

THE EU'S STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CSDP INTERVENTIONS

BUILDING A TENET FROM PRAXIS

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Crisis management forms an integral part of the expanding toolbox with which the European Union (EU) reacts to external crises. This FIIA analysis aims at understanding the strategic approach of the EU to crisis management as it develops from the interplay between growing institutional infrastructure and member states' reactions to crises and conflicts in their neighbourhood. In particular, this analysis investigates the creation of objectives for Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) interventions.

Drawing on a series of expert interviews, the article challenges a tradition in European studies of analysing EU strategy based on strategic documents alone. Instead, it explores the strategic approach as it has been developed, practised and interpreted by practitioners working in the CSDP framework.

The research argues that the development of the EU's approach is characterized by experimentalism and emergence, which are enabled by repetitive processes of intergovernmentalism and institutional learning in the framework. At the same time, discrepancies in the Integrated Approach and decision-making are found to limit the capabilities of the EU as a strategic actor. Finally, three trends are argued to curtail the EU approach to crisis management at present: a decreasing level of ambition, squeezing between other instruments for foreign and security policy, and a rhetorical shift from external to internal security.



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THE EU'S STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CSDP INTERVENTIONS

BUILDING A TENET FROM PRACTICE

I. INTRODUCTION

The chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 has accelerated the debate on the strategic autonomy of the European Union (EU). The fact that the EU still fundamentally represents a civilian project, and that the intergovernmental Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is not best suited for rapid interventions, received extensive media coverage after the allies of the United States (US) had to cope with its hasty withdrawal from the country. Only a year before, in June 2020, Defence Ministers of the twenty-seven EU member states had commenced work on the Strategic Compass, a dialogue process that aims at creating achievable strategic objectives for the security and defence policies of the Union. Crisis management is one thematic area in the process. Two years earlier, the Civilian CSDP Compact was launched to determine the level of ambition in the member states and to assess the available capabilities. The 2017 activation of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) initiative¹ points to the same end: a strategy and its enablers are being sought for the foreign, security and defence policies of the Union.

In this FIIA Analysis, we focus on the strategy creation process for the EU's CSDP interventions, also known as the EU crisis management missions and operations. From the outset, the CSDP² has been mainly externally focused, with crisis management becoming its main tool. A strategy for CSDP interventions could be defined as *EU foreign policy aims combined with crisis management means*.³ This research paper, however, argues that instead of a linear aims-means function, the CSDP interventions strategy reflects a cyclical process. Objectives of interventions are often born in praxis and develop in conjunction with, not subordinate to, the politico-strategic rhetoric set in formal strategies, such as the EU Global Strategy (EUGS, 2016).⁴ The strategic documents, in turn, seem to reflect experiences from previous interventions. New ideas are tested "in the field" before being recognized as wider EU strategic

priorities. "EUGS 2.0" – already expected yet unknown – will most likely reflect experiences in Afghanistan.

In previous literature, the EU strategy for the CSDP is typically described as unclear and incoherent or only partly shared by the relevant actors.⁵ Scholars also argue more broadly that the EU lacks a strategic approach,⁶ and that a clearer strategy would make the EU both more effective and legitimate as an international actor.⁷ While earlier literature has analysed EU strategic documents extensively,⁸ few scholars have delved into the strategy beyond the rhetoric. Not limiting our analysis to reviewing existing literature and official documents alone, this study aims to understand in more detail the strategic approach of CSDP interventions, including importantly the process in which its aims and means are developed.

To accomplish this, the study is based on fourteen semi-structured expert interviews, conducted by phone or via a tele-conferencing tool between February and May 2021. The experts working with the CSDP that we interviewed⁹ include former and current senior staff members of missions and operations and the External Action Service (EEAS, including CMPD/ISP, CPCC, SecDecPol, EUMS and EUMC staff members¹⁰), and member state officials and civil society representatives, representing nine EU member states altogether. Through these interviews, we have been particularly interested in teasing out the ways in which CSDP practitioners see the strategy of interventions as having developed over time, considering the role that member states, institutions and concepts, as well as crises emerging in the EU's neighbourhood, all play in the process.

After introducing the conceptual framework in the next chapter, the third chapter briefly maps out the premises of the CSDP, focusing on pioneering interventions that guided the EU approach from its outset. The fourth chapter investigates the role of Brussels institutions, crisis management procedures, personalities and

1 PESCO focuses on European defence cooperation, but it also includes projects developing capabilities for international military interventions.

2 Initially, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

3 Developed from Major & Mölling's 2013 theorization on EU peacebuilding strategy, which also refers to CSDP interventions for the most part.

4 EEAS 2016.

5 Barrinha 2016 and Howorth 2016 (not focusing on crisis management but international action); Major and Mölling 2013.

6 E.g. Matlary 2018: Conclusions.

7 Before the adoption of the EU Global Strategy: Major and Mölling 2013: 59.

8 Biscop 2021; Cantalapiedra 2020; Sanahuja 2020; Kaldor et al. 2018; Howorth 2016; Tocci 2017 and 2016 (more on the process of creating the EUGS); Mälksoo 2016.

9 List of interviewees at the end of the article.

10 Crisis Management and Planning Directorate/Directorate Integrated Approach for Security and Peace; Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability; Division Security and Defence Policy; European Union Military Staff; European Union Military Committee.

institutional learning that shape CSDP interventions. The fifth chapter locates CSDP interventions in the context of other CFSP tools, while chapter six delves into the member states' impact on CSDP strategy. The final chapter summarizes the key takeaways of the study for the ongoing strategy creation process in the Union.

II. CONCEPTUALIZING THE STRATEGY OF THE EU'S CSDP INTERVENTIONS

The literature on EU crisis management strategy has developed somewhat separately from other peacebuilding strategy theorizations that typically rest on experiences from the United Nations. Strategy studies on international organizations involved in peacebuilding or crisis management typically differentiate between operational and political strategies, or between strategies on peacebuilding and strategies that concern the organizations doing the peacebuilding.¹¹ In the EU context, it is useful to differentiate between EU foreign policy strategy and other policies and plans: in addition to being broader and touching upon policies at multiple levels, strategies include a coherent set of objectives and ideas, and they enable systematic and consistent guiding of policymaking.¹² In this FIIA Analysis, all of these elements of a strategy are reflected, the focus being on how member states' interests develop into shared objectives and are revised based on the realities of resources available and experiences of international cooperation in the complex conflict contexts.

A substantial branch of literature has reflected on the development of the EU's CSDP from an institutional or governmental point of view.¹³ A major trend in the literature is to try to understand the CSDP along the trajectories of *intergovernmentalism* or a *supranational policy*, exploring the role of European governments (the former) or EU institutions (the latter) in the making of EU policy.¹⁴ Despite the supranational features that distinguish the EU in general from many other international organizations, the CSDP is also intergovernmental to a significant degree, especially in terms of decision-making.¹⁵

In this analysis, both of these aspects are taken into consideration. The supranational features of the CSDP are studied in order to understand how the institutional framework and development have shaped the EU's strategic approach to crisis management. Having said that, intergovernmentalism arguably plays an even larger role as an analytical framework in this research paper, supporting our analysis of the decision-making on CSDP interventions. Intergovernmentalism is found to enable member states to *bargain* on CSDP interventions, while severe obstacles in the decision-making framework are also identified.

Member states' interests in the CSDP have been subject to academic research before,¹⁶ but their role in constructing the strategic approach has received little attention, constituting a notable gap in the body of knowledge that this research paper addresses. Considering the intergovernmental aspect of the CSDP, we also investigate it as a system based on supply and demand. Building on earlier literature, we view international peacebuilding functioning akin to a marketplace that aims to meet the demands of conflict-afflicted areas with a supply of solutions by the international community.¹⁷ The CSDP can be viewed as a similar market, with member states being both suppliers, in the form of capabilities and staff, and definers of the demand in the form of mandates for CSDP interventions.

