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# **The quest for coherence: a comparative analysis of EU crisis management in Africa**

**Nicole Koenig**

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## **Declaration**

This is to certify that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the factors that explain varying degrees of coherence in European Union (EU) crisis management and draws implications for its role as an international security actor. The analysis starts from the assumption that coherence is a function of competing and conflicting interests and norms. The influence and interaction of these factors across governance levels are viewed through two theoretical lenses: liberal intergovernmentalism and sociological institutionalism. Derived hypotheses are evaluated through a comparative case study design, focused on three instances of crisis management in Africa, namely Libya (2011), Somalia (2011-2012), and Mali (2012-2013). The analysis traces the activities and interaction of EU institutional actors and member states, with a focus on France, the United Kingdom (UK), and Germany. It suggests that the degree of coherence in EU crisis management is contingent on the congruence of domestic economic and electoral interests, as well as national threat perceptions. But it also depends on the extent to which EU-level coherence norms resonate with national norms on the use of force and preferred modes of multilateral cooperation. The study identifies scope conditions for the interaction of interests and norms: if economic and electoral stakes are high and calculable, interest-based calculation prevails. If, instead, decision-makers are faced with low stakes and uncertainty, embedded national norms are more likely to shape their behaviour. The Union thus represents a rather unpredictable security actor, whose multi-level coherence depends on the context-specific balance between domestically defined interests, stakes, and salient norms.



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## List of abbreviations

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| AMISOM  | African Union Mission for Somalia                 |
| AFISMA  | African-led International Support Mission in Mali |
| APF     | African Peace Facility                            |
| AQIM    | Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb                   |
| AWACS   | Airborne Warning and Control Systems              |
| BiH     | Bosnia and Herzegovina                            |
| CAR     | Central African Republic                          |
| CFSP    | Common Foreign and Security Policy                |
| CMC     | Crisis Management Concept                         |
| CMPD    | Crisis Management and Planning Directorate        |
| COREPER | Committee of Permanent Representatives            |
| CPCC    | Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability          |
| CSDP    | Common Security and Defence Policy                |
| DG      | Directorate-General                               |
| CROC    | Crisis Response and Operational Coordination      |
| ECHO    | Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection             |
| DEVCO   | Development and Cooperation / EuropeAid           |
| DRC     | Democratic Republic of Congo                      |
| ECOWAS  | Economic Community of Western African States      |
| EEAS    | European External Action Service                  |
| EP      | European Parliament                               |
| EU      | European Union                                    |
| EUBAM   | European Union Border Assistance Mission          |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| EULEX    | European Union Rule of Law Mission   |
| EUMM     | European Union Monitoring Mission  |
| EUPOL    | European Union Policy Mission  |
| EUMC     | European Union Military Committee  |
| EUMS     | European Union Military Staff  |
| EUNAVFOR | European Union Naval Force   |
| EUSR     | European Union Special Representative  |
| EUTM     | European Union Training Mission  |
| FDP      | Free Democratic Party  |
| FYROM    | Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia  |
| GDP      | Gross Domestic Product   |
| H        | Hypothesis   |
| HR       | High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission |
| ICC      | International Criminal Court   |
| ICG      | International Crisis Group   |
| ICU      | Islamic Courts Union   |
| IFOP     | Institut français d'opinion publique   |
| IfS      | Instrument for Stability   |
| IIEA     | Institute of International and European Affairs  |
| IR       | International Relations  |
| MEP      | Member of the European Parliament  |
| MINUSMA  | Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali  |

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| MNLA    | Mouvement National de libération de l’Azawad<br>(National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad) |
| MUJWA   | Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa  |
| NATO    | North Atlantic Treaty Organization   |
| NTC     | National Transitional Council  |
| OECD    | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and<br>Development  |
| PSC     | Political and Security Committee   |
| PCD     | Policy Coherence for Development   |
| QMV     | Qualified Majority Voting  |
| SSR     | Security Sector Reform   |
| TEU     | Treaty on European Union   |
| TFEU    | Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union  |
| TFG     | Transitional Federal Government  |
| UK      | United Kingdom   |
| UN      | United Nations   |
| UNHCR   | United National High Commissioner for Refugees   |
| UN OCHA | United Nations Office for the Coordination of<br>Humanitarian Affairs                            |
| UNSC    | United Nations Security Council  |
| US      | United States  |
| UTA     | Union des Transport Aériens  |
| WFP     | World Food Programme   |

# Chapter 1: Introduction

The EU aspires to be a coherent and effective international actor in order to “defend its fundamental interests and values, promote its key political objectives and prevent crises or help to restore stability” (European Commission and HR 2013c).<sup>1</sup> The degree to which the Union has been able to live up to this aspiration has varied throughout the past decades. Faced with the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, Jacques Poos, prominently announced that the “hour of Europe” had dawned (in Blockmans and Wessel 2013: 2). However, the Union failed to stop or even contain the violence in its own backyard. The next ‘dark hour’ of EU crisis management arrived when the American-led invasion in Iraq (2003) split the continent into ‘old’ and ‘new’ Europe (Rumsfeld 2003).

Shortly after the divisions over Iraq, the Union published its first strategic document, the European Security Strategy (Council 2003a). The Strategy stated that the EU could only live up to its full potential if it became more coherent. It specified that “[g]reater coherence is needed not only among EU instruments but also embracing the external activities of the individual member states” (Council 2003a: 13). Six years later, the Treaty of Lisbon (2009),<sup>2</sup> with its central objectives of increasing coherence in EU external action, raised expectations that the hour of Europe had finally come.

However, faced with the first major foreign policy crisis after the ratification of the Treaty, these expectations were dashed. In early 2011, the Europeans openly clashed on the Libyan crisis and failed to provide a unified response. In the meantime, and perhaps less prominently, Somalia – one of the world’s most complex conflict theatres – had become the Union’s prime example of coherent and effective crisis management (European Commission and HR 2013c: 2). This thesis aims to explain

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<sup>1</sup> ‘HR’ stands for the position of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission.

<sup>2</sup> The Treaty of Lisbon will hereinafter be referred to as the ‘Lisbon Treaty’.

such observed variation in the coherence of EU crisis management. It investigates the influence and interaction of conflicting interests and values across governance levels. It thereby questions the assumption implicit in the introductory quote, namely that the Union's "fundamental interests and values" are truly shared.

This introductory chapter starts by presenting the main argument and findings of the study. Section two provides an overview of the broadening understanding of EU crisis management and reviews its evolving implementation. Section three then situates the thesis within the broader literatures on policy coherence, EU crisis management, and European foreign policy. It points towards key findings and gaps and presents the specific contribution of this study. A detailed thesis outline closes the chapter.

## **1.1 The quest for coherence**

In EU studies, coherence is often conceptualised as an independent variable. Many studies evaluate the impact of (in)coherence on the effectiveness, credibility, and power of the EU as an international actor (for example Lerch and Schweltnus 2006; Olsen 2008; Pace 2009). This conceptualisation is in line with the official Brussels discourse, which depicts coherence as an essential condition for effective external action. The Council (2000), for instance, declared that "reinforcing the coherence of the Union's external action and realising its policy objectives are priorities if the Union is to pull its full weight in international affairs". However, the present study takes a step back and conceptualises coherence as a *dependent* variable. It analyses the causes of coherence and discusses potential implications.

### ***Research question and focus***

"Conflicting interests and values are the main cause of incoherence within most systems and at most levels" (Forster and Stokke 1999: 24). This is one of the key messages of a seminal volume on Policy Coherence for Development (PCD).<sup>3</sup> In

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<sup>3</sup> PCD entered the political debate in the early 1990s and aims to "exploit positive synergies and spillovers across all public policies to foster development" (OECD 2012: 3).

2003, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reiterated the message, stating that coherence “has always been and will continue to be a function of competing and conflicting interests and values” (OECD 2003). Taking these statements as working assumptions, this study addresses the following research question: How does the interaction of interests and norms influence the degree of coherence in EU crisis management? Findings are discussed in light of the broader debates on effectiveness and the Union’s role and future as an international security actor.

