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EU Crisis Management
from an Institutional Perspective
Civil-Civil-Military Interfaces, Functional Overlaps
and the Challenge of Coherence

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Abstract

The paper proceeds on the common assertion that the EU disposes of a uniquely wide array of instruments for the management of crises and conflicts, which in contrast to any other comparable organisation (e.g. NATO), does not only include operational means but also a set of political, diplomatic, economic and structural instruments. While this specific feature clearly constitutes an asset towards the ‘outside world’, the institutional set-up underlying this comprehensive profile also bears considerable coordination problems. In the specific context of crisis management, this challenge of ensuring institutional and functional coherence across the whole range of instruments has been addressed in the context of Civil-Military Coordination (CMCO). Rather than just seeking to bring – as the term would suggest – the civilian and the military elements of ESDP together in the most effective way, CMCO aims at the concertation of all institutional actors involved in EU crisis management. Even though in crisis management parlance, striving for coherence to ensure truly comprehensive action has become much of a rhetorical platitude, a clear definition of the specific implications has still not been agreed upon in the literature. Therefore, the paper examines closely the working concepts that have been developed under the label of CMCO. What actually accounts for the challenge of coherence as it is addressed in the CMCO context? Seeking a well-grounded answer, this paper attempts to systematically identify the institutional interfaces crucial to the question and to characterize the extent and quality of functional overlap that needs to be tackled. Coherence in terms of institutional integratedness is assumed to necessitate the reduction of specific effects of dysfunctional fragmentation. The paper eventually comes to show that overcoming this sort of fragmentation calls for more than depillarisation in technical terms, as it has partly been sought to achieve in the Reform Treaty. Generally, the paper is designed as a conceptual and theoretical contribution to a more in-depth understanding of the institutional framework underlying EU crisis management action.
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Introduction

The Asset and Liability of Being a Comprehensive Player

It has become somewhat of a platitude in both academic and political discourse that the profile of the EU as a crisis manager is distinct from other comparable actors, most importantly NATO and the UN. This assertion commonly goes with the mantra that the Union and its Member States dispose of a uniquely wide array of instruments for the management of crises and conflicts. In fact, the general benefit of a comprehensive crisis management profile, which not only includes operational means (both civilian and military), but also a broad range of political, diplomatic, economic and structural instruments, is often rightly emphasised. However, from an institutional perspective, what is repeatedly being declared as the Union’s greatest asset and comparative advantage as a crisis manager – its holistic predisposition and the unique range and variety of policy instruments at its command – in fact bears considerable potential for inter-institutional frictions. In organisational practice, it often constitutes a source of division, and thus, ironically, rather an inherent liability for the Union and the quality of its effective actorness. In fact, the overall success of the Union’s performance in the world stands and falls with the political and administrative ability of coping with the very core features of the EU’s uniqueness as an international actor: its versatility and multi-faceted structural character, and thus, its institutional complexity.

The so-called ‘comprehensive’ approach to crisis management as it is being (implicitly or explicitly) postulated in official EU documents and declaratory statements may to some extent be seen as symptomatic for the strategic rhetorics of power, which naturally aim to emphasise the firm intent of the EU to deliver on its potential. However, the idea of providing a comprehensive set of instruments to be deployed in the service of “a better world” (Council of the European Union 2003) also strongly reflects the Union’s origins as an organisation. As the convenors of this workshop have rightly pointed out in their general announcement, the European approach towards the management of conflicts has generally been “informed by the normative foundations of the Union (and its predecessor organisations) as a community of values […] which shape the [Union’s] efforts to promote democracy, peace and prosperity both within and beyond its boundaries (Whitman/Wolff 2007).” In fact, the declared aim to cover the entire range of challenges posed by today’s complex security environment is consistently in line with the global orientation of the norms and values that the European project essentially builds upon.

Confusingly, but as a matter of fact, these firm convictions about the normative objectives EU crisis management should be based on are not reflected in an accordingly determined and tight institutional set-up. Contrary to the idea of comprehensive action, the Union has no built-in institutional framework that would inherently allow for sound and concerted crisis management. The EU as it presents itself today is made up of a vertically and horizontally multi-layered, and hence, highly complex system of institutional actors, which in essence, would not yet compromise the idea of comprehensiveness. In principle, given the broad range of instruments it has at its disposal, it appears that the Union is virtually meant to act comprehensively. However, the alleged ‘array of instruments’ is spread across the pillars, and thus, divided into different procedural channels of decision-making, financing and implementation. What sounds like a natural given in politico-strategic declarations poses consistent problems: effecting comprehensive crisis management action through the current institutional framework of the Union is indeed a politically, legally and organisationally intricate challenge. The functional fragmentation of the EU’s institutional structures (still) prevents it from performing unitarily on the global scene.
The Quest for Coherence – Not Indeed New

In recent years, the EU’s profile as an international actor has undergone decisive changes. Most importantly, crisis management has been established as a new central element of external action, first in terms of a general strategic reorientation in view of the challenges posed in the Post Cold War security setting as well as a general redirection of most related policies, and later, in the form of concrete operational actions. Through the establishment of a common European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and the build-up of an operable set of civilian and military instruments, the European project has entered a new phase in both functional and institutional terms. Since early 2003, the EU has conducted several civilian and military missions within the framework of ESDP, thus adding an operational element to its foreign political profile. Until then, the Union’s external action had been mainly composed of the EC/EU external trade policies, development assistance and regional cooperation as well as of loose intergovernmental coordination in the framework of the European Political Cooperation (EPC), and later, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

While the newly available operational assets constituted a decisive achievement in the intergovernmental context of the CFSP, they could in turn not simply be expected to functionally complement the range of instruments for external action that the Community already had at its command. Inevitably, the question arose of how these new instruments would relate to the already existing ones governed by the European Commission. Preoccupations about a hierarchic order creeping into the ‘single framework of institutions’ gave rise to considerable inter-institutional tensions between the Community-led and supranational domain of external action (the first pillar) and the CFSP as its newly substantiated intergovernmental counterpart, now featuring operational ESDP. In public documents, these internal struggles were mostly reflected in the form of alleged concern about the ‘coherence’ and ‘consistency’ of the EU’s external action, and respectively ambitious aspirations to tackle the challenge of lacking institutional synergy.

It seems important to acknowledge that the issue of coherence as raised in this specific context is not new to European integration history: in fact, the challenge of having to reconcile supranational structures with intergovernmental elements (or in fact, economic with political ones) is probably as old as the desire to have Europe exist internationally, and thus, also on a political level. As Gauttier (2004) put it, this quest for coherence appears indeed “consubstantial with the external action of the EC/EU.” In principle, the recent debate about coherent crisis management can be seen as yet another episode in this long-standing internal conflict. The proliferation of ESDP operations that came along with a remarkable institutional dynamism within the intergovernmental domain of external action has added new momentum to the old struggles about hard competences and functional grey zones in EU external action. The fact that the current discussions about coherent external action originated back in the earlier decades of European integration should be kept in mind when interpreting and valuating the institutional measures that have recently been taken in order to tackle the respective problems in the specific context of crisis management.

In late 2002, the concept of Civil-Military Coordination was launched to address the issue of coherence in the specific context of crisis management, which in fact, after Cologne, Helsinki and Feira had gradually turned into the central focus if not the very driving power of EU external action. An organisational strategy was introduced under the label of CMCO, which was then implemented through a series of follow-up measures and initiatives mainly albeit not exclusively designed to serve the very purpose of enhancing cross-pillar synergy in crisis management. The ambitious aim was (and still is) to overcome the inconsistencies that functionally divide the Union’s ‘unique’ depository of crisis management instruments by way of ensuring coherence “between the pillars, within the pillars and at all levels of EU Crisis Management” (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2002a).
On the face of it, the notion of “Civil-Military Coordination” conveys the primacy of intra-pillar issues (i.e. of civil-military coordination within ESDP) as opposed to the inter-pillar dimension of coherence (which would mainly concern civil-civil coordination). However, in contrast to what the term would suggest, CMCO aims at much more than just reconciling the civilian and the military elements of ESDP in crisis management; CMCO and all related measures are rather aimed at enhancing the concertedness of all institutional actors involved in EU crisis management to the service of effective and credible action. It is thus indeed intended to involve (if not, in the long run, to address primarily) the delicate question of coordination between the supranational and the intergovernmental domain of EU external action as well.5

Structure

Before the analysis moves on to a more detailed discussion of the CMCO concept and the related follow-up measures, it will reconsider the underlying concept of coherence and consistency both from a terminological and a conceptual perspective. Common categorizations of coherence (horizontal, vertical, external and internal) are discussed as well as the various ‘faces’ (benign, neutral, malign) discourse about the issue may assume in different contexts of political debate. This is thought to ensure that the current challenge of civil-military coordination is viewed in the broader context of coherence and consistency in EU external action, which in fact, has been an issue ever since the European project has gained political and security political substance. Not least because of this historical significance of the underlying question, the paper will then raise some important thoughts about how the implementation achievements of CMCO may be evaluated from today’s point of view.

The main section will seek to give a detailed outline of the CMCO initiative, the political preliminaries, its introduction in 2002 and the way it was presented in the official documents. The paper will then proceed to examine closely the working concepts that have been developed in the course of the follow-up process. Particular attention will be given to the various civil-civil-military interfaces addressed as well as the issue of functional overlap and effectiveness. The section will close with an assessment of the status quo of the implementation process and thereby point out some of the most contentious issues discussed at the moment. The concluding section will wrap up the various points addressed in the course of the study and eventually come back to the question of how the achievements made in the field so far may be measured, and which benchmarks should be used in order to decide about major failures and/or accomplishments.

