



Europe's Coherence Gap in External Crisis and Conflict Management

The EU's Integrated Approach between Political Rhetoric and
Institutional Practice

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Loes Debuysere and Steven Blockmans

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1 Introduction

The European Union (EU) aspires to play a part in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict peacebuilding through civil and/or military operations, through stabilisation efforts, and by building resilience at home and abroad. To bring this ambition to fruition, EU institutions have gradually expanded their 'comprehensive approach to external conflict and crisis' (CA) to become a full-fledged 'integrated approach to conflict and crisis' (IA).¹

In their most basic form, CAs seek coordination and coherence in responding to external conflicts and crises by adopting a system-wide 'whole-of-government approach' (WGA). In their more elaborate form, IAs have incorporated non-traditional security concepts, variously known as conflict transformation, (non-liberal) peacebuilding and human-security approaches. In their most expansive form, IAs may even be understood to apply to external action writ large.

WGAs were introduced to cope with the changing security environment after the end of the Cold War (Weiss, Spanger and van Meurs 2010). They refer to the fact that (re-)emerging conflicts and crises, especially those associated with fragile or precarious statehood, have become multi-dimensional, involving different root causes and going beyond the initial nexus between security and development.

Hence, in order to successfully tackle and address these complex contingencies, a whole toolbox of defence, diplomacy and development instruments has become necessary. To employ this so-called 3D toolbox, cooperation among multiple actors at different levels (local, national, regional) is required throughout all conflict phases (prevention, crisis management, stabilisation, reconstruction and state-building).

To respond to security challenges posed by fragile states in its neighbourhood and beyond, EU institutions have sought to develop whole of 'governance' approaches to external conflicts and crises since 1996.² The EU's 'WGA' policies have gradually evolved in parallel to those pioneered by Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK, from a minimal definition based on the security-development nexus³ to a full-fledged and ambitious 'integrated approach to conflict and crisis' that incorporates non-traditional security concepts. The rationale behind the IA is outlined in the EU's Global Strategy (EUGS) issued in 2016 (EEAS 2016: 28):

"We increasingly observe fragile states breaking down in violent conflict. These crises, and the unspeakable violence and human suffering to which they give rise, threaten our shared vital interests. The EU will engage in a practical and principled way in peacebuilding, concentrating our efforts in surrounding regions to the east and south, while considering engagement further afield on a case-by-case basis. The EU will foster human security through an integrated approach."

¹ The 2001 Communication on Conflict Prevention (EC 2001) was all about the 'integrated approach', which shows that terminology comes in and out of fashion.

² Even if, in the mission letters addressed to designated commissioners, President-elect Ursula von der Leyen prescribed a 'whole-of-government approach' to the work of the College of Commissioners, the European Commission is not a government, just as the EU is not a state. The term 'governance' is therefore to be preferred when transposing the WGA concept to the EU.

³ Such a definition would be that there can be no development without security and no security without development. Cf. Council of the European Union 2003 and, in particular, Council of the European Union 2007.

While EU policy documents of the past two decades have highlighted its commitment to a comprehensive/integrated approach, a few crucial questions remain unanswered: Has this commitment (words) truly become a working methodology (deeds)? And, if so, how has it been institutionalised and 'operationalised' at the headquarters level

While policy documents of the past two decades have highlighted the EU's commitment to a integrated approach, a few crucial questions remain unanswered: Has this commitment (words) truly become a working methodology (deeds)? And, if so, how has it been institutionalised and 'operationalised' at the headquarters level with the aim of increasing the coherence of responses to external conflicts and crises?

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Indeed, one must ask: Does the institutional setting in the EU match the intended purpose of the IA? How have EU institutions overcome fragmentation and silos among, for example, trade, development and defence departments? How do they set up coherent strategies and joint decision-making processes? How much progress has been made in terms of fostering effective

coordination and cooperation? What organisational structures and procedural changes have been introduced to 'join up' units, divisions, services and institutions?

This research report intends to investigate these questions. However, it explicitly does not aim to demonstrate the effectiveness or utility of an integrated approach on the ground, i.e. the real-life 'operationalisation' of EU external policy. Cognisant of the limitations of the insights that our research can produce, the role of the EU delegations as well as cooperation with and perceptions of other stakeholders on the ground falls beyond the remit of the current report, though it is admittedly the subject of ongoing research.

The research here draws on both desk research and qualitative interviews. The desk research included an analysis of primary legal and policy documents, organigrams, annual and other reports on activities, academic literature, thinktank analyses and press articles. The findings gleaned from this desk research were complemented by information and observations collected during semi-structured qualitative interviews with relevant actors and stakeholders at the headquarters level. Stakeholders included, inter alii, staff members of the EEAS (including Directorate ISP); officials of the European Commission working for, inter alia, the Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) service, the DGs International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) and Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) as well as the Secretariat-General (SG); staff from the European Parliament; and officials from other international organisations, such as the UN.

To answer the overarching questions of whether and how an integrated approach to external conflicts and crises has been tangibly incorporated into the EU, the data collected sought to determine:

1. How has a WGA been defined in EU external strategies and policies?
2. How has the IA to external conflicts and crises been institutionalised among EU-level actors?
3. How has the EU's IA been technically operationalised at the headquarters level?

In the following chapters, these three questions are investigated in that order. To set the scene, Chapter 2 maps the strategies and policies that have conceptually outlined a WGA at the EU level over the past decade. Both the

objectives and quality of these documents are assessed, while conceptual influences and exchanges between the EU and other multilateral fora are also touched upon.

Next, Chapter 3 looks into which institutional actors have been crucial in developing and implementing an IA at the headquarters level. Rather than merely listing the actors involved, the chapter discusses the coordinating platforms and mechanisms that bring together all relevant actors and then assesses them in terms of quality. Indeed, three levels of actor coordination are at the heart of this chapter: intra-service coordination within the European External Action Service (EEAS); inter-service coordination among the European Commission, the Council of the European Union (hereinafter: the Council), the European Parliament and the EEAS; and conflict and crisis coordination among the EU and other international actors (i.e. the UN, NATO, the OSCE, the OECD-DAC, the Council of Europe, and civil society). Rather than seeking to be exhaustive, this report focuses on the coordination among the most prominent actors involved in crisis response at an EU institutional level.

In addition to the important coordination mechanisms and platforms under discussion in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 outlines some of the other instruments, tools and procedures in place to facilitate the operationalisation of an IA. On the one hand, the chapter focuses on a new financial instrument that, while still in the pipeline, has the potential to foster (or undermine) a more integrated approach to external conflicts and crises. On the other, it briefly assesses other important EU-based instruments and procedures, such as shared analysis, trainings and political leadership.

Finally, the conclusion brings together the report's findings in a broader reflection of the potential and shortcomings of the current institutional setup to implement an IA at the headquarters level of the EU. What's more, it formulates an answer to the core research question of whether the EU's institutional setting matches its aspiration to take an integrated approach in its responses to external conflicts and crises.

2 Political and strategic objectives

2.1 Developing the Integrated Approach (IA) at the EU level

The need to coordinate the various entities and policies of the European Union in the field of security and development has been acknowledged since the very beginning of the Union's aspiration to play a role in global politics (Tardy 2017: 1). For the past two decades, the EU has aspired to contribute to conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict peacebuilding through civilian and/or military means. In 2001, an 'integrated approach' (IA) was introduced in a Commission communication that identifies 'conflict prevention' as the most effective effort to counter human suffering caused by violent conflicts (EC 2001).

But the 'nexus between security and development', according to which security is a precondition for development and vice versa, only took centre stage in the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) (Council of the European Union 2003). Building on the spirit of structural integration espoused by the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Commission and the high representative for foreign affairs and security policy (HRVP), who also acts as vice-president of the Commission, further developed coordination by introducing the EU's 'comprehensive approach to conflict and crisis' (hereinafter: CA) in 2013,⁴ which was superseded by the EU's 'integrated approach to external conflict and crisis' (hereinafter: IA) in 2016. However, one should note that the seeds of an integrated approach were planted in a number of policy documents in the 1990s and early 2000s.⁵

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2.1.1 Joint Communication on the EU's Comprehensive Approach (CA) (2013)

An important step in the efforts to consolidate the EU's comprehensive approach came with the joint communication of the Commission and the HRVP in 2013 (EC and HRVP 2013). The joint character of the communication serves to illustrate the common understanding of the CA and the desire to jointly apply the CA. While the document states that the concept of a comprehensive approach is not new to the EU, it acknowledges that "the ideas and principles

⁴ There was a major fight between DG DEV (as it was) and DG RELEX between 2007 and 2010 regarding whose conceptual framework for integration/comprehensiveness was going to dominate. While DG DEV has a 'situations of fragility' narrative, DG RELEX has a 'security and development' narrative. The two DGs were then tasked with trying to combine their separate versions into a single action plan, and there was even a commitment to try and do just that in the EU's development policy known as the 2011 Agenda for Change (EC 2017b). But significant bickering torpedoed any related efforts, and when the EEAS was formed, the idea of developing an action plan was quietly shelved until it was eventually reborn within the EU's comprehensive approach. In 2011, there were also Council conclusions on conflict prevention that encouraged the use of the new post-Lisbon arrangements to drive forward 'integrated responses'. See Hauck and Sherriff 2013.

⁵ A first document that hinted at a comprehensive approach at the EU level is the European Commission's 1996 communication on 'The European Union and the Issue of Conflicts in Africa: Peace-building, Conflict Prevention and Beyond' (EC 1996). In 2001, a Commission communication on conflict prevention (EC 2001) introduced an 'integrated approach' and identified 'conflict prevention' as the most effective effort to counter human suffering caused by violent conflicts. Finally, the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) (Council of the European Union 2003), while not mentioning the concepts of 'comprehensiveness' or 'integration', stressed the need for using EU policies and instruments in a more coherent and coordinated manner to respond to interconnected security and development challenges (cf. Faria 2014: 3).

governing the comprehensive approach have yet to become, systematically, the guiding principles for EU external action across all areas, in particular in relation to conflict prevention and crisis resolution" (ibid.: 2).

The communication identifies two core elements of a CA: the coordination of EU instruments and resources, on the one hand, and the role of both EU-level actors and member states, on the other. What's more, it notes that "[c]omprehensiveness refers not only to the joined-up deployment of EU instruments and resources, but also to the shared responsibility of EU-level actors and Member States" (ibid.: 3).

Four principles underpin a CA: the connection between security and development; the importance of context-specificity over blueprints and one-size-fits-all solutions; the need for collective political will and engagement; and the respect for competence allocation among the respective institutions and services of the EU and its member states.

More concretely, eight measures are proposed that aim at enhancing the coherence and effectiveness of EU external policy and action in conflict and crisis situations, all of which are accompanied by concrete actions that can be undertaken (ibid.: 5–12). These are to:

1. Develop a shared analysis of the situation or challenge
2. Define a common strategic vision
3. Focus on prevention
4. Mobilise the different strengths and capacities of the EU
5. Commit to the long term
6. Link internal and external policies and action
7. Make better use of the role of EU delegations
8. Work in partnership with other international and regional actors

While seen as a welcome step to further develop the EU's comprehensive approach – especially because it offers conceptual clarifications and a common understanding of the CA (Tercovich and Koops 2013) – the joint communication also sparked criticism. Overall, while it listed commitments and recommended a number of tangible actions, critics argued that the document did not, in fact, provide EU actors with the systems, mechanisms or means to put it into practice (Faria 2014: 9; Wilton Park 2014). Indeed, it does not set out very concrete and tangible structures and processes regarding who the Union should work with as well as when, where and how (Hauck and Sherriff 2013).

Moreover, a number of gaps were detected in the joint communication. While previous EU documents put a major stress on conflict prevention, the principal focus in 2013 – given the fallout of the Arab uprisings of 2011 – was on conflict situations and crisis management, raising the question of how the CA dealt with prevention (Faria 2014: 8). What's more, the issue of trade preferences, which can play an important role in overcoming instability and crisis, is excluded from the text, as are the roles of local structures, processes and government actors in conflict-affected

countries (Hauck and Sherriff 2013).⁶ Another element missing from the joint communication were the relations with key international partners in the field (e.g. the UN, NATO, the African Union and the OSCE) despite the fact that a specific invitation to build on these partnerships was included in the Council conclusions on conflict prevention from 2011 (Council of the European Union 2011). The development of early-warning indicators, for example, should be coordinated in dialogue with the EU's key external partners (Tercovich and Koops 2013: 4).

