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The European Union and Conflict Prevention

Fraser Cameron
European Policy Centre

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NOTE

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SUMMARY

The early warning of conflicts is a complex issue, requiring analysis of the interaction of a wide range of political, economic, military, environmental and social factors. In recent years, largely as a result of events in the Balkans and Africa, the European Union (EU) has paid increasing attention to conflict prevention, even though the development of effective early warning systems and the utility of early warning are problematic. Early warning is of little value unless it is linked to policy formulation and results in timely and effective action. Many conflicts have been widely predicted and the failure to prevent them has been due not so much in the lack of early warning but rather to the absence of political will to take effective action—Rwanda, Kosovo and Darfur being only a few of the most recent and obvious examples. In the EU, there has been a growing recognition that effective conflict prevention requires a more comprehensive approach addressing the underlying causes of instability and conflict, not simply the more immediate causes or symptoms of violence.

This paper provides an overview and assessment of the European Union's gradual involvement in conflict prevention. It specifically considers what progress has been made since the 2001 Gothenburg European Council; assesses to what extent the EU's conflict prevention tools and policies are complimentary and coherent to other EU policies; discusses the likely impact of the European Security Strategy (ESS) and human security doctrine on future EU approaches to conflict prevention; and examines the impact of the proposed new EU Foreign Minister and EU External Action Service on the EU's conflict prevention capacity.

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THE EUROPEAN UNION AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

Fraser Cameron, Director of Studies[1]
European Policy Centre

INTRODUCTION

The early warning of conflicts is a complex issue, requiring analysis of the interaction of a wide range of political, economic, military, environmental and social factors. In recent years, largely as a result of events in the Balkans and Africa, the European Union (EU) has paid increasing attention to conflict prevention, even though the development of effective early warning systems and the utility of early warning are problematic. Early warning is of little value unless it is linked to policy formulation and results in timely and effective action. Many conflicts have been widely predicted and the failure to prevent them has been due not so much in the lack of early warning but rather to the absence of political will to take effective action—Rwanda, Kosovo and Darfur being only a few of the most recent and obvious examples. In the EU, there has been a growing recognition that effective conflict prevention requires a more comprehensive approach addressing the underlying causes of instability and conflict, not simply the more immediate causes or symptoms of violence.

This paper provides an overview and assessment of the European Union's gradual involvement in conflict prevention. It specifically considers what progress has been made since the 2001 Gothenburg European Council; assesses to what extent the EU's conflict prevention tools and policies are complimentary and coherent to other EU policies; discusses the likely impact of the European Security Strategy (ESS) and human security doctrine on future EU approaches to conflict prevention; and examines the impact of the proposed new EU Foreign Minister and EU External Action Service on the EU's conflict prevention capacity.

THE EU'S GROWING ROLE IN CONFLICT PREVENTION

Set against the background of modern European history, the EU may be described as the best example of conflict prevention. One of the main motives of the Founding Fathers in the early 1950s in establishing the EU was the desire to prevent any further recurrence of conflict by creating a security community. The recent and continuing enlargement of the Union may also be seen in this context, namely as a massive conflict prevention programme designed to spread the Union's values relating to democracy and the rule of law throughout the entire continent. By imposing strict conditions (Copenhagen criteria) for membership, the EU has been able to use its mix of carrots and sticks (essentially financial and technical assistance, trade concessions and political cooperation) to extend the Western European zone of peace, prosperity and stability toward the East. Rarely has there been such voluntary interference in the domestic affairs of individual countries as in the central and Eastern European countries preparing for EU membership.[2]

The EU's more traditional role in conflict prevention emerged parallel to the EU's growing international role. But the EU's political ambitions never matched its economic stature, hence the

unkind description of "an economic giant and political dwarf". The EU was quite unprepared for the challenges emerging as a result of the ending of the Cold War and the statement of Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos in the summer of 1991 in regard to the onset of the Yugoslav crisis that this would be "the hour of Europe" was greatly misplaced. But the successive foreign policy crises of the 1990s brought a rapid maturing of the EU in terms of foreign and security policy. The EU came to accept that its external policies should be tied to the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human and minority rights. A number of treaty changes boosted the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and paved the way for a military component, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Since the 2001 Swedish Presidency, there has been a major increase in the EU's awareness of the importance of conflict prevention and on the need to develop policies that tackle the root causes of violent conflict. The 2001 Gothenburg *Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflict* was a key landmark in this process as was the 2003 ESS.

