EU-CIVCAP

Preventing and Responding to Conflict: Developing EU CIVilian CAPabilities for a sustainable peace

Institutional Learning and Lessons Identified in
EU Civilian Conflict Prevention: A framework for analysis

Deliverable 7.4

(Version 1.6; 8 May 2017)

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 653227.
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<th>Title</th>
<th>DL 7.4 Institutional Learning and Lessons Identified in EU Civilian Conflict Prevention: A Framework for Analysis</th>
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<tr>
<td>Last modification</td>
<td>8 May 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Final</td>
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<tr>
<td>Version</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<td>Leading Partner</td>
<td>UABDN</td>
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<td>Other Participant Partners</td>
<td>UBRIS</td>
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<td>Audience</td>
<td>Public</td>
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<td>Abstract</td>
<td>This document contains the analytical framework to be used to identify and organise lessons in the EU-CIVCAP project.</td>
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<td>Keywords</td>
<td>Institutional learning, Lessons identified, Conflict prevention, Peacebuilding, Crisis response</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual and analytical framework to help relevant EU-CIVCAP partners operationalise learning-related activities associated with EU Conflict Prevention/Peacebuilding policies. This involves identifying, organising, evaluating, and disseminating a range of learning-related findings regarding EU conflict prevention efforts, with a view to improving the EU’s performance in this area. The general framework and initial examples of learning found within this document are the product of a previous EU-funded project (EUCONRES) that ran under Michael E. Smith’s direction from 2008-13.¹

For the EU-CIVCAP project, the rest of this paper attempts to first provide a definition of learning, focusing on its experiential/institutional dimensions. It then turns to the measurement of EU learning-focused efforts in the domain of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In the third section, the paper presents a framework for organising various lessons identified as a result of EU conflict resolution efforts. Finally, the paper suggests several parameters for inputting lessons into our online catalogue/database of lessons identified. This entire approach will be adapted throughout the course of the project in light of inputs and findings by the project members, and will contribute to the production of key EU-CIVCAP deliverables at the end of 2018.

1. INTRODUCTION

Policy learning is a central concept in the EU-CIVCAP project, and also an area of increased EU activity in the realm of foreign/security policy and many other policy domains. Within foreign/security policy in particular, in the past decade the EU has devoted far more attention to formal processes of institutional learning and ‘best practices’ than it had ever attempted between the 1970s and 1990s. Much of this learning-focused activity has been driven by a clear need to adapt EU institutions to take on a wider range of security-related tasks, such as conflict resolution, crisis management, and peacekeeping, using the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP), the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and other policy tools. There are two basic reasons for this: 1) foreign/security policy cannot be ‘managed’ like other socio-economic EU policy domains, by forward-looking regulations and directives; and 2) EU member states still resist extensive delegation of certain responsibilities to centralised EU organisations such as the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS). These facts are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future, which is why the EU continues to invest time and effort in social/networking/learning mechanisms and ‘informal’ (as well as formal/legal) institution-building to improve its performance in this realm, while maintaining it as a decentralised policy sector still under the direct control of EU member states (i.e., intergovernmental rather than supranational).

The purpose of this paper is to initiate an internal dialogue within the EU-CIVCAP project in order to help relevant partners operationalise learning-related activities associated with EU Conflict Prevention/Peacebuilding (CPP) policies. This involves identifying, organising, evaluating, and disseminating a range of learning-related findings regarding EU conflict prevention efforts, with a view to improving the EU’s performance in this area. The general framework and initial examples of learning found within this document are the product of a previous EU-funded project (EUCONRES) that ran under my direction from 2008-13. A monograph based on this project has recently been completed; much of what follows has been adapted from that work.

For the EU-CIVCAP project, the rest of this paper attempts to first provide a definition of learning, focusing on its experiential/institutional dimensions. It then turns to the measurement of EU learning-focused efforts in the domain of CPP. In the third section I

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2 Briefly, ‘social’ mechanisms involve shared understandings, norms, habits, and ‘rules of thumb among a set of policy experts; ‘networking’ mechanisms involve regular linkages among policy experts who share responsibilities for a problem; and ‘learning’ mechanisms involve informal and formal procedures for improving policy performance as described later in this paper.

3 This approach has recently been termed ‘new intergovernmentalism’ (see Bickerton et al. 2015).

present a framework for organising various lessons identified as a result of EU conflict resolution efforts. Finally, I suggest several parameters for inputting lessons into our online catalogue/database of CPP-related learning. This entire approach will be adapted throughout the course of the project in light of inputs and findings by other project members, and will hopefully contribute to the production of our key deliverables at the end of 2018.

2. GENERAL POINTS ON THE CONCEPT

Before turning to the issue of learning, I think we need to be clear about how this concept fits into the project more generally. As I see it, our ultimate goal is to improve or enhance the EU’s capabilities in the realm of CPP, so one of our first tasks is to define the full range of existing resources the EU can deploy in this area. As far as resources are concerned, in addition to technologies, personnel, and procedures, these involve: 1) general concepts/doctrines regarding how the EU should engage in CPP (such as the ‘comprehensive approach’); 2) short/medium term policies (such as individual CSDP missions); and 3) longer-term, and often ‘strategic,’ policies/plans devised on a functional/technical basis (such as the Maritime Security Strategy) and/or on a geographic basis, as with the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) or the EU Strategy for the Horn of Africa. They can also involve the use of various power resources on the part of the EU, such as: 1) diplomacy/good offices; 2) economic/financial aid (in trade/development/humanitarian aid policy); 3) economic/financial sanctions; 4) the power of ‘attraction’ (accession/association); 5) light armed force (police/gendarmerie/border/customs forces); and 6) heavy armed force (air/land/naval military forces). These various tools can also be deployed to provide

5 For a discussion of the concepts of resource and capability, please see EU-CIVCAP DL 2.6, ‘EU Capabilities for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding: A Capabilities-Based Assessment’, available from: https://eu-civcap.net/portfolio/deliverables/ [accessed 8 May 2017].

6 Our understanding of this concept in particular will be the focus of a deliverable due in month 36: DL 4.3, ‘Report on EU comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding’.