2.1.2 Action Plans on the CA (2015-2017)

Eventually, the Council (i.e. the member states) endorsed the joint communication in its conclusions on the EU's comprehensive approach of May 2014 (Council of the European Union 2014) and through the adoption of subsequent action plans in 2015 and 2016/2017 (Council of the European Union 2015, 2016a). Rather than presenting something new, the goal of the action plans was to focus on practical examples for CA implementation and feasible actions that the EU could implement, rather than forging a shared understanding of CA in the EU (Faleg 2018: 38).

Accordingly, these action plans discussed a number of cases where a comprehensive approach was being implemented. In the 2015 action plan, the following cases exemplified "different aspects" of the comprehensive approach: the Sahel (regional action plan), Central America (Caribbean Regional Strategy on Citizen Security), Afghanistan and Somalia. The 2016/17 action plan also listed a number of cases: Mali, Ukraine (regarding SSR), Tunisia (regarding counterterrorism), the Kyrgyz Republic and Myanmar.

2.1.3 The EU's Integrated Approach (IA) as part of the Global Strategy (2016)

Stemming from the shortcomings of the CA, the European Global Strategy (EUGS) (EEAS 2016) sought to move forward the comprehensive approach by (re)introducing the concept of an 'integrated approach'. In fact, an IA numbers among the five priorities that the EU sets forward for its external action, together with the security of the union, state and societal resilience, cooperative regional orders and global governance.

According to the EUGS, the integrated approach has the following four 'multi' characteristics. It is:

- **multi-phased**, in that it enables the EU to act "at all stages of the conflict cycle" and to "invest in prevention, resolution and stabilisation, and avoid premature disengagement when a new crisis erupts elsewhere" (ibid.: 9–10).
- **multi-dimensional**, as it says that it is essential to use "all available policies and instruments aimed at conflict prevention, management and resolution", bringing together diplomatic engagement, CSDP missions and operations, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance (ibid.: 28).

⁶ In fact, trade was mentioned in the 2001 communication on conflict prevention (EC 2001), but it only received very little mention in the EU's conflict-related integrated approaches since then. In some ways, the 2001 communication was more 'comprehensive' than what has followed it given that it did include trade.

- **multi-level**, as it acts to address the complexity of conflicts “at the local, national, regional and global levels” (ibid.: 29).
- **multi-lateral**, as it engages “all those players present in a conflict and necessary for its resolution”, and it enables the EU to “partner more systematically on the ground with regional and international organisations, bilateral donors and civil society” and to build sustainable peace “through comprehensive agreements rooted in broad, deep and durable regional and international partnerships” (ibid.: 29).

The section of the EUGS on the IA (ibid.: 28–32) further emphasises the importance of conflict prevention, the dual nature (security and development) of the EU's engagement, bottom-up approaches and the need to restart a country's economy in times of peace.

2.1.4 Follow-up of the IA (since 2016)

The scope and actions of the IA have been defined in a Political and Security Committee (PSC) working document on external conflicts and crises released in 2017 (EEAS and EC 2017a). According to the document, the IA does four things. It:

- streamlines the CA by addressing all the phases of the conflict and describing the EU's approach to each of these phases;
- operationalises CA by increasing the EU's impact on the ground, ensuring a coherent EU response and a more closely coordinated position among institutions and actors;
- deepens CA by applying its principles to the full breadth of the EU's work on external conflicts and crises; and
- completes the CA, by succeeding it as the framework to promote a coherent approach by the EU to external conflicts and crises.

In addition, the IA identifies a set of priority areas that are elements of the conflict cycle:

- Shared analysis and conflict sensitivity
- Mediation support
- Security-sector reform
- EU conflict early-warning system
- Prevention approach and early action
- Response to crises (CSDP, civil protection and humanitarian issues)
- Stabilisation
- Transitional justice

According to Faleg (Faleg 2018), the practical implementation of the IA includes the following elements: to enhance EU capacities in the fields of early warning and conflict sensitivity; to provide the EU with better conflict-analysis

and -prevention capacities; to reframe the EU's stabilisation approach by integrating various political, security and development components to make sure that the transition from crisis management to stabilisation is more coherent and inclusive as well as by integrating (rather than coordinating) different levels of EU action; and to better link all levels of EU responses with other international actors (the UN, NATO, the OSCE, the African Union and other regional organisations), thereby ensuring consistency in international-community interventions and effective multi-lateralism (cf. Debuysere and Blockmans 2019).

Since the action plans for implementing the CA were viewed as being too rigid, the 2017 working document (EEAS and EC 2017a: 4) outlined that the CA "established a process based on action plans and progress reports [...that...] has been valuable in establishing lessons learned on how the EU could most usefully work in a coherent way." However, it adds that "this process made the system somewhat rigid by the nature of the process and by focusing in advance on a limited number of priorities." As a consequence, under the IA, it has been decided to focus on substance rather than process. The 2017 PSC working document also provides an overview of the results the EU envisions to achieve by implementing the IA, as outlined according to the particular phase of the conflict cycle (ranging from prevention to crisis response to stabilisation).

The Council's 2018 conclusions regarding an IA to external conflicts and crises (Council of the European Union 2018a) called for more concrete and significant progress in this realm. The conclusions welcome that a report on the implementation of the IA is included as part of the yearly report on the implementation of the EUGS. Moreover, the conclusions point out (ibid.: 3) that there are "strong synergies between the Integrated Approach and other follow-up processes to the Global Strategy, in particular with the Joint Communication on Resilience of 7 June 2017 and related Council conclusions of 13 November 2017 and the work on security and defence."

In general, compared to the CA, the IA does not add anything that was not already on the EU's security agenda, and it is mostly compatible with what was laid out in the European Consensus on Development agreed in 2005 (EC 2006) in terms of responding to conflict. However, it does reaffirm the relevance of the CA and states that its scope needs to be "expanded further" by adopting a new cross-sectoral focus on multi-phase and multi-level aspects (Tardy 2017: 2). The extended scope of the IA can be understood in two ways: First, it can be seen as more ambitious, more political and longer-term than the CA. And, second, it can be seen as more operational, i.e. as a means to operationalise the CA. Indeed, the IA has brought about some institutional changes to help operationalise the concept, such as the creation of the PRISM (Prevention of Conflict, Rule of Law/Security Sector Reform, Integrated Approach, Stabilisation and Mediation) division within the EEAS (See Chapter 3.1).

Table 1: Overview of relevant policy documents relating to CA/IA

Date	Title	Document type
6/3/1996	The European Union and the Issue of Conflicts in Africa: Peace-building, Conflict Prevention and Beyond	European Commission Communication (EC 1996)
11/4/2001	Communication of the Commission on Conflict Prevention	European Commission Communication (EC 2001)
8/12/2003	European Security Strategy (ESS)	Strategic Document (Council of European Union 2003)
11/12/2013	The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crises	Joint Communication (EC and HRVP 2013)
12/5/2014	Council conclusions on the EU's comprehensive approach	Council of the European Union Conclusions (Council of the European Union 2014)
10/4/2015	Taking forward the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflicts and crises – Action Plan 2015	Joint Staff Working Document (Council of the European Union 2015)
2/6/2016	EU Global Strategy	Strategic Document (EEAS 2016)
19/7/2016	Taking forward the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflicts and crises – Action Plan 2016/2017	Joint Staff Working Document (Council of the European Union 2016a)
19/7/2016	Progress Report on the implementation of the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflicts and crises – Action Plan 2015	Joint Staff Working Document (Council of the European Union 2016b)
7/6/2017	A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's External Action	Joint Communication (EC and HRVP 2017)
14/6/2017	The EU Integrated Approach to external conflicts and crises	EEAS/Commission services Issues Paper for PSC (EEAS and EC 2017a)
8/12/2017	Parameters for a concept on Stabilisation as part of the EU Integrated Approach to external conflicts and crises	EEAS/Commission services Issues Paper (EEAS and EC 2017b)
22/1/2018	Council Conclusions on the Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises	Council of the European Union Conclusions (Council of the European Union 2018a)

2.2 International actors' conceptual impact on the EU's IA

Other multilateral actors (e.g. the UN, NATO and the OSCE) have been developing WGAs in parallel to the EU (Debuysere and Blockmans 2019). This has inevitably led to conceptual exchanges and interactions among these organisations.

The **United Nations** does not consider itself a pioneer in setting up a WGA, and it claims that it has much to learn from the EU (interview UNLOPS, May 2019; interview EC Sec-Gen, May 2019). As a fully intergovernmental organisation with 193 member states (and two observer states), it is indeed a challenge for the UN to forge enhanced coordination. Nonetheless, the UN has a long history of implementing a WGA to external conflicts.

In conceptual terms, the 1992 'An Agenda for Peace' (UN 1992) was the first serious attempt to generate a greater sense of unity in conflict-cycle management, placing the United Nations front and centre in the international community's efforts to prevent, manage and durably resolve armed conflict in line with the basic principles laid down in both the UN's Charter and human rights covenants. In response to the need felt in Africa, the Balkans and elsewhere to run increasingly large and multi-dimensional peace-support operations (Gelot 2016), the UN Secretariat of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) were created.

This first stab at 'structural' integration was followed by an attempt at 'strategic' integration. Based in part on the lessons learned from peacekeeping failures in the late 1990s and early 2000s (de Coning 2008), the 'strategic' integration drive encapsulated in the Brahimi Report promoted the idea that all UN entities, agencies, funds and programmes should cooperate under a single UN flag so as to maximise the impact of their collective resources (Joops et al. 2015). An analysis of the weaknesses of and obstacles to integration led the Panel on the United Nations Peace Operations to recommend the formation of an 'integrated mission task force', i.e. an integrated headquarters-level response to be developed at the earliest stages of the process of crisis-response planning that brings together different departments of the UN Secretariat (DPKO, DPA, OCHA), agencies, funds and programmes (e.g. UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR) for mission-specific support.

An 'integrated mission concept' was pioneered for Kosovo in 1999 in order to ensure an effective division of labour among the various actors on the ground (Eide et al. 2005; Weir 2006). In operational terms, the main innovation of the integrated mission concept was that the functions of the resident coordinator (RC) and the humanitarian coordinator (HC) were morphed into the mandate of a deputy special representative of the secretary-general (DSRSG). This double-hatting allowed the DSRSG to better represent the humanitarian and development dimensions in planning, coordinating, managing and evaluating the mission. UN entities on the ground – including mission components, the UN country team and specialised agencies – were technically distinct but brought under the same leadership.

Guidelines for an 'integrated mission planning process' (IMPP) became operational as of 2008, when the broader and more strategic 'integrated approach' was adopted under the leadership of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (UN 2008). This approach recognised that integration requires a system-wide process whereby all different dimensions and relevant UN agents – as well as the Bretton Woods institutions (i.e. the International Monetary Fund and the

World Bank Group) – should act in a synchronised, sequenced and coherent fashion, with all operating as a single integrated UN system at the country level and in a coordinated fashion with extra-UN actors. In other words, the approach called for 'effective multilateralism' within and outside the UN family.

A new push for the UN's integrated approach has been catalysed by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 (UN 2015) and the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO) (HIPPO 2015). The HIPPO report recommended ways of achieving the full potential of UN operations. These included strengthened early-warning, analysis, strategy and planning mechanisms, which together would bolster conflict sensitivity in order to design missions better and to be able to respond flexibly to changing needs on the ground, as well as a renewed emphasis on investing in capacities and local ownership to play a more preventive and inclusive role in addressing emerging crises.

Launched by Secretary-General António Guterres, the institutional reform process of the UN peace and security pillar has recently been concluded and may provide inspiration for EU actors. As one of three significant reforms

The institutional reform process of the UN peace and security pillar has recently been concluded and may provide inspiration for EU actors.

(in peace and security, development and management), a main goal of the UN peace and security reforms is to foster increased subsidiarity. By delegating authority and accountability closer to the field rather than keeping it at the headquarters level, the UN hopes to make its crisis response quicker and more effective. One core innovation at the headquarters level has been to merge the

geographical divisions of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) as well as the corresponding tasks at the level of the assistant under-secretary-general.⁷

According to interviewees at Directorate ISP and DG DEVCO (interview EEAS and European Commission, April 2019), the UN is now doing a better job on the ground at connecting the political and the operational dimensions of its actions. This has led to the fact that two more development-oriented agencies (i.e. UNICEF and the UNDP) also use political insights in their actions. In contrast to the UN, the EU struggles to join up the political and 'operational' (i.e. CSDP 'conduct') sides of the EEAS. This is mainly due to two factors: (1) legal hurdles presented by the current treaty framework and (2) an imbalance between development staff (50+ members) and political staff (only a handful of people) in its delegations (e.g. in Ethiopia).