Scholars have also approached the CSDP from the point of view of security governance,¹⁸ strategic thinking,¹⁹ and strategic culture.²⁰ The concepts vary in their emphasis between formal processes and informal aspects of strategy creation, but the focus of all three is on understanding the knowledge management and decision-making processes that define the way CSDP interventions are used as a part of EU external action. This analysis relies in particular on the concept of *strategic culture* to understand the cumulative and competing assumptions and working methods in the CSDP that are not evident in formal documents. The concept guides us to look into differences between civilian and military CSDP, the member states and the outsize influence of individual personalities.

A state-centric understanding of security dominates the debate on the CSDP,²¹ but contemporary literature also applies a *human security approach* to studying the

11 Major and Mölling 2013.

12 Nitoiu and Sus 2017.

13 E.g. Moser 2018 focusing on civilian crisis management; Guerrina et al. 2018 on the CSDP as a gender regime; Lavallée 2013 on the role of the Commission; Howorth 2012 on supranational intergovernmentalism; Merlingen 2011 on governmentality; Norheim-Martinsen 2010 on governance; Grevi 2009 on the ESDP; see also Mengelberg 2021 on European security organizations.

14 Bergmann & Müller 2021; Moser 2018; Sweeney & Winn 2017; Lavallée 2013; Howorth 2012; see also Puetter 2016 and Sus 2015 without the CSDP focus.

15 Siddi et al. 2021.

16 E.g. Pohl 2014.

17 Campbell 2018.

18 Lavallée 2013; Lucarelli et al. 2013; Norheim-Martinsen 2010.

19 Nitoiu and Sus 2017.

20 Irondelle et al. 2015; Haine 2011; Matlary 2006; Cornish & Edwards 2001.

21 Lucarelli et al. 2013, p. 1.

CFSP/CSDP.²² The approach highlights the individual agency and security needs of people instead of those of the state.²³ Closely related, a branch of literature reflects the question of whether the EU should remain a civilian power or develop credible capabilities also on the military front²⁴ – a choice often conceptualized as one between soft and hard power. Our analysis identifies an ongoing orientation process between the two and discusses why the integration of the military and civilian roles of the EU in crisis management is currently out of reach, as even coordination and cooperation are often challenging.

Another relevant security nexus in the European studies lies between *internal* and *external security*. Whereas the European Security Strategy (ESS, 2003)²⁵ established an EU strongly committed to advancing security and stability in its Eastern and Southern partnership countries, the EUGS (2016)²⁶ put increasing weight on the internal security of the Union, emphasizing the protection of the member states and their citizens.²⁷ Scholars interpreted the development as an attempt to bridge the gap between internal and external security in the Union, or as a shift of emphasis from external to internal security.²⁸

The shift has also been conceptualized as a move away from the EU's normative, idealist underpinnings towards a more realist actorship, or from a normative approach towards a more pragmatic strategy.²⁹ The growing priority areas of interventions, such as migration management, counterterrorism and cyber security, primarily serve the EU's interests. In the meantime, the focus on the traditional "Petersburg Tasks" in the CSDP has diminished.³⁰ On the other hand, internal security motivations are not a new phenomenon in the making of the EU's CSDP.³¹ Supporting this observation, this research paper eventually takes a stance that at the operational level, the change from a normative to a pragmatic approach has not been as linear as in the EU rhetoric but, instead, *pragmatism* has featured in the member states' motivations from the beginning.

Finally, earlier literature has recognized an *experimental* feature in the CSDP. Some have studied the EU as a form of experimentalist governance in general,³² but most existing literature only discusses examples of experimentalism. Several studies analyse experimentation with the CSDP in the Sahel in particular.³³ A parallel debate on the CSDP "failing forward" has depicted a similar kind of idea of the CSDP being reformed based on a cycle of crisis, feedback and learning, albeit with an institutional emphasis.³⁴ This analysis contributes to the case study-intensive literature by expanding the hypothesis of experimentalism to the making of EU policy in the CSDP framework more broadly.

III. THE UN LEGACY AND EXPERIENCES FROM KOSOVO AND AFGHANISTAN

The roots of CSDP interventions can be traced back, on the one hand, to conflicts that erupted in Europe's neighbourhood in the 1990s, in the early years of the European integration process, and to the initial division of roles between international actors in responding to the conflicts on the other. In particular, the observed failures of European nations and the international community to respond to crises laid the groundwork for the EU as an external security actor and motivated the building of structures for intervention. Conflicts in Yugoslavia and Rwanda among others were reflected in the early political agreements, such as the one agreed upon in the Cologne European Council (1999). The United Nations (UN) conflict responses, in Kosovo in particular, served as the example, but also showed gaps that the EU interventions could fill.³⁵ In 2003, the first European Security Strategy (ESS),³⁶ written under Javier Solana's³⁷ leadership, sealed the lessons learnt thus far into a future-oriented approach.³⁸ This approach was later framed as a need for the EU to be a "force for good".³⁹

22 E.g. Kaldor et al. 2018.

23 Langenhove and Scaramagli 2013, pp. 43–44.

24 E.g. Millard & Chae-Deung 2018.

25 Council of the European Union 2003.

26 EEAS 2016.

27 Ibid. p. 18; the shift can also be identified e.g. in the internal concept "Strengthening Civilian CSDP" (April 2018) and the Council Conclusions (May 2018); see also e.g. Tocci 2017.

