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MISIJE IN OPERACIJE KOT ORODJE ZA OBLIKOVANJE DELOVANJA EU NA GLOBALNI RAVNI

MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS AS A TOOL FOR SHAPING THE EU'S GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Povzetek Evropska unija je mednarodni akter, ki prispeva k povečanju stopnje varnosti v svetu. Trenutno izvaja 11 civilnih in šest vojaških operacij ter misij s približno 5000 napotenimi pripadniki. Čeprav je z leti svoje mehanizme in instrumente, ki temeljijo na učenju na podlagi izkušenj, prilagodila, se je v zadnjem času, ki ga poglobljeno zaznamuje pandemična kriza, pozornost držav članic obrnila navznoter. Evropska unija se zato zdaj spoprijema z velikim izzivom glede opredelitve svoje varnostne vloge.

Ključne besede *Evropska unija, krizno upravljanje, misije, operacije, varnost, mir.*

Abstract The European Union is an international actor which makes a contribution to increasing the level of security in the world. It is currently carrying out 11 civilian and 6 military missions and operations, deploying approximately 5,000 personnel. Although over the years it has adapted its mechanisms and instruments based on learning by doing, in recent times, deepened by the pandemic crisis, the attention of the Member States has shifted inwards. As a result, the European Union now faces a major challenge to define its security role.

Key words *European Union, crisis management, missions, operations, security, peace.*

Introduction

Although the idea of defence cooperation between European states dates to the end of the Second World War and the signing of the Treaty of Brussels, in fact, until the 1990s, it was NATO that was perceived as the primary security provider, and the only organization capable of rapid deployment of forces. The end of the Cold War, as well as conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990s, brought a change in the perception of security issues by European leaders, and revealed the need to conduct crisis management operations autonomously. Among other things, this led to the establishment of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in the Treaty on European Union, signed in 1992, and to the transfer of a European Security and Defence Policy to the EU in 1999 (the EU also took over the »Petersberg Tasks« – a list of potential crisis management operation types – agreed in 1992 as part of the Western European Union). Nevertheless, NATO's role in Europe has not since been diminished; its importance was emphasized by the possibility of cooperation between the two organizations in the Berlin Plus format in 1999 (Shaping of a Common Security and Defence Policy, 2016).

The major change in the EU's global engagement brought the Treaty of Lisbon, which came into force in 2009. It created a European External Action Service (EEAS) and enhanced the post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP), aimed at running the CFSP. The Treaty also set up the current Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), as part of the CFSP, with operational capacity in both civilian and military dimensions (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007).

The EU therefore received a current legal basis to use the assets provided by the Member States to run missions and operations outside its territory for peacekeeping, conflict prevention, and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter (Treaty on European Union, Article 42). More specifically, these include joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilization (Treaty on European Union, Article 43.1). The objectives and scope of these tasks, as well as conditions for their implementation, are established by Council decisions, and the HR/VP is responsible for coordination between the civilian and military dimensions of the tasks (Treaty on European Union, Article 43.2). EU missions and operations thus serve as a tool for response to the challenges posed outside the EU, but do not address the common defence issues that most Member States are consistently developing within NATO. However, discussions about the division of responsibilities are ongoing, and both organizations are ready to carry out missions and operations in parallel.

Along with expanding technical cooperation between the Member States, it was also necessary to develop strategic guidelines that would help understand contemporary global challenges and define the role that the EU should play. Such a comprehensive document was first formulated in 2003 as a European Security Strategy, and replaced

in 2016 by a new document – a Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS). Five priorities identified in the latter include: 1) Security of the Union; 2) Resilience of the neighbourhood in the East and South; 3) Integrated crisis management; 4) Regional orders; and 5) Global governance. The approach to crises is therefore one of the essential elements of the CFSP. The strategy identifies the need for the EU to act at all stages of the conflict cycle (prevention, resolution, and stabilization), as well as at different levels (local, regional, and global). At the same time, deep alliances and cooperation in a spirit of multilateralism were named as supportive to the EU's crisis response capacity to ensure global stability and long-lasting peace (Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, 2016).

The nature of EU-led missions and operations – their number, type, and size – was first analyzed below, and the directions of EU involvement was also specified. Following these data, the main challenges for the CSDP were presented, as well as the EU's adaptive response to them. The analysis was based on the system method, supported by quantitative methods, which allowed the determination of the weaknesses of the existing instruments and the prospects for further enhancing the EU's global engagement.