For the purpose of this study, coherence is understood as the absence of contradiction (consistency) and existence of synergies between various crisis management policies, instruments, and activities geared towards a set of overarching objectives. The analysis distinguishes vertical, horizontal, and institutional coherence (Nuttall 2005: 97). Vertical coherence refers to the interaction and congruence between the EU-level and member state crisis responses. Horizontal coherence designates the interaction between the objectives and instruments of different EU-level crisis management policies and activities. Finally, institutional coherence – a sub-category of horizontal coherence – is understood as the interaction between EU-level institutions and actors responsible for crisis management.

Coherence is used as a conceptual tool to analyse the implementation of the Union’s comprehensive approach to crisis management. The latter is defined as the integrated use of political, economic, and military instruments and policies towards the overarching objective of changing the dynamics of a given crisis or conflict to achieve increased security and stability (Council 2003a; 2008b; European Commission and HR 2013b). The analysis thus extends to five policy areas, namely:

- diplomacy;
- humanitarian aid;
- development aid;
- economic sanctions and restrictive measures; and



- crisis management operations and missions in the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSPD).<sup>4</sup>

The empirical focus of this thesis is on post-Lisbon crisis management in Africa. The analysis evaluates and compares EU crisis responses and concentrates on internal dimensions of coherence. The historical development of the Union's crisis management and foreign policy do not constitute central analytical categories of this study. Neither does it provide comprehensive analyses of the internal dynamics and drivers of conflicts or crises. The study further excludes a category of coherence that has become known as multilateral or external coherence (Gebhard 2011; Versluys 2007). The latter can be understood as the extent to which the Union's crisis management is in line with, or positively contributes to, the activities and measures of other international actors (Koenig 2011a: 17). While this dimension is certainly relevant, the Union's ability to interact at the international level is – at least partially – contingent on its ability to agree on common policies or activities internally.

### *Coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness*

The practical benefits of coherence are widely recognised in the broader multilateral governance context. There is general agreement that incoherence increases the risk of duplication, inefficient spending and ineffective policies (de Coning 2007). But what is the specific rationale for coherence in EU crisis management? Why focus on Africa? And what contextual factors made these topics salient at the time of writing?

The conflicts in the Balkans, in Iraq, and Afghanistan have shown that “the usefulness of military power alone has serious limits” (Howorth 2007: 93). They led to the recognition that military instruments need to be combined with political and development instruments to produce a lasting effect (Drent 2011: 3; Gross 2013). This recognition triggered an inflation of concepts on how civilian and military actors and instruments could be combined. The United Nations (UN) introduced the

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<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of simplicity, the following will subsume the *European* and the *Common Security and Defence Policy* under the abbreviation CSDP.

‘integrated approach’ to capture “new multi-polar coordination challenges facing complex peacekeeping operations” (de Coning 2008b: 3). The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO 2014) adopted a comprehensive approach to facilitate cooperation with “civilian partners on the ground, and at a political level”. And nation states introduced terms such as ‘3-D security’, the ‘whole-of-government approach’, or ‘inter-linked security’ to enhance cooperation among ministries, departments, and agencies.<sup>5</sup> Overall, comprehensive approaches have become “the gold standard in international security affairs” (Gebhard and Norheim-Martinsen 2011: 221).

Reconciling various dynamics of multidimensional crisis or conflict management represents a challenge for every governance system. Yet the Union’s sheer number of civilian and military instruments as well as its various decision-making layers and procedures compound the challenge. Over the years, the EU has introduced various legal provisions and institutional coordination mechanisms to enhance coherence in its external action in general, and in crisis management in particular (for an overview, see Gebhard 2011).

Nevertheless, the 2008 Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy concluded that, despite some progress, the need to strengthen coherence remained (Council 2008b). In 2013, the European Commission and the HR (2013b: 2) noted that the comprehensive approach had yet to be systematically applied to conflict prevention and crisis resolution. The Union has been undergoing a continuous learning process to enhance its capacity for crisis management. However, the politicisation of internal lessons learned and their negative perceptions as “shaming and blaming exercises” tends to dilute their results (Dari et al. 2012: 13). In addition, documents on lessons learned are often not publicly available and thus evade external, and potentially more objective, scrutiny. Meanwhile, the discrepancy

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<sup>5</sup> The concept of 3-D security refers to the strategic combination of development, diplomacy, and defence.

between comprehensive ambition and implementation continues to call for in-depth investigation.

Empirical reality makes this call even more pressing. In recent years, the Union has faced new, inter-linked security challenges in its neighbourhood. The Arab uprisings, starting in 2010, represented a prime example of the changing security environment at the Union's borders. Meanwhile, globalisation and the growing transnationalisation of threats have pushed the boundaries of the neighbourhood. Decision-makers and academics increasingly include Sub-Saharan African countries in Europe's so-called "broader neighbourhood" (Biscop 2013; Coolsaet et al. 2013; Simón 2013).

The latter comprises the African "arc of instability" stretching from Somalia across the Sahel towards Western Sahara (see Figure 1). Negative externalities emanating from this area – including terrorism, organised crime, and migration – are likely to affect Europe more than any other region. In addition, several EU member states have a particular responsibility in the African continent due to their colonialist past. The combination of rising and interlinked security, development and governance challenges; potential negative externalities; and historical responsibility provide powerful political rationale for a more effective implementation of the comprehensive approach.

But there is also considerable economic rationale. The financial and economic crises entailed Europe-wide austerity measures and budget cuts. The effects were particularly marked in the area of defence, where expenditures had already been on a course of decline since the end of the Cold War. As a result of austerity, almost all EU member states cut their defence budgets. In some smaller member states, those amounted to one third (Mölling 2011). The crisis had a slighter, but nonetheless notable effect on the Union's collective development aid, which dropped consecutively in 2011 and 2012 (EurActiv 2013).

**Figure 1: Africa's arc of instability**



Source: Alexander (2013)

In 2011, European think tank experts published open letters warning decision-makers of an inward-looking Europe that sacrificed external action on the altar of austerity (Cameron et al. 2011; Furness et al. 2011). In 2013, the Commission and the HR (2013c: 3) still emphasised that financial resources were “under pressure”, making “the case for a comprehensive approach (...) stronger than ever”. An effective implementation of the Union’s comprehensive approach would allow the member states to pool scarce military and civilian resources to ensure peace and stability in the increasingly volatile neighbourhood. Identifying the causes of continued incoherence and duplication represents a necessary step towards this aim.

### ***Coherence and EU actorness***

Studying the causes of (in)coherence is also relevant to the broader academic debate on the EU’s nature and role in international affairs (Bretherton and Vogler 1999; Bretherton and Vogler 2006; Jupille and Caporaso 1998; Sjöstedt 1977). Coherence is usually seen as a central component of EU ‘actorness’ (Niemann and Bretherton 2013; Thomas 2012). Scholars commonly define actorness as the “capacity to behave actively and deliberately in relation to other actors in the international system” (Sjöstedt 1977: 16). Jupille and Caporaso (1998: 215) view cohesion, defined as the ability “to formulate and articulate internally consistent policy preferences”, as a key element of actorness. Bretherton and Vogler (1999: 38; 2006) include “the ability to

identify policy priorities and to formulate coherent policies” among their five conceptual components of actorness.

The causes of (in)coherence are also relevant to a parallel strand of literature that simply assumes that the Union is an actor, or at least some kind of “presence” in international affairs (Allen and Smith 1991).<sup>6</sup> Researchers in this field tend to conceptualise the Union as a type of ‘power’, but the debate on the sources of this power remains unresolved (see for example Aggestam 2008; Damro 2012; Manners 2002; Nye 1991; Toje 2011).

This study specifically contributes to the debate on the Union’s actorness and power in security affairs (Gebhard and Norheim-Martinsen 2011; Gegout 2009; Kaunert and Zwolski 2012; Whitman and Wolff 2010; Zwolski 2012b). Crisis management can be seen as a tough test for EU actorness as it requires internal coherence when faced with an often disproportionately dynamic external opportunity structure (Bretherton and Vogler 2006; Niemann and Bretherton 2013).<sup>7</sup> But it also represents a crucial and visible test (Gordon 1997). The ability to influence external events and players lies at the heart of the understanding of power in international affairs.