28 E.g. Bossong & Rhinard 2021; Bossong & Rhinard 2020.

29 See Sanahuja 2020; Winn 2019; Biscop 2016.

30 E.g. Bossong and Rhinard 2021; Bossong and Rhinard 2020; Vorrath & Pietz 2018.

31 Bossong & Rhinard 2020; Duke and Ojanen 2006.

32 Zeitlin 2015.

33 Pye 2019, Venturi 2017 and Lopez Lucia 2017.

34 Bergmann and Müller 2021.

35 Interview 1, see also Serrano 2020.

36 Council of the European Union 2003.

37 EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy 1999–2009.

38 Interview 1.

39 E.g. Solana's speech at the Sound of Europe Conference, Salzburg, 27 January 2006.

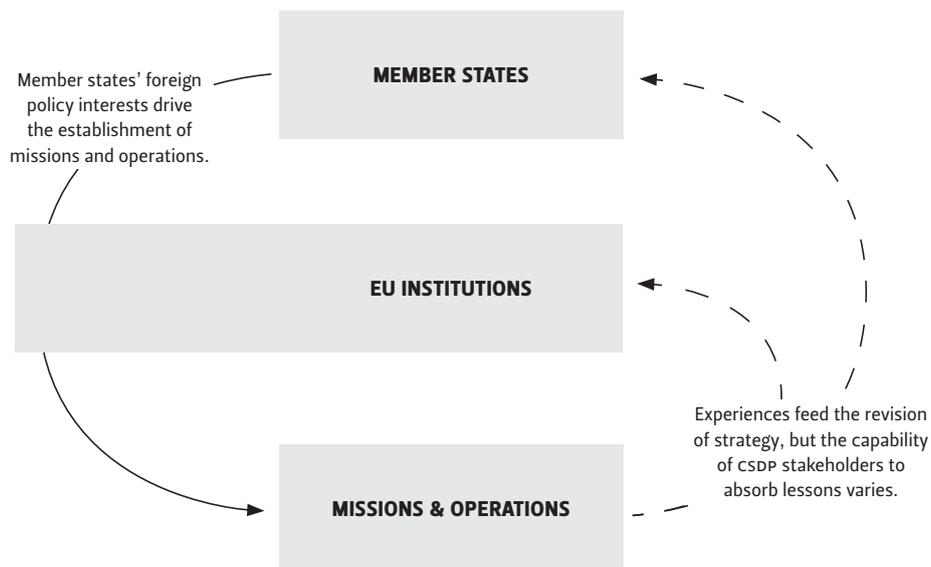


Table 1. Operation experiences feed the revision of CSDP strategy

To this day, the EU's strategic approach continues to build on the experiences of the first generation of CSDP interventions.⁴⁰ In particular, grand executive missions to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Kosovo demonstrated what a CSDP intervention can realistically achieve, and the kind of roles that the EU is competent in performing.⁴¹ The interventions in the Balkans faced a multiplicity of challenges with local and international politics and highlighted the limits of crisis management in complex conflict contexts.⁴² The prolonged engagements also made member states more aware of the difficulty of a successful exit.⁴³ CSDP interventions were found to develop working methods and objectives on their own, separately from the objectives set in the EU strategy documents.⁴⁴ In 2016, the 9-year-long EUPOL Afghanistan mission was run down due to a lack of interest by the member states. While the mission completed its mandated tasks, its overall contribution was criticized as inadequate.⁴⁵ Intervention by intervention, a clearer picture of the resources available was also achieved. A chronic lack of seconded staff was observed in several missions and operations, guiding the EU towards a more modest goal attainment.⁴⁶

As the appetite for executive missions vanished,⁴⁷ shorter-term interventions with visible outcomes and targeted mandates have been preferred instead.⁴⁸ Both military and civilian interventions have become narrower in their focus, and a modular approach is now trending in CSDP planning.⁴⁹ Recent interventions also seem to prefer shorter-term objectives than their predecessors. There is a decreasing emphasis on long-term stabilization of states, while for example support for border management as part of the interventions has gained popularity.⁵⁰ Moreover, typical missions today do not necessarily deal directly with a conflict, but operate on the periphery of issues, focusing for example on capacity-building instead of acute crisis management.⁵¹ Compared to missions like EULEX Kosovo, which left the local populations' high hopes unfulfilled,⁵² expectations about interventions have become more realistic. This is also in line with the reality of staffing challenges.

The development is not applauded by everyone, however. Some of the experts we interviewed criticized the fact that the lowered ambition has led to a corruption of the image of the EU as a credible international partner.⁵³ Interventions with a short-term vision were

40 Interviews 10, 1.

41 Interviews 8, 6.

42 Interview 5.

43 Interview 3.

44 Interview 10.

45 Interview 2; see also European Court of Auditors 2015; Larivé 2012; Pohl 2014 on the unpromising starting point.

46 Interview 6.

47 Interview 13.

48 Interview 5.

49 Interviews 6, 14.

50 Interview 5; EEAS 2019 to access info on past and current operations and missions.

51 Interview 9.

52 Interviews 5, 6.

53 Interview 14.

criticized for preferring state security at the expense of human security, and for lowering the prospect for sustainable, peaceful development. The short-termism that currently serves the political needs of member states was argued to become costly to both member states and local constituencies in the long term.⁵⁴

This landscape is the starting point for us to describe the strategic approach of CSDP interventions as *experimental*. By this we refer to the cumulative exercise of the EU becoming an external security actor by experimenting with the use of crisis management means to advance member states' foreign policy interests. We also observe an emergent feature in that strategic approach, with the strategy developing from practice, sometimes reflexively but never prescribed by any of the stakeholders. The interpretation draws on the interviews we conducted, which highlighted experimenting and "learning by doing" in the making of EU crisis management strategy.⁵⁵ An observation about CSDP interventions as "laboratories" for EU crisis management was also repeated in the interviews.⁵⁶ As the next chapter will argue, both features are further facilitated by the institutional framework developed to manage the interventions.

IV. INSTITUTIONS AS FACILITATORS OF THE STRATEGIC APPROACH

The EU's strategic approach to CSDP interventions has been shaped by institutional development and integration in the Union. Over time, the institutional framework has developed to include procedures and instruments for launching and implementing an intervention, and a process of institutional learning in which diverse actors reflect on and refine the EU strategy. The institutional development of the CSDP has not been limited to a mere reflection of a strategic vision, or to the implementation of it, but has also played a major role in constructing the EU's strategic approach.⁵⁷ In civilian crisis management, the creation of the EEAS transformed civilian interventions from ad hoc external action to a more systematic and bureaucratic structure.⁵⁸ In military crisis management, the establishment of the EUMS accelerated the development of the EU from a purely civilian project into one including military cooperation.⁵⁹

Building the crisis management structures

The history of the CSDP has been characterized by a general unawareness of what the CSDP can deliver, and what its limits are in terms of the sovereignty of member states and the avoidance of overlaps with NATO. This is demonstrated by the complexity and ambiguity in its institutional structure and culture.⁶⁰ The substrate for strategic innovation in the CSDP framework is generous: As of today, the institutional framework for decision-making in the CSDP includes 9 entities under the Council, while the planning and conduct of interventions is tasked to a comparable number of units and directorates in the crisis management structures of the EEAS.⁶¹ Understanding this eclectic matrix of institutions requires experience. The current situation contrasts with the outset of the ESDP/CSDP, when the institutional framework was light and coordination structures underdeveloped. The flexibility enabled interventions to take baby steps as a nimble, actual crisis management tool.⁶²

On the other hand, crisis management has developed as a separate function from other CFSP instruments, contributing towards a siloed approach.⁶³ In the decade from 1999 to 2009, the modus operandi of EU crisis management was crisis response-driven, with limited inter-institutional coordination.⁶⁴ EUPOL Afghanistan is an example of missions of that era, established following a lighter process, before the adoption of the crisis management procedures. The creation of the EEAS bureaucratized the planning process and tied the CSDP more concretely to an overall EU approach.⁶⁵ It also diminished the *crisis management* aspect of CSDP interventions, turning it towards a security and defence cooperation tool with an increased emphasis on capacity-building and training.⁶⁶

The structural development of civilian and military crisis management has progressed at an uneven pace. The establishment of the CPCC in 2007 and the EEAS in 2010 gave civilian crisis management a way to clarify administrative structures, while a similar development in military crisis management in the form of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) only took

54 Interview 5.

55 E.g. Interviews 1, 13, 6.

56 Interview 13.

57 Interview 10.

58 Interviews 3, 8, 10.

59 Interview 13.

60 Interviews 10, 12.

61 The European Parliament has also sought to expand its existing role as a budgetary power towards a more deliberative role. For details, see Legrand 2021; Rosen & Rausen 2018.

