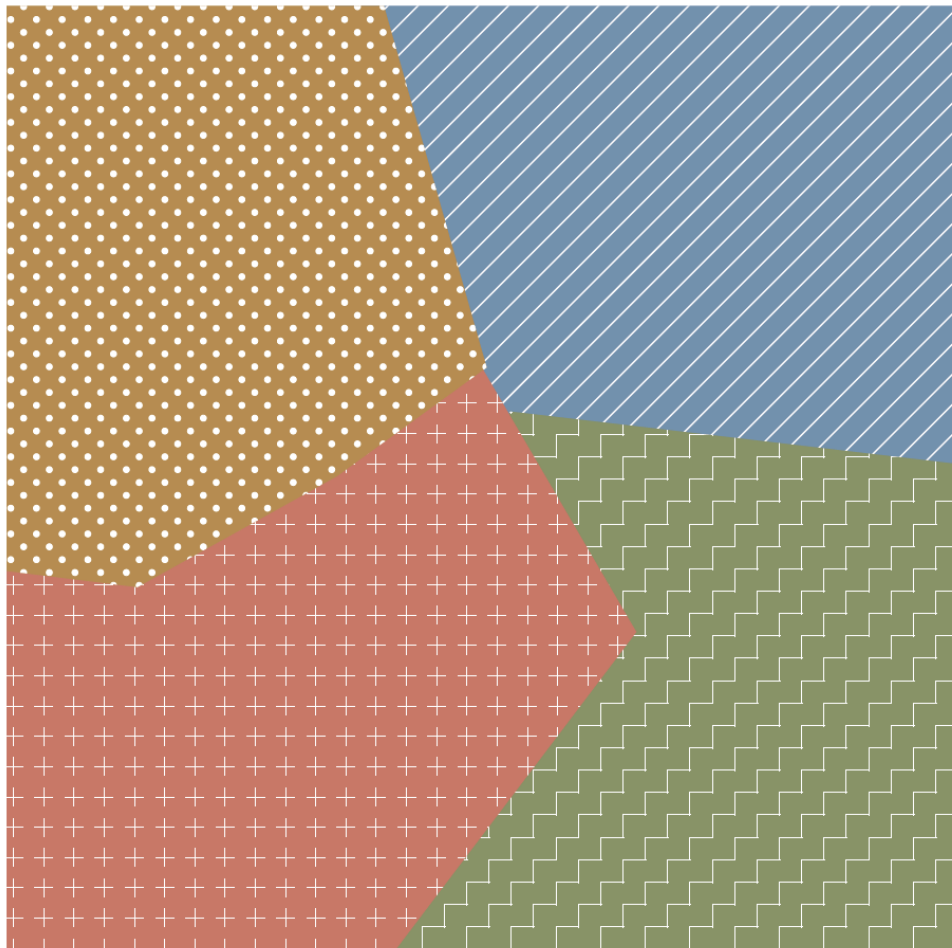


# W O S C A P

ENHANCING EU PEACEBUILDING CAPABILITIES



## EU capabilities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding: Challenges, strengths and opportunities of a Whole-of-Society approach

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## Colophon

# EU CAPABILITIES IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE BUILDING: CHALLENGES, STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF A WHOLE-OF- SOCIETY APPROACH

31 May 2017

Deliverable 4.16: Research Report

Chris van der Borgh, Mary Martin and Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic (editors)



## Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

The Research Report was produced as part of the project "Whole-of-Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding" (WOSCAP). It provides an overview of the research conducted in the framework of the WOSCAP project and draws conclusions on strengths, challenges and opportunities of EU capabilities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. On the basis of the material presented, the report critically assesses EU capabilities to fund, to act and to coordinate / cooperate and discusses how EU capabilities can be enhanced by taking a Whole-of-Society approach. Most of the text has been taken from or is based on the reports written by the authors of the studies in work packages 2, 3 and 4, which includes scoping papers (WP2), country reports and desk studies (WP3), and articles and papers (WP4).

# W O S C A P

ENHANCING EU PEACEBUILDING CAPABILITIES



This project is funded by the EU's Horizon 2020  
Research and Innovation Programme  
Grant agreement no. 653866

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# Table of contents

- List of abbreviations ..... 1
- Introduction ..... 3
- 1. WOSCAP research programme ..... 4
  - 1.1 Objectives and research questions ..... 4
  - 1.2 Whole-of-Society approach and capabilities..... 5
  - 1.3 Organisation of the research agenda ..... 8
- 2. Main findings from country studies and capabilities in context ..... 11
  - Introduction..... 11
  - 2.1 Country cases ..... 11
    - 2.1.1 Ukraine ..... 12
    - 2.1.2 Georgia ..... 13
    - 2.1.3 Mali..... 14
    - 2.1.4 Yemen..... 15
    - 2.1.5 Kosovo..... 15
    - 2.1.6 Afghanistan..... 16
    - 2.1.7 Guatemala/Honduras ..... 17
    - 2.1.8 Sri Lanka..... 18
  - 2.2 Context matters ..... 18
    - 2.2.1 Working in unstable contexts and adapting to conflict dynamics..... 19
    - 2.2.2 Dealing with state weakness and adverse contexts. .... 21
    - 2.2.3 Working in deeply divided societies. .... 23
    - 2.2.4 Challenges of international coordination in national contexts..... 24
  - 2.3 Concluding remarks ..... 26
- 3. Clusters: Multi-Track Diplomacy, Governance Reform, and Security Sector Reform ..... 27
  - 3.1 Multi-Track Diplomacy ..... 27
    - 3.1.1 Conceptualising Multi-Track Diplomacy..... 27
    - 3.1.2 The EU’s approach to Multi-Track Diplomacy ..... 28

3.1.3 Findings on EU Multi-Track Diplomacy .....	29
3.2 Governance Reform.....	31
3.2.1 Conceptualising Governance Reform.....	31
3.2.2 The EU’s approach to Governance Reform .....	31
3.2.3 Findings on EU Governance Reform .....	32
3.3.2 EU support to decentralisation reform .....	33
3.3 Security Sector Reform .....	35
3.3.1 The EU’s approach to Security Sector Reform .....	35
3.3.2 Findings on EU Security Sector Reform .....	35
3.4 Concluding remarks .....	38
4. Cross-cutting themes .....	39
4.1 Local ownership .....	40
4.2 Coherence .....	41
4.3 Civil-military synergies.....	43
4.4 Gender.....	44
4.5 ICTs .....	46
4.6 Concluding remarks .....	47
5. Conclusion – a Whole-of-Society approach to EU capabilities.....	48
5.1 Assessing EU capabilities.....	48
5.1.1 Capability to fund .....	48
5.1.2 Capability to act .....	49
5.1.3 Capability to coordinate and cooperate .....	51
5.2 Deploying capabilities in context.....	53
5.2.1 A Whole-of-Society approach to enhance capabilities.....	54
5.2.2 Opportunities and constraints in applying a Whole-of-Society approach to EU interventions .....	56
5.3 Future research.....	57
Bibliography .....	60

# List of abbreviations

AA	Association Agreement
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
CFA	Cease Fire Agreement
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CICIG	Comisión Internacional contra la Impunidad en Guatemala
COBERM	Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EC	European Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
EU	European Union
EUAM	European Union Advisory Mission
EUBAM	European Union Border Assistance Mission
EUCAP	European Union Capacity Building Mission
EUGSS	EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy
EULEX	European Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
EUMM	European Union Monitoring Mission
EUPOL-A	European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan
EUSR	EU Special Representative
EUTM-Mali	EU Training Mission Mali
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GID	Geneva International Discussions
GOV	Governance Reform
GPC	General People's Congress
GSP+	Generalized System of Preferences
HoD	Head of Delegation
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
IfS	Instrument for Stability

ILO	International Labour Organisation
IO	International Organisation
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
JMP	Joint Meeting Parties
KFOR	Kosovo Force
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MIP	Multi-Indicative Programme
MTD	Multi-Track Diplomacy
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDC	National Dialogue Conference
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PAOSC II	Deuxième programme d'appui aux organisations de la société civile
PARADDER	Programme d'appui à la réforme administrative, à la décentralisation et au développement économique régional
PASS	Programa de Apoyo al Sector Seguridad
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SAVI	State Accountability and Voice Initiative
SBC	State Building Contract
SJSR	Security and Justice Sector Reform
SSD	Security Sector Development
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TMF	Theoretical and Methodological Framework
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNOMIG	United Nations Observer Mission to Georgia
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
WOS	Whole-of-Society
WOSCAP	Whole-of-Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WP	Work Package

# Introduction

This report provides an overview of the research conducted in the framework of the EU supported Whole-of-Society project (WOSCAP) and draws conclusions on strengths, challenges and opportunities of EU capabilities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.<sup>1</sup> The first chapter of the report summarizes the main objectives of the programme and the different research activities undertaken. In chapter 2 we briefly present the main findings from the country and desk studies and reflect on the ways the political, social and geopolitical context affects EU capabilities. Chapter 3 reflects on the EU capabilities in three policy clusters: Multi-Track Diplomacy (MTD), Governance Reform (GOV), and Security Sector Reform (SSR). Chapter 4 focuses on the five cross-cutting themes that were selected for this study and that are relevant across the country studies and in each of the policy clusters: coherence, ownership, gender, ICT, and civil-military relations. On the basis of the material presented in chapter 2, 3 and 4, the final chapter first critically assesses EU capabilities to fund, to act and to coordinate / cooperate and moves on with a discussion on how EU capabilities can be enhanced by taking a Whole-of-Society approach.

With regard to the authorship of this report the following applies. Most of the text in chapters 1 to 4 has been taken from or is based on the reports written by the authors of the studies in work packages 2, 3 and 4, which includes scoping papers (WP2), country reports and desk studies (WP3), and articles and papers (WP4). The report was edited by Chris van der Borgh, who also wrote chapters 1 and 2, the bulk of this text being based on the Theoretical and Methodological Framework, and the country reports and desk studies, while section 2.2 is a new reflection on this. Toon Dirkx and Chris van der Borgh drafted chapter 3 on the basis of the country reports, synoptic report, draft reports on MTD, governance reform and SSR, as well as inputs from the authors of these reports. Chapter 4 was written by Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic and Mary Martin and is a reflection on reports produced in work packages 2 and 4, while combining this with insights from work package 3. The concluding remarks are written by Chris van der Borgh, Mary Martin and Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic. Georg Frerks gave feedback on several draft versions of the entire report.

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<sup>1</sup> See for information on the programme [www.woscap.eu](http://www.woscap.eu).

# 1. WOSCAP research programme

## 1.1 Objectives and research questions

The WOSCAP project's objective is to improve understandings of how EU civilian capabilities can facilitate peacebuilding and conflict prevention policies and interventions which are inclusive and sustainable, and provide scope for innovation. The project follows a four-pronged operational logic: to review the EU's past and ongoing conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions; to reflect on the analysis of the findings; to recommend possible policy changes; and to innovate including pointing out future avenues of research. This logic is implemented through six interlinked work packages, which are organised around three categories ('clusters') of EU peacebuilding/conflict prevention policies: multi-track diplomacy (MTD), governance reform (GOV) and security sector reform (SSR). In assessing and reflecting on EU policies, we apply five 'cross-cutting themes': local ownership, gender, multi-stakeholder coherence, civil-military synergies, and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

The WOSCAP project's point of departure is the current expectations and ambitions – such as comprehensiveness and inclusivity – regarding outcomes and processes of the EU's conflict prevention and peacebuilding policies. In the light of these expectations it seeks to assess current capabilities and look for ways to enhance them, not only by identifying limitations and weaknesses and examples of good practice, but also by suggesting solutions for bottlenecks and exploring alternative courses of action. It is designed to contribute to a practice-orientated definition of sustainable and inclusive conflict prevention and peacebuilding while pointing at the boundaries of what can be expected and realized in particular contexts.

The central question of the WOSCAP project is: What are the current EU civilian capabilities in the fields of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and how can these be enhanced in order to make policies more inclusive and sustainable? The WOSCAP research programme is informed by a critical-constructive reading of current conflict prevention and peacebuilding practice and the underlying assumptions and practices in this field. Acknowledging the multi-actor nature of contemporary security policy-making on the one hand, and the EU's ambitions to offer comprehensive and holistic responses to conflict on the other, the project also takes into account the operational dilemmas and disconnects identified in international conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions. It seeks to assess and enhance the EU's capabilities in relation to two central challenges: (a) enabling co-ordination and synergies among multiple actors and approaches, (b) ensuring local ownership in conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes.<sup>2</sup> Given the salience of these challenges in current policy practice, the research approach was based on a Whole-of-Society approach which we identified as combining greater inclusivity with improved integration of policy choices.

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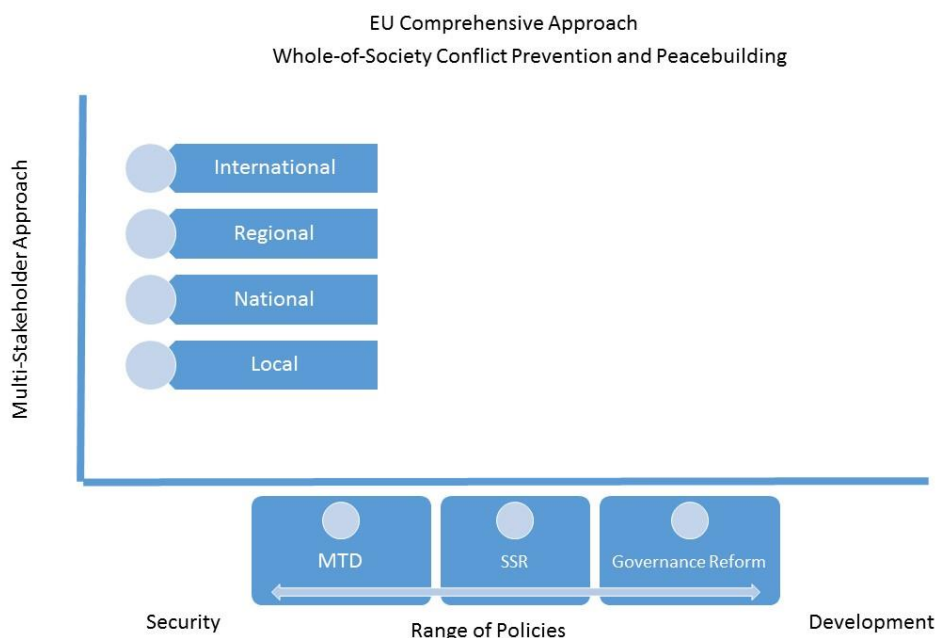
<sup>2</sup> See for a comprehensive discussion of the research questions the TMF (Martin et al, 2016), especially chapter 5.



## 1.2 Whole-of-Society approach and capabilities

As mentioned above, the goal of WOSCAP is to assess and enhance the capabilities of the EU to support conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes which are inclusive and sustainable. We do this by applying a prescriptive and normative ideal of 'Whole-of-Society' (WOS), which pays attention to the role of local societies, to multiple relationships at policy level and on the ground, and a wide range of stakeholders in the conflict space. The term Whole-of-Society refers to a set of ambitions of EU (and other) policy makers to work in a comprehensive and inclusive manner. In terms of our constructive reflection, we have used WOS as a prescriptive-normative device where the aim is to show how the EU might address the problems and deficiencies identified in deploying its capabilities, indicating not only problem-solving possibilities to adapt and reform EU practices, but also more fundamental changes of direction and approach. In this project we distinguish between vertical and horizontal axes of a Whole-of-Society approach, which we use as heuristic devices to analyse EU interventions from a critical-constructive perspective (see figure 1.1). We applied the horizontal axis to examine the choice of policies and programmes as well as the degree of integration and synergy between them; and the vertical axis to examine the EU's capabilities to work in a complex multi-actor environment, and particularly its ability to engage local populations. These two dimensions guided the research conducted in this project.

Figure 1.1. Integration within a 'Whole-of-Society' Approach



The research in the WOSCAP project takes account of the wide range of efforts by diverse actors on the supply and demand sides of intervention, but also recognizes that only some of these are readily visible. As a prescriptive approach, 'Whole-of-Society' assumes that peacebuilding and conflict prevention will be more effective when a broad(er) range of actions

and intentions are identified and taken into account. There is also an assumption in scholarly and practice literature that governance approaches based on local realities, traditions and culture are preferable to state-building projects focusing primarily on creating new institutions (Jarstad and Belloni, 2012; Dillon and Reid, 2000; Boege et al., 2009). However, through applying a critical-constructive perspective, the project also pays attention to the limitations of 'Whole-of-Society' and inclusivity, for example through problematizing dissonances between such diverse groups and processes, in order to understand practical barriers to and exploit potentials for improved integration and synergies between them (Franke and Dorff, 2012).

Debates about capabilities are at the heart of the discussion about the development of EU foreign policy. Since Hill (1993) argued that there is a huge gap between capabilities and expectations of the EU, this gap has, according to some observers, narrowed considerably over the past decades (Toje, 2008). However, it is widely agreed that the EU still faces a 'formidable challenge in coordinating a significant number of institutional actors and policy domains within the Union, both at the political-strategic level and at the level of planning and operations' (Whitman and Wolff, 2012: 5). In addition, the EU has to deal with multiple external actors and developments, including those at the recipients' end, as well as other international stakeholders active in the countries or domains concerned. Furthermore, we take into account that the EU – more than any other single policy actor – has multiple modalities or entry points for initiating external action, in particular through its own autonomous capacities and/or through engaging via one or more Member States. This opportunity to engage different combinations of capabilities, whether acting qua Member States or in the Union's own right, also bears upon our exploration of capabilities.

Capability can be defined in different ways and we use it as a generic concept that points at the quality of being capable or able (Business Dictionary, 2016). More precisely it is about the ability and capacity to achieve objectives in relation to the overall mission. This implies that capability has to be understood in relation to expectations and ambitions with regard to stated (policy) goals. The higher the expectations and ambitions with regard to these goals are, the greater the capabilities needed to realize these. The notion of capability inheres power, since it suggests that an actor can 'get things done' in the way that he or she deems relevant. In EU studies the notion of 'soft power' is often used, which emphasises the use of non-coercive measures aimed at gaining the consent of other stakeholders in policy implementation (Nielsen, 2013). However, in the specific policy area of conflict prevention and peacebuilding the ambitions of the EU are to take a Comprehensive Approach, co-operate with relevant actors and, if so required, to deploy both military and civilian resources. Hence, the ambitions go further than solely acquiring 'consent', but they require proactive and active consensus building and collective problem solving. To what degree this may involve more coercive forms of leverage and whether these more coercive forms can be combined with forms of 'soft power', is debatable, but in EU policy documents this option is not ruled out.