1 PRESENT ENGAGEMENT

Delegated competences in the field of the CSDP allowed the EU to become one of the global security actors. Since 2003, the EU has run 36 missions and operations on three continents. Currently, around 5,000 personnel are deployed to 11 civilian[1] and 6 military missions and operations (see Table 1), which demonstrates the scale of the EU's engagement and the reliance of its partners. As for international law, a mission or operation can only be launched if the state requests assistance or if the United Nations Security Council issues a corresponding resolution. CSDP missions and operations are also open to the contributions of third states, and 20 Framework Participation Agreements have been signed so far (EU Missions and Operations, 2020).

The EU carries out a wide range of civilian activities, engaging in strengthening the internal security sectors of its partners, cooperating with police and border guards, supporting rule-of-law reforms, and carrying out observation activities at the borders of conflict zones. Missions are located both in the EU neighbourhood and in Africa and Asia, covering regions with the greatest destabilizing potential for Europe. Similar localization logic applies to military activities, although their tasks include not only training but also executive operational activities at sea and on land (see Table 1).

[1] *The EUBAM mission in Moldavia and Ukraine is included in those numbers due to its objectives, although it is not managed within CSDP structures.*

Table 1: Ongoing EU missions and operations (Source: Own elaboration based on EEAS data (EU CSDP Missions & Operations for Human Security, 2019))

Type	Assignment	Territory	Year of launch	Personnel[2]
Civilian	Police (EUPOL)	Palestine	2006	110
	Border-control support (EUBAM)	Rafah (Palestine)	2005	16
		Libya	2013	65
	Observatory (EUMM)	Georgia	2008	411
	Security-sector reform (EUAM, EUCAP)	Niger	2012	210
		Somalia	2012	170
		Mali	2015	194
		Ukraine	2015	357
		Iraq	2017	98
		Central African Republic	2019	170
	Rule-of-law reform (EULEX)	Kosovo	2008	503
Military	Naval force (EUNAVFOR)	Southern Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, part of the Indian Ocean, Somali coastal territory	2008	398
		Central Mediterranean Sea	2020	n/a[3]
	Land force (EUFOR)	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2004	553
	Military training (EUTM)	Central African Republic	2016	205
		Mali	2013	697
		Somalia	2010	137

Given the slight changes in the number of missions and operations by continent, the EU has maintained its basic direction of global engagement over the past 18 years (see Figure 1, Figure 2). The overall number of activities has decreased only slightly, and the lead of civilian over military missions has remained quite stable. However, data on the number of personnel deployed show that in Europe, where the number of missions and operations is much smaller, staffing remains almost as high (though the lack of data for the operation in the Mediterranean Sea should be noted) as in Africa (see Figure 3, Figure 4). It therefore seems that while the greater number of missions and operations in Africa is due to the large number of trouble spots, missions and operations in Europe remain in the vital interest of the EU.

[2] *Data for 2019.*

[3] *Data for EUNAVFOR Med Irini not available; however it succeeds Operation Sophia, which in 2019 had 352 personnel.*

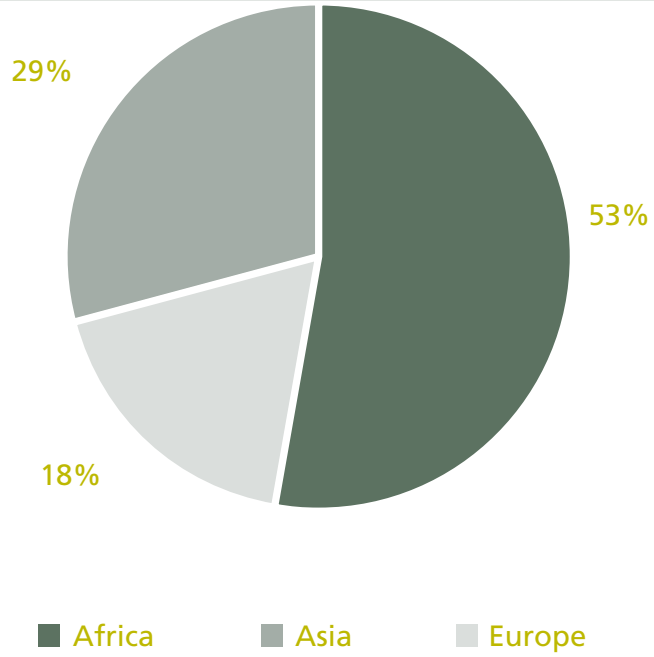

Figure 1: Ongoing missions and operations by continent (Source: Own elaboration based on EEAS data (EU CSDP Missions & Operations for Human Security, 2019))

