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THE INCREASING RELEVANCE OF (TRANS)REGIONAL RESPONSE BY THE EU AS COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS TO ACCUMULATING AND AGGRAVATING LOCAL CONFLICTS IN THE COMING DECADES OF GLOBAL RISKS AND CHALLENGES

Abstract: The significance of actions by the European Union as a regional actor in collective security is conveyed by the implications of a genuinely *multidimensional regional arrangement* or *security agency* with potential capacity to cover almost the entire (with the exception of a high intensity conventional conflict) spectrum of missions as identified in the TEU. If the institutional capacity and instrumental capabilities are coupled with sufficient motivation, the assumption of the new qualities of a "regional security management agency" by the European Union offers or, rather inevitably, implies an opportunity to adapt or reinforce the rules of the "expected and required" conduct either through direct contribution to the performance of responsibility by the United Nations or through the substitution of the universal organisation of collective action by this particular association of European states such as the EU.

The growing recognition of the need for the regional mobilisation of assets and capabilities in conflict prevention and crisis management has driven the efforts to increase the co-operation between the UN and regional formations through supporting both *collaborative* and *complementary* mechanisms.

Variations in EU-UN relations can be identified from the perspective of operational arrangements and connections between their roles and forms of involvement in collective responses to acute or chronic disruptions in regional security within or without Europe.

The last decade of ESDP/CSDP missions illustrated that in certain acute African crisis areas, EU military operations fitting the "bridging model" may be initiated for

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limited (in their scope and extent) enforcement and protective objectives with Security Council authorization either as the initial phase of multinational military presence for humanitarian protection or in support of an already deployed regional response in the form of an autonomous EU operation.

Key words: *European Union, crisis management, collective security, EU and United Nations*

1. THE EU AS A REGIONAL AGENCY WITH TRANSREGIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT UNDERTAKINGS

The activities or the competencies of regional organisations are not necessarily confined to the area of its membership or one exclusive geographical region. Under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter regional arrangements and agencies are conceived to serve as the primary framework for pacific settlements of disputes among their members through mediation, inquiry, confidence building and other measures of preventive diplomacy. The significance of European regional capacity and security responsibilities — either already active (NATO) or currently building up its own identity in this dimension (EU) — can be properly grasped only against this backdrop of conventionally limited and peaceful regional contributions to conflict resolution.

The creation of an autonomous European military capacity to respond to international contingencies testified to the European quest for appropriate means to discharge international responsibilities stated in several European Council conclusions since 1999 onwards and in the European Security Strategy in 2003 as well as in the EU Global Strategy of 2016. The declared acceptance of collective international political and moral responsibilities reflects the shared sense of duty and the perception of necessity for EU countries to *act collectively*.

As the EU pursued the process of institutional and operational evolution in ESDP, it looked for and found its role as an organisation capable of carrying out tasks and responsibilities supportive of or complementary to those of the United Nations. From this perspective, The European Union represents an example that tends to confirm the tendency — an inherent potential in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter — of *delegation* of responsibility and authority from the "central directorate" of collective security to regional complementary arrangements/agencies. Ideally and primarily, regional organisations should seek the authorisation or the approval of the Security Council before their preventive or enforcement action, unless the lack of consensus in the Council becomes evident resulting in the failure to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international

peace and security. The motivation and the potential role for the EU is not to undermine or replace the UN as the repository of universal legitimacy, but rather complement and reinforce UN action whenever it is possible or substitute regional initiatives for Security Council measures if necessary in case of abandonment of responsibility at the universal level of authority.

Although its ambitious *regional role* as a political magnet, point of orientation and economic centre of gravity has already been achieved, the credibility of the EU and its capacity to shape the international normative order of collective security depends on its potential to make constructive and discernible contributions to it. In various fields of global multilateral co-operation — such as trade, humanitarian aid, development assistance and environmental protection — the EU has left its mark on the standards and regulations of these issues. The Union played leading role in the definition of their content and normative contours. The latest additional plane on which the European Union aspires to attain the necessary qualities — institutions, concept and instruments — of a full-fledged participant in the most sensitive dimension of multilateral co-operation, the maintenance and adaptation of the rules of international collective security.

