” in which a vote is taken concerning one or another decision. The “right of the initiative” that the EC has

⁴ Treaty of Lisbon, Article 15; 18; 27; 45.

⁵ Treaty of Lisbon, Articles 26.3; 27.1; 27.2.

⁶ Treaty of Lisbon, Article 30.2.

⁷ Treaty of Lisbon, Article 38. The Political and Security Committee is chaired by a representative of the Union High Representative for foreign affairs and security policy. This Committee monitors the international situation in the areas covered by common foreign and security policy and at the requests of the Council, the EUHR or on its own initiative submits opinions to the Council, contributes to the definition of policy directions, monitors the implementation of the agreed upon political directions. Also, the Political and Security Committee exercises political control of the Petersberg tasks and monitors them.

⁸ Wessels W. and Bopp F., „The Institutional Architecture of CFSP after the Lisbon Treaty– Constitutional breakthrough or challenges ahead?“. *Challenge. Liberty & Security*. Research Paper No. 10, June 2008, p. 15. House of Common Foreign Affairs Committee. *Foreign Policy Aspects of the Lisbon Treaty*. Third report of the session 2007 – 2008, 20 p. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmslect/cmcaff/120/120.pdf> [referred to on 5 May 2010.]

been deprived of has been transferred to the EUHR, who is accountable to the very ERC.⁹ The PSC is also accountable to the Council and the EUHR. Thus, it is possible to state that, at the highest level, decision-making powers on CSDP issues are concentrated in the Council and the institutions accountable to it. It is also worth presuming that the influence of large states, which usually have more power within the Council, is increasing at the expense of small states.

The Treaty of Lisbon has also provided for the takeover by the EUHR of the function of the presidency of the ERC from Member States.¹⁰ Consequently, on the one hand, conditions are created to ensure a more long-lasting, more consistent and more effective CSDP; on the other hand, opportunities of Member States to shape and influence the CSDP agenda have decreased. True, they can do that by posing questions to the EC or ERC, yet these questions are limited to the most important political-level issues.¹¹ Besides, a response to such questions is given only in such cases if the country that has framed the question has a considerable political influence or a strong support of other Member States.

One representative of EU institutions claims that, in order to better grasp the change of the institutional balance after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, it is necessary to separate two functions: the establishing of the agenda and decision making. The balance of power in establishing the agenda has definitely turned towards the EU. The EUHR, in cooperation with her/his subordinates, drafts the agenda. Member States are practically devoid of any possibilities to form the agenda if only to attempt to influence the EUHR through the Council, the PSC or by other means. However, because of the intergovernmental nature of CSDP, Member States remain the most important players in making decisions and “shaping tasks” for the EUHR. The EUHR is but an executor of these decisions. In his opinion, the primary institution where it is possible to influence decisions within CSDP is the PSC.¹² However, it should be kept in mind that the possibilities of Member States to influence the decisions of these political-level institutions are not related to presidency and frequently depend on the political influence of the state as well as its capability to ensure the support of other Member States in advance. The other representative of EU institutions agreed that, in estimating the changes in the balance of power, it is mandatory to analyze different functions, and empha-

⁹ Treaty of Lisbon, Article 30.2.

¹⁰ Treaty of Lisbon, „Declaration on Article 16(9) of the Treaty on European Union concerning the European Council decision on the exercise of the Presidency of the Council”, Article 1.

¹¹ The European Council sets CFSP, including matters of defensive nature, strategic interests, objectives of the Union and defines general guidelines, adopts necessary decisions; when the Union, because of some international situation, has to act in an operative way, the necessary decisions are also taken by the Council. (Treaty of Lisbon, Articles 26 and 28).

¹² An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May 2011.

sized that both the institutional map and the balance of power after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force are still changing. All the presidencies that followed the coming-into-effect of the Treaty of Lisbon were totally different: the Belgians had more influence whereas the possibilities of the Hungarians to somehow make an impact upon the agenda were very limited. In his opinion, Hungary's presidency demonstrated what the presidency within CSDP of all small states will look like in the future. The only agenda influence channels go through the EUHR, but this can only be done by powerful states (still not individually) at the top level or those that are capable of ensuring the strong and broad support of other states. The best example of how to make the EUHR react is the Weimar letter (France, Germany, Poland). Such initiatives cannot be left out of consideration by the EUHR.¹³ Small states can attempt to form coalitions on one or another question and coordinate these issues with the EUHR, but for that a very broad supporters' coalition, involving large states as well, is necessary, whereas the issue should be of importance to the entire EU. It is also important to point out that, because of her very busy schedule and small interest in CSDP issues,¹⁴ the EUHR has essentially transferred all the control of CSDP to her Deputy, Maciej Popowski; therefore, when using the term EUHR, it is actually the Deputy EUHR that is meant. Thus, in making an impact on both the agenda and decisions at the top level, Member States should be capable of ensuring a broad support of Member States in advance.

Notwithstanding, everyday security and defense policy comprises many issues that are not included in the top CSDP agenda and which are solved in the EAS, committees and groups. The main institutions at this level are the newly established EAS, the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM), the Political-Military Group (PMG), the Military Committee of the European Union (EUMC), and the Working Group of Foreign Relations Advisors (RELEX). The presidency function at this level too, after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, falls to the EUHR and her representatives as well (actually, even before the Treaty of Lisbon came into effect, representatives of EU institutions were chairmen for military institutions).

¹³ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (II), 19 May 2011.

¹⁴ An interview with a representative from Belgium, 5 May 2011.

Table 2. **Other Most Important CSDP Institutions within the Council**

European External Action Service	Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM)	Political – Military Group (PMG)	Military Committee of the European Union (EUMC)	Working Group of Foreign Relations Advisors (RELEX)
It is composed of the General Secretariat of the Council, the Commission and personnel delegated by Member States. It assists the Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in drafting proposals and exercising policy approved in the Council.	It is a Working Group of the PSC that is responsible for diverse civilian aspects of crisis management. It drafts civilian crisis management conceptions and instruments, evaluates strategic alternatives, plans and monitors the progress of civilian operations.	It is responsible for military and mixed operations. It drafts strategic conceptions, assists in preparing planning-related documentation and monitors the progress of operations. It also oversees reform missions in the security sector and EU actions in Africa. It is responsible for the preparation of PSC meetings and also summarizes opinions of different working groups, committees working on the issue under consideration and supplies recommendations to the PSC.	It is the highest military institution in the Council, composed of the Chiefs of Defense of Member States represented by permanent representatives. Its purpose is to provide the PSC with recommendations and advise on military EU issues. This Committee monitors EU military operations and evaluates strategic crisis management options and generation of capabilities, provides instructions to the Military Staff. This Committee is chaired by an officer, appointed by the Council (for a 3-year term).	This Working Group is responsible for all horizontal issues in preparing and executing the decisions of the Council.

One of the most important institutional changes in the area of CSDP is the emergence of the EAS. The EAS is composed of the General Secretariat of the Council, officials of the corresponding subdivisions of the Commission and also personnel dispatched by national diplomatic services.¹⁵ The EC generally delegates people to the EAS from the RELEX Directorates-General (Directorates-General for External Relations, Trade and Development) the Council – from the Political subdivision and the Directorate-General of External and Political-Military Affairs.¹⁶ EAS employees assist the

¹⁵ Treaty of Lisbon, Article 27.3.

¹⁶ Vanhoonaeker S., Reslow N., *The European External Action Service: Living Forwards by Understanding Backwards*. European Foreign Affairs Review, No. 15, 2010, p. 6-7.

