



EUNPACK

A CONFLICT SENSITIVE UNPACKING OF
THE EU COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH
TO CONFLICT AND CRISES MECHANISM

European Union's Crisis Response in
the Extended Neighbourhood:
Comparing the EU's Output Effectiveness
in the Cases of Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali

EUNPACK Paper, WP 7, Deliverable 7.1 – part 4¹

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Berlin, March 2018

¹ This paper was prepared in the context of the EUNPACK project (A conflict-sensitive unpacking of the EU comprehensive approach to conflict and crises mechanism), funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 693337. Unless otherwise indicated, the views expressed are attributable only to the authors in a personal capacity and not to any institution with which they are associated, nor do they necessarily reflect the views or policy of the European Commission. For more information on EUNPACK project, see <http://www.eunpack.eu/>

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1. The Context: The Evolution of Conflicts, the Engagement of the EU and of Other International Actors²

1.1 The evolution of conflicts and crisis, the EU 'conflict cycle', and the timing of engagement

When comparing the three conflict theatres of Iraq, Afghanistan and Mali, EU crisis response policy has been facing considerable structural similarities of core challenges. All are characterized by large governance deficits regarding public services, the rule of law, human rights, societal security and widespread corruption.³ Likewise they are marked by delicate ethnic, religious, social and economic fragmentation of societies contributing to a lacking sense of governments' legitimacy and national belonging thus rendering state-building an overriding challenge;⁴ all these features render the three cases 'areas of limited statehood'.⁵ Moreover, the three countries are all embedded in regional instability and power struggles combined with poorly managed borders and cross-border interventions.⁶ In Mali interferences of regional actors are comparatively limited.⁷

Pronounced differences across cases have to be noted regarding the legacies of war involving external powers: Afghanistan (since 2001) and Iraq (at least since 2003) still struggle with the legacy of war including external powers, primarily the United States and its respective alliances' partners, encompassing also some EU Member States (MS). The US-led international intervention left little room for other actors to shape the peace-building agenda. Moreover, a heavy focus on fighting the insurgency and fostering security across the countries left the civilian aspects of reconstruction under the leadership of the UN.⁸ In Mali interventions from outside the region have come from France – not least due to its colonial history – remaining a key stakeholder.

Most importantly, this marked difference of quantity and quality of external engagement imply at least three burdens for the current and future cooperation with the governments or people in Afghanistan and Iraq. First, the international crisis response is – though supported by respective national governments – in the eyes of local leaders and people often neglected, questioning legitimacy and credibility of EU engagement. This most likely will be a significant hurdle to overcome for the

² This part of the overall report (Deliverable 7.1) on the EU's crisis response in Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali compares the findings of three comprehensive cases-studies. The analytical focus is on the *output dimension* of EU policy-making that is the output of decision-making of the policy-making machinery in Brussels. Thus, the analysis is confined to the choices and decisions made regarding the EU's problem definitions, policy goals, strategies and instruments – both on a strategic and operational level; thus policy implementation or impact will be analysed as a next steps in following project reports (D 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4).

³ See Barroso, et al. 2013.

⁴ See Chauzal and van Damme 2015, 38.

⁵ See Krasner and Risse 2014, 548-551.

⁶ See Moulaye and Niakaté 2011, 5.

⁷ The main external actors in Mali are *Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb* (AQIM), *Signatories in Blood, Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa* (MUJWA), ECOWAS, the AU, the UN, the EU and France. See Cristiani and Fabiani 2013.

⁸ See for UN in Afghanistan: Ayub, et al. 2009; in Iraq: Gourlay 2009; in Mali: Vermeij 2015, and Boutellis 2015.

European Union's policy regarding outcome effectiveness since the EU itself considers 'local ownership' and 'partnership' with local elites and people indispensable for peace-building and reconstruction efforts.⁹ Second, the US dominance in the respective war alliances caused internal divides within the EU affecting its ability to reach policy consent. Third, it meant – in view of the massive security challenges on the ground – an indispensable but also problematic reliance on the US as the prime military security provider in an environment in which 'security first' became the *sine qua none* for all EU engagement.¹⁰

As another common feature of our three cases, security challenges impinging on EU engagement and effectiveness (and for that matter other international efforts) covered all levels of state and society.

For example, in recent years numerous manifest violent conflicts have led to a significant surge in the number of internally displaced people and refugees, migrating both from and into the countries of concern.¹¹ Likewise, the humanitarian dimension has posed profound challenges across cases. Particularly in the case of Mali, humanitarian challenges were magnified by recurrent droughts and food crisis, which have often reinforced the conflict dynamics.

Already at the very inception of the policy-making process the EU's idea of a standard conflict cycle,¹² combined with a stereotypical identification of possible windows for engagement, has, according to our case studies, proven conceptually as much as policy-wise an outright misfit between the concept (resembling a 'fire-alarm metaphor') and empirical reality of protracted conflicts. For example, in Afghanistan – similar to the evolution in Iraq – due to the US/UK pressure on the EU to engage, most EU Member States agreed to the lead-nations approach at the Bonn Conference in 2002. Once it became apparent that a joint approach within the EU family would be more effective, a CSDP mission (EUPOL Afghanistan) with a civilian focus was established in 2006. Unfortunately, it remained largely ineffective until the EU MS followed up on their pledges in terms of staffing, funding and political support only in 2012; by that time, however, the insurgency was at a peak and hence questions the timing, scope and planning of the EU Mission.

In order to do justice to the complexity of the conflicts under consideration while at the same time providing a minimum base for comparison, the conflict cycle had to be re-constructed for capturing the conflict evolution of our cases; empirical results of the three cases studies reveal that in protracted conflicts as in Iraq, Afghanistan and Mali, the identified conflict cycles unfold in a specific manner and oscillating levels of violence not fitting a 'one-size-fits-all approach'.¹³ On first glance, merely a

⁹ See for details on this EU crisis response premise sub-section 3.2.4 below.

¹⁰ See Byman 2003; Rathmell 2005.

¹¹ For detailed data, see: UNHCR population statistics: <http://popstats.unhcr.org> (accessed 18.01.2018).

¹² A graph of the EU conflict cycle had been accessible on the EEAS webpage only until summer 2017 (see ANNEX 5). However, this cycle model remains the reference point for the respective description of the EU's Comprehensive Approach, European Commission 2013b, 2.

¹³ See the empirical results represented in respective graphs in ANNEX 5.

conceptual and academic concern, as we will see below, this discussion leads to salient questions concerning the evolution of EU in conflict and crisis-management policy practices.¹⁴

In sum, the question of how relevant context and conceptual factors may be for the implementation of EU policy-making and for the impact in terms of reaching declared goals as much as problem-solving will be postponed to our policy implementation and impact reports.

1.2 Engagement of international actors: between competition and cooperation

Afghanistan, Iraq, and Mali have not been merely in the focus of EU engagement, each of these countries have ranged high on the international agenda resulting in various, sometimes coordinated sometimes overlapping or even contentious, bilateral, regional or United Nations' activities. This multiplicity of actors could improve international engagement *if* funds, facilities and efforts were successfully coordinated. If coordination is not successful, however, the sheer multiplicity of decisions and parallel or competing programming will almost unavoidably have negative implications for the EU's engagement prospects for success.

The United States have been the agenda setter as much as the international actor defining the roles left for other actors – states and organizations as much as the EU – in Afghanistan and Iraq, but not in Mali. In view of the devastating experience with international terrorism, the strong resolve of the US after 9/11 in favour of an international intervention, this – if not marginalized – at least often left little room for other actors to shape the peace- and state-building agenda in Afghanistan. Washington's focus had been on fighting the insurgency ('Enduring Freedom') and fostering security (ISAF) across the country. Likewise in Iraq, the 2003 war emphasized the US's role as dominant external actor in the country and the region. Moreover, while obviously being the preponderant military power, US policy in Afghanistan and Iraq has not been confined to military engagement but – and this is sometimes overlooked in discussions in Europe – the United States also became the first-rank donor for humanitarian and development aid.¹⁵ Additionally, Washington set up its own police mission for restructuring the civil security institutions, primarily the police but also the judicial systems in Afghanistan and Iraq backed up with funds by far excelling EU investments.¹⁶

In Mali, however, the US has not been the preponderant actor, but rather France has been the agenda setter and driving force behind Western and specifically EU engagement (elaborated in the next section). The US, in contrast to the other cases, was not focusing on Mali as such, but Washington

¹⁴ A conceptual critique of this model will follow in sub-section 3.3 when discussing 'substantial consistency' of EU policy-making.

¹⁵ See for details Policy Report (D 7.1) section 1.2 of the three in-depth case studies.

¹⁶ For example, regarding Iraq, see Tarnoff and Lawson 2016, 7 and summary; see European Commission 2014a, 12f, tables 27-34.

considered counter-terrorism measures in the whole Sahel region its chief interest.¹⁷ Here, the US channelled its engagement through the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) and its successor, the United Nations' Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). AFISMA was mandated to support the training of Malian security forces and the stabilization and recovery of the northern territory of Mali. The major contributions for AFISMA came from the US (\$104 million) and Japan (\$120 million) as well as from the EU, France, the AU and Germany.¹⁸ Regarding US assistance to Mali, USAID and Mali envisage \$690 million for the years 2016-2020 in order to enhance "Maliens (to) secure a democratic resilient and prosperous future",¹⁹ almost the same amount as the EU invests in Mali under the 11th EDF for 2014-2020, about €590 million.²⁰ In comparison, French aid (through the 'Agence Française de Développement') amounts to a total of € 357 million only for the year 2017.²¹ This high level of financial engagement again shows the importance ascribed to Mali by its former colonial power.

Other states and governments with various kinds of engagement in the three countries render the EU's operational environment even more complex and demanding in terms of policy coordination. In Iraq, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Russia (to name just the most important states with vested interests) have been supporting different national players of majority or minority groups in Iraq. In Afghanistan, a number of regional powers, not least Pakistan and Iran, and global actors were involved with the US leading the way. For Mali, the picture differs: The main states engaged are France, Germany and the USA, but especially regional organisations, such as ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) with its currently established G5 Sahel force, play a much bigger role in Mali than in Iraq and Afghanistan.²²

The United Nations have been another important actor across cases, always with a multitude of policy programmes and changing significance over time. The mandating function of the UN Security Council (UN SC) has provided international legitimacy for all other international military activities in Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali post 2003.²³ Moreover, reconstruction, development and state-building was mostly and for a long time left to the UN and the wider international community, which for example regarding its

¹⁷ Washington focused on its security assistance programmes 'Pan-Sahel Initiative' and 'Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership'; see Shurkin, et al. 2017.

¹⁸ See Maru 2013.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of State 2016.

²⁰ Under the 11th EDF, the four priority sectors are: state consolidation (€ 280 million), agriculture (€ 100 million), education (€ 100 million), and infrastructure (€ 110 million). Compare European Commission 2016.

²¹ See Agence Française de Développement 2017.

²² See again above, footnote 7.

²³ For details see the individual case studies respective sections 1.2 under EUNPACK Deliverable 7.1.

involvement in Afghanistan, nevertheless chose a ‘light-footprint’²⁴ approach. Consequently, the United Nations Assistance Mission Afghanistan (UNAMA) did not have a strong role during the Bonn process; instead, priority, at least on paper, was given to the Afghan leadership. Reconstruction efforts in different sectors were conducted through cooperation with the respective lead ministry and corresponding lead donor nation; as an unintended but unavoidable consequence this allowed funding to be processed through corrupt state-structures, questioning the UN’s conflict sensitivity and analytical appropriateness.

Multiple engagements of multiple actors almost unavoidably come with coordination challenges and failures regarding the division of labour between the different missions and operations of international actors, not least in the field of development and reconstruction.²⁵

In Afghanistan, for example, as the hopes for progress on the ground did not materialize, the international community adopted the *Afghanistan Compact* at the London Conference on Afghanistan of 2006. Three pillars of activity were identified, with benchmarks and timelines for the next five years: security, governance (including the rule of law and human rights), and economic and social development, all based on the premise that “the success of the Compact relies on an effective coordination and monitoring mechanism.” Hence, a “central and impartial coordination role” for the Compact was accorded to the UN, with a focus on partnership and ‘local ownership’ with the Afghan government and people. In return for financial support, the Afghan government had “to provide a prioritized and detailed Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) with indicators for monitoring results.”²⁶

In Iraq, coordination and cooperation in the reconstruction and development realm was also a challenge. Funding of programmes for stabilizing Iraq – especially of those EU MS which had not taken part in the 2003 war – were channelled through the UN Assistance Mission (UNAMI) the International Reconstruction Fund for Iraq (IRFFI).²⁷ However, due to an attested lack of transparency on part of IRFFI, the EU Parliament’s Committee on Budgetary Control recommended withholding some 20% of its contributions, together with strengthening the EU presence.²⁸ Moreover, as part of the *Joint Response Strategy* a detailed analysis of shortcomings, the Commission criticized as “lessons learned” from “mostly uncoordinated policy-making” across actors and donors, “(t)he continuing lack of a single

²⁴ Although not clearly defined by the UN, Lakhdar Brahimi (who then had a lead role in defining UN policy) advocated a limited international role in accordance with the principle of national self-determination and in recognition of the past experience of foreign powers in Afghanistan.

²⁵ Information from background talks with EEAS official in Brussels, 6 March 2017.

²⁶ All quotes in the previous three sentences from United Nations Security Council 2006.

²⁷ See Burke 2009, 9: the EU in sum provided 42% of the International Reconstruction Fund for Iraq (IRFFI).

²⁸ See Burke 2009 9f.

coherent overall strategic policy framework with a multiplicity of alternative policies and development programmes, which result in the lack of clear development policy leadership.”²⁹

In Mali, the UN (with its mission MINUSMA) as well as ECOWAS and the African G5 Sahel Joint Force have been the most important international actors outside the military security realm. Taking into account that Mali has received increased attention amongst international actors who are ready to engage, tracing back to the huge challenge of corruption among the Malian government, the latter “basically take every aid they get offered, without analysing their effectivity or necessity, leaving alone any possible doubling efforts or even counter-running objectives of the respective aid offers.”³⁰

In sum, main international actors are pursuing their ‘interest’ in all three cases. The US has been the agenda setter, major advocate and provider of military security but also of humanitarian and reconstruction aid. Washington has mostly been the gatekeeper for the role other actors – states and international organizations as much as the EU – could play and the activities they could unfold. Despite massive efforts of the international community, the case-country’s perilous political balance, depressed national economy, volatile territorial and societal security situations created extremely difficult environments for the entire state-building and SSR process in Afghanistan and Iraq. In consequence, the involvements of the UN, NATO and other international actors over time have undergone remarkable changes and shifts in focus evidently never really finding a winning formula. Multiple engagements of international actors – multiple in terms of numbers, kinds, and policies – were from the outset unavoidably defining the context for EU engagement in Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali. We will have to see whether the requirement of multiple-policy coordination has had enabling or constraining implications for EU policy effectiveness when it comes to policy implementation and impact.

1.3 The EU’s multiple engagement in Iraq, Afghanistan and Mali

The EU Council’s as well as Commission’s crisis response policy is, despite all differences in detail, marked by structurally similar problem definitions leading to the same strategic and operational objectives, grand and operational strategies as well as the application of common tools and funding instruments, which resemble the manifold options at the EU’s disposal:

- CSDP missions (EUJUST LEX Iraq, EUPOL Afghanistan and EUTM and EUCAP Sahel Mali) are mandated and controlled by the Council.³¹ All these missions focusing on SSR and capacity building were or have been confined to civil security concerns; their proper implementation (outcome effectiveness) – and their actual impact – was (or is) depended on a stable military security situation not tackled by the EU, but in Mali by France and in Afghanistan and Iraq primarily the United States.

²⁹ European Commission 2010 16f.

³⁰ Information from background talks with Commission official in Brussels, 8 March 2017.

³¹ For case selection concerning Council as well as Commission foreign policy, see ANNEX 1.

- All EU policy prescriptions and actions have been embedded into a larger regional framework that is 'regional strategies' (EU Strategy for the Middle East, Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, Regional Strategy for Central Asia).³²
- For each region a Special Representative (SR) was established, EUSR for the Middle East, EUSR for the Sahel and EUSR Afghanistan (also covering Central Asia and Pakistan). The significance and influence of those SR heavily depends on the respective mandate as well as the personal profiles and standing of the appointees.
- Across cases, missions were complemented by Commission-run regional and national long-term reconstruction and development efforts through DG Development and Cooperation (DEVCO) as part of EU crisis management policies, manifest in respective National Indicative Programmes.
- Last but not least, humanitarian aid delivered by the Commission's DG ECHO, an agency eagerly aiming at conveying an impartial engagement with a low EU profile to the international community as much as to local actors.
- Evolving mandates have also been a feature of EU conflict and crisis response policy; for example, the CSDP missions' mandates/OPLANs in Afghanistan four times in eight years, in Iraq twice in ten years, and in Mali only three years three respectively two mandates for EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali.

EU Council's, Commission's and Member States' engagement in all three cases relate to diverse historic links to the three countries. The salience of individual Member States' advocacy in favour of EU engagement has to be highlighted, not least rooted in their respective colonial past in the EU's extended neighbourhood: Afghanistan and Iraq formerly were colonies of Britain, and Mali (and neighbouring countries) a former French colony.³³ Concerning relations prior to the escalations of conflicts in the 1990s and 2000s, the EU as such had entertained formal relations neither with Afghanistan nor with Iraq. In Mali, on the contrary, long-lasting contractual and friendly relations were fostered since the country's independence in 1960, in the context of the Europeans' multilateral policy framework of the African, Pacific and Caribbean relations. The EU has ever since been Mali's most important donor of aid³⁴ as well as trade and development partner based on the *Lomé Convention* (1975) and significantly revised by the *Cotonou Agreement* (2000), which introduced conditionality as a possible policy tool.³⁵

EU Member States, specifically Britain in Afghanistan and Iraq as much as France in Mali, acquired special roles in the respective countries, inside the EU as 'lead nations' and outside the European by pursuing their respective bilateral policies. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the UK assumed leadership inside the EU – in both cases closely aligning with the United States; British influence on shaping the very statehood, government and governance structures of Iraq has been significant ever since the end of the

³² See, for example, Council of the European Union 2013f.

