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**Achievements | Failures | Perspectives**

# **EU's Role in Multilateral Crisis Management**

**Findings and Conclusions**

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## **Introductory remarks**

This paper results from work developed within COST Action *New Challenges of Peacekeeping and the European Union's Role in Multilateral Crisis Management*, which deals with multilateral peacekeeping missions around the world, with a special focus on European Union (EU) peace missions. By pooling knowledge and networking, the Action sought throughout the four years of its existence to contribute to pave the way for the elaboration of a vision on the EU's role on peace operations. Inspired by developments within the United Nations (UN), such as the Capstone Doctrine which sets out the guiding principles and core objectives of UN Peace Operations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Action envisaged to stimulate exchanges among researchers on how, why, when and with whom the EU should envisage common peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. This publication, as an Action's output, seeks to highlight and discuss internal and external issues that were identified as fundamental to EU's action. This reports directly to inner dynamics related to the underlining rationale of CSDP and of the politics of EU member states, including questions about legitimacy and credibility, as well as modeling aspects, such as the comprehensiveness and reach of CSDP. More deeply, matters related to decision-making procedures and implementation on the field are also discussed, as bridging the conceptual and operational dimensions of CSDP in its various configurations. The paper finalizes with a section on perspectives and recommendations for the EU's role and place regarding peace operations.



## On the comprehensiveness and legitimacy of CSDP

*Maria Grazia Galantino*

The evolution of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) denotes, despite limits, enormous progress in terms of both words and actions. In the last decades, the European Union (EU) has increased quantitatively and qualitatively its commitment in response to crises, enlarging both the geographical scope and the operational spectrum of CSDP. This has come as a result of the many challenges that have emerged, particularly in a post-Cold War context, where old and new problems surfaced in a changed political context, prompting a more active response from the EU. However, in the face of new threats and emerging crises the EU capacity to build a distinctive role as a global security actor remains problematic in many ways. Two of the most debated issues will be examined in this section of the paper: comprehensiveness and legitimacy of the EU's external action.

The rationale for what is commonly termed the “EU comprehensive approach” in security policy rests on the acknowledgement that today's threats do not pertain only to the restricted field of state security but cut across national and sectorial boundaries. International crisis become multifaceted thus requiring a multidimensional response. This is precisely the field of action where the EU is struggling to position itself as a global actor with an own way of providing peace and security.

In the discourse on “the European way” to security, the comprehensive approach is paramount. Far from consensual, however, are assessments on the state of the art and the prospects for future developments. Two different, though sometimes coexistent, arguments can be identified. The first one, promoted by the most enthusiastic analysts, officials and politicians, maintains that the comprehensive approach is *the defining character* of the CSDP. This line of argument comes to the fore whenever there is a need to stress the distinctive quality of the EU intervention for peace and security, its “*differentia specifica*” in comparison to other international actors (Merlingen and Ostrauskaitė, 2008). The following statement by Javier Solana (2009: 3) summarizes it well:



“The comprehensive approach underpinning ESDP is its value added. The logic underpinning ESDP – its distinctive civil-military approach to crisis management – was ahead of its time when conceived. That logic has proved its validity and has been adopted by others. It provides a sound basis on which to approach the coming ten years.”

More critically oriented analysts and policy actors contend such argument. Drawing on the past record of ESDP/CSDP missions, they claim that a comprehensive approach is exactly what EU crisis management lacks, in conceptual, institutional and operational terms.

Indeed, the very term “comprehensive approach”, as used in foreign and security policy, denotes a polysemic concept, whose definition and operational implications still lack broader acceptance. Its meaning can vary according to the organisational and operational context in which it is used (Feichtinger, Braumandl-Dujardin, Gauster, 2011). Within CSDP literature, it is sometimes evoked with regards to the coherence of institutions and policies within the EU system; other times it refers to the external coordination with other international actors. Sometimes comprehensive approach means using the full range of available instruments in response to crises; other times it means addressing a region as a whole. At times, it is an all-encompassing concept; more often, it is equalled to the narrower concepts of civil-military coordination or civil-military cooperation (Gross, 2008; Drent, 2011).

To be truly comprehensive, probably the EU approach would need to incorporate all the above-mentioned dimensions. For one, this would entail the *integration of ends* – conflict prevention, peacekeeping, mediation, peacebuilding, development and more – considering them as functionally complementary rather than chronologically sequential steps. Secondly, it would imply more *integration among actors*, both internal (EU bodies and structures, EU and national states) and external (other international and civil society organisations). Thirdly, it would require the *integration of means* – civilian and military – necessary to achieve those ends. Nonetheless, in the process of constructing the EU’s comprehen-

sive approach, the three different dimensions have been unevenly developed, both at conceptual and operational level.