EUHR in drafting the CSDP agenda, preparing documents and implementing the adopted decisions. Though it is still complicated to evaluate the EAS role within CSDP since the collective is under formation, certain tendencies can already be discerned. First, the EAS takes over more and more presidency functions from Member States. Second, because of the thus-far existing imbalance in institutional delegation (employees of the Commission make up the greater part of EAS officials (1114 from 1643)), work methods of the Commission are in force in the EAS.¹⁷ An EU representative emphasized the fact that about 90% of EAS personnel have come from the Commission and that produces an unfavorable atmosphere of relations between the institution and Member States. Member States are often treated as “enemies”, seeking self-serving interests; therefore, attempts are made to remove them from the decision-making process. The unfavorable atmosphere, concerning Member States, is strengthened by the existence of considerable internal pressures; meanwhile EAS institutions have not been completely formed, workload flows are too heavy for the present number of people and functions are not always adequately distributed.¹⁸ It is likely that the EUHR has already noticed internal EAS problems and is trying to respond. In the middle of May 2011, a sitting of the PSC, where the activity of CSDP and EAS was considered, took place; the EUHR requested Member States to submit their opinions; however, the fact that the opinions were called for at an informal level may indicate that in the nearest future it will be impossible to solve the existing problems.¹⁹

The Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD) which was formed from previously existing civilian and military crisis management structures and surfaced in the EAS structure after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force is becoming one of the most important institutions within CSDP.²⁰ Thus, attempts are made to reduce the divide between civilian and military missions; on the other hand, this subdivision really strengthens the EAS role. CMPD functions are, in essence, the same as those of the EAS, only narrower in scope, i.e. the CMPD works exceptionally on CSDP issues. Consequently, in the area of CSDP, following the EUHR and the Deputy EUHR for security issues, the CMPD is becoming one of the most important institutions that establishes the agenda and prepares documents. Notwithstanding, the possibilities for Member States to influence this institution are strictly limited. The CMPD is a part of the EAS which has no direct contacts with Member States and it is possible to “reach” it only through working

¹⁷ A New Step in the Setting-up of the EEAS: transfer of staff on 1 January 2011.

¹⁸ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May 2011.

¹⁹ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (II), 19 May 2011.

²⁰ European Peace Building Liaison Office, *Statement on Civilian and Military Integration in European Security and Defence Policy*, 2009 January 3.

groups, the HR or the EAS. Member States can form tasks directly to the HR or propose them through working groups and only then the HR transfers them to the CMPD. On the other hand, since the CMPD prepares important documents and has a lot of important information, informal contacts with the employees of this service can be very useful to a Member State.²¹ A representative of the EU claims that, though many people from the Council came to the CMPD, here as well the same attitude towards Member States prevails as in general in the EAS.²² Also, the CMPD is still facing a problem of vacancies. Although in April of 2011 the new Director of the CMPD – a Belgian Walter Stevens – took office, there still remain many vacancies at the level of experts.

After the EUHR, the PSC and the EAS, the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM) and the Political–Military Group (PMG) are the most influential within CSDP.²³ With reference to military issues, the EU Military Committee (EUMC) is also important.²⁴ Before being submitted to the Council, all issues are considered in the PSC. However, before getting to the PSC, all issues are coordinated at a still lower level, that of the PMG, the CIVCOM, the CMPD.²⁵ Therefore, work in these institutions is particularly important in seeking both to influence the agenda and to draft guidelines for certain future decisions. It should be emphasized that, after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, the state holding the presidency does not chair in any of these institutions.

One more institution, established by the Treaty of Lisbon, is the European Defense Agency (EDA). Though this institution had been functioning for several years (established by the decision of the Joint Actions of the Council in 2004), due to the Treaty of Lisbon it gained new status; it is the only EU agency mentioned in the Treaty. The EDA, under the guidance of the EUHR, performs the primary role in improving military capabilities of Member States.²⁶ EDA functions are also associated with the implementation of “permanent structured cooperation” provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon.

²¹ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May 2011.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (II), 19 May 2011.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ The Treaty of Lisbon, Article 42.3.

Table 3. **Other CSDP Institutions, Committees and Working Groups**

- European Defense Agency,
- Security Committee,
- Working Group on Terrorism,
- Group for Application of Specific Measures to Combat Terrorism,
- Non-Proliferation Working Group,
- Working Group on Conventional Weapons Export,
- Dual-Use Items Working Group,
- European Armaments Policy Working Group,
- Military Committee Working Group¹
- EU Military Staff,
- Civilian Planning and Conduct Capabilities,
- Political Military Group,
- European Security and Defense College Steering Committee,
- Satellite Center Council,
- Athena Special Committee,
- EU – NATO Capabilities Group,
- Committee of Contributors (ad hoc, intended for operations, EU and three countries participate).

After the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, Member States lost the possibility to hold presidency (i.e. to establish the agenda and chair the meetings) in other, lower level CSDP institutions as well. The possibility of chairmanship has been retained only in the Working Group on Terrorism, European Security and Defense College (ESDC) Steering Committee as well as in Athena Special Committee, in Terrorism (COTER) and Specific Measures to Combat Terrorism (COOP) Working Groups. True, even in those working groups, chaired by representatives of EU institutions, theoretical possibilities for influence remain, but they are highly dependent on the relations of a Member State with the chairperson of the group and the EUHR.²⁷ Intergovernmental institutions remain in the hands of Member States, i.e. the Satellite Center (SATCEN), EDA and Athena mechanism. Though after Lisbon EDA should change, it has so far been left as intergovernmental. Anyway, it is not clear to what extent these institutions will have changed by the time Lithuania holds presidency.²⁸

Thus, the essential institutions during the presidency in the area of CSDP are the EUHR and the EAS, as well as the CIVCOM, the PSC and the PMG, i.e. top-level institutions whose decisions go to the Council. Therefore, it is necessary for the state holding the presidency to operate actively, particularly in these formats. One of the most important activities is to work with Member States seeking to ensure their support and to constantly coordinate with the EUHR. Theoretically, even the lowest-level institutions can formulate a question and raise it to the EAS; however, it takes a long time, and largely depends on the chairperson as well as on the capability

²⁷ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May 2011.

²⁸ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (I), 27 April 2011.

of a Member State to persuade other Member States to strongly support the initiative. In order for the question to reach the agenda during the presidency, a Member State should launch active actions at least a couple of years before the presidency.

2. Presidency Functions within CSDP after the Treaty of Lisbon Came Into Force

The presidency role in the EU kept changing alongside the development of the latter, ranging from the organizational-nature assistance to EU institutions to avoid an “inflated” secretariat (a three-month presidency of Coal and Steel Community and a six-month presidency of the European Economic Community) to a more serious role, including as well mediation functions from the sixties. Later, another important function developed – the function of a political leader; however, only large and influential states could have the sufficient ambition to implement it. In the course of history, it was not only functions and the content of issues that changed but also workloads. After the latest enlargement, because of the increased number of members and an extensive range of issues, the presidency would become a particularly serious challenge for the chairing countries. Areas covered by CFSP experienced a particular increase. This was one of the reasons predetermining the fact that the Treaty of Lisbon separated the ERC from the General Affairs and External Relations Council and obligated the latter to monitor these issues. The Treaty of Lisbon not only established new institutions, but also assigned important roles to them. Differently from other Councils which are presided over for a period of 18 months by groups of three Member States appointed in advance, made up on the basis of equal rotation among Member States, taking into consideration their diversity and geographic balance in the Union, the Council of Foreign Affairs is presided by a permanent representative – the EUHR.²⁹ This change of the presidency institutional structure and redistribution of functions has in essence reformed the role of presiding states in CFSP. Erika M. Szabó claims that, after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, it is impossible to speak about the traditional presidency, and thus the central research question is whether the current presidency, based on the principle of rotation, is in general retained in the EU’s external relations.³⁰

²⁹ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (I), 27 April 2011.