7 The ENP may deserve more attention in our work even though our two key regions are outside its scope, as the EU is revising this approach to structuring its relations with 15 states, plus the Palestinian Authority, on its eastern and southern borders. More importantly, nearly all of the 15 states initially eligible for involvement in the ENP (Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and Ukraine) currently suffer from problems related to conflict.

8 The issue of ‘force’ raises the question of the functional or practical dividing line between EU ‘civilian’ and EU ‘military’ capabilities (as well as ‘dual-use’ technologies). I think the simplest approach is to define ‘military capability’ as those falling under a direct military chain of command, which (for the moment) involves the command by an EU member state (or coalition of same), as the EU’s own small Operational Headquarter (OHQ) has not yet commanded an EU military operation. Therefore, ‘civilian capabilities’ for CPP could make use of unarmed military resources and/or deploy lightly armed police/gendarmerie forces with executive authority (and both approaches have occurred in the context of specific CSDP operations). We may need to discuss this further as the project develops.
executive authority (i.e., powers to investigate, adjudicate, detain/arrest, and defend) or non-executive authority (training, support, technical assistance, etc.) in a particular host country. Finally, they can involve conceptual and operational linkages to many other actors (providers and stakeholders) in the realm of CPP, such as the UN, the OSCE, NATO, and the African Union (AU). For the purpose of simplicity, I will use the term ‘CPP action’ as a generic term for all of these types of CPP-related EU decisions/actions/capabilities; this will be a core unit of analysis for understanding learning processes in the rest of this paper.

Second, a large part of our effort will also be devoted to developing clear measures of ‘success’ or ‘effectiveness.’ To do this, however, we need to be clear about what the EU has already been doing in this realm, and how the EU itself thinks about, or operationalises, ‘effectiveness.’ Therefore, one critical task, which I will be undertaking during the first year of the project, will be to catalogue the EU’s own well-established learning efforts (or ‘lessons identified’) regarding CPP actions. We do not want to merely repeat what the EU is already doing, but we do need a kind of baseline regarding the EU’s thinking to demonstrate: 1) how effective is the EU’s current approach to learning-based policy-making?; and 2) what can our project add to these efforts, once we collate all of the research generated by the end of 2018? In other words, our reports on learning/lessons should be very clear in distinguishing between what the EU has already learned in this realm (‘EU lessons identified’ for example) and what our project discovers in the next three years that could enhance the EU’s existing efforts (‘EU-CIVCAP lessons identified’ for example). This nomenclature could change but we need to start somewhere. Similarly, our online lessons catalogue is meant to summarise the project findings in this realm from various work packages (WPs), yet we need to be cognisant of the fact that the EU itself is conducting its own work in this area. Moreover, ‘identifying’ lessons (as the EU itself puts it) is not the same as actual ‘learning’ (i.e., improving the EU’s capabilities etc.), so we also need to evaluate whether the EU has implemented its own lessons identified, how those lessons relate to our own findings, and whether the ones we identify are feasible: politically, economically, or whatever.

A third consideration is that we need to be very clear about how to add our EU-CIVCAP lessons identified to the database as several project partners will be involved in this process. As noted above, the EU’s own lessons identified can be found in various EU reports and reports of other authoritative actors, enhanced by personal interviews in some cases. These will be used to populate part of our learning database. For EU-CIVCAP lessons, we may need to discuss a methodology (beyond the general points in this paper) to determine

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9 In using the term ‘host country’ rather than (for example) ‘target’ or ‘conflict zone’ I am assuming that the EU will act in the realm of CPP only if invited by the parties; it does not intend to be an intervention or invasion force.
10 For example, see European Parliament 2012.
11 For example, see UN Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit 2004.
whether certain lessons we identify should ‘qualify’ for the database. This is critical as the learning database we develop will also be used to prepare several deliverables: individual reports on best practices from various WPs and a final report on best practices. At a minimum, then, we will need to discuss in the coming months some criteria for identifying our own lessons and how do deal with possibly conflicting information about such lessons after all the research material is collated. I shall return to this point at the end of this paper.

A fourth consideration, which I believe will be a major challenge, is the need for EU-CIVCAP to impose some intellectual order on what the EU is really attempting to achieve in the realm of international security, and how those efforts relate to the EU’s other major policy goals (particularly internal ones). Many of the terms used in the EU’s own documents are notoriously imprecise when not used in a specific context: peacebuilding, peacekeeping, conflict resolution, conflict prevention, crisis management, crisis response, security sector reform, rule of law, and so on. More problematically, CPP is not a clear or coherent EU policy domain under the direction of a single authority, so we are likely to receive conflicting information about it as we get deeper into the project. There is also a clear gap between the EU’s rhetoric and its policy actions in this realm, which this project should help to address. In terms of policy tools in particular, although we are meant to focus on civilian efforts, we also need to consider the relationship between that realm and the EU’s military capabilities, especially in terms of the EU’s attempt to devise a ‘comprehensive approach’ to CPP-related problems. The rest of this document has been written with a view to addressing some of these issues.

3. DEFINING LEARNING

Turning to the concept of policy-relevant learning, this should be seen most generally as a type of political change, and should be distinguished from other related forms of change, such as vague ‘lessons of history’ (i.e., analogical reasoning) or mere ‘adaptation’ to new circumstances (Levitt and March 1988; Levy 1994; Zito 2009; Zito and Schout 2009). The purpose of policy-relevant learning on the part of the EU is to improve the ‘fit’ between its existing institutional framework/organisational routines and its stated goals/ambitions, in this case involving CPP. While analogical reasoning or adaptation do not typically involve changes in core institutional values or purposes, learning can be conceptualised as a process of deliberate, long-term, and highly self-reflexive institutional/policy reform (Haas 1990). At a minimum, it consists of: 1) regularly benchmarking or reviewing EU policy performance in specific domains; 2) actively generating possible lessons as a result of the experience gained in undertaking new actions (‘lessons identified’); 3) deliberately transforming lessons into policy-relevant knowledge through feedback/monitoring/evaluation/training processes; and
4) institutionalising new knowledge (‘lessons learned’) for application to future operations, often in the form of (narrow) best practices, concepts, doctrines, and (broader) strategic plans.\footnote{EU terminology also distinguishes between Lesson observation (LO), lesson identified (LI) and lesson learnt (LL). LO refers to “[a]ny occurrence(s) or finding(s) that could have an impact on EU operational output and has the potential to become a Lesson Learned. It might require an improvement or it can constitute a Best Practice.” LI is a “Statement (based on a verified Lesson Observation) defining the detailed nature of the problem for which remedial action has to be developed - it is the outcome of the analysis phase.” LL refers to a “lesson that has been fully staffed and the associated improvement and implementation action(s) identified and taken. A lesson can only be declared ‘learned’ once the full remedial action has been successfully implemented” (EUMS 2012: 6).} In line with EU terminology, best practice is understood as “an activity which conventional wisdom regards as more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique, procedure or methodology.” (Council of the EU, 2015: 5).

