Crisis Responders: Comparing Policy Approaches of the EU, the UN, NATO and OSCE with Experiences in the Field

Loes DEBUYSERE[*] & Steven BLOCKMANS[**]

The EU aims at being a prominent global crisis responder but its Member States act also through the UN, NATO, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to achieve both short-term stabilization by military and/or civilian means, as well as longer term conflict prevention and transformation. By comparing the policy approaches of these four multilateral organizations to conflicts and crises, this article shows how the broad principle of comprehensiveness has been developed to fit different institutional logics, thus leading to divergences in approach. Distilling findings from empirical research conducted in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Libya, Mali and Ukraine, this article synthesizes lessons about varying levels of the EU's and the other organizations' conflict sensitivity, effective multilateralism, value-based approach and application of the principle of local ownership in theatre.

1 INTRODUCTION

In a follow-up to the 2013 Joint Communication on the 'EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises', the 2016 EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) set out to implement an 'integrated approach to conflict and crises'. The notions of comprehensiveness and integration are widely present in multilateral approaches to crisis management, with the UN having introduced the 'integrated mission' concept already in the late 1990s. Other actors have followed, including the US and individual EU Member States, NATO and the EU. A comprehensive approach refers to the strategic objective of coordination and integration among different civilian and military actors involved in the conflict cycle, in order to enhance the effectiveness of tackling manifestations of instability and conflict.[1] Accordingly, a comprehensive approach involves action

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[*]   Researcher in the Europe in the World unit at CEPS (Brussels). Email: loes.debuysere@ceps.eu.
[**]   Head of the same unit and Professor of EU External Relations Law at the University of Amsterdam. Email: steven.blockmans@ceps.eu.
[1]   G. Faleg, *The EU: From Comprehensive to Integrated Approach*, 1–13 Global Aff. (2018); A. Kammel & B. Zyla, *The Comprehensive Approach to EU Crisis Management: Contexts, Lessons Identified, and Policy Implications*, 13(1) J. Regional Sec. 39–63 (2018).

using a full range of tools – political, economic, civilian and military – to solve a single conflict or problem.[2] Yet different actors configure comprehensiveness differently in their policies, which leads to divergences in the practical implementation of comprehensiveness.

This article identifies four potential difficulties that may arise when integrating levels, tools and phases of conflict. First of all, coordination between various actors may prove difficult due to complex or conflicting processes and interests. Hence, 'effective multilateralism' – a doctrine included in the 2003 European Security Strategy – serves as a prerequisite for an 'integrated' approach in what are often crowded theatres. Secondly, a process of integration may undermine local ownership. While integration seeks to improve the coherence and coordination of any international intervention, it could in fact weaken or overlook the indispensable input of local actors.[3] Thirdly, the process of integrating responses to conflict ought to happen in a conflict sensitive way. Efficient and comprehensive responses need to take into account the complexity and multi-layered nature of a given conflict, in order to anticipate how interventions will impact and interact with dynamics on the ground. Finally, in setting up an integrated approach to conflict, different priorities, values and interests that underpin an organization's agenda, may clash. While the EU may claim that 'interests and values go hand in hand',[4] evidence from practice – especially in those conflict contexts that pose migration challenges to the EU – shows that this does not necessarily hold true.

This article seeks to address these four challenges facing the EU's integrated crisis response, while comparing the approach of other key players in conflict settings. In order to do so we first provide a broader overview of how the EU's integrated approach compares to the policy approaches of the UN, OSCE and NATO, i.e. the three international organizations on whose side the EU most often serves to prevent, manage and/or sustainably resolve conflicts and crises (section 2). Next, based on empirical findings collected from the H2020 'EUNPACK' research project, which aimed at analysing how the EU and its Member States respond to crises on the ground throughout the conflict cycle,[5] the four challenges that risk hampering successful implementation of an 'integrated' approach are discussed, with a principal focus on the EU's approach to conflicts and crises. This part of the paper starts from concrete experiences in the conflict settings, thus

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2   M. E. Smith, *Developing a 'Comprehensive Approach' to International Security: Institutional Learning and the CSDP*, in *Constructing a Policy-Making State? Policy Dynamics in the EU* (J. Richardson ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012).

3   T. Tardy, *The EU: From Comprehensive Vision to Integrated Action* (EUISS 2017).

4   European Union Global Strategy EUGS, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy* (2016).

5   The H2020 'EUNPACK' data consist of standardized in-depth interviews and surveys undertaken in summer/autumn 2017.

addressing potential intention–implementation gaps, and consists of two sections. The discussion first revolves around how challenges of multilateralism, local ownership and conflict sensitivity have panned out in the EU's (and, to a lesser extent, other actors') responses in the conflict zones of Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Libya, Mali and Ukraine (section 3). The article then takes up the example of crises involving migration in order to discuss the fourth challenge, i.e. how the EU is balancing its interests and values in Libya, Mali and Ukraine, compared to other actors (section 4). The article concludes by synthesizing specific lessons drawn from highlighted examples that can assist in addressing the intention–implementation gap that characterizes the so-called 'integrated' approaches of the EU in particular when compared with other actors.

2 THE INSIDE LOOKING OUT: HQ APPROACHES TO EXTERNAL CRISIS RESPONSE[6]

2.1 THE EU'S INTEGRATED APPROACH

For the past two decades, the European Union has aspired to contribute to conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict peacebuilding through civilian and/or military means. The 'nexus between security and development'[7] took centre stage in the 2003 European Security Strategy, according to which security is a precondition for development. Building on the spirit of structural integration espoused by the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Commission and the High Representative in 2013 issued a joint communication introducing the EU's 'comprehensive approach' to external conflict and crises. This approach combined the use of EU instruments and resources and required the shared responsibility of EU-level actors and Member States. Identifying local ownership as one of the main tenets of EU crisis response, the joint communication represented a shift from a top-down to a bottom-up policy approach.[8] But already in 2016 the

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[6] This section builds on the work carried out by Faleg (2018) for CEPS in the context of a parallel H2020 project devoted to an investigation into the EU's civilian capacities in preventing, managing and sustainably resolving conflicts and crises (EU-CIVCAP). *See also* H. Dijkstra, P. Petrov & E. Mahr, *Reacting to Conflict: Civilian Capabilities in the EU, UN and OSCE*, DL 4.1 EU-CIVCAP (2016); H. Dijkstra, E. Mahr, P Petrov, K. Đokić & P. H. Zartsdahl, *Partners in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding: How the EU, UN and OSCE Exchange Civilian Capabilities in Kosovo, Mali and Armenia*, DL 4.2. EU-CIVCAP Report (2017).