Objective and Scope

In recent years, various specific processes have been put into place in order to tackle the challenge of coherence in external action. While CMCO is certainly not the first and only measure taken, it nevertheless constitutes the most comprehensive working strategy introduced in the specific context of crisis management so far. Building on this assumption, this paper takes the CMCO initiative as an empirical point of reference for a broader discussion about the evaluation of coherence in EU external action and crisis management respectively. While the limited scope of the paper will not allow for the development of a comprehensive theoretical standpoint on the issue, it will seek to bring up a set of important points of reflection in order to stimulate further discussion.
The Terms of the Debate: Coherence and Consistency Reconsidered

Coherence and Consistency – Theoretical and Conceptual Delimitation

Institutional coherence has been an issue since the very beginning of the European integration process. Next to political discourse, also in the legal domain, the general idea of coherence has traditionally played an important role. In 1987, the Single European Act (SEA) introduced a coherence requirement, which was subsequently adopted in the TEU of Maastricht, the Treaty of Amsterdam, and eventually, the Treaty of Nice. However, Bertea (2005) has a point when stating that, despite being consistently present in treaty language and political discourse, the notion has remained “inherently elusive and slippery” to this day. It has to be emphasised that in EU legislation, ‘coherence’ is often used interchangeably with other similar or related concepts (most importantly, ‘consistency’). In general, confusion is greatest when it comes to the translation of the treaties into various different Community languages: the French “cohérence” is commonly translated into English as “consistency” (instead of “coherence”) while it remains “Kohärenz” in German, “coherencia” in Spanish, and “coerenza” in Italian.

These ambiguities in translation make it very difficult to grasp the conceptual distinction that some legal theorists draw between the two terms. Even though there is no general agreement on the legally defining features of ‘coherence’ and ‘consistency’, there is a broad consensus in the literature about their basic conceptual diversity (Tietje 1997; Cremona 1999; Missiroli 2001b; Bertea 2005). ‘Coherence’ is commonly considered as superordinate to the notion of ‘consistency’; it is seen to comprise a set of provisory and “more primitive” conditions which are to be allocated at a minor stage of structural harmonisation, including ‘consistency’ as much as other secondary factors like comprehensiveness, completeness and continuity (Bertea 2005). ‘Consistency’ is thought to constitute sort of a “minimal requirement” which mainly involves the “absence of contradictions”, while ‘coherence’ is about increased systemic synergy, and hence, is to be seen as more of a “desirable plus” that involves “positive connections” (Missiroli 2001b). Gauttier (2004) suggests a similar interpretation for the specific context of EU external action, inferring that “[…] coherence encompasses both the absence of contradictions within the external activity in different areas of foreign policy (consistency), and the establishment of a synergy between these aspects.” Missiroli (2001b) additionally emphasises the “difference of stricture” between the two terms, stating that “it is quite conceivable that something is more or less coherent, while something cannot be more or less consistent – it is, or it is not [original emphases].” What could be added to this statement is that, logically, each term refers to a different ontological context. While ‘consistency’ mainly describes the character of an outcome or state, which is compatible with (or making good sense with respect to) another or not, ‘coherence’ rather specifies the quality of a process, in which the single entities involved, ideally, join together in a synergetic procedural whole.

In treaty language and also in political practice, this sort of conceptual disambiguation appears to have only little relevance. However, for analytical purposes, it remains important to differentiate between the meanings and implied specifications of both. Declining the broader notion of coherence/consistency into single conceptual elements in this and other ways certainly helps the analytical eye to untangle the complex set of institutional issues that the current debate on coherent crisis management and the implementation of CMCO respectively, is bringing to question. As will be shown in the specific context of CMCO, comprehensive crisis management action challenges the ‘minimal requirements’ (e.g. consistency and continuity) as much as it calls for enhanced coordination that strives towards coherence, and ultimately, towards strategic and procedural unity.
Vertical, Horizontal, Internal and Cross-Organisational Coherence

Apart from its ambiguous and very broad figurative meaning, the concept of coherence can be said to bear relevance in four very specific contexts of EU external action, and crisis management respectively (for various suggestions of categorization, see Bertea 2005; Gauttier 2004; Missiroli 2001b, a; Nuttall 2001, 2005):

- Vertical coherence means the concertation of Member State positions and policies with and in respect of the overall consensus or common position at the Community or Union level. It thus includes solidarity, bottom-up commitment to integration, compatibility, readiness to comply as well as top-down harmonisation and regulation.8

- Horizontal coherence, in turn, is concerned with the concertation at Community and Union level, including the coordination of respective actions, procedures and decisions between the main institutional entities of the supranational/integrationist and the intergovernmental domain of EU external action. In concrete terms, it challenges the relationship between the Council/Second Pillar and the Commission/First Pillar, and is thus equivalent to the notion of “inter-pillar coherence.”9

- Internal coherence is concerned with the sound management within each domain, hence with the systemic intra-pillar functioning of the CFSP/ESDP on the one hand and the external aspects of the Community domain on the other.

- Cross-organisational or external coherence is related to the way the EC/EU presents itself to third parties or within a multilateral system, thus having major importance for the Union’s relationship with the UN, OSCE, NATO or with international partners such as the US.

In principle, the four different elements are inherently linked to, and partly, mutually reinforce each other. The following graph seeks to illustrate in what way these various dimensions of coherence relate to each other, which – as will be shown – is not least reflected in organisational approaches like CMCO. The horizontal dimension lies closest to the core notion of coherence as primarily addressed in this paper. In principle, it also constitutes the most crucial element of the CMCO initiative, which through its focus on the inter-pillar issue of coherence, is intended to move concerted action closer to unitary action.10 The idea of internal and intra-pillar coherence, however, remains important as well, both with respect to the first pillar and to the CSFP/ESDP, since the concertedness within each of the domains also has an impact on the quality of and potential for horizontal coherence. The achievement of horizontal coherence in turn, is inherently connected with the compatibility, interoperability and credibility of the Union as a bilateral or multilateral partner, hence with its cross-organisational and external coherence. This is also what makes the enhancement of horizontal coherence such a pressing challenge: despite all internal struggles and the inherent challenge of having to cope with complexity, the Union is increasingly perceived as (and expected to act like) a comprehensive if not unitary actor.
The Three Faces of Coherence/Consistency in EU External Action

The variety of terminological variations commonly employed in Euro-talk, such as ‘acting as a whole’, ‘speaking with one voice’, ‘consonance’, ‘unity’, and ‘consistency’, all of which in principle, express the core idea of striving for unified cohesion and ultimate structural integratedness, blurs the conceptual picture of ‘coherence’ considerably. However, in a way, the multitude of expressions appearing in official documents and in political debate also stand for the figurative meaning that coherence/consistency bears in the specific context of EC/EU external action. As the following extract from the TEU shows, the coherence/consistency requirement appearing in the treaties and other pieces of EC/EU legislation carries a strong normative connotation.

“The Union shall be served by a single institutional framework which shall ensure the consistency and the continuity of the activities carried out in order to attain its objectives […] (TEU Nice 2002: Art. 3).”

The concept conveys the general aspiration of acting with ever more unity, of becoming more united, more cohesive, and thus, of moving closer to an indefinite level or optimum of integration. Hence, it is positively loaded in the sense that it directly appeals to the very core objectives of integration. The normative charge becomes even more evident when the treaty turns to external action and the EU’s “activities as a whole” and “to this end”:

“The Union shall in particular ensure the consistency of its external activities as a whole in the context of its external relations, security, economic and development policies. The Council and the Commission shall be responsible for ensuring such consistency and shall cooperate to this end (TEU Nice 2002: Art. 3).”

The positive expectation lying behind this quest for inter-institutional (Council-Commission, Member States-Union, Union-Community) coherence clearly builds on the intuitive hope that more coherent internal structures necessarily translate into more successful and more efficient external action (Missiroli 2001b, 2003).11 In fact, apart from the treaties, most key documents on the issue argue on the hopeful assumption that enhanced coherence will result in more effective actorness, and ultimately, in a different quality of ‘union’ – the one actually bringing and effecting ‘unity of action’ (see e.g. European Commission 2006)

This leads us to the distinction of various notional implications or ‘faces’ that coherence may assume in different argumentative contexts (Nuttall 2001, 2005 ; see also Missiroli 2001b):

- the “banal” or neutral meaning is equivalent to the technical quest for the ‘absence of contradictions’ between various policy strands and institutional domains. It is fairly devoid of normative connotation, and instead closely determined by practical necessity and the imperative of functionality;
- the “malign” take and power-related subtext of the concept is about the internal struggles between institutions, which commonly arise whenever ‘coherent’ procedures are being established and respective reforms are taking place within a compound and inherently polycentric bureaucratic apparatus like the EU (Bertea 2005);
- the “benign” meaning takes coherence/consistency as the positive interaction between the institutional players bound ‘to the service of a common purpose.’ This notion also bears a constructive element as continuous joint pursuance of this purpose is expected to first generate a different, more integrative quality of interaction, which then, in the long run, results in a state of ultimate systemic integrity and unity.

As the third ‘benign’ interpretation involves instructive requirements (‘the common purpose’), out of the three, it certainly comes closest to the figurative notion predominant in the treaties. In official EU practice, this instructive quest for coherence is recurrently employed in declarations and legal provisions in order to indicate finality, i.e. to hint at the direction that institutional integration should principally follow.
Most concrete measures intended to tackle the problem of incoherence, or in fact, to make institutional realities move closer to the aspired state of “acting as a whole”, in the first place, adhere to the neutral reading of coherence as laid down above. Hence, they focus on ensuring the ad-hoc ‘absence of contradictions’ in technical terms, until more extensive measures are agreed upon by the Member States or on an inter-institutional basis. In spite of all this actual pragmatism, the normative quest for coherence and ‘benign’ take certainly remains present at all times, namely in the form of documents and declaratory statements that guide and frame this sort of implementation work (e.g. the ESS in the case of CMCO implementation).