At an earlier stage, the EU had drawn inspiration from **NATO** attempts to combine civilian and military aspects of conflict management. In the early 2000s, the Council introduced two cornerstone concepts that reflected its desire for a comprehensive/integrated approach: CIMIC (civil-military cooperation) at the tactical level and CMCO (civilian-military coordination) at the political, strategic and institutional levels. While the former is a military doctrine adopted in 2002 (and modelled on NATO's analogous concept), the latter is an internal concept adopted in 2003 (Faleg 2018).

⁷ The creation of a UN Peacebuilding Support Office and Peacebuilding Fund was also an attempt to have a more holistic response to the conflict cycle, but it was not an uncontroversial one. Several member countries saw conflict issues as being the domain of the Security Council, while development concerns were mainly dealt with by specialist agencies. Developing countries, in particular, but also China and Russia, were very suspicious about whether further 'integration' could result in a loss of political steering and control as well as unwanted meddling in internal political affairs (cf. Tomat and Onestini 2010).

The 2006 Riga Summit Declaration (NATO 2006) was the first official NATO document to refer to the alliance's so-called comprehensive approach to 'out of area' conflicts and crises. Drawing on experiences in Afghanistan and Kosovo, NATO's comprehensive approach was conceived of as a way to respond better to crises by involving a wide spectrum of civil and military instruments while fully respecting the mandates and decision-making autonomy of all parties involved. As the need for proper mechanisms of cooperation with other international actors and civilian agencies was considered particularly acute at the early planning stage of an operation, NATO adapted its operational planning to improve support for civilian reconstruction and development (Gheciu 2012). Developing closer ties with the EU, the UN and other international organisations constituted a critical part of this approach, as a better division of mandates would help NATO to perform better in theatre.

NATO's Strategic Concept of 2010 (NATO 2010: 19) affirmed that the alliance would engage "where possible and when necessary, to prevent crises, manage crises, stabilize post-conflict situations and support reconstruction", and that a "comprehensive political, civilian and military approach is necessary for effective crisis management." The strategic concept called for NATO to enhance intelligence-sharing within the organisation, intensify political consultations among allies, form a civilian crisis-management capability to liaise more effectively with civilian partners, improve integrated civilian-military planning, and develop the capability to train local forces in crisis zones (ibid.: 21). A plan was developed to stimulate the transformation of NATO's military mindset into a comprehensive modus operandi with a clear emphasis on effective multilateralism both within and outside the organisation as well as combined with local ownership.

Against the backdrop of a rapidly evolving security environment, the 2016 Warsaw Summit called for a review of the strategic concept and an action plan with new elements for conflict prevention, countering hybrid threats, cybersecurity and operational cooperation at sea and on migration. Based on a joint declaration of 10 July 2016 (NATO 2016a), 42 concrete actions for the implementation in the afore-mentioned areas were developed to enhance NATO-EU cooperation. In December 2017 (NATO 2017), an additional set of 34 actions was endorsed, including on three new topics: counterterrorism; military mobility; women, peace and security.

These efforts at generating more complementarity and effective multilateralism have contributed to improving NATO's own conflict sensitivity, internal organisation and crisis-management instruments. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the military culture remains overwhelmingly predominant in the alliance, and that, in theatre, NATO remains the *primus inter pares* in terms of supporting or undertaking military engagement in crisis situations.

The comprehensive approach to 'in area' conflicts and crises of the **OSCE** is rooted in its core mandate as a forum for political and security dialogue among members, and it has been fully embodied in the organisation's joint actions since its creation. The comprehensive approach emanates from the three 'baskets' of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act (OSCE 1975) : the politico-military, the economic-environmental, and the human dimensions. The approach presumes a direct relationship between peace, stability and wealth, on the one hand, and the values of democratic institutions, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and the development of a market economy, on the other.

The principle of the 'indivisibility' of the comprehensive approach implies that an increase in security for some participating states should not be detrimental to the security of other states. The notion of 'cooperative security' (a

variant of the principle of 'effective multilateralism') is also central to the OSCE's operational rationale, and it aims at the prevention of security threats and zero-sum games rather than efforts to counter them. The OSCE builds on the acceptance of binding commitments that limit military capabilities and actions through confidence-building and reassurance measures. Over time, these values and strategic principles have been reiterated and reinforced via a series of documents, including the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe (OSCE 1990), the 1999 Charter for European Security (OSCE 1999), and the 2003 OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century (OSCE 2003).

Reinforcing comprehensive action along the strands of conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, the OSCE addresses challenges that pose a threat across borders, such as climate change, terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism, organised crime, cyber-crime and trafficking of all kinds. In its cross-dimensional activities, the OSCE starts from virtually the same value-base as the UN and the EU to work towards gender equality, engage with local youth across the peace and security agenda, and promote comprehensive approaches to managing migration and refugee flows. For example, in a 2018 press release regarding enhanced EU-OSCE cooperation, the EEAS wrote (EEAS 2018): "The EU, like the OSCE, addresses security in a comprehensive manner [...] from conflict prevention, mediation and cross-border cooperation, to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; from the promotion of the rule of law and democracy, to strengthening States' resilience to trans-national threats."

OSCE institutions include the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media. The respect which these institutions command across Europe shows that the OSCE can work effectively on issues for which members states have transferred power to it. In other fields, even though a values-based and comprehensive approach to cooperative security is in its DNA, the organisation suffers from significant operational limitations. This is mainly due to seven factors: (1) the different priorities for and perspectives on European security of the participating states; (2) the negative attitudes of a number of participating states about the organisation; (3) the consensus-building nature of the organisation, which is laborious and time-consuming; (4) the absence of effective mechanisms to sanction violations of the body's core principles; (5) limited resources; (6) the lack of clear implementation criteria for its wide range of activities; and (7) the disparate ways and means for implementing lessons learned and (self-)assessment.

In an effort to enhance its 'conflict-sensitive' approach to crises (our term), the 2011 Vilnius Ministerial Council called for enhanced coordination to strengthen the OSCE's analysis, assessment and engagement capacities in all phases of the conflict cycle (OSCE 2011). This led to a consolidation of the organisation's early-warning capacity and resources; the creation of a systematic mediation-support capacity within the Conflict Prevention Centre; the adoption of guidance materials on dialogue facilitation, taking on the UN principles of active mediation; and the creation of a rapid-deployment roster. Capacity-building for the comprehensive approach was accelerated by the deployment of an OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine in 2014. However, despite these changes and efforts, many of these capacities remain in suspended animation. Since the eve of the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act (OSCE 1975), Russia has violated Ukraine's borders, territorial integrity and freedom from non-interference in domestic affairs, thereby shaking the very foundations of European security on which the OSCE rests and ignoring the monitoring mission's observations.

Finally, the **OECD's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC)** has been quite important in setting the whole WGA agenda in the EU (interview DEVCO, April 2019). The EU and its member states regularly cooperate with the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), a subsidiary body of the OECD-DAC, which brings together DAC members and key multilateral agencies working in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. This forum, of which the EU is a member, exchanges knowledge and seeks to improve development engagement in contexts

In their constituent charters and relevant policy documents, the UN, NATO, the OSCE and the OECD-DAC spell out in more or less explicit detail four key virtues in the implementation of their comprehensive/integrated approach to conflicts and crises: being conflict-sensitive; pursuing effective multilateral coordination (within the organisation and with international actors); upholding the organisation's values; and ensuring local ownership.

of conflict and fragility. In addition, it monitors the implementation of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (IDPS 2011), an agreement signed by more than 40 countries and organisations in Busan (Korea) in 2011, which consists of guidelines for development engagement in fragile countries. Some of the principles enshrined in this 'New Deal' have been crucial in shaping and inspiring the EU's integrated approach to conflict and crisis.

The analysis in this chapter reveals a gradual conceptual convergence of headquarters-level approaches to dealing with conflicts and crises. In their constituent charters and relevant policy documents, the UN, NATO, the OSCE and the OECD-DAC spell out in

more or less explicit detail four key virtues in the implementation of their comprehensive/integrated approach to conflicts and crises: being conflict-sensitive; pursuing effective multilateral coordination (within the organisation and with international actors); upholding the organisation's values; and ensuring local ownership.

Divergences between the organisations' approaches arise from variances in their mandates to deal with conflicts and crises 'in area' (UN, OSCE, NATO) and/or 'out of area' (NATO, EU) by employing predominantly civilian (OSCE) or military (NATO) means or a combination thereof (UN, EU). Differences in the autonomy of the organisations' bodies to prepare for and decide on action determine the speed, scope and duration of implementation.

3 Institutional actors

Implementing Europe's ambitious integrated approach (IA) to conflicts and crises poses institutional challenges that are, to a certain extent, somewhat similar to the challenges that other multinational actors face. The EU's challenges include securing sufficient buy-in from all EU actors and the problem of competition among institutions and mandates (Tardy 2017). Moreover, in contrast to the CA, which was about horizontal coordination and cooperation, a proper IA requires truly breaking the silos (Faleg 2018: 4).

In order to achieve this, in addition to a need for a wholehearted adoption of the concept by various EEAS entities, the Commission and member states, there is also a need to effect genuine change in the EU's organisational culture with regard to decision-making structures, the allocation of resources, transaction costs and incentives to sustain an integrated bureaucratic machine. This chapter investigates the key actors that drive the IA concept and assesses the ways in which intra- and inter-service as well as international coordination have been institutionalised.

3.1 Implementing the IA at an intra-service EU level

There is one key body that coordinates the EU's integrated approach within the EEAS: the Directorate Integrated Approach for Security and Peace (Dir. ISP). Established in March 2019, this new directorate has become the main coordination hub for EU conflict-cycle responses (Debuyser and Blockmans 2019). Nestled under the Managing Directorate for CSDP and Crisis Response, Dir. ISP encompasses the old unit for Prevention of Conflicts, Rule of Law/SSR, Integrated Approach, Stabilisation and Mediation (PRISM), which was regrouped with other CSDP parts of the house. Thus, the new directorate is responsible for, inter alia, concepts, knowledge management and training; conflict prevention and mediation; and international strategic planning for CSDP and stabilisation.

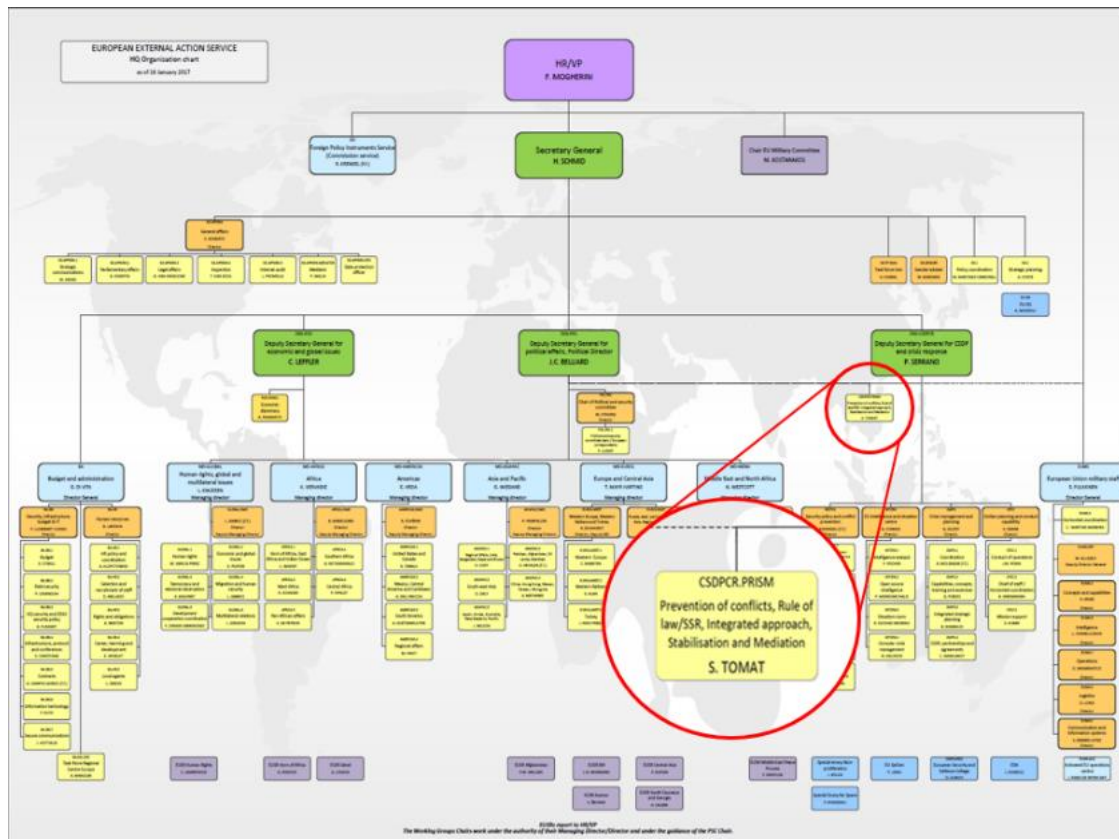
3.1.1 A new setup within the EEAS

A wave of institutional reform that started on 1 March 2019 has significantly altered the organisation chart of the EEAS. The reforms were partly driven by the recent increase in human resources devoted to defence policies and instruments (in particular, the Permanent Structured Cooperation, or PESCO), which created a need to revise and extend the existing Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD). As part of the EEAS, the CMPD functioned as a single hub for civilian-military strategic planning for EU peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. Other motivations underpinning the reform process have been to better embed the EU's integrated approach in the institutional structure of the EEAS as well as to facilitate and improve the EU's ability to address global instability and fragility in an integrated way by deploying all its relevant policies, players and tools in a holistic and well-coordinated manner.

