

# The EU's Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management

Nicoletta Pirozzi



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The publication of this brochure has been funded by the Directorate for Security Policy (SIPOL) – Swiss Federal Department of Defense, Civil Protection and Sports.

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*Nicoletta Pirozzi*

June 2013

Editor: Giji Gya

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## **Introduction: The Comprehensive Approach of the EU**

The concept of a comprehensive approach in the field of crisis management is not new for the European Union (EU), even if it has never been codified in an official doctrine. It can be considered as the policy response to the evolution of the concept of security beyond the conventional, state-centric and militarised terms of the bi-polar era. However, there are indicators that support the idea of a substantial change in its definition and operationalisation in the post-Lisbon phase. A global analysis of the principles defined in the Treaty of Lisbon reveals a decisive step towards a more inclusive, multilateral and coherent external action of the EU. Nevertheless, important divergences exist at the conceptual level on the scope and aim of comprehensive approach among EU institutions and Member States, while institutional divides and operational obstacles hamper its effective implementation.

This study is aimed at contributing to the ongoing discussion on the comprehensive approach at EU level. The first part offers an overview of the development of this concept from the adoption of the European Security Strategy (ESS) to the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. It is followed by an assessment of the architecture and mechanisms created in the post-Lisbon phase, looking in particular at the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service (EEAS), with a view to set the institutional and policy framework for the current implementation of the comprehensive approach, especially in the field of crisis management. The analysis of the effective operationalisation of this concept on the ground is conducted through two main case studies: the EU's engagements in the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa. These are two crisis scenarios in which the EU has intervened with a broad spectrum of instruments at its disposal—reflective of the concept of a comprehensive approach—according to regional strategic frameworks and including two recent missions deployed under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), namely EUCAP Nestor (European Union Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of Africa) and EUCAP SAHEL Niger (European Union CSDP mission in Niger). Finally, the study puts forward some policy recommendations that should help the EU to translate its commitment to a comprehensive approach into effective action in the field of crisis management.

## **The EU's Comprehensive Approach at the Conceptual Level: From the European Security Strategy to the Lisbon Treaty**

The end of the Cold War has been accompanied by a reassessment of the concept of security. Today's security environment is mainly characterised by non-nuclear and intra-state threats, which undermine the effectiveness of traditional forms of coercion and policy instruments. As a consequence, security has to be understood in broader terms in order to encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, respect for human rights and the rule of law. At the centre of this new security thinking is what the 1994 *Human Development Report* issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has called "human security." This concept refers to a multidimensional and holistic interpretation of security, by advocating the need to ensure for individuals not only "freedom from fear," but also "freedom from want," correlating with the conviction that "problems such as underdevelopment, human rights violations and insecurity of citizens in conflict zones are strongly interrelated" (Andrew Mack, 2004, p.48). From a policy perspective, human security offers the opportunity to include non-military root causes of instability onto the agenda, a common framework for cooperative problem-solving among diverse actors (governments, NGOs, international organisations, trans-national agencies and coalitions) and to integrate separate but related policy areas (development, human rights, conflict resolution, etc.).

Before Lisbon, the EU had already modelled its European Security Strategy (ESS) on this new concept of security, in particular by recognising the enduring link between internal and external aspects of security, as well as between security and development (*European Security Strategy*, 2003, p.3). In 2004, a study group on Europe's security capabilities, convened by Professor Mary Kaldor, proposed *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe*, which argued that in order to implement the ESS, Europe needs military forces to be configured and used in new ways. The Doctrine adopts a narrow interpretation of human security, focusing on physical insecurity and "freedom from fear," and consists of seven principles<sup>1</sup> and the capabilities required to apply those principles in practice (a human security response force and a new legal framework). In 2006, the Finnish Presidency of the EU asked the Study Group to look at ways of taking forward a Human Security agenda within the European Union: the 2007 *Madrid Report* proposes to codify a "European Way of Security" and to adopt human security as "a new operating framework for EU external action." The Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy confirms this approach, by affirming that "drawing on a unique range of instruments [...]," the EU has "worked to build human security, by reducing poverty and inequality, promoting good governance and human rights, assisting development, and addressing the root causes of conflict and insecurity" (*Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy*, 2008, p.2).

If we look at the EU's discourse on a comprehensive approach before the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, we can conclude that the EU had substantially adopted NATO's perspective. Within NATO, a comprehensive approach has been developed as an expanded Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), essentially meaning the cooperation among different actors (political, civilian and military) in theatre.<sup>2</sup> This approach was derived from the recognition that military means, although essential, are not sufficient to meet current complex challenges to Euro-Atlantic and international security. NATO's reflection on this concept has itself evolved and in the latest Strategic Concept, adopted at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, the Allies pledged to enhance their contribution to a comprehensive approach in two main directions:

- to work with partner countries, international organisations, non-governmental organisations and local authorities, taking into account their respective strengths, mandates and roles, as well as their decision-making autonomy (*Lisbon Summit Declaration*, 2010, par.8);
- to contribute, when required, to stabilisation and reconstruction through an appropriate but modest civilian capability to interface more effectively with other actors and conduct appropriate planning in crisis management (*Lisbon Summit Declaration*, 2010, par.9).

Therefore, the EU's pre-Lisbon comprehensive approach essentially coincided with Civil-Military Coordination (CMCO), referring to the combination of "instruments across the pillar divide in a coherent manner, aligning EU policy with those of EU Member States and improving cooperation with other international actors in the field" (Eva Gross, 2008, p.7). In the second semester of 2009, the Swedish Presidency of the EU insisted on the concept of a comprehensive approach by translating it into civilian-military synergies in the field of CSDP (Council of the European Union, 2009, p.22). As a consequence, the EU's comprehensive approach has coincided for a long time with the imperative to use all the tools at the EU's disposal (political, civilian/development and military) together in theatre.

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<sup>1</sup> These principles include the primacy of human rights, clear political authority, multilateralism, bottom-up approach, regional focus, use of legal instruments and appropriate use of force.

<sup>2</sup> See the paper "Understanding NATO's Concept of Crisis Management" by Hari Bucur-Marcu in this *Crisis Management Paper Series*, DCAF Brussels, 2012.