Based on these processes, I prefer to use the term ‘experiential institutional learning’ and define this as changes in an institution’s functions, procedures, and capabilities as a result of new information, observation, or experience. In general, ‘changes’ mainly refers to a clearer conceptualisation of what the EU is attempting to achieve, and how the EU intends to achieve it, in the realm of CPP. However, although learning in the case of the EU involves a high degree of technical/functional adaptation (i.e., a desire to ‘improve’ performance), it is not a completely neutral or uncontested spill-over process but rather a deliberate attempt by EU policy elites to use operational experiences to evaluate institutional performance and, if necessary, facilitate institutional change, in a new EU policy domain. More specifically, such learning can be measured in terms of institutional changes across three major dimensions: responsibilities, rules, and resources.

By responsibilities I refer to the EU’s own conception of its place in the world and the specific types of foreign/security policy activities (such as CPP) that might reflect or advance its role. This articulation of the EU’s responsibilities can be framed in terms of treaty articles (such as Art. 21/2 of Lisbon) and general strategic documents (such as the European Security Strategy and the Maritime Security Strategy), or in far more specific terms regarding, for example, a CFSP/CSDP joint action (i.e., in terms of a ‘mandate’). Changes in responsibilities as a result of experiential learning can be measured in three main ways: 1) an expansion and/or clarification of the initial mandate during the planning and/or implementation phases of a policy; 2) a change in the duration and/or geographic scope of a policy; and 3) the creation of complementary or follow-on policies in order to fulfil the original mandate and/or related policy goals, such as development or humanitarian assistance. A high degree of learning of this type, therefore, would involve both general and specific changes to responsibilities (i.e., treaties, strategies, and mandates) in terms of expanding/clarifying them, extending their duration/geographic scope, and creating complementary policies.
By *rules* I refer to the institutional structures and policymaking routines that govern a particular policy domain, in this case those focused on CPP but also the more general relationship between this capacity and other major European foreign policy initiatives, such as the ENP. As noted above, CPP is not a distinct EU policy domain (unlike, for example, the Common Agricultural Policy), but we may need to treat it (or even help ‘create it’) as such for the purposes of EU-CIVCAP. These rules can be informal (or uncodified) or formal (codified in EU treaties/directives/regulations); also, they can reflect, and then influence, how the EU determines future responsibilities and resources. In addition, a central characteristic of EU policymaking in EU foreign/security policy is the ‘maturation’ of informal norms/customs into formal rules/laws (often later codified as treaty reforms), so EU-CIVCAP should attempt to identify these processes whenever possible. Such changes can involve the modification of existing rules (including the role of various organisational actors) or the creation of entirely new ones in order to improve policy performance. As the EU increasingly works with other partners in this realm, we should also be on the lookout for changes in rules regarding (for example) the EU’s relations with the UN, NATO, and the African Union (AU). Rules regarding the EU’s relations with the UN and NATO, in particular, have been codified to some degree, in the form of (for example) an agreement with the UN on crisis management\(^{13}\) and one with NATO regarding the EU’s use of NATO resources.\(^{14}\) These considerations will also inform three of our deliverables.\(^{15}\)

Finally, by *resources* I refer to both material and non-material assets the EU makes available for the purpose of CPP. Material resources might include financing, technologies, personnel, and equipment provided by the EU or its member states; non-material resources might include the provision of best practices, doctrines, concepts, progress reports, data sets, and other sources of knowledge relevant to the creation and implementation of certain policies. This also could include the creation of new institutions or bodies directly involved in CPP activities (which overlaps with ‘rules’ above). We also might think about distinguishing between general changes in resources for the CPP domain (such as an increase in the aid budget or the procurement of a new technology) and the provision of specific resources for a joint action or similar crisis/conflict response mission. This latter component also involves the provision of resources as determined through contributions by EU member states as well as by the EU budget. Our analysis of resources, in particular, along with related

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\(^{13}\) Council of the EU (2008); UN and EU (2003).

\(^{14}\) The so-called ‘Berlin Plus’ agreement, or the EU-NATO ‘Agreed Framework.’ For a detailed discussion, see Smith 2013.

\(^{15}\) DL 4.1, ‘Report on comparing EU, UN, and OSCE conflict prevention and peacekeeping capabilities’ (available online); DL 4.2, ‘Report on interaction between EU, UN, and OSCE in conflict prevention and peacebuilding’ (due in month 24); and DL 6.2, ‘Policy paper on coordination of local capacity-building’ (due in month 30)—once published, these will be available from: https://eu-civcap.net/portfolio/deliverables/ [accessed 8 May 2017].
rules/procedures (for staffing and contracting, for example), will inform several key deliverables.16

Taken together, experience-driven changes in responsibilities, rules, and resources regarding how the EU undertakes CPP activities also may represent a fundamental change in how the EU sees its role in the world, as well as involve the creation of new foreign/security policy concepts, a culture/doctrine of CPP (military and civilian), or a strategic culture to improve the EU’s ability to project various forms of power to cope with certain international security problems. A CPP-oriented strategic culture in particular would involve not just the provision of adequate material resources for CPP actions, but also robust and reliable procedures for deploying multilateral forces, overseeing them, and coordinating their use with other EU policy tools in specific areas of operation (Cornish and Edwards 2001; Cornish and Edwards 2005; Meyer 2005).17 One of the best examples of such ‘comprehensive’ experiential learning is the expansion of the EU’s maritime security efforts in Africa following the launch of the Atalanta naval operation (EUNAVFOR Somalia) in 2008. This initial operation, focused only on counter-piracy at first, grew into a much larger effort – involving changes in responsibilities, rules, and resources – devoted to broader capacity-building, state-building, and rule of law activities, with other follow-on policies (EUCAP Nestor) and a new strategy for the entire region (EU Strategy for the Horn of Africa).