One of the most prominent conceptualisations of the Union’s role in international security affairs is the notion of ‘civilian power Europe’, a term first coined by François Duchêne (1973). The concept rests on three key elements: the transformation of intra-European relations from war to peace and ‘civilised politics’; the reliance on civilian, primarily economic means; and the exertion of power through persuasion rather than coercion (Keukeleire and MacNaughtan 2008: 11). Some argue that the Union’s acquisition of military crisis management capabilities (see section 1.2) has muddled its civilian power profile (Smith 2005; Stavridis 2001). Others hold that the concept still has “considerable empirical and theoretical

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<sup>6</sup> The concept of ‘presence’ designates Europe’s variable impact on international affairs, regardless of the ‘messy’ way in which it is produced (Allen and Smith 1991: 20).

<sup>7</sup> Bretherton and Vogler (2013: 398) define opportunity structure as „the external context of ideas and events that enable or constrain [EU] action“.

purchase” (Whitman 2006: 113). A third group proposes to go beyond the traditional distinction of civilian and military power and to focus on the Union’s normative influence or ethical dilemmas (Aggestam 2008; Manners 2002). The present study does not pretend to offer a solution to this debate. Yet the evaluation of the Union’s internal congruence in terms of norms and interests allows us to draw informed conclusions on the current ideational consensus and material boundaries of the EU’s role as a security actor.

### *Analysing EU crisis responses*

To evaluate the influence and interaction of norms and interests across governance levels, this study applies two analytical lenses. The first starts with rationalist assumptions and is based on liberal intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik 1993a; 1998). From this perspective, the pursuit of coherence is viewed as a two-level game (Putnam 1988). The degree of coherence is seen as the unintended outcome of strategic interaction between influential domestic and national players pursuing self-regarding interests (Pilegaard 2003). The key players are large and prosperous member states with relative bargaining advantages.

The second analytical lens builds on sociological institutionalism and starts with moderate constructivist assumptions (Adler 1997; Hall and Taylor 1996; Wendt 1999). From this perspective, EU crisis decision-making is depicted as a ‘multi-level norm game’ (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).<sup>8</sup> In this game, political and administrative decision-makers are assumed to balance EU-level coherence-related norms with embedded national or organisational norms. The degree of coherence essentially depends on the extent to which these two sets of norms resonate.

Each analytical lens yields three hypotheses addressing the interaction of EU crisis management players at the domestic, the intergovernmental, and the EU institutional

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<sup>8</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 893) speak of a two-level norm game, “in which the domestic and the international norm tables are increasingly linked”. The present study applies the concept to the more multi-levelled EU governance context.

levels respectively. In line with the working assumption that coherence is a function of competing interests *and* norms, the two lenses are not seen as mutually exclusive. This study rather investigates the circumstances under which either lens holds greater explanatory power.

The hypotheses are evaluated through a comparative “multiple-case embedded” design (Yin 2009: 59). The selected cases are the Union’s crisis responses to:

- Libya (February 2011-October 2011);
- Somalia (November 2011-November 2012); and
- Mali (March 2012-August 2013).

Within these crisis responses, the study concentrates on specific analytical units. The analysis of vertical coherence centres on the roles of France, the UK, and Germany (the ‘Big Three’). To address the underlying factors of horizontal and institutional coherence, the responses of the Union’s key institutional players in the field of crisis management are evaluated.

The analysis draws on insights from official documents, political speeches and declarations, national parliamentary debates, analyses by leading think tanks, media reports, opinion polls, and 46 semi-structured interviews with EU and national officials. Single case analysis is based on detailed process tracing and directed, qualitative content analysis (Bennett and Checkel 2011; Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Cross-case analysis follows the method of structured, focused comparison (George and Bennett 2005b).

### ***Key findings: balancing interests and norms***

The study suggests that coherence in EU crisis management can, in fact, be understood as a function of competing and conflicting interests and norms. It shows that the Union’s crisis management players are aware of coherence-related standards of appropriateness. However, as they are only thinly socialised into these norms, immediate strategic interests or long-standing embedded norms continue to inform their behaviour and rhetoric (Checkel 2005).

The analysis of vertical coherence illustrates that national decision-makers are domestically constrained in their ability to agree to or comply with EU-level crisis management decisions. This is particularly the case if decisions acquire political salience and divide government and opposition in the face of upcoming elections. In these cases, decision-makers orient themselves towards the median voter interest. The study further suggests that sector-specific economic interests influence national crisis decision-making. If economic interests converge without competing, a high degree of coherence can be expected. If, however, they diverge or compete, unilateral deviations or actions are likely. Moreover, decision-makers are constrained by domestically embedded norms. For decisions in the arena of EU crisis management, national predispositions on the use of force and preferred modes of multilateral cooperation are particularly salient.

Interaction in the intergovernmental arena is characterised by competitive *and* cooperative dynamics. Under consensus rules, the member states agree on lowest common denominator outcomes as well as mutual compromise outcomes. In addition to domestically embedded norms and interests, national preference functions include perceptions of risks and threats, which are mediated by relevant precedent crisis management cases.

The three case studies show that the influence of institutional players on the degree of vertical coherence is limited. It crucially depends on the degree of delegated sovereignty and thus on the legal division of competences.<sup>9</sup> In addition, there are obstacles to institutional influence on the degree of horizontal coherence. The post-Lisbon transition phase created new overlapping responsibilities between new and old crisis management players. These overlaps fostered inter-institutional tensions and rivalries. Tensions were particularly marked at the interface of security and development and cognitive barriers, stemming from diverse professional backgrounds, compounded them. Norms that clash with the narrative of the comprehensive approach are those related to the preservation of the apolitical

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<sup>9</sup> See articles 2-6 TFEU.



character of aid. It is too early to tell whether socialisation and learning dynamics, triggered by the Union's post-Lisbon institutional coordination mechanisms, will lower cognitive barriers and assuage rivalries in the medium to longer-term.

Each theoretical lens explains parts of the puzzle. Case analysis shows that high stakes (referring to electoral as well as economic risks and costs) and relative certainty with regard to the payoffs of alternative courses of action favour strategic calculation. If stakes are low and outcomes uncertain, embedded norms and a logic of appropriateness are more likely to prevail. The analysed crisis decisions often entailed potentially high economic costs, payoffs, risks, or important electoral consequences. Situations where domestically defined interests 'trumped' norms were thus more abundant.

Based on the evaluation of coherence and its determinants, the analysis suggests that the degree of the Union's security actorness is bound to vary on a case-by-case basis. The Union's ability to act coherently, actively, and deliberately in international affairs is less contingent on institutional coordination mechanisms or legal provisions than on the congruence of situation-specific interests and salient norms. The analysis further shows that the degree of coherence in EU crisis responses tends to increase over time. Stakes become lower; political insulation increases; and more sustained and regular interaction favours socialisation dynamics. In other words, the Union's security actorness is likely to increase the more the situation moves from crisis response (potentially requiring the use of force) towards conflict prevention.

## **1.2 The broadening notion of EU crisis management**

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a gradual shift from a territorial, military, and state-centred understanding of security towards a de-territorialised, civil-military, and human-centred perspective (Kaldor et al. 2007). In line with this paradigmatic shift, the Union's profile as an international security actor gradually expanded. This section outlines how EU crisis management is defined, why it developed, and which crises or conflicts it addressed.