It is not the first time, however, that institutional change has sought to smooth the way for the implementation of an IA. Already in January 2017, the EEAS's Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Mediation unit was upgraded to the status of a division directly reporting to the deputy secretary-general (DSG) for the CSDP and crisis response.

This division, called PRISM, became the focal point for EU responses to the conflict cycle, including prevention and resolution. Among other things, PRISM coordinated a working group of like-minded souls within the EEAS and the Commission – the so-called ‘guardians of the integrated approach’ – whose ultimate aim was to enhance operational capacity by adopting an IA to external conflicts and crises.

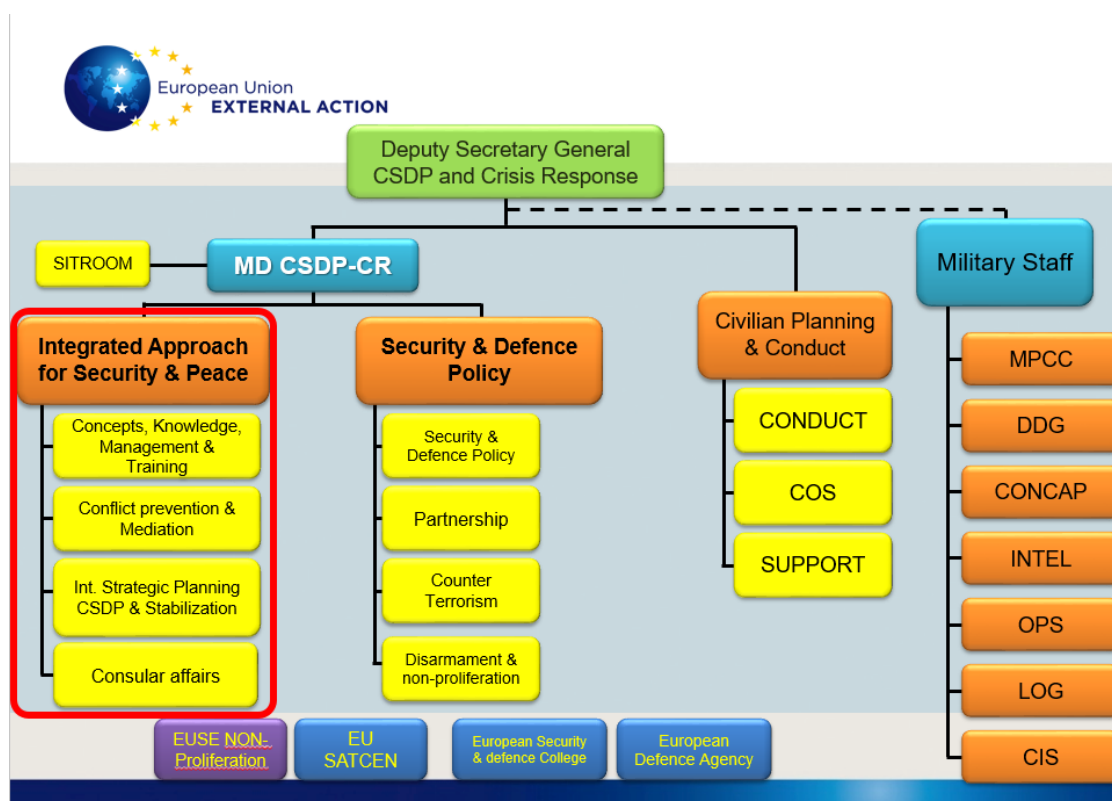
Figure 1: PRISM comes into being in January 2017 (Source: EEAS 2019)



However, due to its slightly odd position in the EEAS organisational chart (Figure 1), the need was felt to place PRISM in a full-blown directorate with its own managing and deputy managing directors. The result was the Directorate Integrated Approach for Security and Peace (Dir. ISP).

Itself a pillar responsible for crisis response and planning, Dir. ISP simultaneously operates with a ‘policy pillar’ and a ‘conduct pillar’ (Figure 2). While the policy pillar (Security and Defence Policy, or SECDEFPOL) brings together all policies relating to security and defence (e.g. PESCO, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), and cybersecurity), the conduct pillar combines the operational headquarters of both civilian (Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability, or CPCC) and military (Military Planning and Conduct Capability, or MPCC) CSDP missions.

Figure 2: Directorate ISP replaces PRISM in March 2019 (Source: EEAS 2019)



3.1.2 Improved managerial strength and operational implementation

Thanks to this improved in-house logic and regrouping of staff capacity (90-odd members), Dir. ISP hopes to forge a better division of labour among its four branches.

While the Concepts, Knowledge Management and Training unit (ISP.1) seeks to revive and operationalise important concepts (e.g. disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), security-sector reform (SSR), and human security) and boost a process of lessons learned, the Conflict Prevention and Mediation unit (ISP.2) principally institutionalises the former tasks of the 'guardians of the integrated approach' thanks to its three teams, which respectively work on conflict prevention, early warning and mediation. The Integrated Strategic Planning unit (ISP.3) brings in some of the later phases of the conflict cycle (e.g. CSDP and stabilisation). Lastly, a Consular Affairs unit (ISP.4) has been added to the directorate to facilitate the protection of and support for EU citizens and staff in case of natural or man-made disasters abroad.

Incorporating a revamped PRISM unit into a full-fledged directorate should clarify and strengthen the chain of command in implementing the EU's IA. In principle, its director and managing director will now be in a position to engage directly with counterparts at their respective levels in the hierarchy. Indeed, the introduction of the new post of managing director, who presides over both the policy (SECDEFPOL) and planning (ISP) branches, means that it will no longer be necessary to turn to an over-solicited DSG to engage in intra-service deconfliction. For example,

Dir. ISP hosts crisis meetings that bring together all relevant EEAS divisions and Commission DGs (ECHO, DEVCO, NEAR) involved in crisis management. More than before, the geographical desks play a prominent role in these meetings, which are chaired by the DSG for CSDP or his (or her) representative.

In addition to improving its managerial strength, formalising and upgrading the former PRISM division will also foster better integration and coordination within the EEAS. By absorbing the former Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD), which is tasked with the political-strategic planning of CSDP missions, Dir. ISP now looks at the crisis cycle in its entirety. In principle, merging PRISM with CSDP planning into a single directorate should facilitate the operational implementation of an integrated approach.

3.1.3 No silver bullet for integration without political buy-in

However, the fact that the directorate has been called 'Integrated Approach for Security and Peace' – with 'security' preceding 'peace' rather than the other way around, as is common in the international context – raises questions about where the unit's focus lies. The staff balance also tilts towards ISP.³ With over a third of all the directorate's personnel operating in strategic planning for CSDP and stabilisation. While, on paper, the (staff) capacity for prevention and mediation has improved compared to PRISM, it is clear that political will on the part of the member states will be needed to prioritise this aspect of the EU's crisis response.

However, this is exactly where the shoe pinches for Dir. ISP. Rather than merging the operational level with the political level, the new directorate only merges the operational side. The reforms did not further integrate the work of the geographical divisions and of the EEAS' DSG for political affairs. While Dir. ISP may trigger integrated action at the bureaucratic level, it will not necessarily do so at the political level. For a service that was expected to be the embodiment of inter-institutional cooperation, it is paradoxical to have developed thick bureaucratic walls within its own organisation.

Moreover, the member states are largely absent from the new directorate's activities even though the Political and Security Committee is permanently chaired by someone in-house and despite the efforts of Dir. ISP to convene meetings of an informal network of corresponding structures, which exist in some ministries of foreign affairs.

To be truly effective from an IA perspective, the latest wave of institutional reforms should have been more informed by, and geared towards, the DSG for political affairs. In this regard, lessons can be learned from the recent UN reforms, which tried to do just that: The former Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO, now the Department for Peace Operations, or DPO) was integrated with the former Department of Political Affairs (DPA, now the Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, or DPPA). This was done at both the assistant-DSG and geographical levels in headquarters and in-country through newly empowered resident coordinators (see Chapter 2.2).

By failing to realise the integration of the new structures for CSDP and crisis response into the geographical managing directorates of the EEAS, mainly due to limitations posed by the Treaties, Dir. ISP cannot be seen as a silver bullet for a 'whole-of-Europe' approach to external conflicts and crises. That said, the new directorate is an important step in efforts to improve the EU's bureaucratic capacity to coordinate its IA.

3.2 Implementing the IA at an intra-service EU level

There are some formal bodies that facilitate coordination among the various EU institutions – principally among the European Commission, the Council and the EEAS – in tackling external conflict and crisis.

3.2.1 Between EEAS and Commission: Crisis meetings and CGEA

Previously organised by PRISM, ISP.1 of the new Dir. ISP convenes crisis meetings on a 'need to act' basis (interview EEAS, May 2019). The goal of these meetings is to bring together all relevant EEAS and Commission services and actors – including EEAS crisis response/management structures, geographical divisions, the EU Military Committee and relevant European Commission DGs (ECHO, DEVCO, NEAR) – to ensure an adequate and timely crisis response.

The crisis meetings are intended to establish a clear division of labour among the different services and to provide political and/or strategic guidance in the management of a given crisis (interview EEAS, May 2019). Outside of emergency situations, there are reportedly also more regular country-team meetings at the EEAS, to which all relevant members of the Commission are invited for policy coordination (interview policy coordination unit EEAS, April 2019; interview EEAS, May 2019).

Two related shortcomings can be detected in the organisation of crisis meetings. First, they do not serve as platforms to incorporate the views of the member states (interview UNLOPS, May 2019), which naturally limits their potential. This points to a broader shortcoming of the EEAS, namely, its apparent inability to reflect the views of capitals and merge them into a synthesis by which member states feel represented (and bound). A second shortcoming is that the crisis meetings are only established on an ad hoc basis and therefore do not regularly provide more systematic platforms for integrated policy coordination and engagement of, say, mediation, prevention and SSR tools in situations of protracted crisis or conflict (Blockmans 2012: 29–31). Sometimes, however, this is remedied by the fact that crisis meetings develop into longer-lasting task forces that meet on a more structural basis to follow up on and monitor a certain conflict (interview EEAS, April 2019). On policy issues other than crisis theatres, the strategic planning division of the EEAS has established a parallel practice of organising so-called 'policy platforms' for coordination with, inter alia, Commission services.

The Commissioner's Group on External Action (CGEA) was reactivated by then-President Jean-Claude Juncker and represents one of the most important institutional initiatives in EU foreign policymaking since the merger of the position of the high representative for CFSP with that of vice-president of the Commission (to form the HRVP) and the creation of the EEAS (Blockmans and Russack 2015). The CGEA, chaired by the HRVP, brings together the commissioners for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, International Cooperation and Development, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, and Trade. Commissioners who do not belong to this pre-defined cluster of four, but who nevertheless have an interest in the items on the CGEA's agenda, are also invited.

Rather than being authorised to adopt official decisions, the CGEA buttresses the standard procedure of decision-

making within the Commission, i.e. inter-service consultation (ibid.). This administrative procedure, launched on the initiative of a commissioner, is intended to include and inform all services that have a legitimate interest in the proposal. The outcome of this process is reflected in joint communications, proposals, reports, consultative papers and decisions, which are issued by the Commission in cooperation with the HRVP.

