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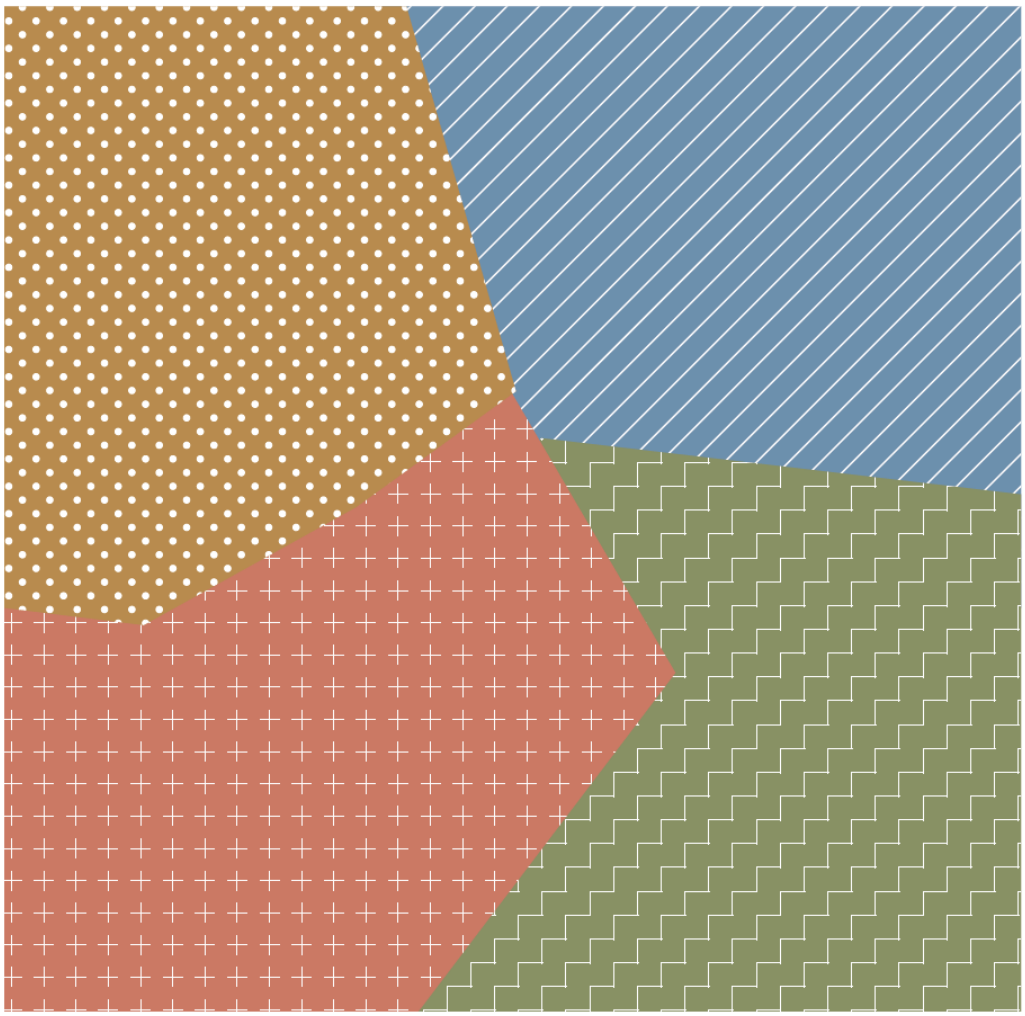

Multi-stakeholder Coherence at the Core of EU Comprehensiveness

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Colophon

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COHERENCE AT THE CORE OF EU COMPREHENSIVENESS

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Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

This scoping study was produced as part of the project "Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding", which aims to enhance the EU's peacebuilding and conflict prevention capabilities.

This paper is part of the first series of orientation papers that were intended to indicate lines of inquiry and propose research questions, as a basis for discussion and input for the project's Theoretical and Methodological Framework. They seek to provide an overview of scholarly knowledge about the EU's capabilities and means for conflict prevention and peacebuilding in relation to several cross-cutting themes and clusters that the project focuses on. More information at www.woscap.eu

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Executive Summary

The multi-stakeholder approach refers to a reflection on the European Union's choice of partners in order to act coherently in the field of peacebuilding and conflict prevention. One of the major difficulties of this scoping study lies in the fact that the term "multi-stakeholder approach" does not exist as such, neither in EU official documents, nor in the literature. This notion has not been conceptualised, but implicitly appears as an intrinsic part of the Comprehensive Approach developed by the EU and 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, p.1). The Joint Communication on the EU's Comprehensive Approach also stressed that "comprehensiveness refers not only to the joined-up deployment of EU instruments and resources, but also to the shared responsibility of EU-level actors and Member States" (HRVP, 2013, p.3). The European authorities have considered this concept as a leading principle for the EU's external action (HRVP, 2013, p.2), as "this contributes greatly to the Union's ability to play a positive and transformative role in its external relations and as a global actor" (Council of the EU, 2014).

The ability of the European Union to address contemporary security challenges is both contingent on context-specific and operational challenges in the field, and subject to its own internal political and policy dynamics. The context of multiplication of the actors involved in the field of peacebuilding and conflict resolution, often implies confusion and counterproductive results due to lack of coordination. International peacebuilding interventions face two central challenges. The first challenge concerns coordination and synergies in the field, due to an increasing range of national, regional and international actors involved in peacebuilding. The second challenge is about ensuring the relevance and ownership of such interventions to local populations. In addition, within the general field of international relations, there has been a change in the perception of who are the relevant actors in peacebuilding and conflict prevention actions, with a focus on the effectiveness of local stakeholders, such as regional organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) or civil society, in compliance with the United Nations (UN) principle of subsidiarity. This principle is included in article 52, Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, and states the primacy of local and regional actions "to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through [...] regional arrangements or by [...] regional agencies either on the initiative of the states concerned or by reference from the Security Council" (United Nations, 1945). The subsidiarity principle as foreseen in the UN Charter has been included in the article 3.5 of the Treaty of the European Union voted in Lisbon in 2009. From a whole-of-society perspective, comprehensiveness starts at the local level, and implies that the EU seeks to work in synergy alongside other state and non-state actors, to leverage partnerships and burden-sharing from the local to national and regional levels.