In the post-Lisbon period, the comprehensive approach has been developed in a much broader framework, essentially by enlarging its scope and assigning greater responsibilities to the EU High Representative/Vice President (HR/VP) for its development and implementation. The challenge launched by the Lisbon Treaty is to break out of the “CSDP box” and interpret the comprehensive approach in the dimension of the EU’s external relations, with the concurring contribution of different policies and actors (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2012). This development has been accompanied by a reflection on the most appropriate instruments to be used by the EU to provide an added value in crisis management, in comparison and in cooperation with other actors and by a change of focus of civilian-military cooperation from the field level to the planning phase in Brussels. However, the shift from “the question of how to coordinate other tools with a CSDP mission” to “a much broader issue of how to intermingle a range of instruments, prioritize these and centre the work around a diplomatic effort led by the EEAS in cooperation with Community instruments” might be difficult to realise (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2012).

A first indication of this difficulty is the ongoing process for the elaboration of a *Joint EEAS/EC Communication on Comprehensive Approach*, originally expected in September 2012 and now delayed to the end of the first semester of 2013, which should bring some defined clarity and offer a single EU interpretation of this concept. The adoption of this *Joint Communication* is blocked by the traditional inter-institutional competition over spheres of influence and approaches to crisis management. On the one hand, the European Commission insists on the need to respect the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty in terms of division of competences and budgetary responsibilities *vis-à-vis* the European External Action Service (EEAS). This is accompanied by fears of politicisation of humanitarian aid and development cooperation by respective communities of actors. On the other hand, Member States are suspicious about a possible distortion of the scope of the CSDP..

A good overview of the competing visions of a comprehensive approach still rooted in the different EU institutions can be derived by analysing a number of recent public interventions by the institutions’ high level representatives on this subject. In particular, it seems that the stance kept by crisis management structures of the EEAS is still anchored in a CSDP-centred mentality, which identifies the CSDP with crisis management and advocates the need to combine it with other EU tools, i.e. diplomatic, economic, developmental and humanitarian. The HR/VP, Catherine Ashton, has promoted a far-reaching objective for the comprehensive approach, which seeks agreement “at the highest political level, [...] on a set of actions which, in a country in crisis, will deliver a solution to that crisis, and a long-term commitment to the political and economic development of that country.” She refers to a broad spectrum of aspects, including not only the more traditionally known aspects “political, diplomatic, security, military, humanitarian, civil protection, border management,” but also “immigration, consular activities and energy.” The HR/VP intends to operationalise the comprehensive approach “by better linking our conflict prevention, mediation, development and conflict resolution activities,” while the CSDP should be reinforced “both in terms of “hardware” (military and civilian capabilities) and “software” (how we plan and conduct operations, engage with partners)” (Statement by Catherine Ashton, 2011).

The European Commission continues to centre the notion of a comprehensive approach on the elaboration and implementation of conflict-sensitive approaches in development cooperation and the need to address root causes of crises. This is reflected in a constant recall to the European Commission’s work on fragile countries, conflict prevention and peace-building, as well as justice and security sector reform (Speech by Commissioner Andris Piebalgs, 2012).<sup>3</sup> In

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<sup>3</sup> In 2010, the EU disbursed 2.8 billion euro in development aid to fragile countries (38% of total development aid disbursements that year), Commission funding for conflict prevention and peace-

line with this approach, the *Agenda for Change*, adopted by the European Commission in October 2011, advocates a differentiated approach to development cooperation and recognises the importance of meeting specific needs of countries in fragile and crisis situations and of keeping state-building as a central element of support strategies (Communication from the European Commission, 2011).

Therefore, the current debate within the EU is still characterised by the confrontation between different approaches by the EEAS and the EC on “the type and scope of activities included under the comprehensive approach” (Andrew Sherriff, 2013). A narrower understanding defines it as civil-military integration and limits it to crisis management, while a broader perspective refers to an integrated EU policy towards a particular country or region, thus encompassing wider security and development activities in a “whole-of-EU approach,” where the comprehensive approach is the “European way” to do crisis management and comprises the 3Ds of diplomacy, development and defence/security.

### **Institutions and Policies: Ensuring Consistency in the EU's External Action**

The most important contribution of the Lisbon Treaty to the redefinition of the Union's external action *vis-à-vis* a comprehensive approach is perhaps the principle of “consistency”—between its different areas and between these and its other policies—and the attribution of responsibility over its implementation to the Council and the Commission, assisted by the HR/VP (Article 21.3 TEU).<sup>4</sup> In this provision, the Treaty sets the framework of reference for the external action of the EU, both in terms of policies and institutional structure.

At the institutional level, the main innovations of the Lisbon Treaty, and particularly for the EU's external action and its foreign and security policy, are seen in the creation of a permanent President of the European Council (Article 15 TEU) and a “double-hatted” High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President (HR/VP) of the European Commission, supported by a European External Action Service (EEAS). In theory, the creation of these positions should enhance a consistent leadership structure for envisioning a comprehensive approach.

Relating to the articulation of a comprehensive approach in external affairs and the representation of the Union, the Lisbon Treaty states that the President of the European Council “shall, at his (*sic*) level and in that capacity, ensure the external representation of the Union on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy, without prejudice to the powers of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy” (Article 15.6 TEU). At the same time, the Treaty maintains that the HR/VP too “shall represent the Union for matters relating to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). He (*sic*) shall conduct political dialogue with third parties on the Union's behalf and shall express the Union's position in international organisations and at international conferences” (Article 27.2 TEU). Thus the Treaty does not establish how these two top figures should divide between them the task of representing externally the Union regarding CFSP matters and hence leaves to practical experience the definition of their respective mandates. As an additional element of complexity, the President of the European Commission is expected to continue to represent the Union in other aspects of its external relations, such as trade. Moreover, it is worth noting that in the framework of the political dialogue, the HR/VP can delegate the representation of the EU to a Commissioner or to the rotating presidency.

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building between 2001 and 2010 amounts to 7.7 billion euro, and funding for justice and security sector reform in the same period is about 1 billion euro.