Experiential institutional learning in the EU context, then, differs from bureaucratic/organisational or individual/cognitive learning, although elements of these approaches do overlap in practice. As noted above, the most important difference is that there is no single agency, bureaucracy, or organisation responsible for CPP; instead, this capacity is shared across the EU, involving mainly the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, EU member states, the Commission, and the EEAS. Moreover, the EU also developed two distinct approaches to activity in this realm, depending on whether they were primarily military or civilian in nature. Therefore, a bureaucratic or organisational approach to learning, which focuses on fairly rigid standard operating procedures or routines (Levitt and March 1988), would be too narrow to explain the development of these two major EU capabilities (military and civilian).

16 Such as a report on ‘capability-based analysis of technologies, personnel, and procedures’ (DL 2.1, available online); a report on ‘dual use-technologies’ (DL 2.4, due in month 26); a policy paper on ‘pooling and sharing of capabilities’ (DL2.5, due in month 34); a report on ‘technical shortcomings in early warning and conflict analysis’ (DL3.1, available online); and a report on ‘the EU’s capacities for conflict prevention’ (D3.2, available online)—once published, these will be available from: https://eu-civcap.net/portfolio/deliverables/ [accessed 8 May 2017].

17 The ESS (p. 11) also mentions the need to develop a European strategic culture “that fosters early, rapid, and where necessary, robust intervention.” In my own work, I use a relatively narrow or instrumental approach to strategic culture, focusing on specific resources and institutions/procedures developed to foster individual actions, rather than a broader, or constitutive, approach based on shared beliefs, emotions, habits, attitudes, history, or other factors (although these approaches can be linked). On this point, see: Haglund 2011; Norheim-Martinsen 2011.
Conversely, an individual-level or cognitive approach to learning would be far too broad if applied to CPP as a general policy domain. Most EU policies in this realm are organised on a case-by-case basis and personnel do not always serve in multiple actions over time. The high degree of rotation among EU policymakers involved in specific missions/operations also means that whatever lessons or knowledge they absorb as individuals may not result in long-term procedural changes throughout the EU’s foreign/security policy infrastructure. Thus, if learning occurs in this domain, given its decentralised bureaucratic structure and rotating operational personnel, it must involve changes within and among the policy units charged with conducting specific policies. In other words, experiential institutional learning depends, above all, on taking on new actions or new tasks that force an institution to evaluate, and possibly reform, its normal ways of doing things. Therefore, it makes sense to examine learning primarily, or at least initially, in terms of those new tasks, such as the type of action (i.e., peace monitoring or rule of law) or the geographic region in which they were launched.

It is also possible to analyse institutional learning – as defined above – in terms of several other parameters. It may be worth considering these further once we move deeper into the lessons learned/best practices phase of the project. One such parameter involves the level of analysis where institutional learning takes place. Here we can discern between three major levels: strategic (or political-level), operational (or headquarters-level), and local (or force/theatre-level) learning. Strategic institutional learning focuses on changes in the responsibilities, rules, and resources within and among key EU institutions that provide political direction and strategic oversight to specific policies. Operational-level institutional learning involves specific dynamics in terms of resourcing, burden-sharing, mandates, rules of engagement, and (for some actions) the direct command and control by the EU from Brussels through various EEAS bodies (for civilian actions) or its Operational Headquarters (OHQ)(for military actions). Finally, local institutional learning focuses on learning behaviours experienced ‘on the ground’, in terms of the responsibilities, rules, and resources required to fully implement a CPP-related action. This level would also include the involvement of local stakeholders as either beneficiaries of EU policy or as partners involved in the provision of CPP activities. Our work on the local or tactical level also informs several deliverables due near the end of the project.

18 For example, Tonra (2003) has applied such an approach to the creation of the CFSP; also see King 2005.
19 One small exception to this tendency involves the use of ‘follow-on’ policies to support or extend already existing ones, as they may make use of existing personnel.
20 This rotation, in fact, is one of the major areas of opportunity if the EU hopes to reform or improve the performance of the CPP capacity much further, especially in terms of its linkages to the new EEAS system devised under the Lisbon Treaty.
21 These deliverables are DLs 6.2–6.6; once published, these will be available from: https://eu-civcap.net/portfolio/deliverables/ [accessed 8 May 2017].
Obviously, there are overlaps between these levels of action, as there are with the more general concepts of responsibilities, rules, and resources. Overall, however, we need to strike a balance between understanding how the EU as a whole adapts itself in order to undertake a range of CPP policies and how local EU officials on the ground deal with day-to-day problems in carrying out those policies and determining success/effectiveness. In both cases, however, we need to pay close attention to whether the EU makes reference to, and then implements, ‘lessons identified’ from earlier policies when it implements any new or recent policies examined by EU-CIVCAP. As the EU’s own learning culture (such as it is) did not develop fully until just before the Lisbon Treaty (around 2008), it makes sense to use that period as an initial starting point, or baseline, for documenting various ‘EU lessons identified.’

4. LEARNING AND THE EU POLICY PROCESS

In addition to the question of defining and measuring central concepts like ‘lessons’ and ‘learning’ and (eventually) ‘best practices’, etc., we also need to think clearly about how those efforts relate to the ‘real world’ of contemporary CPP. For me, this involves thinking about the politics of policymaking/policy-implementation within the EU itself and between the EU and the ‘outside world’ (namely the host country). Or in other words, between endogenous and exogenous factors. If the EU’s lessons do not enhance these two aspects of how the EU actually conducts CPP activities, then they must be treated as ‘cheap talk’ or mere rhetorical reforms rather than as serious attempts to improve the EU’s policy performance in the realm of CPP. Hopefully, EU-CIVCAP will help the EU avoid this outcome, at least regarding the findings from our project, by serving as a kind of ‘reality check’ on the EU’s efforts.