62 Interviews 1, 9, 10.

63 Interviews 6, 12.

64 Mattelaer 2012.

65 Interview 4.

66 Interviews 9, 10.

place in 2017. Upgrading the MPCC into an operations headquarters will serve as the next step in developing an independent command and control capability for military interventions, bringing it to a comparable institutional level with civilian crisis management. This will also support the recent proposal to develop a rapid reaction capability, which will require more support capabilities under the MPCC for it to function effectively as an operational headquarters. The MPCC seems best suited to manage strategic enablers for crisis management, even though these continue to be member state capabilities.⁶⁷

Personalities in lieu of institutional continuity

The initial lack of institutional development in CSDP structures created space for individuals to play critical roles in defining institutional relations and working methods. At the same time, continued institutional reshuffles have prevented a shared institutional culture from developing.⁶⁸ Both factors have contributed to the lack of a systemic approach to goal-setting and institutional memory, resulting in a weak link between mission tasks, decision-making and overall EU policy.⁶⁹ Norms and priorities tend to *emerge* from the staff and their agency as policy implementers or policy facilitators, potentially tied to their national strategic culture or professional background. Recent scholarship has focused in particular on the role of the High Representative/Vice President (HR/VP) as an individual policy entrepreneur in developing the EU foreign policy strategy.⁷⁰ Our analysis proposes that such roles are even more commonplace among CSDP staff. For example, the interviews highlighted the political selection of the civilian operations commander, which is more linked to member state political interests than professional capability.⁷¹ Short tours of service were reported as an exacerbating issue, as it takes time for new staff to learn the complexity of the crisis management structures and make relevant personal connections. At worst, policy discussions are repeated every time the staff changes. Those staff members that have served the longest and have knowledge of

the instruments were considered to be in a key role to define institutional culture.⁷²

Individual personalities and interpersonal relationships also seem to define the level of cooperation between a CSDP intervention and other actors at the country level. The relationship between a CSDP intervention and an EU special representative or delegation in a host country is officially defined in the Council Decisions establishing the CSDP intervention. The special representative or head of delegation should guide and support the CSDP intervention at the political level. Yet the division of labour between the political and operative instruments often becomes obscured. According to a former head of mission, if a political EU presence does not facilitate political connections for a CSDP intervention, it will need to develop those on its own. For example, security sector reform (SRR) is an inherently political activity and cannot be conducted purely at a technical level, but requires political support, such as a special representative or delegation diplomat, to support effective dialogue with host country ministries.⁷³ The coordination gap also entails institutional elements, addressed in chapter 4.

Institutional learning in the CSDP architecture

The experimental and bottom-up approach of strategy construction in EU crisis management is concretized in the institutional learning process in the CSDP. In particular, the strategic review process serves as a means by which failures and successes on the ground become reflected by a number of European constituencies, and at best turn into an institutional memory. While strategic reviews are the main tool for member states to revise the objectives and means of the already established interventions, these processes also serve as an opportunity for some other partners to contribute to the process. Importantly, the review processes provide a forum for European civil societies to monitor and make suggestions on CSDP interventions, whereas consultancy during the initial planning phase is rarer.⁷⁴ Since CSDP interventions have had a tendency to continue for a long time, these instances of strategy revision play a key role in the overall making of the EU strategy. The revision

67 Interview 13.

68 Interview 8; see also Blockmans and Debuysere 2021.

69 Interview 2.

70 Sus 2021.

71 Interview 3.

72 Interviews 10, 4. Similar gaps were also observed within the EEAS and between staff working in external relations and their colleagues in EU agencies in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, making for challenging cooperation.

73 Interview 2.

74 Interview 5.

processes demonstrate experimental foreign policy and an adaptive approach being organized in practice.

While strategic reviews are of key importance for the strategic approach of CSDP interventions, some problems impede the “lessons learned” process in the CSDP in general and the reviews in particular.⁷⁵ Firstly, it was argued that the initial reports are typically dressed up before they reach the member states.⁷⁶ Similarly, lessons from institutional developments are impacted by the loyalty of the staff towards the institutions: it will seldom be reported that a new structure does not work at all.⁷⁷ Secondly, a lack of transparency, namely that the access to review reports is restricted, hinders the contribution from civil society actors to the process.⁷⁸ Thirdly, the lack of institutional memory due to high staff turnover decreases the relevance of the process.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the political will of member states to actually learn from the lessons and adjust mandates varies. The problem of a lack of institutional pressure to ensure a follow-up was also raised in the interviews. It was also argued that the lack of hierarchy between Brussels civilian CSDP structures decreases institutional pressure to adapt identified lessons into practical developments.⁸⁰

It develops from the analysis that political, procedural and personal barriers should be overcome in order to enhance institutional learning in the CSDP framework. More deliberation and negotiation would enable a strategic culture to develop, and more exchange between EEAS and Commission staff would allow more systematic strategic work.⁸¹ A systemic approach, not one based on personalities and political pressure from member states, should be prioritized.⁸² The focus on EU structures, however, does not seem to be enough, as member states also struggle with institutional memory issues due to similar staff rotation in national services, such as ministries of foreign affairs. Projects to develop the CSDP, such as PESCO and the current Civilian CSDP Compact, can serve as avenues for building shared working methods and institutional memory between member states and CSDP structures, as “every new kid on the block should learn what happened before him in the same block”.⁸³

75 Interviews 10, 2.

76 Interviews 8, 7.

77 Interview 6.

78 Interview 7.

79 Interview 14.

80 Interview 6.

81 Interview 1.

82 Interview 6.

83 Interview 14.

V. CRISIS MANAGEMENT AS AN INSTRUMENT IN EU FOREIGN POLICY

The role of crisis management in the EU foreign and security policy toolbox is changing, as other instruments of the EU Integrated Approach have begun to have overlapping functions.⁸⁴ EU border and coast guard agency Frontex, Commission projects, EU development and humanitarian aid, delegations and individual member states also operate in the host countries of CSDP interventions. Since 2016, the Global Strategy and its Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises has replaced the European Security Strategy in setting the policy framework for crisis management. While keeping the EU security agenda largely intact, the greatest change is the attempt to approach security threats in a holistic, multidimensional way.⁸⁵ To implement this practically, a clearer division of labour is still needed, but this would require resolving the civil-military and the Commission-member state cooperation gaps that still plague it.

CSDP coherence with other EU instruments

Silos between CSDP interventions and other EU foreign policy functions, primarily Commission projects and humanitarian aid, still constitute the most critical coordination gap in the EU external action framework, limiting a joined-up EU strategic approach. While the EU has developed its security and defence cooperation, it has also made efforts to enhance the humanitarian and development aspects of EU external action. The most recent example of this was the integration of several different funding instruments, including those supporting crisis response, into one Neighbourhood, Development & International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) in the new Multiannual Financial Framework.⁸⁶ Questions have been raised about how coherently different EU actors will use the instrument, given their differing mandates, approaches and decision-making structures, which are plagued by coordination gaps.⁸⁷ The creation of the NDICI instrument can potentially lead the Commission-led “soft security side” of the Union to increasingly overlap with the member state-led

84 Interviews 8, 1, 5, 7, 6.

85 Council conclusions on the EU’s comprehensive approach, June 2013. For a broader discussion of the integrated approach, see Blockmans and Debuysere 2021.

86 European Commission 2021; Blockmans and Debuysere 2021.

87 See e. g. Bergmann & Friesen 2021.

CSDP, such as in projects on security sector reform – traditionally a function owned by the CSDP and the member states.⁸⁸

The development of Commission-led instruments has led some to consider that the CSDP is at risk of losing its prominence in the EU toolbox. The overlap between instruments links to the timing of EU engagement in a host country in the phases of conflict cycle. In many instances, CSDP missions have served as a way for the EU to level-up – not to introduce – EU engagement in its immediate neighbourhood. For example, in Ukraine, the Advisory Mission was preceded by a decade of Commission activities linked to border management.⁸⁹ The CSDP has potentially contributed to the overlap, as interventions tend to self-extend. The lengthy involvement in host countries has changed the nature of interventions from crisis management towards more technical capability development.⁹⁰

The European Peace Facility (EPF), an off-budget instrument, is one of the newest tools in EU external action, replacing the existing financing tools such as the African Peace Facility (APF) and the Athena mechanism. The EPF opens up new opportunities for the financing of the EU's and partners' military interventions in Africa and elsewhere, as well as enables the material support of third parties, possibly including lethal equipment. Despite the supposed added value of the EPF for CSDP interventions and for building local capabilities, civil society actors and think tanks have been extremely cautious about its impact, mostly due to doubts about insufficient risk analysis and mitigation.⁹¹ It is both the EPF's close association with (host) state security (versus human security) and the internal security of EU member states (vs security of the host states) that cause concern. The EPF is likely to be used for migration management and anti-terrorism functions, and the EU has been criticized for lacking commitment to developing oversight and ensuring the security of the people governed with the funding.⁹²

