

# The EU's joined-up approach to security

Between robust external action and co-ordinated compromise

Clingendael Report

Peter van Ham



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# Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	From whole-of-government to a joined-up approach	3
3	The EU's three-layered quandary	5
4	Security and migration – where strategy meets reality	9
5	Two approaches: business as usual and conflict and crisis	14
6	Finding realism (and some inspiration) in models: the PCD and QDDR	21
7	Concluding remarks: setting priorities	24

# 1 Introduction

In April 2015, the European Commission published “The European Agenda on Security”, setting out how the European Union (EU) could support member states in dealing more effectively with the wide array of security challenges they currently face.<sup>1</sup> In this Agenda, the Commission suggests maximising the benefits of existing EU instruments and measures, calling for a “more joined-up inter-agency and cross-sectorial approach.”<sup>2</sup> The Commission proposed launching a reflection on how to maximise the contributions of all relevant EU agencies and member states through better co-ordination, “comprehensive programming, careful planning and targeting of resources.” The Commission’s “European Agenda on Migration” (published in May 2015) offered some insight into how such a “joined-up approach” could tackle Europe’s most urgent security problem: the ongoing refugee and migration crisis.<sup>3</sup> Much is being expected of this “coherent and comprehensive approach” to security, in the hope that the EU will be able to synergise all its instruments and institutions, linking the internal and external dimensions of a wide range of policies, all in good co-operation with member states and third countries.

Both Commission “Agendas” raise numerous fundamental questions. First, although a joined-up policy seems to be the “motherhood and apple pie” of all approaches (ie, no one can reasonably be against it), it is disconcerting that the call to EU institutions and member states to work together still needs to be made at all. It raises the question of why EU policies have not been “joined-up” already. Second, apart from demanding a joined-up approach, the Commission’s Agendas remain modest and sketchy on how such a “coherent and comprehensive” approach can (or even should) actually be achieved. Third (and given the long track record of failed attempts to achieve coherence – see below), has the time now come to seriously consider the need for either an institutional system overhaul (probably some unification under the EU’s External Action Service) or a stronger role for member states (working within so-called *ad hoc* groups)? These seminal questions have also informed the EU’s new Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (June 2016).<sup>4</sup> Despite the significance and urgency of these

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1 European Commission, “The European Agenda on Security”, Strasbourg, 28 April 2015.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

3 European Commission, “A European Agenda on Migration”, Brussels, 13 May 2015.

4 “Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy”, Brussels (June 2016).

questions, this debate conjures up a sense of *déjà vu*, indicating that, for all its simplicity, the aim of “better co-ordination” remains hard to achieve.<sup>5</sup>

This Report examines the background of the EU's call for a joined-up approach to security. The main reason is clearly Europe's refugee/migration crisis, which (former European Commission President) José Manuel Barroso labels as “the most serious crisis in many years the EU is facing, probably even the most serious since the beginning of the process of European integration.”<sup>6</sup> If this is true, tackling the migration crisis has become an existential question for the EU, which will need to prove that it is fit for purpose. This Report outlines the main options for the EU to join up its policies, taking the current migration crisis as a (modest) case study. These conclusions will be drawn against the background of a brief examination of earlier ambitious efforts to improve policy co-ordination, both in the EU (the Policy Coherence for Development) and the US (the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review). The Report concludes that the EU may have to acknowledge that more drastic changes need to be made to avoid muddling through, resulting in disappointment. Ultimately, (coalitions of) member states need to take the lead, offering the EU the opportunity to streamline its own instruments, institutions and policies in a more depoliticised setting. If the EU itself is not “joined-up” (as an organisation), it can hardly expect to steer others (member states and third countries) towards the “coherent and comprehensive” approach it deems so necessary.

**Tackling the migration crisis has become an existential question for the EU, which will need to prove that it is fit for purpose**

This Report further concludes that the EU does not only face tough institutional challenges, but also major deep-seated problems: rising Euro-scepticism, the return of geopolitics and an enduring economic malaise. These “atmospheric” complications constitute the intricate backdrop against which the EU's joined-up approach has to be fostered today. One could argue that this puts extra pressure on the EU (as well as member states) to make it work this time around.

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5 See Daniel Keohane, “A Joined-Up EU Security Policy”, *EurActiv*, 9 December 2003. In this paper, Keohane makes exactly the same arguments as the European Commission puts forward in its Agendas (on security and migration – see above), more than a decade later. See also: Simon Caulkin, “Why Things Fell Apart For Joined-Up Thinking”, *The Guardian*, 26 February 2006.

6 “Europe Faces ‘Existential’ Threat From Migrant Crisis, Politicians Warn”, *EUBusiness.com*, 4 March 2016.

## 2 From whole-of-government to a joined-up approach

Over past decades, efforts have been made to overcome the drawbacks of a government system based on single-purpose organisations (which specialise), and to ensure co-operation and co-ordination as well as effectiveness and efficiency. A wide variety of labels has been used to describe these efforts, ranging from Whole-Of-Government, holistic government, networked government and connected government. All these approaches share the aim of working across organisational boundaries to enable effective and efficient policy development, implementation and policy delivery.<sup>7</sup> International Organisations (IOs) such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) have adopted comparable approaches, such as the “Comprehensive and Co-operative Security Concept.” This Concept assumes that economic, political and military issues, as well as human security issues, are innately linked, which calls for policy approaches that address all aspects of security.<sup>8</sup> NATO has adopted a similar so-called “Comprehensive Approach”, which “requires all actors to contribute in a concerted effort, based on a shared sense of responsibility, openness and determination, taking into account their respective strengths, mandates and roles, as well as their decision-making autonomy.”<sup>9</sup>

These comprehensive approaches are all aimed at avoiding (or overcoming) the drawbacks of “siloesation”, or “pillarisation” which have been the result of the structural devolution and disaggregation of large government structures since the late 1980s. For the EU, this challenge is especially acute since the Maastricht Treaty (1993) introduced three different pillars (trade and economics, foreign and security policy and police and judicial co-operation), each with its own legal status, policy process, budget, decision-making procedures, and lines of authority and accountability. Arguably, the EU has been dealt a particularly bad hand for an organisation that today officially strives towards both coherence and effectiveness. Whereas national governments “merely” have to “square

Whereas national governments “merely” have to “square the circle” of their own bureaucracies, the EU has to square a much more complicated, often unstable shape

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7 Tom Christensen and Per Laegreid, “The Whole-of-Government Approach – Regulation, Performance, and Public-Sector Reform”, Stein Rokkan Centre For Social Studies, *Working Paper*, No. 6 (August 2006).

