The Security–Development Nexus in European Union Foreign Relations after Lisbon: Policy Coherence at Last?

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One of the 2009 Lisbon Treaty's objectives was to enhance the coherence of EU-level foreign relations by improving collective action. Policy-level innovations included 'comprehensive' and 'joined-up' approaches linking EU instruments and actors, especially the Commission and the new European External Action Service. Have these reforms improved policy coherence? We focus on a key EU policy domain illustrating Europe's engagement with the changing global context: the security–development nexus. Although we find that collective action has improved somewhat since 2010, decision-making is affected by bureaucratic actors catering to specific constituencies. Accordingly, the coherence of security and development policies remains challenged. The EU institutions lack strategic direction, which is unavoidable in a system that lacks clear hierarchy.

Key words: EU foreign relations, policy coherence, nexus management, security–development nexus, European External Action Service, European Commission

1   Introduction

The 2009 Lisbon Treaty introduced profound changes to EU foreign relations,[1] a governance system that involves both a vast number of cross-cutting policies and institutional actors from the EU as well as 28 member states. In light of its 'multi-level actorness', it is no surprise that the scope and conduct of the EU's foreign relations are constrained by collective action challenges. In contrast to previous attempts to improve collective action between the various components of the foreign relations machinery, the Lisbon Treaty forged entirely new bodies with the objective of bridging the intergovernmental and supranational realms of EU foreign policy-making. By

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1. Even the simple task of labelling what the EU does outside its borders is beset by coherence problems in terms of language. We use the term 'foreign relations' to encompass 'external relations' (the activities of the European Commission outside the borders of the EU), 'foreign policy' (the CFSP), 'security policy' (the CSDP) and specific 'external' policy areas such as development, trade, neighbourhood and humanitarian affairs, which are managed by the responsible Commission directorates-general, often in cooperation with the EEAS and the EU delegations.

combining the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and External Relations Commissioner in the new post of High Representative/ Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP), by establishing the European External Action Service (EEAS), by reforming the European Commission directorates general (DGs) responsible for development and neighbourhood policy, by enhancing the European Parliament's oversight role, and by reforming the EU delegations, the Lisbon Treaty aimed at drawing the policy-making systems for foreign and security policy, development, neighbourhood and humanitarian response much closer together.

Concomitantly, the Lisbon Treaty changes reignited the debate on how to turn the EU into a more integrated and comprehensive actor in international affairs (Duke, 2008; Holland and Doidge, 2012; Smith, 2013). Underlying the strategy of institutional reform at the EU level was the assumption that improving collective action among actors with differentiated but complementary mandates, and creating new actors with multiple policy responsibilities, should also improve policy coherence. The intended outcome was not just a better functioning bureaucratic system at the EU level, but also improved 'consistency between the different areas of EU external action' (HR/VP, 2013: 2).

But does improving the conditions for collective action lead to greater policy coherence? This article discusses this question with reference to the effects that the post-Lisbon treaty reforms have had on how the EU handles the security–development nexus, where policy-making requires cooperation among actors with differing mandates, constituencies and capabilities. Existing accounts in the growing body of literature on policy coherence in EU external relations have sketched out normative expectations for policy coherence (Egenhofer et al., 2006, Sianes, 2013). Five years after the Lisbon Treaty, we can begin to assess whether the innovations have triggered tangible results.

Considerations of policy coherence can never avoid normative perspectives entirely. Policy coherence concerns the externalities that decisions in one policy area have for the intended outcomes of policy decisions in other policy areas (Nilsson et al., 2012). 'Coherence' can, therefore, never be an abstract value existing in isolation from normative preferences for given outcomes. This implies that policy coherence is best served when the actors responsible for policy-making in various domains engage in a process of designing and implementing comprehensive policy frameworks with strategic objectives in mind, and that both the objectives themselves and the processes by which they are pursued support rather than undermine each other.

Policy coherence for development (PCD) is a long-running debate in the EU external relations context, both at the policy level in the several reports that the European Commission has published, and in scholarly literature discussing the impacts of, in particular, agriculture and trade policies on the outcomes of EU aid programmes (Carbone, 2008; Young and Peterson, 2013). From a collective action perspective, the defining feature of PCD is the identification of trade-offs and synergies across interacting policy domains that can contribute to achieving strategic development objectives that cannot be realized solely with development aid (Picciotto, 2005).

