



IIEA EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE SERIES

EUROPEAN SECURITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

THE EU'S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

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“IIEA European Security and Defence Series: European Security in the 21st Century: The EU’s
Comprehensive Approach”

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century international security environment, dominated by the rise of transnational security threats such as terrorism, cyber attacks, organised crime and piracy, has provided an opportunity for the European Union (EU) to enhance its added value as a global security actor. In this context, the EU has embraced a new external action discourse, known as the 'comprehensive approach'. This involves the mobilisation of the entire range of instruments available to the Union to address the full cycle of crisis prevention, response and recovery. The Lisbon Treaty updated EU foreign and security policy structures to institutionalise this approach, with the promise of greater coherence and capacity to act. These developments have created new openings for the EU, and Ireland in turn, to enhance the effectiveness of its contribution to global security despite the economic crisis, which has placed severe constraints on the resources available.

This paper begins by describing the comprehensive approach and concludes that a paradigm shift has taken place in European security and defence since the end of the Cold War. It considers how the Lisbon Treaty has adapted the EU institutions to facilitate the implementation of the comprehensive approach, demonstrating that this is a work in progress and that the operational aspects currently lag behind conceptual developments. It then outlines a case study on the EU's involvement with the Horn of Africa, highlighting some of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach in that region. It assesses a number of key remaining challenges before examining the implications for Ireland and concludes that the comprehensive approach creates an environment in which Ireland can contribute effectively to the peace and security of the EU as a whole.

2. A DISCOURSE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Under its comprehensive approach to crisis management the EU takes a holistic view of a (potential) crisis situation and recognises that an effective, sustainable solution can only be achieved by using the full range of instruments at the EU's disposal. These instruments include political, diplomatic, economic, development, military, civilian (policing, judiciary, border assistance, etc.), and the external dimensions of internal instruments such as energy policy¹ – as complementary aspects of a coordinated response.

The comprehensive approach represents a shift away from a Cold War world-view, which identified existential threats (primarily the threat of invasion) that required solely military responses. It orients the EU towards a multi-faceted approach that recognises the complexity of global security issues and considers how the EU can

¹ Emergency humanitarian assistance is not considered part of the crisis management toolbox. EU policy determines that such assistance should be based on need alone and not linked to political objectives.

address every aspect of a particular crisis in a coherent manner. The idea of 'comprehensiveness' also refers to the need for both rapid response capabilities and a complementary long-term strategy. Furthermore, it blurs the distinctions between internal and external security threats, which have been artificially divided into the Freedom, Security and Justice (internal) and Common Foreign and Security Policy (external) domains. Finally, the comprehensive approach reflects the greater interdependence of Member States when facing these threats.

The term itself is not new: the concept of the comprehensive approach was formally presented as early as 2003 in the European Security Strategy, *A Secure Europe in a Better World*.² The Strategy assessed that:

“In contrast to the massive visible threat in the Cold War, none of the new [global security] threats is purely military; nor can any be tackled by purely military means. Each requires a mixture of instruments.”

The EU is well placed to engage in such an approach given the uniquely broad range of instruments in its toolbox compared with other multinational security organisations. NATO, for instance, commands greater military might but lacks an array of civilian resources comparable to the EU. By contrast, the EU has the scope for a broad mandate, drawing on the expertise, personnel, financing and capabilities available in its twenty-seven Member States, alongside limited own-resources, to construct 'packages' of measures to respond to crisis situations as they arise.

Against a backdrop of austerity across the EU, the comprehensive approach may also enable EU Member States to better weather the current economic crisis without a major decline in their ability to achieve their foreign and security policy objectives. Faced with the sacrifice of national capabilities which, once lost, are difficult and expensive to regain, some Member States are beginning to view cooperation and interdependence with EU partners as a more attractive prospect. The options open to a Member State that wishes to maintain its capacity to act in an efficient and cost-effective way through the EU are numerous. Personnel and equipment (including national military headquarters) from different Member States can be contributed to EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, and countries share the common costs of the military operations through the ATHENA mechanism (see box below). In addition, the European Defence Agency (EDA)³ facilitates the joint development of military capabilities by groups of Member States and the pooling and sharing of existing capabilities. By availing of these opportunities and engaging in an approach which maximises impact and avoids duplication, EU Member States hope to prevent the economic crisis creating a

² <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>

³ The European Defence Agency (EDA) is an intergovernmental agency which acts as a catalyst and a coordinating body for multinational initiatives to address shortfalls in European capabilities. Ireland is a participating Member State and is involved in a number of EDA projects, including those related to chemical, radiological, biological and nuclear (CRBN) weapons and maritime surveillance.

security crisis and Europe's vulnerabilities becoming more apparent as the US focuses its own declining defence resources on the Asia-Pacific region.