<sup>4</sup> The concept of coherence between the European Political Cooperation (EPC) and the Community policies was introduced for the first time in the Single European Act (1987), Article 30.5.

At this stage, it is useful to outline the complexities of the policies, representation and implementation of a comprehensive approach of the departments and implementers of such an approach in the EU structures. Beyond the task of external representation of the EU, the HR/VP is a hybrid institutional figure combining different competences: (a) the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; (b) a Vice-President of the European Commission (in charge of external relations and coordination of other relevant portfolios, which include Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy; Development and International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection but not Trade); (c) the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Council, previously a position filled by the Foreign Minister of the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the HR/VP also has dual loyalties and accountabilities, being appointed by the European Council as High Representative and by the European Parliament as a member of the European Commission.

Concerning the implementation of a comprehensive approach in the specific field of CFSP/CSDP, the HR/VP contributes to the development of CFSP through his/her proposals and shall ensure the implementation of the decisions adopted by the European Commission and the Council in this field (Article 27.2 TEU). Decisions relating to CSDP, including those initiating a mission, shall be adopted by the Council acting unanimously on a proposal from the HR/VP or an initiative from a Member State (Article 42.4 TEU). In fulfilling his/her mandate, the High Representative is assisted by the EEAS (Article 27.3 TEU). It is important to understand the background and current build-up of the EEAS to point to potential tensions from differing structural cultures in adopting a comprehensive approach. According to the Treaty, the EEAS personnel shall comprise officials from relevant departments of the General Secretariat of the Council and of the European Commission as well as staff seconded from national diplomatic services of the Member States (Article 27.3 TEU). The one-third share laid down in the Treaty is being implemented with some flexibility: it has been agreed that by 2013, EU officials should represent at least 60% of all EEAS staff at AD (administrator) level and national diplomats should amount to at least 33%, while the remaining gap should be filled through Seconded National Expert contributed by Member States (Antonio Missiroli, 2010, p.439). Therefore, the new diplomatic service of the EU ambitiously tries to merge at least three different cultures: the Communitarian-like culture inherited from Directorate Generals (DGs) RELEX (External Relations) and Development of the European Commission, which are the most numerous in staff in the EEAS; the political culture inherited by the policy unit and the crisis management structures formerly located in the Directorate-General of the Secretary-General of the EU Council; and the national diplomatic cultures of 27 Member States (Maxime Lefebvre and Christophe Hillion, 2010).<sup>6</sup>

In addition, any approach requires a financial component and, in the case of the EU, the architecture is complicated and cross-cutting. According to the Council Decision on the establishment of the EEAS, the HR/VP “shall ensure overall political coordination of the Union’s external action, [...] in particular through external assistance instruments” (Article 9.2, Council Decision 2010/427/EU). Among these instruments, a distinction has been made according to their programming cycle (Steven Blockmans and Marja-Liisa Laatsit, 2012, p.150). The Instrument for Cooperation with Industrialised countries, the Instrument for Stability (short-term component), the CFSP budget, communication and public diplomacy actions and election observation missions, which follow annual or shorter-term programming, are under the responsibility of the HR/VP and the EEAS. The Commission is responsible for their financial implementation under the authority of the HR/VP in her capacity as Vice-President of the

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<sup>5</sup> The HR/VP is not anymore Secretary-General of the Council of the EU, a position merged to the one of HR for CFSP before Lisbon.

<sup>6</sup> For more detail on the make-up and background of the EEAS Headquarters, see the Annex.

European Commission, and the Department responsible for their implementation—the Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI) Service—is co-located with the EEAS (Article 9.6, Council Decision 2010/427/EU). As for the Development and Cooperation Initiative (DCA), the European Development Fund (EDF) and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which require a long-term approach to programming, any proposals shall be prepared jointly by the relevant services of the EEAS and the European Commission under the supervision of the responsible Commissioner (Development Cooperation for DCA and EDF, Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy for ENPI). They are then submitted jointly with the HR/VP to the Commission for adoption (Article 9.4, Council Decision 2010/427/EU). So we can see that coordination for a comprehensive approach from a financial angle remains a challenge in terms of mechanisms and funds.

An essential and complementary part of the EU structure are the EU Member States. The Treaty also says that the EEAS shall work in cooperation with the diplomatic services of the Member States (Article 27.3 TEU). This provision becomes particularly relevant in relation to those services that are still managed by national diplomacies: consular services (i.e. issues of Schengen visa), reporting and intelligence, coordination of humanitarian aid and evacuation of EU citizens in case of crisis or natural disaster. A constant interaction between the EEAS and national capitals, as well as between the EU Delegations and Member States' embassies in third States, is crucial in order to downsize the risk of the EU having to act through twenty-seven plus-one diplomatic services. As previously discussed, differences among Member States in terms of capacities and conceptualisation of a comprehensive approach represent another challenge.

With regards to the implementation of a comprehensive approach on the ground, after the entry into force of the Treaty, the former EC Delegations have been transformed in EU Delegations and integrated within the EEAS. This is not just a nominal shift, as the 141 EU Delegations have now assumed the role of full EU embassies, with competences not limited—as before—to the implementation of trade agreements, development cooperation and humanitarian aid programmes, but including also a number of foreign policy tasks once assigned to the rotating EU presidency. The idea behind this innovation is to ensure an autonomous political representation of the EU without replacing national embassies of EU Member States. In fact, the Lisbon Treaty itself prescribes that the diplomatic missions of the Member States and the Union's Delegations in third countries and at international organisations shall cooperate and shall contribute to formulating and implementing the common approach (Article 32 TEU). It must be underlined that the coordination and representation of the EU's positions at international organisations remains problematic for those matters that are considered as shared competences between the Union and its Member States, such as development cooperation and humanitarian aid (Article 4 TFEU). Hence a strong linkage between the vision of the comprehensive approach at the top level and understanding and implementing such an approach on the ground by the EU Delegations is needed.