³⁰ Szabó E. M., Background Vocals: What Role for the Rotating Presidency in the EU’s External Relations post-Lisbon?. *EU Diplomacy Paper*, 05 / 2011, Department of EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, College of Europe. http://aei.pitt.edu/32319/1/EDP_5_2011_ErikaSzabo.pdf [referred to on 8 February 2012]

Academic literature abounds in articles that investigated the roles of presidency in the area of external relation before the Treaty of Lisbon.³¹ In general, these primary presidency functions are distinguished: a) organization of the Council work – organization and logistics of the meetings of EU states' representatives in Council committees, working groups, etc., coordination of the Council activity in cooperation with the Council Secretariat; b) mediation and search for compromises (both of concrete EU states and EU states and the Commission of Europe); c) political leadership – determination of the objectives and priorities of EU policy; d) internal (the EU with other institutions) and external (relations with the rest of the world) representation.³² These functions are associated with the leader's three main roles, singled out in the leadership theory (mission execution oriented leadership, group oriented leadership and transformational leadership),³³ which have not only different functions but also become relevant in various situations. When the implementation of the already adopted decision becomes the most important tasks, the need for mission execution oriented leadership manifests itself; when changes come into play, a demand for political, transformational leadership becomes stronger.

Another very important presidency function is the representation of national interests.³⁴ This function is most controversially treated because it is not compatible with the presidency philosophy according to which the president should be neutral. However, in the history of the presidency, all states, depending on their capabilities and resources, more or less sought to transfer their national interests to the EU agenda. Notwithstanding, after the Treaty of Lisbon, this became practically impossible in such areas as CFSP and CSDP because the state holding the presidency does not establish the agenda any more. Another presidency function that was abolished after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force is the representation function; both the internal and external representation falls to the responsibility area of the EUHR. Other presidency functions in the area of

³¹ Bengtsson R., "The Council Presidency and external representation", in O. Elgström (ed.), *European Union Council presidencies : a comparative perspective*, London, Routledge, 2003; . Fernandez A.M., Change and Stability of the EU Institutional System: the Communitarization of the Council Presidency, *Journal of European Integration*, vol. 30. no. 5.; Schout A., Vanhoonacker S., The rotating Presidency: obstate of obsolete, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 44, no. 5, 2006.

³² Aleksa K., Grubliauskas J., Statkus N., Vaičiūnas Ž., Žielys P., *Vokietijos, Portugalijos ir Slovėnijos pasirengimo pirmininkauti Europos sąjungai lyginamoji analizė*, Vilnius university, 2007, p. 10; Quaglia L., Moxon – Browne E., what makes a good EU presidency? Italy and Ireland Compared, *JCMS*, Vol. 44, No. 2, p. 349 – 368. . Schout A., Vanhoonacker S., Evaluating Presidencies of the Council of the EU: Revisiting Nice, *JCMS*, Vol. 44, No. 5. p.1053-1056.

³³ Yukl G., *Leadership in Organizations*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 4th ed. 1998.

³⁴ Schout A., Vanhoonacker S., Evaluating Presidencies of the Council of the EU: Revisiting Nice, *JCMS*, Vol. 44, No. 5. p. 1055.

CSDP have also changed though not to such a drastic extent. After the function concerning agenda formation and presiding over committees and working groups was transferred to the EUHR and the EAS, the state holding the presidency lost a part of its organizational functions. Traditional mediation functions of presiding states have completely disappeared, since they were given over to committees and working groups, i.e. to the hands of the EUHR and the EAS. The function of the political leadership, which used to fall to the largest and most powerful states, passed to the hands of the EUHR through the right of the agenda initiative and agenda implementation function.

After the major part of presidency functions were passed over to the responsibility of the EUHR and the EAS subordinate to it, the role of the presiding state within CFSP and CSDP considerably decreased; therefore, in the discussions of experts, the presidency is more and more often defined as the role of the EUHR “assistant” and not as an independent role of the president. Wolfgang Wessels claims that the position of the EUHR, established by the Treaty of Lisbon, is complicated, too dependent on other institutions, executing too many diverse and insufficiently defined tasks and having too few assistants,³⁵ thus, the task of the presiding state is to supply the necessary help to the EUHR. Yet, having surveyed the experience of the states that have presided after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, it is possible to state that the functions and the influence of the “assistant” may differ.

Since after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force only four states have held the presidency, it is complicated to accurately define all presidency functions in the post-Lisbon system—all the more so since they keep slightly changing with the spreading and strengthening of EUHR functions. Depending on the level of the presiding state’s ambitions, the presidency after the Lisbon Treaty is defined as “facilitating”³⁶ or “supporting”.³⁷ In essence, both presidency types mean help and assistance to the EUHR and the EAS, but not an independent presidency; however, the “facilitating” presidency is related to the presidency by Belgium and stands for a higher level of ambitions when the president is not only the organizer of functions, but also to a small extent a generator of ideas and a mediator, whereas the “supporting” presidency – this is how the Hungarians titled their presidency – limits itself only to the technical function of the organizer. An interview with a representative of

³⁵ Wessels W. and Bopp F., „The Institutional Architecture of CFSP after the Lisbon Treaty– Constitutional breakthrough or challenges ahead?“. *Challenge. Liberty & Security*. Research Paper No. 10, June 2008, p. Wessels W., p. 23.

³⁶ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (I), 27 April 2011.

³⁷ A memo of the consultations with the President of the EU team Col. Johan Andries from the Belgian Defense Ministry during the presidency, 20 January 2011.

EU institutions suggests that during the post-Lisbon period there were four phases of the CSDP presidency: 1) during the presidency by Spain, chaos dominated: there was no agenda, meetings were not held, the EAS was non-existent; 2) the presidency by Belgium was a mixed presidency, during which the Belgians proposed a certain agenda and the HR approved of it. Though, following the Treaty of Lisbon, Belgium did not already have to hold presidency in the area of CSDP, because of the shortage of human resources in the EAS, Belgium performed many of the same functions as the states that had held presidency before the Treaty of Lisbon came into effect; 3) during the presidency by Hungary, the EAS already had its program and the personnel serving the presidency, and consequently the Hungarians retained very few functions³⁸; and 4) the presidency by Poland that at the beginning gave grounds to expect changes, i.e. a more active presidency, but, at the end of the term, was treated as a passive presidency since Poland, had almost no influence either in establishing the agenda or in decisions.³⁹

Because of the still changing presidency environment, both the roles of the presidency and capabilities of states to implement those roles should be examined very carefully. The general tendency indicates that the role of the presidency within CSDP is decreasing, but a question arises whether there is a limit for this decrease and whether the presiding country can influence at least a little its role? A representative of the Hungarian presidency team claimed in an interview, that the “supporting” role during the Hungarian presidency period could be identified with a non-existent presidency of the state.⁴⁰ She was supported by a representative of the Defense Ministry of Ireland who stated that, after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, presidency became very passive. This is particularly evident in the presidency activity in Brussels, but possibilities are very limited in the capital as well.⁴¹ On the other hand, a high-ranking EU official emphasized in an interview that the role of the presidency still largely depends on the preparation and initiative of the state holding the presidency.⁴² Before the presidency of Poland began, a representative of Poland was convinced of it. She claimed that, differently from passive Hungarians, the Poles would at least seek to become a part of the process. As it is provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon, they will not form the agenda but will seek to make an impact on the agenda, to consult the EUHR, to encourage certain discussions.⁴³ Consequently, it is likely that there is no uniform definition as to

³⁸ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (II), 19 May 2011.

³⁹ Kaczynski P. M., *Polish Council Presidency 2011: Ambitions and Limitations*, SIEPS, 2011.

⁴⁰ An interview with a representative of Hungary in Brussels, 4 May 2011.

⁴¹ An interview with a representative of Ireland in Brussels, 10 May 2011.

⁴² An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May 2011.

⁴³ An interview with a representative of Poland in Brussels, 18 May 2011.

who an assistant in the presidency is and that this may depend on the ambitions and influence of a state. Before the beginning of the presidency by Poland, it was expected that the presidency could slightly turn the center of power towards the presiding state. However, the Poles failed to do that. It is not worth expecting either from the currently presiding Denmark or from Cyprus and Ireland, whose presidencies will follow, that the powers of Member States will strengthen.