FINANCING CSDP MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS

CSDP *civilian* missions are funded under heading four of the general EU budget ('EU as a global player').

Operations with *military implications* or *defence operations* cannot be financed from Community funds. The common costs for such operations, including headquarters, medical services and, in some cases, transport and lodging of forces, are jointly financed by EU Member States through the **ATHENA mechanism**. Twenty-six Member States (all bar Denmark) contribute to this mechanism in proportion to the size of their economy.

In practice, common costs represent only a small proportion of the total costs for an operation. The remaining expenditure is financed directly by the participating Member States on the basis of the '**costs lie where they fall**' principle.

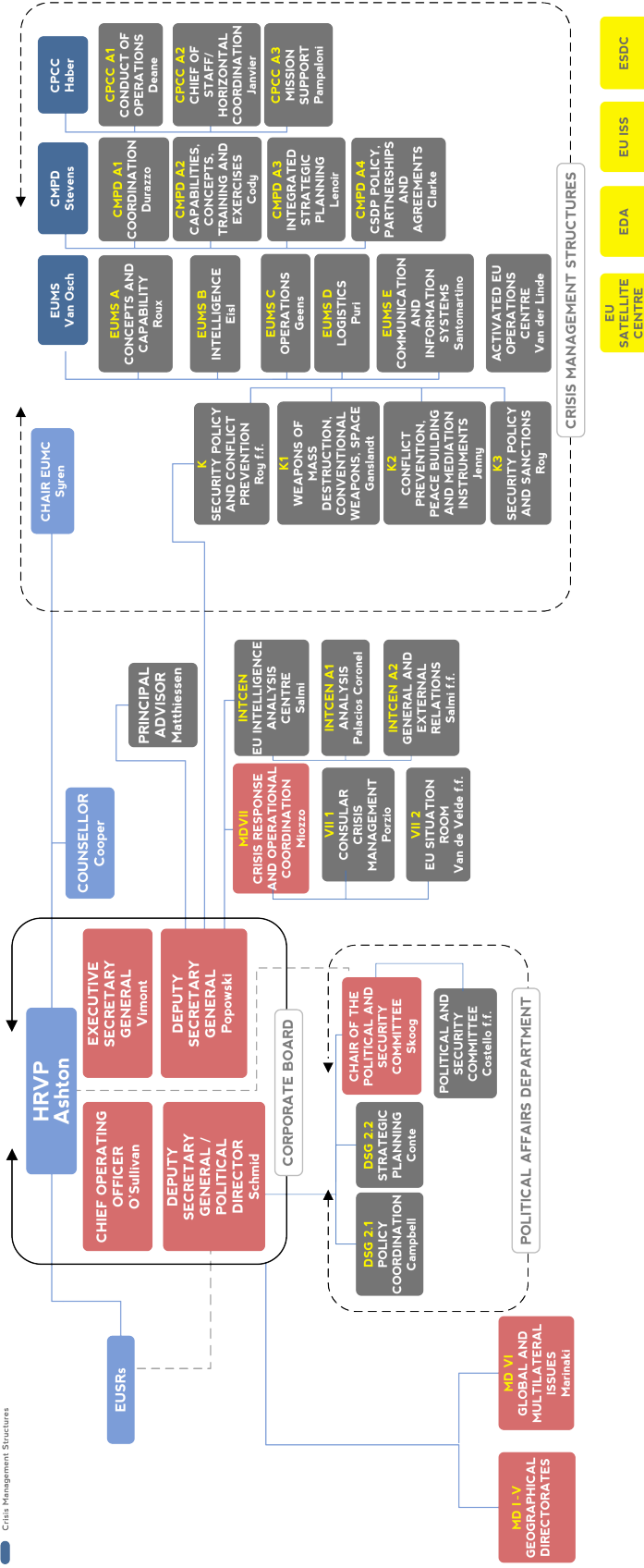
3. INSTITUTIONALISATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