Regarding its financial and technical means, with a wide range of instruments at its disposal, the European Union has considerable involvement capabilities around the world and is the largest provider of international aid in the world. The idea behind the WOSCAP project is that the EU's peacebuilding interventions can be more effective and produce more sustainable

results if these challenges are addressed up-front and as part of an inclusive whole-of-society approach. Therefore, the European Union (EU) is committed to 'effective multilateralism' as a normative principle through comprehensiveness, in order to achieve optimum division of labour and to improve coherence. The multi-stakeholder approach has been an intrinsic part of the EU's Comprehensive Approach, based on co-operation and collaboration among multiple actors. It has not been conceptualised in EU policies but this scoping study proposes that the multi-stakeholder approach includes three categories of actors. First, coherence and complementarity have been valued within the EU and Member States, across the range of EU institutions and capabilities including civilian and military actors and processes. The multi-stakeholder approach also implies coherence with international and regional governmental organisations, such as the UN, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the African Union (AU), but also coherence between the EU and civil society organisations and the private sector. In addition to these three dimensions, this scoping study identifies two lines of analysis: the multi-stakeholder approach refers first to the inclusion of actors, and then to the way these actors are working together, through partnerships, sharing of information, dialogue, etc.

By paying attention to realities both at field-level and in the policy arena in Brussels, this scoping study aims to show that the EU multi-stakeholder approach has been a progressive process. It will first give an overview of the historical developments of the EU multi-stakeholder approach through comprehensive instruments and policies. Then, the study will cover the different multi-stakeholder approaches implemented by the EU in order to work towards enhanced comprehensiveness, first within EU institutions and Member States, with international and regional governmental organisations and with civil society organisations. Each part will be analysed through the prism of coherence, both in terms of inclusivity and of experience of working together. Then, the study will give an overview of the connections and overlaps with other peacebuilding and conflict prevention concepts and approaches.

1. Prompting a multi-stakeholder approach at the core of comprehensiveness

The European Union is perceived by itself (Council of the EU, 2009; Council of the EU, 2014) and by academics (Barry, 2012; Furness, 2014) as a global actor, involved on the international scene in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Indeed, a number of academics (Woollard, 2011; Barry, 2012; Zwolski, 2012; EPLO, 2013; Hauck and Sherriff, 2013; Faria, 2014; Furness, 2014; Hauck and Rocca, 2014) agree that the capabilities of the EU are based on a wide range of instruments and policies, its broad mandate, expertise and financing capabilities. But in order to improve effectiveness, EU policies have been focused on coherence and comprehensiveness since the 2000s with the same message, based on enhancing co-operation and collaboration with other actors and within EU institutions. Efforts towards comprehensiveness have therefore implemented a multi-stakeholder approach which although it has not been conceptualised as such in EU policies, set the basis for improved coherence with the actors involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Three dimensions have been progressively highlighted in EU policies: coherence within EU institutions and Member States, coherence with international and regional organisations, and coherence with civil society organisations.

The 3Cs ideology developed in the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 (Hauck and Rocca, 2014), referring to the commitment of European leaders to improve co-ordination, complementarity and coherence, has been considered as the starting point for growing awareness that the EU needs to adopt a Comprehensive Approach, especially in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This idea was further developed, especially in 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)[1] and in the 2001 Communication from the Commission on Conflict Prevention (EC, 2001), until it led to the signing of the EU Gothenburg Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts (2001). This programme served in setting the stage for putting conflict prevention and peacebuilding as priorities on the EU's agenda, and stressed the necessity to co-operate with local, regional and international actors in order to address current complex threats.[2]

The EU Comprehensive Approach was then formally presented in the 2003 European Security Strategy (European Council, 2003).[3] Stating that security and development challenges are now interconnected, the 2003 ESS and its revision in 2008 pointed to the necessity of

[1] "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)

[2] "*The EU must build and sustain mutually reinforcing and effective partnerships for prevention with the UN, the OSCE and other international and regional organisations as well as the civil society. Increased co-operation is needed at all levels, from early warning and analysis to action and evaluation. Field co-ordination is of particular importance. EU action should be guided by principles of value added and comparative advantage*" (Council of the EU, 2001a, p.7)

[3] "In contrast to the massive visible threat in the Cold War, none of the new [global security] threats is purely military; nor can any be tackled by purely military means. Each requires a mixture of instruments." (European Council, 2003, p.7)

using EU policies and instruments in a more coherent and co-ordinated manner at different levels and stages of the conflict.[4] All these commitments were legally enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty of 2009, with the aim of achieving more effective external action. This document explicitly sets conflict prevention and peacebuilding as core objectives of the EU's external policy, underpinned by the deployment of a more Comprehensive Approach with the wide range of foreign policy instruments at the EU's disposal. The creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission (HRVP) were further supposed to increase the co-ordination of EU's external action.

Coherence has thus been considered as a priority since the 2000s, and its importance has been repeated regularly. The 2011 Council Conclusions on Conflict Prevention (Council of the EU, 2011) and the 2014 Council Conclusions on the EU's Comprehensive Approach (Council of the EU, 2014) reaffirmed the principles of the Gothenburg Programme of 2001 (Council of the EU, 2001a), and stressed the need to combine all the EU's available instruments more effectively, the necessity of improving early warning, the need to take into account the regional context of the EU's actions. More recently, references to coherence were made in the Guidance Note of 2013 (EEAS and EC, 2013) or in the Council conclusions on the EU's Comprehensive Approach: "The Council recalls the Conclusions from the European Council of December 2013 as regards the importance of ensuring the greatest possible coherence between the Union's and Member States' actions to support partner countries and regional organisations" (Council of the EU, 2014, p.4).

[4] This statement was reaffirmed in the 2007 Communication entitled "Towards an EU response to situations of fragility" (EC, 2007b)

2. State of the art – Efforts towards comprehensiveness through multi-stakeholder approaches

2.1. Cooperation within the EU institutions and Member States

The new structures established with the Lisbon Treaty were supposed to implement both institutional and instrumental coherence, by simplifying co-ordination within the arsenal of foreign policy instruments at the EU's disposal and by reducing the gaps between the different bodies dealing with conflict prevention and peacebuilding. All the EU actors involved in the EU's external action have implemented ways of working together, but competition and lack of clarity remain a challenging issue.