A leitmotif in the policy of the EU is a Comprehensive Approach to security which was formally presented in the 2003 European Security Strategy (European Council, 2003), and then defined by the Council of the European Union as 'both a general working method and a set of concrete measures and processes to improve how the EU, based on a common strategic vision and drawing on its wide array of existing tools and instruments, collectively can develop, embed and deliver more coherent and more effective policies, working practices, actions and results' (Council of the EU, 2014: 1). The term has many similarities with (and is partly based on) the

notion of human security (a term that was, however, not used in the EU Security Strategy of 2003, but features in the Global Security Strategy of 2016). Human security proposes a deeper and broader approach to security than traditional approaches, focusing on the conditions that ought to pertain for people to be secure (Kerr, 2006: 92-3). It entails safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression, and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life (ibid). Human security also ties in with the search for more 'emancipatory approaches' to peacebuilding mentioned by Richmond (2005). The Comprehensive Approach to security is the way the EU seeks to operationalise these ideas and emphasises the need to co-ordinate between different policies and actors (Gebhard and Norheim-Martinsen, 2011: 221). It is widely recognized that implementation raises a range of challenges 'at the politico-strategic level, at the level of operational and policy planning and in day-to-day implementation' (ibid 221). The commitment to the Comprehensive Approach to conflict prevention and peace building was repeated in the new EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EUGSS), published in June 2016, which announced a shift in the EU's strategy to focus on societal resilience.<sup>3</sup>

With regard to the categorization or delineation of capabilities our starting point is Whitman and Wolff's distinction between three capabilities: the capability to act, to fund, and to coordinate and cooperate (2012: 11). In this formulation:

- The capability to act deals with the 'extent to which the availability of personnel and hardware (or lack thereof) has aided or stifled the EU's ability to pursue more proactive policies, and the degree to which the full range of policy instruments was used (or not) [...] depending on the ability to back intentions with concrete actions' (2012: 11). This capability is closely linked to the intention to work in and across different policy domains.
- The capability to fund looks at the 'flexibility of the Instrument for Stability (IfS) to address specific crisis situations', the efforts of transitioning towards longer term financing and the broader question of whether EU funds made available for conflict management are sufficient (2012: 13). (Note that the IfS runs under a new name: Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, IcSP.)
- With regard to co-ordination and co-operation the authors place emphasis on the relations with other international actors (such as states, IOs, and NGOs), and internal relations within the EU. This capability is linked to the intention to work in an inclusive way. Whitman and Wolff propose to focus on the extent to which the expected benefits of multilateralism have been realized and to what extent the EU's mechanisms and procedures for co-ordination and co-operation with third parties have been effective on the ground (2012: 14).

The main assumption with regard to the *nature* of capabilities is that we assert that EU capabilities develop, adapt, grow or erode in complex and largely unpredictable processes. These processes are context-specific and thus highly dependent on 'external factors'. Whitman and Wolff (2012: 16) identify four contextual levels that are relevant to the EU in its activities of conflict prevention and peacebuilding: the local, national, regional and international level. We

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<sup>3</sup> See A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, June 2016, online available at [http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top\\_stories/pdf/eugs\\_review\\_web.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf)

argue that the 'political or conflict context' at these different levels creates a range of particular challenges and opportunities to the EU and that it is up to EU staff and agencies (both on the ground and in Europe) to seize opportunities. In other words, capabilities are forged in interaction with other actors.

These interactions can take many forms: consensus, obedience, confrontation, negotiation, resistance, persuasion, etc. Thus, instead of looking for capability as something dichotomous that the EU 'either has or has not', we want to improve our understanding of the social processes that determine how capabilities are made and unmade, what the perceptions are of different stakeholders about these capabilities, and the degree to which they are deemed effective (which may be informed by different experiences with the EU, or different expectations about the EU). In addition, we are interested in other possible capabilities (other than the ones mentioned by Whitman and Wolff) that the EU may have, lack or develop, e.g. the capability to adapt policies in context, and to learn from different types of experiences.

### 1.3 Organisation of the research agenda

The research in this project was organized in different work packages (WPs). Below, the research focus and approaches in work packages 2, 3 and 4 are outlined briefly (WP1 dealt with coordination of the programme).

The project began by undertaking seven scoping studies of each cluster and cross-cutting theme. The aim of each study was to provide an initial orientation of the subject based on desk research, to identify and explain key terms and concepts, and prevailing practices. Each study sought to provide an overview of scholarly knowledge, represented by secondary literature, policy developments (primary texts) as well as grey literature, reflecting practitioners' discourses. This review of key literature itself, although not exhaustive, represented a contribution to knowledge and to the goal of outlining a future research agenda on the topic of EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The studies attempted to take account of a broad range of scholarly disciplines in summarising the state of the art – recognising that insights are available not only from security studies (which itself contains sub-disciplines and approaches) or European studies but also increasingly from sociology, psychology, and anthropology, to name but a few.

The studies focused on topics that related to the project's core concerns: inclusiveness and a bottom-up perspective; gaps, disconnects and paradoxes in the deployment of EU civilian peacebuilding capabilities; sustainability; synergies and overlaps between civilian and military capabilities. The scoping studies were intended to indicate lines of inquiry and propose research questions in line with WOSCAP objectives, but also current trajectories in academic research and practitioners discourses. Thus they were an important ingredient in generating an appropriate and relevant research agenda for the project. They were supplemented and clarified by a discussion among all project members in December 2015 at a theoretical and methodological framework meeting.

The scoping studies provided evidence of the trajectory of EU policy and a progressive process of refining the EU's capability to act, both in terms of specifying conceptually and legally the Union's areas of competence and ambition, and of setting concrete goals, policy ideals and delivering the required resources. Key milestones began with the Maastricht Treaty

of 1992 and include the European Security Strategy of 2003, the Lisbon Treaty of 2009, and other core texts such as the 2000 Report on Improving Coherence and Effectiveness of the European Union Action in the Field of Conflict Prevention (Secretary General/High Representative and the EC, 2000)<sup>4</sup>, the 2001 Communication from the Commission on Conflict Prevention (EC, 2001), and the EU Gothenburg Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts (2001) (Benraïs and Quinet, 2016; Benraïs and Simon, 2016).

The objective of WP3 was to review EU capabilities through assessing specific EU interventions in national contexts. As discussed in the Theoretical and Methodological Framework (TMF) (Martin et al, 2016), the focus was on three EU types of action: Multi-Track Diplomacy (MTD), Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Governance Reforms (GOV), while within country contexts the project sought to bring together an examination of clusters with a cross-cutting evaluation based on a number of themes which reflect the ambitions and normative aspirations of the EU as a global peacebuilding actor. These themes are: multi-stakeholder coherence, local ownership, gender, civil-military synergies, and ICTs. The research in WP3 consisted of four country studies in Georgia, Mali, Ukraine, and Yemen, conducted by teams in these countries. The cases represent two countries in Europe's immediate neighbourhood, and two further away, but nevertheless relevant to Europe's security (and sometimes portrayed as being part of the 'Arc of Instability'). These studies were complemented by desk studies of EU policies in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Central America. Afghanistan and Kosovo, are currently important countries for the EU in terms of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, while in the other two cases the EU has actively dealt with problems of civil war and the aftermath of war.

As discussed in the TMF the question guiding the research in WP3 is what kind of capabilities are evident from EU interventions in the three policy domains/clusters and how has the EU developed its capabilities in the three policy domains over the past one or two decades.<sup>5</sup> While the research was informed by the existing literature on EU capabilities, as well as scoping studies on the three policy clusters and five cross-cutting themes, it was primarily exploratory and empirical in that it looked for relevant factors (both contextual and internal to the EU), as well as processes and patterns of interaction, that provide information about the ways in which the EU deploys, develops, and adapts its policies in multiple policy domains and in interaction with other stakeholders.

Work package 4 investigated lessons learned and involved experts, practitioners and stakeholders, providing a community of practice perspective on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The activities in this work package focused on the analysis of crosscutting themes, identifying good practices from a wide range of contexts and actors related to local ownership, gender, multi-stakeholder coherence, civil-military synergy and the use of ICTs. This work package also reflected on the main lessons from the country studies and desk studies, as will be further discussed in chapter 3. The approach to study the five cross-cutting themes is informed by a proposition that practice-based reflections offer a first-hand evaluation and insights from those implementing international policies for peacebuilding and conflict resolution. This enables a direct confrontation with the inherent dilemmas facing these policies

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<sup>4</sup> "The central issue for the Union is one of coherence in deploying the right combination and sequence of instruments in a timely and integrated manner" (Secretary General/High Representative and the EC, 2000, p.4)

<sup>5</sup> See M. Martin et al 2016, chapter 6.

(Paris and Sisk 2009), and contributes to a critical constructive analysis of the EU's comprehensive approach. Everyday experiences and encounters between different stakeholders, in different situations, is invaluable in determining both a direction of change and the feasibility of adjustment. However at the same time, these studies have taken a cautious approach to identifying 'good' rather than 'best' practice given the disparity of contexts in which practitioners are operating and the challenge of attempting to draw scientific comparisons between them. WP4 also draws on secondary literature in an attempt to provide not an exhaustive or comparative account of practice, but one which enables us to indicate avenues for practice change and gauge the salience of a Whole-of-Society approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

## 2. Main findings from country studies and capabilities in context

### Introduction

This chapter assesses how national contexts impact on EU interventions. Indeed, the EU seeks to contribute to transitions and transformation towards stability and peace in war-torn societies, but is at the same time confronted with multiple actors and factors that may hamper or resist the proposed changes. The chapter starts with a brief summary of the four country studies and five desk studies that were conducted in the framework of the WOSCAP project. We move on with a section discussing different dimensions of the national contexts.

### 2.1 Country cases

In the framework of the WOSCAP project four country studies were conducted, which included local fieldwork (Ukraine, Georgia, Mali, and Yemen), and five desk studies that were mostly based on a review of the literature (Kosovo, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Guatemala and Honduras). The guiding questions and structure of the country and desk studies were similar and based on the Theoretical and Methodological Framework (Martin et al, 2016). All studies provided information about the 'general picture' of the EU presence and intervention in each context, while taking a more in-depth look at selected policies in each of these countries.<sup>6</sup> The country reports and desk studies all include chapters on (a) an analysis of the national context and international involvement, (b) an analysis of the EU presence in the national contexts, which takes into account its politics and policies during different phases of the conflict, and its relations with other national and international stakeholders, and (c) an analysis of selected EU interventions, with a focus on the EU's capabilities to act, to fund and to coordinate/cooperate. Below, for each of the countries included in this study, it is briefly described how the EU became involved in activities of conflict prevention and peace building, and which EU interventions were included in this study.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Criteria for selection were: (a) Policies should be in the fields of MTD, GOV, or SSR; (b) They should be specific and focused to allow for fine grained research; e.g. not an Association Agreement or a Peace Process but a specific initiative within this; (c) They should relate to core WOSCAP themes such as inclusivity, coherence, comprehensiveness, gender and /or technology/innovation; (d) There should be a diverse range of policies – which represent a broad /human security definition of security; (e) They should be salient and significant in terms of the EU's intervention in the country; (f) They should be researchable, and allow for original findings, not a repackaging of existing research; (g) A bonus is comparability between different desk studies.

<sup>7</sup> The following sections are based on the country reports and desk studies. See references in the text.

### 2.1.1 Ukraine

EU-Ukraine relations were defined by the Partnership and Cooperation agreement (signed in 1994 and coming into force in 1998) and in 2008 negotiations about the Association Agreement (AA) started, leading to the signing of the Association Agreement in 2014 (Litra et al, 2016: 9). While the EU presence in the Eastern neighbourhood through its integration mechanisms such as the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership had already irritated Russia over the last decade (ibid: 4), Russia pressured then president Yanukovich to join the Customs Union instead, leading to his decision to shelve the talks with the EU on the Association Agreement in November 2013 (ibid: 4). When protests against this decision increased Yanukovich fled to Russia on 22 February 2014. The new government favored the AA and was almost immediately confronted with the annexation of Crimea by Russia (Litra et al, 2016: 5).

Relations between the EU and Ukraine traditionally lacked a security dimension, but as a result of this crisis the EU could not avoid becoming a 'security actor', albeit reluctantly (Litra et al, 2016). Several waves of sanctions were imposed by the EU against Ukrainian and Russian persons and companies (also special sanctions on Crimea), including top Russian companies and officials close to Putin. The Ukraine study looks at four interventions of the EU in Ukraine that related to the security situation. Firstly, the EU has been active in setting up the Geneva format (April 2014) for negotiating a peaceful settlement of the conflict and the stabilisation of Ukraine. Although the Geneva format was replaced by the Normandy format, which no longer included the EU, but a representation by Germany and France, Brussels remained active in helping Berlin and Paris put together a settlement plan. Secondly, the EU Advisory Mission (EUAM) was to provide strategic consultation and to coordinate donor support to civilian security sector reform in Ukraine. The mission defined its key beneficiaries to be the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Prosecutor General's Office, the State Penitentiary Service, the State Border Guard Service, the State Fiscal Service and the Security Service of Ukraine (Zarembo, 2015). After the strategic review of the mandate, EUAM works according to three pillars of activity: (a) strategic advice on civilian Security Sector Reform, in particular the need to develop civilian security strategies; (b) support for the implementation of reforms, through the delivery of hands-on advice, training and other projects; (c) cooperation and coordination, to ensure that reform efforts are coordinated with Ukrainian and international actors (EUAM, 2016). Thirdly, the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) to Moldova and Ukraine was launched and has been operating since 2005. Its headquarters are in Odessa (Ukraine). It also has a EUBAM Office in Moldova and five field offices – two on the Moldovan side of the joint border and three on the Ukrainian side. EUBAM's primary counterparts in Ukraine and Moldova are the local Border and Customs Services. Technically EUBAM is not a proper Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission but a hybrid one, since it is administered by the European Commission rather than by the European Council. Fourthly, the study looked at decentralisation efforts – funded through the IcSP – as a means to manage local level conflict.



## 2.1.2 Georgia

Since Georgia regained independence from the Soviet Union, protracted conflicts have seriously affected the country's development and its transformation into a democratic state. The conflicts over the two breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia caused several hundred thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and inflicted serious economic damage to the country. The international community and different peace and security organisations (UN, OSCE, Red Cross, EU, etc.) have been involved in conflict management activities between 1992 and 2008. Following the war in August 2008, the existing mandates of the UN Observer Mission to Georgia (UNOMIG) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) were blocked by Russia. Consequently, the EU's Monitoring Mission (EUMM) became the only international mandated organisation. Thus, the EU became a crucial factor for peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the country.

After the 2008 war, peacebuilding aspects of EU policy acquired a prominent role. Together with significant support for governance reforms in the framework of Pre-Accession (IPA), Association Agreements, European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), and Eastern Partnership (EaP), the EU is especially relevant to post-2008 conflict prevention, management and resolution. The EU's strategic importance in Georgia increased significantly, with the EUMM becoming the sole officially mandated international peace mission operating in Georgia (Macharashvili et al, 2016).

The Georgia study addresses three EU interventions in Georgia. Firstly, the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) which is currently the most concrete instrument used for conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Georgia. With its role in this mission, the EU is identified as a deterrent force, one that ensures the non-resumption of hostilities, and the prevention of kidnapping and assault on individuals leaving the areas adjacent to the administrative boundary lines with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The EUMM becomes active only in ad-hoc situations when there is a crisis and immediate involvement becomes necessary. Even if the EUMM has limited power to operate on the other side of the boundary line, its impact is still very significant. Secondly, the Geneva International Discussions (GID) is the only substantial diplomatic platform functioning around the conflict in Georgia. Even though the conflict has evolved into a kind of stalemate, the platform offers a venue for diplomats, politicians and decision-makers to exchange information and resolve certain ad hoc issues. GID has not been able to find diplomatic solutions to the conflict and the EU capacity within the GID format is seen by most research participants as restricted. The elite character of the platform and its lack of transparency constitute important restrictions, particularly from the perspective of local civil society organisations. Thirdly, the EU-UNDP joint programme Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism (COBERM) invests in grassroots dialogue and trust building. Different stakeholders inside Georgia generally evaluate this programme as useful and positive, since it is able to stimulate people-to-people contact across conflict divides, and to generate increased capacities within communities, as well as Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to mediate political differences in constructive ways. However, measures are needed to make the programme more permeable to new actors and to allow it to increase its impact beyond the small groups that have been participating thus far (Macharashvili et al, 2016).

### 2.1.3 Mali

Since the crisis escalated in January 2012, numerous international support initiatives for Mali have emerged. In 2013, the Ouagadougou Agreements, a new Presidential election, and the approval of the United Nations Integrated Multidimensional Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) all contributed to the Malian peace process, though they did not completely halt the hostilities. Like most of Mali's development partners, the EU was initially taken aback by the eruption of the 2012 crisis, and expressed its deep concern. The sudden fall of democracy, the violence of the attacks and the multi-level consequences of the crisis led the members of the international community in general, and the EU in particular, to invest heavily in a return to peace. The EU has used different means for this purpose. First, EU multi-track diplomacy has proven its capability to contribute to the promotion of peace dialogue amongst stakeholders with diverging interests. The EU engaged in this process with respect and support for the role that different international institutions or governments were already playing, allowing crucial support for key efforts undertaken by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union, and the Algerian government, among others (Djiré et al, 2016).

Another important EU contribution to the peace process in Mali consists of support for Mali's weakened and beleaguered security sector. In 2013, the EU set up a Malian Security Forces Training Mission (EUTM-Mali) tasked with strengthening the Malian army, focusing on operational deployment and on strengthening of the chain of command. EUTM also provides advisory support in elaborating military doctrine and planning. The EU furthermore supports the European Capacity Building Programme for the Malian Security Forces (EUCAP-Sahel-Mali), set up in 2014. This programme focuses on capacity building, training, equipment, and organisational development for the Police, Gendarmerie, and the National Guard. EUCAP also supports the improvement of the Justice system, including training of justice officials and policy development. Though both programmes are extremely relevant and necessary, concerns exist as to whether these efforts will suffice for the task at hand. The development of a security sector up to Mali's current challenges will take more resources and time than provided by the prevailing support programmes. The streamlining of international support and capacity building will be a key aspect of this process (Djiré et al, 2016).

In the aftermath of the 2012 crisis, as the transition towards legitimate government began, the Malian state found itself in dire financial and institutional circumstances. In this context, the EU used governance support interventions mainly as a tool to keep the state afloat. These measures, most crucially exemplified in the State Building Contract (SBC) mechanism, were indeed essential to keep the Malian institutional framework in place. It made the democratic transition and the peace agreement possible. Other EU governance support programmes had already been in place before the crisis, and were resumed after the worst had passed. The EU extended its Administrative Reform, Decentralisation and Regional Economic Development Support Programme (PARADDER), initiated in 2010 with a focus on decentralisation, to 2017. Civil society support activities also continued through the Support Programme for Civil Society Organisations II (PAOSC II) (Djiré et al, 2016).

#### 2.1.4 Yemen

The EU's decision in 2011 to support the general framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) agreement has shaped the course of the EU's relationship with Yemen. This framework committed the international community to the course of the main power broker in the region, Saudi Arabia. The efforts of the GCC, the EU, and the UN Security Council to stabilize Yemen, eventually derailed into a military intervention led by Yemen's oil-rich neighbour Saudi Arabia (Eshaq and Al-Marani, 2016). During this tumultuous period in Yemen's history the EU played a substantial role, helped in part by the general perception in Yemen that it is more neutral than other international actors. The EU's technical advice and capacity building was much appreciated, and many felt that the EU had contributed to making Yemen's transition process more inclusive. The basic problem however, was that the EU committed itself to the fundamentally flawed GCC Agreement, willing to overlook problems for the sake of Yemen's 'transition'. At the time, it appeared to be the only available solution. Despite its flaws, the GCC Agreement had appeared to be the lesser evil than total chaos (Eshaq and Al-Marani, 2016).