8 OSCE Secretariat, “The OSCE Concept of Comprehensive and Co-operative Security”, Vienna, June 2009.

9 NATO Secretariat, “A ‘Comprehensive Approach’ To Crises”, Brussels, 12 December 2014.

the circle” of their own bureaucracies, the EU has to square a much more complicated, often unstable shape. Unlike the EU, the OSCE and NATO did not consciously create “pillars”, and hence did not have to spend most of the 1990s overcoming a self-imposed fragmentation.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike most other IOs, the EU also prides itself on being a unique “one-stop shop”, offering a nearly complete set of policy instruments to tackle Europe’s security challenges. This has raised expectations, both in Europe and with the EU’s international partners. Despite such ambitions to have a comprehensive policy toolbox, the EU faces remarkable deficiencies, mainly for political reasons. For example, the EU lacks a fully-fledged military headquarters and draws upon NATO’s military assets in most of its own peacekeeping operations (through what is known as the “Berlin-plus” agreement). For similar political (as well as practical) reasons, the EU also lacks the authority and capabilities to effectively control and defend its external borders. As a result, the EU has to overcome the deliberate fragmentation of policy processes on internal and external security matters and on economics and foreign policy. For the EU’s capacity to develop into an effective external actor, its problematic institutional pedigree has significantly complicated matters. This goes a long way towards explaining why merely calling for a comprehensive, joined-up approach has never proved sufficient, despite all good intentions.

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10 Although the OSCE has so-called “baskets” for different (security) themes.



# 3 The EU's three-layered quandary

The EU's predicament in trying to achieve a joined-up approach to security is complex and intransigent, which makes it necessary to unscramble the structural obstacles it faces. There are three layers of problems for the EU: (1) the *practical* fragmentation of authority and capabilities, involving EU institutions, member states and third parties (2) the *political* challenge of linking the EU's internal and external security problems and (3) the *atmospheric* backdrop of the EU's current efforts to co-ordinate policies, ranging from rising Euro-scepticism to the return of geopolitics.

*Layer one* consists of the most obvious practical fragmentation between a scattered field of actors, comprising the EU's institutions (from the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament to EU Agencies and the EU's own budding diplomatic service, the European External Action Service) and the 28 EU member states<sup>11</sup>, as well as the EU's external partners (which include NATO, key strategic allies and *ad hoc* partners in varying configurations). The EU also aims to include civil society and private partners, which further complicates co-ordination.<sup>12</sup> It is worth repeating that much of this fragmentation is deliberate, partly reflecting the classical separation of powers (between the legislative, executive and judiciary branches) and partly due to a division of labour between the EU and member states (in the context of so-called "subsidiarity").<sup>13</sup>

The European Commission's 2013 Communication on "The EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crises" offers a list of preconditions for an effective joined-up approach: (1) develop a shared analysis (2) define a common strategic vision (3) focus on prevention (4) mobilise the different strengths and capacities of the EU

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11 Following the UK's decision to leave the EU ("Brexit"), "only" 27 member states have to be co-ordinated within an EU framework. This will hardly make the challenge to "join up" the EU's security policy any easier, since the UK remains an essential and integral part of any future "European" approach. If anything, it will make it harder for the EU, since it has to take into account the UK's interests and policies, adding another layer of consultations and co-ordination with a major "third party".

12 "The EU's Comprehensive Approach in External Conflict and Crisis: From Strategy to Practice", CARE International and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Brussels), 12 February 2014, p. 5.

13 European Parliament, "The Principle of Subsidiarity", *Fact Sheets on the European Union* (2016).

(5) commit to the long term and (6) link policies and internal and external action.<sup>14</sup> In follow-up documents, the EU confirms that a joined-up approach to security can only be achieved through “closer inter-agency co-operation, co-ordination with member states, comprehensive programming, careful planning and targeting of resources.”<sup>15</sup> The EU recognises that a “wide range of EU policies contribute to security objectives, including in the areas of transport, finance, customs, education, maritime security policy, information technologies, energy and public health.”<sup>16</sup> It is clear that in all these policy areas, decision-making authority is divided up (often erratically) between EU institutions and member states. The same applies to the allocation of resources and capabilities. All EU member states are already supposed to co-ordinate their foreign and security policies within the context of CFSP. However, this has remained a political ambition, and not a binding, let alone factual, commitment.

The Lisbon Treaty (2007) has made significant steps towards policy coherence by locking various dimensions of the EU's external relations together. The EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) also became the European Commission's Vice-President (VP), ensuring that the person speaking for the Union also has direct access to the institution's economic and financial instruments. The HR/VP also assumed the role of president of the Foreign Affairs Council, ensuring greater continuity in the EU's external engagement. The HR/VP now also heads the EU's new collective diplomatic service (see below). The EU's goal is to speak with “a single voice”, assuming that internal cohesiveness and external effectiveness go hand in hand.<sup>17</sup>

Based on these Lisbon reforms, the Commission claims that the “EU's institutions, agencies and existing cooperation tools already provide an effective set of instruments to make EU security policy an operational reality. More synergies between EU agencies, more systematic coordination and full use of tools (...) can make a real difference”.<sup>18</sup> This is a somewhat blue-eyed statement, ignoring the reality that, although everyone likes the idea of co-ordination, no one actually wants to be co-ordinated. It also overlooks the fact that the EU's 2015

Although everyone likes the idea of co-ordination, no one actually wants to be co-ordinated

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14 European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, “The EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crises”, Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, Brussels (11 December 2013).

15 European Commission, “The European Agenda on Security” (2015), p. 4.

16 *Ibid.*

17 This assumption has been effectively questioned by Eugénia da Conceicao-Heldt and Sophie Meunier in their article “Speaking With a Single Voice: Internal Cohesiveness and External Effectiveness of the EU in Global Governance”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 21, no. 7 (2014).

18 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

budget earmarks an impressive € 8.7 billion for external policy, but “only” € 321 million for CFSP.<sup>19</sup> This implies that most policy instruments are related to trade and aid (for historical reasons), whereas other instruments (human rights promotion, or early warning and conflict-related analysis) often go (financially and politically) unheeded. Since these budgets tend to be rigid (as they reflect complex negotiations and are subject to tough accountability requirements), the EU has a hard time in responding effectively within a volatile security environment (see below). It also implies that most foreign and security policy “tools” remain in the hands of the Commission.

The *second layer* of problems involves the EU's challenge of knitting internal and external security challenges together. Arguably, the current security challenges facing Europe – most notably terrorism and the refugee/migration crisis – have caught the EU unprepared. Refugees fleeing Syria and the wider Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region overrun the EU's fragile and porous external and internal borders, and Jihadism (including so-called “foreign fighters”) is on the rise within the EU, linking Islamic State (IS) to home-grown terrorism. For a joined-up approach to be effective, the EU not only has to bring together many different actors, it also has to bridge its own internal/external security gap.

For all too long, the EU assumed that security threats (mainly) come from outside Europe, taking internal economic prosperity and social stability for granted.<sup>20</sup> This clearly is no longer the case, and this breakdown of the internal/external nexus creates significant problems. Most of the EU's instruments – ranging from the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) to numerous “Dialogues” with the MENA region – aim to stabilise the EU's strategic vicinity, whereas the EU's policy instruments to address *internal* security challenges are few and far between. By trying to match the external and internal aspects of its policies, the EU needs to co-ordinate horizontally (ie between different policy sectors) and vertically (ie between different levels of governance), alongside policies with third parties outside of the EU. This has proven a Herculean effort, with commensurately modest results.

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19 European Commission, “EU Annual Budget Life-Cycle: Figures” (2015). See also Stefan Lehne, “Promoting a Comprehensive Approach to EU Foreign Policy”, *Carnegie Europe*, 21 February 2013.

