CSDP Missions and Operations

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IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

CSDP Missions and Operations

ABSTRACT

This policy brief provides an overview of what the EU has done through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations since 2003, and which achievements and challenges it faces at the end of EU High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) Federica Mogherini's mandate. It evaluates how the overall political context and the EU's approach have evolved over time, and how this has affected the launch and implementation of CSDP actions. It looks at a range of criteria for evaluating the success of missions and operations such as effectiveness, degree of match between mission launch and EU interests at stake, responsiveness, coherence with wider policy strategies, coherence with values and norms, and degree of democratic scrutiny and oversight. It assesses some of the achievements as well as shortcomings of previous and ongoing missions and operations against these objectives. The brief identifies three underlying and cross-cutting problems hampering performance: (i) incompatible attitudes among Member States towards the use of force; (ii) resource disincentives and barriers to timely European solidarity; and (iii) gaps between early warning and early action. It outlines some selected initiatives launched and options discussed to address these shortcomings and improve the EU's performance in crisis management operations.

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1   Background: The launch and evolution of missions and operations since 2003

Since the EU conceived what is today known as the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) at the Cologne summit in 1999, it has launched 34 missions and operations across the task spectrum listed in the EU Treaties (art. 43 TEU):

- humanitarian and rescue tasks;

- conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks;

- tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making;

- joint disarmament operations;

- military advice and assistance tasks;

- post-conflict stabilisation tasks.

All of these may 'contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories'[1]. The broad notion of 'crisis management' therefore covers different threats and the whole conflict cycle from prevention and intervention to peace-building. Any CSDP mission, whether military or civilian in nature, requires unanimity to be launched, although a variable number of EU Member States will take part and actively contribute[2]. The decisions to launch, resource, implement and discontinue such operations have been affected by a range of factors and many have shifted over time. These include the level of support from leading Member States, the EU's priorities and key institutions within it, security challenges in Europe's neighbourhood, and changes in the behaviour of great powers, (e.g. the US, Russia and China).

The political context and security environment in the early 2000s was highly conducive to launching CSPD operations. At the Anglo–French St. Malo summit of 1998, the UK had changed its longstanding position towards building an autonomous European defence policy and capability. This paved the way for new legal provisions in the Treaty of Nice, supported by a new institutional infrastructure and energised by the EU's first High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, a former NATO Secretary General.

A generation of political leaders was in power that had learned similar lessons from the violent break-up of Yugoslavia and was supportive of the EU playing a more active role in defence, despite disagreements in 2002–2003 over the US-led invasion of Iraq. After the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, the first ever European Security Strategy of 2003 could write with some justification that 'Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free'. The enlargement process had enhanced stability and liberal values within Europe, and support for integration was high within the EU. The US remained engaged in European security, and supportive of Europeans playing a stronger role in ensuring their own security as long as these efforts would not duplicate, discriminate or decouple European defence efforts from NATO[3]. In this politically supportive and geo-strategically benign context, three military operations were launched in quick succession:

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[1] The spectrum of tasks has expanded the original Petersberg Tasks of the Western European Union (WEU).

[2] Article 42(1)T EU only refers to 'missions', whereas common usage refers to operations as 'executive' and 'military' and 'missions' are understood as 'non-executive' in the sense that they are run by the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability/Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC/CPCC), but could be either military, civilian or hybrid. To enhance readability, 'mission' has been used when talking about both types in line with common usage.

[3] The three 'Ds' invoked by US Foreign Secretary Madeleine Albright in her influential *Financial Times* opinion piece titled 'The Right Balance Will Secure NATO's Future' of 7 December 1998.

1. In March 2003, the first EU-led military operation Concordia took over the responsibilities of NATO-led mission Allied Harmony in what is today called North Macedonia. Operation Concordia provided security to EU and OSCE monitors tasked with ensuring that inter-communal tensions did not flare up again. The EU and NATO cooperated closely and shared NATO's assets and capabilities, including its headquarters (SHAPE).

2. The second military operation, Artemis, was launched in June 2003 in response to an escalation of the conflict in Ituri, a province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), including mass atrocities that threatened the peace in the region, the presence of the United Nations (UN) and the country's broader peace process. It was the first operation outside of Europe and the first autonomous operation. It tested the EU's framework nation concept, initially developed by the Western European Union in 1997 and adopted in July 2002, under French leadership. France provided more than 80 % of the force and secured contributions from other EU Member States, such as Swedish special forces and British engineers. Artemis was also the first example of an EU bridging operation in support of a UN operation in crisis management. Troops were deployed rapidly and engaged on the higher end of the EU's task and risk spectrum.