The mobilization and deployment of the necessary elements of European civil and/or military arsenal could carry remarkable *legal significance*. If applied coherently and effectively, these capabilities might play an instrumental role in the formation of *reference examples* or *precedents* of collective security actions and in the implementation of coercive security measures which few regional organisations or occasional "coalition of the willing" could match.

With the insertion of an institutionally consolidated and operationally improved Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) with its civilian and military instruments into the range of CFSP tools available for the EU, the Union has been set on a course towards acquiring the qualities of a genuinely *multidimensional regional arrangement* or *security agency* with potential capacity to cover almost the entire (with the exception of a high intensity conventional conflict) spectrum of missions as identified by the extended task list in the reformed TEU.

The current terms of reference for the CSDP envisage a virtual geographical scope (legally not confined in Treaties) for EU military crisis management (up to approximately 4000 km from Brussels) that roughly covers the present immediate neighbourhood (immediate security perimeter as the *primary area of responsibility*) starting with the Balkans and extending to Eastern and Southern neighbourhood of the Union. It does not rule out, at least in principle, engagements on the 'outer' periphery (as *secondary area of responsibility*) as the military deployments in Africa have already

proven repeatedly since 2003 (Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of Congo).

The EU today is still building up a "toolbox" for flexible crisis management combining various military and civilian means in the pursuit of adequate and comprehensive approach. The true strength of the EU lies in its increased potential to blend *the various instruments of inducement* and *coercion*. Provided that EU Members States summoned sufficient political determination, this "combined response" option available for the Union warrants valuable *comparative advantage* over all other international actors, particularly when fused with long-term structural measures of EU external relations.

2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ACTIONS BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AS A REGIONAL ACTOR IN COLLECTIVE SECURITY

Coherent EU actions through *concerted* and *consistent* policy measures carry remarkable potential and can be expected to exercise significant influence on the international treatment of many issues in areas of articulated concern for the security of the European Union and its Member States. The political legitimacy and legal relevance of EU actions would be further enhanced by those states — *associates* and *candidates* of the EU — that identify themselves with the CFSP political position and even participate in ESDP actions. An acting coalition of EU Member States could embark on the task of implementation of their decision about crisis management with broad and impressive legitimacy conveyed on them by the common stance of all EU MS and supplemented by "the associate partners of the Union", third states from outside identifying themselves with the adopted EU position.

The list of the participants from *within the EU* and from circles of *potential partners outside* remains open and inclusive in order to recruit all those states that are willing and able to offer useful voluntary contributions. Their offers proved sufficient to assemble and deliver all the adequate and necessary resources — assets, expertise and capabilities — for the launch and successful accomplishment of the assumed latest ESDP mission.

These instances can demonstrate the modalities of the application of European military instruments by multinational *coalitions of variable composition* while the European Union — more precisely its Member States collectively through the Political and Security Committee — remains in charge of co-ordination, force generation and command in the course of these deployments.

In addition to the political and moral value of its conferred legitimacy, a decision in the Council implies that the EU could place its assets and

capabilities (for example, the Satellite Centre) at the service of the operation discharged on behalf of the entire Union. Importantly, a military operation carried out by several European states under EU banner could always increase the "visibility" of the Union in international affairs.

The emergence of an EU equipped and institutionally prepared for more active engagements entails the responsibility and the ability to shape the standards of applicable, appropriate and acceptable international measures and responses. If the institutional *capacity* and instrumental *capabilities* are coupled with sufficient *motivation*, the assumption of the new qualities of a "regional security management agency" by the European Union offers or, rather inevitably, implies an opportunity to adapt or reinforce the rules of the "expected and required" conduct either through direct contribution to the performance of responsibility by the United Nations or through the substitution of the universal organisation of collective action by this particular association of European states such as the EU.

