

Planting seeds and breaking eggs

EU Delegations dealing with peace and security – the Sahel case and beyond

Damien Helly and Greta Galeazzi¹

Key messages

- Peace and security work in EUDs is still a suboptimal combination of influences from EU stakeholders, who will all have to break some eggs to make the best development and security omelet.
- EUDs political sections in fragile contexts suffer from staff shortage on peace and security related issues, thus limiting their ability to better link crisis response to development action.
- DEVCO and ECHO's experience and expertise in the field of security could be better exploited and shared in EUDs.
- Current procedures allow EUDs to rapidly contract development funds to respond to crises but they don't seem to be used as frequently as they could.
- The effectiveness of EUDs development and security actions in fragile and conflict contexts will significantly depend on staff security and safety.

Introduction

Since the deconcentration reform of the external service of the European Commission in the early 2000s, Commission delegations have gone through a series of changes. One – and not the least – of them is to play a more political role in third countries including those where development cooperation and poverty alleviation remains a top priority.² Under the Lisbon Treaty, EU Delegations in the world have new responsibilities in the field of peace and security: they now represent all EU institutions and contribute to the EU's efforts to safeguard its own security and to strengthen international security. Peace and security related issues have also been steadily moving to the mainstream of the development agenda for the EU and internationally.³ The 2013 communication on a comprehensive approach to crises also underlines the

¹ The authors are grateful for feedback on this draft received by Volker Hauck, Frauke de Weijer, Fernanda Faria and Andrew Sherriff. The views expressed in this briefing note are those of the authors and should not be attributed to ECDPM.

² Helly, D. et al., 2013, *A closer look into EU's external action frontline – Framing the challenges ahead of EU Delegations* (ECDPM Briefing Note, 62), <http://www.ecdpm.org/bn62>

³ For an analytical overview of this see with particular focus on the EU see, Furness, 2014. *Lets Get Comprehensive: The EU's Engagement with Fragile and Conflict Affected Countries* (Discussion Paper 5/14), German Development

added value of EU delegations as have a number of recent independent analyses and official EC evaluations.⁴ In Africa as well as in other developing countries, EU delegations thus use ODA to pursue a variety of development and poverty alleviation objectives while contributing to the enhancement of third countries' security, justice and governance systems.

The objective of this Briefing Note (BN) is both to provide the incoming teams in EU institutions with fresh knowledge and concise messages about the peace and security role of EU delegations in contexts of fragility or crisis as well as informing a wider readership curious to know more about how the EU deals with the security-development nexus.⁵ This note uses evidence based mainly on field missions in the Sahel and hopefully provides knowledge or assumptions of relevance to other EU Delegations in other fragile and conflict contexts.⁶

This note first explores EUDs early warning and monitoring capacities before looking at issues related to political and security dialogue and conflict resolution. It then looks at the role of EUDs in crisis response and management. The third part delves into the work of EUDs regarding smooth transitions and interactions between emergency humanitarian action, development assistance and security interventions. Since there are no credible development and foreign policies without staff safety in fragile contexts, the note ends with some points on the way EUDs ensure their own security so as to be able to effectively deliver.

1. Early warning and early action: why political sections are key in fragile contexts

The political role of the Delegation is concentrated in the hands of the Head of Delegation backed up by a political section, in charge of formulating a political approach underpinning cooperation and dialogue with the third country. Heads of Delegations and political sections are at the crossroads between early warning, early action and long-term vision. They are the ones who transform the EUD's knowledge of host societies (including security monitoring and reporting) into dialogue, political demarches and development strategies. Their role in linking fragility-focused and development-driven approaches is paramount.

Political tasks consist of monitoring, analysing and engaging the main stakeholders – including non state actors - of host country politics as well as following and providing analysis on the country's foreign affairs and regional environment. The functions of a political section are a mix of analytical, diplomatic (including negotiation and protocol aspects) and representation tasks. They are part of the early warning and monitoring efforts of the EUD, in addition to security monitoring usually done by Regional Security Officers (RSOs) and other sources of intelligence and information such as the Brussels-based EEAS Intelligence Centre (INTCEN) and crisis rooms.⁷ Heads of Delegations⁸ and political sections have created their own methods of monitoring and political reporting over time as they acquired new functions.

Institute, and in the context of post 2015 debate see, Weijer, F. de, A. Knoll, 2013, *Joining forces for peace post-2015* (ECDPM Briefing Note 53), ECDPM, <http://www.ecdpm.org/bn53>

⁴ Council conclusions on the EU's comprehensive approach, 12 May 14; building on the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises, JOIN (2013) 30 final, dated 11 Dec 13, ADE (with ECDPM), 2011 *Evaluation of EC Support to Conflict Prevention and Peace Building 2001-2010*, Joint Evaluation Unit of the European Commission, European Think Tank Group, 2014. *Our Collective Interest – Why Europe's problems need global solutions and global problems need European Action*, GDI, ECDPM, FRIDE, ODI, September. Lisbon Treaty, Title V, Chapter 1, General provisions on the Union's external action, article 21.2a & b.