[7] M. B. Anderson, L. Olson, & K. Doughty, *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners* (Cambridge, MA: CDA 2003), cdacollaborative.org/publication/confronting-war-critical-lessons-for-peace-practitioners (accessed 24 Feb. 2018); D. Chandler, *The Security–Development Nexus and the Rise of 'Anti-Foreign Policy'*, 10(4) J. Int'l & Dev. 362–86 (2007).

[8] O. Richmond, A. Björkdahl & S. Kappler, *The Emerging EU Peacebuilding Framework: Confirming or Transcending Liberal Peacebuilding?*, 24(3) Cambridge Rev. Int'l Aff. 449–69 (2011).

comprehensive approach was superseded by the European Union Global Strategy's 'integrated approach' to external conflicts and crises.

According to the EUGS, the integrated approach is:

– *Multi-phased*, allowing the EU to act 'at all stages of the conflict cycle, acting promptly on prevention, responding responsibly and decisively to crises, investing in stabilization, and avoiding premature disengagement when a new crisis erupts'[9]

– *Multi-dimensional*, drawing on 'all available policies and instruments aimed at conflict prevention, management and resolution', bringing together diplomatic engagement, The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance[10]

– *Multi-level*, acting to address the complexity of conflicts 'at the local, national, regional and global levels'[11]

– *Multi-lateral*, engaging all players 'present in a conflict and necessary for its resolution, partnering more systematically on the ground with regional and international organizations, bilateral donors and civil society', to build sustainable peace 'through comprehensive agreements rooted in broad, deep and durable regional and international partnerships'.[12]

The scope and actions of the EU's integrated approach to external conflicts and crises have been defined in a working document of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission.[13] The EU's tools for integrated responses are said to encompass different policy phases, such as planning and implementation; address all stages of the conflict cycle, from prevention to recovery; and advance essential cross-cutting issues, such as the evolution from early warning to preventive action. A new directorate in the EEAS devoted to the 'Integrated Approach for Security and Peace' (Dir. ISP) has become the main coordination hub for EU conflict cycle responses. Created in March 2019 and nestled under the Managing Directorate for CSDP and Crisis Response, Dir. ISP is the upgraded and institutionally better connected successor of PRISM (Prevention of Conflicts, Rule of Law/SSR, Integrated Approach, Stabilization and Mediation). The new directorate packs divisions responsible for, inter alia,

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[9]   European Union Global Strategy EUGS, *supra* n. 4, at 28.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] European External Action Service and European Commission (EEAS and EC), *The EU Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises*, EEAS-Commission services issues paper for PSC, EEAS/COM, 8 (2017).

concepts, knowledge management and training; conflict prevention and mediation; and international strategic planning for CSDP and stabilization. It is flanked by the Directorate Security and Defence Policy and cooperates closely together with the Commission's Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) service and Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) Resilience and Fragility Unit.

By expanding the 'comprehensive approach', EU policy-makers sought to reframe the EU's response to fragility and external conflicts and crises. In conceptual terms, the integrated approach increases the level of ambition of EU interventions. The EU seeks to address instability more strategically, i.e. by going beyond operational crisis response and integrating a better sequencing of the political, security and economic dimensions of crisis response to deal with the root causes of conflict. This new level of ambition is reflected in the strong linkages between the 'integrated approach' and other follow-up actions to the EUGS, particularly the 'strategic approach to resilience in the EU's external action', a joint communication which highlights the relevance of investing in upstream conflict prevention, crisis response and conflict resolution.[14] This document recognizes that 'the traditional linear division of labour between humanitarian aid and development cooperation has been changing' in the face of a fluid landscape of protracted crises, global challenges and risks. Pressures on states, societies, communities and individuals 'range from demographic, climate change, environmental or migratory challenges beyond the power of individual states to confront, to economic shocks, the erosion of societal cohesion due to weak institutions and poor governance, conflict, violent extremism, and acts of external powers to destabilize perceived adversaries'.[15]

Whereas the comprehensive approach synchronized a wide range of instruments in a horizontal way, the integrated approach places various components of EU response under a single authority,[16] i.e. Directorate ISP. In operational terms, the implementation of the integrated approach could enhance EU conflict sensitivity by strengthening capacities in the fields of early warning, conflict analysis and prevention; to reframe the EU's stabilization approach, integrating various political, security and development components to make sure that transition between crisis management and stabilization is more coherent and inclusive, integrating (rather than coordinating) different levels of EU action; and to more effectively link all levels of EU responses with those of other multilateral actors and regional

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[14] Joint Communication of the European Commission and the High Representative to the European Parliament and the Council, *A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's External Action*, JOIN(2017) 21 final (2017).
[15] *Ibid.*, at 3.
[16] Tardy, *supra* n. 3.

organizations (UN, OSCE, NATO, African Union), ensuring consistency in international community interventions.

2.2   THE UN's INTEGRATED APPROACH

In conceptual terms, the 1992 *Agenda for Peace* was the first serious attempt to generate a greater sense of unity in conflict cycle management, placing the United Nations front and centre of the international community's efforts to prevent, manage and durably resolve armed conflict in line with the basic principles laid down in both the UN's Charter and human rights covenants. In response to the need felt in Africa, the Balkans and elsewhere to run increasingly large and multi-dimensional peace support operations,[17] the UN Secretariat of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) were created. This first stab at 'structural' integration was followed by an attempt at 'strategic' integration. Based in part on the lessons learned from peacekeeping failures in the late 1990s and early 2000s,[18] the 'strategic' integration drive, encapsulated in the Brahimi Report, promoted the idea that all UN entities, agencies, funds and programmes should cooperate under a single UN flag, to maximize the impact of their collective resources.[19] An analysis of the weaknesses and obstacles to integration led the Panel on the United Nations Peace Operations to recommend the formation of an 'integrated mission task force', i.e. an integrated HQ-level response to be developed at the earliest stages of the crisis response planning process, bringing together different departments of the UN Secretariat (DPKO, DPA, The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)), agencies, funds and programmes (e.g. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) for mission-specific support.

An 'integrated mission concept' was pioneered for Kosovo in 1999 in order to ensure an effective division of labour between the different actors on the ground.[20] In operational terms, the main innovation of the integrated mission concept was

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[17]   L. Gelot, *The Legitimacy of Peace Operations in Volatile Environments: Between State-Centred and People-Centred Standards*, 11(2) J. Regional Sec. 123–42 (2016).

[18]   C. de Coning, *The United Nations and the Comprehensive Approach* 14 (Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), 2008).

[19]   J. Joops, N. MacQueen, T. Tardy & P. D. Williams, *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (Oxford University Press 2015).

