

Working Paper

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Conflict prevention

Making the EU talents work

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Conflict Prevention: Making the EU's Talents Work

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Summary

In spite of its past successes and concerted effort, the EU needs to continue to dedicate *more energy* to the prevention of conflicts, i.e. intervening before potential conflict situations become more difficult, or even almost impossible, to solve due to their eruption into violence which often spreads into a wider area. The importance of early and effective intervention cannot be overstated.

The EU has confirmed its commitment to prevention in the European Security Strategy and even acknowledged that this commitment, especially in the cases of WMD proliferation and international terrorism, could require a particular preventive engagement. The EU has made great strides: it is more active in international crisis management and has developed additional capabilities to make it a more effective intervention force. What is missing, however, is a fully functional organisational structure necessary to implement this *strategic choice*. Within the EU, much more needs to be done in order to co-ordinate the implementation of the wide range of political, military, civilian, trade and development instruments that are at its disposal. The civil-military approach of ESDP represents this goal and also the EU preference for a holistic approach to conflict prevention and post-conflict stabilisation because it facilitates broader and better targeted deployments.

A key problem within the EU is the *structural separation* of CFSP/ESDP from the external relations of the EU. The installation of a European Foreign Minister, who is responsible for both elements of conflict prevention and post-conflict stabilisation, will go a long way towards remedying this structural separation of European security policy. In addition, steps are being taken to better co-ordinate the work of the Commission and the Council, to avoid the perceived duplication of efforts and to each institution's respective expertise and influence to greater effect.

In spite of its high ambition, the EU has recognised the *inherent limits* placed on external interventions. Therefore, it has begun to focus on encouraging regional actors, especially in Africa, to take more responsibility for conflict prevention and post-conflict stabilisation and to work either independently of or together with the EU. For example, the EU has invested heavily in strengthening the African Union and ECOWAS so that they will be able, independently, to carry out the tasks necessary for conflict management. Although such approaches may be more effective, and free the EU to take on other tasks, the EU does lose some control and influence over the situation. This approach will be extended to other international and regional organisations.

Finally, more is being done, and still needs to be done, to give greater respect and more functionality to the *civilian component* of conflict intervention. Too often it is relegated to second place, in terms of attention and resources, in comparison to military means of intervention. In this context, the use of police forces as an intervention tool will only increase, especially in light of their successful operations to date.

So far, the Commission and the Council have not been able to overcome their inherent differences and the asymmetrical development of their respective conflict prevention tools. They need a *third institutional partner* to stick to the primary course of prevention. The talents of the EU will be fully effective only if the European Parliament organises itself in order to play a forceful role.

Conflict Prevention: Making the EU's Talents Work

1. Despite major response efforts in the last years the EU continues to be confronted with a charged agenda of global challenges and key threats. The EU rushes from case to case on an ever larger watch-list. The most urgent contingencies are treated with care but their root problems cannot be solved quickly or easily. While these challenges remain on the to-do list and absorb increasing resources, new conflicts emerge and threaten to escalate. If they are not dealt with the EU runs the risk of suffering from an even wider and more complex need to respond to them later on. Earlier action seems to be one of the more efficient ways to cope with such a dynamic security environment.

2. The benefits of preventive policy are beyond doubt. If one can tackle more of the causes of a conflict early on, there is less of a reason for conflicting parties to justify violence, to prolong disputes, and to reject peace building efforts. Likewise, the earlier a conflict can be defused the less likely it becomes that it will slide into violence, spill over into neighbouring regions, and affect European interests. As the European Security Strategy suggests, the EU needs to be prepared and act before the crisis occurs: The prevention of conflicts and threats cannot be started too early.

Following the Prevention Imperative

3. By placing prevention at the centre of EU efforts to address violent conflict and other security threats and concerns, the European Security Strategy matches the approach taken a few years earlier when the Göteborg EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts was launched. Thus, the Strategy and the Programme (even though developed in reverse order) are compatible and consistent. The rift among EU member states over Iraq did raise some doubts about the solidity of this consistency, but the enlargement of the EU, the Constitutional treaty, and a growing number of ESDP operations seem to have reconfirmed the EU's basic choice. The preventive approach has even been extended to a wider dimension of security, including the proliferation of WMD and international terrorism as additional challenges. In these fields, prevention may have to get close to pre-emptive moves.