We argue that improving collective action through institutional and bureaucratic reform cannot improve policy coherence in the absence of clear strategic direction. This is because strategic direction is necessary for enabling bureaucratic actors to

prioritize, and thereby to organize themselves institutionally and allocate resources accordingly. However, strategic direction is in itself a collective action challenge in that it requires leadership and trade-offs among competing policy objectives. The Barroso II Commission, which oversaw the Lisbon Treaty's implementation between 2010 and 2014, was not able to provide strategic direction for reasons discussed below, but nevertheless prioritized collective action and laid important foundations for improving coherence. The Juncker Commission, which took office in late 2014, has taken further steps towards improved collective action and policy coherence, in particular through the EU strategic review process (EEAS, 2015). To this end, the June 2015 European Council encouraged a 'process of strategic reflection with a view to preparing an EU global strategy on foreign and security policy in close cooperation with Member States' (European Council, 2015: 6).

The rest of the article is organized as follows: the next section discusses the relationship between collective action and coherence at the level of actors and polices from a theoretical perspective. The third section details the main reforms aimed at improving collective action in EU foreign relations introduced by the Lisbon Treaty. The fourth section turns to the impact of these reforms on collective action and coherence with regard to EU policy at the security–development nexus. The final section concludes with some analytical and policy implications for EU foreign relations and policy coherence for development.

2   Collective action and policy coherence

Policy coherence in EU foreign relations has been widely debated by scholars asking what kind of international actor the EU is (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006; Gänzle et al., 2012: 1–14). Some scholars have argued that the idea of 'normative power Europe' is in fact a smokescreen for old-fashioned *realpolitik* (Hyde-Price, 2006). Others have noted that the EU's responses to complex regional and global processes are driven by a range of material and normative factors that require alternative analytical explanations or narratives (Youngs, 2014). Ultimately, questions about whether the EU's foreign relations are primarily anchored in norm-based policies such as human rights and democracy promotion or whether its motives are primarily geo-strategic or economic concern not only the *raison d'être*, character and strategic outlook of the actor, but ultimately lead to coherence debates, since they affect the preferences for different types of outcome (Kreutz, 2015). In the EU, incoherence is magnified by the complexity of the multi-level system and the plethora of constituencies and diverging interests which are represented (Carbone, 2008). Consequently, policy incoherence is often the outcome of unresolved or partially-resolved collective action problems (Gebhard, 2011).[2]

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2. Although the term 'coherence' is widely used, its meaning has remained ambiguous. It tends to be used interchangeably with other concepts such as 'coordination' or 'consistency'. Coordination is an important pillar of coherence. While 'consistency' refers to the character of an outcome, 'coherence' goes further and specifies the quality of a process, in which entities join in a synergetic procedural whole that 'structurally harmonizes' actions and actors (Gebhard, 2011: 106).

Conceptually, the link between collective action and policy coherence is related to the public goods challenge of how the costs and benefits of policies are dispersed and concentrated. On one hand, it is well known that when the benefits of a policy change are large and concentrated among a group of actors, the group has a strong incentive for acting collectively. On the other hand, when diffuse interests pull in different directions, incentives to act collectively are lower (Blouin, 2007). The relationship between collective action and coherence is mutually reinforcing: when actors prefer different policy outcomes they are less likely to act collectively than when they prefer similar outcomes, and vice versa. When the policy change in question is one that is expected to lead to more coherence between two or more policy areas, actors need to know that they will benefit from the change or they will have lower incentives to support it (Ostrom, 2014).

Collective action problems become most apparent at the complex policy interfaces or nexuses that link policy areas, where the effects of one policy affect the outcomes of another. For example, arms sales may benefit the defence industry and the local economy in a stable Western country, but are unlikely to benefit the constituencies of that same country's aid programme in a fragile developing country, namely the development policy community in the Western country and the recipient population in the fragile country (Hudson, 2006). While improved coherence between defence industry policy and development policy may be possible through technical adjustments to the design and implementation of those respective policies, it is more likely that the core objectives of the two policies need to be identified and a decision taken as to which is more important. This requires a clear understanding of externalities and their impacts, and a hierarchy of goals in the context of the power relations between the two constituencies. Given that formal and informal rules governing policy-making and implementation are often shaped by interests that try to ensure that the rules serve to perpetuate them, changes require leadership and the legitimate regulatory authority to adjust the incentive structure for the actors concerned, or to force compliance.