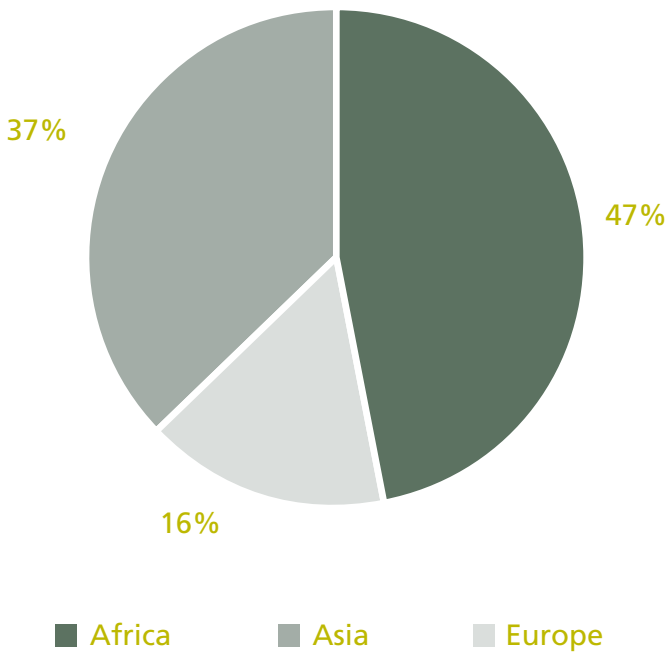

Figure 2: Completed missions and operations by continent (Source: Own elaboration based on EEAS data (EU CSDP Missions & Operations for Human Security, 2019))

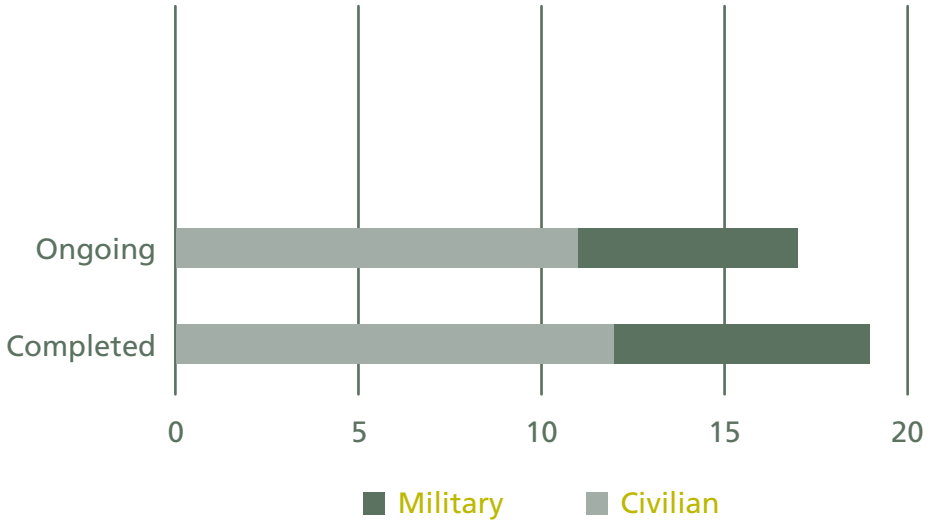

Figure 3: Change in number of civilian and military activities (Source: Own elaboration based on EEAS data (EU CSDP Missions & Operations for Human Security, 2019))