## *Delineating 'EU crisis management'*

A 'crisis' can be defined as "a phase of disorder in the seemingly normal development of a system" (Boin et al. 2005: 2). Typical characteristics include threat, uncertainty, and urgency. Crises can affect various systems including, for instance, the economy, politics, or personal lives of citizens. This thesis concentrates on security-related crises, which can be distinguished as acute situations "in which armed force is (likely to be) used" (Blockmans and Wessel 2009: 5). Crisis management, in turn, designates the policies, activities, procedures, and instruments used to contain a crisis and to influence its future course with the aim of its resolution (Blockmans and Wessel 2009: 5). Typically, the literature distinguishes crisis management, as referring to early or immediate reactions to an acute situation, from medium to long-term activities in the realm of peace-making and post-conflict stabilisation.<sup>10</sup>

However, in the EU crisis management "has become a catch-all term without precise definition" (Schroeder 2009: 492). The Union extended the meaning of 'crisis management' beyond the immediate or acute phases of an emergency and to the whole range of the its security-related external activities (Blockmans and Wessel 2009: 6). The European External Action Service (EEAS 2014a), for instance, employs the term 'crisis response' to describe "the immediate mobilisation of EU resources to deal with the consequences of external crises caused by man-made and natural disasters". The EEAS also uses the term 'crisis response cycle', which includes activities related to conflict prevention, peace-making, and post-conflict stabilisation (see Figure 2).<sup>11</sup>

This thesis employs the terms 'crisis response' and 'crisis management' interchangeably. The focus lies on the Union's short to medium-term reaction, rather

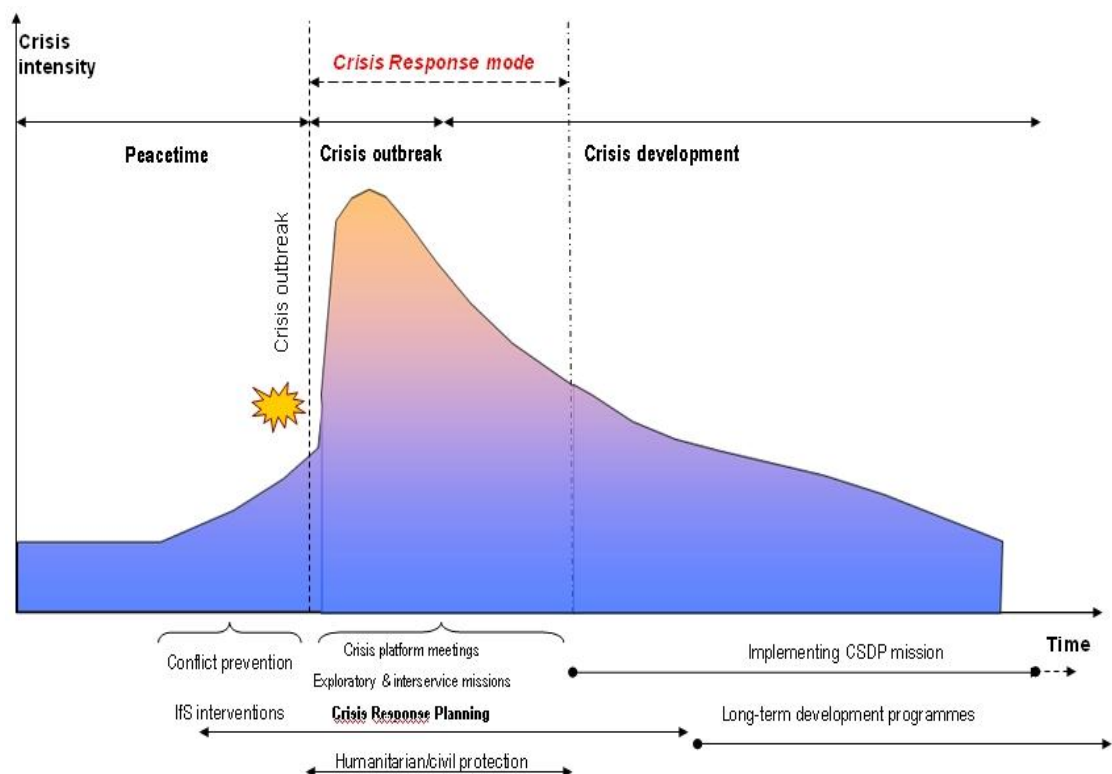
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<sup>10</sup> Peace-making describes the imposition of the cessation of violence and reconciliation among warring parties. Meanwhile, post-conflict stabilisation targets the root causes of a crisis and seeks to prevent the resurgence of violence (Blockmans and Wessel 2009: 5).

<sup>11</sup> Conflict prevention refers to policies, activities, and measures designed to avert or mitigate violent conflict (Gross and Juncos 2011).

than on longer-term activities and measures in the realm of post-conflict reconstruction and conflict prevention. The short- to medium-term can be considered a crucial test for the implementation of the comprehensive approach. As Figure 2 shows, it is the phase, in which diplomatic, economic, and military activities are most likely to converge. Vertical and horizontal coordination challenges thus coincide under conditions of heightened uncertainty and urgency.

**Figure 2: The EU's crisis response cycle**



Source: (EEAS 2014b)

Decision-makers further divide crisis management into the political, strategic, and operational levels (Council 2008a; Simón 2013). The political level refers to policy formulation and decision-making in the inter-governmental arena, taking place in the European Council or Council. The strategic level encompasses planning activities such as those for civilian and military CSDP missions and operations. And the operational level refers to implementation and comprises the management of activities or instruments in the field. This thesis concentrates on decision-making and cooperation at the political and strategic levels, as they can be seen as essential pre-conditions for coherent policy implementation on the ground.

### *The CSDP's first decade*

Having delineated conceptual boundaries, let us now turn to the most salient and visible instrument of short- to medium term EU crisis management: the CSDP. Europe's failure to react to the conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990s gave the political impetus for the birth of the collective crisis management capacity. At a meeting in St. Malo in 1998, France and Britain agreed that "the Union must have the capacity of autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises" (St. Malo Declaration 1998). They also decided to create "the appropriate structures and a capacity for situation analysis, sources of intelligence and capability for relevant strategic planning" (St. Malo Declaration 1998). In the following year, at the European Council in Cologne, the member states endorsed the Franco-British initiative and incorporated the Western European Union in the EU. They also agreed to complement military crisis management with a civilian dimension.

The new crisis management capacity was firmly located within the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and thus in the sphere of intergovernmental decision-making. At the political level, the key actors were the European Council and General Affairs and External Relations Council as well as its preparatory bodies, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) and the Political and Security Committee (PSC). As Chair of the European Council and Council, the rotating Presidency had an important agenda-setting function. The development of the CSDP also led to the establishment of new institutional crisis management actors. It enhanced the responsibilities of the High Representative for the CFSP and of its supporting body, the Council Secretariat. The latter became host to the Union's growing civilian and military crisis management structures at the strategic level.

Between 2003 and 2009, the Union deployed 23 CSDP missions and operations (see Table 1). Their geographic and functional scope gradually broadened. With an initial focus on traditional military peacekeeping and police missions, the spectrum of tasks came to include border management, monitoring, rule of law reforms, security sector reform (SSR), and maritime counter-piracy. Geographically, the CSDP initially

focused on the Western Balkans and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The military arm then expanded in Europe's Eastern neighbourhood and Africa. Meanwhile, civilian missions were also deployed more globally, notably in the Palestinian Territories, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Indonesia.

**Table 1: CSDP missions and operations (2003-2009)**

| Name           | Location                                      | Nature         | Type        | Staff <sup>12</sup> | Duration   |
|----------------|---|----------------|-------------|---------------------|------------|
| EUPM           | Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)                  | Civilian       | Police      | 540                 | 2003-2012  |
| Concordia      | Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) | Military       | Military    | 350                 | 2003       |
| Artemis        | DRC   | Military       | Military    | 2,000               | 2003       |
| EUFOR Althea   | BiH   | Military       | Military    | 2,200               | Since 2004 |
| EUPOL Proxima  | FYROM   | Civilian       | Police      | 169                 | 2004-2005  |
| EUJUST Themis  | Georgia                                       | Civilian       | Rule of law | 10                  | 2004-2005  |
| EUBAM          | Moldova and Ukraine                           | Civilian       | Border      | 233                 | Since 2005 |
| EUPOL Kinshasa | DRC   | Civilian       | Police      | 23                  | 2005-2007  |
| EUSEC          | DRC   | Civil-military | SSR         | 50                  | Since 2005 |
| EUBAM Rafah    | Palestinian Territories                       | Civilian       | Border      | 24                  | Since 2005 |
| EUJUST LEX     | Iraq  | Civilian       | Rule of law | 30                  | 2005-2013  |

