



# EU-CIVCAP

Preventing and Responding to Conflict:

Developing EU CIVilian CAPabilities for a sustainable peace

## Report on EU comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding

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### Summary of the Document

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<b>Abstract</b>	This report appraises the evolution of the EU's comprehensive approach into the integrated approach, in comparison with three other international organisations: the UN, NATO and the OSCE. The report makes a set of recommendations to improve the coherence and impact of EU's integrated responses at the strategic and operational levels.
<b>Keywords</b>	Comprehensive approach, integrated approach, conflict prevention peacebuilding, security sector reform, civilian capabilities, resilience, EU, UN, NATO, OSCE

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## Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific countries
AMISOM	African Union Mission to Somalia
AU	African Union
CA	Comprehensive Approach
CBSD	Capacity Building in Support of Security and Development (EU)
CEPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
CEWS	Conflict Early Warning System (EU)
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy (EU)
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
CIVCOM	Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (EU)
CMCO	Civilian-Military Coordination
CMPD	Crisis Management Planning Directorate (EU-EEAS)
CPCC	Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (EU-EEAS)
CSAP	Country Situational Awareness Platform (EU)
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy (EU)
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
DEVCO	Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (EU-EC)
DOCO	Development Operations Coordination Office (UN)
DPA	Department of Political Affairs (UN)
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
DPP	Defence Planning Process (NATO)
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (UN)
EBCG (Frontex)	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
EC	European Commission
ECHA	Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDA	European Defence Agency (EU)
EDF	European Development Fund (EU)
EEAS	European External Action Service
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument (EU)
EOM	Election Observation Mission (EU)
ERCC	Emergency Response Coordination Centre (EU-ECHO)
ERSG	Executive Representative of the Secretary General (UN)
EU	European Union
EUBAM	European Union Border Assistance Mission (EU-CSDP)
EUCAP	European Union Capacity Building Mission (EU-CSDP)
EUGS	European Union Global Strategy
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission (EU-CSDP)
EUMC	European Union Military Committee
EUMM	European Union Monitoring Mission (EU-CSDP)
EUMS	European Union Military Staff
EUNAVFOR	European Union Naval Force (EU-CSDP)
EUPOL	European Union Police Mission (EU-CSDP)
EUROPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
EUSR	European Union Special Representative
EWS	Early Warning System (EU)
FPI	Foreign Policy Instruments (EU)
FSC	Forum for Security Co-operation (OSCE)
GPGC	Global Public Goods and Challenges (EU)
JFD	Joint Framework Documents (EU)
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs (EU)
JMAC	Joint Missions Analysis Center (UN)
JOC	Joint Operations Command (UN)
JP	Joint Programming (EU)

JPE	Joint Programming Exercise (EU)
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator (UN)
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus
HIPPO	High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (UN)
HRVP	High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission
IA	Integrated Approach (EU)
ICI	Instrument for Cooperation with Industrialised Countries (EU)
IcSP	Instruments Contributing to Stability and Peace (EU)
IMPP	Integrated Missions Planning Process (UN)
IMTF	Integrated Missions Task Force (UN)
INTCEN	Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU)
ISF	Integrated Strategic Framework (UN)
MS	Member States (EU)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (EU-EC)
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PASP	Political Affairs and Security Policy Division (NATO)
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office (UN)
PMG	Politico-Military Group (EU)
PRISM	Prevention of Conflicts, Rule of Law/SSR, Integrated Approach, Stabilisation and Mediation division (EU-EEAS)
PSC	Political and Security Committee (EU)
RAP	Regional Action Plan (EU)
RC	Resident Coordinator (UN)
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe (NATO)

SACT	Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (NATO)
SECPOL	Security Policy Directorate (EU-EEAS)
SNE	Seconded National Expert
SRSO	Special Representative of the Secretary-General (UN)
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UN	United Nations
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WFP	World Food Programme

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report appraises the evolution of the EU's comprehensive approach (CA) to external conflicts and crises, including its recent evolution into the integrated approach (IA) and compares its approach to those of the United Nations, NATO and the OSCE. These four organisations (EU, UN, NATO, OSCE) aim at being prominent global providers of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Member states act through these multilateral institutions to achieve a wide spectrum of objectives, including resilience, stabilisation, short-term crisis responses via military, civilian or joint civil-military operations, conflict transformation or prevention. By assessing the **uniqueness of the EU's approach**, and **comparing lessons from its partners' experiences**, this report makes a set of recommendations to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and impact on the ground of the EU's response to conflicts and crises.

With the introduction of the integrated approach since the **2016 EU Global Strategy (EUGS)**, concrete steps have been taken to **take the EU response to conflicts and crises to the next level**. The EU's new tools for integrated responses encompass different policy phases, such as planning and implementation; address all stages of the conflict cycle, from prevention to recovery; advance essential cross-cutting issues, such as the evolution from early warning to early action.

In this regard, the comparative analysis shows that **the EU and the UN exhibit the most ambitious efforts to reform their structures** to achieve an integrated approach by integrating lessons learned across the whole spectrum of comprehensiveness, taking a broader systemic and strategic stance, through the guidance provided respectively by the EUGS and by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO). Conversely, **NATO and the OSCE's efforts have been more focused and targeted towards specific areas**: in the case of NATO, the new comprehensive approach action plan calls for transformation of the Alliance's capacities to operate in changed security environments, by tackling hybrid threats more effectively and engaging in conflict prevention; whereas in the OSCE, MC3/11 calls for enhanced co-ordination to strengthen OSCE analysis, assessment and engagement capacity in all phases of the conflict cycle.

The practice of integration in the EU has shown a steady evolution from a narrow concept of civilian-military coordination, following the NATO blueprint, to a broad notion of systemic coherence, similar to the UN's endeavour, which seeks to integrate multiple, interconnected layers of action. By presenting the guiding principles of this evolution, the report provides a framework for understanding **how international actors can forge and implement a consensus towards integrated actions**, so that different stakeholders can work together better towards building peace and preventing conflicts. In this regard, the EU makes a strong and compelling case for integration because of the uniqueness of its institutional architecture and the level of ambition set by its external action doctrine. The conclusions of this report offer **seven key messages and policy directions for EU policy-makers**.

## KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION

### Integrated strategic and political priorities

- The EU's integrated approach should be instrumental to bridging differences and building trust between member states (MS). Relevant best practices of coordination in specific regions (e.g. Sahel) or themes (e.g. gender) should therefore be monitored and used to consolidate shared visions among EU MS. **Baseline indicators** should be used to assess the extent to which **MS are committing to the implementation** of the integrated approach, and the progress towards fully-fledged joined-up EU responses.
- The EUGS is leading to a proliferation of new policy agendas, each one requiring staff attention, resources and political capital. A main recommendation is to **avoid 'over bureaucratisation' of policy priorities** (e.g. multiplying written assignments, meetings and lengthy procedures) and **select a few, consistent concepts to invest in**, always keeping a close eye on **operational needs** and requests coming from delegations and missions in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

### Institutionalisation (accountability and results)

- To avoid conflict between EU institutions, **integrated actions should be streamlined**, setting parameters for implementation and **reducing transaction costs** or barriers. For this to happen, the EEAS and DEVCO should take the lead in proposing targets and indicators, with the aim of **establishing a broader results framework**, including modifications in actions or responses to measure the delivery of services specific to conflict areas more effectively. The latter should be supported by **an accountability and decision-making framework, clarifying roles, protocols and behaviours** to make decisions on integrated actions more effective and reduce the possibility of a conflict among institutional actors. This framework should therefore define who has authority to **manage quality, risks, results, compliance with other EU policies and monitoring**.

### Training, recruitment and incentive systems

- A reform of **training and recruitment procedures** for EU staff working on violent conflict and crises situations should result in being able to use these instruments as a **catalyst for knowledge sharing and breaking down silos** among civilian, military, police, development, humanitarian and political personnel; this objective can be achieved at the policy level, but also by making full use of the Goalkeeper system as the go-to place for capability development and standardisation.
- A new **incentive system** should aim to attract and develop EU staff and support them better in implementing the integrated approach in their day-to-day jobs, rewarding those

staff members who have been working more proactively towards a joined-up and conflict-sensitive approach in their responsibilities, by expanding benefits and promotions as **attraction-retention tools**, enhancing networking, knowledge exchange and learning opportunities, ensuring sufficient budget allocations for staffing in the field and increasing **operational readiness**.

### **IT solutions for the integrated approach**

- New technological solutions to foster coordination should be explored, by raising awareness of the possibilities provided by ICT on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and comprehensive/integrated responses to them. Timely and precise information is essential for agreeing on coordinated, comprehensive, integrated and effective actions. It is crucial for the EU to keep on promoting and financially supporting a **more efficient ICT platform to serve as the basis for integrated action**, for instance by piloting the use of **geo-enabled platforms** to collect, organise and disseminate spatial data for multiple purposes, such as **project execution, monitoring and evaluation in high-risk areas**.

### **EU Delegations**

- EU delegations should be modernised, and their operating models updated. Drawing on UN efforts aimed at creating a new generation of country teams and a new and stronger leadership in the field, the EU should reframe the terms of reference, mandates, physical presence and operational models of staff working in EU delegations, establishing **new accountability lines and coordination platforms for fast mobilisation of capacities** and resources when coping with pressures in the host country. Modernising and making EU delegations more coherent in their operations would also contribute to a more positive perception of the EU as a partner for other international actors.

### **Partnerships**

- The EU should orient the integrated approach towards **greater complementarity with other actors** involved in conflict affected situations (UN, NATO, World Bank, OSCE, regional organisations, civil society organisations). This is still an area in which progress has to be made, not only in practice, but also in the perceptions of other actors. Joint assessment of operational options and initiatives along the humanitarian, development and peace continuum should be intensified, to deliver comprehensive responses in the short-medium-long term and tackle specific country-level challenges. Similarly, more systematic information sharing, dialogue on regional and thematic cases and exercises/simulations of crises response should be promoted.
- Civil society should be an integral part of EU policy-making and action on conflicts and crises, and the EU's integrated approach is an opportunity to bring it on board as a fully-fledged partner, not just as a service provider or a beneficiary of EU funding. This should contribute to fostering innovation in integrated policy-making, revising focus areas and

**initiatives based on local needs (e.g. representation in policy-making for peacebuilding, or projects sensitive to youth expectations),** so as to integrate the EU's response to crises and conflicts more fully in the local context.

- In line with the growing emphasis on supporting more and better jobs in fragile settings, it is crucial for the EU to **increase collaboration with the private sector for projects in the area of decent job creation.** In particular, this would make sure that integrated actions to support young men and women's contributions to peace include prospects for sustainable and equitable economic growth and are sensitive to their needs.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The comprehensive approach (CA) is the process whereby the European Union is progressively instilling a culture, and related practices of coordination, among the different EU actors involved in the conflict cycle. Although the need for coordination is as old as the EU's external action, its legal basis can be found in the Art. 21.3 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), calling for "consistency between the different areas of external action and between these and its other policies".<sup>1</sup> For years, the EU had tried to implement in practice a comprehensive approach in conflicts and crises. However, the 2013 Joint Communication on "The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crisis" (EC and HRVP, 2013) represents the first attempt to define guiding principles and procedures for the CA in a systematic way, setting up concrete objectives and priorities to be followed by EU actors. Since then, against a backdrop of growing instability, threats and demand for security provision both within and beyond its borders, the EU has put more efforts into taking the CA framework forward, with a view to achieving a more strategic and joined-up use of its external action instruments.

The comprehensive approach is the EU-specific adaptation of the general principle of 'comprehensiveness', defined as an understanding in the international community that responses to crises cannot be purely military and, therefore, should include all policies, instruments, players and methodologies that are relevant in violent/armed conflict and may contribute to its resolution, or prevention. Since the 1990s, governments and international organisations have adapted their strategic doctrines and procedures so as to take greater comprehensiveness into account, with many overlapping terms such as 'whole of government' (used by the British government), 'multi-dimensionality' or 'integrated mission' (United Nations) or 3D approach (Defence, Development and Diplomacy, in Canada and the Netherlands).

This report appraises the evolution of the EU's comprehensive approach and assesses its specific character in comparison with three other international organisations: the United Nations, NATO and the OSCE. All four organisations (EU, UN, NATO, OSCE) are prominent global providers of

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<sup>1</sup> According to Art. 21.3 (TEU), "[t]he Union shall ensure consistency between the different areas of its external action and between these and its other policies. The Council and the Commission, assisted by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, shall ensure that consistency and shall cooperate to that effect".

conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions, by direct execution or through third parties. Member states act through these multilateral organisations to achieve a wide spectrum of objectives, including resilience, stabilisation, short-term crisis response via military, civilian or joint civil-military operations, and conflict transformation or prevention.

The report uses its assessment of the uniqueness of the CA vis-à-vis external actors as a basis for a set of recommendations to improve the coherence and impact of EU responses at the strategic and operational levels, drawing lessons relevant to the EU from the experience of the three other organisations.

**Chapter 1** briefly reviews the conceptual origins of ‘comprehensiveness’ in international security and development assistance to fragile countries, prompting organisations to develop integrated civilian-military means to prevent and address conflicts, and effectively contribute to building peace. The chapter then analyses the evolution from ‘comprehensiveness’ to the EU’s comprehensive approach, with reference to relevant EU initiatives and policy documents.

**Chapter 2** highlights the specificities of the CA in comparison with other international organisations (UN, OSCE, NATO). By doing so, this chapter shows how the broad principle of comprehensiveness is adapted to different institutional contexts, thereby identifying points of convergence and divergence in the mandates of those organisations, and the lessons that can be learned.