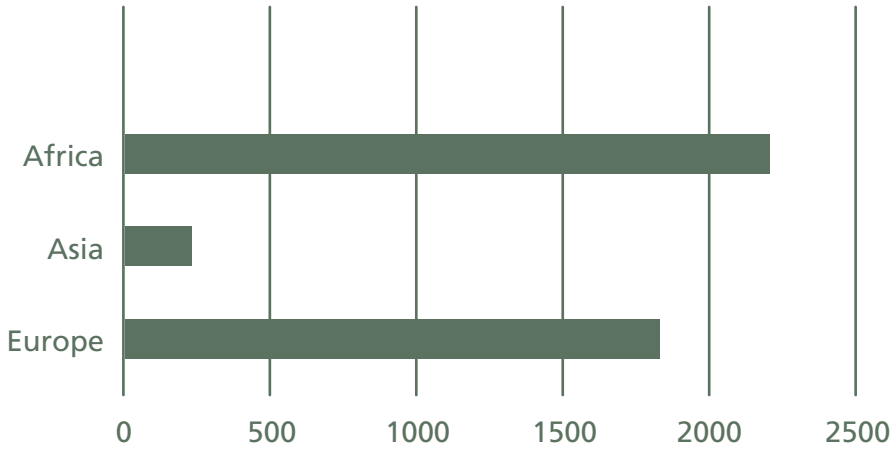

Figure 4: Number of personnel deployed to ongoing missions and operations (Source: Own elaboration based on EEAS data (EU CSDP Missions & Operations for Human Security, 2019))

It should be remembered that while it is the EU that carries out civilian and military activities, the decisive voice on the assets provision depends on the Member States. Launching a new mission or operation requires consent expressed by a unanimous vote in the Council. This, despite possible problems due to divergent interests and the strategic culture of individual states, ensures the coherence of the external action. Eventually, however, only a limited number of Member States become involved in an individual mission or operation.

The level of funding also depends on the common interest of the Member States. Military activities must be covered by extra-budgetary sources, which constitute the European Peace Facility (EPF) and individual contributions, while civilian tasks are financed through the CFSP part of the EU budget. For the years 2021-2027 the EPF budget will amount to €5 billion (about €500 million to €1 billion annually), which is an increase over the previous financial framework (Special Meeting of the European Council, 2020, p 56). Civilian activities, meanwhile, have a budget of about €281 million annually (Working to Improve Human Security: Civilian CSDP, 2019). The disproportion in finance is significant given the larger number of civilian missions, but it is also important to consider the higher personnel numbers and intensity of on-site activities in the case of military assignments.

2 MAJOR CHALLENGES

The changing international environment is having a significant, if sometimes underestimated, impact on the EU's global engagement (Lindstrom, 2020, p 88). Recently the most frequently mentioned, although not traditionally related to security issues, is climate change (Fetzek and Schaik, 2018; Towards a climate-proof security and defence policy, 2020). Its effects are among the most important factors today that can cause or intensify other trends directly translating into the global order. Dwindling natural resources, such as water and food, and increased risk of natural disasters, e.g. floods and fires, can force many people to fight for goods that are difficult to access or to migrate. These effects will be unevenly distributed, and one of the region's most at risk is Africa (Brown et al., 2007), where the EU is already involved in the greatest number of missions and operations. Due to climate change, but also exacerbated by the economic crisis after the pandemic, there will also be a growing number of weakened or failed states. This, related to rising social inequalities, can create unrest or support for terrorist activity, in the EU's neighbourhood as well as in other places.

The demand for missions and operations is therefore likely to increase in the near future[4]. It will be indicated by the destabilization of the situation in the East (escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, renewed clashes over Nagorno-Karabakh), and the potentially growing instability in the South (including the Balkans, Libya, and the Sahel) and the Middle East (the 10-year war in Syria). Russia and China's aspiration to curb the multilateral world order will also be a phenomenon of increasing importance.

Furthermore, the conditions for conducting missions and operations will change, mainly due to shifts in the nature of conflicts (Terlikowski, 2020). On the one hand, they are taking on a more fluid character, which is expressed, for example, by the growing ability of terrorist organizations to easily transfer their activities or by increasing the possibility of global impact as information technologies develop (see

[4] *On 12 July 2021 Council adopted a decision setting up an EU military training mission in Mozambique (EUTM Mozambique).*

the case of ISIS foreign fighters in Syria). On the other hand, the use of modern technologies is creating completely new battlefields. This is mainly related to rising digital threats such as disinformation and cyber-attacks; building resistance to these is currently one of the key tasks in the field of security (Poushter and Huang, 2019).

All these issues have so far been insufficiently considered in shaping the CSDP missions and operations. The evolution of the EU's approach to addressing them will be of key importance for the effective achievement of its goals and ensuring a corresponding security level in general. Consideration should be given not only to geographical distribution but also to the profile and assets necessary for carrying out external activities (Lindstrom, 2020, p 88).