<sup>12</sup> Staff numbers refer to EU and international staff. They are approximate and reflect the *status quo* in 2009 (Grevi et al. 2009).

| Name              | Location                            | Nature         | Type           | Staff <sup>12</sup> | Duration   |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|------------|
| Support to AMIS   | Sudan/Darfur                        | Civil-military | Assistance     | 47                  | 2005-2007  |
| AMM               | Indonesia/Aceh                      | Civilian       | Monitoring     | 125                 | 2005-2006  |
| EUFOR             | DRC                                 | Military       | Military       | 2,400               | 2006       |
| EUPAT             | FYROM                               | Civilian       | Police         | 29                  | 2006       |
| EUPOL COPPS       | Palestinian Territories             | Civilian       | Police         | 42                  | Since 2006 |
| EUPOL             | Afghanistan                         | Civilian       | Police         | 225                 | Since 2007 |
| EUPOL             | DRC                                 | Civilian       | Police         | 23                  | Since 2007 |
| EUFOR             | Chad/Central African Republic (CAR) | Military       | Military       | 3,700               | 2008-2009  |
| EU SSR            | Guinea Bissau                       | Civil-military | SSR            | 14                  | 2008-2010  |
| EULEX             | Kosovo                              | Civilian       | Rule of law    | 1,642               | Since 2008 |
| EUMM              | Georgia                             | Civilian       | Monitoring     | 340                 | Since 2008 |
| EUNAVFOR Atalanta | Somalia                             | Military       | Military/naval | 2,000               | Since 2008 |

Source: Grevi et al. (2009), Gross and Juncos (2011)

### *Incremental learning and outstanding challenges*

The evolution of the CSDP can be seen as an incremental learning process. There are many examples testifying to the Union's learning capacity (see Dari et al. 2012: 34-100). However, Europeans also faced recurrent challenges. These challenges can be grouped in four categories: strategic deficit, capability gaps, dysfunctional coordination, and limited impact (Asseburg and Kempin 2009; Dari et al. 2012; Grevi et al. 2009; Gross and Juncos 2011).

Many CSDP missions and operations were criticised for the absence of an overarching political *strategy*. Helly (2009: 11), for instance, argued that the Union's

engagement in Chad and the CAR did not follow any “clear common foreign policy objectives”. A symptom of the strategic deficit was the Union’s preference for an ‘end-date’ rather than an ‘end-state’ approach to crisis management (Mattelaer 2008). The former implies that the exit strategy is contingent on a particular date, rather than on changes in the security situation on the ground.

The CSDP’s first decade also highlighted *capability gaps*. EU crisis management is contingent on the member states’ willingness to provide military and civilian personnel on an *ad hoc* and voluntary basis. The financing of military operations follows the principle ‘costs lie where they fall’.<sup>13</sup> A striking example for capability shortages was operation EUFOR Chad/CAR, which only attained initial operational capacity after six months and six force generation conferences (Mattelaer 2008). Furthermore, the operation had to rely on Russian transport helicopters, which only arrived three months before the end of the operation (Seibert 2010). In addition, the Union faced shortcomings in civilian capabilities. This was particularly the case for the more dangerous or distant missions. For the EU’s police mission in Afghanistan, the Council decided to raise the number of civilian personnel from 160 to 400 in May 2008. Yet, two years later, only 265 were on the ground (Koenig 2010: 17).

*Coordination* problems appeared in almost all cases of EU crisis management. Policy analysts regularly admonished inter-institutional turf wars in Brussels, the divide between development and security, and the lack of civil-military planning (Drent 2011; Emerson et al. 2007; Grevi et al. 2009). On the ground, dysfunctional coordination occurred between civilian and military CSDP missions and operations, Commission delegations, EU Special Representatives (EUSR), and member state representatives.

The final critique, which is often seen as a result of the aforementioned shortcomings, concerns the *limited impact* of EU crisis management. CSDP missions and operations were often small in scale and scope, and short in duration. Between

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<sup>13</sup> Only the common costs – usually a small share of overall costs – are financed through the Athena mechanism, and thus distributed among all member states according to Gross National Income.

2003 and 2009, ten out of 23 numbered less than 100 staff (see Table 1). An example for limited impact is Operation Artemis (2003) in the DRC where the operational area was restricted to the district capital Bunia and the mandate to three months. Instead of durable conflict resolution, the operation displaced violence beyond the area of operations (Dari et al. 2012: 42). CSDP missions and operations were often successful in fulfilling narrow mandates, but failed to have lasting impact on broader political conditions.

### *The promise of comprehensiveness*

With its panoply of external instruments, the Union seemed predestined for comprehensive crisis management. In addition to its emerging capacity for crisis management, it had a worldwide network of Commission Delegations at its disposal. Combined, the Union and its member states were and are the world's leading development and humanitarian aid donor. In addition, it is the world's single most important trading bloc with an intricate net of trade agreements with the developed and developing world.

The European Security Strategy of 2003 clearly emphasised the ambition to “bring together the different instruments and capabilities” (Council 2003a: 13). The Strategy underscored that the instruments “should follow the same agenda,” and added, “[i]n a crisis there is no substitute for unity of command” (Council 2003a: 13). The specificity of the EU's comprehensive approach is the focus on internal coordination. By comparison, NATO's comprehensive approach concentrates more on in-theatre cooperation with other international actors or organisations – in other words – on multilateral coherence (NATO 2014).

One of the major objectives of the Lisbon Treaty was to enhance the coherence of the Union's external action. Its key institutional innovations were the double-hatted HR and the EEAS – a diplomatic service, composed of member state, Commission, and Council Secretariat officials.<sup>14</sup> Both the HR and EEAS were explicitly mandated to

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<sup>14</sup> See article 18 TEU.



ensure the consistency and coherence between the Union's various external and internal activities.<sup>15</sup>

The Treaty also introduced innovations, specific to the field of crisis management. It re-named the *European* into the *Common* Security and Defence Policy and formally broadened the Petersberg tasks to include conflict prevention, military advice and assistance, joint disarmament operations, and post-conflict stabilisation.<sup>16</sup> The Treaty also introduced mechanisms for more flexible intergovernmental cooperation. Article 44 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), for instance, allows the Council to entrust a CSDP operation or mission to an intra-European coalition of the 'willing and able' (Blockmans and Wessel 2009: 39). Similarly, new provisions on 'permanent structured cooperation' enabled smaller groups of disposed member states to enhance their cooperation in military capability development.<sup>17</sup>

In 2010, the HR introduced the new Directorate-General (DG) for Crisis Response and Operational Coordination (CROC) to the EEAS. In early 2011, the crisis management structures, formerly located within the Council Secretariat, were transferred to the new Service. Furthermore, the HR introduced the 'Crisis Platform' – a temporary coordination mechanism, variably including the crisis management structures, geographical and horizontal EEAS departments and relevant Commission services such as the DG for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO).

While the EEAS was gradually consolidating, the Union reviewed its crisis management procedures dating from 2003 (Council 2013f). At the same time, the Commission and the HR (2013b) were developing a joint Communication on the comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises. Both documents were published in 2013 and further raised expectations for a more ambitious,

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<sup>15</sup> For the difference between consistency and coherence, see section 2.1.

<sup>16</sup> The Council originally outlined the so-called Petersberg tasks for the Western European Union in 1992, including humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping, and peacemaking. The broadened tasks can be found in article 43 (TEU).

<sup>17</sup> See article 42, paragraph 6.

comprehensive, and active EU role in international crisis management. The present study evaluates to what extent the Union has been able to meet these expectations.

### **1.3 Identifying the gap**

This thesis aims to contribute to literatures on policy coherence, EU crisis management, and EU foreign policy. Its contribution is both theoretical and empirical. It devises an original framework for the analysis of multi-level crisis decision-making and applies it comparatively to three prominent post-Lisbon cases. This section reviews relevant findings of the literature, points towards shortcomings, and outlines how this study intends to address them.