Regarding the internal/endogenous dimension, we need to think about how changes (or potential changes) in responsibilities, rules, and resources fit within the EU’s existing machinery for conducting CPP activities. Assuming that we are treating CPP as an expression of EU foreign/security policy more generally, we can conceptualise this activity in a fairly straightforward fashion involving several policy phases, which can be juxtaposed against the three components of learning (rules, responsibilities, and resources) and the two major levels of analysis (strategic and operational) noted above. These phases involve: 1) agenda-setting/policy planning, particularly in terms of mandate-creation and policy leadership or responsibility (i.e., involving the Commission, EEAS, or EU member states); 2) policymaking to decide the specific details; 3) implementation and initial experiential learning; and 4) evaluation of the action afterwards (including learning and feedback processes). In other words, these phases involve answering questions about why the EU undertakes an action, who will represent the EU, how and with what resources the EU will conduct the action, and
how the EU intends to evaluate the action and, if necessary, reform its institutions to improve its performance the next time. These phases are not discrete, of course, but each phase is distinguished by a primary question to be answered.

Specifically, the planning phase generally involves discussions among EU member states, typically in the Council of the EU and the Political and Security Committee, with some input by the Commission. As many actions associated with CPP involve the CFSP/CSDP policy domain, we need to remember this is an intergovernmental instrument largely governed by consensus, so the interests of EU member states are a critical component of the process, especially when a CSDP operation with executive authority is under consideration. Although explicit quid pro quo bargaining is typically avoided during these deliberations, we do need to determine whether EU member states (particularly the larger ones that might lead and/or provide resources for a CPP action) are acting on the basis of their own political, economic, or security interests, and/or on the basis of a European interest, as identified by shared experiences, evaluations of the situation, EU strategy/policy documents, learning processes, or other factors.

Once planning moves into the second stage (policymaking), the EU begins to take firm decisions on questions regarding mandates, command/leadership, and burden-sharing/force generation. Burden-sharing (including the problem of monitoring transactions costs) in particular is a chronic problem in the area of multilateral security/defence cooperation (Lipson 1984) and this is no less true of the CFSP/CSDP and other CPP actions funded in whole or in part by intergovernmental contributions (Nováky 2015a; Weiss 2012). Since the EU puts together resources on a case-by-case basis for some of these actions, policymakers must regularly consider who will lead and provide the resources in these cases. Here we can focus on whether the mandate seems achievable in light of the planned resources and factors thought to be at work in the host country. We can also ask whether the mandate is directly linked to other EU policy goals (particularly development) in the host country or region. These problems require a high degree of coordination, and provide opportunities for learning, between the strategic and operational levels of analysis. Although we are not directly focusing on them, any policies involving military operations are especially problematic, given the need for a strict chain of command involving the specification of an OHQ in Europe and a Force Headquarters (FHQ) in or near the host country, each with their own commanders, as well as agreement on a specific Concept of Operations (CONOPS) to fulfil the mandate.

The third and fourth stages in the analysis (implementation and evaluation) are the most critical for our purposes: the dynamics of implementation and experiential learning once the EU launches a CPP action. Here we can focus on new experiences, feedback loops, and specific lessons identified, mainly at the operational and tactical levels, with some attention to strategic level processes. In this sense the feedback loops evolve from a negative-
preventative purpose (confidence-building through the communication of information regarding intentions) toward a more positive-affirmative purpose (common analyses, understandings, and policy-relevant knowledge, geared towards problem-solving). Thus, to the extent that EU member states and key EU organisations can agree on the policy-relevant content of information about the conduct of specific CPP actions regarding the causes of, and effective solutions to, conflict resolution and crisis management in third countries, the prospects for institutional change, and more cooperation, should be enhanced.

As noted above, these phases overlap with each other in the ‘real world’ of policymaking, so that lessons can change as the policy process moves forward. This often involves a change from the ‘general’ to the ‘specific’ (or from ‘broad’ to ‘narrow’). For example, one critical issue is whether the action actually had enough resources to fulfil the mandate, and delivered those resources on time, as specified in the initial CONOPS (or similar plan) for a specific action. Here we can determine whether a gap emerged between what was initially expected (in a general/broad sense) and what was experienced by EU policymakers (in a specific/narrow sense) between the planning and implementation phases of a CPP action. In addition, we can examine whether the mandate expands or even contracts once implementation starts, possibly as a result of new information and experience (i.e., learning). We can also examine potential learning dynamics when multiple actions (such as follow-on actions) are undertaken in a single host country or region, such as the Balkans or Africa. Also, when the EU undertakes both military and civilian CPP actions in a single country or region, do these efforts complement or undermine each other? Finally, has the EU managed to improve its overall civilian-military coordination in such situations, as later specified by its claims regarding a comprehensive approach to security? In other words, if the EU does not live up to its claims regarding these goals, to what extent does it attempt to reform its institutional structures and resource base in order to work more effectively the next time?

Thus, although there are at least four major micro-foundational logics of institutional change, or institutionalisation, in international organisations (IOs), this approach pays close attention to the functional and socialisation logics of institutional or normative evolution. The functional logic involves the idea that changes in how to perform a task (such as a CPP action) are necessary to improve the effectiveness of that task (such as contributing to peace-keeping or conflict resolution). This perception of necessity for change

22 Such a contraction of the mandate has occurred during the implementation of several CSDP actions; this can involve geographic scope and/or policy goals/tasks.