So long as the role of the presidency remains undefined, it would be complicated to accurately name presidency-related functions. Yet, having evaluated the experience of the states that have held presidency, we can see several general tendencies emerging, i.e. traditional functions within the presidency framework after the Treaty of Lisbon not only become narrower, but their nature also changes. A representative from the Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the EU emphasized that the presidency in essence now covers two functions: the organization of events in the capital and Brussels and a partial influence on the agenda.⁴⁴ In the interviews conducted, several main presidency functions after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force manifested themselves: organizational, mediation-related and that of influencing the agenda. In fact, these functions largely coincide with former functions, but the scope of activity in all the functions have considerably decreased as well as the changed methods of activity.

2.1. Organizational Function

The organization of formal and informal events has always been one of the primary presidency functions. After the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, this function did not disappear, but its nature has changed. The organization of formal events was attributed to the EAS, whereas Member States were assigned the organization of informal functions. Informal events are semi-academic functions, the themes of which are proposed and the agendas are established by the presiding state or by informal meetings. The state holding presidency retains the function to organize informal meetings (informal meetings of ministers, informal meetings of policy directors, the PSC, PMG, CIVCOM, RELEX, Athena mechanism groups). The possibility to contribute (at least financially) during the presidency to the organization of two events by the European Defense Agency (EDA) is also retained. Hungary organized about 20–30 events on CSDP issues. Most of them were held in Hungary, and several in Brussels. A representative of Poland maintained that the Poles had to organize many events as well, but she also pointed out

⁴⁴ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (II), 4 May 2011.

that the organization of functions (particularly academic) is more a tradition than a must; besides, they cost a great deal; therefore, in the future, smaller states such as Cyprus or Denmark can in general refuse to do that.⁴⁵ It is worth mentioning that, though the Hungarians are sufficiently skeptically disposed towards Member States' would-be presidencies in the area of CSDP and claim that the only serious tasks remaining for the presiding state are to logistically support informal meetings in the capital as well as consider on what themes to organize seminars in the capital,⁴⁶ an appropriate exploitation of these existing formats can enhance the influence of the state holding the presidency. A Lithuanian representative claims that in the post-Lisbon environment, the organization of different informal, semi-academic events with the assistance of the EAS will become one of the primary functions of CSDP presidency. In such events, it is possible to propose agenda themes to the EAS, formulate both topics and content of the functions themselves as well as what is going to be discussed during the event.⁴⁷ Such events, provided they are successfully organized and their topics are well chosen, may be a perfect "step" for these topics to get to "the genuine ES agenda". A representative of Lithuania maintained that informal meetings may become such a "step" as well. It is in informal meetings that the most interesting discussions usually take place. For example, an informal meeting of the CIVCOM group, held in Budapest in May 2011, was very interesting and successful. The Hungarians managed to invite the appropriate people from the EAS, and the latter raised the issues important to the Hungarians in the area of capabilities. Very good discussions were going on, and a non-binding document, which may later become a working one, was circulated.⁴⁸ Thus, the organization of both informal independent functions and the arrangement of informal meetings with prior preparation as well as proposal of interesting ideas may extend the powers of the presiding state.

The presidency of committees and working groups may also be attributed to the organizational function. After the Lisbon Treaty came into force, these functions are practically no longer performed by the presiding state. Even though it still arranges informal meetings, it no longer chairs them. Meetings of Defense Ministers are chaired by the EUHR, whereas informal meetings of Political Directors are chaired by the Head of the CMPD. The presidency of all highest level key CSDP institutions is held by the permanent chairmen. The Hungarians claimed that they held presidency of only 3-4 committees and groups,⁴⁹ whereas

⁴⁵ An interview with a representative of Poland in Brussels, 18 May 2011.

⁴⁶ An interview with a representative of Hungary in Brussels, 4 May 2011.

⁴⁷ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels, (III), 10 May, 2011.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ An interview with a representative of Hungary in Brussels, 4 May, 2011.

a representative of Lithuania has forecast that Lithuania is going to chair only the Athena Group and the Steering Committee of the ESDC.⁵⁰ However, the presiding state must be ready to chair at a higher level, too. For example, during the informal meeting of Defense Policy Directors which took place in Hungary in January, a Hungarian chaired the event, because the Directors of the EDA or the CMPD had not yet been appointed.⁵¹ Since both the Directors are in office already, such cases will be less numerous in the future. Besides, both representatives of EU institutions stressed that the task of the chairing state is to substitute for the HR in different roles in case the latter is busy.⁵²

Therefore, it is particularly important for the state preparing for the presidency to accumulate expertise on various issues of the EU agenda and be ready to present this expertise during the presidency.

Alongside the direct functions of the presidency in the area of CSDP, there are alternative presidency “channels” which can be used to raise CSDP issues urgent to the state. A representative of Lithuania emphasized that the presiding state still retains presidency in many institutions where CSDP-related problems may be raised (COREPER, Terrorism Working Group, RELEX Group, Development Group). Another possible format beyond the frame of the Council is the European Parliament. Although within this institution CSDP is institutionally represented by the EUHR, the chairing country may try to raise CSDP issues and propose resolutions in other formats. The influence through other international organizations cannot be dismissed either. At present, the issue of EU coordination in international organizations (the WTO, the OSCE, the UNO) is being considered; however, as long as it has not been resolved, security and defense issues may also be raised through them.⁵³ In this case, good coordination between chairing institutions within the state becomes of the utmost importance.

Thus, although it is obvious that the presiding state has been left with only a formal organizational function and alternative “channels”, having made successful use of them, a Member State, at least so far, is capable of drawing the EU’s attention to the issues important to it, whereas a successful fulfillment of the organizational function becomes, in fact, the prime focus of the presidency within CSDP.

⁵⁰ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (I), 27 April, 2011.

⁵¹ An interview with a representative of Hungary in Brussels, 4 May, 2011.

⁵² An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011 and An interview with a representative of EU institutions (II), 19 May, 2011.

⁵³ An interview with a representative of Lithuania (IV), 28 April, 2011.

2.2. Establishing the Agenda

The function of establishing the agenda has never guaranteed an automatic transfer of the priorities of the presiding state to the EU level. A great number of issues that reached the EU agenda were inherited from previously presiding states; some part of them was dictated by the external environment; and only 5-10 percent of the agenda could be regulated by the chairing state.⁵⁴ After the Lisbon Treaty came into force, the function of forming the agenda has rested on the EUHR and the EAS. True, the possibilities for the chairing state to transfer its national interests to the EU agenda are undergoing slight changes, depending on whether the presidency is executed from the capital or from Brussels and also on the level of the chairing state's ambitions; however, the Treaty of Lisbon assigns this function exceptionally to the EUHR and the EAS. Alongside the other three states, the chairing state still prepares the presidency program of the trio as well as an individual presidency program, yet they do not form the priorities in the areas of CFSP and CSDP.

In fact, the states that have already held presidency had different experiences concerning this issue. During its presidency Belgium managed to formulate priorities in the area of CSDP and propose them to the EUHR. They also tried to influence the presidency agenda during the period of their actual presidency. The Belgians explained their success by an extremely close cooperation with the EUHR and the CMPD already prior to the Belgian presidency and during it and they were active and proposed such themes that were important not only to the Belgians, but also interesting and of significance to both the EU and Member States.⁵⁵ An EU official admitted that the most important achievement of the Belgians was an informal Ministerial Meeting in Ghent. During it, Belgium not only managed to include the issues of importance to itself in the EU agenda but also to earn publicity. The Ghent initiative is also significant in that that attention to it did not abate after the Belgian presidency.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that during the Belgian presidency the EAS was not completely formed and had far fewer powers and ambitions; therefore, the fact that the Belgians proposed something was simply convenient for both the parties and did not at all depend on the capability of the Belgians to influence the agenda.

The EAS, which strengthened and gained influence during the Hungarian

⁵⁴ Tallberg J. The Agenda – shaping Powers of the EU Council Presidency// *Journal of European Public Policy*, 10:1, February, 2003, p. 3.

⁵⁵ An interview with a representative of Belgium, 5 May, 2011.