In Europe, the call for a broader approach in response to crises dates back to the mid-nineties as a backlash to the EU's shortcomings during the war in Bosnia. The failure to commit and to play a relevant role in crises following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, offered a big impetus to reorganise and reinforce EU's security and defence policy. At the time, though, the plea for a wider intervention capacity was intended mainly for the development of a European military force. As his main advocate, Javier Solana put it: "If Europe is to take its rightful place on the world stage it needs to have an ESDP [...]. We need to be able to act. And that means having military capabilities" (Solana, 1999). Thus, progress on military aspects temporarily put the civilian ones on standby: civilian and military components were somehow "separated at birth" within ESDP (Missiroli, 2008). Concerns over civilian capabilities only arose at a later stage, under initial pressures from former neutral member states, but with time have grown to be the majority of EU led missions on the ground. Nevertheless, the building of a military power balancing, what was formerly considered a solely normative power, was probably the first attempt to adopt a comprehensive approach to crisis management.

An ambitious step towards a conceptual and political framework for EU missions occurred with the publication of the European Security Strategy (ESS) in 2003. While the term comprehensiveness is not explicitly used in the document, a working definition of the concept is already in place. In fact, it firstly recognises that "In contrast to the massive visible threat in the Cold War, none of the new threats is purely military; nor can any be tackled by purely military means. Each requires a mixture of instruments". Then, it advocates for a more coherent effort by EU institutions, which would entail: 1) the "bringing together of the different instruments and capabilities"; 2) the harmonisation of EU instruments and external activities of individual member states, 3) the development of regional policies in conflict situations rather than interventions on a single country basis. Furthermore, the ESS states that EU objectives have to be pursued "both through multilateral cooperation in international organisations and through partnerships with key actors" (ESS, 2003).

Of all these concerns, the issue of enhancing the relationship between military and civilian instruments has probably been the one that has been more extensively codified in official documents. In particular, two twin - concepts seem to be at the core of CSDP: civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) and civil-military coordination (CMCO).

CIMIC is the oldest concept established within national military doctrines. In spite of considerable country variations, it is generally concerned with the use of civilian resources as a means to secure local support and thus, to support the military in pursuing the success of an operation. From this point of view, CIMIC is a military instrument to achieve military ends. Accordingly, CIMIC objectives and structures are fully integrated in the overall military planning and chain of command. At international level, even allowing for more horizontality among the actors, the military baseline of CIMIC remains unaltered. The UN doctrine states:

“UN Civil Military Coordination (UN-CIMIC) is a military staff function in UN integrated missions that facilitates the interface between the military and civilian components of the mission, as well as with the humanitarian, development actors in the mission area, in order to support UN mission objectives (UN-DPKO, 2010).”

The recently reformed NATO doctrine states:

“The coordination and cooperation, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civil actors, including national population and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organizations and agencies (NATO, 2013).”

The EU’s definition of CIMIC is more outspokenly concerned with humanitarian and reconstruction functions and in some way reaches beyond the internal military support function. It can be considered a broader notion, implying a possible use of various military and civilian instruments, thus incorporating the EU’s comprehensive and coherent approach to crisis management (Malesic, 2011). However, as Pugh

warned after the military interventions in Somalia and in the Balkans, “the institutionalisation of CIMIC [...] manifests a hegemonic approach to civil-military relations that subordinates humanitarian action to military necessity” (Pugh, 2001: 346).

In the direction of enhancing comprehensiveness and reaffirming the civilian political primacy, the EU put a special emphasis on the newer concept of civil-military coordination (CMCO). The affinity and interrelation of the terms coordination and cooperation allow for a certain ambiguity, thus requiring a clarification which is provided in relevant Council documents:

“CIMIC covers the co-operation and coordination, as appropriate, between the EU military force and independent external civil organisations and actors (International Organisations (IOs), Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), local authorities and populations). Throughout the text, the term “external” civil actors refers to actors not belonging to the EU institutions or MS. In contrast, CMCO covers internal EU co-ordination of the EU's own civil and military crisis management instruments, executed under the responsibility of the Council (Council of the EU, 2008).”

The two concepts differ regarding not only the internal/external dimension of the actors involved, but also regarding the strategic/tactical dimension. As various observers have highlighted, CIMIC is defined as cooperation at operational-tactical level while CMCO concerns the civilian-military interplay at political-strategic level (Kaldor et al., 2007; Drent, 2011; Malesic, 2011). In fact:

“[...] rather than seeking to put too much emphasis on detailed structures or procedures [...CMCO aims to be ...] a culture to be “built into” the EU’s response to a crisis at the earliest possible stage and for the whole duration of the operation, rather than being ‘bolted on’ at a later stage. This culture of co-ordination is based on continued co-operation and shared political objectives” (Council of the EU, 2003).

The cultural aspect is a major matter of concern in multilateral crisis management. Since the nineties, research has shown that a lack of common culture in peace operations affects not only the political-strategic level, endangering a common perception of the missions' objective and mandate, but also the operational level. On the ground, the challenge is to manage cultural differences that cut across many coexisting cleavages (nationality, organisation, gender, language, etc.), preventing culturally based conflicts to jeopardise the effectiveness of the multinational force and, therefore, the achievement of the missions' goals (Elron et al., 2003).