20 The EU's first Security Strategy stated (in 2003) that “Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free” (“A Secure Europe in a Better World”, Brussels, 12 December 2003). In 2012, the EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize since it (allegedly) had “for over six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe” (The Nobel Peace Prize, Announcement 2012. Available at: [http://nobelpeaceprize.org/en\\_GB/laureates/laureates-2012/announce-2012/](http://nobelpeaceprize.org/en_GB/laureates/laureates-2012/announce-2012/)).

The *third layer* of problems is atmospheric in nature. Since 2014, anti-establishment (and Euro-sceptical) political factions control nearly one-third of the European Parliament, indicating that the public mood has changed markedly.<sup>21</sup> This limits the EU's options for co-ordination of a joint EU-wide approach to security, since its credibility with respect to delivering effective policies is now put into doubt. Many core EU policies – ranging from the Euro project and open borders to a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the United States – are being heavily criticised.<sup>22</sup> This explains why many member states (as well as the general “European public”) have limited confidence in the EU as the future co-ordinator of Europe's external actions.

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The rise of geopolitics does not make it easier for the EU to assume a joined-up approach to security. Dealing with autocratic regimes such as Putin's Russia, which seems all too willing to use military force to achieve its goals in a shared “near abroad”, has proven to be a challenge for the EU. The EU obviously not only lacks military tools to counter Russia, but also has deliberately chosen not to adopt a strategy based on *Realpolitik*. “Joining up” resources and partners to deal with a so-called “first-order”<sup>23</sup> security challenge such as Russia brings the EU into new territory, where it has no experience and no reputation or track record. The return of geopolitics therefore adds one more complicating factor to the already long list of obstacles the EU has to overcome in order to reach its ambition of becoming Europe's prime security co-ordinator.

Arguably, these three layers of problems overlap and influence each other. Still, it is important to disentangle this Gordian knot, mainly to get a better overview of the EU's challenges. Some problems may be worth tackling; others may prove to be intransigent. Moreover, some problems may be linked, so should be addressed as one. A closer look at the EU's attempts to tackle and/or manage the ongoing refugee/migration crisis offers insight into the reality and future of a joined-up approach to security.

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21 “The Eurosceptic Union”, *The Economist*, 31 May 2014.

22 “TTIP Has Failed – But No One Is Admitting It, Says German Vice-Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel”, *The Independent*, 28 August 2016.

23 See Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1962).

## 4 Security and migration – where strategy meets reality

The Commission's ambitious "European Agenda on Migration" (May 2015) suggests that "[n]o Member State can effectively address migration alone. It is clear that we need a new, more European approach. This requires using all policies and tools at our disposal – combining internal and external policies to best effect." The Agenda on Migration also argues that "[a]ll actors: Member States, EU institutions, International Organisations, civil society, local authorities and third countries need to work together to make a common European migration policy a reality."<sup>24</sup> This concise (16-page) document offers a clear overview of which actors are involved in managing migration and what instruments are available to put together such a "common European migration policy." Although the Agenda on Migration does not mention the term "joined-up" at all, the overall aim is clear: strengthen the coherence and comprehensiveness of EU policies.

The Strategic Review (published one month later, in June 2015) by HR/VP Mogherini (entitled "The European Union in a Changing Global Environment: A More Connected, Contested and Complex World"), makes the related case for "joined-up EU external action", arguing that it "puts a premium on various actors and instruments of EU external action coming together to work in synergy. Vertical and horizontal silos hamper the EU's potential global role. And in a world of mounting challenges and opportunities, this is a luxury we cannot afford."<sup>25</sup> Although the Strategic Review spends two pages elaborating upon what the joined-up approach could mean, it remains vague and superficial. For example, it calls for "closer links between enlargement, neighbourhood, migration, energy, CT and security and defence policies", as well as "partnerships beyond the EU and across the public/private divide." It suggests (a bit more concretely) that a "joined-up approach to migration prevents the emergence of policy silos. But this also requires the end of geographical silos." It makes reference to the EU's Policy Coherence for Development (PCD, see below), arguing that "further efforts in this direction can help ensure that the Union can bring its full weight to bear on driving an ambitious and deliverable post-2015 agenda."<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, the Strategic Review does not get

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24 "A European Agenda on Migration" (2015), p. 2.

25 "The European Union in a Changing Global Environment: A More Connected, Contested and Complex World" (June 2015), p. 3.

26 "The European Union in a Changing Global Environment" (June 2015), pp. 18-19.

more hands-on and concrete than these kinds of general statements of intent. The EU's Global Strategy reiterates its commitment to the adoption of "an integrated approach to conflicts" and a "comprehensive approach to conflicts and crisis" as part of what it now calls a "joined-up Union".<sup>27</sup>

Europe's refugee/migration crisis is widely considered to be an opportunity to bring a joined-up security approach into practice. In 2015, the number of new asylum applications doubled from the previous year and (detected) illegal border crossings reached 1.2 million (a quadrupling of the number in 2014). As a result, the EU's migration-cum-asylum system is now stretched to breaking point. As is usual during crisis situations, European leaders are hard-pressed to consider new policy alternatives, including common external border controls and harmonised migration and asylum rules. For example, Guy Verhofstadt (leader of the Liberal ALDE group in the European Parliament) argued that the only way to solve the EU's current crises is "to take a leap forward into deeper European integration."<sup>28</sup> In turn, British Conservative MP William Hague argued that the EU "has not been good in recent decades at looking ahead and allowing for facts that are inconvenient but obviously true", calling for a "stress test" on migration policy since "if it is not prepared to take such steps then it will struggle to survive itself the stresses to which vast movements of population will subject it."<sup>29</sup> The EU's drive towards a joined-up approach to security is therefore part of a politicised debate on who should co-ordinate whom, and who should take the lead: the EU, or member states?

Europe's refugee/migration crisis is widely considered to be an opportunity to bring a joined-up security approach into practice

So how has the EU responded to the refugee/migration crisis? Like most (if not all) member states, the EU recognises that managing human mobility requires a joined-up approach. As Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Bert Koenders argued (in December 2015): "Europe can deliver better by mixing its instruments. After all, issues such as conflict, migration and poverty are often linked. This means that different policy areas – trade, development, security and politics – have to be addressed comprehensively."<sup>30</sup> This also involves policy coherence on a range of other issues, from human trafficking and counterterrorism to maritime policy.

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27 EU Global Strategy (2016), p. 11.

28 "Europe Faces 'Existential' Threat From Migrant Crisis", *AFP.com* (4 March 2016).

29 William Hague, "The Migrant Crisis is a Mere Gust of the Hurricane That Will Soon Engulf Europe", *The Telegraph* (11 November 2015).

30 "Speech of Foreign Affairs Minister Bert Koenders at the Expert Meeting on Global Governance", *The Hague Institute for Global Justice*, 8 December 2015.

In 2005, the European Commission developed a Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), intended to mainstream immigration into the EU's wider foreign policies. In 2014, the re-organisation of the European Commission introduced a new Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), reflecting the higher priority accorded to migration issues. This was, however, not followed through with a major reconfiguration within the European Commission to address policy co-ordination on migration. This proved hard to achieve, partly because DGs often take the lead based on the specific characterisation of the EU's relationships with third countries. For example, if a country is considered to be in crisis (or conflict), DG ECHO (responsible for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection) claims leadership, whereas DG DEVCO (responsible for International Co-operation and Development) is generally in charge of countries in need of "normal" development support. The same "logic" applies to the EU's neighbours, which quasi-automatically fall under the responsibility of DG NEAR (dealing with European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations). Getting these DGs to work together in a truly joined-up approach to security is a challenge.