One goal of the CGEA is to align the positions of the HRVP and the various commissioners on responses to crises. While the CGEA aims to harmonise diverging interests of Commission DGs in certain conflict zones, the HRVP acts as a coordinator to mobilise instruments, funding and expertise managed by the Commission and to capitalise on a political consensus reached in the Council. A concrete example concerns the Commission's adoption of a legislative proposal offering additional temporary access for Tunisian olive oil to the EU market to help support Tunisia's recovery in the wake of the terrorist attack of 26 June 2015 in Sousse, which had prompted a reaction from the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) on 20 July 2015 on the need to further assist Tunisia in its political and economic transition in a concrete and targeted manner.

In presenting her "geopolitical" Commission, President-elect Ursula von der Leyen has emphasised the need for the College of Commissioners to discuss a weekly fixed agenda point covering external relations, including crisis prevention and management, to ensure maximum participation by all DGs concerned. This would not only strengthen coherence within the Commission, but could also help the HRVP to whip up political will among member states by showing that the tools managed by the Commission can be put at the Union's disposal to boost effective foreign policy. A good example of intra-Commission deconfliction and Council-backed crisis response is the case of Myanmar, for which the CGEA successfully sought to balance its humanitarian aid, sanctions, trade preferences and development responses in response to the military's genocidal actions in Rakhine State (interview Commission, April 2019).

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3.2.2 Between Council, EEAS and Commission

Depending on the topic on the agenda, the FAC convenes member states' ministers of foreign affairs, defence, development or trade. The FAC is chaired by the HRVP and also attended by responsible members of the Commission (Keukeleire and Delreux 2014: 66).

However, rather than by the FAC, most decisions are taken by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER II) or the Political and Security Council (PSC). While the former deals with EU external action (e.g. development cooperation and trade policy) and internal policies with an external dimension, the latter deals with CFSP/CSDP policies. The PSC, which is composed of one ambassador per member state as well as a representative of the Commission, of the EU Military Committee (EUMC) and of the Committee for Civilian Aspects for Crisis Management (CIVCOM), is in fact the logical counterpart in the Council of the CGEA. As the central body for preparatory work for the FAC, it convenes at least once a week in addition to exercising the political control and strategic direction of civilian and military CSDP operations (ibid.: 69–70).

Below the level of the PSC and COREPER, there is a large network of working groups that shape EU external action. These working groups consist of experts from the member states (either from the permanent representations in Brussels or from the ministries back home), from the EEAS and/or from the Commission, and they are chaired by the EEAS, which also gets to set the agenda.⁸ While most of them are geography-based, some are theme-based.

Both in the Commission (SG Inter-institutional and external relations) and the EEAS (SG AFFGEN Inter-institutional relations, policy coordination and public diplomacy), there are also specific units that facilitate intra- and inter-service coordination. These units also facilitate an IA by setting up platforms and guidelines to cooperate (interview EEAS policy coordination unit, April 2019). In times of crisis, the heads of division operate in a rather informal but swift manner, including via a pre-established WhatsApp group (interview EEAS, April 2019).

Yet, while coordination and cooperation take place among the different DGs and EEAS, the policy coordination unit within the Secretariat General of the Commission has in the past not always been involved in coordinated policy discussions (interview EC SecGen, May 2019). This raises questions about the added value of the above-mentioned units in fostering inter-institutional coordination. Their inclusion should not depend on personalities.

3.2.3 Between Parliament, Commission and EEAS: Mediation and Dialogue Unit

The role of the European Parliament (EP) in EU foreign policy in general and crisis response in particular is quite limited. In the CFSP/CSDP framework, the EP has only a consultative role, and the Treaty on the European Union (Art. 36) says that the HRVP “shall regularly consult the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices” of the CFSP and CSDP, and that the EP “may address questions or make recommendations to the Council or the High Representative.” Twice a year, the EP also holds a debate on progress in the implementation of the CFSP and CSDP. In practice, the EP has managed to obtain regular formal and informal dialogue with the HRVP, the EEAS and the Commission. The basis of this dialogue is spelled out in an inter-institutional agreement from late 2013 that set out the following (EP, Council of the EU, and EC 2013: 5):

Each year, the High Representative shall consult the European Parliament on a forward-looking document, which shall be transmitted by June 15 of the year in question, setting out the main aspects and basic choices of the CFSP, including the financial implications for the general budget of the Union, an evaluation of the measures launched in the year n-1 and an assessment of the coordination and complementarity of CFSP with the Union's other external financial instruments. Furthermore, the High Representative shall keep the European Parliament regularly informed by holding joint consultation meetings at least five times a year, in the framework of the regular political dialogue on the CFSP, to be agreed at the latest in the Conciliation Committee. Participation in those meetings shall be determined by the European Parliament and the Council

⁸ The Committee on Development Cooperation (CODEV) is chaired by the country holding the rotating presidency of the Council.

respectively, bearing in mind the objective, and the nature of the information exchanged in those meetings.

The Commission shall be invited to participate in those meetings.

If the Council adopts a decision in the field of the CFSP entailing expenditure, the High Representative shall immediately, and in any event no later than five working days thereafter, send the European Parliament an estimate of the costs envisaged (a 'financial statement'), in particular those costs regarding time-frame, staff employed, use of premises and other infrastructure, transport facilities, training requirements and security arrangements.

Once a quarter, the Commission shall inform the European Parliament and the Council about the implementation of CFSP actions and the financial forecasts for the remainder of the financial year.

When it comes to EU external action (outside CFSP/CSDP) and internal policies with an external dimension, the EP has two major instruments to influence EU foreign policy (Keukeleire and Delreux 2014). On the one hand, there is the consent procedure, which gives the EP a veto power over the ratification of international agreements. On the other hand, the EP has important budgetary powers, which it can indirectly use as leverage over EU foreign policy.⁹

One 'crisis response' area in which the EP does play a role is mediation activities. What originally started as an informal consultation by Commissioner Johannes Hahn with certain MEPs in North Macedonia (or the FYROM, as it was then called) has gradually developed into a Mediation and Dialogue Unit (one pillar within the Directorate for Democracy Support at DG EXPO) in the European Parliament. In terms of conflict prevention and mediation, this unit regularly cooperates with DG NEAR, DG DEVCO, the EEAS and the EU delegation on the ground.

The EP's Mediation and Dialogue Unit coordinates political mediation activities with third-country parliaments (interview EP, April 2019). One key instrument developed by this unit as a soft-power tool in the area of parliamentary mediation and dialogue is the Jean Monnet Dialogue for Peace and Democracy. This mediation and dialogue working method, inspired by French political economist and diplomat Jean Monnet (d. 1979), encourages pragmatic dialogue to achieve concrete, consensual results and has been applied in Ukraine and Macedonia. The Jean Monnet Dialogues of the EP have an inter-institutional character, as delegation members and actors from the EEAS and Commission assist in organising it (European Parliament 2019a).

Nonetheless, inter-institutional coordination in the realm of mediation is not well institutionalised (interview EP, May 2019).¹⁰ While Dir. ISP deals with the more technical level of mediation (early warning, expert support,¹¹ conflict analysis), the Mediation and Dialogue Unit at the EP is much more hands-on and political. Operating in parallel, parliamentary diplomacy can have a significant added value. In this respect, one could even argue that the EP

⁹ However, on particular issues – such as the CFSP budget managed by the FPI service of the Commission (which deals with, e.g., EUSRs) – it is the PSC/COREPER rather than the Parliament that scrutinises budgets.

¹⁰ The EP's Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET) recently issued a report on 'Building EU capacity on conflict prevention and mediation' to push the next Commission to do more on conflict prevention via a roadmap (European Parliament 2019b).

¹¹ The fact that Dir. ISP has a small budget for more operational activities (€500,000) is a complete anomaly slipped into the budget of the EEAS. The FPI service has a much larger budget in support of third-party mediation efforts.

actually has more say in and influence on EU foreign policy than national parliaments over the foreign policy of their respective member states.

3.3 Coordination at the international level

3.3.1 United Nations

UN-EU cooperation has seen worse days,¹² as both multilateral actors aim to preserve the importance of multilateralism in today's multipolar world (interview UNLOPS, May 2019). While the EU's CSDP missions and the UN's peacekeeping operations were somehow in competition a decade ago, the urgency of the threat posed to a multi-lateral, rules-based order – in combination with the important steering role played by HRVP Federica Mogherini and the UN Liaison Office representing DPA-DPKO in Brussels – has greatly fostered EU-UN cooperation and coordination in the past five years.

There is a EU-UN steering committee that convenes every six months in either Brussels or New York, and that comes up with a list of shared action points for conflict response. The EU and UN also engage in a Conflict Prevention Dialogue and in continuous working-level interactions, both between the two headquarters and among missions and operations. Special representatives of the UN secretary-general (UNSG) are regularly invited to brief the FAC or the PSC (UNLOPS 2019) and, when they make their annual trips to New York, PSC ambassadors have informal meetings with UNSG representatives. This helps to coordinate EU foreign policy with decision-making in the UN Security Council. Following the 2015–2018 priorities, both actors have recently adopted a new set of priorities for the 2019–2021 period (Council of the European Union 2018b) to reinforce the EU-UN Strategic Partnership on Peace Operations and Crisis Management. In a related press statement, the UN (UN 2018) described the eight priorities (in the first person) for cooperation as follows:

- 1) Establish a UN-EU collaborative platform on 'women, peace and security' to enhance coherence and integration of gender perspectives throughout our cooperation.
- 2) Strengthen cooperation between missions and operations in the field with a view to ensuring increased reciprocity in assets-sharing, coherence and continuity.
- 3) Assess how best to act in complementarity during the planning and execution of transitions of missions and operations, considering the development of common guidelines.
- 4) Further facilitate EU member states' contributions and support to UN peace operations and the UN secretary-general's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative.
- 5) In support of conflict prevention and political processes and solutions, identify, mobilise and use tools – mediation, early warning and security-sector reform (SSR) – and coordinate political messages and strategic communication in response to early signs of conflict, as relevant.
- 6) Intensify cooperation on policing, the rule of law and SSR to include also the justice and penitentiary structures; and assess possibilities for cooperation on civilian rapid response.

¹² For a critical analysis, see Medinilla, Veron and Mazzara 2019.

- 7) To enhance cooperation with and support to African-led peace operations, explore (together with the African Union (AU)) possible initiatives to deepen trilateral cooperation (UN-EU-AU) on peace operations, conflict prevention and crisis management, as well as on regional strategies.
- 8) Efforts to enhance performance of peace operations on the ground will be taken forward through strengthened cooperation on training and capacity building, including exercises. Focusing our cooperation around these eight priority areas will allow us to continue reinforcing the UN-EU strategic partnership on peace operations and crisis management in response to increasingly complex causes of crisis, and interconnected peace and security challenges.

The EU and UN also increasingly operate in a trilateral format with the African Union. One key example has been the AU-EU-UN Joint Taskforce to address the situation of migrants and refugees in Libya. While this trilateral co-operation has achieved some of its objectives, it faces multiple political and practical challenges, including the need to improve coherence between European and African actions (Abderrahim 2018).

3.3.2 NATO

EU-NATO relations have traditionally been described in lethargic terms due to longstanding political blockages (Duke 2008; Smith 2011). Nevertheless, bound by a shared commitment to universal values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law, NATO and the EU share not only strategic goals, but also common global security challenges. The new security environment has driven the EU to assume a bigger role in security and defence, and has forced EU-NATO relations to evolve into a more practical strategic partnership. This has been prompted by the facts that their security is interconnected and that neither organisation has the full range of tools needed to address the new security challenges on its own.

This new narrative was put forward on 10 July 2016 in the joint declaration of a NATO summit in Warsaw (NATO 2016a). While the document confirms NATO as the *primus inter pares* regarding defence matters, it also notes that “EU efforts will also strengthen NATO, and thus will improve our common security.” The 2016 joint declaration outlined seven concrete areas where the bilateral cooperation ought to be enhanced (NATO 2016b): countering hybrid threats; operational cooperation, including at sea and on migration; cyber security and defence; defence capabilities; defence industry and research; exercises; and supporting the capacity-building efforts of partner nations to the east and south. Subsequently, the EU and NATO established a common set of 42 actions to implement all seven areas of cooperation (Council of the European Union 2017b). The set also introduced a monitoring mechanism to review progress on a biannual basis.

Obscured by US President Trump's theatrics at the first summit held at NATO's new headquarters in Brussels, a second joint declaration on NATO-EU cooperation was adopted on 10 July 2018 (NATO 2018). The joint declaration emphasised “coherent, complementary and interoperable” capability development and encouraged the fullest possible involvement of non-EU allies in the European Union's new initiatives in the field of defence.