In the case of the European missions, many have emphasised the need for a common strategic culture (Meyer, 2004). This is a challenging endeavour. As a combination of ideas, values and practices in the field of defence and security, strategic cultures are deeply rooted in national culture and defence traditions. They represent the "lenses" through which states analyse international threats and challenges and elaborate policy solutions (Katzenstein, 1996; Jepperson, Wendt, Katzenstein, 1996), but those lenses, in today's Europe, often lead to diverging and sometimes conflicting views. Member states manifest not only a different perception of threats but also a different attitude towards instruments to address them, putting more or less emphasis on military or on civilian means (Price and Santopinto, 2013).

It may be argued that a strategic EU culture is developing through practice. Some see the Petersberg Tasks, as a distinctive approach to humanitarian crises, with the protection of human rights and the promotion of law as the concepts at its core (Margaras, 2010). Others claim that a European approach to the use of military force, as opposed to the American one, has always existed. According to this perspective, the EU regards force as a tool of last resort and thus prefers peace support operations over war fighting and greatly values UN legitimation (Kagan, 2003; Lucarelli and Menotti, 2006; Battistelli, 2004). However, members attach nuanced importance to this alleged common vision. The difficulty in reaching common grounds among the EU member states becomes clear vis-à-vis the identification of common geopolitical interests or geographical spheres of responsibility. In consequence CSDP appears,

until today, based “on the premise of what is possible rather than what is needed” (Lindley-French, 2002). Similarly, it also seems to follow the agenda of the most powerful member states, allowing them to pursue those foreign policy objectives, which they find difficult to pursue at home (Bickerton, 2007).

Research and policy papers suggesting remedies for enhancing the European strategic culture proliferated in the last few years. According to Kaldor, Martin and Selchow (2007: 273) a strategic narrative could “provide an enduring and dynamic organizing frame for security action, a frame which European foreign policy texts and practices currently lack”, thus paving the way for a more holistic and integrated approach. Whether this frame can be offered by “human security”, as the Barcelona report suggested almost a decade ago (Study Group on Europe’s Secure Capabilities, 2004), remains an open question. A recent report on a future European Global Strategy(2013) distances itself slightly from such a holistic concept of security, identifying more specific interests and strategic objectives for the EU. Yet, whereas great attention is placed on the features of the next forthcoming strategy, no comparable consideration is given to process of building a common view among members. A good starting point could be the following acknowledgement: “For the EU to claim its role as a global actor it will above all need to find ways to bolster the political will of its member states. One measure to further this aim would be to invest more in fostering a common view among them”. Also, all should fully share the idea that “An agreement on the EU’s overarching strategic goals therefore marks the beginning, not the end, of a process leading to a more strategic Europe” (EGS, 2013: 21). How to do this – granted that it is desirable and possible – is a question that remains open and claims further attention from scholars and policymakers alike.

In the debate on CSDP, a further matter requiring more in-depth consideration is the issue of legitimacy. As external policies in general and peace operations in particular are highly political and ideological in nature, as their objectives go far beyond the halting of violence or the management of open conflicts, they have to be legitimate. The notion of legitimacy has been differently operationalised in the literature. Two main

dimensions of the concept are particularly relevant here. The first covers the legal and normative aspects of legitimacy, which have been extensively documented in the research on peace operations. In the specific case of CSDP, the role of institutional settings or the normative and discursive foundations of legitimacy have been widely discussed (Wagner, 2005; Bono, 2006; Stie, 2010).

Less extensive is research on the more political and sociological concept of legitimacy (Battistelli, 2011), which is related to the democratic process of legitimization (or input legitimacy) of policies. In representative democracies, elected Parliaments represent the major actors in this process and most literature is indeed focused on increasing parliamentary accountability. But citizens, as the ultimate forum where governments have to justify and account for their course of action, retain a direct role which is becoming more and more relevant in Europe, due to the crisis of traditional institutions of representation and to the mounting demand for more citizens' participation.

Consensus over the need for public legitimacy in foreign policy is not unanimous. Many observers, evoking the arguments known in the literature as the Almond-Lippman consensus (Holsti, 2004), maintain that foreign and security policy decisions are too important to take into account the demands of a volatile and irrational public. In fact, at national level, democratic procedures are often circumvented and executives detain a high degree of discretion in foreign and defence policy. Hence, has been claimed, when it comes to the EU "the relative neglect of democratic standards is highly surprising [...] The ESDP simply mirrors domestic practices" (Kurowska, 2008). Birkenton (2007: 25) well expresses this idea: "Conjoining the term legitimacy with both the EU and foreign policy may appear quixotic: the EU is beset with a series of legitimacy problems that go under the title 'democratic deficit', and foreign policy is traditionally a prerogative power of the executive, thus limiting its need for legitimacy".

There are at least two good reasons why public legitimacy is relevant for EU security policy: first, the normative belief that democratic political decisions have to be somehow responsive to the people, even in foreign

and security policy; second, the practical conviction that public legitimation is a crucial requirement for any successful politico-military strategy. In other words, what an actor is able to do in the world depends in part upon its ability to legitimize his actions (Isernia and Everts, 2006).