Investigating Institutional Realities – A Case for Normative Expectations?

Needless to say, in official documents, inter-institutional communication and practice, the malign aspect of coherence hardly ever appears in explicit terms. It is different, of course, when it comes to the critical reception of the issue in academia. In order to illustrate the puzzle about studying this sort of inter-institutional matters, many scholarly analyses, in the first place, point at the malign ‘turf battles’ between rivalling institutions, ‘pillarized’ bureaucratic cultures and the multiple instances of alleged functional fragmentation, overlap and duplication between the pillars (see e.g. Duke 2006b; Schroeder 2006a; Kurowska 2007; Emerson and Gross 2007; Juncos 2007). It does not come as a surprise that most of them draw their fascination from indicators of incoherence instead of taking exception to the allusive and declaratory requirements laid down in the treaties and official documents. However, surprisingly, the benign reading of coherence and the dictate of normative requirements it entails, are again often dominant when these studies come to the overall evaluation of the status quo and the achievements made in enhancing coherence, and more importantly, in establishing ‘genuinely’ coherent procedures and structures.

The quest for ‘coherent and constructive interaction in the service of a common purpose’ in fact not only lies behind most of the political and declaratory statements on enhancing coherence and effectiveness, it also constitutes a recurrent motive and argument in scholarly contributions whenever they are about rating the institutional output in EU external action and identifying the alleged lapses, inconsistencies and shortcomings still in place. Technical ad-hoc achievements in eliminating contradictions and progressively streamlining inter-institutional procedures are often accounted insufficient as long as grand scale coherence in terms of a ‘synergetic procedural whole’ – and appropriate to the ambitious objectives voiced in declarations – has not been achieved. Contributions following this argumentative pattern seem to insist on the benign willingness of the institutional actors involved to commit themselves unselfishly and in the service of the common purpose, in other words, they build on the hopeful normative expectation that also lies at the core of the coherence/consistency requirement in the treaties. Therefore, this analytical perspective is equally prone to assume a direct if not natural link between enhanced structural coherence and increased effectiveness (Missiroli 2001b, 2003).

De Wilde and Glume (2004) have brought up a few important considerations on this general trend in ESDP studies, which so far, however, have not received appropriate attention in the research community. They raise the intriguing question, whether coherence in the sense of unitary action is a suitable theoretical benchmark and point at the analytical dead end this sort of normative approach might lead to if applied in a policy field as inherently “pragmatic and incremental” as EU external action. This argument essentially builds on the assumption that imposing coherence does neither by all means enhance unity of action nor necessarily result in more effective action (see also Peen Rodt and Wolff 2007). This goes with the supposition that effectiveness is not necessarily (and exclusively) the result of integrated and neatly interlocking institutions. As will be argued below, in the long run, pragmatic inter-action and ad-hoc styled (and thus, in principle, not ‘genuinely’, systematically and formally coherent) procedures may also – if not rather – lead to a more effective performance.
Ensuring Coherence Within and Across Pillars

Preliminaries: Tracing the Origins of the Current Debate

The idea of coherent institutional action has been an issue ever since the Merger Treaty (1965) established a single Council and a single Commission for the European Communities, and thus, a “single set of institutions” to exercise the powers conferred to them by the treaties. Early episodes of the debate occurred in the course of the 80s, while the institutionalisation of the then informal EPC began to take shape. When EPC was eventually adopted in the Single European Act (SEA) in 1987 as a first albeit weak form of ‘political Europe’, the issue arose of how these early intergovernmental attempts of giving the internal market a foreign policy dimension could be reconciled with the then established supranational framework of the Community. Nuttall (2001) has a point when stating that today’s fragmentation of the EU’s external profile originated in this very context, when “at the insistence of France, EPC and the Community were kept as far as possible in hermetically sealed compartments.” As the dysfunctional division between economic and (then) diplomatic foreign policy was consolidated, lacking consensus for integration was partially compensated with mere interaction, and coherence became “the art of managing the interface (Nuttall 2001).”

The following Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) did not find any solution for the settlement of the EPC-Community divide. The establishment of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) rather complicated the picture, as the institutional background it provided for the political cooperation among the Member States reinforced the pre-established dualism between supranational integration and intergovernmental cooperation instead of removing it (Gauttier 2004). The choice for a pillar structure and for the establishment of a ‘Union’ to back the ‘Community’ politically, determined the course of institutional developments for the years to come. With both consecutive treaty revisions (1997 and 2000) Member States equally failed to resolve at least part of the problem, and thus, had to leave the settlement of institutional fragmentation to practice. In fact, the Nice Treaty confirmed the dualist logic, so that legally, the options for the post-Cologne fledgling ESDP and crisis management respectively, were limited from the beginning. It was in this very setting at the beginning of 2000, shortly before the IGC was launched, when Chris Patten, then Commissioner for External Relations, in the context of a series of public speeches about the “EU’s Evolving Foreign Policy Dimension”, initiated a general debate about the division of competences and responsibilities in EU external action, and more generally, about the overall finality of the Union’s external actorness and role in the world (Patten 2000a, b, c). This debate did not in the first place deal with the CFSP, let alone with exclusively ESDP-specific issues or crisis management. However, in a way, it touched upon many important issues that concerned the future development and scope of the ESDP, and thus considerably influenced the discussion about coherent crisis management.

CMPs: Towards Coherent Procedures

The issue of coherence in the specific context of crisis management gained considerable momentum while the preparations for the formal establishment of the permanent political and military structures for the ESDP were about to be finalised: In November 2000, the Council Secretariat delivered a reference framework for the coherent and effective management of “any crisis the Union might have to face”, stating that

“A coherent framework needs to be defined within which instruments coming under the various pillars and the competence of different institutions and bodies are implemented in synergy. This is a complex task [which] is due to the existence of decision-making mechanisms peculiar to each pillar, and to the fact that the institutions and their various subordinate bodies have distinct (and occasionally exclusive) powers and prerogatives under the Treaties (Secretary-General/High Representative 2000b).”

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After the first recommendations given in this context had been endorsed in the Presidency Conclusions at the European Council in Nice in December 2000, a first draft of more detailed “Suggestions for Procedures for Coherent, Comprehensive EU Crisis Management” (later referred to as the CMP/Crisis Management Procedures) was delivered in January 2001. The document provided suggestions for inter-institutional procedures for each specific phase of the conflict cycle, thus trying to basically cover the whole range of possible actions from the routine phase to the post-conflict reconstruction phase (Council Secretariat 2001). Arranged in the form of a “living document”, it was meant to be completed incrementally according to the results achieved in Crisis Management Exercises (CMEs) as well as through further revision within the respective working bodies, mainly the Politico-Military Group (PMG), and following the advice of the EUMC and CIVCOM. In 2001, conceptual works on the issue of procedural coherence were continued throughout both the Swedish and the Belgian Presidency; seminars and workshops were conducted to reflect the various practical challenges that comprehensive multi-pillar action would involve in practice.

In principle, the CMPs were continuously revised until the first ESDP missions were launched in 2003. Up to this point, the initial draft, whose focus had been mainly military, was developed into a fairly complete catalogue comprising the whole range of civil-military crisis management instruments, and roughly indicating the apposite and viable procedures for most imaginable operational settings and scenarios. Apart from the increasing focus on the civilian elements, with each revision, the respective role of the Commission was also taken into account more and more explicitly. Even though the specific model of a comprehensive CMP catalogue was abandoned in the course of the following years, the overall importance of the measure remains. Some critics tend to misinterpret the fact that the CMP process has not been continued after 2003 (e.g. Schroeder 2007). In the overall institutional context of early ESDP implementation, however, the mere act of developing this sort of procedural inventory clearly constituted an important mind mapping exercise serviceable to all institutional entities involved. Taking note of the range of instruments at hand including the procedural implications certainly helped to identify organisational shortfalls, which in turn provided guidance for further exercise planning.

**CMCO: Recalibrating External Action**

After the first steps with respect to the procedural aspects of coherent crisis management had been taken, the debate was again fuelled in the context of the Laeken Declaration on the operational capability of the ESDP (December 2001) as it marked a new stage in the development of the Union’s security political actorness. After months of internal discussions at working group level, in June 2002, the Spanish Presidency mandated its successor to “further strengthen the EU’s crisis management mechanisms […] by developing the conceptual and practical aspects related to civil-military co-ordination (Presidency of the Council 2002).” In line with the Spanish mandate, and following a request from the PSC, in September 2002, the Council Secretariat and the Commission delivered a joint note about the issue (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2002a), which however, for the moment, only contained a description and analysis of previous and current inter-institutional practice. The joint contribution defined the general scope of the initiative as follows:

“Civil-military coordination (CMCO) in EU crisis management is understood to encompass both civil-civil and civil-military coordination as well as ‘internal’ (intra and inter-pillar) and ‘external’ (between EU and other actors). It is understood to be required at all levels of EU crisis management, i.e. in Brussels, between Brussels and the field and in the field (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2002a).”