THE GOTHENBURG PROGRAMME

At the Gothenburg European Council in 2001, the EU agreed an ambitious *Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts* with four key priorities. The EU should:

Set clear political priorities for preventive actions

The Commission and the Council should cooperate more closely on conflict prevention: the Commission should provide assistance for the monitoring of potential conflict issues at the beginning of each Presidency and should also strengthen the conflict prevention content of its Country Strategy Papers. One of the main problems is the division of responsibilities (competences in EU jargon) between the Council and Commission. Broadly speaking the Council leads on the more political–security issues. It has far fewer resources (human and financial) than the Commission but it clearly feels in the ascendancy as a result of Solana's high profile and the proposed changes in the Constitution. The Commission has the resources and most of the instruments useful for conflict prevention but finds itself on the defensive as a result of member states' reluctance to grant the Commission any powers in foreign and security policy. Indeed under the new Constitution the Commission loses its automatic (shared) right of initiative. It can only put forward proposals under the aegis of the double-hatted Foreign Minister. The on-going tension between the Council and Commission was often hidden because of the good personal relations between the High Representative (Javier Solana) and the Commissioner for External relations (Chris Patten). This is not to say that cooperation does not proceed, rather that it often relies more on informal contacts and relationships than agreed structures.

Within the Commission, the Directorate-General for External Relations (DG Relex) and the Directorate-General for Development (DG Dev) are the two most important Directorates-General in terms of conflict prevention. The Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management Unit in DG Relex is responsible for coordinating Commission conflict prevention activities. It provides expertise and training to headquarters and field staff and promotes conflict assessment methodologies within the Commission. Despite its extensive mandate, the Unit which was established only in 2001 has a very small staff. In close cooperation with the Council Secretariat and the Joint Situation Centre, the unit provides the Council with a Watchlist of potential crisis states on which the EU should focus. This is given to each Presidency and periodically reviewed. However, despite their recent creation, the C/SRP have been criticized for overly stressing the economic and financial issues contained in the *check list*, while only superficially covering the questions on the existence of a civil society or the political legitimacy of the regime in place. An early report—*One Year On*[3]—

indicated the Unit has had some success in coordinating EU instruments and increasing the efficiency of actions that target so-called cross-cutting issues. The Unit has also done well to push for integrating conflict prevention concerns into Commission policies, particularly the programming of external assistance. This appears to have led to the progressive inclusion of conflict prevention indicators[4] in the Country Strategy Papers, which the Council welcomed as a "significant contribution to achieving the objective of giving multi-annual programming greater substance, increasing the effectiveness and quality of EU external assistance".[5]

Improve its early warning, action and policy coherence

To help achieve this aim the Union agreed that there should be greater input (intelligence, assessments, political reporting) from member states into the institutions. Coherence among the different EU policy areas should continue to be ensured by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER), while the Political and Security Committee (PSC)'s role in supervising the EU's activities on the front of conflict prevention should be reinforced.

There has been a steady increase in material flowing from member states but it is patchy and sometimes provided with caveats. There is perhaps at least as much information provided informally to national diplomats serving temporarily in the Policy Planning Unit of the Council. Language is another factor that inhibits free circulation of material. The establishment in early 2005 of the new civilian–military cell could also improve coherence as it is mandated to conduct integrated civil strategic planning. It is worth noting that similar considerations lay behind the HLP proposals for a UN Peace-building Commission.

Some progress has been made in terms of action, mainly through the 2001 Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM). This is a flexible instrument and has been deployed usefully on numerous occasions (18 operations in 2002). The RRM has helped make EU assistance more responsive and is run by the Conflict Prevention Unit in DG Relex. Its budget for 2003 was €27.5 million, to be spent on projects lasting no longer than six months. The RRM is intended to allow more flexible and rapid funding in crisis situations for primarily civilian initiatives. It has been used in Afghanistan, Macedonia, Nepal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan and elsewhere. In June 2003, at the request of the Economic Community of West African States, RRM funded the roundtable that brought together in Ghana the parties who reached an agreement on ending the Liberian conflict.