The formation of normative precepts and operational rules of conduct can be recognised and confirmed through practice and doctrines pursued by states individually or in their temporary or permanently organised international associations. The explicit (association through action or declaration) or implicit (tacit support or acquiescence) acceptance of assertions and claims to legal relevance and recognised status can be best pursued through repeated acts by the greatest possible number (*critical mass*) or by some persuasive formation (a distinct coalition of democracies with their *normative power* through the *pursued objectives* and *accomplished actions of participants*) of the members of the international community.

The creation and sustenance of organisational capacity and instrumental capabilities to mount crisis management undertakings are requisite and distinctive attributes of international agents of real normative impact on the system of collective security. The institutional ability to take effective measures — civilian and military as well — has proven to be decisive in the efforts not only to accomplish the goals of *actual engagements*, but in the exercise of more lasting influence on the normative contours of desirable and acceptable *international responses*.

The emergence of the EU as a permanent regional association of states conscious and able to assemble the necessary political will and also gradually the coercive tools for public common goods has the potential to make very significant contributions to the comprehensive transformation of the international landscape of collective security. The rise of a multidimensional European *security agency* capable — with established permanent structures and available combined instruments — and supposedly committed

to act beyond their borders in international crises opened the prospects for a new avenue for normative influence through collective and regional actions of conflict prevention as well as crisis management.

The increased prominence of the European Union as potential purveyor of "security first aid" or the provider of safety and security for "post-traumatic sustained rehabilitation therapy" clearly illustrates the inevitable reassessment of the notions of "prevention", "containment" and "enforcement". Coercive capabilities to enforce, deter or protect are necessary instruments of crisis management and needed, though in varying degrees, all along the spectrum of peace support and state-construction engagements. Missions of armed forces, from observers to enforcers, have become indispensable (but not sufficient in themselves) components — at almost any stage and in many variations — of the termination or prevention of violence, implementation of agreements and the administration of recovery. Already existing or evolving *enforcement endowments* — will and capability — of the EU (besides NATO) enable them to deploy troops to these effects. Their instrumental role in several important instances of international contribution to the reconstruction of internal order and regional security makes them particularly and increasingly valuable institutional actors even beyond the European context on the broader global tableau.

3. THE GENERAL BACKDROP TO EU-UN CO-OPERATION IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT: UNIVERSAL-REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS IN COLLECTIVE SECURITY

In the course of the governance of collective security, the international community and the UN at the epicentre of its structural maintenance must repeatedly face the contradiction between the enforcement incapacity of the world organisation and its declared "primary responsibility"[1] for international peace and security. The source of UN predicaments in times of crisis calling for timely and effective response is encapsulated by the fundamental dichotomy between the *concentration of authority* in the Security Council (SC) and the *decentralisation of capacity* among UN members to take measures under the prevailing legal norms of collective security. In order to fill the foreseeable vacuum of capabilities at the heart of the current system for the management of global security, Article 43 of the UN Charter refers to the negotiation and conclusions of agreements between

[1] Article 24, UN Charter

the SC and UN members or "groups of members" on consigning units of national armed forces and military facilities to the universal organisation. The "groups of members" may be either transient formations of states (temporary coalitions) brought together for the specific purpose of concerted action or permanently established regional arrangements. The continuing absence of these agreements can be identified as one of the principal reasons why the collective security system centred on the UN has very rarely managed to live up to its underlying promise.

The implementation of Security Council resolutions on the application of collective instruments of peace and security[2] in the form of "peacekeeping", "post-conflict peace-building" or "peace enforcement" operations continues to depend on the active participation of UN Member States or regional arrangements. The dependence of collective security responses on individual national decisions on the nature and extent of contributions (if at all) has been preserved by the absence of independently deployable military forces at the disposal of the United Nations. With no standing armed forces to mobilise and dispatch to the zones of acute crisis, the international community has no better option than the delegation of the tasks of collective security to "coalitions of the willing" or regional formations acting for the recognised interests and public good of the broader community of states than only those involved in the concerted action.