2.1.1. Inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders

Institutional changes have been implemented since the Lisbon Treaty, requiring enhanced co-operation within the new EEAS and between the EU institutions and Member States, overriding their preferences for bilateral policy. The strategy has been to bring together all the instruments of the EU's external action in a single network under the co-ordination of the HRVP: the EEAS (Barry, 2012). The EEAS is made up of the former DG Relex[5] and other elements from the European Commission, and of the part of the Council Secretariat which had been responsible for foreign and security policy (Zwolski, 2012). Among the actors engaged in EU external policy, the multi-stakeholder approach also refers to coherence between civilian and military actors. For a long time, civilian means and conflict prevention were not as developed as military means. Even if the EC had early warning resources[6], most efforts were still concentrated on crisis management through ESDP/CSDP (European Security and Defence Policy/EU Common Security and Defence Policy) missions (Duke, 2011).[7] EU external action was therefore characterised by being responsive instead of pro-active, favouring crisis management over conflict prevention (EPLO, 2011). This imbalance changed when conflict prevention was introduced in the Petersberg Tasks, and further integrated into CSDP by the Lisbon Treaty.[8] Coherence between EU civilian and military actors was also increased through the incorporation of crisis management bodies such as the Crisis Management and Planning

[5] Former Directorate-General of the European Commission, responsible for the external policy

[6] These sources especially come from the EU Delegations on the ground

[7] CSDP missions were actually the strongest response that can be deployed by the EU, but were not really compatible with early response (Bewick, 2012) due to the long timeline required between concept and action. Indeed, long decision-making process was necessary due to the high level of authority required.

[8] Following the idea of a comprehensive approach, as currently, civilian and military missions are led under the CSDP framework.

Directorate (CMPD) and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) (Barry, 2012) into the EEAS, enabling co-operation between both civilian and military components. The CMPD is the result of the fusion of Directorates E VIII and E IX and allows for an integrated planning capacity[9] for CSDP missions (Beswick, 2012).

In order to implement an effective Comprehensive Approach, the EEAS has to cooperate with the EU Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament. These actors have to agree on objectives and strategies regarding the country or region involved (Woollard, 2013). The necessity of co-operation was highlighted with the publication of the 2013 Joint Communication on the EU's Comprehensive Approach (HRVP, 2013), in order to clarify a common understanding of both strategic goals and what the Comprehensive Approach entailed. Nevertheless, centralising the EU's external action instruments remains incomplete, since the EU's response to conflict is still divided across different institutions and structures, especially between the EEAS and the European Commission (EC). The institutional changes are not completely clear, a situation which is reinforced by the legal and bureaucratic complexity of the EU system (Furness, 2014). It appears that the distribution of specific tasks has been poorly defined and led to confusion about the role of each institution, the distribution and complementarity of tasks and co-ordination mechanisms. In fact, complementarity has been supplanted by competition (Faria, 2014), especially between the EEAS and the EC. Overlaps exist between them, increasing tensions over resources. It occurred when the Managing Directorate within the Crisis Response and Operational Coordination (MDWCROPC) of the EEAS decided to include humanitarian assistance as a priority on its agenda. This was criticised because it touched the competence of ECHO and DG DEVCO (EPLO, 2013). As a result of this lack of rationalisation, separate early warning and conflict analysis tools have been introduced without mechanisms for co-operation, leading to reduced effectiveness. One example of the duplication of instruments has been the creation of the EEAS Division for Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Mediation Instruments, whereas a similar division already existed inside DG DEVCO (EPLO, 2015). The 2013 Joint Communication on the EU's Comprehensive Approach (HRVP, 2013) was supposed to show consensus and a common understanding of how the EU could work more comprehensively (Faria, 2014). But, as Hauck and Sherriff stressed in their article in 2013, "it does not set out very concrete and tangible structures and processes on who and with whom the Union should work when, where and how" (Hauck and Sherriff, 2013). The EU lacks a competent and legitimate authority in charge of the direction of the EU's external actions strategy[10] (Zwolski, 2012; Hauck and Rocca, 2014).

The Comprehensive Approach cannot be achieved without taking into account Member States. First, because they are decision-makers in EU policy, and the EU needs their approval in order to implement the Comprehensive Approach. Second, EU Member States can also be considered as external actors to be reckoned with, regarding co-operation and co-ordination (EPLO, 2013). However, the lack of concrete guidelines and objectives on major issues in EU strategic documents is mainly attributable to the difficulties in securing agreement among

[9] As the first one was dealing with defence and the other one with civilian crisis management

[10] Speaking with one voice is necessary to improve coherence between the institutions, but it implies a political process which is costly for these institutions, along with Member States.

Member States on prioritising resources (Brante et al., 2011). Differences between EU Member States remain the main obstacle to being able to speak with one voice in EU external action. Conflicting views imply that there is no clear European position, or that Member State positions will undermine what EU delegations can do in the field (Furness, 2014). Moreover, a greater role assumed by the EC and the EEAS in the area of conflict prevention and peacebuilding flies in the face of a traditional preference by Member States for bilateral policy.[11] Mark Furness (2014) gives the example of South Sudan, where Member States decided to implement a joint programming exercise rather than allowing the EU Delegations to act on their behalf. Therefore, support for the EU's Comprehensive Approach is directly linked to a more general willingness to integrate politically within the Union (Hauck and Rocca, 2014). It remains a challenge as the EU needs the political will of EU Member States to implement a common and unique coherent strategy.

2.1.2. Different ways of working together

Co-operation within EU institutions has been enhanced through instrumental changes, and covers a number of key aspects, such as information sharing, action planning and the co-ordination of external policy instruments. However, competition and fragmentation remain challenging.

Co-ordination between EU actors involved in external action has been based on information sharing, and communication has been improved from the ground to the decision-making level, particularly thanks to the expansion of the mandate of EU Delegations under the Treaty of Lisbon. It has allowed them to share information with thematic directorates of the EC or with relevant divisions of the EEAS, or to report to geographic desks within the EEAS (Beswick, 2012). For instance, heads of EU Delegations (Barry, 2012) can provide political guidance to policy-makers in Brussels. Another illustration is the sharing of military expertise by the Director General of the EUMS (Barry, 2012). However, information sharing is made difficult by the multiplicity of actors involved, while the EEAS has strengthened hierarchical relations and led to more restricted communication rules (Brante et al., 2011). For instance, the agreement of the HRVP is required before acting in a crisis situation and this may represent an overload of process and time-wasting (EPLO, 2011).

