



Partnering for Peace: Lessons and Next Steps for EU-UN Cooperation on Peace Operations

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UN and EU cooperation on peace operations was initiated over a decade ago with the 2003 *Joint Declaration on UN-EU Cooperation in Crisis Management*. Since then, the EU and the UN have established various new missions that often deploy to the same countries. In 2014, to use the momentum of the approaching end of the *EU Plan of Action for CSDP Support to UN Peacekeeping (EU Action Plan)*, Germany and Italy implemented the “EU-UN Partnerships Initiative.” In four events, the initiative brought together more than 350 representatives from EU Member States, UN, EEAS (European External Action Service) as well as think tanks. It identified and debated four crucial areas for EU-UN cooperation on peace operations: coherence in mandates and planning, training, military capabilities, and justice and security sector reform (SSR). This policy briefing sums up key findings and policy recommendations.

More than a decade of cooperation

EU-UN cooperation has evolved significantly since the first parallel mission deployments in 2003 and since the establishment of the EEAS in 2010. With the implementation of the *EU Action Plan* from July 2012 until the end of 2014, as well as the recent adoption of the *UN guidelines on coordination between the UN and the EU during the planning of UN missions and EU civilian missions and military operations (UN Guidelines)* in April 2014, both organizations have been striving for

closer forms of cooperation. From the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Mali and the Central African Republic, they have cooperated in the field through various activities and frameworks and in an increasingly mutually reinforcing manner. By doing so, the two organizations have shown an ability to adapt to new forms of multidimensional crisis management. However, more than ten years of cooperation that has too often been ad-hoc rather than structured in nature have also revealed the limits and challenges of this partnership.

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Achieving coherence: mandates and planning processes

It is a well-known dilemma that EU and UN mission mandates differ from each other, and that these differences can give rise to disagreements and confusion. UN mandates tend to be more

general in nature and enable a decentralized decision-making process. EU mandates, on the other hand, are more focused on specific tasks and are less flexible. In the field, this leads to greater autonomy for UN operations, while EU missions face a higher level of political control

from headquarters. In addition, parallel UN and EU missions occasionally share similar mandated tasks – e.g. MINUSMA and EUCAP Sahel Mali. In these cases, the degree of coordination and coherence of actions depends largely on the staff implementing the mandates.

However, coordination in planning between UN and EU has improved significantly. There is a reasonably high degree of mutual knowledge and trust, and information is shared whenever possible. The main drivers of this improvement have been the *EU Action Plan* and cooperation in the field. The recently adopted *UN Guidelines* are seen as a key tool for continuing to expand cooperation in this area, as recently tested in both Mali and the Central African Republic. Improved coordination is also the result of internal upgrading of the EU planning capability, which by now is better equipped to reach out to partners.

Naturally, the EU and the UN work with different information analysis tools, standards and codes. While the exchange of information has improved, obstacles remain with regard to the classification of EU documents which often cannot be shared with UN planners.

“We – the UN, the AU and the EU, together with other key partners – need to do better. I am convinced that we can, if we use existing mechanisms and capacity much more effectively and predictably, and further strengthen others.”

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the Open Debate of the UN Security Council on UN peacekeeping, regional partnerships and its evolution on July 29, 2014

Building a common approach: training frameworks

There is an ever-growing need for adequately qualified and equipped personnel for peace operations – including civilian, military as well as police. Here too, cooperation on training has been rather ad-hoc and unstructured, even though both organizations often deploy to the same countries, e.g. CAR, Somalia, Afghanistan or Kosovo (see table); often, there is a lack of systematic joint guidance and harmonized curricula.

Within the EU institutional framework, Europe’s New Training Initiative for Civilian Crisis Management (ENTRI) serves as good practice for coordinating a variety of Member States’ training provisions. Moreover, ENTRi has reached out to the UN in making EU pre-deployment and certification courses available to UN field personnel, but mainly in the civilian sector.

Parallely deployed EU and UN missions (Feb. 2015)

	EU	UN
DR Congo	EUSEC RD Congo*	MONUSCO*
Kosovo	EULEX Kosovo*	UNMIK*
Mali	EUTM Mali* EUCAP Sahel Mali*	MINUSMA*
Central African Republic	EUFOR RCA* EUMAM RCA*	MINUSCA*
Somalia	EUTM Somalia* EUNAVFOR Somalia	UNSOM*
Libya	EUBAM Lybia*	UNSMIL*
Afghanistan	EUPOL Afghanistan*	UNAMA*
Israel/Palestinian Territories	EUBAM Rafah* EUPOL COPPS*	UNSCO UNTSO

* Missions with tasks in justice and security sector reform

Although both the EU and the UN are currently undergoing strategic reform processes of their training architectures, these processes show no structured consultation or clear operative links so far. These reforms provide a unique window of opportunity for the UN and EU to renew, intensify and synchronize their cooperation in training.



A difficult comeback: European military capabilities for the UN

The debate among European countries on capabilities for the UN often revolves around the relatively low numbers of European troops in UN peace operations since the 1990s, although EU Member States have been providing a huge financial share to UN peacekeeping through assessed contributions. Oftentimes, European senior military leadership and members of parliament continue to have strong reservations about the command and control structures in the UN; this is compounded by a lack of current experience with UN peacekeeping practices.