The Yemen study focuses on the EU's role in multi-track diplomacy in Yemen. The centerpiece of the GCC Agreement was the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) that was scheduled to solve all of Yemen's long-standing crises – including the Southern Issue and the Sa'ada Issue – within a mere six months. The failure of the GCC Agreement to include anyone but the General People's Congress (GPC) and Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), was to be rectified in the NDC. In addition to including the Houthis and the Southern Movement, it was decided that women, youth, and civil society organisations should also be represented as separate groups in the NDC to promote inclusiveness. Despite efforts by the EU to reach out to these groups, and offer capacity building to the newly identified interest groups, the results of the research presented in this report suggest that the inclusiveness that the NDC sought to produce was deeply flawed when the delegates were eventually selected (Eshaq and Al-Marani, 2016).

#### 2.1.5 Kosovo

The interventions of the EU in Kosovo as of 2008 can be seen as a new phase of international intervention in the post-independence state of Kosovo. While tensions in Kosovo already started to rise by the end of the 1980s, the international community became actively involved in the Kosovo crisis when the conflict turned violent by the end of the 1990s. After several failed efforts to manage the conflict, a NATO-led bombing campaign in 1999 led to a UN interim administration mission (UNMIK), supported by a large contingent of NATO peacekeepers (KFOR). However, the UNMIK mandate (UNSCR 1244) was status neutral and efforts to negotiate the final status of Kosovo failed. This eventually led to Kosovo's 'unilateral' declaration of independence in February 2008, which counted on the support of the United States (US) as well as a majority of the European countries, while it was fiercely opposed by Serbia (van der Borgh, et al, 2016).

Over the past twenty years, the EU transformed from an actor with limited leverage to a major player in Kosovo. The EU made large financial commitments to Kosovo, and despite the disagreement between EU members about the status of Kosovo, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) entered into force in April 2016. In the post-independence period the EU stepped up its presence in Kosovo by deploying the European Rule of Law

Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), the largest CSDP mission. Furthermore, the EU took the lead in a new dialogue process between Kosovo and Serbia. Arguably, there is no other country where, in terms of post-war conflict management and peacebuilding, the EU plays a more important role than Kosovo. However, the disagreement about the status of Kosovo has seriously hampered the EU role in the Balkans, and the ambiguity of UNSCR 1244 about Kosovo's status, which was adopted in June 1999 after the international bombing campaign, still affects the room to manoeuvre for the EU (van der Borgh, et al, 2016).

The Kosovo study analyses two EU interventions. Firstly, the EU rule of law mission (EULEX) that was deployed in 2008, was the largest CSDP mission to date, and the only one with an executive mandate. It was designed to help Kosovo make the transition towards an independent state that respected the rule of law. The mandate and objectives of the mission included judicial reform, police reform, border management, as well as the fight against corruption and the arrest of former war criminals. However, the mission could not live up to the high expectations of the EU and the mission has been extensively criticized in academic and policy literatures, formal evaluations, and by political leaders in Kosovo and Serbia. Secondly, the EU-led dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo was another important initiative of the EU in the post-independence period. This dialogue was the result of the leverage of the EU, which made normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia a condition in the stabilisation and association process in both countries. While both Serbian and Kosovar leaders were not keen to start a new round of dialogue and kept on emphasising that they were not willing to change their positions about the status of Kosovo, it is fair to say that the EU pushed, if not forced, the two countries to join the dialogue (van der Borgh, et al, 2016).

### 2.1.6 Afghanistan

Since 2001, the EU has put forward ambitious policy goals and became a prime donor in the post-2001 build-up of the new Afghan State. Afghanistan receives more development aid from the EU and Member States than any other country. The EU's engagement with Afghanistan has been shaped in a complex field of Afghan and international actors with different logics, justifications, and approaches that often competed with – or even directly contradicted – each other (Dirkx, 2017).

While the Bonn Agreement of December 2001 put forward the ambition to create a 'broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government', in practice this was never realised. International donors – including the EU – who had state-building ambitions were confronted with the central dilemma of working with or against the warlords, and as the international involvement in Afghanistan evolved from a light footprint approach to a much more intrusive form of external state-building, a complex field of Afghan and international actors emerged in which some focused on building peace, while others sought to wage war. Moreover, within that complex field of stakeholders, national political interests of international actors and (transatlantic) diplomatic relations often trumped the concerns and needs of ordinary Afghans. This increasingly revealed the ambiguities of 'local ownership' in Afghanistan (Dirkx, 2017).

The EU has been confronted with many external challenges that have affected its overall capabilities in the fields of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In the shadow of a US-led war, the EU has sought its role in the civilian domain, but has nevertheless been highly

dependent on what happened on the battlefield. Even though the EU's assistance to Afghanistan since 2001 has been of tremendous proportions, it has been overshadowed, and repeatedly undermined, by an ongoing war between insurgents, and the United States, NATO, and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). This dynamic thus draws attention to the contentious nature of a civilian mandate in a violent context that continuously hinders its implementation (Dirkx, 2017).

The Afghanistan study assesses two interventions. Firstly, the role of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) in Afghanistan, who has been the political presence of the EU in that country since 2001, is considered. The position of EUSR was developed to represent the EU in troubled regions and countries and the study of the EUSR in Afghanistan analyses how the position of EUSR changed over time in that country. Secondly, the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) Afghanistan Mission is discussed. This mission is widely assessed as a failure (Dirkx, 2017).

### 2.1.7 Guatemala/Honduras

The involvement of the EU in Central America dates back to the 1980s when wars raged in the isthmus. The (then) European Economic Community (EEC) supported the regional efforts to bring an end to the civil wars. This role as 'peace actor' evolved in the post-settlement period of the 1990s when the EU increased its development assistance to the region, while at a later stage an association agreement was signed with the Central American countries. In the framework of these agreements the EU has also increasingly paid attention to Central America's public security crisis, and to security and rule of law reforms in the region (van der Borgh, 2016).

By the second half of the 1990s, civil wars had ended in the region, leading to a period of pacification, democratic reforms and reform of the security sectors in Honduras and Guatemala. The outcome of that transition has been mixed at best, with Guatemala scoring 'partly free' and Honduras 'not free' on the ranking of Freedom House. Moreover, the governments in these countries seem to have lost effective control over substantial parts of their territory, and there is increasing concern about the presence of street gangs, the growing presence of drug trafficking, corruption, infiltration of non-state actors in the state and the narrowing space of civil society organisations (van der Borgh, 2016).

In the EU's Regional Strategy Paper for the period 2007 – 2013, the EU set itself the task to support the process of political, economic, and social integration in the context of the preparation of the future Association Agreement between the EU and Central America. In that framework it also aims to contribute to regional security by strengthening the rule of law and containing the high levels of violence (van der Borgh, 2016).

The brief report discusses two EU programmes that aim to support justice and security sector reform in Honduras and Guatemala: the programme in support of the security sector (PASS) in Honduras and the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). While the CICIG is an international organisation that is co-funded by the EU, PASS was an EU programme that sought to make a serious contribution to justice and security sector reform taking a comprehensive approach to public security (van der Borgh, 2016).

### 2.1.8 Sri Lanka

Over the years the EU has become a more articulated donor vis-à-vis Sri Lanka as a country in conflict or – as of recently – a post-conflict country. The donors' involvement, including the EU's, occurred in four major domains. It has adapted its programmes, made them increasingly conditional and conflict-sensitive, arguing for peace, human rights and reconciliation. Though some donors, including European countries, were affected by flows of Tamil refugees from the mid-1980s onwards, this did not lead to a concerted donor effort vis-à-vis the Sri Lankan government. In this stage the EU was politically largely invisible, except for its usual trade and development cooperation. Foreign involvement became more consequential when the Norwegian government brokered the Cease-fire Agreement (CFA) in 2002. The EU together with Japan, the US and Norway became co-chairs of the peace process, actively attempting to keep the process afloat and make progress in the direction of a political solution. At this stage and continuing up to present, the EU coordinated the positions of the European countries in the peace process and regarding the human rights agenda. As most European missions in Sri Lanka were small and lacked sufficient manpower they realized that together they possibly could exert more leverage (Frerks and Dirkx, 2017).

The study further reviews several EU interventions. Firstly, it assesses the donor role of the European countries on their own or under the banner of the EU in relation to the peace process. The European Union implements its bilateral programmes with Sri Lanka under the so called Multi-Indicative Programmes (MIP-I and MIP-II), while it also provides funds through a number of regional initiatives. Secondly, donors including the EU provided generous *relief aid* to the war-affected zones and areas devastated by the tsunami in 2004. Though the tsunami had a brief fraternising effect on the conflict parties, the distribution of aid soon became an additional bone of contention between them and further complicated the peace process that had already started to unravel. Donors did not attempt to use relief aid for leveraging the peace process. Thirdly, the EU was a highly significant trade partner for Sri Lanka. Trade relations between the EU and Sri Lanka were governed by a Cooperation and Partnership Agreement since 1995, while Sri Lanka has been benefiting from the EU Generalized System of Preferences (GSP+) since 2005. However, the withdrawal of the GSP+ facility by the European Union in 2010 on grounds of the government's failure to implement International Labour Organisation (ILO) and human rights conventions, seriously affected the apparel industries (Frerks, 2016). Currently negotiations are ongoing on the renewal of the GSP+ facility for the country.

## 2.2 Context matters

The particular characteristics of national contexts matter a great deal in the development and implementation of EU policies and each national context poses a unique set of problems and challenges to the EU. Below we explore how the different political and conflict contexts influence the room to manoeuvre of the EU, discussing several challenges of working in (post-) conflict areas. It starts with a discussion of working in contexts where war is ongoing, or where violence can (re-) escalate. It moves on with the challenges that different types of state weakness and deeply divided societies pose to the objectives to work inclusively and

comprehensively. Finally, the specific challenges of international coordination and of EU-coherence in different national contexts are addressed.

### 2.2.1 Working in unstable contexts and adapting to conflict dynamics.

While the EU interventions in the countries and desk studies all aim to contribute to prevent further escalation of conflicts, or to build structures that help foster peace, the room to manoeuvre of international actors in national contexts is largely influenced by the intensity of the conflict at the time of these interventions. The risks and challenges in contexts where war is still ongoing, like Afghanistan, Mali or Ukraine, are quite different from the ones where violent conflict has been brought to an end, like Kosovo or Georgia. However, conflicts are not static and in most of the countries under study the EU was confronted with violent (re-) escalation at some point in the conflict: Yemen (2013), Mali (2012), Honduras (2009), Ukraine (2013), Georgia (2008), Sri Lanka (2007). In Afghanistan the war never came to an end after 2001, but has intensified over the past decade. In the other cases violence and insecurity remained widespread (Guatemala), while in Kosovo tensions with Serbia were still alive, and a sizeable military NATO deployment of 4600 staff was still in place by March 2016.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, activities related to civilian peacebuilding can be expected to be more effective in stable contexts, so how did the EU deal with escalation of violence or continuing insecurity?

In two countries military international interventions leading to regime change were the reason for the EU to become involved: Afghanistan and Kosovo. In Afghanistan, an international coalition toppled the Taliban regime in 2001 and the EU became involved in the stabilization and rebuilding of a new state. Soon, it became clear that the violence had not ended, and the EU found itself contributing to peace and state building in the midst of war. In the case of Kosovo, a NATO-led international bombing campaign forced the Serbian army and government to leave the province in 1999, and the EU agreed to coordinate the economic reconstruction of the country. Over time the EU stepped up its involvement and became the lead actor in the period after Kosovo's independence. Both in Kosovo and Afghanistan, the EU was confronted with the backlash of military intervention leading to regime change, culminating in a contested legitimacy of international military and civilian missions. In these cases there is not even a basic agreement between warring parties about reconstruction processes, and the efforts to build states, including the development of new political architectures as well as the very presence of international actors, were resisted throughout much of the period of reconstruction. While in these cases the military capabilities of the EU to stop violence were limited, in its civilian actions the EU was able to deal with different parties to the conflict at different levels (national and local). In the case of Kosovo, where tensions remained high, but where violence did not flare up again, the EU plays an increasingly prominent role in addressing tensions and looking for sustainable solutions. Although progress has been slow and the interventions of the EU (in particular the EULEX mission) have been subjected to critique, the EU shows the capacity to deal with and adapt to the multiple challenges in these contexts.

There is an obvious need for flexibility given the conflict and post-conflict dynamics, the ever-changing (political) contexts and their impact on programming. This requires the capability

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<sup>8</sup> See NATO's role in Kosovo, at <http://jfcnaples.nato.int/kfor/about-us/welcome-to-kfor/natos-role-in-kosovo> (visited on 2 April 2017).

to adapt goals and objectives, programming, implementation modalities and timing in an overall administrative structure which is often bureaucratic and rule-based, focused as it is on accountability. This is a difficult path to tread. The EU is sometimes perceived as rather rigid, but the cases show that it, nevertheless, has a certain capacity to adapt to changing contexts.

In a number of cases (re-)escalation led to a termination of the projects of the EU. In the case of Honduras the EU postponed its PASS programme when confronted with a coup d'état and it sought to redefine the programme when the situation had somewhat stabilized. In the case of Yemen the peace process unraveled and in the face of a new round of escalation the EU stopped its programme, while EU staff left the country and relocated in Jordan (just like a large number of national politicians). In Sri Lanka the Rajapakse government that assumed office in 2005, revoked the Cease Fire Agreement between the Sri Lankan government and the rebel movement Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and opted for a military approach, eventually defeating the LTTE. The international community – including the EU, who had played a role in the peace process – increasingly lost traction with the Sri Lankan government that had become hostile towards the western international community.

In the cases of Georgia and Ukraine the EU adapted its policies as a result of (re-)escalation of the conflicts. As discussed in section 2.1.1, in Ukraine the EU deployed a new CSDP mission, was involved in the initiation of talks between the parties (Geneva talks), and with funds from IcSP decentralisation programmes were funded. However, the case of Ukraine shows that the EU was cautious not to become (too deeply) involved in the political crisis with Russia. A similar situation exists in Georgia, where the EU stepped up its peacebuilding programmes after the war in August 2008. While local stakeholders consider the presence of the EU to be of great strategic importance (e.g. in recognizing the territorial integrity of Georgia), the EU is not seen as a very influential, or a unitary international player. The limitations of the EU in Ukraine and Georgia reveal that the legitimacy of the EU-project itself is part of the contestations and conflicts in these countries, and that the EU takes a very careful approach vis-à-vis these conflicts.

The discussion above shows that the EU was confronted with diverse conflict dynamics in national contexts, while escalation led to different responses that were highly context specific. Overall, the EU showed mixed capacity to respond to processes of escalation. It is important to note that the nature of the response was not simply the result of the conflict dynamics on the ground, but also of the prior involvement in the country by the EU. While in some countries international intervention of other actors was the reason that the EU became involved (Afghanistan), in other countries the EU had a history of working on development issues and was confronted with destabilisation and war to which it responded (Mali, Yemen). In these latter countries the EU showed an ability to use insights and common practices in development cooperation (involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, including underrepresented groups) in its conflict prevention and peace building work. It was also well placed to link this type of work with development agendas.



### 2.2.2 Dealing with state weakness and adverse contexts.

State weakness is generally seen as both a cause and a consequence of intrastate war and international actors have increasingly argued that their core task should be state building. This view has been challenged from different angles. Firstly, instead of simply focusing on the state, policy definitions of fragility take a more holistic approach, including a range of weakness and vulnerabilities in different spheres (OECD, 2016: 24). This broader interpretation about the interconnectedness of problems in different societal spheres ties in with the EU's emphasis on the need for a comprehensive approach. Secondly, the concept of the state itself has been challenged as being too simplistic. Instead, the idea of a 'hybrid political order' has been coined, pointing at the 'diverse and competing claims to power and logics of order that overlap and intertwine' (Boege et al., 2009, 24). This concept emphasises the complexities of political power and political processes in non-Western contexts and that an understanding of state power should take into account its relations with other societal 'power poles' and recognize that the boundary between state and society is elusive (Hagmann and Péclard, 2010: 542-3). This latter point is not yet sufficiently recognized by the EU and not reflected in practical operations. The EU still departs from the assumption that state power needs to be strengthened and that state elites and civil society actors should be involved in this process. The evidence presented in the country and desk studies shows, however, that the EU is not simply confronted with weak state power, but with different forms of authority and domination, as well as different ideas about the architecture of the state and with resistance and hostility against the state building efforts. While the construction of a unified authority requires inclusion of a broad range of actors, these may represent opposing views of the future of the state and the nature of a 'social contract'.

Overall, the EU shows a good capacity to work in weak states and adverse contexts and to deal with the multiple challenges in these contexts. These challenges are more serious in states with a low capacity to govern throughout its territory and that are seriously challenged (albeit in different degrees) by subnational actors – like Afghanistan, Mali and Yemen. In these cases the very process of establishing state power throughout the territory is historically hampered and extremely problematic. Building states is particularly challenging since national governments are confronted with and relate in complex ways to a myriad of both armed and unarmed non-state actors. While international actors – including the EU – continue to promote state building in states like Mali and Afghanistan, the academic literature has generally been critical about the prospects to do so (see for Mali Charbonneau and Sears, 2014; for Afghanistan Suhrke, 2013).

The studies conducted in the framework of this project also point at the numerous problems encountered in contexts of state weakness. The desk study of Afghanistan addresses some of the intended and unintended consequences of EU support for state building (Dirkx, 2017). While it is fair to say that the EU contributed to the strengthening of some of the state structures, Dirkx points at the limited outcome of the police mission in Afghanistan, as well as the adverse effects of pouring billions of dollars in state institutions. In the face of the deficient oversight of these funds it unintendedly contributed to corruption, a phenomenon that the EU increasingly wants to address. The country study of Mali points to the fact that, for quite some time, Mali was actually seen as an example for the region. Together with international partners, including significant support from the EU and EU Member States, from the early 1990s onwards Mali had garnered a position at the forefront of good governance and decentralisation

efforts in Africa. The authors of the report argue that it would be too simplistic to suggest that the current crisis reflects the ultimate failure of those efforts, but that it is important to acknowledge that previous efforts were unable to create a strong Malian state in all of the country's territory, and that decentralisation efforts were also not completely successful, neither in consolidating socio-economic development, nor in overcoming separatism and minority group grievances. In hindsight, it is also clear that the institutional weaknesses of the Malian Armed Forces and other security forces were insufficiently addressed, which resulted in a state that proved ill-equipped to deal with growing security challenges and with the changing geopolitical circumstances of the Sahel region (Djiré et al, 2016). The case of Yemen is a sobering account of the failed efforts to bring together a large range of national stakeholders with a view to building a political order that would be acceptable to all (Eshaq et al, 2016).