From this point onwards, the complexity of issues related to inter-institutional coherence in EU crisis management was commonly referred to as CMCO (Civil-Military Coordination). The way the concept was arranged at this point was clearly symptomatic of the institutional
specificities of the EU as an external actor, meaning its characteristic multi-pillar structure, the separation of supranationally and intergovernmentally directed policies, and the resulting fragmentation of its instruments for crisis management. Interestingly, following a few tentative ‘common’ suggestions and remarks given in the brief introductory statement, the main part of the ‘joint’ note presented itself in two separate sections, one pertaining to “the point of view of the CGS” and another to “the point of view of the COM.” Both parties thus had the opportunity to submit their suggestions for enhancing coordination in crisis management without necessarily having to come to a consensus in the first place. It is probably needless to say that both sides employed considerably different argumentative strategies: while the CGS contribution was prone to immerse in practical details and meticulous disquisitions about certain procedural practices, the Commission rather adopted a declaratory and narrative style, obviously intending to make its position clear about the finality and scope that ESDP crisis management should adopt with respect to the Community’s external action. In some parts, the Commission statement appears defensive, making repeated allusions to the danger of functional duplication, and insisting on the value and significance of the know-how and experience in conflict prevention and civilian crisis management available in the Community context. The CGS position in turn appears rather cooperative and pragmatic in tone, while it remains reluctant to address the sensitive issue of functional inter-pillar overlap directly (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2002a).

Civil-Civil-Military Interfaces

Given the complexity and variety of issues addressed, it is a great challenge to untangle the conceptual foundations that CMCO essentially builds upon. Generally, the CMCO policy documents that have been developed after 2002 as well as all related conceptual works on the issue were dedicated to the intricate challenge of having to deal with increasingly complex crisis situations through a rich yet largely fragmented and sectionalised institutional set-up. More specifically, the CMCO concept was thought to enhance coordination (and thus, coherence) across various civil-civil and civil-military interfaces potentially in place during or in the wider context of operational action in the ESDP framework. In contrast to what the term would suggest, the CMCO conception is neither restricted to the ESDP domain, nor is it exclusively concerned with managing the relationship between civilian and military components of crisis management. In fact, particularly by including e.g. coordination issues in the routine phase, and thereby, overtly addressing the role of i.a. the Commission and its administrative services, the concept clearly goes beyond the narrow framework of operational ESDP. Its broad focus comprises all elements of EU external action that in some way or another may assume a role or function in the context of managing crises and conflicts, including also continuous risk assessment, monitoring efforts and prevention. Hence, in a way, it is concerned with operational crisis management in the ESDP framework as much as with all thematic and geographical policies, external cooperation programmes and activities directed by the Community, that bear – at least theoretical or potential – relevance for the implementation of comprehensive crisis response, crisis management and preventive action. This very broad approach probably seeks to reflect the complexity of today’s crises, which often result from a mixture of combined and inter-related factors of insecurity, e.g. ethnic conflicts in particularly ill-conditioned countries that find themselves “caught in a cycle of conflict, insecurity and poverty (Council of the European Union 2003).”

In short, CMCO is intended to tackle the administrative and political challenge of coordinating the EU’s instruments at hand (including diplomacy, civil-military operational capacities, trade, development, humanitarian aid) to the service of a combined, effective and tailor-made crisis response capability. The specific civil-civil and civil-military interfaces that indeed need to be ‘coordinated’ for this purpose comprise both institutional entities as such as well as the policy domains that each of them is responsible for or primarily involved in. CMCO thus appeals to all dimensions of coherence:
- the inter-pillar or horizontal dimension, while focussing on civil-civil/civil-military interfaces (and – as will be shown – overlaps) between the pillars, i.e. mainly between the Community domain of external action and ESDP, and accordingly, between the Council and the Commission apparatuses;¹⁹
- intra-pillar or internal coherence, comprising all inter-institutional actions and procedures within each of the two domains (e.g. between the Council Secretariat and the various Council working bodies, or between various DGs/administrative bodies of the Commission);
- external or cross-organisational coherence, by aiming at the improvement of the EU’s profile as an international and multilateral partner in EU crisis management;
- vertical coherence, by seeking to streamline inter-institutional action at the Union level before they are circulated to the Member States involved.²⁰

Even though the aspects of coordination concerning the external dimension of coherence, i.e. the relationship with third parties (multilateral actors and partners), and also the question of bringing the Member States in more directly by enhancing vertical coherence, are regularly mentioned in the context of CMCO, the main focus of the concept nevertheless lies on the first two issues: the one of inter-pillar/horizontal coordination and the one of intra-pillar/internal coordination.²¹

**Coherence Within Pillars: Intra-Pillar Coordination**

Understandably, in the first few years of the ESDP development, the implementation of measures to settle the intra-pillar issues of coordination has been incomparably smoother and indeed more dynamic than the reconciliation of inter-pillar frictions. As for the ESDP domain, it may be assumed that institutional developments and current adaptations have largely been pushed by increasing political ambitions within the EU and by the outside expectations voiced by international partners and other collective actors. Internal adaptations within the Community set-up in turn have been strongly inspired if not provoked by the new dynamism in the CFSP domain (Emerson and Gross 2007). The progressive substantiation of ESDP, and the enhanced visibility of the achievements made in the context of strategic planning and capability development challenged the Community’s profile as an international security and stability provider considerably. However, part of what has been sought to achieve in order to enhance intra-Community coordination in external action was also related to the general redirection of external Community policies after the end of the Cold War. Intra-pillar innovation processes e.g. in the field of external aid, have been pursued largely detached from the respective institutional developments in CFSP/ESDP. This implies not least that also the framework of CMCO – as the CGS initiative that it substantially was and is – has not been used by the Commission as an arena for the settlement of its intra-pillar issues in the first place.²²

In the CMCO context, most particularly in early contributions on it, the Commission presented the Community rather as a complete, capable and thus competitive framework for (if not a counterpart to) what was being built up in the ESDP framework, most importantly in the civilian field. The Commission had, for instance, recently provided itself with new financing instruments to ensure swift emergency response for either short-term or long-term deployments.²³ In the context of CMCO, the Commission then pointed at these new capacities in order to support its main argument against a primacy of second pillar action that “in fact, the majority of civilian operations could be handled within the framework of Community instruments even if at first they might seem to come under the CFSP (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2002a).”
This defensive position of the Commission must be viewed against the fact that ever since the inception of the ESDP, the division of functional roles in EU external action has been shifted to the disadvantage of the Community competences – (as will be shown) a sensitive issue, which the Council Secretariat appeared to avoid during the early years of CMCO development and implementation. Instead of insisting primarily on the settlement of the more contentious aspects about ‘coherent’ crisis management, i.e. inter-pillar coordination (or – to add the malign take of it – the potential for functional duplication between the pillars), SG/HR Solana rather sought to settle the practical issues first. In fact, during the first months after its inception in 2002, CMCO appeared to provide an important working tool for the CGS to reconcile the most pressing intra-pillar issues and to prepare the newly established entourage of the Secretariat for the first ESDP operations. Accordingly, also the early follow-up measures to the first joint Council/Commission note (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2002a) had a strong pragmatic focus and were apparently – to a large extent – designed for the convenience of the SG/HR and his immediate ambition to enhance the procedural flow within his own administrative domain.

The “Action Plan for the Further Strengthening of CMCO” developed by the Politico-Military Group of the CGS and released in October 2002 offered a set of concrete proposals for the improvement of ESDP-internal coordination, which were subsequently developed further in a series of follow-up working sessions and debates to include the advice of other Council bodies, most importantly, the EUMC and CIVCOM as well as the Police Unit (Politico-Military Group 2002a; Council Secretariat and European Commission 2002b; Presidency 2002b, a; Politico-Military Group 2002b). Looking at the conceptual contributions developed in the course of this working round, a set of core topics may be identified which clearly dominated the discussions. The various central aspects are best categorized the way it was also suggested earlier on by the PMG (Politico-Military Group 2002a): “issues”, i.e. certain broader thematic challenges, were debated next to a set of more concrete “products”, which in essence, constituted working tools for procedural standardisation and implementation and were presented in the form of ‘living documents’. The following table gives a non-exhaustive overview of some of these core “issues” and “products” that turned out to be most crucial at this stage of the process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordination during the routine phase</td>
<td>Crisis Management Concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(early warning, assessment and control)</td>
<td>(template)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidation of planning capacities</td>
<td>Crisis Management Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>towards comprehensive civil-military planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of operation management</td>
<td>Guidelines for Joint Fact Finding Missions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(coordination in the field)</td>
<td>(military/police/other civilian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of evaluation methodology</td>
<td>Guidelines for EU Crisis Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(lessons learned)</td>
<td>Information Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource and capability management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMCO-specific training</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Incorporation of CMCO in exercise policy</td>
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Core issues and products in early stage CMCO implementation
The various civil-civil-military interfaces concerned in the ESDP intra-pillar context of CMCO comprised the following constellations:

- civil-military interface A: resulting from the interaction between military aspects and police elements (military-police interface);
- civil-military interface B: emerging between the military and civilian aspects other than police (e.g. rule of law) (military-civilian interface),
- civil-civil-military interface A: military action combined with police and other civilian aspects (military-police-civilian interface);
- civil-civil-military interface B: police (and other civilian components) combined with paramilitary police units;
- civil-civil interface A: interaction of various civilian elements (e.g. police with rule of law, rule of law with monitoring etc.);
- civil-civil interface B: between operational ESDP and foreign policy elements of CFSP;

The various thematic challenges, i.e. the “issues” indicated above, stretch across this entire set of constellations which ESDP institutional actors (PSC, CIVCOM, EUMC, Police Unit etc.) might find themselves in during or in the context of a crisis management action (civ-civ, civ-mil, civ-civ-mil). Coordination during the routine phase, for instance, inherently concerns all organizational entities and institutional channels that in some way hold potential to make a relevant contribution. According to the CMCO guidelines, the SitCen prepares its situation and risk assessments on an “all source basis”, which not least includes relevant Commission inputs (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2002a). The development of the “products” in turn also stretches across the whole range of interfaces listed above. The development of Guidelines on Joint Fact Finding Missions, for instance, has involved military and police-related services as much as other civilian expert and working groups within the Council structure.