3. In December 2004, the European Union Force Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR Operation Althea) was launched to oversee the military implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The operation took over from NATO's Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR) and Implementation Force (IFOR) operations, but had access to NATO assets under the 'Berlin Plus' arrangements. EUFOR Althea was remarkable in terms of the sheer number of troops initially involved, but also the high political stakes and potential military risks of taking over from NATO.

All three operations could be described as largely successful in meeting the EU's own objectives and providing valuable opportunities to learn lessons for future military endeavours, potentially involving higher ambitions and risks. EUFOR Althea is still ongoing and has had to adapt to changing political and security conditions on the ground. Another case of a consensual and largely successful operation was the European Union Naval Force Somalia (EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta) against piracy, which was developed in 2007 and launched early in 2008. In contrast to most other military operations, it did not involve conflict management.

After 2004, the balance shifted increasingly towards civilian missions. The EU categorised 22 of the total of 34 CSDP missions or operations as purely or predominantly civilian in nature, such as training and strengthening the capacities of police forces, border assistance, rule of law and civilian protection monitoring[4]. This trend towards more civilian missions partly reflected a greater emphasis on the EU's comprehensive (now integrated) approach to external crises, and the success of advocacy within the EU to elevate and develop the importance of the civilian dimension of CSDP[5]. Civilian missions were also less costly and less politically divisive for the EU, especially as public opinion across most Member States had grown increasingly sceptical about military interventions following deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Such missions, if launched quickly enough, can significantly contribute to crisis management. An example of this is when, in little more than a month, the EU managed to launch a mission to monitor the ceasefire after the five-day Georgia/Russia war of 2008 (the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia).

Some initiatives for military operations that were discussed at the time did not gain sufficient political support. This was the case with a possible deployment of a battle group to the eastern DRC in 2008 to

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[4] European External Action Service (EEAS), *EU CSP missions and operations for human security*, 2019.
[5] Jakobsen, P. V., 'Small States, Big Influence: The Overlooked Nordic Influence on the Civilian ESDP', *Journal of Common Market Studies,* Vol. 47, No. 1, 2009, pp. 81–102; Faleg, G., 'The EU: from comprehensive to integrated approach', *Global Affairs*, Vol. 4, No. 2–3, 2018, pp. 171–183.

provide aid to civilians affected by the upsurge in violence, strongly advocated by Belgium, Spain, Finland and Sweden[6]. When the initiative was opposed by countries leading the Battle Groups on standby during that time (the UK and Germany), the Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt went on record to say: 'If is worth anything, it could be used. If it can't be used, we have to question the concept of it'[7]. Later in Libya in 2011, Member States could not agree on undertaking EU military missions to impose a no-fly zone or to provide humanitarian and evacuation assistance. HR/VP Catherine Ashton was reportedly sceptical too[8]. The military intervention in Libya was eventually taken by a coalition of the willing outside of the EU framework. In addition, no action was taken by EU Member States (either within or outside of the EU framework) in response to the Syrian civil war and the use of chemical weapons. Increasingly from 2008 onwards, the EU struggled to prevent or effectively manage instability in its southern neighbourhood through CSDP missions.

The period 2008–2012 was marked by an increasing sense that CSDP operations were underachieving against the stated ambitions in terms of their willingness to act upon cases that appeared, at face-value, to fit the criteria for EU engagement. In 2009, Korski and Gowan wrote that 'ten years after the creation of ESDP, most EU missions remain small, lacking in ambition and strategically irrelevant'[9]. Some of reasons for this were transient rather than structural. These included the surprising nature and speed of the instability at the EU's borders, EU leaders being politically distracted by the fall-out from the global financial and Euro area debt crises, and the fact that these crises led to spending constraints on defence and security. It was also a period when the EU's own structures were in a state of flux as new HR/VP Ashton was focused on setting up the European External Action Service (EEAS), creating considerable start-up costs, friction and confusion[10].

The launch of new operations since 2012 in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, as well as the 2015 European Union Naval Force Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR Med) Operation Sophia to counter people smuggling, indicates an uptick in the political support for CSDP missions and the broader foreign policy ambitions and approaches of the EU. This was reinforced by the growing realisation that crises in Europe's neighbourhood were increasingly becoming politicised and electorally relevant, whether through the radicalisation of diasporas and EU citizens or the large influx of refugees from war zones, such as Syria between 2013 and 2015.