[20]   E. Barth Eide, A. T. Kaspersen, R. Kent & K. von Hippel, *Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations*, Independent Study for the Expanded UN ECHA Core Group 12 (2005) and E. A. Weir, *Conflict and Compromise: UN Integrated Missions and the Humanitarian Imperative* (Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Center 2006).

that the functions of the Resident Coordinator (RC) and the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) were morphed into the mandate of a Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG). This double-hatting allowed the DSRSG to better represent the humanitarian and development dimensions in planning, coordinating, managing, and evaluating the mission. UN entities on the ground, including mission components, UN Country Team and specialized agencies were technically distinct but brought under the same leadership. Guidelines for an 'integrated mission planning process' (IMPP) became operational as of 2008 when the broader and more strategic 'integrated approach' was adopted under the leadership of SG Ban Ki-moon.[21] This approach recognized that integration requires a system-wide process whereby all different dimensions and relevant UN agents should act in a synchronized, sequenced and coherent fashion, also with the Bretton Woods institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group), all operating as one integrated UN system at the country level, and in a coordinated fashion with extra-UN actors. In other words: 'effective multilateralism' within and outside of the UN family.

A new push for the UN's integrated approach has been catalysed by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015[22] and the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO).[23] The HIPPO report recommended ways of achieving the full potential of UN operations. These included strengthened early warning, analysis, strategy and planning mechanisms, thereby bolstering conflict sensitivity in order to design missions better and be able to respond flexibly to changing needs on the ground; and a renewed emphasis on investing in capacities and local ownership to play a more preventive and inclusive role in addressing emerging crises.

The institutional reform process of the UN peace and security pillar launched by SG António Guterres is expected to be completed in the first half of 2019. Plans include reconstituting DPA as the Department for Peacebuilding and Political Affairs (DPPA) and DPKO as the Department of Peace Operations (DPO). Three Assistant Secretary Generals (ASGs) will be responsible for regions and the Standing Principals Group will be tasked with increasing the coherence and coordination between DPPA-DPO and regional ASGs. The Department of Field Support (DFS) should also be restructured and become the Department of Operational Support (DOS) to reduce

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[21] *Integration, Decision of the Secretary General*, Policy Committee, Decision Number 24 (New York: United Nations, 25 June 2008).

[22] *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, United Nations General Assembly (25 Sept. 2015).

[23] *High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO)*, General Assembly, Security Council United Nations (17 June 2015).

fragmentation, expand capacities/activities and ensure faster deliveries. The new structures should address the main problems identified by the HIPPO report, namely reducing competition and duplication within the Secretariat and ensuring a spectrum of operations that are customized to address country contexts better.[24] If properly implemented, then the ongoing reform may well turn the UN into the world's most sophisticated integrated system for conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding.

2.3   THE OSCE'S COMPREHENSIVE AND CO-OPERATIVE SECURITY APPROACH

The OSCE's comprehensive approach to 'in area' conflicts and crises is rooted in its core mandate as a forum for political and security dialogue among members and has been fully embodied in the organization's joint actions since its creation. The comprehensive approach emanates from the three 'baskets' of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act: the politico-military, the economic-environmental, and the human dimension. The approach presumes a direct relationship between peace, stability and wealth, on the one hand, and the values of democratic institutions, the rule of law, respect for human rights and the development of a market economy on the other. The principle of 'indivisibility' of the comprehensive approach implies that an increase in security for some participating states should not be detrimental to the security of other states. The notion of 'cooperative security', a variant to the principle of 'effective multilateralism', is also central to the OSCE's operational rationale and aims at the prevention of security threats and zero-sum games, rather than efforts to counter them. The OSCE builds on the acceptance of binding commitments that limit military capabilities and actions, through confidence-building and reassurance measures. These values and strategic principles were reiterated and reinforced over time, through a series of documents, including the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the 1999 Charter for European Security, and the 2003 OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century.

Reinforcing comprehensive action along the strands of conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, the OSCE addresses challenges that pose a threat across borders, such as climate change, terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism, organized crime, cyber-crime and trafficking of all kinds. In its cross-dimensional activities, the OSCE starts from virtually the same value-base as the UN and the EU to work towards gender equality, engage with local youth across the peace and security agenda, and promote comprehensive approaches to managing migration and refugee flows:

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[24]   S. Cliffe, *UN Peace and Security Reform: Cautious Steps in the Right Direction*, N.Y.U. Center on International Cooperation 3–4 (2017).

> The EU, like the OSCE, addresses security in a comprehensive manner (…) from conflict prevention, mediation and cross-border cooperation, to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; from the promotion of the rule of law and democracy, to strengthening States' resilience to trans-national threats.[25]

Its institutions include the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Despite a value-based and comprehensive approach to cooperative security being engrained in the DNA of the OSCE, the organization suffers from significant operational limitations (i.e. ineffective multilateralism). This is mainly due to the different priorities and perspectives on European security of the participating states; negative attitudes to the organization from a number of participating states; the consensus-building nature of the organization, which is difficult and time-consuming; the absence of effective mechanisms to sanction violations of the body's core principles; limited resources; the lack of clear implementation criteria for the wide range of activities; and the disparate ways and means for (self-)assessment and implementing lessons learned. In an effort to enhance conflict sensitive approach to crises, the 2011 Vilnius Ministerial Council[26] called for enhanced coordination to strengthen the OSCE's analysis, assessment and engagement capacities in all phases of the conflict cycle. It led to the consolidation of the organization's early warning capacity and resources; the creation of a systematic mediation-support capacity within the Conflict Prevention Centre; the adoption of guidance materials on dialogue facilitation, taking on the UN principles of active mediation; and the creation of a rapid deployment roster. Capacity-building for the comprehensive approach was accelerated by the deployment of an OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine in 2014. Yet many of these capacities remain in suspended animation. Since the eve of the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, Russia has violated Ukraine's borders, territorial integrity and freedom from non-interference in domestic affairs – thus shaking the very foundations of European security on which the OSCE rests and ignoring the monitoring mission's observations.

2.4 NATO's comprehensive approach

The 2006 Riga Summit Declaration was the first official NATO document to refer to the Alliance's so-called comprehensive approach to 'out of area' conflicts and

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25   European External Action Service (EEAS), *Press Releases: The EU Enhances Its Operational Cooperation with the OSCE* (2018).

26   OSCE, *Elements of the Conflicts Cycle, Related to Enhancing the OSCE's Capabilities in Early Warning, Early Action, Dialogue Facilitation and Mediation Support, and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation*, Vilnius Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/11, MC.DEC/3/11 (7 Dec. 2011).

crises. Drawing on the experiences in Afghanistan and Kosovo, NATO's comprehensive approach was conceived as a way to respond better to crises by involving a wide spectrum of civil and military instruments while fully respecting the mandates and decision-making autonomy of all involved. As the need for proper mechanisms of cooperation with other international actors and civilian agencies was considered particularly acute at the early planning stage of an operation, NATO adapted its operational planning to improve support for civilian reconstruction and development.[27] Developing closer ties with the EU, the UN and other international organizations constituted a critical part of this approach: a better division of mandates would help NATO to perform better in theatre.