4. Since the key documents and action plans on conflict prevention were launched in 2000/2001, all of the EU's institutions have been trying to integrate the concept into their activities. They have all had the same experience: while conflict prevention is a plausible strategy, it seems to be one of the hardest to implement. Yet, as the most recent annual Presidency report on conflict prevention rightly claims, "substantive progress towards a more effective approach by the EU towards preventing violent conflict" has been made.¹ This is visible in a more active approach to conflict-related issues, in the development of applicable capabilities, in the more effective integration of instruments, and in the way in which the EU is building partnerships with other actors for conflict prevention.

¹ *Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management*, Draft report to the European Council on EU activities in the framework of prevention, including implementation of the EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts, Brussels 02.06.2004, 10051/04, p. 13.

5. On the other hand, the same report admits that many important practical fields remain underdeveloped such as the follow-up to early warning issues, the link between security and development, a comprehensive approach to fragile states, and the strengthening of a rule-based international order. More importantly, the EU still grapples with the well-known structural problems of integrating short-term and long-term measures within one strategic move. Linking Community instruments with CFSP/ESDP assets remains an institutional and procedural challenge. Applying the full spectrum of instruments for crisis management and conflict prevention, including diplomatic, political, military and civilian, trade and development activities requires more fundamental reforms of the political system of the EU than has been ventured into so far.

6. Nevertheless, there has been some incremental progress in overcoming these structural deficiencies, for instance, in linking security and development issues, particularly in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, but also regarding the financial support for the Peace Facility for Africa. This should be an encouragement to use more external assistance to support international and regional initiatives to prevent or reduce the outbreak of hostilities or to contain the consequences thereof. No development without security. The Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme, in addition to providing humanitarian assistance in the Great Lakes region, is one prominent example here.

Moving from Intervention to Ownership

7. The EU support for peacekeeping operations elsewhere in Africa that can be made possible through the EDF is to be regarded as a growing field of prevention. Bringing the parties together in the Darfur crisis and the North-South Sudan war displays a mediation effort that the EU would not have attempted a few years ago, but it also demonstrates the limitations of influence. In a different approach, the EU can contribute funding to African-led operations in Burundi, Liberia and the Ivory Coast aimed at securing stability and implementing peace agreements, but in none of these cases will the outcome of these efforts be under the EU's command as recent events in Ivory Coast and Sudan have demonstrated.

8. The emphasis of the EU on holistic strategies for support in post-conflict situations which focus on meeting both the immediate security needs and the longer term reform of the security sector is in line with the broad civil-military approach which ESDP is supposed to represent in the future. Until recently, the EU could only be active in providing assistance for disarmament, reintegration and rehabilitation programmes on the one hand and in supporting partner governments with institution building and local community development activities on the other hand. ESDP instruments now allow for more comprehensive and more targeted deployments.

9. Operation Artemis, launched in Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in June 2003, helped stabilise security conditions and improve the humanitarian situation in support of UNSC 1484 which authorised the deployment of an interim emergency multi-national force until September 2003. The European military force worked in close co-ordination with the UN Mission in DRC (MONUC). In parallel, the use of development instruments has been helping to consolidate security in DRC and to work for good governance and rule of law as essential factors for the peace process. In the meantime, the EU is providing assistance to the setting up of an integrated Police Unit in Kinshasa. This is intended to help to reinforce the internal security apparatus and to ensure the protection of State institutions. The goal and the hope is to contribute to a critical sector at a critical juncture in order to prevent further destabilisation of the country.

10. Given the limitations of any external conflict prevention and post-conflict stabilisation efforts and the magnitude of the task in many critical regions of the world, the ownership approach has become more prominent, especially in the EU's relations with Africa. Thus, investment in strengthening the African Union (AU) and

sub-organisations such as ECOWAS, particularly regarding their preventive capabilities and activities, ranks high on the EU's agenda. Support through the European Development Fund for the Peace Facility for Africa is a significant step. Whilst mainly focused on the deployment of peacekeeping troops and related capacity building it will support conflict prevention by reinforcing the early warning system, conflict mediation, and cease-fire observation. The downside of the ownership approach is that the EU may have less influence on the launch and outcome of interventions undertaken by these regional organisations.

11. Despite those consequences, co-operation with relevant regional and international organisations should move ahead. It makes multilateral engagement more effective. In this regard it is encouraging that the EU finally reached out to the UN, a front runner in matters of conflict prevention. The EU-UN Joint Declaration of September 2003 sets out a framework for closer co-operation in conflict prevention and crisis management, especially in the areas of planning, training, communication and best practices. An EC-Communication on EU/UN-relations aims to consolidate international support behind UN objectives and to develop strategic partnerships with specialised agencies. Such a partnership has already been concluded with UNDP covering conflict prevention. High-level meetings have started and steering committees have been established to co-ordinate joint work. EU officials participate in DPKO assessment missions. Commission services have launched a desk-to-desk dialogue (including early warning information), with integrated UN teams, on five countries. This is the right direction. Many more of these exercises in cross-fertilisation should be launched.