³³ The US was not a colonial power in the countries or regions in question, but its involvement in Iraq and the Kurdish conflicts, its temporary support for Saddam Hussein, as well as its manifest enmity with the Ayatollah regime in Teheran dates back at least to the 1970s.

³⁴ See Barroso, et al. 2013.

³⁵ See, for example, Babarinde and Faber 2004.

Ottoman Empire in 1922. The UK under Tony Blair – in contrast to France and Germany, for example – had also been a major member of the US-led campaign in Iraq in 2003, while all EU-3 countries were militarily engaged in Afghanistan mostly with contributions to ISAF. Moreover, the British compound in Bagdad, in view of the oscillating levels of insurgency, successively became a ‘safe-haven’ for the EU Delegation in Iraq as much as for MS representations. Moreover, the British rules of procurement served as guidelines for the whole of the EU.

In contrast, in Mali France has been the agenda setter and driving force behind Western and specifically EU engagement as much as with its own unilateral engagement and ‘boots on the ground’.³⁶ Most importantly, Paris has pursued its own anti-insurgent mission ‘Opération Serval’ (2013-2014) followed by ‘Opération Barkhane’ since 2014. The division of labour on the ground is well defined. While the two EU missions EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUTM Mali provide for capacity building as well as training of Malian Armed Forces meaning no involvement in fighting activities, ‘Opération Barkhane’ is as a military mission explicitly dedicated to counter-terrorism and the fight against Islamist extremists in the Sahel region.³⁷

In sum, in response three conflict theatres, the EU has been drawing on the full range of policies, strategies and tools at disposal of the Council and the Commission.³⁸ Regarding policy formation (output), the EU has done justice to its ambition of responding to complex challenges by complex policies, since 2013 officially reflected in its ‘comprehensive approach’ to conflict and crisis management.³⁹ However, policy output and planned engagements remained confined to the civilian sphere, rendering the prospects for actual implementation and impact dependent on the respective security situation. Another important pattern of EU engagement in conflict and crisis management has been the ‘lead-nation practice’ especially concerning Britain and France; hence, the upcoming Brexit could have a significant impact on future EU crisis response policy.⁴⁰ Moreover, MS’s historical links to the regions and countries in question matter if it comes to initiating and conducting missions and other policies. Whether these mostly colonial ties come with positive, enabling implications (like knowledge of languages and cultural predispositions) or negative constraining implications (like neo-colonial suspicion) for EU crisis response policy is open to debate.

³⁶ See Menon 2004, 637-640.

³⁷ See Équipe relations médias de l’État-major des armées July 2017.

³⁸ See European Commission 2013a, 2.

³⁹ See European Commission 2013b. In section 3.2.4 below, this approach is addressed in detail.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Martill and Sus 2018.

2. Features of EU Crisis Response during Policy Formulation: Policy Output⁴¹

2.1 EU Policy Features on the Strategic Level

In accordance with broad similarities that characterize the conflicts within the three theatres (see sub-section 1.1), EU problem definitions regarding the challenges on the ground turn out to be corresponding across cases. Everywhere, security has been the key concern, springing from political instability on the national and regional level referring to characteristics of limited statehood in terms of weak government and governance.⁴² Regarding the latter, the EU emphasizes deficiencies in the realm of human, civil and societal security springing from humanitarian disaster, the lack of rule of law, the widespread problem of corruption, non-existing or devastated infrastructure, public services and the lack of an organized civil society. Hence, already in its problem definition, the EU links peace, state- and society-building in a bottom-up way.

Following EU analysis, another core challenge perceived is regional instability in which the three countries are embedded. Hence, threats posed by transboundary criminal and terrorist networks are ranking high on the resulting policy agenda: smuggling of all kinds of military goods, and various trafficking issues of drugs and humans (especially women and children) and kidnapping are, according to EU analyses, regarded particularly worrisome challenges in need for policy responses.⁴³

Moreover, low levels of economic development are considered to represent both cause and consequence of the turmoil and violent conflicts. Unsurprisingly, the fight against food insecurity, particularly in the case of Mali, unemployment and deficient education are additional concerns. Another central part of EU problem definition is the challenge of migration. The recent surge in migratory flows in particular following the escalation of conflict in Syria and in the aftermath of the Arab Spring (since 2011) and the rise of the 'so-called Islamic State' (in addition to the Taliban or Al Qaida) is regarded a threat weakening the social and political texture of the respective regions – Central and West Asia, the (Greater) Middle East and the Sahel. In addition, migration – with the flow of migrants to Europe directly impacting the EU particularly via the southern Member States – has become an immediate part of the

⁴¹ For specifying the EU's agenda setting across cases, specific concepts for systematically describing 'EU policy' is applied: Policy-making starts with an actor's 'problem definition' based challenge perceived to require (re-)action. Logically following is the formulation of 'strategic objectives' linked to 'grand strategies' (including intermediate objectives) for attaining the former. 'Operational strategies' connect objectives, strategies, tools and funding instruments across levels of analysis. 'Policy tools' are the focus of policy-making on the ground, such as CSDP missions and Commission programmes. Please note, the term 'instrument' is used here in accordance with the standard 'EU speak' in which this term is reserved for funding instruments like the 'Instrument for Stability and Peace'.

For a detailed elaboration see Peters, Deliverable 7.1 Case Study Iraq, p.19-28.

For the selection of cases and cases-in-case see ANNEX 1.

⁴² See Council of the European Union 2012b, Council of the European Union 2012c. See for general background: Krasner and Risse 2014.

⁴³ Council of the European Union 2016.

EU and its MS's domestic agenda thus providing for an immediate internal-external security policy nexus.⁴⁴

Corresponding to the EU's problem definition, the promotion of 'democracy' and civil society, human rights (including minority and gender issues), the rule of law and capacity building regarding state and community institutions have been the standard 'strategic objectives' and 'grand strategies' of the EU institutions and Member States alike. The policy-making agenda is for all three cases properly subsumed under the 'strategic objectives' of achieving stability, security and prosperity,⁴⁵ as has been indicated by the Council, Commission, and Member States.⁴⁶ In the case of Afghanistan, this agenda has been further extended by explicitly incorporating 'sustainability'. The 'intermediate aims' and 'grand strategies' of the three cases are also similar, by placing the focus on democracy/democratization and Good Governance (promoting human rights and the rule of law), international cooperation/internationalization and state-building/reconstruction and development. Moreover, EU policies and documents for all three cases stress the interconnectedness of the listed challenges. This provides a basic rationale for formulating the EU's ambition of a 'comprehensive approach' as a grand strategy since none of these problems could be tackled in isolation.⁴⁷

2.2 EU Policy Features on the Operational Level

Regarding 'operational objectives and strategies', local ownership, political dialogue, capacity-building, security governance, empowerment of state institutions, civil administration reform and empowering civil society featured EU policies in all three conflict theatres.⁴⁸ 'Good governance' issues are cross-cutting the levels of policy-making from the strategic to the operational level. This comes as no surprise since these issues lie at heart of EU identity, policy values and norms.⁴⁹

Moreover, 'gender mainstreaming' has been a major aspect of the EU agenda within all three cases, though perhaps a little more pronounced in Iraq. Peace/Peace-Building on the level of intra-societal relations, the promotion and empowerment of the local level of governance are also common operational policy features. Yet for Mali, an *Inclusive National Dialogue*, a *Dialogue and Reconciliation Mission* and a *Truth Justice and Reconciliation Mission* have been a distinct operational peace-building strategy. In contrast to Iraq, the approach for tackling the challenge of national reconciliation as the social dimension of good governance in Mali has been significantly more institutionalized. Efforts on

⁴⁴ See European Commission 2014b.

⁴⁵ Note, these three overarching EU objectives were already officially used by the EU when setting up its Neighbourhood Policy in the aftermath of enlarging the Union by 10 new members in 2003/4.

⁴⁶ See for example, the general official EU policy description: European External Action Service (EEAS) 2016b.

⁴⁷ See again European Commission 2013b.

⁴⁸ See on the ambition of the EU and its shortcoming with regard to moving from the third to the fourth generation of peace-building Richmond, et al. 2011.

⁴⁹ See for example the first part of Manners 2002.

peace negotiations for tackling the different aspects of the insurgency in Afghanistan and Mali show conceptual and substantial overlap. In contrast to the other two cases, EU missions and policy programmes are continuing up-to-date in Mali, hence rendering the special emphasis of EU operational objectives and strategies on supporting intra-societal reconciliation possibly a ‘lesson learned’ by the EU from the other two cases.

In sum, building on the premise that state-building relies on social consent and local ownership as well as taking into account the importance of social structures by its policies, EU policies overall portray a comprehensive understanding of governance. The visible increase of complexity of the EU approach to conflict and crisis management thus mirrors the complex reality of inter-state and intra-state conflicts. However, one may ask whether this increased complexity might complicate policy-making in terms of policy and institutional coordination. The latter might not always improve but sometimes rather diminish the prospects for successful engagement – an issue we will keep in mind when investigating the effectiveness of policy implementation and impact.

3. Effectiveness of EU Crisis Response – Policy Output?

3.1 EU Output Effectiveness as ‘Actor Coherence’⁵⁰

Actor coherence – first measured as actor unity (of voice) – was a major challenge for the EU from the very beginning across cases, with Mali being an exception. Horizontal as well as vertical coherence was challenged more than once by diverging preferences. A few but major examples have – *pars pro toto* – to suffice for empirical evidence: In the case of Afghanistan, actor unity resulted from a cumbersome internal process (in NATO and the EU alike) of a gradually evolving commitments from low to enhanced engagement. Consequently, a gradual increase in MS troops, EU staff and budget contributions, resulted in a likewise gradual harmonization of the EU engagement merely by 2011/2012. In the case of Iraq, after the US-led war on Saddam in 2003, a profound split between war-opposing and war-supporting Member States preceded and significantly influenced the EU internal decision-making processes regarding the EU engagement in general and deployment of a CSDP Rule of Law mission in particular. As consequence, the initial commitment of war-opposing MS was hesitant, favouring a low level of engagement void of an ambitious state-building strategy and resting on a ‘security first’ premise. Despite this proclaimed premise, however, MS refused to contribute troops, leading in institutional terms to a manifest lack of harmonization between EU institutions and Member States. The only slowly emerging consensus – in terms of compromises – among MS and thus in the EU Council in the early

⁵⁰ Please note, in our three case studies, ‘actor coherence’ comprises the criterion ‘unity of voice’ and the indicators ‘viability of compromises’ and ‘determinacy of EU documents’; see ANNEX 2.

years of policy formation also hampered opportunities for Commission engagement in the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq.⁵¹

Sometimes deviating preferences of some Member State's undermined efforts at reaching substantial compromises and common positions at least temporarily. For example, the reconstruction of Iraq for some time ranked low on the EU agenda not least due to the UK and France reserving this issue for the United Nations in New York.⁵² Likewise, France temporarily blocked initiatives for installing an EU special envoy or representative to Iraq and opening an EU office in Baghdad since Paris was hedging against US preponderance by confining institution building in Iraq to the UN.⁵³

Divergent priorities among EU actors regarding Iraq were not confined to Council foreign policy; Commission foreign policy was likewise beset by 'vertical incoherence'. This was, for instance, most visible regarding the Commission's efforts for Joint Programming which gained support merely from a few MS, namely Italy, Sweden and Germany. Other EU MS' governments set different priorities for their individual development policy.⁵⁴ In contrast, in Mali actor unity has been – with France as a constant and strong advocate inside the EU – steady and high from the very beginning. This unity has encompassed a common sense among Member States for an increased commitment, including CSDP instruments in place as well as regarding development aid and reconciliation policy. Moreover, continuously increasing attention to the regional context and the actual broadening of engagement arguably proves the ambition for a comprehensive approach and a lasting commitment.

Regarding *output determinacy*⁵⁵ – the second indicator constituting 'actor coherence' in this study – in fact, the determinacy of Council Conclusions has across cases been higher than the determinacy of the overall sample that is including Commission policy documents.⁵⁶ At least in the case of Afghanistan, in contrast to Council policies, Commission policy formulation should remain flexible in the face of dynamically changing policy priorities. Concerning the challenges of defining a common approach for

⁵¹ See Burke 2009, 8.

⁵² See Crowe 2003, 534f.

⁵³ See Youngs 2004, 8.

⁵⁴ See European Commission 2014a, 4f.

⁵⁵ How strict or 'determinant' are policy prescriptions as part of EU outputs, i.e. documents and statements? The respective 'determinacy' of wording of EU documents matters (Thomas 2012, 459f): The more stringent a wording is that is the less room for manoeuvring and interpretation it provides for individual actors in EU foreign policy-making, the greater is the 'determinacy'. Strict formulations may indicate a stronger resolve for a prescribed policy course; a high determinacy also indicates a stronger commitment and compromise viability of a given policy prescription. The more often we find strict wordings, the greater the determinacy and the greater the 'output effectiveness' of EU policy-making. For details of the linguistic analysis compare the appendixes to the three case studies under D 7.1; see also below, ANNEX 2.

⁵⁶ See again Thomas 2012, 459f. Since we are not starting from a mono-causal assumption, we also do not assume 'actor unity' to be the one and only factor 'determining' policy effectiveness. Instead, we took as premise what Thomas presented as his result: 'policy coherence' may be a necessary but not a sufficient pre-condition for effectiveness. For other usages of the concept of 'determinacy' see, for example, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005.

Iraq after the 2003 war, the quantitative analysis of EU documents suggest that despite the many divergences at the outset, once documents were formulated determinacy of official statements were remarkably strong. In the case of Mali, the EU shifted from a rather non-active position in 2010 and 2011 towards a more supportive and operationally engaged actor from 2012 onwards. However, later EU documents increasingly focused on support to local actors – especially the G5 – and enhancing regional structures and policy coordination.

Summing up, evidently actor coherence – measured as actor unity (of voice), viability of compromises and policy determinacy – was across cases a major challenge for the EU from the very beginning with Mali as a relatively ‘easy case’. Horizontal as well as vertical coherence was questioned more than once by diverging MS preferences. Moreover, slowly emerging compromises among MS and thus in the Council in the early years of policy formation for Afghanistan and Iraq hampered opportunities for the Commission’s supposed stronghold regarding state-building via reforming or building pertinent state institutions.⁵⁷

3.2 EU Output Effectiveness as ‘Process Coherence’

3.2.1 Policy Features: Strategic and Intermediate Objectives and Grand Strategies

How successful has EU crisis response policy been concerning ‘process coherence’ (comprising the indicators ‘coherence of policy features’, ‘coherence of core concepts’ and ‘institutional coherence’)?⁵⁸

The core strategic as well as intermediate objectives of the EU have overall been remarkably coherent across cases since these are continuously visible in EU policy formulation. However, policy adjustments made in view of changing context challenges on the ground show that continuity cannot be considered a success in itself. Formulated against the backdrop of the respective political, economic and social challenges, EU strategic and intermediate objectives covered in short improving ‘security’, ‘stability’ and ‘prosperity’ as has been indicated by the Council, Commission, and Member States alike.⁵⁹ Concerning intermediate and operational objectives and strategies of EU policy-making on Afghanistan, concepts like good governance (democratization, rule of law, human rights), and security have been continuously represented. Even the more recent EU documents are aligned with international commitments and strategies. The EU’s *Agenda for Change*, for example, is concerned about “tackling the challenges of security, fragility and transition”⁶⁰ and highlights the importance of rule of law and justice for coping with political and social fragility. Within its 2014-2020 Multiannual Indicative Programme for Afghanistan and in line with the “Policy Coherence for Development” (PCD),⁶¹ the EU has

⁵⁷ See Burke 2009, 8.

⁵⁸ For details on operationalization see tables 2 in all three case studies, also incorporated here under Annex 7.

⁵⁹ See again above sub-section 2.1.

⁶⁰ European Commission 2011.

⁶¹ See European External Action Service (EEAS) 2014; European Commission 2017.

identified policing and rule of law as focal sectors, combining efforts with EU Member States and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Mission EUPOL as part of a comprehensive approach. The Council's EU Strategy on Afghanistan 2014-2016 and CAPD 2017 included both “promoting peace, stability and security” as well as “fostering rule of law and respect for human rights” as its main intermediate objectives.⁶²

Continuity and visibility have also marked the EU’s pertinent policy formulation of strategic objectives, intermediate aims and grand strategies likewise in Iraq and in Mali. ‘Security first!’ has been the prime EU concern as structural gate-keeping factor for all efforts at stabilizing Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali across time (here 2003-2016). Concerning Iraq, for instance, Council and Commission policy decisions focused on ‘domestic security’ that is capacity building for facilitating state-building by empowering the respective governments.⁶³ EU positions on Mali resemble this policy focus by advocating democracy promotion, justice sector reforms, and the fight against terrorism,⁶⁴ organized and transboundary crime⁶⁵ and severe food and nutrition crisis.⁶⁶

However, despite the aforementioned policy continuity, a shift of EU concerns towards migration gradually emerged following the escalation of violence in the whole MENA and Greater Middle East regions in the wake of the ‘Arab Spring’ of 2011. Migration flows towards Europe signified a strong nexus between the EU and its MS internal and external policy agenda. In Afghanistan, for example, the EU is working on migration in a bilateral as well as regional context specifically on the issue of Afghan refugees currently hosted in Pakistan and Iran. The EU and Afghanistan recently signed the *Joint Way Forward*⁶⁷ on migration issues which is meant to facilitate the return process for asylum seekers to Afghanistan (and other countries of the region) rejected in Europe.⁶⁸ Likewise the EU’s policy positions on Iraq and the Middle East incorporated concerns and policy responses addressing the challenges of in-country and intra-regional migration, specifically from Syria.⁶⁹ In the case of Mali, the EU’s problem definition and policy positions recently shifted towards the regional dimension of the crisis, including security and migration as well.⁷⁰

⁶² Council of the European Union 2017; European External Action Service (EEAS) 2017a; European External Action Service (EEAS) 2017b.