What turned out to be the most challenging task in the context of ESDP-internal CMCO was to generally tackle the complexity of necessary procedures within the entourage of the Council Secretariat and across the whole Council structure, including its administrative services and associated working bodies. The challenge was to translate the multiplicity of actors into a multi-faceted yet complete and sound procedural reality. One of the major cleavages that essentially had to be reconciled within the Council apparatus concerned the inherent divide between organisational traditions of civilian or police and military personnel, which in fact posed serious communication problems.

In the early years of ESDP development, these ‘cultural’ differences had been additionally fuelled by the relative imbalance of resources allocated to the military elements, while the civilian bodies, most importantly the CIVCOM and the Police Unit, had been poorly equipped if not chronically understaffed. Moreover, these tensions were – and to some extent, still are – reflected in all contexts of civil-civil-military interaction, spanning from the coordination in Brussels down to the interaction with the field and in the field. The measures taken to compromise these internal frictions all followed a fairly consistent management concept, which basically built on the following principles for long-term implementation:

- **early and continuous** communication and information exchange;
- **routinized** transparency and informedness across the military, police and civilian spheres, e.g. through systematic liaising between the various functional areas;
- involvement of all elements **regardless of** the civilian, police or military **focus of** a specific action or process in order to foster socialization across the fields;
- standardized methodology aimed at **formally streamlining** the working **output of** various entities (e.g. standard model for strategic options delivered to the PSC by either the EUMC or the CIVCOM).
Apart from the very specific procedural solutions found within the ESDP context (most importantly, the instalment of the Police Unit and the Civil-Military Cell), as will be shown, these principles for enhancing intra-pillar coordination in the long run, have by and large also been extended to the inter-pillar dimension of CMCO and the horizontal context of coherence.

Coherence Across Pillars: Inter-Pillar Coordination and Functional Overlaps

Even though formally the comprehensive idea of CMCO suggested to lump intra-pillar and inter-pillar issues together in one single working concept, it was clear from the beginning that the ‘old divide’ between the intergovernmental and the supranational Community sphere that dominates the horizontal dimension still today could not be reconciled as easily as it was probably the case with certain technical problems faced in the internal ESDP context. In terms of hard competences, the EU’s external action is divided into the various domains constituted by the pillars of the Union: the European Community or first pillar, the Common Foreign and Security Policy or second pillar, and the third pillar comprising Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters. As far as EU crisis management is concerned, each of the pillars carries its own relevance, and not least, its own competences. Hence, given its comprehensive focus, CMCO comprises all issues of coherence potentially arising from this pillarized structure. The horizontal ‘dividing lines’ in place could – as the graph suggests – equally be conceptualised as “interfaces”.

However, the nature of coordination to be effected across these ‘interfaces’ is inherently different from the vertical one identified earlier in the context of internal/intra-pillar CMCO. The necessity and ambition to compensate the fragmentation across various pillars is inordinately more challenging. This is mainly because the segregation of structural entities in terms of policy content and orientation involves also an inherent diversity of scope between the pillars. In contrast to the challenge of coherence posed in the ESDP context, ensuring coherence in this case is also a matter of streamlining objectives both in the sense of ‘external’ political output, and of ‘internal’ contention within the overall institutional set-up of the EU. From this perspective, the interfaces appearing alongside the pillar lines in the course of institutional interaction come along with ‘functional overlaps’, i.e. with overlapping (and potentially conflicting) strategic and political scopes. These overlaps result from the fact that, in the context of crisis management, and more generally, of security, the pillars all have competences, and strategic objectives respectively, which are primarily different from each other in style and structural orientation. However, they are also related to each other in scope. The following graph seeks to illustrate the fundamental difference between
- managing coordination across interfaces between actors of the same system (e.g. ESDP), who are essentially bound by the same overall objectives, and
- having to reconcile actors from different systems pursuing different yet similar objectives.
The interface, or in fact, the gap between them is additionally exacerbated by the overlaps that arise because of the functional relatedness of political dossiers.

Coordination across within-system interfaces and interfaces involving functional overlap

While in the case of within-system interfaces, the effort of keeping up the flow of interactions is mainly directed to the level of actors, whose organisational traditions and working routines have to be streamlined according to the overall framework of strategic objectives. Intrinsically, coordination across functionally competing domains is in turn additionally concerned with the harmonisation of scopes, which ultimately and potentially raises the sensitive issue of primacy among the actors opposing each other in this way.

‘Functional overlap’ is a prominent issue in management and organization theory, where it is widely acknowledged as one of the primary sources of procedural incoherence and ineffectiveness (see e.g. Tyre and Hauptman 1992). The concept as such has also been studied widely in International Law and Governance Theory (see e.g. Jungcurt 2004), where it is mainly perceived to result from incomplete and contradicting legal regulation. What is common to all definitions is the assumption that the relationship between two or more entities, i.e. systemic actors or institutions, which act within a certain field of interest, and respectively, are bound in their actions by similar scopes and inherently related objectives, is not sufficiently clarified. Neither is there a hierarchic order installed between them nor a clear allocation of competences, and respectively, of functional responsibilities. What both management and legal theories ascribe to this sort of imbalance is an inherent increase of ‘transaction costs’ as well as a partial waste of resources that is due to the likeliness of functional duplication across the field.

This sort of ambiguous relationship evokes the functional fragmentation dominating the rapport between the pillars in the specific context of EU crisis management. While the third pillar has recently gained considerable significance and relevance in external security matters as well, the major dividing line in this sense remains the one between the first and the second pillar, i.e. between the supranational Community domain with its various security-related policies and ambitions, and the CFSP with its intergovernmental instruments and operational ESDP. Both the Commission and the Council dispose of relevant structural and/or operational capacities, which qualify them as legitimate actors in the field. Moreover, there is no hierarchic order embracing the two domains, which would regulate the division of competences and the delimitation of functional scope in an unambiguous manner. In fact, their relationship is governed by the legal provisions laid down in the treaties, which indeed leave substantial leeway for interpretation, and accordingly, bear considerable potential for functional duplication. Essentially, the two pillars represent entirely different types of external action, building on fundamentally different bureaucratic traditions with different temporal perspectives, and essentially, different functional approaches in respect to the contested field. As ever in EU matters, in the first place, the division between them results from different legal foundations, and equally, from a set of loopholes indeed provided for in the treaties, which in inter-institutional practice have led to considerable tensions (Duke 2006a).
References like “without prejudice to the institutional prerogatives” or “in compliance with the treaties” still dominate the working parlance in EU external action, and as such, they could be said to build the legal manifestation of the functional divide experienced in the field. One of the main causes for the intricate legal situation is the fact that – for various political and historical reasons – developments in either domain have advanced at different points in time, and have thus broadly remained distinct from each other. The intergovernmental approach advocated by the Council builds on the legal foundation laid down in Article 11 TEU, which indicates that the CFSP covers “all areas of foreign and security policy”. Significantly, this provision entered the treaties in 1992, i.e. at a stage where the EC already had an established profile in major foreign and security policy related areas. Accordingly, operational ESDP has entered the system of EU external action only recently, intruding the established domain of EC external action in relevant areas like post-conflict peace building, monitoring, civil protection and stabilization (arguably) without necessarily being intended to compromise the role of the Community in the first place. An important consideration coming from Governance Theory appears again neatly applicable to this specific context. Young (1996) argues that most often, functional overlaps are initially unintended consequences of general changes in the system and are thus mostly not immediately apparent to the parties involved. Generally, they do not start seeking for solutions until the effects of systemic dysfunctionality are revealed in the course of practical interaction. This brings us back to the issue of CMCO and the solutions that were developed in this framework in order to, in the first place, overcome the practical effects of structural dysfunctionality.

CMCO Plus: Beyond Procedural Continuity, Towards a Culture of Coordination

Once the most pressing procedural problems of coordination had been settled, or at least decimated to allow for a smooth albeit not consummate course of actions in the field, the CMCO process moved on to the identification and definition of more general guidelines for further reconciliation of various elements of potential incoherence – a stage in the process that according to its broader perspective, could be termed “CMCO Plus”. For some scholars, the largely narrative (and in some parts, also repetitive) CMCO documents that were again delivered jointly by the Council Secretariat and the Commission in late 2003 (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2003b, a), were not much more than an awkward political response to what could obviously not be achieved on the concrete technical level (e.g. Schroeder 2007). The suggestions for further enhancement of horizontal CMCO given in this context indeed did not introduce any breaking or innovative approach nor did they contain any magic formula to resolve the decade-long division between the Community and the intergovernmental domain of external action. However, what must be taken into consideration is that essentially at the outset of the initiative in 2002, the aspirations had been fairly decent on both the Commission and the Council side. CMCO was neither expected nor probably intended to remove the conflict about functional overlaps between the pillars right away and in this very context. Looking at the very first joint note on CMCO (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2002a), it becomes clear that coherence was in fact intended to be achieved despite the remaining and factual gap between the pillars. From the point of view of the CGS, the central aim was to ensure consistent action in the first place, while the Commission emphasized the overall purpose of “making the best use of resources”. As a matter of fact, neither side had at any point envisaged (let alone expected) any sort of rigid or binding scheme to master the relations between Council and Commission services for the purposes of a comprehensive crisis management performance. After all, the solutions introduced for the enhancement of internal ESDP coordination also largely adhered to the idea of flexibility and ad-hoc compilation of planning teams. Bearing this in mind, it should neither come as a surprise nor as a source of frustration that in 2003, nothing more tangible or binding was introduced than the concept of a “culture of coordination” (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2003b, a) to be incorporated by all institutional actors involved.
"At the top of the list of fundamentals lies the need for a culture of coordination rather than seeking to put too much emphasis on detailed structures and procedures. [...] It is important to recognise that this CMCO culture needs to be ‘built into’ the EU’s response to a crisis at the earliest possible stage [...] rather than being ‘bolted on’ at a later stage (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2003a)."