Undeniably, foreign policy decisions are increasingly de facto removed from parliamentary scrutiny, even in systems that formally require it. At the same time, however, decisions at international level can determine success or failure in the electoral booths, thus rendering political leaders highly aware of public consensus over their foreign policy decisions. In many instances, this represents merely an ex-post concern aimed at rendering already made decisions more palatable to public opinion (Jacobs and Shapiro, 2000; Galantino, 2010). In any case, public legitimacy over foreign and security policy does play a crucial role at national level.

The same cannot be said for the European level. For years the EU enjoyed extraordinary public support for the aspiration to common policies in the sector of foreign and, to a slightly lesser extent, defence policy. As many have pointed out, though, this support mainly derived from dissatisfaction with national policymaking, a sort of wishful thinking that the EU could do more and better in the world. Very little of this support had to do with the actual content of on-going EU policies, which remained far from any public scrutiny or popular involvement. In the last decade, the opportunity to sustain and substantiate this consensus was somehow overlooked. The development of CSDP in terms of structures, institutions and implementation on the ground have hardly been coupled with public outreach strategies supporting them. Not much of what happens in Brussels reaches the public debate in European countries, very little of what the EU does at international level is known to the European publics, almost nothing is known about EU missions in the world outside of the circles of experts and officials, who are in one way or another directly concerned with them.

The 2013 agenda for CSDP raises high expectations. In December, the Council will review progress, assess the situation and provide guidelines and timelines for the future of CSDP. Some of the questions analysed in this paper will probably be addressed. The broadly announced



EEAS/Commission Joint Communication on the Comprehensive Approach, due to be published within the year, will probably offer clarifications and guidelines regarding the comprehensiveness the EU aspires. Less clear is the path the discussion on legitimacy will take. In response to critics stemming from the democratic deficit debate in the field of CSDP, the official discourse has revitalised the notion of performance legitimacy or “legitimacy through action”. It is still unclear if this is going to provide a firm ground for building the future of CSDP. Certainly, such future cannot be constructed without the European people. In a context of a serious economic and financial crisis, where the legitimacy of the EU as a whole is at stake, the project of a common EU security policy requires support from both European leaders and citizens, so as to not be overshadowed by what are perceived as more urgent and legitimate concerns.

## **On decision-making, capabilities and the local dimension in EU operations**

*Maria Raquel Freire*

Decision-making has been at centre-stage of contention in the development of the CSDP. The issue of member states' particular interests in the design of foreign policy decisions as constituting hindrance to progress, by lacking in a strategic and integrated approach has been much debated (the communitarian *versus* inter-governmental tension). However, reading the limits of CSDP based on unwilling member states is rather simplistic. The development of this policy has reflected convergence, which, despite limitations, has allowed for concrete achievements as the deployment of several operations with differentiated scope and in different geostrategic spaces demonstrate. Also, the building of the CSDP, both at the institutional level and in its operational dimensions, has demonstrated that there are niche areas where specialization might bring benefits to the EU's overall role in crisis management. These developments have, however, not been linear or without difficulties, as will be further analysed. This section aims therefore to debate the possibilities and limits of CSDP regarding the complex process of decision-shaping and -making, the instruments available, and how these are (or not) reflected in the field, at the level of EU operations.

The lessons-learnt from the Balkans, in the 1990s, in particular, led integration to become a priority in order to render the EU a relevant international actor. The Lisbon Treaty sought to respond to some of the identified problems with regard to disconnection within the EU structures and in its inter-relations with member states. The need to achieve institutional coordination capable of addressing the various security and defence challenges at the EU borders and further afield was recognized as fundamental. The Treaty of Lisbon clearly states, “[t]he Union shall have an institutional framework which shall aim to promote its values, advance its objectives, serve its interests, those of its citizens and those of the Member States, and ensure the consistency, effectiveness and continuity of its policies and actions” (TEU 2007, Title III, art.9).

The issue of consistency and effectiveness becomes a central one in the definition of the new institutional framework. The establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) bringing together the Commission's external relations and the Council's personnel, provides support to the newly created post of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who is also Vice-President of the European Commission (since 2009, Catherine Ashton). This double-hatted function, as it has been commonly labelled, envisages rendering EU foreign policy more coherent. To some extent, the establishment of the EEAS is responding to the goals stated in the European Security Strategy (ESS) of 2003, particularly regarding the integration of "instruments and capabilities" (ESS, 2003: 13) in a setting where "greater coherence is needed not only among EU instruments but also embracing the external activities of the individual member states" (ESS, 2003: 13), along with the enactment of regional policies for responding to violence or for initiating preventive actions in the EU's neighbourhood and beyond it.

The context where decision-shaping and -making takes place is thus a complex one, involving EU institutions and 27 member states, and demanding a careful analysis of different intervening factors, including political willingness, material and human resources, legitimacy concerns, values-oriented decisions, which in the end reveal a combination of the different issues discussed in this paper, in both material and ideational terms. Additionally, there is an informal setting where bargaining and the building of consensus takes place, out of the formal institutional mechanisms. According to Juncos and Pomorska (2008: 501), there has been "an increase in communicative practices among CFSP officials", particularly noticeable after the 2004 enlargement, including "e-mails, mobile phone calls and frequent meetings with other colleagues in the corridors and 'over lunch' (...) [and the] practice of consensus-building". This practice includes careful management of pre-arranged agreements in order to avoid contradictions in institutional committees and meetings, including a cautious use of language.