As many actors are involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, planning is a key part of the implementation of a coherent strategy. Indeed, while information sharing has been effective between institutions, the issue is rather to find the right combination of EU instruments. The Comprehensive Approach requires coherence in the use of all the instruments at the EU's disposal (Barry, 2012), implying a combination of long and short term objectives, crisis management and crisis prevention, and of civilian and military means, in compliance with the human security concept (Kaldor, Martin and Selchow, 2008). Regarding crisis management planning, coherence and collaboration among civilian and military actors was deepened when

[11] These conflicting views imply that there may not be a clear European position, or that differing Member State positions may undermine what the EU delegation is trying to establish on the field (Furness, 2014).

conflict prevention was introduced into the Petersberg Tasks, and further integrated into CSDP by the Lisbon Treaty.[12] The requirement for civil-military cooperation is emphasised by the concept of human security, which was proposed as part of the EU doctrine in 2004. As seen earlier, crisis management cells have been incorporated within the EEAS and have made it possible to implement missions like the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa. Launched in 2011, this mission represents a significant example of military operations supporting civilian actions (Barry, 2012). It demonstrated that civil-military co-operation is possible, and that the current structures allow the right combination of instruments.[13] On 12 December 2011, EU Foreign Ministers agreed on the launch of a new CSDP mission, called EUCAP NESTOR, in order to support regional maritime capacity building (RMCB) in the Horn of Africa and West Indian Ocean. This civilian mission, supported by military expertise, was planned to have an initial mandate of two years. The military operations were accompanied by EU civilian engagement, especially through the Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan, and through development aid funding (Barry, 2012). Planning also refers to the use of financial means by the EU and the balance between long-term and short-term objectives. The Instrument for Stability (IfS), established in 2007, allocated 73% of its budget to short-term projects under Article 3 (EPRD, ITALTREND and SOCABA, 2014, p.4) of the IfS Regulation, whereas the IfS Crisis Preparedness component[14] under Article 4 only represented 5% of the total funding. In 2014, the IfS was replaced by the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP).[15] The overall budget was increased, from €2.06 billion to € 2.34 billion, while the financial allocation for Article 4 was doubled, from "5% of € 2.06 billion under the IfS to 9% of € 2.34 billion under the IcSP" (EPLO, 2014, p.1). However, the budget allocated to stability and peace under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 remains small in comparison to other components.[16]

Finding the right combination of instruments is essential to implement coherent action (Furness, 2014). Depending on the situation, this combination has to be rapidly deployable, and compatible with a changing context on the ground (Furness, 2014). Intra-EU coherence has been improved by the creation of a Crisis Platform (Barry 2012)[17], which allows the heads of

[12] Following the idea of a comprehensive approach, as currently, civilian and military missions are led under the CSDP framework.

[13] The fact that it happened in Africa is significant, as consensus between Member States seems easier to achieve on African issues, due to past experiences and the interests of EU Member States. Nevertheless, the launch of this Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa was a good example of the EU's Comprehensive Approach following a multi-stakeholder approach.

[14] This component is defined in Article 4.3 of the Regulation as "support for long-term measures aimed at building and strengthening the capacity of international, regional and sub-regional organisations, state and non-state actors in relation to their efforts in (a) promoting early warning, confidence-building, mediation and reconciliation, and addressing emerging inter-community tensions; (b) improving post-conflict and post-disaster recovery." (European Parliament and Council of the EU, 2014, art. 4.3)

[15] The IcSP was established by the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2010

[16] For instance, the overall budget for the Development Cooperation Instrument is €19.662 billion (Council of the EU, 2013)

[17] This Crisis Platform can be convened by the HRVP, EEAS Executive Secretary General or the EEAS Managing Director for Crisis Response and Operational Co-ordination

each of the EU instruments concerned to meet in order to co-ordinate a joint response when facing a crisis situation. But most of the time, "different institutions and actors are responsible for managing the wide range of EU policies and instruments, and they aren't necessarily obliged to engage with or consult each other, even when policies or actions in one dimension impact on another" (Faria, 2014, p.11). The fragmentation of the EU's response to conflict is visible through the division of development policies across different services, whereas their integration within a unique service would have implied better coherence (Woollard, 2011). However, it is assumed in the European Security Strategy of 2003 (European Council, 2003) and its review (European Council, 2008), as well as in the 2006 Consensus on Development (EU, 2006) that "there cannot be sustainable development without peace and security, and without development and poverty eradication there will be no sustainable peace" (European Council, 2008, p.8). Moreover, EU instruments, which are owned by different institutions, require different levels of authorisation, which implies less flexibility, "leading to a fragmented, slow and unresponsive process of policy-planning" (Brante et al., 2011, p.26). It is particularly the case concerning control over financial instruments, as the service in charge of the EU's external action does not have a complete overview of the instruments involved. In this regard, the EU Delegations' budget and staff remain managed by DG DEVCO even if they are under the political authority and responsibility of the HRVP. Similarly, the Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), a key external action instrument, was created outside of the EEAS, as a new European Commission Directorate General.

2.2. Co-operation with international and regional governmental organisations

The EU, with a wide range of instruments at its disposal, along with the financial means available, is a key actor in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding (Barry, 2012; Furness, 2014). As the international context is currently characterised by the involvement of other powerful international organisations, the EU Gothenburg Programme of 2001 (Council of the EU, 2001a) aimed to enhance co-operation with international organisations and regional actors in order to derive added value from each organisation (Council of the EU, 2002). Co-operation has been formalised through information sharing, financial support and partnership, but has sometimes taken a long time to develop.