⁵⁶ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

presidency, completely took over the function of drafting the agenda. As it has been provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon, the Hungarians had no presidency program in the area of CSDP or priorities; however, in this area, they tried to propose assistance and recommendations to the EUHR and the EAS. In an interview, one of EU officials emphasized that the presiding state must be attuned to the requirements of the Lisbon Treaty and should leave the function of forming priorities to the EUHR. Therefore, he suggests that recommendations put forward by a state should not even be called priorities since this could provoke a negative reaction from the EUHR.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the experience of Hungary shows that the EUHR is not inclined to take into consideration even sufficiently neutral recommendations. According to a representative of Hungary, after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, it was already obvious that approximately 90 percent of the agenda was under the control of the EUHR, whereas during the Hungarian presidency it reached 100 percent.⁵⁸ A representative of Ireland is convinced that after the Treaty of Lisbon, the presiding state practically lost the possibility to influence the agenda. The presiding state may request to include issues in the agenda, but decisions on this question are taken by the EUHR and the EAS.⁵⁹ True, the EAS permits the chairing country to get acquainted with the agenda content prior to the others; and, the EAS and the country preparing for the presidency take part in all preparatory meetings. Yet these countries do not have even an advisory vote. A representative of Hungary claims that, most probably, the only possibility for the Hungarians “to get into direct touch” with the establishing of the agenda was during an informal meeting of Defense Policy Directors held in Hungary in January, when the Directors of neither the EDA nor the CMPD had been assigned and the presidency of the event fell to the Hungarians. The informal meeting of the ministers was already chaired by the EUHR and neither the EAS nor the EUHR asked the Hungarians to contribute to the agenda.⁶⁰ Thus, it is hardly likely that similar possibilities could surface at the time of the forthcoming presidencies when heads of all main institutions are already in office.

In attempts to forecast a further direction of the distribution of powers between the EUHR and the presiding state, all eyes were directed to Poland. On the one hand, it is a state possessing considerable resources and influence; second, Poland is one of the countries of the Weimar initiative; third, the Poles could expect assistance from Mr. Maciej Popowski (Deputy EUHR for Security Issues) who,

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ An interview with a representative of Hungary in Brussels, 4 May, 2011.

⁵⁹ An interview with a representative of Ireland in Brussels, 10 May, 2011.

⁶⁰ An interview with a representative of Hungary in Brussels, 4 May, 2011.

in principle, might be identified with the HR within CSDP. A representative of Lithuania confirmed this, saying that “on the basis of the conversations with the Poles, a conclusion may be drawn that they associate the plans of their presidency with Popowski and do not see any possibilities without him.”⁶¹ On the other hand, the strength of the Poles lies in human resources. The Poles could afford to participate in all working groups. Already prior to the presidency, each working group had at least a few Polish representatives.⁶² Nevertheless, despite Poland’s determination to take on an active role in the proposition of new initiatives to the EUHR as well as its attempts to influence the agenda, it should be admitted that with the Polish presidency approaching the end, there was, in essence, nothing new in the EU agenda on CSDP issues. Besides, it happened so because economic issues prevailed on the EU agenda. However, Poland’s hopes associated with the Weimar initiative were ruined because of the disinterest of other countries in this initiative.⁶³ Thus, it is possible to state that in spite of its ambitions and size, direct opportunities for the presiding state to influence the agenda are minimal.

Regardless of essentially no opportunities for influencing the official agenda, a possibility of informal or indirect influence on the agenda remained. A representative of EU institutions said that the possibilities for a chairing state to draft the CSDP agenda remain in developing different kinds of non-papers. According to him, a good quality and properly prepared positions in terms of themes that help CSDP move forward are highly valued in EU institutions and have many possibilities for eventually being included in the CSDP agenda.⁶⁴ A representative of Ireland believes that this tool was very effective earlier (particularly during informal meetings or in working groups), but now it encounters serious difficulties regarding its employment. One of the main challenges is a longer way for the issue to get into official formats. One of the reasons for that is the fact that the EAS is still lacking human resources.⁶⁵ Seeking to include one or another issue in the official CSDP agenda during the presidency of a country, the latter should start acting a couple of years in advance. The first step is the formation of good, food-for-thought positions that are important to the entire EU or a larger part of its members. The second step is intensive negotiations with Member States and EU institutions concerning support.⁶⁶ Yet even this does not guarantee that the issue will reach the agenda at the right time. In recent years, the EAS has been exerting

⁶¹ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (III), 10 May, 2011.

⁶² An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (I), 27 April, 2011.

⁶³ Kaczynski P. M. *Polish Council Presidency 2011: Ambitions and Limitations*, SIEPS, 2011, p. 45.

⁶⁴ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

⁶⁵ An interview with a representative of Ireland in Brussels, 10 May, 2011.

⁶⁶ An interview with a representative of Poland in Brussels, 18 May, 2011.

too much control over all levels of the agenda. Proposals can be accepted or rejected on the grounds of the availability of other issues on the agenda or simply because the agenda is full. Another way to indirectly influence the agenda by spreading unofficial positions during the presidency is the organization of seminars on a specific issue in the capital.

It should be noted that issues may be initiated by both a chairing and non-chairing state, forming unofficial positions in advance. Therefore, an informal function of forming the agenda is not a prerogative of the state holding the presidency. Since in order to put any issue on the agenda, it is essential to ensure as broad a support from Member States as possible, this function is most often used by powerful states that are capable of proposing something in exchange to other Member States.

A representative of EU institutions claims that in order to better understand the institutional balance change after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, it is necessary to distinguish between the two functions: the establishing of the agenda and decision making. In the shaping of the agenda, the balance of power has markedly shifted towards the EU. In cooperation with the subordinates, the EUHR drafts the agenda. Member States practically have no possibilities for establishing the agenda, except through the Council, the PSC or by using other ways to try to influence the EUHR. However, due to the intergovernmental nature of CSDP, Member States remain key players in making decisions and “forming objectives” to the EUHR. The EUHR is only an executor of these decisions. In his opinion, the main institution where CSDP decisions can be influenced is the PSC.⁶⁷ Another representative of EU institutions also emphasized that in order to influence the agenda it should be done only at the highest level.⁶⁸ Possibilities for Member States to influence decisions of institutions of this political level are not associated with the presidency and often depend on the political weight of the state and its capability to ensure support from other Member States in advance. The best example is the Weimar letter which was initiated by France, Germany, Poland, and in which new CSDP initiatives were launched. According to the EU official, the EUHR cannot leave such initiatives out of consideration.⁶⁹

Small states may try to form coalitions on one or another issue and coordinate these issues with the EUHR. However, a very broad supporting coalition, including large states as well, is necessary, whereas the issue must be important to the entire EU. It should also be noted that because of a very busy schedule and small interest in CSDP

⁶⁷ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

⁶⁸ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (II), 19 May, 2011.

⁶⁹ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

issues,⁷⁰ the EUHR has essentially transferred all control of CSDP to her Deputy Maciej Popowski; therefore, in using the concept the EUHR, the Deputy EUHR is often actually meant. He also chairs meetings of Political Directors. The fact that after this official took office, the area of CSDP has finally acquired a person responsible for it and may positively impact the communication between states and the EUHR.

After the Treaty of Lisbon came into effect, the formation of the agenda by employing direct ways of influence is practically disappearing in the area of CSDP. Yet it cannot be stated that this function is disappearing altogether. Similarly to the organizational function, the establishing of the agenda only acquires an informal character, i.e. unofficial positions during informal meetings or well before the beginning of the presidency, and also informal negotiations with other Member States in seeking support for the proposed initiative.

2.3. The Function of Mediation

Although according to the philosophy of the Lisbon Treaty, the presiding state no longer has the function of mediation as it was previously perceived, some slight role of mediation still remains. A representative of EU institutions emphasized that the presidency in the post-Lisbon environment primarily implies smooth communication between the areas in which the presidency of Member States has been retained and those that no longer have it, i.e. the interaction of the PSC and the Council with the COREPER, etc.⁷¹ Another significant part of the function of mediation is the mediation between the EUHR, the EAS and Member States. In the opinion of a Polish representative, “facilitating” first of all implies mediation. “If you are seeking to initiate some discussions, the first step is to negotiate with Member States, look for compromises. It is also very important to constantly maintain communication with the EAS.”⁷² Thus, the function of mediation remains, but its nature is very indefinite. One part of activity areas related to mediation may be attributed to the organizational function, i.e. smooth inter-institutional communication and communication between different areas during the presidency. Negotiations with Member States may be included in the function of establishing the agenda. However, in order to make a clearer distinction between functions and underline the importance of the communication function, the function of mediation is singled out.