Coherence is not the natural state of affairs in bureaucratic political systems, whether at national administration or EU level. Different policy areas tend to be handled by bureaucratic actors that represent constituencies with different preferences for policy choices and outcomes. When the interests of the constituencies behind different policy areas clash, the bureaucratic actors mandated to design and implement policy find it difficult to act collectively. Ideally, the complementarity of policy orientations among different bureaucratic actors should be promoted top-down by a political strategy that defines priorities and common goals, and assigns responsibilities for addressing them. However, bureaucracies are not usually neutral political actors that simply implement directives from above, but tend to seek autonomy, leading to competition with other actors (Page, 2012). The potential for bureaucracies to hinder the formulation of coherent policy responses has been emphasized in studies of 'whole of government' approaches, especially in response to security crises where effective engagement requires a combination of assets from defence, foreign affairs and development bureaucracies (McConnell and Drennan, 2006). Coherent cross-governmental action in these contexts requires clear overarching political guidance for engagement and incentives internal to

bureaucracies for encouraging the promotion of goals and investing in coordination processes (OECD-DAC, 2006).

The promotion of policy coherence is, therefore, as much a political as a technical endeavour. Horizontal policy objectives do not always co-exist harmoniously but are often contested. Indeed, 'coherence' itself only makes sense with reference to the objectives with which policies should be coherent. Conceptualizing policy coherence requires an understanding of goal hierarchies, while working towards more coherent policy requires trade-offs between objectives as incoherencies become apparent. Political constituencies with interests in particular outcomes are unlikely to accept unfavourable trade-offs easily, even when there is clear evidence of the negative effects of incoherence for others. The impact of institutional reforms on policy coherence is, therefore, likely to be marginal unless they are the result of a political decision to prioritize certain outcomes, reinforced by an adequate system of incentives that can induce actors to behave in a certain way.

3   The Lisbon Treaty, collective action and coherence in EU foreign relations

The EU and its predecessor, the European Community, have long linked collective action and coherence through the so called 'triple C' of coherence, coordination and complementarity (Picciotto, 2005). Coordination should lead to improved coherence, whereas complementarity has the potential to undermine coherence. This is because of the diversity inherent in the subsidiarity principle, whereby policy-making at the EU level does not inhibit member states' bilateral prerogatives and international agreements (Craig, 2012). Systematic incoherences are built in at the EU level as well. Underwritten by the institutional autonomy of development policy, the compartmentalization of EU foreign relations among bureaucratic actors with differentiated but at times overlapping responsibilities has become entrenched. The EU has tried to overcome this by engaging in strategic discourses on objectives and collective action, but has stopped short of establishing a clear set of strategic priorities. EU strategic programmes have linked internal and external policies, such as the Lisbon Strategy, its successor Europe 2020, and more recently the global 2030 Agenda (Bodenstein et al., 2016). In foreign relations, the European Security Strategy (2003) and the European Consensus on Development (2006) aimed to provide clear directions enforced by soft instruments, such as voluntary harmonization among the institutions and member states concerned. None of these policy statements was clear about what should happen when the EU's many objectives clashed, as they inevitably would.

Given that the EU has a long-standing formal commitment to PCD, development policy could serve as the primary reference for coherence in EU foreign relations (Egenhofer et al., 2007). Ever since the 1957 Treaty of Rome, external trade has been part of the EU's common commercial policy and therefore the European Commission's supranational competence. European Political Cooperation, which was formalized in the early 1970s and became part of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, Europeanized aspects of member states foreign and security

policies, which nevertheless remained under intergovernmental modes of decision-making in the European Council. With the emergence of a distinctive relationship to former member state colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) in the 1970s, foreign relations were divided thematically and geographically between different Commission DGs and between the Commission itself and the Council Secretariat.

Development policy was added to the 1992 Maastricht Treaty as a 'shared competence' between the Commission and member states, and PCD became part of the EU's legal framework in article 178 of the Treaty establishing the European Community and in article 3 TEU, which required consistency between all of the EU's policies and its external activities. Politically, the EU commitment to PCD has developed further from the 1990s and was expressed in strategic policy declarations, including the 2006 European Consensus on Development. These commitments also bound member states to the PCD agenda. In 2005 the EU established a PCD unit in DG Development, increased the use of inter-service consultations and started work on a biennial PCD report (EC, 2009).[3]

The PCD agenda was further strengthened by the Lisbon Treaty,[4] which formally abolished the pillar structure that had hitherto put EU foreign relations into different 'silos'. The pillar system was regarded as a barrier to policy coherence, particularly in the realm of security policy where responses to multidimensional security threats demanded the availability of a range of instruments that could be mobilized in response (Deighton, 2002). Symbolic of the end of the pillar system was the merging of the offices of CFSP High Representative with the External Relations commissioner into the HR/VP, and the establishment of the EEAS as an 'interstitial organization' hovering between classical diplomatic service and supranational Commission-bureaucracy (Bátora, 2013). In organizational as well as institutional terms the multi-hatted nature of the HR/VP job description blurred the lines between supranational and intergovernmental competences as well as decision-making procedures. Following the Lisbon Treaty, the HR/VP conducts the CFSP, presides over the Foreign Affairs Council and – as first Vice-President of the Commission – coordinates external relations policies under Commission competence, including development, neighbourhood and trade (Erkelens and Blockmans, 2012).