⁶³ See European Commission 2010; European Commission 2012; European Commission 2014a.

⁶⁴ See Council of the European Union 2010b, Council of the European Union 2012a, Council of the European Union 2012c, Council of the European Union 2015a, Council of the European Union 2015b.

⁶⁵ See Council of the European Union 2010b, Council of the European Union 2012c, Council of the European Union 2013a, Council of the European Union 2014c.

⁶⁶ See Council of the European Union 2012a, Council of the European Union 2012b, Council of the European Union 2012c, Council of the European Union 2013b, Council of the European Union 2014a, Council of the European Union 2015c.

⁶⁷ See European External Action Service (EEAS) 2016a.

⁶⁸ See Kanwal Sheikh 2016.

⁶⁹ See again the EU documents on Iraq cited in footnote 64.

⁷⁰ See Council of the European Union 2012b, Council of the European Union 2015c.

In sum, the EU strategic objectives as well as the intermediate aims (or grand strategies) are easily discernible from EU policy output that is pertinent EU documents on its crisis response to the identified challenges.⁷¹ These EU policy elements are already coloured by the Unions identity as a pluralistic polity founded on the principle of ‘unity in diversity’, facilitated and legitimized by democratic institutions based on the principles of human rights and the rule of law. By emphasising its constitutive set of social and political norms and practices, the EU once more promoted, based on its own historical experience, itself as a role model by ‘Europeanizing’ partner countries that is exporting its ‘institutions’ to the cases in question.⁷²

3.2.2 Policy Features: Operational Problem Definitions, Objectives and Strategies

On the operational level, problem definitions, objectives and strategies also show a high degree of continuity, hence indicating a significant policy output effectiveness – aside from some noteworthy deviations: In Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali, the identified operational strategies – ‘dialogue and partnership’, ‘ownership’ as well as ‘capacity building’ – have been continuous features of EU policy-making output (documents & statements) across the timeframe of this investigation. Hence, the policies addressed here resembled features marking the European Union foreign policy overall, from Neighbourhood Policy to interregional policies vis-à-vis Africa, Asia or Latin America as much as to the extended neighbourhood, representing an attempt at horizontal export of EU institutions (in the broader sense).⁷³ In Mali, however, a fourth dimension has to be added connected to the EU’s intermediate aim and grand strategy of peace and peace-building that is the support of efforts at achieving ‘peace agreements and reconciliation’ in an institutionalized manner.⁷⁴ While these general characteristics could be considered a ‘one-size-fits-all approach’, the specifics of EU policy-making are nevertheless strongly defined by the respective challenges of the specific case in question, including adjustments made in view of changes on the ground.⁷⁵ Beyond these general characteristics however, the EU itself disclaims the feasibility of such an approach and argues, like in the case of Iraq, in favour of policy strategies and programmes adapted to the respective specific needs as defined by the country, its government, civil society and people.⁷⁶

The standard principles and norms (democracy, human rights and rule of law) have been guiding EU policy formulation across cases. Moreover, operational strategies (transformative mechanisms) like

⁷¹ For an overview of EU policy features see ANNEX 6.

⁷² See Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005.

⁷³ See Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005.

⁷⁴ The Malian government established a *Dialogue and Reconciliation Mission* in 2013 as well as a *Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission* in 2014. See Council of the European Union 2013a, Council of the European Union 2013b, Council of the European Union 2013c.

⁷⁵ See Börzel and Risse 2004.

⁷⁶ See more details below in sub-section 3.2.4 at footnotes 116-118.

socialization (by dialogue and partnership) and *capacity building* (by empowering state institutions, personnel and civil society) are characteristic features of EU policy strategies. *Conditionality*, another often found EU strategy – no matter whether in its positive or negative form⁷⁷ – has not been part of the EU’s policy declarations and documents on the output level. However, this is not *per se* excluding this ‘transformative mechanism’ from the second phase of EU policy-making that is policy implementation in Afghanistan, Iraq or Mali.⁷⁸

3.2.3 Policy Features: Operational Tools

The EU’s ambitious programmatic statements on its intermediate objectives (grand strategies) of democratization, dialogue and partnership, and ownership as well as the EU’s normative premise of good governance were translated into modest and focused policy programmes and missions across cases. In Afghanistan, for instance, despite the claims towards a ‘comprehensive approach’, policy practice focused on rule of law assistance and civilian police reform,⁷⁹ with the Council CSDP Police Mission EUPOL Afghanistan,⁸⁰ and for the Commission side the Law and Order Trust Fund of Afghanistan (LOTFA)⁸¹ as part of the rule of law/SSR efforts as cases in point.

National and local ownership have also been continuous operational strategies of EU policy-making across cases. EU documents and statements show a strong emphasis on the ownership of Afghan people, the countries’ constitution and democratic institutions since the EU considered these political features indispensable drivers for Afghanistan’s stabilisation, development and democratisation processes.⁸² Likewise, concerning the EUJUST Lex-Iraq integrated rule of law mission, the mission’s mandate – the original one of 2005 as well as the revised one of 2010 – were also marked by a wording strongly favouring to empower and support the Iraqi government’s efforts by facilitating capacity building as part of Criminal Justice Sector (CJS) reforms. In addition, the CSDP missions EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali resemble efforts in capacity building for facilitating political stability. For instance, the strategy of ownership becomes manifest by the ‘train-the-trainer’ concept, and, in the case of EUCAP Sahel Mali by an explicit involvement of civil society and the Malian parliament.⁸³

⁷⁷ See for a proper start on this issue: Smith 1998.

⁷⁸ This will be covered as part of D 7.2-4 on policy implementation and impact. For example, the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) has been strongly criticized for the mismanagement of funds and lack of transparency by most donors involved — including the EU. The latter decided to temporarily suspend its payments to the fund in 2011, and ultimately the Commission used conditionality for the disbursement of funds as part of LOTFA. Since this step was taken single-handedly by the Commission, this decision also lacked major political backing required to be effective and institutionally coherent. See European Court of Auditors 2015.

⁷⁹ See again European Commission 2017, European External Action Service (EEAS) 2014.

⁸⁰ For this case-in-case, the content analysis is focused on the mission’s mandate from 2007 onwards.

⁸¹ LOTFA was a trust fund established by UNDP in 2002. It was almost exclusively used as mechanism for coordinating contributions from donors for paying salaries of the Afghan national police.

⁸² See European External Action Service (EEAS) 2017b.

⁸³ See EUCAP Sahel Mali 2017.

However, attempts at living up to the often high aspirations formulated on the level of general objectives by respective choices of operational strategies and tools, has significantly been suffering from the changing security situation on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq. Hence, for instance, it came as no surprise that operational strategies for Iraq changed in view of the rising levels of violence and the deteriorating security situation in the country. EU Commission policies – though the general commitment to the strategic objectives was ostensibly upheld – became re-oriented from an ‘agenda for change’ to an ‘agenda for consolidating’ with the redefined shortened list of operational aims and ‘focal sectors’ for future programming as conveyed in the 2014 Multiannual Indicative Programme.⁸⁴ Likewise, Commission policies in Mali – taking the activities of Reconstruction and Development as focal point – reflect EU’s strategic objectives and strategies of ‘internationalization’, ‘dialogue and partnership’, and ‘ownership’; in addition continuous references are made to the Union’s normative foundations that is democracy, human rights and rule of law across cases. However, resembling the respective adjustment in the other cases, Commission problem definitions for Mali in its NIPs and RIPs have been witnessing a gradual qualitative shift towards stability and security, hence emphasizing the strong security-development-nexus.⁸⁵

The policy adjustment in Iraq resonated – despite its alleged success in terms of quantitative indicators regarding trained Iraqi personnel⁸⁶ – with an increasingly critical view inside the Council and the vanishing support by MS after four Mission extensions. Hence, the EUJUST Lex-Iraq Mission came to an end as of December 2013. Nevertheless, the Council affirmed “its commitment to a smooth and effective handover of the activities of the European Union Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq, EUJUST LEX-Iraq, to other EU and international actors and to Iraqi authorities,” to allow follow-up activities to draw on lessons learned through that the mission.”⁸⁷

EUTM Mali seems to display a rather positive example considering policy output. Within the range of intermediate aims of the EU in Mali, the mission’s focus was on training and capacity building. Policy coherence in this realm has been maintained since intermediate aims resonate with strategic objectives, grand strategies and operative strategies as well as operational tools, respectively. Furthermore, close correspondence to other intermediate aims is visible, in particular regarding local ownership and the comprehensiveness of the EU’s approach in Mali. In this respect, the *train-the-trainer* (TTT) and *monitor-the-trainer* policy programmes as well as the focus on a gradual decentralization and handover of

⁸⁴ See European Commission 2014a, 6-12.

⁸⁵ In the RIP 2008-2013, security was still referred to as regional stability. However, in the RIP 2014-2020 ‘Peace, Security and Regional Stability’ became the first focal sector thus emphasizing the security situation in Mali, encompassing its institutional and economic dimension. See European Commission 2008a, European Commission 2008b, European Commission 2014b, European Commission 2015.

⁸⁶ See Christova 2013, 433f.

⁸⁷ Council of the European Union 2013e, 14, item 3.

authority to the Malian counterparts ought to be highlighted.⁸⁸ Furthermore, EUCAP Sahel Mali is explicitly embedded in the EU's comprehensive approach for the Sahel and the EU mandate for this region – closely resonating with the one for EUTM – calls for consistency with EU development programmes, coordination with the Head of Delegation in Bamako and the Special Representative for the Sahel. The mission explicitly strives to explore synergies not only with EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Niger, but also with the EUBAM Libya.⁸⁹

Summing up, compared to the ambitious and comprehensive strategic objectives and strategies, operational objectives and strategies of the EU Council as well as the Commission are significantly more modest in scope and programming features. Downscaling of the output directly relevant for policy implementation had to happen everywhere not least in view of changing security conditions on the ground. However, the concept of 'national/ local ownership' as a common policy output feature across cases may be not just a political choice considered an indispensable precondition for generating a sustainable state-building process; the down-scaling of concrete policy programmes in connection with an upgrading of 'ownership' can also be considered – in view of limited budgets and vanishing support at home – as part of a long term exit-strategy for the EU.

3.2.4 Conceptual Coherence: 'Continuity and Visibility' of Core Policy Concepts

Core concepts – like 'conflict sensitivity', the 'comprehensive approach' and 'local ownership' – are pertinent features of EU documents across cases in the extended neighbourhood. However, do these concepts also show up 'continuously and visibly' on the strategic and operational level of policy output and indicating 'policy successes' in terms of 'conceptual coherence'?⁹⁰

Conflict Sensitivity

The concept 'conflict sensitivity' has been as our quantitative analyses revealed part of pertinent Council and Commission documents on EU crisis response policy over the years.⁹¹ This apparently confirms 'conceptual coherence' in terms of continuity and visibility of the concept and hence indicates output effectiveness. As for the Commission and the Council policy alike, all references to 'conflict sensitivity' resemble the "Do no harm"-approach.⁹² The EU institutions almost copied the concept of *Saferworld*,⁹³ as, for example, in a Commission document of 2013 in which it aims at "ensuring that EU actions avoid having a negative impact and maximize the positive impact on conflict dynamics", and

⁸⁸ See EUTM Mali - Public Affairs Office 2017.

⁸⁹ Council of the European Union 2014b, 15.

⁹⁰ On elaboration of concepts see Annexes of the individual case studies under D 7.1 reports and Annex 2.

⁹¹ See Council of the European Union 2001, Council of the European Union 2007; compare ANNEX 2.

⁹² See ANNEX 3.

⁹³ *Saferworld* is a NGO that is often financed by the EU in order to provide it with conceptual frameworks. The "Do not harm" approach by *Saferworld* has been defined as: 1. understand the context; 2. understand the nature of intervention; 3. analyse the interaction between the intervention and the context and 4. avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impact. See Saferworld June 2012.

continues later: “By applying a pro-active conflict sensitive approach we increase the EU’s adherence to the ‘Do No Harm’ principle”.⁹⁴

Nevertheless, the actual ‘continuity and visibility’ of the ‘conflict-sensitivity’ concept, has shown remarkable differences: This policy feature is particularly significant for politically and strategically complex environments like Afghanistan, Iraq or Mali where delving into understanding the local context in terms of ‘the root causes of conflict’ is an indispensable – necessary but not sufficient – precondition for successful external intervention. The West lacked the knowledge, power, or legitimacy to transform Afghanistan, however. Policymakers, according to Stewart, were mostly anxious and rather ‘hypnotized’ by fashionable theories, too isolated from Afghan reality, and too laden with feelings of guilt to notice that the ambitious Afghanistan mission was difficult if not impossible to succeed.⁹⁵

Many scholars have argued that the Afghanistan intervention was not successful because it “wasn’t done right” that is with insufficient ‘conflict sensitivity’: “If only we had not been distracted by Iraq, had tackled the right warlords, pursued the correct counterinsurgency strategy, and surged earlier, it would have been fine”.⁹⁶ Following Rory Stewart the actual challenges were more fundamental since the West’s premises were wrong: “The West was trying to do something it couldn’t do, and it was trying to do something it didn’t need to do”.⁹⁷ Contrary to the common belief, Afghanistan did not pose an existential threat to international security, and it was not a “failed state.” The truth hence allegedly lies beyond this simplistic and popular rhetoric.

In our case studies on EU crisis response, quantitative analyses of core EU documents show that the concept of ‘conflict sensitivity’ has been explicitly used comparatively – that is relative to the other two core concepts, and across cases – least in the Iraq, more in the Afghanistan and most in the Mali document sample.⁹⁸ However, that is not to say that it is *per se* of no relevance for EU policy-making on the ground but may rather be encapsulated in other policy features and core concepts appearing in pertinent EU policy documents, most likely regarding the ‘local’ dimension covered below. In the case of Mali, background talks with EEAS officials in Brussels revealed a lack of awareness and knowledge about the concept of ‘conflict sensitivity’.⁹⁹ After confronting the officials with the EU definition of the concept, one desk officer stated that the “EEAS automatically acts conflict sensitive, without knowing, since CSDP aims at reconciliation.”¹⁰⁰ This positivistic answer may be symptomatic for EU declaratory concepts without guiding EU officials’ daily work. Another EEAS official called this concept a “luxury concept”,

⁹⁴ See European Commission - International Cooperation and Development 2013.

⁹⁵ See Stewart 2013.

⁹⁶ Stewart 2013, 26.

⁹⁷ Stewart 2013, 26.

⁹⁸ See ANNEX 3 for details.

⁹⁹ Information from background talks with EU officials in Brussels, 7 March 2017.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

while the real motives guiding EU policy planning are allegedly not primarily local needs, but rather political risks and benefits, budgetary implications, risks for human beings, security interests or the cost of (non-)commitment.¹⁰¹ Moreover regarding Mali, the pertinent EU documents and statements have been marked by a missing distinction between the different societal and ethnic groups compounding the society's texture in the country also indicating a lack of 'conflict sensitivity'. After all, incorporating the two core challenges defined as *mistrust* and *fragmentation* of the Malian state and society is indispensable as a more solid foundation of policy-making and hopes for policy effectiveness.¹⁰²

Another challenge for EU engagement in unstable countries is the 'counter-insurgency logic',¹⁰³ as the EU, not least for practical reasons, stereotypically supports one of the conflict parties in order to enhance stability in the country implying to possibly preserving the status-quo and feeding the domestic and regional conflict and thus contradicting strategic objectives.¹⁰⁴ In Mali, for instance, the role of the government for the outbreak of the crisis is quite controversial. While the EU collaborates with the government as a partner, non-partisan experts assert that the "direct collusion between the state and local militias has never been so explicit, demonstrating that local spoilers of peace processes might in fact not be so local."¹⁰⁵

In sum, aside from declaratory claims in core Council and Commission documents on EU conflict and crisis response, however, empirical evidence of our qualitative as much as quantitative analyses across our three cases show that for the daily work of EU practitioners this concept at best merely tends to be sullenly accepted as general reference if not explicitly discounted or neglected altogether in actual policy-making practice.

Comprehensive Approach

This concept is inherent in the policy features identified above pertinent documents as a 'grand strategy' of EU crisis response:

- as part to the internationalization/ regionalization strategy – in terms of encompassing external factors influencing political and social process in our case countries;
- as part of inter-organizational cooperation with the UN and the World Bank or concerning significant state actors like the United States;
- as part of grand strategy of democratization, inherently encompassing all levels of society requiring reforms in political, economic and societal structures and processes on all levels of governance and government.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² For the dimension of *mistrust* see Batten Carew and Dowd 2015 3, Seydou and Dakouo 2016 45, Sonner and Dietrich 2015 15ff For the dimension of *fragmentation* see inter alia Chauzal and van Damme 2015, Dakouo and Sidibe 2017, Høyer 2013.

¹⁰³ See Vermeij 2015.

¹⁰⁴ Information gathered by background talks with ECHO officials in Brussels, 6 March 2017.

¹⁰⁵ Guichaoua 2016.

Since these features of EU engagement were also found to govern the EU's operational objectives, strategies and tools, the comprehensive approach likewise resembles the ambition of comprehensive EU responses to the complex challenges at hand. As the quantitative analysis reveals the usage of the concept of 'comprehensive approach' has been stressed more in EU documents than 'conflict sensitivity' or 'local ownership', concepts which are indeed subsumed as integral parts of the comprehensive approach.¹⁰⁶

Hence, at first glance, conceptual coherence regarding the comprehensive approach (as part of 'process coherence') in EU crisis response policy has been continuously and visibly given and thus pointing to output effectiveness. However, some qualifications are in place if it comes to this feature governing EU policy practice across the extended neighbourhood cases: In Afghanistan, for instance, the comprehensiveness in terms of horizontally coordinated engagement by the Council and the Commission was hampered since the Council and Commission activities were not driven by the same dynamic. After all, the Commission had been engaged in conflict and crisis management for a long time with its ECHO and DEVCO activities, while the Council with its CSDP operations was a comparatively new option.¹⁰⁷ Hence, the lack of coordination between various EU policy tools and funding instruments and those of the MS further obstructed the implementation of the 'comprehensive approach'.