One of the objectives of the Lisbon Treaty was to modernise the EU institutions and processes in order to facilitate the objectives and working practices of an enlarged Union. In the fields of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), it promised better coordination, efficiency and ultimately greater coherence on the world stage. The institutional architecture established by the Lisbon Treaty maintained many of the Union's pre-existing security bodies and crisis management structures but significant innovations at the level of coordination and management were introduced. Major institutional changes introduced by the Treaty include:

- the creation of the post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission (HRVP), and
- the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Union's new diplomatic service.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE STRUCTURES IN THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE

- Reporting directly to HRVP Ashton
- Corporate and policy boards
- CFSR Agencies
- Crisis Management Structures



The majority of the Union's instruments for external action, previously spread across the Council Secretariat and the European Commission (in particular DG RELEX), were brought together in the EEAS, which was established on 1 January 2011. This new institution is headed by the HRVP and even those instruments that remain part of the European Commission (enlargement, development, trade) are under the coordination of the HRVP. Thus, post-Lisbon, all of the instruments are united in a single network headed by the HRVP. Implementing these changes has consumed considerable time and energy, and an analysis must take account of the fact that the new structures are a work in progress and not yet functioning at full capacity.

- HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY POLICY AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION (HRVP)

An assessment of the significance and effectiveness of the HRVP must take account of the fact that the role has thus far been synonymous with its first incumbent, Catherine Ashton. Until a comparison can be made with her successor, it is difficult to separate an analysis of her level of ambition, priorities and working style from considerations of the strengths and weaknesses of the position itself. Some suggest that Catherine Ashton has proven to be a strong driver of coordination and a force for coherence since she took office on 1 December 2009. Others have been more critical of her performance to date, pointing to a lack of strategic vision and ambitious agenda.

Indeed, the HRVP has thus far primarily been confined to a coordination role. The double-hatted mandate involves coordinating Member States on one hand, as Chair of the Foreign Affairs Council, and coordinating the Union's external instruments on the other, as head of the EEAS and Vice President of the European Commission. To appreciate the challenge facing the HRVP in coordinating the Member States in this domain, it is important to recall that unanimity is required to launch a common security and defence initiative and Member States themselves decide on a case by case basis whether to participate. As a result of the strongly intergovernmental nature of the policy area, there are strict limitations on the HRVP in the role of Chair of the Foreign Affairs Council – essentially, the HRVP can only lead the Member States where they want to go. One recent situation which highlighted these limits was the lack of political will for an EU-wide response to the 2011 crisis in Libya. Another avenue through which Member States engage with each other and with the HRVP is the Political and Security Committee (PSC).⁴ This is a body made up of Member State ambassadors where, under the Permanent Chairmanship of Olof Skoog, they seek consensus on policy responses to international crises. The Chair reports frequently to the HRVP and she periodically attends PSC meetings to engage directly with the ambassadors.

⁴ The Political and Security Committee (PSC) is a permanent Brussels-based body in which ambassadors from the twenty-seven EU Member States work to find political consensus on foreign and security issues as they arise.

One notable way in which the HRVP has driven the search for common foreign and security policy positions is by putting the EU at the forefront of the global response to certain important security problems. In the fight against piracy off the coast of Somalia and the search for peace in the Middle East, to take two examples, the EU, represented by the HRVP, has taken a leading role in the international initiatives to respond to the crises. Each of these situations are highly-complex, long-running security problems, with an array of individual countries and multilateral organisations involved in the response. In the case of piracy, NATO, the US, the UK, China, Russia, India and Malaysia all have operations off the Horn of Africa, with the EU in a strong, though informal, coordination role due to the size of its naval operation. On the Middle East Peace Process, the EU is part of the high-profile Quartet, along with the United Nations, the US and Russia. By positioning the EU very visibly at the fore of the international response to such crises, the HRVP has attempted to create an incentive for EU Member States to move towards strong, unified positions beyond the lowest common denominator.

- EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE (EEAS)

The EEAS is the new diplomatic service of the EU, headed by the HRVP, assisted by Executive Secretary General, Pierre Vimont, and Chief Operating Officer, David O'Sullivan. At a conference organised under the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU in February 2012, Catherine Ashton described the EEAS as “a crisis prevention machine”. While it could doubtlessly be debated whether the EEAS is successfully fulfilling this function, the focus on crises is in itself notable. In line with this vision, HRVP Ashton gave special responsibility for security policy to Maciej Popowski, one of two Deputy Secretaries General of the EEAS, and created the role of Managing Director for Crisis Response and Operational Coordination⁵, embedding CSDP and the comprehensive approach at senior level in the EEAS. The role of the Managing Director is to design mechanisms and practices to ensure streamlined and effective cooperation between all those involved in crisis response on behalf of the EU – a task which the incumbent, Dr. Agostino Miozzo, himself admits has been very challenging, due to the fact that the majority of the EEAS staff lack hands-on experience of dealing with crisis situations.⁶