#### ***Causes of (in)coherence***

Both ‘coherence’ and the ‘comprehensive approach’ are under-conceptualised. Gebhard (2011: 123) argues that “the notion of coherence is among the most frequently misinterpreted and misused concepts in EU foreign policy”. Meanwhile, despite the political omnipresence of the comprehensive approach in EU and security studies, its strategic, operational, and organisational meaning remains “inherently elusive” (Gebhard and Norheim-Martinsen 2011: 223). Due to the Union’s specific focus on internal coordination, this thesis concentrates on the concept of coherence, which it understands as key organising principle for the implementation of the comprehensive approach.

During the past decade, the literature on policy coherence – particularly on PCD – has flourished (Ashoff 2005; Barry et al. 2010; Carbone 2008; Pietrangeli 2007; Hoebink 2005; Keijzer and Oppewal 2012; Youngs 2004). There are numerous valuable empirical evaluations of policy coherence. However, few engage in systematic theory-led analysis, leaving the concept largely under-theorised (May et al. 2006: 2; Pilegaard 2003). A review of inductive and conceptual studies yields a range of causal factors for (in)coherence (see Table 2). As the overview shows, the literature underlines the role of interests, ideas, institutions, and complexity across governance levels. However, most studies in the field start from implicit or explicit

institutionalist assumptions, leading to an over-emphasis on institutional factors (den Hertog and Stroß 2013; Portela and Raube 2009).

**Table 2: Causes of (in)coherence in the literature**

| Category                           | Examples  |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Interests and power                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competing or divergent national interests (Ashoff 2005; European Commission 2007; European Commission 2009; Forster and Stokke 1999)</li> <li>• Inter-institutional power struggles (Hoebink 2005; Nuttall 2005; Uvin 1999)</li> <li>• Influence of domestic interest groups (Ashoff 2005; Barry et al. 2010; Hoebink 2005)</li> </ul> |
| Cultural and ideational factors    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competing or diverging national values or norms (Ashoff 2005; Forster and Stokke 1999)</li> <li>• Different organisational cultures (Christiansen 2001; Egenhofer et al. 2006; Hoebink 2005; Portela and Raube 2009; Uvin 1999)</li> </ul>   |
| Institutions                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional fragmentation (Christiansen 2001; May et al. 2006)</li> <li>• Absence or inadequacy of institutional coordination mechanisms (Egenhofer et al. 2006; European Commission 2006; European Commission 2007)</li> </ul>  |
| Complexity and analytical capacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of information and bounded rationality (Ashoff 2005; Hydén 1999);</li> <li>• Multitude of actors (Portela and Raube 2009; Uvin 1999),</li> <li>• Complexity of decision-making processes (Ashoff 2005: 36),</li> <li>• Proliferation of policy objectives within and across issue areas (Ashoff 2005: 38-39)</li> </ul>           |

*Source: own compilation*

Meanwhile, the EU studies literature on coherence strongly emphasises the role of legal rules and provisions. Incoherence is viewed as the result of functional fragmentation in the Union's legal system (see for example Cremona 2008; den Hertog & Stroß 2013; Gauttier 2004; van Elsuwege 2010; Tietje 1997). The number and scope of legal provisions aimed at enhancing the coherence of the EU's external action has expanded since its first appearance in the Single European Act in 1986

(Cremona 2008; Gebhard 2011).<sup>18</sup> As seen above, the amendments and innovations introduced by the Lisbon Treaty represent a culmination in this trend.

However, legal scholars also caution that the impact of these provisions may be overestimated (Gauttier 2004: 24; Cremona 2008: 13; Van Elsuwege 2010: 1015). The coherence requirement is legally binding but it is currently not legally enforceable (Gebhard 2011: 114). While coherence is an integral part of the EU's legal framework, van Elsuwege (2010: 1015) concludes that it “remains essentially a political imperative which largely depends on the political will of the Member States and the institutions”. The rather ambiguous notion of ‘political will’ leads us back to the intricate balance of values, interests, and power in political decision-making (Post et al. 2010).

### *Theorising EU crisis management*

Policymakers and academics underline the Union’s comparative advantage in combining civilian and military instruments (Gebhard and Norheim-Martinsen 2011). The discourse advocating a comprehensive approach to security and crisis management has become “dominant in the EU and remains largely uncontested” (Zwolski 2012a: 994). But at the same time, studies of EU security and crisis management often narrowly focus on the CSDP. The reason for the discrepancy between political discourse and academic practice lies in the conceptual and methodological complexity of bringing various institutional frameworks, policy issues, and governance levels into one analytical framework (Gebhard and Norheim-Martinsen 2011; Gross and Juncos 2011; Zwolski 2012b).

In addition to its narrow focus, the EU crisis management literature has long suffered from a lack of theory-informed studies (Gross 2009; Gross and Juncos 2011; Klein 2010). Analyses of the CSDP tend to be “either descriptive or prescriptive or both”

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<sup>18</sup> The Single European Act (SEA) introduced the requirement of coherence/consistency into EU primary law. It underscored Europe’s aim of “speaking ever increasingly with one voice and to act with consistency and solidarity” (preamble). The SEA specified that the “external policies of the European Community and the policies agreed in European Political Co-operation must be consistent” (art. 30 (5) SEA).

(Bickerton et al. 2011: 7). Since the late 2000s, there has been growing theoretical interest in the study of EU crisis management. A 2011 special issue of the *Journal of Common Market Studies* (Bickerton et al. 2011) announced a ‘second wave’ of CSDP scholarship and identified four core theoretical concerns:

- The role of power
- The influence of institutions
- The balance between structure and agency
- The relationship between material and ideational factors

These concerns place the study of EU crisis management at the centre of International Relations (IR) theory.

With their focus on nation states, the security dilemma, and relative gains, neo-realists have long played a marginal role in the field of EU integration (Andreatta 2011). They typically attempt to explain the CSDP as an attempt to balance against the US, to rally against a common threat, or as “a collective attempt at milieu shaping” (Hyde-Price 2006: 122; Jones 2007; Posen 2004; Posen 2006; Rynning 2011). However, they also struggle to explain continued integration after the end of the Cold War and bipolarity (Pohl 2012: 4). Intergovernmentalism attempted to reconcile realist assumptions with European integration, by allowing for sustained cooperation in fields of low politics, but excluding high politics (Hoffmann 1966). Both theoretical strands would emphasise the structurally determined security interests of the Union’s largest member states as key drivers behind coherent crisis management. Notwithstanding, they are hard to reconcile with the comprehensive approach to crisis management, which represents a deliberate attempt to blur the distinction between high and low politics.

By emphasising the role of ideas, social constructivists offer a fundamentally different perspective on EU crisis management. A particularly fruitful strand of research is the literature on strategic culture (Giegerich 2006; Meyer 2004; 2005; 2006). Scholars in this field interpret the development of the CSDP as a sign for the gradual evolution of a shared European strategic culture (Biava et al. 2011; Cornish and Edwards 2005; Howorth 2002). Meyer (2004: 4) defines the latter as the “ideas,

*norms* and patterns of *behaviour* that are shared across the actors *and publics* involved in the processes of pursuing European security and defence” [original emphasis]. From this angle, the development of a collective European strategic culture can be seen as an essential pre-condition for coherent EU crisis management (Biava et al. 2011; Rynning 2003).

The strategic culture literature yields valuable insight into long-standing ideational factors shaping the course of national security and defence policies. But while strategic culture accounts allow us to trace behavioural continuities back to historically grown ideational constraints, they are less able to accommodate behavioural change. Cultural approaches often have to adopt a *longue durée* perspective as administrative and political cultures change very slowly (Schein 1996; Biava et al. 2011). Even key proponents of the strategic culture approach concede that its ability to “explain and forecast change has suffered from neglecting the link between material structures and ideas” (Meyer and Strickmann 2011: 61; see also Meyer 2011).

Another constructivist-inspired strand that more easily integrates material factors is the Europeanization approach. Scholars in this field usually understand intra-European convergence as a “two-way process through which national governments both shape European policies (uploading dimension) and adapt to them (downloading dimension)” (Müller 2012: 3). Gross (2009) has applied the Europeanization approach to analyse the extent to which member states’ positions have converged in favour of a greater EU role in crisis management. In her insightful longitudinal study, she detects some evidence of Europeanization between 2001 and 2006. Gross (2009: 172), however, concludes that intra-European convergence remained limited and that “Europeanization does not serve as an overall explanation for national policy decisions”. Instead, domestic considerations and proven national foreign policy parameters often prevail.