The decision to deploy (or not) a peace operation encapsulates various factors that render it greater complexity than the mere national interest

factor – the “good will” factor. Though this is of utmost relevance, and the commitment of member states is crucial to the success of the CSDP, this commitment involves more than particular national interests as these are framed in complex international and transnational settings. In this regard, as Thierry Tardy notes (Vienna 2013), it is fundamental to clarify the strategy underlining CSDP linked to the self-definition of the EU’s identity as a security actor (see also Toje, 2008: 139). What kind of security actor does the EU want to be? The answer to this question is closely related to the issue of leadership and strategic outlook of the EU in security and defence terms. Specialisation in civilian crisis management has been noted as a way forward given accumulated experience; further hybridisation of interventions, through closer cooperation with other international organisations has also been claimed, though the issue of partnerships has also been a difficult one (the case of the Atlantic Alliance is a good example). In fact, the number of CSDP operations deployed (past and current) points to a dynamic policy, but this lack in strategy points to the limits it is subject to.

According to Hynek (2011: 87), the “increase of ambition has been, nevertheless, offset by the inability of the EU to formulate a clear strategy for crisis management missions, a fact caused by the combination of two factors: first, no long-term vision has underpinned operational planning; and second, divergence between different Member States’ interests has hampered any attempts to develop or formulate a common approach.” The decision-making structure envisaged at Lisbon retains various layers, from the EU structures to the member-states internal bureaucracies. This means, the combined “use [of military and civilian means] for comprehensive crisis management operations which incorporate genuine coordination of all planning stages – including advanced planning – is rather limited.” (Hynek, 2011: 90) If inside the EU problems of integration among the different stages and actors are found, when looking at cross-institutional collaboration other questions emerge.

The issue about EU’s comparative advantages with regard to other international organisations emerges in this context as a central one. The role and place of the EU regarding other international organisations, such as the United Nations (UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

(NATO) or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) need to be acknowledged. Turf wars among international institutions are widely acknowledged and concur to weakening the potential of each of them, as well as the potential for a collective effort towards addressing the challenges at hand. Duplication of tasks is commonly identified as hindering collaboration, along with the so-called 'specialisation approach' that should render these capabilities complementary instead of competitive.

The civilian dimension of EU interventions and the know-how it has gained in this area throughout the last decade should be highlighted in this context. To date, the EU deployed a total of 28 operations, 19 civilian, 8 military, and one civilian/military (operation Support to AMIS II Sudan/Darfur, 2005-2006). By June 2013, 16 were operational. These numbers reveal that in ten years the EU gained considerable experience in crisis management, through its involvement in different contexts, from Europe to Asia and Africa, and with different means, of a civilian and military nature as well as a combination of both. It should, however, be underlined the focus on civilian peace operations, which have clearly outnumbered military missions, and where the EU has gained substantial know-how and has been recognised as an active and effective actor, despite limits. The EU has, generally, managed through its civilian crisis management to affirm itself as a stabilising intervener in issues ranging from legislative adaptation and institutional reform, to police training and elections monitoring. The variations in strength, time and site of deployment reveals the flexibility of missions to adapt to differentiated contexts, though also potentially signalling resistance from member state(s) to send a more empowered presence in face of particular circumstances. Past historical relations of some EU members with states particularly in Africa, deserve mention here – both regarding the option to intervene (such as in the case of France and the recent crisis in Mali, for example), or not to intervene (as Belgium has opted for with regard to instability in Congo).

In the words of Amelia Hadfield (2006: 688), the CFSP is thus a real paradox. It operates because of a unique agreement among member states upon generic interests held in common at a national level, opera-

tionalised at the collective level which in turn can promote visible forms of foreign policy actorness. Equally however, member states' own particularist discourses demonstrate an ongoing desire to retain a genetic component of their national interest that cannot always be adjusted to fit within the perimeters of collective decision-making, as well as a desire to retain the right to exercise such foreign policy particularism in the first place.

The design of operations where the EU will potentially get involved seeks to respond to requests and needs-identification, demanding a careful dealing with what Christopher Hill (1993) termed the "capabilities-expectations gap". This refers both to the capabilities available at EU level in terms of human and material resources, as well as to how these match commitments in the field. Promising to deliver more than its actual capabilities will obstruct EU efforts, so a clear assessment of possibilities and limitations is fundamental. Additionally, the issue of integration, both inside an operation and with regard to Brussels and the field, has raised attention, since the lack of a structured line of action and communication might hamper the activities to be developed. This issue has been subject of much discussion particularly concerning the integration between the civilian and military dimensions of these operations, as chains of command and tasks' attribution reveals in instances difficult. This issue has been acknowledged as fundamental for avoiding duplication of tasks, assuring costs' effectiveness, and local perceptions about what the *international* means in an international intervention. To avoid the strains caused by difficult processes of bargaining at the political level, informal processes of communication have been developing, for example between the EU and NATO.