Amendments to the original mandates for engagement – though the general commitment to the strategic objectives was ostensibly upheld – more than once limited the scope of EU policies by decisions (output) at the intermediate stages thus diminishing the comprehensiveness of the EU crisis response. EU crisis response hence became re-oriented and recalibrated from and 'agenda for change' to an 'agenda for consolidating'. For instance in Iraq, most significantly the strategic and operational objectives were re-focused and thus limited in their comprehensiveness regarding the programmes funded under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) in 2010. The refocused agenda now was on a) good governance and rule of law, b) education matching labour-market needs, and c) water management and efficiency.¹⁰⁸ Likewise in 2014, policy provisions, explicitly qualified as 'lessons learned' from "past, on-going and planned cooperation", limited the EU's approach since the areas for future intervention, "shall be defined by (1) areas where EU has interest in and added value for, (2) areas where activities will be nationally owned and promote rights based approach and (3) an impact of programmes is likely building upon 10 years of EU and broader international engagement in the country."¹⁰⁹ Likewise, the of operational goals for Council activities where redefined which

¹⁰⁶ See the conceptual discussion and details on quantitative results in the Annexes of the three case studies, or here in ANNEX 3.

¹⁰⁷ See for more details the following section on 'institutional coherence'.

¹⁰⁸ See European Commission 2010, 34; also 31f of this report, and Annex 2.

¹⁰⁹ European Commission 2014a, 6. See also the overview of EU Section Intervention Framework, here Annex 4

“should be the protection, preservation and further development of political, financial and human capital, invested in Iraq by the EU Member States during the 2005 – 2013 period through the Common Security Defence Policy EU JUST-LEX IRAQ mission, the project budget of which amounted to approximately EUR 22 million per year.”¹¹⁰

The issues identified for cooperation with Iraqi institutions were then boiled down to three focal sectors: 1) human rights and rule of law, 2) capacity-building in primary and secondary education and 3) sustainable energy for all.¹¹¹ Moreover, as part of its implementation strategy on the operational level, the Commission stressed that these focal sectors will be treated in an “integrated way”, and programmes will be implemented bilaterally through Financing Agreements.¹¹²

In Mali, considering four dimensions of the concept (what, where, when, who), the EU’s practice justifies the term ‘comprehensive approach’ in view of the wide range of instruments and tools applied, the regional dimension of the EU approach and the close cooperation with other international actors on the ground. Likewise, the quantitative analysis reveals that before and after the phase of the implementation of the two CSDP missions in Mali the concept of “comprehensive approach” has continuously been promoted in EU documents.¹¹³ During the “high phases” of CSDP launching, however, a shift can be detected towards local ownership. It seems that as soon as the EU is not involved through CSDP missions in Mali, the role of local ownership increases. However, when considering the fifth dimension (“How coordinated?”), the difficulties of (horizontal) inter-institutional cooperation in Mali between the EEAS and the Commission with its respective Directorate-Generals DEVCO and ECHO must be stressed.¹¹⁴ Likewise the comprehensiveness of the territorial dimension is questionable with EU activities continuously confined to the ‘Bamako-bubble’, thus indicating severe constraints on the territorial scope of missions and engagement, which most likely will have significant consequences for EU impact.

Summing up, obviously, continuity and visibility of the core policy concept of a ‘comprehensive approach’ to crisis response policy has fully been given regarding the declaratory level of policy-making that is the policy output in terms of EU documents and statements. Policy-output at later stages of engagement, involving policy adjustments in view of lessons drawn and of policy preferences, tend to become more focused and narrowed down no longer justifying the characterization as representing a ‘comprehensive’ approach in crisis response policy. What this gap between declared ambitions and practiced policy means for the EU’ crisis response effectiveness remains to be discussed.

¹¹⁰ European Commission 2014a, 12.

¹¹¹ European Commission 2014a, 7-10.

¹¹² European Commission 2010, 5, 46.

¹¹³ Documents underlying the analysis were all Council Conclusions and Decisions related to Mali and the Sahel between 2010 and 2016.

¹¹⁴ Information gathered by background talks with ECHO officials, 6 March 2017, DEVCO officials, 8 March 2017, and EEAS officials, 7 March 2017 in Brussels. See also Missorili 2001; Gebhard 2011; Beger and Bartholmé 2007.

Local Ownership

The EU's performance regarding the inclusion of 'locals'¹¹⁵ has already been identified as one of the pertinent features of EU crisis response regarding the intermediate and operational strategies, here on the level of policy-formulation. Ownership' is also a complex concept encompassing various dimensions¹¹⁶ and possible measurements.¹¹⁷ Our first concern regarding the empirical investigation is thus *who* is addressed as 'local actor' by EU policies? And our second concern must be *why* the EU considers involvement of locals important? What do our three cases tell us about this core concept regarding the output of EU crisis response policy?

A recurring problem is a lack of convergence between the interests and preferences of local actors and international interveners, sponsors and donors thus leading to a conceptual-contextual divide.

Afghanistan is clearly a case in point; on the one hand, the EU's engagement has been embedded in a comprehensive international policy framework. The EU welcomed and encouraged coordinated efforts to support the Afghan government in promoting a meaningful, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, which was allegedly considered the only viable path towards a sustainable resolution of the conflict.¹¹⁸ On the other hand, the equation "more local ownership = more successful security sector reforms" is overly simplistic, particularly in contexts where there is no monopoly of force and no stable political system allowing for stable processes of peaceful change.¹¹⁹ In this vein, Sarah Lister argues that

"disarmament, police reform, judicial reform and close attention to the quality of senior appointments are all measures that would have contributed to shifting 'the rules of the game' in Afghanistan from informal patronage based systems, and towards a more depersonalised, formalised and rationalised exercise of power through the state. Instead their neglect at a critical period has enabled local power holders to continue to use the

¹¹⁵ The concept of 'locals' encompass state- as well as non-state actors, in terms of civil society organizations (CSO), traditional and customary authority and justice structures, non-state or non-statutory armed actors. 'Locals' can be identified at various levels of analysis: the national, the intra-state regional, or the community level of social organization resonating with the level of EU engagement of interventions in third countries as part of its crisis response. The authors of this report gratefully acknowledge the inspiration and information underlying this part provided by the MA-thesis of Philipp Neubauer (MA-IR, FU-HU-UP, 2017).

¹¹⁶ "Ownership" *ideally* stands for sharing or embracing EU premises (including basic policy norms of 'good governance' that is democracy, human rights and rule of law), policy analyses, the formulation of policy objectives, adequate strategies and use of policy tools as legitimate and effective for policy-making. It is not just about constitutive characteristics of 'local people', but also a relational concept qualifying the political balance between outsiders and insiders during the process of state- and peace-building. The concept contains also a post- or neo-colonial dimension in terms of outsiders more or less aiming at 'empowering vs. imposing' local communities and actors (see Donais 2009). Moreover, the local dimension enters the picture in terms of EU concerns regarding locals as 'passive entities' addressing – sometimes merely implicitly – those suffering from human rights abuses, gender or minority discrimination.

¹¹⁷ 'Ownership' can take different qualities, for examples these premises and other policy-making elements could be an intrinsic part of local actors' identity and generic parts of their sets of political values, interests and preferences. In contrast, ownership could be a more superficial quality of actors ascribing to EU policy preference merely due to instrumental and opportunistic purposes. However, these quality dimensions will become relevant in the following Deliverables under WP 7 (7.2, 7.3, 7.4) focusing on EU policy implementation.

¹¹⁸ See Kempin and Steinicke 2009.

¹¹⁹ See Giustozzi 2008, 215.

state as a means to exercise power, resisting or co-opting attempts to create new structures and impose bureaucratic rule.”¹²⁰

In consequence, civilian policing, female policing or police-justice cooperation were never truly ‘locally owned’ while the fixation on dealing with complex reforms through funding and cooperating with local but corrupt Afghan agencies and structures led to a nominally correct but *de facto* ineffective policy approach.

As for Iraq, this operational strategy was a specific inference from the general insight proclaimed by the Council as part of the EU’s Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East:

“These challenges will not be overcome by maintaining the status quo; political, social and economic reform is required. Such reforms can succeed only if they are generated from within the affected societies; they cannot and should not be imposed from outside.”¹²¹ Hence, the EU ambition has been to enable and empower state institutions in line with the “Iraqi government’s priorities.”¹²²

Simultaneously, this underlines the EU’s policy premise addressed above that a ‘one-size-fits-all approach’ is not viable for crises response policy. In the same vein, the EU Commission conveys its premise regarding Iraqi ownership when admitting that to realize EU objectives “will depend on the degree to which they are shared by the Iraq government and evolution of the security situation.”¹²³

Additionally, the Commission considered support for institution-building in various sectors an option “depending on the Iraqi interests” also assistance for “democratization, civil law enforcement, the rule of law and the justice sector and human rights.”¹²⁴ Some evidence for EU words being followed by deeds have been substantiated already, for example providing for an active and input role for the Iraqi government in producing the Strategy Paper of 2008 and Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 2009/12 aiming at establishing regular cooperation framework where jointly formulated. Likewise regarding the EUJUST Lex-Iraq mission the ambition was to incorporate Iraqi functionaries in the process of defining the training activities down to the respective programmes and syllabi. However, whether these claims were actually guiding policy-making at later stages of the policy-cycle that is during policy implementation is waiting to be seen.

The EU’s Iraqi-ownership strategy as basic principle and operational strategy of EU policy also incorporated a strong role and support for Civil Society Organisations (CSO). For example, when the Council stressed in the preamble of the EUJUST LEX-Iraq mission mandate that this was responding to “the wish of the Iraqi authorities for the EU to become more actively involved in Iraq and that

¹²⁰ Lister and Nixon 2006.

¹²¹ Council of the European Union 2004, 2.

¹²² Council of the European Union 2008, Conclusions 04/2007, 19, item 7.

¹²³ European Commission 2004, 7.

¹²⁴ European Commission 2004, 9; likewise for example: Council of the European Union 2008, Conclusions 09/2006, 18, item 4.

strengthening the criminal justice sector would respond to Iraqi needs and priorities.”¹²⁵ Likewise, the Commission qualified its approach in 2010, as a response to the “main priorities discussed during the thorough consultations process with the government and civil society” allegedly reflecting those in the Iraqi National Development Plan.¹²⁶ The significance of the CSO’s role in stabilizing and reforming Iraq was additionally stressed since CSO were supposedly part of all “specific objectives” as a core element of the “sector intervention framework” being part of the MAIP.¹²⁷

When it comes to local ownership in EU Council conclusions and decisions for Mali, it is mostly referred to as ‘regional’ or ‘national’ ownership, with national meaning the Malian government in Bamako. For instance, the EU considered “National Ownership”, “regionally-owned processes”, “paramount” and “Malian, regional and African ownership (...) essential.”¹²⁸ Besides, the National Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission created by the Malian government in 2013, which the EU Council had strongly promoted,¹²⁹ aims at enabling “Mali’s key players to take ownership of the results of the process of negotiation, including with all non-terrorist and non-criminal armed movements which agree unconditionally to respect the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Mali.”¹³⁰ Hence, the EU does not exactly specify the term ‘local’ when using it, but one can deduce from the documents that the EU mostly refers to the government and the MAF when talking about the ‘locals’. As the Malian government is a conflict-party that has also fed the crisis, this again draws questions about the aspect of conflict sensitivity.

The EU’s declared strive for instigating ownership is moreover apparent by a distinct terminology the Council or the Commission has been using when formulating strategic as well as operational objectives to avoid providing any impression or to undercut any suspicion of pursuing its policies in terms of attempts at super-imposing its own preferences on Iraqis. The specific EU way of formulating (‘framing’) strategies and policy instruments strongly convey and promise to the Iraqi counterparts that all EU action is intended to enable and empower and hence to facilitate promoting Iraqi preferences. This is visible by the many explicit statements advocating Iraqi ownership, but moreover by indicating its good services providing ‘merely’ ‘support’ or ‘assistance’ for political objectives, strategies and programmes defined by the Iraqi government. The official and declared EU policy is hence on the output level strongly mainstreamed as to avoid the impression EU policies geared towards ‘high jacking’ Iraqi institutions and government programmes or ambitions of governing Iraq from Brussels.

¹²⁵ Council of the European Union 2005, para. 2.

¹²⁶ European Commission 2010, 5f.

¹²⁷ See European Commission 2014a, 6.

¹²⁸ For the usage of this variety of ownership references see Council of the European Union 2012c.

¹²⁹ Council of the European Union 2013a, Council of the European Union 2013b, Council of the European Union 2013c.

¹³⁰ Council of the European Union 2013d.

Summing up, ‘local ownership’ undoubtedly has ‘continuously and visibly’ been a core policy feature of EU crisis response policy appearing – relative to the concepts of ‘conflict sensitivity’ or ‘comprehensive approach – most often across EU policy documents and cases. Regarding the lower levels of ‘local’ engagement, the previous analysis has not generated much in terms of substantial evidence. Thus, we might suspect more about this dimension’s empirical significance when shifting our attention to policy implementation in the follow-up reports when also the EU delegation’s efforts of involving locals not just in and around Kabul, Bagdad or Bamako but also in the various regions and local levels of engagement, not least when it comes to the on-site dimension of reconstruction and development policy under the Commission’s aegis.

3.2.5 Institutional Coherence

Institutional coherence is here conceptualized as ‘horizontal coherence’ in terms of coordination of policy-making across Community and Council foreign policy domains. However, if competencies are contested among institutions and Member States, coordination becomes politicized and a matter of ‘vertical coherence’.¹³¹ What do our case studies teach us about this measure of policy output effectiveness?

In the initial days of EU’s involvement in Afghanistan, for instance, Council and Commission activities were not driven by the same dynamic, thus rendering the challenge of horizontal coordination even more complex. First, the institutions functioned under two different decision-making procedures with rather common objectives but different priorities. Second, with the strengthening of the CSDP alongside the engagement in the field, the Council was still in a process of building its own legitimacy for its activities in crisis management in relation to other actors.¹³² Conversely, the Commission had a long experience in development cooperation and did not encounter the same pressure for immediate results. The incentive for the Commission was rather small to better coordinate with Council activities in the field of SSR thus affecting the planning and conduct of the EUPOL Afghanistan mission significantly. For example, this created difficulties to integrate short- and long-term objectives within the working culture of international civilian and military personnel and limited the ability of the EU to sustain a comprehensive approach. Moreover, despite the declaratory promotion of a ‘comprehensive approach’ in official EU documents and statements, the actual planning and delivery of EUPOL projects, however,

¹³¹ See Gebhard 2011, 107f. In our study, ‘institutional coherence’ is defined as involvement of EU institutions and agencies according to the governing rules as ultimately defined in the Treaty of Lisbon, and respective operational mandates. It becomes manifest in terms of regular engagement of the mandated institution as well as successfully policy coordination during the decision-making and output generation of policy-making among EU institutions, the Council, the Commission. If our empirical investigations show significant overlap or even doubled responsibility for the same assignment, ‘turf wars’ among agencies or significant time-lags in decision-making, this indicates weak or lacking institutional coherence. See also Missiroli 2001; Beger and Bartholmé 2007.

¹³² See Cornish and Edwards 2005, 820.

was not based on any logical framework rendering policy goals, strategies and tools clear and easy to comprehend.¹³³

EU engagement in Afghanistan moreover suffered from institutional fragmentation. Internal coordination between the MS, EUPOL, the EU Special Representative (EUSR) and the EU Delegation was initially rather weak. This was ameliorated by the establishment of the EEAS in 2011, and the subsequent double-hatting of the EUSR and Head of Delegation (HoD). Yet coordination in the police domain remained difficult and local actors were often side-lined as a consequence. For example, the International Police Coordination Board (IPCB) established in 2007, supposed to enhance police-related coordination and supported by EUPOL with staff, administrative and logistical support, faced significant obstacles. Over the past 13 years, more than 37 different international donors have been involved in supporting Afghan police development, most of them by contributing to the NATO-run NTM-A, to EUPOL, or both. Despite all these efforts, promoting cooperation among the international community generated limited results.

Policy coordination across actors in Afghanistan also remained awkward with other donors in the justice sector. For example, the Commission did not assume a coordination function among international actors as mandated.¹³⁴ However, the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) has been strongly criticized for the mismanagement of funds and lack of transparency by most donors involved — including the EU, which had decided to temporarily suspend its payments to the fund in 2011; and (b) LOTFA has had very limited experience of capacity building in the sector. Even though in 2011, LOTFA included a pillar on capacity development of civilian policing, throughout its life, the trust fund had been used almost exclusively as a payroll mechanism.¹³⁵ **In the Iraq case, the empirical investigation of EU policy output also revealed some issues of institutional coherence in the Brussels machinery.** Already in 2003, Crowe pointed out that early on in EU engagement in Iraq *de facto* decision-making patterns privileged the HR over the formal tasks of the Political and Security Committee (PSC) regarding coordination with other key players and with Council endorsement. Solana's partial empowerment was not least due to the leadership role he *de facto* had played in certain aspects of EU policy on the Balkans and the FYROM. Moreover, his role and reputation was significantly strengthened by the personal invitation from the Egyptian President and the UN Secretary-General to represent the EU in the Middle Eastern Quartet.¹³⁶ Still HR Solana's empowerment found its limits if tensions existed between MS and the Council and particularly the respective Presidency.¹³⁷

¹³³ European Court of Auditors 2015, 27.

¹³⁴ See Gross 2009, 32.