Election observation is a significant component of the EU's policy of promoting human rights and democratization throughout the world, and thus, part of its overall conflict prevention strategy. This is an area where the Commission has asserted leadership.[6]

Enhance its instruments for long- and short-term prevention

Gothenburg proposed that all relevant EU institutions should mainstream conflict prevention in their areas of competence. The instruments for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, it was noted, should also play a vital role in the EU's conflict prevention policy.

Although the EU has managed to introduce the concept of conflict prevention into all its institutions, a strong discrepancy persists between long-term (structural) policy aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict, and medium/short-term early warning and crisis management. Development issues have been effectively separated from external relations policy in the Commission. In DG Relex, attention to the root causes of a conflict is very limited and hinges largely on the geopolitical significance of the country considered. There is also very little attention

paid to development issues at the Council level, which de facto undermines the coordination of ESDP/CFSP policy with longer-term conflict prevention. Another type of discrepancy affects the allocation of funds between civilian and military crisis management. Operations with a military component are more easily funded, as they are directly charged to member states. The financing of civilian operations is more intricate, as some operations can be financed through the Community budget and others through the CFSP budget. These differentiated financing constraints logically result in clear imbalances between military and civilian crisis management staff at EU level, to the advantage of the former.

The institutional problems noted above also affect attempts to ensure the benefits of conflict-prevention mainstreaming in most EU policy areas. In addition to the problems between the "first" and "second" pillars an additional complexity arises when policing is involved as this requires activation of the "third" pillar. The different procedures under the pillar system thus serve to complicate matters and often delay decisions. The Commission has a relatively unchallenged role in trade, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance but a much more modest one in CFSP, which is the domain of intergovernmentalism.[7] Still, its management of the CFSP budget gives it influence. Its comparative advantage in conflict prevention and management lies in areas closely linked to long-term structural issues or immediate humanitarian needs. It controls many of the resources for EU action and has numerous instruments at its disposal, from election monitoring to the RRM. This contrasts with the Council and the High Representative, who deal with a wider range of security issues but have many political constraints and fewer instruments they can use to influence situations. The Commission will continue to be the main, sometimes exclusive, purveyor of EU foreign policy in those regions of the world member states do not consider strategic priorities.

Build effective partnerships for prevention

The EU should intensify its cooperation and exchange of information with the other relevant global institutions—the UN, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)—as well as with the regional organizations competent for the regions of concern.

With conflict prevention an increasingly visible external objective, the EU has expanded its contacts with and operational dealings with a number of international partners. The EU institutions are in regular contacts with the UN, the OSCE, NATO and several relevant regional organizations such as the African Union (AU). In the Western Balkans, and especially in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, cooperation between the EU and other multilateral organizations, primarily NATO, but also the OSCE and the World Bank, was decisive during the critical phase of the conflict. This concerted and successful action was underpinned by a common assessment of the situation and a consensus on the goals. The EU has also proved to be an influential actor in the building of international regimes, such as small arms control (1988 Code of Conduct and 1999 Joint Action). The EU continues to seek to work with as many relevant international actors as possible. First and foremost this means the UN and the December 2003 European Council welcomed the EU–UN "Declaration on Cooperation in Crisis Management." Clearly, one of the goals of the effort to develop standardized ESDP training mechanisms is to allow EU forces to make meaningful and efficient contributions to UN operations.

Relations with the UN have developed rapidly in the past few years and need to be further strengthened. The EU also plays an active if sometimes incoherent role in the OSCE and the Council of Europe as well as the international financial institutions, notably the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, both key actors in conflict prevention. It has also tried to

strengthen other international frameworks such as the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

Perhaps the EU's most ambitious support initiative for a regional organization is its African Peace Facility (APF), established on 19 April 2004 in response to a request from the AU's Maputo Summit. It makes €250 million available from the European Development Fund (EDF) to promote African solutions to African crises by giving the AU financial muscle to back up its political resolve. This money will help pay for African-led, -operated and -staffed peacekeeping initiatives, though these need not be exclusively military; indeed APF money cannot be used to buy arms. The latest Common Position on conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa[8] identifies a need for a longer term, more integrated approach to conflict prevention. It stresses mainstreaming conflict prevention perspectives in particular within development and trade policies to reduce the risk of fuelling conflicts and to maximize impact on peace-building.