Since it became operational on 1 January 2011, the EEAS has incorporated a cluster of autonomous crisis management cells, both civilian and military. The Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD)⁷ and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPC²)⁸ have both been incorporated into the EEAS. The important role that the military retains in the comprehensive approach was emphasised by Catherine Ashton's statement at the EDA Annual Conference in January 2012 that: “If Europe is to be a credible player in the world, it requires more

⁵ The Managing Director for Crisis Response and Operational Coordination heads a Crisis Response Department and manages a 24/7/365 situation room.

⁶ IIEA event, 8 March 2012 <http://www.iiea.com/events/eu-crisis-response--from-pakistan-to-libya>

⁷ The Crisis Management and Planning Directorate creates civil-military synergies and brings both elements together in the strategic planning for CSDP missions and operations.

⁸ The Civil Planning and Conduct Capability is responsible for planning and conducting civilian missions.

than just soft power.” The EU Military Committee (EUMC)⁹ and EU Military Staff (EUMS)¹⁰ have been brought within the EEAS structure, along with a range of other branches concerned with security and defence policy – such as the Political and Security Committee, the EU Special Representatives¹¹ and the Union Delegations in third countries.¹² Each has its own independent links to the HRVP. However, the fact that they are all part of a single network, under the common institutional umbrella of the EEAS, has created efficiencies, in particular related to the exchange of information. Heads of EU Delegations around the world, for example, provide local political guidance to policy-makers in Brussels and Member State governments, while the Director General of the EUMS shares military expertise and lessons learned.

Institutional regrouping is one step in the implementation of the comprehensive approach, but without buy-in throughout the ranks of the EEAS it can have little real impact. There have been reports of institutional in-fighting and turf wars both within the EEAS and between it and the European Commission, constraining work in the area. Challenges have also arisen in coordinating different aspects of the comprehensive approach, due to different planning timelines, chains of command and operating cultures between the civil and military instruments. In this context, it is important to keep in mind that the EEAS is still in its infancy and enduring patterns of behaviour and interaction have not necessarily yet emerged. Staffing difficulties have meant that, eighteen months after the establishment of the EEAS, many positions in Brussels and in the delegations remain vacant. The goal of achieving a balance between officials drawn from the European Commission (one third), the Council Secretariat (one third) and the Member State Diplomatic Corps (one third), which could have a substantial impact on the functioning and balance of the institution, has not yet been achieved. Furthermore, the fact that the Member State representation lags behind the one-third target is significant, in particular as Member State appointees will form the EEAS’s main cohort of experienced diplomats. The HRVP is currently preparing a review of the 2003 procedures for crisis management and will conduct a full review of the functioning of the EEAS by mid-2013 which will provide an opportunity to assess the progress thus far and consider changes that may be needed.

Despite the considerable operational challenges, and the time lag between the conceptualisation of the new approach and its implementation, the EEAS has become the home of the comprehensive approach. The process through which the EU’s coordinated response to a crisis is constructed is carried out under the authority

