



**The European  
Neighbourhood Policy  
in Perspective**  
**Context, Implementation and Impact**

Edited by

**Richard G. Whitman**  
*Professor of Politics, University of Bath, UK*

and

**Stefan Wolff**  
*Professor of International Security, University of Birmingham, UK*



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## Lessons from the Balkans: The ENP as a Possible Conflict-Management Tool?

*Stefan Wolff and Annemarie Peen Rodt*

### Introduction

The 2004 and 2007 enlargements moved the European Union (EU) closer – geographically, politically and security-wise – to a number of frozen and violent ethnic conflicts in its so-called ‘new neighbourhood’. These conflicts include ongoing disputes in Israel/Palestine, Lebanon, Algeria, Moldova (Transnistria), Armenia/Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia), Morocco/Western Sahara, Egypt, Ukraine, Jordan and Syria. EU foreign policy-makers have in recent developments of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP)<sup>1</sup> stressed the importance of managing these conflicts. With the 2003 European Security Strategy and the launch of the 2004 European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) the Union explicitly articulated its intention to take a more active stance in the management of violent ethnic conflicts in the ENP area (and beyond).

The failed European attempts to handle the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, were, according to the large majority of CFSP scholars, the first real push for European foreign policy-makers more actively to seek to develop a common EU approach to dealing with violent ethnic conflicts in the Union’s near abroad. The atrocities in the Western Balkans had illustrated the inadequacy of the tools available to the Union at the time and left the EU embarrassed. After NATO came to the rescue of the EU over Kosovo for the second time in 1999, the EU was eager to develop its own crisis-management capabilities, and consequently did so with the Yugoslav experience in mind and

reflecting past and present failures, as well as a few successes, in the Western Balkans. The EU's approach to violent ethnic conflicts thus arguably being born and bred in the Balkans, and the Union's experience in this region is therefore an important aspect of any debate on the EU's potential future global role as a conflict manager. This chapter therefore examines the EU's capabilities and recent track record in dealing with the ethnic conflicts in the Western Balkans in order to assess what, if any, lessons can be learnt from the Balkan experience and to consider whether the ENP could potentially serve as a tool for the management of violent ethnic conflict in the rest of Union's 'new neighbourhood' and beyond.

### **The EU's early experiences of ethnic conflict-management**

The European Union as a collective of its member states has been concerned with ethnic conflicts since its very beginning. On the one hand, the EU, and its predecessor organisations, has always prided itself in being, among other things, a community of values in which democracy, human rights and the rule of law take on concrete meaning for the benefit of all its citizens, regardless of ethnic, linguistic or religious background. This normative perspective has informed the EU's non-discrimination directives and policies, and has thus been one instrument of the management of minority-majority relations within EU member states. Yet its success in addressing ethnic conflicts effectively within the Union itself, and even more so beyond its boundaries, has been limited. Conflicts in Northern Ireland, the Basque Country and Corsica have persisted at different levels of violence and intensity, causing loss of human life and material damage. The states directly affected by these conflicts, and other countries outside the present boundaries of the EU, share a second area of concern in relation to ethnic conflicts – security. This relates to the physical security of both individual citizens and the state, but also involves a wide range of other dimensions of security, for example ethnic conflict has immediate and longer-term consequences for socio-economic security, to name but one.

The conflicts within the EU as it existed before the 2004 enlargement were relatively well contained and did not pose major threats to the security and stability of the EU as a whole, but were rather perceived as internal matters not to be dealt with at the EU level. The perception of far graver threats in post-communist Europe, large parts of which had aspired to EU membership since the early 1990s, prompted the EU to adopt a much more proactive policy of managing ethnic conflicts

outside its boundaries than within them. This approach was deemed necessary because of the greater risk posed by such actual and potential conflicts in likely new member states and the EU's 'new neighbourhood'. It was made possible as a consequence of the collapse of communism, the end of the Cold War division of Europe and the greater political and economic leverage that the EU gained over these respective countries. EU-internal conflicts had remained relatively contained for decades and member states facing such threats generally resented and actively blocked EU involvement in their management,<sup>2</sup> but conflicts outside the Union were perceived as potentially far more dangerous in the short-term as well as in the potential longer-term of their becoming EU-internal conflicts by way of enlargement. This resulted in the EU beginning to create a framework of policies and institutions for the management of ethnic conflict that was primarily aimed at non-member states. It became most closely associated with the CFSP and increasingly also with the EU's enlargement policy, through the Stabilisation and Association Process for the Western Balkans, which effectively allowed the EU to impose conditions on candidate states that it did not implement on its own territories, and more recently through the ENP, which explicitly states the Union's ambition to 'reinforce stability and security and contribute to efforts of conflict resolution [in the ENP area].'<sup>3</sup>

### **Institutional reform and capability-building: the EU after its Balkan failures**

Based on its respect for state sovereignty and its own experience of ethnic conflict, the initial response of the EC (later EU) to the Yugoslav crisis in the early 1990s was to attempt to contain the problem by seeking to keep Yugoslavia intact. European countries faced with ethnic conflicts of their own feared that if they supported the dissolution of Yugoslavia, this might encourage ethnic minorities elsewhere to push for independence. The Union therefore sought a neutral role as negotiator between the belligerent parties and was reluctant to recognise any one side as the aggressor. These negotiation efforts failed repeatedly, as violence broke out first in Slovenia and later in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo.<sup>4</sup> The EU's further failures to respect its self-set criteria for the recognition of Slovenian and Croatian independence and its inability (along with that of the rest of the international community) to prevent the increase in, and extent of, the violence and large-scale disasters such as the 1995 atrocities in the 'UN protectorate' of Srebrenica,<sup>5</sup> illustrate the continued failures of EU conflict-management efforts in the

former Yugoslavia throughout the 1990s.<sup>6</sup> These failures were largely the result of the EU's internal struggle with its own inexperience in providing 'soft' as well as 'hard' security; it lacked the institutional structure and the military strategy and strength to back up its infant CFSP, which was simply not ready to deal with a challenge as complex as Yugoslavia.<sup>7</sup> What the EU as a conflict manager lacked more than anything in the 1990s; however, was the political will to act – and to act in unison.<sup>8</sup>