The necessity to support other international peace-building regimes and organizations has been recognized for some time. The EU has a strong interest in promoting these at both the regional and sub-regional level, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Organization of American States, the Community of Andean Nations, and the Southern Common Market. In addition to the previously cited support for the African Union, the EU also works on that continent with the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

GOTHENBURG ASSESSMENT

The Irish Presidency in 2004 reported positively on the implementation of the Gothenburg Programme, and its conclusions were endorsed at the European Council in June of that year. The reform of EU external assistance that began in 2000 aimed to establish a closer match between development cooperation and the political commitment to address the root causes of conflict, while ensuring high quality standards were met. A main focus of the reform is the actual programming of assistance, which is supposed to lead to greater coherence between the EU's strategic priorities and to the right "policy mix" for each country or region. As early as March 2002, the Commission claimed that it "has delivered" on its commitment,[9] a judgment with which several significant external observers have agreed.[10]

COMPLEMENTARITIES BETWEEN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The reorganization of the Commission Directorates-General in 1999 and the transfer of conflict prevention competences from DG Dev to DG Relex was regarded by some as limiting the EU's capabilities in terms of long-term conflict prevention policy. There is little interaction between the two directorates apart from preparation of the Country Papers which are meant to help the desk officers and delegations of the Commission to better target the Community aid, by increasing their awareness and knowledge of the root causes of conflicts. A more substantive issue is the need to assess the match between development cooperation and conflict prevention objectives. There is no in-house system for reviewing the overall impact of EU assistance on local and regional conflicts.

An additional difficulty is represented by the internal fragmentation of competences within DG Dev, as EuropeAid handles the planning, management and implementation of European Commission aid, while the responsibilities of DG Dev are further downsized by the decentralization of aid management, gradually transferred to the Commission Delegations in the developing countries. This internal fragmentation of DG Dev has not helped raise the profile of development considerations in EU conflict prevention policies. Partly because of the transfer of competence, development and conflict prevention policy tend to mutually ignore each other. The website of DG Dev devotes little space to conflict prevention and speeches by the Commissioner have paid little more than lip service to the concept. It seems that DG Dev is still groping for a clearer articulation between development and conflict prevention objectives as evidenced by the latest issues paper from DG Dev, "Consultation on the Future of EU Development Policy" of 7 January 2005. It is of course true that development and conflict prevention do not always go hand in hand. Strategies to reduce poverty for instance will not necessarily contribute to strengthening democracy and preventing conflict. Economic and social development meant to alleviate poverty may fuel conflict in communities, depending on which social, sectoral or ethnic groups are the beneficiaries of this aid. Further reflection on these problems, perhaps with the World Bank and UN, might be fruitful in terms of better coordination of the EU development and conflict prevention policies.

The majority of EU external assistance is delivered through long-term instruments and intended to support structural conflict prevention and peaceful resolution of disputes through targeted programmes that promote the rule of law, good governance and poverty reduction.[11] Humanitarian aid delivered through European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) can also help mitigate crises or prevent conflicts as witness efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia and Sudan. As best it can, ECHO seeks to insulate its humanitarian mission from the political decisions and policies pursued by other elements of the EU and by its member states. Critics have suggested that highly developed participants in the global economy such as the EU and the United States could provide substantially more benefits to many underdeveloped countries by eliminating trade subsidies, particularly in agriculture, than they do through foreign aid.

The European Security Strategy

The European Security Strategy offers a number of guidelines of direct concern to conflict prevention.[12] The emphasis is on extending the zone of security on the EU's periphery, supporting multilateral institutions (specifically the UN and regional organizations) and seeking a comprehensive approach to old and new security threats. The ESS stresses that priority security objectives (weapons of mass destruction proliferation and international terrorism) should be addressed through "effective multilateralism". In other words, by supporting the UN system, strengthening national responses through EU synergies and by addressing root causes such as poverty and weak governance by drawing upon community instruments and regional dialogue. These characteristics, along with an emphasis upon "preventive engagement" rather than "preemption", are generally acknowledged to make the ESS stand apart from the US National Security Strategy. Yet, the ESS recognizes that the first line of defence lies beyond EU frontiers; acknowledging that inaction is not an option; understanding that a military response is not always appropriate but might form one element of a combined response. In this way, the EU can engage in the systematic political engagement of "prevention".