Moving from Output to Outcome

12. When focusing on the output of the EU regarding conflict prevention its record is impressive. The direct outcome of preventive policies of the EU is less obvious, except in cases like FYROM. Too many conflicts from the EU's watch-list remain unresolved and require long term stabilisation efforts or military intervention, or both. In fact, in the past few years, concerns other than prevention moved to the top of the security agenda: crisis management, post-war reconstruction, stabilisation of failing states. Has conflict prevention been pushed to the sidelines? There is always such a danger, especially if conflict prevention would remain a policy of its own which addresses only part of the security spectrum within a cycle of conflict. Yet, one can safely say that most of the EU's crisis management activities and, especially, post-war stabilisation efforts follow preventive goals. On the ground, all of these activities overlap.²

13. While one should not get caught up in semantics, it is important that the objective of prevention is not relegated to second place. By placing preventive engagement at the centre of its foreign and security policy, the EU raises its ambitions to a high level, knowing that internally it is not yet fully prepared for such a challenge.³ It has impressive assets but it also has stunning deficiencies. Part of the deficiencies is that some of the EU's most promising tools (such as the civilian elements of ESDP) lack the experience to serve within a European operation. Roughly speaking, the EU's comparative advantage continues to be in the richness of its instruments. A major disadvantage is that these instruments are scattered and hard to be co-ordinated given the institutional and legal set up of the EU.

14. And the richness of instruments is growing. Ten years after the inception of CFSP and five years after the launch of the ESDP project the EU is significantly better prepared for coping with external security than before. Relatively speaking, the build up of CFSP/ESDP and its practical achievements are still in the embryonic

² See Table 1: Overview of ESDP Operations.

³ See Table 2: Scenarios of potential future ESDP Operations.

stages, but, as such, they are a success story and at present it seems that there is more to come. The EU has become a more political and a more serious actor, also in conflict prevention, thanks to the possibility of using force. As Robert Cooper rightly claims: “When a country or an organisation contemplates the deployment of forces, the atmosphere changes, ambiguity ceases to be an option, decisions go up to the highest levels; the risks, costs and commitment are of a different order from those involved in other actions – making statements or giving aid.”⁴

15. Yet, while the development of the CFSP/ESDP towards autonomous action continues, its growth rate and effectiveness are increasingly limited by its unnatural separation from the external relations of the EU. Overcoming the historic schism, therefore, and connecting the “structural weight” of the Community with the “strategic weight” of ESDP has become a precondition for a qualitative leap forward in the EU’s prevention policy as well as crisis management and post-war stabilisation.

Overcoming the Institutional Split

16. The prospective of a European Foreign Minister (EFM) who integrates both sets of instruments is promising and the announcement effect can already be felt. While the EFM is still a few years away, work on the European External Action Service is set to begin right after the signing of the Constitutional Treaty. Commission, Council Secretariat, Policy Unit and Member States have each been designing ideas for the new service. The Parliament is not a direct party to this club but will be affected by the new structure when it comes to questions of transparency, consultation, information and control of future EU security policy including conflict prevention.

17. An equally important innovation is already underway regarding the two components of ESDP, civilian and military. Again Parliament is affected without being involved or consulted on the new institutional provisions. So far, ESDP missions have consisted of either civilian or military assets. In the future, the parallel tracks are prepared within one single approach in order to ensure compatibility and coherence in action such as in the EUPM/Althea missions in BiH. Preparatory work on the establishment of the Civilian-Military Cell which is to start operation in January 2005 has advanced considerably. The Commission will be represented in the civ-mil cell but cannot deny that the Council is again extending its agencies and widening its scope of initiating and implementing foreign and security policy.

18. The civ-mil cell is the conceptual nucleus of a broadly based EU security policy. It is a test field and an experiment to learn an innovative approach to conflict management by overcoming the traditional narrowness of either the military or the non-military traditions and instruments. Prevention should be part of a civ-mil process of assessment and implementation. It should not be regarded as a civilian domain. There is an inherent tendency to assign a secondary role and status to civilian measures. Experience shows that this is not justified. The requirement is to look at both the civilian and the military resources and to determine their respective function within a broad approach rather than integrating the civilian assistance strategies into military doctrine.