⁵ For a wider overview of how the new EU leadership can better respond to conflict and fragility more globally see, Sherriff, A., and V. Hauck, 2014. *A more peaceful and secure world: a more effective response to conflict and security*, DIE, ECDPM, FRIDE, ODI, <http://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/Our-Collective-Interest-ETT-Report-New-EU-Leadership-2014.pdf>

⁶ It is based on around 30 interviews held in the Sahel during field missions in Dakar, Bamako and Niamey, another dozen of interviews with a variety of stakeholders between Summer 2013 and August 2014, and comments from ECDPM staff who have experience with EU Delegations. The two main questions addressed by interviews were: "what is your experience of this EU Delegation in dealing with peace and security challenges? Is this EU Delegation well equipped to address them? Questions on the detailed questionnaires can be sent to ECDPM.

⁷ In some countries, RSOs regularly and formally coordinate with the security officers of Member States' embassies but it is not always the case.

⁸ "Head of Delegation" and "EU ambassador" are used interchangeably throughout this briefing note.

Still, some guidelines are already provided by DEVCO and EEAS HQs on conflict Early Warning Systems (EWS), Conflict Analysis, Political Economy Analysis (PEA) and (post-conflict) context analysis.⁹ As far as early warning and conflict prevention are concerned, a number of guiding tools exist but their existence is still not at this moment very well known by EUD staff. The deficiencies of EU past early warning approaches as well as the key role of EUD's have been well noted¹⁰, and a new system of early warning is in its roll out stage. In addition context analysis and Political Economy Analysis tools are now being viewed again in DEVCO HQ as potential options to politically inform and guide the programming of cooperation funds.

The current perception, in most EUDs consulted, is that **political sections are under-staffed and unable to perform adequately in terms of early warning, context/political analysis and monitoring**. For some experienced practitioners, the most basic and standard staff requirement for a political section, of an organisation such as the EU, in a small peaceful country is a team of at least five individuals: two political advisers (one on internal politics, one on foreign affairs), one press and information officer, one local agent, one administrative agent.¹¹

In some cases in the Sahel region, these practical requirements are hardly met despite the enhancement of the section with seconded national experts (SNEs), as experienced in Mali.¹² These basic requirements must also be compared with the capacities of Member States. For instance the EUD in Abuja has a 4-strong political section, compared with the UK's larger capacities on governance, while around 20 Member States only have a "laptop ambassador" to report on political dynamics in Nigeria.¹³

In case of staff shortage, **the Heads of Delegations had to find internal creative solutions to properly staff their political sections**. Several ad-hoc solutions were found. An option is the official transfer of staff, possessing the right skills and profile, from another section to the political section. A second option, quite frequent and pragmatic, is to use inputs from staff working in other sections (for example those managing the programmes of the Instrument for Stability and Peace, IcSP).¹⁴ In Dakar, the office of the person in charge of the IcSP, regularly invited to provide inputs, is physically located next to the political section. Yet IcSP staffs are not specifically trained as political advisers. A third option is to seek more synergies with the political sections of Member States present in-country, though very little has changed in that realm, according to practitioners in the Sahel region.¹⁵

EUD rely on a wide set of information sources. In case of acute humanitarian crises, field-information from ECHO teams, when it does not endanger humanitarian action or compromise humanitarian principles, is shared with political sections. When EU programmes are implemented externally or via a programme management cell, operational staff contribute as much as other EU staff to early warning and monitoring efforts.

In case of violent conflict or of a military intervention involving European armed forces, the military is another crucial source of intelligence. The quality of the personal relationship between and coordination amongst political advisers of the EUDs and of EU and/or European military operations/missions therefore matters a lot. Regular coordination mechanisms and more informal exchanges can also help build trust. During the EUFOR Tchad/RCA military operation in 2009, such information sharing meetings took place between various European political advisers. In Mali, a coordination format gathering political advisers from EUTM, Serval, EUCAP, EUSR team is operational since 2014. A comparable information sharing mechanism on security-related issues is at work in Niger.¹⁶

⁹ Particip, Dara, GOPA, ECDPM, Punto Sud, Tools and Methodologies for Understanding the Conflict Context, Presentation made at EU External Action: Fragility, Security and Development in a Changing World Training of EU institutions and EU MS staff, Tuesday 15 April 2014.

¹⁰ See, ADE (with ECDPM). 2011.

¹¹ Interview with a Head of Delegation, June 2014.

¹² In other countries with significant political weight such as Ethiopia and Angola, political sections are also less than 5 staff.

¹³ Interview with a Head of Delegation, June 2014.

¹⁴ Interviews with EUD staff, May and June 2014.

¹⁵ "Member States have not made the effort to get closer to EUDs as political partners. They still see them as development agencies." Interview with a seconded national expert, Sahel, June 2014.

¹⁶ Phone interview with an EU official, August 2014.