**Chapter 3** provides a detailed description of the instruments, procedures and bureaucratic structures through which the EU implements the comprehensive approach, thereby unpacking the nitty-gritty of the EU’s machinery dealing with conflicts and crises. The chapter includes practical case studies and goes beyond the CSDP and civil-military cooperation, examining all dimensions that are relevant for the entire cycle of conflict management (i.e. prevention, response, stabilisation), thereby including coordination between the European External Action Service, relevant European Commission directorates-general (ECHO, Trade, Development Cooperation, Home, NEAR) and other institutional and non-governmental stakeholders.

**Chapter 4** analyses recent trends and developments affecting the role of the comprehensive approach in the EU’s external action, particularly since the release of the 2016 EU Global Strategy (EUGS). The chapter focuses on the complementarity between the CA and new frameworks

introduced by the EUGS, such as the Integrated Approach (IA) and the joint communication on resilience, in the spirit of a joined-up approach to the EU's external action.

Finally, **chapter 5** concludes by presenting the main takeaways of the report and recommendations for policy-makers on how to improve the EU's comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, taking into account an effective division of labour and exploring new options for the intersection of mandates with other international organisations.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL ORIGINS OF THE EU'S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

There is no single or common definition of the comprehensive approach at the international level. States and international organisations understand and implement comprehensiveness in different ways, using different models, strategies and terminology. In the EU, comprehensiveness translates into a framework for coordination among EU actors, therefore acquiring a very specific meaning in comparison with the concepts used by other institutions.

Initial efforts by the EU to define the CA drew to a large extent on the international debate on comprehensiveness and on the agenda of other international organisations on integration in the crisis management sector. The latter has been widely discussed and implemented in the UN context, through the concept of integrated missions, but also by the United States and individual EU member states.

The baseline definition of the EU's comprehensive approach is the strategically coherent use of EU tools and instruments for external action in crisis or conflict situations, which implies not only the "joined-up deployment of EU instruments and resources, but also the shared responsibility of EU-level actors and Member States" (EC and HRVP, 2013: 3). Since its creation, EU external action has involved a multitude of civilian and military actors, member states with different preferences and capabilities, and competing bureaucratic entities in Brussels, both in the field (a wide network of EU delegations, operational engagements and EU Special Representatives) and in national capitals. In such a complex system, strategic objectives, political priorities, mandates, operational procedures, financial instruments and timeframes of intervention are often in conflict with each other. Therefore, building coherence and coordination in response to fragile and crisis situations has been a prominent challenge for EU policy-making, leading to the elaboration of clearer and systematic guidelines through the notion of CA.

## 2.1 From the origins of the EU CA...

The origins of the EU comprehensive approach can be traced back to the early 2000s and efforts at creating a culture of co-ordination as part of a holistic framework for EU intervention in crisis situations. It essentially relied on two components: civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) at the tactical level and civilian-military coordination (CMCO) at the political, strategic and institutional levels. CIMIC is a military doctrine, which the EU modelled on the NATO's concept, introduced by Allies since the mid-1990s as a result of the lessons learned from operations in the Western Balkans. The EU officially adopted the CIMIC concept in 2002, upon recommendation of the EU Military Committee and based on a Council decision (EU Council, 2002).

CMCO is, in contrast, an internal concept for coordination of the planning and implementation phases of crisis response, addressing “the need for effective coordination of the actions of all relevant EU actors involved in the planning and subsequent implementation of the EU's response” (EU Council, 2003). The CMCO is an EU-specific framework, which arises from the specific nature of EU decision-making and multi-level governance, particularly the need to create a sustainable modus operandi between the security agenda of the Council and MS and the European Commission's development cooperation and humanitarian aid. It serves the double purpose of building a more holistic crisis response capacity and avoiding conflicts between the divergent mandates and priorities of EU institutions.

By institutionalising the concepts of CIMIC and CMCO, the EU started implementing comprehensiveness in CSDP missions and operations, namely through a process of learning by doing (Faleg, 2017) that has characterised the first decade of civilian and military deployments overseas since 2003. The process was also supported at the strategic level, with the 2003 European Security Strategy (Council of the EU, 2003) and the 2008 Implementation Report (Council of the EU, 2008); and at the institutional level, through reforms introduced as the Lisbon Treaty entered into force in 2009, particularly the creation of the post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security, who is also the Vice-President of the Commission, and the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS).

It can be concluded that in the pre-Lisbon phase, the EU's comprehensive approach initially adopted NATO's perspective of civil-military cooperation, which was soon adapted to EU institutional needs. In the post-Lisbon period, and in light of the debate on a 'whole-of-EU' approach to effective external action<sup>2</sup>, the comprehensive approach eventually evolved into a broader framework, enlarging its scope beyond the CSDP field and becoming more similar to the integrated approach of the UN (Pirozzi, 2013: 7).

## 2.2 ...to the rise of the CA policy framework

The operational development of the CA (2003-2013) was characterised by an expansion of the EU's crisis management tasks and a growing integration of civilian-military components in missions, including at the planning level. This gradually led to an intensified intertwining between the Commission and the Council agendas, increased importance of EU Special Representatives in managing coordination of key field operations, and to greater efforts to seek partnerships with non-EU member states and multilateral institutions operating in the development and security areas (Pirozzi and Sandawi, 2009). Key lessons learned in this phase had to do with inadequate instruments and lack of capabilities, poor strategic guidance, persistence of institutional conflicts among EU institutions and divergences between civilian and military agendas (Juncos, 2010). Notwithstanding the institutional innovations of the Lisbon Treaty<sup>3</sup>, a real challenge remained in terms of ensuring a transition between different instruments and methodologies within the EU, with member states and with other operations operating in crisis zones.

The creation of a more consistent and sustained policy framework for the CA was therefore aimed at improving its effectiveness, providing clearer guidance for operations and EU actors in the field. The 2013 joint communication on the "EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises" leveraged the full potential of what had been learned from operational experience along with the innovations introduced by the Lisbon Treaty in setting up concrete

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<sup>2</sup> The debate on a whole-of-EU approach encompassed several areas and incentivized coordination between EU actors at HQ and field levels, information exchange, joint analysis, cooperation with partners, human resources capacities and incentives (Faria, 2014: 4).

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed overview of the institutional innovations of the Lisbon Treaty, see Pirozzi (2013: 8).

steps for the EU to take. The document includes a list of measures to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of EU external action in conflict and crisis situations: (1) shared analysis, situational awareness, information sharing and a common methodology in conflict analysis, including development, humanitarian, political, security and defence perspectives; (2) common strategic vision; (3) focus on conflict prevention and early warning; (4) strengthened operational coordination among EU MS and use of common instruments (EU delegations) to ensure coherence of actions; (5) coordination of long-term and short-term objectives by using all EU instruments in synergy; (6) linking internal and external aspects of conflicts; (7) working in partnerships (EC and HRVP, 2013: 5-9).

The CA concept and priority areas identified in the 2013 communication were given full support by EU MS in the May 2014 Council conclusions, inviting the HRVP and the Commission to prepare an Action Plan to apply the CA to strategic planning and implementation. Priority actions and specific initiatives were set out with a view to taking stock of progress on a yearly basis. This led to the adoption of the Action Plan 2015 (EC and HRVP, 2015), to a progress report on the Action Plan 2015 (EC and HRVP, 2016a) and to the Action Plan 2016/2017 (EC and HRVP, 2016b). Chapter 4 discusses in detail the focus areas, actions, country-cases, progress to date, lessons learned included in the action plans, as well as other CA instruments. Chapter 5 documents the evolution of the CA into the Integrated Approach.<sup>4</sup> Beforehand, Chapter 3 examines similar approaches in NATO, the UN and the OSCE in more detail.

*Table 1: Full list of CA policy documents, 2013-2017*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Document type</b>
11/12/2013	<i>The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crises</i>	Joint Communication (EC and HRVP)
12/5/2014	<i>Council conclusions on the EU's comprehensive approach</i>	Council of the European Union Conclusions
10/4/2015	<i>Taking forward the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflicts and crises – Action Plan 2015</i>	Joint Staff Working Document

<sup>4</sup> Following the completion of the 2016-2017 Comprehensive Approach Action Plan, “the Integrated Approach will succeed the Comprehensive Approach as the framework to promote a more coherent approach by the EU to external conflicts and crises. A final report on the implementation of the 2016-2017 Comprehensive Approach Action Plan will be released in the Spring 2018” (EEAS, 2017: 4).

18/7/2016	<i>Progress Report on the implementation of the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflicts and crises – Action Plan 2015</i>	Joint Staff Working Document
18/7/2016	<i>Taking forward the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflicts and crises – Action Plan 2016/2017</i>	Joint Staff Working Document
2/6/2017	<i>The EU Integrated Approach to external conflicts and crises</i>	EEAS-EC services issues paper for PSC

### 3. COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH FRAMEWORKS IN NATO, THE UN AND THE OSCE

While the EU implemented a unique version of comprehensiveness to fit its *sui generis* institutional structure, there are nonetheless some important similarities in the internal mechanisms of international organisations leading to comprehensive planning, resources and execution of responses to conflicts and crises. A comparative analysis therefore supports identification of best practices, common challenges and paths towards improving comprehensive approach practice. This section introduces the implementation of the comprehensive approach in other international organisations operating in fragile and insecure settings – NATO, the United Nations and the OSCE – in order to put the detailed analysis of the EU’s CA into a broader perspective. The following boxes summarise the rationale, implementation and evolution of the comprehensive approaches at the three organisations.

*Boxes 1, 2 and 3: Summaries of NATO, UN and OSCE comprehensive approaches*

#### **BOX 1: NATO: COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH (since 2010)**

**Rationale.** The need for proper mechanisms of cooperation with other international actors and civilian agencies at the early planning stage of an operation, leading NATO to adapt its operational planning to better support civilian reconstruction and development. NATO’s Strategic Concept in 2010 affirmed that NATO would engage, “when possible and necessary, to prevent crises, manage crises, stabilise post-conflict situations and support reconstruction”, and that a “comprehensive political, civilian and military approach is necessary for effective crisis management”.

**Implementation.** Action plan including 29 tasks divided into 4 pillars: (1) planning and conduct of operations; (2) lessons learned, training, education and exercises; (3) cooperation with external actors; (4) strategic communication. A Civilian-military task force chaired by the Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy Division coordinated implementation of the comprehensive approach, in line with the action plan, highlighting gaps and reporting to member states on achievements and shortfalls. The development of closer ties with the European Union, the United Nations and other international organisations is a critical part of NATO’s comprehensive approach, based on the realisation that a better division of mandates would help NATO work better on the ground.

**Lessons learned and evolution.** A decision was taken at the 2016 Warsaw Summit to review the 2011 concept and submit a new action plan for consideration by Foreign Ministers in 2017. The new action plan was expected to capture evolution of the security environment since 2011, new initiatives and trends towards 2020, and incorporate in the document pivotal elements for the Alliance’s strategy, such as hybrid threats or conflict prevention.

**BOX 2: UNITED NATIONS: INTEGRATED APPROACH (since 1992)**

**Rationale.** Instil greater unity of purpose in the organisation's conflict and post-conflict engagement. Through 'integration', 'integrated missions' and 'integrated strategic planning', the UN has undertaken a series of institutional innovations aimed at fostering coherence across its political, security, development and humanitarian pillars.

**Implementation.** Integration started out as an inter-Secretariat effort in 1992, with the creation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), in response to the need to run increasingly large and multi-dimensional peace operations. Operationally, the main feature of the integrated mission concept is that a UN peacekeeping mission becomes 'integrated' when the Resident Coordinator (RC) and the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) functions are integrated with the peacekeeping operation through the appointment of a Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG) performing both RC/HC roles. Coordination has been fostered through several frameworks: the Integrated Missions Planning Process (IMPP), the Integrated Approach, and Integrated Assessments.

**Lessons learned and evolution.** The ongoing reform efforts build on the momentum created by the HIPPO Report. The full reform process of the UN peace and security pillar is expected to unfold in 2018, with full implementation reached by 2019. Plans include reconstituting the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) as the Department for Peacebuilding and Political Affairs (DPPA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) as the Department of Peace Operations (DPO). Three Assistant Secretary Generals (ASGs) will be responsible for regions, and the Standing Principals Group will be tasked with increasing the coherence and coordination between DPPA-DPO and regional ASGs.

**BOX 3: OSCE: COMPREHENSIVE AND CO-OPERATIVE SECURITY (since 1975)**

**Rationale.** The OSCE's work on the comprehensive approach emanates from the 'three baskets' of the Helsinki Final Act (1 August 1975): the politico-military, the economic-environmental, and the human dimension. This approach presumes a direct relationship between peace, stability and wealth, on the one hand, and the development of democratic institutions, the rule of law, respect for human rights and the development of a market economy on the other.

**Implementation.** The politico-military dimension oversees a number of mechanisms for conflict prevention and crisis management, and for confidence-and-security building measures. Active OSCE forums include the Forum for Security Co-Operation (FSC), the Security Committee and the Annual Security Review Conference. The economic and environmental dimension monitors regional developments in those areas that may impact on the security of participating States. The Forum active in this dimension is the Economic and Environmental Forum, supported through the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. The human dimension covers the implementation of human rights commitments and standards, upholding OSCE norms and principles of democracy, promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination, rule-of-law, and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Institutions include the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

**Lessons learned and evolution.** The 2011 Vilnius Ministerial Council Decision (MC3/11) redefined the organisation's engagement in the full conflict cycle. MC3/11 called for enhanced co-ordination to strengthen OSCE analysis, assessment and engagement capacity in all phases of the conflict cycle. It led to the creation of a systematic mediation-support capacity within the Conflict Prevention Centre, and subsequently to guidance materials on dialogue facilitation and mediation, taking on the UN principles of active mediation; to the consolidation of the organisation's early warning capacity and resources, including through a network of early-warning focal points in executive structures; as well as to the creation of a rapid deployment roster.

