

**MARITIME POLICIES FOR A PROSPEROUS AND SECURE EUROPE  
Towards a 21st century comprehensive civil-military approach**

***Keynote Speech: Maritime Security: Delivering value.***

**Adm. Manuel Rebollo García**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I do not believe I exaggerate if I say that maritime issues have seldom been addressed by as large and high-standard group of experts as is now gathered in this room. The attendance of you all, representatives of both national and European agencies, organizations and civilian and military institutions, underlines the growing importance of maritime topics and the wide range of actors with responsibilities in the various activities conducted in European maritime spaces.

While not a new question, one of the many challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is to improve the security in the seas and oceans. And we should achieve this at a historical time when to the indiscriminate global threat from transnational terrorism other factors have summed up, some of them inherited from the former century. Although they are more than enough familiar to us all, I will mention some of them:

- A changing international domain in which new economic powers are emerging and claim their own space in the strategic world scene.
- The expansion of the phenomenon of globalization to all areas of life and activities of both institutions and people.
- A growing concern for worldwide impact issues, like climate change and energy challenges.

Actually, these are factors that usually surpass the physical frontiers of states and have turned the separation between security and defence and, in this context, between the civilian and the military realms, into a blurred and permeable line.

We need to consider all these issues from a very general perspective, not just to trace their causes, but also to identify and take into account the actors who can best contribute to resolve them.

The implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon should allow for a better positioning of the European Union in order to face these challenges, since the fusion of the three pillars on which it was based with their integration into a single decision-making and enforcement structure will enable the development of more coherent and effective policies aimed at finding synergies and fulfilling the need to implement a more efficient management of the available assets.

Such reality is particularly relevant for the policies in which a good relationship between the civilian and the military fields is vital to achieve success, as is the case of the Integrated Maritime Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy.

Both have a common factor: the sea. Europe is an essentially maritime continent, whose coastline contains 85 per cent of the EU's international borders. Therefore, the sea, along with information networks, is the main link connecting the European Union with the rest of the world. This is why the freedom of shipping, the fight against maritime pollution, the protection of natural resources, the prosecution of all kinds of unlawful traffic and an aim to prevent the sea from being used for criminal purposes have been, and will always be, priority concerns for Europe.

I do believe that this has been a situation that has run throughout the European history, but perhaps today, due to very diverse reasons, it is not so evident for public opinion. It is my opinion that those who hold some posts with sea-related responsibilities have the moral duty of letting people know the actual relevance of maritime matters, both in the national and the European spaces. Thus, we will be offering an important service to our fellow citizens.

The latest Presidencies of the European Union and the Commission have recognized this, and from this novel interest in sea topics documents like the Green Book, the Blue Book and the Action Plan have emerged – with highly promising results in integrating efforts to preserve and protect our maritime and coastal spaces.

These initiatives have been monitored with the utmost interest by the European military navies. The group of their Chiefs of Staff known as the CHENS Forum has been involved in the wide consultation process that preceded the development of the Green Paper and the Blue Book; we can say that in the field of military navies the need has also been noticed to address maritime issues from an integral approach that involves all agencies with responsibilities and interests in the sea.

It is true that when the initial endeavours on Integrated Maritime Policy commenced, Maritime Security came down to port security and law enforcement. But life itself has shown (Somalia for example) that this approach is not adequate and we need a much wider foresight: the integral approach I referred to before.

The Commission has consequently entrusted the current Presidents and Member States to look for common European policies for a better development of maritime issues.

In search for those synergies, the Spanish Presidency is promoting the cooperation between the Integrated Maritime Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy.

This impulse is centred around a threefold strategy:

- Contribute to the design of a common conceptual framework on European Maritime Security.
- Share information among all agencies with maritime tasks.
- Organise sea operations in an efficient manner, and with total consideration for responsibilities of the Commission and its agencies, as well as the principle of subsidiarity.

From my viewpoint, this search for synergies has two important aspects:

- On the one hand, it represents continuity and progress in the right track.
- On the other, it abides by the spirit of the Treaty of Lisbon in the sense that it provides new contents to the Common Foreign and Security Policy, strengthening the coordination role of the High Commissioner.

I think that these regulations are most adequate in the sense that all European actors with maritime responsibilities ought to think about new ways to improve sea-related European policies, especially in those aspects connected with security.

The fact is that the World of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is changing and those changes are also shown in the sea. We are possibly starting a new cycle in which the maritime dimension of political, economical, social and cultural aspects may have a significance unheard of up to now.

Let me make a short consideration on the role military navies can play in this scenario. From piracy activities in Somalia to the humanitarian tragedy in Haiti, to mention but just two recent examples, naval forces still demonstrate their true and genuine characteristics: **High readiness; capability to deploy great numbers of personnel and equipment; flexibility; mobility and access to any maritime area; and possibility to remain in the area for long periods of time.** This has been so throughout History, and it is necessary to stress the importance of having these assets in order to provide the required support.

Spain as a maritime nation intends to put forward the sea as one of its priorities during the Spanish Presidency of the European Union, and is therefore promoting this initiative which we hope to include in the new structure of the Union described in the Treaty of Lisbon.

If some aspects of our performance at sea are to be changed, we will have to study the way to do it and the organisation we will need. This review will also have to take into account common interests and stands to develop cooperation among national and European agencies and institutions with the idea of protecting the oceans, its resources and the people who work at sea.

The Lisbon Treaty provides us with the necessary tool at the right time. We face, just a month after the adoption of the new Treaty, a great opportunity: to use the sea and its security, common elements to the Integrated Maritime and the Common Security and Defence Policies, as the leverage to start breaking down the barriers between the old pillars of the Union.

In conclusion, I would like to stress my conviction that this seminar is an excellent opportunity to share our opinions and viewpoints, and move forward in the direction marked by the European Council and Commission.

I do sincerely expect that this conference may yield fruit in order to exchange ideas and, above all, become a starting point for closer collaboration among the agencies and institutions to which we belong. Thank you very much.