The presence of seconded national experts - usually praised for their professionalism - in political sections certainly brought additional expertise and experience in EUDs' political sections. Yet it is clear that despite their new temporary official allegiance to the EU as a whole these experts are part of two parallel chains of loyalty: the EUD and their national administration with which they interact in real time if they are requested to provide information. In French speaking Africa, France has a particularly strong and controversial influence and it is frequent to see seconded French experts in EUDs. In at least one case, this has led a Head of Delegation to bypass French seconded national experts when reporting to Brussels about the ambiguous policy of France.¹⁷

Given the potential divergence or nuances between national and EU political lines, EUDs find themselves between a rock and hard place with the imperative to reconcile opposite priorities: **build genuine EU political capacities while relying on or replacing – Member States' expertise.** In such circumstances, the coordination and facilitation role of the Head of Delegation and of the political section is absolutely essential to ensure efficient information sharing. However, many feel the discrepancy between EUDs limited and patchwork political capacities on the one hand, and the width and depth of EU's new political responsibilities in a number of fragile contexts such as the Sahel or the Horn of Africa on the other. The role of INTCEN in collaboration with other early warning initiatives to coordinate EUDs' political sections on early warning is also a dimension worth exploring in that regard.

Despite significant progress made in the last years, EUDs still suffer from a capacity shortage for political and early warning monitoring work within their political sections. They still very much value the contribution of other European and EU sources of expertise and information. The capacity for political analysis of EUDs in the region varies and may depend on the sense of importance attached to the country but also on the ability of the Head of Delegation to obtain from Brussels the creation of new positions or on the attractiveness of the given country.¹⁸ If there is a crisis in an area where they have specific interests, Member States are keen to invest their resources to step up the staffing of political sections. In others, they are not. As a result the EU may still be punching below its weight in many instances. Yet a number of Heads of Delegations, when efficiently informed and well connected within the EU family in third countries, have the ability and power to define a European line that is more than just a common lowest denominator or the mere repetition of the former colonial powers' line.

2. Political and security dialogue

The conduct of political and security dialogue includes the political representation of the EU (conveying messages and positions), mediation roles and participation in conflict resolution negotiation. It is a shared task between the EUDs, the HQ (DEVCO and the EEAS) in Brussels, EUSR teams as well as some Commissioners or Ministers of the Member States when they are delegated specific missions by the HR/VP. Brussels can send instructions to EUDs but it often happens that in volatile contexts EUD staffs have to act without clear directions.

In the Sahel, the EU does not really play a track one high-level mediation role in conflict resolution.¹⁹ In Mali, the EU has worked closely with France's military operation Serval to protect European interests.²⁰ This may have limited but not at all extinguished (it still actively participates in the 2014 Algiers mediation process) the EU's potential as a mediation supporter and perhaps of neutral broker in the eyes of other organisations and actors for whom neutrality and impartiality is an imperative.²¹ Even the EU's role as a neutral observer in peace negotiations in Mali did not go unnoticed and has been questioned by some

¹⁷ Interview with a Head of Delegation, June 2014.

¹⁸ Dakar, depicted as an attractive destination for expatriation, is a case in point in the Sahel/West Africa region. Interview with a Head of Delegation, June 2014. On the contrary, staffs are rarely motivated to apply for positions in Mauritania. Interview with EU officials, August 2014.

¹⁹ For instance in the negotiations on the Mali crisis, the EU is not an official mediator, though it took part as an observer in the negotiation of - and was among the signatories of - the Ouagadougou agreement (July 2013).

²⁰ Remarks by EU HR/VP Ashton upon arrival at Foreign Affairs Council, Brussels, 31 January 2013, interviews with EU officials and statements made under the Chatham House rule, 2014 and 2013.

²¹ Some humanitarian organisations actually decided to stop receiving EU funds in 2012 and 2013 to operate in Northern Mali precisely because of the EU, in their view, had taken a political stance in the conflict. Security risks in Northern Mali also implied specific adjustments to reduce EU visibility.

members of the Tuareg community loyal to the Malian state.²² Indeed analysis commissioned by the EEAS shows that understanding and adapting to the context was one of the first lessons learnt for the EU to find an effective role in mediation and dialogue globally.²³

Mobile and agile EUSR teams are an important asset for the EU as a peace broker or negotiation observer. The representation of the EU (by the EUSR team, the EEAS in Brussels or the EUD) in conflict resolution processes in Mali remains however unclear. Synergies and coordination between EUD teams and EUSR teams are being pursued through the co-location of EUSR team members within EUDs premises (in Bamako for the Sahel, in Nairobi, Khartoum, Juba for the Horn and conflict in Sudan). Chains of command are managed in a pragmatic fashion, depending on individuals' profiles and connections. For instance the EUSR for the Horn of Africa Alexander Rondos had direct access to the HR/VP, which is far from being a widespread practice.²⁴

At the national level, the capacity of EUDs to influence policy dialogue (not least on the use of budget support) in contexts of fragility requires two main conditions that are not always met. One is the ability (sometimes enhanced by a security presence on the ground) to play a strong role in diplomatic dynamics; the other is to have experience in security-related matters.²⁵ In the case of Mali and Niger, while the EU and its Member States have an increased security presence, some international donors wonder whether its political weight and visibility is commensurate with its financial footprint due to budget support.²⁶ Instead, political and security dialogue is held through informal diplomatic talks and the facilitation role of the EU ambassador. The personal touch and style of the Heads of Delegations also consist of building trust and maintaining access to the political and economic elite, together with key Member States and other international partners. The choice here is to act effectively while not looking primarily for visibility. As a result the EU and the EUD are part of the core group for security matters in Mali together with France, the US and the UN.