### 3.1 NATO: building comprehensiveness to upgrade the crisis management machine

The Riga Summit Declaration (NATO, 2006) was the first official NATO document to refer to the comprehensive approach. Drawing from experience in Afghanistan and Kosovo, NATO's comprehensive approach was conceived as a way to respond better to crises by involving a wide spectrum of civil and military instruments, while fully respecting the mandates and decisional autonomy of all actors. 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. Military means being insufficient on their own to meet complex security challenges, the development of closer ties with the European Union, the United Nations and other international organisations was another critical part of this approach: a better division of mandates would help NATO work better on the ground. Commitment among the allies towards the comprehensive approach added impetus in this direction to NATO's Strategic Concept in 2010 (NATO, 2010), which affirmed it would engage, "when possible and necessary, to prevent crises, manage crises, stabilise post-conflict situations and support reconstruction", and that a "comprehensive political, civilian and military approach is necessary for effective crisis management" (NATO, 2010: 19). The strategic concept called for NATO to enhance intelligence sharing within the organisation, form a civilian crisis management capability to interface more effectively with civilian partners, enhance integrated civilian-military planning, develop the capability to train local forces in crisis zones, identify and train civilian specialists from member states so they could be available for rapid deployment, and intensify political consultations among allies (NATO, 2010: 21-22). A working group was created to engage in internal brainstorming to clarify the notion of the comprehensive approach. While not able to agree on a precise definition, the working group developed an action plan including all NATO bodies and outlining 29 tasks divided into 4 pillars: (1) planning and conduct of operations; (2) lessons learned, training, education and exercises; (3) cooperation with external actors; (4) strategic communication. The action plan aimed to trigger transformation of NATO's military mindset into thinking – and acting – comprehensively, with a clear emphasis on the division of labour between

international diplomatic, security, humanitarian and development actors operating in fragile settings or crisis areas.

A civilian-military task force chaired by the Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy was then set up to coordinate the implementation of the comprehensive approach in line with the action plan, highlight any gaps and report to member states on achievements and shortfalls. A main challenge of the task force was to harmonise internal aspects of the CA (coordination, consistency, communication between directorates) with its external dimension (coordination with external actors), so as to ensure a transversal approach. The task force was able to draw on a wide membership base, including staff from NATO's main divisions in its International Staff (e.g. legal, PASP, DPP, OPS), command structures (SACEUR and SACT), liaison offices in New York, OSCE, AU, while engaging in consultations with other organisations involved in crisis management and cooperative security (EU, UN, OSCE, Red Cross) and keeping member state delegations regularly informed. The task force identified the struggle to achieve internal cohesion, lack of synchronisation in member states planning, and lack of budget allocated to foster CA implementation and the projection of stability as the key challenges.

To overcome those challenges, and against a rapidly evolving security environment, a decision was taken at the 2016 Warsaw Summit to review the 2011 concept and submit a new action plan for consideration by Foreign Ministers in 2017 that would capture the evolution of the security environment since 2011, new initiatives and trends towards 2020, and incorporate in the document pivotal elements for the Alliance strategy, such as hybrid threats or conflict prevention.

Although some internal and operational challenges remain, the adoption of a comprehensive approach has been instrumental in allowing NATO to build closer partnerships with actors that have experience and skills in areas such as institution building, development, governance, the judiciary and the police. This has in turn contributed to improving NATO's own crisis management instruments, and to breaking some of the silos within the organisation, although the military culture remains predominant. Compared to the EU, NATO's comprehensive approach has therefore been driven by a need to upgrade its crisis management machine (internal and external coherence, civil-military interaction) and make the most out of cooperation with external actors.

### 3.2 The United Nations' integrated approach

The United Nations have a long story of integration. Conceptually, the notion of comprehensiveness was born in the UN system. The 1992 *Agenda for Peace* was one of the first international attempts to instil greater unity of purpose in the organisation's conflict and post-conflict engagement, placing the UN at the forefront of the international community's efforts to promote a comprehensive approach. Over time, under the terms 'integration', 'integrated missions' and 'integrated strategic planning', the UN has undertaken a series of institutional innovations aimed at fostering coherence across its political, security, development and humanitarian pillars. Evolution in processes, policies, structures and outcomes of UN integration has been significant.

Integration started out as an inter-Secretariat effort in 1992, with the creation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), in response to the need to run increasingly large and multi-dimensional peace operations mandated by the Security Council. Those missions brought together civilian, military, and police components under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) and under the same budget, with the establishment at the field level of a Joint Operations Command (JOC) and a Joint Mission Analysis Center (JMAC). This first wave of 'structural', intra-Secretariat integration was followed by (and in part overlapped with) a second wave of 'strategic' inter-Agency integration, based in part on the lessons learned from peacekeeping failures in the late 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>5</sup> This integration drive, mainly through the Brahimi Report, promoted the idea that all UN entities (agencies, funds, programmes) should operate together under a single UN flag, to maximise the impact of their collective resources.<sup>6</sup> An analysis of the weaknesses and barriers to integration led the Panel on the United Nations Peace Operations to recommend the formation of an Integrated Mission Task Force (IMTF), an integrated headquarters-level response to be employed in the earliest stages of the crisis response planning process, bringing together the

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<sup>5</sup> For a broader overview of the UN and the integrated approach, see: de Coning (2008).

<sup>6</sup> On UN peacekeeping and multidimensional missions, see: Joops et al. (2015).

Secretariat and agencies, funds and programmes (OCHA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, etc.) for mission-specific support. The Integrated Missions concept was initially developed for Kosovo in 1999, in order to ensure an effective division of labour between the different actors operating on the ground (Eide et al., 2005: 12).

Building on member states' support for integrated and strategic planning, a review of the DPKO's planning process was launched and resulted in the 2004 Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP), which incorporated inputs from UN agencies into DPKO's internal planning procedures. The IMPP guidelines were approved in 2006 by Secretary General (SG) Kofi Annan and became operational as of 2008.

They stated that an integrated mission is based on "a common strategic plan and a shared understanding of the priorities and types of programme interventions that need to be undertaken at various stages of the recovery process. Through this integrated process, the UN systems seeks to maximise its contribution towards countries emerging from conflict by engaging its different capabilities in a coherent and mutually supportive manner" (UNSG, 2005: 1).

Furthermore, as cited by Weir (2006: 13), it is "a deliberate effort by all elements of the UN system to achieve a shared understanding of the mandates and functions of the various pillars of the UN presence at country level, and to use this understanding to maximise UN effectiveness, efficiency, and impact in all aspects of its work at country level". Operationally, the main feature of the integrated mission concept is that the Resident Coordinator (RC) and the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) functions are integrated with the peacekeeping operation through the appointment of a Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG) performing both RC/HC roles, or when the Executive Representative of the Secretary General (ERSG) is also the RC/HC in the case of a political or peacebuilding role. The UN Country Team remains technically independent from the mission, but the integration of RC/HC functions allows the coordinator to better represent the humanitarian and development dimensions in planning, coordinating, managing, and evaluating the mission. For UN entities on the ground, including mission components, UN country team and specialised agencies are included under the same leadership.

The shift from integrated missions and planning to a broader and more strategic ‘integrated approach’ occurred in June 2008, under SG Ban Ki-moon. The June 2008 Policy Committee Decision (UN, 2008) adopted the concept of integrated approach in line with the ‘form must follow function’ principle: under this new paradigm, structural integration can be provided if and where appropriate, but the key operating principle of integration is based on a strategic partnership between the UN peacekeeping operation and the UN Country Team, ensuring that all components of the UN system operate in a coherent manner in close collaboration with other partners. To complement existing integrated planning and assessment tools, an Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) was introduced as a requirement to capture the context-specific nature and depth of the partnership between a mission and a country team in support of peace-consolidation objectives.

The 2008 *Decision* of the SG clarifies the core features of the integrated approach, in particular the recognition that integration requires a system-wide process whereby all different dimensions and relevant UN agents should act in a synchronised, sequenced and coherent fashion, including not only departments in the Secretariat (such as DPKO, DPA, OCHA), but also independently constituted funds/agencies/programmes (e.g. UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR), and the Bretton Woods institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group), all operating as one integrated UN system at the country level.

United Nations’ efforts to strengthen integration are in continuous evolution. The Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning was approved in April 2013 to define the minimum and mandatory requirements for the integrated conduct of assessments and planning in conflict and post-conflict settings where an integrated UN presence is in place, and to outline the responsibilities of UN actors (UN, 2013). Since then, the UN has engaged in a wider range of conflict and fragile situations and emerging threats (such as terrorism or transnational organised crime), requiring different types of responses – from cross-border, regional initiatives, to earlier stabilisation interventions with humanitarian, development and security partners.<sup>7</sup> The new push for UN integration has been catalysed by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

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<sup>7</sup> On internal and external pressures challenging the implementation of the UN integrated approach, see: Boutellis (2013: 18-23).

Development in 2015 (UNGA, 2015) and by the commitments of the Grand Bargain and the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (The Grand Bargain, 2016). The report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO) (UN, 2015) recommended ways of achieving the full potential of UN operations. These included smoother transitions between phases of UN missions and strengthened underlying analysis, strategy and planning to design missions better and be able to respond flexibly to challenging needs on the ground; a stronger, global-regional peace and security partnership to be established at the outset of new operations and maintained throughout the mission through enhanced collaboration and consultations; a renewed emphasis on conflict prevention and mediation by investing in capacities to play an earlier role in addressing emerging conflicts.<sup>8</sup>

The ongoing reform efforts, announced by SG António Guterres, to make the UN system more integrated built on the momentum created by the HIPPO Report. The UN is now becoming perhaps the most complex and sophisticated integrated system for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The persistence of heavy transaction costs and the inevitable sense of ‘fatigue’ are counter-balanced by the vital need for system-wide collaboration to tackle fragility in conflict and post-conflict settings, and by a long process of integrative dynamics and institutional innovation that was initiated 25 years ago with the *Agenda for Peace*. The post-2015 development agenda and the humanitarian commitments of the Grand Bargain have created a new, important political consensus around the necessity of approaching conflict, fragility, and development together in an integrated manner. As the UN looks inside its structures to optimise its integrated processes and policies, systematic dialogue with other organisations facing the same challenges (international financial institutions, the EU and regional organisations) is a key determinant for ensuring impactful interventions on the ground. The first Report of the SG on “Repositioning the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda – Ensuring a better future for all” goes in that direction (UN Economic and Social Council, 2017). Some key CA-relevant actions recommended in the report to improve the UN’s capacity to deliver on the 2030 Agenda include:

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<sup>8</sup> For an assessment of the implementation of the HIPPO recommendations, and the ongoing reform process in the UN, see: Boutellis and Connolly (2016). See also: UN Secretary General (2015).

- Address **capacity gaps to support policy integration**, data management, partnerships and financing, including harmonised data and reporting systems across agencies, adopting a system-wide approach to partnerships, devising a refreshed system-wide compact with international finance institutions to sharpen partnerships around high-impact actions in support of SDGs, determining a clearer division of roles in support of financing for development.
- Move towards a modular approach to the **new generation of UN Country Teams**, by ensuring a more responsive and tailored configuration for UN Country Teams and developing proposals to rationalise physical presence and a strategy to ensure common operational services/back-office functions.
- Strengthen the **leadership and impartiality of Resident Coordinators**, by establishing new and clearer accountability lines with a better operational model for the RC function delinked from UNDP Resident Representative and meeting funding/staffing requirements for RC offices.
- **Operationalise the Humanitarian-Development Nexus at the country level**, implementing a **New Way of Working** across humanitarian and development activities (development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and sustaining peace), particularly as follows:
  - Working with OCHA and UNDG to streamline policies and operational guidelines at HQ, incentivising coherence in the field; improving cross-pillar analysis, planning and programming; review the double hatting of UN leadership on the ground; identify flexible financing for resilience building and joint H-D activities in protracted crises;
  - Establishing a Steering Committee of Principals to foster H-D synergies, chaired by the Deputy SG with operational leadership from OCHA/ERC and UNDP, guiding collective action and adopting strategies/mobilising resources when required;
  - Expanding the investments of the UN Peacebuilding Fund to support integrated UN action for prevention;

- Building interlinkages with the simultaneous review of UN peace and security architecture to ensure coherence and support between H-D-P pillars.
- Address the **funding fragmentation**, by working on a **Funding Compact** with member states to explore reasonable options to improve quality and predictability of resources allocated within UN system.

The full reform process of the UN peace and security pillar is expected to unfold in 2018, with full implementation reached by 2019. Plans include reconstituting the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) as the Department for Peace-building and Political Affairs (DPPA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) as the Department of Peace Operations (DPO). The DPPA will combine the political responsibilities of DPA with those of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), while the DPO will manage all field missions. Three Assistant Secretary Generals (ASGs) will be responsible for regions, reporting to Under-Secretary Generals (USGs) and the Standing Principals Group, a body tasked with increasing the coherence and coordination between DPPA-DPO and regional ASGs. The Department of Field Support (DFS) should also be restructured and become the Department of Operational Support (DOS) to reduce fragmentation, expand capacities/activities and ensure faster deliveries. The new structures should address the main problems identified by the HIPPO report, namely reducing competition and duplication within the Secretariat and ensuring a spectrum of operations that are customised to address country contexts better (Cliffe, 2017: 3-4).