¹³⁵ See European Court of Auditors 2015.

¹³⁶ See Crowe 2003, 542.

¹³⁷ See Crowe 2003, 541.

Coordination among EU institutions as well as between the EU institutions and external actors was also a challenge concerning the EUJUST LEX integrated rule of law mission under CFSP and thus Council control. In view of the mission's narrow mandate and – due to the instable security situation – limited in-country presence “cooperation with the European Commission, the US and European bilateral programmes were crucial,” as Korski reported:¹³⁸

“The main vehicle for international cooperation has been the Rule of Law Sector Working Group, chaired by the Iraqi Chief Justice. Three EU institutions are represented at the group's meetings: EUJUST LEX, the Commission Delegation and the EU Presidency. An initial member of the mission's Baghdad office was also a Commission official. Yet with the Commission itself only having a limited presence in Baghdad, most of the coordination took place in Brussels.”

Hence, functionally as much as politically, to have two offices, a Coordination Office in Brussels and a Liaison Office located on the British embassy in Baghdad, accompanied a year later by the European Commission office, might give rise to suspicion for enhanced coordination problems and thus lack of policy coherence.¹³⁹ However, given limited information access regarding the early years of the mission to the knowledge of this author, coordination between EU institutions (horizontal coherence) as much as between institutions and MS (vertical coherence) problems within Iraq can be assumed to be mitigated by the various institutions location on the same British compound in Iraq. By virtue of this arrangement the British moreover provided for the security of the others in view of the varying security situation in Bagdad and Iraq.¹⁴⁰

In Mali, the most important aspect of cooperation and coordination problems have concerned access to and sharing of information foremost between Commission agencies that is ECHO and DEVCO,¹⁴¹ but also between the Commission and Member States or the EEAS, respectively. Without access, however, monitoring is impossible, and hence the policy of information sharing could be reconsidered in order to enhance a comprehensive and more effective engagement of the EU. Despite the deficiency in information sharing with EU Member States, the integrated approach is considered by EU insiders as “pretty advanced”¹⁴² in Mali, providing for a good overview of actions by the Commission and EU Member States. Regarding the coordination between the Commission and the EEAS, the lack of

¹³⁸ Korski 2010, 236.

¹³⁹ See Korski 2010, 235.

¹⁴⁰ Policy analysis of the EU's long term engagement – as in Iraq – is severely hampered by difficulties of information access even via background talks in Brussels and elsewhere. As in national ministries, respective personnel on relevant positions in the Council, the Commission or nowadays the EEAS are also ‘revolving’ that is normally changing posts after two to four years thus mostly abolishing the opportunity for building up ‘institutional memories’.

¹⁴¹ Information gathered by background talks with ECHO officials in Brussels, 6 March 2017 as well as with DEVCO official in Brussels, 8 March 2017.

¹⁴² Ibid.

institutionalised cooperation arguably rather hinders a comprehensive approach.¹⁴³ Hence, improving coordination mechanisms between the Commission and the EEAS seems to be indispensable in order to ensure continuous coherence and an integrated approach of EU institutions. Another problem in the relationship between the EEAS and the Commission is that the political security and defence expertise is solely owned by the EEAS, whereas most of the means to implement the policies are in the hands of the Commission.¹⁴⁴

In sum, institutional coherence remains a political and functional challenge for every complex institution and thus also for the EU's multi-actor foreign policy-making in the extended

neighbourhood. What the public as well as researchers get to see in terms of lacking coherence, one might suspect without being unfair, are different sizes of the tip of the iceberg. Available evidence, however, suggests assessing this challenge being of moderate significance and its overall impact on EU effectiveness as moderately negative.

3.3 EU Output-Effectiveness as 'Substantial Consistency'¹⁴⁵

How 'appropriate' are the identified policy features (premises & objectives, strategies & instruments) in view of a given problem/ challenge at hand? Do EU problem-definitions match those of non-EU experts? Do the prescribed policy strategies (grand & operational) match with causal assumptions? Do prescribed instruments/ tools match with strategies and objectives of the EU?

Obviously, the EU is promoting its constitutive set of social and political norms and practices, based on its own historical experience, and hence itself as a 'role model' in term of externalizing and exporting its 'institutions' to the extended neighbourhood. According to practitioners and experts this 'role-model' export policy approach is over-ambitious and bound to fail, hence (more or less) inadequate. However, at least some shortcomings were rectified by the EU through recurring policy adjustments. For example, a senior EUPOL-Afghanistan officer summarized the overarching goal of that EU mission as "transforming a green into a blue police" thus, turning a militarized policy force into a community police where decision makers are accountable to society.¹⁴⁶ In contrast, in a much more sober approach, Washington – supported also by some EU Member States used to para-military police

¹⁴³ Background talks with EEAS officials in Brussels, 7 March 2017.

¹⁴⁴ For example, the Commissions programming in the EU Trust Fund in which programmes are in place that touch sensitive issues, such as migration, security and defence.

¹⁴⁵ 'Consistency' is here conceptualized as 'appropriateness' of the policy features (identified earlier) for tackling the identified policy challenges; substantial consistency is considered to be given if EU features (problem definitions & policy objectives, strategies and instruments) resonate with the analyses and prescriptions of non-EU experts. The match of EU policy features with the analytical dimensions of experts' (problem descriptions, problem evaluations and causal statements), combined with the evidence base and plausibility of the pertinent scholarly research should be indicative of the 'appropriateness' and thus the 'consistency' of EU policy formulation. The more such a match can be certified, the higher its output effectiveness under this category.

¹⁴⁶ Weigand 2013, 25.

forces, Britain, Italy and France – perused a military-oriented more robust policy reform policy, shedding some doubts on the wisdom of EU policy and the sustainability of its Afghanistan agenda based on conceptually profound and long-term conflict resolution and state-building approach. After all, “American bullets will indeed fly faster than European political suggestions.”¹⁴⁷ These doubts concerning the EU’s ambitious police reforms were additionally nurtured by the incrementally emerging insight that – while keeping in line with its core objectives – the EU had to modify the Operational Plan for EUPOL in different phases of the reform. Since the Council approval of the first Operational Plan, key planning documents have been revised four times in 2008, 2010, 2013 and 2014. There was also an emphasis on the professionalization of the Afghan Police in line with the ‘Ten-Year Vision’ document.¹⁴⁸

Some experts account for EU’s underperformance by contextual reasons – ‘unfortunate circumstances’ combined with home-made conceptual and institutional shortcomings. Concerning Afghanistan for example, experts like Maxime Larivé posit that,

“(t)he case of EUPOL-A is a textbook case of failure in application of the SSR model for a variety of reasons, including security concerns, weak domestic institutions, institutional cacophony within the EU and between Euro-Atlantic institutions, and lack of commitment to the EUPOL-A mission.”¹⁴⁹

Different shades of inappropriate policy premises of EU policy have been stressed, for example by Lord Paddy Ashdown, a former EU High Representative to Bosnia, who concluded that “the paramount reason for our failing grip [in Afghanistan] lies within ourselves.”¹⁵⁰ Likewise critical, Thijs Berman (MEP) reportedly asserted, “What we have seen is years of collective self-deceit by the EU proclaiming imaginary successes.”¹⁵¹ Hence, critics doubt that the EU model can easily be exported as a recipe for successful conflict and crisis management. However, the EU is, on the one hand, said to follow a one-size-fits-all approach, on the other hand, it proclaims in its programmatic statements the necessity of local ownership and the requirement of policy adjustment to the respective social and political context.

Additionally, expert investigations of EU crisis response in the extended neighbourhood point to mismatches and inadequate causal assumptions on the one hand and prescriptions of operational strategies and policy tools, on the other hand. For example, with reference to the Iraq case, Richard Youngs early on raised the question whether the almost exclusive focus on long-term engagement at the expense of immediate EU action in Iraq was appropriate in view of the challenges at hand.¹⁵² However, though this strategy might not be clever functionally, he pointed to political ramifications since the discussion of a new strategy for Iraq in 2003/4 had been the first substantial debate on Iraq

¹⁴⁷ See Scimia 2017.

¹⁴⁸ For more details see: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan 2013.

¹⁴⁹ See Larivé 2012, 186.

¹⁵⁰ Burke 2014, 5.

¹⁵¹ Burke 2014, 7.

¹⁵² Youngs 2004, 5.

inside the EU. What might seem to be functionally appropriate is one thing, however what is politically agreeable and thus operationally feasible is another. The same argument applies to Youngs' report of that time, according to which the EU donors did not follow a clear state-building strategy and also no pro-active policy for stemming the drift towards sectarian politics or secular-ideological parties or other measures which would have been in line with EU concerns and especially criticism of such elements lacking in US policy-making vis-à-vis Iraq.¹⁵³

As to policy consistency in the case of Mali, problem definitions and strategies show high policy coherence of EU output over time. However, when taking into account Non-EU/ local expertise, the EU list of problem definitions is to a significant degree found to be inadequate. For example, the pertinent EU documents and statements missed a clear distinction between the different societal and ethnic groups compounding the society's texture in Mali; this not merely indicates a lack of 'conflict sensitivity'. But incorporating the two core societal challenges in Mali that are *mistrust* and *fragmentation* is indispensable for a more solid foundation of policy-making and hopes for policy effectiveness.¹⁵⁴ Another pitfall exists regarding EU problem definitions and policy prescriptions in terms of lacking capabilities when it comes to migration management or 'fighting' migration; this issue is increasingly high on the agenda if not considered *the* most important challenge of EU Member States foreign policies.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, the EU puts its own credibility into questions since it is not able to provide proper equipment for its missions possibly rooting in financial constraints of Member States' security and defence expenditures.¹⁵⁶

Last but not least, due to the high dependence on Member States' and governments' "appetite to engage",¹⁵⁷ when it comes to foreign and security policy, which – as can be learned from the case studies on Afghanistan and Iraq – is rather volatile; Member States' political priorities may change quickly, not least due to the required domestic legitimation of foreign policy-making. Hence, it will remain a difficult task to ensure sustainable long-term engagement in Mali based on a truly long-term strategy indispensably for providing policy coherence ultimately, as the EU can learn from its conflict management experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The three case studies on the EU's crisis response in the extended neighbourhood point to a basic shortcoming regarding the EU's concept of the "Conflict Cycle" as being part of core EEAS conflict and crisis management documents supposedly representing the very foundation of EU policy making. The

¹⁵³ See Youngs 2004, 11.

¹⁵⁴ For the dimension of *mistrust* see Batten Carew and Dowd 2015 3, Seydou and Dakouo 2016 45, Sonner and Dietrich 2015 15ff For the dimension of *fragmentation* see inter alia Chauzal and van Damme 2015, Dakouo and Sidibe 2017, Høyer 2013.

¹⁵⁵ Information gathered by background talks with EEAS official in Brussels, 6 March 2017.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. See also European Commission/DEVCO 2013.

¹⁵⁷ Information gathered by background talks with EEAS official in Brussels, 6 March 2017.

first challenge for our empirical analyses occurred when trying to grasp and represent the long-term evolution of the conflicts and identifying politically significant phases of this evolution, which could be more or less prone for outside intervention. Already at the very inception of the policy-making process the EU's idea of a standard conflict cycle¹⁵⁸ combined with a stereotypical identification of possible windows for engagement has, according to our case studies, proven conceptually as much as policy-wise an outright misfit between the concept (resembling a 'fire-alarm metaphor') and empirical reality of protracted conflicts considered in this project. The available expert literature on this issue supports our suspicion and offers alternative and arguably more appropriate models, for example the respective approach by Eva Gross.¹⁵⁹

In order to do justice to the complexity of the conflicts under consideration while at the same time providing a minimum base for comparison, as part of this report, the conflict cycle therefore had to be re-constructed for capturing the conflict evolution of our cases by using the as quantitative indicators 'casualties', 'casualties caused by terrorist attacks' and 'refugees/IDPs'. Although this is still far from capturing reality on the ground, we considered the three indicators to demonstrate conflict intensity and dynamics to an adequately reliable way.¹⁶⁰ As a result, the identified conflict cycles of your cases reveal – and this should not be a big surprise – that in particular protracted conflicts as in Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali unfold in a specific manner and oscillating levels of violence not fitting a 'one-size-fits-all approach'.

However, experts working inside EU institutions in Brussels or in the field are not naïve, and the way of thinking about or handling of these challenges on the ground in practice may not be dominated by the said model but by *realpolitik*. Hence, contrary to its documented conceptual vision, the EU itself is in these complex settings not following its own “guidelines”: In Iraq, for example, CSDP mission EUJUST-LEX Iraq was originally deployed in 2005 while the level of violence was rising, and the second mandate of 2010 years after the level of conflict had receded.¹⁶¹ This contrasts starkly with the EU conflict cycle that indicates that EU instruments would ideally be introduced during the time of “crisis development”. In Afghanistan, a number of EU Member States instead of engaging in EUPOL mission joined the respective US/NATO programme (NTM-A; est. 2009). Still the EU and the majority of MS joined the civilian reconstruction efforts according to the division of labour with the UN, World Bank and other international actors defined at the Bonn Conference in 2002. In Mali, the EU engagement has been continuously present before the outbreak of violence in 2012, so that EU engagement can be

¹⁵⁸ See footnote 13 and the EU graph in ANNEX 4. European Commission 2013b, 2.

¹⁵⁹ See Gross 2013, 12. The graph is represented in ANNEX 4 to this report.

¹⁶⁰ For more information on the categorization of conflict intensities and possible indicators consult the *Heidelberger Institut für Internationale Konfliktforschung (HIK)*, Conflict Barometer: <https://hiik.de/konfliktbarometer/> (last access: 18.02.2018).

¹⁶¹ See Council of the European Union 2005; Council of the European Union 2010a.

considered as rather means of prevention than in the other two cases. However, EU engagement increased rapidly in form of two CSDP missions right after the peak of the crisis and continuous deterioration of the security situation in 2012, not least due to the strong advocacy by France and the comparatively quickly emerging consent within the EU.

In sum, while the appropriateness of EU problem-definitions seems to be given at least in general, the devil might, however also in this case lie with the detail and with the translations of words, claims, and policy programmes into action. The inappropriateness of the EU's conflict-cycle model might at **first glance appear as merely an academic concern; but this discussion leads to very relevant questions concerning policy responses by the EU which will be addressed in the concluding section of this study.** We can thus expect to get more information on the issue of substantial coherence when investigating policy implementation in Reports D 7.2, 7.3. and 7.4.

4. Summary of Findings & Interpretations: Output Effectiveness of EU Crisis Response in the Extended Neighbourhood¹⁶²

"There's no success like failure, and (...) failure's no success at all."
Bob Dylan

Three context dimensions of EU engagement

1) The evolution of conflicts and crisis across cases

- When comparing the three conflict theatres of Iraq, Afghanistan and Mali, EU crisis response policy has been facing considerable structural similarities of core challenges concerning a) huge governance deficits, b) delicate ethnic, religious, social and economic fragmentation, c) the embeddedness in regional instability and power struggles, rendering all these cases 'areas of limited statehood.
- Moreover, these security challenges covered all levels of state and society affecting EU engagement and effectiveness (and for that matter other international efforts). In recent years numerous manifest violent conflicts have led to a significant surge in the number of internally displaced persons and refugees, migrating both from and into the countries of concern alike.
- Pronounced differences across cases have to be noted regarding the legacies of war involving external powers, primarily the United States, impinging on the EU's current and future cooperation with the respective governments or (local) people.

2) Major features of international engagement other than of the EU

- Multiple engagements of international actors – multiple in terms of numbers, kinds, and policies – were from the outset unavoidably rendering the EU's operational environment complex and demanding in terms of policy coordination in Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali.
- The United States have been the agenda setter as much as the international gatekeeper defining the roles left for other actors – states and international as well as non-state organizations as much as the EU – in Afghanistan and Iraq, but not in Mali.
- The United Nations have been another important actor across cases always with a multitude of policy programmes and changing significance over time. The mandating function of the UN Security Council (UN SC) has provided international legitimacy for (almost) all military and civilian international activities in Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali.

3) Overview of the EU's multiple engagements in our three countries

- The EU Council's as well as Commission's crisis response policy is, despite all differences in detail, marked by structurally similar problem definitions leading to the same strategic and operational objectives, grand and operational strategies as well as the application of common tools and funding instruments. The latter resemble the manifold options at the EU's disposal, for instance CSDP missions, regional strategy papers, Special Representatives or Commission engagement via DEVCO and ECHO.
- Evolving mandates are (though not unique) a feature EU conflict and crisis response policy; the CSDP missions' mandates/OPLANs in Afghanistan four times in 8 years, in Iraq twice in ten years, and in Mali only three years three respectively two mandates for EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali. This can be taken as rather positive indicators of an intrinsic lessons-learned approach and flexibility.

¹⁶²

- These items stand for summary points.
- ❖ These items stand for analytical arguments.
- 🚩 These items stand for policy recommendations.

- EU Council's, Commission's and Member States' engagement in all three cases relate to diverse historic links to the countries. The salience of individual Member States' advocacy in favour of EU engagement has to be highlighted, not least rooted in their respective colonial past in the EU's extended neighbourhood.
- Moreover, MS's historical links to the regions and countries in question matter if it comes to initiating and conducting missions and other policies, providing reference points for questions of neo-colonialism¹⁶³ or 'soft imperialism'¹⁶⁴ possibly infringing on the EU's policy legitimacy as well as outcome and impact effectiveness.
- Moreover, Britain in Afghanistan and Iraq as much as France in Mali acquired special roles in the respective countries as well as 'lead nation' inside the European Union's policy-making machinery or regarding bilateral engagement.
- ❖ We will have to see a) whether the requirement of multiple policy coordination across international actors has had enabling or constraining implications for EU policy effectiveness, and b) whether the colonial ties come with positive enabling or negative constraining implications for EU crisis response policy. This is open to debate and will be treated in the follow-up project reports on policy implementation and impact.