Lessons from the failures of the EU and the broader international community during the ethnic conflicts in the Western Balkans throughout the 1990s were gradually learnt and a new European security architecture started emerging in which different international organisations play their part and contribute to a cooperative, rather than merely collective security order.<sup>9</sup> Characterised by principles of task- and burden-sharing, this new cooperative security structure emerging at the beginning of the twenty-first century, involves the same principal security institutions – the UN, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), NATO and the EU – but with a new set of mandates, instruments and policies that (in principle) enable them to face existing and emerging security challenges. Within this new European security architecture the EU occupies a central role: strengthened in its political weight through the enlargements and the accession and association processes, and diplomatically and militarily more capable as a result of the development of its security and defence identity and policy.

For the EU, lesson-learning happened within an existing institutional framework: begun by the Treaty on European Union (TEU) (1992) and revised by the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), crisis-management is a policy area within the CFSP Pillar and the CESDP, but owing to the complexity of the tasks, it also requires input from policy areas in Pillars 1 and 3 (see Figure 6.1). Specifically, the Treaty of Amsterdam expanded the range of tasks of the Union to 'humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis-management, including peacemaking' (Article 17). These so-called Petersberg Tasks have their origin in the June 1992 Ministerial Council of the Western European Union (WEU) at which the WEU member states agreed to make available military units for tasks conducted under WEU authority.<sup>10</sup>

For the military component of crisis-management, the European Council in Helsinki (1999) followed up on the decisions made at the Cologne Council meeting earlier the same year.<sup>11</sup> Comparing existing

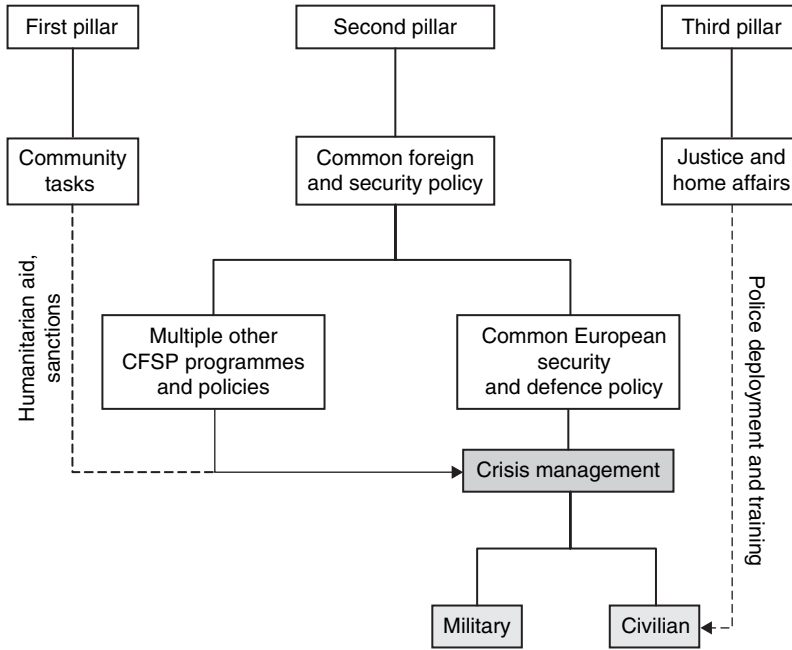


Figure 6.1 The place of crisis management in EU policy

capabilities with the ambitious Petersberg Tasks, the heads of state and government agreed on the Helsinki Headline Catalogue, which determined 144 areas in which capabilities and assets needed to be developed in order to enable the Union to fulfil the Petersberg Tasks:

- commitment by the member states to make available 50,000–60,000 military personnel deployable within 60 days and sustainable for up to 12 months;
- establishment of coordinating political and military structures within the Union’s single institutional framework; and
- development of a framework for cooperation with NATO and third states.

Subsequent meetings of the European Council contributed to the further development of EU crisis-management policy, particularly in relation to the improvement of its civilian component. The 2000 Feira

European Council determined four priority areas for the improvement of the Union's civilian crisis-management capabilities:

- police (commitment to the deployment of up to 5000 officers and training of local forces);
- strengthening of the rule of law (identification of 200 experts readily available for deployment, development of common training modules for human rights monitors);
- civilian administration; and
- civil protection.

The Treaty of Lisbon, which was signed by EU leaders in December 2007 (but has yet to be ratified in a number of member states) reiterates the EU's continued commitment to 'assist populations, countries and regions confronting natural or man-made disaster' and 'promote an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance'. In particular, it confirms the EU intention to 'develop a special relationship with neighbouring countries, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterised by close and peaceful relations based on cooperation'.<sup>12</sup>

Four key innovations in the Treaty of Lisbon seek institutionally to improve CFSP capabilities and may thus have an effect of the EU's future role as a conflict manager in the ENP area and beyond:

- a new High Representative of the Union in Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, also the Vice-President of the Commission, is to increase the impact, coherence and visibility of EU external action;
- a new European External Action Service, is to provide support to the High Representative and work in cooperation with the member states' diplomatic services. The External Action Service shall comprise officials from the relevant departments of the General Secretariat of the Council and of the Commission as well as staff seconded from the national diplomatic services of the member states;
- a single EU legal personality is intended to strengthen the Union's negotiating power by making it a more visible partner for third countries and international organisations; and
- special decision-making arrangements are to pave the way to reinforced cooperation amongst a smaller group of member states in the CESDP.<sup>13</sup>