2 The current state of play

Since the new Commission, HR/VP and European Parliament came into office in 2014, there have been a number of significant initiatives to substantially reinvigorate CSDP in terms of political ambition, capabilities, defence markets and governing structures[11]. However, the considerable progress in policy has not been reflected in the launch of more ambitious military operations despite ongoing crises with multi-facetted threats in Europe's neighbourhood and beyond.

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[6] Cited in Palm, T. P., *Normative Power and Military Means: The evolving character of the EU's international power*, Free University of Amsterdam, 2017, p. 157.

[7] Cited by Vogel, T., 'EU rejects UN request for Congo force', *European Voice*, 12 December 2008.

[8] Palm, T. P., 2017, pp. 158–160; Koenig, N., 'The EU and the Libyan Crisis – In Quest of Coherence?,' *The International Spectator*, Vol. 46, No. 4, 2012, pp. 11–30.

[9] Howorth, J., *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, UK, 2014, p. 147.

[10] Vanhoonacker, S. and Pomorska, K., 'The European External Action Service and agenda-setting in European foreign policy', *Journal of European Public Policy,* Vol. 20, No. 9, 2013, pp. 1316–1331; Helwig, N., 'EU Foreign Policy and the High Representative's Capability-Expectations Gap: A Question of Political Will', *European Foreign Affairs Review,* Vol. 18, No. 2, 2013, pp. 235–254.

[11] See the other EP-SEDE Policy Briefs on EU Defence Capabilities, Defence Industrial Base and Institutional Framework.

Currently, 16 CSDP missions are ongoing of which 6 are military in nature[12]. Yet the significant number of CSDP actions since 2003 is not necessarily evidence of growing ambition. These actions have varied greatly in terms of mandate, strategic objectives and length, instruments used, the level of ambition, risk tolerance and costs, the breadth of participation of EU and non-EU countries and geographic focus. This diversity makes any overarching and comparative assessment of the EU's performance in this respect difficult[13].

Perhaps most strikingly, the missions have varied widely in terms of personnel deployed – with the EUFOR Althea military mission comprising a maximum of 7,000 people at one time and the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Rafah (EUBAM Rafah) comprising 16 personnel. Even the larger military operations have tended to be low intensity, although an operation such as Althea did face the chance of significant escalation and required greater contributions and risk acceptance.

In terms of their geographic focus, as noted by Jolyon Howorth, the missions have underlined the role of the EU as a regional power interested in problem-solving in its neighbourhood[14]. The EU has not launched any missions in the Americas and only two civilian missions in Asia (the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) in Indonesia and the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) in Afghanistan).

CSDP missions have generally been launched because of political choice, often including bargaining among the most and least interested Member States, rather than as a necessary response to protect EU citizens from imminent harm. The actual focus of CSDP actions has expanded to include the implications of crises in Europe's neighbourhood for the EU. EUNAVFOR Atalanta was launched in response to a significant threat to vessels from the World Food Programme, as well as European trading interests in the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Aden, while EUNAVFOR Sophia was primarily aimed at addressing the politically salient migrant crisis. These examples suggest that CSDP operations had become increasingly driven by a desire to protect European citizens and pursue strategic interests, even prior to the shift in emphasis announced in the European Global Strategy of 2016[15].

One of the most frequent critiques of CSDP operations is that this instrument has not been used more consistently when European interests and values were affected and when some capabilities, such as the Battle Groups, would have been available in principle. One shortcoming is a **failure to launch in response to emerging or manifest crises,** even though it can be contested which CSDP operations should have been launched in specific cases as well as whether they would have been effective. This raises questions about why there has not, at times, been a greater convergence of views regarding the need for an EU operation and a willingness to provide national assets for it. An analysis of military CSDP operations to date substantiates the conclusion that the following conditions need to be met:

- There is a UN mandate or actual request to act, although sometimes EU and UN authorisations are *de facto* closely linked and interdependent[16].

- The mission is unlikely to be highly intense and risky in a way that could generate a political backlash.

- At least one of the three largest Member States (France, the UK and Germany) is strongly in favour of a launch due to a mixture of interests, whether it is former colonial links, security and economic

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[12] EEAS, 2019.