At the same time, EU Delegations still suffer from a lack of expertise on security and defence aspects. Recently, some EU Delegations asked to be reinforced with security experts, including military personnel, and are pushing to become part of the chain of command of CSDP missions. Following recent events in Libya, Somalia and Mali, several of these posts are being already established at the request of Delegations on a case-by-case basis.<sup>7</sup> Moreover,

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<sup>7</sup> Recent examples include: sending a military liaison officer to Abuja to deal with ECOWAS; deploying EUCAP SAHEL Niger liaison officers to Mali and Mauretania; reinforcing the Delegation in Pakistan with a counter-terrorism expert; reinforcing the Delegation to Libya with a military, police and SSR advisor; reinforcing the Delegation in Mauretania with a police expert; embedding support functions for

personnel in the EU Delegations dealing with development cooperation and humanitarian aid still depend on the European Commission and not on the Head of Delegation. This is a point where a weak understanding or differences in enacting a comprehensive approach between the EEAS and the EC can be problematic.

The lack of a strategic vision for the overall development of the EEAS emerged quite clearly through the scattered and contested definition of its architecture, which gave scope to pioneer interventions by single institutions and even individuals. This inevitably had a negative impact on the consistent and integrated implementation of the different policies that constitute the external action of the EU in the post-Lisbon scenario. The overall review of the EEAS scheduled in 2013 should be aimed at addressing the enduring fragmentation among the different components of EU foreign policy: CFSP/CSDP, Member States' individual foreign policies, and external action led by the European Commission (Stefan Lehne, 2013). This would be the only way to create a common framework for a comprehensive approach.

### **The Comprehensive Approach in Crisis Management: Combining and Sequencing EU Instruments**

The implementation of a comprehensive approach in the field of crisis management is based on the institutionalisation of coordination mechanisms among the main institutions involved and the instruments at their disposal. The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty has produced new dynamics of interaction among crisis management actors in the framework of EU institutions and in particular within the EEAS. The results of this development however, remain mixed, at best. There is now a broader consultation among the stakeholders, but their relationship remains highly problematic.

A first indication derives from the difficult coordination among the crisis management structures of the EEAS, and notably between the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD)—which should be in charge of the integrated civilian-military strategic planning—and the Civilian Conduct and Planning Capability (CPCC) – which is responsible for the operational planning in the civilian field. The Lisbon Treaty does not contain indications concerning the respective mandates of the two bodies, while the poor guidance provided by the higher political levels leaves space for personal territorial claims and intra-institutional competition. This often results in inefficient management of the dossiers and a lack of a unitary vision—hence a comprehensive approach—over crisis management issues.

Looking at the interaction between the civilian and the military components, which should represent the core of an integrated crisis management system, we can conclude that they have improved over the years, firstly through the establishment of the CMPD, and then with the implementation of the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty. At present, the main obstacles for the implementation of effective civilian-military integration lie in the financial and command aspects of CSDP missions. On the one hand, civilian and military missions continue to be funded through different financial instruments.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the creation of a truly integrated chain of command encounters a number of obstacles: while the Constitutions of some Member States do not allow the deployment of civilian personnel in operations led by a mili-

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CSDP operations in the Delegation in Nairobi; creating a Rule of Law section in the EUSR's office in BiH, as part of the follow-up to the EUPM mission.

<sup>8</sup> Civilian missions are directly financed through the collective CFSP budget, while military missions abide to the principle of “costs lie where they fall,” with only a small proportion (about 10% of common expenditures) funded through the ATHENA mechanism. In the light of the different sources of funds, a reform of the existing cost distribution mechanism for operations is a pressing issue, particularly for the deployment of larger civilian and military contingents.



tary commander, most of the military constituencies in Member States are reluctant to be deployed under a civilian head. Moreover, while national military authorities are closely involved in the planning phase of EU missions, the situation is much less linear in the civilian field, where the delegates from national Ministries of Foreign Affairs are often unable to satisfy the different interests of the national authorities concerned, including Ministries of Interior, Ministries of Justice, etc. Looking for a way out of this stalemate, the CMPD is trying to promote the engagement of, and strengthen ties between, the national ministries involved in the EU civilian crisis management.

Combining and sequencing the broad range of instruments at the EU's disposal to address crises and conflicts in a comprehensive manner—from CSDP to political and mediation activities, to development cooperation—also implies that crisis management structures have to liaise closely with Geographic Departments within the EEAS. For example, the CMPD and the relevant Geographic Departments work together on a daily basis in the framework of the strategic review of CSDP missions. CMPD is responsible for all the aspects linked to CSDP, while the geographic desks deal with the political situation in the field. Relations between these structures are easy in some cases (i.e. between the CMPD and DG Africa), more problematic in other cases (i.e. between the CMPD and the Department for Western Balkans, specifically on the prolongation of EUPM in Bosnia and Herzegovina and more in general on the EU's presence in the Balkans). However, the relations between the crisis management structures and the geographic desks appear much more effective than before, now that the geographical desks are integrated in the EEAS, when they belonged to the DG RELEX of the European Commission. A good example of cooperation and implementation of a comprehensive approach is the strategic review of the two CSDP missions (EUSEC and EUPOL DR Congo) currently deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). A task force composed by CMPD, CPCC, European Union Military Staff (EUMS), FPI and led by the Managing Department for Africa, has conducted the strategic review of the missions on the field and the timeframe of the European Development Fund for DRC.

The need to translate the comprehensive approach to crisis management that emerged from the Lisbon Treaty into a concrete revision of the institutional set-up and its functioning is the primary reason behind the establishment of a coordinated Crisis Response System (CRS) within the EEAS and the current process of revision of crisis management procedures. Crisis Response is defined as “the immediate mobilization of EEAS resources to deal with the consequences of crises caused by political or armed conflict, technological incidents and man-made and natural disasters” (Note from the Executive Secretary-General, 2012, p.2). The CRS should aim at “facilitating the political decision making *vis-à-vis* a given crisis situation and ensuring the coordination of the implementation of EEAS activities internally and with other actors.” A Crisis Management Board has been established as the permanent entity addressing horizontal aspects of EEAS crisis response. It shall meet regularly, consist of all relevant EEAS services and operate in close liaison with Commission and Council General Secretariat services.<sup>9</sup> A new mechanism to facilitate information-sharing and provide political and strategic guidance for further action and planning—the Crisis Platform—has also been created. It is chaired by the High Representative, the Executive Secretary General or the Managing Director for Crisis Response and Operational Planning, and consists of the relevant EEAS, Commission and Council General Secretariat services. It is activated in response to a crisis and its meetings are scheduled on an *ad hoc* basis.

