



DIIS REPORT

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**LINKING INSTRUMENTS
IN DEVELOPMENT AND
FOREIGN POLICY**

COMPREHENSIVE APPROACHES
IN THE EU

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Acronyms

<i>ACP countries</i>	African, Caribbean and Pacific countries
<i>AFISMA</i>	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
<i>AMISOM</i>	African Union Mission in Somalia
<i>CMCO</i>	Civil–military coordination operations
<i>CMPD</i>	Crisis management and planning directorate
<i>CPPB</i>	conflict prevention and peacebuilding
<i>CSDP missions</i>	Common Security and Defence Policy missions
<i>DCI</i>	Development Cooperation Instrument
<i>DEVCO</i>	Directorate General for Development and Cooperation
<i>DFID</i>	Department for International Development
<i>DG</i>	Directorate General
<i>DIIS</i>	Danish Institute for International Studies
<i>EC</i>	European Commission
<i>EDF</i>	European Development Fund
<i>EEAS</i>	European External Action Service
<i>EPA</i>	Economic Partnership Agreements
<i>EU</i>	European Union
<i>EUTM</i>	European Union Training Mission
<i>FAC</i>	Foreign Affairs Council
<i>ODA</i>	Official Development Assistance
<i>PSD</i>	Political and Security Committee
<i>UK</i>	United Kingdom
<i>UN</i>	United Nations
<i>WGA</i>	Whole-of-Government Approach

Abstract

The EU is currently working at defining a comprehensive approach linking development and other instruments in external action. The Lisbon Treaty has contributed to a reorganisation of the institutions in Brussels, affecting crisis management structures and the organisation of external relations. Comprehensive approaches are not new in the EU system, in particular an integrated approach for conflict prevention and a concept for civil–military coordination were developed in the 2000s. However, a forthcoming communication on a comprehensive approach in external action constitutes an occasion to clarify and operationalise the approach in a new, post-Lisbon, institutional setting as well as consolidating the formal EU commitment to working comprehensively.

The study argues that building a comprehensive approach is a long-term process with changing objectives and focus over time in response to an evolving context. An essential building block of a comprehensive approach is cross-sector collaboration involving different units and agencies of the EU at headquarters and field level.

The scope of the comprehensive approach in the EU system is debated. Should the approach focus on crisis and conflict situations, or cover the approach of the EU towards a third country or towards another region or group of countries in general? While it is essential to work on improving comprehensiveness in conflict and crisis situations, the study recommends applying a broad approach that takes into account other constellations of actions and instruments in external action as well. In partnerships with middle-income countries which are becoming increasingly important, the EU attempts to act upon national, regional and global issues as well as to mobilise and link instruments in areas such as diplomacy, trade, security, development and business cooperation.

I. Introduction

“We cannot succeed without this comprehensive approach - it is simply not enough to chase and deter pirates, not enough to try and do development when there is no security, not enough to try and provide economic support without a stable government... – and that is what the existence of the EEAS allows us to do – uniquely.”
(High Representative Catherine Ashton, annual meeting with heads of delegations, Brussels, 3 September 2012)

Integrated and comprehensive approaches have been developed since the 2000s in the EU system, linking development, security and other instruments in foreign policy. Since the adoption of common policies and frameworks for conducting missions in the fields of security and foreign policy, the role of the EU as a ‘security provider’ has grown (Gross 2008: 3). The EU is well placed to engage in comprehensive approaches, “given the uniquely broad range of instruments in its toolbox” (Barry 2012: 2).

With the establishment of the EEAS, a strong momentum has amassed in the EU behind working on integrating different instruments in external action and forging stronger links between development and diplomacy. At the same time, classical approaches to development cooperation are revised in a context of changing international conditions with economic growth in the South and crisis in the North leading to a diversification of development actors and a new landscape of poverty. In addition, the involvement of the international community in complex peace operations, intrastate wars and fragile states has contributed to a movement towards more integrated approaches since the 1990s (Stepputat 2009: 10). For some, the comprehensive approach is viewed as a means to forward a more strategic vision for external policies in order for the EU to punch its weight on the international stage (European Parliament, meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Press release, July 12, 2012).

The EEAS and the EC have been working on drafting a joint communication on comprehensive approaches for around a year. A drafting group led by the EEAS and the secretariat general of the Commission is in charge of preparing the proposal. It is expected that this proposal will be sent for inter-service consultation in 2013, followed by a decision in the College of Commissioners. Afterwards, the Council will express its views. In this context, several strategic issues have been debated during 2012 and 2013 among member states, EU institutions and civil society actors on how the comprehensive approach should be defined and implemented in the EU system.

Three themes are central for the debate:

- The scope of the comprehensive approach. Different options are currently debated: should the comprehensive approach encompass crisis management, the conflict cycle, or external action more broadly? In other words, how wide should the comprehensive approach be?
- The degree of integration of instruments: should the comprehensive approach provide a basis for information sharing between different actors or involve integrated processes for initiating, programming, implementation and monitoring of action?
- The level of formalisation of the structures and processes defined to implement the comprehensive approach. To what extent should the comprehensive approach involve a standardised and thus predictable framework or more flexible and ad hoc structures?

The study provides an introduction to the different meanings of the concept of comprehensive approaches, to the challenges that need to be faced in order to take forward these approaches in the EU system, as well as a consideration of lessons learned from combining instruments in practice. A discussion of the different options for a comprehensive approach in the EU system is included, in particular the potential advantages and disadvantages of choosing a narrow or broad scope for the EU comprehensive approach, a high or a low degree of integration of instruments and, finally, a standardised or flexible institutional set-up.

The study is based on a literature review and interviews at the level of the EEAS, European Commission and member state representations in Brussels.¹ Three country cases are explored: EU action towards Somalia is a much-cited example of an EU comprehensive approach having involved the integration of a range of different instruments including political dialogue, crisis management, development cooperation and humanitarian aid since the 2000s. More recently, crisis response to Mali has mobilised a wide range of EU instruments and provides an example of the current status and dynamics of the EU comprehensive approach, including the experience of new mechanisms such as a common inter-service mission in February 2013. EU action towards South Africa reflects new experiences of mobilising different instruments in support of and in partnership with middle-income countries.

¹ A total of 17 interviews in March and May 2013.

First, the report explores the concept of comprehensive approaches including the background to developing comprehensive approaches and previous experiences in the EU, selected member states and international organisations. The next section provides an overview of the EU instruments for external action and explores the three abovementioned country-cases where instruments have been linked in practice. Finally, salient issues for developing a comprehensive approach in the EU system are discussed.

2. The concept of comprehensive approaches

Since the 1990s international society has deployed an increasing number of peacekeeping missions. The complexity of these missions and the difficulties of getting sustainable results have been main drivers for developing integrated or comprehensive approaches (Hull and Derblom 2011: 12). The rationale of developing these approaches relates to developing synergy, especially between military and civil interventions, acting upon root causes of conflict, coordinating efforts of various actors involved and increasing cost-effectiveness in crisis management. Various definitions and practices have evolved in the UN system, NATO, the EU institutions and EU member states. Therefore it is more useful to speak of ‘comprehensive approaches,’ rather than one universal comprehensive approach (ibid: 18).

A common denominator for comprehensive approaches is that they refer to a mindset recognising a holistic approach (Wendling 2011: 13; Hull and Derblom 2011: 15). Some of the approaches entail the establishment of structures and processes for coordination, including pooled funding arrangements. All the approaches involve cross-sector work.