In terms of achievements, one cannot help but note that, to date, most of the low-hanging fruits have already been picked. A European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats has been set up in Helsinki, and frequent contacts at the working level and staff-to-staff communication have been achieved among the EU's Hybrid Fusion Cell, NATO's Hybrid Analysis Branch and the centre of excellence. But, so far, trilateral cooperation has only been based on open-source material, and information- and intelligence-sharing between the two partner organisations still remains a great challenge. Cybersecurity and defence is one of the areas in which NATO and the EU are working together more closely than ever. Analysis of cyber threats and collaboration between incident-response teams is one area of further cooperation; another is the exchange of best practices concerning the cyber aspects and implications of crisis management (NATO 2017).

In short, cooperation between the EU and NATO has been gradually improving beyond the largely defunct 'Berlin Plus' arrangements, whereby the EU could borrow intelligence, troops and equipment from NATO (only used once since 2003, i.e. in Bosnia-Herzegovina). It is obvious that, within the defined framework, there are many obstacles to be overcome before opportunities can be more fully exploited. Yet, the emergence of the EU as a stronger defence and security actor may spur further cooperation (Blockmans 2018) – not competing or duplicating, but complementing NATO efforts in an integrated approach between the two organisations (Stoltenberg 2018).

3.3.3 OSCE

Only limited progress has been made in developing synergies between the OSCE and the EU, which alone comprises already half of the membership of the OSCE (Jorgensen 2008). The contributions of the EU family make up over 70 percent of the OSCE's budget, not to mention the extensive financial support the EU gives to specific operations, such as the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. Furthermore, there are many examples of cooperation between the OSCE and the EU, such as in electoral observation missions or in addressing protracted conflicts, such as the Transdniestrian settlement process.

At the same time, there are areas in which this cooperation could be improved. For instance, conflict mediation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and elsewhere in the Balkan region would lend itself to more extensive EU-OSCE cooperation and a pooling of expertise. While preparing its annual progress reports on the EU enlargement process, the European Commission organises regular consultations with the OSCE and the Council of Europe to review and compare the organisations' respective assessments in their areas of expertise. With regard to the OSCE, given its autonomous institutions and its extensive expertise in the areas mentioned above, its assessments and views could be more systematically reflected in the European Commission's assessment (Fouéré 2015).

Indeed, considerable gains could still be achieved in policy areas where the OSCE has developed extensive expertise and the EU has few competences (e.g. media freedom, the rights of national minorities, and education) as well as in domains where the EU is in the process of building up its respective capacities (e.g. in mediation and conflict prevention). Sharing analytical research and organising joint training exercises for people working in the field would be of mutual benefit in dealing with conflict situations in the OSCE region as well as in enhancing the much-needed early-warning mechanisms throughout the region. The OSCE's comparative advantage is reflected

in its flexible structure and autonomous institutions, such as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Representative for the Freedom of the Media.

3.3.4 OECD-DAC and other actors

The EU regularly cooperates with the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), a subsidiary body of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which brings together DAC members and key multilateral agencies working in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (interview DG DEVCO, April 2019; see Chapter 2.2). Among the other international organisations with which the EU cooperates closely is the Council of Europe, whose Venice Commission plays a very valuable (and, in many respects, unique) role in buttressing the rule of law in Europe's wider neighbourhood.¹³

While civil society organisations play an important role in conflict theatres, their role at the headquarters level is generally limited to providing inputs in consultations for the development and review of policies. However, this is not to say that civil society has not had an impact on the EU institutional structure. There was, for instance, heavy lobbying by civil society (as well as by the European Parliament and a few member states) to create a Division for Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Mediation when the EEAS was set up. In fact, over almost two decades, it was specialist civil society (e.g. EPLO, International Alert and Saferworld) that kept the pressure on the EU to adopt and use conflict analysis as well as to adapt its institutional structures to function in a more integrated fashion. The Commission, followed by the EEAS, have established various structures to more efficiently engage and use the expertise of civil society through semi-formal structures.¹⁴

¹³ For further references, see Wessel and Odermatt (2019).

¹⁴ See, e.g., EPLO (2019).

4 Degree of interaction and instruments used

4.1 Finances

The current external financing instruments of the EU, as established under the 2014–2020 multiannual financial framework (MFF), have struggled to provide enough coherence and flexibility in responding to today's quickly shifting contexts. In the face of mounting instability in the neighbourhood (and beyond) and a sharp increase in refugee flows and migration, the key finding of a mid-term self-assessment by the Commission was the need for “more strategic and overarching programming” and “coherent interactions at operational level in the renewed international context” (EC 2017c: 2). The need for flexibility and the problem of silo approaches similarly figure in a ‘Coherence Report’ from external evaluators (EC 2017a) and the European Parliament's implementation assessment (EPRS 2018).

In an effort to address these recommendations, the Commission has come up with a new and bold proposal for future spending on issues relating to the neighbourhood, development and international cooperation (EC 2018a). By merging the 11 existing instruments outlined below (Table 2) into one financial instrument, the so-called Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) put forward in the Commission's proposal seeks to increase simplification, coherence, responsiveness and strategic direction in EU external action.

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While commendable from a coherence-seeking perspective, the desire to simplify the EU's financial toolbox and to increase the Commission's flexibility in spending has raised concerns among various parts of the EU's apparatus and member states alike. How will a unified instrument reflect the privileged relationship of the neighbourhood with the EU (EaP CSF 2018)? What will the governance structure and operationalisation of the instrument look like (Jones, De Groof and Kahiluoto 2018)? How likely is it that the NDICI will survive broader MFF negotiations in the Council (Castillejo et al. 2018)? These are some key questions that observers have addressed in various analyses of the proposed jumbo instrument.

Table 2: Comparison between current programmes and the NDICI proposal, taking into account Brexit (EU27) and the budgeting of the European Development Fund.

MFF 2014–2020		MFF 2021–2027	
€70.1 billion + 6.9 billion¹⁵		€89.2 billion	
11 instruments = European Neighbourhood Instrument, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace, Development Cooperation Instrument, Partnership Instrument for Cooperation with Third Countries, Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation, Macro-Financial Assistance, External Lending Mandate, Guarantee Fund for External Action, European Fund for Sustainable Development and European Development Fund (excluding African Peace Facility).		1 instrument, 4 components = Neighbourhood, Development, International Cooperation (NDICI)	
Geographic Programmes	€57,568 million (74.8%)	Geographic Programmes	€68,000 million (76%)
<i>Neighbourhood</i>	<i>€17,693 million</i> <i>(30.7%)</i>	<i>Neighbourhood</i>	<i>€22,000 million</i> <i>(32%)</i>
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	<i>€26,097 million</i> <i>(45.3%)</i>	<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	<i>€32,000 million</i> <i>(47%)</i>
<i>Asia and the Pacific</i>	<i>€9,819 million</i> <i>(17.1%)</i>	<i>Asia and the Pacific</i>	<i>€10,000 million</i> <i>(15%)</i>
<i>The Americas and Caribbean</i>	<i>€3,959 million</i> <i>(6.9%)</i>	<i>The Americas and Caribbean</i>	<i>€4,000 million</i> <i>(6%)</i>
Thematic Programmes	€9,139 million (11.9%)	Thematic Programmes	€7,000 million (8%)
<i>Human Rights and Democracy</i>	<i>€1,302 million</i> <i>(14.24%)</i>	<i>Human Rights and Democracy</i>	<i>€1,500 million</i> <i>(22%)</i>
<i>Civil Society Organisations</i>	<i>€1,414 million</i> <i>(15.5%)</i>	<i>Civil Society Organisations</i>	<i>€1,500 million</i> <i>(21%)</i>

¹⁵ The €70.1 billion budget for 2014–2020, as estimated for the EU27, does not include the budget for emerging challenges and priorities, as the latter is not necessarily funded under the MFF.

MFF 2014–2020		MFF 2021–2027	
€70.1 billion + 6.9 billion¹⁵		€89.2 billion	
11 instruments = European Neighbourhood Instrument, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace, Development Cooperation Instrument, Partnership Instrument for Cooperation with Third Countries, Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation, Macro-Financial Assistance, External Lending Mandate, Guarantee Fund for External Action, European Fund for Sustainable Development and European Development Fund (excluding African Peace Facility).		1 instrument, 4 components = Neighbourhood, Development, International Cooperation (NDICI)	
<i>Stability and Peace</i>	€706 million <i>(7.7%)</i>	<i>Stability and Peace</i>	€1,000 million <i>(14%)</i>
<i>Global Challenges</i>	€5,716 million <i>(62.5%)</i>	<i>Global Challenges</i>	€3,000 million <i>(43%)</i>
Rapid Response Pillar	€3,407 million (4.4%)	Rapid Response Pillar	€4,000 million (5%)
Emerging Challenges and Priorities Cushion	€6,869 million (8.9%)	Emerging Challenges and Priorities Cushion	€10,200 million (11%)

Source: Adapted from data from the Secretariat of the Committee on Budgets, as included in a December 2018 European Parliament briefing (Immenkamp 2019).

An underexposed angle in the existing body of commentary is how the NDICI relates to the EU's commitment to an "integrated approach to conflict and crisis" (EEAS 2016: 9). Pooled funding and joint financial instruments can be seen as a way to facilitate the implementation of this kind of integrated approach.

While the preamble of the Commission proposal (EC 2018a) outlines a commitment to the five priorities enshrined in the Global Strategy, the proposal does not mention the integrated approach explicitly. References are made, however, to "a more geographically and thematically comprehensive approach" by tackling policies in a "trans-regional, multi-sectoral and global way" with a goal of breaking down silos (ibid.: 9–10). But in what ways does the NDICI regulation actually live up to facilitating a multi-dimensional, -level, -lateral and -phased approach to conflict and crisis?

4.1.1 Multi-dimensional

According to the Global Strategy, the integrated approach is multi-dimensional in that it draws on “all available policies and instruments aimed at conflict prevention, management and resolution” (ibid.: 28), and that it brings together diplomatic engagement, CSDP missions and operations, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

Merging financial assistance for neighbourhood, development and international cooperation agendas under the NDICI should facilitate the financial implementation of a multi-dimensional approach to crises. However, one wonders how ‘integrated’ the NDICI actually is given that the budgets for, say, the Neighbourhood (under its geographic pillar) or Stability and Peace (under its thematic pillar) remain ring-fenced (Table 2).

Moreover, the NDICI proposal does not cover all dimensions of EU external action spending. For one, CSDP operations and military capacity-building for CFSP objectives cannot be included under the EU budget (and, hence, under the NDICI) due to limitations enshrined in the EU Treaty.¹⁶ Similarly, humanitarian aid resides outside the NDICI’s scope in compliance with the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence.¹⁷ Sufficient coordination among the NDICI, the ECHO budget (including the EU’s Emergency Aid Reserve), and different types of security funding will therefore be key.

In fact, four different security-related instruments and funds are currently on the table for the 2021–2027 period: the NDICI, the CFSP budget, the European Peace Facility and the European Defence Fund (Table 3). While the NDICI and the CFSP budget mainly seek to finance soft security needs, the proposed European Peace Facility (HRVP 2018) caters to CSDP operations with military and defence objectives and the European Defence Fund (EC 2018b) aims to encourage the development and operationalisation of joint defence capabilities among member states (Blockmans 2018). The envisaged split between the NDICI and other funds will continue to hamper the type of ‘civ-mil’ coordination that a truly integrated, nimble and effective approach to external conflict and crisis requires.

¹⁶ The EU Treaty (TEU Article 41.2) does not allow the Union’s budget to be used for military or defence purposes.

¹⁷ As outlined in Section 2.1 of the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

Table 3: List of security, defence and military instruments and funds

EU financial instruments and funds relating to security and defence						
2014–2020				2021–2027 proposals		
No.	Financial instrument	Funding Source	Scope	Financial instrument	Funding Source	Scope
1.	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)	EU budget €2,339 million under current MFF	Supporting of security initiatives and peace-building activities in partner countries, with no military or defence purposes. Includes 'capacity-building in support of security and development' (CBSD), with objectives in the field of development and human security.	Included in the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)	EU budget €1,000 million is specifically allocated under the next MFF for peace and stability (as part of the thematic pillar), but the NDICI also includes unallocated and more flexible spending in this realm (cf. Table 4).	Includes conflict, peace and stability actions in geographic and thematic programmes, on the one hand, and in rapid response and emergency, on the other (cf. Table 4). Does include CBSD, with objectives in the field of development and human security. ¹⁸
2.	CFSP budget provisions within EU budget	EU budget €2,338 million under the current MFF.	Financing of administrative costs of all CSDP missions and the operational costs of civilian CSDP. ¹⁹	CFSP budget provisions within EU budget	EU budget €3,000 million under the next MFF, outside the NDICI.	Financing of administrative costs of all CSDP missions and the operational costs of civilian CSDP.
3.	Athena Mechanism	Off budget Annual share by MS, excluding Denmark.	Financing of common operational costs of military operations	European Peace Facility	Off budget €10,500 million, to be financed by	Enables the financing of operational actions (e.g. EU or partners' military operations) under

¹⁸ The proposal of the European Peace Facility (HRVP 2018: 2) outlines: "Current provisions on Capacity Building of military actors in support of Development and Security for Development (CBSD) as set out in the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, provide for actions which mainly pursue objectives in the field of **development**. The Facility will be able to finance capacity building activities in support of third countries' armed forces in pursuit of **CFSP objectives**" (bolding added). However, discussions regarding how CBSD will exactly take shape under both the NDICI and the European Peace Facility are still ongoing.