23 The other two major logics of institutionalisation are a power logic (institutionalisation depends upon actors with a capacity for leadership, such as large EU member states) and an appropriateness logic (institutionalisation results from a need to adapt new ways of doing things into an already-existing framework). These logics are not mutually exclusive, of course, and can work with or against the functional logic at the heart of experiential learning, as the analysis will demonstrate.
can be a direct result of experiential learning or learning-by-doing. The socialisation logic involves a shared desire to belong to, and build, a common socio-political space (such as a new EU policy domain). Active learning therefore requires shared perceptions of a gap between expectations and the actual experience of CPP actions (framed here as changes in responsibilities, rules, and resources), and deliberate measures to pass those perceptions on to other actors, across time and space, if they are involved in CPP. However, although I focus on learning as a result of shared perceptions of policy failure (or of similar difficulties), it can also involve other dynamics, such as: 1) risk-taking innovation during the implementation of a CPP action; 2) new information beyond direct experience that conflicts with previous beliefs; 3) bureaucratic turnover (i.e., new staff with new ideas); and 4) new technologies to deliver policy.

These processes can be treated as general causal mechanisms that change EU decision-making from a political process of self-interested bargaining (or politisation) to a more socio-technical process of consensual problem-solving (or functional socialisation) that serves a common interest. Such processes may also result in the creation of networks of policy experts or even so-called ‘epistemic communities’ devoted to certain policy problems. Epistemic communities are bound by their policy-relevant technical knowledge, professional expertise, and policy goals regarding a specific issue; the Commission represents this kind of technical expertise in many socio-economic EU policy domains. Therefore, we can consider whether this dynamic may be at work in the CPP domain, as some have argued of the CSDP, in particular (Cross 2013; Howorth 2004). Moreover, we can also examine the creation of a common EU/European knowledge base regarding these types of operations, much of which has been increasingly framed in terms of a comprehensive approach to security and as a nascent EU global or grand strategy. This ideational component regarding the EU’s unique contribution to CPP is in fact one of the most interesting aspects of the EU’s development of this capability, as it invests the effort with a more deontological aspect: the idea that EU member states increasingly share a sense of moral duty, purpose, or obligation to provide effective security assistance when asked to do so by third countries and other international organisations.

24 On this point, see the 2005 special issue of International Organization—59(1)—on ‘International Institutions and Socialization in Europe’.

25 For example, Müller and van Dassen (1997: 68) have made such a claim in their analysis of CFSP efforts regarding nuclear non-proliferation; Zito (2001) has made a similar claim regarding the EU’s leadership in environmental regulation.
5. POLICY PHASES AND THE CONFLICT CYCLE

The considerations above regarding learning, lessons identified, and policymaking phases can be juxtaposed against another key element of EU-CIVCAP: the concept of a conflict ‘life cycle’. As described in the proposal, this cycle involves four basic stages: 1) Conflict Prevention (conflict analysis & early warning); 2) Crisis Response (mediation & negotiation); 3) Conflict Management & Mitigation (crisis management operations); and 4) Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding (local capacity building). Further, each of these components of the conflict cycle is associated with a specific work package, as follows:

- Conflict Prevention: WP3
- Crisis Response: WP4
- Conflict Management: WP5
- Conflict Resolution & Peacebuilding: WP6

Although these aspects of the project are addressed with different WPs, the discussion above should make it clear that the boundaries between them are not very distinct in practice, especially when juxtaposed against ‘normal’ EU policymaking dynamics. For instance, framing some or all CPP actions as a type of crisis response (WP4) introduces other complications into the analysis, as (and similar to CPP more generally) no single authority in the EU has sole responsibility for ‘crisis response’. Various EU institutions also possess their own internal procedures for ‘crisis response’, which are not always easily coordinated in a real crisis. Finally, evidence from a range of CSDP ‘crisis operations’ clearly indicates that the EU does not normally act as quickly as one might expect in a ‘real’ crisis situation. Devising practical measures to solve these problems could be one of the most important contributions of EU-CIVCAP. These dynamics will be evident in terms of investigating the two areas of where most EU crisis response activity has taken place: the Western Balkans and the Horn of Africa (our case studies for WP5 and WP6).

In any event, the key point is that we can try to organise all of our empirical findings in a more systematic way to make them more intelligible to policymakers and other researchers. This exercise should also be useful in terms of populating the lessons database (DL7.1) and putting together the final best practices report (DL7.2) (see below). As an example, I will use learning-related evidence from the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM), which the EU implemented from September 2005 to December 2006 in partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This was the first major EU attempt to conduct a peace-monitoring mission, after its more limited experience with the EU Monitoring Mission in the Western Balkans (EUMM) and the EU Special Representative (EUSR) Border Support

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26 For the purposes of this paper, a ‘crisis’ in a third country usually involves: 1) suddenness; 2) time pressures to act quickly; 3) the use of violence; and 4) actual (or the highly likely possibility of) harm to large numbers of civilians.
Team in Georgia mission (EU BST Georgia). The AMM was also the first CSDP action in Asia, an area of the world where the EU has limited political influence, and the EU’s first practical security cooperation with ASEAN. The fact that about half of ASEAN’s monitors were Muslim added to the novelty of this mission in terms of giving the EU (and ASEAN) practical experience in security cooperation among diverse populations; it also enhanced the regional legitimacy of the mission. This is an important point considering the current challenges involving so-called Islamic State. In terms of the specific mandate, the EU also had to take a stance on the difficult question of a separatist movement; in this case it obviously sided with the national government to support territorial integrity. This approach paid off in the end in this case, as peace has been self-sustainable since the AMM created structures to outlast its presence and to maintain direct contact between the parties. Finally, it has also been cited as the EU’s first CSDP action to be conducted with another regional IO under the policy of “effective multilateralism” (Braud and Grive 2005: 36).

In Table 1 below, I summarise some of the main lessons learned from the EU’s experience with the AMM. Some of these lessons are derived from the EU’s own lessons identified reports; others are based on my own interpretation of how the mission was planned and implemented.