A typical example of a comprehensive approach is that of the UN ‘integrated missions’ in relation to peacekeeping missions, which was developed during reforms of the UN system in the 1990s (Barth Eide et al. 2005: 11). The concept was further reaffirmed in 2008, but refined and renamed the ‘Integrated Approach.’ One of the implications of the Integrated Approach on UN peacekeeping operations is that the old bipolar concept of civil–military coordination no longer adequately captures the new multipolar coordination challenges facing complex UN peacekeeping operations. In the UN Integrated Missions context, the focus has shifted instead to system-wide coordination across the political, security, development, rule of law, human rights and humanitarian dimensions (De Coning 2008: 3). The concept is mainly about shared understandings and common strategic plans among the various UN agencies engaging in recovery processes, in particular a strategic partnership between the UN peacekeeping operation and the UN country teams (UN 2006, paragraph 4; UN 2008: 1). In the context of the integrated approach, headquarters-based, interdepartmental and interagency “integrated task forces’ are undertaken before and throughout the mission in order to provide overall strategic guidance. At country level, the SRSG (the Special Representative of the Secretary General) has been entrusted with the authority to establish the overall framework to ensure a coordinated and coherent

approach of all UN agencies. This may involve an integrated strategic framework for action and an integrated planning unit.² While coordination between the country team and the peacekeeping mission is promoted, the various agencies, funds and programmes that make up the UN country team remain structurally independent from the peacekeeping mission (De Coning 2008: 19).

OECD has positioned itself on the ‘whole-of-government approach’ (WGA) to fragile states. Recognising that political, security and economic spheres are interdependent, the OECD calls for a whole-of-government approach involving those responsible for security, political and economic affairs, as well as those responsible for development aid and humanitarian assistance. This should aim for policy coherence and joined up strategies where possible, while preserving the independence, neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian aid (OECD 2005: paragraph 5). The OECD does not further define a whole-of-government approach, but provides key lessons on the basis of an analysis of member states’ experiences in applying the principles of cross-sectorial work in order to increase overall synergy in assistance to fragile countries (OECD 2006). These include the importance of an overall strategic framework and of working together among a wide range of actors, possibly with differentiated relations between core agencies and those involved on a more occasional basis. In addition, the importance of joint analytical work and operational plans is emphasised, as well as information sharing. The OECD work on whole-of-government approach in fragile states recommends clarifying roles and structures including setting up, when necessary, new and joint instruments, but also highlights the need for flexibility and country-specific approaches on fragile states avoiding new bureaucratic straitjackets and additional layers (ibid 8–10).

The United Kingdom has been a prime mover for developing comprehensive approaches at national and international level. Based on experiences in the Balkans and Sierra Leone in the 1990s as well as in Iraq and Afghanistan later, the need for better integration among policy areas and activities of the British government were recognised. The UK ‘Comprehensive Approach’ aims to bring together UK government departments and other stakeholders in international crisis management to: 1.

² The 2005 Barth Eide *et al.* Report on Integrated Missions adopts the phrase “form follows function”, and this concept has been incorporated into almost all official UN policy directives on Integrated Missions. It implies that there is no single form, meaning structural template, that all integrated missions have to follow, and that the exact structural arrangements of each mission should depend on its specific context. Asymmetric models of integration may provide deeper integration of some sectors than others (Barth Eide *et al.* 2005: 17; De Coning 2008: 15)

promote a shared understanding of the situation and common aims and objectives which will govern efforts in conflict situations, particularly when military action is foreseen; 2. develop structures and processes to help align planning and implementation in conflict situations; 3. establish relationships and cultural understanding, through common training, exercising, analysis and planning” (UK government stabilisation unit 2006: 1). In the UK, the Prime Minister holds leadership over the comprehensive approach and may delegate it as needed to one of the relevant departments. The British approach involved the establishment of a cross-departmental body, the stabilisation unit, jointly owned by the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development (DFID). The focus is on filling the gap between emergency humanitarian and long term development assistance. Common funding mechanisms were also set up with the establishment of the African conflict prevention pool and the global conflict prevention pool (on the UK model, see further Stepputat 2009: 36-37).

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA) in France has developed an approach called ‘global response’. According to Wendling, the MFEA tries to keep a certain distance to using the term comprehensive approaches in order to limit British and American influences (Wendling 2011: 65). The structures in charge of implementing the ‘global response’ is a steering committee at the top level and a task force located in the crisis centre at the MFEA with an objective to elaborate an inter-ministerial strategy of external crisis management. Conversely, the Ministry of defence in France has developed a more standardised NATO-EU vocabulary in the form of the expression ‘comprehensive approach’ aiming at preventing or settling durably and rapidly a crisis through the synergy of actions carried out by various actors in the fields of governance, security, and economic and social development (ibid 64).

The EU, as noted in the introduction, is currently developing a communication on the comprehensive approach. The term ‘comprehensive approach’ is widely used in the EU system.³ The forthcoming communication is intended, among others, to provide definitions and operationalisation in a new post-Lisbon institutional context. The EU has already developed a so-called ‘integrated approach to conflict prevention’ in 2001 and a specific concept for civil–military coordination in the context of the common security and defence policy in 2003.

³ For instance, in Council conclusions concerning specific crisis situations and in relation to civil–military coordination, CMCO. The revised Cotonou Agreement also makes reference to the comprehensive approach.

The 2001 EC communication on conflict prevention emphasises the need to address causes of tension and conflict. The EU should seek to improve the focus and effectiveness of its actions in conflict prevention with an integrated approach. “It must be able to respond in a timely and tailor-made fashion, with an appropriate mix of instruments, to the specific situations as they arise” (EC 2001: 6). The communication provides an overview of what the European Commission is already doing in conflict prevention and suggests some improvements at a strategic level i.e. building the objectives of peace, democracy and political and social stability more clearly into assistance programmes, taking account of indicators of exclusion of population groups, increasing the focus on cross-cutting issues (such as international crime, the spread of small arms and drugs trafficking) drawing on a broad range of instruments including trade policy instruments and trade and co-operation agreements, or tools derived from areas such as justice and home affairs, migration, social or environmental policy and, finally, developing new approaches and instruments to deal with conflict and crisis situations (EC 2001: 29). The communication emphasises the need for enhanced common analysis of root causes of conflict and of signs of emerging conflict. The communication does not suggest specific processes or structures for operationalising integrated approaches.

The 2011 evaluation of European support to conflict prevention and peacebuilding (CPPB) points to some progress in implementing the integrated approach to CPPB in the EU. The report underscores that since 2001, the Commission has implemented a substantial shift in support to CPPB by developing its funding, policy framework and instruments (ADE 2011: ii–iii). The financial support increased from €124 million in 2001 to around €1bn per year since 2004. The Commission has increased its capacity to react quickly and introduced flexible procedures for crisis situations. It also envisaged linking short-term and long-term prevention, but this transition has been challenged by lack of capacities combined with insufficient exit strategies. The Commission also strategically aimed at acting on different geographical levels (for instance national and regional) but evidence of actual synergy is mixed (ibid 43–44). The evaluation also points to increased exchange of information among different directorate generals working on CPPB, in particular the directorates for external relations, for development (strategic level) and AIDCO (for implementation) as well as regular meetings between the Council and the Commission.⁴ However, an explicit and shared strategy in the EU to ensure coordinated support to CPPB has not been

⁴ The evaluation mainly covers the period before the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the establishment of the EEAS and the merger of DG development and AIDCO.

developed and conflict analysis has not been systematised in country strategies and programmes (ibid 52–53).