The field is therefore a fundamental scenario to assess how the whole process of decision-shaping and -making has been revealing of assistance or instead resistance. The way the operations taking place engage with the local dimension is fundamental, as assessment of success depends to a great extent on the matching of the expectations-capabilities gap at this level. Knowledge about the contexts of intervention, spaces where political, economic, social and other dynamics interact, is fundamental for the daily implementation of mandates (on this issue refer to

the work by Pugh, 2005a and 2005b). Linked to the local dimension of the functioning of an operation, the definition of exit strategies is part of the process of assuring a smooth downgrading of the EU's presence sustained on long-term peacebuilding goals. For that to occur, the definition of short-term goals of an intervention needs to be accompanied by a longer term strategy in terms of the sustainability of the efforts developed from that EU presence. The local dimension debate points to two main issues, on the one hand, concerning organisational matters on the ground, highlighting the perspective of missions' staff; on the other hand, regarding the impact these missions have on local dynamics including institutions, leadership, power politics and civil society. This type of impact requires an understanding of the difference between short- and long-term analyses. Consequently, beyond evaluating for the EU's internal dynamics sake it is crucial to evaluate for the mandates' broader objectives on the ground (Freire et al., 2010).

Additionally, how missions' personnel, be it civilian or military, engages with the local reality is also fundamental. The "capabilities-expectations gap" emerges in this context as key with regard to local (mis)understandings, and the missions' capacity to deliver. Knowledge about contexts of intervention and clearly defined lines of communication are fundamental to assure the linkages between all actors are pursued smoothly. An intervention that takes place detached from the locals becomes very much exposed to failure. Also the definition of exit strategies has been an issue debated and which has raised dissension about when and how downsizing should take place. The definition of criteria against which field operations should be dismissed has been a difficult issue. However, this is a central issue in peacebuilding and in assuring transition efforts are accommodated. In the process, the definition of short-term goals of an intervention needs to be accompanied by a longer term strategy in terms of the sustainability of the dynamics initiated and resulting from that EU presence.

The EU has, in fact, deployed a multiplicity of operations, but these have in all been small missions essentially with functional tasks within the civilian dimension component, such as legislative adaptation, electoral monitoring or police training. This means the level of ambition of the

CSDP seems to be overrated when compared to the whole range of formats and activities these operations could take in, revealing an inherent dilemma to the EU when comparing rhetoric to concrete action (Giegerich, Vienna 2013). In all, from words to action there are still many issues in need of refinement, so that the EU's role in crisis management might be acknowledged as a sustained and sustainable one, directed at the stabilisation of its neighbourhood and further afield, and with concrete added-value to offer in relation to other actors in the field.





## **Geostrategic aspects and future challenges of CSDP**

*Walter Feichtinger*

This section highlights eleven aspects that on the one hand will shape the backdrop of future EU Peace Engagement and on the other hand include some recommendations directed at fostering the image, effectiveness and flexibility of EU actions.

### **1) Need for EU's Contribution to International Conflict and Crisis Management**

On a global scale, the number of violent conflicts and wars is quite stable, not falling under the “magic” threshold of 30. Still, the vast majority of conflicts occur within states – they are intrastate conflicts often characterized by blurred frontlines and ambiguities. A regional concentration of conflicts can be observed in the Middle East and the Maghreb, in Sub-Saharan Africa and in Asia. Weak or bad governance, respectively un-governed or uncontrolled areas, are perceived as root causes for instability, organized crime, crimes against humanity, civil wars and other threats to international peace and security.

In addition, the effects of climate change and demographic change are going to have a severe impact on regimes and governments, putting many of them under heavy pressure over the next decade. Projections of trends regarding demographic and climate changes even show that these changes will mainly affect regions and countries already shattered by crisis and war. This means that the root causes of violent conflicts will not only persist but be further fuelled by additional factors like loss of arable land, draught, population growth, urbanisation, etc.

### **2) Four Regions Are of Highest Strategic Importance to the EU**

A single glance on a map shows very clearly which regions are of highest strategic importance to the EU. Besides South East Europe – which is likely to become an integral part of EU within one decade (though far

from being certain) – the developments and upheavals in states on Europe’s periphery will have strong and multiple effects on Europe. As recent incidents in Libya and the civil war in Syria indicate, future in the MENA-region will be shaky and stability in the area is far from secured. The countries already affected by evolutionary and revolutionary changes are going to face manifold troubles, as empirical evidence from other countries in similar situations after WW II suggests. According to the World Development Report 2011, the transition of former totalitarian systems to liberal and more or less democratic states based on rule of law etc. takes at least two decades – if a significant change is achievable at all.

In addition, one has to ask, whether these events are already the whole story or whether they represent only the initial part of bigger transformation processes encompassing other poorly legitimized governments in the Arab World and around. Currently, the civil war in Syria is dominating external fears and expectations – but nobody knows how and to what extent it will affect the situation in the entire Middle East.

On its eastern part the EU is still confronted with unsolved problems stemming from the Cold War times. Belorussia, Moldova and Ukraine still cause some security concerns due to unfinished political transformation and the mere fact that Russia is trying hard to reassert its influence on its so-called Near Abroad. Additionally, the situation in South Caucasus is far from self-sustaining peace, requiring permanent attention from the international community.