The rapidly developing Frontex, in terms of both legal aspects and resourcing, is the key institutional competitor evoking confusion and uncertainty in CSDP circles. Migration-focused functions swelled in civilian CSDP interventions after 2015, but Frontex conducts the same tasks with better resourcing, more

staff and a clearer mandate.⁹³ The agency draws on the same recruitment pool as CSDP interventions but with more direct access: Most member states deploy staff to CSDP interventions through foreign ministries, whereas national border agencies can send staff directly to Frontex. Successful staffing makes Frontex a more rapid tool for responding to sudden events in the neighbourhood. This can lead to policy area conflicts when the mandates of member state-led CSDP interventions and Commission-led Frontex operations overlap. Strengthening Frontex could, however, also support developing the CSDP framework: a Frontex presence in a host country with executive functions could free the CSDP to focus on the strategic development of partners.⁹⁴ Additionally, the CSDP could still function in an executive role in countries where Frontex is not welcome due to its public image as an EU internal security entity.⁹⁵

Many have asked what the *raison d'être* of EU civilian crisis management is in contexts where instruments like the Commission projects or Frontex can perform the same functions more effectively.⁹⁶ The problem seems insurmountable but, at the same time, CSDP interventions remain popular among member states because of their political value. Despite their overall contribution not always being clear, it seems unlikely that the interventions will disappear from the EU toolset. Even with their ambiguous objectives and staff deficit, CSDP interventions serve as a tool for high visibility for the member states.⁹⁷ While the interventions require decision-making ability between the 27, they respectively also enjoy the clout of the 27 and have more political weight to utilize when cooperating with host countries.⁹⁸ Member state leadership in the CSDP also makes it interesting for host countries, as accommodating a CSDP intervention gives the host country political visibility.⁹⁹

It has been suggested that increasing the Commission's role in CSDP interventions could make them a faster and more efficient tool for crisis management.¹⁰⁰ This builds on existing practice, as since 2005 the Commission has led its own mission, the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) to Moldova-Ukraine.

88 Interview 1.

89 Interview 1.

90 Interview 10.

91 See e. g. Safer World 2021; Crisis Group 2021; Eplo 2021.

92 Interview 5; see also Safer World 2021; Crisis Group 2021; Eplo 2021.

93 Interviews 1, 7.

94 Interview 4.

95 Interview 6.

96 See for example Tammikko & Ruohomäki 2019.

97 Interviews 3, 10, 5.

98 Interview 3.

99 Interview 10.

100 See for example EU-CIVCAP lesson 22, 2018; interview 3.

Commission-owned projects replacing CSDP interventions would mean member states' diminishing control over EU external action. The pilot "Stabilization Action" in Mali under Article 28 of the Treaty of Lisbon was one example of such projects. However, Commission projects are unlikely to challenge CSDP interventions (at least) in the near future. Member states hold the view that EU crisis management needs to be owned by member states inside out. More likely, projects will supplement CSDP interventions, as they have a more technical focus and can even be outsourced.

The more politically important the case, the more likely it is that a CSDP intervention will be preferred over other foreign policy options for intervention. Considering the limited resources, the use of the CSDP vehicle should indeed focus on those cases for which visibility and political prominence add value. Yet member states will most likely continue to push for topics better suited to a Commission project to be included in the CSDP, as they have more control over this tool.¹⁰¹ The crisis in EU crisis management will continue in the form of resourcing and staffing challenges – not in the form of abandoning the interventions.

Balancing between civilian and military CSDP

Over time, the use of civilian and military CSDP has become differentiated, as the EU has become a major actor in civilian crisis management, in contrast to its decreasing role on the military front.¹⁰² Some attempts by the EU to pursue more prominent roles in military crisis management have not succeeded, for example in Libya.¹⁰³ There is reluctance amongst member states to relinquish the CSDP's ability to produce a quick crisis response. While the EU could, in theory, utilize member state military capabilities similarly to NATO, these capabilities have not been made available for the CSDP.¹⁰⁴ In order to build credibility as a military actor and improve its strategic autonomy, some have called for the EU to demonstrate an ability to also use military CSDP in an executive capacity.¹⁰⁵ A recent proposal by the defence ministers of 14 member states would

bring about a new rapid deployment force to fulfil this role.¹⁰⁶

The EU is in the midst of a gradual change from a civilian peace project towards one that includes more military elements in its toolbox. That said, there has long been a broadly shared negative perception of an EU military. Only in the past few years have European governments, foreign ministries and institutions started to view military capabilities as important for the Union. With this new-found political will, the question has shifted to how to use the military capabilities, and what role EU institutions should play in coordinating and commanding the tool.¹⁰⁷ It has also already been argued that the current prominent developments in military CSDP should be accompanied by similar initiatives in the civilian field. The integrated approach combining civilian and military efforts, dating back to the comprehensive approach of the 2000s,¹⁰⁸ is the most fundamental axis of cooperation in EU crisis management. And yet, the longstanding detachment of civilian and military interventions from each other remains an unresolved issue even today. Both PESCO and the Civilian CSDP Compact fail to address this gap.

Issues with a joined-up civilian-military approach boil down to two categories. Firstly, differences in the operational culture challenge joint planning. While military crisis management is more intergovernmental, civilian crisis management has a larger supranational feature in the EU. Different recruitment procedures and funding mechanisms exacerbate the issue for deploying civilian and military capabilities jointly or in a coherent manner. The division of labour in leadership between member states and the Commission should also be resolved to improve coordinated action.¹⁰⁹ Secondly, differing mandates of civilian and military CSDP and their capability gaps make a true integrated approach in the field difficult. Expanding the coordination role of EU delegations in local settings is one proposed way to resolve this issue without strict standardized processes. This was seen as a success in Mali, where the delegation bridged gaps between the civilian and military missions through the use of Commission-funded projects.¹¹⁰

101 Interview 10.

102 For a broader discussion on early EU military crisis management, see Peen Rodt 2012.

103 See e.g. the Guardian 13.5.2015

104 Interview 13.

105 Interview 8.

106 Reuters, 5.5.2021. As of the current discussion, the force would consist of approximately 5,000 troops from all branches of the military, being a more potent force compared with the existing EU battlegroups.

107 Interview 11.

108 Pirozzi 2013; Faleg 2018.

109 Interviews 13, 10.

110 Interview 13.

Making the head of delegation the head of an integrated CSDP mission would be an even bolder step towards an actual integrated strategic approach.¹¹¹ The CSDP already has limited experience of integrated missions. The coast guard component embedded in EUCAP Somalia has been claimed to demonstrate that a military component in a civilian mission is workable. On the other hand, the plan to include a civilian cell in the new EU military crisis management mission in Mozambique failed. In the absence of institutional changes, deeper integration in the field seems challenging, making it thus more feasible in the short term to focus on cooperation rather than integration between the two.¹¹² The EU Concept on Effective Civil-Military Coordination in Support of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief is one example of developing civilian-military coordination in the EU. A similar concept has been called for training. Operational requirements set by the Strategic Compass are anticipated to incentivize such initiatives.¹¹³ Projects under the PESCO initiative are also relevant to crisis management, with the new rapid deployment force initiative potentially joining them. With the advent of this force, it should be considered whether a similar civilian project could be established as a part of the Civilian CSDP Compact to achieve the longstanding goal of deploying 200 staff in 30 days.