¹⁹ Ibid.

EU financial instruments and funds relating to security and defence						
2014–2020				2021–2027 proposals		
		Limited budget. ²⁰	under CSDP.		MS, excluding Denmark.	CFSP that have military or defence implications (cf. TUE Art. 41.2).
	African Peace Facility	Off budget €1,662.5 million for the 2014-2018 period, ²² funded by MS (excluding Denmark) as part of 11th European Development Fund.	Supports the African Union's and African Regional Economic Communities' efforts in the area of peace and security. Includes capacity-building, early response mechanisms and support to Peace Support Operations in Africa.			Is not restricted to Africa. Brings together former Athena Mechanism and African Peace Facility. Also includes CBSD, with objectives in the field of CFSP (in support of countries' armed forces). ²¹
4.				European Defence Fund	Partly funded by EU budget €13 billion under the next MFF and partly funded by MS contributions.	Looks to increase coordination of investment among MS throughout the industrial cycle (from research to development of prototypes to acquisition of defence capabilities). Includes financing of priority projects agreed by MS within the framework of CSDP and NATO.

Source: Authors' own compilation.

²⁰ In 2014, for five military operations, the Athena budget was estimated at around €78 million (EPRS 2016).

²¹ Ibid.

²² This is the sum of the €1,030.5 million committed under the 2014-2016 Action Programme (EC 2018c) and the €592 million committed under the 2017–2018 Action Programme (Council of the European Union 2017a). At the time of writing (October 2019), the APF budget for 2019–2020 was not yet available.

4.1.2 Multi-level

According to the Global Strategy, the integrated approach is multi-level in that it acts to address the complexity of conflicts “at the local, national, regional and global levels” (EEAS 2016: 29).

The NDICI proposal seeks to improve coherence between geographic and thematic interventions by transferring most (global) thematic actions into (country- or region-based) geographic programmes.²³ Despite the intention to shrink thematic programming, clarifications will be needed about how coherence will be achieved between peace and security interventions financed under bilateral and regional envelopes, on the one hand, and those facilitated by the Stability and Peace thematic programme, on the other.

Moreover, while it makes sense to invest more in geographic programmes, given that these are closer to home (neighbourhood and Africa) and tailor-made, such an approach raises concerns about support for local-level actors. Since geographic programming and implementation take place via bilateral or regional cooperation, national governments and public authorities will have to endorse the decentralisation of allocations to, for example, authorities, councils or civil society organisations at the local level. In countries mired in conflict, repression and authoritarianism, this approach may prevent some local-level actors from having guaranteed access to EU support under the geographic pillar.

4.1.3 Multi-lateral

According to the Global Strategy, the integrated approach is multi-lateral in that it engages all players “present in a conflict and necessary for its resolution” and aims to partner “more systematically on the ground with regional and international organisations, bilateral donors and civil society” to achieve sustainable peace “through comprehensive agreements rooted in broad, deep and durable regional and international partnerships” (EEAS 2016: 29).

Generally speaking, the NDICI regulation outlines that programming should take place in cooperation with partner countries or regions, and preferably through joint programming with EU member states. Joint programming with other donors and consultation with representatives of civil society and local authorities shall take place “where relevant” (EC 2018a: 33). More specifically, when drawing up programming documents with partner countries and regions afflicted by conflict and crisis, the proposal (ibid.: 34) stipulates that “due account shall be taken of the special needs and circumstances of the countries or regions concerned”, and that “special emphasis shall be placed on stepping up coordination amongst all relevant actors to help the transition from an emergency situation to the development phase.”

The proposal remains vague, however, as to with whom and how financial coordination will be consolidated in conflict zones. For example, there is no explicit mention of joint programming or co-financing with the UN even

²³ A key motivation for bringing the NDICI into existence was to improve coherence between geographic and thematic interventions. In today's budget, there has been overlap and inconsistent responses at the country level due to missing synergies between (country- and region-based) geographic and (global) thematic financial instruments. Therefore, the NDICI proposes to transfer a number of thematic actions to the geographic programmes, with the latter now representing three-quarters of the instrument. The remaining thematic actions (only 8% of the NDICI) would then cover those issues that are better dealt with at the global rather than the country/region level.

though the latter is the EU's core strategic partner in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding (Debuysere and Blockmans 2019).

Vagueness about "effective multilateralism" also predominates at an inter- and intra-institutional EU level. A truly integrated approach to conflict and crisis will require increased coordination both within the Commission (e.g. in the Commissioners' Group on External Action) (Blockmans and Russack 2015), the Council (among all relevant working parties) and the Parliament (between the AFET and DEVE committees, in particular), as well as among these institutions. However, at one point in the process, attempts to move the management of external financing instruments (e.g. the NDICI) from different line DGs and the FPI service (co-located in the EEAS) to DG DEVCO were interpreted as signalling an intended concentration of power of the purse, which is anathema to the philosophy of multilateralism within the EU's own apparatus.²⁴

4.1.4 Multi-phased

According to the Global Strategy, the integrated approach is multi-phased in that it allows the EU to act "at all stages of the conflict cycle, acting promptly on prevention, responding responsibly and decisively to crises, investing in stabilisation, and avoiding premature disengagement when a new crisis erupts" (EEAS 2016: 9–10).

Under its different pillars, the NDICI provides financial assistance for all phases of the conflict cycle (Table 4). However, given that the NDICI is to be employed in a flexible manner in line with policy priorities, some phases of the conflict cycle risk being gradually overlooked in favour of quick responses to unforeseeable challenges and crises. As such, short-term foreign policy interests (e.g. stopping migration flows) may trump longer-term preventive approaches to conflict.²⁵ Further clarification regarding the flexible short-, medium- and long-term deployment and impact of, in particular, the rapid response pillar and the emergency cushion (Table 2) is therefore imperative.

At the intersection of a multi-lateral and -phased approach to conflict and crisis lies a difficult balancing act of reconciling complex 'multi-lateral' coordination with the need for responsive crisis intervention. While the rapid response pillar and the emergency cushion do not require time-consuming programming, clarification is needed on how swift coordination among key EU players (e.g. DG DEVCO, DG NEAR and the EU delegations) and non-EU players (e.g. the UN, NATO and the OSCE) will take place under these two envelopes in order to avoid increasing delays in responding appropriately and decisively to crisis situations.

²⁴ Insight gleaned from interviews with current and former EU officials.

²⁵ An additional question to be asked is how existing Trust Funds will relate to the NDICI.

Table 4: Funding specifically allocated for issues relating to 'Conflict, Peace and Stability' under the NDICI

Specific 'Conflict, Peace and Stability' actions under the NDICI	
Geographic Programmes <i>= one out of five pillars within the geographic programmes specifically tackles Peace cooperation (i.e. Security, Stability and Peace) in all 4 designated regions (Neighbourhood, sub-Sahara Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the Americas and Caribbean)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People - Planet - Prosperity - Peace including resilience-building, conflict prevention, early warning, peacebuilding, SSR support, capacity-building of military actors (CBSD), countering radicalisation, etc. - Partnership 	Unclear what share of the overall €68,000 million of the budget for geographic programmes will be used for the 'Peace' pillar
Thematic Programmes <i>= one of the four thematic pillars deals with 'Stability and Peace'</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human Rights and Democracy - Civil Society Organisations - Stability and Peace²⁶ includes (1) assistance for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and crisis preparedness and (2) addressing global and trans-regional threats and emerging threats - Global Challenges 	€1,000 million of the overall €7,000 million is ring-fenced for 'Stability and Peace'
Rapid Response Pillar <i>= quick responses, including (1) actions contributing to stability and conflict prevention in situations of urgency, emerging crisis, crisis and post-crisis; (2) actions contributing to resilience-building and the humanitarian-development nexus; and (3) actions addressing foreign policy needs and priorities</i>	Unclear what share of the overall €4,000 million will go to which phase of the conflict cycle
Emerging Challenges and Priorities Cushion <i>= to be decided</i>	The €10,200 million is unallocated to ensure flexibility

Source: Authors' own compilation based on the Commission's proposal (EC 2018a).

4.1.5 Towards an integrated financial instrument?

Looking at it from the angle of an integrated approach to conflict and crisis, there lies a paradox at the heart of the current NDICI proposal. On the one hand, by streamlining all instruments into a single flexible instrument, there is a risk that certain conflict dimensions, levels or phases will outweigh others, such as if there is political pressure to

²⁶ Likely to be renamed 'Conflict Prevention, Stability and Peacebuilding'.

serve the EU's direct internal and external interests. As such, a joint instrument risks undermining a truly holistic approach.

On the other hand, however, an integrated financial approach would likewise be undermined if the solution to this problem is to install excessive ring-fencing within the NDICI, thereby nullifying the philosophy of integration in the process. A difficult balance between merging instruments and preserving comprehensive action needs to be struck if the NDICI is to facilitate a genuine, rather than a merely cosmetic, integrated approach to conflict and crisis. Indeed, simplification is the hardest thing to do.

Yet despite the fact that the NDICI embodies the rationale of an integrated approach, the instrument may well be pulled apart by the future European Development Fund and the European Neighbourhood Instrument owing to a political decision late in the process. If so, this would indicate that, despite commitments and logic, more specialist interests sometimes run counter (and powerfully so) to achieving integrated action.

4.2 Other WGA instruments and procedures

4.2.1 Lessons learned processes

The 'Concepts, Knowledge Management and Training' division of the new Dir. ISP seeks to boost a process of lessons learned. What is new about this procedure is that it will try to look at the EU's overall performance in a conflict zone. Rather than learning lessons about a certain aspect of EU intervention – as currently conducted by, e.g., DEVCO for development and the FPI service for financial instruments in external action – Dir. ISP.1 hopes to set up lessons learned processes in an integrated manner (interview EEAS, May 2019).

If it succeeds, this form of knowledge management will help to set up feedback loops, as the lessons learned will be used to impact the planning and training activities of Dir. ISP itself. However, it remains to be seen whether ISP.1 will manage to implement this kind of more integrated lessons learned procedure about the EU's overall performance. The fact is that ISP.1 lacks sufficient staff to execute this process properly, and that conducting these type of assessments may also not be appreciated across the board, as they are likely to identify structural failures (interview EEAS, May 2019).