[13] Such an assessment has rarely been done, but for an exception see Peen Rodt, A., *The European Union and Military Conflict Management: Defining, Evaluating and Achieving Success*, Routledge, London, 2014.

[14] Howorth, J., 2014.

[15] Legrand, J., *Does the new EU Global Strategy deliver on security and defence?*, European Parliament, Brussels, 2016; Juncos, A. E., 'Resilience as the new EU foreign policy paradigm: a pragmatist turn?', *European Security*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 2017, pp. 1–18.

[16] Palm, T. P., 2017, pp. 164–166.

  - interests, or a match with broader policy agendas or ideas. These pivotal members are then also crucial for force generation[17].

  - No Member State (particularly not one of the three largest) or the HR/VP should be strongly opposed to a mission.

  - The mission needs to be compatible with existing EU strategic and regional priorities.

Competing and complementary yardsticks (criteria) can be used to assess the performance of missions, specifically their achievements and shortcomings. The obvious criterion is the degree to which the political objectives were achieved, i.e. **their effectiveness in their own terms**[18]. This is not without difficulty as political-strategic goals for missions may be relatively vague and require interpretation or ranking, if several objectives are listed. Operational objectives may be more specific, but could also legitimately change as operations need to adapt to changing local conditions[19]. It is also important to question whether goal attainment really means high performance if the objectives were relatively unambitious, or whether failure should be lamented if ambitious objectives were defined under difficult conditions.

We have not found a comprehensive, up-to-date and reliable assessment of all CSDP actions, although interim assessments of some types of operations have been undertaken[20]. Overall, few would dispute Annemarie Peen Rodt's conclusion that most of the EU's military operations were largely or completely successful in meeting their mandated goals, even if achieving larger policy objectives in these countries was more elusive[21]. However, Peen Rodt's comparative study of Concordia, Artemis, EUFOR RD Congo, EUFOR Tchad/RCA also noted that these operations were only partially successful in terms of appropriateness criteria such a timeliness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

A more critical assessment of CSDP operations specifically in Africa was advanced in a policy brief by Danish, Finnish and Austrian authors issued by the Royal Danish Defence College as part of an EU-funded research project. The authors criticised a lack of 'realistic balance between the level of ambition and resources available', insufficient 'in-depth understanding of the situational context in which they engaged', over-ambitious and rigid planning, and execution from the top 'without establishing and sustaining local partnerships and contextual insights necessary to ensure a realistic and successful outcome'[22]. Other missions fell short of quantitative goals such as the number of police to be trained, in part because of insufficient or slow Member State contributions (e.g. EUPOL Afghanistan)[23]. Finally, some missions could be considered a short-term success, but may have created longer term unintended consequences. For instance, strengthening the capacity of security services in Mali may have inadvertently fed into recruitment to radical and terrorist organisations[24].

Another way of looking at performance is **how quickly operations were agreed and resources deployed in relation to the crisis.** The swifter the response, the more likely the EU is able to live up to its aspirations

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[17] Henke, M. E., 'Networked Cooperation: How the European Union Mobilizes Peacekeeping Forces to Project Power Abroad', *Security Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 5, 2019, pp. 901–934.
[18] Annemarie Peen Rodt has developed a framework on how to measure the success of the EU's military crisis management operations. See Peen Rodt, A., 'Effectiveness in Operational Conflict Prevention: How Should We Measure It in EU Missions and Operations?', *Seminar Publication on Contemporary Peace Operations: From Theory to Practice*, 2017, pp. 97–106; Peen Rodt, A., 2014, Chapter 2.
[19] Peen Rodt, A., 2017.
[20] For an overview see Howorth, J., 2014, Chapter 5 – citing particularly Ginsberg, R, and Penksa, S., *The European Union in Global Security: The Politics of Impact*, Springer, Basingstoke/New York, 2012.
[21] Peen Rodt, A., 2014, p. 151.
[22] Højstrup Christensen, G., et al., 'Successes and Shortfalls of European Union Common Security and Defence Policy Missions in Africa: Libya, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic', *Fak Brief*, 2017, p. 13.
[23] Henke, M. E., 2019.
[24] Carayol, R., 'Mali: Le jeu trouble de l'Etat avec les milices', *OrientXXI*, 9 August 2019.

to prevent rather than just manage crises. Prevention, while not a panacea, generally costs less, carries smaller risks and has a higher chance of success than deploying only when violence on the ground has escalated and polarisation has become entrenched.