⁷⁰ An interview with a representative of Belgium, 5 May, 2011.

⁷¹ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

⁷² An interview with a representative of Poland in Brussels, 18 May, 2011.

The conducted analysis of presidency roles indicates that though the main functions of the presidency of CSDP, in essence, have remained after the Treaty of Lisbon, Member States lost a major part of activities associated with these functions. The functions themselves have also considerably changed. For example, the importance of informal actions has grown, the significance of organizing informal events has also increased, the function of coordination with the EUHR and the EAS has been added, and a great amount of work has been transferred from Brussels to the capital. It is obvious that the redistribution of functions is still underway. Therefore, it is so far hard to foresee what the key functions of the presidency in the second half of 2013 are going to be. Cyprus, Denmark and Ireland that will hold presidency before Lithuania and which are smaller and have fewer ambitions in CSDP may leave little freedom of action to Lithuania in CSDP. A representative of Hungary is convinced that even if the Poles manage to slightly extend the powers of the state presidency within CSDP, these will again shrink after the presidency of Cyprus.⁷³ A representative of Lithuania says that the starting point of the Lithuanian presidency will have to be determined after the end of the Danish presidency.⁷⁴ It is likely that Lithuania will remain with the only role, the role of organizing seminars and informal meetings in the capital, and this role is going to be of a rather administrative nature.⁷⁵

The narrowed roles of the presiding state within CSDP and doubtful results pose the question as to whether it is worthwhile for small states to invest their limited resources in the presidency in this area or whether it is better to direct them to the areas where the presidency is still retained. A representative of EU institutions claimed that handing presidency of CSDP over to the EUHR and the EAS is in compliance with the philosophy of the Treaty of Lisbon and, therefore, should not damage the reputation of the state. He stressed that in such a case, it is important to convey this decision to the EUHR as soon as possible. In his opinion, the EUHR would take it as a natural phenomenon. At the same time, however, he admits that a minimal presidency will remain since the function of the presidency is retained in some institutions related to CSDP.⁷⁶ In the opinion of other survey participants, this choice may have a negative impact on the treatment of the state. The Hungarians have chosen a passive strategy of participation and have received a lot of negative reactions. However, a conscious choice of the state to distance itself from the presidency in CSDP may raise suspicions that in this way it demonstrates its skeptical attitude to CSDP. In case of Lithuania, it may be associated with the obviously clear declaration of NATO prioritization regarding CSDP.

⁷³ An interview with a representative of Hungary in Brussels, 4 May, 2011.

⁷⁴ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (III), 10 May, 2011.

⁷⁵ An interview with a representative of Hungary in Brussels, 4 May, 2011.

⁷⁶ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

3. Criteria and Preconditions of an Effective Presidency

There is no uniform formula for the evaluation of the presidency. A majority of academics researching these problems agree that to be considered effective, the presidency should be able to successfully end negotiations on the currently discussed issues, guarantee positive negotiation results, create a good negotiating atmosphere and achieve the goals set for the period of the presidency.⁷⁷ The definition of an effective presidency also depends on what role the presiding state gives priority to in general and on concrete issues. Following the contingency management theory based on the model of demand (generated by the EU) and supply (provided by the presiding state),⁷⁸ a successful presidency is one which is in compliance with the demand (existing at that time) of the chairing role and in which the commitments are successfully fulfilled. Taking into consideration the fact that after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force the presidency functions in CSDP kept changing, the criteria of an effective presidency need to be re-evaluated. A representative of Lithuania emphasized that during the presidency in any area it is essential to bear in mind that an effective presidency is a smooth presidency rather than representation of national interests at any cost. In his opinion, the success of the presidency should be evaluated more broadly than based solely on the achievement of particular objectives in one or another area: “it is important for a general presidency to be successful because through it we collectively become more influential, our reputation grows, individual capabilities are strengthened. A smooth presidency means that priorities are good, interesting to others, and there is a demand for them in the EU”.⁷⁹ The presidency will be smooth and effective only if it meets the EU demand, i.e. what the EU (its Member States and institutions) will require from the chairing state. Of course, the situation may still change; however, it is likely that primary functions of the presiding state in CSDP will be the organization of semi-academic seminars and informal meetings. A representative of EU institutions says that even though the chairing state chose a totally passive role, it would not avoid some functions – chairing the institutions where it still remains, guaranteeing communication between these and other institutions. Some functions for ministers will also be retained.⁸⁰ Thus, although “demand” for the presidency has significantly decreased, it still remains.

⁷⁷ Schout A., Vanhoonacker S., Evaluating Presidencies of the Council of the EU: Revisiting Nice, *JCMS*, Vol. 44, No. 5, p. 1056.

⁷⁸ Schout A., Vanhoonacker S. p. 1057.

⁷⁹ An interview with a representative of Lithuania (IV), 28 April, 2011.

⁸⁰ An interview with a representative of ES institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

3.1. Organizational Function

Almost all survey participants admitted that the organizational function will become the main function of the presiding state in the area of CSDP. The state must try to arrange a sufficient number of events (apart from informal meetings of working groups) on all important to the EU issues. To make the presidency successful, the organizational tasks entrusted to a Member State must be carried out smoothly. Recalling his participation in the Irish presidency team in 2004 and comparing it with the presidency after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force, a representative of Ireland admits that the differences are considerable. First of all, a major part of work of the chairing state is moving from Brussels to the capital. Thus, a smooth presidency is largely determined by good work in the capital, i.e. good organization of informal meetings and seminars.⁸¹ A representative of Belgium also noticed that a smooth organization of events is a very important element of a successful presidency. In his opinion, organizational failures often become more significant to the results of the presidency than the content. Poor time management, calendar errors, insufficient communication are the main errors of presiding states.⁸² Taking into account the fact that in the CSDP of the post-Lisbon environment in general the organization of functions remains almost the only task, its significance, in the context of other functions, considerably increases. One of the essential preconditions of smooth organization is close cooperation with the EUHR and the EAS.⁸³ Yet, one should not leave out of consideration the fact that due to the organizational challenges that the EAS still poses, close coordination with the latter is not a very simple process; therefore, everything must be coordinated in advance and checked personally. A representative of Ireland stated that the latest example of poor organization was a formal meeting of Defense Ministers held during the Hungarian presidency when the EAS did not coordinate the agenda with the Commission, and the EUHR had to participate in both functions at the same time.⁸⁴ This may have consequences for the chairing state since the minister of the presiding state must formally represent the EUHR in case the latter is not able to take part in some function. Another untapped possibility is cooperation on organizational issues with the states of the trio, sharing functions and reducing organizational costs.

⁸¹ An interview with a representative of Ireland in Brussels, 10 May, 2011.

⁸² An interview with a representative of Belgium, 5 May, 2011.

⁸³ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

⁸⁴ An interview with a representative of Ireland in Brussels, 10 May, 2011.