As far as the decision-making process is concerned, the Commission will no longer be able to make proposals in the area of the CFSP, but should

support specific initiatives of the High Representative, who because s/he is also Vice-President of the Commission will ensure consistency of the Union's external action. At the same time, the principle of unanimity is largely confirmed for the CFSP, thus preserving member states' ability to cast a veto on specific policy proposals. The Lisbon Treaty limits the available CFSP instruments to European decisions (on actions, positions and arrangements for implementation). The so-called Common Strategies under the TEU are preserved in the Lisbon Treaty as strategic guidelines set by the European Council and further elaborated by the Foreign Affairs Council.<sup>14</sup>

### Developing European crisis management: civilian and military capabilities

Lord Robertson, the Secretary-General of NATO (until the end of 2003) shortly after taking office in October 1999 emphasised that the three most important elements for securing the future of the Alliance were 'capabilities, capabilities, capabilities'. What is true for NATO, the most powerful military alliance (albeit largely dependent on the US in this context) is equally valid for the EU's crisis-management capabilities, be they military or civilian in nature. In the EU context, the 'capabilities, capabilities, capabilities' dogma can be broken down into three main areas: capabilities to act, to fund and capabilities to cooperate and coordinate (see Figure 6.2).<sup>15</sup>

In terms of capabilities to act, issues of personnel and hardware were addressed by several European Council meetings following the inauguration of crisis-management as a distinct policy under CESDP in Cologne in 1999. Specifically, the Helsinki European Council in 1999 agreed on the Helsinki Headline Goal, which was to set up the rapid-response capabilities needed to fulfil the Petersberg Tasks (see above). By the time the heads of state and government of EU members met again

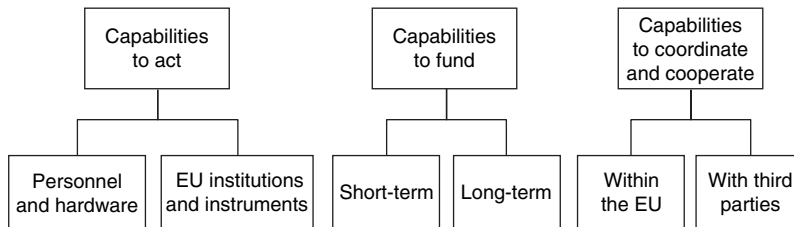


Figure 6.2 The EU's 'capabilities, capabilities, capabilities' problem



in Laeken in 2001, the Headline Goal had, in their view, been partially met, and they found that:

through the continuing development of the ESDP, the strengthening of its capabilities, both civil and military, and the creation of appropriate structures within it and following the military and police Capability Improvement Conferences held in Brussels on 19 November 2001, the Union is now capable of conducting some crisis management operations.<sup>16</sup>

However, the Council also recognised that there was a large number of deficiencies in areas crucial for the EU's ability to take on more demanding operations and emphasised that the Union had to improve coordination between the resources and instruments of military and civilian crisis-management, strengthen its military capabilities, finalise agreements with NATO to gain access to resources (planning, military assets and command options) and implement already existing arrangements with other non-NATO partners.<sup>17</sup> NATO-EU cooperation has subsequently made significant progress in the form of the Berlin Plus Agreement, a Framework Agreement on the EU-NATO partnership and an Agreement on Security of Information.

The development of appropriate institutions and policy instruments also progressed significantly. The creation of the post of Secretary-General of the European Council and High Representative for CSFP (and the appointment of former NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana to the post) was a significant step forward and indicated that the Union was prepared to follow up on its intentions with substantive commitments.<sup>18</sup> The new institutional structure, made permanent under the Treaty of Nice (see Figure 6.2) has to date proved reasonably efficient and effective. As for EU policy instruments, and emphasising the multifaceted nature of CFSP, Hill has aptly summarised the situation, '[t]he arrival of Joint Actions, Common Positions and now Common Strategies in the CSFP has spawned new initiatives such as the Stability Process in South-East Europe'.<sup>19</sup> In addition to these three policy instruments, 'statements' also form part of the range of options available to the Council for the conduct of its CFSP.

Capabilities to fund various crisis-management operations in the short and the long-term do exist within the EU. The provision of long-term funds for CFSP activities is normally not a problem – it certainly was not a shortage of financial means that impeded EU policy in the Western Balkans. However, the complicated system within the Union

for making the use of its funds transparent and accountable, for the first two years of the existence of crisis-management as a distinct Union policy, often hindered their rapid disbursement. An important contribution to the improvement of the EU's short-term funding capabilities, therefore, was the creation of the Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM) in February 2001. Its main aim is to 'allow the Community to respond in a rapid, efficient and flexible manner, to situations of urgency or crisis or to emergence of crisis'.<sup>20</sup> The RRM covers six dimensions of EU crisis-management: 'assessment of possible Community responses to a crisis, conflict prevention in countries and regions showing significant signs of instability, acute crisis-management, post-conflict reconciliation, post-crisis reconstruction and the fight against terrorism'.<sup>21</sup> Actions financed with funds from the RRM may be carried out by 'authorities of Member States or of beneficiary countries and their agencies, regional and international organisations and their agencies, NGOs and public and private operators with appropriate specialised expertise and experience' (Article 6) and must be implemented within six months. The RRM has a fixed amount of funds at its disposal each year, determined annually by the budgetary authority (Article 8). This was €20 million in 2001, €25 million in 2002 and €30 million in 2005. Of the 2001 funds, 64 per cent were spent on Macedonia alone, while in 2002 all new activities financed by the RRM took place outside the Western Balkans, since by then only one programme was taking place in Macedonia. This clearly underlines the importance of the Balkans experience to other areas in which the EU is engaged in conflict-management: institutions created in direct response to EU conflict-management needs in the Balkans now form an integral part of the Union's broader approach to conflict-management beyond this region, including in the ENP area.