The cases of Afghanistan, Yemen and Mali show that a context of state weakness poses enormous challenges to the EU. With regard to ownership, the fragmentation of power may seriously hamper efforts to reach consensus between a broad range of stakeholders. The multiple and interrelated challenges that these countries face in the field of development, security, and governance reinforce one another and can be simply too big to address in the short and medium term for international actors. This does not imply that nothing can be done, but rather that moving forward in these complex political contexts is likely to be a long road. As will be discussed in chapter 5, a better understanding of the complexities of state-society relations at local and national levels may improve such interventions.

While the other countries discussed in the study have stronger states, the EU also encountered considerable problems in its efforts to strengthen state institutions. In many cases, dealing with state elites proved to be quite problematic. In the cases of Guatemala, Honduras and Kosovo the EU worked in an 'adverse context' and was confronted with resistance to envisaged reforms of the security and justice sectors. This resistance was partly the result of the infiltration of criminal interests in several government agencies, and the efforts to block reform. The consequences on country ownership were dramatic. In the case of the PASS programme in Honduras a sense of ownership was virtually absent and there was no one the EU could align with (van der Borgh, 2016). In the case of Guatemala, international supporters of the CICIG had to cooperate with the very elites that CICIG was investigating. Despite the successes of CICIG (high level government officials, including a former president and vice-president were brought to justice) the prospects for longer term capacity building and reform continue to be problematic (Schloss, 2015, in van der Borgh 2016). The efforts of the EULEX mission in Kosovo to reform the judicial sector and to 'stamp out corruption' proved particularly difficult. While this was the result of several factors, such as the problems of building a mission structure and the lack of European consensus about the status of Kosovo, the dependence of the EU and other international actors on national leaders that themselves were being accused of criminal activities was particularly problematic. In this regard, these cases reveal fundamental problems of reform and ownership. Firstly, counterparts may not have a genuine interest in the proposed reforms. Secondly, external actors may have to match their reform agenda with other policy agendas (stability) or needs (continued cooperation of local elites) for which they have to assume a more pragmatic attitude (van der Borgh et al, 2016: 78).

These findings only reinforce the call for an adequate understanding of the multiple challenges and dilemmas of state building and peacebuilding operations. In this regard, Barnett and Zurcher (2009: 24) emphasize the negotiated nature of interventions and argue that the

objectives and interests of the key actors involved in these transitions – state elites, subnational elites, and national and international peacebuilders – are fundamentally different. Thus, local actors do not simply give up control over political power, making peacebuilding a process of negotiation between them and their international counterparts.

### 2.2.3 Working in deeply divided societies.

While the EU adheres to a comprehensive approach and aims to relate to a wide range of actors in its interventions, the enduring tensions in society and fragmentation along ethnic, religious or political lines can seriously hamper this objective. In all the countries included in this project, divisions between groups were hard to overcome. This was for instance the case with those resisting and supporting the coup d'état in Honduras, or the ongoing war between the Taliban and the Afghani state. In a considerable number of countries ethno-political conflict led to a hardening of boundaries between groups, which also had a clear territorial dimension: Kosovo (Serbian majority area in the north and in enclaves), Georgia (the breakaway states), Ukraine (Eastern parts), Yemen (several parts), and Mali (the north). Sri Lanka (the North) is also a case in point, where the EU dealt with the negative consequences of a 'victor's peace' for the Tamil population. In the other countries the continuing contestation about the form of political institutions seriously hampers vertical legitimacy (the rightfulness of the state) and horizontal legitimacy (the attitudes and practices of individuals and groups within the state towards each other') (Holsti, 2004: 88). In many cases the further erosion of horizontal legitimacy leads to people withdrawing loyalty from the state and its institutions and looking for other political arrangements (ibid). Indeed, externally supported democratisation and institution building are supposed to deal with these differences, as well as programmes that seek to foster cooperation and reconciliation between different groups. But the challenge to overcome these differences is often daunting, and in some cases international intervention can even harden boundaries, or reinforce tensions.

The above has consequences for the form and shape of local civil societies in deeply-divided societies, which can still be highly polarized and politicized (Belloni, 2009; Paffenholz et al, 2010). The country and desk studies included in this project did not systematically analyze the role played by civil society actors, but there is little doubt that the conflict often affected the stances of grassroots organisations and NGOs. For example, after the coup d'état in Honduras, civil society was divided between groups in favour and against the coup (van der Borgh, 2016). In addition, there often exist multiple tensions between different (mostly urban) NGOs that can be of a more personal or political nature (van der Borgh and Terwindt, 2014: ch.5). The capacity of the EU to deal with and include different civil society groups varies greatly. In the case of the Honduran security and justice programme, the cooperation of civil society was not factored in, this was recognized at a later stage (van der Borgh, 2016). In the case of Yemen, the EU pushed for the involvement of youth and women (underrepresented groups in the context of Yemen) in the peace process. The latter is quite surprising as it was in one of the most difficult national contexts that the EU was willing to work in a more inclusive and innovative way. This may be the result of the EU having a background in development work, where inclusion of such groups is emphasized and much more common. This stood in stark contrast to the facilitation of the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, a process led by the EU, where civil society was not involved or consulted.

All in all, the divisions, tensions and fragmentation that continues in many of the countries where the EU intervenes, limits the possibilities to include a broad and representative range of actors. In deeply divided and fragmented societies the ideal to bridge all the existing divides may seem a bridge too far. However, it is fair to say that precisely in deeply divided societies a greater degree of inclusivity of interventions will probably imply greater acceptance and better chances for success. In this regard, the very diverse experiences of the EU in terms of including relevant stakeholders, gives reason for some optimism. In some cases the EU displayed a far greater capacity to include a range of stakeholders, or simply to involve underrepresented groups than in other cases. This was even the case in countries that can be considered extremely adverse contexts.

#### 2.2.4 Challenges of international coordination in national contexts

From the country and desk studies it becomes clear that the realities of and prospects for international coordination not only depend on the constellation of actors *per policy area* (see the discussion in the next chapter) but also on the constellation of actors *per country*. As MacGinty and Williams (2009: 70) have noted, the presence of the international community in national contexts consists of 'a constantly changing mix of states, international organisations, INGOs, NGOs and private sector interests which coalesce and re-coalesce at different times on different issues'. The process of agenda setting of the international presence can therefore be rather ad hoc, with UN resolutions, (peace) agreements, donor conferences, and a whole range of other considerations and interests playing a role. In most situations, the EU seems to be well aware of its limited leverage, while it is able and willing to discuss its role with other actors and to carve out a role for itself. In this regard, the fact that the EU has a broad range of policy tools at its disposal should be seen as an advantage.

In many national contexts, the interventions and responses of the 'international community' have a profound impact on the ensuing processes of reconstruction and political developments. Thus, the EU not only needs to find its way in national contexts, but it also needs to relate to forms and networks of international involvement that have developed over time and which are the outcome of countless interactions and negotiations between international actors. In a number of cases the international presence is in trouble. Afghanistan is a case in point. The political situation is extremely complex and not very encouraging with regard to the prospects of state building. State building nevertheless remains a key objective of the strategy of the international community, and the capacity (and willingness) to rethink the options of the international presence seems to be limited. However, the question of what a realistic strategy might look like is a very urgent one.

As discussed in section 2.2.2, the problems in Afghanistan are partly the result of the lack of national consensus and the problems of political reconstruction after an international military coalition toppled the Taliban government. There are other places where the EU is confronted with these kinds of problems related to military intervention. The EU endorsed the French military intervention in Mali (2012, on the request of the Malian government) and developed new policies in the support of peace- and state-building (inter alia EUTM and EUCAP). By doing so it became involved in an extremely complex process of ongoing negotiations and conflicts about the form and shape of the Malian state. The instability

throughout Mali's territory is unlikely to end any time soon.<sup>9</sup> The case of Kosovo is another example of how the EU became part of an international coalition that got deeply involved in the debates and conflict about the political architecture of the country. The challenges faced by the EULEX mission are not only the result of the limitations of the mission itself, but also of the failed efforts of international actors during previous phases of international involvement. Hence, not only the particular constellation of intervening actors is relevant to the room to manoeuvre of the EU, but also the histories of intervening actors in previous phases of international involvement can deeply influence it.

The EU has faced increasing opposition from Russia against its closer ties to countries in Eastern Europe (including association agreements). Although the relevant country and desk studies only partially address the EU's diplomatic efforts vis-à-vis Russia, it is clear that the relationship with Russia remains highly problematic and that pressures from Russia have influenced the scope of action of the EU in Kosovo, Georgia and in particular in Ukraine. In the case of Ukraine the association agreement caused a national and international crisis after President Viktor Yanukovich – at a very late stage – rejected the association agreement and opted for the Russian Customs Union instead. This happened after Russia had put considerable pressure on Ukraine. It seems the EU had insufficiently factored in the resistance of Russia against the association agreement and was taken by surprise by the dramatic developments that followed (the occupation of Crimea and the intervention in two Donbas breakaway entities). However, the Russian opposition was not so new and can be related to the Russian perceptions of how its strategic interests are affected by EU enlargement. In this regard, the unilateral declaration of Kosovo (supported by the US and the majority of European states) in 2008 was rejected by Russia and it is widely believed that Russia's aggression in Georgia and its support for the declarations of independence of Georgia's breakaway republics were related, and a reaction to the support for Kosovo's independence (Sampath Kumar, 2008). Thus, it is hard to see the conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine in isolation from this clash between the European project and Russia's proclaimed 'privileged interests' in the region.<sup>10</sup> In the case of Ukraine, the EU showed a limited capability to anticipate and deal with the Russian interests and perceptions of the European project.

Consequently, the instruments of the EU to help manage or resolve the local conflicts in Ukraine and Georgia should be understood in the broader geopolitical context. In both cases, the EU keeps a low profile and it can be questioned whether the EU has the capacity to resolve the conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine. In Georgia, most stakeholders view the EU as neither an influential, nor a unitary international player in the power politics in Georgia, particularly when confronting Russia. Yet, the EU's firm support for Georgia's territorial integrity and non-recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia is vital for the country's diplomatic efforts to resolve these conflicts and its fragile relationship with Russia. In Ukraine the EU took a very careful approach with regard to the conflict with Russia, with Ukrainian supporters of EU association

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<sup>9</sup> 'The Sahel: Mali's Crumbling Peace Process and the Spreading Jihadist Threat', International Crisis Group, Commentary, 1 March 2017, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/mali/sahel-malis-crumbling-peace-process-and-spreading-jihadist-threat> (accessed 12 April 2017).

<sup>10</sup> 'Ukraine: Military Deadlock, Political Crisis', International Crisis Group, Briefing No. 85, 16 December 2016, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/eastern-europe/ukraine/b85-ukraine-military-deadlock-political-crisis> (accessed 12 April 2017).

hoping for a deeper and more determined EU involvement while criticizing the lack of resolve of the EU.

## 2.3 Concluding remarks

In the previous sections the importance of the political context on EU interventions in the field of conflict preventions and peace building were discussed. From this discussion it becomes clear that it is hard to make a clear distinction between local, national, regional, and international levels, and that these levels are in practice strongly intertwined. For example, international coordination takes place in (relation to) national contexts, while local conflict regions can become the theatres where the conflicting national, regional and international positions on the resolution of conflict play out; the North of Kosovo and Mali, the breakaway republics in Georgia, and the East of Ukraine being cases in point. Section 2.2 identified and discussed four contextual dimensions that deeply influence the room to manoeuvre of the EU and which have to be taken into account when enhancing capabilities from a WOS perspective. Firstly, the composition of the international presence, and the history of the international presence in a particular country was mentioned. What does the international presence look like? Who are the lead actors? Has the EU a leading or coordinating role compared to Member States' missions? How and why did an international constellation start (after a military intervention, or a peace agreement)? How did the intervention evolve? Secondly, the geopolitical context of intervention is quite important. In all settings the EU has to relate to the agendas and interests of other actors. In this regard the situation in the east of Europe is most complex, since the EU is confronted with Russian resistance against its increasing role, which influences the type of conflict prevention and peace building interventions that the EU is willing to support. Thirdly, the relations with political and state elites are in many cases ambiguous. National elites may oppose reforms that are deemed necessary by international actors. In this regard, the cases revealed fundamental problems of governance reform and ownership: counterparts of governance programmes may not have a genuine interest in the proposed reforms and external actors may need to cooperate with the very local elites that were complicit in war crimes or corruption cases they have to fight. Fourthly, the divisions, tensions and fragmentation that continue in many of the countries where the EU intervenes, seriously hamper the ability to include a broad and representative range of actors of the EU.

## 3. Clusters: Multi-Track Diplomacy, Governance Reform, and Security Sector Reform

This chapter provides an overview of the findings per cluster on EU interventions in the fields of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, addressing the clusters of Multi-Track Diplomacy (MTD), Governance Reform (GOV), and Security Sector Reform (SSR). Even though these clusters do not offer an all-encompassing account of EU external action, they represent quintessential areas of EU engagement in conflict- and post-conflict countries. The chapter draws on evidence from Ukraine, Georgia, Mali, Yemen, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Guatemala, Honduras, and Sri Lanka.

### 3.1 Multi-Track Diplomacy

The first cluster that is discussed are the EU's efforts in terms of Multi-Track Diplomacy. After a brief introduction of the concept itself and the EU's approach to Multi-Track Diplomacy, the most important findings will be presented as well as opportunities for the EU to advance its MTD efforts. The specific EU interventions within this cluster that this chapter draws on are the Normandy format in Ukraine, the Geneva Discussion and COBERM in Georgia, EU diplomacy in Mali, the National dialogue in Yemen, the EU dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, the role of the EU Special Representative in Afghanistan, and EU diplomacy in Sri Lanka.

#### 3.1.1 Conceptualising Multi-Track Diplomacy

The concept of Multi-Track Diplomacy was first coined by Diamond and McDonald (1993) to 'depict the interconnected activities, individuals, and institutions that cooperate to prevent or resolve conflicts peacefully, primarily through (direct or mediated) dialogue and negotiation' (in Dudouet and Göldner-Ebenthal, 2017: 6). The term focuses on the relations between different actors within a given society, and emphasises that these multiple levels can be addressed simultaneously in an interconnected fashion. Lederach (1997) distinguishes three 'tracks' to classify these different levels.

- **Track I** refers to official discussions between high-level governmental and military leaders focusing on ceasefires, peace talks, treaties and other agreements. Often associated with power-based, deal-brokering diplomacy by external mediators. Track I peace processes are typically limited to a small number of national stakeholders. While the participation of armed groups and other potential spoilers is justified by the need to ensure the sustainability of the resulting agreements, other segments of society tend to be excluded from such processes (Dudouet and Lundström, 2016).
- **Track II** refers to unofficial dialogue and problem-solving activities aimed at building relationships between civil society leaders and influential individuals that have the ability to impact on Track I dynamics through lobbying, advocacy or consultation channels (and who are sometimes, although rarely, invited to participate in official and formal negotiations). When government representatives take part in non-governmental,

informal dialogue, this is referred to as 'Track 1.5' (Allen-Nan, 2005; Berghof Foundation, 2012).

- **Track III**, finally, consists in people-to-people interactions at the grassroots level to encourage interaction and understanding between communities through meetings, media exposure, and political and legal advocacy for marginalised people and communities (EPLD, 2013).

The combination of tracks in Multi-Track Diplomacy thus reflects the assumption that international actors need to engage with, and support actors beyond the core parties to a conflict (government and rebel movements), including, amongst others, religious leaders, youth, women groups, civil society, and marginalised communities. The rationale is that when efforts at these different levels are well coordinated and mutually reinforcing each other, it increases the chances of a durable peace (Dudouet and Göldner-Ebenthal 2017: 6-7).

When Multi-Track Diplomacy is approached from a Whole-of-Society perspective, a distinction can be made between, a horizontal axis, a vertical axis and, in addition, a temporal axis.<sup>11</sup> As discussed in chapter 1 of this report, the horizontal axis refers to internal coherence of different MTD efforts. It thereby focuses on the links between different policy domains, instruments, and actors to deliver effective peacebuilding support. This includes both coherence within international organisations, such as the EU and the UN, as well as coherence between these actors and other non-governmental, national, and international organisations involved in MTD. The vertical axis refers to the coordination between the different tracks of MTD, and emphasises the need for an inclusive approach that addresses and leverages the potential for complementarity between the elite level, unofficial dialogues, and support for marginalised groups (Dudouet and Göldner-Ebenthal, 2017: 7-8). The temporal axis refers to a proactive and long-term approach to mediation and dialogue support. It emphasises the needs of early warning and early action to prevent an escalation or relapse of violence.

### 3.1.2 The EU's approach to Multi-Track Diplomacy

Given the history of the EU as a 'peace project', and its often cited use of so-called 'soft power', fostering peace and preventing conflicts through diplomacy is an important part of the Union's foreign policy (Dudouet and Göldner-Ebenthal, 2017: 2). The 'Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities', which was endorsed by the EU Council in November 2009, is the primary policy text that sets out the EU's approach to Multi-Track Diplomacy. It frames European diplomacy, including EU mediation and dialogue facilitation, as the focal point of international efforts to prevent and resolve armed conflicts through negotiated settlements (Dudouet and Göldner-Ebenthal, 2017: 4). The EU asserts that it is seen as 'a credible and ethical actor in situations of instability and conflict', which would make it 'well placed to mediate, facilitate or support mediation and dialogue processes' (Council of the EU, 2009: 2).

The EU's presence on the ground through its EU Delegations and in some cases EU Special Representatives play important roles in working towards the ambitious objective of

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<sup>11</sup> This distinction is based on the 2009 EU Concept on mediation and dialogue (Council of the EU, 2009: 2).



engaging in preventive diplomacy, and assisting in resolving armed conflicts. Yet, even though the EU has had a longstanding presence in all the researched countries, there are considerable differences between the timing, coherence, and types of diplomacy the EU has engaged in. The following section will tease out these differences as well as similarities between the researched countries.

### 3.1.3 Findings on EU Multi-Track Diplomacy

The general picture from the investigated MTD interventions is that in all cases there have been attempts to engage early and to use existing windows of opportunity such as a long-standing EU presence on the ground and existing dialogue frameworks to prevent violence from escalating or relapsing. These efforts have been hindered, however, by both internal and external constraints. The internal constraints have slowed down the deployment of adequate capacities to leverage such early action in a credible and sustained manner, while external constraints in the political and conflict context have affected the EU's space for diplomatic manoeuvring. Together, this complex interplay often results in seemingly ad-hoc interventions in practice. Based on an analysis of MTD efforts that are grounded in a Whole-of-Society perspective, as echoed in the 2009 EU Concept on mediation and dialogue, findings can be grouped into 1) proactive vs. reactive EU engagements, 2) horizontal coherence and integration, and 3) vertical inclusivity and multi-track coordination.

With regard to the proactive and reactive diplomatic engagements of the EU there is no clear pattern that has emerged, but there are some similarities between certain country contexts. In both Ukraine and Yemen the EU's diplomatic interventions showed some commitment to proactively try to prevent escalations of violence, but they were, nevertheless, unable to avoid a surge in armed conflict. The cases of Kosovo and Georgia show the EU sought to mediate in 'frozen conflicts' through elite negotiations at the governmental level, but in Mali the EU's MTD attempts were mostly reactive. From this rather diffuse set of engagements a common problem has been to adapt rapidly to evolutions in the situation on the ground. While in some cases there was political will to engage proactively (e.g. Ukraine and Yemen), the processes of internal decision making were slow, and adopting a common EU position often proved a strenuous task. As a consequence, early warnings have often not been met with early action. EU mediation and dialogue support hence, in practice, seem to function primarily as short-term crisis response instruments in conflict and post-conflict contexts.