Despite this, early warnings, early actions and rapid responses remain a challenge to the EU's analytical, planning and decision-making structures (Howorth points out that only 5 of the 23 missions undertaken until 2009 were launched in less than 4 weeks[25]). This is due to the diversity of interests that need to be accommodated in order to reach a unanimous consensus, but also the EU tendency to sometimes work with overly rigid and hierarchical templates, and prioritise coherence over timely response. A key problem at the planning and decision-making stage is the availability of timely, reliable and actionable intelligence for all EU members. Too often, Member States do not arrive at a shared assessment of the situation on the ground quickly enough, let alone an agreement on how the EU could have responded[26].

More positively, the relevant institutions involved in CSDP action planning – the Political and Security Committee, the EU Military Committee and Staff, the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM), the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate, and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) – have learned to proceed more quickly through the process, from drawing up a first Crisis Management Concept (CMS) and developing the Operational Concept (CONOPS), to creating a detailed operational plan (OPLAN) and achieving a Council decision to launch an operation[27].

Within the Brussels-based bodies, a shared culture and body of knowledge is emerging on 'how to do' CSDP missions and reduce bureaucratic delays[28]. However, further delays can and do derive from problems with the force generation process. For example, in the case of the EUFOR Chad/RCA mission, seven force generation conferences and extensive persuasion and bargaining were required to reach the intended strength[29].

When assessing the missions, another criterion could be the **degree to which they were coherent with or at least not undermining the EU's broader foreign policy objectives in the country or region**. Tracing the missions between 2003 and 2018, Palm and Crum observed that the initial military CSDP operations until 2008 were less embedded in broader EU foreign policy aims and more conceived in terms of promoting human security as a value in itself. In contrast, post-2008 missions tended to be more embedded in broader foreign policy goals, for instance, the strategies for the Sahel and the Horn of Africa[30]. A shift towards missions being more focused on the pursuit of what might be called the strategic interests of the EU can also be noted – whether to safeguard safe maritime trade, reduce human trafficking across the Mediterranean Sea or combat radicalisation in the Sahel region.

A particular area of concern for some critics is whether CSDP missions **are compatible with or undermine the EU's support for core values and norms,** such as a commitment to the protection of human rights, sustainable development, peace and democratic freedom[31]. The question of whether some CSDP missions

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[25] Howorth, J., 2014, p. 184.

[26] Meyer, C. O., De Franco, C. and Otto, F., *Warning about War: Conflict, Persuasion and Foreign Policy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2019, Chapters 3 and 9.

[27] Xavier, A. I. and Rehrl, J., 'How to launch a CSDP Mission or Operation,' pp. 78–82, in Rehrl, J., ed., *Handbook on CSDP Missions and Operation: The Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union*, 3rd ed., Austrian Ministry of Defence and Sports, Vienna, 2017.

[28] Biava, A., 'The Emergence of a Strategic Culture within the Common Security and Defence Policy', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2011, pp. 41–58; Biava, A., Drent, M. and Herd, G. P., 'Characterizing the European Union's Strategic Culture: An Analytical Framework', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 6, 2011, pp. 1227–1248.

[29] Henke, M. E., 2019.

[30] Palm, T. and Crum, B., 'Military operations and the EU's identity as an international security actor', *European Security*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 2019, pp. 513–534.

[31] Manners, I., 'European Union "Normative Power" and the Security Challenge', *European Security*, Vol. 15, No. 4, 2006, pp. 405–421.

are strengthening the power of authoritarian regimes over populations has been raised, or whether action against human traffickers has come to take precedence over humanitarian demands or protecting migrants destined for Europe from harm. Riddervold argues that 'Sophia is not a humanitarian mission,' despite being 'initially launched as a search and rescue mission'[32]. Furthermore, an operation may be considered a success from the EU's perspective, but will not necessarily be seen as successful from the perspective of the external country or conflict, as Peen Rodt points out[33]. For instance, an interest in combating extremist organisations or in curbing human trafficking can have negative side effects for human security in countries such as Mali.