2.2.1. Inclusion of different international and regional stakeholders

Comprehensiveness at the international level has been progressively implemented through EU co-operation with multilateral actors – such as the UN, the OECD or the OSCE – and regional organisations. The necessity to co-ordinate external action with other multilateral actors has been systematically highlighted since the EU Gothenburg Programme (Council of the EU, 2001a) in order to apply a multi-stakeholder approach in the face of increasingly complex

threats.[18] The EU highlighted the need for international co-ordination as part of Civil-Military Coordination (Council of the EU, 2003). The 2011 Council Conclusions on Conflict Prevention (Council of the EU, 2011) re-affirmed the Gothenburg Programme as a valid policy basis, and put the emphasis on the intensification of such partnerships to improve the EU's action in the field of long-term structural conflict prevention. More recently, the 2013 Joint Communication on the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflict and crisis (HRVP, 2013) reaffirmed that the EU's action is linked with the action, resources and expertise of other actors in the field, and that it has to be taken in consideration when developing EU positions. Therefore, various EU Annual and Presidency Reports (Council of the EU, 2006a; Council of the EU, 2007; Council of the EU, 2008; Council of the EU, 2010) highlighted the EU's willingness to co-operate with the OSCE, the OECD, the UN and the UN. Specifically, the necessity of enhanced partnerships with the UN has been regularly re-affirmed in EU policy documents.[19] The UN is considered by the EU as the most important actor in the area of international peace mediation, and because it offers the most legal framework (Council of the EU, 2009), it is therefore also seen as the best partner for the EU. A joint consultative mechanism[20] was established in 2006 between the EU and the UN, as well as a Steering Committee to co-ordinate joint work between the Secretariats in crisis management and relevant European Commission services (Council of the EU, 2006a, p.14).

The subsidiarity principle as foreseen in the 1945 UN Charter is consistent with the move towards a Comprehensive Approach, and pushed the EU to favour integrated regional actions. Therefore, the EU provides assistance to allow the development of technical and financial means in regional organisations, especially in Africa. The Africa ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement was signed on 23 June 2000, and financed by the European Development Fund. It included more support for peacebuilding processes and political activities, to improve and develop non-state actors' engagement and develop political dialogue. It has allowed the launch of the African Peace Facility in 2004, which provides support for peace building and peacekeeping operations (EC, n.d.c).

[18] "The EU must build and sustain mutually reinforcing and effective partnerships for prevention with the UN, the OSCE and other international and regional organisations as well as the civil society. Increased co-operation is needed at all levels, from early warning and analysis to action and evaluation. Field co-ordination is of particular importance. EU action should be guided by principles of value added and comparative advantage" (Council of the EU, 2001a, p.7)

[19] It has been reaffirmed in documents such as the Council Common Position concerning conflict prevention management and resolution in Africa (Council of the EU, 2001b), or in the Concept on strengthening EU mediation and dialogue capacities (Council of the EU, 2009)

[20] This joint consultative mechanism's aim was to analyse what can be done to improve mutual co-ordination and complementarity, regarding planning, training, communication and exchanges of lessons learned.

2.2.2. Different ways of working together

Co-operation with international and regional actors has taken the form of financial support, information sharing, and partnerships. Nonetheless, lack of experience of working together is slowing down the co-operation process.

The EU is one of the major contributors to peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The way of supporting financially other international and regional organisations constitutes a good prism to understand its endeavours. As the EU perceived the UN as the major international actor in peacebuilding and conflict prevention (Council of the EU, 2009), the European Commission has provided 63% of its funding for conflict prevention to international organisations (EPLO 2011) between the implementation of the Gothenburg Programme and 2011. In addition, the EU has repeated several times its commitment to contributing actively to the work of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (UNPBC)[21], which was set-up in 2006. More recently, the EU showed its support to the OSCE through the provision of additional funding, as the Organisation was seen as the "most appropriate framework to manage the crisis and prevent further escalation" (Lehne, 2015) in the Ukraine situation that unfolded in 2014.

In respecting the subsidiarity principle, the EU seeks to provide financial and technical support to regional organisations in order to improve their intervention capacity on the ground. The ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement demonstrated EU willingness to "move beyond simply the provision of humanitarian assistance to new forms of engagement and influence" (Bayne, 2003, p.23). Nonetheless, competition at the regional level often limits the coherence of such support. To illustrate this, Haysom recalls that the AU considers itself as the main actor in Africa: "In theory, the AU establishes rules of co-operation with regional economic communities which should guide complementary action, within which the AU's role has primacy" (Haysom, 2014, p.10). But its authority is challenged by sub-regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) or the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), who demand increasing control over conflict responses in their areas (International Crisis Group, 2013). This multiplies initiatives on the ground without co-ordination, adding to incoherence. The rivalry and competition between the AU and ECOWAS has been particularly visible in the handling of the Mali crisis in 2012 (Théroux-Bénoni, 2013). The initial response was undertaken by ECOWAS with a multidimensional mission (MICEMA), without the support of the AU. This solution was rescinded, to be replaced by the involvement of the AU through a continental initiative, with the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) (Théroux-Bédoni, 2013). A common initiative at the first stages of the crisis would have increased coherence on the ground (International Crisis Group, 2013; Haysom, 2014).

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[21] "The Peacebuilding Commission plays a unique role in (1) bringing together all of the relevant actors, including international donors, international financial institutions, national governments, troop contributing countries; (2) marshalling resources and (3) advising on and proposing integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery and where appropriate, highlighting any gaps that threaten to undermine peace". (http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/)

The level of information sharing is another axis to understand co-operation between the EU and international organisations. It was fully implemented between the EU and the UN with the establishment in 2006 of a joint consultative mechanism[22], as well as a Steering Committee to co-ordinate joint work between the Secretariats in crisis management and the relevant European Commission services (Council of the EU, 2006a, p.14). The aim was to continue the on-going "desk-to-desk" dialogue that has been initiated with UN teams on conflict prevention through regular meetings. But competition has frustrated the level of information-sharing between actors. The OSCE-EU partnership was weakened during the 2000s, after the sharing of sensitive information between the OSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre and the EU Joint Situation Centre (known as the SitCen) was limited by the EU. The organisation refused to share information with non-EU/non-NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) members, and has resorted to restricted case-by-case co-operation (Gross and Juncos, 2011).