If the Commission's bureaucratic politics makes it cumbersome, the Council is – despite its reputation for intergovernmental clarity – hardly better. Below the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER) which co-ordinates all CFSP measures within the EU (prior to the emergence of a Council decision), the Council now has more than 20 working groups dealing with foreign and security policy. So-called "horizontal groups" (such as RELEX and the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management, CivCom) deal with cross-sectoral issues; "vertical groups" deal with specific regions and issues (such as Africa [COAFR], the Western Balkans [COWEB], and terrorism [COTER]). About half of these groups are referred to as "merged groups", handling CFSP as well as external economic relations (including ENP). Most of these working groups are now chaired by an EEAS official, with the exception of working groups dealing with trade and development, as well as six horizontal working groups (RELEX, COTER, COCON [dealing with consular affairs], COCOP [non-proliferation], COJUR [public international law] and COMAR [maritime law]).

At ministerial level, the EU's HR/VP has expressed her desire to organise more so-called "Jumbo Councils" to deal with the migration crisis. These Council meetings bring together officials and politicians from several ministries (ie foreign affairs, development, interior, etc), aimed at ensuring better policy co-ordination and coherence. In November 2014, the Rome "Jumbo Council" was even widened to a meeting of the Rabat Process (set up in 2005), gathering some 55 European and African countries, together with the European Commission and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The objective of this mega-meeting was to "enhance dialogue and co-operation on migration more broadly (legal migration and mobility; prevention of irregular migration

and measures to counteract it; migration and development; international protection), as well as to identify common priorities in order to develop operational and practical co-operation.”<sup>31</sup>

Around this already elaborate system of working groups and high-level intergovernmental meetings, a web of dialogues and contact groups has been spun, all dealing with migration. These include the Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum (SCIFA) and the Working Group on Schengen, as well as the High-Level

Working Group on Immigration and Asylum. Each committee has its own specific policy niche and background, usually emerging from a well-meant drive to “bring policymakers together.” Especially during times of crisis, the first impulse of member states has been to develop another forum, such as the Task Force Mediterranean. As the Commission stated: “On 3 October 2013, a boat with around 500 migrants sank off the coast of Lampedusa. The loss of human lives triggered a strong call for action from European leaders and European citizens. The Task Force Mediterranean (TFM) was set up following the JHA Council of 7-8 October 2013.”<sup>32</sup> This clearly illustrates that, during a crisis, member states tend to go for easy, visible success on which they can find consensus: setting up a new “working group”, or opening a new “dialogue” rather than making use of existing fora and channels of co-operation (see below).

Especially during times of crisis, the first impulse of member states has been to develop another forum

The problem with these myriad working groups and committees is not just that their remits tend to overlap and need to be pruned and better co-ordinated, but that many member states do not participate fully in all of them, or fail to communicate positions and decisions adopted in one working group to their (own, national) counterparts discussing migration in other EU fora.<sup>33</sup> Tensions and disagreements between the Commission and the Council also remain, partly due to a lack of communication and partly because “Member State representatives are weary of negotiating on immigration topics with Commission officials, who lack both front-line experience and the type of political concerns that individual representatives must face upon return to their capitals.”<sup>34</sup> This may explain why national civil servants also meet outside the formal Council framework in numerous (mainly technical) settings. On immigration, Frontex is

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31 European Commission, “The European Union’s Co-operation With Africa on Migration”, Brussels (22 April 2015).

32 European Commission, “Communication From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the Work of the Task Force Mediterranean”, Brussels (4 December 2013).

33 Elizabeth Collett, “The Development of EU Policy on Immigration and Asylum”, *MPI Policy Brief Series*, No. 8 (March 2015), p. 5.

34 Collett, p. 3.



the forum which convenes border and police officials, whereas the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) brings together the heads of the asylum services of member states. Since 2004, the General Directors' Immigration Services Conference (GDISC) meets annually and informally, but always outside the official EU framework. The GDISC network now consists of the 28 EU member states and the three EU candidate countries (Iceland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey), as well as potential EU candidate Bosnia-Herzegovina and two Schengen-associated countries (Norway and Switzerland).<sup>35</sup>

This brief (and far from complete) overview of the EU's institutional complexity on migration fora and strategies offers a glimpse of today's challenges to "joined-up" policy, even within Brussels. The problem clearly is (as Wolfgang Münchau has argued) that "[t]he Commission is part executive, part administration and part guardian of the European treaties." And on top of that, the "European Council is not a government *in situ* but a group of national leaders who come together a few times a year to take decisions."<sup>36</sup> This complexity is compounded by the fact that there are actually two policy environments for the EU's joined-up approach: when the going is easy and it is business as usual, and when the EU is in crisis mode, which tends to spur member states' involvement, but also offers opportunities for change.

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35 See [www.GDISC.org](http://www.GDISC.org)

36 Wolfgang Münchau, "A History of Errors Behind Europe's Many Crises", *Financial Times*, 28 March 2016.

## 5 Two approaches: business as usual and conflict and crisis

In general, policy coherence is achieved by (1) setting policy objectives (2) actual policy co-ordination through maximising synergies and minimising incoherence among all actors and (3) monitoring, analysing and reporting in order to generate “lessons learned” and provide an evidence base for accountability. This is the general *modus operandi* of any joined-up approach to any possible policy area. Within this context (particularly in the EU), there is a trend to depoliticise the policy process by applying standardised methods aimed at identifying a so-called “logically correct solution”.<sup>37</sup> This also allows for careful planning, for example by ensuring that through a multi-year calendar of set meetings (eg on migration), relevant working groups meet simultaneously, or back-to-back, allowing for joint discussion sessions. Taking time to transpose, implement and operationalise joint (EU-wide) agreements in a national context also takes time, especially since adequate human and financial resources have to be found to ensure that the work of national (migration) agencies is carried out.

In order to increase openness and transparency, the EU introduced an Impact Assessment (IA) process in 2002, which the European Commission labels “a powerful mechanism” for achieving policy coherence.<sup>38</sup> As Camilla Adelle and Andrew Jordan argue, the EU’s IA process “seeks to rationalise the policy-making process into a series of analytical steps to increase the co-ordination of cross-cutting issues by providing a venue for information exchange between stakeholders and a place where trade-offs between different policy objectives can be identified.”<sup>39</sup>

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37 Johan P. Olsen, “Maybe It Is Time to Rediscover Bureaucracy”, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, vol. 16, no. 1 (January 2006), p. 5.

38 European Commission, *2009 Report on Policy Coherence For Development* (Brussels, 2009), p. 4.

39 Camilla Adelle and Andrew Jordan, “Policy Coherence for Development in the European Union: Do New Procedures Unblock or Simply Reproduce Old Disagreements”, *Journal of European Integration*, vol. 36, no. 4 (2014), p. 377. See also “Measuring Policy Coherence for Development”, *European Centre for Development Policy Management* (May 2013).