### 3.3 The OSCE's concept of comprehensive and co-operative security

With 57 participating States in North America, Europe and Asia, the OSCE is the world's largest regional security organisation. It was the first security organisation that conceived and adopted a concept of comprehensive and cooperative security. The OSCE's work on the comprehensive approach is based on three equally important pillars, or dimensions of security, which emanate from the Helsinki Final Act signed on 1 August 1975 (initially called the 'three baskets'): the

politico-military, the economic-environmental, and the human dimension. The essence of this approach entailed the idea that the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and economic and environmental governance is as important for the sustainability of peace and security as is politico-military cooperation. These strategic principles were reiterated and reinforced over time, through a series of documents, among which the most important have been the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the 1999 Charter for European Security, and the 2003 OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century (also called the Maastricht Strategy).<sup>9</sup>

The concept of comprehensive and cooperative security, to which the OSCE adheres, can be seen as the most ambitious approach towards broad security. This approach presumes in fact a direct relationship between peace, stability and wealth, on the one hand, and the development of democratic institutions, the rule of law, respect for human rights and the development of a market economy on the other. The principle of 'indivisibility' of this approach implies that an increase in security for some participating states should not be detrimental to the security of other states, hence excluding a zero-sum game. By definition, cooperative security aims at the prevention of security threats, rather than efforts to counter them. It therefore builds on the acceptance of binding commitments that limit military capabilities and actions, through confidence-building and reassurance measures.

The politico-military dimension oversees a number of mechanisms for conflict prevention and crisis management, and for confidence-and-security building measures. The objective is to achieve transparency and co-operation between participating States, and foster their common engagement in activities aimed at enhancing regional security, such as arms control, border management, combating terrorism, and security sector reform. Active OSCE forums include the Forum for Security Co-Operation (FSC), the Security Committee, and the Annual Security Review Conference.

The economic and environmental dimension monitors regional developments in those areas that may impact on the security of participating states. To this purpose, the OSCE promotes policies

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<sup>9</sup> For an overview of the main documents on the OSCE comprehensive and cooperative security concept, see: OSCE Secretariat (2009).

of sustainable development and environmental co-operation. The Forum active in this dimension is the Economic and Environmental Forum, supported through the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

Finally, the human dimension covers the implementation of human rights commitments, upholding OSCE norms and principles of democracy, promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination, rule-of-law, and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. This dimension addresses a wide range of regional challenges, including religious freedoms, trafficking in human beings, election monitoring, gender equality and minority rights. Three OSCE institutions are involved in the implementation of this dimension: the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

The comprehensive approach is deeply rooted in the value proposition of the OSCE and a core component of its mission, as a forum for political dialogue and a platform for joint action. Contrary to the other organisations analysed in this study (EU, UN, NATO), the OSCE has fully embodied the principles of the comprehensive approach ever since it was created, adopting a multi-dimensional definition of security with a view to managing regional security challenges during the Cold War and in the post-Cold War period. The comprehensive approach is considered instrumental in bridging differences and building trust between states through cooperation on conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Besides the three pillars, 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 in drugs, arms and human beings. In its cross-dimensional activities, it works towards gender equality and engages with youth across the peace and security agenda, promoting comprehensive approaches to managing migration and refugee flows.

An important milestone in the evolution of the OSCE comprehensive approach has been the 2011 Vilnius Ministerial Council Decision (commonly referred to as MC3/11), which redefined the organisation's engagement in the full conflict cycle and provided the basis for enhancing capabilities in early warning, early action, dialogue facilitation and mediation support, and post-conflict rehabilitation (OSCE, 2011). In particular, MC3/11 called for enhanced co-ordination to

strengthen OSCE analysis, assessment and engagement capacity in all phases of the conflict cycle. It led to the creation of a systematic mediation-support capacity within the Conflict Prevention Centre, and subsequently to guidance materials on dialogue facilitation and mediation, taking on the UN principles of active mediation (OSCE, 2014); to the consolidation of the organisation's early warning capacity and resources, including through a network of early-warning focal points in executive structures; as well as to the strengthening of rapid reaction capacities through the creation of a rapid deployment roster (OSCE, 2011: 3-5).

Following the MC3/11, capacity building for the comprehensive approach was accelerated in practice by the Ukraine crisis and through the deployment of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, decided on 21 March 2014. The size of the mission and the urgent operational requirements of a conflict setting created a momentum to make rapid progress towards new capacities, for instance in terms of monitoring technologies (including the use of UAVs).

It is important to note that the OSCE approach of comprehensive and co-operative security, while being the most advanced example of comprehensiveness, exhibits significant operational limits. Firstly, the nature of the organisation is such that reaching political consensus can be hard and time-consuming. OSCE commitments and principles are only politically, not legally, binding and it has no effective mechanisms to sanction violations. The different priorities and perspectives on European security of participating states mean that agreements on new or upgraded policy frameworks are difficult to reach, making it preferable to improve the existing ones (such as MC3/11) rather than coming up with new policy documents.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, by operating under a broad conceptual basis of security, the OSCE undertakes a wide range of disparate activities, which may at times appear to lack coherence or clear implementation criteria. Processes to learn lessons take place in different ways, thanks to an extended presence in the field, but are hampered by limited resources. High staff turn-over and lack of attractiveness of the secondment system limit institutional capacity and incentives to boost the comprehensive approach. The OSCE also faces sceptical, if not negative, attitudes from a number of participating states, namely the Russian Federation and other former republics of the Soviet Union, which complain about Western domination in the organisation and its incapacity to focus on real threats and challenges,

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<sup>10</sup> Interview, Vienna, July 2017.

overemphasising comprehensiveness to the detriment of concrete security problems (Van Staden et al., 2003: 141-143).

Notwithstanding these operational and political challenges, the OSCE comprehensive approach has undoubtedly made headway since the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. In specific sectors – for instance mediation, early warning or in complex operational theatres such as Ukraine – the organisation has managed to cope quite effectively with a growing demand for comprehensiveness, doing much with limited resources and focusing on the improvement of existing capabilities.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Interview, Vienna, July 2017.

## 4. TAKING STOCK OF THE EU'S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

The previous two chapters discussed how the EU adopted the comprehensive approach, particularly since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty; and appraised the implementation of the comprehensive approach in other international organisations (NATO, UN, OSCE) with a view to gaining a better understanding of similarities and differences with the EU's approach. This chapter takes stock of the EU's comprehensive approach as it stands today, introducing the main actors involved in CA implementation, their thematic and geographic areas of action, the instruments and resources available to act comprehensively and the main lessons learned from field experiences. Data and empirical evidence have been collected through interviews with EU policy-makers in Brussels, as well as through an analysis of relevant EU policy documents and secondary literature. Because the EU's CA is a 'moving target', and the relevance of this report is to draw useful recommendations for policy-making, this chapter only covers the last two years of CA implementation (2015-2017), since the adoption of the Action Plan 2015.<sup>12</sup>

The literature identifies three main challenges for the EU's comprehensive approach, against which lessons learned and long term progress can be measured: (1) differences in **political** objectives, roles, mandates and approaches by actors hampering the establishment of a minimum common denominator for EU responses; (2) **organisational** difficulties in articulating a variety of EU policies and instruments with different rules, procedures, financial regulations, programming and management lines; (3) **contextual** factors, since each country situation requires a specific approach, to cope with local economic, political and social realities (Faria, 2014: 11).

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<sup>12</sup> For a discussion on the earlier implementation of the CA, please see this report's Introduction and Barry, 2012; Blockmans and Laatsit, 2012; Gross, 2008.

## 4.1 The comprehensive approach: key actors

There are a multitude of EU actors that are involved in the formulation and implementation of the comprehensive approach. As discussed above, since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the CA moved from a narrow perspective of civil-military coordination and civilian-military cooperation, to a broader emphasis of leveraging, in a synergic and strategic manner, all stakeholders, instruments and capabilities from the political, military, development and humanitarian domains that intervene in external conflicts and crises, “working together to enhance the coherence, effectiveness and impact of EU’s policy and action” (EC and HRVP, 2016a: 2). The following actors, in particular, constitute the bulk of the ‘membership’ of the EU’s CA<sup>13</sup> in its formulation provided by the 2015 and 2016/2017 action plans: the European External Action Service<sup>14</sup>, the European Commission<sup>15</sup>, the Council of the European Union<sup>16</sup>, as well as other technical EU agencies<sup>17</sup> and member state representations in EU institutions.

Actors that are involved in the CA interact through formal and informal channels, depending on operational requirements. Specifically, since the adoption of the Action Plan 2015, there have been a variety of working groups created on a permanent or *ad hoc* basis to facilitate internal discussions and coordination, or the achievement of specific tasks such as:<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The list includes only the main actors involved in the formulation and implementation of the CA. The following selection criteria were used: 1) services, units and agencies that are explicitly mentioned in the EU CA official documents; 2) stakeholders that are involved in the EU’s internal working groups and consultations, and particularly in the reference group on the comprehensive approach; 3) actors contributing to the operationalization of the CA in the field.

<sup>14</sup> In particular: Security Policy directorate (SECPOL), Prevention of Conflicts, Rule of Law/SSR, Integrated Approach, Stabilisation and Mediation division (PRISM), Development Cooperation Coordination Division (Global.5), Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD), INTCEN, Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), European Union Military Staff (EUMS), EU Delegations.

<sup>15</sup> In particular: International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI).

<sup>16</sup> In particular: the Politico-Military Group (PMG), Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM), EU Military Committee (EUMC), Political and Security Committee (PSC).

<sup>17</sup> Including the European Security and Defence College, the European Defence Agency, the EU Satellite Centre, the EU Operations Centre, EU Special Representatives, Europol, CEPOL and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.

<sup>18</sup> Interviews, Brussels, November-December 2016.

- **Reference Group on the Comprehensive Approach:** A core group of actors involved in the implementation of the CA are part of the 'Reference Group', an informal working group that was set up in 2015 to facilitate coordination among parties involved in the action plan's deliverables. The group is co-chaired by the EEAS (SECPO) and DG DEVCO. Membership: EEAS (SECPO, CMPD), EC (DEVCO, NEAR, ECHO).
- **Joint Programming Exercise (JPE):** A formal, institutionalised process of consultations involving DEVCO, the EEAS and MS to coordinate planning of development cooperation initiatives and discuss programming cycles together. Initially focused on non-conflict affected developing countries, it increasingly overlaps with the comprehensive approach by engaging with fragile and conflict-affected settings. Membership: EEAS (SECPO, CMPD, REGIONAL DESKS), EC (DEVCO).
- **Lessons Management Group:** informal working group tasked with collecting, discussing and prioritising operational lessons learned to be included in the annual report and to feed the debate on the CA action plan.
- **Sahel Task Force:** led by the EEAS and the EUSR, it originates in the crisis platform for Mali and regularly convenes staff and units working on the Sahel to monitor and discuss the situation. It is organised around the themes of border management, youth, radicalisation, countering extremism and migration. Membership: EC (DEVCO, NEAR, ECHO, FPI), EEAS (CMPD, INTCEN, SECPO, Counter-terrorism).
- **PRISM:** a new division established in December 2016 within the EEAS to be the focal point for the prevention of conflicts, rule of law, SSR, integrated approach, stabilisation and mediation. It is composed of staff from the SECPO directorate (the former Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Mediation Division), from the former Crisis Response and Coordination Division and from OPCEN, as well as seconded national experts (SNEs). This new division reports directly to the Deputy Secretary General for CSDP and crisis response, and partially to the Deputy Secretary General for political affairs. It consists of four teams: one on early warning and conflict prevention, a mediation support team, a

stabilisation and crisis response team and an SSR team. PRISM acts as the permanent working group for consultation on how to achieve an integrated approach.<sup>19</sup>

*Box 4: The SSR Task Force*

**Permanent informal inter-service SSR task force**

This informal group was established by the Commission and the HRVP following the 2016 Joint Communication on SSR to advise and support EU Delegations, the EEAS and Commission Services and CSDP missions on SSR-related matters. It contributes to the coherence and complementarity of EU SSR activity and supports the planning and design of SSR development cooperation projects and CSDP planning documents.

Set up

The group has a fairly wide inter-service membership and a flexible setup which allows members to meet twice a month and hold ad hoc meetings when needed (rotating chairing, 2 representatives per unit/ division involved). It brings together EU officials in charge of CSDP, development cooperation and peacebuilding instruments and security policy, i.e. Heads of Units and Team Leaders of key thematic units of the EEAS (CPCC, CMPD, EUMS, Multilateral Relations, PRISM) and the European Commission (NEAR's COTE on crisis reaction, DEVCO's Governance and Security and Nuclear Safety Units, FPI). It has included participants from other branches when the topic required (e.g. DG Home).<sup>20</sup>

The main objective of the TF is to implement the tasks listed in the Action Plan of the Joint Communication and to provide advice to EU policy-makers and staff in charge of SSR activities. It carries out its work according to an internal monitoring table based on the Action Plan's tasks. Its activities include assisting EU Delegations in implementing SSR activities, raising awareness on EU priorities on SSR in MS and other EU institutions, participating in ESDC trainings and developing SSR thematic evaluations.