3.2. Establishing the Agenda

A successful performance of the function of establishing the agenda must end up with some legal act, resolution, guidelines and the like.⁸⁵ However, after the Lisbon Treaty came into force, it has become complicated since the presiding state does not form an “official” agenda. A representative of EU institutions claimed that in regard to the issues of establishing the agenda, the presiding country can do nothing but act like an ordinary state. The EAS may have consultations with the chairing state, or invite it to preparatory meetings, but it does not mean that its propositions will be taken into consideration.⁸⁶ In the post-Lisbon environment, the narrowed possibilities for establishing the agenda encourage the presiding states to look for other ways of linking the processes that are going on in the EU with the results of their presidency. A new tradition is being formed when the chairing state, prior to its presidency, tries to explore EAS “needs”, i.e. what issues will be on the CSDP agenda during the presidency, what positions might be needed; it is necessary to study these issues well, prepare propositions, seek the support of other Member States, retain a “solid line” during the presidency in arranging events, and, at the end of the presidency, to emphasize that the planned results have been achieved. The initiators of this tradition were the Belgians. The Belgian presidency of CSDP was evaluated as successful. The Belgians closely cooperated with the EUHR and the EAS and managed to succeed in having their propositions in establishing the CSDP agenda taken into account. A representative from EU institutions claimed that although in the area of CSDP the Belgians did not include anything in the presidency program, they succeeded in arranging successful functions, the themes of which later became a part of the agenda. Besides, they proposed to the EUHR and the EAS such themes which were very important to both Member States and the EUHR.⁸⁷ True, a part of the Belgian success was determined by the fact that during their presidency the EAS was still experiencing a notable lack of human resources and was greatly dependent on the presiding state both financially and in terms of human resources; however, this practice of the Belgians has spread. The Hungarians and the Poles tried to use it, and the Irish and the Lithuanians are planning to as well. A representative of Lithuania stated that during the presidency “our goal is to closely cooperate with the EAS, analyze the “market”, determine what is needed, put forward propositions where they are pertinent and try to say that these are our priorities. Also, it is essential to bring

⁸⁵ An interview with a representative of Lithuania (IV), 28 April, 2011.

⁸⁶ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (II), 19 May, 2011.

⁸⁷ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

together a group of supporting countries (constantly) because as long as there is no support from other members, it is impossible to do anything.”⁸⁸

A Belgian representative related that they started their discussions with the EUHR and the EAS on the contribution of the presidency to the CSDP agenda 2-3 months prior to the beginning of the presidency, but the capital advised the start of preparations much earlier, approximately in summer of 2012.⁸⁹ A representative of Poland suggest that they should constantly and closely follow the agenda far in advance of the presidency, prepare people well, pool knowledge on different CSDP issues. Also, it is necessary to start discussions with Member States on support for priority issues as soon as possible.⁹⁰ A representative of Lithuania claimed that in the post-Lisbon environment it is vital to be aware and understand countries’ positions on each issue and be able to project them.⁹¹ In spite of the changed balance of power, it is worth remembering that CSDP remains intergovernmental and the EUHR depends on Member States, therefore, they can formulate tasks for the HR. If the issue is well prepared and there is approval of Member States, the states maintain possibilities for influencing the agenda.⁹² In the opinion of a representative of EU institutions, the Weimar initiative is a perfect example of the powers of Member States.⁹³ However, while seeking such an impact, the broadest possible support from Member States is needed; it is also important that large states support the initiative. Sometimes it is reasonable to be flexible and “wait for the proper time” until one or another priority becomes urgent without any effort.⁹⁴ According to a representative of EU institutions, one more factor that expands the boundaries of states’ influence is access to the “internal” information in the EAS; therefore, it is highly recommended that presiding states send their liaison officers to this institution.⁹⁵ In the opinion of a representative of Lithuania, the influence of the presiding state is greatly increased by a high level of expertise, capability to voice its position on any issue as often as possible.⁹⁶ However, only larger states possessing more considerable human resources can use these advantages.

According to another representative of Lithuania, it should not be forgotten that states retain the presidency on some important issues related to external relations, i.e. trade issues and visa issues. Member States still hold presidency in

⁸⁸ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (III), 10 May, 2011.

⁸⁹ An interview with a representative of Belgium, 5 May, 2011.

⁹⁰ An interview with a representative of Poland in Brussels, 18 May, 2011.

⁹¹ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (II), 4 May, 2011.

⁹² An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

⁹³ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (II), 19 May, 2011.

⁹⁴ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

⁹⁵ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (II), 19 May, 2011.

⁹⁶ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (I), 27 April, 2011.

the COREPER. He suggests that these remaining possibilities should be taken advantage of in establishing the agenda; for example, to implement the objectives of eastern neighborhood in this area in order to ease visa regime for Georgia.⁹⁷ This can be applied to CSDP issues as well; for example, links between CSDP and the former third pillar, CSDP and trade can be sought.

3.3. The Function of Mediation

With the Treaty of Lisbon in effect, a Member State must ensure good coordination between the areas where the presidency remains within the competence of states and those where it is handed over to EU institutions. This function can be employed by transferring some issues of the CSDP agenda to the areas where Member States still hold the presidency. To perform this function successfully, good coordination of the presidency team, clear division of functions and constant cooperation with the EUHR and the EAS are necessary.⁹⁸ It is important to start preparatory work on time, in close coordination with the EAS, arrange the schedule and divide the functions.

The function of mediation is also retained in negotiating for support from Member States on concrete issues. In this case, the success of the mediation depends on good knowledge of the content of the issue⁹⁹, preparation and relations with other states. A representative of Belgium advised to make up a map of countries' interests eight months before the presidency and identify potential partners and opponents according to it and later continuously "measure the states' temperature" on different issues.¹⁰⁰ A Lithuanian representative thinks that Lithuania should exploit bilateral negotiations with other countries seeking support for its positions and offering support on the issues that are less important to us, but urgent to those countries. In his opinion, in the area of CSDP, it is possible to offer support to the French in the field of defense industry and in this way ensure an influential supporter.¹⁰¹ Prior to the beginning of the Polish presidency, in the research carried out by the Center for International Relations in Poland it was claimed that the implementation of increased ambitions of Poland during the presidency will depend on their ability to clearly formulate priorities and do that together with

⁹⁷ An interview with a representative of Lithuania (IV), 28 April, 2011.

⁹⁸ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

⁹⁹ Interview with Permanent Representation of Slovenia, Vanhoonacker S., Reslow N., *The European External Action Service: Living Forwards by Understanding Backwards*. European Foreign Affairs Review, No. 15, 2010, p. 21.

¹⁰⁰ An interview with a representative of Belgium, 5 May, 2011.

¹⁰¹ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (II), 4 May, 2011.

its partners.¹⁰² Although it is easier for larger countries to ensure support from larger partners, it has been noted that small states are less suspected of attempts to transfer their national interests to the agenda¹⁰³ and therefore they gain support from other smaller states.¹⁰⁴ No less significant are informal relations with key figures in CSDP: Catherine Ashton, Maciej Popowski, chairmen of working groups and committees.¹⁰⁵ Being a newcomer in the presidency and lacking experience, Lithuania will still have to earn a good reputation and relations. A representative of Lithuania claimed that so far Lithuania is a country without a face¹⁰⁶ and, therefore, the expectations of states concerning us will be largely formed depending on Lithuania's actions during the presidency, but search for informal contacts should start as of this moment.

3.4. Other Preconditions of a Successful Presidency

Survey participants singled out some further preconditions of a general nature for a successful presidency: the appropriate level of ambitions, good distribution of functions and good coordination in the presidency team, political support and strong human resources.

In seeking a successful presidency, it is necessary to set a balanced level of ambitions. Ambitions must be “realistic”, yet not too modest. A representative of Lithuania stated that “during the presidency, the influence of small states reaches the level of influence of medium-size states (e.g. Spain). Accordingly, similar action formats can also be chosen.”¹⁰⁷ However, no illusions should be cherished that it is possible to achieve serious changes in the EU within six months. This is particularly important in the area of CSDP. Consequently, presidency ambitions in CSDP should be defined in accordance with what is provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon and what is required by the EUHR.¹⁰⁸ The most fatal errors of the presidency are disagreements at the national level over the level of ambitions and

¹⁰² Vanhoonacker S., Pomorska K., Maurer H., *The Council Presidencies and European Foreign Policy Challenges for Poland in 2011*, Warsaw: Center for International Relations. http://csm.org.pl/fileadmin/files/Biblioteka_CSM/Raporty_i_analizy/2010/1CSM_Raporty_i_Analizy%20K%20Pomorska.pdf [referred to on 9 February 2012]

¹⁰³ Qaglia L. Moxon-Browne E., What Makes a Good EU Presidency? Italy and Ireland Compared. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44 (2), p. 360.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

¹⁰⁶ An interview with a representative of Lithuania (IV), 28 April, 2011.