As we can see, every single EU CPP action, such as the AMM, generates multiple opportunities and locales for learning, involving various types of change (responsibilities, rules, and resources) and levels of analysis (strategic/political, operational, and tactical/local). Since the EU has already institutionalised its own learning culture when undertaking these actions, we need to think about our real ‘value added’ in terms of what EU-CIVCAP can bring to the analysis. One way to do this is to compare the EU’s own learning culture with its actual practice when conducting certain CPP actions; in other words, does the EU follow its own rules regarding learning? Another way to do this, as noted above, is for EU-CIVCAP to serve as a kind of ‘reality check’ on whether the EU’s own ‘lessons identified’ will realistically meet the needs of the conflict life cycle, as we define it. Thus, the concept of conflict life cycle will be helpful towards this end, as will a clearer understanding (as presented above) of the practical working relationship between the real-world dynamics of a conflict/crisis life cycle and the politics of how the EU actually behaves when attempting to manage it. A final reality check is to consider examples of failed EU crisis response/conflict management in recent years. The EU’s security agenda (as discussed in the Political and Security Committee) is packed with potential problems for resolution, yet the EU acts only under certain conditions. Therefore, we may want to think about whether to consider situations where the EU briefly debated a response (such as Lebanon or rescuing hostages taken by Boko Haram), yet failed to act in the end.

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27 The short answer is: not always, in the sense that: 1) the EU does not consistently follow its own rules on the practice of learning; and 2) the EU does not consistently apply lessons learned to later actions.
Table 1: Examples of key lessons learned under the AMM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy phase (EU)</th>
<th>Conflict cycle stage (EU/host country)</th>
<th>Changes in responsibilities</th>
<th>Changes in rules</th>
<th>Changes in resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Planning</td>
<td>1. Analysis/early-warning</td>
<td>Clearer practical definition of ‘peace monitoring’ in Aceh</td>
<td>Initial agreement with Indonesian government; initial EU-ASEAN division of labour</td>
<td>Initial plan for burden-sharing between EU budget, EU member states,(^{28}) and ASEAN(^{29})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Crisis response</td>
<td>Specific mandate as agreed by all stakeholders(^{30})</td>
<td>EU-ASEAN command/staffing structure; roles of mission staff</td>
<td>‘Start-up’ funding provided by Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Policymaking</td>
<td>3. Conflict management/mitigation</td>
<td>Extension of mandate to include election period</td>
<td>Proactive measures to bring peace, such as Commission on Security Arrangements</td>
<td>Creation of ‘district offices’ and deployment of staff (‘decommissioning teams’); use of ‘flanking measures’ by the Commission(^{31})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Conflict resolution/peacebuilding</td>
<td>Lessons learned report on the overall mission, including the idea of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)(^{32}). But no lessons report was produced regarding the planning phase</td>
<td>Lessons on EU-ASEAN cooperation, the media, human rights, and gender</td>
<td>Lessons on financing; inspired the idea of a ‘start-up’ fund for such actions, which was institutionalised as the Instrument for Stability (IFS) from 2007 for civilian missions(^{33})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{28}\) Plus two non-EU European states (Norway and Switzerland).  
\(^{29}\) Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, and the Philippines.  
\(^{30}\) Specifically: 1) demobilisation/decommissioning; 2) re-location of military forces and police troops; 3) monitoring the reintegration of rebel forces; 4) monitoring human rights; 5) monitoring legislative change; 6) ruling on disputed amnesty cases; 7) dealing with complaints and alleged violations; 8) maintaining liaison and cooperation with the parties.  
\(^{31}\) Such as support to the reintegration of former rebels into civil society and democratic political life; support to persons displaced by the conflict and to returnees from third countries; EU observation of local elections in 2006; technical assistance and capacity-building to support local police and the civil judicial system; and access to justice.  
\(^{32}\) Council of the EU 2007.  
\(^{33}\) The IFS was created in November 2006 as a Commission tool to enhance security in foreign countries facing a crisis. Viewed as a follow-up to the Rapid Reaction Mechanism facility, the IFS was initially endowed with €2.062 billion over seven years (2007–13). See European Commission 2006.
Finally, it may be worth considering the extent to which another factor might be introduced into the analysis: classifying ‘conflicts’ or ‘crises’ in terms of specific dynamics/problems, which may in turn influence the conflict life cycle and/or the EU policy process. For example, we can think about interstate conflicts (Russia/Ukraine), intrastate conflict (Syria), ethnic conflicts (Balkans), insurgencies (Iraq, Islamic State), resource conflicts (Nigeria), separatist conflicts (Kosovo), crime-related conflicts (piracy, corruption), and so on. If we are focusing mainly on EU conflict response since the Lisbon Treaty, and mainly on the Balkans and Africa, then analysing this factor (types of conflicts) in detail might be beyond the scope of our empirical terrain, but it is worth thinking about given the intellectual resources we have at our command for the next three years. Moreover, this type of analysis could be addressed in more detail in our report for future research priorities under the H2020 security agenda (DL7.3).

6. CATALOGUE OF LESSONS IDENTIFIED

The online catalogue (database) of lessons is currently live and has been populated with ten of our own lessons identified. The system allows users to browse the database according to the keywords that have been assigned to each individual lesson. The keywords are categorised as follows:

1. Countries/regions:34
   a. Online: N/A
   b. Forthcoming: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Horn of Africa, Kenya, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Western Balkans.

2. Institutions:
   a. Online: CMPD, CPCC, EC, EEAS, ESDC, EUSC, EUSR, OSCE, PSC, UN.
   b. Forthcoming: African Union, Council of the EU, EUMS, European Union, FPI Service, HR/VP.

3. Policy phases:
   b. Forthcoming: To be confirmed.

4. Conflict-cycle stages:
   a. Online: Conflict prevention, Crisis response, Conflict management, Conflict resolution & peacebuilding.
   b. Forthcoming: To be confirmed.

34 This category is forthcoming, as presently all the lessons uploaded accord to no specific country or region.
5. Cross-cutting issues:
   a. **Online**: Civil-military coordination, Local ownership, Short-long term approaches, Warning-response gap.
   b. **Forthcoming**: To be confirmed.

6. Topics:
   b. **Forthcoming**: Benchmarking, Budget, Civil-military coordination, Comprehensive Approach, Dual-use, Impact assessment, International cooperation, Lessons learned system, Mandate, Procurement, Staffing, Sustainability, Training.