## Normal policymaking breaks down, often rather spectacularly, in times of conflict and crisis

Still, normal policymaking breaks down, often rather spectacularly, in times of conflict and crisis when politics (and often *Realpolitik*) takes precedence over already existing mechanisms and commitments. As Karen Smith argued, “[p]art of the problem in the EU is that because there is no prioritization of objectives, the latest crisis can crowd out any preventive action. In other words, everybody focuses on the latest crisis and attention and resources are diverted.”<sup>40</sup> The creation of yet another forum (the Task Force Mediterranean, or TFM) in October 2013 to deal with migration (see above) illustrates the EU’s penchant for staying within its comfort zone and tinkering with institutions rather than ensuring that existing mechanisms are used (more effectively). Officially, the TFM takes a “holistic approach”, covering a “wide geographical scope: from the countries of origin and transit, to prevent migrants from undertaking dangerous journeys, to the shores of the European Union.”<sup>41</sup> The TFM is chaired by the Commission and involves the EEAS, all member states, and all relevant EU agencies (including the EASO, Frontex and Europol). The TFM also intends to consult with a much wider network of “associated countries” as well as UNHCR, the Migration Policy Centre (based in Fiesole, Italy) and Interpol. Arguably, the TFM for the first time offers a platform for developing a truly comprehensive approach to migration in the Mediterranean. The TFM is certainly billed in Brussels as a precursor of the joined-up approach to security, offering valuable lessons on how the EU should get a grip on its organisational pandemonium and the matching cacophony of voices “speaking for Europe.”

There are several other examples where crisis and public disaster (as the October 2013 Lampedusa tragedy most certainly was) have become catalysts for policy development and even innovation. Over the years, numerous crisis platforms have been set up, bringing together relevant EEAS and Commission services. The EEAS Crisis Response and Operational Co-ordination Department prides itself that it “can respond politically, diplomatically, economically, financially, militarily, judicially or through development aid.”<sup>42</sup> In these task forces, EU services responsible for humanitarian assistance, military security and development are all engaged from the get-go. After the Arab Uprisings, task forces sprang up on Tunisia, Jordan and Egypt, offering a platform for member states and financial institutions as well as the private sector.

In November 2015, the EU used its Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) arrangement for the first time (since it was approved in June 2013) to attain a more

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40 See Karen Smith’s evidence for the House of Lords’ European Union Committee, “Europe in the World: Towards a More Effective EU Foreign and Security Strategy”, London, 16 February 2016.

41 European Commission, “Communication on the Work of the Task Force Mediterranean”, (2013), p. 2.

42 EU Delegation to Somalia, “Crisis Management” (website).

comprehensive approach to the Syrian refugee/migration crisis. The IPCR mechanism aims to mobilise “all relevant services and bodies amongst [EU] institutions and member states to ensure a co-ordinated set of actions in the EU’s crisis response.”<sup>43</sup> IPCR is now used as a platform for information sharing, aimed at monitoring the development of migratory flows, supporting (joint) decision-making, and implementing agreed measures. In this information-sharing mode, EU member states and institutions (as well as relevant agencies) are asked to share updated information on the situation on the ground via a common web platform. The Commission and the EEAS provide regular integrated analysis of the information provided to facilitate common decision-making and a co-ordinated crisis response between member states. The EU makes it clear that this IPCR arrangement is based on the principle of subsidiarity, fully respecting member states’ responsibilities in a crisis situation and not replacing existing arrangements at sectorial level.

Within this context of attaining more policy coherence, the EU’s Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis was established (with a target volume of € 1 billion) in December 2014. This Madad Fund (from the Arabic “Madad”, which means providing aid and help jointly with others) has been the European Commission’s response to provide a coherent and reinforced aid effort to the Syrian (humanitarian) crisis, closely co-ordinated by the EEAS, ECHO and donors in the region. Setting up a Trust Fund is relatively new to the EU (and was not possible before 2013), and aims to make the EU’s external action more flexible, comprehensive and effective.<sup>44</sup> The Madad Trust Fund is an instrument that allows the pooling of aid from different sources, offering the EU an opportunity to leverage the (matching) contributions of its member states, and is open to contributions from non-EU donors. Created and managed by the Commission, the Madad Fund aims to reinforce the EU’s status and visibility in a volatile region, delivering flexible and high-impact aid. The Fund allows for fast-track contracting and disbursement, where funding can be shifted between different countries if and when required.<sup>45</sup> The European Commission (and DG NEAR in particular) plays a central role in the overall management of the Madad Fund, chairing the Trust Fund Board, its Operational Committee (which examines, approves

Created and managed by the Commission, the Madad Fund aims to reinforce the EU’s status and visibility in a volatile region, delivering flexible and high-impact aid

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43 Pierre Minard, “The IPCR Arrangements: A Joined-Up Approach in Crisis Response?”, *EUISS Brief Issue*, No. 38 (December 2015), p. 2.

44 The EU’s Financial Regulations were adjusted in 2013 to allow for the introduction of Multi-Donor Trust Funds.

45 Volker Hauck, Anna Knoll and Alisa Herrero Cangas, “EU Trust Funds – Shaping More Comprehensive External Action?”, *ECDPM Briefing Note*, No. 81 (November 2015).

and supervises actions and projects) and day-to-day management of the Fund (in close co-operation with a network of focal points in EU Delegations). The Madad Fund offers the Commission an opportunity to reorient existing funds (such as the Instrument for Pre-Accession and the European Neighbourhood Instrument) to acquire sufficient financial firepower and to ensure that policies with respect to the MENA region, Turkey and the Western Balkans (who are all affected by the Syria crisis) are organised in a “joined-up” approach. The Fund’s more strategic objectives include (1) stabilising overstretched host countries (most notably Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq), as well as (2) reducing the so-called “push factors” and root causes of the refugee/migration crisis (in the entire MENA region).<sup>46</sup> The United Nations (UN), the Red Cross, the development agencies of member states and NGOs are key partners within this Madad Fund.

Another (recent) example is the EU’s “Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020”, adopted in April 2015. Following the EU’s earlier (2014) “Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel”, the Sahel Action Plan specifically links security and development, re-affirming the EU’s objective of supporting “sustainable and inclusive political and socio-economic development, the strengthening of human rights, democratic governance and the rule of law as well as resilience, as a response to the multidimensional crisis in the Sahel.”<sup>47</sup> The Sahel is now an integral part of the EU’s Africa Trust Fund (which also covers the Horn of Africa and North Africa). The Africa Trust Fund was set up in September 2015 and aimed to tackle the “causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular immigration.”<sup>48</sup> As part of the EU’s far-reaching Africa policy, the EU’s Sahel approach emphasises the well-known security-development nexus, and the Action Plan focuses on four domains relevant to stabilising the region: (1) the prevention and countering of radicalisation (2) the creation of appropriate conditions for youth (3) migration, mobility and border management and (4) the fight against illicit trafficking and transnational organised crime. The EU also aims to deal with the region as a whole, acknowledging the synergies between the Sahel countries and beyond (most notably the Maghreb). The Sahel Action Plan seeks complementarity with existing EU strategies and action plans (most notably the Joint Africa/EU Strategy of 2007 and the EU Strategy on the Gulf of Guinea of 2013). Key regional partners are included in the Action Plan including, among others, the UN, the African Union, the World Bank and the G5 Sahel (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauretania and Niger).

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46 European Commission, “The Madad Fund”, Brussels (2015), p. 4.