For the efficient implementation or enforcement of Security Council decisions, the UN has to rely exclusively upon the contributions and commitments of its members either individually in *ad hoc coalitions* or through *permanent regional arrangement or agencies*. The delegation of authority by means of specific Security Council resolutions to exercise of Chapter VII powers within the limits of mandates[3] has been regularly chosen to ensure that even in the absence of a standing UN force, collective security measures can still be carried out by a group of UN members or regional organisations. Since the recourse to the "regional option" is specifically recommended in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter[4], the transfer of authorisation

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[2] *Supplement to An Agenda For Peace: Position paper of the Secretary–General on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations*, Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organisation, A/50/60 — S/1995/1, 3 January 1995, Para. 36–46, 47–56, 77–80

[3] Rosalyn Higgins: Peace and Security Achievements and Failures, *European Journal of International Law*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1995, pp. 445–460

Danesh Sarooshi: *The United Nations and the Development of Collective Security: The Delegation by the UN Security Council of its Chapter VII. Powers*, Oxford University Press, 1999

[4] Article 53 of the UN Charter

to prevent, contain, enforce or restore to regional structures of concerted measures can be, in legal sense, more preferable than calls upon UN members individually or generally to act in pursuit of shared security interests at the level of the international community.

Since United Nations has been unable to formulate operational response to all violent disruptions of security in various regions, the political organs of the UN have paid increasing attention and frequently resorted to regional bodies in recent years. Already before the turn of the millennium, the situations in various pockets of violent conflicts, most notably in the Balkans as well as in West and Central-Africa, all focused attention upon potential partnerships between the universal and the regional institutional frameworks for multilateral responses to the consequences of violent conflicts.[5] The proliferation of conflicts in many parts of the world and the explosive growth in demand for peace operations prompted an extended role for regional organisations — "arrangements and agencies" as referred to in the UN Charter and in Security Council resolutions — in their peacemaking, peacekeeping and enforcement capacities. In earlier public endorsement of the growing role of decentralised structures in upholding local requisites of global security, the UN Secretary General declared the readiness of the world organization not only to politically support, but also to facilitate peacekeeping, crisis management and enforcement actions undertaken by Member States through the mobilisation of available regional organisations and arrangements.[6]

The growing recognition of the need for the regional mobilisation of assets and capabilities in conflict prevention and crisis management has driven the efforts to increase the co-operation between the UN and regional formations through supporting both *collaborative* and *complementary* mechanisms. Thematic reports of the Secretary-General have repeatedly endorsed the expanding practice and perspective of beneficial co-operation between the UN and regional organizations in conflict prevention and crisis management as fundamental condition for countering the challenges

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[5] *Cooperation Between the United Nations And Regional Organizations/Arrangements In a Peacekeeping Environment — Suggested Principles And Mechanisms,* UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, March 1999, www.un.org/Depts/dpko/lessons/regcoop.htm

[6] *Security Council meets with regional organizations to consider ways to strengthen collective security*, UN Press Release SC/7724, 11 April 2004

UN needs vital contribution of regional organizations in stabilizing war-torn nations, Secretary-General tells Security Council, UN Press Release SC/8154, 20 July 2004

Security Council highlights need to further strengthen co-operation between UN and regional organizations in maintenance of international peace, security, UN Press Release SC/8526, 17 October 2005

to international peace and security.[7] Due to their important and increasingly indispensable contribution to peace and security, co-operation on the ground of predictable partnerships and permanent arrangements between the UN and regional organisations can be considered one of the central attributes of a reinvigorated multilateral system animating the institutions and rules of collective security.

Regional organisations and arrangements may be counted as likely candidates for collective action in response to particular crises either because of their location or due to their potential to assemble the necessary instruments of operation. With respect to the geographic rational for involvement, occasionally even regional frameworks originally designed for other kinds of co-ordination (for instance economic and development as the engagements of the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS demonstrated in its own region already more than 20 years ago) may prove particularly useful for the orchestration of joint security measures.