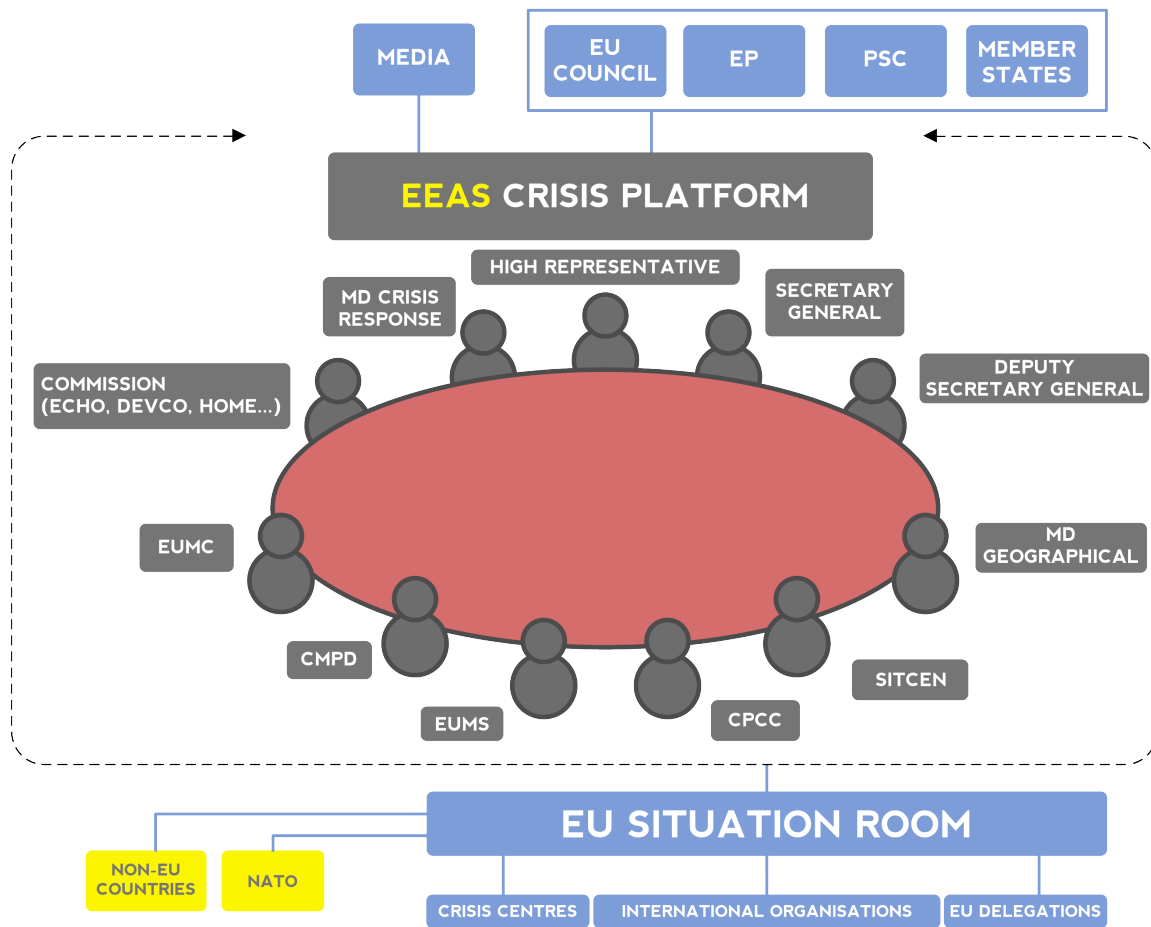
⁹ The European Union Military Committee (EUMC) brings together the Chiefs of Defence (CHOD) of the EU Member States to discuss the military issues facing the Union and to provide military advice and recommendations to the Political and Security Committee.

¹⁰ The European Union Military Staff (EUMS) is the only permanently-based, integrated military structure of the Union. Its mission is to carry out early warning, situation assessment and strategic planning for CSDP activities.

¹¹ EU Special Representatives are high-level appointees who support the work of the HRVP in troubled countries and regions. They provide the EU with an additional, active, political presence in key areas.

¹² Over 130 EU delegations around the world represent the EU and its Member States in third countries. These were formerly European Commission delegations with economic and development mandates, but under the Treaty of Lisbon they now represent the Union as a whole and have an additional political function.

of the HRVP. A body called the Crisis Management Board (CMB)¹³, chaired by the HRVP or the EEAS Executive Secretary, meets on an ad hoc basis to discuss horizontal organisational aspects of EEAS crisis response, crisis management and conflict prevention. In addition, the HRVP, EEAS Executive Secretary General or the EEAS Managing Director for Crisis Response and Operational Coordination, may convene the Crisis Platform¹⁴ to coordinate the response to a particular situation. This body brings together the heads of each of the EU ‘instruments’ concerned (see graphic below) to define what they can contribute should an initiative be sanctioned by the Political and Security Committee (PSC). Contributions may include money from the development budget, border control assistance or military escorts for food aid. In this way a comprehensive package of complementary measures is designed, tailored to the crisis at hand.



¹³ The Crisis Management Board meets on an ad hoc basis to discuss horizontal organisational issues to ensure coordination of EU measures related to crisis prevention, preparedness and response capabilities. It brings together all relevant EEAS departments.

¹⁴ The Crisis Platform meets on an ad hoc basis and is composed of various EEAS crisis response and management structures, relevant geographical and horizontal EEAS departments, relevant European Commission services and the EU Military Committee. It was activated four times in 2011 to ensure the coherence of the EU response relating to the crises in the Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, the Horn of Africa and the crisis management exercise CME 11.