Coordination and cooperation capabilities here relate to EU-internal processes as well as to the EU's relations with third parties. Within the EU, these have two dimensions: a horizontal one (coordination among the three pillars) and a vertical one (between the EU as a supranational organisation with its own institutional structures and the EU member states). At the external level, coordination and cooperation is essential in particular with NATO (see above) and, while potentially increasing EU dependency on NATO resources, has so far worked well. In the Western Balkans, especially, there has been a longer tradition of cooperation anyway (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo), and the Union took over from NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR) as EUFOR in 2004 after having already assumed responsibility from an earlier NATO force in Macedonia. Cooperation with third countries (i.e. non-EU and

non-NATO members) and international organisations (the UN, OSCE, UNHCR and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)) is accorded high priority by the Union. This is the case for two reasons: the EU is strongly committed to a multilateral approach and it recognises the mutual benefits of cooperation with organisations that 'specialise' in different crisis-management tasks. In the case of cooperation with NATO, permanent consultation structures have been created in the wake of the Berlin Plus Agreement; in the case of cooperation with third parties the EU has clear procedures for coordination, including the establishment of so-called committees of contributing countries meant to give third parties an adequate role in the day-to-day running of a particular crisis-management operation while leaving responsibility for overall strategic direction with the relevant institutions inside the Union. In addition, as recent experience in the Western Balkans indicates, the EU also uses its ability to conclude bilateral agreements with third parties to put any crisis-management cooperation on solid legal foundations.

The changes proposed in the Treaty of Lisbon, if it is ratified, are intended to improve further the Union's institutional capability to cooperate and coordinate better both internally and externally and to act in a more coherent and efficient manner with regard to the CFSP. Furthermore, the amended Article 28 of the Lisbon Treaty states that the Council shall adopt a decision establishing the specific procedures for guaranteeing rapid access to appropriations in the Union budget for urgent financing of initiatives in the CFSP framework and, in particular, for preparatory activities referred to in Article 28 A(1) and Article 28 B, namely, joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peacekeeping tasks and tasks for combat forces in crisis-management, including peacemaking and post-conflict stabilisation. The Treaty also states that preparatory activities for such tasks, which are not charged to the Union's budget, shall be financed by a start-up fund made up of member state contributions. In this way the Lisbon Treaty also increases the Union's short-term capability to fund its conflict-management efforts.<sup>22</sup>

## **Testing capabilities in the Western Balkans**

### **The EU police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The 2003 EU Police Mission (EUPM) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B-H) was the first ever CESDP mission. It is part of a comprehensive programme of measures aimed at establishing rule of law in B-H and is envisaged to accomplish its tasks by the end of 2008. It succeeds

the UN's International Police Task Force. EUPM's annual budget is €38 million budget (50 per cent provided directly by Brussels), its personnel consists of 207 staff from 34 EU and non-EU countries. EUPM derives its legitimacy from Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1396 and a decision by the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) to accept EUPM to follow the UN Mission in B-H. EUPM is a crisis-management operation and as such has a unified command structure within the single EU institutional framework, comprising the European Council and its Secretary-General and High Representative (SG/HR), the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for B-H. The Head of Mission/Police Commissioner, who leads EUPM and is in charge of day-to-day operations, communicates with the SG/HR through the EUSR. The EUPM has two key priorities – fighting organised crime and ensuring the security of returnees. Apart from technical and professional assistance and training, EUPM is therefore also involved in the creation and consolidation of new institutional structures. Following an invitation by B-H authorities the EUPM refocused its mission in 2004 to support the B-H police reform process to develop and consolidate local capacity and regional cooperation in the fight against organised crime.<sup>23</sup>

### **Operation CONCORDIA in Macedonia**

2003 Operation CONCORDIA also followed on from a previous international mission, in this case NATO's operation Allied Harmony. The background of this mission was to ensure sufficient levels of security and stability in Macedonia to enable the implementation of the 2001 Ohrid Agreement. CONCORDIA derived its legitimacy from a request by Macedonian President Trajkovski and UN SCR 1371. The operation fell within the remit of EU military crisis-management operations and was the first ever CESDP deployment of military forces. It comprised 400 soldiers from 26 countries, again including non-EU contributor states. Operation CONCORDIA was the first case for EU-NATO cooperation under the Berlin Plus Agreement, that is the EU made use of NATO capabilities. Initially only assumed to last for six months, Operation CONCORDIA was extended at the request of the Macedonian government until December 2003. Command of the operation rested with EUFOR headquarters.<sup>24</sup> Contributions to Operation CONCORDIA were made by EU member and non-member states: the budget of €6.2 million was contributed by the EU with non-common costs borne by the participating states. As part of the day-to-day management structures, a Committee of Contributors had a consultative role its decision-making procedures.

### **Operation PROXIMA in Macedonia**

In 2003 Operation PROXIMA became the second EU police mission in the Balkans. The establishment of the mission followed an invitation by Macedonia's Prime Minister. Its implementation was closely linked to the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement. The mission was extended beyond its initial 12 months following another request by the Macedonian Prime Minister and was completed in December 2005. The mission personnel comprised staff from EU member and non-member states. Operation PROXIMA was deployed to five locations across Macedonia to monitor, mentor and advise Macedonia's police force and promote European policing standards. The budget was €7.3 million for start-up costs and €7 million for 2004 running costs to be financed from the Community budget. For the 12-month extension a budget of €15.95 million was agreed.