The design of the EEAS is a prime example of attempting to improve policy coherence through collective action, in this instance by means of bureaucratic innovation. Its staff members are drawn from three different parent institutions, including Commission officials from the former external relations DGs, staff from the Council Secretariat, and seconded member state officials. The establishment of the EEAS meant reforms to the Commission's external relations bureaucracy as well, most notably the transfer of the ACP country desks to the EEAS and the merger of the former DG Development's policy units with the EuropeAid agency to

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3. Rather than assessing the EU's performance on PCD, the reports have been used principally as a tool for communicating the agenda itself to member states and other partners, including the EU's peers in the OECD-DAC.
4. Article 208 TFEU states that 'The Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries.'

form DG Development and Cooperation (DEVCO). The process brought new expertise, including both diplomatic and development cooperation competences, to the EU and enhanced connections between EU and member foreign and development policy bureaucracies (Furness, 2013).

The Lisbon Treaty also enhanced the oversight of the European Parliament in foreign relations, further complicating decision-making processes while making them more inclusive. As Wisniewski (2013) has noted, the Parliament pushed hard for a greater foreign relations role and achieved more influence than the Lisbon Treaty intended. Although the Parliament has no role in the conclusion of CFSP decisions, the increasing practice of trialogues – involving the Commission, Council and member states – in legislative acts have made the Parliament an important interlocutor (Murdoch, 2013). The Parliament also has increased authority over the CFSP and CSDP budgets, and holds debates on the two policies every six months. With regard to development policy, Article 209 TFEU requires that legislation necessary for development cooperation be adopted by both the Parliament and the Council, effectively placing both institutions on an equal footing. The Parliament exercised its powers in 2013 when the regulations governing the EU's external financing instruments were negotiated in a strategic dialogue between the Parliament's Development Committee and DEVCO. The Parliament does not control country-level implementation, but can question the Commission if it considers that specific proposals promote causes other than development, such as European commercial or security interests (Carbone and Keijzer, 2016).

These efforts to improve collective action through reforms to the EU foreign relations machinery were undermined by the economic crisis that struck just as they were implemented. The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty coincided with the global financial crisis and the subsequent euro crisis, creating a significantly tougher political and fiscal environment than the boom years during which the Treaty was drafted and negotiated. Much of Europe's attention was directed towards internal problems, in spite of momentous international events, particularly the 2011 Arab Spring and its aftermath. EU officials who took part in the post-Lisbon Treaty reforms lamented that the EEAS' roll-out process was hampered by budget constraints at the very moment when expectations on Europe to act were highest (interview with EEAS official, Brussels June 2014). These factors also contributed to the findings of a European Court of Auditors investigation, which noted that the establishment of the EEAS was 'rushed and inadequately prepared, beset by too many constraints and vaguely defined tasks' (European Court of Auditors, 2014: 4). The report's most important recommendations were to clarify the EEAS' objectives and strengthen its capacity for strategy and planning. Although the Court of Auditors criticized the EEAS itself for not being proactive enough in prioritizing strategic thinking, the lack of strategic guidance from member states in the European Council meant that there was a narrow political space for prioritizing the many tasks that the EU was expected to perform and the division of labour between EU level and member state foreign relations activities.

The Juncker Commission declared its intention to provide more strategic direction, partly by building on reforms made under Barroso and Ashton and partly by setting clearer priorities for EU foreign policy. In his mission letter to the

incoming HR/VP, President Juncker asked former Italian foreign minister Federica Mogherini to 'chair a Commissioners' Group on External Action to develop a joint approach' (Juncker, 2014: 3f) and to move her headquarters from the EEAS building to the Commission's headquarters in the Berlaymont building. This action seemed merely symbolic, and yet was clearly taken to improve collective action by reinforcing Mogherini's VP function and thus linking the EEAS and the Commission more closely. The Juncker Commission's intentions to improve policy coherence were evident in its comprehensive review to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2015, which devoted significant attention to 'priorities' and 'focus'. The revised ENP framework resulting from the review was more clearly focused on political stability and economic cooperation, with reduced emphasis on liberal-democratic political and economic transformation (EC/HRVP, 2015b).