One of the fundamental issues is the approach that Member States have towards launching new missions and operations. Currently, a trend of protracted decision-making is becoming apparent. Member States tend to react only when large-scale crises break out, and as a result, effective crisis management is more difficult compared to a situation where the reaction takes place at an earlier stage of the conflict cycle, i.e. in the prevention phase. At the same time the EU is rather selective when it comes to launching new missions and operations, and prefers to avoid taking action in areas of high military intensity (Palm and Crum, 2019)[5]. An additional reason is the relatively low percentage of military actions financed by the extra EU budget so far. The remainder of the costs must be borne by the individual Member States, which means that only those with strong national or strategic interests tend to become involved. In this context, flexibility in setting missions and operations objectives and mandates is also a matter to discussion.

Secondly, considering rapidly changing operating conditions requires proper forecasting, adaptation of staff training, and selection of appropriate equipment. In the digital age, it is also necessary to ensure adequate access to data, including satellite navigation and imagery, as well as secure communication channels (such as the currently in development GOVSATCOM) in any deployment location.

Finally, the added value of missions and operations, both from the EU and the local perspective, should be considered. Although external activities are usually very complex in nature, their sometimes-unclear goals make it difficult to evaluate and compare their effectiveness. Considering this as a matter of not only enhancing credibility but also the power of its own actions, the EU should do more to better define them and to introduce a clear, accessible evaluation methodology. Improving the availability of certain mission and operation data (e.g. allocations and delegated personnel) would also be advisable.

[5] *To use recent examples, reference can be made to Libya 2011 and the use of chemical weapons in 2013 during the Syrian civil war.*

3 EUROPEAN UNION RESPONSE

In recent years the EU has taken several steps to improve its crisis response by launching an evaluation and revision process. In 2018 the Council adopted »Conclusions on the Implementation of the Civilian CSDP Compact«, defining 22 political obligations that are meant to enhance the EU's capacity to conduct civilian missions (Conclusions of the Council, 2018). The main premise is improvement in the responsiveness and flexibility of missions, to make them more capable and effective in fulfilling their adopted mandates (Civilian CSDP Compact, 2019). Although its implementation is anticipated by mid-2023, the process has been rather slow, and the current pandemic works as an additional distraction. Thus far one of the biggest achievements has been the opening of the European Centre of Excellence for Civilian Crisis Management in Berlin in 2020 (Kozioł, 2020a). While it has only been a few months since the CoE became fully operational in January 2021, it is already evident that this new initiative is enjoying limited interest. Of the 18 states that decided to cooperate in this format, only four have so far seconded their national experts (European Centre of Excellence, n.d.). In this way the main assumption, of raising the level of analysis to standardize tasks and procedures related to civilian missions, will be rather difficult to implement in the near future. The slow development of the CoE reflects also the overall trend in civilian actions to reduce the proportion of staff and shift from delegated to contracted positions in employment.

The issue of the EU's military involvement has been the subject of much debate in recent years. As a result, significant changes have been made to the EU's foreign military activities with the launch of the European Peace Facility in 2021 (Kozioł, 2020b; EU sets up the European Peace Facility, 2021). External actions that have military or defence implications are now covered under the CFSP by replacing previous instruments, such as the Athena and the African Peace Facility. The EPF is designed to standardize the financing and management mechanisms, as well as to facilitate the EU's military engagement and move it to the global level. The main incentive for Member States to take joint action is of financial character: the overall budget increased (from €250-500 million to €500 million - €1 billion annually) and the ceiling for common costs has been raised to 35-45% (from 5-15%). On the other hand, the EPF introduces the possibility of purchasing military equipment for partner countries, which is meant to increase the effectiveness of actions taken, although it raises legitimate concerns about possible misuse. This new instrument has only just been introduced, which makes it difficult to judge the real response to the number of challenges set. Certainly, however, the smaller-than-assumed budget (€5 billion instead of the initial €10.5 billion) confirms a shift in the EU's priorities in the short term towards economic recovery following the pandemic, rather than increasing the Union's security potential (New European Peace Facility, 2018).

Despite the launch of the EPF and several ongoing, albeit technical, changes to the EU's missions and operations, key questions remain unanswered. Above all, the level of ambition of the EU's crisis response management has not yet been defined.