4. THE EVOLVED PRACTICE OF EU CRISIS RESPONSE UNDERTAKINGS IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UN

After almost 15 years of various EU contributions to the collective containment and pacification of violent conflicts in its immediate neighbourhood and also farther afield, the operations and missions undertaken as calibrated security enterprises of the European Union have given rise to the formation of patterns for possible linkages between the EU and the United Nations in crisis situations of shared concerns. The emerging tableau of feasible configurations in inter-organizational relations displayed a noticeable range of variations with regard to their respective tasks and responsibilities in the implementation of collective measures in response to particular crisis situations.

In most cases, EU military operations are carried out in countries where the UN (or one of its specialized agencies) is already involved in crisis management and/or stabilization efforts. Naturally, both organizations are drawn into security predicaments which call for external coordinated responses to contain and reverse the impacts of conflict and insecurity on countries or on entire regions affected by violence. The arrest of

[7] *Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations — Report of the Secretary-General*, A/67/280–S/2012/614, 9 August 2012

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations — Report of the Secretary-General, A/71/160–S/2016/621, 15 July 2016

escalation or the prevention of relapse into violent conflicts and the support for recovery from severe disruptions of security and order in various countries require concerted external endeavours through universal and regional frameworks of collective action in sequence or as complementary undertakings. Acute conflict situations and cases of protracted insecurity demand different sorts of responses and forms of engagement at different stages of developing crisis situations. These diverse and simultaneously emerging demands explain parallel or successive engagements of the UN and the EU in the same theatres of conflicts by their own means and for their own purposes.

Variations in EU-UN relations can be identified from the perspective of operational arrangements and connections between their roles and forms of involvement in collective responses to acute or chronic disruptions in regional security within or without Europe. All EU military deployments — either in Europe or farther afield — have been conducted as "autonomous operations" outside UN peacekeeping missions and without their submission to any UN command structure. Differences in the evolved patterns of EU military operations emerge with respect to the forms and degree of UN involvement in the crisis management process. The relation of CSDP undertakings to the UN can be classified according to the following modalities for EU engagement by military means in collective security enterprises not only in its neighbourhood, but also far beyond the horizon:

— One possible configuration of EU-UN collaboration in military peace support and stabilization measures can be identified in case of a CSDP operation — EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) since 2004 — as regional action instead of UN peacekeeping presence but with express Security Council authorization addressed to the European Union.

— Direct military support for already deployed "blue helmet" peacekeepers by the dispatch of expeditionary forces in EU operations demonstrates a distinct form of close operational alignment between the two organizations for brief periods of time on the model of the temporary reinforcements for the UN mission in Congo (MONUC) in times of emergency (2003)[8] or increased security risk (2006)[9].

[8] Council Joint Action 2003/423/CFSP of 5 June 2003 on the European Union military operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Official Journal of the European Union, L 143, 11. 06. 2003.

[9] Council Joint Action 2006/319/CFSP of 27 April 2006 on the European Union military operation in support of the United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) during the election process, Official Journal of the European Union, L 116, 29. 04. 2006

— The EU "bridging military operations" in the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2014–2015 highlighted a distinct and particular modality of coordinated action between the EU and the UN in crisis situations calling for urgent external military assistance for the security of civilians and the safety of humanitarian efforts.[10]

— The EU naval deployment off the coasts of Somalia is an ongoing illustration of a CSDP operation expressly conducted to protect of humanitarian activity under the aegis of a UN agency against violent threats to the delivery of aid and supplies to civilians in a dangerous conflict zone.[11]

— The current instance of simultaneous deployments of UN and EU military missions in Mali (2013–) presents a practical demonstration of their possible complementary (or even overlapping) roles and (ideally) reinforcing tasks in crisis management by different military means.[12]

From the broader pool of EU crisis management practice, the above mentioned instances of operations are selected to illustrate discernible configurations in the role and responsibilities of the European Union with respect to the exercise of authority and participation of the UN in the coordinated provision of external response measures to particular crisis situations.