This “culture of coordination” should be developed on the basis of “continued cooperation” according to “shared political objectives”. The given long-term goals included “increasing unity of purpose” and an enhanced functional “convergence of instruments”, which should ultimately result in “effective action on the ground”. More formalized solutions to implement CMCO were refused in the first place with reference to the differing practical demands in each individual crisis management situation. Detailed inter-institutional regulations for CMCO would generally run the risk of being outdated or inapplicable for the specific constellations on the ground (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2003b). This distinctly informal and pragmatic approach was harshly criticised by some. Schroeder (2007), for instance, argues that

“the initiative failed to provide practical ways of achieving better coordination outside the fostering of a ‘culture of coordination’ and did not go into details of how it would be implemented. Initiated at the political level, it relied on the promotion of informal and work-level contacts to fix coordination failures within the formal institutions of the EU’s crisis management functions.”

What could be argued against this criticism is that the CMCO initiative as such was intended to provide an organisational strategy, and accordingly, to identify and define the fundamental long-term objectives of all related practical effort (i.e. the instalment of a Police Unit and a Civil-Military Cell, the development of methodologically standardized working tools etc.). CMCO as such is indeed much of a political commitment, which, however, has been openly dedicated as such. Apart from that, CMCO documents have indeed been fairly clear about the “ways of achieving better coordination”. The fact that the suggestions build i.a. on the promotion of informal contacts and the establishment of ad-hoc coordination teams in Brussels and in the field cannot be interpreted as a failure of the whole initiative. The pragmatic character of the CMCO implementation measures rather needs to be seen against the practical consideration that most rigid procedural models are bound to fail if confronted with the unique complexity of a specific crisis. As a matter of logic, a tailor-made crisis management performance cannot build on pre-established templates for action, nor can the organisational sequences be predicted for every imaginable setting or type of operation. What can be done instead is to ensure that the fundamental preconditions are met e.g. by streamlining the practical works of all institutional actors involved on a day-to-day basis, by fostering the inter-institutional links between them (and not regulating them according to a rigid procedural model), and thus, in the long run, by establishing a ‘culture of coherence’.

The trilateral initiative of the British, Austrian and Finnish Presidencies in 2005 and 2006 has shown that CMCO is still high up on the agenda. Efforts to contribute to the achievement of CMCO objectives have continued throughout all crisis management missions the EU has conducted so far, and have shown slow but steady progress. However, to those awaiting quantum leaps, the whole exercise might well appear somewhat lame and unfruitful. It should be kept in mind though, that implementing CMCO in the context of EU crisis management is a long-term if not indeed an open-ended task. Hence, it is clearly inappropriate at this point, to hastily rate the CMCO initiative as a ‘failure’. Although the very broad scope of CMCO might still intuitively raise doubts about the practicability of such an initiative, the achievements made in the course of its implementation have been fairly decent.

After all, CMCO has been launched by the CGS in the form of a pragmatic and goal-oriented initiative and was as such by no means intended to revolutionize the EU’s external governance set-up. Not only did the situation between 2002 and 2003 call for this sort of pragmatism, as ESDP operational action was about to be implemented for the first time and
inter-institutional procedures had to be settled as quickly as possible. The entire logic behind this approach was to a very large extent also grounded in the given fact that the structural divisions laid down in the treaties could in no way be overruled by such an initiative. Looking back, the first Commission statement in the context of CMCO has been fairly clear about the actual limitations in place:

“In coming up with better civilian-military concepts the EU must take account of the spheres of competence and the acquis enshrined in the Treaties and in international agreements, and in particular any such concept must be consistent with the EU’s existing system of pillars. The starting point has to be that the primary responsibility for coordination, and the decision to cooperate, lies with the institution competent to implement the operations; it is not possible nor desirable to split up legal, administrative and financial responsibilities (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2002a).”

It is needless to say that there is a clear ambiguity if not irony about suggesting a concept of inter-pillar coherence that is to remain “consistent with the EU’s existing system of pillars.” However, the underlying conservatism simply complies with the Commission’s key role as ‘guardian of the treaties’. Quite simply, it argues on the grounds of the Nice treaty provisions, which in fact should give any observer a clear idea about what could be expected. However, at the end of the day, whatever aspirations have been voiced in the context of the CMCO initiative, its factual outcomes could not remove the virtual deadlock that the treaties currently provide for. This again leads us to the question whether and to what extent the Treaty of Lisbon, which supposedly, will soon build the new legal basis for EU external action, will change anything about the situation.

The limited scope of this paper will not allow for an in-depth discussion of the probable effects and direct consequences the Reform Treaty will have for the governance of EU external policies including crisis management. However, what appears important to underline in this very context is that the alleged depillarisation this treaty reform was said to entail in fact does not hold true for the core provisions concerning EU crisis management. As regards decision-making, and thus, the allocation of hard competences, the existing second pillar will clearly retain its distinct intergovernmental character. Anyway, what could indeed be said to hold potential for sidelining this continuation of old divides in the long run, is the new post of a High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy that will integrate the functions of the present EU Commissioner for External Relations and the High Representative for the CFSP. Much has been said about the intricacy of double-hatting and will not be repeated here (see e.g. Avery 2007). By acting as both Vice-President of the Commission and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Council, the person in office will certainly become a key figure in external action. Whether the expected benefit of merging these two offices across the old pillar line will indeed translate into factual improvements may be doubted but nevertheless, cannot be predicted at this point. As a matter of fact, however, this institutional innovation cannot in itself be assumed to constitute the critical breakthrough that will eventually revolutionize the Union’s external action (Wallace 2007). From the point of view of inter-institutional coherence, the new post is indeed more likely to reinvigorate the inter-pillar divide and to fuel the mutual sensation of overlap instead of removing it in the first place. In the long run, the imposed fusion and amalgamation of pillars that the new double-hatted non-foreign minister actually stands for might as well have a positive impact on the functional cohesiveness of EU external action. However, the Treaty of Lisbon does not provide the necessary substance to back this sort of integrative leap in legally binding terms (Hofmann and Wessels 2008). Hence, once again, policy practice in European security and defence is called to develop pragmatic solutions that answer the inherent need to compensate for what is not accounted for in the treaties, and thus, to reduce the elements of structural fragmentation that appear most impeding at the moment. It appears legitimate if not indeed necessary to turn to more informal channels of innovation as long as no fundamental reassessment of the Union’s division of power is in sight.
Summary, Outlook and Conclusion

After the end of the Cold War, the EC/EU has considerably extended the focus of its external policies. Following the broad normative foundations of the European project, in the course of the 1990s, a comprehensive conception of security was advanced by the Member States that draws on both civilian and military aspects, and puts particular emphasis on prevention. This ‘holistic’ approach was intended to enable the EU to address crisis and conflict situations with a full range of operational, political, civilian, non-governmental and economical instruments. Since early 2003, when the first crisis management operation in the framework of ESDP was launched, the EU has conducted (and/or completed) further 18 (+1)\(2^{28}\) field missions in various regional contexts and of various operational types across the civil-military spectrum. Quite swiftly in fact, the Union has turned from a mere ‘structural factor’ to an active – and increasingly proactive – player on the international scene. The recent dynamism (or activism as some might call it) in the area of security and defence has not only changed the EU’s profile as a global actor towards the outside; since it has led to the establishment of the ESDP as a new core component of EU external action, it has also had decisive impact on the Union’s internal balance of power, i.e. its overall institutional set-up and the question of competence-sharing between the institutions. Following the inception of ESDP as a means to back up the Union with operational assets, the intricate question has emerged of how these new elements could be reconciled with the structural instruments the Community already had at its disposal. The origins of this contentious issue date back to the early years of the European integration process, when in the 1950s and 1960s it turned out that cooperation in political matters would take a distinct path. Apart from the fact that the creation of the ESDP has perpetuated the ‘old divide’ between the intergovernmental and the supranational strand in European integration, its subsequent substantiation has also fuelled a long-standing internal conflict between the main institutional players, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union.