In parallel, concerning CSDP missions and specific responses to crisis situations, the EU developed a concept for civil–military coordination termed the CMCO (civil–military coordination operations) in 2003. CMCO emphasises coordination of EU instruments in response to a crisis. “The EU possesses a uniquely wide array of civilian and military instruments for use in response to a crisis. This comprehensive approach to crisis management leads to the need for ensuring an effective co-ordination of the whole range of such instruments within the EU. “This approach will have to take into account the fact that these instruments may be subject to different institutional and thus decision-making processes” (Council of the EU 2003, paragraph 1). “At the top of the list of fundamentals lies the need for a culture of co-ordination rather than seeking to put too much emphasis on detailed structures or procedures” (ibid, paragraph 4). To ensure coordination, EU special representatives, when appointed, are in a leading role and it is also foreseen that all EU actors in the field participate in coordination groups. In 2005, emphasising the need to involve a wide range of EU actors from the start, ‘the comprehensive planning concept’ was suggested as part of the CMCO approach to address the need for effective intra-pillar and inter-pillar co-ordination of activity by all relevant EU actors in crisis management planning (European Council 2005, paragraph 6). The new structure incorporating the CMCO today is the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD) a department of the European External Action Service.

One of the criticisms directed towards CMCO is that it describes the culture of coordination at the expense of more operational structures and processes (Hynek 2010: 8). According to Khol, differences between national conceptions of civil–military relations of EU member states (British, French, German or Nordic) have complicated the creation of a common model for civil–military coordination at the EU level (Khol 2008: 123). It should also be noted that CMCO has been developed in the period where the EU itself started implementing civil and military crisis response operations in the context of the new common foreign security and defence policy.

3. Linking instruments and approaches in practice in EU external action

The EU has a wide range of instruments in external action that can potentially be mobilised in a comprehensive approach. This section introduces the range of instruments and provides three country case studies of practical integration, respectively Somalia, Mali and South Africa. These cases show the potential of the EU but also the complexity of achieving synergy among the various actors and instruments in a comprehensive approach. From this analysis, it appears that ‘comprehensiveness’ depends on actions at both policy and implementation level and that it involves headquarters as well as field staff.

3.1 The panoply of EU instruments in external action

The EU instruments in external action mainly include geographical and thematic instruments, the CSDP missions, humanitarian aid as well as a range of diplomatic and political instruments. In addition, the EU manages trade and investment relations with non-EU countries through the EU’s trade and investment policy.

Since the reforms of external assistance introduced in 2002–2003, the Commission has attempted to rationalise and simplify the various thematic and geographic instruments. There are four essential geographical instruments. First, the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) provides essential support to candidate countries for EU membership. Second, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument provides support to ten Mediterranean and six Eastern European countries, plus Russia. The main purpose is to create an area of shared values, stability and prosperity, enhanced co-operation and deeper economic and regional integration by covering a wide range of co-operation areas. The Instrument for Development Cooperation and the European Development Fund (EDF) are focused on poverty reduction in developing countries and include actions at both national and regional levels.⁵ A specific thematic and highly flexible Instrument for Stability was established in 2006 in order to complement geographic instruments, and it addresses global security and development challenges, and seeks to re-establish stability through capacity building

⁵ The European Development Fund (EDF) is the main instrument for delivering EU assistance for development cooperation under the Cotonou Agreement with ACP States. The EDF is funded outside the EU budget by the EU Member States on the basis of specific contribution keys. Each EDF is concluded for a multi-annual period. The 10th EDF covers 2008–2013 while the 11th EDF will cover 2014–2020.

for crisis prevention. A thematic instrument for human rights covers support to electoral processes including observation of elections and support to civil society. Under the Development Cooperation Instrument several thematic programmes cover issues such as migration, food security, non-state actors and local authorities, investing in people and environment.

The new 2014–2020 proposals for the EU budget include a new Partnership Instrument for cooperation with third countries covering public diplomacy, common approaches, trade and regulatory convergence that replaces the former Instrument for Cooperation with Industrialised and other High Income Countries. The proposal for a Development Cooperation Instrument includes thematic programmes on local authorities and non-state actors, global public goods as well as a pan-African instrument to support the Joint Africa–Europe Strategy and successive action plans. Under the EDF, the African Peace Facility was established in 2004 in a partnership between the EU and the African Union. The instrument covers conflict prevention, management and post-conflict stabilisation. Actions include support to capacity building, African-led peace support operations and early response mechanisms such as the initial steps of mediation processes.

Since the decision to set up a Common European Policy on Security in 1999, the EU decided to establish the necessary structures to deploy military and civilian stabilisation operations to various crisis spots, so-called ‘ESDP’ or later ‘CSDP missions’. In this context around 28 missions have been undertaken in the Balkans, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.⁶ The civilian component is financed mostly via the EU budget while the military component is financed directly by member states according to the ATHENA financing mechanism.

The EU is an important international actor in humanitarian aid. The Commission’s European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) was created in 1992 and later transformed into the Directorate–General for Humanitarian Aid before integrating Civil Protection in 2010. The EU’s humanitarian assistance is based on principles such as humanity, neutrality, impartiality and dependence. Humanitarian aid is provided in a variety of forms depending on the nature of the crisis. Over the last five years ECHO’s annual budget has averaged €1 billion. In 2011 alone these funds reached nearly 150 million of the world’s most vulnerable people in over 80 countries. It can take many forms, ranging from food, clothes, healthcare, shelter, water and sanitation

⁶ Around 16 ongoing missions, <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/>.