### **Operation ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

In 2004, the European Council decided to take over responsibility from NATO for securing the conditions for the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.<sup>25</sup> The initial budget for common costs was €71.7 million to be administered by the [ATHENA mechanism], which relies on financial contributions by EU member states determined on a GDP basis. EU member and non-member states participate in this operation. Perhaps more than any other ESDP operation to date, Operation ALTHEA exemplifies the importance of cooperation among the international organisations making up Europe's security architecture. The EU takeover from NATO was only possible following the work of NATO's SFOR and the resulting improvements in the security environment on the ground.<sup>26</sup> The EU was able to rely on NATO assets and capabilities. NATO's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe was appointed as the Operation Commander for the military component of Operation ALTHEA, and SHAPE simultaneously became the EU Operation Headquarters.<sup>27</sup> The command structure of Operation ALTHEA again underlines the close cooperation between NATO and the EU under the political control and strategic direction of the EU's PSC, the EU Operation Headquarters at SHAPE in Mons, the EU Command Element at the Allied Joint Forces Command in Naples and the Headquarters of EUFOR at Camp Butmir in Sarajevo. The EU Command Element at the Allied Joint Forces Command is a particularly crucial element in the coordination process with NATO as it ensures the EU's operations in the Balkans conform to the EU's regional approach, on the one hand, and cooperate closely with NATO operations in the Balkans, on the other.

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In addition, the EU closely coordinates its military mission with its police mission. As both are meant to contribute to the implementation of the Dayton Agreement, cooperation is also essential with the PIC, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and other international actors engaged in the region: primarily, the UN and OSCE.

### **Lessons learnt for future challenges of ethnic conflict-management**

In 1993, Christopher Hill predicted six future functions of then European Community (EC) as an international actor, including that of 'regional pacifier' and 'mediator of conflicts'.<sup>28</sup> In each case, he made explicit reference to former Yugoslavia and pointed out that it fell to the EU 'to act as mediator/coercive arbiter when the peace of the whole region seems under threat' and that there had been 'considerable diplomatic effort and creativity in the early stages of the Yugoslav imbroglio'.<sup>29</sup> Judging the EU's performance in the 1990s, however, only since the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999 has the EU played an increasingly important role as a regional pacifier and mediator of conflicts in the Western Balkans, albeit with varying success over time. No matter which perspective one takes on the Union's conflict-management policy in the Western Balkans, it remains the largest donor and the organisation with the biggest presence throughout this region, having contributed significantly (partly in cooperation with third parties) to the stabilisation of the countries in the region and their reconstruction to date. This general view, at least partly, testifies to the existence of EU conflict-management capabilities in the Western Balkans. However, only a closer look at the operations conducted there allows making better informed statements about the status of capability-development in general.

Current EU capabilities appear to be sufficient to take on tasks of the kind required in the Western Balkans at present. The EU was able to mobilise sufficient personnel, hardware and the funds to sustain them. It had the institutional framework and instruments available to make the necessary decisions and proved itself capable of a certain level of cooperation and coordination within its own structures as well as with third parties. This relatively positive assessment of EU crisis-management capabilities in the Western Balkans since 1999, however, cannot necessarily be taken as a general indication of the readiness of the Union to manage conflict elsewhere and with a similar degree of success. While it is undoubtedly true that the 'CFSP, through the position

of the HR for CFSP, has experienced in a very short time a substantial improvement in its coherence and visibility' (Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet 2002: 278), improved coherence and visibility do not necessarily translate into effectiveness. With respect to the Western Balkans one could question whether the Union has indeed been successful. In Macedonia, for example, it could be argued that early stage of conflict-management, despite the mobilisation of significant resources, failed, and that it was only once the violent conflict had erupted that the EU (through conflict-management measures) succeeded in brokering a deal between the fighting factions.<sup>30</sup>

Taking into account the complexity of the situation the EU had and has to deal with in the Western Balkans and the intensity of the conflicts it had to manage (in post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Macedonia) the Union has demonstrated that it has developed an institutional framework and a set of policies that enable it to make decisions quickly, provide adequate funds and personnel and cooperate and coordinate activities with third parties in ways that enhance its own capabilities and maximise the chances of successful crisis-management. It is equally important in this context to bear in mind that since the failure of conflict-management in the early and mid-1990s, the Union's capabilities have been improved significantly, enabling it now to undertake both civilian and military operations, that is being able to back up its diplomatic efforts with credible threats of force where necessary. This evolution of expertise at both the HQ and ground level demonstrates a significant process of lesson-learning at the institutional and operational levels of EU conflict-management capabilities.

However, the EU's relative success of late in the Western Balkans has its sources not only in improved capabilities. In our view, the Union's experience in the Western Balkans cannot be generalised or exported easily. The distinct advantage that the EU has in this region is that its policy of conditionality is much more effective vis-à-vis countries where the promise of closer association with, and potentially accession to, the EU is credible and where both political elites and the general public are ready to make significant compromises in order to attain what many believe to be the only option for a viable future, even though there is now growing Euroscepticism in Croatia, Serbia and B-H, because the imagined solutions are not forthcoming as quickly as envisaged. In other words, the success of EU conflict-management in the Western Balkans must be seen in a larger context, in which conflict-management is only one element in a comprehensive EU approach to a region. As Javier Solana pointed out as early as 2000, '[t]he European

Union is uniquely placed for comprehensive action in the Western Balkans' and is 'the only institution capable of comprehensive action, ranging from trade, economic reform, and infrastructure, humanitarian assistance, human rights and democratisation, justice and police to crisis-management and military security' (Solana 2000). Without the clear long-term commitment of the EU to the Western Balkans' prospect of EU membership, the incentives for political elites and the various ethnic groups they represent would be less powerful and thus the Union's ability to elicit short- and long-term compliance, which has been a major factor in the success of its conflict-management operations so far, diminished.