5. BRIDGING OPERATIONS AS TEMPORARY EU TRANSREGIONAL EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR THE UN OR THE AFRICAN UNION IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Already in the conceptual outline of possible EU operational engagements in relation to UN crisis management endeavours, a specific genre of security enterprises on behalf of the Union was defined as "bridging model". This type of EU military crisis management operation was envisaged to provide "the UN with time to mount a new operation or to reorganise an existing one". Such an undertaking was foreseen to require the rapid deployment of capabilities under EU command for an agreed duration and

[10] Council Decision 2014/73/CFSP of 10 February 2014 on a European Union military operation in the Central African Republic (EUFOR RCA), Official Journal of the European Union L 40/59, 11.2.2014

[11] Council Joint Action 2008/851/CFSP of 10 November 2008 on a European Union military operation to contribute to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast, Official Journal of the European Union, L301, 12. 11. 2008

[12] Council Decision 2013/34/CFSP of 17 January 2013 on a European Union military mission to contribute to the training of the Malian Armed Forces (EUTM Mali), Official Journal of the European Union, L 14, 18.1.2003

purpose in coordination with the UN in the implementation and conclusion of the operation.

The last decade of ESDP/CSDP missions illustrated that in certain acute African crisis areas, EU military operations fitting the "bridging model" may be initiated for limited (in their scope and extent) enforcement and protective objectives with Security Council authorization either as the initial phase of multinational military presence for humanitarian protection or in support of an already deployed regional response in the form of an autonomous EU operation. In both modalities, a bridging operation is implemented as the precursor to an anticipated UN peacekeeping mission at later stage.

Examples of EU "security stopgap missions" — urgent deployments with the express purpose of covering significant holes in the range of applicable means of international crisis management — in response to security and humanitarian emergencies have emerged on two occasions during the practice of ESDP/CSDP undertakings in Africa since 2008. This sort of EU operation is expressly identified by the establishing Council act as "bridging operation" in order to indicate their limited ambition, duration and function as temporary and connecting military enterprise in anticipation of a comprehensive UN engagement in the same theatre of operation.

Rapidly deteriorating humanitarian and security conditions — in Chad and in the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2008–2009, and again in the CAR between 2013 and 2015 — necessitated the dispatch of foreign military contingents as emergency crisis response measures prior to the anticipated insertion of UN forces either in the fall-out zone of a protracted crisis (the Darfur conflict in Sudan) or directly into the theatre of civil war and state collapse (Central African Republic). In the instances of escalating complex emergencies triggered by violent conflicts in the Central African region, the temporary but timely deployment of capable forces could make a significant difference and infuse a certain degree of security for humanitarian assistance and protection of civilians in danger zones. ESDP/CSDP bridging operations have demonstrated that the realistic and limited objective of safe environment for aid and protection in their designated area of responsibility can be achieved and maintained as limited but important transitory measures of international crisis response. Bridging operations are offered by the EU as an early and temporary response for a defined period of time in order to cover apparent gaps in security on the ground and overcome the limitations of available capabilities of regional (African Union) or universal (United Nations) frameworks for collective action.

Neither the previous nor the current instance of expeditionary undertakings by EU-led armed forces in the volatile Central African region were

intended and implemented as prolonged engagements in pursuit of the resolution of the underlying sources of insecurity and chronic conflicts in the area. Both EU security enterprises (EUFOR Thcad/RCA in Chad and in the Central African Republic in 2008–2009) and (EUFOR RCA in the CAR again in 2014), were conceived and launched as voluntary interventions of an extra-regional organization with the stated aim of providing emergency response to the symptoms and consequences of complex crises within their material and geographical scope of operation until the instalment of more comprehensive and prolonged forms of crisis management under the aegis of the United Nations.