47 Council of the European Union, “Council Conclusions on the Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020”, Brussels, 20 April 2015, p. 2.

48 European Commission, “Constitutive Agreement For Africa Trust Fund”, Brussels (20 October 2015).

The Sahel Action Plan in particular can be considered a policy laboratory for the EU's joined-up approach to security *and* development. The EU's main partner in the region is the G5 Sahel, working through so-called "comités de pilotages" (small groups in charge of projects). Within the context of the Africa Trust Fund, the EU has launched numerous regional projects, often focusing on cross-border security issues. Combined with other active EU member states (such as the UK and the Netherlands), policy approaches are being shaped through informal platforms focusing on concrete projects and operational matters. The EU's southern member states consider the Sahel "their" strategic backyard, which tends to fill in the political blank spot in the EU's strategic approach towards the region. This system offers the coveted flexibility and speed that is the very rationale and basis of the EU's efforts to promote its joined-up approach to security.

Although it may be too early to judge the EU on the basis of these attempts towards a joined-up approach to security, some provisional conclusions present themselves. The EU's aim to offer a comprehensive and flexible approach to regional and complex security challenges assumes a strong commitment by member states and third parties. At times, this political support is offered, but member states' commitment often remains lacklustre, or even lacking. For example, as a recent report on EU Trust Funds claims, "the buy-in of EU member states in the Madad and Africa Trust Funds has not matched the [European Commission's] announced expectations: contributions are often around the minimum of € 3 million for a voting seat and mostly do not surpass the € 10 million mark. For the Madad Fund, EU member states have initially taken a 'wait and see' approach."<sup>49</sup> The reasons for this hesitancy vary. Member states seem to acknowledge that the Madad Fund may bring strong efficiency gains on the financial side (and limit overheads to less than 5%, as is the European Commission's stated aim). Still, "joining up" also implies that the usual checks and balances (offered by the scrutiny of national parliaments as well as the European Parliament) are left out. This assumes a level of trust in the EU's co-ordinating role which the European Commission still has to earn. This means that most member states will only opt for the instrument of Trust Funds if there is an acute sense of urgency, and if a strong case can be made for the Fund's added value.

**This assumes a level of trust in the EU's co-ordinating role which the European Commission still has to earn**

There is also an ongoing debate (even within the EU) as to whether support to the MENA region, Syria and Africa should be channelled through, and co-ordinated by, the EU or the UN (or even bilaterally through national channels). Creating EU-based Trust Funds, it is argued and claimed, just adds another complicating layer of co-ordination, since much of the practical aid will still be distributed by the UN and its agencies. The

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49 Hauck *et al.*, "EU Trust Funds" (2015), p. 8.

main objective of the Madad Fund is to finance the local resilience component of the UN's Regional Refugee and Resilience Plans (3RPs), an aim that has not been fulfilled since “many response programmes remain structurally underfunded.”<sup>50</sup> A recent study by Rosan Smits *et al* suggests that (in the case of the Madad Fund), “[d]onor money risks becoming entwined in a web of rent-seeking structures because of heavy donor reliance on national policies and structures that have historically serviced specific constituencies.”<sup>51</sup> This also has a negative effect on the sense of ownership of these Funds in EU member states, as well as in the region. This applies to the Madad Fund in particular, since it has a regional orientation and does without the usual country representatives or formal mechanisms of exchange with governments.

A recent study by Ronja Kempin and Ronja Scheler further suggests that the EU's Sahel Strategy is “fundamentally driven by security concerns”, which is problematic since “the focus of bilateral EU development co-operation is slanted toward agriculture and food security.”<sup>52</sup> The Commission plays a crucial role in funding most key EU policies, and therefore largely determines the planning and implementation process of the abovementioned Strategies. Although the EEAS has been instrumental in drafting these Strategies (in close co-operation with the Commission), it lacks its own resources and control over budget lines. This puts a brake on the EEAS's ability to influence political and strategic decisions. As Kempin and Scheler conclude, the EU's most important foreign policy and development budgets remain “dominated by development programme lines. There is no balance between security and development.”<sup>53</sup> Although the European Commission and the EEAS are supposed to work together effectively (following internal protocols), duplication of structures remains problematic. The Commission also has a hard time in ensuring proper co-ordination between its own internal programmes (such as the European Development Fund and the Multiannual Financial Framework). The EU has introduced new EU Special Representatives in order to co-ordinate the European effort, eg for the Sahel. Still, as Kempin and Scheler argue, this “configuration creates parallel structures, impedes the coherent implementation of policies, and generates tensions.”<sup>54</sup> This is a conclusion that bodes ill for the grander ambition of a joined-up EU approach to security.

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50 The Madad Fund allocates a little over 10% of its funding to 3RP resilience and local development programmes. See Rosan Smits, Fransje Molenaar, Floor El-Kamouni-Janssen and Nick Grinstead, “Cultivating Conflict and Violence? A Conflict Perspective on the EU Approach to the Syrian Refugee Crisis”, *CRU Policy Brief* (August 2016), pp. 2-3.

51 Smits *et al.* (2016), p. 3.

52 Ronja Kempin and Ronja Scheler, “Joining Forces: Necessary Steps for Developing the Comprehensive Approach”, *SWP Comments* (May 2016), pp. 3-4.

53 Kempin and Scheler (2016), p. 5.

54 Kempin and Scheler (2016), p. 7.

## Without setting priorities, the EU Global Strategy will not offer the required guidance to make clear and consistent policy choices

This is part of a long-standing and clearly persistent complaint which calls into question the EU's institutional and political capability (and willingness) to think and act strategically. The EU's Global Strategy has made an effort to offer a more strategic vision on

Europe's security agenda. Still, without setting priorities, the EU Global Strategy will not offer the required guidance to make clear and consistent policy choices. And without the full commitment of EU member states and regional stakeholders, even these well-meant policy innovations aimed at achieving a joined-up approach to security remain problematic. This can only be based on an EU-wide agreement that money spent on maintaining peace and security (eg in the Sahel) should count as official development assistance (ODA). Today, EU donors spend (on average) five times less on security in the Sahel than on traditional development projects. France is calling for such a change of rules (by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee), but without the full support of the EU and many key member states (at least for now). In the end, a commitment to a joined-up approach may divert funds away from traditional humanitarian NGOs and the poorest countries.<sup>55</sup> This is a concern that applies to the Africa Trust Fund in particular.

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55 Cécile Barbière, "Development Aid and Security Spending in Africa's Sahel Region Are 'Inextricably Linked'", *EurActiv.com* (6 September 2016).