Evaluating the EU's crisis response output effectiveness

1. Actor coherence as 'actor unity' and 'policy determinacy'¹⁶⁵

- 'Actor coherence' – first measured as 'actor unity of voice' concerning viable compromise – and hence 'output effectiveness' showed considerable deficiencies across cases. This was a major challenge for the EU from the very beginning especially in Afghanistan and Iraq. In contrast Mali has been a case in which actor unity has been – with France as a constant and strong advocate inside the EU – steady and high from the very beginning.,
- Regarding *output determinacy*¹⁶⁶ – the second indicator of 'actor coherence' in this study measured as binding quality of wording in EU documents and statements – the determinacy of Council Conclusions has across cases been higher than the determinacy of the overall sample that is including Commission policy documents.
- ❖ The Council and the Commission as institutions play a major role in policy-making which sometimes is resulting in institutional conflicts undermining actor unity especially in CSDP missions. What seems to further actor unity and policy determinacy 'technically', the 'lead-nation' concept, may politically be counterproductive. This is due to an inherent tension between greater effectiveness due to political leadership and representation of the EU family as a whole.

🚩 Policy Recommendation: Improve the balance between policy effectiveness and internal representativeness for enhancing actor unity!

2. Evaluating the EU policy output effectiveness concerning 'process coherence'¹⁶⁷ (criteria: 'coherence of policy features', 'conceptual coherence' and 'institutional coherence')?

a) 'Coherence of policy features'

¹⁶³ See Nicolaïdis, et al. 2015.

¹⁶⁴ See Hettne and Söderbaum 2005.

¹⁶⁵ See for the operationalization of categories, criteria and indicators of policy effectiveness in ANNEX 7.

¹⁶⁶ See again Thomas 2012, 459f.

¹⁶⁷ See for the operationalization of categories, criteria and indicators of policy effectiveness in ANNEX 7.

- The core strategic as well as intermediate objectives of the EU have overall been continuously visible in EU policy formulation and hence remarkably coherent across cases. In view of respective political, economic and social challenges, EU strategic objectives covered in short improving ‘security’, ‘stability’ and ‘prosperity’ as has been indicated by the Council, Commission, and Member States alike.¹⁶⁸ In Mali a fourth dimension has to be added connected to the EU’s intermediate aim and grand strategy for peace-building that is the support of efforts at achieving institutionalized domestic ‘peace agreements and reconciliation’.
 - The EU’s ambitious programmatic statements on its intermediate objectives (grand strategies) of democratization, dialogue and partnership as well as the EU’s normative premises of good governance were policy-wise operationalized in a modest and focused. Moreover, policy tools and programmes were adjusted not least in view of changing security conditions.
 - In all three cases, ‘security first!’ has moreover been the core EU concern and intermediate policy goal as structural gate-keeping factor for all efforts at stabilizing the three countries and societies across the time-frame of this study (2003-2016).
 - Despite the aforementioned policy coherence, a shift of EU concerns towards containing migration gradually emerged following the escalation of violence in the whole MENA and Greater Middle East in the wake of the ‘Arab Spring’ of 2011. Moreover, this shift signifies a strong nexus between the EU’s and its MS internal and external policy agenda.
 - Downscaling of policy benchmarks at the output level will be directly relevant for policy implementation, and often happened not least in view of changing security conditions on the ground, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq, while in Mali the scope of EU engagement has increased and become more ambitious over time.
 - On the operational level, problem definitions, objectives and strategies also show a high degree of continuity and visibility, hence indicating a significant policy-output effectiveness: In Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali the identified operational strategies – ‘dialogue and partnership’, ‘ownership’ as well as ‘capacity building’ – have been continuous features of EU policy-making output (that is documents and statements) across the time-frame of this investigation.
- ❖ The policies on the countries and regions addressed in this report resembled features marking the European Union foreign policy overall, from Neighbourhood Policy to interregional policies vis-à-vis Africa, Asia or Latin America as much as to the extended neighbourhood. These general characteristics seemingly resemble a ‘one-size-fits-all approach’.¹⁶⁹ The specifics of the EU’s policy-making are, however, strongly defined by the respective challenges of the specific case in question, including adjustments made in view of changes on the ground.
 - ❖ Obviously, the standard principles and norms (democracy, human rights and rule of law) have been guiding EU policy formulation across cases. Moreover, operational strategies (transformative mechanisms) like *socialization* (by dialogue and partnership), and *capacity-building* (by empowering state institutions, personnel and civil society) are well-known features of EU policy strategies. *Conditionality*, another often found EU strategy – no matter whether in its positive or negative form¹⁷⁰ – in our cases has not been part of the EU’s policy declarations and documents on the *output* level but might become important during policy implementation.
 - ❖ These EU policy features are already coloured by the Unions identity as a pluralistic polity founded on the principle of ‘unity in diversity’, facilitated and legitimized by democratic institutions, based on

¹⁶⁸ For an overview on EU policy features see ANNEX 6.

¹⁶⁹ See Börzel and Risse 2004.

¹⁷⁰ See for a proper start on this issue: Smith 1998.

the principles of human rights and the rule of law. By emphasising its constitutive set of social and political norms and practices, the EU once more promoted, based on its own historical experience, itself as a role model in term of externalizing and exporting its 'institutions' to the cases in question.¹⁷¹ What would Edward Said say about this?

Policy recommendations:

- ✚ The EU should forego the ambitious goal of forging every state/ society in crisis according to its own model unless true ownership exists on the partners' side; facilitating a stable process of peaceful change may be ambitious enough – and all we can hope for. Moreover, this leaves it to the partners' stakeholders and people to determine their future.

These recommendations are in consequence arguing for limiting one's ambitions in order to enhancing prospects for success. A holistic awareness of challenges is never futile, but it does not necessarily have to result in holistic ambitions of "making the world safe for democracy" which would ultimately lead to endless interventions. This premise has – as we will argue below – significant implications for core policy features representing core concepts!

b) 'Continuity of Core Concepts'

'Conflict sensitivity'

- The concept 'conflict sensitivity' has been part of pertinent documents on EU crisis response policy throughout the years. In addition, the EU has indeed signed up for the 'do-no-harm' approach as an indispensable premise for its conflict and crisis management policy. But the actual 'continuity and visibility' of the 'conflict-sensitivity' concept, has shown remarkable differences:
 - In the case study on EU crisis response in Iraq the quantitative analysis of core EU documents shows that the concept of 'conflict sensitivity' has been explicitly used comparatively – that is relative to the other two core concepts, and across cases – least in the Iraq, more in the Afghanistan and most in the Mali document sample.¹⁷²
- Another challenge for any EU engagement in any unstable country is being caught in the 'counter-insurgency logic',¹⁷³ as it supports one of the conflict parties in order to enhance the stability in the country while also possibly preserving the status-quo that has fed or might feed the ongoing conflict in the first place.¹⁷⁴
- Empirical evidence of our qualitative as much as quantitative analysis shows however:¹⁷⁵ For the daily work of EU practitioners, this concept tends to be merely sullenly accepted in general terms if not explicitly discounted or neglected. For example, background talks with EEAS officials in Brussels revealed a lack of awareness and knowledge about the concept of 'conflict sensitivity', especially regarding Mali.¹⁷⁶
- ❖ The do-no-harm approach and conflict sensitivity are indeed indispensable for maintaining the EU's crisis response legitimacy and effectiveness. Practically this concept is compromised already when cooperating with some parties to a conflict but not with others often resulting in suspicion by some 'locals' about an existing bias of EU's engagement from the outset. Thus, what might be considered being functionally and practically unavoidable is often politically problematic.

¹⁷¹ See Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005.

¹⁷² See ANNEX 2 for details.

¹⁷³ See Vermeij 2015.

¹⁷⁴ Information from background talks with ECHO officials in Brussels, 6 March 2017.

¹⁷⁵ See ANNEX 3.

¹⁷⁶ Information from background talks with EU officials in Brussels, 7 March 2017.

- ✚ 'Conflict sensitivity' has to start at home, and should for policy-making be treated as a twin-principle to facilitating 'local ownership', addressed below!
- ✚ Choose your in-country partners carefully and avoid one-sided commitments to traditional power elites but try to find a viable balance between conflicting parties!
- ✚ Conflict sensitivity has to encompass 'cultural sensitivity' including a sober strategy avoiding overly demanding normative changes on the partner's side. What is standard in Europe often is overstretching the demanded changes of standards and behaviour of partners.

'Comprehensive approach'

- The concept of *'comprehensive approach'* is inherent in the policy features identified above as a 'grand strategy' of EU crisis response pertinent documents:
 - as part of the internal challenges of policy coordination among EU institutions and Member States' engagements;
 - as part to the internationalization/ regionalization strategy also encompassing external factors influencing political and social process in our case countries;
 - as part of inter-organizational cooperation with the UN, the World Bank or concerning significant state-actors like the United States;
 - as part of grand strategy of democratization, inherently encompassing all levels of society requiring reforms in political, economic and societal structures and processes on all levels of government.
- Since these features of EU engagement were also found to govern its operational objectives, strategies and tools, the comprehensive approach resembles the ambition of comprehensive EU responses to the complex challenges at hand.
- As the quantitative analysis reveals, the usage of the concept of 'comprehensive approach' has been stressed more in EU documents than 'conflict sensitivity' or 'local ownership', which can indeed be subsumed as being parts of the 'comprehensive approach'.¹⁷⁷
- ❖ From a common-sense perspective a complex and holistic response to complex challenges that is a 'comprehensive approach' sounds plausible as a precondition for 'success'. However, the more we analyse practices and consequences of this approach, the bigger the frustrations regarding limited policy effectiveness becomes.
- ❖ The comprehensiveness of any policy over time tends to become limited in practice, thus suggesting that policy priorities have to be defined anyway.
- ❖ Moreover, a truly comprehensive approach resembles a 'functional' approach to conflict and crisis response suggesting that peace-building could rely on a bottom-up strategy alone. Moreover, this approach is suggesting a trend towards de-politicizing conflict management policy, while the 'security first' is running counter to this. Hence, without political settlements among conflicting parties in any given state or society stabilizing bottom-up policies will mostly be in vain.
- ❖ Afghanistan and Iraq provide evidence that the bottom-up and comprehensive approach takes years and ended before a political settlement could be reached since the time-dimension of the approach primarily depends on the MS sustained commitment and some rapprochement of political parties to the conflict.
- ❖ Despite ending missions as unfinished, new EU police-missions have been established or previous ones re-focused in both countries. Why should those missions have greater prospect for effectiveness and success? Which lessons have been learned from the previous exercises?

¹⁷⁷ See again the Annexes of the three case studies under D 7.1.

- ✚ Policy recommendations: Think comprehensively but act according to priorities from the outset!
- ✚ Do not go beyond humanitarian engagement if you are not 'willing or able' to engage in conflict diplomacy negotiating a basic agreement between conflicting parties!
- ✚ Define a proper exit-strategy early on as to avoid being forced – due to lack of commitment by the MS or due to unfavourable circumstances on the ground – to leave a country without having finished your 'businesses'!

'Local ownership'

- The EU's performance on its ambition to include 'locals' has been identified as one of the pertinent features of EU crisis response on the level of policy-formulation. This concept appeared most often across EU policy documents and our three cases – relative to the concepts of 'conflict sensitivity' or 'comprehensive approach'.
- The EU's declared strive for instigating 'local ownership' has moreover been apparent by a distinct terminology the Council or the Commission used when formulating strategic as well as operational objectives to avoid any impression or to possibly preclude any suspicion the EU would super-impose its own preferences on the respective country and their 'local' actors.
- In EU Council conclusions and decisions for Mali, 'local ownership' is mostly referred to as 'regional' or 'national' ownership, with national meaning the Malian government in Bamako.
- Moreover, the local dimension has been a pertinent feature of EU concerns regarding locals as 'passive entities' addressing – sometimes merely implicitly – those suffering from human rights abuses, gender or minority discrimination.
- A recurring challenge, indicating varying degrees of ownership, is the varying lack of convergence between the interests and preferences of local actors, on the one hand, and international sponsors and donors, on the other hand. This implies a political divide, which requires long-term engagement for socializing local partners in favour of EU norms and values in order to maintain legitimacy as an indispensable precondition for the EU's sustained effectiveness.
- ❖ The underlying reasoning indicates a 'causal belief'¹⁷⁸ of the EU crisis response policy since local ownership and strengthening Civil Society Organizations has been considered an indispensable – that is a necessary but not sufficient – prerequisite for the ultimate success of state- and peace-building efforts.
- ❖ Regarding the lower levels of 'local' engagement, the perception study across cases indicate that locals mostly have no clue who/ what the EU is, what the European are doing in the respective country or how significant EU engagement might be.¹⁷⁹

Policy Recommendations:

- ✚ Mainstream engagement of locals into planning and implementation of EU policies early on as to facilitate as much ownership by socialization as possible!
- ✚ Reconsider the long list of what are supposed to be 'indispensable' preconditions for successful peace-building and balance this list against unavoidable practical compromises.
- ✚ Avoid overly ambitious promises featuring unrealistic expectations about EU performance since the higher you aim, the lower frustration tolerance might become thus undermining the required long-time commitment of EU institutions, Member States and people to state- and peacebuilding!

¹⁷⁸ See George 1979; Goldstein and Keohane 1993.

¹⁷⁹ See the EUNPACK Policy Brief on local perceptions of EU engagement in our cases.

c) Institutional coherence

(horizontal/ vertical coherence across Community and Council foreign policy domains)

- When it comes to institutional coherence, empirical evidence points to both remaining challenges of horizontal as much as of vertical coherence.
- In Mali, for instance, there is still a lot of room for improvement. Not only are there coordination issues between the EEAS and the Commission, but also within the Commission services, namely DEVCO and ECHO. The most difficult coordination problem of DEVCO concerns the cooperation with EU Member States that is vertical coherence. Additionally, as an inference from the EDF review, the Commission identified security as a priority concern; this seems to mark a significant departure for an institution, which has been responsible for development for a long time.
- The lack of institutionalised policy coordination and cooperation between the Commission and the EEAS up-to-date has in practice undermined a comprehensive approach to the Mali conflict. The most important aspect of this deficit is the access to and sharing of information foremost between Commission agencies that is ECHO and DEVCO,¹⁸⁰ but between the Commission and Member States or the EEAS, respectively.
- Regarding Afghanistan, EU efforts initially suffered from fragmentation. Internal coordination between the MS, EUPOL, the EU Special Representative (EUSR) and the EU Delegation was initially rather weak. Policy coordination across actors also remained awkward with other donors in the justice sector. For example, the Commission did not assume a coordination function among international actors as mandated.¹⁸¹
- In the Iraq case, the empirical investigation of EU policy output also revealed some issues of institutional coherence in the Brussels machinery concerning the EUJUST LEX integrated rule of law mission under CFSP and thus Council control. Here, still during Solana's time of duty, tensions reportedly existed between the role of the HR and the Political and Security Committee (PSC) regarding coordination with other key players and with Council endorsement. Moreover, in view of the mission's narrow mandate and – due to the instable security situation – the limited in-country presence rendered the Brussels office of the mission in the driver's seat whereas the actual activities in Iraq itself were limited until 2012 – one year before that mission ended in December 2013.
- ❖ Hence, institutional coherence remains a political and functional challenge for the EU's multi-actor foreign policy-making in the extended neighbourhood. However, as the pertinent literature tells us, at a closer look this also holds true for other international actors, not least the United Nations, and even for state actors like the United States in terms of inter-agency policy coordination in the realm of conflict and crisis management. Hence, this feature can hardly be ascribed to the sui-generis character of the EU polity.
- ❖ Moreover, the comprehensive approach inherently comes with enhanced coordination requirements and challenges. What the public as well as researchers get to see in terms of lacking coherence, one might suspect without being unfair, are different sizes of the tip of the iceberg. Available evidence, however, suggests assessing this challenge being of moderate significance and its overall impact on EU effectiveness as moderately negative.
- ✚ Policy Recommendation: Improve vertical and horizontal policy coordination by involving different levels of 'the chain of command' across policies: Think and plan comprehensively but act according to political priorities!

¹⁸⁰ Information from background talks with ECHO officials in Brussels, 6 March 2017 as well as with DEVCO official in Brussels, 8 March 2017.

¹⁸¹ See Gross 2009.

3. EU Output-Effectiveness as ‘Substantial Consistency’

How ‘appropriate’ are the identified policy features (premises & objectives, strategies & instruments) in view of a given problem/ challenge at hand? Do EU problem-definitions match those of non-EU experts? Do the prescribed policy strategies (grand & operational) match with causal assumptions? Do prescribed instruments/ tools match with strategies and objectives of the EU?

- Our analyses raised significant issues of policy consistency in terms of EU policy-features matching or miss-matching expert knowledge (which is, of course, in itself diverse!).
- Regarding Iraq and Mali, on the conceptual level of policy-making (see below the EEAS’ and Commission’s conflict-cycle model) as well as operational definitions of objectives and strategies are pointing to a prime concern with long-term engagement. Immediate measures addressing crisis symptoms are covered by the EU Commission’s humanitarian aid via ECHO, which ought to be appreciated. Focusing on humanitarian aid is, however, ‘merely’ addressing symptoms but not ‘root causes’ violent conflicts. How can the obvious tension between a plea for modest ambitions (see above) and the demand for tackling root causes of conflict be reconciled?
- In the realm of “fighting migration”, EU strategies and tools are mostly in line with its problem definitions, thus show policy coherence over time. However, in turn, policy consistency is according to experts’ analyses suffering due to lack of resources provided resulting and the existing tendency to securitize migration policy in credibility and legitimacy deficit of EU foreign policy.¹⁸²
- Furthermore, taking Mali as an instance, the EU puts its own credibility into questions since it is not able to provide proper equipment for its missions possibly rooting in financial constraints of security and defence expenditures of MS.¹⁸³
- The EU’s foreign policy-making – as mostly intergovernmental endeavour – remains highly dependent on Member States with highly volatile political preferences and priorities. Hence, regarding vertical coherence as much as policy consistency, it remains difficult to sustain long-term engagement since Member States’ political priorities may change quickly, not least due to the required domestic support for conflict management engagement and the legitimation of foreign policy-making.
- By promoting its constitutive set of social and political norms and practices, the EU once more recommends, based on its own historical experience, itself as a ‘role model’ in term of externalizing and exporting its ‘institutions’ to the extended neighbourhood. However, according to practitioners and experts, this ‘role-model’-export-policy approach is over ambitious and lacking conflict sensitivity, and hence is (more or less) inadequate.
- Experts account for EU’s underperformance by contextual reasons – ‘unfortunate circumstances’ – combined with EU-home-made conceptual and institutional shortcomings, for instance, the lack of conflict sensitivity in Mali concerning its societal and ethnic texture.
- Additionally, expert investigations of EU crisis response in the extended neighbourhood point to miss-matches between the EU’s diagnosis and therapy. Hence, inadequate causal assumptions as part of the problem-definition, on the one hand, and prescriptions of operational strategies and policy tools, on the other hand, are cases in point.
- However, this is not a singular feature of EU conflict and crisis management policy; for instance, in the same vein the UN’s policy-making in Afghanistan has been marked by a mismatch of analysis

¹⁸² Information from background talk with EEAS official in Brussels, 6 March 2017.