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<sup>9</sup> Relevant EEAS services include: the Chairman of the EU Military Committee, the COO, the Deputy Secretary Generals, the Managing Director for Resources, the Chair of the Political and Security Committee, the MD CR&OC, the Geographical Managing Directorates, the Conflict Prevention and Security Policy Directorate, INT.

The revision process of crisis management procedures in the EU has been stimulated by the contemporary reflection on lessons learned from the 24 CSDP missions conducted by the EU over the last 10 years<sup>10</sup> and is driven by three main purposes: (1) to enable a comprehensive approach to crisis management; (2) to align civilian and military planning process; and (3) to rebalance responsibilities between EU institutions, notably the EEAS and Member States. As stated in a UK non-paper on the revision of crisis response procedures, the translation of a comprehensive approach into crisis management procedures requires rooting EU crisis responses into a broader country/regional strategy so that the response complements and supports broader objectives while addressing specific symptoms. This has been interpreted as the need to develop Framework Documents that set the political context, clearly articulate what the crisis is, why the EU should act and what instruments are available and best suited for that action. This document should be produced before a Crisis Management Concept is developed and its coordination should be assigned to the relevant desk officers within the EEAS. In addition, Strategic Reviews before termination of a mission and/or due to a significant change in the political context will be regularly developed by CMPD, closely involving all EU services, including EU Delegations. In case of closure of a mission, the Strategic Review should also contain an indication of the modalities for a gradual transfer of CSDP activity to more appropriate instruments, namely the EDF or other financial tools.

### **Testing the Comprehensive Approach on the Ground: The Cases of Sahel and the Horn of Africa**

At the operational level, the real challenge for the implementation of the comprehensive approach in the post-Lisbon era lies in ensuring a sequenced transition between different instruments, within the EU but also with Member States and with all the other organisations that are present and operating in the crisis zone.

However, the absence of a single concept document for a EU comprehensive approach, which should provide a way to update the EU's model of engagement, has not prevented EU institutions and Member States to make some progress in its operationalisation. It is fair to say that the two 2011 Strategies for the Horn of Africa and the Sahel are a specific legacy of the Lisbon Treaty's appeal to "consistency" in the EU's external action (Article 21 TEU) and can be considered as a first attempt to put the comprehensive approach into practice by joining different instruments and through the cooperation among the institutions involved.

#### **The EU's Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa**

The *Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa* was approved by the Council of the European Union on 14 November 2011 and defines five key priorities for the EU's engagement: (1) building robust and accountable political structures; (2) contributing to conflict resolution, particularly in Somalia and Sudan, and prevention; (3) mitigating security threats emanating from the region, e.g. piracy, terrorism and irregular migration; (4) promoting economic growth and (5) supporting political and economic regional cooperation, in particular through Regional Economic Communities (RECs) (Council of the European Union, 16858/11, 2011b, pp. 4-5). The Strategy acknowledges the great diversity of the security threats affecting the area—ranging from violent conflicts, lagging development, unaccountable governance and corruption mixed with societal tensions, absence of the rule of law that has permitted the flourishing of piracy, terrorism and the action of armed groups, inter-state rivalry, persistent poverty, climate change migration, small arms proliferation and lack of regional integration—and at the same time recognises that they are inextricably intertwined (Council of the European Union, 16858/11, 2011b, pp.6-8).

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<sup>10</sup> For an overview of CSDP missions, see [www.csdpmap.eu](http://www.csdpmap.eu).

The implementation of the *EU Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa* requires an effective cooperation between the different EU actors involved – namely the HR/VP, the EEAS, the EUSR, the EU Delegations in the region, the European Commission and the Member States, particularly when they are expected to contribute to a comprehensive approach.

It also needs to combine the different strands of the EU's action on the ground in a more co-ordinated way. Crisis response and management is identified by the *Strategy* as the fastest growing area of EU engagement conducted directly through CSDP and through financial support, especially in Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan (Council of the European Union, 16858/11, 2011b, pp.10-11). The *Strategy* indicates that in future the EU's response should be underpinned by the principles of regional ownership and mutual responsibility, and of supporting the added value of regional cooperation to guarantee peace, stability and development (Council of the European Union, 16858/11, 2011b, pp.13). A number of priority areas are identified for the EU's action: in the field of peace, security, conflict prevention and resolution, the *Strategy* underlines the needs, among others, to tackle the root causes of conflict, to support mediation efforts, to monitor arms smuggling, and to encourage transitional justice (Council of the European Union, 16858/11, 2011b, pp.14-15). Finally, a special attention is devoted to partnerships with the countries of the region and civil society, third countries, as well as regional and international organisations (Council of the European Union, 16858/11, 2011b, p.18).

EUCAP Nestor is the latest mission deployed by the EU in the Horn of Africa with a view to contribute to the development of regional maritime capacity-building in the region: it has been explicitly embedded in a *Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa* and mandated to contribute to the EU's comprehensive approach to fighting piracy and instability in the region (Council of the European Union, 8258/12, 2012a, pp.1-2). This approach to counter piracy is based on the combination of military and legal action with political and diplomatic efforts, as well as development assistance and international coordination. The other two CSDP missions—the European Naval Force Somalia – Operation Atalanta (EUNAVFOR Atalanta) and the European Union Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM Somalia)—currently deployed in the region were reviewed to enhance complementarity between them and with EUCAP Nestor. One of the objectives of the planners has been to ensure coordination between the CSDP missions and the three large projects in the region and outlined below, funded through the European Development Fund (EDF) or the Instrument for Stability (IfS) and managed by the European Commission in the region:

- The Regional Maritime Security Programme (MASE) to support the Eastern and Southern Africa – Indian Ocean Regional Strategy and Action plan (adopted in Mauritius in October 2010) is an approximately 40 million Euro project in progress since 2011. It aims to contribute to tackling root causes of piracy in Somalia, enhancing judicial capabilities to handle piracy suspects, addressing economic impact and financial flows related to piracy and improving regional capacities for maritime security functions.
- The Pilot project on Piracy, Maritime Awareness and Risks, is a 1 million Euro project implemented by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre since 2010. It explores the potential use of tools such as satellite technologies to develop an approach to obtain real-time maritime situational awareness.
- The Critical Maritime Routes Programme (MARSIC) is an ongoing 6 million Euro project funded under the Instrument for Stability that supports maritime security and safety in the Western Indian Ocean region by enhancing information sharing and training capacities. As its objectives significantly overlap with the mandate of EUCAP



Nestor, the cooperation between the two EU initiatives is particularly important to ensure an effective action on the ground.