The findings on horizontal coherence and integration refer to the EU's ambitions for a comprehensive approach to foreign policy, through coordinating the various instruments and actors at its disposal. The empirical findings in this regard indicate two dominant strategies of the EU. Firstly, there are examples of power-based mediation, consisting of direct mediation by EU officials (Kosovo and Georgia), indirect mediation through EU Member States (Ukraine), EU support to other international mediators (Mali, Yemen, Ukraine, and Sri Lanka), and efforts to promote peace through public diplomacy (Yemen, Mali, and Afghanistan). Secondly, there are examples of dialogue facilitation and support through confidence- or capacity building by EU officials in-country. EU Special Representatives have facilitated dialogues in or outside the public eye in, for example, Georgia, Mali, and Afghanistan. Their loosely defined mandates seem to provide considerable leeway to facilitate formal and informal dialogues. EU delegations may also play an important role in facilitating a dialogue between conflict parties, as is illustrated by

the case of Yemen where, until the 2015 crisis, EU in-country officials had been facilitating meetings and events with various stakeholders to create an informal setting for the exchange of views and demands (Dudouet and Göldner-Ebenthal, 2017: 17). In cases where EU officials lack sufficient knowledge of the conflict, the actors, and the power dynamics, they may rely on the European External Action Service (EEAS) Mediation Support Team, which provides technical dialogue support. For example, in the cases of Mali, Ukraine, and Yemen their support was used by in-country EU officials. Together, the findings on horizontal coherence and integration vary greatly, but some trends can nevertheless be identified. Actors such as the HR/VP or important Member States such as Germany and France are most likely to lead power-based mediation efforts that rely on positive or negative leverage as the primary component of MTD. In-country EU officials of EU Delegations, EU Special Representatives, and CSDP mission staff are more likely to engage in informal dialogues, and use their expertise, local outreach, and (in some cases) perceived impartiality.

The gathered evidence on vertical inclusivity encompasses an assessment of the EU's coordination of its dialogue and mediation efforts between different tracks (I, II and III). Firstly, this reveals that in the cases of Ukraine, Georgia, and Kosovo, the EU was engaged in top-down peace processes by supporting elite bargains. In Ukraine, the diplomatic efforts of Germany and France have refrained from including civil society actors and representatives from the Eastern 'rebel-held' territories, and in the case of Kosovo the EU did not provide opportunities to give a voice to those most affected by the decisions taken in the Pristina-Belgrade dialogue process: the people living in northern Kosovo. Also, in the Georgian case the EU's efforts as part of the Geneva International Discussions have been solely focused on the elite level. Overall, these three examples demonstrate a lack of including non-state or informal stakeholders that are seen as having no 'legitimate' mandates as well as broader segments of society, either directly at the negotiation table or indirectly through consultations and information sharing. Secondly, in other cases such as Yemen and Mali the EU did engage with non-state actors. In Yemen, the EU has maintained regular contact and dialogue with the Houthis and the Southern Movement, and in Mali EU officials have pressured armed opposition groups in order to accelerate the negotiation process. Within these countries the EU also supported the inclusion of civil society groups in dialogue processes, including youth and women's groups. Thirdly, the EU has funded local and international initiatives directed at Track II and III mediation and dialogue in, for example, Georgia, Mali, Yemen, and Sri Lanka through the IcSP and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) (Dudouet and Göldner-Ebenthal 2017: 18-21). Such discrepancies in the EU's capacity to apply the norm of vertical inclusivity across various contexts of intervention are influenced by various internal and external constraints and opportunities. The personality, experience and expertise of key in-country officials condition their degree of proactive engagement with relevant stakeholders beyond state officials. Interventions by the EEAS Mediation Support Team (e.g. by providing expert support) also seem to influence the range of multi-track channels supported by EU staff in the various case study countries, and their awareness of the benefits of inclusive dialogue. External factors influencing EU capacities for promoting participatory peace processes include the capacity and political will of primary conflict stakeholders to adopt Whole-of-Society approaches in negotiations, and especially their readiness or resistance to allow civil society participation in political bargaining processes.

## 3.2 Governance Reform

The second set of EU interventions that have been analysed comprise the cluster of Governance Reform. Subsequently, the concept will be introduced, the EU's approach to Governance Reform will be explained, and the most important findings of the case studies and desk studies will be presented. The specific EU interventions within the Governance Reform cluster that this chapter draws on are decentralisation efforts in Ukraine, PARADDER, State-building contract, PAOSC I and II in Mali, the EULEX Mission in Kosovo, CICIG in Guatemala, PASS in Honduras, and governance and development efforts in Sri Lanka.

### 3.2.1 Conceptualising Governance Reform

Definitions of governance in both academia and among policy makers vary widely and are subject to heated debates. Two angles are particularly relevant in terms of the EU's efforts in the fields of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Firstly, there is the approach of international actors such as the OECD, the World Bank, and the UN, which are often geared towards state-centric and technocratic ways of mainstreaming good governance principles. They often pay little attention to local needs linked to culture, history, and norms. The second strand of approaches refers to a broader interpretation of governance that includes more segments of society. Governance reform from this latter perspective can be defined as 'any coordinated action or initiative that aims to strengthen inclusive governance structures, processes, and outcomes by increasing their accessibility, representativeness, and responsiveness to all segments of society' (Lundström and Dressler, 2016: 2). This approach thus has a stronger focus on inclusivity, similar to the track III initiatives discussed in the Multi-Track Diplomacy cluster.

A Whole-of-Society perspective on governance reform furthermore draws attention to vertical and horizontal inclusivity. The vertical axis refers to multiple actors, stakeholders, and levels of action, while the horizontal axis draws attention to the different policy domains related to governance, such as security, development, and human rights. Together, these two axes constitute a point of reference to analyse Governance Reform from a Whole-of-Society perspective (Dressler and Lundström, 2017: 6).

### 3.2.2 The EU's approach to Governance Reform

Since the early 2000s the EU has put governance reform high on the agenda of its foreign policy. In light of increasingly becoming an actor in the field of conflict prevention, it has leveraged governance reform initiatives as a tool in conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. So far the general evaluations and assessments of the EU's support to governance reform have shown mixed results. Despite this mixed empirical evidence and some knowledge gaps on the decentralisation-peacebuilding nexus, the EU is currently supporting a number of such reforms in states both in its neighbourhood and beyond, for example in Ukraine, Mali, Kosovo, Sri Lanka, Guatemala, and Honduras. After the annexation of Crimea by Russia the ongoing decentralisation process in Ukraine, for example, became a major focus for the EU's engagement in Ukraine (Dressler and Lundström, 2017: 2).

### 3.2.3 Findings on EU Governance Reform

In the EU's efforts to improve governance in the countries studied we see a number of relevant programmes and activities. There has been a series of efforts to steer countries to better governance by expressing concern and asking attention for topics like the rule of law, respect for human rights, abolishing states of emergency, fights against corruption etc., which all could be subsumed under governance as well as contain aspects of MTD. In many cases these initiatives remained, in first instance, declaratory, and understandably showed a mixed record in terms of success and impact, but in other instances they were followed up by concrete activities and programmes in these areas. These concrete initiatives covered a wide variety of relevant themes, generally based on needs *in situ*, but also sometimes driven by an international agenda or a combination of both, which was one determinant affecting levels of local ownership and effectiveness. Areas covered in the cases studied concerned support to state-building (Mali), decentralisation (Mali, Ukraine), institutional reform (Mali), support to the justice sector and strengthening the rule of law (Kosovo, Guatemala, Honduras), human rights (Sri Lanka), democratic transitions (Mali, Sri Lanka), conflict transformation (Georgia), civil society support (Mali, Georgia, Sri Lanka), the functioning of (local) social services and also initiatives to foster post-conflict economic development (Mali, Sri Lanka), and reconciliation (Mali). This extensive, but not exhaustive list already indicates that the EU has a large variety of programmes and instruments at its disposal that, in principle, form a suitable repository to craft and tailor activities according to local needs and requirements (van der Borgh and Frerks, 2016: 42).

Nonetheless, in practice, these programmes have shown a mixed record. Some faced setbacks and problems (Mali), and even sometimes created local resistance or indifference (Honduras and Kosovo), but others were more successful and adept at playing a flexible role in charged contexts with a multitude of actors and diverging local and international interests. The decision or threat to withhold support to a country can also be an effective instrument to pressurize a government. This happened in Mali where the withdrawal of EU support arguably helped facilitate the democratic transition which was further concretized during the International Donor Conference on Mali in Brussels. In Sri Lanka the donor community tried to influence the conflict parties by promising US\$ 4.5 billion to stimulate them to engage in the peace process, but this failed to produce tangible results (Van der Borgh and Frerks, 2016: 42).

While the gathered evidence on EU interventions in the cluster of governance reform suggests a high diversity in the implemented programmes, some interesting observations can be made. Firstly, in the cluster of governance reform there were a number of examples of the successful cooperation of the EU with other international actors, which might serve as inspiration for other cases. It is interesting to note that the EU worked together with these other actors in different contexts and in different subfields of governance reform (rule of law and impunity in Guatemala, support for the peace process and development in Sri Lanka, and decentralisation support in Ukraine). The positive synergy created resulted in a multiplier effect in terms of impact and funding, while sometimes heightening the leverage of the international community on local partners. For example, in Ukraine the IcSP has relied on partnerships with UN Women and UNDP. The Guatemalan case of the CICIG programme shows the teaming up of a broad range of international actors including the EU, which created political and financial leverage over the Guatemalan government. In other cases, such as Sri Lanka, this cooperation between international donors was seen as 'ganging up', which led the Sri Lankan President

Rajapakse to turn his back on Western donors when they became too critical in his eyes. As a consequence, the EU and other Western donors almost lost all their leverage over the government during the Rajapakse presidency (van der Borgh and Frerks, 2016: 44).

A second set of findings relates to the fact that the EU had to deal with national political actors who resisted (part of) the proposed reforms which touched upon vested interests. The cases of Kosovo, Guatemala, and Honduras show that in the field of rule of law reform, the interests of national actors do not necessarily align with the envisioned objectives of the EU related to reforming governance structures. This can lead to uneasy partnerships, with the EU having to deal with political objectives that diverge from the EU's aims. In these contexts national 'owners' of the intervention had different interests and 'routines' that were not, or only partly aligned, with the reform that was promoted by the EU. These tensions point to struggles related to local initiative and ownership (van der Borgh and Frerks, 2016: 45). However, in all these cases, the EU showed an awareness of these issues and undertook efforts to deal with resistance, among others, by looking for new ways (new programmes) to support reform within the governments.

### 3.3.2 EU support to decentralisation reform

Another set of findings from the governance cluster is related to the EU's peacebuilding oriented support to decentralisation reform. In light of increasingly becoming an actor in the field of conflict prevention and conflict resolution, the EU has more and more leveraged decentralisation – among other interventions – as a tool for peacebuilding. The motivations behind EU support for decentralisation related reforms have seemingly developed in parallel to global trends which led to an increasing number of decentralisation processes in developing countries, for example: the increasing participation of non-state actors in development; a paradigm change in development policies and economic liberalisation after the Cold War, and, finally, increased international concern to support state reforms and democratisation (Tidemand et al., 2012). The EU support to decentralisation processes was reinforced and interlinked with its new focus on good governance since the 2000s. So far, the general evaluations and assessments of the EU's support to decentralisation reform have shown mixed results at best, and disappointing results at worst (see example: Tidemand et.al, 2012).

The case of Ukraine was analysed in more detail to assess the potential of these reforms to contribute to peacebuilding and conflict prevention (Lundstrom and Dressler, 2016). It shows the sensitive and political nature of decentralisation reforms in (post-)conflict contexts, but also points at the potential that decentralisation reform can have in a peacebuilding context. The EU's most substantial involvement in supporting this process has come through the instruments of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP since 2003) and the Eastern Partnership Programme (since 2009). Currently the EU Ukraine Association Agenda to prepare and facilitate the implementation of the Association Agreement is central in outlining EU support (EU-Ukraine Association Council, 2015; EC, 2016).

After the Ukrainian conflict erupted, and with the start of the implementation of the Association Agreement, the EU's support for decentralisation intensified and also partly took on new, peacebuilding related, facets. The EU's engagement in the current processes of decentralisation in Ukraine has many different elements and has been supported through various channels (policy, funding, diplomatic engagement). It should be emphasised that

decentralisation is a sensitive and contested topic in Ukraine. Discourses around decentralisation reform in Ukraine are polarized along multiple lines, ranging from interpreting it as technical state reform of the centralised Ukrainian state, as a project which will lead to independence of rebel controlled regions and threaten Ukraine sovereignty, or as an important contribution to peacebuilding in Eastern regions of the country. In other words, reform efforts and their public perception have to be understood against the background of the armed conflict, Russia's geopolitical interest in Ukraine and the EU's broad security interest in its neighbourhood (Cross and Karolewski, 2017).

With regard to the EU's capabilities to address conflicts with decentralisation reform support in Ukraine, the IcSP funded action "Restoration of Governance and Reconciliation in Crisis affected Communities of Ukraine" is of particular interest. The project is being implemented by UNDP and UN Women in the government controlled areas closest to the contact line (Luhansk and Donetsk region). It is in this project that decentralisation reform support is built, most noticeably, on peacebuilding needs. Analysing the IcSP's contribution to decentralisation reform in Ukraine through a Whole-of-Society lens and looking at the EU's different capabilities (to fund, to act, and to coordinate and cooperate) helps to generate a set of interesting observations.

The EU has substantial capabilities to support decentralisation reforms from a Whole-of-Society peacebuilding perspective. In fact, in Ukraine, the EU has engaged in all the priority areas it had mentioned in its central policy documents on decentralisation reform, for example, by a) building its project on local and regional need assessments; b) aiming to improve the planning and service delivery capacities of local authorities; c) prepare communities for their new responsibilities; and d) work closely with the Ukrainian parliament and government on the policy dimension of decentralisation reform. The choice of a funding instrument designed to serve peace and stability for the above examined project shows that the EU does make the link between decentralisation and peacebuilding, not only in its policy documents, but also in practical support. More specifically, in Eastern Ukraine the IcSP met its objective of being flexible in terms of complementing other programmes which are more bound to strategic vision and programming objectives and which might need longer to set up a project. Regarding the EU's capability to act, the longstanding ground presence (by UNDP) and its relationship with the Ukrainian government (via the EU delegation) stand out for enabling the project to build upon local input (via development plans). Thus, the project is based on local needs and demands and manages to make local authorities the actual target group of the project. As to the capability to coordinate, the EU's support for decentralisation reform seems well coordinated and embedded within the endeavours of other international donors and states. Donor working groups and the EU's Support Group for Ukraine have played a vital role in that regard. However, shortcomings seem to exist in coordinating or cooperating with the national government on issues of outreach and transitions of power to the local authorities' level. Another potential constraining factor for the reform to succeed on the local level is that benefits of decentralisation might not materialize in a timely manner (e.g. fewer hospitals as part of amalgamation, but not an immediate increase in quality in the remaining ones). In addition, the (geo)political environment has been a big contextual factor regarding decentralisation reform support in Ukraine since the 2013 political crisis and has influenced the EU's capability to act in multiple ways.

## 3.3 Security Sector Reform

The third and final set of EU interventions that have been analysed are part of the cluster of Security Sector Reform. This paragraph briefly introduces the concept of SSR and the EU's approach to SSR. It then outlines the most important findings of the case studies and desk studies, and finally, it draws attention to opportunities for the EU to improve its SSR efforts. The evidence on EU SSR efforts stems from research on EUAM and EUBAM in Ukraine, EUMM in Georgia, EUTM and EUCAP in Mali, and the EUPOL Mission in Afghanistan.

### 3.3.1 The EU's approach to Security Sector Reform

The roots of the concept of Security Sector Reform can be traced back to the late 1990s. Rooted in the fields of security and development policy, the concept represents a movement towards a more coherent and comprehensive understanding of the 'security sector'. There are, however, different understandings of what the security sector entails and what activities it consists of. Furthermore, the label of SSR is often used interchangeably with the concepts of Security Sector Development (SSD), Security Sector Transformation, and Security and Justice Sector Reform (SJSR). Also within programmes labelled as SSR there is a wide variation.

The EU defines SSR as 'the process of transforming a country's security system so that it gradually provides individuals and the state with more effective and accountable security in a manner consistent with respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and the principles of good governance. SSR is a long-term and political process, as it goes to the heart of power relations in a country. It needs to be nationally driven and requires political commitment and leadership, inter-institutional cooperation and broad stakeholder participation to achieve the widest possible consensus' (EC, 2016:2). Only during the last decade, some EU missions have started getting explicit SSR labels. Since then, SSR has become a prominent tool in the EU's external intervention toolkit, exemplified by missions in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe. Up until now, the EU has launched 27 SSR related missions, and among the ongoing 17 CSDP missions, 14 have elements of SSR (Tardy, 2016:1). According to the European Union's Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EEAS- GSFSP 2016), and the preparatory documents related to the EU wide strategic framework for SSR<sup>12</sup> (EEAS-JC 2016), the EU has renewed its commitment to SSR.

### 3.3.2 Findings on EU Security Sector Reform

In the countries studied, the EU has carried out a significant number of SSR-related programmes and projects. Most of these missions are complex and involve several Member States and a variety of local, governmental and non-governmental agencies. The cases analysed included the EUAM mission to Ukraine, focusing on strategic consultation and coordinating

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<sup>12</sup> The EU wide strategic framework for SSR attempts to redress the incoherencies conceived during the practice of the two 'pillars' structure, divided between the Council and the Commission of the EU. Thus the recent attempts under the Joint Communication on an 'EU-wide strategic framework for SSR' targets bringing the CSDP and other relevant Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) tools under one umbrella as well as the development of co-operation instruments and freedom, security and justice actors.

donor support to civilian security sector reform, benefiting a whole range of security-related, non-military ministries and services. The EUBAM mission helped Ukraine and Moldova to improve their border management which was beset by mutual distrust due to the frozen conflict over Transnistria. In Georgia the EU launched the unarmed EUMM to reach stabilisation on the ground by monitoring compliance to the 2008 post-war agreements through the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism, among others. In Mali the EUTM contributes to the Malian army's restructuring and capacity building. The EUCAP mission provides advice and training to Mali's internal security forces: police, gendarmerie and National Guard. EUPOL, finally, has focused on the training of the Afghan police and is currently providing strategic advice to the Afghan Ministry of Interior (van der Borgh and Frerks, 2016: 42). It can be said the EU's efforts in SSR related activities were nearly all depending on a wide variety of Member States and local partners. This created mandate, coordination, funding and coherence issues. Moreover, these activities had to be done in difficult security conditions and weak institutional contexts. In view of this it is not surprising that results show a mixed record and diverging assessments of the EU's accomplishments related to SSR. On the basis of the diverse SSR missions, a number of conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, two important distinctions can be identified in terms of the activities deployed under the label of SSR. The first distinction relates to the content of SSR programmes. Overall, the EU-SSR shows a tendency towards applying the traditional, short term, "train and equip" approaches. This approach focuses on improving the technical capacity of security forces, and contrasts to the more long term "governance-development" approach, aiming to meet the range of security needs of these countries' societies, based on principles of, amongst others, transparency. Another distinction refers to the short and long term of SSR. Given the urgency of the situation in a particular country, the EU can be tempted to implement short term activities as a way of securing a strategic presence for it in the context. However, over time, this needs to be translated into sustainable long term programming, but with the urgency of the situation fading out, the interest to do so may diminish. This calls for longer term scenario building for SSR, both at the macro and micro level. Lastly, on the basis of the country studies it is fair to say that – both in the short and long term – EU-SSR interventions struggle to make an impact and positive impression on its commitment to gender equality.