The ESS also stresses that Europeans generate inadequate capability from their considerable defence spending. Member states must make better use of the €160 billion devoted annually to defence (the United States spends around €340 billion).[13]

THE HUMAN SECURITY DOCTRINE

While much attention has been paid on the need for the EU to improve its military capabilities there has been a parallel pressure to improve its civilian capabilities and to ensure more attention for human security. Solana has taken a strong interest in the whole human security agenda and commissioned a report in 2004 that urged greater EU resources to deal with conflict prevention and crisis management. The report urged more attention to be paid to human rights and proposed a mainly civilian, 15,000 strong, Human Security Response Force.[14]

The EU had already sought to increase its civilian capabilities when member states agreed at the Feira European Council in June 2000 to provide by 2003:

- policing: a minimum of 5,000 officers, 1,000 of whom can be deployed within 30 days;
- rule of law: 200 experts, including prosecutors, lawyers and judges and a rapid response group capable of deployment within 30 days;
- civilian administration: a pool of experts; and
- civil protection: two or three assessment teams of ten experts each, capable of dispatch within hours of a disaster, with a 2,000-strong civil protection intervention contingent available for later deployment.

The EU has done a fair job in meeting these goals, at least in principle. The Civilian Capabilities Commitment Conference on 22 November 2004 declared that member states have volunteered 5,761 police, 631 rule of law specialists, 562 civilian administrators and 4,988 civil protection personnel.[15] Proxima in Macedonia and the European Union Police Mission in Bosnia were police missions, as was the "EUPOL Kinshasa" mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo;[16] and in response to an invitation from Georgia, it was decided in June 2004[17] to send the EU's first ever ESDP Rule of Law Mission (Themis) to Tbilisi for one year. In December 2004, the European Council asked the incoming Luxembourg Presidency and Solana to prepare for the possibility of an integrated police, rule of law and civilian administration mission for Iraq but while preparations continue no date for deployment has been announced.[18] The EU has also agreed a new Civilian Headline Goal (2008) that runs parallel to the military headline goal (2010). The aim of the new Civilian Headline Goal is to improve the EU's capacity to act both in terms of quantity and quality of resources. There is a need to have a roster of experts with language skills and areas of expertise and have them trained with other nationalities. There is also likely to be a demand for increased integrated packages involving rapidly deployable civilian response teams.

In the longer term, the EU's added value in conflict management should be its ability to deploy mixed civilian and military missions rapidly. But just as this requires new thinking about the function of armed forces, it also requires new seriousness about civilian capabilities as, in many situations, at least an equal complement to military capabilities. To date, the EU has trained over 200 people for possible civilian deployment. As this has been mainly done at the national level, it is crucial to ensure more coherence in national training programmes, so that personnel deployed from different member states can work together effectively from day one. There is currently no link between training courses and deployment, and mechanisms need to be introduced to ensure that those trained are also willing and able to take part in EU operations.[19] Recruitment—the responsibility of member states—is procedurally diverse, which makes it quite difficult to identify qualified personnel to deploy at short notice. The newly adopted standard EU training concept in ESDP has the potential to improve interoperability between civilian officials from different member states and spread a common ESDP culture based on lessons learned from past operations.

However, it is clear that EU civilian capabilities have not yet come near their potential. The problem is one of coordination between both political priorities and Council and Commission competencies. There has been pressure from some NGOs to create a European Peace-building Agency while others have proposed a European Civil Peace Corps, although member states are yet to be persuaded of the viability or desirability of these proposals.

The New EU Foreign Minister and External Action Service

There has been considerable focus on the status of the new EU Foreign Minister who will largely replace the traditional rotating Presidency. Partly to deal with this discontinuity, the Constitution institutes a two-and-half-year term for a Chairman of the European Council. Even now there are attempts to put forward joint programmes spanning two or three Presidencies to try and achieve more coherence. The joint Irish–Dutch Presidencies' "Operational Programme of the Council for 2004" declared conflict prevention to be "a major crosscutting priority for the Union" and pledged to improve cooperation with the UN in conflict management. It identified as regional priorities strengthening AU-led African initiatives in conflict prevention, support of the political process in Kosovo in anticipation of discussions on final status in 2005, implementation of the Road Map for the Middle East Peace Process, and stabilization of Afghanistan.