Whether they are a personal gift or acquired skills, facilitation and mediation techniques both require experience and adequate training. While such modules already exist for HoDs, it could be generalised and made more systematic in crisis-prone contexts.²⁷ In conflict contexts generally the tension between aid effectiveness principles of alignment with government priorities and the EU's pursuit of its own interests while also balancing its values in promoting conflict prevention and peacebuilding has required some skill.²⁸

3. Crisis response: from words to action

European crisis response mechanisms have substantially improved over the last decade and have been widely documented.²⁹ EU's responses to crises are more and more tailored and are the result of increasingly multidisciplinary approaches mixing humanitarian, civilian, military and development expertise. EU Delegations (together with ECHO field offices) contribute to a large extent to crisis response by guiding preliminary assessments, following up on the early design of response measures, and implementing actual decisions and crisis response programmes. Yet few people would be so bold to say that current arrangements are optimal.

²² Interview with a Tuareg figure working for the Malian government, May 2014.

²³ Sherriff, A., V. Hauck, C. Rocca, 2013, *Glass half full: Study on EU lessons learnt in mediation and dialogue*, ECDPM, a Study for the EEAS.

²⁴ Interview with an EU official, Addis, November 2013.

²⁵ For a fuller discussion of EU budget support in fragile states see, Hauck, V., G. Galeazzi, J. Vanheukelom, 2013, *The EU's State Building Contracts: Courageous assistance to fragile states, but how effective in the end?* (ECDPM Briefing Note 60), ECDPM, <http://www.ecdpm.org/bn60>

²⁶ Interview with a staff member of a Western aid agency in Niger and EU staff in Bamako, May 2014. Between 2012 and 2014 in Mali, EU staff increased from 45 in the EU Delegation to over 600, mainly due to an enhanced security presence. Estimates shared by an EU official, September 2014.

²⁷ See for instance the recommendations of made by Sherriff, A., V. Hauck, C. Rocca, 2013, *Glass half full: Study on EU lessons learnt in mediation and dialogue*, ECDPM, a Study for the EEAS and Hauck, V., A. Sherriff, 2013, *EEAS Mediation Support Pilot Project Evaluatory Review*, ECDPM.

²⁸ The evaluation of EC Conflict Prevention Peacebuilding 2001-2010 noted this tension.

²⁹ See for instance early publications on crisis response and management by DG RELEX http://eeas.europa.eu/ifs/publications/index_en.htm. Blockmans, S. (ed), 2010, *The European Union and crisis management – Policy and Legal Aspects*, T.M.C. Asser Press. Biscop S., R. Whitman, 2013, *The Routledge Handbook on European Security*.

The role and experience of the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)³⁰

The presence of staff implementing IcSP-funded programmes is definitely a new variable in the peace and security role of EU Delegations. It has brought **new implementation capacity within EUDs and has allowed the EU to intervene in transition phases** between open conflict, humanitarian interventions and development projects. Although it would be misleading to believe IcSP staff can replace political sections, in some cases IcSP has an exploratory role that allowed the EU to test new grounds and explore policy domains that were beyond the traditional remit of EUDs role. The deployment of IcSP staff in EUDs, which started in 2009 with the creation of 30 positions for short-term programmes (of which 24 with national competences and 6 with regional competences), means that, through the IcSP, a network of expertise is developing worldwide and at the regional level.³¹

The inclusion of IcSP staff in EUDs follows various formats depending on the needs and situation. Some IcSP experts report to the Head of Operations while some are parts of different sections. It is frequent that they also manage European Development Fund (EDF) or other programmes. Conversely IcSP programmes are implemented by DEVCO staff for instance in Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Togo, and Sierra Leone.

A particularly remarkable experience of the new system has been the rapid crisis response in Mali in spring 2013 which led to swift mobilisation of IcSP funds and the implementation of a 20 million Euro stabilisation package.³² EU institutions inter-service fact-finding missions and on-the-spot pre-planning of emergency programmes for Northern Mali have shrunk the decision-making process down to a dozen days, reportedly an unprecedented record for an initiative of this magnitude.

Yet some issues are pending. First, IcSP staff in EU Delegations deal with both the short term component (managed by the FPI service of the Commission located in the EEAS in Brussels) and the long term global and trans-regional component (managed by DEVCO Brussels HQ) of the instrument.³³ The existence of a double chain of command and the involvement of numerous entities make managing the programmes more complicated for some EUD staff.³⁴

Secondly, in the Sahel region, large IcSP programmes often end up being implemented by development or humanitarian NGOs³⁵ while the capacity of IcSP staff for direct or constant oversight is limited. This has three main implications: politically-motivated EU crisis response is increasingly being delegated to competent NGOs, with limited immediate oversight capacities from EU Delegations. Secondly, IcSP staff may in the future need more socialisation with both HQ dynamics or field realities – IcSP officers with both country field experience and thorough knowledge of practice in Brussels are rare.³⁶ Thirdly, despite very clear red lines in the IcSP regulation, there is a risk of overlap between IcSP short term projects and humanitarian work carried on the fringe of the development sphere.³⁷ This risk may require more formalisation in ECHO-FPI working arrangements on the use of respective instruments.