Since the 1970s, the core of EC/EU foreign relations architecture has remained by and large intergovernmental: this applies in particular to defence and security policies. Other foreign relations arenas, such as trade and development, have either been anchored in Community or, alternatively, shared competence, bringing together EU institutions and member states. Rather than calling for a clear separation and hierarchical delineation of competences between EU institutions and the member states in treaty terms, there has been an attempt to bridge the member states level and the EU level by voluntary coordination and, more recently, by the creation of *sui generis* institutions and bodies, such as the EEAS, as well as renewed efforts to ensure coherence through collective action across the differently regulated policy arenas of EU foreign relations.

4   Coherence through collective action: managing the security–development nexus in EU foreign relations

The nexus between EU security and development policies has long been recognized as beset by coherence problems (Hout, 2010). Some difficulties have been attributed to collective action. Different areas of the security–development nexus (particularly defence, civilian crisis response, humanitarian affairs and development) have been managed by actors with very different mandates and goals. Defence has remained a national concern despite efforts to increase EU-level cooperation as an alternative to NATO (Biscop, 2012). In development policy, the Commission and member states have parallel, sometimes overlapping and sometimes even competing policy frameworks and country-level engagements. These are not always coherent with other aspects of foreign policy, formulated both at EU and member state levels. Humanitarian aid is managed at the EU level by a separate Commission DG, and has remained an area in which tensions between international neutrality principles and strategic policy processes for dealing with crises have long been noted (Macrae and Leader, 2001).

A number of strategies launched in the first decade of the 2000s established normative guidelines, although not strategic priorities, for improving coherence between EU security and development policy. The European Security Strategy (2003), the European Consensus on Development (2006) and the EU's

Communication on fragile states (2007) all called for EU level and member state actors to work more closely together in a 'whole of EU approach' to addressing global security and development challenges. In 2009 the EU decided to focus on five priority challenges for PCD, including 'strengthening the links and synergies between security and development in the context of a global peace building agenda' (EC, 2009: 4).

The Lisbon Treaty's abolition of the pillar system was intended to ease EU-level collaboration in legal terms since EU law did not apply to those parts of EU foreign relations not under Community competence (Hoffmeister, 2008). However, rather than tackling issues of legal competences, which would have required clarification of the EU's strategic priorities vis-à-vis those of the member states, the Lisbon Treaty's compromise sought to improve policy coherence through improved collective action among bureaucratic structures and policy reforms at the nexus of security and development policies.

4.1 Collective action among actors

With regard to bureaucratic structures, the civilian–military dimension has become a core area for increased cooperation among EU diplomats, military staff and development cooperation officials in the context of certain missions and under the broader umbrella of the CSDP. Operations such as the European Union Force (EUFOR) intervention in the Central African Republic have demonstrated the need for collective consolidation in the planning and execution of CSDP missions (Orbie and Del Biondo, 2015). Outside the formal structures of inter-service consultations, some flexible working methods have emerged, especially related to crisis response. The Crisis Management and Planning Directorate within the EEAS has started to coordinate EU-level responses to crises in specific country contexts, such as the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Syria and Libya. Although there is no template, and processes are shaped by the issues raised by the crisis, the EEAS has assumed a pivotal role, calling the meetings, drafting and circulating the policy documents, often with 'place holders' for DGs European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO), Neighbourhood and Enlargement (NEAR) or other Commission services to include their competencies and perspectives. The European Parliament has generally been excluded from crisis response strategies, which have been considered CFSP and therefore European Council competence despite their increasing overlaps with community policy areas.

Overcoming different institutional and organizational cultures and ways of thinking about problems has, nevertheless, not been easy. Most EEAS officials regard their organization as a ministry of foreign affairs and defence, not foreign affairs and development. Although this may help broaden approaches by bringing foreign policy and defence perspectives and development discussions together, it does not imply more coherence. As one senior EEAS official noted, 'the fact that we're not the Commission creates tension: development versus foreign policy tension, but also institutional tension'. Institutional tensions have their roots in the

reality that the Commission remains responsible for most of the EU's financial instruments, and the DGs with external budgets have looked to preserve their decision-making autonomy. As the EEAS official put it, 'the Council PSC (political and security committee) wants to tell DEVCO what to do, but they're not the Commission. The PSC is comitology in the CFSP world, but not for [development aid]. This is a clash, we're solving it slowly, but it will create tension' (interview, Brussels June 2014).