A second finding is that several EU Missions faced operational problems due to, for example, a lack of resources, a lack of qualified staff and insufficient coordination in the trainings offered. In Mali, EUTM and EUCAP faced discontinuities in the training modules, and in Afghanistan the EUPOL Mission lacked continued support from EU Member States, resulting in a lack resources and staff. This problem was further compounded by rapid staff rotations, and a lack of coordination with national and international stakeholders.

Thirdly, coordination and coherence problems are rife at different levels of intervention. Of the many tensions and problems discussed in the studies conducted in the framework of the WOSCAP project, we want to point at two of them in particular: the relations between civil and military actors, and the relations between EU Member States. In the field of civil-military relations, coordination is hampered by the fact that SSR is mostly part of civilian missions (and the Commission's responsibility), while military deployments are supported by the Council and Member States. For instance, in the case of Ukraine both a civilian and a military mission were deployed simultaneously, but the two were not related. The military deployment of EUBAM (which dated from before the crisis in Ukraine and did not seek to address the conflicts in the



Eastern region) is more visible (men in uniform) and its achievements were generally praised by various local stakeholders. The civilian mission (EUAM) is not only less visible, especially in relation to the large number of other actors that were present in the field of SSR in that country, but was also seen as too little and too weak by local actors hoping for a stronger EU involvement.

The evidence also shows the importance of negotiations between Member States in the deployment of missions. Several EU missions have been the result of complex deals and compromises between EU Member States. These deals are sometimes also subject to pressure from national electorates, geopolitical tensions, and negotiations within governments. The EUAM Mission in Ukraine and the EUPOL Mission in Afghanistan vividly illustrate these dynamics. The start of EUAM in Ukraine was, for example, complicated by disagreements between Member States on the course of action to be followed. While some Member States were in favour of an assertive mandate in light of the Russian interference in Ukraine, other Member States such as Sweden, Poland, and the United Kingdom suggested a compromise in the form of an SSR CSDP mission. Eventually, the security and defence component was – contrary to what the Ukrainian government had asked for – ‘watered down as much as possible.’ The case of the EUPOL Mission in Afghanistan shows a similar pattern with some Member States such as Germany in favour of setting up a civilian SSR mission under the flag of the EU, while other Member States such as France were far more sceptical of the added value of such an endeavour. The start of the mission was hurried by Germany – who wanted it to start during its Council Presidency – and once it was underway the implementation of EUPOL was complicated by a lack of political will of EU Member States to support the mission, and American militarised policing programmes that not only competed with EUPOL, but were also moving in a contradictory direction. This shows that the way in which mandates are defined and negotiated at the international level is highly political. The political bargaining may not necessarily lead to results that are suited or tailored to the context and contrasts with a ‘needs-based approach’ or assessment that is driven by a demand from the societies. This hampers the EU capability to act and the capacity to operationalise commitments to ‘local ownership’, since this takes place at a point in time when the mission’s objectives and mandate have already been determined.

Fourth, since the main goal of SSR interventions is the strengthening of one of the key sectors of the state apparatus, the principal counterparts are usually the national governments and, in particular, representatives at the top of the security apparatus. The involvement or representation of other constituencies is still rather limited. An important limitation of the strong reliance on government elites is that the notion of security that they adhere to is generally derived from the conventional strategic state-centric notion of security. This implies that there seems to be tension with the EU’s understanding of SSR based on the notion of human security, which stresses not simply the strengthening of the armed forces, but also the democratic control of the armed forces. The EU has not fully faced this challenge and rather tends to emphasize the technical assistance element of its SSR missions, while it seeks to keep a distance from the politics of security sector reform. However, the evidence discussed in the case studies show that it is virtually impossible to stay away from these political questions. Jayasundara and Schirch (2016: 3-30) argue that this is also the case for the more practical train and equip approaches to SSR. If the EU’s SSR interventions are to be sustainable, the political nature of these approaches needs to be taken into account.

### 3.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter discussed the main findings about EU policies in three clusters of intervention – MTD, governance and SSR. The range of policies in each of these clusters is broad and each of these policies faces particular challenges; emerges in a unique actor constellation; relates to a different national setting, and is part of a specific package of reforms. It is fair to say that, in this regard, the EU has a considerable capability to fund and to act in the three spheres. However, in a number of cases the EU did not live up to its own expectations of comprehensiveness and inclusivity. For example, SSR programmes often focus on the more limited concept of train and equip, instead of a more comprehensive approach, and the experience of the EU to work in more inclusive ways did not always materialise (e.g. in the MTD cluster, Yemen versus Kosovo). More generally, coordination with a range of actors – from the local up to the international level – often proved problematic. Indeed, as discussed in chapter 2, the contextual challenges pose serious limitations to these goals, but innovative courses of action of the EU can be found in a wide variety of contexts, including the most adverse ones. This is not to say that there are ready made answers to the question of how to enhance a Whole-of-Society approach, since policy responses and innovations can only be developed taking these specific contexts into account.

## 4. Cross-cutting themes

The aim of this chapter is to reflect on EU capabilities based on insights from the investigation of the project's five cross cutting themes: local ownership, gender, multi-stakeholder coherence, civil-military synergy, and information and communication technologies (ICTs).

The selected cross-cutting themes encapsulate the Whole-of-Society perspective that speaks of the aspiration of inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding, informed by concerns for human security. Each theme individually functions as a discrete and autonomous site of inquiry, concerned respectively with local ownership, issues of gender equality, coherence of interventions, and the use of the potential of new technologies for enhancing peacebuilding purposes. The investigations into selected themes have a dual focus. In the first place they enable a qualitative assessment of the EU's conflict prevention and peacebuilding actions and policies. In particular, they problematize and address the practical dilemmas and operational challenges in EU civilian interventions. This practice perspective serves to highlight disjunctures between the level of strategic policy and theoretical capability on the one hand, and the specific operationalisation of EU intentions on the other. In the second place, the authors examined relevant 'good practices' among international organisations beyond, but including, the EU. This wider practice reflection serves to further highlight capability gaps and opportunities for enhancing the EU's approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

The approach to study the five cross-cutting themes is informed by a proposition that practice-based reflections offer a first-hand evaluation and insights from those implementing international policies for peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and directly facing their inherent dilemmas (Paris and Sisk, 2009). This contributes to a critical constructive analysis of the EU's comprehensive approach. Everyday experience and encounters between different stakeholders, in different situations, is invaluable in determining both a direction of change and the feasibility of adjustment. However at the same time, these studies have taken a cautious approach to identifying 'good' rather than 'best' practice given the disparity of contexts in which practitioners are operating and the challenge of attempting to make generalisations or to draw scientific comparisons between them. It also draws on secondary literature in an attempt to provide, not an exhaustive or comparative account of practice, but one which enables us to indicate avenues for practice change and gauge the salience of a Whole-of-Society approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

This strand of the project deployed a variety of methods to collect an evidence base of good practices and lessons learned across the five themes examined, extending beyond the four country cases where in-depth field work was conducted and three areas of EU engagement ('clusters') examined in the previous chapters of this report. Desk studies of academic and grey literature were conducted to explore experiences of the EU's engagement as well as those of other actors such as the UN, and in some cases were complemented by interviews of policymakers and experts. In parallel, additional fieldwork was conducted on the theme of local ownership in Ukraine by using participatory research methods. Engagement with practitioners was another track to gather insights on different dimensions of peacebuilding and conflict prevention represented by the five cross-cutting themes. This took a range of formats

such as roundtable discussions and workshops, and the establishment of an on-line interactive platform as a means towards creating a community of practice around the five themes.<sup>13</sup>

## 4.1 Local ownership

Implementation of local ownership in the experience of peacebuilding practitioners brings forth a number of challenges that arise from a combination of conceptual confusion and process issues. At a fundamental level, poor articulation of the concept of local ownership, a lack of clarity and shared understanding, both among the international stakeholders and between them and their local counterparts, limits its relevance in day-to-day operations. Whereas a degree of consensus among various stakeholders appears somewhat easier to reach at the strategic level, it tends to break down closer to the operational level, as shown by a perusal of literature and our own research. This was the case in the Boma consultation process in the Central African Republic, and in the implementation of the peace agreement in Guatemala. In Ukraine there is a disconnect between the EU's and local counterparts' understanding of the nature of the problem and hence of an appropriate response. The EU's formulation of civilian security as an overarching framework for its support to Ukraine diverges from local stakeholders' position that civilian and military security are intertwined and hence call for a different approach to that the EU pursues. Ambiguity surrounding the concept of local ownership and its meaning among stakeholders leads to and is reinforced by a lack of specific guidance on various implementation aspects, which directly undermines quality and accountability of an intervention.

It is unclear how, in operational terms, to resolve tension which arises between efficiency objectives as defined in EU programmatic documents and meaningful engagement through extensive and lasting interactions with a range of local counterparts. External actors, including the EU, operate according to their own priorities, and logframe-driven targets emphasising tangible results with fixed timelines for funding disbursements. Those contrast with requirements of consultative, participative, iterative and adaptive processes intended to ensure inclusiveness and develop the kinds of interactions and relationships which are conducive to strengthening local ownership and sustainability of intervention.

From a practice perspective, local ownership is also hampered by the fact that primary accountability in an intervention resides among external actors, typically headquarters of international organisations (in the case of the EU, at Brussels level) while also driven by the additional demand on resources to pursue longer term relationship building at the operational level. These two aspects mitigate deeper relationship building and instead lead to widespread practices of partially participative processes whereby, alongside national elites, external actors tend to confine their engagement to working with a fairly narrow set of non-state actors. The issue is both around the kinds of actors involved as well as in what capacity and for what purpose they are involved. For example, civil society as a typical interlocutor across policy domains was not part of the Geneva talks under the MTD initiative in Georgia. Even in those areas of intervention where nominally a broad inclusiveness is purported, there is often inadequate follow-through in the implementation phase which can restrict both the range of actors involved and the nature of their involvement. In Yemen, even though broad engagement

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<sup>13</sup> Unless specified otherwise, the analysis in this chapter draws on the empirical evidence from the WOSCAP thematic studies.

with civil society resulted in the introduction of a formal women and youth quota in the NDC, there was no oversight over the actual process of selecting women and youth representatives.

The selection of local interlocutors in the civil society sphere is in the majority of cases informed by externally conducted conflict analysis with limited or no local knowledge input, and based on technical and organisational capacity, and visibility of local civil society organisations. Such engagement strategies have proved unsustainable. Importantly, they bypass important constituencies which often have strong standing in local communities, such as private companies and faith-based organisations investigated in WOSCAP research in Ukraine. Those actors can act as bridges between grassroots and elite levels, and provide a different kind of information about the conflict, as well as more variegated, nuanced and adaptable responses, which may be more conducive to generating locally relevant and durable solutions (Bojicic-Dzelilovic and Martin, 2016).

The research found that other international actors are more successful in facilitating more inclusive forms of interactions with local actors. An illustrative case is that of the Danish Development Agency DANIDA's support to a combination of religious and development civil society organisations in Kenya, which were able to define the contents of the intervention and to identify local stakeholders. This resulted in the local organisations reaching out to armed youth and terror suspects, who are typically outside a circle of actors targeted by international initiatives (Pinnington, 2014). Besides broadening the range of local actors involved, there are also examples of new models of engagement with local actors based on building qualitatively different relationships among the stakeholders as another important element in facilitating local ownership. An example is the United Kingdom's Department for International Development's support to the State Accountability and Voice Initiative in Nigeria (SAVI) which aims at building the capacity of civil society and media to engage constructively with the government. This model of facilitated multi-stakeholder engagement through consultative advocacy partnerships is credited to have influenced the government in one of Nigeria's states to adopt gender policy aligned with the local context of Sharia Law (Booth and Chambers, 2014: 20). Overall, according to the practitioners, in most cases international actors' engagement strategies, the EU included, fail to align with the diverse, complex, and dynamic character of local society, its various categories, their respective interests, worldviews and expectations. The consequence of this disconnect is manifested in difficult, and often non-functional relationships among stakeholders that inhibit local ownership.

## 4.2 Coherence

WOSCAP thematic research on coherence investigates salient issues based foremost on the experience of intra-EU coherence (among EU institutions and between the EU delegation and Member States) and coherence in the EU's engagement with local actors. Coherence is translated into beneficial capabilities in terms of EU responsiveness, gathering and effective use of information and its ability to play a leadership role among multiple actors.

Practitioners generally consider the EU's institutional presence on the ground and its ability to support multiple types of intervention as robust, providing a solid base against which different EU actors and institutions implement their mandates both singularly and in coordination. The EU's ability to respond to the situation on the ground afforded by its

institutional presence is illustrated in Mindanao and Liberia, two contrasting cases of EU involvement. In Mindanao, the EU was able to use its know-how to transform its role from an initial humanitarian intervention, to development and peacebuilding activities. In Liberia, the EU itself was not directly involved in peacebuilding intervention, but EU Delegation staff were actively monitoring activities of other actors and assessing the situation on the ground in order to respond to a potential change of policy position and a possible intervention in security sector reform (MacDonald and Vinals, 2012; Furness, 2014).

In operational terms, the institutional arrangements on-the-ground in zones of intervention allow the EU to effectively co-ordinate and communicate through a range of mechanisms such as regular meetings, joint briefs, and co-location arrangements, whose deployment can be tailored to local context. The EU Delegations play a fundamental role in managing and enabling effective action. There is evidence that EU Delegations serve as effective information hubs, providing valuable input for conflict analysis to inform planning and implementation of EU peacebuilding work, and to facilitate burden sharing with EU Member States. EU Member States rely on information gathered by EU Delegations. In Kinshasa, weekly meetings between EU Member States and the EU Delegation were opportunities for information sharing leading to the production of joint briefs by the Delegation and Member States. The EU delegation in Sri Lanka played a similar role. Informal gatherings also served as information and co-ordination channels: in Cambodia regular joint retreats also provided opportunities for developing good working relations. In Mindanao, the EU Delegation was not only a conduit for intelligence to Brussels but a mechanism for maintaining good working relations with the Philippines government, despite the latter's objection to the EU engagement with civil society organisations. However, information sharing is still a challenge when dealing with highly sensitive and political topics, and in large countries where EU Member States have strategic interests. This was the case in Iran, when the United Kingdom refused to share intelligence with the EEAS on the nuclear dossier (Dermendzhiev, 2014). Furthermore, local stakeholders such as the governments in Ukraine and Georgia also rely on the information provided by EU Delegations, which is considered as credible and reliable. The EU Delegation and several EU Member States effectively implemented burden sharing in Kenya after 2013 by relying on a road map to act simultaneously and coherently, and by avoiding overlaps and counter-productive actions (Sheriff and Hauck, 2013).

EU Delegation leadership, particularly the previous experience and individual commitment of the Head of Delegation, can be decisive in effective management of relations between the Delegation, EU institutions, and Member States' diplomatic representatives on the ground and in Member States' government headquarters, and in generating positive capital and profile for the EU contribution to peacebuilding. In a number of cases, the Heads of EU Delegations (HoD) have taken a proactive role and spearheaded efforts to facilitate interactions among various stakeholders and steer processes within the framework of EU intervention. In Yemen, a female HoD publicly backed a gender inclusive peace dialogue which is believed to have contributed to the inclusion of a female quota in the National Dialogue Conference. In Kenya, the HoD, in the aftermath of 2008 elections, chaired weekly meetings with EU Member States to agree on joint positions including a common statement on economic sanctions towards Kenya. The roundtable on coherence in Brussels in June 2016 heard similar accounts of the influential and proactive role played by the Guatemala HoD.

However, despite a potential for coordinated and coherent EU actions arising from its strong and varied presence on the ground, its engagement across multiple policy domains and across various levels of action, a lack of clear guidelines and policy strategies hamper this capability. As a consequence, the role and responsibility of each EU actor for making a distinct contribution to integrated efforts while also respecting the context-specific nature of each engagement is ill defined. A division of work between small groups has been identified as a good practice to coordinate between the EU delegations and EU Member State actions (Helly et al., 2015). Coordination and coherence are also vulnerable to the Member States' conflicting interests; the successful case of EU intervention in Mindanao – considered a show case of EU coherence – is in part attributed to low Member States interest (Benraïs and Simon, 2016). In contrast, in the Nagorno-Karabakh context, the EU took a very cautious approach in deciding on its role because of some Member States' interests in the energy sector (Freire and Simao, 2011). The need to balance different Member States interests undermined the EU's ability to coordinate and act in a coherent manner (ibid).

Coherence in multi-stakeholder engagement involving local non-state actors in conflict zones is impaired by the EU's narrow definition of local stakeholders which excludes some actors (for example, companies and faith groups as highlighted in the previous section), and by a rigidity and slowness of dedicated EU instruments. This limits the EU's ability to tap into important reservoirs of local capacity, experience and expertise to complement those of the civil society organisations it traditionally supports (Benraïs and Simon, 2016). A tendency towards epiphenomenal approaches which take immediate action rather than cultivate engagement principles or normative or operational standards, also directly undermines coherence within EU interventions.

### 4.3 Civil-military synergies

According to peacebuilding practitioners' experiences, civil-military synergy happens incidentally and is subject to a confluence of factors and context specificity, which determines how different civil and military components combine. It is seen as more likely to occur in shorter-term interventions, with clear mission objectives, defined roles, and discrete procedures around delimited tasks where fewer actors are involved, and when there is skilled and authoritative leadership capable of responding to ad hoc opportunities in a given situation. This was illustrated by a case of EU ATALANTA mission undertaken as part of a multilateral anti-piracy initiative off the coast of Somalia which engaged predominantly military actors for a shorter period of time with a clear objective of counteracting piracy.

Seizing opportunities for synergy in a fast moving and dynamic local context, which requires a degree of flexibility in the actions of civilian and military actors alike, alongside maintaining their respective autonomy, creates operational difficulties. In many contemporary conflicts, a distinctive role for and autonomy of civil and military actors are difficult to achieve due to the multidimensional nature of the issues that intervention strives to address. The usefulness and feasibility of ad hoc responses in promoting civil-military synergies is particularly questionable in longer term interventions. This is illustrated by the case of the Dutch Task Force Mission in Afghanistan's Uruzgan province whose mandate was to support building the capacity and authority of the provincial government by synchronising reconstruction and development programmes with support for the Afghan National Security Forces (Jayasundara-

Smits, 2016). Practitioners consider a sharper distinction between military and civilian actors in the implementation of an intervention as counterproductive to seizing ad hoc opportunities for synergies at the operational level. In Mali, it was decided that the implementation of security sector reform required working with moderate non-state actors as a way to weaken the influence of extremist armed groups, although such practice was in breach of the EU's official policy.