Co-operation between international organisations can also take the form of formal partnership. This term is often used in order to define a wide range of co-operation actions and relationships, particularly in the area of development. In the international context, partnerships between multilateral organisations historically suggest equality, respect, reciprocity and trust between the actors concerned (Bailey & Dolan, 2011). Once this equality is broken, partnerships become inefficient. After the launch of a joint consultative mechanism in 2006 between the UN and the EU to analyse what could be done to improve mutual co-ordination and complementarity, the two organisations worked together with the aim of developing and implementing a "strategic multi-agency project" (UN, n.d.) for building capacities for land, natural resources and conflict prevention in 2008. It was based on the pooling of capabilities and capacities of national stakeholders, the UN system and the EU.[23] The EU also took part in multilateral partnerships between actors with a common objective of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, for example with the OECD: in 2006 the EU (Council of the EU, 2006a) reinforced its commitment, along with Member States, to contribute actively to various subsidiary groups of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC)[24], such as the DAC Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation or the DAC Fragile States Group. In this framework, multilateral[25] and bilateral[26] donors were brought together to cooperate on policy and operational guidance about conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and security sector reform (Council of the EU, 2006a).

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[22] This joint consultative mechanism's aim was to analyse what could be done to improve mutual co-ordination and complementarity, regarding planning, training, communication and exchanges of lessons learned.

[23] The first phase of this project was the development of guidance and training material on several topics (Land and conflict, Extractive industries and conflict, Environmental scarcity and conflict, and Capacity development for managing land and natural resources). The second phase of the project consisted of delivering training modules for UN and EU staffs on the field and local stakeholders. (UNEP, n.d.)

[24] The OECD Development Assistance Committee has a mandate to "promote development co-operation and other policies so as to contribute to sustainable development, including [...]-poor economic growth, poverty reduction, improvement of living standards in developing countries, and a future in which no country will depend on aid" (OECD, 2010a)

[25] The UN and the World Bank

[26] The EU Member States, the US, Canada, Japan, etc.

Co-ordination can be challenged by the lack of experience of working together and of information sharing between international organisations acting in the same field of peacebuilding. The sharing of common perceptions and definitions helps to implement coherent actions and policies, responding to shared objectives of peace. Thus, Furness (2014) observed a lack of co-ordination at international level regarding the slow adaptation of EU policies to OECD or World Bank standards on issues concerning fragile states and conflicts. These two organisations have provided the normative framework through guidelines and criteria[27] as a basis for an international coherent action. But the translation of their standards into EU norms has taken time (Furness, 2014). For instance, the OECD guidance for establishing responsible supply chains of minerals from conflict-affected and high-risk areas, published in 2010, became the basis for an EU Regulation, which was only drafted in 2014. At the organisational level, a lack of experience in working together can also have an impact on collaboration. For instance, co-operation between the EU and the OSCE in the 2000s was weakened by differences related to organisational culture, as the EU gave priority to dialogue at headquarters level, whereas the OSCE activity was largely field-based (Gross and Juncos, 2011).

2.3. Co-operation with civil society organisations

The necessity of including civil society organisations when intervening in third countries has been consistently highlighted in EU policies. Efforts have been made to legitimate EU actions on the ground, particularly through dialogue and information sharing. The inclusion of international NGOs on the ground has been deepened although improved co-operation with local actors has taken time.

2.3.1. Inclusion of civil society organisations

The inclusion of civil society stakeholders refers firstly to international NGOs, and to a lesser extent to local NGOs and actors, and the private sector.

Pouligny highlights the fact that, as with many popular academic concepts, there is no clear universal definition on the meaning of “civil society” (Pouligny, 2005). The European Union provides the following definition: “The concept of "CSOs" embraces a wide range of actors with different roles and mandates. Definitions vary over time and across institutions and countries. The EU considers CSOs to include all non-State, not-for-profit structures, non-partisan and non-violent, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic.” (European Commission, 2012, p.3). If this definition clearly includes grassroots organisations, local and international NGOs and various local authorities, the inclusion of the private sector is not made explicit. Co-operation with civil society actors has mainly taken the form of information sharing, dialogue and mutual support.

[27] The OECD for instance provided guidelines about fragile states or under-developed countries (World Bank, 2007; OECD, 2010b)

Considering its multi-stakeholder approach, the major change in EU action has been incentives for dialogue with local stakeholders, especially since the emergence of the 2009 Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities (Council of the EU, 2009). This concept also emphasised the promotion of women's participation in mediation processes and peace negotiations, in compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820.

NGOs are seen by the EU as privileged actors in the field (Pirozzi, 2013b). The Gothenburg Programme (Council of the EU, 2001a) initially pointed out the added value of co-operation with NGOs, along with the Cotonou Agreement of 2000 which highlighted the role of civil society. This commitment to a participatory approach was reaffirmed with the 2002 Communication on the Participation of non-state actors in EC Development Policy (EC, 2002). Subsequently, the ESDP Procedures for Coherent, Comprehensive EU Crisis Management of 2003 noted that "modalities for co-ordination in the field between the EU and international organisations, local authorities and NGOs need to be developed" (EPLO, 2007, pp.7-8). It has encouraged consultation with NGOs "regarding early warning mechanisms, strategic and operational planning and mission implementation" (EPLO, 2007, p.7). Further, the report 'Partners Apart: Enhancing Co-operation between Civil Society and EU Civilian Crisis Management' (EPLO, 2007) reaffirmed the importance of NGOs in providing knowledge and expertise for civilian ESDP missions. Thus NGOs have been regularly involved in EU processes and discussions. For instance, the EU Action Plan for Civilian Aspects of ESDP (EC, 2004) supported regular exchanges with civil society organisations, particularly about EU civilian crisis management. The CivCom agreement on Recommendations for Enhancing Co-operation with Non-Governmental Organisations and Civil Society Organisations in the Framework of EU Civilian Crisis Management and Conflict Prevention (Council of the EU, 2006b), approved by the Political and Security Committee in November 2006, led to meetings organized by CIVCOM (Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management). Field experts from European NGOs were invited for informal exchanges, with the aim of participating in the preparation of EU concepts and policy documents. The problem is that academics and EU policy-makers do not distinguish between international and local NGOs, while academics have observed that the integration of local NGOs has been far less developed than the integration of international ones (Reich, 2006).