³⁰ The IcSP was formerly known as Instrument for Stability (IfS). See the official website http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/what-we-do/instrument_contributing_to_stability_and_peace_en.htm

³¹ A regional seminar organised by the IcSP Dakar in October 2013 gathered EUD staff (including IcSP staff) on crisis, security and justice matters in the framework of the CODELAO (Coordination Mechanism for EU Delegations in West Africa). Interviews and email exchanges with EU officials, May and June 2014.

³² http://eeas.europa.eu/crisis-response/where-we-work/sahel/index_en.htm

³³ The IcSP provides funding for: a) urgent short-term actions in response to situations of crisis or emerging crisis (component managed by the Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), a Commission service located in the EEAS; b) Longer-term capacity building of organisations engaged in crisis response and peace-building (managed by DG DEVCO). See the official website as well as articles 4 and 5 of the regulation. http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/what-we-do/instrument_contributing_to_stability_and_peace_en.htm

³⁴ Lavallée, C., *L'Instrument de Stabilité – Au service de l'approche globale de l'UE*, EUISS, March 2013, http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief_15.pdf. Interview with IcSP EUD staff, May-June 2014. One example of such complex system is the Sahel Security College programme, the impact of which has been quite controversial

³⁵ In some instances the implementation was done by UN agencies, though their track record is mixed. See the findings of http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/documents/pbp_evaluation_2014_report_en.pdf

³⁶ Comment by EU staff in interview, June 2014.

³⁷ Interviews with EU staff in Niger, May 2014.

Last but not least, the IcSP is currently running out of cash to disburse already committed funds, because Member States are cutting payment appropriations to the European Commission³⁸ – a historically common practice affecting also ECHO on a regular basis. This situation, albeit not new for EU institutions, is problematic since it undermines the efficiency of EU delivery in crisis response. Ultimately, it is for those on the front line, in EUDs, to manage the consequences of Brussels inter-institutional tensions.^{39,40}

4. Security & development nexus in EUDs: from theory to practice

CSDP missions as a security cooperation tool

For the EU, one way of concurrently achieving security and development objectives has been to deploy CSDP civilian crisis management operations in crisis-prone developing countries. **The current trend is to transform CSDP civilian missions into mid-term (longer than 2 or 3 years) security cooperation tools.** Military training missions (EUTM for Somalia and Mali) are labeled as civilian missions but are mostly staffed with military personnel; capacity-building missions for the security and justice system (EUCAP Sahel Niger and Mali, EUCAP Nestor) are also planned as relatively enduring engagements. Most of these missions have liaison officers in EUDs (as it has been the case for EUCAP Sahel) and are included in HoMs meetings and other related EU or international in-country coordination working groups on security matters. **If managed well by the Head of Delegation and Heads of CSDP missions, CSDP assets can substantively contribute to the EUD coordination and steering role,** as it seems to have been the case in Mali since 2012. Co-location of CSDP staff in the EUD building is seen as a contributing factor to coherence in that respect. The challenge for Brussels Headquarters is thus to efficiently and coherently manage the multiplication of parallel reporting and decision making channels while, as far as the EU ambassador is concerned, it is to “coordinate and animate the EU circus in town”.⁴¹

Development tools used as security cooperation initiatives

When they are well designed and conflict sensitive, programmes in the security and justice sectors, that DEVCO and EUDs have historically managed, serve the purpose of conflict prevention by planting the seeds of more stable societies, but contribute also to security cooperation and crisis response. **DEVCO staff actually has a lot of experience in dealing with political and policy dialogue on security and governance matters and a lot of this could be shared** more widely and more deeply amongst and within EUDs.⁴² Still, there are strong ideological, bureaucratic and personality factors which prevent DEVCO from working in synergy with other EU entities on political and security matters.⁴³ Interestingly, none of our interviews mentioned concerns with the risk of “securitization of development assistance” and most of them acknowledged the need for a broader vision of what the EU is trying to achieve collectively.

More specifically, according to some informants the slowness and weight of internal bureaucratic procedures leads DEVCO staff to conclude that their development assistance cannot make a difference in the short term. Furthermore, DEVCO directors and Heads of Delegation are quite reluctant to use

³⁸ Letter to HR/VP Ashton and Member States’ Foreign Ministers by the European Parliament AFET Committee, D (2014) 20065, 17 April 2014.

³⁹ The paradox is that the European Commission itself (service in charge of the budget), despite calls for action by the European Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee, decided not to replenish the IcSP payment appropriation, considering it to be too much of an “intergovernmental” mechanism and thus not a priority. Interview with an EU official, Brussels, June 2014.

⁴⁰ Other challenges are worth mentioning: the IcSP software is technically unusable to programme certain funds in Niger, causing substantial delays in delivery, while IT services in Brussels HQ have been unable to find a quick fix. Interviews with EU officials, May 2014.