It has been clear from the beginning to all actors involved in the process, that the value added of the ESDP could not be tapped without instantaneously reconciling it with the broader institutional framework of the Union and the Community respectively. Accordingly, recent efforts to enhance the capacity of the EU to deliver on its potential, and thus, to translate its comprehensive profile into effective and credible action, focussed primarily on the improvement of institutional coherence. In the specific context of crisis management, the issue of enhancing institutional coherence has been addressed under the label of CMCO (Civil-Military Coordination). The initiative as such was intended to balance the internal fragmentation given in various different contexts on the institutional level in order to enable a smooth and effective conduct of crisis management operations on the ground. It appears important to underline the historical background of CMCO in order to explain its fairly broad strategic focus. In contrast to what the term of ‘Civil-Military Coordination’ would suggest, the CMCO initiative aimed at much more than the mere coordination between the civilian and the military aspects of ESDP. Developing operational capacities that comprise military, police and civilian elements and bringing them together for the purpose of comprehensive crisis management clearly constituted an entirely new task for the Union’s administrative bodies. However, the practical necessity of having to ensure internal coherence across the whole range of operational instruments constituted only one part of the overall challenge. Apart from the short-term necessity to tackle the procedural problems faced during the first ESDP operations and the immediate interest to enable sound institutional interactions in Brussels and on the ground, the CMCO process was also driven by the long-term ambition to effect stronger cohesion between the pillars.
The way these long- and short-term goals have been sought to achieve in the context of CMCO has been subject to harsh criticism by both practitioners and academia. However, what is it actually that the initiative did or did not achieve so far? What are the major flaws about the concept? What have the makers of CMCO actually missed out on? Approaching these questions from an analytical point of view essentially entails taking a clear stand on the expectations we actually conceive with respect to this sort of broad and ambitious initiative. Can or should an initiative that intends to encompass “both civil-civil and civil-military as well as ‘internal’ (intra and inter-pillar) and ‘external’ (between EU and other actors) coordination [...] at all levels of EU crisis management” be expected to accomplish all its objectives within 3-5 years – a fortiori, bearing in mind that essential parts of the issues addressed have actually been on the agenda for more than four decades? This brings us back to the issue of normative expectations raised in the previous section of this paper. While pointing at various inconsistencies in fact still in place, recent evaluation studies on the Union’s crisis management performance have taken up a fairly critical (if not polemic) position on the overall success and significance of CMCO (Kurowska 2007; Emerson and Gross 2007; Schroeder 2006b). However, only roughly six years have passed since the working concept of CMCO was introduced. Moreover, given the complexity of the problems addressed, and bearing in mind the incalculable nature of crisis management as such, it had to be expected that the concrete and immediately visible or measurable short-term results would remain limited in the first place. It must be emphasized that much of what has been integrated into the conceptual framework of CMCO either was already underway in inter-institutional practice, and thus, driven by events on the ground, whereas other aspects of the concept in turn were clearly addressed on the basis of underlying long-term objectives. Regardless of whether it was particularly helpful in the long run to formally and conceptually lump the technical short-term issues of intra-ESDP coordination together with grand issues like the incorporation of a ‘culture of coordination’ across the pillars, it nevertheless needs to be taken into account that the set of measures suggested for the implementation of the CMCO fell into two distinct chapters, which entails that they also have to be rated differently. Anyway, what the two have in common is the pragmatic style of the solutions suggested. This paper has shown that intra-pillar coordination challenges have mostly been addressed on an ad-hoc basis. Apart from the formal establishment of new supporting or liaising bodies (e.g. the CivMil Cell or the Police Unit), the measures taken to improve coherence across different fields of action (military, police, civilian) broadly adhered to the overall idea of pragmatic and goal-oriented ad hoc problem solving. The contested suggestion of a ‘culture of coordination’ to be incorporated broadly by all actors involved in the process as such also comes up to the same pattern. Instead of imposing ‘coherent’ modes of interaction by means of rigid and formalized provisions, it was sought to provide the best possible institutional conditions for a cooperative culture of coordination to emerge in the long run. In the eyes of any formalist this inherently non-committal style might well be problematic or indeed appear to be bound to fail. However, looking at the current state and recent activities in the field, it must be acknowledged that the EU is actually performing increasingly well. Many important steps have been taken to enhance coherence on the strategic and – even more so – on the technical and practical level. After fundamental inconsistencies in the very first years, day-to-day planning and implementation are now effectively, and by and large, uncontestedly managed by the Council Secretariat. The ad hoc working relations between the Council working bodies and with the Community actors have been gradually substantiated through the establishment of a general modus operandi. As a result, the Council-Commission divide is increasingly absorbed by constructive pragmatism, and much of the initial mistrust between the Council and the Commission bureaucracies appears to be incrementally replaced by more goal-oriented coordination. In core ESDP matters, in fact, the Commission is arguably acting like an integrated team member that seems to have accepted its associated role.
The main research question framing this workshop, whether the “EU as a global conflict manager” is indeed moving “from pragmatic ad-hocism” towards “policy coherence” conveys a certain qualitative order between the management of challenges on an ad-hoc basis and solutions building on what could be called ‘actual’ coherence. In this context, the notion of “ad-hocism” (as many other political or ideological -isms as well) clearly carries a pejorative connotation. Coherence in turn appears much like the desirable optimum state that administrative management can attain. If this is actually what the EU is and should be striving for, the ultimate level of institutional cohesiveness has definitely not yet been achieved. However, what could be brought up in the context of CMCO is that in fact, the main aspiration behind this sort of initiative lies very much in the practical effects of supposedly ‘coherent’ structures and/or policies. From this perspective, a question such as the above clearly runs the risk of having but academic significance. The overall aim of the EU as a global conflict manager is to visibly deliver on its potential, and thus, to translate ambitions into effective and credible action. In principle, whether this is achieved by way of ad-hocist ‘fire-fighting’ or in fact through ‘actual’ coherence does not matter in the first place. Another important point is related to the criteria of evaluation, and again, the respective role of expectations. CMCO documents draw on declaratory and symbolic style as much as other comprehensive policies do, not least because they are inherently bound by the overall objectives and principles laid down in the treaties. However, from a critical point of view, it has to be questioned whether the grand aspirations voiced in the context of such an inter-institutional initiative, e.g. about ensuring ‘inter-pillar coherence’, establishing ‘unity of scope’ or striving for the ‘integration of objectives to foster a comprehensive whole’ should be taken over as qualitative benchmarks for the evaluation of the respective outcomes. The same applies to the conceptual definition of coherence and the benchmarks we put in place in order to determine the level of achievements made so far. Are the high hopes raised in declarations suitable for the critical evaluation of empirical success or failure? This paper rather advocates a more technical and pragmatic approach, suggesting that implementation results should be judged according to more neutral, and thus, more clinical standards of ‘effectiveness’ instead of applying the normative benchmarks suggested in the treaties or in most declaratory statements. In a way, this perspective seeks to account for the down-to-earth and plausible assumption that in a complex bureaucratic system, “a certain measure of incoherence remains inevitable and must be deemed acceptable” without necessarily having to refuse the stepwise progress and day-to-day achievements across the board (Gauttier 2004). This argument becomes even more striking when recalling the historical origins of single instances of fragmentation in the EU’s external action set-up, which no howsoever well-reasoned organisational strategy will be able to resolve on the spot.

Formally, the CMCO initiative did clearly not qualify for the removal or dissolution of a divide as fundamental and intricate as the one between the first and the second pillar. Unarguably though, the single measures taken to implement the overall idea, have contributed to making EU crisis management action more efficient, and thereby, coherent in action. While the efforts continue, the idea of developing a ‘culture of coordination’ remains as an overall strategic vision. Comparable to the ‘strategic culture’ envisaged in the European Security Strategy to guide the relationship of the Member States towards the common objectives of the Union, the ‘culture of coordination’ suggested in the context of CMCO was intended to give long-term guidance for institutional interaction, since not least, it is also a clear statement about finality. One can criticise CMCO for having retained its non-binding character and ad-hocist orientation. However, what can be held against this is that with or without CMCO, in the first place, the Union is governed by law, and it is bound by the provisions that regulate the balance of powers between institutions. By advocating the informal approach and claiming for a non-binding rapprochement between the Community and the Council bureaucracies, from this perspective, CMCO has simply yielded to the dictate of the treaties.
As a matter of fact, even with the Reform Treaty, the EU will not be given the legal preconditions for neat coherence and unity in external action. However, by seeking to compensate what is not provided for in the treaties, CMCO implementation will continue to be a valuable contribution. Following the necessity of having to grow on demand and without much first-hand experience to build upon, the administrative bodies managing the conduct of EU crisis management have learned quite well to deliver on an ad hoc basis. In fact, the external action domain of the Union has proven to be particularly prone to succeed in advancing without effective legal basis. Hence, if perpetuated and pursued systematically, this pragmatic ‘ad-hocism’ and continuous trial-and-error exercise is likely to lead gradually to enhanced effective action, which should do until the next treaty reform will again formalise (at least) part of what will already have become institutional and – recalling the vision of a ‘culture of coordination’ – also ‘cultural’ reality.