NATO's Strategic Concept of 2010 affirmed that the Alliance would engage, 'when possible and necessary, to prevent crises, manage crises, stabilize post-conflict situations and support reconstruction', and that a 'comprehensive political, civilian and military approach is necessary for effective crisis management'.[28] The strategic concept called for NATO to enhance intelligence sharing within the organization, intensify political consultations among allies, form a civilian crisis management capability to liaise more effectively with civilian partners, enhance integrated civilian-military planning, and develop the capability to train local forces in crisis zones.[29] A plan was developed to stimulate the transformation of NATO's military mind-set into a comprehensive *modus operandi* with a clear emphasis on effective multilateralism both within and outside of the organization and combined with local ownership.

Against the backdrop of a rapidly evolving security environment, the 2016 Warsaw Summit called for a review of the strategic concept and an action plan with new elements for conflict prevention, countering hybrid threats, cyber security and operational cooperation at sea and on migration. Based on a joint declaration of 10 July 2016, forty-two concrete actions for the implementation in the afore-mentioned areas were developed to boost NATO-EU cooperation. In December 2017, an additional set of thirty-four actions was endorsed, including on three new topics: counter-terrorism; military mobility; women, peace and security. These efforts at generating more complementarity and effective multilateralism have contributed to improving NATO's own conflict sensitivity, internal organization and crisis management instruments. That said, the military culture remains overwhelmingly predominant in the Alliance. In theatre, NATO remains the *primus inter pares* in supporting or undertaking military engagement in crisis situations.

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[27]   A. Gheciu, *Communities of Security Practices in the Age of Uncertainty*, 7(2) J. Regional Sec. 151–62 (2012).

[28]   NATO, *Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Adopted by Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Lisbon* 19 (19–20 Nov. 2010).

[29]   *Ibid.*, at 21–22.

2.5 CONCEPTUAL CONVERGENCE BUT DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS

The analysis in this section reveals a gradual conceptual convergence of headquarters' approaches in dealing with conflicts and crises. In their constituent charters and relevant policy documents, the UN, OSCE, NATO and EU spell out in more or less explicit detail four key virtues in the implementation of their comprehensive/integrated approach to conflicts and crises: being conflict sensitive; pursuing effective multilateral coordination (within the organization and with international actors); upholding the organization's values; and ensuring local ownership. Divergences between the organizations' approaches arise from variances in their mandates to deal with conflicts and crises 'in area' (UN, OSCE, NATO) and/or 'out of area' (NATO, EU) by employing predominantly civilian (OSCE) or military (NATO) means or a combination thereof (UN, EU). Differences in the autonomy of the organizations' bodies to prepare for and decide on action determine the speed, scope and duration of implementation.

In what follows, empirical data gathered by 'EUNPACK' partners from a range of conflict areas (Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Libya, Mali and Ukraine) are used to illustrate the extent to which crisis responders are led by the four above-mentioned virtues in implementing their so-called integrated approach. The principal focus will be on the EU's external action.

3 THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN: FIELD EXPERIENCE

3.1 EFFECTIVE MULTILATERALISM

In a follow-up to the doctrine of 'effective multilateralism', as outlined by the 2003 ESS, the 2016 EUGS has listed 'effective global governance' among its five priority objectives. The EU thus continues its commitment to preserving, strengthening and coordinating multilateral processes, albeit in a more pragmatic and flexible fashion. Since interventions in Mali, Libya, Ukraine, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq have attracted a multiplicity of actors, it makes sense to see how multilateral processes play out in external crisis response and what challenges they raise. In general, the EU has worked in various coalitions and strategic partnerships with the UN (the EU's most consistent partner), NATO (in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Kosovo) and OSCE (in Ukraine, Kosovo). The involvement of all actors has undergone major changes and shifts over time, never really finding a winning formula.[30]

Kosovo, fully entrusted to the administration of a UN peacekeeping operation (UNMIK), was initially governed by a four-pillar structure under the leadership of

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[30] I. Peters, E. Ferhatovic, R. Heinemann, S. Berger & S. M. Sturm, *European Union's Crisis Response in the Extended Neighbourhood: Comparing the EU's Output Effectiveness in the Cases of Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali*, EUNPACK Paper D. 7.01 (4), EUNPACK Project, 6 (2018).

Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), with the UN in charge of civil administration, UNHCR in control of the humanitarian aid programme, the OSCE responsible for democratization and institution building and the EU focused on economic reconstruction.[31] In both Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States assumed the role of agenda setter, leaving little room for other actors to determine the course of peace- and state-building. While the US focused heavily on fighting the insurgency and fostering security ('security first'), the civilian aspects of recon-struction took place under the leadership of the UN.[32] In Mali, it was France who was the agenda setter and driving force behind Western and EU engagement. The UN (MINUSMA mission), together with Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African G5 Sahel Joint Force, were the most important actors outside the military-security realm.[33] In Libya, after a NATO-led interven-tion, the UN (UNSMIL) has played a crucial role in the country's political mediation and reconciliation process. However, in the wake of the difficulties that the UN's initiative is facing, many international players have joined the multilateral process, yet also started to compete with one another to gain in Libya.[34] In Ukraine, some experts have rated the EU as the second most active international actor dealing with the country's conflict, together with the US. The OSCE has had a supportive function, but did not shape conflict developments.[35] This short overview shows that, generally speaking, the EU tends to arrive late in 'theatre', resulting in a reactive rather than pro-active role in shaping multilateral relations on the ground. In the case of EUNAVFOR MED (cf. Section 4), where it dove head first into a crisis situation, the EU has been criticized for over-reacting and launching a military operation without a UN Security Council legal mandate covering all phases of the mission.