As their main advantage, even transient and limited military expeditions of the EU — as a platform for collective security action conducted outside its own region — are able to provide an element of casual remedy for one of the major weaknesses of the UN system, the lack of rapid response capability. These interventions earn time for the UN to prepare for the establishment of larger, longer and comprehensive missions necessary for prolonged pacification. Bridging operations require regular consultation and co-ordination between the EU and the UN — at political and at operational levels alike — from the conception of European interventions throughout their implementation until the transfer of operational tasks to the succeeding UN mission with authority and capacity for sustained security measures in the conflict zone.

6. COORDINATION OF EU-UN SUPPORT FOR THE AFRICAN UNION: TRILATERAL INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COOPERATION IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The recent UN SG report highlighting the importance of partnerships in peacekeeping underlines the need to perceive partnerships in larger, more inclusive formats as well. The new approach suggests moving beyond the usual understanding of inter-organizational partnership as bilateral relationship either along the universal-regional axis or in inter-regional context. A more adaptive and potentially more adequate cooperative arrangement for improved peacekeeping has already been demonstrated by concerted engagements of the UN, the AU and the EU in Africa from Mali through the CAR to Somalia. More than just occasional or coincidental involvements in sequence or simultaneously, their cooperation has become an established practice of a "de facto trilateral partnership".[13]

[13] *Partnering for peace: moving towards partnership peacekeeping* — Report of the Secretary-General, S/2015/229, 1 April 2015, para. 62

Parallel to their increasingly coordinated preparations and engagements, the response mechanisms and capabilities of these partner organizations — in their bilateral or in triangular collaborations — could be taken into consideration as potentially available assets and resources in combination with one another. In practice, it would permit more efficiency and lend predictability to rapid responses as orchestrated (initially) regional — (later) universal measures to contain acute crises with high risk of human costs and escalation. Even if combined at least in principle, the capacities of the UN and its European and African partners are certainly limited. Nevertheless, their complementary capabilities and rehearsed collaboration in mounting concerted actions carry the potential of most effective responses to critical disruptions in security and order at state and regional levels in the conflict zones of Africa.

With respect to the apparent benefits of EU reinforcement to the African Union from the perspectives of the UN responsibilities in growing number of violent contingencies calling for peacekeeping operations, the Security Council commended the contributions from the EU to the enhancement of AU capacities for the maintenance of international peace and security on the African continent.[14]

The specifically adopted packet of possible forms of increased EU support for UN peacekeeping activities years ago laid out assistance to AU and other regional or sub-regional organizations as one of its fields of contribution to UN endeavours with respect to African crisis management capabilities.[15] The principal objectives of EU supportive measures and actions expressly included enhanced coordination between the EU and the UN regarding their respective assistance to the AU (such as logistical and technical assistance to the African Union in preparation for African forces for deployment in UN-led peacekeeping operations) and other, sub-regional actors in Africa.

One of the particularly useful form of transregional (European) input in regional capacity-building on the African continent comprises both substantial financial and technical assistance for operations by African forces in crisis areas as well as sustained support to the creation and consolidation of standing capabilities to be deployed in AU operations. Another form of assistance that could hopefully result in some more permanent solution to the chronic absence of instrumental and institutional requisites necessary

[14] *Statement by the President of the Security Council*, S/PRST/2014/27, 16 December 2014, pp. 5

[15] *Plan of Action to Enhance EU CSDP Support to UN Peacekeeping*, Section E. 1: Strengthen EU-UN coordination on assistance to AU and other regional organizations, EEAS 01024/12, ARES (2012) 805155, 13 June 2012

for regional crisis response may be provided through fostering the development and consolidation of capacities and structures readily available for collective regional measures as soon as required. To this end, the EU undertook to create an instrument (the African Peace Facility) in support of the formation of permanent African capacities to be called upon in case of crisis as a welcome form of relief for the UN[16] with its constantly growing burden of simultaneous security emergencies worldwide.

[16] UN Security Council resolution 1631 (2005), Para. 2