4. THE EU AND THE HORN OF AFRICA: THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH IN ACTION?

The EU's ongoing engagement with the Horn of Africa is a useful case study as it is often presented as the flagship of the comprehensive approach. The EU has long been present in this troubled region in East Africa, and its initial CSDP engagement took the form of civilian support to the African Union Mission to Sudan (July 2005-December 2007). However, the launch of a Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa¹⁵ on 14 November 2011 was significant in formally laying out the Union's comprehensive approach to the interconnected political, socio-economic and security challenges in the region, bringing all of the ongoing activities under a common umbrella and proposing additional initiatives to complete the response. The strategic framework encompasses the EU's relationship with eight countries in the Horn of Africa¹⁶ in the areas of development, trade, political dialogue, humanitarian activities, crisis response and management, counter-terrorism, piracy, climate change, migration and regional cooperation. The role of EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa was established to coordinate the activities. While the new Special Representative, Greek diplomat Alexander Rondos, has responsibility for all eight countries, the Council has requested that he initially focus on Somalia and the regional dimensions of the conflict there, as well as on piracy, which is seen to be rooted in the instability of Somalia. The underlying assumption is that progress on these problems is a prerequisite for successfully addressing other issues in the region.



¹⁵http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126052.pdf

¹⁶ The countries included are those which belong to the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD): Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda.

Two ongoing EU-led military operations predate the strategic framework: EUNAVFOR ATALANTA and EUTM Somalia. EUNAVFOR ATALANTA¹⁷, the EU's first naval mission, contributes to maritime security off the coast of Somalia and in particular protects World Food Programme vessels from pirate attacks. The operation was launched in December 2008 and it comprises approximately 1,500 military personnel with a mandate until the end of 2014. The scope of its mandate was extended in March 2012, which allowed for air raids on land-based targets to commence in May. This operation has given the EU the opportunity to cooperate with a broad range of international partners such as NATO, the US, India, Russia, China and Malaysia. EUNAVFOR ATALANTA and NATO Operation Ocean Shield headquarters are co-located in Northwood in the United Kingdom to facilitate coordination.

An EU Training Mission¹⁸ (EUTM) is also ongoing, under the command of Irish Colonel Michael Beary. A third intake of Somali security forces finished their training in Uganda in May 2012. In addition, on 12 December 2011, EU Foreign Ministers approved the crisis management concept for a new CSDP mission, EUCAP NESTOR¹⁹, focused on supporting regional maritime capacity building (RMCB) in the Horn of Africa and West Indian Ocean. This decision allows the operational planning phase to begin for a civilian mission augmented by military expertise. The deployment of personnel will begin during 2012 for an initial mandate of two years.

While these operations continue to support security and stability in the Horn of Africa as a major element of the EU's comprehensive approach, it is clear that a military response alone cannot resolve the deep-rooted problems in the region. Other elements of the EU's engagement with the Horn of Africa, such as the presence of a Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan and a number of important funding initiatives, complement the aims of the military operations. By 2013, Somalia alone will have benefitted from €412 million of development aid from the European Development Fund since 2008. This is in addition to more than €280 million for humanitarian aid since 2005.²⁰ The EU also supports the work of the African Union Mission in Somalia²¹ (AMISOM). On 5 December 2011, the European Commission authorised the transfer of an additional €50 million to AMISOM to increase personnel on the ground from the current level of 9,800 towards the eventual target of 12,000 and support the fulfillment of its mandate to stabilise the security situation in Somalia. This contribution brought the total EU aid for AMISOM to €258 million since 2007.

The EU's activities in the Horn of Africa exemplify the Union's new approach to external action, which goes beyond a predominantly military emphasis in CSDP to

¹⁷ <http://www.eunavfor.eu/>

¹⁸ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eu-somalia-training-mission>

¹⁹ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eucap-nestor>

²⁰ All figures from <http://www.eunavfor.eu/about-us/mission/>

²¹ <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/auc/departments/psc/amisom/amisom.htm>

an approach where military operations support a broader civil agenda. However, the long-term impact of the EU's engagement cannot yet be assessed and it remains to be seen to what extent and how successfully the approach can be applied to other situations. Over time, the impact will also be compared with other cases, for example the EU's approach to the Sahel region.²² In that instance, different sequencing allowed the overarching EU strategy to be designed first and missions and other activities to flow from it. The Horn of Africa case study demonstrates that where the EU decides to act, it does have an operational capacity which can be effective in working towards its foreign and security policy goals around the world.