Lessons can also be located via a free-text search function.
Users navigating to the Catalogue of Lessons Identified homepage are presented with a full list of lessons available, the various categories listed above, a search box for conducting free text searches, and the following introductory note:

The EU-CIVCAP catalogue of lessons is an online, searchable and living document which gathers all the lessons identified by the project’s Work Packages and published in our Deliverables. The evidence presented in this catalogue will be collected from official documents and reports, secondary sources and interviews with practitioners. To facilitate search through the archive, lessons identified are categorised according to the following criteria: relevant actor/institution, region/country, policy phase, conflict stage, cross-cutting issues and topics. The catalogue will be continually updated to reflect the ongoing research findings of the project until the end of November 2018.35

35 Available from: [https://eu-civcap.net/lessons/](https://eu-civcap.net/lessons/) [accessed 8 May 2017].
This is an initial setup, and will likely change as we proceed. However, it is not necessary to link every lesson to an item in each of the categories (the number of categories may expand as well); also, we try to be consistent in terms of how the ‘lessons’ are delivered to the EU-CiVCAP Project Officer for inputting into the catalogue, which will in turn make it easier to structure our final reports on this topic.

The system also allows for a short narrative of each lesson. Within the short narrative, there is a paragraph giving context and an introduction to the lesson, followed by an elaboration on the details of that lesson, as well as the lesson’s overall importance, evidenced by references to findings in multiple Deliverables. It concludes with brief recommendations deriving from the discussion. Each lesson also includes hyperlinks to all related lessons and related Deliverables, and the categories and tags it belongs to.
As noted above, individual lessons may involve multiple dimensions within the categories (for example, involving implementation/evaluation, or rules/resources, or multiple levels of activity). Also, as our basic approach is oriented around two major geographic areas (Western Balkans and Horn of Africa), these lessons can be grouped later into comparative case studies, which will inform one of our deliverables (DL5.1) and could be used as the basis for an academic publication. We are presently designing a methodology/concept for turning ‘lessons’ into ‘best practices’.

One final consideration regarding our research is that we have limited empirical material to work with if we are planning to focus on EU CPP activity since the Lisbon Treaty was implemented. Therefore, our work should refer to some of the EU’s experiences and learning from the very active period prior to Lisbon, where the EU actually developed the idea of ‘civilian crisis management’ and created several institutions to support it, even before the EEAS was established. This applies as well to the two main geographic areas noted above (Western Balkans, Horn of Africa), where the EU was already engaged before Lisbon.
7. CONCLUSION

This paper is intended only as a starting point in the work of EU-CIVCAP, which obviously involves other tasks and WPs where learning is not a priority. However, we should bear in mind that major institutional reform (i.e., treaty revision) in the area of CPP is not very likely during the course of this project, so framing our findings as lessons/best practices is one of the few ways that we are likely to make a direct and lasting contribution to this topic. Having worked on this approach (experiential learning) since just before the Lisbon Treaty, I would just add a few final words of caution regarding the politics of EU foreign/security policy, regarding CPP and other goals. Most EU policymakers and other informed observers already know exactly what needs to be done in this realm in order for the EU to be more coherent and effective, yet the EU often fails to act in many cases because of opposition from one or more EU member states. Therefore, even though this problem is not built into EU-CIVCAP as a central puzzle, all of our efforts need to take it into consideration.

I would also recommend that we try to consider our research in the context of the EU’s broader ambitions, especially in the current financial climate. Again, most EU officials will say that they support CPP goals and that the EU’s is uniquely equipped to deal with such problems as a kind of ‘one stop shop’ (i.e., the comprehensive or integrated approach). Yet the EU does not have unlimited resources and its political capital (not to mention economic resources) for CPP must be balanced against other EU priorities, which can change dramatically (e.g., euro ‘crisis’, refugee ‘crisis’, etc.). So our understanding of ‘EU capabilities’ for CPP must consider the opportunity costs as well, which would include perceptions among EU citizens about the need for such activity in light of other problems. Similarly, the EU has been extremely lucky in its CPP activities in that EU casualties have been very low in this realm (so far). Yet we must ask what would happen to the Union’s ambitions for CPP if it suffered a major disaster involving EU casualties and/or many civilian casualties in a host country (because of EU action or inaction)? Our lessons and best practices should be framed with some of these considerations in mind (along with those noted above), so that we avoid making recommendations that might lead the EU to make matters worse in a host country by (for example) claiming greater effectiveness as a security provider/peacebuilder than its capabilities – including leadership/resolve – actually merit. All political actors have limits, and our work should consider this element as well (i.e., what is well beyond the capabilities of the EU, and why?), even though we are trying to ‘enhance’ the EU’s overall performance in this realm.
### 8. TIMETABLE FOR MAIN LEARNING AND BEST PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

| Activity                                                                 | DL          | Means                       | Target Audience                | WP Leader | Input                          | Date(s)                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|                            |                                |           |                               |                                                                        |
| **Conceptual paper**                                                    | DL 7.4      | Internal document (Task 7.1)| Shared repository              | UABDN     | UABDN UBRIS UMAAS RUC IAI EPLO CEPS | Feb 2016                                                               |
| **Lessons identified/learned catalogue**                                | DL 7.1      | Website/Publication         | All                            | UABDN     | All Consortium Members         | From Jan 2016; Major update Feb–Mar 2017; Ongoing until Nov 2018     |
| **Institutional Learning and Lessons Identified in EU Civilian Conflict Prevention: A Framework for Analysis** | DL 7.4      | Publication                 | All                            | UABDN     | UABDN UBRIS UMAAS RUC IAI EPLO CEPS | Mar–May 2017; To be completed no later than 31 May 2017             |
| **Future research priorities report**                                   | DL 7.3      | Publication                 | All                            | UABDN     | UBRIS                         | Nov 2017                                                              |
| **Report on best practices**                                            | DL 7.2      | Publication                 | All                            | UABDN     | UABDN UBRIS UMAAS RUC IAI EPLO CEPS | Nov 2018                                                              |
9. BIBLIOGRAPHY