⁴¹ Interview with a Head of Delegation, May 2014. In Mali, the risks of the Ebola crisis are also being addressed specifically by ad hoc coordination working groups gathering all EU political stakeholders under the coordination of ECHO. Interview with an EU official, September 2014.

⁴² See for instance the conclusions and recommendations of http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/reports/2011/1295_vol1_en.pdf

⁴³ Interviews in Bamako, June 2014.

derogations procedures for a quicker use of development funds in crisis response,⁴⁴ as DEVCO's top management previously discouraged this approach.⁴⁵ While such procedures were encouraged in some recent cases in the Sahel, further research would be needed to have a broader picture of their usage.

The paradox is that following late DEVCO internal reforms, the DG now lacks thematic expertise to provide EUDs with appropriate guidance and advice on security, justice and rule of law issues. For instance EUDs report of unmet needs for SSR experts able to produce thematic analysis on the security sector to inform the programming of 11th EDF funds. These gaps are not really filled in by the creation of an EU SSR roster initially set up to staff CSDP missions.

Development cooperation in many respects is very much a conflict prevention and peace building tool and the quality of its impact partly depends on the ability of EUDs' operations sections to programme and steer meaningful initiatives that are conflict-sensitive. As far as counter-radicalisation efforts and the prevention of violent extremism – threats clearly identified in the EU Sahel strategy – are concerned, the contribution and implication of DEVCO, at the highest level, will therefore be absolutely crucial.⁴⁶

Another debate relates to the need for military, defence, and/or security attachés in EU Delegations. As the EU has no standing army the traditional attaché function of a representative of a particular military is neither what could be offered or what is specifically required. An EEAS internal paper dating back to 2010 made suggestions to adequately staff EUDs with skilled security and defence personnel. This option was rejected by some Member States, yet the capacity shortage remains and is being addressed on an ad hoc basis. Some security experts de facto play the role of an attaché, other liaison officers – CSDP operations staff - located in EUDs de facto perform EU military diplomacy without calling it as such.⁴⁷ Yet the question remains what specific skills and attributes the EU needs in specific conflict affected countries and whether in every instance a specific 'security official' rather than a conflict and/or peacebuilding advisor or both would be more appropriate.

5. Humanitarian aid, development cooperation and security issues

How to effectively deal with overlaps between humanitarian action and development aid and cooperation? This question has been at the core of the EU's work in fragile contexts for decades. Over time, several labels, solutions and models of action have emerged - the latest being resilience-focused approaches, - showing the **central role of EUDs to ensure smooth transitions from humanitarian to development action and vice versa**.⁴⁸ In the last few years, EUDs and ECHO offices benefitted from a favourable political environment in Brussels whereby the agendas of their respective headquarters and Commissioners converged towards two complementary priorities: populations' resilience and food security.⁴⁹ EUDs and ECHO have therefore been encouraged to cooperate more closely in the Horn of Africa as well as in the Sahel.

⁴⁴ Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Actions (PRAG), Annex A11a, Guidelines on contractual procedures to be used in cases of crisis situations under the EU budget and EDF, 2014. Interview with an EU official about the EBOLA fever crisis in West Africa, June 2014. ADE (with ECDPM), 2011, *Evaluation of EC Support to Conflict Prevention and Peace Building 2001-2010*, Joint Evaluation Unit of the European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/annexes.do?group=A>

⁴⁵ Interview with an EU official, Brussels, July 2014.

⁴⁶ In June 2014, a regional meeting gathered all EU Heads of Delegation from West Africa and high officials from the EEAS for two days in Dakar to discuss regional planning and regional security issues. DEVCO high-level representatives attended only half of the meeting and were then represented only by one mid-ranking official.

⁴⁷ It happened that EUNAVFOR Atlanta liaison officers were co-located in EU Delegations or posted in Member States' embassies in Eastern Africa.

⁴⁸ In Ethiopia the EUD and ECHO work hand in hand on resilience cluster. For each cluster there is a cluster working group with a representative from ECHO and a representative from the Rural Development & Food Security section of the EUD: together they define a joint 3 year logframe. Interview with ECHO staff, Addis, November 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OasN2CQYWrc>

⁴⁹ Examples are the resilience initiatives AGIR in the Sahel and the SHARE in the Horn of Africa promoted by the EU. See the pages <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en/what/humanitarian-aid/resilience/sahel-agir> and <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en/what/humanitarian-aid/resilience/horn-of-africa-share>

The first pre-requisite for win-win synergies is good working relations between the EUD and ECHO, which usually implies geographical proximity. When ECHO offices are located close to or in the same building with the EUD, as in Ouagadougou or Bamako, working relations and communication are smoother, despite unavoidable and usual conflicts of personalities. In this type of context, humanitarian actors and the EUDs all face security challenges, be it related to their personnel's safety, the smooth conduct of their operations and their ability to monitor and anticipate the evolution of the security situation in the areas where they operate. Be as it may, ECHO still has its own Regional Security Officers and its own security rules, based upon its neutrality and humanitarian principles, yet there seems to be no criticism against this set up.⁵⁰

The second pre-requisite is that ECHO and EUD staffs are sufficiently aware of potential synergies between relief and development work. This can be achieved thanks to political backing from the management and through joint training and programming seminars or through Joint Humanitarian and Development Frameworks.⁵¹ The results of joint humanitarian and development work are uneven across the Horn and the Sahel and would require more thorough examination. They often depend on the governance system in a given country and on the leadership of the host government (strong in Ethiopia and less palpable in certain countries of the Sahel) in ensuring sound transitions between humanitarian and development work.