In the case of EUCAP Nestor, the European Commission proved its willingness to cooperate with EEAS crisis management structures to implement a comprehensive approach. In particular, several meetings were held between DG DEVCO and CMPD during the planning phase. However, at the time of writing, the EEAS and the European Commission are still in the process of setting up a proper coordination mechanism at project level. The termination/transformation of the mission have been taken into account from the early stages of the planning process. The logic behind this exercise is to consider the mission as a means to create the right conditions for the European Commission's instruments to operate through a post-operational support mechanism. One proposal is to maintain mission personnel on the ground after the termination of EUCAP Nestor and attach them to the EU Delegation as technical advisers for the implementation of European Commission's projects.

In the implementation of the EU's comprehensive action on the ground, a special coordination role has been assigned to the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Horn of Africa, which has been appointed by the HR/VP in December 2011 with a view to contribute to regional and international efforts to achieve lasting peace, security and development in the region (Council Decision 2011/819/CFSP). The initial priority for the EUSR was twofold: (1) the Somali conflict and its regional dimension, which entails the need to coordinate effectively the EU's instruments in order to support the role of the UN in facilitating the Somali-led peace process; as well as (2) piracy and its root causes in the country's instability, by contributing to the development of a comprehensive approach encompassing political, security and development areas of EU action and act as the main interlocutor on piracy for the international community.

Beyond this overall positive assessment, it is still unclear if initiatives such as the *Strategic framework for the Horn of Africa* should be considered as the product of a genuine effort to identify a collective purpose for EU engagement and translate the comprehensive approach into practice. It could be asked whether it is more a reverse engineering exercise, consisting in the development of a conceptual umbrella aimed at providing ex post coherence to a number of different and often non-aligned activities conducted by the EU in crisis theatres.

### **The EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel**

The EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, or the Sahel Strategy, was conceived after two years of intense work by all the concerned institutions (EEAS, European Commission, EU Council) and through instruments ranging from the Instrument for Stability, the European Development Fund and the CSDP. The strategy acknowledges the negative impact that the region's instability exerts not only on the development of local populations, but also on the security of European citizens, including the terrorist threat posed by Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM). After stating "the inter-dependence of security and development" in the area and assessing that "problems in the Sahel are cross-border and closely intertwined," the *Sahel Strategy* stresses the need for a "regional, integrated and holistic" approach by the EU (Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, pp.1-2). This approach is articulated in complementary areas of action of the Strategy: (1) development, good governance and internal conflict resolution; (2) political and diplomatic action; (3) security and the rule of law; (4) fight against and prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation (Council of the European Union, 8030/11, 2011a, pp. 7-8).

The resources mentioned in the Sahel Strategy to implement these objectives range from the EDF and IfS to the ENPI, as well as thematic programmes and budget lines such as the Security and Rule of Law Line of Action, not forgetting the possible bilateral support from EU

Member States (Council of the European Union, 8030/11, 2011a, pp.8-9). Some observers have pointed out that the *Sahel Strategy* seems to disproportionately emphasise development instruments to the detriment of security responses through CSDP action, due to the growing instability in the region (Oladiran Bello, 2012, p.2). Another weakness of the EU approach has been identified in the definition of the geopolitics of the region, which does not take into account “the complex interactions among interlinked conflict systems” (Oladiran Bello, 2012, p.2). In fact, the *Sahel Strategy* decided to select three core countries—Mali, Mauritania and Niger—as the EU’s primary focus, thus failing to involve key regional players such as Algeria and Nigeria from the outset. This choice has inevitably undermined the possibility to tackle crucial economic, security, humanitarian and governance aspects through a genuine and inclusive regional dimension. As a result, the engagement of anchor countries in the area and regional organisations such as the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) has been only partial and exclusive, rather than comprehensive and complementary.

In the preparatory documents for EUCAP SAHEL Niger, the different EU bodies underlined the need to implement a comprehensive approach of the EU in order to ensure regional stability, security, social and economic development and political accountability. From the outset of the planning phase, the guiding idea was to complement the planned CSDP mission with other EU instruments in the framework of the *Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel*. In order to foster this comprehensive approach, the EU appointed a Senior Coordinator for the EU *Sahel Strategy* and a Task Force that meets informally two or three times each month and is tasked with the evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy.<sup>11</sup>

The actors involved in the planning process of EUCAP NESTOR Sahel point out some positive developments in terms of coordination among EU institutions after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and particularly as a consequence of the creation of the EEAS. Before Lisbon, the political desk was located at the European Commission either in DG DEVCO for African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries or in DG RELEX for other countries. In the present situation, the political desk dealing with a crisis and the crisis management structures belong to the same institution, namely the EEAS, thus facilitating their coordination. For example, the geographic desk of the EEAS Department for West and Central Africa played a substantive role in the first phase of the planning process of EUCAP SAHEL Niger, especially concerning the political design of the EU intervention and including the evaluation of the appropriateness of a CSDP action.