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We must sound a second note of caution regarding the EU's readiness to engage successfully in conflict-management operations elsewhere concerns the availability of personnel and especially military assets. The commitments made by EU member states have not yet been tested to the full – the two police missions in B-H and Macedonia have required only about 10 per cent of the total number of police officers committed by EU member states, and the two military operations CONCORDIA and ALTHEA have similarly required only around 12 per cent of total committed troops. At the same time, the EU is now, for better or worse, locked into a framework of cooperation with NATO which will perpetuate its dependency on NATO resources.<sup>31</sup> This may significantly decrease the Union's capability for autonomous action in situations where NATO resources are stretched or where disagreement within NATO prevents the use of certain resources by the EU.

A final factor limiting the generalisability or indeed the transferability of the relative success of recent EU conflict-management operations in the Western Balkans is at the same time one of the very reasons for this success – increasing familiarity with, and sensitivity toward, the situation in the region and the countries concerned, a long-standing network of information sources (EUMM) and previous experience in dealing with the political elites and populations in the area. One of the main shortcomings of EU capabilities, identified by the Director General of the European Union Military Staff, General Rainer Schuwirth (2002), namely 'shortfalls in all areas of intelligence gathering' and a lack of a 'common system for intelligence fusion' could thus be at least partially neutralised.

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Nevertheless, even the limited conflict-management operations that the EU is currently conducting in the Western Balkans are very valuable for its future role as a serious international actor. While it might be too early to proclaim the overall success of EU conflict-management in the



region, there are some indicators that a certain degree of success might not elude the Union on this occasion.<sup>32</sup> First of all, they have proven the success of institutional reforms within the Union and of the development of credible policies and instruments for conflict-management. Second, they underscore that the overall approach of the EU to the conduct of international affairs is fruitful: commitment to multilateralism (within the EU and with its partners elsewhere),<sup>33</sup> constructive and long-term engagement with conflict regions, combining short-term crisis-management with long-term structural conflict prevention and a fair balance between civilian and military strategies to maximise the short- and long-term impact of its policies. Third, by highlighting remaining deficiencies in EU conflict-management capabilities, the Union now has an opportunity to draw lessons for the future before engaging in more ambitious and demanding operations elsewhere in its 'new neighbourhood'.

### **The ENP as a possible conflict-management tool?**

In order to draw an accurate parallel from the lessons learned in the Western Balkans to an assessment of the prospect of the ENP as a potential policy instrument for conflict-management in the EU's 'new neighbourhood', it is important to stress that the countries in the ENP area have an all together different relationship with the EU than the countries in the Western Balkans. Although, the EU is a key aid and trade partner to these countries, the ENP explicitly excludes them from the promise of future EU membership. In effect, the EU has significantly less leverage in terms of conditionality compliance in these countries than it does in the Western Balkans, where the accession prospect is the key to the Union's success. Consequently, the EU is not seen as an equally important partner in these countries, and it often suffers a lack of credibility in terms of its capability to deliver on its threats as well as its promises. It is important here to stress that the relationship with the EU also varies significantly between the different ENP countries.<sup>34</sup>

The international context with regard to the ENP partner countries is also different from that of the Western Balkans, where the key international security actors (for the most part) respect the EU's current leading role. In the ENP area, other international actors, such as Russia, China, a number of Middle Eastern countries and the US, have vested interests and are already engaged in a number of the conflicts in question (albeit in different ways, to different degrees and at different levels in the different countries).<sup>35</sup> The ENP's prospect as a conflict-management

tool therefore depends on whether the EU is both able and willing to implement a conflict-management policy despite other international actors being engaged and potentially having conflicting interests in the country in question. Although the Union may have learned valuable lessons with regard to what means are necessary for successful EU conflict-management, this does not by any means guarantee that the Union is able or indeed willing to undertake such missions throughout the ENP area, especially where such efforts would conflict with the interests of the other actors engaged or indeed those of the EU itself. As argued above conflict-management in the Western Balkans is comparatively much more important for the EU. Finally, the EU has relatively few capabilities in terms of intelligence and understanding of the conflicts in these countries and it lacks the institutional memory and know-how, which have gradually been built up over time in the Western Balkan context, which means that if the EU was indeed willing to commit to the extent necessary for EU conflict-management to be successful in the ENP area, it may not necessarily be able to do it with the same relative success as it has had in the Western Balkans since 1999.

What then are the tangible prospects of ENP conflict-management in the EU's 'new neighbourhood'? As far as the Southern dimension is concerned, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Lebanon, Algeria and Morocco/Western Sahara, we argue, are far beyond the individual conflict-management capacity the EU (and within it the ENP) at present. Nevertheless, the EU has an important role to play here alongside the US, Russia and the Arab world in bringing about conditions under which international, multilateral conflict-management would be possible. Here, the EU has significant long-term potential in facilitating conflict-management through aid, trade, mediation and long-term governance reform assistance, to mention but a few areas, all of which could well be facilitated through multifaceted ENP country strategies, and it is in the formulation of such strategies that the EU could make the best use of the lessons it learned in the Western Balkans.

In the Eastern dimension, its geographical proximity and political leverage arguably presents the Union with a relatively positive prospect in playing a more significant role in the conflict in Transnistria. A positive outcome of any ENP initiative to manage (resolve and prevent) further conflict in Moldova, however, depends on the cooperation of the respective governments in these countries and the role of Russia.<sup>36</sup> The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh presents the EU with an even more complex regional situation involving Russia, Iran and Turkey. In particular, the nature of the incumbent

regimes in relation to this particular conflict presents the ENP with a significantly greater challenge than the conflict in Moldova.