¹⁸³ Ibid. See also European Commission/DEVCO 2013

and actual policy-making when distributing funds for SSR reforms through corrupt Afghan state institutions.

- The three case studies on the EU's crisis response in the extended neighbourhood point to a basic shortcoming regarding the EU's concept of the "Conflict Cycle" as being part of core Commission's and EEAS' conflict and crisis management documents supposedly representing the very foundation of EU policy making.¹⁸⁴ Our findings suggest however that the EU's ideal-typical model does not fit for any protracted conflict. Moreover, the timing of EU engagement often is questionable not least since it is not primarily a question of functional appropriateness but of political expediency.
- ❖ In order to do justice to the complexity of the conflicts under consideration while at the same time providing a minimum base for comparison, as part of this report, the conflict cycle therefore was re-constructed for capturing the conflict evolution of our cases by using the as quantitative indicators 'casualties', 'casualties caused by terrorist attacks' and 'refugees/IDPs'.
- ❖ Though on first glance merely an academic concern, this discussion leads to very relevant questions concerning policy responses practices by the EU:
 - Are external conflict management interventions most promising when these are at first sight most needed that is when levels of violence are escalating? Or are such interventions more promising during phase of subdued, emerging or abating violence?
 - Taking the Iraq case as an example, why are concrete measures and instruments implemented when the level of violence is low and thus might seem to be secondary? Why are phases of low conflict intensity (like 2008–11) not used for timely action re-enforcing existing dynamics towards state and societal reconstruction?¹⁸⁵
 - Why did it take three years for taking decisions to render the Iraq rule-of-law mission an in-country activity, finally implemented in 2012, when the level of conflicts and violence was turning up again and – as we now know on hindsight – just one year before the EU Council decided to pull out its CSDP mission from Iraq?
 - On a similar note, the MS needed year to make the AFG mission operational but ultimately ran in deteriorated security environment due to rising insurgency rendering civilian policing close to impossible.
 - Possibly, our case studies merely provide another example of a pattern of policy-making well-known as the *conflict-prevention paradox*: Interventions are not occurring when it would be functionally most promising, but when they are considered politically appropriate!
- ❖ Regarding conflict management in Afghanistan and Iraq, the mandate was not fulfilled but the missions closed before any prospects for political settlement. Nevertheless, in Afghanistan the EU devolved parts of the earlier mandate to the EU Delegation, and in Iraq a new police-reform mission was established (in October 2017) under continuously problematic conditions. What lessons learned have been applied, and what factors promise better prospects for success now than before?

Policy recommendation:

- ✚ Be aware that functional rationality differs from political rationality and that in case of doubt the latter will most likely top the former!
- ✚ Define and implement a combination of bottom-up and top-down strategies to balance functional and political requirements!
- ✚ Combine modest ambitions with strong a resolve and focused efforts in priority areas!

¹⁸⁴ See graphs in ANNEX 5.

¹⁸⁵ See Burke 2009.

Some remarks on method issues

- ❖ Aside from the summary of substantial findings across the distinctive analytical steps, it is indispensable to end on a cautionary remark regarding availability of information/ the data base as well as regarding the evaluation of policy-output effectiveness.¹⁸⁶
 - Information always remains incomplete and especially for a time-span of some 12-years-plus even problematic for the early years. Research can only work with the available information beefed up by background talks with involved policy actors; however, the latter are getting rare soon the further back in time the processes under investigation are.
 - Likewise, the evaluation remains highly subjective even though we have tried to base our research on transparent and comprehensible methods. Judgements unavoidable remain subjective; however, since simultaneously based on evidence, this should allow the reader to make up his or her own mind on the viability of the offered qualitative evaluations.
- ❖ The results of this 'subjective' evaluation are summarized in ANNEX 7 indicating some differences in effectiveness of EU-output dimensions: Are these statements on effectiveness too positive too optimistic? Or are they too negative or pessimistic? These statements addressing the EU-output performance are these 'fair' in comparison of crisis response policies of other international actors (the US or the United Nations)? Are we coming closer to rendering foreign policy evaluation in the realm of conflict and crisis management a scientific endeavour or does it – as Alexander George once concluded¹⁸⁷ – remain rather an art?

¹⁸⁶ See also the introduction to section 3!

¹⁸⁷ See George 1984, 224.

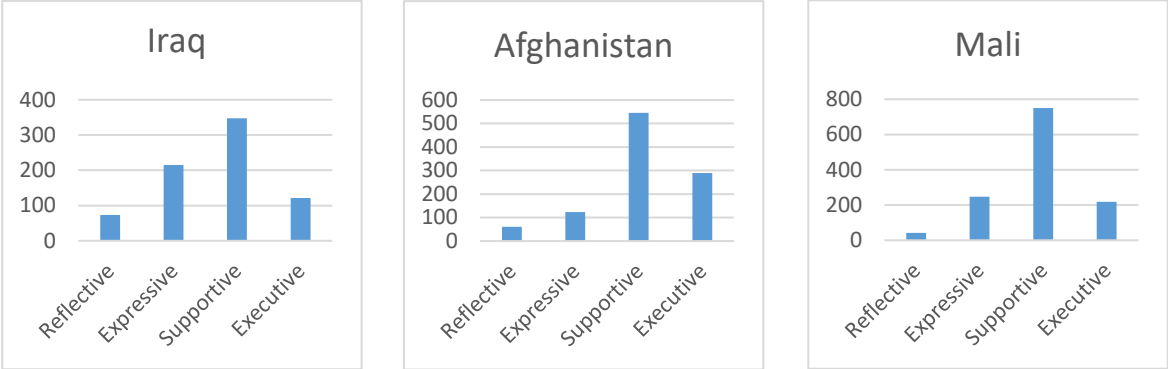
ANNEX 1: Case Selection

Table 1: EU Crisis Response in the Extended Neighbourhood: Selection of Cases & Cases-in-case			
WP 7	Enver Ferhatovic	Ingo Peters	Rabea Heinemann
Cases/ Countries Cluster of Sub-cases	Afghanistan	Iraq	Mali
«Council foreign policy»	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSR: CSDP supported/ EC funded and managed • EUPOL-Afghanistan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ANP Training Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUJUST LEX-Iraq <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Including RoL support programme of Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [SSR : EUCAP Sahel Mali as broader, regional framework] • SSR : EU TM Mali
«Commission foreign policy»	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RoL: EC funding, steering of activities/projects of the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) <p><u>EXCLUDED:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade • Human Rights • Democratisation • Political Dialogue • Humanitarian Aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Aid • RoL support (s.a.) <p><u>EXCLUDED:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade • Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection (ECHO) • Human rights, electorate process • Refugees Aid inside & outside Iraq • Special measures 2016 (Mosul) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU RoL engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the framework of the National Indicative Programme (NIP): Institutions, Corruption, Decentralisation • Development & Humanitarian Aid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Food Security/ migration nexus >>NIP ○ Rural Development/ Transportation <p><u>EXCLUDED:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade (Economic Partnership Agreement) • Electorate Process

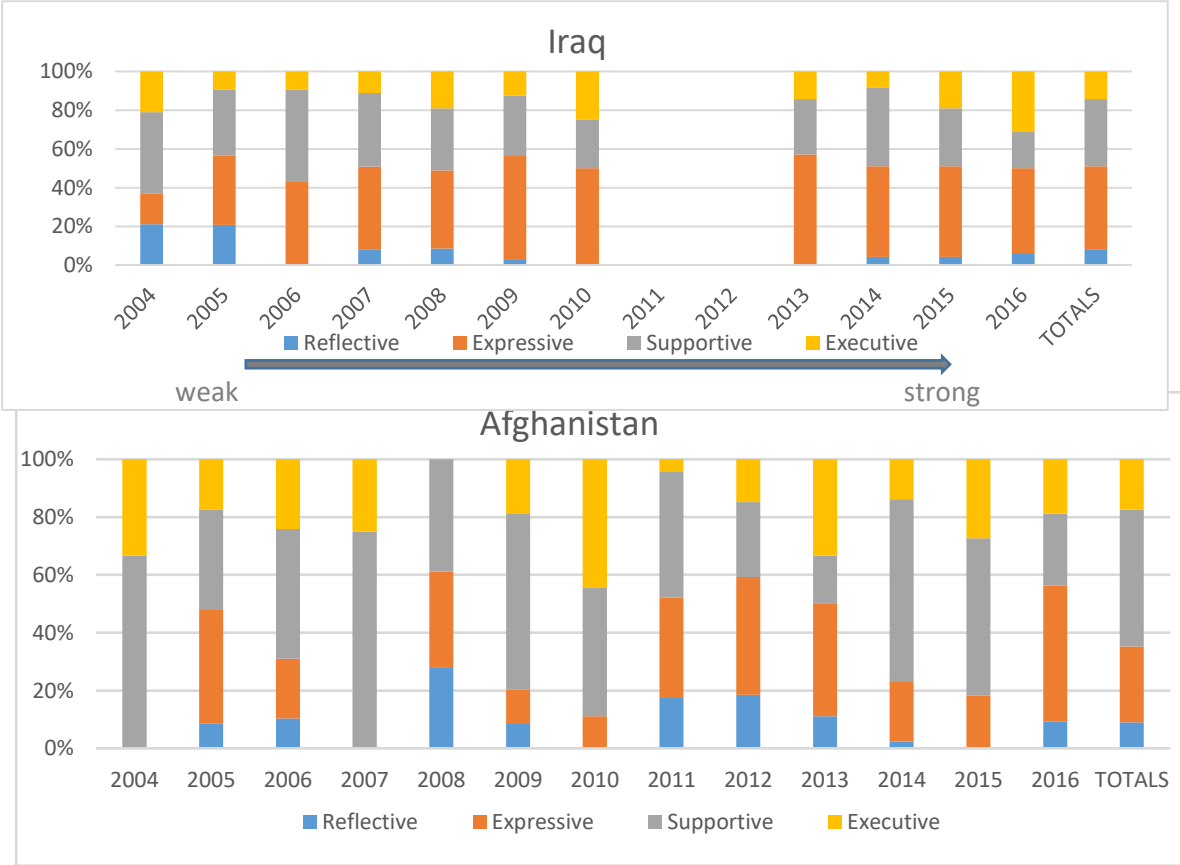
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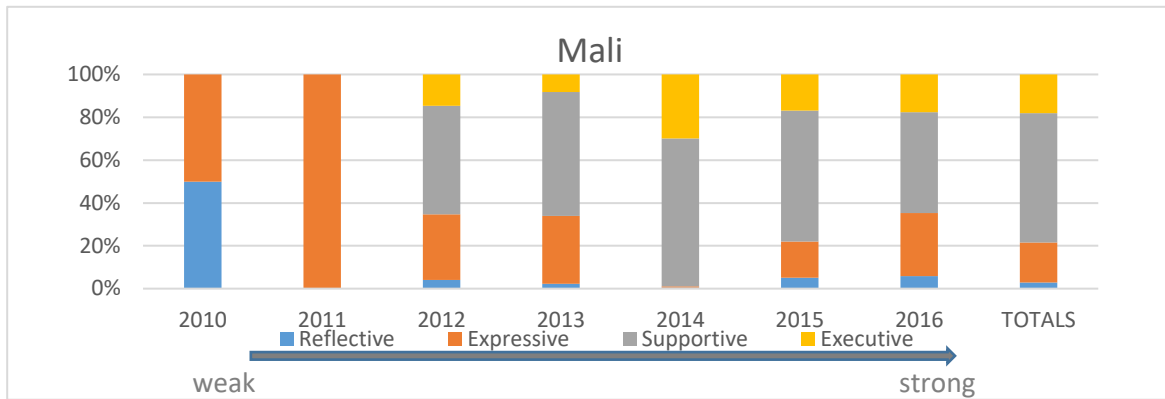
ANNEX 2: Quantitative Results Concerning ‘Actor Coherence’: Determinacy

Determinacy in EU Council Conclusions (for Mali additional: Council Decision) – Total Samples



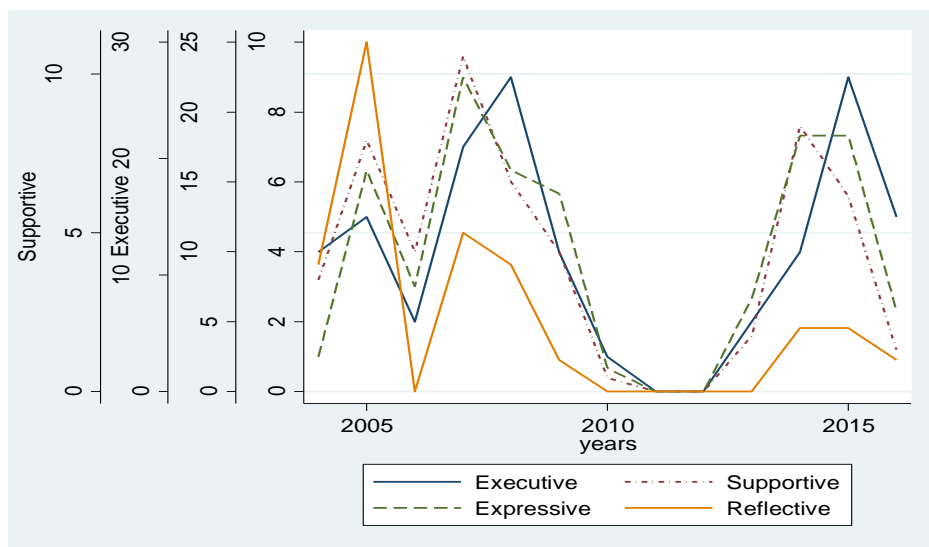
Determinacy in EU Council Conclusions (for Mali additional: Council Decision) – by Years



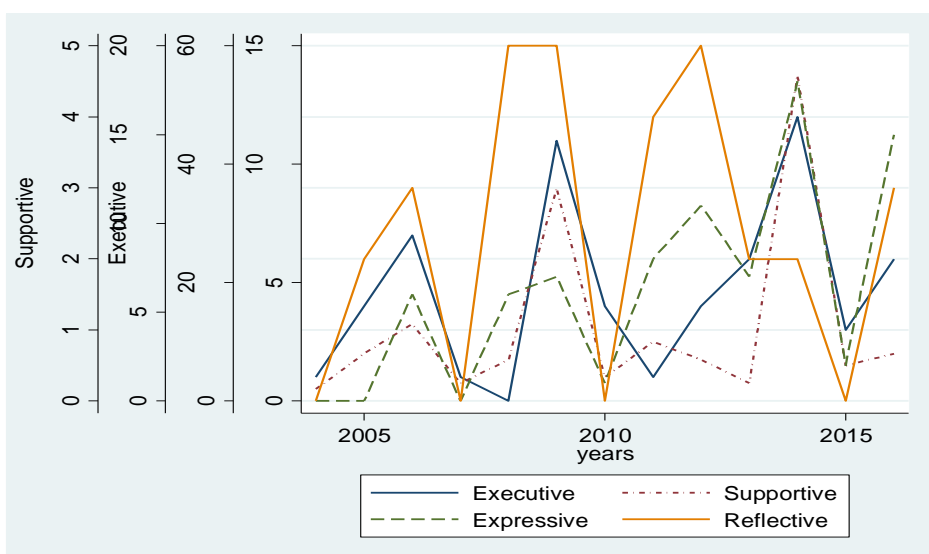


Diagrammes – Determinacy in EU Council Conclusions (for Mali additional: Council Decision) – by years