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Notes

1 For an in-depth discussion on the notion of “power” and its compatibility with normative actorness, see Manners (2002; 2004; 2008).
2 The recent dynamism in ESDP has been accompanied by a series of reforms in relevant policy areas of the Community domain such as development cooperation, humanitarian aid and disaster relief, including respective financing mechanisms.
3 The inter-pillar tensions also fuelled internal turf battles within each domain of external action (Duke 2006b).
4 The proliferation of crisis management elements in EU external action not only comprised the CFSP/ESDP, it was also reflected in the Community domain in the form of what could be called a gradual ‘securitization’ of foreign policy instruments in the area of trade, development and humanitarian aid (see European Commission 2001a). The ‘comprehensive’ approach to security as advocated, for instance, in the European Security Strategy symptomatically implies the involvement of non-traditional tools for the prevention and management of crises and (see Biscop 2005).
5 This reading of the concept is opposed to the one employed by Khol (2006), who claims that the intra-pillar element is the central aspect of CMCO, and thus that coordination within ESDP builds the core of the concept, whereas inter-pillar issues are only concerned with respect to “certain priority areas.”
6 The relevant articles of the TEU are: Art. 1, Art. 3 and Art. 13(3) (TEU Nice 2002). Missiroli (2001b) notes that, in a strict sense, the so-called coherence requirement does not constitute a legal requirement. The way the concept appears in the treaties does make it “legally binding but not enforceable.”
7 See for instance (TEU Nice 2002: Art. 1, 3 and 13(3)). For a related discussion on previous treaties, see (Tietje 1997).
8 In the treaties, this vertical reading of coherence is prominently expressed in Article 11(2) TEU, which states: “The Member States shall support the Union's external and security policy actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity. The Member States shall work together to enhance and develop their mutual political solidarity. They shall refrain from any action which is contrary to the interests of the Union or likely to impair its effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations (TEU Nice 2002).”
9 This comprehensive reading of “horizontal coherence” is different from most suggestions in the literature, as it comprises all inter-pillar aspects including specific policies as much as potentially conflictive organisational and procedural specificities inherent to the bureaucratic traditions of each pillar (most importantly, the supranational domain of the Commission and the intergovernmental one of the Council apparatus). Alternative readings distinguish between “horizontal” coherence as the cohesiveness of various EU policies distinguishing it from “institutional” coherence, which denotes the organisational and procedural aspects (Missiroli 2001b; Nuttall 2001, 2005).
10 It has to be noted that the CMCO documents do not prioritise any of the dimensions. However, given that the internal aspects of coordination were first dealt with separately within each domain, the core value of the initiative essentially lies in its focus on establishing inter-pillar coherence in all crisis management action.
11 “The assumption is of course that, by acting unitarily and with a common purpose, the EU (i.e. the 15 plus 1 Community/Union) also becomes ipso facto more efficient and effective: an assumption that is more intuitive than well-founded, given that European foreign policy has often achieved unanimity at the expense of effectiveness and that, in general, a policy can be effective without necessarily being consistent (as the ‘carrot-and-stick’ metaphor and the ‘good cop-bad-cop’ example epitomise) (Missiroli 2001b).”
12 The critical judgement by Schroeder provides an impressive example of this normative load: “Alongside the fact that the EU has quickly been able to develop instruments dealing with complex emergencies and crises, the initial institutional set-up remains problematic. […] In contrast to the EU’s comprehensive political concepts for crisis management, the organisational practices of strategic planning within the Council and the Commission have remained institutionally divorced. Political attempts to fill the gap between the concepts and the organisational realities of EU crisis management have remained both inconclusive and limited to fostering informal forms of coordination among the different actors (Schroeder 2007).”
Patten’s initiative has to be seen against the background of the overall debate on effectiveness and comprehensiveness in external action, which was first brought up in the Council Conclusions of Helsinki in December 1999. In view of the appointment of Javier Solana as the first High Representative for the CFSP, the European Council emphasised the importance of “taking the necessary steps to ensure that optimum use is made of all the various means at the Union’s disposal for more effective and comprehensive external action (European Council 1999: Chapter V).” Other important references that need to be mentioned at this point are the general debate about the administrative reforms within the European Commission, which started in late 1999 (European Commission 2000a, b), as well as the discussions about the “refocusing of policies and institutions” in the context of the White Paper on European Governance (European Commission 2001b).

The main focus of the debate was rather put on the more traditional Community aspects of external policy, most notably, development cooperation, external assistance, trade, environment, and the promotion of human rights and the way these policies could be coordinated in a more effective way (See Presidency of the Council 2001). Formally, in the following years, this strand of discussions on effectiveness in external action was conducted separately from the whole debate about coherent crisis management in terms of civil-military coordination, with only a few cross references appearing accidentally between the two. Since its inception, the so-called “Evian Process” on “Enhancing Effectiveness in External Action” – named after an informal meeting of the General Affairs Council held in Evian/ France in September 2000 (see Secretary-General/High Representative 2000a) – has put forth a series of yearly progress reports, all mainly focussing more on the incremental refashioning of the external policy domain of the Community than on ESDP proper. The most recent conceptual input on the question of effectiveness of external action in this context was a Commission Communication on “Europe in the World”, offering “some practical proposals for greater coherence, effectiveness and visibility.” (European Commission 2006)

Interestingly, a Report on Conflict Prevention, which had jointly been agreed upon by the Council Secretariat and the Commission (General Secretariat 2000), was also issued on the very same day. Addressing the upcoming European Council of Nice, the document sought to offer “concrete recommendations on how to improve the coherence and effectiveness of the European Union action in the field of conflict prevention.” Although the concurrent ESDP process was briefly mentioned in the introduction of the report (“building on previous work”), no direct reference was made to the other document. The overall assessment of practical necessities in turn was – aside from the recurrent emphasis on prevention (apparently to delimit it conceptually and functionally from crisis management) – close to identical. However, the document concluded with the expectation that “addressing these issues in the context of conflict prevention can give impetus to our efforts towards greater coherence in all external action (ibid.),” which could possibly be interpreted as an allusion to the respective efforts of the SG/HR in the field of crisis management. Following the Nice Council in early 2001, the Commission also set out to prepare an autonomous contribution on the issue, expectedly stressing the broad range of long- and short-term instruments available in the Community framework, and thus mastered by the Commission (European Commission 2001a).

A final version of the CMP was released in July 2003, which however, contained only little modifications with respect to the previous draft delivered in March 2003.(Council Secretariat 2003)

After the first experiences gained in the early exercises and in preparation for the first ESDP missions, the original model of the CMPs was found to be “too detailed, vulnerable to rigid interpretation and to be taking insufficient account of the unique aspects of a crisis (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2002a).”

 Schroeder ignores the learning effects that the composition and continuous revision of the catalogue has had (and was supposed to have) for the institutional bodies involved. “The CMP process remained essentially a political project without much impact on the actual coordination of the various Council and Community crisis management policies. The CMPs in effect did not change the tasking and planning procedures of the different bodies involved and remained an exercise in documenting the relationships among available instruments for EU crisis management (Schroeder 2007).” Anyway, a close look at the introductory statement of the first draft of CMPs makes clear that the document was never designed to change anything but rather to serve as a “working paper” that helps to “form an evolving whole, and will be constantly reviewed and up-dated (Council Secretariat 2001).”
In view of the envisaged comprehensiveness of EU crisis response, third pillar elements have also recently gained importance in the context of crisis management. In the framework of CMCO, this includes all aspects of internal security that have an inherent external dimension (fight against terrorism, organised crime, border control, management of migration flows, intelligence cooperation). However, in general it is mainly the relationship between the first and the second pillar, and thus, between the mostly structural crisis management instruments governed by the European Commission and the operational instruments available through the ESDP that builds the framing reference for the CMCO debate.

Since issues of vertical coherence, i.e. between the MS and the Union level, do not present an institutional challenge in a strict sense, they were mainly dealt with in the context of capability development, recruitment, training and procurement. However, in some instances elements of vertical coherence were also raised in the context of CMCO, e.g. national agencies involvement in strategic planning and risk assessment (Council Secretariat and European Commission 2002a).

However, it must be noted that the issue of vertical and external coherence in the context of CMCO gained new momentum during the UK, Austrian and Finnish Presidencies (2005-6), which launched a trilateral initiative for the strengthening of CMCO (Solana 2005).

In theoretical terms, the Community has been trying to tackle internal functional fragmentation across civil-civil interfaces (e.g. DG Trade vs. Development). In fact, however, the internal reconciliation of various Community elements in the service of a more coherent performance in security-related matters has been effected in other contexts, most importantly, in the framework of the Commission initiative on Conflict Prevention and the overall reform of the EC External Aid. Despite this characteristic detachment between the pillars, the respective Community reforms nevertheless remain highly significant for the general idea of CMCO and the way ESDP crisis management is reconciled with these modified structural conditions. By enhancing the intra-pillar convergence, efforts such as the reorganisation of external aid have clearly favoured the purpose of CMCO and benefited the aspiration of comprehensive EU crisis management.

In 2001, the Rapid Reaction Mechanism was put into place in order to provide a more flexible financial instrument to allow the Community to respond urgently to the needs of countries threatened with or undergoing severe political instability or suffering from the effects of a technological or natural disaster (Council Regulation (EC) No. 381/2001). In 2006, the so-called “Instrument for Stability” replaced the RRM in the form of a more diversified financial tool (Regulation No. 1717/2006 of the EP and the Council establishing an Instrument for Stability 2006).

On some occasions, paramilitary police forces in the form of so-called Integrated Police Units (IPUs) are employed in the context of ESDP operations involving either or both civilian and military elements. The functional role of the IPUs was first defined at the European Council of Feira as “robust, rapidly deployable and interoperable forces capable of performing executive tasks in order to re-establish law and order in non-stabilized situations (Feira European Council, Appendix 4 to Annex I of the Presidency Conclusions).”

Some of the issues equally apply to the horizontal contexts of coordination, i.e. between the Council and the Commission apparatuses.

What appears in fact most decisive about the divide between the pillars in the context of crisis management is the different procedural focus of the actors involved on each side. While the European Commission traditionally focuses mainly (albeit not exclusively) on preventive long-term action that essentially seeks to fight the root causes of conflict, by definition, operational ESDP focuses on more immediate, reactive and short-term crisis management. As will be shown, however, conflicts arise wherever functional overlaps are produced by either the Commission moving into the core field of managing crises (e.g. in order to stabilize a country or region in view of structural long-term programmes), or the Council in turn, intruding traditional EC fields of responsibility such as post-conflict reconstruction.

In 2005, the three consecutive Presidencies launched a joint initiative on the Strengthening of the CMCO in EU Crisis Management, which added new momentum to the overall debate and contributed to the “fine-tuning” of previous actions and efforts in the CMCO context. Most of the aspects discussed during the Presidency Seminars held in the UK, and later, in Finland focused on the role of the newly established Civil-Military Cell and on the ways it could be deployed in future missions. One of the major horizontal achievements was the development of an Action Plan for
ESDP support for Peace and Security in Africa, which marked a first important step towards joint EC-ESDP regional strategies (Council of the European Union 2004).

28 The 20th ESDP mission in Guinea Bissau is being launched while this paper is written (See Council of the European Union 2008).

29 It appears likely that the intention behind this ‘comprehensive’ approach was to extend the dynamism and constructive course of developments within ESDP to the much more conflict-laden debate about inter-pillar coordination.
References


Documents