A tension between the benefits from ad hoc responses and a need for long-term planning in promoting civil-military synergies is heightened in long-term missions such as the one by the Dutch forces in Uruzgan mentioned above; its implementation involved close assessment, planning, coordination, alignment and sequenced execution of the mission's civilian and military component. Among other issues, flexibility to respond to ad hoc opportunities prevents development of communication practices that facilitate civil-military cooperation. It also suggests limited use of a system of lessons learned, which contradicts a more general EU need to standardise operational principles and guidelines. Practitioners identified a lack of up to date operational guidelines as an obstacle to more effective civil-military cooperation. At the operational level, the potential for civil-military synergy is also affected by the number and versatility of civilian actors and their often multiple identities which the military find difficult to navigate. On the part of civilian actors, particularly among humanitarian organisations, there is often reluctance to cooperate with military actors, principally on the grounds of that it would jeopardise their apolitical status, a critical aspect of humanitarian work in conflict zones. Civilian and military actors differ in their respective working practices, timelines and security concerns which, coupled with insufficient knowledge of each other's organisational identities, further undermines possibilities for civil-military synergy. For example, civilian actors work to longer timelines which increases the probability of foregoing incidental opportunities for civil-military synergy. Different deployment cycles of military and civilian personnel are another inhibiting factor for building civil-military synergies. A specific challenge to civil-military synergy in the EU missions is the issue of military-military relationships, given the differences among the Member States defence system and strategic interests.

Practitioners' experience highlights a lack of systematic and strategic approach to civil-military cooperation and coordination with many issues of how the two components best work together still unsettled and with no established practice or learning guidelines. Instead of new concepts and frameworks, practitioners are in favour of the EU utilising its existing comprehensive approach capabilities better by focusing on coordination, cooperation, agreement on joint assessment, mission aims and planning, and civil-military synergy.

## 4.4 Gender

The thematic report on gender examined practices of women's inclusion in peacebuilding focusing in particular on the EU's experience with MTD in peace processes. The adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) was a watershed moment in fostering women's participation and representation in peacebuilding under the UN global leadership. However, despite a near universal pledge by all relevant actors, the EU included, the implementation of the WPS agenda has not been systematic. Some moderate increase in reference to women's inclusion in peace agreements and in the participation of women in peace operations has been recorded, which suggests that genuine gender



mainstreaming remains more of a normative ideal rather than an established and widespread practice (Kreft, 2017: 133).

The EU includes gender among its five MTD principles and supports it through two main modalities: by directly engaging in mediation/facilitation and co-mediation efforts; and by promoting, supporting, leveraging and funding mediation and peace efforts, both in its own capacity and in collaboration with other international actors and EU Member States. The EU has mimicked the UN in developing capacity to implement gender mainstreaming and gender sensitive mediation (for example, the EEAS Mediation Team is fully trained on gender issues, and a post of EEAS Principal Advisor on gender was introduced) and often works alongside the UN, in particular UN Women and UNDP. This was the case both in Mali and Yemen. The role of the EU Delegation was pivotal in Yemen in ensuring participation of women in the NDC, while in Mali, the EU (and the UN) had to abandon a gender objective in the face of opposition from other co-mediators and local elites. The EU has a strong record of supporting women's participation in various policy areas, notably governance, sometimes even when the gender aspect is outside a mission's mandate (as in Georgia for example); but all too often this does not translate into greater political participation and representation of women. An example of this disconnect is the EU's varied support to women's organisations in Afghanistan where women continue to be insufficiently included in the political processes. The gaps are not only local-context derived but the EU's own, sometimes inconsistent, action can be a contributing factor. For example in Georgia, unlike in Yemen, the EU not only failed to appoint a gender advisor in the Geneva International Discussions, but it also did not follow up local women's initiatives for greater female engagement.

EU Member States – notably Nordic countries spearheaded by Sweden – have taken a proactive role in supporting women organisations by building national and regional networks, but the EU's engagement in those initiatives has been limited. Simultaneously, the EU's distinct, relatively robust instruments for implementing the WPS agenda are insufficiently deployed for a variety of reasons. The EU's experience in Mali illustrates a broader challenge the EU faces in the form of a lack of genuine commitment by many a local constituency to implement gender mainstreaming as part of peacebuilding and conflict prevention activities and hence makes use of the EU's expertise on gender. But as well as having to manage weak political support for a gender agenda among local governments, the EU itself faces obstacles in the practical implementation of its commitments to gender issues. One of the reasons for the latter is the difficulty of measuring the impact of implementation of the gender mainstreaming on peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

The EU's support of the participation of women in peace processes includes high-level political support for gender issues in international forums through the EU's network of Delegations, and through participation in other actors' initiatives. However, from a practitioners' perspective, in contrast to this strategic level action, the EU's achievement on the ground falls behind its commitments and is not commensurate with its expertise. In this sense, gender represents both a capability gap and a missed opportunity to utilise the knowledge and experience available to EU interventions. Despite significant resources and the importance attached to gender as a normative ideal, in contributing to inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding there is weak operationalisation and systematisation on the ground. The practitioners suggest that the EU could manage some of the challenges of political will and commitment by better utilising its extensive and varied presence on the ground which is

currently encumbered by the EU's overall set up and overlapping competences; and by leveraging its influence on the negotiating parties to include women and gender experts (Urrutia and Villelas, 2016).

## 4.5 ICTs

The use of ICTs in peacebuilding represents an opportunity to innovate as well as enhance inclusivity and improve the effectiveness of different kinds of policy intervention through the application of technology. ICT is an area in which the EU seems to have some theoretical interest although it does not yet have a concrete strategy and an approach to integrate them systematically into its peacebuilding and conflict resolution work. A roundtable of policy experts in Brussels demonstrated that there is some pushback against ideas using innovative methods amid claims that 'the human dimension is still important in peacebuilding'. Among international donors and aid organisations, non-governmental organisations have to be the path-finders in pioneering this kind of innovation, suggesting that particularly in terms of enhancing its funding capabilities, the EU could engage more in this type of intervention. In contrast, the EU has not stepped in to exploit the potential of new technology, which has implications for other thematic issues such as local ownership, coherence and gender inclusivity, which are all brought into play according to evidence of how different stakeholder groups are currently using this type of technology in the field.

The ICT report cited examples of good practice among international actors, to highlight the kind of potential in this area. These included Sisi ni Amani (supported by the USAID) which developed a SMS-based conflict prevention programme in Kenya and the Elva community engagement project (supported by the EU and UNDP) fostering intercultural youth dialogue through computer games in Georgia, which is based on strong involvement of local communities throughout a programme cycle. According to practitioners, the EU faces several main constraints in making ICTs an integral element in its peacebuilding and conflict prevention practices. These include its size, risk aversion and the premium it places on demonstrating impact from EU interventions, rather than refining appropriate processes. The most immediate potential for the EU and ICTs is seen in funding other organisations to implement tech-enabled projects, so called 'peacetech'. The EU's current infrastructure on the ground in terms of extensive presence and accessibility to potential partners for peacetech implementation is an asset which it could further exploit. However, current modalities of funding discriminate against smaller non-governmental organisations which are the typical kind of actors involved in peacetech (Gaskell, 2016).

The poor take-up of ICTs and the potential that these offer suggests that, despite its ambition to be innovative, the EU suffers from a lack of strategic, tactical and operational guidance as to how to deploy appropriate civilian peacebuilding and conflict prevention tools, and an awareness of how the use of such tools might either benefit or compromise the safety of individuals and local communities.

## 4.6 Concluding remarks

Investigation of civilian capabilities for peacebuilding and conflict prevention using the five cross cutting themes to generate a critical-constructive evaluation of practice, reveals several important characteristics that speak to the strength of the EU's existing capabilities and the potential for implementing effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. Below we point at three main challenges that the EU encounters.

The deployment of EU capabilities is based on insufficient coherence among different actors/ stakeholders, specifically in determining clear objectives of intervention and an appropriate response, and in particular regarding to long-term peace and development goals. The EU encounters substantial challenges to manage the multi-actor environment effectively, both in terms of integrating types of action or different categories and perspectives of local actors, as was clear from the studies on local ownership, gender, coherence, civil-military synergy, as well as its failure to grasp the potential of technology to achieve improved inclusion and comprehensiveness.

The EU lacks an explicit strategy of engagement with different categories of stakeholders, with the result that individual actions and programmes may end up being poorly defined in terms of their scope, durability and sustainability. Moreover, the EU displays limited capacity for reflective learning, and to conduct reflections and lessons learned at different levels from the operational to the strategic, benefiting both from its own successful experiences as well as from failures. The lack of multilevel learning was notable in terms of being able to contribute to trust building and sharing with local stakeholders, and in developing good/best practices more broadly from other international actors active in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

The EU's approach to the implementation of peacebuilding and conflict prevention interventions tends to focus on searching for technical solutions to what are often deeply political and complex issues. In doing so, it fails to use creative and political potential of local actors and contexts, opportunities for civil-military synergies, and ICTs to deliver on its aspirations of effective peacebuilding rooted in EU's norms and values.

## 5. Conclusion – a Whole-of-Society approach to EU capabilities

This chapter reflects on the capabilities of the EU in the field of conflict prevention and peace building, based on the research findings from three analytical entry points of country-based interventions, policy clusters and cross-cutting normative themes, and draws conclusions about ways for the EU to improve its performance. The WOSCAP project takes a critical-constructive approach, meaning that we believe that critical reflection on existing capabilities is needed in order to draw lessons, and in order to propose constructive enhancements based on a Whole-of-Society perspective. In the first section of this chapter we draw conclusions about EU capabilities, based on a critical assessment of the findings presented in the previous chapters. The second section examines the chances for the EU to apply a Whole-of-Society approach to address this assessment, including the possibilities and limitations for doing so.

### 5.1 Assessing EU capabilities

As discussed in the opening chapter of this report the concept of capability refers to the ability and capacity to achieve objectives in relation to an overall mission. While *capacity* refers to skills, resources and power to undertake action, the term *capability* stresses the relationship with objectives and, thus, with expectations about possible goals. This link between capacity and 'mission' or expectation is of key importance. It is one thing to have the capacity to deploy a mission in a country, it is another thing to achieve particular objectives with this mission, e.g. to keep peace, to reform a security sector, or to combat corruption. The more ambitious the stated objectives of the policies, interventions and the missions of the EU and the underlying expectations (of the EU, or other stakeholders) about societal change are, the more capacity is needed.

In this regard, it has been noted that the ambition level of the EU is high and that the EU still faces enormous challenges in 'coordinating a significant number of institutional actors and policy domains' (Whitman and Wolff, 2012: 5). Indeed, a Whole-of-Society approach, which emphasises the ability to link different policy fields (coherence, comprehensiveness) and to include a broad range of actors (inclusivity), arguably requires strong capacities of the EU. As discussed in chapter 1, our starting point to assess EU capabilities is Whitman and Wolff's (2012) distinction between the capabilities to fund, to act, and to coordinate/cooperate (see for more details chapter 1). However, while it is possible to assess these capabilities separately, we also argue that capabilities are context and case specific, interlinked, and forged in interaction with others. A discussion of each of these EU capabilities brings to light a number of strengths and weaknesses.

#### 5.1.1 Capability to fund

The capability to fund and the capability to act are strongly connected, because the question whether the stated objectives about the use of these funds are reached or not, is related to the question of how the EU has invested these funds in order to act. However, the capability to

fund can be considered a quality in its own right. As discussed in chapter 2, the EU has, in principle, the capacity to fund and act in a wide range of political contexts (including the most difficult countries that are characterised by very weak states and deeply divided societies), and during different phases of conflict (war, frozen conflict, continuing tensions, post-conflict). However, these local settings pose great challenges to the ambitions of the EU to work in a comprehensive way, and to coordinate with a broad range of actors, and in practice the capacity to do so has been mixed.

Funding can buy the EU influence. The EU's strong capacity and willingness to fund has made it an influential actor in countries like Ukraine, Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Mali, as well as Central American countries. In these countries the EU has funded a range of policies and interventions beyond the three selected policy areas that were key in this study (MTD, governance, SSR), including development assistance, and balance of payment support. It has often been stated that this financial or funding capacity gives the EU a degree of respect, as well as political leverage. On a critical note, however, this funding capacity also had unintended consequences. For instance, in a number of cases the EU is confronted with corruption at government level and made insufficient use of conditionality in order to stop this, but rather cooperated and dealt with governments where corruption is rife. Notable cases in this regard are Afghanistan, where the EU was confronted with the problem of large aid disbursements to the government with limited oversight mechanisms (Dirkx, 2017), and Ukraine where according to Yaffa (2016) European diplomats became increasingly frustrated about 'Poroshenko's attempts to manipulate European sympathy for Ukraine', while Western capitals have ended up 'prisoners of this government'.<sup>14</sup> This all points at the risks that funding, although well-intended, may support forces and processes that cannot be seen as conducive to the changes envisioned by the EU.

An important element of the capability to fund is the capacity to link short term needs to longer term processes of peacebuilding. In this regard, reference is made to the flexibility of the EU to react to new situations, e.g. by using the IcSP. The studies that were conducted in the framework of this research project have not systematically addressed the connection between short-term and longer-term needs. But it is fair to say that in the countries under study, the EU has made use of different instruments to address short term and longer term needs (at different geographical levels). For instance, in the case of Kosovo, the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia was complemented with development projects in the North of Kosovo, and in Georgia the EU funded the COBERM project which aimed to stimulate people-to-people contacts across conflict divides (van der Borgh et al, 2016; Macharasvilli et al, 2016).

### 5.1.2 Capability to act

Overall, the EU has a strong capability to act. This is thanks to the diversity within the EU system, its networks and its instruments that underpin its strong and varied presence on the ground and its engagement across multiple policy domains, and across various levels of action from the grassroots to the elite level. Such a versatile presence affords multiple opportunities to engage unilaterally and in coordination with other actors. Based on this the EU becomes an

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<sup>14</sup> Yalla quotes a former journalist and current Member of Parliament.

important player in countries and in the three policy areas studied. However, there are a number of challenges that the EU faces and that limit the capability to act.

Firstly, in a number of cases the EU encounters problems of a more practical and operational nature that are related to the capacity itself. For example, the deployment of a number of missions was problematic, and it proved difficult to find capable staff, to manage the mission, etc. These shortcomings are seldom just of a technical nature and often related to the complex contexts in which missions deploy, or the problems with synchronizing international agendas. For example, in the case of Kosovo, finding staff with adequate knowledge of local languages and local judicial systems proved difficult. And discussions between Member States about the organisation of missions, based on different views and interests of Member States, have led to compromises that are not necessarily the most effective or efficient. Furthermore, it is fair to say that the EU also has a limited capacity to work in war zones as opposed to more stable regions. While it has deployed a mission in Mali's war-torn area, it has stayed out of eastern Ukraine and the breakaway regions in Georgia. It also proved difficult to deploy the EULEX mission in the north of Kosovo.

Secondly, the mission statements and the expectations of the EU in the different policy domains are often quite ambitious. A case in point is the broad mission statement of the EULEX mission in Kosovo, which included many dimensions that could not realistically be addressed by the EU. This problem applies in particular to policies in the field of governance and security sector reform, which are generally informed by the assumptions of the liberal peace. The EU endorses these ideas but finds itself constantly 'under capacitated' to deliver on all fronts. While there is no need to abandon the ideals enshrined in the liberal peace (including rule of law, state building and democratisation), there is a need to manage expectations. As we will argue further on, the EU is in need of better capacities to appreciate its own capabilities and comparative advantages per country context as well as mechanisms to tailor its response to a selected set of local needs.

Thirdly, the capacity of the EU to work on different fronts and to use a range of policy instruments is not a strength under all conditions. The recognition that different types of reforms and different policy fields are related and can strengthen one another (e.g. security sector reform, and anti-corruption measures) does not imply that the EU should be involved in all of these activities. In complex contexts the needs are always bigger than the available capacities or funds of international actors and strategic choices are inevitable. However, as discussed in the previous chapters, the strategic capacity of the EU to make such choices and to implement these is limited. There seems to be a limited capacity to put priorities and to argue what - given limited resources and time - are the most important objectives in a given context, and in which areas and how limited resources can be used most effectively. Indeed, these are extremely complex strategic questions to which perfect answers may not be possible. But the question of how synergies can be created between different programmes, as well as how tensions and contradictions between different EU interventions can be addressed in dynamic contexts, requires more attention.

Fourthly, working in, on and after conflict requires a degree of adaptability to changing contexts, conflict dynamics and actor constellations. It is fair to say that the EU does not have the capacity to respond immediately when confronted with new crises. This is partly the result of the EU not having a military response capacity, but also of the complex structure of the EU. However, the EU does show a capacity to adapt to changes. These changes are mostly made

on an ad-hoc basis, and often entail compromises (e.g. EULEX mission in Kosovo) that are not always appreciated by all actors. For example, the EU was faced with very different expectations regarding its role in Ukraine (see also the discussion about coordination). In these instances, the different expectations between the EU and local actors can become visible, but also different and even conflicting expectations among local actors themselves about the EU's role can manifest. Managing and reconciling these expectations and interests can be a complex endeavour.

### 5.1.3 Capability to coordinate and cooperate

A distinction can be made between three dimensions of the capability to coordinate and cooperate: with other international actors, within the EU, and with other actors at the national level.

As to the coordination and cooperation with international actors, the EU has a strong capacity to coordinate, with the quality of coordination varying significantly across many dimensions. For example, in the field of MTD the EU operates mostly in broader international networks, consortia or formats. In the area of SSR, missions are matched with the activities of other international actors. In a number of cases the EU outsources activities to other international actors (e.g. the UNDP through the Fund for Peace in Ukraine) or includes national and international NGOs in the implementation of programmes (e.g. the PASS programme in Honduras). Through its doctrine of effective multilateralism articulated in the 2003 European Security Strategy, the EU continues to demonstrate its status as a global actor in relation to other states and international organisations – that it is not prepared to act unilaterally or in contradiction particularly to individual EU Member States. This has established benefits in terms of a clear normative purpose (multilateralism and support of the international order) and a reputation for impartiality in contrast to national partisan interests of EU Member States or other global actors. However, as discussed in chapters 3 and 4, the practice of coordination between international actors is often problematic, and multilateralism sometimes limits its scope, with the EU's ability to act positively and pro-actively sometimes being compromised by the need for consensus.

Coordination with international actors also means adapting to geopolitical realities. However, the capacity to adapt to the different geopolitical realities is mixed. The EU has shown a willingness to cooperate with other lead agents, such as the US in Afghanistan, or to give follow up to the military intervention of France in Mali. In these cases, the ongoing armed conflicts and the military involvement of other international actors that the EU teams up with deeply influence the room to manoeuvre of the EU. This also implies that the possibilities to influence the agenda are limited, but in a number of cases the EU has shown an ability to creatively carve out its niche, Yemen being a case in point.

