



### Launching EUNPACK

The H2020 sponsored project 'EUNPACK' takes an integral approach to the crisis cycle. It considers the EU's intentions and use of the tools at its disposal (from financial and technical assistance to the launch of military missions); reception on the ground and perceptions in host countries. Discussing crisis response in Ukraine and Iraq, panelists at EUNPACK's inaugural event, which took place at CEPS in Brussels on 20/4/2016, found the EU's more recent and comprehensive approach in Ukraine has fared better than its efforts in the more distant and crowded theatre of Iraq.

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### Challenges to crisis response and peacekeeping Morten Bøås, NUPI and EUNPACK Coordinator

External crisis response in the form of peacekeeping and peacebuilding has never been easy, but the current context of broad and ambitious mandates combined with robust instructions to use force may provide for further challenges. If we take recent conflict trends as a guide to ongoing and future externally-driven crisis response operations, the field is and will continue to be characterised by complex missions in politically difficult terrains. There is no clear endgame in sight, and the missions sent out to facilitate the production of peace will be left to grapple with weak states, national leaders with low levels of legitimacy. Peace support missions may end up fighting or attempting to control armed non-state actors that are not only hard to beat militarily, but that also have agendas that leave little if any room for a negotiated settlement to the conflict. These missions will also most likely take place in failed states in areas of the world where local livelihoods are under pressure from a number of external shocks, including increased climatic variability. This 'messiness' of things to come can easily be observed in areas where the EU is currently engaged in various crisis response operations such as in the Mali/Sahel, the Central African Republic, and eastern Congo (DRC).



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## First policy forum

The EU's new Global Strategy on Foreign & Security Policy (EUGS) stresses responsible and decisive crisis response by the Union. But how can the EU make good on these lofty goals? This was the central question at EUNPACK's first crisis response policy forum which took place in Brussels on 26/9/2016 at CEPS. More than 50 experts exchanged views with Stefano Tomat (Head of Division, CSDP Coordination & Support, EEAS), Juha Auvinen (Head of Unit, DG ECHO), Pernille Rieker and Morten Bøås (both at NUPI and EUNPACK) on the ways and challenges to implement the EUGS. The main takeaways were:

- A host of existing policy documents help the EUGS chart an 'integrated approach' to the use of EU policies and instruments, working with local CSOs & international partners.
- Local reception & perceptions of EU crisis response (often encapsulated in the adage "too little, too late") need to feed into lessons learned which, in turn, need to be applied.

## Coming up:

Working papers on concepts; the EU's crises response architecture, procedures & toolbox; and best practices in implementation.

Even if all of these missions come with their own set of unique challenges, there are also certain commonalities that need to be thought through carefully as ever more robust and comprehensive mandates alone are not going to be able to overcome them.

First, it must be acknowledged that a good number of current armed non-state actors do not fit very well with the established categories of insurgencies: e.g. national liberation, separatism, revolution or warlordism. The new generation of insurgencies such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb are both deeply local and immensely global. Branding has become an integral part of their strategy. They may be religious fundamentalists, but they are also pragmatic and very good at appropriating local grievances for their own purposes. Second, most of them also operate in and from failed states. As they are not seeking to capture the state or to break away from a state, but challenge the very notion of the modern statehood, there is no or only a very narrow margin for a negotiated settlement. Finally, as a majority of these actors also seem to be very hard to beat militarily, the EU and its partners in the international community may be left to attempt to control conflict situations to which solutions may be very hard to find.

What we therefore risk being left with is endless missions which struggle with limited capacities, that gradually lose sight of the original objectives and achieve not much more than nominal day-time control of conflict-prone areas. It is therefore urgent to rethink current approaches to crisis response. EUNPACK aims to contribute to this through its focus on how EU crisis response activities are understood by a broad spectrum of actors on the ground in countries in conflict.