Strengths and challenges

It is too early to assess the success of the task force, but a few preliminary observations can be made. The existence of the task force in itself can be considered a success in that it is the only active discussion platform on SSR for external action, which facilitates information-sharing among EU actors. By extension, the task force naturally came to discuss other SSR-related issues, e.g. Capacity Building in Support of Security and Development (CBSD). Its informal nature and the diversity of its membership are its strengths: it can adapt its agenda quickly according to developments and mobilise the networks of its members within their respective institutions. It has the potential to help build comprehensive EU support for the security sector in priority countries using the expertise of its membership (EEAS, Commission) and to some extent those of individual MS. In this respect, the task force is a promising tool with the potential to support the implementation of the comprehensive approach in specific countries, and its model could be replicated for other priority areas of the EU's global strategy. Now that the Integrated approach is officially effective internally, the TF's good practices on horizontal information-sharing within the EU and on participatory approaches with international and regional organisations could, in theory, help inform vertical decision-making.

This strength also brings a key challenge for the task force, which is to work coherently with members with different, if not diverging, approaches to SSR, in particular when it comes to developing monitoring and evaluation tools for SSR activities. Reporting back to the institutional constituencies of the TF's members has been mentioned as difficult: information is brought into the TF by its members, but does not flow back to their respective units and divisions. Externally, the TF also needs to increase its visibility; like PRISM, many outside of Brussels are not

<sup>19</sup> Cf. chapter 5. Interviews, Brussels, March 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with an EEAS official, June 2017.

aware of its existence. We could also question the kind of assistance the task force is able to provide to project managers designing or implementing SSR projects, and how it can be connected with EU Delegations. Finally, it is not clear to what extent the setup of the task force is responding to wider political imperatives rather than being the direct expression of the Comprehensive Approach and the JC on SSR. Its agenda reflects largely that of MS, i.e. migration (in particular border management in the southern Neighbourhood and Sahel), CVE/CT and CBSD.

## 4.2 EU CA actions: thematic and geographical areas of implementation

Building on the proposals set out in the 2013 Joint Communication and following the invitation included in the 2014 Council conclusions, the Action Plan 2015 (AP) set out priority actions and concrete specific initiatives under the CA policy framework for the first time. The idea behind the AP was to focus on practical examples for CA implementation, and feasible actions that the EU would manage to carry out, rather than forging a shared understanding of CA in the EU.<sup>21</sup> Progress on the AP's deliverables would be monitored by a CA reference group, meeting at least twice a year and composed of the units responsible for implementing the actions. The AP gave more emphasis to the identification of concrete initiatives, leaving less space for a discussion on the overall definition and conceptual clarifications of what 'comprehensiveness' could mean to different units.<sup>22</sup> Actions prioritised for 2015 included the development of guidelines for joint framework documents (JFDs), to strengthen joint analysis and a common strategic EU vision; capacity building in support of security and development (CBSD), to pursue EU's efforts in helping partner countries and regions to better prevent and manage crises; transition to/from CSDP missions, ensuring more coherent and collaborative planning of transition strategies between the EEAS and EC services; and exploring new methods for rapid deployment of joint field missions and/or staff to reinforce EU delegations (EC and HRVP, 2015: 5). The AP also identified four country cases (Sahel, Afghanistan, Somalia, Central America) and a series of initiatives included in the annex, most importantly: the development of an EU-wide SSR framework, the roll-out of

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<sup>21</sup> Disagreements and divergences between EU institutions and member states persist on when and for what the comprehensive approach is needed, and whether it relates to crises and conflict situations in fragile states or to external action in a more general sense.

<sup>22</sup> Interview, Brussels, November 2016.

the Conflict Early Warning System (CEWS), trust-fund actions related to migration, and joint programming of external assistance.

The EU policy-makers interviewed reported that misunderstandings relating to the nature of CA created some problems with putting the action plan into operation, with some actions progressing better than others, amidst persisting bureaucratic ‘silos’.<sup>23</sup> Despite the focus on concrete actions and step, the EU’s external action system, bound by a complex variety of procedures and organisational cultures, struggled to shift towards comprehensiveness. Some initiatives, such as CBSD, made little progress, lacking agreement on funding sources and on whether instruments should be considered as short-term or long-term responses, which has management and resourcing implications (European Parliament, 2017). Progress was more positive in other areas, such as information sharing on Afghanistan and Somalia. The CEWS (EC, 2016c) gained momentum as an important prevention tool in support of decision-making, through a system providing risk scanning of quantitative and qualitative data<sup>24</sup>, prioritisation, shared assessment and follow-up, and monitoring.<sup>25</sup> Although this new system did create some bureaucratic resistance in that it brought more workload, it nonetheless created a platform for discussion and joint analysis in support of risk-informed decisions. The main challenges since the beginning of the global roll-out phase have been coordinating messages from HQ to delegations, maintaining focus on long-term horizon risks in the context of short-term politically visible crises, the lack of flexibility in aligning different activities with CEWS shared assessments, the burden and accountability for monitoring follow up on CEWS prioritisation, and the provision of quick analysis for critical decision-making: in short, turning early warning into early action.

These and other lessons learned informed the elaboration of the progress report and the new 2016/2017 action plan. The latter identified new priorities, while at the same time continuing to follow up on the actions agreed upon in 2015. Following the new EU-wide strategic framework to support SSR, a SSR coordination matrix is foreseen in this action plan, to be implemented in at least two countries by 2018. The concept of Country Situational Awareness Platform (CSAP),

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<sup>23</sup> Interviews, Brussels, November 2016 and January 2017.

<sup>24</sup> This is mainly done by the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (IntCen) and the EUMS, through the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC) and SECPOL.

<sup>25</sup> For a detailed explanation of the EWS four steps – risk scanning, prioritisation, shared assessment and follow-up, monitoring – see Berglund and Bruckert (2017: 10-14).

chaired by the Head of Delegation, is developed to strengthen ties between the CSDP and Freedom, Security and Justice (FSJ), facilitating a common understanding of a situation at the country level and in synergy with the Early Warning System. The two trust funds to address the refugee crises (The Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis - MADAD Trust Fund and the Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa) are also included in the new action plan with a view to establishing coherence between the different financing instruments. Initiatives with partners are foreseen in the field of women, peace and security, integrating gender into crisis management missions and enhancing accountability. New country cases include Mali, Ukraine, Tunisia, Kyrgyz Republic, and Myanmar. Tables 2-3 below summarise the main geographic and thematic areas of CA implementation, as included in the two action plans.

Table 2: Overview of CA country cases

YEAR	COUNTRIES/REGIONS	FOCUS AREAS
2015-2016	<b>Sahel</b>	<i>Regional Action Plan (RAP) will integrate CA measures, including shared analysis, conflict prevention and better link internal and external action (e.g. combating terrorism and organised crime, managing migration).</i>
2015-2016	<b>Central America</b>	<i>Implement the Caribbean Regional Strategy on Citizen Security; prepare action plan with the involvement of EU MS and partner countries.</i>
2015-2016	<b>Afghanistan</b>	<i>Progress in public financial management through the Law and Order Trust Fund and the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund; programmatic approach to capacity building for Afghan key ministries and civilian policing; ensure EUPOL's transition to enhance police-justice linkages, also through reinforcement of EUSR team; refreshed framework for mutual accountability; humanitarian assistance for Afghans affected by conflict/natural disasters.</i>
2015-2016	<b>Somalia</b>	<i>Based on Horn of Africa Strategic Framework and Somali Compact, reinforce EU actions by developing shared conflict analysis, define a common strategic vision linking up EU-MS instruments/policies, formulate new interventions – CBSD and continue engaging with African Union to increase political coordination and mediation effort, notably as regards AMISOM.</i>
2016-2017	<b>Mali</b>	<i>Link/synergies between CA and joint programming and improve information and knowledge sharing.</i>
2016-2017	<b>Ukraine</b>	<i>Assess whether joint-shared analysis of the security sector follows CA principles and identify lessons learned in this area.</i>

2016-2017	<b>Tunisia</b>	<i>Assess coordination with major donors; initiate anti-terrorism partnership with the support of relevant EU agencies and JHA instruments.</i>
2016-2017	<b>Kyrgyz Republic</b>	<i>Reinforce synergies between policy objectives and cooperation tools.</i>

Source: EC and HRVP (2015); EC and HRVP (2016b).

Table 3: Overview of CA priority actions

YEAR	PRIORITY ACTIONS	FOCUS AREAS
2015-2016	<b>Define common strategic vision</b>	<i>Develop guidelines for <b>Joint Framework Documents</b>.</i>
2015-2016	<b>Mobilise different strengths and capacities of the EU</b>	<i><b>Capacity building in support of security and development.</b> <b>Transition:</b> earlier and more coordinated planning between EEAS, Commission services and MS from one form of engagement to another (e.g. to/from CSDP missions). <b>Rapid deployment</b> of joint field missions.</i>
2016-2017	<b>Joint Analysis, Options and Strategic Visions</b>	<i>Establish lessons learned on <b>Joint Programming and CA</b> synergies in selected countries.</i>
2016-2017	<b>Conflict Prevention</b>	<i>Comprehensive <b>EU SSR Coordination Matrix</b> developed in at least 2 countries, defining objectives and sequencing between political dialogue, cooperation instruments and CSDP operations/mission.</i>
2016-2017	<b>EU Delegations</b>	<i>Pilots on <b>Country Situational Awareness Platforms (CSAP)</b> in 2 countries.</i>
2016-2017	<b>Linking policies and internal and external action</b>	<i><b>Migration</b> – ensure coherence between actions funded under all financing instruments addressing migration issues and political dialogues; promote comprehensive approach to forced displacement through joint/coordinated needs assessments.</i>
2016-2017	<b>Work in partnership</b>	<i>Assess improvements in the area of <b>women, peace and security</b>, based on the Gender Action Plan 2016-2020; assess how EU is integrating gender into crisis management missions and operations.</i>

Source: EC and HRVP (2015); EC and HRVP (2016b).

### 4.3 Instruments and resources for comprehensive actions

The implementation of the EU's comprehensive approach in selected geographical areas and themes, as outlined in the previous section, is made possible by a set of instruments and resources that enable the EU to act in a comprehensive manner, and that have been adjusted over time to meet this objective. This section provides an overview of these tools, with a focus

on what can be defined as key CA enablers. They can be divided into five types: human resources, financial instruments, response tools, joint analysis and programming, and field operations.

### Human resources and leadership

The two main units involved in the formulation and planning of the comprehensive approach are PRISM in the EEAS and DEVCO's Fragility and Resilience Unit (DEVCO B.2, formerly B.7). The two units closely cooperate on all focus areas and coordinate all instruments related to comprehensive action in the fields of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and therefore take the lead in consultations and discussion on CA priority actions and areas of intervention. Leadership being a key enabler of effective coordination and cooperation, the close cooperation between EEAS and DEVCO, and the working group discussions (see section on CA actors) with all other CA stakeholders has in general improved the EU's capability to increase coherence, despite some obvious differences in the two units' agendas and priorities. That being said, it is not a secret that problems remain from a human resources and staff time perspective. Staff are not fully engaged in discussing the CA and devote only a limited part of their time (below 20%) to pushing forward the CA agenda or better coordinating with colleagues from other units.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, progress reports are largely based on personal contributions (suffering from the lack of time just described) and there is no serious benchmarking system to monitor and conduct evaluations.<sup>27</sup>

### Financial resources

The comprehensive approach does not have its own direct, financial arm. However, CA activities are financed through the multiple financial instruments that constitute the source of funding for the EU's external action, managed by the European Commission – the EEAS does not manage the operational budget.<sup>28</sup> Having a comprehensive approach entails combining comprehensive and joint actions, with resources that do not have an integrated or joint administration. This is

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<sup>26</sup> Interview, Brussels, December 2016.

<sup>27</sup> An analysis of the impact of leadership and the lack of resources on EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding is available in Davis et al. (2017).

<sup>28</sup> For a detailed explanation of financing and procurement procedures for civilian CSDP missions and other relevant aspects of the EU's external action, see Dijkstra et al. (2016: 36).

certainly a key challenge for the implementation of the CA as it creates a constant tension between those who drive the CA agenda, and those who actually finance it.

One key actor is the Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) service, which finances the execution of operations under the CFSP, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the Partnership Instrument, the Instrument for Cooperation with Industrialised Countries (ICI) and the Election Observation Missions (EOMs). The FPI is a Commission service, working closely alongside – and actually located inside the EEAS. Working relations between the FPI service and the EEAS is an example of how the comprehensive approach applies to the financial dimension of EU foreign policy. This relationship encounters occasional conflicts, originating in different interpretations of treaty provisions, for instance, about what can be financed (and not financed) through the EU budget. A case in point is the funding basis for training activities carried out by Operation Sophia – EUNAVFOR MED, which required intensive inter-service consultation since the task could not simply be funded by the EU budget, in that it is a military operation, and MS were reluctant to finance it through the Athena mechanism. Another example is divergent views between the EEAS and the EC on how to transition from CSDP missions to long-term development projects administered by DEVCO.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the fact that the FPI office is located within the EEAS and reports directly to the HR/VP is a signal of the attempt to bring greater coherence to consultations on funding decisions for CA actions. Since its creation, the FPI has managed the crisis response and crisis preparedness components of the Instrument for Stability/IcSP. As the crisis response component does not follow the usual multi-year and annual programming cycle – unlike all standard EU funding instruments, this part of the IcSP allows a more flexible and faster response.

Other external action instruments are for the most part geographical.<sup>30</sup> They include: the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) covers partner countries and regions and addresses interconnected thematic challenges through the Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC – supporting actions in environment and climate change, sustainable energy, human development, food security and migration), the Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities programme (a

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<sup>29</sup> Interview, Brussels, January 2017.