Finally, revising the relationship between military and civilian CSDP must keep an eye on developments in other international organizations, most importantly NATO, the UN and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).¹¹⁴ The EU-NATO relationship in particular has shaped the EU as a security actor from the outset, serving as a model while also limiting its strategic autonomy. Engagement with NATO can both strengthen and restrict the EU as an external security actor.¹¹⁵ The EU's military crisis management objectives have both overlapped with and supported those of NATO, depending on the level of coordination at both the political and operational levels.¹¹⁶ At the same time, the UK's withdrawal from the EU increases the relevance of military cooperation by European states outside of the CSDP framework, which could have further negative effects on the resourcing of CSDP military missions.

111 Pietz 2021.

112 Interview 10.

113 Interview 11.

114 Interviews 2, 8.

115 See Ojanen 2021.

116 Interviews 13, 2; see also Smith 2011.

VI. MEMBERS STATES' MIXED CAPABILITY TO STEER CSDP INTERVENTIONS

Due to the intergovernmental feature in the EU's CSDP, member states play an indisputable role as the guardians of EU crisis management. Member states establish each intervention through a unanimous decision, negotiate on their continuation or discontinuation, and provide the resources, thus creating a rigged marketplace of supply and demand. Member states empower the EU institutions involved in the CSDP, set the limits on their mandate and provide resources. Since the member states also contribute to international crisis management through other international organizations, this also impacts whether CSDP interventions are launched and continued.¹¹⁷

Shared motivations and bargained deals

As discussed in the second chapter, CSDP interventions are increasingly justified in the EU rhetoric based on their added value to the security of the EU and its member states, instead of being portrayed as primarily building stability and peace in the host states. Our analysis, however, indicates that at the operational level, the development is not as linear. The justification for our argument is twofold: Firstly, activities in support of state-building and peace-building still form the core of CSDP interventions, and secondly, the interventions have been motivated by member states' national interests from the outset. Various interviews for this research paper indicate that key operational-level functions, including political advice, training and support in security sector reform or the rule of law, have changed little in the past twenty years.¹¹⁸ It was also stated that mandates still focus on host country needs.¹¹⁹ At the same time, decisions to establish new CSDP interventions follow member states' national priorities, such as motivations linked to geography and history or concerns about migration, but this is not a new phenomenon in the EU's external action. According to the interviews, "selfish" motivations of member states always played a role, but today it is an accepted trend to be open about it.¹²⁰ Some also argued that the EU only

117 See Pohl 2014.

118 Interviews 2, 6.

119 Interview 8.

120 Interview 2.

recently became able to express such underpinnings of its strategy.¹²¹

The shift towards openness about internal security motivations could link to the identified void in the CSDP's *raison d'être*, since member states are keen to continue making interventions. A pragmatic emphasis on expected internal security benefits helps to justify why interventions pay off, and portraying the CSDP as securing EU citizens and states also secures the role of interventions in the future.

Preventing and managing migration towards Europe is a notable example of internal security-oriented objectives explained to European constituencies when justifying CSDP interventions. Member states' interests to prevent and control migration to Europe have grown exponentially, not only revitalizing Frontex but also giving CSDP interventions a new purpose. Before 2015, migration was a priority topic mainly for the Mediterranean countries. Today, most member states advocate the use of CSDP interventions to prevent and control the movement of people to Europe.¹²² Preventing migration pressure towards Europe has become the leading internal security priority for the CSDP, demonstrated both in the rhetoric and in operation mandates.

Based on the interviews, other factors defining member states' motivations to deploy CSDP interventions include historical links, such as colonial ties with the host state,¹²³ and geography, with various countries advocating a focus on their own neighbourhood in the Eastern-Southern axis.¹²⁴ CSDP interventions have also served the intelligence needs of member states.¹²⁵ Finally, the relevance of political signalling has reportedly increased, as the interventions serve as means for member states to demonstrate credibility through contributing to the building of peace in a conflict context.¹²⁶

All of these factors refer to pragmatic (rather than idealist) drivers in the strategic approach, and demonstrate that member states have always balanced various interests in their decision-making on the launching of interventions.¹²⁷ It is also worth noting that based on the interviews, the trend of openly prioritizing internal security also links to a dismissal of the human security perspective and entails an emphasis on state security

instead.¹²⁸ Certain interventions, such as EUBAM Libya and EUNAVFOR MED IRINI, were considered to demonstrate the increased domination of state security in particular.¹²⁹ At the same time, the interviews highlighted the need for a human security perspective especially when governance is being built.¹³⁰

Member states also vary in their interests in CSDP interventions, following their national politics. According to a former member state delegate, the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management typically splits into groups of Northern and Southern member states: Often, France and a varying group of other states, typically from Southern Europe, form a block with reservations towards civilian CSDP and a preference for a military approach. The other group with more ambitions for civilian CSDP loosely consists of the Nordic states, Germany, the Netherlands, and Austria. The more politicized the interventions, the more variety appears. For example, when planning EUAM Ukraine, member states' Russia policies mattered. Often, those in favour of a firm policy towards Russia, or in geographical proximity to it, favoured a geographically broad mission, whereas France and Germany called for a more modest approach. On EULEX Kosovo, positions have been linked to Kosovo's status; for those not recognizing its independence, the intervention is a way to highlight the incompleteness of the state-building process.¹³¹

Many CSDP interventions represent the interests of some member states only. The interviews portrayed interventions being used by member states to push their national agenda as the norm,¹³² exemplifying the supply side-driven nature of CSDP interventions. For example, the CSDP in Mali was considered to represent the interests and ideas of France primarily.¹³³ The interviews also highlighted that a new CSDP intervention typically needs a member state champion to push for it, in addition to a critical mass of other states with an interest in the mission being accepted.¹³⁴ The logic of the marketplace is demonstrated here, as member states aim to create demand for their own ideas. In this process, the intergovernmental nature of the CSDP also brings about opportunities for *bargaining*. Interviewees from both military and civilian sides considered it a widely accepted practice that member states bargain

121 Interview 10.

122 Interview 12.

123 Interview 2.

124 Interview 8.

125 Interviews 5, 2.

126 Interview 5; see also Pohl 2014.

127 In support of this interpretation, see Sanahuja 2020; Winn 2019.

128 Interviews 5, 7, 8.

129 Interview 7.

130 Interviews 5, 7.

131 Interview 3.

132 Interviews 12, 9, 7.

133 Interview 12; see also Okemuo 2013.

134 Interview 9; see also Pohl 2014.

on missions to avoid blockages and to offer something for all.¹³⁵ Reciprocal support for each other's initiatives was deemed a positive resource.¹³⁶ However, it was also noted that bargained interventions are likely to face problems with resourcing and staffing, as not enough member states are actually keen on the objectives.¹³⁷ Some interviewees also criticized the "EU flag" being utilized to pursue the national interests of only one or a few member states, and close control by all member states over all interventions was considered important from a risk mitigation point of view.¹³⁸

From tangled decision-making to half-measure implementation

Decision-making in the CSDP features paradoxes that are deeply rooted and tricky to overcome. The most central one culminates in member states calling for a better coordinated approach but not authorizing EU bodies to implement it.¹³⁹ Despite the fact that crisis management is established as an EU competence in the Treaty on European Union, this principle is not reflected in practice as decision-making power and capabilities are held by the member states.¹⁴⁰ The CSDP has followed a path of coordinating scattered resources rather than centralizing them, or in some cases, relying on forms of differentiated integration.¹⁴¹ The tangled decision-making process on CSDP interventions decreases the ambition level¹⁴² and makes the EU slow in reacting to crises and conflicts.¹⁴³ The crisis management procedures provide an opportunity to draft a response quickly, yet this is rare.¹⁴⁴ Unlike the UN Security Council, which gives a mission a short mandate that is then developed into an operations plan by the Secretariat, EU member states negotiate interventions in fine detail. This has led to micromanagement,¹⁴⁵ often leading to the lowest common denominator that member states can agree on.¹⁴⁶ The intervention in South Sudan provides an example:

the mission decided upon out of several proposed options was to simply provide airport security in Juba.¹⁴⁷ This scenario seems to be the one that bargaining ought to prevent.