The new EU Foreign Minister foreseen in the Constitution should be in a powerful position to ensure greater coherence in the EU's efforts in conflict prevention. He (it is already foreseen that the first occupant will be Javier Solana) will be "double-hatted", that is he will simultaneously chair the Foreign Affairs Council and be a Vice President of the European Commission. This should allow him to play a major role in bringing together all the various EU instruments available in external relations. The Foreign Minister will need to ensure that he enjoys a good working relationship with the President of the Commission and the new Chairman of the European Council, both of whom have their own foreign policy responsibilities.

As Vice President of the Commission, Solana will probably chair meetings of the DG Relex Commissioners (Trade, Development, Enlargement) and thus be able to steer Community action toward supporting overall EU foreign policy goals. He will be supported by an EU Foreign Service (currently but probably only temporarily) named the EU External Action Service. The precise size and location of this new service remains to be determined but it is likely to be sui generis and include the current 129 Commission delegations, that will become EU missions. These missions will have a greater political reporting responsibility, including assessment of important indicators for conflict prevention purposes.[20] The evolution of Commission delegations toward true EU embassies may improve the Union's ability to pursue timely conflict prevention since it will give it greater capacity to develop more of its own internal assessments rather than being forced to rely on member states to contribute theirs. EU embassies also should be competent to implement specific policies in a range of fields—CFSP as well as justice and home affairs cooperation—that hitherto have been mostly beyond the scope of the delegations.

It is difficult to assess the likely impact of the new EU Foreign Minister and external service. Foreign and security policy remains a very sensitive area for the member states and there is a general reluctance to cede powers to the EU institutions in this area. At present, Solana only has a very limited role on paper "to assist the Presidency" but due to his experience and connections he has carved out a role where he is now routinely described as "the EU's foreign policy chief." The new constitution grants him considerable increased powers but he will still be dependent ultimately on the goodwill and support of the member states, especially the larger ones. Solana has always recognized the importance of conflict prevention and the new position should enable

him to wield more clout both within the institutional set up in Brussels and with Ministers in the Foreign Affairs Council over which he will preside. But no one should expect miracles. Although the pillars are abolished under the new Constitution the old procedures remain in place. Whatever structure is agreed the Commission will continue to hold considerable competences in the external field as well as managing the sizeable external budget. In the best of worlds the new structures should lead to greater harmony and less bureaucratic turf wars. Few in Brussels are convinced this will happen quickly.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ESDP

Conflict prevention and crisis management sometime require properly trained and equipped armed forces to intervene at crucial junctures. The acceptance in 1997 of the Petersberg Tasks ("humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking") was recognition of the EU's willingness to engage militarily when necessary. But fulfilment of these tasks was handicapped by the structure and poor capabilities of the defence forces in most member states. There was also a perennial dispute between the United Kingdom and France about the degree of autonomy of such an EU force vis-à-vis NATO. At St. Malo in December 1998, London and Paris initiated a new bi-lateral push on EU defence efforts with a declaration stating that the EU should develop "… the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises".[21]

Since then the European Council has developed ESDP further. First, by its 1999 Helsinki Headline Goal where the member states agreed that in "cooperating voluntarily in EU-led operations, member states must be able by 2003, to deploy within 60 days and sustain for at least one year military forces of up to 50,000–60,000 persons capable of the full range of Petersberg Tasks". Second, by its 2000 decision at Nice to establish the permanent structures of the Political and Security Committee, Military Committee and EU Military Staff. Third, by agreeing the financing of military crisis management operations in 2002. Four, by its 2002 decision approving the European Capability Action Plan that called on member states to "mobilize voluntarily all efforts, investments, developments and coordination measures, both nationally and multinationally, in order to improve existing resources and progressively develop the capabilities needed for the Union's crisis-management actions."[22] The Berlin Plus arrangements with NATO whereby the EU could draw on NATO assets were also an important step forward. Finally, the Union began its first actual military operations under ESDP (Concordia[23] and Artemis[24]) in April and June 2003 and is now in the process of establishing Battle Groups that could be used for UN-sponsored conflict prevention and peacekeeping activities.