These findings point towards a third strand of IR theory, namely liberalism. Liberal scholars have largely eschewed the area of EU crisis management and foreign policy. Some even argue that the field displays an “omitted theory bias” in this respect

(Jørgensen 2006: 519; Krotz and Maher 2011: 571; Moravcsik 1997: 538-541; Pohl 2012: 2). While liberal intergovernmentalism has become one of the most influential theories of EU integration, it has found little application beyond the economic realm and treaty-amending decisions (Moravcsik 1993a; 1998). Nonetheless, Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig (2009: 74) argue that the approach “applies far more broadly than is commonly supposed”, including to every day EU decision-making. They emphasise the need to transcend the sterile debate between grand theories and to refine the components of liberal intergovernmentalism on the basis of empirical analysis. So far, only few have followed their advice (see Jürgenliemk 2008; Kaim 2007; Pohl 2012; 2014).

### *Institutions: constraining or enabling*

As the Union’s crisis management machinery expanded, neo-institutionalists discovered it as a field of study. They generally agree that ‘institutions matter’, but their conceptualisation of institutional influence varies (Aspinwall and Schneider 2000; Hall and Taylor 1996). Historical institutionalism often focuses on the evolution of EU crisis management. Scholars in this field depict it as a path-dependent process, in which the member states are constrained by previous decisions and institutional choices (Petrov 2011). Historical institutionalism helps explain the direction and pace of institutionalisation, but is less suited to the analysis of day-to-day crisis decision-making (Vanhoonaeker and Jacobs 2010).

Meanwhile, rational choice institutionalism concentrates on the conditions for the delegation of power from political principals to institutional agents and on the conditions for agent discretion. Klein’s (2010) application of this variant to EU crisis management modelled the member states as a unitary principal and the Commission and Council Secretariat as agents. Despite limited delegation, she detected significant agent influence on the implementation of EU crisis management (Klein 2010). She presented operation EUFOR Chad/CAR as an example where time pressure enabled the Union’s military bodies to push the member states towards military options (Klein 2011). This very example shows that the ‘unitary principal assumption’ is problematic. It might well have been the distribution of member state preferences

that led to the alleged institutional influence. In fact, France strongly pushed for the implementation of a military operation while the preferences of other member states were rather vague. Paris had officials in strategic positions in Europe's crisis management structures and provided the bulk of resources.

Finally, sociological institutionalism starts from a broad definition of institutions, including "symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 14). Applications to EU crisis management are scarce and tend to focus on institutional development and change (Faleg 2012; Mounier et al. 2007; Schröder 2011). Juncos's (2011) analysis of the design *and* performance of operation EUFOR Althea in BiH constitutes a useful exception. She demonstrates how institutional actors deviated from the member states' initial rational plan. But, she also identifies the need for more research into the effects of socialisation, the boundaries between rational and appropriate behaviour, and the nexus linking national interests to 'Brusselisation' (Juncos 2011).<sup>19</sup>

### ***Multi-level foreign policy governance***

Traditional approaches in IR and EU integration theory are often considered too rigid for the study of EU crisis management and foreign policy (Gross 2009). Meanwhile, neo-institutionalism tends to be confined in its analytical focus. Alternative approaches that attempt to address the broader picture of EU foreign policy decision-making have emerged in the fields of governance and foreign policy analysis.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, EU studies witnessed a 'governance turn' (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2006). Governance differs from the hierarchical notion of government and can be defined as "steering capacities of a political system without making any assumption as to which institutions or agents do the steering" (Gamble 2000: 110). Reflecting overlapping and interdependent loci of governance and increasingly entwined intergovernmental and supranational logics, scholars have

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<sup>19</sup> 'Brusselisation' refers to a process of social interaction, during which national officeholders move from national preferences to a collective European preference in the absence of coercion or material incentives (Allen 1998: 54).



described EU foreign policy as “multi-level governance” system (Hooghe and Marks 2001; M. Smith 2004).

A growing sub-field of the governance literature is security governance (Diedrichs 2006; Hollis 2010; Kirchner 2006; Schröder 2011). From this perspective, EU crisis management is seen as a system of “co-ordination, management and regulation of issues by multiple and separate authorities (...) directed towards particular policy outcomes” (Kirchner 2006: 948). Incoherence can be seen as resulting from the complexity of overlapping steering processes in the absence of an overarching political authority (Pilegaard 2003). Governance approaches are able to accommodate a broadened understanding of security by including state and non-state actors, external and internal crisis management dimensions, and formal or informal modes of coordination (Schröder 2011). They thus provide valuable insight into the complexity of EU foreign policy and crisis management.

However, governance approaches are often descriptive in character and neglect power and agency. A recent analysis of the CSDP governance network confirms the existence of a complex constellation of ties between national and supranational actors (Mérand et al. 2011). But it also shows that the CSDP remains dominated by a few traditional actors, in particular national ambassadors in Brussels. The authors conclude that “these actors are not giving up on state power, but reconstituting it at the supranational level” (Mérand et al. 2011: 121). The depiction of the EU foreign policy as multi-level governance system thus represents a useful conceptual frame, but the analysis of crisis decision-making demands attention to hierarchy, power, and agency.

A theoretical paradigm that more readily incorporates these factors is foreign policy analysis. Long reserved to the study of national foreign policy, this sub-field of IR theory gained traction in EU studies at the turn of the century. In the context of the present study, foreign policy analysis presents three advantages. First, it explicitly focuses on political decision-making processes and underlying motivations (Gross 2009: 10). Second, it is adaptable enough to scrutinise EU-level *and* national foreign policy (White 1999; White 2004). And third, it concentrates on domestic processes

and factors, which – as Gross (2009) has demonstrated – play an important role in European crisis management.

Foreign policy analysis has been criticised for its lack of a grand theory and its ambiguous assumptions leading to ‘analytical kitchen sink’ models (Garrison 2003: 178). However, the introduction of middle-range theories can sharpen the analytical focus (Kaarbo 2003: 151). White (1999) and Kaarbo (2003: 162) recommend introducing constructivist approaches to examine “the linkage between social structures and calculating agents”.

### *Addressing the gaps*

The present study devises an original theoretical framework for the analysis of coherence. With its focus on multi-level crisis decision-making, the framework can be situated within the broader realm of foreign policy analysis. However, rationalist and moderate constructivist theoretical lenses are incorporated to narrow down the analytical focus. The rationalist lens builds on liberal intergovernmentalism and adapts it to the issue area of crisis management. The constructivist lens represents an application of sociological institutionalism to the multi-level governance system and draws on findings from the strategic culture literature.

The analytical framework thus addresses three shortcomings in the literature. First, it fills the gap of theory-led studies in the coherence literature. Second, it applies one of the most prominent EU integration theories (liberal intergovernmentalism) to the ‘hard case’ of comprehensive crisis management. And third, it contributes to the sociological institutionalist research agenda by introducing dynamics of vertical and horizontal norm contestation. This adaptation is in line with Aspinwall and Schneider (2000: 29) who recommend studying the “cross-cutting influence of non-national norms”. In addition, the focus on contestation allows us to explore conditions for norm compliance and helps counter a common critique of sociological institutionalism, namely its neglect of agency (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Juncos 2011). The framework thus speaks to the core theoretical concerns of the ‘second wave’ of CSDP scholarship: the role of power, the influence of institutions, the

balance between structure and agency, and the relationship between material and ideational factors.