19. There are still some who feel that civilian operations by the Council are a duplication of work already done by the Commission or – worse – who regard the Council international policies of lower impact given that it cannot match the weight and expertise of the Commission. Council representatives claim that their missions are likely to make a greater impact on the ground: “Using manpower directly generated by member states produces – in co-operation with the Commission – a higher degree of commitment and ownership than do the more arms-length

⁴ Gnesotto, Nicole (ed.), *EU Security and Defence Policy. The first five years (1999-2004)*, Paris, August 2004, p. 192.

programmes that the Commission organises.”⁵The future EFM will be in a position to choose from both sources of expertise and to launch initiatives either on the Commission or the Council track. The Parliament will have to play an important part in the process of choosing the option that promises to achieve the best result.

20. With regard to civilian capabilities, a more substantial process of commitment, preparation and training needs to be launched to lift this component to the quality required by complex and more demanding missions and to reach the level of professionalism as achieved within the military component of ESDP⁶. Emphasising the civilian component of ESDP will allow the EU to make better use of the military in conflict prevention as well as in post-war stabilisation efforts. One needs to learn from the rich experience in the Balkans (including the March 2004 riots in Kosovo) that a more tailor-made and differentiated response capability should be organised for transition situations from war to peace and for situations of fragile peace, where re-ignition of fighting may occur or where riots may lead to the spread of violence.

21. From this perspective, and considering future cases of failing states, the importance of police missions as an instrument of building internal security is likely to grow. Given its increasing role and its particular features (such as the need for large numbers of policemen for executive policing and for monitoring and co-location tasks) police power should be regarded as a category of its own next to civilian and military assets of intervention. So far, police power has not been contemplated as a means of prevention deployed early on to try to prevent disputes from becoming violent and prevent organised crime from getting out of hand. In the future, the EU may want to use it more often for preventive goals and deploy it earlier, before fighting breaks out.⁷

22. A similar case can be made regarding a civilian ‘reserve’ for the purpose of dealing more specifically with so-called human security. In their recent report, commissioned by the HR/SG, Mary Kaldor and her team focus on basic insecurities caused by gross human rights violations within regional conflicts and failed states. These violations are the source of new global threats including international terrorism, WMD, and organised crime. The report suggest a ‘Human Security Response Force’ being composed of 15 000 men and women, most of whom civilian. While this ‘force’ seems to be largely identical to the civilian component of ESDP, it would also contain a ‘Human Security Volunteer Service’. If Mr Solana contemplates the creation of such a service, Parliament may want to reintroduce its long-standing proposal for a European Peace Corps.

Raising Parliament’s involvement

23. The more tools the Council is building up and the more differentiated its process of implementation becomes, the more difficult it will be for Parliament to follow the events, to get early information and to try to influence decisions of the Council. Parliament need to concentrate on two levels of influence, the structural and the actual. How much of a preventive drive is connected with the further build up and qualification of ESDP? Parliament should make sure that it has a say in structural questions. The annual report on EU Conflict Prevention can be a tool in this regard. In the future, it should be established from a civ-mil basis and should include an element of impact assessment. It should also include a record of member state’s activities in conflict prevention. Parliament should find a form and a forum to discuss the annual Conflict Prevention report and use it as a regular check and monitoring device.

⁵ Gnesotto, Nicole, p. 192

⁶ See the Civilian Capabilities Commitment Conference of 22 November 2004 in Brussels.

⁷ See Annex 1: EU police forces in a preventative capacity

24. Up to date information is needed for Parliament's co-decision making and its own foreign and security policy agenda. Given the time consuming discussion process within the Parliament, a more effective channel needs to be opened to receive timely and substantial briefings on the Council's and the Commission's conflict prevention agenda. Any procedure in this regard would be a preparation for and an anticipation of the new institutional set up (civ-mil cell, European External Action Service, EFM).

Operation (Name, Country, Date)	Mandate			Type		
	Prevention	Crisis- Management	Re-Construction/ Stabilisation	Civilian	Police	Military
EUPM BiH Since January 2003	X		X		X	
CONCORDIA FYROM March-December 2003	X	X				X
EUPOL PROXIMA FYROM Since December 2003	X		X		X	
ARTEMIS Bunia/DR Congo June-September 2003	X	X				X
EUJUST THEMIS Georgia Since July 2004	X		X	X		
ALTHEA BiH Scheduled for December 2 th 2004	X		X			X
Policemission Kinsahasa/DR Congo Planned/Medium Term Strategy	X		X		X	
Policemission Dafur/Sudan Planned/Medium Term Strategy	X		X		X	

Table 1: Overview of ESDP Operations (©R.F.)