Sub-Saharan Africa is not as far away as some people in Europe might assume. The Sahel zone is already seen by many security analysts as essential part of an “arc of crisis” reaching from Mauretania to Somalia. This means that Organised Crime and Islamic terrorists can set up safe havens and have free hand in these weak or ungoverned areas. It goes without saying that there are strong interdependencies between developments in this part of the world and developments on European soil. For this reason, events like those in Mali 2012/2013 are of highest importance to Europe or at least to some EU member states.

In setting this regional focus one should not forget the importance of strategic sea lines of communication. It is obvious that unhindered passages are a prerequisite for the global economy and that any disturbance or blockade would cause serious harm to open and free markets and economy.

### **3) Europe Has to Stand on Its Own Feet**

The strongest European ally in security, the US, has been shifting its strategic interest to the Pacific and East Asia for one decade already. This will have an increasing impact on Europe, forcing it to take over more responsibility on security and defence matters than it was used to in the past. Apart from some rhetorical remarks by the US Secretary of Defence, this became evident on several occasions during the NATO air campaign against Libya's former leader Gaddafi. One called the limited US-engagement "leading from behind", others view it as an expression of the low strategic interest the US had in Libya. But anyway, it is a matter of fact that the US will no longer pay the lions share for Europe's security.

This will have a huge impact on Europe – be it for better or worse. With regard to NATO it could lead to its "Europeanization", giving European states like Germany, France and United Kingdom a stronger role in decision shaping and making – and in taking responsibility too.

A comprehensive engagement based on European interests and concepts as well as military and civil capabilities will therefore define the EU's future role in international crisis management and with regard to its domestic security.

### **4) A Persisting Stalemate in NATO-EU Relations Has to Be Considered**

The different membership configurations of NATO and EU are limiting EU's possibilities in security cooperation and engagement, both on the decision making level and in executing peace operations. It has to be

clear that Berlin Plus<sup>1</sup> cannot function according to its intentions as long as Turkey is not a full EU-member and the political problem of a divided Cyprus remains unresolved. Hence, there will always be some uncertainty when it comes to the point that EU might need specific NATO-assets for crisis management operations. There is simply no guarantee that EU can rely on NATO-support in crucial situations due to political considerations inside the organisation and because of particular national interests of some NATO members.

All this means that EU should have autonomous capacities and capabilities – maybe through permanent structures – in line with its political level of ambition. On the one hand this may limit EU's options to engage –, on the other hand, it brings more clarity to capacity planning including the issue of command and control structures. Depending on EU's true (and viable) political ambitions and taking into account the option of not having access to NATO assets, EU capability planning processes should be reassessed. This should be done bearing in mind that rapid reaction is of highest value and importance in crisis management and that one can sometimes achieve more with less by early action.

#### **5) EU's Identity as a Security Actor – Be an Actor Not Only a Contributor**

Despite all national reflexes to save jobs in the military-industrial complex and to maintain national sovereignty, within a few years one decisive question will have to be answered: Does Europe want to be a fully fledged security actor, will it primarily be a civilian actor in crisis management or does it see its role only as a contributor to the efforts of other actors like UN, NATO, US or regional security organisations? If its intention is limited to be a contributor to others, then there is no need for a strong EU, because this can also be done on a national or multinational level. But if the EU wants to be a full spectrum actor, it will have to do

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<sup>1</sup> Berlin Plus is the short title of a package of agreements between NATO and the EU, allowing EU to draw on NATO's military assets where NATO as a whole is not engaged.

much more than just provide funding for capacity building in post-war theatres or send a limited number of troops or a couple of civilian experts.

This does not mean that EU should become a military super power for large scale interventions or, even worse, that it should be “militarized” as a whole. But a full spectrum actor should be able to use military and civil assets in a balanced and adequate way throughout all phases of a conflict to achieve a significant impact on the situation. EU has the concepts and the means to become and to prevail as a respected security actor – it is “only” a question of common political will among the member states.

## **6) Austerity and Financial Cuts Enforce Closer Cooperation and Integration**

One cannot expect the financial downturn to be over quickly and budgets for security and in particular for the armed forces to increase in a foreseeable time. Against this background, it seems to be obvious that the sooner we can create transnational synergies by intensifying cooperation and taking integrative steps, the more capacities we will be able to save or build up. It can't be in the interest of EU member states to witness an uncontrolled crackdown on defence capabilities that generates 28 “Bonsai-armies” (Mölling, 2011) – being “capable of nothing”. The time is ripe to counter this development and to replace rigid traditional national approaches by Europeanizing ideas, concepts and structures.

## **7) Threat Assessments and Consequences**

Another dividing factor jeopardizing closer cooperation is a different or diverging perception of risks, dangers and threats mainly in relation to geographic parameters and issues of political neighbourhood. Global threats expressed in the Security Strategy 2003 and reassured in 2008 are evident and understandable – but they do not always have the quality and power to convince and to motivate others to form strong coalitions or to build up capacities. Most EU member states perceive some small-

scale security problems and threats as closer and as more urgent to them than large-scale issues at a global but abstract level. The importance of a regional or even local dimension of security should thus not be underestimated.