Moreover, the European Commission has funded and implemented in cooperation with Member States a number of projects that aim to:

- support the justice sector – *Programme d’appui à la justice et à l’Etat de droit (PA-JED)*, funded through the EDF and managed by the European Commission;
- assist the Nigerien authorities to cope with insecurity, social-economic difficulties and the consequences of the Libyan conflict to the north of the country – co-funded by the short-term IfS and Denmark and implemented by UNDP;
- reinforce the criminal justice system in Niger mainly in the field of counter-terrorism through training courses and curricula – funded by the long-term IfS and implemented by a European consortium led by CIVIPOL, a consulting and service company of the French Ministry of the Interior.

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<sup>11</sup> It is coordinated by the Director of the EEAS Department for West and Central Africa, and is composed by the EEAS relevant actors (both Geographic Departments and crisis management structures), European Commission services (Instrument for Stability, DG DEVCO, DG ECHO and DG HOME for issues of counter-terrorism and immigration) and the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator.

Also in this case, a strong coordination between EUCAP SAHEL Niger and European Commission-funded programmes would be essential in order to ensure coherence for the EU's action and mutual reinforcement among the different activities. These initiatives should also be better linked with the nutrition programmes run by ECHO to tackle food security and children's malnutrition in the country.

Political interests also affect the implementation of a comprehensive approach. The cooperation between the EU and its Member States has been difficult since the preliminary phases of the planning process, due to the strong interests maintained by some states in the region. In particular, the decision to deploy a CSDP mission in the Sahel was actively promoted by France, Italy and Spain, while Germany, Poland and Nordic countries were more reluctant. Assessment missions were conducted already in 2010 in Mauritania, Niger and Mali. However, the agreement on a possible CSDP action in the region was reached only in December 2011 and the Council Decision authorising the deployment of the mission was adopted in March 2012. It was the crisis in Mali that triggered the decision-making process among Member States and led to the decision to ensure an EU presence in the region through EUCAP SAHEL Niger, thus questioning whether this action is part of a comprehensive approach or a visibility project. The scope of the mandate and the strength of the mission have undeniably suffered from these political divergences. Moreover, the limited scale and piecemeal approach of both EUCAP SAHEL Niger and EUTM Mali, which should help improve the military capacity of the Malian Armed Forces in order to allow, under civilian authority, the restoration of the country's territorial integrity, generate concerns about their capability to join efforts with each other and link up with other enforcement actions currently carried out by regional actors in the framework of ECOWAS (Oladiran Bello, 2012, p.4).

### **Conclusions: How to Turn Comprehensive Approach into Comprehensive Action in post-Lisbon EU?**

The accomplishment of a truly comprehensive approach to external action according to the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty is a prerequisite to strengthen the effectiveness of the EU as an international security provider. This necessitates a much more integrated framework of inter-institutional cooperation, involving the key policy-making figures and institutions that matter in the field of crisis management. It is worth to recall that “[...] the powers and responsibilities of the HR/VP do not merely constitute “double hatting,” but represent a merging of functions and sources of legitimacy, making her role central to the process of bringing the various instruments, actors and procedures of EU external action into a coherent relationship” (European Parliament, 2011, pp.6-7). A more proactive role of the HR/VP could be facilitated by the establishment of formal mechanisms of coordination with the Commissioners in charge of various aspects of external action—including the Commissioner for Trade—and regular consultation with the President of the European Council and of the European Commission, which share with the HR/VP the external representation of the EU. However, the current fragmentation among policies, proliferation of agencies and partial disconnect between EU institutions and national capitals, represent major obstacles to the implementation of this task by the HR/VP.

The establishment of the EEAS remains one of the most relevant changes introduced by the Treaty. After an initial period of shakedown, the new institution is called to assess its own organisation and performance and deliver in terms of policy output as foreseen in the original plans of the European decision-makers. The ongoing review of the EEAS should take into account a number of shortfalls that have emerged in the past two years and pave the way for the development of a functioning and unitary body, which is in charge of the bulk of the EU's external action and has a primary responsibility in shaping its international presence.

The embryonic institutional culture that characterises the Service is linked to its *sui generis* set-up, being composed by personnel coming from the European Commission, the EU Council and national diplomacies. As correctly pointed out by Stefan Lehne, “to integrate people from such different background into a new institution with its own identity and a common sense of purpose [...] will require strong leadership and a clear vision at the top. But it also needs to be supported by systematic training and by modern management instruments” (Stefan Lehne, 2011, p.6). A clearer strategic direction for the future development of the EEAS is necessary at the highest hierarchical levels: the HR/VP, but also other top level positions such as the members of the Corporate Board, whose functions and responsibilities should be better defined in order to establish a unified and efficient management line. Frequent and transversal training opportunities for EEAS personnel would also underpin shared experiences and knowledge that would favour the aggregation of the various elements in a common membership and hence a sense and vision for a comprehensive approach.

An enhanced sense of ownership by national governments *vis-à-vis* the EEAS as a pivotal element of a reinforced Service is also necessary if a comprehensive approach is to be successful and should be built over time. Here it would be essential for the EEAS to show its added value in terms of policy elaboration and implementation to national constituencies, thus ensuring a growing buy-in on the side of Member States. Additional competences—for example in the field of consular services—as well as increased budgetary powers can help in this direction. Assigning consular services to the EEAS will enable Member States to save a lot of resources and could be particularly appealing for the smallest ones. At the same time, improved responsibilities for additional foreign policy instruments, in particular for the CFSP budget, and the right to manage its operational budget (Stefan Lehne, 2012, p.3), would increase both the national perception of its relevance and the effectiveness of its management functions. A closer relationship between the EEAS and Member States can also be built at field level, for example through sharing of intelligence services, infrastructures and other resources between EU Delegations and national embassies (Stefan Lehne, 2011, p.4).

As far as crisis management is concerned, the Lisbon Treaty has integrated the main structures and the largest part of the decision-making process in the EEAS. Therefore, a better organisation of the Service in terms of management efficiency and integrated functions would have a considerable impact on the EU's effectiveness in this sector as a whole. A functioning system would require as a first precondition an enhanced cooperation between all the relevant actors. The creation of the Crisis Response System can be considered as a commendable effort in the direction of improved information sharing and coordination among stakeholders within the EEAS. However, it represents only an initial step, to be reinforced through institutionalised mechanisms of regular meetings and daily practice of cooperation in a common framework.