Such issues as: 1) geographical priorities; 2) modalities of response; and 3) types of missions and operations to engage, are to be discussed and included in the work on the new Strategic Compass (Towards a Strategic Compass, 2021). At the same time, Member States should set ambitious but realistic tasks, trying to deviate from the current course of growing disenchantment with the CSDP (Pietz, 2021). It is also important to consider NATO's strategic planning to avoid duplication, while ensuring an increase in the EU's potential and further successful cooperation between the two organizations (Fifth Progress Report, 2020). Focusing on possible other bi- or multilateral partnerships, e.g. with the post-Brexit United Kingdom, could also elevate the EU's crisis response potential. In this context, however, Member States' reluctant attitude towards common security commitments seems disturbing. The position of the French in favour of organizing coalitions of the willing is particularly clear in this respect (e.g. the case of the Strait of Hormuz) (Brzozowski, 2020; European Maritime Awareness in the SoH, 2020). Such a way of responding to international crises is perceived as more effective, ensuring greater flexibility and speed of reaction, allowing the avoidance of the protracted consent process and the negotiation of the mandate by Member States. Nonetheless, it does not provide legitimacy for action at the EU level. The French position may be counterbalanced by Germany if it decides to take an active part in the debate on the future shape of the EU's crisis response. Due to a reluctance for ad-hoc responses, Germany proposed giving EU action more flexibility while retaining full legitimacy by the implementation of Article 44 of the Treaty on European Union. In the German concept, this would allow, on the one hand, the maintenance of the required unanimity in taking external actions, while only delegating tasks to willing Member States. Although this proposal does not dispel all doubts, it certainly does open the door to further debate on the future conduct of EU missions and operations (Puglierin, 2021).

Conclusion

When Ursula von der Leyen announced in 2019 that she would chair the »geopolitical Commission« (Szymańska et al., 2019), the international situation was radically different. The pandemic, which has caused a global health crisis combined with an economic downturn, forced the EU to pay more attention to internal problems than to building its global importance. It does not change, however, the demand for the EU as a global actor (CSDP missions and coronavirus, 2020). For this reason, seeking a consensus between Member States on a common approach to building international security should be considered as one of the important elements defining ongoing reflection on the Strategic Compass. Crisis management missions and operations could play an important role in this process and be treated as a measurable tool for the EU's global engagement. Moreover, an increase in efforts to promote the external actions should be considered at this point, as information on the EU's global role as a peace-making actor is still limited.

The EU has continually been trying to improve crisis management capabilities by adapting its structures and mechanisms. Nevertheless, recently proposed initiatives, such as the CoE or the EPF, are rather limited tools for the improvement of the EU's external actions. A similar reference should be made to the Battle Groups

concept, which was initiated in 2007, three years after the initial commitment; however, no Battle Groups have yet been deployed. As Europeans face more serious challenges related to the changing nature of threats and the declining level of both local and global security, the need to build a common strategic view within the EU takes on importance. Nevertheless, while differences in perceptions of threats do not necessarily have to be eliminated, reducing the reluctance of Member States to engage in new missions and operations is a vital factor, not only for effective action but also to maintain credibility in their global commitments. Several actions at the EU level would have an indirect but positive impact on this.

Most importantly, the role of external actions should be redefined. While purely military tasks could be used for rapid interventions, civilian missions should be a more long-term response. In addition, it would also be necessary to ensure better cooperation between civilian and military tasks, or even to combine mandates. This would help to achieve the best possible results on the ground. Cooperation with NATO, especially in the case of military tasks, would also help to increase the effectiveness of such actions. Next, threat detection, advanced planning and building probable action scenarios should be improved. It would be easier to prevent escalation if a developed forecasting system were introduced. Therefore, the EU should act according to the concepts of early warnings, early action, and rapid responses. Then, steps in civilian dimension could be taken, such as under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument. Its rapid response component, dedicated to financing a fast response capacity for crisis management, conflict prevention and peace building, could become one of these useful tools (Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, 2020).

The last thing to note is the multilateral effort to ensure security. For example, for countries like Poland, the Baltic States or Romania, the EU's crisis management capabilities should not be developed at the expense of activities undertaken within NATO. Still, there are possibilities of tightening cooperation between the two organizations, which could maximize the effect of the EU's global engagement, as in the case of the Somali coast (Del Principe, 2020). Likewise, cooperation between the EU and local societies or the United Nations can be mentioned, with an agreement signed in September 2020 to facilitate alignment and enhance complementarity in the field, including areas of logistics, medical, and security support (UN and EU sign agreement, 2020). It seems that currently only the efforts of various actors, undertaken on many levels, can bring about a tangible effect.

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