EU institutions have been the main pushing actor in initiating reforms and supporting the member states in developing CSDP capabilities.¹⁴⁸ Member states have also developed means to overcome barriers to decision-making. One current trend is to issue non-papers of like-minded states to discover a level of joint ambition(s) and gain visibility on foreign policy issues.¹⁴⁹ Initiatives such as the Strategic Compass or the current Civilian CSDP Compact also serve as a way to identify shared strategic priorities, and to reorient working methods.¹⁵⁰ Increasing the role of the Commission has been proposed as a quick fix but remains unlikely to be agreed on.¹⁵¹ This is also the case with the Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) initiative that proposes a move from an absolute consensus to an agreed-upon majority of member states representing a majority of the EU population. In this respect, member states fear that interventions could either be launched or run down without a chance to push back.¹⁵²

The likelihood of the joint approach failing seems to even increase in the implementation phase, a topic already widely discussed in the research literature.¹⁵³ Civilian interventions, especially in the French-speaking host states, suffer from a chronic lack of staff, whereas military interventions in particular are subject to fundamental challenges in terms of funding.¹⁵⁴ In general, resources are insufficient to meet the level of ambition, and the situation is worsening. For example, the share of seconded staff in civilian missions decreased from 83 to 65 percent of all international staff between 2010 and 2019.¹⁵⁵ Most interventions are staffed by only a handful of EU member states, including in military CSDP. The increasing relevance of competing tools for foreign and security policy foresees further challenges, among them the likelihood of resources being increasingly allocated to new agencies, such as Frontex.¹⁵⁶ This supports our analysis of the crisis in crisis management: CSDP

135 Interviews 11, 9.

136 Interview 9.

137 Interview 6.

138 Interview 12.

139 See e. g. Sus 2015, echoing Uwe Puetter (2012) on post-Maastricht (economic) integration paradox.

140 See Wessel 2016.

141 See Puetter 2016; Siddi et al. 2021.

142 Interviews 9, 6, 14.

143 Interview 10.

144 Interview 8.

145 Interviews 9, 8, 14.

146 Interview 9; for a comparison of UN & EU approaches to developing their crisis management mechanisms, see Dijkstra et al. 2019.

147 Interview 9; for a description of a potential future scenario of diminishing ambitions on the CSDP, see Baciu & Friede 2020.

148 Interview 1.

149 Interview 1.

150 Interview 10.

151 Interviews 1, 3.

152 Interview 3.

153 See for example IECEU project; Dumur-Laanila & Karjalainen 2018.

154 Interview 1.

155 See Smit 2019 for a detailed analysis.

156 Interview 1.

interventions are preferred by member states over other CFSP tools, but there is no political will to overcome the resourcing and decision-making challenges, the outcome being a number of narrow and lower goal interventions continuing under member states' close control yet without adequate resources for achieving their objectives.

VII. NEXT STEPS TO EXPERIMENT WITH IN THE EU'S STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CSDP INTERVENTIONS

This FIIA Analysis has explored the strategic approach of the EU to crisis management, most notably CSDP interventions. Three trends in particular seem to curtail it at the beginning of the 2020s. Firstly, the *raison d'être* of CSDP interventions is under pressure from competing EU instruments, particularly Frontex but also other CFSP tools such as Commission projects. Secondly, there is a shift in rhetoric in terms of the security conception from external to internal security, revealing more transparently than before the national interests of member states in establishing CSDP interventions. And thirdly, a decreasing level of ambition in the CSDP framework has led to narrower and more moderate goal attainment in the interventions.

While these trends characterize the CSDP interventions at present, they arise from a decades-long experimental exercise of constructing the EU strategic approach. Our analysis is aligned with earlier literature that also recognized the experimental feature in the CSDP, and we argue that both supranational and intergovernmental aspects in the policy area support the approach.

The EU in general stands out in the group of international organizations because of its supranational features. However, in the realm of the CSDP, intergovernmentalism plays a central role and defines the creation of CSDP strategy. Compared to the UN, whose operations closely follow a predefined strategy, EU crisis management interventions have had more space to experiment, develop objectives from praxis, and adjust means of operation. Sometimes, adapting the approach has been the only way forward due to a lack of resources or tangled decision-making. Unlike in the UN, in the CSDP the member states closely participate in the revision and control of interventions also after their launch, which has provoked criticism about negative micromanagement. Yet that micromanagement –

intergovernmentalism in practice – also has a silver lining. It enables experimentalism and emergence in EU crisis management strategy when experiences from specific operations are absorbed into institutional knowledge and developed into broader EU strategic priorities. This also presents an opportunity to align EU crisis management more closely with particular conflict contexts, at best aligned with the idea of adaptive peacebuilding.¹⁵⁷

The specific features of the institutional culture have also advanced the development of the EU's Integrated Approach. In the early years of CSDP interventions in particular, the lack of institutional bureaucracy and the freedom of heads of missions and strategic planners to direct EU interventions in host countries enabled the EU to adapt its operations to what other international actors were doing in the field. At the same time, the lack of institutional structures exaggerated the role of personalities in the shaping of the EU strategic approach. In addition, a lack of shared strategic culture hindered the progress in crisis management strategy.

Only with deliberative dialogue and decision-making can EU member states with varying national interests develop a joined-up approach to which all are willing to contribute resources. The lack of shared strategic culture and common strategic language, and lapses of memory in the CSDP structure, decrease the positive opportunities embedded in the experimentalist and emergent features of the approach. Pitfalls in the strategic review processes in particular pose a risk of compromising the adaptive strategy. The current Strategic Compass process can support the creation of a shared strategic culture and language of EU crisis management, strengthened by a continuation of the dialogue.

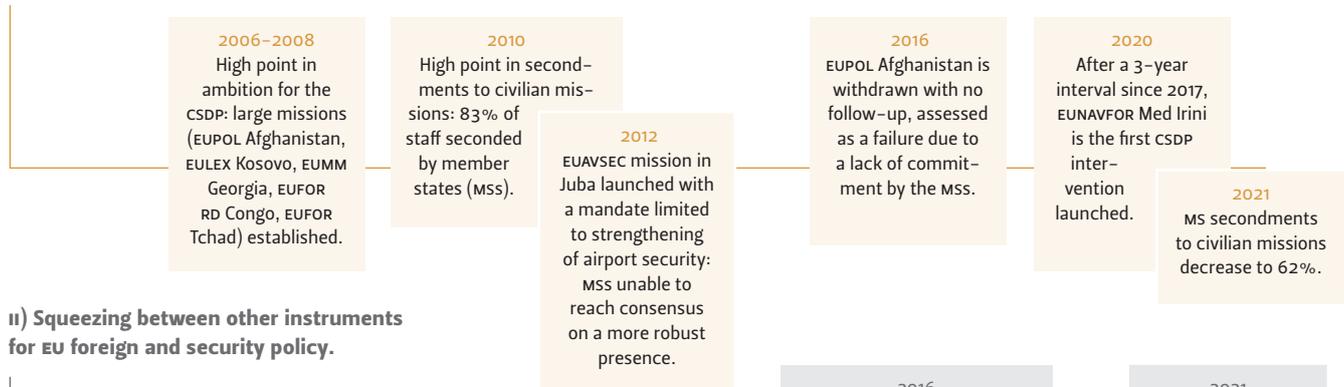
This analysis has also contributed to the debate on the external-internal security nexus in the EU's CSDP. We argue that while the strategic rhetoric of the EU has shifted from emphasizing external security (i.e. the stability and peace of host states) towards justifying CSDP interventions by their added value for internal security (i.e. the security of EU member states and their citizens), the shift at the operational level might not have been as significant as the rhetorical shift suggests. In fact, our analysis concludes that elements that serve EU member states' national interest have always been a part of the interventions.