Based on EUNPACK findings, three concrete and interrelated pitfalls or challenges with regard to multilateralism were identified for the EU. Firstly, a lack of coherence among the response of key international actors has hampered effective conflict management. While the presence of many actors can improve international engagement – funds, facilities and efforts are successfully coordi-nated – our collective research findings illustrate that when coordination is lacking, the sheer multiplicity of parallel or competing decisions and programmes will almost inevitably have negative implications.[36] For example, in Kosovo, the

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[31]   J. Bátora, K. Osland & M. Peter, *The EU's Crisis Management in the Kosovo-Serbia Crises. EUNPACK Paper* D. 5.01., EUNPACK Project 14 (2017).
[32]   Peters, Ferhatovic, Heinemann, Berger & Sturm, *supra* n. 30, at 1.
[33]   *Ibid.*, at 6.
[34]   K. Mezran & A. Varvelli, *Foreign Actors in Libya's Crisis*, Atlantic Council & ISPI, 18 (Milano 2017).
[35]   K. Ivashchenko-Stadnik, R. Petrov P. Rieker & A. Russo, *Implementation of the EU's Crisis Response in Ukraine. EUNPACK Working Paper* D. 6.03. EUNPACK Project 11 (2018).
[36]   Peters, Ferhatovic, Heinemann, Berger & Sturm, *supra* n. 30, at 3.

overlapping focus by multiple actors, including the EULEX mission, led an OSCE official to argue that the area of rule of law assistance is so crowded that the local judiciary suffers from 'training fatigue'.[37]

Conflicting ambitions and difficult cooperation have been especially present in EU–NATO relations. In response to the crisis in Libya, for example, EU members disagreed about whether an EU military mission (as advocated for by France) or a broader alliance under NATO flag (as advocated by Italy) was the appropriate answer. Eventually, the EU decided to set up the military operation EUFOR on 1 April 2011, tasked with assisting the efforts of the UN humanitarian agency in Libya. However, humanitarian actors never requested the intervention of EUFOR, at least in part because a NATO-led military operation was already operating with a UN mandate. The short-lived EUFOR Libya mission illustrates the initial lack of coordination and the problem of unilateral action on EU side.[38] In Afghanistan, the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) also suffered from difficult coordination with NATO. Despite the Berlin Plus Agreement, which allows the EU to use NATO intelligence and assets for CSDP missions, EUPOL was limited in its access to NATO's provincial bases due to the veto by Turkey (a NATO ally) over a dispute with EU member Cyprus.[39] Similarly, in Mali, the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) has lacked budget for military and defence, which resulted in the EU being unable to provide equipment for its mission. EEAS officials complained that while the EU supports NATO, it has not received the same support from NATO for its missions. The lack of equipment and the financial constraints for security have dealt a blow to the credibility of the EU in Mali.[40]

Secondly, the responses by the EU and the Member States have also lacked internal cohesion, which has hampered the effectiveness of the EU response. The decision of five Member States not to recognize Kosovo as an independent and sovereign state, for example, has prevented the EU from pursuing a clear institutional logic in assisting the country's political order. This, in turn, has left space for competing claims of sovereignty and authority by the governments in Pristina, Belgrade and local actors in the Kosovo Serbian municipalities in Northern Kosovo.[41] In Afghanistan, the lack of coordination between various

[37] Bátora, Navrátil, Osland & Peter, *supra* n. 31.

[38] K. Ivashchenko-Stadnik, R. Petrov, L. Raineri, P. Rieker, A. Russo & F. Strazzari, *How the EU Is Facing Crises in Its Neighbourhood: Evidence from Libya and Ukraine, EUNPACK Paper* D. 6.01., EUNPACK Project 13 (2017).

[39] Q. Suroush, *Assessing EUPOL Impact on Afghan Police Reform (2007–2016). EUNPACK Working Paper* D. 7.03, EUNPACK project 14 (2018).

[40] R Heinemann, *The European Union's Crisis Response in the Extended Neighbourhood: The EU's Output Effectiveness in the Case of Mali*, EUNPACK Paper, D. 7.01. EUNPACK Project 55 (2017).

[41] J. Bátora, M. Navrátil, K. M. Osland & M. Peter, *The EU and International Actors in Kosovo: Competing Institutional Logics, Constructive Ambiguity and Competing Priorities*, EUNPACK Working paper D. 5.02, EUNPACK Project (2018).

EU policy tools and funding instruments and those of the Member States has obstructed the implementation of the 'comprehensive approach'.[42] Concretely, coordination has been difficult between the EU Special Representative, the delegation of the European Commission, EUPOL and the bilateral missions by Member States, as Member States have for example felt that joining EUPOL translated in losing national influence and visibility on the ground. As a consequence, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain committed forces to the NATO training mission rather than to EUPOL.[43] In Ukraine, the EU has faced difficulties in effectively coordinating both old (pre-conflict) and new (post-conflict) EU initiatives in the country. Coordination has been weak, for example, between the Commission-led Support Group for Ukraine (SGUA) and the delegation in Kiev, or between the EUBAM and EUAM missions.[44]

Thirdly, unilateralist tendencies by actors have constrained the impact of other key actors, including the EU. Notable cases are Afghanistan and Iraq, where Washington was the gatekeeper for the role of other actors. In Afghanistan, the strong push of the US after 9/11 for an international intervention, marginalized other actors, including the UN, to shape the peace- and state-building agenda in Afghanistan.[45] By launching a contested military intervention in Iraq, the US also stirred major rifts both within NATO and among EU members, pitting the US and its allies against those EU Member States which opposed the war. This division undermined both organizations and resulted in a lack of harmonization between European institutions, individual states and NATO in relation to capacity building and democratization in Iraq.[46] In Mali, France rapidly launched a unilateral military operation in Mali (Opération Serval), after the 2012 rebellion and coup d'état. France's role has had an impact on the EU, as Malians have considerable difficulties separating the EU's activities from what France has undertaken bilaterally. Given France's former colonial role and the issues this may raise in terms of local (rather than neo-colonial) ownership, some[47] have argued that it is in the EU's interest to set its activities apart from those of France.

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[42]   Peters, Ferhatovic, Heinemann, Berger & Sturm, *supra* n. 30, at 21.
[43]   S. Tripathi & E. Ferhatovic, *The European Union's Crisis Response in the Extended Neighbourhood: The EU's Output Effectiveness in the Case of Afghanistan*, EUNPACK Paper D. 7.01, EUNPACK Project 43 (2017).
[44]   Ivashchenko-Stadnik, Petrov, Raineri, Rieker, Russo & Strazzari, *supra* n. 38, at 61.
[45]   Peters, Ferhatovic, Heinemann, Berger & Sturm, *supra* n. 30, at 3.
[46]   I. Peters, *The European Union's Crisis Response in the Extended Neighbourhood: The EU's Output Effectiveness in the Case of Iraq. EUNPACK Paper* D. 7.01, EUNPACK Project 44 (2017).
[47]   A. W. Cissé, A. Dakouo, M. Bøås & F. Kvamme, *Perceptions About the EU Crisis Response in Mali – A Summary of Perception Studies*, EUNPACK Policy Brief, D. 7.07. EUNPACK Project 8 (2017).