Efforts to improve collective action in civil protection have had an ambiguous impact on policy coherence, largely because of the strong desire of humanitarian aid agencies to protect the independence of their mandate. In the context of the reorganization of the Commission, DG ECHO assumed responsibilities related to disaster preparedness inside and outside of the EU and therefore a coordination role with respect to aid for disaster relief. The increased emphasis on disaster resilience – which has a longer-term logic than humanitarian response – has implied closer work between DG DEVCO and DG ECHO, for example on the Horn of Africa and the Sahel where the coherence of development aid and humanitarian assistance has been prioritized. The position of ECHO within these discussions has been to preserve the independence of humanitarian aid. The EEAS and ECHO have placed similar emphasis on crisis response, but ECHO officials have voiced a strong desire to keep humanitarian aid from becoming overly politicized, whereas EEAS officials see it as de facto and important political tool (interview with Commission official, Brussels June 2014).

The post-Lisbon Treaty reforms have certainly led to enhanced collective action through increased cooperation among different services at the EU level. Furthermore, the EEAS has assumed the role of an institutional bridge between different bureaucratic cultures at the EU- and member state levels. At the same time, the EU's decision-making culture has not evolved as fast as the post-Lisbon Treaty institutional frameworks, with implications for policy coherence. While the bureaucracies and their officials have become more socialized in different kinds of thinking, there have been many instances of misunderstanding between different organizational cultures. Another EEAS official noted that 'more and more you don't just have a CFSP process, but you also have the communitarian process. Competencies are clear, but we haven't established a one-size-fits-all process. There is a gap between the Commission and the Council and we're trying to bridge the gap with the EEAS' (interview, Brussels July 2015). In this sense, collective action at the EU level remains constantly hampered by persistent 'pillar thinking' that has prevailed despite the Lisbon Treaty's abolition of the EU's pillar structure. The Commission's approach has continued to be more technocratic, where officials talk about instruments, the external dimension of internal policies, programming and budgets. EEAS officials want a more political, quid pro quo approach (interviews with EEAS and Commission officials, Brussels, June 2014 and July 2015).

4.2 Policy coherence: the 'Comprehensive Approach'

With regard to nexus management, the EU has stepped up its efforts to improve the coherence of its security and development policies. In spite of differing competencies

and organizational cultures, widespread agreement on the necessity of a 'Comprehensive Approach' to the security–development nexus across the Commission, the EEAS and the European Parliament has emerged since the Lisbon Treaty. The European Council (2009) resolved to strengthen links and synergies between security and development in the context of a global peace building agenda, emphasizing strategic planning. The OECD-DAC praised the EU for these and other efforts to bring security policy into the PCD agenda, and called upon the EU to finish conceptual work on security, fragility and development 'to ensure that European objectives for development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and international security are mutually reinforcing' (OECD-DAC 2012: 15). In this regard, the 2011 Agenda for Change called for the EU to ensure that its 'objectives in the fields of development policy, peace building, conflict prevention and international security are mutually reinforcing', and that 'the EU's development, foreign and security policy initiatives should be linked so as to create a more coherent approach to peace, state-building, poverty reduction and the underlying causes of conflict' (EC, 2011: 6–11).

Has the EU achieved this? The Barroso Commission's most important policy-level security–development nexus initiatives that followed the Agenda for Change were regional strategies for the Horn of Africa and the Sahel in 2011, and the Comprehensive Approach to crisis response communication published in December 2013 (EC/HRVP, 2013). Similarly, the Pan-African Programme, funded under the Development Cooperation Instrument with a budget of €845 million for 2014–2020, has indicated the EU's growing recognition of the need to address security–development nexus issues in one policy framework (interview with EEAS official, June 2014).

The Comprehensive Approach formulation process has, nevertheless, faced significant collective action challenges. In 2010, the Barroso Commission commenced work on a draft action plan on fragility started based on experiences in six pilot countries: Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Timor-Leste and Yemen. The plan was intended to clarify the role that the EU level of Brussels institutions and EU delegations would have in relation to the EU's member states, particularly those with large presences in fragile countries. Discussion among member state ministries, the Commission and the EEAS stalled in late 2010 after senior officials in DEVCO and the EEAS were reportedly reluctant to commit to the text and the political will to push it through dried up (interviews with EEAS and Commission officials, Brussels January 2013) The action plan was not, however, a collective action failure. The fact that the action plan draft was not publicly released did not prevent the responsible units in the EEAS, DEVCO and the EU delegations from incorporating its most relevant and sensible provisions into policy and operations (Görtz and Sherriff, 2012). For example, conflict analysis has been conducted more regularly as a joint exercise involving member states, meaning that information has been shared. This has contributed in particular to joint programming, where conflict analyses have shaped division of labour at the country level (interview with Commission official, Brussels June 2014).