The fact that two of the early test beds for the comprehensive approach have been in Africa (Horn of Africa and Sahel regions) can be explained by a number of factors. In the first instance, consensus between Member States may be easier to achieve in relation to Africa compared with, say, South East Europe, due to the close alignment of individual Member States' and EU interests in the region. David O'Sullivan, EEAS Chief Operating Officer, has described this as "not so much having a single voice but passing a single message", i.e. it helps to overcome the problem of Member States' statements cutting across one another and across the public diplomacy of the EU, providing an opportunity for the EU to showcase a best practice model of EU external action. However, now that the arenas for EU activities have gone beyond the traditional scope of the EU's 'own backyard' (i.e. the Balkans and to a certain extent Eastern Europe and North Africa) into the heart of Africa and various parts of Asia, a thorough understanding of the countries involved is vital. Comprehensive packages of EU solutions require tailoring to each unique situation and it is important that decision-makers in Brussels adopt a differentiated approach, using the situation on the ground, rather than the EU instruments, as a starting point for designing a solution. Accordingly, the network of over 130 EU delegations operating in third countries is the key to a nuanced understanding of local issues in a particular area.

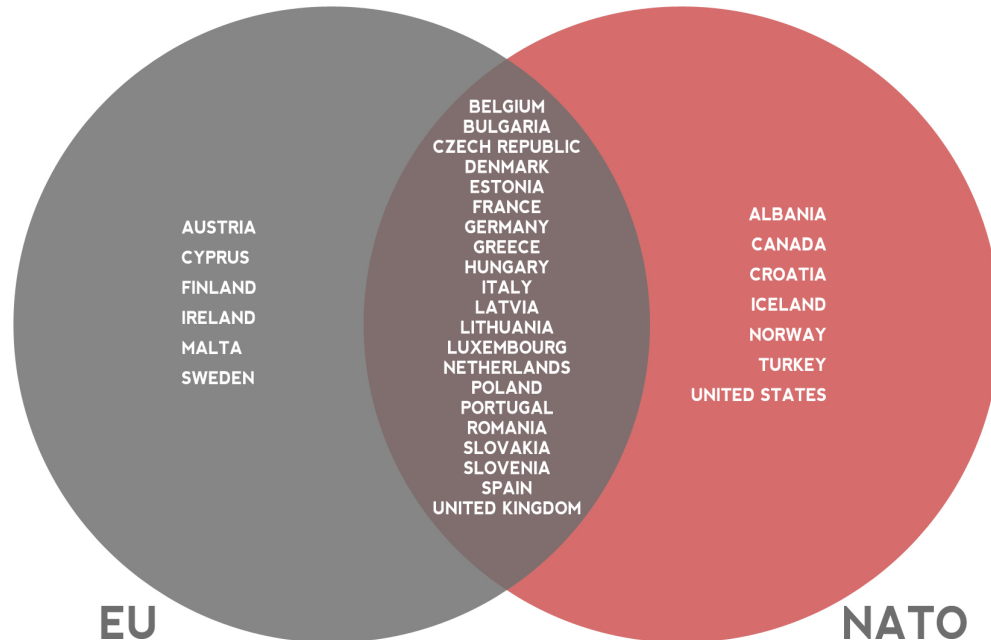
5. CHALLENGES REMAINING

Challenges doubtlessly remain to be addressed if the EU is to progress the effectiveness and efficiency of its Common Security and Defence Policy. In addition to the various operational challenges that have been mentioned, a number of overarching issues such as funding EU CSDP and managing EU-NATO relations require further reflection. Financing for CSDP operations (see box above) was a major obstacle even before the outbreak of the current economic crisis. Defence spending in many EU countries is in steep decline, due in the first instance to severely constrained government resources and facilitated by a perceived lack of immediate traditional security threats. Common costs such as transport and medical services are financed through the ATHENA mechanism but the remainder of the

²² The Sahel is the region stretching from East to West of the African continent between the Sahara desert in the North and the Sudanian Savannahs in the South. The EU's Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel focuses on Mauritania, Mali and Niger. The region also includes Senegal, Burkina Faso, Chad, Sudan and Eritrea.

costs (which represents the large majority) are borne by the participating states under the principle of 'costs lie where they fall'. This can lead to problems and delays in launching a mission or operation, even after political consensus has been achieved. In advance of the EUFOR Chad/CAR operation in 2008, for instance, five force generation conferences were required before a viable force could be assembled.