## 6 Finding realism (and some inspiration) in models: the PCD and QDDR

Since much of the EU's current drive to "join up" its foreign and security policies repeats the well-known call for "more" and "better" co-ordination, it is important to find the right balance between ambition, policy innovation and realism. The gap between what *can* and what *should* be achieved needs to be bridgeable. The best approach to remain grounded in reality is to learn from past efforts to co-ordinate policies. Two "models" present themselves. First, the EU's very own Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), which officially aims to "avoid contradictions and build synergies between different EU policies" in the area of development (a political commitment for the European Commission, the Council and European Parliament since 2005).<sup>56</sup> Second, the US Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), which aims to make American "diplomacy and development work more agile, responsive, and complementary" but, most of all, more effective and better co-ordinated.<sup>57</sup>

The EU's PCD aims to take into account the needs of developing countries in "non" development policies. It emerged on the EU's political agenda in the 1990s, and was integrated into EU fundamental law in 1992 (Maastricht Treaty). The PCD made little progress in practice until the UN's Millennium Development Goals offered concrete "parameters" for development. The EU realised that to achieve these Goals, more far-reaching synergies would be needed between the EU's development and non-development policies (mainly agriculture and trade). In May 2005, EU institutions agreed on an ambitious PCD agenda (laid down in a "Consensus on Development") aimed at co-ordinating their development efforts in twelve main areas, which were later (in 2009) clustered into five strategic challenges: trade and finance; climate change; food security; migration; and security. The Commission issues a biennial PCD report, the latest having been published in 2015. The Commission is often also called upon to feature the PCD explicitly as an essential fourth element of its policy impact analysis, alongside economic, social, and environmental aspects.

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56 European Commission, *Policy Coherence for Development. 2015 EU Report*, Brussels (2015).

57 Brian M. Burton and Kristin M. Lord, "Did the State Department Get the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review Right?", *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 2 (Spring 2011), p. 111.

The PCD acknowledges that development policy is a mixed (or parallel) competence between the EU and member states. This is why the Juncker Commission has been restructured, introducing so-called “clusters of competence” headed by Commission Vice-Presidents to promote cross-cutting and coherent policymaking. To achieve these goals, HR/VP Mogherini now leads the External Action cluster, co-ordinating seven Commissioners whose portfolios are particularly relevant to EU external relations (including trade, humanitarian aid and crisis management, neighbourhood policy and enlargement). This cluster meets at least once a month based on agendas prepared by EEAS staff (as well as by the relevant Commission DGs). The Council, in turn, has over the past two years introduced “dedicated discussions and debates” amongst others in the Working Party on Development Cooperation (CODEV), COREPER, as well as the Foreign Affairs Council in Development Formation (ie meetings of ministers responsible for development). The European Parliament has also made concrete proposals (in its 2014 Resolution on the PCD) to raise awareness among MEPs of coherence with respect to development across the wide range of policy initiatives, and to reinforce political commitment to bring this into practice.<sup>58</sup>

The second model (or, perhaps better: source of institutional-cum-bureaucratic inspiration) is the US State Department’s QDDR. The QDDR was initiated by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (in 2009) to improve the management and effectiveness of the US State Department and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The QDDR was billed as a counterpart of the Pentagon’s Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), which should radically improve the effectiveness of Washington’s diplomatic and development efforts. The overall objective was to link hard (military) with soft (diplomatic and development) policy tools, creating the much coveted “smart power.”<sup>59</sup> For the US, the QDDR aims at extending the foreign policy horizon beyond the traditional annual appropriations-driven process to a period of four years, and to force two powerful bureaucracies (the State Department and USAID) to work closely together to reach shared goals.

Apart from formulating the key strategic priorities of US foreign policy, the QDDR has identified the tools and resources needed to implement this strategy and suggest management and organisational reforms to improve outcome and efficiency. The QDDR also offers recommendations for performance (or impact) measurement and assessment, as well as proposals to improve inter-agency and whole-of-government approaches. Its main focus is to generate concrete and innovative ideas for improving US foreign policy, for example by co-ordinating positions within the State Department (eg on cybersecurity) and by establishing regional embassy hubs for experts on

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58 European Parliament Resolution of 13 March 2014 on the EU Report on Policy Coherence for Development.

59 CSIS Commission on Smart Power, *A Smarter, More Secure America* (Washington DC, 2007).

This Commission was chaired by Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, Jr.

cross-cutting issues such as climate change and conflict resolution. USAID has also been turned into a core component of US foreign policy, creating a division of labour where State is to lead on political crisis situations, while USAID leads in humanitarian assistance missions.

The two QDDR Reports (2010 and 2015) offer a solid basis for examining whether this planning process has indeed added to Washington's smart power, or whether it is just "great googli moogli", as Daniel Drezner calls it.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, one critical report argues that the QDDR's aspirational buzzwords ("fostering a culture of engagement and innovation", "optimising impact", etc) read "like a management consultant's crib notes. Translating this jargon into actions that produce desired results is the hard part."<sup>61</sup> As with the EU's PCD, the US has peppered its QDDR with dozens of (proposed) initiatives, partnerships, offices, fora and programmes. What all these new efforts do exactly often remains unclear. Whether they contribute to policy coherence certainly remains doubtful. Instead, this drive towards ever more "initiatives and partnerships" seems to offer a semblance of action and political virility, and an excuse for bureaucratic procrastination.

All in all, both the PCD and QDDR indicate that policy coherence in any political system is difficult to achieve. The EU's joined-up approach to security aims to reconcile conflicts between legitimate interests, which requires that different economic, political and strategic concerns have to be traded off against one another. These trade-offs and compromises tend to be controversial and politically difficult. Quasi-technocratic processes such as the PCD and QDDR may make a positive contribution to a joined-up approach to security by streamlining policy debates and unblocking bottlenecks in the flow of information, but on controversial, politicised policy issues and during times of crisis, different rules apply. So, what options does the EU currently have to develop an effective and efficient joined-up approach to security?

The PCD and QDDR indicate that policy coherence in any political system is difficult to achieve

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60 Brett D. Schaefer, Helle C. Dale and James M. Roberts, "Hot Air and Spurned Allies: A Tally of Obama's Foreign Failures", *Commentary* (Heritage Foundation) (7 May 2015).

61 Quoted in Schaefer, Dale and Roberts, "Hot Air and Spurned Allies" (2015).

## 7 Concluding remarks: setting priorities

The call for a joined-up approach to security within Europe is likely to resonate for years within EU institutions and national capitals. Co-operating and striving for coherence and effectiveness is the obvious preferred option for all actors involved. The EU's ongoing migration crisis may galvanise the process towards better policy co-ordination, since the EU (and most member states) acknowledge that conflict, migration and poverty are often linked. As a result, different policy areas (trade, development, security and politics) have to be addressed comprehensively. On the EU level, this implies that policy coherence on a range of other issues (from human trafficking and counterterrorism to maritime policy) becomes an absolute necessity. Still, as this Report indicates, the EU finds it particularly hard to set concrete steps to realise this widely shared objective. And not for a lack of trying, or even a lack of political will (although there is, arguably, never enough of that). The new Global Strategy exemplifies these ambitions, as well as the EU's continued challenges. Four conclusions present themselves:

*First*, the European Commission (and the EU in general) has a long and diverse track record in trying to achieve a comprehensive approach to key political and security challenges. This has usually gone under the heading of “mainstreaming” numerous issues in EU policy, ranging from climate change (mitigation and adaptation), gender equality, social inclusion or development. Like the new “joined-up approach”, mainstreaming strives for policy coherence across institutions, member states and third parties and stakeholders. Since 2003, the EU even aspires to “mainstream” WMD non-proliferation policies in its wider relations with third parties.<sup>62</sup> This wide range of policy “priorities” – from gender to nuclear weapons – indicates that the EU (as well as member states) wants to have its cake and eat it too. Any hierarchy in this long list of “priorities” is lacking. This may be the result of the EU's overly extensive foreign policy ambitions as laid down in Article 3(5) of the Treaty on European Union: “In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among people, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights.”