For a comprehensive approach to have an impact, it also needs to finally go beyond EU policy rhetoric and function on the ground. Delegations are at the forefront of the EU's presence in third countries and international organisations. However, in order to perform their crucial role, EU Delegations have to be equipped with adequate security expertise and additional functions in terms of management, reporting and analysis. Moreover, with a view to ensure a unitary projection of the EU outwards, there is a need to clarify and coordinate the respective and distinctive institutional functions of the Head of Delegation, the EUSR and the Head of EU missions. As far as EU Delegations to other international and regional organisations are concerned, the expansion of their competences in accordance with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty cannot be accomplished without an increased coordination and cooperation with national representations: the growing presence of personnel from the national diplomatic services of Member States within the EEAS should help in this direction. Finally, the internal

organisation of EU Delegations should be centralised and the current separation between EEAS and European Commission staff should be eliminated in order to make their work more streamlined and effective.

The effective coordination of instruments for crisis management also needs a better cooperation between the EEAS, which is the reference institution in the field of CFSP/CSDP, and relevant services of the European Commission. The Lisbon Treaty has made inter-institutional cooperation increasingly important, as the EEAS has been tasked with the strategic planning of the main financial instruments (i.e. EDF, ENPI, IfS) managed by the European Commission. For example, with a view to combine different tools for the planning of a comprehensive approach to tackle security challenges, civilian crisis management structures within the EEAS need to establish closer links particularly with FPI, EUSRs and projects on non-proliferation and disarmament.

The credibility of the EU as a comprehensive crisis manager has to be restored also in terms of its ability to put forward timely and effective actions to respond to crises and threats. The inadequacy of military capabilities is one of the priorities to be tackled by the EU. The implementation of the comprehensive approach cannot overlook the necessity to rely on a credible military force that enables the EU to intervene in high intensity conflicts—i.e. to conduct humanitarian interventions in order to halt mass atrocities—particularly in its own neighbourhood. The lack of appropriate human resources and means prevented the EU to deploy military missions or had a negative impact on the conduct of military actions. Therefore, the EU must realise and expand its capability development plan in the military field, which should take into account the current phase of economic recession but at the same time rely on the possibility to map, integrate and make better use of existing assets.

The increasingly complex challenges that the EU is called to face through its CSDP interventions will require an enhanced integration between military and civilian components. This integration can only be implemented if a series of conditions are fulfilled: (1) an integrated civilian-military headquarters tasked with the planning and conduct of missions; (2) the revision of crisis management procedures leading to an alignment of civilian and military decision-making, including the harmonisation of timing and responsibilities for the production of the main planning documents; (3) following the example of the UN, the chain of command of civilian and military missions deployed in the same theatre should be unified under the political responsibility of the EU Special Representative.

The practice to include CSDP actions in the broader framework of regional strategies and comprehensive concepts will highly benefit the effectiveness of actions on the ground. However, planning should be improved in two main directions: (1) the identification of the most appropriate instruments for the various activities to be conducted on the ground. While the presence of CSDP missions is essential in some theatres in order to lend political control and visibility of the Union, in other situations it is highly contested; (2) the correct sequencing of rapid reaction mechanisms and longer term support actions to ensure the stability and development of a crisis area, especially by elaborating effective exit strategies for CSDP missions and securing the handover to other EU actors and instruments.

If we assess the degree of convergence by different actors and policies towards the elaboration and implementation of the EU's comprehensive approach, we find that the Lisbon Treaty has marked some progress in the construction of a collective purpose in the crisis management sector, at least at strategic level. Not only has the discourse on the comprehensive approach been enlarged in scope and defined in content, it has also led to the elaboration of inclusive strategies with a regional dimension that involve the entire spectrum of the stakeholders and instruments at the EU's disposal and are aimed at identifying a coherent path for



their respective contribution to common objectives. Nevertheless, a definite update of the EU's model of engagement requires the definition of a single conceptual framework for EU external action and the consolidation of a shared vision among the different institutions—particularly between the EEAS and the European Commission—that are still work in progress. Conceptual clarity and unity of intent—although very difficult to achieve—are the basics for the implementation of a comprehensive approach at institutional and operational levels.

## **Annex: The Background of the EEAS Headquarter**

At the time of writing, the EEAS has been established as a functionally autonomous body, with a central administration composed by the HR/VP, Catherine Ashton, assisted by a Corporate Board, a sort of “quadrumvirate” (Antonio Missiroli, 2010, p.437) composed by an Executive Secretary-General (French diplomat Pierre Vimont), a Chief Operating Officer (former Secretary-General of the European Commission David O’Sullivan), a Deputy Secretary General and Political Director (German diplomat Helga Schmid) and a Deputy Secretary General for Inter-Institutional Affairs (Polish diplomat Maciej Popowski).

The crisis management structures, which were located within the General Secretariat of the EU Council before Lisbon, have shifted within the new Service. Originally placed in the upper right corner of the EEAS organisational chart without a clear connection with the EEAS leadership nor with the other components, they are now better integrated in the system with a direct link to the HR/VP. Crisis management structures include the EU Military Committee (EUMC), the Activated EU Operations Centre (Ops Centre), the EU Military Staff (EUMS), the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD), the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC). Originally placed in the Department for Global and Multilateral Issues, the Security Policy and Conflict Prevention Division, dealing mainly with such issues as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, conflict prevention, peace-building, mediation and sanctions, has been moved within the CSDP structures. The group of bodies related to crisis management is completed by the Crisis Response and Operational Coordination Department and the EU Intelligence Analysis Centre (INTCEN), symbolically located half-way between the Security Policy and CSDP structures and the Corporate Board.

One thematic Department for Global and Multilateral Issues—dealing with Human Rights and Democracy, Multilateral Relations and Global Issues—flanks five geographic Departments – for Asia and the Pacific; Africa; Europe and Central Asia; North Africa, Middle East, Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq; Americas, plus a Department for Administration and Finance.

A Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI) Service incorporates Units for (1) Budget, finance and inter-institutional relations; (2) Stability Instrument operations; (3) CFSP operations; and (4) Public diplomacy and election observation.

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