Regarding local stakeholders, the EU's official position has been the same since the 1990s, based on co-operation and support to civil society actors. The revision of the European Security Strategy of 2008 (European Council, 2008) recognised the key role of civil society in the prevention and response to conflict, which was restated in the 2015 Annual Action Programme for the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) (EC, 2015), as "effective implementing partner[s], able to ensure a strong co-relation between local needs and implemented projects and [to] achieve tangible results at grassroots level" (EC, 2015, p.3). Indeed, international stakeholders broadly agree over the value of local ownership in peacebuilding, meaning the necessity to involve local stakeholders in the various processes implemented on the field.[28] The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) stated that

[28] This is accentuated by the fact that since the mid-1990s, conflicts have largely taken place within societies, implying the search for local solutions (Reich, 2006).

sustainable development "must be locally owned" (OECD, 1996). When intervening in developing countries, the lack of legitimacy of local authorities in fragile states commits EU staff to deal with non-government as well as government partners (Furness, 2014). They are important interlocutors and may have the power to legitimate governments' or external actors' activities through their support (Furness, 2014). Moreover, the 2012 Communication on Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations underlined the increasing role of civil society in creating social impacts on the local economy to sustain development and peace (EC, 2012, p.9). The EU committed itself to support these initiatives in various sectors, with a special focus on job creation and the stimulation of economic growth. Despite these efforts towards enhanced co-operation with local actors, it has been observed that there is an unequal sharing of power because of the binary division between donors and beneficiaries, which impedes the full integration of local stakeholders in peacebuilding processes (Reich, 2006). Academics point out that in order to achieve sustainable results, local stakeholders have to be fully integrated at the decision-making level, rather than only supporting and participating in the local implementation of activities decided by external actors (Reich, 2006; EPLO et al., 2007; Palm, 2010).

The integration of the private sector as a peacebuilding and conflict prevention actor is not fully recognised by the EU. In fact, the EU recognized the private sector as a civil society actor in the European Consensus on Development (EU, 2006), but not in the 2012 EU Communication on Europe's engagement with civil society in external relations (EC, 2012). In addition to the importance of clearly defining what the EU means by "civil society", the integration of the private sector in this definition will help simplifying the EU strategy. In fact, it must particularly be taken into account within the economic dimensions of conflict, as it plays an important as both conflict driver and peace driver.

2.3.2. The multi-stakeholder approach seen as different ways of working together

The efforts done towards enhanced cooperation with local stakeholders have taken the form of information sharing and dialogue. Nevertheless, further integration of these actors has been challenged by mistrust and disinterest.

Information sharing is at the core of the co-operation between NGOs and EU institutions. NGOs in the field have an extensive knowledge of issues related to culture, relationships or politics, because of their presence on the ground[29], which allows them to identify signs of tension.[30] They sometimes appear as the only actors able to have access to this information[31] and to spread it, as they benefit from a large network of contacts with the

[29] Indeed, unlike diplomats, NGO personnel are not required to rotate too often, which allows them to integrate into local society in a sustainable manner.

[30] Due to their field personnel being directly involved, they pay close attention to every sign of rising tension.

[31] It is especially the case in remote locations where humanitarian intervention is required, as in Sudan or DRC.

media and from a less hierarchical structure[32] which simplifies early warning processes. Moreover, when dealing with conflicting parties during a crisis, NGOs are often seen as more credible than other actors which may be present in the field, due to their apolitical and independent status. According to Brante et al. (2011), this is particularly the case for international NGOs whose primary activity is warning, such as the International Crisis Group, as they are not susceptible to the tensions engendered by conflict interests and have a good knowledge of EU processes, as well as direct contacts with high-level authorities. Co-operation between the EU and NGOs through information sharing still remains suboptimal, as NGOs may be torn between their neutrality imperative[33] and their function of early warning, which may alter the quality of the information they provide (Brante, et al., 2011). The existence of conflicts of interest[34] has been highlighted by scholars, in view of the fact that the Union does not have a data base which might enable the registration of NGOs according to their credibility and reliability (Brante, et al., 2011). In addition, non-reciprocity between NGOs and the EU over the sharing of information has sometimes made NGOs unwilling to co-operate[35] (Brante, et al., 2011). Moreover, the diversity of information and warnings provided by NGOs and local actors cannot be matched by the EU as it lacks a centralized warning structure.[36] Finally, differences in processes are an obstacle to enhanced co-operation. NGOs that operate regularly in a given context promote their own agendas according to their priorities which are not necessarily the same as those of the EU (Brante, et al., 2011). In some crisis situations, co-operation is even more difficult as both domestic and international NGOs ignore the demands of policy-making processes and the unrealistic nature of their recommendations.[37]

NGOs are efficient in providing both early warning and response in crisis situations (Brante et al., 2011; Pirozzi, 2013b). Indeed, NGOs are not alone on the field, and have implemented "fourth generation" (Brante, et al., 2011) systems of early warning, whose aim is to encourage the mobilisation of local civil society information, tools and methodologies to monitor and analyse the situation in a conflict region. While first, second and third generation systems defined early warning as "the systematic collection and analysis of information" (Meier,

[32] In comparison with international institutions

[33] Neutrality is canceled once compromising information which can undermine the position of one of the conflicting parties is revealed. The risk of being seen as partisan by local partners and authorities in the host country if they co-operate extensively with external actors may also lead to suspicions of spying and danger for the field staff of these organisations.

[34] It may result in ideologically based alerts rather than evidence based ones in order to support advocacy, or the fact that some NGOs make money from services that are most needed when a conflict escalates (Brante, et al., 2011). It is therefore important to be aware that sometimes NGOs are not objective when they signal an increase of tensions.

[35] Even if NGOs are sharing their information with governmental organisations, the latter are often reluctant to do the same.

[36] The existence of the SITCEN, the Crisis Room as well as the work of the EU Delegations who receive information coming directly from NGOs on the ground are not sufficient (Brante, et al., 2011).

[37] Some authors also talk about the "cry wolf syndrome" that pushes NGOs to produce too many warnings. But by doing that, policy-makers may pay less attention to the most relevant facts, drowned in the mass of information (Brante, et al., 2011).

2009), fourth generation systems are about strategic and tactical empowerment and protection, and direct intervention.