Figure I. Main EU instruments potentially affected by a comprehensive approach

Instrument	Main content	Institutional affiliation	Comments
Instrument for Stability	In complement to geographic instruments the instrument addresses global security and development challenges, re-establishing of stability & capacity building for crisis prevention	DEVCO EEAS (Foreign Policy Instruments)	Has two components: a short-term component concerning crisis response and preparedness, and a long-term component in the context of stable conditions.
African Peace Facility	Conflict prevention and post-conflict stabilisation as well as to accelerate decision-making and coordination processes	DEVCO	Peace support operations are conducted in this framework. Partnership with the African Union.
Common Security and Defence Policy, CSDP, military component	Early warning, military–military cooperation, military peacekeeping missions	Council of the EU, EEAS (EU military staff), headquartered in member states	The EUMC, the European Union Military Committee, and the PMG, the politico-military group. Financed via the ATHENA mechanism.
Common Security and Defence Policy, CSDP, civil component	Police, strengthening of the rule of law, strengthening civilian administration and civil protection	Council of the EU, EEAS, FPI (unit in the Commission responsible for the CFSP-budget),	The CIVCOM, Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management, and the PSC, Political and Security Committee.
Geographical instruments (Development cooperation, enlargement, EDF, neighbourhood)	Financing country programmes in different parts of the world focused on development.	The EC (DEVCO, DG enlargement), EU delegations	The EEAS is involved in programming. Regional components may be very relevant for comprehensive approaches.
The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, EIDHR	Support to human rights, civil society electoral processes	DEVCO and EEAS	Includes election observation
Thematic programmes under the Development Cooperation Instrument	Food security, 'invest in people', local authorities and non-state actors, environment, migration	DEVCO	New programmes on global public goods and civil society organisations/local authorities, Pan-African Instrument.
Strategic partnerships (with countries or regions), Partnership Instrument	Strategic partnerships on trade, research, development, global public goods, etc.	The Council together with the Commission and EEAS	Strategic partnerships have been developed with South Africa, China, Brazil, India, etc.
Trade	Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) provisions of Everything But Arms, economic partnership agreements and other trade agreements.	DG trade	DG trade is resistant to political use of trade. Collaboration with DEVCO on matters of linking trade and development. Trade is an exclusive competence of the EU.
Humanitarian aid	Humanitarian aid can range from food, clothes, healthcare, shelter, water and sanitation to emergency repairs to infrastructure, education, etc.	DG for humanitarian aid and civil protection	Humanitarian actors are keen on keeping political neutrality ECHO conducts an annual 'forgotten crisis assessment' attempting to raise their profile within the humanitarian community.
Sanctions and restrictive measures	The EU has the possibility to apply sanctions to bring about a change in activities or policies such as violations of international law or human rights.	Council of the EU	Foreign Relations Counsellors Working Group (RELEX) and the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER).
Political and diplomatic instruments including high-level mediation and EU observers	The EU has the possibility to make political dialogue at many levels. These include formal statements or diplomatic demarches and processes of political dialogue.	EEAS, EC, Council EU delegations, EU special representatives	The EU–ACP partnership agreement (Cotonou) contains article eight on political dialogue and articles 96 and 97 on specific consultations in case of breach of one or more of the partnership obligations.
Trust funds	A new instrument in order to pool funding.	EC, EEAS	The EU often relies on other implementing partners.

to emergency repairs to infrastructure, demining actions, psychological support and education.

Finally, the EU has the opportunity to make political dialogue at many levels including high-level mediation.⁷ Political dialogue may involve the EEAS, the Commission, the Council, EU delegations and EU special representatives when appointed. The establishment of common EU positions or diplomatic demarches is one of the means to exercise political and diplomatic influence. In addition, the use of sanctions is possible within the common foreign and security policy.

3.2 Somalia – building up a comprehensive approach

For more than two decades, Somalia has been in conflict. In 1991, the government of General Siad Barre fell, armed conflict continued and the state collapsed. In 2004, a transition government⁸ was established assisted by the African Union peacekeeping force (AMISOM). The government had difficulties in getting control over the territory including the capital Mogadishu, fighting against the militant Islamic group Al-Shabab in particular. An increasing number of pirate attacks off the Somali coast in the Western Indian Ocean, an essential passage for trade between Asia and Europe, became an increasing international problem during the 2000s. In this context as well, it became increasingly difficult to transport humanitarian aid to Somalia.

The EU has mobilised a wide range of instruments in the Somalia case. First, the EU has provided humanitarian support via ECHO. Second, via the European Development Fund, the EU has funded the transitional federal institutions of the transition government through cooperation activities in the governance sector managed by the UN and civil society. In addition a programme on economic growth and food security has been implemented. Third, the EU has supported the African Union mission (AMISOM)⁹ through the African Peace Facility since

⁷ As a peace project itself since its very beginning, the EU has had mediation and dialogue as part of its activities. In addition, in 2009 the Council agreed upon strengthening EU mediation and dialogue capacities, see Sherriff et al. 2013: v).

⁸ Following the end of the interim mandate of this transition government, the Federal Government of Somalia was established on August 20, 2012.

⁹ The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was launched by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, with the agreement of the United Nations, on 19 January 2007. The mandate covers protection to the Transitional Federal Institutions, the provision of security for key infrastructure; assistance with the implementation of the National Security and Stabilisation Plan; and contribution to the necessary security conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance. Around 10,000 peacekeepers from Uganda and Burundi are currently deployed.

2007 (around €325 million for 2007–2012). Fourth, the EU carries out two CSDP military actions – the naval operation ATALANTA which contributes to containing piracy in the Western Indian Ocean (2008–2014) and the EU Training Mission (EUTM Somalia) in Uganda which supports the training of Somali National Security Forces in partnership with Uganda and the US. A third civilian CSDP mission is currently under preparation (EUCAP NESTOR) in order to strengthen the maritime capacities of five countries in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean. The Instrument for Stability has also been mobilised with a ‘Critical Maritime Routes Programme’ in place since 2009 in order to enable maritime administration and law enforcement in the Western Indian Ocean region to respond effectively to armed robbery and piracy against ships by providing them with the necessary training and equipment. Finally, the EU also acts at regional level via the EDF assisting the Eastern and Southern African – Indian Ocean Regional Strategy and Action Plan against Piracy and for Promoting Maritime Security. Political dialogue is conducted by the EU special representative for the Horn of Africa, the EEAS geographical unit for Africa and the head of the EU Somalia unit at the EU delegation in Nairobi.

In 2009 the Council decided to proceed to establish a regional strategy for the Horn of Africa which would provide an overall strategic framework for comprehensive approaches in the region. The strategy, which was finalised in 2011, states that the EU will seek to make its engagement in the Horn more effective through consistent, coherent and complementary use of its instruments, reinforcement of its political coordination, and by focusing more clearly on the underlying challenges of the region. The strategy foresees five areas of action: 1) Democratic and accountable state structures, 2) Peace, security, conflict prevention and resolution, 3) Mitigation of the effects of insecurity in the region, 4) Poverty reduction, economic growth and prosperity and 5) Regional cooperation (Council of the EU 2011: 14-17).

A recent analysis of the EU comprehensive approach to Somalia draws some lessons on integrating the wide range of instruments (Frisell et al. 2012). In practice, a great deal of synergy has been developed between the different actions in Somalia. The approach in Somalia has been built up gradually on the basis of experience; it has not been the result of an overall comprehensive strategy (ibid 35). To some extent, the recent strategy on the Horn of Africa is intended to fill this gap. Currently, the EU does not have a high-level structure that is responsible for sustaining a comprehensive approach and strategically coordinating the

different instruments. The EEAS to some extent plays this role, but does not have authority over the Commission. Integration and coordination is promoted by various structures such as the EEAS geographical unit for Somalia and the Horn of Africa, the EEAS Operation Centre for coordinating CSDP missions and operations in headquarters, the informal task force on piracy which includes members of the EEAS and the Commission, the weekly meetings in Nairobi among political advisors of the three CSDP missions, etc. Due to the lack of security, there is no EU delegation in Somalia, making coordination in the field more complicated (ibid 36).

Two main criticisms have been levelled. Firstly, that analytical work is fragmented. New analysis is made in relation to each new intervention without taking into account systematically analysis already made (ibid 34). Secondly, the links between security and development are not always explored sufficiently to address the causes of the problems. For instance, further actions to promote development in coastal areas could reduce piracy. It has also been difficult to ensure security and development in newly controlled areas by the transition government and the African led peacekeeping force AMISOM. According to some, the balance between rather costly military interventions and development actions should also be revised, but this of course depends on the evolution of the security situation. Lastly, the case of Somalia shows the dilemma of humanitarian workers. They want to maintain neutrality in order to avoid becoming the targets of the militant Islamic groups. Therefore they want to keep a distance to other EU interventions, in particular those involved in military issues (ibid 38–39).