CONDITIONALITY

Conditionality entails the EU linking perceived benefits to another state, such as financial assistance, trade concessions, cooperation agreements, political contacts or even membership, to the fulfillment of certain conditions. These normally relate to the protection of human and minority rights, the advancement of democratic principles and, in some cases, willingness to engage in regional cooperation. Negative conditionality would lead to the withholding or withdrawal of such benefits. Conditionality, however, is not an easy instrument to use. There are no scientific rules covering democracy and there remain different interpretations of human rights. In December 1991 Croatia was recognized even though it had not met the (Badinter) conditions,[25] while recognition of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was withheld even though it had met the conditions. In 1992 the EU turned a blind eye as the military intervened

after the first round of voting in the Algerian election. Indeed the EU has never invoked the articles allowing for suspension in the Association Agreements with the Mediterranean partners if there is evidence of human rights abuses. Although the use of conditionality by the EU has increased steadily in recent years it is difficult to assess its effectiveness. A preliminary conclusion may be that the greater the EU carrot on offer, the greater the likelihood of EU pressure bringing results. There is little doubt that the carrot of EU membership has acted as an incentive to all central and Eastern European countries to improve their democratic structures. There is also some evidence that geographical proximity to the EU is an important factor, as is the size of the country. It is easier to influence Albania than China or Russia.

CONCLUSION

The past four years have seen a change in the EU's approach to conflict prevention and crisis management. The EU is becoming more active in this regard and has developed significant new capabilities. The EU has had a number of modest achievements, but paradoxically this has raised also new questions on the limits of its role. Had The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia been devoid of any hope of future EU membership, could the EU still have been successful in its intervention? Is it likely that the institutional constraints inherent to the EU conflict prevention policy (pillarization, dispersal of bodies and complexity of decision making) condemn it to a more modest policy agenda, covering only crises in regional proximity and horizontal issues of a limited range, international crime, the diamond trade, drug trafficking or child soldiers? Or could it overcome these barriers and draw on its entire range of instruments, such as trade policy and trade and cooperation agreements, or tools derived from areas such as justice and home affairs, migration, social or environmental policy? A coherent preventive approach to conflict and crisis depends on three factors: a clear definition of objectives, capacity, and the political will to act.

It is clear that mainstreaming—the process of establishing an in-house culture of prevention—has become more and more embedded in EU bodies. It is not an easy task to assess its strengths and weaknesses at this stage. Although the EU has moved steadily into the field of conflict prevention, there are a number of ways in which it might expand and enhance its role. There is a continuing need to develop ways in which conflict prevention is integrated, including gender sensitivity and awareness, more fully into existing programmes and policies; and to develop new frameworks through which women's conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities are supported. More sophisticated Conflict Impact Assessments could assist in the development of a strategic framework. The Union also needs to have clearer guidelines as regards financing for its external actions in order to avoid confusion and delays. It should also reflect more on how to maximize use of its growing array of Special Representatives.[26]

Perhaps the major obstacle facing the EU and other international actors is the lack of political will to take effective action at an early enough stage in the process. But what does "political will" really entail? Much depends on the building of a political consensus to act as well as ensuring the necessary capabilities. There are sometimes differences between the 25 EU member states on the use of instruments to deal with potential conflicts, and some may also have specific interests in a region. There are also the oft-cited rivalries between those responsible for Community instruments and those for CFSP/ESDP. It is thus not always easy to secure a common vision of the desired outcome of a crisis and there are limitations on the EU's use of its well-stocked toolbox. Practitioners need to recognize that these constraints are likely to inhibit the EU's potential in conflict prevention for some considerable time.

Some key questions include:

- If the constitutional treaty is ratified, what will change for external policy and the priority attached to conflict prevention?
- If the treaty is not ratified what are the implications for external policy?
- What are the likely impacts of the EU's comprehensive efforts on non-proliferation (success or failure) on other policy areas, including small arms?
- How to secure US support—and if not forthcoming—can there be an effective international regime on small arms? How to bring others, for example the Russian Federation, on board?
- What is the linkage between the EU's current ad hoc policy on small arms and other policy areas related to conflict prevention? Is there anything to suggest that agreeing a policy on small arms would change anything?
- How to secure adequate financing for external action and ensure speedy disbursement of funds?

Notes

[1] The author is grateful to Julien Bouzon, Junior Policy Analyst at the European Policy Centre for research assistance. This paper is part of the SALW project, but the paper is intended to provide a general overview and does not therefore touch directly on SALW issues.