<sup>30</sup> See website of the European Commission ([https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/funding-instruments-programming/funding-instruments\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/funding-instruments-programming/funding-instruments_en)).

key funding instrument for CSO initiatives in fragile or conflict-affected countries), and the Pan-African Programme; the European Development Fund (EDF), DEVCO's main funding instrument to provide development assistance to 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) partner countries; the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), which assists countries that will become members of the EU and is managed by DG NEAR; the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), the funding instrument for European Neighbourhood Policy, also managed by DG NEAR; and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the EU's funding for democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights and basic freedoms. Trust Funds represent an increasingly 'popular' financial instrument within the EU, seen as having the capacity to respond better and more visibly to external pressures (e.g. refugee crisis) while maximising efficiency, coherence and flexibility, as well as the speed of delivery of EU support to recipients and beneficiaries. It is certainly no coincidence that the 2016/2017 action plan emphasises the need to ensure coherence between actions funded under all financing instruments, including trust funds that address migration issues.

Flexibility in the use of resources is, in this regard, a key requirement for the CA agenda. The CFSP budget is a good example: a total of 320 million EUR is used to finance EU Special Representatives (5-10%), projects in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament with UN agencies (5-10%) and the rest goes to civilian CSDP missions, which constitutes the biggest portion (circa 80%).<sup>31</sup> This part of the budget has not been used in full in recent years, as no new civilian CSDP mission has been launched since 2014, EUPOL Afghanistan was closed and EULEX Kosovo was downsized. When budget is not used, it can be transferred to other activities (e.g. humanitarian aid, IcSP) or to different trust funds (for instance, to address the refugee crisis).

### Humanitarian response

The capacity of the EU to ensure an effective, timely and coordinated crisis response is the key success factor for the comprehensive approach. This makes cooperation between different services with sometimes conflicting mandates even more important. A case in point is the

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<sup>31</sup> Interview, Brussels, January 2017.

effective coordination between humanitarian- and disaster response-related interventions provided by the European Commission's European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) and other EU development, security and political actors.

ECHO has, in this regard, a special role to play with regards to the CA, given the need to follow as closely as possible the principle of neutrality and independence that underlies humanitarian cooperation. This implies the need to act autonomously from other EU and Commission bodies – to avoid misperceptions of on the ground operations – while at the same time maintaining a considerable degree of cooperation at the strategic level. For this reason, DG ECHO's level of engagement in the comprehensive approach is defined as 'in, but out'.<sup>32</sup> It is part of EU crisis response (with EU humanitarian aid sometimes even being the only tangible symbol of EU solidarity), but is not an EU crisis management tool. EU humanitarian aid is provided on the basis of the needs of affected populations, in line with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, and independent of any strategic, military, economic or other EU objectives.

Against this backdrop, sharing information is one of the principal coordination activities that has been progressing in recent years, also thanks to the CA. INFORM – DG ECHO's open-source tool for measuring the risk of a humanitarian crisis or disaster occurring in a country – is embedded in the CEWS, with information being shared with EEAS and EC policy-makers. DG ECHO staff take part in inter-service crisis platform meetings to share information and alerts. This also includes routine consultations with MS at the EUMC and PMG levels, where ECHO coordinates the Commission's presence (including from most relevant DGs, e.g. DEVCO, FPI, etc.). DG ECHO's field network, outside (but in close consultation with) the EU delegations ensures better situational awareness and monitoring, while facilitating interactions with NGOs, civil society and local actors on the ground.

Also worth mentioning is the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), DG ECHO's 24/7 operational crisis centre. The ERCC serves as the coordination hub for European responses during emergencies and as such allows the EU to avoid duplication of efforts. It monitors the situation, collects and analyses real-time information on disasters, prepares plans for the deployments of teams, works with MS to map available assets and in-kind assistance. The ERCC calls on resources

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<sup>32</sup> Interview, Brussels, 2 December 2016.

from the countries participating in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, under which a whole range of civil protection services can be provided.

Overall, according to an ECHO official, a comprehensive approach in humanitarian response has gradually emerged in the past 10 years, especially in terms of civil-military cooperation. EU efforts in this area allow for smoother and more effective coordination among key actors at all stages (i.e. before, during and following different operations).<sup>33</sup>

### Joint Analysis, Programming and Decision-Making

The Conflict Early Warning System (CEWS) and the Country Situational Awareness Platforms (CSAP) have been two key actions prioritised in the CA action plan in order to support risk-based policy making and improve the EU's situational awareness and analysis capacity, thereby enabling faster information sharing. The Joint Programming (JP)<sup>34</sup> is another important tool in support of comprehensive decision-making, which complements (and in some cases supports) CA actions. Technically, JP is a planning instrument for development cooperation, allowing DG DEVCO to plan work in partner countries by developing a joint analysis of the country situation and a joint response with other EU partners and MS. JP outlines a joint strategic vision, informing financing and actions for a partner country in a strategic manner and bringing coherence in EU and MS support. In the working group discussions, DG DEVCO strongly pushed for the need to keep JP on top of the CA agenda, especially in fragile and conflict-affected states, and as a way for key stakeholders to reduce the transactions costs and increase coordination. The 2016/2017 action plan highlights the need to identify good practices and lessons learned linking JP and the comprehensive approach, and better define how joint programming is related to joint analysis. This work should be a shared competency between DG DEVCO and the EEAS.

### CSDP civilian missions and military operations

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<sup>33</sup> Interview, Brussels, 2 December 2016.

<sup>34</sup> Joint Programming emanates from the Lisbon Treaty provisions of more joint working and 'whole of Europe' approach, and was included in the European Council Conclusions of November 2011 (Council of the EU, 2011a), as well as in the Agenda for Change (European Commission, 2011).

EU missions and operations under the Common Security and Defence Policy, and relations with other EU programmes on the ground, constitute an important element of the CA's implementation. Particularly important is the nexus between development and security actions in crisis management, through cooperation between DG DEVCO and CSDP missions (civilian and military). Here, the CA is evident mostly in joint trainings – including pre-deployment – for CSDP missions, and information sharing for peacebuilding and SSR. The level of exchange between the EEAS, MS and DEVCO has been barely satisfactory in the past, but significant progress has been made thanks to the institutionalisation of 'multi-layer exercises' organised every two years (March through October) by the EEAS in cooperation with field and operational headquarters. The exercise simulates a crisis taking place in a country and tests crisis management structures and procedures, planning civilian and military CSDP engagement simultaneously, with a SSR workshop held at the beginning of the crisis to reinforce synergies. This exercise was seen by development actors (DG DEVCO) as a good opportunity to test coordination with security (EEAS) and humanitarian actors (ECHO), coordinating actions from the early stages of a crisis, and planning the transition strategy more effectively. The last multi-layer exercise involved external actors (UN, African Union, International Committee of the Red Cross) involved in field operations. Training of personnel for mission deployments has been another important test case for the implementation of a comprehensive approach in specific crisis areas. Key challenges in this domain are: (a) intra-EU coordination of training design to achieve a gradual standardisation of EU training activities; (b) inclusion of CA practices and methodology in training courses to train newly appointed staff effectively in acting comprehensively in peacebuilding and crisis management; (c) availability of EU financial resources for civilian training.

With regards to the first point, the EU has diversified training courses and mentoring programmes on conflict prevention and peacebuilding, creating a broad platform for the transfer of expertise. However, initiatives are still fragmented and, in many cases, not mandatory, with remarkably slow progress in implementing the principles and policies included in the 2004 Draft EU Training Concept in ESDP (EU Council, 2004). The *EU Policy on Training for CSDP* and the *Implementing Guidelines for the EU Policy on Training for CSDP* are both supposed to improve the training cycle in terms of internal coordination, comprehensiveness of exercises, harmonisation of training

systems across the EU, the capacity to foster a common understanding among civilian and military personnel through training activities, the coordinating role of the European Security and Defence College, and the training-recruitment nexus through the full implementation of the Goalkeeper project.<sup>35</sup>

#### 4.4 CA practical cases and lessons learned

The 2015 and 2016/2017 action plans describe the country and regional cases where the EU has put the comprehensive approach into practice. This section looks at two particularly relevant cases – a regional one, the Sahel, and a country, Tunisia – and summarises the main lessons learned from these two practical experiences.

##### **4.4.1 The Sahel**

The case of the Sahel is particularly relevant, not only because of the strategic importance of this area and the multi-country, regional features of EU interventions; but because work underlying the two action plans drew substantially from the EU Strategy for the Sahel and from the Regional Action Plan (RAP) (Council of the EU, 2015). Lessons learned from this practical case therefore deserve particular attention because the EU action in the Sahel has been a forerunner of the CA (Helly and Galeazzi, 2015).

The *EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel*, elaborated through consultations among relevant EU institutions (EEAS, European Commission, EU Council), strongly emphasised that since “problems in the Sahel are cross-border and closely intertwined”, a “regional, integrated and holistic” approach by the EU was needed to articulate actions in the areas of (a) development, good governance and internal conflict resolution, (b) political and diplomatic action, (c) security and the rule of law, (d) fight against and prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation (EU Council, 2011: 7-8). The Sahel Strategy mentioned a wide range of resources to implement these objectives, including the EDF, the IfS, the ENPI, and thematic programmes

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<sup>35</sup> For details on the current debate on reforming the EU training and recruitment systems for CSDP, including a full description of the training cycles and courses offered by EU institutions (EEAS, DEVCO) and MS, see De Zan et al. (2016: 26-27).

and budget lines such as the Security and Rule of Law Line of Action, as well as support by EU MS. Three core countries were selected as the EU primary focus for intervention – Mali, Mauritania and Niger – which constituted a limitation insofar as it excluded key regional players, such as Algeria and Nigeria, from the outset (Pirozzi, 2013: 15).

The Strategy played a role in the planning and preparatory actions for the EUCAP SAHEL Niger and the EUCAP NESTOR Sahel, allowing both missions to be planned in complementarity with other EU instruments and under the same strategic framework, with some positive developments. For example, the geographic desk of the EEAS Department for West and Central Africa played a substantive role in the first phase of the planning process for EUCAP SAHEL Niger, namely as regards the political design of the EU's intervention and the evaluation of the appropriateness of a CSDP action. To ensure a coherent implementation, the EU appointed a Senior Coordinator for the EU Sahel Strategy and a Task Force meeting informally every month, tasked with the evaluation and the implementation of the Strategy (Pirozzi, 2013: 16).

Diverging political interests have been one of the main factors hampering the implementation of the comprehensive approach in the Sahel, with cooperation between the EU and its MS being difficult, in particular during the preliminary phases of the planning processes of Sahel CSDP missions: the decision to deploy a CSDP mission in the Sahel was actively promoted by Italy, France and Spain, while Germany, Poland and the Nordic countries were more reluctant (Pirozzi, 2013: 16). Furthermore, in order to be effective on the ground and fully aligned to the approach suggested by the Sahel Strategy, EUCAP SAHEL Niger should have been created with a clear regional dimension – while it fell short of scope and its capacities were too modest to effectively fulfil the objective of providing Nigerien ownership of an effective security and judicial system for the fight against terrorism and organised crime.<sup>36</sup>

These three main lessons learned (increase capacities, take into account political realities, maintain a focus on strengthening a regional approach) were the main principles informing the Sahel RAP 2015-2020, approved in April 2015. The Regional Action Plan for the Sahel was used as a basis for discussions when preparing and drafting priority areas for the Action Plan, for

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<sup>36</sup> On the lessons learned from CA and CSDP missions in the Sahel, in particular EUCAP SAHEL Niger and EUTM Mali, see Pirozzi (2015: 111-115).

instance the need to provide a common analytical platform for CSDP operations bringing together all EU services in Brussels and MS.

The RAP identifies four domains: 1) preventing and countering radicalisation, 2) creating appropriate conditions for youth, 3) migration and mobility, 4) border management, fight against illicit trafficking and transnational organised crime. The Action Plan considers several issues mutually reinforcing, such as socio-economic development, food security, human rights, governance, and the rule of law as well as security-related threats.

The RAP also establishes a comprehensive approach to coordinating EU institutions as well as EU MS by using all the relevant instruments, from the European Development Fund to MS programmes and IcSP, and including the CSDP missions currently deployed in the region: EUTM Mali, EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUCAP Sahel Mali. This approach is connected to framework mechanisms such as the Rabat and Khartoum processes on migration and development and it should be implemented in synergy with the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the G5 Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the World Bank, as well as with civil society organisations.

In December 2016, the Commission and EEAS published the first Annual Report on the implementation of the Sahel Regional Action Plan (from April 2015 to August 2016) (European Commission and EEAS, 2016). The report highlights as extremely challenging the terrorist threats in the region and the role played by Niger as a migration route to Europe. It also shows the growing engagement of EU and MS, in particular through the EU Trust Fund for Africa. The Sahelian region remains today a particularly challenging operational environment for the comprehensive approach, but at the same time an extremely relevant one, as it combines considerable international migratory flows, new and traditional expressions of insecurity, and major challenges to promoting long-term development and short-term humanitarian assistance.