3.2 CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

Conflict sensitivity, i.e. the awareness of how interventions interact with the conflict situation on the ground and the ability to minimize negative impacts of these interventions, i.e. 'do no harm', turns out to be another challenge rather than a virtue that arises when trying to implement a comprehensive crisis response. In the context of the Libyan conflict, some have argued[48] that EU conflict sensitivity needs to be strengthened, especially when compared with other international actors' crisis response. While a 'Conflict Sensitivity Leadership Group' and 'Assistance Forum' have been set up to ensure greater attention to the topic, most EU officers (re)located in Tunis only have a vague understanding of these tools. NGO officers and conflict sensitivity specialists have expressed fears that the EU approach to conflict sensitivity has been superficial, lacking genuine commitment and adequate knowledge.

Concretely, a lack of conflict sensitivity on the part of the EU has been most notable in the EU's outsourcing of migration management to Libyan authorities and the setting up of detention centres, which fuelled a criminal economy of exploitation and trafficking. As such, the EU may have been unintentionally empowering non-state armed actors and militias, given the links that exist between security officers and trafficking networks on the ground.[49] In an earlier phase of the conflict, NATO also misjudged the local context, by underestimating the resistance a military campaign would face. While NATO planners expected that the air campaign would contribute to overthrowing Gadaffi in a matter of weeks, loyalists to the Gadaffi regime proved able to count on support from African mercenaries, including labour migrants and marginalized communities from Southern Libya.[50]

In the case of Mali, the EU's conflict sensitivity has also been limited. Background talks with EEAS officials in Brussels revealed a lack of awareness and knowledge about the concept of 'conflict sensitivity', with the concept at one point being dismissed as a 'luxury concept'.[51] It does not come as a surprise, then, that the EU Training Mission (EUTM) and EU Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP) produced very mixed results on the ground, as a result of the EU crisis response being imported, rather than set up via a bottom-up approach.[52] Indeed,

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48   C. Loschi, L. Raineri & F. Strazzari, *The Implementation of EU Crisis Response in Libya: Bridging Theory and Practice*, EUNPACK Working Paper D. 6.02, EUNPACK Project 23 (2018).

49   *Ibid.*, at 22.

50   Ivashchenko-Stadnik, Petrov, Raineri, Rieker, Russo & Strazzari, *supra* n. 38, at 13.

51   Peters, Ferhatovic, Heinemann, Berger & Sturm, *supra* n. 30, at 19.

52   M. Bøås, A. W. Cissé, A. Diallo, B. Drange, F. Kvamme & E. Stambøl, *Working Paper on Implementation of EU Crisis Response in Mali*, EUNPACK Working Paper D. 7.04. EUNPACK Project 24 (2018).

policy documents are developed in Brussels, with limited consultation with local partners in Mali.[53] The EU's conflict sensitivity has also been questioned in the context of the EU's close cooperation with the Malian government, despite clear links between the state and local militias, according to non-partisan experts.[54]

In Iraq, one concern raised by academics and civil society activists was that the EU approaches the whole of Iraq as a single unit, while on the ground no such entity exists. Implementing the same projects in all governorates, as the EU tends to do, does not necessarily make sense, as each area has its own needs and is bound by unique dynamics.[55] In Afghanistan, external actors were also lacking a proper understanding and sensitivity towards the needs of locals, which explains why the intervention in Afghanistan was not successful. A fundamental problem was that Western actors lacked the knowledge, power or legitimacy to transform Afghanistan, being isolated from Afghan reality.[56] Also the UN failed the test of conflict sensitivity in Afghanistan, when it allowed funding for reconstruction to be processed through corrupt state-structures.[57]

3.3   LOCAL OWNERSHIP

A third virtue for the successful implementation of the integrated approach to conflicts and crises is 'local ownership'. This principle ensures that local concerns and needs are at the heart of conflict management and peacebuilding. In Libya, the prompt and top-down actions that the EU took to tackle Libya's 'migration crisis', seemed not to reflect principles of participatory planning and local ownership. Local stakeholders felt marginalized, feeling that they had to sign-off pre-conceived projects with limited consultation about their inputs, priorities and needs.[58] When the EU did seek to ensure local ownership, for example by supporting local authorities and communities in dealing with the migration crisis within the framework of the EU Trust Fund (EUTF), this proved to be a double-edged sword. Indeed, cooperation with local municipalities stirred competition and opportunism among local actors and negatively impacted the local economy. Other international actors pursued a different strategy in this regard. The UNDP, for instance,

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[53]   *Ibid.*, at 15.

[54]   Heinemann, *supra* n. 40.

[55]   K. Mohammed, *The EU Crisis Response in Iraq: Awareness, Local Perception and Reception*, EUNPACK Working paper D.7.02, EUNPACK Project 16 (2018).

[56]   R. Stewart, *What Went Wrong in Afghanistan. Trying to Do the Impossible*, Foreign Policy (4 Mar. 2013), http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/03/04/what-went-wrong-in-afghanistan/ (accessed 4 Dec. 2017); Tripathi & Ferhatovic, *supra* n. 43, at 51.

[57]   Peters, Ferhatovic, Heinemann, Berger & Sturm, *supra* n. 30, at 5.

[58]   C. Loschi, L. Raineri, & F. Strazzari, *The Implementation of EU Crisis Response in Libya: Bridging Theory and Practice*, EUNPACK Working Paper D. 6.02, EUNPACK Project 15 (2018).

promotes the involvement of municipal governments in stabilization programmes, always in combination with central government representatives, such as the Ministry of Infrastructure. This helps to respect inter-governmental relations between national and sub-national levels and, simultaneously, to enhance the legitimacy of the Government of National Accord.[59]

In Mali, in order to ensure local ownership, the EU not only works together with the Malian government, but also with other actors including the African Union (AU), the ECOWAS, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the G5 Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin Commission. While the EU has actively sought to cooperate with regional organizations – more than was the case in Afghanistan or Iraq for example[60] – there is little mention in its documents of the importance of working with local bodies and communities.[61] In practice this has resulted in an information deficit with local Malian stakeholders reporting problems understanding the EU's approach and how to interpret concepts like SSR and 'border management'. Simultaneously, to what extent do EU priorities of border management align with the priorities of local stakeholders and communities?[62] For example, EU reinforcement of border control as a means to manage migration flows may be at odds with regional law which states that citizens of ECOWAS countries are free to move across borders within the ECOWAS space.[63] Similarly, the free health care that ECHO provides for the population as part of humanitarian relief actually goes against Malian law, which forbids free care provision. As a consequence, even when training is provided to local staff to take over the work, the provision of health care will be stopped.[64]

In Afghanistan, similar problems emerged in relation to local ownership. While the EU welcomed coordinated efforts to support the Afghan government in promoting an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, it quickly found that pursuing local ownership does not necessarily translate into, for instance, more successful security sector reforms. In a context where there is no monopoly of force and no stable political system, relying on local actors does not necessarily foster a more depersonalized, formalized and rationalized exercise of power through the state. The UN faced the same problem with its 'light footprint' approach that welcomed local ownership yet underestimated the extent to which professional leadership and institutional capacity of national/local actors had been

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[59]   *Ibid.*, at 17.