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62 Lina Grip, “The European Union's Weapons of Mass Destruction Non-Proliferation Clause: A 10-Year Assessment”, *EU Non-Proliferation Consortium Working Paper*, No. 40 (April 2014), p. 1.

This explains (at least in part) why forging a consistent and effective EU foreign and security policy remains demanding. In rare cases, it may be possible to achieve all policy goals aspired to, but most often the EU (and member states) will have to choose. What takes priority (in any particular case): halting WMD non-proliferation, or tackling climate change? What is more important, the support of a major third party in dealing with the refugee/migration crisis, or promoting democracy? The EU's recent deal with Turkey on stemming the flow of migrants from the MENA region is a clear example of this dilemma.<sup>63</sup> If the EU continues to mainstream and join up too many policies without clearly indicating what issues take precedence, the current stalemate is bound to continue. This even applies to the joined-up approach to security itself, given that security's label applies to a wide range of issues and interests (ranging from human security to terrorism). Setting priorities is what the EU's Global Strategy should have done, but has chosen to avoid, since this process inevitably has "losers." The painful reality is that, without prioritising, a joined-up approach to security is beyond reach. Or, to put it differently: without a joined-up *strategy*, a joined-up *approach* (to security) remains elusive.

*Second*, the drive towards a joined-up approach to security may (or even should) be used to re-appraise the EU's role as a policy co-ordinator. This clearly is a very political debate, where some call for a stronger EU role on (for example) immigration and asylum, and others conclude that member states will have to take the lead (based on a system of strong national borders). Still, it seems about time

to acknowledge the reality that the EU is (and remains) deeply divided on foreign and security policy, which no amount of joining-up can overcome. Since joining up 28 (and soon "only" 27) member states is often no option, the call to accept *ad hoc* groups of member states even on security issues becomes understandable. The EU's fragile status as a "security provider" strengthens Europe's traditional default option: national diplomacy. This option is vocally supported by member states with a more global outlook and capable foreign policy instruments such as France, Germany and the UK. As UK Prime Minister David Cameron argued (in 2013), the "EU must be able to act with the speed and flexibility of a network, not the cumbersome rigidity of a bloc (...). Let's welcome that diversity, instead of trying to snuff it out."<sup>64</sup>

The drive towards a joined-up approach to security may (or even should) be used to re-appraise the EU's role as a policy co-ordinator

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63 Janis A. Emmanouilidis, "Elements Of a Complex But Still Incomplete Puzzle: An Assessment Of the EU(-Turkey) Summit", *European Policy Centre*, 21 March 2016.

64 David Cameron, "EU Speech at Bloomberg", 23 January 2013.

Successful examples of such *ad hoc* groupings are the EU's negotiations with Iran (on its nuclear programme) and the Normandy Format (involving Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia), which has helped to negotiate the Minsk Agreement, as well as the Anglo-German Initiative on Bosnia-Herzegovina (which was concluded in late 2014). Less formal groupings also exist which include smaller member states, such as the Visegrad group (comprising the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), and a more eclectic Scandinavian group (based on the Nordic Council, which also includes Iceland and Norway). Clearly, these *ad hoc* groups offer flexibility, bringing member states together who have expertise and a shared interest to tackle specific issues. They also offer another major advantage: speed and credibility. The main challenge for a joined-up approach to security will be how to ensure that these *ad hoc* groups are embedded within the EU institutional framework. The emerging consensus seems to be that at least the EU's HR/VP should always be fully involved in any of these groups, and that efforts should be made (and mechanisms devised) to mobilise the EEAS (as well as – preferably – the European Commission).

*Third*, the EU's drive to join up its security policies remains most valuable in a non-crisis, business-as-usual setting. The abovementioned *ad hoc* groups are best-suited for high-profile issues, which comprise the visible top of the security iceberg. Underneath, and behind the scenes, much remains to be done to ensure policy coherence. This involves mundane and painstaking work, based on careful assessments of what is needed and what has really worked so far. Recent suggestions to back up regional strategies (eg towards the Sahel) with immediate action plans backed up by a joint “strategic budget” managed by the Commission and the EEAS, are part of such a necessary institutional recalibration.<sup>65</sup> Also, a cap (and a maximum) should be placed on the number of working groups, fora and platforms that deal with often exactly the same (security) issue. This will save scarce diplomatic energy within already overstretched national ministries. Moreover, making better use of EU Delegations who are at the frontline of the EU's external action should be possible.<sup>66</sup> This is especially the case since much of EU foreign and security policy is based on the papers prepared and circulated by the EEAS. EU Delegations play a key role in devising the required bottom-up, comprehensive policies the EU requires. Ultimately, the EEAS (and its Delegations) has to prove that its information and political analysis are superior to that of member states. However, most member states still question the expertise and strategic skills of the EEAS, which get in the way of the EU's drive towards a joined-up approach to security. This may also explain why the EEAS has no formal role in managing the Madad and Africa Trust Funds, which are steered by the European Commission.

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65 Kempin and Scheler (2016), p. 7.

66 Fernanda Faria, “What EU Comprehensive Approach? Challenges For the EU Action Plan and Beyond”, *ECDPM Briefing Note*, No. 71 (October 2014), p. 12.

Lessons should also be drawn from existing models like the EU's PCD and the US State Department's QDDR. Although a new Policy Coherence for Security (PCS)<sup>67</sup> may be the last thing the EU wants, the PCD experience is valuable since it indicates the level of ambition a joined-up approach to security should strive for. The US QDDR offers another important warning: that formalising and institutionalising a joined-up approach to security is no guarantee of success. Perhaps even on the contrary: it risks adding just another layer of formalities and checks and balances to the already quasi-Byzantine world of EU decision-making.

*Fourth* (and last), the EU should shed its ambitions of being a “transformational power” which aims at supporting good governance and democracy in its direct neighbourhood as well as across the world. Hence the multiple “good causes” the EU mainstreams in its external policies (from gender equality to social inclusion). As Al Franken once famously (and wisely) argued: “It’s easier to put on slippers than to carpet the whole world.” The EU’s foreign and security policies basically aim at “carpeting” the world using mainstreaming, conditionality and (more recently) a joined-up approach to security, rather than just putting on “slippers” and protecting its own interests in a much simpler and more straightforward manner. In many cases, the challenge is to join up the EU’s values and interests, which tend to pull in quite different directions. Since the EU clusters terrorism and WMD non-proliferation together with gender equality and good governance under the all-encompassing heading of “security”, hard choices have to be made on what takes precedence, and why this is so. For a joined-up approach to succeed, the EU has to merge its dual role as missionary and merchant. This requires making hard choices based on a meaningful shift towards more geostrategic thinking. The EU’s Global Strategy has taken some modest steps in the right direction, but has not set priorities in a still overcrowded security agenda. Since growing towards strategic maturity inevitably takes time, the EU has to do what is possible and necessary to achieve a joined-up approach to security. This involves balancing its foreign policy ambitions with its limited resources and ability to shape outcomes, and leaving the rest to capable and resolute member states.

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67 See Simon Duke, evidence for the House of Lords' European Union Committee, “Europe in the World: Towards a More Effective EU Foreign and Security Strategy”, London, 16 February 2016.