Finally, regular information sharing - including on sensitive security issues - between the EUD, Member States, CSDP missions and ECHO is an essential precondition, therefore the participation of ECHO heads of office in the HoMs meetings is a useful practice. Because ECHO and other EU security actors operate simultaneously on the same territories, EUDs may have a role to play in facilitating their working relations. The signature of ad hoc MoUs between militaries and humanitarian organisations played a useful role in the past in so as preserving the humanitarian space from military interference.⁵²

6. The EU delegations' own security

Internal EEAS data shows that security risks for EUDs staff in Africa remain significant in comparison with other parts of the world.⁵³ A safety concern on the continent is the capacity of host governments to ensure the security of the EUD staff according to the Vienna convention.⁵⁴

Security of EU delegations is ensured by contracted security professionals, Regional Security officers (RSOs), around 75% of whom are police and military officers from Member States.⁵⁵ The RSOs, created in the early 2000s in the framework of the deconcentration reform, establish basic procedures such as buildings' security rules, evacuation plans, secured communications and transmissions. In peaceful times, RSOs cover several countries at the same time while in case of crises EUDs can request a full-time security officer.⁵⁶

Buildings' security has improved over time and is now subject to stricter rules: visitors are requested to leave any electronic device in external lockers before entering EUD buildings. However some staff underline they still work in buildings that do not fully meet security requirements while the HQs' lengthy

⁵⁰ Despite attempts by some Heads of Delegations to impose EUDs' security rules to ECHO offices, ECHO has been very firm on its specificity. Interview with an EU official, Brussels, July 2014.

⁵¹ As an example, a seminar on humanitarian and development challenges was organised in Bamako in March 2013, associating other financial partners and implementing agencies. Another example is a joint regional seminar on programming in Dakar in October 2013 which informed ECHO programming and the 11th EDF programming.

⁵² Apraxine, P., S. Fetta et D. Helly, 2010, *Humanitaire et conflits armés Les défis contemporains*, Hors série. Colloque IESUE-CICR Paris, 28 & 29 juin 2010, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/fr/publications/detail-page/article/humanitaire-et-conflits-armes-les-defis-contemporains/>

⁵³ In Americas risks are high as well. Since we primarily focus our research on EUDs in Africa, we did not specifically look for data on Asia but the comparison with Americas was made to us by a Brussels-based EEAS official in an interview in July 2013.

⁵⁴ Interview with an EU official, Brussels, October 2013. In 2012, crime was the source of 44% of security incidents for EUDs in Africa; 27% of incidents were related to demonstrations against EUDs; 10% of incidents were man-made (usually related to car accidents involving EUD staff or vehicles).

⁵⁵ Interview with an EU official, June 2014. A part of RSOs is made of retired national staff but there is no publically available information on this proportion.

⁵⁶ For instance the RSO in charge of the Bamako EUD is based in Rabat. Phone conversation with an EU official, 24 September 2014.

procedures do not help to solve these issues.⁵⁷ Other internal security functions, including protecting the premises, are fulfilled by local or international externally-contracted companies. Those however do not always meet required standards.⁵⁸

EUDs' secure communication systems are still being developed and remain a EU-wide challenge.⁵⁹ Heads of Delegations usually have secured computers and send restricted RUE reports.⁶⁰ The ACID system allows the EUD and Member States embassies to communicate more securely, but it is not yet established everywhere. For the benefits to be fully exploited, all Member States need to decide to use and set up the system.⁶¹ Even within EUDs assessed in our previous study EUD staff complained about the lack of secure computers available for their use creating significant efficiency challenges.

In the long run, **the effectiveness of EU development and security actions in fragile contexts will ultimately depend on staff security and safety.** So far, staff compliance with security rules varies quite significantly, depending on staff profile. For instance staff are required to go through mandatory training about hostile environment but the rate of those passing the exam proved lower than expected by HQ security experts.⁶²

7. Conclusions

The Lisbon Treaty, following a number of ground breaking innovations in the early 2000s, has led the EU to create new expectations about its external action in the field of peace and security. Beyond this, tailoring development cooperation in fragile countries is becoming a trend the EU also has to deal with. Today there is no shortage of EU strategies, instruments and procedures to promote peace and security in the world. However, **there is currently a shortage of peace and security expertise in EU Delegations** operating in fragile contexts despite on-going efforts made by Heads of Delegation to remedy it. It is still possible, if the new EU leadership wishes so, to make the EU a serious global security and development provider in Africa's fragile regions and more widely through its Delegations.