Finally, any deployment of personnel abroad and use of military force require **proper authorisation, democratic oversight and scrutiny** before, during and after an operation. There is, therefore, also a need to consider process performance *vis-à-vis* democratic legitimacy. This usually involves the UN Security Council (UNSC), the European Parliament and, crucially, national parliaments of those Member States contributing to an operation. National parliaments differ significantly in terms of their formal and informal authority to scrutinise and authorise national deployments, as well as their actual motivation to do so[34]. The European Parliament has asked for existing parliamentary and decision-making structures to be upgraded, formalised and strengthened in order to more effectively hold the Council and the HR/VP to account in CSDP matters[35].

While all CSDP operations can be considered to have been legal under international law, there have been occasions where the UN was arguably used by governments in debates about whether to launch an operation *vis-à-vis* national parliaments and the public. Palm argues that the UN was used by some Member States to obscure their own opposition to EUFOR Libya[36]. Similarly, in the case of EUNAVFOR Sophia, the UNSC was put under pressure to agree to a mandate that was primarily serving EU interests rather than the objectives of the UN Charter. The mission was divided into phases, with the more controversial parts made conditional on obtaining the UN mandate, which was eventually granted, but with the exclusion of operations in Libyan waters and onshore[37].

3 Key challenges and options to address them

In order to achieve the ambitious objectives contained in the European Global Strategy of 2016 and other documents issued by the European Council, the EU will need to address some of the shortcomings identified above. However, it also needs to anticipate and deal with challenges that might affect future CSDP operations and missions, as the EU security environment has changed significantly and new threats are emerging that require CSDP missions to solve problems not previously encountered.

One of the central questions is whether the EU and its Member States may be faced with a situation where a CSDP mission or operation is no longer a question of choice but of necessity. This situation may arise if the mutual assistance clause of Article 42(7) TEU is triggered by a major surprise attack or if the EU is forced to escalate its engagement on current CSDP mission (while the US is not prepared to contribute, let alone

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[32] Riddervold, M., 'A humanitarian mission in line with human rights? Assessing Sophia, the EU's naval response to the migration crisis', *European Security*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2018, p. 171. For a similar view, see Palm, T. P., 2017, pp. 163–165.

[33] Peen Rodt, A., 2017.

[34] Research highlights the motivation of parliament in addition to their formal powers – see Huff, A., 'Executive privilege reaffirmed? Parliamentary scrutiny of the CFSP and CSDP', *West European Politics*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 2015, pp. 396–415.

[35] Points 60 and 64 in Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Annual report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy*, European Parliament, A8-0375/2018, 2018.

[36] Palm, T. P., 2017, pp. 161–163.

[37] Ibid.

lead). In other cases, it may be the speed of the required deployment that poses a greater challenge than the desired operational strength[38].

3.1 Incompatible national attitudes to the use of force

As CSDP operations remain dependent on unanimous decisions among sovereign nations, differences in Member States' attitudes towards the use of force have continued to hamper decision-making and force generation.

The concept of a strategic culture has been widely used to study how and why national attitudes regarding the use of force in Europe differ: on the legitimate goals for it, the ways in which force may be used and the risk tolerance for deployed personnel and foreign citizens, military doctrines and rules of engagement, domestic and international authorisation requirements, or attachments to specific partners and alliances[39].

Observers often contrast the activist or robust strategic cultures of two of the largest Member States (France and the UK), underpinned by their status as permanent members of the UNSC, with a country such as Germany that has historically-conditioned – albeit gradually changing – cultural and political constraints on when and how to use force. Other divisions are between countries that are neutral or non-aligned, or between those who are strongly Atlanticist/US versus those who are more EU-oriented. Differences in these cultures are rooted in formative periods of national history and deep beliefs among national foreign and security policy elites. These differences matter most when it comes to potentially high-risk missions where the NATO/US or, indeed, Russia are likely to be involved, or when some Member States have concerns that EU operations serve primarily the interests of one Member State rather than broader EU-wide interests.

Convergence in culture can happen naturally over time as threat perceptions align, common operations are conducted that build mutual trust, or lessons are learned from past conflicts (e.g. Ex-Yugoslavia in 1995, Libya in 2011 or Ukraine/Russia in 2014). However, there are also steps that EU and national leaders can take to increase the pace and direction of cultural change, particularly at the level of military officers, civilian personnel, policy planners, intelligence analysts and senior decision-makers. Convergence at the level of public opinion and society is likely to be slower, unless this happens during highly salient crises.