Several issues that arose in during the action plan discussions remained in focus, as attention turned to the 'Comprehensive Approach to external conflict and

crises'. There was resistance in parts of the Commission, because at the beginning the Comprehensive Approach processes were conducted by the EEAS in parallel to the fragility action plan and the relationship between the two processes was unclear (interviews with EEAS and Commission officials, Brussels June 2014). The Communication was drafted using a combination of Community and intergovernmental methods, which officials involved in the process considered hard to reconcile (interview with EEAS official, January 2013). The exercise of formulating the policy document nevertheless brought people together from the military, security and development policy-making areas at the EU level who had hardly spoken in the past. Despite different backgrounds, these officials all had crisis response experience, and with this the awareness that the tools under their purview, whether military, civilian, technical or financial, were not on their own capable of resolving a crisis (interviews with Commission and EEAS officials, Brussels, June 2014).

The Council Conclusions on the Comprehensive Approach stressed collective action: 'The EU's policies and priorities should follow from common strategic objectives and a clear common vision of what the EU collectively wants to achieve in its external relations or in a particular conflict or crisis situation' (European Council, 2014: 2). The Communication was written to reflect joined-up thinking, but existing structures were not efficient enough to promote this. As one Commission official put it, 'we now have a good policy document that instructs member states, the EEAS and the Commission to work together, although it is still difficult to get the military and development people to work together' (interview, Brussels June 2014). The European Parliament was largely sidelined.[5] Perhaps because the process was driven by the EEAS, the outcome was heavily shaped by the dynamics of crisis response rather than development, with the outcome that the development perspective was – at least rhetorically – subsumed by security concerns (Faria, 2014).

The Comprehensive Approach has been tested under the Juncker Commission in the form of two crisis response strategies: the Syria–Iraq strategy and the Political Framework for a Crisis Approach (PFCA) for Libya, both formulated by the EEAS. The first PFCA, circulated in September 2014, was not tasked by the Council but emerged as an EEAS initiative. The process started with a meeting called by the EEAS with all interested services, including DG Home Affairs (for counter-terrorism and migration aspects), DEVCO, DG NEAR and the EEAS mediation unit. There was also consultation with the sanctions and weapons proliferation colleagues in the EEAS and the EU Delegation to Libya (interview with EEAS official, July 2015). The European Parliament was not consulted as the PFCA is a restricted document. In April 2015 the EU Foreign Affairs Council asked HR/VP Mogherini to update the PFCA to focus on the way forward for Libya once a government of national unity was formed. The document called for things like stronger EU support for the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) mission and outlined the appropriate EU policy tools for engagement (EEAS, 2015b).

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5. The Parliament's one success was in changing the name of the 'Instrument for Stability' to the 'Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace'.

The EU's strategy for the Syria–Iraq crisis and the Islamist Da'esh threat was formulated in response to events in the summer of 2014 and published in March 2015. As with the PFCA for Libya, the EEAS was in the lead for preparing the strategy. The Commission's DG NEAR had a major role as well, particularly in bringing knowledge about processes and projects into the discussions. Informal consultation with member states took place in December 2014 and EEAS officials included their recommendations before the document template was circulated at the EU level (interview with EEAS official, Brussels, June 2015). The Communication posed three objectives: first, to 'counter the threat posed by Da'esh and other terrorist groups to regional and international stability'; second to 'create the conditions for an inclusive political transition in Syria', and third to alleviate 'the human suffering caused by the ongoing violence and displacement' (EC/HRVP, 2015a: 6). From a PCD perspective the strategy appeared heavily securitized with its emphasis on 'the Da'esh threat'. It nevertheless represented a comprehensive effort to bring all of the EU's tools to bear on a crisis situation, and was accompanied by the launch of a new instrument, the 40 million euro Madad trust fund for addressing the refugee crisis in Syria's neighbours.