In the Somalia case, the EU acts simultaneously on security, humanitarian and development issues, employing a wide range of instruments. For EU action towards Somalia, one of the potential gains of further defining the comprehensive approach in the EU system is to consolidate cross-sector collaboration by clarifying the roles of the different actors and ensuring that it takes place already in the process of initialising and planning actions.

3.3 Mali – cross-sector collaboration from the beginning

“We are today acting on all fronts in a coordinated manner. This is an illustration of what comprehensive approach is all about and how we turn it into concrete actions: since the extraordinary FAC in January, we have convened two Crisis Platforms (with all EU services involved) in order to produce a comprehensive overview of our

activities – covering EUTM,¹⁰ our support to AFISMA,¹¹ and a quick identification of a stabilisation and development package. We have also immediately deployed on the field an inter-service mission to support our delegation in Bamako. This has allowed to identify EU activities in the field of stabilisation and development, but also to start implementing them. Our work allows liaising the diplomatic activity with the security and the development in policies in a mutually reinforcing way.”¹²

In 2011 the EU defined a strategy for development and security in the Sahel including Mali. The strategy emphasises that the problems in the Sahel are cross-border and closely intertwined and therefore proposes a regional, integrated and holistic strategy. According to the strategy, the Sahel region is an example par excellence of the interdependence of security and development. “The fragility of governments impacts on the stability of the region and the ability to combat both poverty and security threats, which are on the rise. Poverty creates inherent instability that can impact on uncontrolled migratory flows. The security threat from terrorist activity by Al-Qaida in the Maghreb (AQIM), which has found a sanctuary in Northern Mali, is focussed on Western targets and has evolved from taking money to taking life, discouraging investment in the Region” (EEAS 2011: 1). Whereas developing policy is geared towards tackling the root causes of extreme poverty, it will be hard to achieve a high impact unless security challenges are also tackled (ibid). The strategy proposes a framework for the coordination of the EU’s current and future engagement in the region with the common objective of reinforcing security and development, thereby also strengthening the EU’s own security. Four lines of action are suggested: 1) Development, good governance and internal conflict resolution, 2) Political and diplomatic (especially cross border issues and dialogue at regional level), 3) Security and the rule of law and 4) Fight against and prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation.¹³

During 2012 the situation in the Sahel and particularly in Mali worsened. A rebellion in the North combined with a coup d’état plunged the country into a deep crisis. The

¹⁰ EU military training mission, for further details see next page.

¹¹ ECOWAS-led peacekeeping mission, for further details see next page

¹² Speech by Commissioner Štefan Füle on behalf of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, on the current situation in Mali, at the European Parliament on 13 March 2013.

¹³ A recent study on the EU’s Sahel strategy, carried out for the European Parliament, takes a positive view of the strategy but concludes that its implementation does not live up to the expectations it generated. A future revision of the Sahel strategy is recommended in order to make a greater effort to incorporate and integrate the wide array of instruments and frameworks that govern the EU’s relations with the countries in question (Simon et al. 2012: 5 & 34).

political collapse made it possible for militant Islamist groups, including the Maghreb Al Qaeda, AQIM, to take control over the northern part of the country. In the context of the rapid advance of a coalition of jihadist militias threatening an overthrow of the state, French land and air forces, with military logistics support from other EU Member states (including Belgium, Denmark and the UK) have been engaged in a combat operation since January 2013.

In addition to the EU member states' bilateral military engagements, the EU crisis response to Mali concerns humanitarian aid, development cooperation, and civilian and military cooperation in security as well as political dialogue. Humanitarian aid concerns immediate short-term humanitarian response and medium-term food security operations since 2012 in Mali and other countries of the Sahel. In addition, the European Commission has mobilised €115 million in emergency aid for Mali, including an allocation of €20 million in January 2013 and an additional €22 million to assist victims of the conflict in northern Mali.

A first €20 million stabilisation support package was approved in February 2013 under the Instrument for Stability to provide immediate support to Mali's law enforcement and justice services, the Malian local authorities, dialogue and reconciliation initiatives at local level, and the first phases of the upcoming electoral process. Under the Instrument for Stability, a long-term counter-terrorism project linked to the EU Sahel strategy mentioned above also covers Mali.

EDF funds to Mali were suspended in 2012. On 19 February 2013, however, the European Commission unblocked €250 million from the European Development Fund. Part of the EDF will take the form of a budget support contract for the reconstruction of the state in order to cover the most immediate needs such as police, security and justice as well as the resumption of basic public services such as water, health and education. Support will also be provided in order to organise the Malian elections in July 2013, which were a condition for unblocking the aid.

UN Security Council Resolution 2085 (2012) authorised the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) for an initial period of one year. In March 2013 the EU announced a support of €50 million to AFISMA from the African Peace Facility. A military CSDP EU training mission, 'European Union Training Mission to Mali', in order to train Malian armed forces was also announced in 2013.

The EU has approached the crisis in Mali with new structures and processes for integration and coordination of the various involved parts of the EU system which are promising for the implementation of a comprehensive approach. A joint inter-service mission was organised by the geographic unit in the EEAS with the participation of a range of services in the EU including the Commission and the Council.¹⁴ Member states were also invited to participate in the mission.¹⁵ The mission allowed for identifying actions and instruments to mobilise. A task force on Mali was established in the EEAS and coordinated by the geographic unit in order to follow the EU crisis response. According to involved staff, the use of communication technologies has been optimised with frequent video conferences between stakeholders, for instance the EU delegation in Mali and EU headquarters.

The case of Mali shows that it is possible for the EU system to act quite rapidly, for instance in mobilising the EDF to respond to the crisis situation with a statebuilding contract. However, interviewed officials also noted that they had very little time for context analysis prior to action. One of the aims for the future is to systematise analytical work such as conflict or political economy analysis at the level of EU delegations and proceed to rapid updates in an eventual crisis situation (see further section 4).

Finally, the trajectory of Mali has contributed to reflection on development cooperation in fragile contexts and early warning systems. In this vein, the Mali head of delegation expressed that the main lesson he has learnt from the Malian situation is the following: “Mali was thought to be a model of democratic development and sustainability, but we have seen that it was extremely fragile. So it is certainly a long-term reflection on how we should organise our cooperation in a number of countries who are in a situation of fragility.” (M. Soret, Head of Delegation, Mali, May 2013).¹⁶

¹⁴ The following EU services were represented: EEAS Sahel Coordinator, EEAS CROC (Crisis Response and Operations Coordination), EEAS CPCC (Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability in charge of planning civilian CSDP missions), FPI (Foreign Policy Instruments, in charge of Instrument for Stability, short-term component), Council of the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator, DG Humanitarian Aid and Civil protection, DEVCO, EEAS K2 (Division of conflict prevention, peace building and mediation instruments).

¹⁵ It included member states’ country level representations and, in addition, France and Spain joined with representatives from headquarters.

¹⁶ <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/article/work-eu-delegation-mali-how-continue-development-projects-when-crisis-erupts>. Information in the context of development for capacity is provided in the interest of knowledge-sharing and capacity development and should not be interpreted as the official view of the European Commission.