EU-NATO relations present another critical challenge. Due to largely overlapping membership and the two organisations operating both in the European Neighbourhood and now increasingly out-of-area, issues over the division of labour and the allocation of Member State capabilities are constantly present. Both the EU and NATO attest to frequent and productive staff-to-staff working relations between counterparts at every level in the two organisations, but a strategic framework for relations between them is lacking. While much progress has been made on interoperability, the Turkey-Cyprus conflict hampers further synergies by effectively vetoing the Berlin Plus arrangements.²³ Both American and European commentators have suggested that it would be beneficial for the EU to clearly lay out at strategic level its CSDP objectives and priorities, the situations in which specific capabilities should be deployed²⁴ and what the parameters of its activities are. This would then become the basis upon which political-level discussions with NATO on a strategic framework for relations – a successor to the Berlin Plus agreement – could eventually proceed.



²³ The Berlin Plus agreement is the short title for a package of agreements between NATO and the EU, dating from 2002, which essentially allow the EU to access NATO assets and capabilities for EU-led crisis management operations.

²⁴ Lack of clarity on this point has been a factor in the EU's battlegroups not yet being deployed, for example.

6. AN IRISH PERSPECTIVE

The enduring intergovernmental nature of CSDP, outlined earlier, defines its scope and begs the question whether the requisite political will exists in the Member States to pursue an ambitious agenda. The answer, of course, varies depending on the issue and the specific Member State in the spotlight.

From an Irish perspective, the advent of the comprehensive approach is hugely significant. The paradigm shift that has taken place has brought into the security and defence policy equation many elements which Ireland counts amongst its foreign policy strengths and priorities, such as peacekeeping, 'honest broker' diplomacy and development cooperation. No longer does security and defence policy relate solely to state-to-state military operations, which are contentious from an Irish perspective because of its historic stance of neutrality. CFSP and CSDP now encompass multiple levels of activity and a much broader range of instruments.

Ireland has been hugely successful at shaping its participation in CSDP activities to reflect its values and the limited resources available in a highly effective approach. Skilled personnel have been involved in missions and operations at the most senior level to an impressive degree for a small Member State. Notably, Lieutenant General Pat Nash served as operational commander of the EU-led military operation in Chad/Central African Republic from its launch in January 2008 until its handover to the United Nations in March 2009. As already mentioned, Colonel Michael Beary currently commands the EU Training Mission for Somali Security Forces in Uganda.

In addition, the comprehensive approach provides an opportunity for Ireland to play an important role in the foreign and security policy of the EU by contributing its renowned expertise in development assistance, trade negotiations, conflict resolution, policing, humanitarian aid and democratic capacity-building to common EU projects. The questions Ireland and the EU are faced with are no longer ones of militarism versus neutrality. Instead, they are based on an assessment of what combination of civil and military solutions can be mobilised to prevent or bring an end to instability and conflict and to minimise security threats to Europe and the wider world.

6. CONCLUSION

The advent of the comprehensive approach to crisis management is a development that allows the EU as a whole, and Ireland in particular, to maximise its added value to global security. Through successive policy decisions and the institutional changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has taken significant steps to redesign its processes and structures to facilitate a holistic, comprehensive approach to security and defence policy. The intergovernmental nature of EU Common Security and Defence Policy has remained its defining feature, but CSDP has nonetheless

gradually become embedded in the post-Lisbon institutional architecture. In spite of the many challenges, the progress made by the EU in terms of its coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and capacity to act since 2001, and especially since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, is significant. The HRVP, Catherine Ashton, and others have been active in Brussels in cultivating political will amongst Member States. When all of the EU27 do decide to act, the structures are now in place to allow the most effective package of measures for a given situation to be assembled.

The move towards the comprehensive approach, if supported by sufficient measures of political will at Member State level and leadership at EU level as it develops, will enhance the effectiveness and inclusiveness of the Union's external action. Ireland and other small Member States have the opportunity to add value in specific areas where they have expertise, confident that their contribution is working in concert with all other instruments towards a common end. The institutionalisation and implementation of the comprehensive approach bring to a close the traditional mode of CSDP where Ireland's neutrality determined its role and the scope of its involvement. It gives Ireland the opportunity to be at the centre of the Union's response to the complex security threats of the 21st century in a manner that respects the country's particular strengths and values.