Two major observations can be drawn with regard to policy coherence. First, the EEAS has increasingly become a hub for collective action and the coordination of positions among EU institutions and member states. The negotiations leading to the Comprehensive Approach communication provide a case in point, even if questions remain as to how effectively the approach will be implemented. Second, the post-Lisbon period witnessed the articulation of several, mostly regional, strategies focusing on coherence through collective action at the nexus of security and development policies, which provide important cornerstones, but do not add up to a comprehensive strategy for mobilizing security policy for achieving development objectives, as the PCD agenda implies.

5   Conclusions

Since the endorsement of the Lisbon Treaty there have been concerted efforts to address the security–development nexus both in actor and policy terms at the EU level. Development and CFSP capacities have been brought together in the EEAS creating an 'institutional' locus that has helped reduce compartmentalization. Policy coherence certainly gained a higher profile after the Lisbon Treaty, and collective action has started to result in more coherence, based not just on institutional reforms but on a (slowly) emerging set of norms regarding the most appropriate and effective role for the EU. There has been convergence at the level of discourse and rhetoric, towards a strategic culture of comprehensiveness in foreign relations, which has been reflected in the increasing number of joint actions and policy statements. The EU has been able to produce a Comprehensive Approach communication focusing on crisis response, and several regional strategies that outline the EU's collective engagement in specific situations. Its failure to finalize the much more ambitious fragility action plan bringing together the entire peacekeeping, peacebuilding, state-building and

development processes indicates that policy coherence at the security–development nexus is still a work in progress.

Systemic incoherences, such as unclear or overlapping mandates, have only been partly resolved. There are still differences between the EEAS and the Commission with regard to engagement with crisis countries. DG DEVCO has maintained its emphasis on development priorities and its implementation practices have generally not changed. At the same time, the EEAS has tried to take a more overtly political approach that has not always gelled with either the Commission or with the European Parliament's more traditionally developmentalist approach. Policy-makers in the EU institutions have shown awareness of these problems and their potential impact on policy coherence, and have taken informal steps to work around some of the inconsistencies in the system.

The institutional underpinnings of nexus management mean that the role of leadership is very important. As first HR/VP, Catherine Ashton not only had to build her service from scratch, she also had to deal with huge expectations. Her time in office was consequently perceived by many as failing to further collective action and policy coherence. She was sidelined by the Presidents of the Commission and the European Council on some issues, and her office was overwhelmed by the multitude of tasks it was assigned. As a result, Ashton focused on her role as an envoy and chief negotiator in key foreign relations processes, such as the Iranian nuclear weapons talks, the Western Balkans peace process, and the Egyptian revolution and its aftermath. Her VP role as coordinator of other commissioners was mostly neglected. The Juncker Commission has taken steps to encourage the EU foreign policy-making system to function more collectively. Perhaps the most significant measure in this regard is HR/VP Mogherini's overarching EU global strategy, which aims to provide strategic direction for the various components of EU foreign relations (EEAS, 2016).

Have the post-Lisbon Treaty collective action reforms and accompanying strategic visions resulted in more coherence from a development policy perspective? Institutional reforms are unlikely to improve policy coherence for development unless they are driven by the political decision to prioritize development above security or trade or other policy objectives, in instances where these are not synergetic. The EU-level foreign relations decision-making system still lacks the clear hierarchy that would enable it to set the priorities that are preconditions for policy coherence. The Lisbon Treaty reformed the system's structure of overlapping legal competencies, but it left plenty of grey areas. The HR/VP and the EEAS are mandated to work in these grey areas, but the Commissioners with international responsibilities and their DGs have defended their turf, especially regarding development aid. Meanwhile, security policy actors in the EEAS have continued to focus on immediate threats rather than on long-term developmental challenges and their weight in decision-making processes has been aided by the crisis atmosphere. Accordingly, security–development decision-making processes have tended towards managing incoherence to the best extent possible.

Nevertheless, key aspects of EU-level foreign relations policy have become more coherent since the Lisbon Treaty, in the sense that the Comprehensive Approach, regional frameworks such as the Sahel and Horn of Africa strategies and

the ENP review, and the crisis response strategies for Libya and Syria/Iraq are more focused on priority objectives than previous policy frameworks. Unfortunately, from a development perspective the focus has not been on PCD but rather policy coherence for stability and security, where development aid plays a contributing role. Ultimately, improving coherence in EU foreign relations over time will depend on whether the EEAS develops into the hub for vertical and horizontal coordination and accommodation of interests – respected by other EU institutions and member states. Future research should investigate the EEAS's actual capacities for assuming this role – both at Brussels level as well as throughout the EU's global network of diplomatic missions.

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