[2] The new members included the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, plus Malta and Cyprus. A target date of 2007 has been agreed for Bulgaria and Romania. Turkey is scheduled to open accession negotiations later in 2005 while Croatia has to demonstrate its cooperation with the ICTY before it can start negotiations.

[3] See <http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/cpcm/cp/rep.htm>.

[4] See the Commission checklist for root-causes of conflict/early warning indicators elaborated by the Conflict Prevention Unit, <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/external _relations/ cpcm/cp/list.htm>.

[5] GAERC meeting, 18 March 2003.

[6] The legal basis for EU Election Observation Missions consists of Council Regulations 975/99 and 976/99. The decision to provide electoral assistance and to send EU observers must be taken on the basis of a Commission proposal.

[7] The Commission, which has exclusive right to initiate EU policy measures in Pillar One, shares this right with member states in CFSP (Pillar Two).

[8] "Council Common Position Concerning Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa and Repealing Common Position 2001/374/CFSP", 26 January 2004.

[9] "One Year On: The Commission's Conflict Prevention Policy", March 2002.

[10] See, for example, "Report of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) High Level Meeting", 15–16 April 2004; and the UK House of Lords European Union Committee, "EU Development Aid in Transition", 29 April 2004.

[11] These are the Cotonou Agreement for the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, ALA for Asia and Latin America, TACIS for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, MEDA for the countries of the Mediterranean and CARDS for South Eastern Europe.

[12] European Union Institute for Strategic Studies, "A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy", 2003, <http://www.iss-eu.org/solana/solanae.pdf>.

[13] The Solana Paper uses the figure €160 billion, slightly different figures can be calculated from the figure drawing on SIPRI and IISS, which may be due to exchange rate differences (usually occurring when drawing upon NATO figures which are in dollars).

[14] "A Human Security Doctrine for Europe", Barcelona, 15 September 2004.

[15] Ministerial Declaration, Civilian Capabilities Commitment Conference, Brussels, 22 November 2004.

16 Council of the European Union, *Joint Action on the European Union Police Mission in Kinshasa (DRC) Regarding the Integrated Police Unit (EUPOL "KINSHASA")*, EU document 15070/04, 6 December 2004

17 Council of the European Union, *Joint Action 2004/523/CFSP of 28 June 2004 on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Georgia, EUJUST THEMIS*, EU document 2004/523/CFSP, 28 June 2004.

18 European Council Conclusions, 16–17 December 2004.

19 International Security Information Service, "Developing Civilian Crisis Management Capabilities", *European Security Review*, no. 20, 2003.

20 See European Policy Centre Issue Paper no. 29, "Towards an EU Foreign Service".

21 For a review of the defence policy and economics of the evolution of ESDP since St. Malo see G. Quille and J. Mawdsley, "The EU Security Strategy: A New Framework for ESDP and Equipping the Rapid Reaction Force", International Security Information Service, 2003; see also "From St. Malo to Nice, European Defence: Core Documents", compiled by Maartje Rutten in the series: Chaillot Papers, ISS, no. 47, May 2001.

22 See <http://www.eurunion.org/legislat/Defense/LaekenESDP.pdf>.

23 The European Union launched a military operation (Concordia) in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 31 March 2003. The core aim of the operation, at the explicit request of the government, was to contribute further to a stable secure environment to allow the implementation of the August 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement.

24 The European Union (EU) launched a Military Operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in June 2003. The operation was code-named *ARTEMIS*. The European military force worked in close coordination with the United Nations Mission in DRC (MONUC). It was aimed, inter alia, at contributing to the stabilization of the security conditions and the improvement of the humanitarian situation in Bunia.

25 The French constitutional judge, Robert Badinter, was asked by the EU in 1991 to produce a number of criteria on which to base recognition of states. These included control of territory, and respect for human and minority rights.

26 There are currently seven EU Special Representatives, with a wide range of responsibilities. The experience with Special Representatives has generally been positive but success depends considerably on the personality and political weight of the individual and his or her ability to gain the respect of diplomatic peers and the parties in the crisis area.

ACRONYMS

APF	African Peace Facility
AU	African Union
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
DG Dev	Directorate-General for Development
DG Relex	Directorate-General for External Relations
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
EDF	European Development Fund
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PSC	Political and Security Committee
RRM	Rapid Reaction Mechanism
UNCAC	UN Convention against Corruption