3.4 South Africa, EU support to middle-income countries

Changed conditions for international development cooperation such as the involvement of new actors, changes in international relations, the geography of poverty as well as awareness of global issues, contribute to new challenges and opportunities. The development landscape has always been changing but what is new is the role of middle-income countries which are simultaneously countries with development needs containing the majority of the world's poor, important anchors for regional and global development, donors, and strategic partners for development (Herbert 2013: v1). In the EU context, the new policy of differentiation may lead to fundamental changes in relations to many middle income countries by cutting grant-based aid. The EU is exploring a wide range of tools in the case of South Africa, including a strategic partnership agreement, a grant-based development programme, and loans via the European Investment Bank. Whereas, the current preparatory work on an EU communication on comprehensive approaches is concentrated on actions related to situations of crisis and conflict, the case of South Africa also highlights the importance of working comprehensively in other contexts.

The EU South Africa partnership is based on different strategic documents and financial sources. First, a bilateral agreement on trade, development and cooperation was signed in 1999 which is still used a basis for trade relations.¹⁷ The agreement gives South African goods open access to 95% of the EU market, while EU goods enjoy the same in 86% of the South African market. Second, a strategic partnership was signed in 2006 focusing on political dialogue and cooperation in many areas. In this context, South Africa benefits from financial support of €5.4 million via the Instrument for Cooperation with Industrialised and other High Income Countries.¹⁸ Third, South Africa also benefits from grant-based development cooperation financed by the EU via, in particular, the Development Cooperation Instrument geographic and thematic programmes as well as the Instrument for Human Rights. Finally, the European Investment Bank provides loans for infrastructure construction according to an agreement with South Africa for €900 million covering the period 2007 to 2013.

The aim of the strategic partnership between the EU and Africa is to promote peace, security and stability in Africa and allow closer collaboration between the two parties at national, regional and global level. It sets out to enhance existing cooperation in

¹⁷ South Africa is part of SADC (South African Development Community) that is currently negotiating economic partnerships with the EU defining trade relations, but these agreements are not yet finalised.

¹⁸ Is going to be transformed into the strategic partnership instrument.

development and trade and to extend cooperation to other fields promoting both public and private partnerships. The cornerstone of the strategic partnership is strengthened political dialogue and political cooperation with regular high-level meetings. Scientific collaboration has been developed within the partnership as well. Implementation of the partnership relies on the shared interest and goodwill of the two parties through an action plan defining the broad implementation principles.

The EU–South Africa partnership is shaped by the EU’s perspective of South Africa’s role on the African continent, in particular a leading role in the regional integration of southern Africa and in the African Union (Keijzer et al. 2013: 35). While the partnership is both intense and broad, the EU and South Africa are not always allied in international negotiations. Differences of opinion between South Africa and the EU have appeared on issues such as the human rights dialogues on Zimbabwe, climate change negotiations in Copenhagen and Durban and the international response to the crisis in Libya (*ibid*).

The partnership agreement contributes to lifting EU–South Africa relations above the previous donor–recipient relations to a more interest-driven political and value-based partnership, reflecting South Africa’s place among the BRICS countries. In this line, during the first EU–South Africa summit in 2008, following the signing of the strategic partnership, EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso said: “This is an historic day for EU–Africa relations and especially our relationship with South Africa. This summit shows that our relationship is no longer about trade and development aid only. This summit shows that we have a true partnership based upon mutual respect and a desire to work together on a whole range of issues – from the food price crisis, climate change, business and migration to peace and security (...)”¹⁹

Development cooperation is funded through geographic and thematic budget lines. These include a €968 million geographical allocation from 2007–2013 directed at two focal sectors: employment creation and capacity development for service delivery and social cohesion, as well as three non-focal areas (governance, regional and pan-African support, and facilitation of the 1999 trade and cooperation agreement). In addition, support to human rights and management of migration is provided via thematic budget lines, for instance a border control operation project and support to South African NGOs in their activities aimed at advocating and developing a rights-based approach to migration policy. The EU has been using an approach known as

¹⁹ Barroso 2008 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-08-1208_en.htm?locale=en

the 'value added' approach to ODA in South Africa since 2007. In a context where development aid is a minor part of the national budget, the main value added by ODA is not the finance itself but what comes with it: best practice, innovation, risk taking, pilot programmes, systems development, capacity building and, above all, skills and knowledge (EC 2007: 28).

Within multiple relations between the EU and South Africa, a main challenge is to establish synergy between the processes of conceptualising and implementing development cooperation, the strategic partnership and trade agreements. With the Lisbon Treaty, the EU delegations were given the mandate to cover all external actions of the EU in a specific country and therefore they may play a central coordinating role. EU–South Africa relations cover a range of regional and global issues as well, which involves the EU headquarters and collaboration between the EEAS, the Commission and the Council.

4. Salient points for a future comprehensive approach in the EU

The current section presents important points from major debates concerning the EU comprehensive approach.²⁰ The delay in establishing a joint communication between the EEAS and the Commission denotes the complexity of the EU system with discussions among EU institutions concerning mandates and competences, a panoply of instruments and 27 member states. In addition, there is not yet an agreement on the definition and the scope of a comprehensive approach. The fact that some experiences of integration have worked in practice is a positive starting point for the work on defining and operationalising the comprehensive approach in the EU.

4.1 The institutional context

In the EU, the institutional set-up for managing the wide range of instruments in external action is a particular challenge for making comprehensive approaches. The so-called 'silo structure' implies that for each instrument or policy area different management and policy committees and working groups are put in place. According to the instrument, these committees involve different directorates and units within the Commission, different units of the EEAS, the Council, as well as member states directly. A frequently-reported problem is that the EU system is not geared to be comprehensive. Sometimes resistance to acting comprehensively appears when actors within each of the silos want to keep their authority and power. In addition, the system does not have a clear structure with strategic oversight and authority to take cross-cutting decisions on the various instruments in external action. Several officials pointed out that overcoming the so-called 'silo thinking' is a major potential gain of further defining a comprehensive approach in order to increase the overall effectiveness of EU actions.

The relations between the Council, the Commission and the EEAS are essential for the development of a comprehensive approach. In the post-Lisbon institutional setting there is some uncertainty about the roles and relations. Some believe that the

²⁰ Two major events are the EPLO (European Peace Liaison Office) civil society network meeting on "The EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Action: Gathering Civil Society Input" in February 2013 and a Wilton Park meeting in March 2013 with the objective of identifying obstacles and ways forward to turn the EU comprehensive approach into action and to provide input to the joint communication. EU member states have introduced non-papers in the debate as well.

new communication will be a means to consolidate the role of the EEAS in crisis management and even lead to more control by the EEAS of instruments managed by the Commission. Therefore, a strongly held position within the Commission is that the comprehensive approach must maintain respect for Treaty roles and competencies as well as for the specificity of its different instruments (see Grant and Keohane 2013: 5). One of the suggested improvements for consolidation of high-level strategic coordination is that the formal role of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy as Vice-President of the Commission be used more actively, for instance in the meetings of the group of external relations commissioners.²¹

The position of the EU delegations within an EU comprehensive approach is another salient issue. Decision making on policy and finance in the EU system is centralised but an essential input is provided by EU delegations.²² Country representations play an essential role in promoting long-term national ownership and statebuilding which cannot be supported and monitored from headquarters level uniquely. In addition, the EU delegations are placed in a central position for promoting coordination, complementarity and division of labour with member states and other donors. Some of the first examples of EU joint programming started in crisis situations such as Haiti and South Sudan. The role and capacities of delegations in politico-strategic action have been reinforced since 2006 with the creation of political sections and, since 2010, with EEAS political advisors. Delegations are responsible for coordinating EU political dialogue with partner governments in the context of the Cotonou Agreement. Joint Framework Documents are aimed to be developed at country level among EU delegations and member states, that will integrate all aspects of EU external action and all EU tools/instruments to the country, defining strategic lines of action and a broad policy mix, taking into account political and diplomatic aspects (EC and EEAS 2011: 7). Some of the contributions to the debate on the comprehensive approach highlight the role of the head of delegation as hub, acting together with the responsible geographical units in EEAS.