4.2.2 Joint programming

For the next legislature, the EU is seeking to step up its own 'joint programming' in development cooperation,²⁷ which means the joint planning, analysis and response efforts (in short, a joint strategy) by all relevant EU partners. While still under negotiation, development programming in the next MFF is supposed to happen in an even more

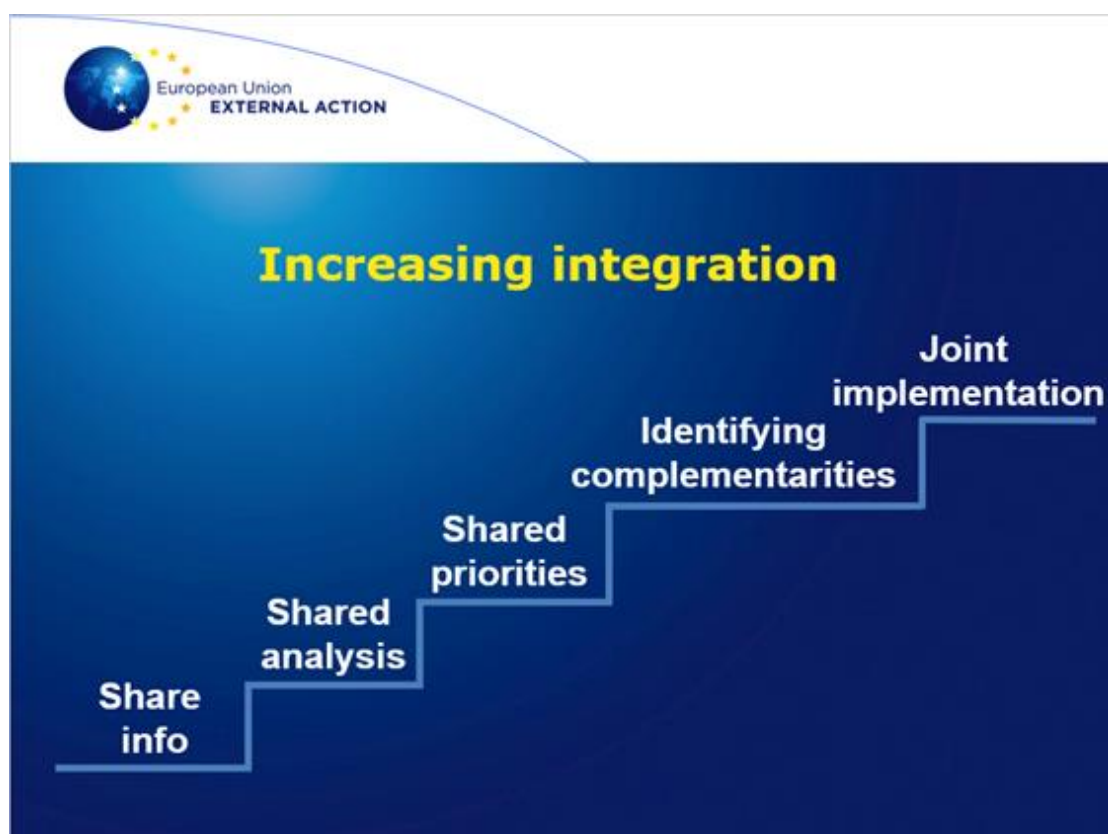
²⁷ The term 'joint programming' traditionally refers to working with member states. What is interesting is that the Commission text on the NDICI regulation makes joint programming 'the default'. Indeed, in the preparatory work on strategic programming in 2019, EU delegations have also been asked to look at the feasibility of joint programming in every setting (Medinilla, Veron and Mazzara 2019).

integrated manner involving DG DEVCO, DG ECHO, the EEAS and the member states (interview DG DEVCO, April 2019). Indeed, there is an increased focus on joint programming with the EU member states in the Commission proposal on a new jumbo instrument for external action (EC 2018a; see Chapter 4.1).

4.2.3 Information-sharing and shared analysis

Important for a successful IA is to enhance information- and analysis-sharing among the various actors involved in crisis response in order to facilitate the implementation of a joint conflict response (Figure 3). The first implementation report of the IA, which has since been issued on an annual basis, outlines that the EU institutions are improving shared conflict analysis with member states and other stakeholders (EEAS 2017). The work being done by Dir. ISP to foster a shared understanding and analysis of a given conflict is particularly appreciated by various Commission DGs (interview DG ECHO, May 2019). They believe that different actors can provide different perspectives on a conflict or crisis with, for example, DG DEVCO (which often operates only in the capital of third countries) and DG ECHO (which also operates outside the capital) providing complementary analysis.

Figure 3: Increasing integration (Source: EEAS 2019)



One concrete example of information-sharing and shared analysis are the country reports that are drafted during country meetings, which bring together all stakeholders that work on a particular country. While the EEAS is the

penholder in this exercise, other actors (e.g. PSC and DEVCO) also contribute to this shared analysis as seen from different perspectives, such as by taking the theatre or the conflict as the subject rather than EU policies or institutions.

Another concrete example of shared analysis is the Political Framework for Crisis Approach (PFCA). If there is an emerging crisis, the PSC can ask the geographical desks within the EEAS to prepare a PCFA based on close consultation with the member states and the Commission. This PCFA provides a strategic analysis of a given crisis situation and outlines the available options for EU action, including a CSDP mission. While useful as an inter-service tool for joint analysis, the EU should promote greater use of the PFCA in its processes for dealing with crisis situations (interview European Commission, May 2019).

4.2.4 Human resources

Human resources (HR) do not necessarily facilitate or reflect the importance of an IA to external conflicts and crises. In fact, a widespread sentiment within the institutions is that in order to write policy at the EU level, one needs to work together by default. In this sense, an IA is inevitable and an HR policy is not the core driver behind cooperation or coordination among services (interview EEAS, April 2019). Nonetheless, some interviewees have identified HR as one realm in which there is major scope for improvement in the belief that fostering incentives could enhance the services' performance in working in an integrated manner.

Specialised staff and resources

Dir. ISP brings together up to 90 staff members who specialise in implementing and coordinating the EU's IA. The increased staff capacity shows the importance attributed to implementing and operationalising the IA. Yet, for other staff at the EEAS and in other institutions, the IA is not mentioned as a core objective of the job mandate, nor are cooperation and coordination being sufficiently assessed during annual appraisal talks.

It is clear that individual personalities matter for the implementation of an IA, as some are more likely to implement an IA than others. For example, some important drivers of the IA concept within Dir. ISP come from the UN and have brought with them certain ideas and expertise in the realm of policy and institutional integration (interview UNLOPS, May 2019).

WGA trainings

Some training schemes exist that seek to foster exchange among different EU institutions and bodies.

- While new EEAS staff gets a four-day training to learn about the different parts of the house, this is not necessarily done with the motivation of fostering an integrated approach (interview HR, May 2019).
- While not obligatory for all EEAS staff, personnel that specifically work on topics relating to crisis and conflict have a chance to take part in both trainings and conferences that deal with the EU's IA (interview EEAS, May 2019).

- There are also in-house non-mandatory trainings for Commission staff that focus on conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity, of which an IA is one aspect (interview DG DEVCO, April 2019).
- DG DEVCO organises CSDP pre-deployment trainings for staff members who are about to leave for a delegation. Among other things, these trainings discuss the integrated approach to conflict and crisis (interview DG DEVCO, April 2019).
- There is a voluntary 'twinning' training scheme between the European Parliament and the EEAS (interview EP, April 2019). Members of staff in the EP can spend up to three weeks at the EEAS or in a delegation to learn the ins and outs of these services.
- In 2019, the EEAS developed a toolkit for strategic programming that includes a one-day specialist training for staff across the service, though it is primarily aimed at geographic desks. The rationale was to prepare strategically for the programming of the NDICI, including the pre-programming process of developing country assessments.²⁸

4.2.5 Political leadership

Political leadership is key when trying to implement an IA. There has been massive improvement in inter-institutional coordination in the last six years. One key factor behind this has been the leadership shown by Commission President Juncker and HRVP Mogherini (Interview EC SecGen, May 2019). In contrast to their respective predecessors, José Manuel Barroso and Catherine Ashton, who were reluctant to work in an integrated manner, Juncker and Mogherini have facilitated and encouraged inter-institutional cooperation. In a similar vein, one expects HRVP Josep Borrell and European Council President Charles Michel to cooperate better than their predecessors. After all, heads of state or government play an important role in foreign affairs, especially when acting in crisis mode in the European Council. Since the staff of the European Council's president is spread too thinly, it requires the preparatory support of the EEAS.

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Furthermore, at a more micro-level, leadership can also facilitate an IA. For one thing, having heads of units and DGs rotate among different services and institutions can help to foster better inter- and intra-service cooperation. For example, when DG DEVCO got a new DG who had previously worked at the EEAS, he managed to push for more and better cooperation with the EEAS (Interview DG DEVCO, April 2019). Similarly, effective rotation between the EEAS and its stakeholders – especially the member states – will be key to a better functioning of the EEAS as well as the success of the IA.

²⁸ Insight taken from an email exchange with Andrew Sherriff on 4 October 2019.

5 Conclusion

Conceptually, over the past decade, the EU has been elaborating and deepening its WGA to external crises and conflicts. By gradually developing an integrated approach based on the security-development nexus (2003) into a 'comprehensive approach' (CA) (in 2013) and a more holistic 'integrated approach' (IA) (in 2016), the scope of the EU's so-called 'whole-of-governance approach' (WGA) – as opposed to the 'whole-of-government approaches' (WGAs) of the member states – has ambitiously expanded. While designing this approach, the EU has learned from and exchanged with other multilateral actors (the UN, NATO, the OSCE, the OECD-DA and civil society), which in turn has led to a gradual conceptual convergence of all these actors' headquarters-level approaches to dealing with external conflicts and crises.

Today, the EU's IA aims to address all conflict dimensions – ranging from security challenges to development concerns to economic grievances – during all phases of a conflict, from prevention to post-conflict rehabilitation. To effectively implement such an approach, the EU wishes to coordinate and cooperate with all relevant actors at the local, national, regional and global levels.

Indeed, the EU's IA is system-wide in that it builds on various EU policies and instruments, including humanitarian aid, political dialogue, sanctions, CSDP, development cooperation, macro-financial assistance and trade (EEAS 2019). While the EU's core interests in terms of external conflict management lie in its extended neighbourhood, the IA is applied much more broadly and spans the entire globe, including when tackling conflicts in the Sahel (especially in Mali and Niger), the Horn of Africa (mainly Somalia), South-east Asia (notably Myanmar) and Latin America (Venezuela).

In order to operationalise its ambitious WGA policy, several platforms and mechanisms have been put in place to enable actors to interact and coordinate. The key player and facilitator of the EU's IA is the EEAS' new Directorate Integrated Approach for Security and Peace (Dir. ISP), which was founded in March 2019 to regroup the former division for the Prevention of Conflicts, Rule of Law/Security Sector Reform, Integrated Approach, Stabilisation and Mediation (PRISM) and the security/defence policy, planning and conduct parts of the house. In addition to conflict and crisis coordination by Dir. ISP, there are numerous inter-service platforms (e.g. crisis meeting and the Commissioners Group on External Action) and multi-lateral platforms that facilitate a joint crisis response of the HRVP/EEAS, the Commission's DGs, the Political Security Committee and other international actors. However, despite playing an interesting political role in the realm of conflict mediation, the European Parliament is generally not involved in inter-service coordination.

The latter is emblematic of one core challenge that hampers the establishment of a truly effective IA at the EU level: the remaining gaps between the political and operational dimensions in responding to external conflicts and crises. For instance, while the divisions of the EEAS with a conduct function in civ-mil security and defence cooperation have been merged into Dir. ISP, the geographical directorates under the Deputy Secretary General for political affairs remain largely detached and member states are not fully integrated into their activities. As a result, although the Dir. ISP may trigger integrated action at the bureaucratic level, it will not necessarily do so at the political and operational levels.

At a more technical-operational level, one key innovation that may enhance the implementation of an IA to crisis response is the NDICI, the jumbo financial instrument that has been proposed by the Commission for the next MFF. However, the intention to merge finances for development, international cooperation and the neighbourhood also lays bare one key paradox: While the NDICI has the ability to facilitate coordinated financial action, there is also a risk that it will actually undermine comprehensive action, as some conflict dimensions, levels or phases may outweigh others within the same instrument under political pressure of serving the EU's direct interests.

While it still remains to be seen whether the merging of financial instruments will be a success factor for an IA at the EU level, the importance of political leadership in encouraging cooperation and coordination unquestionably is. The cooperation of the HRVP with both the Commission president and the president of the European Council cannot be underestimated in this regard. Moreover, investing in human resources is important to facilitate an IA – and personalities matter. While specialised staff has been hired in Dir. ISP to operationalise an IA, more could be done to create the right incentives for people to work together within and across EU services and institutions.

6 End note

This report was written in the framework of the research project *“Europe's coherence gap in external crisis and conflict management: Political rhetoric and institutional practice in the EU and its member states”*. In this project, the Bertelsmann Stiftung and Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) have joined forces to assess whether, how and with what degree of success whole-of-government approaches (WGAs) are being implemented in the external actions of the EU and its member states. The underlying interest was to find out whether WGAs have, as intended, led to more political coherence.

WGAs in foreign affairs were introduced to cope with the changing security environment after the end of the Cold War. They refer to the fact that (re-)emerging conflicts and crises, especially those associated with fragile or precarious statehood, have become multi-dimensional, involving different root causes and going beyond the traditional nexus between security and development. Hence, in order to successfully tackle and address these complex contingencies, a whole toolbox of defence, diplomacy and development instruments has become necessary. To employ this toolbox, cooperation with multiple actors at different levels (local, national, regional) is required throughout all phases of the conflict cycle (prevention, crisis management, stabilization, reconstruction and state-building). A WGA thus refers to a holistic and integrated government response to tackling fragility and conflict.

The results of this research will be published as an anthology in early 2020. The book will contain an abridged version of the present EU study and 28 country reports, each examining whether and how the WGA policy of the respective member state was institutionally implemented.

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