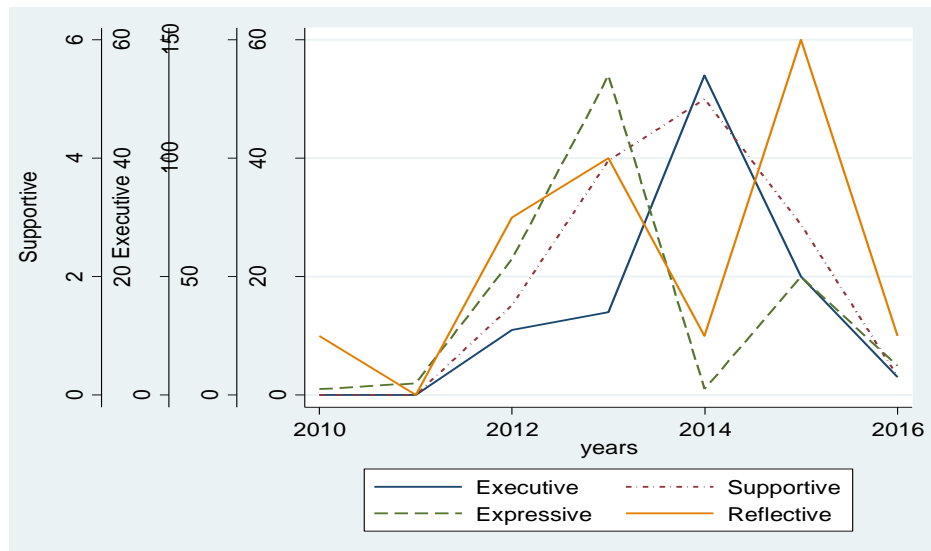
a) Iraq



b) Afghanistan



c) Mali

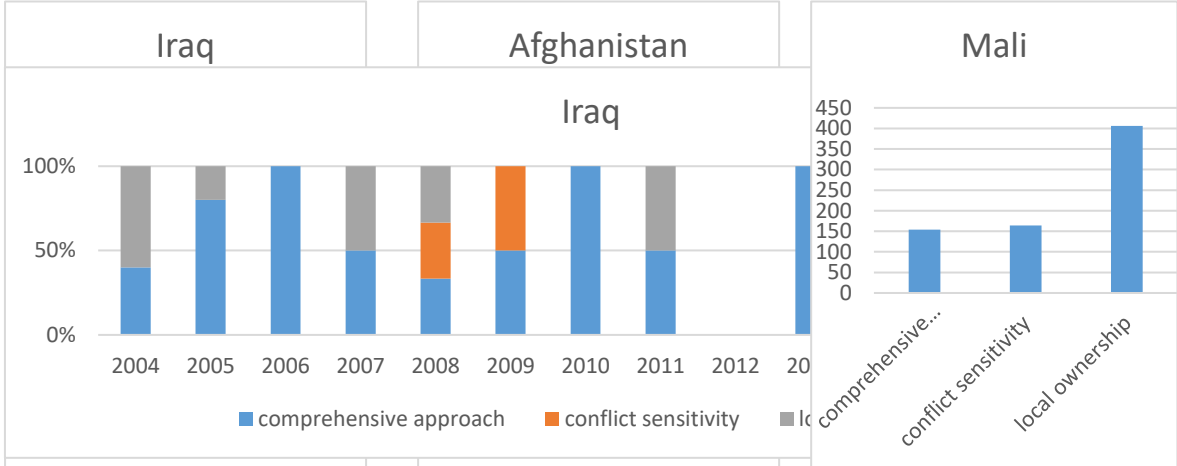


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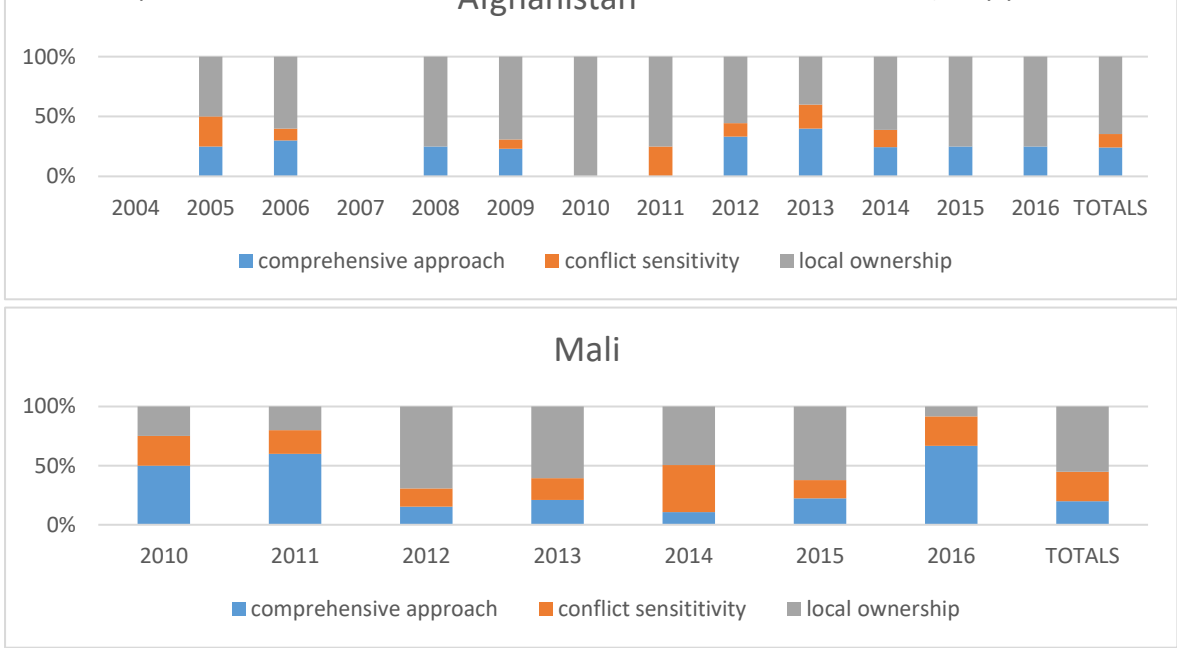
ANNEX 3: Coherence of Core Policy Concepts: Quantitative Analysis of ‘Continuity and Visibility’

Quantitative Analyses: Overview of findings

Core Concepts in EU Council Conclusions (for Mali additional: Council Decision) – Total Sample

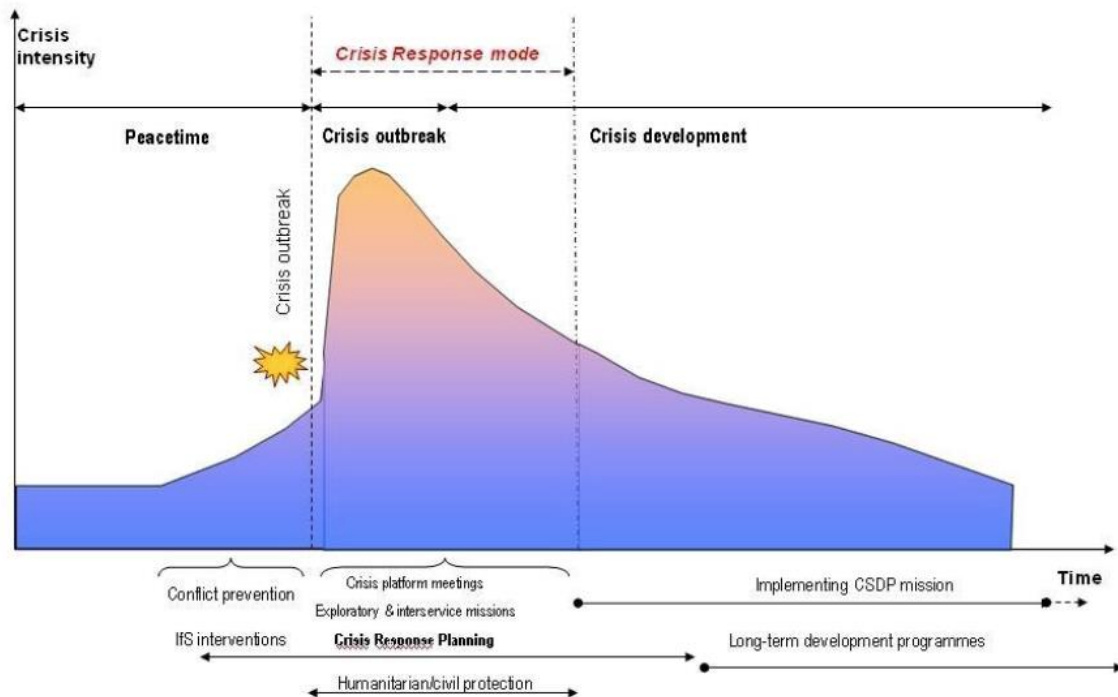


Core Concepts in EU Council Conclusions (for Mali additional: Council Decision) – by years



ANNEX 4: EU Conflict Cycle and Alternatives

a) EU Conflict Cycle

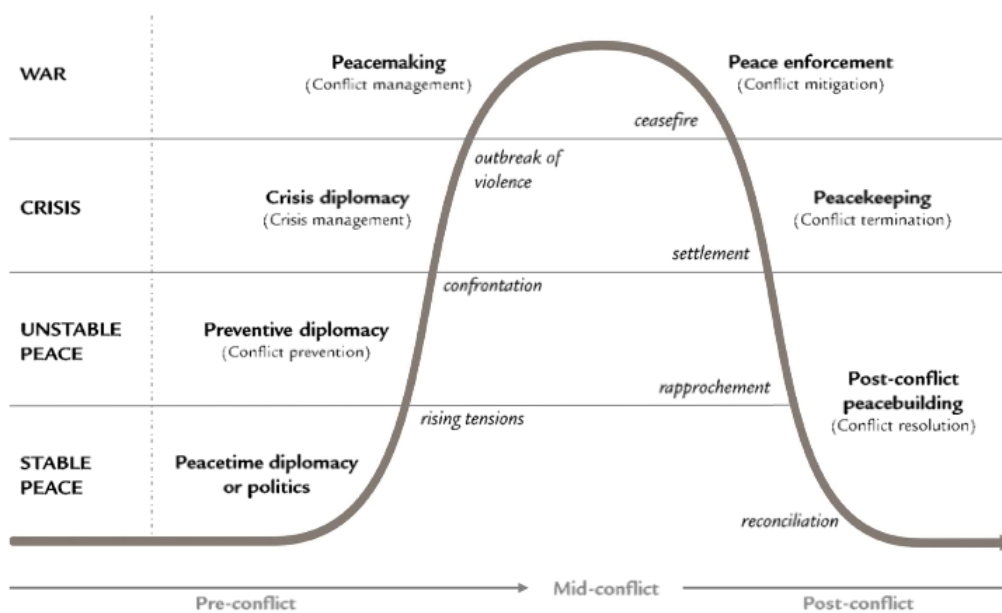


Deliverable 4.1, page 8, Figure 1.

Source: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/crisis-response/what-we-do/response-cycle/index_en.htm (Accessed 20.02.2017)

b) Alternative Conflict Cycle

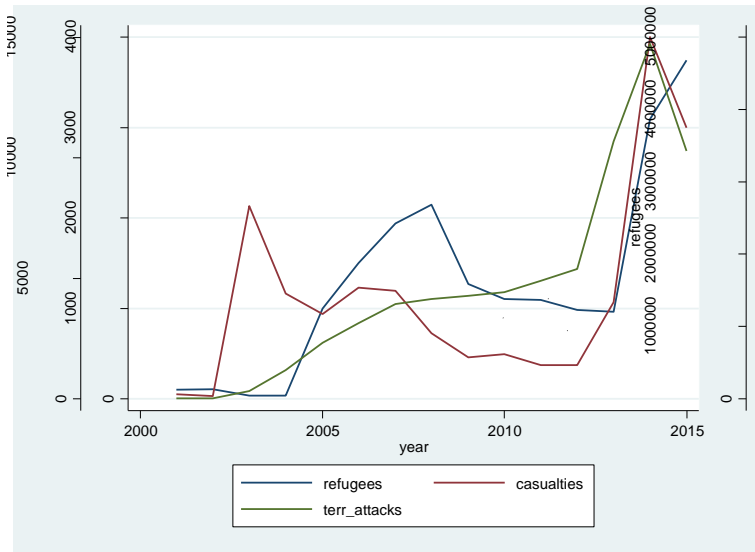
Figure 1: Conflict stages¹



Source: Gross, Eva. 2013. *Peacebuilding in 3D: EU and US approaches*. Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies. Page 12.

Annex 5: Re-Conceptualized Conflict Cycles of Cases

a) Iraq (2002-2015)



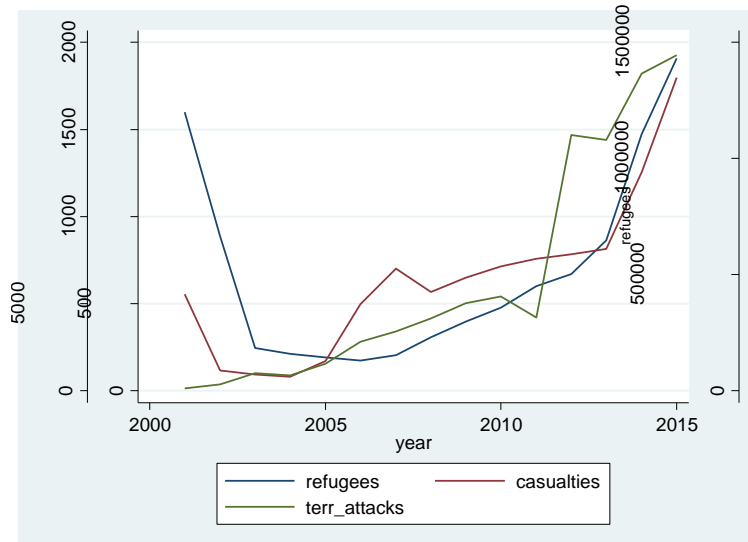
Based on data from :

UCDP: <http://www.ucdp.uu.se/#country/645>

Global Terrorist Database:

<https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>

b) Afghanistan (2000-2015)



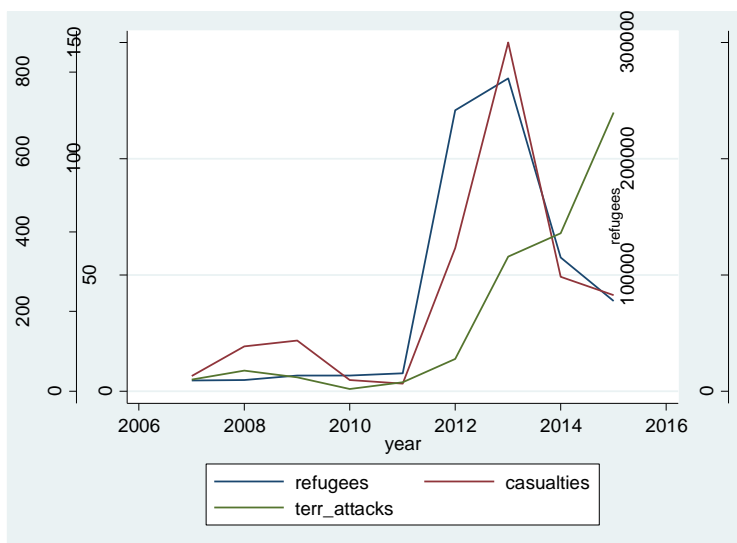
Based on data from :

UCDP: <http://www.ucdp.uu.se/#country/700>

Global Terrorist Database:

<https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>

c) Mali (2007-2015)



Based on data from

UCDP: <http://www.ucdp.uu.se/#country/432>

Global Terrorist Database:

<https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>

ANNEX 6: EU Policy Features

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Strategic Objectives	Intermediate Aims Grand Strategies	Operational Strategies	Policy Tools
Stability Security Sustainability Prosperity Peace-building	Democracy Democratization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership • Reforms • Bilateral dialogue & partnership with Iraqi counterparts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCA • EU Mission EUJUST LEX-Iraq • Civilian Policing • Anti Corruption Mission • RIP, IcSP, PACTEA 2 • NIP, IcSP, EUTM Mali
	International Cooperation, incl. regional cooperation Internationalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi- and multilateral dialogue & partnership ('socialization') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy initiatives for partnership and cooperation conferences and commission in Iraq and on regional level • EU Sahel Strategy, EUSR Sahel, EU Trust Fund, Support ECOWAS, Regionalization of EUCAP, RIP
	Humanitarian Aid State-building Reconstruction and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-building • SSR • Security governance • Empowerment of institutions & personnel & civil society • Gender mainstreaming • Conditionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, programmes and funding instruments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development and Cooperation Instrument ○ European Initiative for Democracy and Human rights (EIDIR) ○ Stability Instrument • EU Emergency Trust Fund • EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUTM, IcSP • PACTEA 2 • EUPOL Afghanistan • International Policing Coordination Board • Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund • LOTFA
	Peace Peace-Building	<p>Peace Agreement</p> <p>Reconciliation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusive National Dialogue - Dialogue and Reconciliation Mission - Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in proposed Follow-Up Committee/Mechanisms IcSP (Dialogue and Peace) • Part of international Mediation Team
	Gender Mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Strategies • Political Participation • Health and literacy • Exchange experiences and best practices in promoting gender equality • Promotion of adoption of positive measures in favour of women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowered Women, Prosperous Afghanistan • Involvement in decision making with regard to conflict resolution • UNSC 1325

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ANNEX 7: Operationalization of Effectiveness Criteria & Output Effectiveness Across Cases

Category	Criteria	Indicators	Output effectiveness		
			IRAQ	MALI	AFG
ACTOR COHERENCE/ ACTOR UNITY a) horizontal b) vertical	Unity of voice	1) Viability of compromises 2) Relative effort finding compromise 3) Determinacy of common documents	1) ++ 2) + 3) + / ++	1) +++ 2) +++ 3) +/++	1) + 2) + 3) ++
PROCESS COHERENCE	a) coherence of identified policy features (problem definition, objectives, strategies, instruments) and	'Continuity' and 'visibility of a) core features & concepts across on strategic & operational level;	<u>Policy features</u>		
			++	++	+++
	b) coherence of core concepts	b) of core concepts: 1. 'Comprehensive approach' 2. 'Conflict sensitivity' 3. 'Local ownership'	<u>Core Concepts</u> Qualitatively		
			1) + 2) + 3) +	1) ++ 2) -- 3) -	1) ++ 2) 3)
	c) institutional coherence	Regular involvement of EU institutions and agencies as defined in mandates in EU treaty or basic documents	Quantitatively		
			1) +++ 2) CCL - - COM + 3) ++	1) + 2) - / + 3) +++	1) ++ 2) + 3) +
			-	-	+
SUBSTANTIAL CONSISTENCY	Appropriateness of identified policy features <(problem definitions, policy objectives, strategies and instruments)> in view of given problems at hand;	1) Match of EU problem definition with those of the (non-EU) experts? 2) Match of strategies with causal assumptions? 3) Match of instruments with strategies and objectives?	- / + + ++	- ++ ++	+ ++ ++

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