The EU is already benefitting from efforts undertaken in the framework of NATO training and manoeuvres, but has also tried to foster learning and convergence through the European Security and Defence College founded in 2005[40] and within the EEAS structures, such as the EU Military Staff. Shared training on estimative and current intelligence happens in informal grouping of analysts, such as the Budapest Club, which is devoted to open-source intelligence. It could also benefit from the Joint EU Intelligence School (JEIS), which is envisaged as part of the launch of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)[41].

The European Intervention Initiative is a complementary new undertaking, formally independent of the EU, legally non-binding and with little added bureaucracy, which involves a smaller number of invitation-only members[42]. It aims to promote regular discussions at expert and, eventually, top decision-maker level

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[38] See EP-SEDE Policy Brief on Capabilities for more detail on key defence capability shortfalls.

[39] Meyer, C. O., *The Quest for a European Strategic Culture: A Comparative Study of Strategic Norms and Ideas in the European Union*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, UK, 2006.; Giegerich, B., *European security and strategic culture: national responses to the EU's security and defence policy,* Nomos, Baden-Baden, Germany, 2006; Biehl, H., Giegerich, B. and Jonas, A., eds., *Strategic Cultures in Europe: Security and Defence Policies across the Continent*, Springer, Berlin, 2013.

[40] See https://esdc.europa.eu/

[41] See https://pesco.europa.eu/project/joint-eu-intelligence-school/

[42] See UK Parliament, *House of Commons Library: The European Intervention Initiative (EII/EI2)*, 2019, available at: https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8432; Bel, O-R., 'Can Macron's European Intervention Initiative make the Europeans Battle Ready?', *War on the Rocks*, 2 October 2019, available at: https://warontherocks.com/2019/10/can-macrons-european-intervention-initiative-make-the-europeans-battle-ready/

on topics of strategic importance to help build and strengthen a shared strategic culture among like-minded European nations (including a post-Brexit UK) to facilitate future military operations. The initiative is focused on four areas: strategic foresight and intelligence sharing, scenario development and planning, support for operations, and lessons learnt and doctrine[43]. However, it raises difficult questions about the sharing of intelligence with non-European partners, the relationship with the EU intelligence structure and democratic oversight.

3.2 Resource disincentives and barriers to timely European solidarity

The modalities of cost sharing are one of the reasons why Battle Groups are not deployed and why some CSDP actions struggle to reach their target strengths. In contrast to civilian missions, the costs of military operations cannot be charged to the EU budget because of legal restrictions under Article 41(2) TEU. Under the alternative Athena mechanism, 5–15 % of the overall costs for an operation are met from the budget based on the additional contributions of Member States, but the bulk falls on participating Member States under the 'costs lie where they fall' principle[44]. This is a substantial disincentive for Member States to contribute their assets unless they have significant national interests at stake, or pivot nations or EU leaders can 'compensate' or in other ways induce them to commit[45].

The issue of compensating troop-contributing Member States is also important for making the provisions of Article 44 operational, whereby the Council can entrust a group of willing and capable states with carrying out CSDP operations[46]. This could also help to alleviate with some delays in the force generation process.

One way of tackling the problem is the currently discussed European Peace Facility (EPF). The proposal aims to have 35–45 % of the operational costs covered from a common budget, therefore increasing solidarity and sharing[47]. Moreover, as a fund outside of the EU budget, it would allow the provision of arms to non-EU partners in crisis management operations. The envisaged budget of EUR 10.5 billion would be a significant increase on the combined costs of the Africa Peace Facility (EUR 2.7 billion) and the Athena mechanism (EUR 60–70 million), which it is meant to replace. The launch of the EPF is envisaged in summer 2020. However, concerns have been voiced by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) over the potential harmful and counter-productive effects of providing arms to certain regimes, as well as the sufficiency of oversight and accountability[48].

A broader question is whether there is a way of tackling the current, seemingly dysfunctional, arrangement so that the political decision to launch an operation can be decoupled from force generation (as each contributing country goes through its national decision-making processes, involving varying kinds of parliamentary authorisation). A political decision in support of an operation should consider the concrete resource implications earlier and more quickly. In 2018, Civilian CSDP Compact agreed to increase the responsiveness of civilian missions by improving their size and readiness[49].

Finally, effective operations require easy access to a capable headquarters. The Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) established in 2017 serves three current training missions, but the aspiration is

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[43] See Bel, O-R., 2019.

[44] Deneckere, M., 'The uncharted path towards a European Peace Facility', *ECDPM Discussion Paper*, No. 248, Maastrict, 2019; European Parliament, *Decision establishing a European Peace Facility*, P8_TA-PROV/2019)0330, Strasbourg 2019.