Some experts argue for a “Global Security Strategy”, seeing it as “the” instrument to translate the EU mantra on “comprehensive engagement” into practice (Coelmont, 2013). Others stress the need for a new security strategy, pointing to the fact that EU itself has become bigger (28 instead of 15 member states) and that the threat perceptions of the new 13 members are not really reflected in the ESS of 2003. In addition, a revised Security Strategy could incorporate CSDP in the broader framework of a Common Foreign Policy. Maybe this approach might indeed be useful and helpful. Nevertheless, doubt will persist unless the “burning” security problems at the heart of EU-member states are not reflected and tackled in a satisfactory manner. Shared views on key threats can foster cooperation, stimulate common capacity building and enhance pooling and sharing efforts on an EU-sublevel. This needs not to undermine EU ambitions as a whole; there could be a two-dimensional approach to security, offering the possibility to participate at EU-sublevels within the framework of CSDP as well as at EU level itself.

#### **8) Mutual Trust as a Precondition for Cooperation and Integration**

Europe needs a master plan for restructuring its military and civilian capacities – but even the best plan will fail, if it is not based on mutual trust between the involved partners. Only if a government can totally rely on the determination and the capacities of its partners, it will be ready to provide military capacities on its own and will share specific capacities with those who do not – any longer – have them.

Confidence building among partners is a long lasting affair – but it can be done both bottom-up and top-down simultaneously. At times, there is a need for courage by single states or even individuals in order to make a first step. The fear of losing state sovereignty in this particular context seems already outdated – sometimes one has the feeling that European

citizens do expect “more” than politicians are yet able and willing to deliver.

### **9) A Coherent European Capacity Planning Process Is Required**

Due to general budget cuts we currently witness an unplanned, unstructured, uncoordinated and unguided breakdown of European Military Capacities. This is not only senseless – it can even be dangerous and destructive in its final outcome. An impulse or initiative to tackle this problem can come from either NATO or EU or from both. Whoever will do it, alone or together, the issue is very urgent. Depending on EU’s real ambitions and taking into account that NATO assets will not always be available, the setup and the figures for strengthening capabilities set out in 2008 (Council of the European Union Declaration on Strengthening Capabilities, 11 December 2008) should be reassessed.

### **10) Engagement Brings Visibility and Confidence**

CSDP is like the EURO currency not only a question of facts but also of faith and trust – there is a mass-psychological dimension to it. Every single action in the spirit of CSDP thus contributes to EU’s internal and external visibility, its acceptance and credibility. To the contrary, the non-engagement of military forces like the EU-Battle Groups is undermining the initial vision behind the concept, its credibility and the overall seriousness of the enterprise. In other words, it should be a deliberate intention to act instead of wait.

To engage only in small-scale missions and operations creates the public perception of being a small-scale actor unable to meet bigger challenges and leaves the EU with a notion of being dispensable. Engaging in larger and important operations can lead to the opposite – to be perceived as a strong and indispensable security actor. The EU will not be in a position to launch huge military operations like Iraq or Afghanistan, not even like the 1999 intervention in Kosovo. But already the deployment of smaller contingents up to brigade level embedded in a comprehensive civil-military enterprise could be sufficient to leave a strong and remarkable footprint. In this context, EUFOR Chad/DRC was a good example for



the potential size of further missions and EU's ability to run a peace operation autonomously.

### **11) Tell the People What CSDP Is and Can Do**

“Do good and talk about it” – a well known phrase that also applies to the EU's peace engagement. It is equally well known that the EU and its daily work are perceived by the vast majority of EU citizens as being highly bureaucratic and over-complicated. The essence, importance and impact of EU actions are often not visible or understandable.

A strong peace-engagement in meanwhile 27 different theatres or environments is a message in itself – but it still has to be transmitted to the public. Many Europeans are proud of the EU as one of the most successful peace projects in history and they are equally proud of EU's ambitions to spread peace to its periphery and to support sustainable development in post-war situations. Let them participate in this effort and get a feeling of pride. In addition, there are strong arguments for an intensified cooperation and for further integrative steps in the field of security and defence. It would be quite easy to explain the possible benefits and added values deriving from closer ties.

All these aspects have to be transformed into simple and understandable messages and this has to be done professionally. It is not sufficient to publish dry statistics on how much was spent on what and on how many projects were funded. And not to forget – information has to be provided in a structured way on different levels and in a continuous manner (Feichtinger, 2008).

EU in general and CSDP in particular need a PR-strategy to familiarize European citizens with current developments and needs in order to shape and to foster a common European identity. Efforts and achievements in CSDP can significantly contribute to this goal – hence, let us use them.

**Final Remark:** CSDP still has the potential for being a powerful motor of integration and to give EU greater visibility and a voice in world affairs. The biggest challenge to foster CSDP lies inside the EU itself! But to say it very clearly:

“Muddling through is not a solution – it is only a kind of behaviour”.



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