

The added value of CSDP operations

by Hadewych Hazelzet

Over the past two years, many high-level discussions within the EU have centred around the question of the ‘added value’ of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). In times of fiscal austerity, member states want to make sure they invest their resources where their impact is strongest. In the current climate of financial crisis and retrenchment, there are no resources or time to waste on a ‘beauty contest’ between organisations or instruments. In order to prepare for the next decade of deployments, the question to ask is therefore not *whether* but *under what conditions* CSDP has brought added value, to date, in responding to given contingencies.

‘Value’ can be defined as decisively contributing to bringing lasting peace and security in a crisis or post-conflict situation. An EU action that other actors or instruments either cannot or will not carry out in such a contingency would thus constitute *added value*.

Compared to the UN and NATO

How do EU deployments compare to those carried out by other organisations in terms of numbers and type of response?

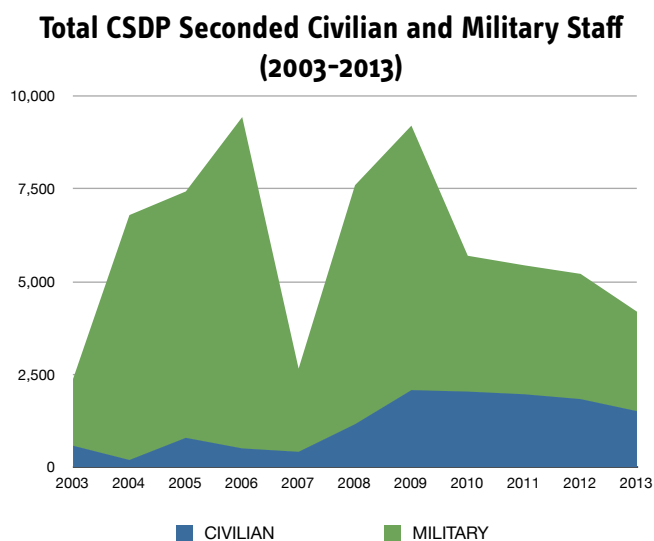
Although the EU, over time, has deployed more civilian (17) than military (8) operations, in terms of

size military missions have been much larger. Staff engagements have fluctuated over time depending on crises: for instance, peaks were reached in 2006 by the deployment of EUFOR RDC, and in 2008 by EUFOR Chad, EUNAVFOR Atalanta and EULEX Kosovo (whose personnel was augmented in 2009).

To put the level of EU staff engagements in perspective: in 2011, the UN deployed 120,000 peacekeepers and NATO almost 150,000 troops – more than 24 and 30 times, respectively, as many as the EU. That said, EU member states provide important shares of NATO troops and carry a large chunk of the costs of UN peacekeeping operations. Not unlike the EU, the UN is deploying more and more civilian (police) missions, with a growth of 80 percent over the past few years (compared to a 13 percent growth in UN military operations). In 2012, the UN deployed a total of 16 peacekeeping operations and one special political mission, compared to 15 by the EU.

When does the EU *not* intervene while others do? Over the past decade, compared to the EU, the UN and NATO have typically interfered during conflict situations in non-permissive environments. Yet the EU’s ambition – as set out in the European Security Strategy, the Petersberg Tasks and the civilian and military Headline Goals – is to be (cap)able to in-

tervene also in such situations. So, why has the EU not made use of all the capabilities at its disposal?



Source: compiled over time by author on basis of CMPD, CPCC and EUMS figures.

The worst and most violent crises in the world tend to attract the attention of the UN Security Council, thus calling for a multilateral response. In the EU, which tends to operate below that threshold, those member states or presidencies in favour of sending in troops were usually not the ones in charge of (and bearing the costs for) the so-called Battle Group in crisis situations (e.g. Eastern DRC, November 2008). Perhaps more significantly, member states politically favoured intervention through their membership of NATO in a transatlantic framework (Afghanistan, Libya), a coalition of the willing (Iraq 2003) or decided to wait for a UN or regional response (Lebanon 2006-09, Sri Lanka 2009, Kyrgyzstan 2010, Syria 2012). Thus, since many EU deployments were not in response to crises but were more of a capacity-building nature, the term ‘crisis management’ does not fully correspond to the reality on the ground.

In other words, EU interventions have tended to be small but targeted in comparison to the UN and NATO. Where then – compared to other actors – did the EU intervene and why? And what factors determine which organisation is better placed to intervene?