Much more concretely than in most other cases in the EU's neighbourhood, the recent confrontation between Russia and Georgia (August 2008) has tested the EU's emerging conflict-management capabilities in the Southern Caucasus. Taking into account the complexity of the situation the EU has had, and continues to have, to deal with in Georgia and the complexity of the underlying conflicts it has to help manage (resolve and prevent) in the region, the Union demonstrated that it has indeed developed an institutional framework and a set of policies that enable it to make decisions quickly, provide adequate funds and personnel and cooperate and coordinate activities with third parties in ways that enhance its own capabilities and maximise the chances of successful crisis-management in this context, too. Shortly after the outbreak of the war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008, on 1 September 2008 the Council of the EU expressed 'grave concern at the open conflict which had broken out in Georgia, and expressed the readiness of the European Union to commit itself to supporting every effort to secure a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict' (Council Joint Action 2008/760/CFSP of 25 September 2008, p. 1). To this end the Council appointed Pierre Morrel as European Union Special Representative for the Crisis in Georgia to 'enhance the effectiveness and visibility of the European Union in helping to resolve the conflict in Georgia' (Council Joint Action 2008/760/CFSP of 25 September 2008, p. 1) and on 15 September the Council adopted a Joint Action to launch a European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM Georgia). Two days later Hansjorg Haber was appointed Head of the EUMM and within two weeks of the Council decision, the Union had successfully launched the mission and deployed more than 200 monitors from 22 member states on the ground.

Although the EUMM has already encountered a number of problems in the field<sup>37</sup> and it is still far too early to proclaim the overall success of EU's reaction to the crisis in Georgia, the quick reaction in terms of condemning the conflict, appointing the EUSR and launching the EUMM, there are some indicators that a certain degree of success might not elude the Union on this occasion. First, as already mentioned, the EU underscored the success of its internal institutional reforms and of the development of credible policies and instruments for conflict-management. Second, the rapid EU response to the recent developments in Georgia highlighted once again the Union's emerging approach to conflict-management through commitment to multilateralism

(within the EU and with its partners) and constructive and long-term engagement with conflict regions, combining short-term crisis-management with long-term structural conflict prevention. The Union now has an opportunity in Georgia to draw on the lessons from the Balkans before engaging in more ambitious and demanding operations elsewhere in its 'new neighbourhood'. The track record so far suggests that the EU might after all be on the right track to establish itself as a credible international security actor.

## Notes

1. Initially it was simply referred to as ESDP in the Presidency Conclusions of the Cologne European Council in June 1999; the Helsinki Council of December 1999 introduced the acronym of CESDP 'to signify the determination, on the part of the EU member states, to develop a distinct European politico-military project, with its own institutional infrastructure and a significant military capacity' (Howorth 2000: 377).
2. This is not to deny that the EU has had two successive programmes in support of the Northern Ireland peace process since the mid-1990s (PEACE I from 1995 to 1999, and PEACE II from 2000 to 2006) and that European integration has provided institutional structures and incentives for cross-border cooperation both in Northern Ireland and in South Tyrol that have had a generally positive, albeit hardly quantifiable impact on conflict resolution in both of these cases.
3. Commission of the European Communities (2004), Communication from the Commission, *European Neighbourhood Policy, Strategy Paper*, COM(2004) 373 final, p. 3, Brussels, 12 May 2004.
4. A.G. Kintis (1997), 'The EU's foreign policy and the war in former Yugoslavia' in M. Holland, *Common Foreign and Security Policy*. London: Pinter. L. Silber and A. Little (1996), *The death of Yugoslavia*. London: Penguin Books.
5. It is estimated that between 7000 and 8000 Muslim men and boys were killed by Serb nationalists in Srebrenica in 1995. L. Silber and A. Little (1996), *The death of Yugoslavia*. London: Penguin Books.
6. A.G. Kintis (1997), 'The EU's foreign policy and the war in former Yugoslavia' in M. Holland, *Common Foreign and Security Policy*. London: Pinter. N. Morris (2004), 'Humanitarian intervention in the Balkans', in J. Welsh, *Humanitarian intervention and international relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P.C. Pentland (2003), 'The EU and Southeastern Europe after Dayton' *Europe-Russia Working Chapters*. Ottawa: Carleton University.
7. The EU did, however, go through a learning process in the Balkans. After the Dayton Agreement ended the war, the EU gradually began a more coherent and effective response to political stabilisation and economic recovery in the region. The EU assumed a modest role in the first three years of the international protectorate in Bosnia-Herzegovina and contributed

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significantly in terms of humanitarian aid and assistance in the post-conflict reconstruction in the wider region, but it was not until after the Kosovo campaign that the EU re-emerged with a comprehensive vision for the Western Balkans and a renewed claim to leadership. Today the EU, heavily engaged in crisis-management is widely recognised as one of if not the most important international actor in the region. F. Cameron (2006), 'The European Union's role in the Balkans' in B. Blitz (ed.) *War and change in the Balkans*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; E. Faucompret (2001), *The dismemberment of Yugoslavia and the European Union*. Antwerp: University of Antwerp. L. Silber and A. Little (1996), *The death of Yugoslavia*. London: Penguin Books.

8. E. Faucompret (2001), *The dismemberment of Yugoslavia and the European Union*. Antwerp: University of Antwerp.

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9. Weller and Wolff 2008.

10. The Petersberg Declaration was the WEU's response to calls for greater burden-sharing within NATO through the elaboration of a coherent European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) built around the WEU. In the context of the European Convention, important amendments and revisions to the Petersberg Declaration were proposed by the so-called Barnier Report (European Convention 2002.)

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11. The Cologne Summit, importantly, happened just at the end of NATO's intervention in the Kosovo crisis, which in turn visibly influenced the decision-making by Heads of State and Government in Cologne.

12. European Union (2007), Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community (2007/C 306/01), *Official Journal of the European Union, English Edition, C 306, Volume 50, 17 December 2007*, available online at [http://bookshop.europa.eu/eubookshop/FileCache/PUBPDF/FXAC07306ENC/FXAC07306ENC\\_002.pdf](http://bookshop.europa.eu/eubookshop/FileCache/PUBPDF/FXAC07306ENC/FXAC07306ENC_002.pdf); accessed on 3 April 2008.