²¹ The first review of the EEAS is currently underway. Co-operation between the EEAS and the Commission is one of the issues for discussion, see statement on the review by Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, on 12 June 2013: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-13-530_en.htm

²² A recent study on EU engagement in fragile states points to the need for further decentralising decision making to EU delegations and to reinforce staff in terms of human skills and numbers in order to achieve more effective interventions and greater ability to respond as the situation on the ground changes and presents opportunities to be seized. (Gavas et al. 2013: 34–35).

4.2 The scope of the comprehensive approach

In the EU context, there are two different understandings of the scope of the comprehensive approach. The broader understanding of the comprehensive approach takes into consideration the approach of the EU towards a third country or towards another region or group of countries. The EU has a set of objectives developed by and agreed to by all relevant EU institutions, and it then has policies, instruments and activities to implement these objectives. Both the objectives and the activities may be contained in a strategy towards the country or region in question. The expression a whole-of-EU approach is also used to describe the broader understanding of the comprehensive approach drawing on the concept of ‘whole-of-government approach’ (see section 2 on the OECD). Conversely, the narrower understanding defines comprehensive approaches mostly as civil–military integration. This understanding implicitly or explicitly limits the comprehensive approach to crisis management. It is similar in some respects to the definitions of the comprehensive approach used by NATO (Woollard 2013: 1)

According to EU officials working with defining the comprehensive approach, the current communication proposal addresses the conflict cycle as a whole, from early warning to crisis management to long-term stabilisation. It is placed somewhere in the middle, between a narrow and a broad understanding of the comprehensive approach. The danger is that the comprehensive approach will be too wide to be effective or so narrow (such as structured only around CSDP missions that it fails to tap into the EU’s potential added value and excludes major parts of EU external action (see Sherriff 2013). An argument in favour of an approach limited to conflict situations and international crisis is that it is important to clarify roles and improve the synergy between four main strands involved in these situations: diplomacy, humanitarian aid, development aid as well as stability and security operations (Instrument for Stability, CSDP missions). On the other hand, another valid argument is that the need for a comprehensive approach is not limited to crisis and conflict situations but applies to all contexts where different EU instruments are mobilised and therefore a narrow definition would be a missed opportunity.

Another dimension of the debate on the scope of the comprehensive approach concerns the role of member states’ bilateral engagements. For some, the EU comprehensive approach is mainly about creating better synergy within the EU institutions when working in a specific country. For others, the EU comprehensive approach should, from the start, be an attempt to create a common EU approach including member states as well.

4.3 Integration

One of the ideas of a comprehensive approach is to create synergy. The EU not only uses different instruments in the same geographical setting, but the different actions also contribute to common objectives. Working together across different sectors and the aforementioned 'silos' is not straightforward for the different actors; it involves questions of authority and autonomy of each instrument.

In the EU system, the distribution of competencies between member states and common institutions differs from one policy area to another involved in a comprehensive approach. Trade is an exclusive competency of the EU and the Commission is in charge of implementation. Development policy evolves as a parallel competency according to a principle of mutual complementarity, the EU Commission manages common funds and member states continue to act as well. EU security and foreign policy including implementation of CSDP missions is closely monitored by member states through regular Council committees. These differences are often mentioned as barriers to working closely across the different EU 'silos.' There is also some fear that one objective will dominate over another or that short-term or ad hoc actions will undermine a long-term perspective.

Creating synergy and good sequencing between CSDP missions and other EU actions has been one of the critical problems in the past. A revision of crisis management procedures is currently underway, aimed at accelerating and improving the effectiveness of CSDP planning, decision-making, conduct and review.²³ The issue of exit strategies for CSDP missions is extremely important for comprehensive approaches in order to ensure transition from different forms of short-term to long-term assistance using the wide range of instruments in the EU.²⁴ In addition, coordination between autonomous CSDP missions and other EU structures at country level during implementation is a major challenge. Co-location of EU delegations and CSDP missions is one of the suggested solutions.

Concerning military CSDP missions, there is resistance to giving up autonomy, as the military is very anxious to keep its chain of command intact and separate from the civilian side (see Khol 2008: 124). Therefore, EU Special Representatives, when appointed, do not have a supreme coordination authority over EU Force Commanders,

²³ This revision was validated by member states in June 2013.

²⁴ For instance, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is currently discussed how to ensure the sustainability of activities started in the context of the CSDP missions assisting the Congolese authorities in setting up a defence apparatus and supporting security service reform.

who report to the EU Military Committee and receive political instructions directly from the Political and Security Committee (PSC). Some of the objections raised by member states to developing a comprehensive approach in the EU are founded on the fear that the comprehensive approach will reduce the importance of and progress in relation to CSDP, in particular military CSDP. Another dimension of this debate is that CSDP missions are closely monitored by member states while member states have delegated management for most other instruments for external action to the Commission.

There is concern whether humanitarian action will be too strongly linked to political objectives in a comprehensive approach. Political neutrality is one of the fundamental principles of humanitarian action. It is important for humanitarian actors to keep a reputation of neutrality in order to maintain access to all populations needing aid and not be targeted by rebel groups. Tensions can therefore appear with other parts of the EU system working explicitly for political objectives and engaged in military action. However, there is broad support in the EU system for respecting humanitarian principles. Humanitarian actors are also interested in political intelligence, which offers a vital source of information when a conflict is underway. Even though the mission is to help people, not necessarily to solve problems, humanitarian actors also see the interest in cooperation with the other parts of the EU system, for instance concerning conflict prevention that can help avoiding humanitarian crisis as well as collaboration with development partners on transition to long-term actions. The engagement of humanitarian actors in the comprehensive approach is still to be defined. Currently, information sharing is already taking place on the ground (see Woollard 2013: 5).

While the scope of the different instruments is different, some overlapping areas exist. The EU intervenes in security sector reform, for instance through geographical instruments such as development cooperation and EDF, CSDP missions and the Instrument for Stability. In food security as well, the EU intervenes with geographical instruments and thematic instruments for development cooperation as well as humanitarian aid. In this context, it should be mentioned that the practice of making joint communications is developing in the EU system on cross-sector issues, which involves several directorate generals of the Commission or the Commission and the EEAS. Currently the EEAS and DEVCO, for instance, are working on a joint communication on security sector reform. Promoting clarity and synergy in these overlapping areas appears to be a major gain from a comprehensive approach.

Linking short-term and long-term action is another important dimension of the debate. As mentioned above, exit strategies of CSDP missions with a rather short-term mandate have been a recurrent problem. Another fundamental issue is transition from humanitarian to development aid. Development cooperation, in particular EDF procedures, have been criticised for being inflexible and slow, contributing to problems of transition. In view of this, the proposal for the new 2014–2020 financial framework puts emphasis on improving flexibility in relation to fragile countries and conflict situations. Another argument is that actors working with short-term actions should pay more attention to long-term objectives from the beginning, and base new interventions on existing country-level experiences and analysis. According to the interviews carried out for this study, the added value of development policy in a comprehensive approach is, in particular, to favour a long-term perspective instead of ad hoc and short-term actions.