The EU’s comparative advantage

An analysis of EU civilian and military interventions over the past ten years shows that the EU – despite relatively small and often short interventions – was often able to tip the scales in times of conflict. The EU mainly brought a decisive contribution in three

types of situations: the EU was willing and capable to act (i) where other organisations were not; (ii) when there was a specific demand for it to intervene; and (iii) in low- to medium-intensity conflict environments. Geographically, the EU is also the only regional organisation that has deployed far beyond its own neighbourhood.

First, it should be noted that the reasons for the Union’s comparative advantage where other organisations did not intervene, include the following:

- the UN or another regional organisation was not willing or politically capable of acting (e.g. the UN in Kosovo post-declaration of independence, the UN/OSCE in Georgia 2008)
- the UN or African Union (AU) could not deploy quickly enough to stabilise the situation (e.g. bridging operations EUFOR Tchad, EUFOR Artemis, EUTM Mali)
- the UN explicitly asked for help in a particular situation, as their resources were insufficient and increased involvement of European actors promised to have a mitigating effect (e.g. EUFOR RDC)
- EU member states offered specific capabilities (e.g. EUNAVFOR Atalanta)
- Finally, the EU contribution was linked to a specific situation that was difficult to address by others due to its geographical scope (e.g. Regional Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of Africa, various missions in Sahel).

Second, a specific *demand* for the EU to intervene (as opposed to the UN or others) occurred when:

- the EU was perceived as particularly legitimate to help solve a conflict in its immediate neighbourhood (e.g. EUFOR *Althea*, EUPM BiH, EULEX Kosovo, EUMM Georgia, Concordia FYROM), or as more ‘neutral’ than the UN in the eyes of the host country (e.g. AMM Aceh, EUBAM Rafah). In these cases the EU could also play a decisive role as a mediator in the conflict and help the parties agree the conditions of a ceasefire (e.g. Aceh, Georgia)
- the EU was responding to a specific need which other actors did not address (or failed to address effectively), usually related to Security Sector Reform (e.g. EUPOL RDC, EUPOL AFG, EUSSR Guinea Bissau, EUTM Somalia), the rule of law (EUJUST LEX Iraq, EUPOL COPPS), border management (EUCAP Niger, border management Libya) or airport security (EUNAVFOR South

Sudan)

- a broad range of diplomatic, civilian and military tools was needed to deal with a situation (e.g. comprehensive approach), and few actors have as many tools at their disposal as the EU. The capability for integrative (civ-mil) planning is particularly unique in this regard (again cf. the Horn of Africa, Sahel). The presence of an EU Delegation on the ground also tends to enable deployment and facilitate long-term sustainability after closing down a mission. This is not always the case for other international or regional organisations (NATO, the AU, the UN).

Third, thus far EU interventions – with possibly one exception (the first DRC operation in 2003) – have taken place only in pre- or post-conflict situations. That is not to say that no risks were involved (e.g. EUFOR Tchad, EUNAVFOR Atalanta and EUTM Somalia) but, in comparison, NATO has intervened primarily in high-intensity conflicts, while UN operations also typically need ‘a peace to keep’ before deploying.

In some cases where another actor was better placed or equipped to respond to a crisis and CSDP action was not taken, the EU sought to bring value by serving as a clearing house for member states’ contributions (e.g. Lebanon 2006, Haiti 2009) or contribute to UN peacekeeping or monitoring missions by other means – such as satellite imagery (Syria 2012). The EU has also helped build the capacity of other regional organisations (the AU, ECOWAS, Arab League of States).

All this seems to suggest that the question of who could best intervene where and how was mostly based on factual analysis and rational calculation rather than an abstract ‘right of first refusal’ or a ‘beauty contest’ among different actors.

From added value to lasting impact

What has then been the impact of EU interventions? At least six factors have contributed so far to CSDP having stronger impact:

- prevention: CSDP action can, in itself, stop situations from escalating. This preventive role requires the capability and agility to plan, generate and deploy forces of sufficient speed and strength to influence decision-makers. The Union’s intervention in fYROM in 2003 was a successful example of a preventive civilian intervention;