Furthermore, despite some recent interventions with mandates that emphasize internal security, the external

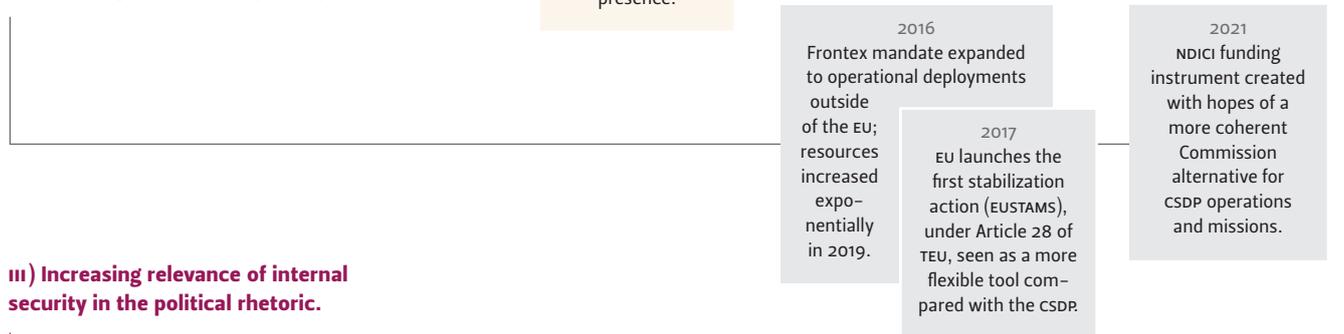
157 See de Coning 2018.

Three trends in EU crisis management with examples

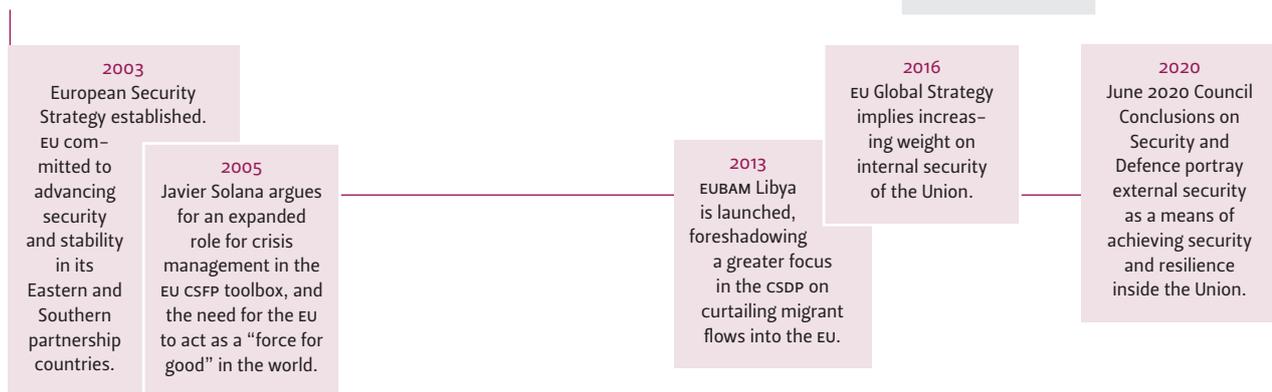
i) Decreasing level of ambition.



ii) Squeezing between other instruments for EU foreign and security policy.



iii) Increasing relevance of internal security in the political rhetoric.



stability-oriented objectives still seem to be present in EU crisis management praxis. Whether and how much the operational-level elements have actually changed along the external-internal security axis should be confirmed with empirical research on the implementation of CSDP mission mandates. Embedded research based on first-hand observations in missions would complement our interview-based analysis and the prevalent studies that review strategic documents on the EU’s CSDP.

In addition to the internal-external security nexus, the time aspect of objectives and the human security aspect should also be taken into account when assessing

the EU approach to crisis management. Our analysis reinforces the concern that short-term visible objectives are now prioritized over long-term goals that would better support sustainable development towards peace and stability. This short-termism in strategic thinking seems to link to a decreasing ambition level for interventions. Operations with a short-term vision and pursuit of high political visibility also tend to prefer state security at the expense of a human security approach. While the EU rhetoric recognizes the relevance of human security in international interventions, it does not seem to apply it to a sufficient degree in CSDP interventions.

Finally, taking a look forward, as long as the intergovernmental basis of the CSDP remains, it is up to the member states to decide how they wish to use CSDP interventions as a part of the integrated approach, and at which phase of a crisis. In military crisis management, longstanding hopes of re-developing a rapid crisis response capability are currently advancing through PESCO, although the outcome of the process remains uncertain. Civilian CSDP Compact, on the other hand, has yet to produce substantive steps toward the stated goal of being able to deploy a civilian CSDP mission with 200 staff in 30 days. Until these capabilities are developed and demonstrated, CSDP interventions will most likely be limited to their current role, focused on developing the rule of law and building the resilience of host countries. This will maintain the ambiguity in the division of labour between the CSDP and other instruments of EU external action. Separate development processes will likely also make further integration of civilian and military CSDP challenging.

Considering the discrepancies in decision-making, staffing, funding, institutions and practices within the CSDP framework, the question arises as to whether crisis management should even be regarded as a single tool in the integrated approach “toolbox”. Recognizing and accepting multiplicities in the CSDP could potentially be

a more effective future approach for the deployment of interventions at different phases of the conflict cycle, in various configurations and with different mandates. A rapidly deployed CSDP intervention focusing on managing a crisis, possibly with executive capacity, fundamentally differs from one rebuilding a country’s security sector. The two require planning and support functions to work in different time spans and thematic areas and, most importantly, with a different theory of change. It might be worth exploring whether interventions with different objectives should also rely on separate planning and decision-making procedures.

Member states have required the EEAS to develop better analytical and strategic capabilities to manage the complexity of the integrated approach, but it will take time and practice to overcome the friction between these institutions. For their part in the process, member states have been unwilling to revise working methods in the Council towards deliberative guidance of CSDP missions. The Strategic Compass could serve as a basis for continued strategic dialogue between the member states and the Commission structures, which could help to build a more shared lexicon and knowledge base among these entities. For crisis management to support and demonstrate European strategic autonomy, further steps towards a common strategic culture in the CSDP are needed. /

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Conducted via telephone or a tele-conference tool between February and May 2021.

Interview 1: Senior EEAS official working with civilian CSDP, 16 February 2021

Interview 2: Former Head of Mission, 3 March 2021

Interview 3: Former member state delegate to CIVCOM, 8 March 2021

Interview 4: Senior CPEC official, 16 March 2021

Interview 5: Civil society representative, 17 March 2021

Interview 6: Senior EEAS official working with the CSDP, 8 April 2021

Interview 7: Civil society representative, 15 April 2021

Interview 8: Senior member state diplomat working with security policy, 16 April 2021

Interview 9: Senior civilian CSDP mission staff member, 16 April 2021

Interview 10: Former staff member at CMPD, 20 April 2021

Interview 11: Senior EEAS official working with military CSDP, 26 April 2021

Interview 12: Member state crisis management expert, 11 May 2021

Interview 13: Former senior staff member at EUMS, 12 May 2021

Interview 14: Member state crisis management expert, 17 May 2021

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