The environments for military peacekeeping operations have changed dramatically in recent years. Even traditional missions like the UN mission on the Golan Heights are no longer “soft soldiering.” Missions encounter asymmetric attacks in Mali and are tasked to engage in a more robust way – with the Force Intervention Brigade in DRC as a special test case. UN missions are struggling with inconsistent quality of training and preparedness of troops, as well as with a lack of specialized capabilities. Rather than infantry units, what the UN is asking Europeans for are strategic enablers, e.g. rapid reaction forces like the EU Battlegroups, logistical assets or high-tech equipment.

The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) submitted a “capabilities list” to the EEAS. Although the *EU Action Plan* addresses the issue of national assets provided through the EU to UN operations, the response of Member States has tended toward bilateral cooperation with the UN rather than action through an EU-coordinated mechanism.

To date there is no example of an EU component to a UN operation, let alone support by an EU Battlegroup. Instead, the EU supports UN peacekeeping through its own missions. This is currently the case with the EU operation in the Central African Republic, which serves as a “bridging mission” until the UN mission becomes fully operational.

Creating synergies: justice and security sector reform

Rule of law and SSR activities have been at the core of both UN and EU missions over the past decade. However, there continue to be differing interpretations of what the rule of law and SSR mean – and how to implement them on the ground. While the UN has been able to achieve system-wide coordination on these issues, internal coherence on the EU side remains a challenge.

The EU-UN Partnerships Initiative

In summer 2014, the governments of Italy and Germany jointly launched the initiative for “EU-UN Cooperation in Crisis Management and Peace Operations.” The implementing partners of the initiative were the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the German Federal Foreign Office, as well as the Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF), the Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna (SSSUP), the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) and the International Peace Institute (IPI). The UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support (DPKO/DFS), UN Liaison Office for Peace and Security (UNLOPS), EEAS Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD) and Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) were associate partners in the process.

The webpage www.euun2014.eu provides all documents, agendas and further information on the initiative.

With the *EU Action Plan* and the *UN Guidelines*, instruments are already in place to raise joint efforts on SSR to a new level. Both documents highlight these as key areas for improving cooperation, for example by calling on the EU to bring about a “division of labor and complementarities/synergies with UN planned activities in the rule of law and security sectors.”

The cooperation – and division of labor – in place in Mali might set a good precedent for future endeavors. The recently established SSR mission EUCAP Mali has been planned in close collaboration with DPKO, with the aim of complementing UN efforts with fixed coordination meetings and reciprocal liaison officers at EUCAP and MINUSMA.

Recommendations

To strengthen the already well-established partnership in peace operations between the EU and the UN, the partnership needs more exposure. This includes not only the EU and the UN with their multiple agencies, but also EU Member States with their respective foreign and security policies, training centers and public opinions.

MANDATES & PLANNING

- The EU and the UN should seek clarity on their respective mandates at the highest political level before serious planning starts.
- Planning bodies of both institutions need to add “inter-institutional coordination” to any matrix, checklist or guideline. EU-UN cooperation should become a natural reflex and joint planning teams a standard tool.
- Where both organizations have been simultaneously involved, they should implement systematic joint after-action reviews to improve future crisis management.

JUSTICE & SECURITY

- The modular approach of the *EU Action Plan* should finally be put into practice. A specialized EU justice and security component integrated into a UN mission could serve as a pilot.
- To foster exchange, a standing UN-EU working group on SSR and the rule of law should be created to align the two organizations’ activities in this field; if proven successful, other actors like the African Union and the OSCE should join such a working group.
- SSR and rule of law personnel in the field from both organizations should benefit from deeper coordination mechanisms and instruments such as co-location of units (in shared facilities or at host governments’ institutions), joint assessment missions and after-action reviews.

TRAINING

- Training coordination requires standardized approaches to the qualification of field personnel. Cooperation on the planning, implementation, evaluation and harmonization of training courses is key, and will only be achieved in the future if both actors truly align the current revisions of training policies and architectures.
- One achievable target is the establishment of a compatible training recognition system for both organizations which acknowledges the competencies of their respective staff.

MILITARY CAPABILITIES

- In order to change the mindset of European military and political leadership, the UN needs to step up and make an effort to counter outdated myths about UN peacekeeping. Although some EU member states have come back to UN peace operations, outdated views of UN command-and-control and other prejudices still linger in the European defense establishment.
- European countries which have recently re-engaged in UN peace operations should inform others on how to adapt to the UN force generation and reimbursement mechanisms, as well as the UN field support system.
- Bilateral and group partnerships among European countries and between individual European TCCs and African or Asian TCCs offer promising opportunities to jointly contribute key enabling capabilities to UN peacekeeping operations or to help increase the preparedness and effectiveness of other TCCs.
- The EU should partner with the UN on rapid deployment of military assets and personnel. This could be done through the deployment of EU Battlegroups as a bridging force or by implementing the modular approach as foreseen in the *EU Action Plan*.

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