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13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. For a somewhat different take on the capabilities problem, see U. Schneckener (2002), *Developing and Applying EU Crisis Management: Test Case Macedonia*. ECMI Working Paper No. 14. Flensburg: European Centre for Minority Issues, pp. 37–39. Available at [http://www.ecmi.de/doc/download/working\\_paper\\_14.pdf](http://www.ecmi.de/doc/download/working_paper_14.pdf).

16. Presidency Conclusions, European Council Meeting in Laeken, 14 and 15 December 2001. SN 300/1/101 REV 1.: paragraph 6.

17. Presidency Conclusions, European Council Meeting in Laeken, 14 and 15 December 2001. SN 300/1/101 REV 1. Annex II.

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18. This has also been emphasised by Piana (2002, p. 211) in relation to the crisis in Macedonia: 'The creation of the post of High Representative definitely brought the visibility/continuity element that was lacking in the CFSP.'

19. C. Hill (2001), 'The EU's Capacity for Conflict Prevention', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 6 (3), p. 328.

20. European Council (2001), Council regulation (EC) No 381/2001 of February 26 2001 creating a rapid reaction mechanism.

21. Commission of the European Communities (2002). Information Note, 'The Rapid Reaction Mechanism Supporting the European Union's Policy Objectives in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management', available at [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/cfsp/doc/rrm.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/cfsp/doc/rrm.pdf).
22. European Union (2007) Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community (2007/C 306/01), *Official Journal of the European Union*, English Edition, C 306, Volume 50, 17 December 2007, (available online at [http://bookshop.europa.eu/eubookshop/FileCache/PUBPDF/FXAC07306ENC/FXAC07306ENC\\_002.pdf](http://bookshop.europa.eu/eubookshop/FileCache/PUBPDF/FXAC07306ENC/FXAC07306ENC_002.pdf); accessed on 3 April 2008).
23. European Council (2008), 'European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina', available at [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3\\_fo/showPage.asp?id=585&lang=EN&mode=g](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=585&lang=EN&mode=g); accessed on 9 March 2008).
24. EUFOR was established in 1995 in Lisbon as a military force under the Petersberg Tasks. Contributing nations are France, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Operational since 1998 and listed in the force catalogues of the EU, NATO, the OSCE and UN, it has been part of NATO operation Allied Guardian in Albania in 2000.
25. Council Joint Action of 12 July 2004 on the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. 2004/570/CFSP.
26. The Operations Field Commander was EUFOR military staff, but also part of the command structure of this particular operation. He reported to the EU Operation Commander, in this case NATO's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander for Europe. The EU Military Committee monitored the conduct of the operation and received reports from the Operation Commander as well as providing the first point of call for him in relation to the Council. Even though the Operation Commander simultaneously had a position within the NATO command structure, he only reported to EU bodies and the chain of command remained under the EU's political control and strategic direction. In contrast to the EUPM, the EUSR to Macedonia, Alexis Brouhns, was not part of the command chain, but acted, together with the SG/HR, as primary point of contact for Macedonian authorities and as key liaison for EU commanders in the field. This was in many ways similar to what had happened one year earlier in relation to the EU's Operation CONCORDIA taking over from NATO's Operation Allied Harmony in Macedonia.
27. NATO, 'SHAPE-EU Cooperation: Background Information. Available at [http://www.nato.int/shape/issues/shape\\_eu/background.htm](http://www.nato.int/shape/issues/shape_eu/background.htm); NATO, 'Operation Althea', available online at [http://www.nato.int/shape/issues/shape\\_eu/althea.htm](http://www.nato.int/shape/issues/shape_eu/althea.htm).
28. C. Hill (1993), 'The Capability-Expectations Gap, or Conceptualising Europe's International Role', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 31 (3), p. 312.
29. C. Hill (1993), 'The Capability-Expectations Gap, or Conceptualising Europe's International Role', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 31 (3), p. 311f.
30. This is the problem of CFSP as a 'moving target'. See F. Cameron (2002), 'The European Union's Growing International Role: Closing the Capability - Expectations Gap?'. Paper presented at the conference on The European

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Union in International Affairs, National Europe Centre, Australian National University, July 2002, available at [http://www.anu.edu.au/NEC/fraser\\_cameron.pdf](http://www.anu.edu.au/NEC/fraser_cameron.pdf).

31. For example, the decision of extending Operation CONCORDIA in Macedonia was contingent upon a decision of the North Atlantic Council to extend the availability of NATO assets to the EU.
32. The two big (known) unknowns in this respect are the closure of the OHR in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the outcome, and impact, of the Kosovo final status negotiations.
33. The preference of a multilateral approach to crisis-management can also be deduced from the fact that in both current crisis-management operations in the Western Balkans and in the brief military operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the European Council either did not move before the UN (DRC) or explicitly inferred the legitimacy of its operation, at least in part, from a *preceding* UN resolution. M.E. Smith (2001) 'Diplomacy by Degree: The Legalisation of EU Foreign Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 39 (1), p. 99.
34. For a more in-depth investigation of the role of the EU and the ENP in different geographical contexts, see the chapters by Echeverria, Bicchi, Ghazarian and Sasse in this volume.
35. For some examples, please see Rynning and Jensen and Haukkala in this volume.
36. For a more in-depth discussion, Haukkala in this volume.
37. The successful implementation of the EUMM mandate in Georgia has so far been hampered by the blockage of access for EU monitors to South Ossetia and Abkhazia and, according to the EU itself, limited cooperation with the Russians. Some observers, such as the International Crisis Group, Radio Free Europe and reportedly Human Rights Watch, have also raised concerns about the limited mandate of the mission and the inability of the EU observers to intervene directly when faced with violence. (Crisis Group Europe Briefing No. 51, 26 November 2008; EUMM Press conference with Hansjorg Haber, 24 October, 2008; Radio Free Europe interview with Hansjorg Haber, 4 November 2008).