¹⁰⁷ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (III), 10 May, 2011.

¹⁰⁸ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

too great ambitions.¹⁰⁹ Ambitions must also be tailored to the available resources. Too great ambitions force the presiding state to make many mistakes, there is also a danger that the majority of goals will not be achieved.

A representative of EU institutions claimed that in order to obtain good results, it is necessary to start with smooth teamwork; and for that not only clear division of functions, but also cooperation between institutions is needed. Of special importance in CSDP is cooperation between the MoFA and the MoD which should manifest itself not only by unity of action but also by a unanimous standpoint on all CSDP issues. He said that there have been some cases in the history of the presidency when because of poor coordination or disagreements between these institutions the presidency was ruined.¹¹⁰ Political support for the presidency and presidency priorities is very significant too. For example, a changed position of the state on one or another issue after an election can seriously harm the image of the state as well as presidency success. In order to ensure political support, following the Hungarian example, political agreement between parties might be sought which would obligate them to guarantee consensus during the presidency. A representative of Lithuania stressed that serious problems may arise from some speeches by highest officials; therefore, it is necessary to know how to manage these risks.¹¹¹

One of the most important preconditions for a good presidency is to properly select and prepare people. A representative of EU institutions maintained that members of a presidency team must have considerable knowledge of the post-Lisbon structure and themes of the area. He suggested that in making up a presidency team, Lithuania's experience of the OSCE presidency should be used.¹¹² A representative of Ireland claimed that, during the preparation for the presidency, they paid much attention not only to the preparation of people but also to their motivation, granting broader powers to them and relating the presidency to their career possibilities.¹¹³ An appropriate number of people in the presidency team is also important. In order to determine it, a Member State has to evaluate the level of ambitions and consider the number of people in the capital and Brussels, taking into account the fact that the balance of the scope of work is shifting towards the interest of the capital. Regarding the number of people needed in Brussels, there was a divergence of opinion among survey participants, yet this fact was determined by different experience of the presidency. A representative of Belgium stated that

¹⁰⁹ An interview with a representative of Belgium, 5 May, 2011.

¹¹⁰ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

¹¹¹ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (II), 4 May, 2011.

¹¹² An interview with a representative of EU institutions (I), 24 May, 2011.

¹¹³ An interview with a representative of Ireland in Brussels, 10 May, 2011.

the number of human resources needed remains the same as for the pre-Lisbon Treaty presidency.¹¹⁴ A representative of Ireland said that under present conditions, it is almost unnecessary to expand a permanently working team. During the presidency, the Irish will need one additional post at the representational level.¹¹⁵ A representative of Lithuania stated that the problem of Lithuanian human resources is two-sided; on the one hand, there is a lack of people (Lithuania has fewer people monitoring CSDP issues in Brussels than other states); on the other hand, the issue of their subordination has not been resolved yet. Lithuania has no separate advisors on the EU defense policy and they all are personnel of the Lithuanian mission to NATO.¹¹⁶ This may cause difficulties during the presidency, trying to ensure the continuity of action in the presidency.¹¹⁷ A representative of Lithuania stressed that a sufficient number of people involved in the presidency in the capital and the level of their expertise are equally important.¹¹⁸ The presiding country must be ready for contingences, for example, a possible crisis and an EU mission related to it. The EU expects the presiding country to contribute to the EU mission at least during the period of the presidency. The Defense Ministry of Hungary had resources provided for in its reserve had the EU decided to launch a mission in Libya.¹¹⁹ One more important aspect is proper working conditions. A representative of EU institutions emphasized the need for a broad and flexible mandate for those chairing in the capital so that they would not have to coordinate every minor issue with their colleagues presiding in the capital. Appropriate IT solutions greatly contribute to the coordination with the capital. Smart phones and video conferencing possibilities largely facilitate the work of the presidency team and enhance its effectiveness.¹²⁰

An important precondition for the presidency is a communication plan or strategy. The chairing state has a general presidency communication strategy, but it should be borne in mind that CSDP must be a part of it. A good communication strategy may increase the visibility of the country in the world and help manage different potential risks as well as enhance the visibility of the EU within the state. By using this strategy, it is possible to try to build society's support for concrete issues. By means of this strategy, the place of Lithuania in CSDP may be explained and a greater support for both CSDP and the involvement of the

¹¹⁴ An interview with a representative of Belgium, 5 May, 2011.

¹¹⁵ An interview with a representative of Ireland in Brussels, 10 May, 2011.

¹¹⁶ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (I), 27 April, 2011.

¹¹⁷ An interview with a representative of Lithuania (IV), 28 April, 2011.

¹¹⁸ An interview with a representative of Lithuania in Brussels (I), 27 April, 2011.

¹¹⁹ An interview with a representative of Hungary in Brussels, 4 May, 2011.

¹²⁰ An interview with a representative of EU institutions (II), 19 May, 2011.

Lithuanian military forces in CSDP may be ensured. However, the EUHR often complains of the lack of CSDP visibility, so a good communication strategy in the formation of a positive image of CSDP in Europe and the state may result in a more considerable support of the EUHR.

Having evaluated the arguments of the survey participants, several criteria of a good presidency may be distinguished. First, the functions and content of the presidency must be very accurately coordinated with the EUHR and meet EU “demand”. Second, the presidency within CDSP must be coordinated with other areas chaired by the state. Third, the organization of functions operating during the period of the presidency must be faultless. During a good presidency, at least several semi-academic events on the topics important to the development of CSDP must be held. Fourth, during the presidency, a state may undertake the role of a mediator, trying to informally ensure the support from Member States on one or another issue of the agenda.

Conclusions

In an attempt sum up and generalize the main features of the new presidency environment, it is important to recognize that this institutional environment is still undergoing formation and the redistribution of functions is still on-going. All four states that have held presidency after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force have been presiding under different conditions; thus, it is hard to find common denominators that would explain the existing institutional environment, both formal and informal relations, functions or criteria of an effective presidency. Nearly all interview participants underlined that prior to the Lithuanian presidency, both the institutional environment and operational possibilities and effectiveness criteria will still be changing and it will be possible to put together a more accurate picture of the possibilities of Lithuania’s presidency only after the Danish presidency. Nevertheless, several key tendencies related to the presidency in the area of CSDP may be distinguished.

First, the balance of power within CSDP is obviously changing in favor of the EUHR and the EAS. This tendency is increasing with the growth of the EAS.

Second, although the traditional roles of the presidency within CSDP remain, their character has considerably changed alongside the change of the presidency; formal functions of the organization of events, establishment of the agenda and mediation have been substituted with the informal ones (organization of informal events, formation of informal positions, and informal mediation between Member States and EU institutions). A direct presidency of CSDP institutions, after the Lisbon Treaty came into force, has practically disappeared.

Third, a change in functions has affected the factors determining a successful presidency. They can be defined as: a) close cooperation with the EUHR and the EAS, main institutions holding the presidency within CSDP. The functions and content of the presidency must be very accurately coordinated with the EUHR and meet EU “demand”; b) good coordination between the areas where a state is still holding presidency and those where this function was transferred to the EUHR; c) good organization of functions held during the presidency; d) a well fulfilled mediation function while negotiating with Member States over support. Successful accomplishment of these factors is largely determined by the following preconditions: an appropriate level of ambition, good division of functions between both the EUHR and the presiding state’s institutions, good coordination in the presidency team, political support in the country and strong human resources.

Provided the current tendencies continue to strengthen, the burden of the presidency that is going to fall to Lithuania in the area of CSDP will not be very heavy; however, successfully performing the tasks, though not numerous, will pose a serious challenge to Lithuania, as it is going to hold the EU Council presidency for the first time. Therefore, it is important to prepare for this challenge properly.

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