The EU has also dealt with actors that oppose its conflict prevention and peacebuilding policies. This is most notably the case in the eastern neighbourhood, where the EU faced resistance from Russia against the European project and where the EU had a limited capacity to deal with that resistance. In the case of Ukraine, the Russian aggression in the East and in Crimea can be linked to the national and international debate about the signing of the EU association agreement. The capacity of the EU to factor in and deal with the Russian position on the European project seems rather limited.

The capacity of the EU to internally coordinate its different policies, both within the EU, and with country states, still faces numerous disconnects at the operational level. This manifests itself in several ways. Firstly, while the national delegations and special representatives play important roles in coordinating different tasks, the capacity to match different programmes, to set strategic priorities and to create synergies is still limited in many cases. It should be emphasised that it is not an easy task to match different intervention objectives, as the tensions between the EU-facilitated dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo on one hand, and the EULEX mission on the other hand, demonstrated. This means that it may be inevitable that internal coordination leads to a revalorisation of expectations and objectives. Secondly, at the programme level, reconciling various national interests may seriously hamper the ability to reach consensus about programmes, as the case of the deployment of the police mission to Afghanistan shows.

The capability to coordinate with actors at the national and local levels – or the diverse forms of national ownership – is by far the most complex element. This complexity is exacerbated by having to simultaneously coordinate with the national level and to reconcile different (sometimes competing) agendas within the EU. It seems that in the face of this, the EU has sought to limit its efforts by coordinating a narrower set of local elites. Overall, the EU has a strong capacity to coordinate with national governments, a rather good capacity to coordinate with civil society organisations (mostly urban NGOs), while it has shown some capacity to deal with non-state armed actors. However, coordination with all these actors is often problematic, because the expectations and interests of actors involved do not necessarily align.

While in all countries the EU establishes connections with host governments, their real support for EU interventions can widely vary. This is not simply the result of different expectations, but also of different and sometimes opposing interests of stakeholders involved. In the case of the EU border mission between Ukraine and Moldova there was an interest of the involved parties to make the mission work. In other cases, national or subnational political or economic elites did not have a genuine interest in proposed reform programmes and the EU had to take a more pragmatic attitude vis-à-vis them. This is not to say that reform is impossible. In some cases a delay in the pace of the reform process was accepted by the EU, while in other cases the EU or consortium of actors were able to support pro-reform actors, as was the case in Guatemala. However, in the case of Ukraine the EUAM aligned poorly with both elite expectations and grass-roots views and hopes. In this case poor coordination effectively impeded the capability to act. This implies that a deeper understanding of the national political setting and the interests of different state and non-state actors is needed in order to assess the possibilities for change.

As to the involvement of civil society, the EU showed a mixed ability to include organisations from civil society in its interventions. The EU generally, through different instruments but notably the EIDHR and the IcSP, and previously IFP, has done as much as any actor to provide not just capacity to civil society, but to mobilize and provide an alternative legitimacy when domestic institutions and governments have proved weak or predatory. This commitment to civil society has had mixed results because it has empowered only a relatively small elite (mostly urban based ‘professional’ NGOs, or the ‘usual suspects’) and the use of both funding and co-ordination capabilities has proved more exclusive than inclusive. At the same time, the EU often misses opportunities to tap into the richness and dynamism of civil society.



As the local ownership research shows, the EU also fails to respond to the complex interactions between government and civil society, and once again (like in SSR interventions) it tends to adopt an overly technical and process orientated approach to working with civil society. In many cases, consultations are routine and superficial and there is inadequate use of polling, perceptions management and sophisticated communication techniques.

In some cases the EU successfully stimulated the involvement of underrepresented actors (e.g. Yemen national dialogue), in others it did not include civil society (e.g. the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo). While the inclusion of civil society implies making choices about who should be involved and who not (total inclusivity is not possible), there generally is a lack of guidelines indicating how stakeholders can be identified, or who are the key stakeholders in relevant policy areas. Overall, the inclusion of local actors, while clearly necessary, brings numerous problems and challenges to the EU. The question of who should be included and how is a profoundly political one, since it is related to (different) agendas and interests.

## 5.2 Deploying capabilities in context

The previous section critically assessed EU capabilities to fund, act and coordinate. While these capabilities are necessary ingredients to develop an adequate, efficient and optimal response in (post-) conflict situations, the EU also faces limitations, both endogenous and exogenous, in exercising these capabilities. Rather than critiquing its interventions on the basis that its capabilities are inadequate or policies ineffective, the project's constructive focus considered how to address these limitations in order to lead to better results. Thus the analysis finds that the capabilities outlined above are necessary but insufficient in seeking to meet the EU's ambitions and aspirations as a global peace actor, and particularly in implementing key norms such as comprehensiveness, inclusivity and local ownership. A necessary adjunct in suggesting how capabilities can be enhanced is to see how the EU does and can exercise its capabilities within any given intervention environment.

Moreover, we take a pragmatic and cautious view, recognizing that the possibilities for improvement may themselves face constraints, but that what is required follows Paris and Sisk's (2009) argument about the complexity of contemporary conflict contexts where they identify the task as managing the multiple challenges, contradictions and dilemmas which arise in the course of intervention. This ties in to one of our core assumptions mentioned in the introduction, that capabilities are not simply 'properties' or technical attributes and resources that the EU has or doesn't have. While the distinction made between capabilities to fund, to act and to coordinate by Whitman and Wolff (2012) is useful to reflect on capacities and capabilities, we emphasize the interrelatedness between these capabilities and in particular the fact that these capabilities develop in interaction with other stakeholders and in specific contexts. This means that what is significant is *how (when and where)* they are deployed in relation to the particular setting in which they are required, and in interaction with a range of actors. Capabilities develop, adapt, grow or erode in dense and often unpredictable processes. These processes are context-specific and thus highly dependent on external factors, which are often beyond EU control. Chief among these external factors are the political and conflict contexts (which includes influences at different geographical levels), which presents particular barriers as well as opportunities to policymakers and practitioners. Hence a constructive view

of capabilities includes analysing how the EU can better seize these opportunities, confront the challenges, and identify and react to the limits of what it is able to do.

### 5.2.1 A Whole-of-Society approach to enhance capabilities

As explained in chapter 1, the Whole-of-Society (WOS) approach is based on a prescriptive and normative ideal which emphasises the role of local societies, multiple relationships at the level of design and implementation of policy, and the presence of a wide range of stakeholders with the potential to influence durable peace and development outcomes, as well as diverse forms of formal and informal actions which infuse the conflict space. WOS not only reflects the complex and multifaceted nature of intervention environments, but it chimes with the ambitions of the EU in terms of being a comprehensive actor, with access to a full spectrum of policies, with recourse to military as well as civilian means, and an inclusive actor working at multiple levels of society. Thus, WOS is consistent with the focus in the 2016 European Global Security Strategy (EUGSS) of seeking to build longer-term resilience within conflict-affected societies and a new relationship between external and local actors, paying attention to both the inside and the outside of intervention, and indeed working towards shared understandings of reform and assistance (EUGSS, 2016: 14, 29).

In terms of policy utility, rather than proposing WOS as a novel concept to reframe the goals and methods of EU civilian interventions, we suggest it can sharpen and refine what the EU already does, in applying the Comprehensive Approach and norms such as local ownership, to give a sense of purpose to everyday practices, particularly in devising practice modifications. As the authors of the study on Multi-Track Diplomacy note, WOS can be seen as giving effect to the multilateral and multilevel ambitions contained in EU peacebuilding and conflict prevention policies (Dudouet and Goldner-Ebenthal, 2017 1). Commenting on the challenges of civil-military synergy, practitioners suggested that rather than new concepts and frameworks, what they sought were new ways to operationalise Comprehensive Approach capabilities by focusing on coordination, cooperation, agreement on joint assessment, mission aims and planning, and optimising working relationships (Jayasundera and Schirch, 2017). The value of WOS is its potential to gain additional traction applying approaches which do not solely focus on traditional mechanisms such as elite bargains, programmatic interventions or attempts at capacity and institution building. Analysing EU interventions against both vertical and horizontal axes (see figure 1.1) gave us insight into the exercise of capabilities in complex environments characterized by a wide spectrum of actors, practices and policies, and led to the following conclusions regarding capabilities.

The capability to act is framed strategically and operationally by the Comprehensive Approach which awards primacy to the horizontal axis over the vertical axis, and privileges breadth of action over deep-seated interactions. The horizontal axis encompasses multiple entry points where the EU can choose to intervene, as well as different contextual conditions which will determine whether, when and how the EU will act. The logic of choice about the nature, timing and method of action is not clearly conceptualised or communicated in EU policy, thus the horizontal axis is not fully understood or operationalised. Interventions often fail to leverage opportunities elsewhere on the axis – synchronizing economic relations with mediation for example (Dudouet and Goldner-Ebenthal, 2017). There is a gap in actively identifying and cultivating synergies between points on this axis (whether timing or the nature

of action). Furthermore, interventions ignore discrepancies in the choice and combination of policies, such as the normative tensions between different policy goals. There is for example a dissonance between observance and promotion of human rights, and peace negotiations in Yemen, which also reflects a more fundamental gap between pragmatism which dictates seeking an end to violence, working with elites and creating short-term impacts on the one hand and promoting values and norms on the other. Such dilemmas are typical of contemporary conflicts but it is possible to do more and better in this regard and this requires a methodology and visible logic for making the political choices to resolve them.

Another gap in the capability to act highlighted by WOSCAP studies, concerned the timing of action – achieving positive outcomes through appropriate decisions on when to intervene with a particular policy focus. The EU was often out of step with local perceptions and expectations regarding action and intervention, for example in Ukraine, but also in Mali, where intervention was perceived as less effective because it came late. This undermined EU credibility and limited its eventual room to manoeuvre. Timing is also salient in balancing short and long term objectives and these choices appeared to be more successful when there was improved co-ordination – at the design and implementation stage of policy – with local actors. For example, as the MTD study highlights, increased penetration of and engagement with local sources of information and mapping EU action onto indigenous responses to the conflict (including non-elite responses) would have improved early warning and the possibility for early action (Dudouet and Goldner-Ebenthal, 2017: 10).

The capability to coordinate emerged as a significant component of EU actorness in country contexts, in clusters and in operationalising norms such as local ownership, coherence and gender. From a WOS perspective, the deficiency in this capability relates to the limited scope of the vertical axis – which the EU fails to include significant actors whose participation could ensure that its convening and coordinating power could have more impact, such as the private sector and faith groups. While the need to engage marginalised groups has become a truism particularly within debates about local ownership and gender, there is less attention paid to the influence of powerful non-armed outlier groups in conflict affected societies, and how to utilise this influence in shaping peace and reform. The need is to identify important constituencies which are not currently reached by EU policies and programmes, while in terms of the horizontal axis a WOS approach could help identify relevant processes, ‘routines’, norms and modes within local society, which can enhance the EU’s capability to coordinate and act.

A significant finding of the research was the gap between the EU’s intentions and the variegated nature of opinion in local society, including different interpretations of the conflict and the expectations of external intervention. Often local views and interests are themselves at odds creating no single point of reliable reference for EU action. While a WOS approach per se cannot mediate between conflicting parties and powers, it might serve to better identify and manage this density and complexity of local society and enable the EU to analyse the challenges, contestations and opportunities it faces in implementing its objectives.

Related to this, the studies in this project showed that the EU is a repository of knowledge about other actors (both external and indigenous), and their capacities. A WOS approach would aim to make use of that knowledge to provide improved conflict analysis and adaptation and to generate further convening and coordination opportunities. The paper on coherence points to examples in Kenya, Liberia, Cambodia and the Philippines where

information sharing and a knowledge hub have been the basis for enhanced visibility of the EU Delegation (Benrais and Simon, 2016).

Similarly the capability to fund could be strengthened through increased attention to both the vertical axis in terms of reaching out to less visible local constituencies, which may be significant not only in improving the inclusiveness of EU action, but in accessing novel and dynamic modes of action. This was evident from missed opportunities identified in the case of gender in Yemen and a disjuncture between EU programming and the rapid evolution of civil society activism in Ukraine, noted in the report on local ownership. By contrast, Dressler and Lundstrom point to the high engagement of local stakeholders and prioritisation of local issues as part of the EU's programme on 'Restoration of Governance and reconciliation in Crises affected Communities of Ukraine', while at the same time noting that the EU's short-term funding cycle effectively interrupted that process of dialogue and limited follow-through from the initiative (Dressler and Lundstrom, 2017: 15).

### 5.2.2 Opportunities and constraints in applying a Whole-of-Society approach to EU interventions

As to the opportunities and constraints to apply a WOS approach to EU interventions, it is important to stress, as has already been noted by many other authors, that there are no quick fixes, no blue prints, and that peacebuilding is a rocky road with no guarantees about the end stage. Indeed, in these complex contexts, the challenges to apply a WOS approach are considerable, and need to be set alongside the potential effectiveness and legitimacy gains which have been highlighted in this project's empirical findings. But it is fair to say that any strategy dealing with violent and intractable conflicts will soon be confronted with the fact that different problems (social, economic, political, etc.) and different policy fields are strongly interrelated. In this regard, the efforts to build peace have often been compared with the building of a house of cards. In addition, for all the problems of local state weakness, it is precisely in deeply divided societies where a greater degree of inclusivity of interventions will imply greater acceptance, and in societies where governance is fractured and widespread reforms are required, that the ability to connect different points of policy and policy-making process offers better chances for success. So while acknowledging the challenges of a Whole-of-Society approach, we argue that the efforts to understand and work with not only a broader range of actors, but to link EU intervention to a broader set of local policies and processes, have been limited. In this respect there is still room for improvement, which a WOS approach can help identify.

A WOS approach implies a thicker engagement between EU and conflict affected societies, whereby the EU would make fuller use of the diversity of actors and local interactions in the conflict space, and leverage the potential of indigenous practices and forms of action. This deeper engagement is more likely to sustain transformations, through rooting them in culturally specific situations while improving legitimacy and buy-in, the latter a key 'brake' on the EU's deployment of its capabilities in the cases studied in this project.

Deeper engagement is not unproblematic: utilizing local potential faces challenges of capacity deficits, broken or non-existent social mechanisms and a questionable willingness of local society to re-order itself or be co-opted by external actors. However, the studies in this

project indicated the presence of networked and interactive local power (examples in Ukraine, Mali, Yemen, Colombia, and Guatemala among others) and the need to identify and mobilize it. However, the implication is that EU capabilities could be enhanced through engaging not only directly in terms of acting, coordinating and funding, but also indirectly by identifying change multipliers in terms of both local actors and processes.

Despite what its name suggests, a WOS approach does not imply that the EU should simply expand its actions or add to its capabilities. A WOS approach is not an argument for 'more Europe', requiring the EU to work with every civil society group or increase its relationships and policies in a potentially infinite extension of the vertical and horizontal axes of inclusion and comprehensiveness. This would be neither feasible nor effective. On the contrary, one key finding of this research has been that in terms of capabilities and demonstrating a logic and coherence of action, the EU is already overstretched and dilutes rather than maximizes its impact. Simply extending its vertical and horizontal reach risks undermining rather than enhancing its capabilities.

In order to improve its performance in (post-)conflict regions, the EU does not necessarily need more coordination, more ownership, or more integration of policies, but a better capacity to manoeuvre in complex settings, based on a better understanding of the situation and the strategic options it has. The capacity to analyse particular (and changing) contexts, to define key strategic objectives, to define priorities and comparative advantages, and work with other actors entails a profound understanding of context and changes in context. While context includes national (elite) level and geopolitical determinants, it is in the 'immediate context' (the actor constellations and political processes that shape the room for manoeuvre that the EU has to deploy and maximise its impact) which is particularly important.

### 5.3 Future research

We finalize this chapter with reflections on future research into EU capabilities and WOS as an approach informing EU policies and interventions.

#### **Involving local society – prospects for deeper and different engagements**

We have focused on WOS as an approach whereby the EU can enhance its capabilities through actively managing the complexity and nuance of local society. A potential area for further research is to see how the EU mobilises actors and processes from a broader set of social layers and capacities within its own populations to enrich the capabilities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Such a perspective is alluded to in work on the concept of publics, including 'inactive' and 'forgotten' publics (Hallahan, 2000) and overlooked stakeholders (Brunk, 2015). In this regard the concept of social capital can also be useful. How can existing local social capital be used to enhance EU capabilities as part of a resilience-building legacy of intervention. In addition, the different types of cooperation with as well as resistances against EU presence, the ways the EU deals with 'contrasting' agendas in recipient countries, and how a WOS approach might deal with these tensions, could be further investigated. Local level research, including in-depth interviews and discussions focus groups, which take into account the different understandings and practices of (everyday) peace and intervention, would yield interesting insights that may be relevant to existing and future EU interventions.

### **A more fine-grained understanding of capabilities in context**

A key assumption of this study has been that capabilities are forged in interaction with other actors and in context. These interactions can take many forms: consensus, obedience, confrontation, negotiation, resistance, persuasion, etc. While the studies in the WOSCAP project pay attention to the complexity of policy processes and how context influences the outcomes of policies, our understanding of how policies develop in context, which social processes determine how capabilities are made and unmade, and what the agency and perceptions are of different stakeholders, are still limited. A fine grained analysis of a small number of similar and comparable EU policies in different contexts can shed light on these processes and provide lessons about how EU policy making works in different contexts, how capabilities are forged, and what opportunities for future action of the EU and other international actors are.

### **Internal drivers of EU policy making in the field of conflict management**

Another area of further research could be to carry out more systematic research on EU's internal (technical, institutional, political/strategic) drivers and constraints for a WOS approach. In several of the studies that were conducted in the framework of this programme the importance of internal decision making processes and politics were addressed (e.g. in the field of MTD, desk studies Afghanistan and Kosovo). A fine grained analysis of these processes may lead to a better understanding of the EU's limitations and opportunities to work in the field of conflict management and to apply a WOS approach. This would require interviews with EU staff both in Brussels and in-country, as well as their counterparts and other persons that have been involved in the process of policy formulation and implementation.

### **The 'price' and comparative benefits of EU peacebuilding and conflict prevention**

There clearly is a cost constraint in seeking to do more than the EU already does through multiple forms of intervention, including over longer time frames. It was beyond the scope of this research to assess the cost/benefit implications of a WOS approach, but it is an avenue for further study. The hypothesis is that WOS could bring efficiency gains in terms of improving the information on which EU policy decisions are based, in increasing the availability of options for action through working with the social fabric of local societies and in lessening friction and contestation which derail initiatives and waste resources. The WOSCAP research has provided indications that these might be outcomes of a WOS approach, but these claims would require empirical testing in the future.

### **The EU in relation to other international actors**

Another avenue of research is to undertake comparative research on other multinational/regional organisations (such as the AU, OSCE) in order to bring to light the EU's specific added values or hindrances when it comes to applying a WOS approach to interventions in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

### **Conduct meta level studies**

The WOSCAP project has shown that carrying out multiple country case studies and thematic studies, combining these in a 'meta-analysis', provides mileage in terms of available insights, evidence, comparisons, and context-specificity. It could be considered to repeat such studies in other countries, and to expand these to other 'clusters' of EU intervention.

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