[45] Henke, M. E., 2019.

[46] See de Langlois, M. and Ara, B., 'Article 44 of the Treaty on European Union: enhancing efficiency in EU operations', *Note de recherche stratégique*, No. 26, IRSEM, 2015.

[47] Deneckere, M., 2019.

[48] Montanaro, L. and Räty, T., 'EU's new €10bn "peace facility" risks fuelling conflict', *EU Observer*, 27 November 2019.

[49] Council of the European Union, Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the establishment of a Civilian CSDP Compact, 14305/18, Brussels, 2018.

for it to be able to conduct at least one executive (military) mission. Brexit poses another challenge as the operational headquarters for some operations needed to move from Northwood to Roda, and the Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) headquarters to Brest[50].

3.3   Gap between early warning and early action

One recurring problem with the track record of CSDP actions, whether civilian or military, is the knowledge required to take decisions quickly about deployments and ground plans in changing local conditions. Intelligence needs to be timely, reliable, relevant and actionable for decision-makers, planners and commanders.

The problem starts with the demand-side for conflict warnings as the EU's Political and Security Committee is structurally overburdened with the whole range of foreign policy issues and tends to engage with conflicts only after they have hit the news media and escalated to crises, as was the case with Ukraine in 2013[51]. If a European Security Council (ESC) was to be created this could become a structure to drive better estimative intelligence and warnings, earlier receptivity and better decision-making preparation. The ESC would need to be supported by a more capable and joined-up intelligence system, akin to the National Intelligence Council in the US.

The EU has been strengthening its current intelligence analysis structures, including the role of the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) and INT EU Military Staff, although ideally the EU would be given a clearer legal basis for intelligence work in the future, not least to clarify the important role of parliamentary oversight. The goal must be to arrive at a common analysis of security situations through better sharing of raw and assessed intelligence from Member States and the EU's own sources, and better mutual challenges on analytical judgements, supported by a more secure infrastructure for the transmission of intelligence products.

A key element of providing added value and grounding CSDP missions in local knowledge is to strengthen EU delegations in the field, increasing not just conflict sensitivity (as already achieved under the Early Warning System), but also military expertise in order to provide more relevant, detailed and actionable intelligence. There should also be a channel for fast-tracking warnings, expressing dissent with conventional wisdom and discussing 'wildcard scenarios' to better detect early indications of major surprises or sudden changes in foreign countries.

4   Conclusion: The way forward

CSDP missions and operations matter as they put into practice the aspiration of the EU to play a greater operational role in protecting its citizens from various kinds of harms expressed in the European Global Strategy. CSDP missions have come a long way since 1999 and there is considerable evidence of 'learning by doing' and improved performance over time. Yet, despite the number of operations, the indications are that some actions have failed to reach their potential for a number of reasons outlined in this briefing. It should be emphasised that the knowledge on the performance of CSDP actions is still limited, mainly based on practitioners and grey sources, and could be more systematic and comparative. While such missions and operations regularly report to EU structures (e.g. the PSC), there are currently few systemic, in-depth and truly independent reviews of their performance, and limited work has been done to identify and learn from the most important and actionable lessons that missions and operations can offer. Recent positive

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[50] Graziano, C., *Speech at the Sub-Committee on Security and Defence,* speech, European Parliament, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/161801/06_sub%20committee%20on%20security%20and%20defence.pdf
[51] Meyer, C. O., De Franco, C. and Otto, F., 2019, Chapter 9.

efforts include the May 2019 action plan and the first Annual Review Conference on realising the Civilian CSDP Compact[52].

The European Parliament plays a central role in holding decision-makers and senior officials to account for CSDP actions and driving improvement in different areas in the future. Some of the options mentioned above could improve performance against some criteria, such as effectiveness and early action, but may not improve or even reduce transparency, oversight and accountability. The dynamics of contemporary conflicts means that a swift response is sometimes required in order to prevent initiation or escalation (and therefore save lives), promote human security and pursue EU strategic interests, however they are defined. Building public support for missions and operations will require an honest assessment of what such operations can realistically achieve under the present conditions, and where reforms can significantly change and improve such conditions, bearing in mind potential trade-offs and tensions between various reform options.

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[52] EEAS, 'EU Civilian Crisis Management: Member States review progress in strengthening civilian CSDP', press release, 14 November 2019.