In theory and practice, **political sections would be the most logical hub within the EUD to catalyse early warning, violence prevention and crisis response activities.** However, those sections are still under-staffed and very much reliant on stronger operations sections that concentrate much of the field expertise, knowledge and experience. Be as it may, peace and security is an already existing strand of the EU's work (and therefore of the Commission's) and is not any longer the monopoly of Member States, the EEAS or CSDP.⁶³ Yet any staff in political sections would have to work closely with their operational colleagues to be effective.

In that respect, **DEVCO has a lot to bring on to the table, provided ideological and bureaucratic barriers are broken down from the very top of its hierarchy. Crisis response derogatory procedures exist for the use of development funds but, as in the case of the Ebola crisis mentioned to us, they are not used as frequently as they could by EU Delegations.**⁶⁴ Member states equally will have to accept that their seconded national experts to the EUDs will legitimately work towards a more independent EU foreign and security policy. Permanent dialogue between security and development expert communities

⁵⁷ In Niamey, the EUD needs to leave the building it is occupying for security reasons. The Nigerien government granted the EU with a piece of land to build a new EUD in the long term. In the meantime a temporary location for the EUD has been identified, which would require renovation works. The agreement on the amount for the renovation is a matter of unfruitful communication between the EUD and DEVCO HQ. There are also concerns about the unmet needs of a bulletproof vehicle.

⁵⁸ Interview with a former staff member of the EUD in Eritrea and EU official, July 2013. EUDs have their own evacuation plans relying on the recourse to commercial means. See also for Iraq <http://euobserver.com/very-private/119834>.

⁵⁹ See for instance <http://euobserver.com/secret-ue/117634> and <http://euobserver.com/foreign/120166>

⁶⁰ RUE stands for "Restreint UE". Other encryption systems are used for different levels of classification. See <http://euobserver.com/foreign/120166>

⁶¹ Other communications challenges remain, for instance staff phones are not protected.

⁶² Interview with an EU official, October 2013.

⁶³ The European Court of Justice's ruling on the ECOWAS Small arms case is clear in that respect. Blockmans, S., J. Wouters, T. Ruys (eds), 2010, *The European Union and Peacebuilding Policy and Legal Aspects*, T.M.C Asser Press, The Hague, The Netherlands.

⁶⁴ Interviews with a Head of Delegation and an EU official, Dakar and Brussels, June and August 2014.

on the virtues of long-term conflict sensitivity will remain paramount to ensure that both make efforts to understand their respective added value in implementing EU treaties.

Peace and security functions in EU Delegations are currently very much disseminated across these entities and shared with other EU bodies – including Member States – operating in host countries. If the EU Member states and institutions are serious about implementing the treaties by strengthening EU external action in Africa beyond the sole bilateral influence of Member States, they will have to find ways to enhance peace and security functions within EU Delegations. Measures to do so at the EU delegation level are to: a) dramatically enhance political sections, b) encourage different staff to cooperate more frequently and efficiently within EUDs on peace and security issues – alongside other policy areas such as development - including through the introduction of more fluidity in staff management c) tap into non-governmental sources of peace and security expertise beyond EU institutions.

Furthermore, re-introducing thematic expertise within DEVCO HQ on peace and security at large would substantially reinforce the capacities and performance of EUDs and favour knowledge circulation to the benefit not only of DEVCO staff but also of seconded national officials and other EU personnel. Indeed staffing in relation to expertise to peace and security has consistently been noted as one of the major problems in enhancing the EU's response.⁶⁵ Clarifying modalities for peaceful coexistence between ECHO and other EU's security actors, including CSDP missions and the IcSP is a task that has to be tackled at both headquarters and Delegations level.

The EU's much vaunted ambition to engage a more effectively comprehensive approach to crises will run aground fast if there is no investment in appropriate staffing at the EU Delegation level.⁶⁶ At the end of the day, empowering EU Delegations would strengthen the EU as a whole to “strengthen international security”.⁶⁷ That means both the security of the EU and the human security of individuals and societies in conflict affected countries. All EU stakeholders will have to break some eggs to make the best development and security omelet.

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info@ecdpm.org
www.ecdpm.org
KvK 41077447

HEAD OFFICE
SIÈGE
Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 21
6211 HE Maastricht
The Netherlands *Pays Bas*
Tel +31 (0)43 350 29 00
Fax +31 (0)43 350 29 02

BRUSSELS OFFICE
BUREAU DE BRUXELLES
Rue Archimède 5
1000 Brussels *Bruxelles*
Belgium *Belgique*
Tel +32 (0)2 237 43 10
Fax +32 (0)2 237 43 19



⁶⁵ See, Sherriff A., C. Gourlay, H. Hohmeister, E. Koeb, 2010, *EU Conflict Scoping Study*, Study for DFID/FCO/MOD, UK., & ADE (with ECDPM), 2011 and European Think Tank Group, 2014.

⁶⁶ For analysis of challenges of EU comprehensive approach see, Hauck, V., and A. Sherriff, 2013, *Important Progress but Real Comprehensiveness is Still Ahead of Us* (ECDPM Talk Points, December) and Sherriff, A. & V. Hauck, 2014, *Will the Action Plan to Implement the EU's Comprehensive Approach Have Any Bite?* (ECDPM Talking Points, 23rd of May).

⁶⁷ Lisbon Treaty, article 21 (c).