[60]   Peters, Ferhatovic, Heinemann, Berger & Sturm, *supra* n. 30, at 4.

[61]   Heinemann, *supra* n. 43; G. Vogelaar, *Local Ownership, Inclusivity and Civil-Military Synergy in EU External Action: The Case of EU Support to Security Sector Reforms in Mali*, 13(2) J. Regional Sec. 105–30 (2018).

[62]   Bøås, Cissé, Diallo, Drange, Kvamme & Stambøl, *supra* n. 52, at 7.

[63]   *Ibid.*, at 23.

[64]   Peters, *supra* n. 46, at 47.

eroded during years of conflict.[65] While ostensibly a good idea, local ownership can in practice mean ineffective policy,[66] especially when not implemented in a conflict sensitive way.

4 THE EU'S 'PRINCIPLED PRAGMATISM' AND THE CASE OF MIGRATION

> 'We will be guided by clear principles. These stem as much from a realistic assessment of the current strategic environment as from an idealistic aspiration to advance a better world. Principled pragmatism will guide our external action in the years ahead.'[67]
>
> 'We need as Europeans, as the European Union, to be extremely clear, united and firm with our own compass in mind: the set of values, principles and interests that guide our action on the global scene.'[68]

Upholding institutional principles and values in responding to conflict situations constitutes a final virtue and challenge underpinning the EU's integrated approach to external conflict. Indeed, the EU prioritizes European values and principles in its rhetoric and speeches about external action (cf. quotes supra), with '*principled* pragmatism' (italics added) figuring as an overarching Leitmotif in the EU's Global Strategy. In practice, however, the EU has struggled to make good on idealism. The EU approach to migration in its wider neighbourhoods (Libya, Ukraine and Mali) shows how the EU tries to straddle the line between interests and values and how its approach is received by other actors, both local and international, in conflict zones.

Libya provides the clearest illustration of a European Union struggling to uphold its principles in the face of pragmatic Member State interests. While the EU has been present on the ground since 2011, the Council in March 2015 hinted at a new CSDP mission in Libya that would focus specifically on migration and security, as irregular migration was increasingly seen as a threat to the interests of EU Member States.[69] A major shipwreck involving a migrant boat in April 2015 eventually led to the launch of CSDP mission *EUNAVFOR MED – Operation Sophia* with the aim of breaking the business model of refugee smugglers along routes in the central Mediterranean. What followed was a shift in the EU's crisis response, henceforth perceiving the interlacing conflicts and crisis in Libya as a 'mere' migration issue, thus bringing into question the comprehensiveness of the EU's crisis response. Rather than investing in longer-term strategic Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), Security Sector Reform (SSR)

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[65] Tripathi & Ferhatovic, *supra* n. 43, at 11.
[66] Peters, Ferhatovic, Heinemann, Berger & Sturm, *supra* n. 30, at 24.
[67] European Union Global Strategy EUGS, *supra* n. 4, at 8.
[68] (Opening speech by HR/VP Federica Mogherini at the annual EU Ambassadors Conference 2018).
[69] Ivashchenko-Stadnik, Petrov, Raineri, Rieker, Russo & Strazzari, *supra* n. 38, at 26.

processes, which would address some of the root causes of the Libyan crisis, the EU presented short-term solutions, such as coastguard capacity-building to intercept migrants bound for Europe.[70]

EUNVAFOR MED began training the Libyan coastguard in late October 2016. This included, according to official documents, a substantial emphasis on human rights law. Loschi et al.,[71] however, show little evidence of a genuine commitment to core EU values during these trainings. Moreover, the EU faced difficulties when selecting candidates for the training seminars, with some individuals involved in human trafficking appearing among the beneficiaries of the EU support.[72] Seen through this prism, it is hardly surprising that Libyan coastguard officers have been accused of abusive behaviour towards both migrants and NGOs engaged in Search and Rescue (SAR) operations. By outsourcing border control to Libya and its coastguards, the EU has resorted to unsafe detention schemes within Libya. Various NGOs have documented the dreadful conditions in Libya's detention centres, which at worst can be seen as a direct result of the EU's restriction of migrants' safe passage to Europe.[73]

The examples of coastguard trainings and detention centres bring into question both the conflict sensitivity and value-based approach that the EU claims to uphold as part of its 'integrated approach'. They are but two illustrations of a decoupling of normative rhetoric and practice in Libya, which is undermining the reputation of the EU and its crisis response.[74] Indeed, despite persistent rhetoric on the part of the EU to uphold 'UN-EU priorities to human rights and, International Humanitarian Law, including the protection of children and other persons in vulnerable situations in conflict and post-conflict areas',[75] the UN has strongly condemned the EU securitization of migration in Libya. It contends that the Union's strategy of containment has been 'catastrophic' and 'inhuman', and calls for the decriminalization of irregular migration.[76] UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet issued a statement in September 2018 saying that:

> 'In the context of the EU's ongoing discussions to establish so-called 'regional disembarkation platforms', the prospect of the EU outsourcing its responsibility to govern

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[70]   C. Loschi, L. Raineri & F. Strazzari, *The Implementation of EU Crisis Response in Libya: Bridging Theory and Practice*, EUNPACK Working Paper D. 6.02, EUNPACK Project 23 (2018).

[71]   *Ibid.*, at 7.

[72]   Amnesty International, *Libya's Dark Web of Collusion. Abuses Against Europe-Bound Refugees and Migrants* (2017); F. El Kamouni-Janssen & K. de Bruijne, *Entering the Lion's Den: Local Militias and Governance in Libya* (Clingendael Crisis Alert Report 2017).

[73]   Loschi, Raineri & Strazzari, *supra* n. 70, at 15.

[74]   *Ibid.*, at 23.

[75]   Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on Reinforcing the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peace Operations and Crisis Management: Priorities 2019–2021* (18 Sept. 2018).

[76]   Loschi, Raineri & Strazzari, *supra* n. 70, at 24.

migration to States with weak protection systems is disturbing. Without prejudice to the
ongoing discussions, the authorities should recall that respect for the rights of all migrants
must be assured, including those in the most vulnerable situations, and processes must be
established to ensure that relevant actors be held to account if they fail to meet basic
international standards.'[77]

Several NGOs have deliberately declined to apply for EU funding in order to
distance themselves from the EU's controversial migration policies in Libya.[78] In
short, the EU's natural allies in terms of norms and values have not endorsed the
Union's turn to 'pragmatic turn' in Libya.