#### **4.4.2 Tunisia**

Today's Tunisia is less a potential model for democratic transition than a test case for the nexus between security-development and cooperation among international actors, given the need for democratic development to be supported by development actions, financial assistance, and adequate security support. Since the 2011 Jasmine Revolution, Tunisia has undergone a fragile democratic transition. Unlike other Arab countries, the country has been seen by the international community as an example of peaceful transition and political compromise, thus far avoiding degeneration into civil war or military intervention to restore order. However, Tunisia's progress towards building a stable democracy is increasingly in danger: the pace of reforms has slowed down significantly since the 2014 elections and the economy remains weak, while domestic discontent and social unrest are on the rise. Naturally, security is also part of the picture. Challenges to Tunisian security include a difficult domestic security environment, an unstable region, insecure borders and ineffective security forces, which together constitute fertile ground for jihadi terrorism. The fight against militias and terror groups has been a growing concern for the EU: security cooperation has been deepened in the area of counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation, although this has so far occurred outside the CSDP framework. The 2016 Joint Communication Strengthening EU support for Tunisia states that the EU should help Tunisia in "building national capacities and provide expertise on issues such as preventing radicalisation, border management; encouraging rule-of-law and prosecution; strategic communications; addressing foreign terrorist fighters and organised crime" (Commission & HR/VP, 2016). The EU-Tunisia Action Plan 2013-2017 lists "enhancing cooperation in areas such as democracy and human rights, foreign and security policy, cooperation in the fight against terrorism" among the priority actions (EEAS, n.d). The EU has allocated 23 million euros to support a programme for the reform of the security sector in Tunisia as part of the Action Plan, focusing on the modernisation of the internal security forces in line with human rights standards, including the reform of evaluation, recruitment and training systems. The programme also advises the Tunisian state on the establishment of an inter-ministerial crisis cell as well as strengthening the technical and operational capacities of land border security services to support

the fight against cross-border crime with new rapid operational centres set up in Medenine, Tataouine, and Kasserine. This support is complemented by justice reforms, backed by the EU with a budget of 40 million euros. Other security-related budget lines have included the Instruments contributing to Stability and Peace, with a contribution of 4 million euros in 2015. On the development assistance front, the EU has more than doubled its financial contribution to Tunisia since 2011 and established a 'Privileged Partnership' in 2012. The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), the main instrument providing assistance to Tunisia, supplied over 1 billion euros in grants and other forms of aid from 2011 to 2015, with 886 million budgeted from 2014 to 2020, to encourage inclusive economic growth and strengthen the foundations of democracy, human rights, civil society and security sector reform. Overall, the combination of grants, macro-financial assistance and loans, including those from the European Investment Bank, brings the total support to Tunisia to approximately 3.5 billion euros from 2011 to 2016. Undoubtedly, by boosting security as well as development support to Tunisia following the 2011 revolution and in the aftermath of the 2015 terrorist attacks, the EU and its member states have made it clear that a strong, democratic and stable Tunisia is their direct strategic interest. Overall, responses have been adapted to evolving country-specific circumstances, taking into account new risks to democratic transition, growing security threats and, most importantly, developing a new approach to jointly tackle interconnected challenges, which attempts to fill the holes in security support with a wide range of development programmes and financial aid (Commission & HR/VP, 2016: 5). However, efforts have only been partially successful. Understanding Tunisia's drivers of fragility, and acknowledging the need for integrated security-development responses did not generate a grand strategy for Tunisia, nor did it help to increase synergy in the field. Furthermore, the lack of a regional approach, as in the case of Sahel, constitutes a significant limit to the effectiveness of responses, particularly given the link between insecurity in Tunisia and neighbouring Libya.

## 5. FROM COMPREHENSIVE TO INTEGRATED APPROACH

Moving beyond the notion of comprehensiveness and against the backdrop of a rapidly deteriorating geopolitical context in Europe's strategic neighbourhood, the 2016 EU Global Strategy (EUGS) introduced, as part of a series of new work strands aimed at redefining priorities for the EU's external action, the concept of an 'integrated approach' to conflicts and crises. According to the EUGS, the integrated approach (IA) has four layers of action:

- *Multi-phased*, allowing 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" (EUGS, 2016: 28);
- *Multi-dimensional*, drawing on "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 (EUGS, 2016: 28);
- *Multi-level*, acting to address the complexity of conflicts "at the local, national, regional and global levels" (EUGS, 2016: 29);
- *Multi-lateral*, engaging all players "present in a conflict and necessary for its resolution, partnering more systematically on the ground with regional and international organisations, bilateral donors and civil society", to build sustainable peace "through comprehensive agreements rooted in broad, deep and durable regional and international partnerships" (EUGS, 2016: 29).

The scope and actions of the IA have been defined by a working document of the EEAS, The EU Integrated Approach to external conflicts and crises, released in June 2017 (EEAS and EC, 2017), which is the result of inter-service policy work led by PRISM. According to the working document, the integrated approach bases itself and expands the scope and ambition of the comprehensive approach, strengthening the way the EU brings together institutions, expertise and instruments,

and works with MS in prevention, peacebuilding, crisis response and stabilisation (EEAS and EC, 2017: 2). More specifically:

- IA **streamlines** the CA by addressing all the phases of the conflict and describing the EU’s approach to each of these phases;
- IA **operationalises** CA by increasing the EU’s impact on the ground, ensuring a coherent EU response and more closely coordinated position among institutions and actors;
- IA **deepens** CA by applying its principles to the full breadth of the EU’s work on external conflicts and crises (EEAS and EC, 2017: 3).

The IA also **completes** the CA, by succeeding it as the framework to promote a coherent approach by the EU to external conflicts and crises.<sup>37</sup> PRISM becomes the focal point, together with relevant EEAS and Commission services (such as DEVCO B.2 or FPI), for EU responses to the conflict cycle.

The IA working document identifies a set of priority areas, which are common to the full conflict cycle. The priority areas and related objectives are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Integrated Approach focus areas

FOCUS AREA	OBJECTIVE & INITIATIVES
<b>SHARED ANALYSIS AND CONFLICT SENSITIVITY</b>	<i>Enhance the capacity of the EU to conduct analysis, assess the underlying vulnerabilities and causes of emerging conflicts, potential factors of resilience and options for engagement; the EU will also strengthen conflict sensitivity, by ensuring joint planning, programming and implementation in fragile and conflict-affected countries.</i>
<b>MEDIATION SUPPORT</b>	<i>Integrate the EEAS mediation support capacity into peace process-related work for the EU, including in the PSC, and by strengthening cooperation in mediation support capacities with international and regional organisations.</i>
<b>SECURITY SECTOR REFORM</b>	<i>Implement the SSR Strategic Framework to apply short-term, mid-term and long-term support activities, including CSDP actions, IcSP programmes and development cooperation in the security sector of partner countries.</i>

<sup>37</sup> The EU will present a final report on the implementation of the 2016-2017 Comprehensive Approach Action Plan in Spring 2018, after which the IA will be the main framework for the implementation of coherent and coordinated responses to external actions and crises. Cf. EEAS and EC (2017: 4).

<b>EU CONFLICT EARLY WARNING SYSTEM</b>	<i>Prevent the emergence, re-emergence or escalation of violent conflict, adapting EWS to make it fitter for purpose and better linked to other instruments.</i>
<b>PREVENTION APPROACH AND EARLY ACTION</b>	<i>Strengthen the EU's partnership with the UN on conflict prevention and participation in other conflict prevention fora.</i>
<b>RESPONSE TO CRISES</b> [CSDP, CIVIL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN ISSUES]	<i>Envisage the use of all available resources to respond to crises in a coordinated way, enhancing synergies between EEAS and Commission instruments (e.g. the EEAS Crisis Response Mechanism and DG ECHO's Emergency Response Coordination Centre). Use the EU's political and diplomatic outreach more effectively and consistently to promote the EU's objectives for people affected by humanitarian crises, notably through initiatives for humanitarian access and the promotion of respect for international humanitarian law, as well as early warning, de-confliction and protection. Regarding CSDP missions, an EEAS task force will be created to contribute to strategic foresight on possible future conflicts and crises, and identify early actions, including CSDP engagements.</i>
<b>STABILISATION</b>	<i>The EU will strengthen its stabilisation response by drafting a stabilisation concept and guidelines, based on prior and existing engagements, as well as preparing a proposal for an EEAS surge mechanism (roster).</i>
<b>TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE</b>	<i>Efforts on transitional justice will be stepped up, to improve coordination of transitional justice donors, both in-country and at HQ level, making better use of resources.</i>

Source: EEAS and EC (2017: 5-10).

By expanding the CA, EU policy-makers sought to reframe the EU's response to fragility and external conflicts and crises. This new level of ambition is also reflected in the strong linkages between the IA and other follow-up actions to the EUGS, particularly the Joint Communication on Resilience, which highlight the relevance of investing in upstream conflict prevention, crisis response and conflict resolution.

Conceptually, as observed by Tardy, the IA can be seen as more ambitious, in the sense that it increases the level of ambition of EU interventions to address instability, in line with the EUGS spirit; more strategic, going beyond operational crisis response by integrating a better sequencing of the political, security and economic dimensions of EU crisis response to address the root causes of conflict; and more vertical, placing various components of EU response under a single authority and chain of command, whereas the CA synchronises a wide range of instruments in a horizontal way (Tardy, 2017: 3). Operationally, the practical implementation of

the integrated approach could go so far as: to enhance EU capacities in the fields of early warning and conflict sensitivity; to provide the EU with better conflict analysis and prevention capacity; to reframe the EU's stabilisation approach, integrating various political, security and development components to make sure that transition between crisis management and stabilisation is more coherent and inclusive, integrating (rather than coordinating) different levels of EU action; and to better link all levels of EU responses with other international actors (UN, African Union, OSCE, NATO, regional organisations), ensuring consistency in international community interventions.<sup>38</sup>

There are some key issues and challenges that need to be clarified to avoid the emergence of inefficiencies and blockages in the EU's crisis response machinery. First, the integrated approach will undoubtedly imply an alteration (if not a transformation) of the chain of command and institutional procedures of the EU's response to crises, in a much more radical way than the CA. The CA was about coordination and cooperation, whereas integration requires truly breaking down the silos, revising the authorising environment and the way decisions in some areas are taken, including the decision-making structure, the allocation of resources, and the transaction and administration costs to sustain an integrated bureaucratic machine. Negotiating 'who does what' may turn out to be a very complex endeavour, and behavioural changes among staff may be needed in order to achieve a shared understanding of (and buy-in to) the new approach. Moving from CA to IA would require a change in the EU's bureaucratic culture and organisation, notably through human resources incentives (EPLO, 2017). Secondly, because IA is aiming to be more strategic and political than CA, member states will have more to say in it and diverging preferences or strategic interests will weigh much more (and potentially hamper) putting IA into operation. Third, as IA goes beyond being a coordination mechanism and has the ambition to achieve transformational objectives on the ground, adequate results frameworks, indicators, monitoring and evaluation tools should be set in place to track progress and its contribution towards achieving EUGS goals in the fields of prevention, stabilisation, resilience, and security. A 'vertical' approach connecting policy- and decision-making levels to ground operations is doomed to fail without a proper assessment of successes and challenges encountered in the field. More

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<sup>38</sup> Interviews, Brussels, December 2016. See also Tardy (2017: 4).

importantly, a new approach is doomed to fail if it focuses only on EU internal processes and not enough on local needs and the perspectives of people in conflict-affected countries, including civil society actors. Designing the right programmes for interventions with a consensual view among all stakeholders, and the right monitoring tools, is therefore essential to translating priorities into coherent and effective actions. Expanding the CA into an integrated approach is a double or quits gamble: if successful and properly planned and implemented, it will increase the overall coherence, and impact of EU responses; but it also risks being counter-productive by creating additional burdens and misunderstandings among EU agencies and thereby undermining the capacity of institutions and staff to coordinate their efforts.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The EU has undoubtedly made good progress since the 2013 Joint Communication on the CA, both in terms of institutionalisation/operationalisation of this concept and inter-agency coordination. The introduction of an ‘integrated approach’ in the EUGS, and the subsequent definition of its scope and actions, confirm that concrete steps have been taken to improve EU responses to conflicts and crises. Compared to the lessons learned and evolution of the comprehensive approach in other international organisations, EU tools for the integrated approach encompass different policy phases, such as planning and implementation; address all stages of the conflict cycle, from prevention to resilience; address essential cross-cutting issues, such as the evolution from early warning to early action. In this regard, the EU and the UN exhibit the most ambitious efforts to reform their structures by integrating lessons learned across the whole spectrum of comprehensiveness, taking a broader systemic and strategic stance – in the case of the EU, strategic direction is provided by the EUGS, while for the UN, it stems from the recommendations of the HIPPO report. Conversely, evolution in the NATO and OSCE frameworks has been more focused and targeted towards specific dimensions: in the case of NATO, the new action plan will call for transformation of the Alliance capacities to operate in changed security environments, for instance by tackling hybrid threats more effectively and engaging in conflict prevention; whereas in the OSCE, MC3/11 called for enhanced co-ordination to strengthen OSCE analysis, assessment and engagement capacity in all phases of the conflict cycle and led to the creation of a systematic mediation-support capacity.

Therefore, the practice of CA and its evolution from CMCO to the IA shows that the EU drew on NATO’s comprehensive approach first, adapting it to its *sui generis*, multi-level governance and the need for inter-institutional coordination; but it also moved progressively closer to the UN’s work on systemic coherence (visible in the efforts to elaborate the 2013 Joint Communication) and, more recently, expanded the notion of ‘integration’ to the four interconnected layers of action (multi-level, multi-phased, multi-layered and multi-lateral), thereby becoming significantly more ambitious in dealing with external conflicts and crises.

Has this evolution made the EU's comprehensive/integrated approach more fit for purpose, or too sophisticated for operational requirements? Is there a risk that the EU's responses will be integrated at HQ level, but remain in silos in the field, lacking the ability in practice to turn a proliferation of guiding principles into impactful, context-driven actions?