Scenario (level of contingency)	Mandate			Type		
	Prevention	Crisis-Management	Re-Construction/ Stabilisation	Civilian	Police	Military
I: a large-scale peace support operation	X	X	X	X	X	X
II: high-intensity humanitarian intervention	X	X				X
III: regional warfare in the defence of strategic European interests	X	X				X
IV: prevention of an attack involving WMD	X	X				X
V: homeland defence	X	X		X	X	X

Table 2: Scenarios of potential future ESDP Operations

Source: *Gnesotto, Nicole et al., European Defence. A proposal for a White Paper. Report of an independent Task Force, Paris, May 2004, p. 67-98. (©R.F.)*

EU police forces in a preventative capacity

The use of police forces in the framework of international post-war stabilisation and for the purpose of conflict prevention has recently sensibly grown. Currently, the most prominent example is Iraq, where the interim government and the coalition partners have asked the international community for support for police-related tasks.

There have been several similar requests made in recent years. Most EU member states have preferred to respond to these requests with offers of training. When it was deemed appropriate, deployments abroad were also agreed upon. International police are not only a well established part of complex peacekeeping operations of the United Nations (UN) but are also used by regional organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the African Union (AU) to prevent violent conflicts and to support post-war stabilization. For 15 years, the international police have regularly been deployed to stabilize disintegrating states, after military interventions, and during the transformation of political systems.

The range of tasks of internationally deployed police officers is accordingly broad: support and supervision of the police in crisis regions, training of police officers on the spot and set-up of administrative police structures, replacement of local police forces by international officers, support for the enforcement of law. The mandate of the respective international police missions usually emphasizes only one or two of these tasks but in practice the execution of a multitude of consultative and replacement functions in one country is not rare.

Almost all EU member states have, for a long time, contributed to international police missions. These missions involve measures for comprehensive crisis management such as in Kosovo, state supporting functions as in the case of East Timor or simply bilateral development aid for the reform of the security sector as for example in Kenya.

The EU has participated in such missions since 2003. As is common internationally, the police missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina (EUPM) and Macedonia (Proxima) are composed of contingents of many states, but they are for the first time under sole EU leadership. This provides the EU with the opportunity to test the operative capabilities of the civil component of its European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) and to get important clues for its further development.

Brussels is already preparing for possible additional police missions, including in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan (Darfur). The EU seems to have entered into a dynamic in which all factors point towards it but in which it is, however, not able to address its self-defined requirements and third parties' desire for help, especially of the UN and the USA. The EU member states want to provide their international police assistance together through Brussels, but they are still not willing or able to take the necessary steps for that on the national and EU levels. A number of decisions about the future of police missions have to be made.

It would be important to clarify the question of how far police support will be taken out of the traditional context of development cooperation and be turned into a branch of security policy. The analysis of the new security policy challenges suggests such a shift in emphasis. Accordingly, the programs of the EU, especially of the Commission, would have to be realigned and be geared to the security policy requirements as defined by ESDP.

At the same time, the EU has to face up to the complexity of crisis management. This means that the police, civilian and military means of crisis management, which are

still spread over the EU's three pillars, have to be brought together. The concept of an integration of the EU's different security organs, on which the new civil-military planning cell is based, has to be applied universally.

Experience has shown that police forces for international stabilization and prevention tasks are mostly needed for the long term. This, however, does not make them per se the predominant intervention measure. This has to be determined according to each situation. Nevertheless, the police have to be prepared for leadership tasks in complex crisis management, which is also a question of status.

Further deficits of ESDP police forces relating to their availability and quality jeopardize the credibility of EU interventions. These deficiencies can only be remedied through an upgrading of the civilian component of ESDP (especially in relation to the military component). More and high-ranking personnel, enhanced equipment, and a stronger role in the ESDP bodies should be considered.

Furthermore it is necessary to build up a reserve police force whose main task is (EU) crisis management. A group of states has already joined together for such a task in the paramilitary area, outside of the EU structures (European Gendarmerie Force).

In sum, it is about drawing up an action plan for the upgrading of the civilian part of ESDP, the member states are to participate in the substantive implementation of this plan through innovations in their own countries.

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