In Ukraine, while migration flows from here have not been framed as a
security threat to the EU, in contrast to the Libyan example, the EU's crisis
response has also comprised efforts in the realm of border security and border
management.[79] Since the referendum in Crimea in March 2014, the ongoing
conflict in the eastern provinces has created a problem of internally displaced
people and refugee flows, with over 1.5 million Ukrainians seeking asylum or
other forms of legal stay in neighbouring countries in 2017.[80] As a consequence,
the EU has sought to foster further investment in cross-border cooperation with
neighbouring countries and its CSDP mission EUBAM was mandated to
strengthen border security. However, EUBAM's mandate of consolidating pillars
of statehood and stability has reportedly clashed with the informal and extra-legal
economies in situ, which risks further conflict.[81]

Apart from conflict-insensitive designs, the EU has also been blamed for
double standards in its asylum policies with regard to potential asylum seekers
who migrate to Europe through Ukraine. Human rights defenders have reported a
gap between the EU's human rights rhetoric and its operational recommendations
to Ukrainian authorities: 'in fact, the EU is interested in not allowing potential
asylum seekers and refugees into Ukraine'.[82] The EU's enforcement of discrimi-
natory practices on the border has led to violations of conventional commitments
and contrasts with the human rights perspective adopted by the International
Organization for Migration, a UN migration agency based in Ukraine.

In Mali, the EU's external action has also been perceived as serving its own
interests rather than being 'a force for good'.[83] After the spike in migration in
2014–2015, Mali rose to the top of the EU's political agenda, resulting in the

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[77] OHCHR, *Opening Statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet* (Sept. 2018).
[78] Loschi, Raineri & Strazzari, *supra* n. 70, at 16.
[79] Ivashchenko-Stadnik, Petrov, Raineri, Rieker, Russo & Strazzari, *supra* n. 38.
[80] *Ibid.*, at 37.
[81] *Ibid.*, at 63.
[82] OHCHR, *supra* n. 77.
[83] European Commission European Security Strategy (ESS), *European Security Strategy – A Secure Europe
      in a Better World* (Dec. 2003).

deployment of a police and a military training mission (EUCAP and EUTM). The EU perceived the 'problem of porous borders' as the key challenge and threat in Mali, which led to migration management being mainstreamed in all EU external action in Mali.[84] This disproportionate focus on security and border management, combined with a lack of subsequent monitoring, has indirectly led to human rights abuses, as the EU cooperated with disputed actors like Mali's Armed Forces (FAMA) in restoring state authority.[85] The EU's focus on border controls has also conflicted with the freedom of movement and trade, guaranteed by an ECOWAS convention for citizens of ECOWAS Member States.[86]

There is concern in Mali that, unlike the UN's neutral approach to conflicts and crises, the EU's 'principled pragmatism' focuses too much on protecting its own interest in containing migration flows to Europe. To counter this sentiment, the EU Delegation in Bamako has since late 2017 been developing a second component to PARSEC – a programme aimed at enhancing the security in the Mopti and Gao regions – to help the state respond to the basic needs of the local populations.[87] This attempt to build trust between state and local communities moves beyond mere security provision. This may be the only bottom-up, comprehensive and potentially conflict-sensitive project in an otherwise Brussels-driven 'integrated approach'.[88]

5   CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of headquarters' approaches to 'comprehensiveness' shows that the EU and the UN exhibit the most ambitious efforts to reform their structures and procedures to achieve an integrated approach to conflicts and crises. They have done so by incorporating lessons learned across the whole spectrum of action, taking a broader systemic and strategic stance, through the guidance provided respectively by the EUGS and by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO). Integration efforts by NATO and the OSCE have been more focused: enhancing the OSCE's conflict sensitivity through early warning, analysis, strategy and planning and transforming NATO's capacities to tackle hybrid threats.

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84   Bøås, Cissé, Diallo, Drange, Kvamme & Stambøl, *supra* n. 52, at 12.
85   B. Ba, & M. Bøås, *Mali: A Political Economy Analysis* (Oslo: NUPI (Report commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), 2017).
86   Bøås, Cissé, Diallo, Drange, Kvamme & Stambøl, *supra* n. 52, at 24.
87   *Ibid.*, at 23.
88   *Ibid.*

Policy documents illustrate how the EU has shown a steady evolution from a narrow concept of civilian–military coordination – i.e. a blueprint followed by NATO albeit from the opposite perspective – to a broad notion of systemic coherence similar to that employed by the UN. However, experiences in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Libya, Mali and Ukraine point toward at least four challenges the EU is facing when attempting to effectively implement its integrated approach in conflict settings.

Firstly, the multi-dimensional nature of conflicts and security threats requires proper coordination among international partners, to produce inter-agency syner-gies and to avoid overlaps, waste of resources and unintended consequences. Infamous for its slow conflict responses, the EU has faced challenges in fostering multilateral coherence, both among its own ranks and with other international actors – particularly NATO.

Secondly, aside from declaratory claims in official documents on EU crisis response, empirical evidence from Libya, Afghanistan, Mali and Iraq shows that 'conflict sensitivity' is only sullenly accepted, if not a completely neglected concept in practice.[89] Especially in Libya, the EU has been blamed for a lack of conflict sensitivity compared with other international actors operating on the ground.

Thirdly, both the EU and other multilateral actors' crisis response have recurrently failed to ensure and prioritize the participation and needs of domes-tic actors in their crisis response.[90] Even when local ownership was on the agenda, a lack of conflict sensitivity sometimes resulted in local, yet corrupt or ineffective actors, aggravating a crisis or conflict and undermining peace-build-ing efforts.

Finally, the examples of Libya, Ukraine and Mali illustrate the kind of challenges which are likely to dog the EU for years to come,[91] and show a self-interested increasing focus on migration in the EU's crisis responses. This narrow focus is thwarting the Union's self-proclaimed commitment to a 'inte-grated' approach to conflicts and crises. In spite of persistent rhetoric about human rights and democratic values, normative concerns have progressively faded in policy documents.[92] More pragmatic security and stabilization imperatives are now centre stage, effectively subordinating the EU's role as a transformative power and affecting its credibility compared to less interest-driven and more value-based actors like the UN.

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[89]   Peters, Ferhatovic, Heinemann, Berger & Sturm, *supra* n. 30, at 20.
[90]   *Ibid.*, at 23.
[91]   European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS), *Global Trends to 2030: Can the EU Meet the Challenges Ahead?* 9 (2015).
[92]   Ivashchenko-Stadnik, Petrov, Raineri, Rieker, Russo & Strazzari, *supra* n. 38, at 63.