Taking a step back and looking at the broad picture, the following practical recommendations may be useful for EU policy-makers as they try to optimise their crisis response machinery to improve effectiveness, efficiency and impact on the ground, while maintaining horizontal, system-wide coherence.

At the strategic and political levels, there is a significant risk that the move from a comprehensive to an integrated approach will create confusion or disagreement on the priorities for CA-IA actions, particularly so far as the role of EU MS is concerned. As the need for policy harmonisation will increase, an innovative mechanism for consultations should be found to prevent CA-IA from becoming a shopping list prepared by member states on the basis of their particular strategic objectives, while at the same time adequately engaging them in steering CA-IA priorities. Political leadership from HRVP and EEAS and EC Senior Management will be important for that. Furthermore, there is still the conceptual imperative of clarifying how different but overlapping work streams (e.g. prevention, resilience, integrated approach, etc.) can fit together coherently, both at the level of common strategic priorities and that of specific initiatives. Paradoxically, an ambitious comprehensive agenda set out in the EUGS is actually leading to a proliferation of new policy agendas, each one requiring staff attention, resources and political capital.

**R1 - REDUCE COMPLEXITY:** Avoid 'over bureaucratisation' of policy priorities (e.g. multiplying written assignments, meetings and lengthy procedures) and **select a few, consistent concepts to invest in**, always keeping a close eye on operational needs and requests coming from delegations and missions in fragile and conflict-affected countries, as well as by ensuring coherence and synergies in dialogues with external partners. The IA working document appears to go into this direction.

**R2 - CREATE BASELINE INDICATORS FOR SHARED POLITICAL VISION AMONG EU MEMBER**

**STATES:** The comprehensive approach has focused on bureaucratic coordination among EU institutions, but the integrated approach creates an urgent need to reinstate political coordination among EU member states as a key determinant of coherence in the EU's response to conflicts and crises. Drawing from the OSCE framework, the EU's IA should be instrumental to bridging differences and building trust between member states. Relevant best practices in coordination in specific regions (e.g. Sahel) or themes (e.g. gender) should therefore be monitored and used to consolidate shared visions among EU MS. Baseline indicators should be used to assess the extent to which MS are committing to the implementation of the integrated approach, and progress towards fully-fledged joined-up EU responses.

At the **institutional level**, the main problem remains how to handle the divergent preferences, mind-sets and agendas of the EEAS, EC services and other EU agencies that are involved in the formulation and implementation of comprehensive actions. To avoid an enduring – and counter-productive – conflict between the main CA shareholders (mainly EEAS and DEVCO), **the work done at the level of inter-service working groups (both formal and informal) should be accompanied by more learning initiatives aimed at creating synergies between staff and management, and between thematic and geographical teams.** Flagship CA actions should be streamlined, setting parameters for implementation and reducing transaction costs or barriers. For this to happen, **the EEAS and DEVCO should take the lead in proposing targets and indicators, with the aim of establishing a proper results framework**, including modifications in actions or responses to measure the delivery of services specific to conflict areas more effectively. **The latter should be supported by an accountability and decision-making framework**, clarifying roles, protocols and behaviours in order to make decisions on CA actions more effective and reduce the possibility of a conflict among institutional actors. This framework should therefore define who has authority to manage quality, risks, results, and compliance with other EU policies and monitoring.

**R3 - IMPROVE TRAINING, RECRUITMENT AND INCENTIVE SYSTEMS** at the individual and institutional levels for EU staff working on violent conflict and crisis situations, using them as catalysts for knowledge sharing and breaking down silos among civilian, military, police, development, humanitarian and political personnel to render the EU more effective at conflict prevention. These systems should aim to **increase and maintain conflict expertise across EU institutions**, for example by increasing the number of peace and conflict experts seconded by MS, recruiting and maintaining a quota of permanent conflict experts on staff, evaluating staff on conflict-sensitive engagement and considering creating a conflict expert roster available for deployment or consultation (e.g. for DG Trade negotiation teams working on trade agreements or DG Home when working on a migration compact in conflict-affected contexts). A reformed incentive system should aim to attract and develop EU staff engaging in implementing the integrated approach, especially those engaged in conflict-affected countries, offering them better support in their day-to-day jobs and rewarding those who have been working more proactively towards a joined-up approach in their responsibilities. Such incentives should include offering a **viable EU career track on conflict issues, expanding benefits and promotions as attraction-retention tools**, enhancing networking, knowledge exchange and learning opportunities such as **peer-to-peer exchanges**, ensuring sufficient budget allocations for staffing in the field and increasing operational readiness. When they include CSDP missions, the EU's interventions should make full use of the Goalkeeper system for capability development and standardisation.

**R4 - TRACK RESULTS AND IMPROVE LEARNING** by establishing **clear benchmarks and indicators to monitor the achievement of CA-IA objectives** and progress on prioritised actions and investing in sustaining institutional memory. The latter involves reinforcing in-house expertise and institutional knowledge management, e.g. by mentoring programmes between experienced and new EU officials working on crises, peace and conflict issues, documenting lessons learned and successes (e.g. through cases studies, reflection seminars and listing of past prevention activities). Lessons learned should be used to streamline integrated operating procedures, ensuring predictability and better tracking of progress. This is particularly important in the fields

of rapid deployment (how fast the EU can mobilise CA instruments), transition (how flexibly and coherently the EU ensures handovers from short-term humanitarian or crisis responses to medium/long-term peacebuilding and development programmes), stabilisation, prevention and SSR (how ‘integrated’ the outcomes of EU actions on the ground are so as to prevent relapses into conflict and restore the core security functions of a state).

In terms of **instruments and resources**, this study demonstrates that the EU has developed the capabilities and instruments to push forward a comprehensive and integrated approach, but that the financial resources and staff time allocated to it are still insufficient. Furthermore, internal incentives to motivate staff and management in breaking down silos are lacking, particularly as the EU moves from coordinated to integrated planning in some key areas. A condition *sine qua non* is **sustaining the EU’s CA-IA agendas and actions with more funds and increasing staff time available for supporting comprehensive actions**. These additional resources should be aimed at reducing the CA-IA’s perception as a ‘burdensome’ activity beyond staff’s traditional areas of work, and including it in staff performance assessments. In addition to funds, new technological solutions and a revised model for EU delegations would be key capabilities to invest in for a more effective implementation of the integrated approach.

**R5 - EXPLORE NEW TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS TO FOSTER COORDINATION**, by raising awareness of the possibilities provided by ICT for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and comprehensive/integrated responses. The EU should ensure that information exchange systems are updated and harmonised across EU institutions and mainstream the use of already available technologies to support smooth communication, coordination and interconnectivity between actors, thereby avoiding duplication and isolation (Berglund and Bruckert, 2017: 6). It is crucial for the EU to keep on promoting and financially supporting a more efficient ICT platform to serve as the basis for integrated action, for instance by piloting the use of geo-enabled platforms to collect, organise and disseminate spatial data for multiple purposes, such as project monitoring and evaluation in high-risk areas, including when conducted by third parties. The EU should also continue supporting research projects focusing on ways to incorporate ICT and Big Data in tools

available to all those involved in EU external action, including on conflict prevention and early warning, both in Horizon 2020 programming and beyond.

**R6 - MODERNISE EU DELEGATIONS AND UPDATE OPERATING MODELS:** In line with UN efforts aimed at creating a new generation of country teams and a new and stronger leadership in the field, the EU should reframe the terms of reference, mandates, physical presence and operational models of staff working in EU delegations, establishing new accountability lines and coordination platforms for fast mobilisation of capacities and resources when coping with pressures in the host country. Modernising and making EU delegations more ‘integrated’ in their operations would also contribute to a more positive perception of the EU as a partner for other international actors. An enhanced role of the EU Delegation as ‘integrator’ could contribute greatly to turning the integrated approach into concrete and impactful actions. A promising example is provided by the EU stabilisation action in the central regions of Mali which includes the deployment of a team of experts responsible for advising the Malian authorities on governance-related issues, and supporting the planning and implementation of activities aimed at reinstating the civilian administration and basic services in the region (EU Council, 2017). The team of 10 experts will be based within the EU Delegation, with the latter tasked with ensuring full complementarity and coordination of this initiative with other ongoing CSDP missions (EUCAP Sahel and EUTM Mali), EU development and humanitarian activities as well as other international actors operating in the region, particularly MINUSMA.

Regarding **partnerships**, there is a growing recognition in the international community that humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts are complementary and need to be mutually reinforcing to respond to volatile and fragile situations around the world. Building on this understanding, **the EU should orient the CA-IA towards greater complementarity with other actors involved in conflict-affected situations (UN, NATO, World Bank, OSCE, regional organisations, civil society organisations).**<sup>39</sup> This is still an area in which progress has to be made, not only in practice, but also in the perceptions of other actors.

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<sup>39</sup> On EU interactions with international organisations on the ground, see: Dijkstra et al. (2017).

**R7 – PARTNER FOR JOINT ANALYSES AND PREVENTION:** More **systematic information sharing on conflict analysis, dialogue on regional and thematic cases, exercises/simulations of crisis response should be promoted.** A good example here is the coordinated exercise by NATO and the EU as part of the Alliance’s Crisis Management Exercise 2017 (4-11 October), which aimed to improve the synchronisation of crisis response activities between the two organisations.

**Joint assessment of operational options and initiatives along the humanitarian, development and peace continuum should also be intensified,** following the model of the Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBAs)<sup>40</sup>, to deliver comprehensive responses in the short-medium-long term and tackle specific country-level challenges. In particular, the emerging international agenda on **prevention of violent conflict** (World Bank Group and UN, 2017) provides a promising basis on which the EU can work jointly with other partners earlier. The EU can play a decisive role in the international community’s efforts to organise properly for prevention, contributing to setting the right incentives for national, regional and international actors to identify early signs of risks in pre-crisis contexts, and devise programming or early prevention or stabilisation actions accordingly.

**R8 - PARTNER WITH CIVIL SOCIETY:** Civil society should be an integral part of EU policy-making and action on conflicts and crises, and the EU’s integrated approach is an opportunity to bring it on board as a fully-fledged partner, not just as a service provider or a beneficiary of EU funding. Therefore, all above-mentioned recommendations should involve civil society groups and be informed by the perspectives of women, religious groups as well as marginalised groups in any given situation. In particular, increased participation of young men and women, and youth-led organisations in the formulation and implementation of activities related to peacebuilding and conflict prevention can lead to a more effective prevention of violent conflict (EPLO, 2017a). Moreover, top EU leadership should promote more regular exchanges with civil society experts

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<sup>40</sup> The Recovery and Peace Building Assessment (RPBA) is a partnership framework supported by the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank Group (WBG) to coordinate reengagement in countries or regions emerging from conflict or political crisis. For a description of RPBAs methodology and country experiences, see: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/recovery-and-peace-building-assessments>.

to foster innovation in integrated preventive action and encourage the secondment of NGO peace and conflict experts to the EU institutions. It could also make mechanisms for access by EU officials to civil society conflict expertise more flexible and sustainable (e.g. the European Partnership for the Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, European Resources for Mediation Support (ERMES) and others), and create civil society focal points in the political sections of EU Delegations (in addition to the existing ones in operational sections) in order to take greater account of complex sub-national political dynamics and to monitor the effectiveness of EU or joint actions. This approach could be particularly beneficial in Tunisia, one of the case studies examined in this report, given the role of a strong civil society and vibrant business communities in peacekeeping.

**R9 - BRING THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN:** In line with the growing emphasis on supporting more and better jobs in fragile settings, it is crucial for the EU to **increase collaboration with the private sector for projects in the area of decent job creation**. In particular, this would make sure that integrated actions to support contributions to peace from young men and women include prospects for sustainable and equitable economic growth and are sensitive to their needs. Recent research has shown that individuals with frustrated expectations for economic improvement and social mobility are at greater risk of radicalisation (Bhatia and Ghanem, 2017). Hence, it is crucial for the EU's integrated approach, as for other actors, to think innovatively about projects that address and **manage the expectations of educated, yet unemployed youth** in fragile settings, as in the case of the Sahel.

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## Annex 1 – List of interviews

Interview	Organisation	Date	Interviewer
1	EEAS official	21 June 2017	Nabila Habbida, EPLO
2	EEAS official	30 November 2016	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
3	EEAS official	30 November 2016	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
4	EEAS official	29 November 2016	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
5	EEAS official	10 November 2016	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
6	EEAS official	30 November 2016	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
7	EEAS official	29 November 2016	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
8	EEAS official	28 November 2016	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
9	EEAS official	29 November 2016	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
10	EEAS official	30 November 2016	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
11	FPI official	24 February 2017	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
12	ECHO official	17 January 2017	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
13	NATO official	29 November 2016	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
14	NATO official	26 November 2016	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
15	EU ISS staff	24 February 2017	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS
16.	EDA official	30 November 2017	Giovanni Faleg, CEPS

17.	UN official	12 September 2017	Giovanni CEPS	Faleg,
18.	OSCE official	14 March 2017	Giovanni CEPS	Faleg,
19.	EU Delegation official	16 April 2017	Giovanni CEPS	Faleg,
20.	Academic	11 February 2017	Giovanni CEPS	Faleg,
21.	Academic	20 May 2017	Giovanni CEPS	Faleg,
22.	DG DEVCO official	21 May 2017	Giovanni CEPS	Faleg,
23.	DG DEVCO official	12 September 2017	Giovanni CEPS	Faleg,
24.	DG DEVCO official	29 November 2016	Giovanni CEPS	Faleg,