The development of dialogue between the EU and local actors, which has been intensified in recent years, particularly through the initiatives of EPLO, can be seen as a new tendency. EPLO worked with the EC to launch the Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) on July 2010, a mechanism allowing dialogue through a forum of debate between EU policy-makers and civil society.[38] Other initiatives have been launched within the EU framework, such as the creation of Working Groups of EEAS officials and civil society experts on particular topics and regions (EPLO, 2011).[39] Dialogue has also been developed on the ground: when intervening in developing countries, the lack of legitimacy of local authorities in fragile states forces EU staff to deal with both government and non-government partners (Furness, 2014). The latter are important interlocutors[40] and may have the power to legitimate governments or external actors' activities through their support (Furness, 2014). Nevertheless, their added value has not yet been clearly incorporated. An example by Palm (2010) is that information sharing between EULEX (European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo) staff members and civil society organisations was not actively encouraged. According to the author, the main issue is that "since co-operation with CSOs is not a recognised component of most Mission staff members' job descriptions, they may not always see the relevance of allocating time for such meetings" (Palm, 2010, p.12). The more general issue is that the EU has recognised the importance of civil society actors without providing strong incentives to promote and use these relationships. Observers also notice that engagement with the private sector can play an important role in conflict prevention, as "economic instability is a driver of conflict" (Lucas, 2010, p.2). Initiatives of this type are still rare, but in the field of natural resource conflicts, the EU has encouraged partnership with the private sector, following the example of the UN and the OECD, through a draft law on conflict minerals due diligence (Bulzomi, 2014). This EU regulation, based on the OECD guidance, focuses on the establishment of concrete incentives[41] to companies implementing due diligence steps.

[38] It was funded by the crisis preparedness component of the Instrument for Stability

[39] After the EU Council adopted Recommendations for enhancing cooperation with NGOs and CSOs (Council of the EU, 2006b) in 2006, meetings were organized by the Political and Security Committee and CIVCOM (Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management) with field experts from European NGOs with the aim of participating in the preparation of EU concepts and policy documents.

[40] They can play the role of mediators, by serving as a link between the different layers of society, or between the state and citizens.

[41] According to Bulzomi (2014), these incentives will range from public procurement contracts to funding possibilities for small and medium enterprises

4. Existing connections and overlaps with other conflict prevention and peacebuilding concepts and approaches

The multi-stakeholder approach is also linked with effective multilateralism, reflecting the fact that the choice of partners in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, is at the core of the Comprehensive Approach.

4.1. Multi-track diplomacy

Multi-track diplomacy is based on relationships between different activities, individuals or institutions, in order to prevent or resolve conflicts peacefully through dialogue and negotiations. These connections between entities are linked to efforts to promote synergies and co-ordination between both local and international actors. The EU has a role to play in supporting dialogue and negotiations, given its co-operation with various international actors and local stakeholders. The multi-stakeholder approach also raises the issue of a distinction between local and international NGOs in multi-track diplomacy.

4.2. Security Sector Reform

The Comprehensive Approach requires coherence between the instruments at the EU's disposal, which means coherence between civilian and military means. The context of ESDP has emphasized the military dimensions of crisis management undertaken in the Western Balkans, to the detriment of civilian instruments which were developed later (Duke, 2011). The progressive emergence of the Comprehensive Approach saw crisis management and conflict prevention introduced into the Petersberg Tasks, re-establishing the balance between them (Duke, 2011). Nowadays, the multi-stakeholder approach provides a framework for understanding civil-military synergies and policies to provide a more transparent security sector. The multi-stakeholder approach is also essential to clarify the links between external intervention and local needs, through partnerships and co-ordination with relevant actors.

4.3. Governance reform

From a whole-of-society perspective, governance reform must provide effective mechanisms to address state-society relations which underpin institutions, providing them with legitimacy and ultimately sustainability. Implementing governance reform in situations where actors with different interests, motives, value systems, legitimacy and mandates are present, necessitates a multi-stakeholder approach. It requires efforts to improve dialogue and to reach consensus solutions, but also to understand the nature and the dynamic of these actors' relationships.

5. Conclusion

The multi-stakeholder approach has not been conceptualised or even defined in EU policies, but is an intrinsic part of the Comprehensive Approach, referring to the EU's choice of partners in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, but also to coherence in the different types of initiatives undertaken. The multi-stakeholder approach suggests inclusiveness and complementarity of actors at different levels: within the EU institutions, between the EU and international organisations and with local stakeholders.

The Treaty of Lisbon established important reforms regarding the EU's external action structures, with the goals of rationalization and coherence. This led to the creation of the EEAS and of the HRVP, with the aim of improving co-ordination and communication between EU actors and instruments within a single political entity. Further integration is required as duplication and competition between the institutions, especially the EEAS and the EC, are evident. Therefore, structural reforms are expected in the coming months as the EU Global Strategy (to be released in June 2016) should address some internal co-ordination issues, such as the fragmentation of financial instruments across the Commission and the EEAS (EEAS, 2015).

The multi-stakeholder approach has also been a matter of concern at the level of international organisations involved in peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Forms of co-operation have been established, especially with the UN, through the setting of international standards, common initiatives and support. Integrated regional co-operation has also been emphasised, particularly with the African Union. Lack of co-ordination and rationalisation has slowed this process and also led to competition or confusion. Moreover, the definition of a subsidiarity principle in regard to regional organisations should be discussed in order to improve coherence on the ground.

Better co-operation with local stakeholders has been one of the priorities of the EU since the Gothenburg Programme of 2001 (Council of the EU, 2001a), based on the assumption that EU intervention should be in line with the local needs, and legitimated by the participation of local actors to guarantee sustainability. If the principle of this has emerged, its application remains problematic. Efforts have been made to enhance local ownership, through better co-operation with local NGOS, local authorities and civil society actors, but reciprocal mistrust and lack of co-ordination are still slowing the practical implementation of such principles. Co-operation has to be further deepened through the integration of local stakeholders into the design and decision-making process of peacebuilding and conflict prevention, including the private sector. Moreover, the strengthening of local capabilities in the context of peace processes raises the question of the independent status of these actors (EPLO, 2007). As the EU Delegations have been empowered by the Lisbon Treaty to represent an institutional cross-road, the issue of coordination both at the EU-level and with the local stakeholders could be addressed through an in-depth study.

The multi-stakeholder approach while not conceptualised, has been an incentive for EU institutions to work towards more comprehensiveness in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In practice, it has allowed a more coherent approach in managing conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions, through sustainable, comprehensive and innovative civilian means. But this scoping study also shows that the quest for coherence has

added a layer of complexity. In terms of achieving more positive impacts and addressing the remaining challenges of multi-stakeholder coherence, it might be interesting to study if an official recognition by the EU of the multi-stakeholder approach should be encouraged to enhance the EU effectiveness on the ground. In this regard, special attention might be paid to the position of local stakeholders and the private sector.

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