- local ownership: when the local government has the capacity to work with CSDP mission/operations. Lessons identified thus far show that the impact of CSDP missions was less effective in unstable countries with reticent or unwilling governments (e.g. Guinea-Bissau). The fact that Niger showed more political interest in CSDP support (compared to other countries in the region) led the EU to start its action in the Sahel from that country;
- planning: this should include clear targets and objectives, well-defined exit strategies (end-states rather than end-dates: e.g. Aceh, DRC/Bunia), and sustainable follow-up planned through other instruments (e.g. EUPM BiH, South Sudan, SSR in the DRC);
- leverage: situations where the EU has particular influence over or attractiveness for states (e.g. the Balkans) through a wider spectrum of tools of cooperation are also likely to bring success, especially if those tools are skillfully used. In politically unstable situations the EU needs to bring to bear all the means at its disposal, including those provided by the Cotonou Agreement and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) itself;
- coherence and synergy: the impact of CSDP actions increases when it is embedded in a broader, comprehensive approach encompassing diplomatic, development and defence-related measures (the three ‘D’s’). Such an approach is one of the *raison d’être* for the establishment of the EEAS. And the comprehensive strategy for the Horn of Africa – encompassing three CSDP interventions EUNAVFOR *Atalanta*, the EU Training Mission for Somalia and regional maritime capacity building through EUCAP NESTOR – is obviously a crucial test case;
- last but not least, initiative: a ‘lead nation’ can ensure decisive action, harness support from other member states, and foster effectiveness of collective action (e.g. Chad with France, EUTM Somalia with Spain).

The impact of CSDP is often difficult to measure, due to the many factors affecting unstable situations and the difficulty in identifying the concrete effects of CSDP action alone. This makes it all the more important to define benchmarks of effectiveness, as was the case with EUTM Somalia (control of Mogadishu), EUNAVFOR *Atalanta* (none of the vessels with escort or protection on board were to be hijacked), South Sudan (airport meets international standards). This helps identify whether and when EU goals have been met and a CSDP mission



can be brought to a close. But more, of course, can and should be done in this domain.

The bigger picture

As CSDP is part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), EU operations are never ‘stand-alone’ actions but part of the Union’s wider long-term policy towards a country or a region. The presence of an EU Special Representative, EU Head of Delegation and CSDP mission ensures the EU’s comprehensive relationship with a given country or region. The question, therefore, is thus not really the comparative advantage of CSDP *vis-à-vis* but rather *as part of* other CFSP instruments. For instance, the internal civilian CSDP budget has steadily increased since 2004 yet remains small (approximately €300 million) as compared to EU development (e.g. €22.7 billion for the European Development Fund 2008-2013) and humanitarian funds (e.g. €1.1 billion for ECHO in 2010), so there are limits to what it can achieve. Hence all efforts are geared towards creating further synergies and enhancing the combined impact on the ground of the totality of EU actions.

The European Commission has also funded projects to train police, border and customs officers (e.g. EUPAT and Proxima FYROM, EUBAM Moldova/Ukraine, and the planned follow-on to EUPM BiH). An advantage, due to its different recruitment policy, is that force generation does not pose as much of a problem as when personnel is largely paid for by member states. Under this format, in fact, staff have a consultative status and are no longer on active duty and thus do not wear a national uniform.

These projects, however, figure less prominently on the radar screen of the member states. As CSDP operations are largely staffed by personnel seconded by the EU-28, and as the Political and Security Committee provides strategic and political guidance to and overview of the CSDP, member states have stronger ownership of and political commitment to CSDP missions than projects tendered out to contractors. In other words, there is a trade-off between force generation challenges and political ownership.

Finally, CSDP action – while primarily an instrument of external policy – also brings value to

internal EU security. CSDP addresses the wider notion of rule of law as the ultimate objective, and so promotes capacity building in fighting organised crime and terrorism, including strengthening host countries’ ability to cooperate with international law enforcement agencies (e.g. Europol, Interpol, the International Criminal Court). This fosters the establishment of a wider ‘rules-based’ security community – which is of particular relevance in the Union’s neighbourhood.

In conclusion, the EU is uniquely placed to respond to crises given its comprehensive approach, world-wide representation and niche capabilities. If given the opportunity and resources to grow and mature further, CSDP (as part of CFSP) could decisively help raise the Union’s scope and profile worldwide. The question *whether* the EU adds value in response to conflicts is thus outdated and has already been answered in the affirmative. The question now is rather *under what conditions* the EU’s impact is comparatively bigger and likely to tip the scales.

International and regional organisations are competing for scarce civilian and military capabilities owned by the member states. These will offer their capabilities where they are best put to use and have most impact. It is the EU’s duty to ensure high returns on national investments (thus showing its member states the expected added value when deploying their resources through CSDP) in those cases where the EU is deemed to have a comparative advantage over other actors in bringing about lasting peace and security. This may also be the key to turning the larger EU’s military potential into reality.

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