Communication about the different instruments, their purposes and objectives, is a basic gain from working comprehensively. In the above-mentioned silo structure it is not obvious that staff working with one EU instrument know the other instruments in external action, their scope and objectives. In addition, while some efforts have been made to rationalise the instruments, it is still not straightforward to get an overview of all the instruments and how they function.

Shared analysis is a basic means to getting more comprehensive actions. The experiences of joint missions that were tried in Libya and Mali are very positive contributing to cross-sector collaboration in early phases of a crisis. Currently, the EU system is working with systematising fragility assessments, conflict analysis and political economy analysis.²⁵ It should be noted that the multiplicity of requirements may prove an excessive workload for delegation staff contributing to fragmentation of analytical work if these analytical exercises are not combined in practice. However, the quality and availability of analysis made is extremely important. If a crisis breaks out, like in Mali, already existing analytical work may be used and updated.

It has recently been decided to draw up ‘framework documents’ for the context of crisis management.²⁶ This new tool is promising for cross-sector collaboration as it provides a common frame for action including situation analysis, an overview of EU

²⁵ On the framework for country level political economy analysis, see <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/political-economy/terms-5529/tags/political-economy-analysis-2>.

²⁶ Framework documents have been introduced under the revision of crisis management procedures.

interventions and potentially a common strategic vision. The geographical services in the EEAS are responsible for coordinating the elaboration of a framework document for a country in crisis. Member states will be consulted in the Council. It is essential to ensure that these framework documents become a common tool for the different involved units in the EEAS and the Commission. Thus, the impact of these framework documents will, to some extent, depend on how the EEAS geographical services are able to involve other major EU stakeholders in the process.

Differentiated relations with varying levels of integration have been suggested. The comprehensive approach could involve integration of EU external policies, in particular the Common Foreign and Security Policy, development and humanitarian assistance while also involving coordination with policies with an external dimension or implication such as trade, fisheries and actions of the Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security (Woollard 2013: 3).²⁷ Depending on the country or regional context it may be relevant to involve different parts of the EU system in a comprehensive approach. It is therefore important to maintain flexibility in order to take into account context-related factors. However, the issue of formalising cross-sector and cross-agency work is also important in order to guarantee the participation of involved stakeholders.

4.4 Formalisation

In recent years, in the context of crisis management, several structures and processes for collaboration and coordination have been experienced. Crisis platforms led by the EEAS provide an opportunity to gather all the actors concerned by a specific country situation or event. Task forces on geographical areas or themes have been established. Joint missions have been tried in recent crisis situations such as Libya and Mali. Joint communications are increasingly used as a means to clarify links between sectors. The drafting of joint regional strategies for the Horn of Africa and the Sahel also contribute to a common framework for action.

One of the added values of a more formal definition of the comprehensive approach in crisis and conflict situations in the EU might be to systematise some of these activities and possibly improve or create learning processes concerning the methods used. It may

²⁷ Woollard refers to 'integration' as a process where all relevant institutions are brought together to develop common objectives and strategies and then work jointly towards meeting them. In the context of 'Coordination': Different institutions develop their own objectives and work towards meeting them but coordinate, that is, share information (usually at coordination meetings) about what they are separately doing.

also lead to more transparency about decision-making structures in crisis management. A strong argument for formalising steps and procedures in a comprehensive approach is to ensure clarification of roles and collaboration between the EU institutions. By contrast, formalisation may also slow down action. Some member states are keen on keeping flexibility and thus avoiding any time-consuming formal processes, in particular concerning CSDP missions. In this sense, it seems important to find a balance between guaranteeing a minimum collaboration through formalisation but at the same time leaving room for spontaneous initiatives among staff, flexibility to act rapidly and the possibility of finding tailor-made solutions in each case.

One of the positions of the Commission is to use existent procedures more proactively. The Commission has the college of commissioners' weekly meetings. In addition, inter-service consultation is a systematised procedure for ensuring information sharing and coherence on new policies and strategies.

5. Conclusions

Is it possible to be comprehensive within the EU? (EU official, May 2013).

Comprehensive approaches are not new to the EU system but former concepts and approaches only covered the institutions and actions partially, for instance the integrated approach to conflict prevention and the concept of civil–military coordination in crisis management. Therefore, a central potential added value of the current work on a comprehensive approach would be to get one common understanding among the different actors involved in the management of the conflict cycle in external action. The process involving drafting a joint communication between the Commission and the EEAS followed by Council conclusions also potentially serves to clarify and consolidate the formal EU commitment to working comprehensively.

A common denominator for comprehensive approaches is that they refer to a mindset recognising a holistic approach. In complex situations, it is necessary to work on different dimensions of the problems to solve and establish synergy among the different types of action and support. The forthcoming communication constitutes one step in the direction of building a comprehensive approach in the EU system. However, this study argues that building a comprehensive approach is a long-term process with changing objectives and focus over time in response to an evolving context. An essential building block of a comprehensive approach is cross-sector collaboration involving different units and agencies of the EU. Forums and mechanisms for such collaboration have intensified in the EU system and include crisis platforms, task forces, inter-service missions, inter-service consultations, joint communications and the new framework documents in the context of crisis management. A balance should be found between formalising these procedures and processes and leaving room for staff initiatives and flexibility. In addition, a comprehensive approach should not only be built in headquarters. Delegations have a broad mandate in external action since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and potentially constitute a hub for different EU actions in the field, being close to member state country representations, partner governments, non-state actors and other donors.

In order to promote a comprehensive approach, it is particularly important to work on four basic issues. First, the match between staff and the required competencies and roles is essential. In particular, EEAS geographical services and EU delegations play a central and coordinating role in a comprehensive approach. Therefore, an evaluation

of the potential requirements to strengthen and train staff at these levels is highly relevant for consolidating the comprehensive approach. Second, incentives for staff should favour cross-sector work and collaboration, recognise common initiatives and encourage joint work. It is extremely important that the leadership of the concerned organisations supports cross-sector work. Third, cross-sector and inter-institutional collaboration should, as far as possible, be built into the procedures for initiating, programming, implementing and monitoring actions. Fourth, an overall strategic vision for action is important to guide the multiple interventions. Recent experiences with regional strategies and new framework documents are important steps in this direction. Within the complexity of the EU system, an overall strategic vision on foreign policy issues depends both on top-level leadership and on collaboration between member states, the EEAS and the Commission.

In the EU context, there are two different understandings of the scope of the comprehensive approach. The broader understanding of the comprehensive approach takes into consideration the approach of the EU towards a third country or towards another region or group of countries. Conversely, the narrower understanding defines comprehensive approaches mostly as civil–military integration concentrated on crisis and conflict situations. While it is essential to work on improving comprehensiveness in conflict management, the study recommends applying a broad approach as well. Over the last decade, development cooperation has evolved in a rapidly changing world order. Changing patterns of growth have led to diversification of development actors and a new geographical landscape of poverty. The EU is establishing new forms of partnership, with middle-income countries in particular, that involve acting upon national, regional and global issues as well as mobilising and combining instruments in areas such as diplomacy, security, trade, development and business cooperation. Applying a broad approach is a means to tap the full potential for establishing a less fragmented and more effective EU external action in a post Lisbon institutional setting.

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