By theorising the influence of norms and interests, this study in particular contributes to the ongoing theoretical dialogue between rational choice and constructivist scholars (Aspinwall and Schneider 2000; Johnston 2005; Jupille et al. 2003; Zürn and Checkel 2005). This debate has largely supplanted that between neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism, which dominated EU studies until the 1990s (Christiansen et al. 1999). For a long time, rationalist and constructivist approaches were seen as incompatible, and the ontological and epistemological divides between them viewed as insurmountable. However, since the turn of the century, there is an increasing trend to bridge these divides and to view them as compatible, if not complementary. Theoretical dialogue between rationalist and constructivist approaches has empirical and theoretical advantages. Not only does it permit us to paint a more encompassing and nuanced picture of social reality (Fearon and Wendt 2002). It is also possible to delimit the scope and applicability of theoretical approaches. As King et al. (1994: 101) put it, “[t]he process of trying to falsify theories in the social sciences is really one of searching for their bounds of applicability”.

By devising an original ordinal measure for the degree of coherence, this study helps clarify the conceptual and empirical boundaries of the term. Its application to the specific area of EU crisis management further contributes to an enhanced understanding of the comprehensive approach. Systematic enquiry into the challenges of comprehensive multilateral crisis management is not only relevant to the field of EU studies, but also to the broader literature on multilateral conflict management and peacekeeping.

Last but not least, the empirical analysis evaluates three recent cases of post-Lisbon crisis management. By studying the first three years of the operational functioning of the Union’s new crisis management set-up, it provides original empirical insight into the implications of the Lisbon Treaty. It further offers an in-depth analysis of the determinants of French, British, and German foreign and security policy. Finally, the

study of the micro-foundations of coherence permits us to draw informed conclusions on the state of the art and future prospects of the Union's post-Lisbon security actorness.

## **1.4 Thesis outline**

Following this introduction, *chapter 2* presents the theoretical framework of this thesis. It starts by conceptualising policy coherence and adapting it to the issue area of crisis management. Thereafter, the two theoretical lenses are introduced and applied to multi-level crisis decision-making. The chapter concludes by bringing the lenses together and devising an analytical framework to theorise the interaction. The analytical framework includes six hypotheses on the influence of interests and norms on the degree of coherence in EU crisis management. It further devises four scope conditions on their interaction across governance levels.

The comparative multiple-case embedded design is introduced in *chapter 3*. Reflecting the nature of policy coherence as a social phenomenon without clear boundaries, the research design is qualitative. However, as coherence is a matter of degree and can never be fully attained, the concept is operationalised at ordinal level. The chapter further specifies the interests and norms on which this thesis focuses and how their existence, influence, and interaction are established on the basis of empirical evidence. The operationalisation of dependent and independent variables is followed by a discussion of the methods for case selection, analysis and comparison, as well as data collection.

Theory and research design find application in *chapters 4, 5 and 6*, which analyse the Union's post-Lisbon crisis responses to Libya, Somalia, and Mali. To facilitate cross-case comparison, the case studies follow a similar structure. They start by evaluating the degree of coherence in the Union's crisis responses on the basis of the pre-established indicators. They then trace the crisis responses of France, the UK, and Germany to detect underlying causes for the observed degree of coherence in the domestic and intergovernmental arenas. To conclude, the case studies move to the institutional arena to discern dynamics of institutional influence and interaction.

The findings of the case studies are drawn together in *chapter 7*. The chapter is based on two modes of comparison. The first and primary comparative mode is modelled on the method of structured, focused comparison (George and Bennett 2005b). The research question is divided into three sub-questions addressing each analytical level. The chapter assesses the validity of the structured answers provided by the hypotheses. The secondary mode of comparison consists of evaluating the role of embedded analytical units (member states and institutions) across cases and over time. Comparison shows that the three cases of EU crisis management varied in terms of coherence. The degree of coherence in the Libyan response was relatively low, whereas the collective response to the Somali conflict displayed a relatively high degree of coherence. Meanwhile, the Union's responses to the Malian crises were coherent on paper, but not in terms of resources. Across cases, the key factors behind incoherence are:

- competing or disparate economic interests;
- electoral calculation;
- embedded national norms on the use of force and modes of multilateral cooperation; and
- institutional competence overlaps and rivalries.

The analysis of analytical units shows that there is some convergence over time. But this convergence might be offset by temporary domestic or institutional incentives.

The conclusion (*chapter 8*) summarises the main findings of the study and systematically reviews the hypotheses and scope conditions. It discusses potential trade-offs between coherent crisis management on the one hand, and timeliness as well as effectiveness on the other. It is argued that coherence might be a necessary condition for effective goal attainment in the medium- to longer term. However, in cases where an urgent and forceful response is required, European coherence might actually prevent effective action. The thesis concludes by discussing implications for the Union's future as a security actor and potential future avenues of research.

## Chapter 2: Theorising coherence in EU crisis management

The degree of coherence in EU crisis management can be seen as the aggregate outcome of political decision-making processes at various governance levels. To elucidate the underlying causes and mechanisms, the present chapter introduces two theoretical lenses: liberal intergovernmentalism and sociological institutionalism. Their separate application leads to alternative depictions of EU crisis decision-making as a rational or norm game. An analytical framework brings the two games together to derive hypotheses on the interaction and effect of interests and norms across three governance levels: the domestic, the intergovernmental, and the EU institutional arena.

To bridge the epistemological divide between the two conceptualisations of the game, sociological institutionalism is combined with a moderate or ‘thin’ constructivist stance (Adler 1997; Wendt 1999). Moderate constructivists acknowledge that the world surrounding us is socially and materially constituted and do not reject a positivist understanding of causality (Jupille et al. 2003: 14-15). A positivist epistemology is more prone to provide common ground between rationalist and thin constructivist lenses. As Smith (1999: 691) puts it, “[t]o the extent that constructivists can treat reasons as causes, they can debate easily with (neo-liberal institutionalist) rationalists”.

The analytical framework expects norms on the use of force and modes of international cooperation to interact with electoral and economic interests in the domestic arena. It suggests that national calculation, on the basis of societal interests and threat perception, interacts with EU-induced norms of cooperation to produce outcomes in the intergovernmental arena. Finally, it assumes that bureaucratic interests and long-standing organisational norms meet in the EU institutional arena to determine institutional discretion and interaction. What prevails in influencing the degree of coherence is hypothesised to depend on four contextual scope conditions: the magnitude of stakes, the level of information and certainty as well as the embeddedness of norms and their prescriptive clarity.

The chapter proceeds in four parts. The first conceptualises policy coherence and adapts it to the issue area of comprehensive crisis management. The second and third parts introduce the theoretical lenses and their core tenets and apply them to multi-level crisis decision-making. Their separate application fosters an awareness of the similarities and differences, necessary to prevent “crude synthesis” (Hall and Taylor 1996: 24). The chapter concludes by presenting the analytical framework that will guide subsequent empirical analysis.

## **2.1 Coherence for EU crisis management**

Coherence is often described as an “elusive” or even “slippery” term (Bertea 2005). Its elusiveness is partly due to the large number of existing definitions and typologies (den Hertog and Stroß 2013). The aim of this section is to clarify the meaning of coherence and to adapt the concept to the issue area of comprehensive EU crisis management. The resulting definitions and typologies serve as a conceptual anchor for the subsequent theory-based enquiry and as a basis for the more specific concept operationalisation following in chapter 3.

### *Defining coherence*

In common parlance, coherence is equated with consistency (Hoebink 2005). It is defined as the quality of ‘being free from self-contradiction’ or as the ‘action of sticking together’ (Picciotto 2004: 323). The term implies logic and constancy of purpose. In philosophy, the truth of a proposition consists of its coherence with all other true propositions. In physics, coherence describes the force by which molecules are held together, the ‘constant phase relationship of waves’, or the degree of viscosity (that is, the resistance of a liquid to ‘flow’) or firmness of a substance. These definitions are quite precise (Picciotto 2004: 323).

Defining coherence in the social sciences is less straightforward. There are numerous definitions of ‘coherence’ in public policy terms. Its conceptual delimitation remains subject to academic controversy (den Hertog and Stroß 2013). One of these controversies concerns the distinction of the terms ‘consistency’ and ‘coherence’. According to Nuttall (2005: 93), distinguishing these two terms amounts to

“linguistic pedantry”. In practice, the terms are often used interchangeably (Gebhard 2011: 105). A common example are the different language versions of the EU Treaty texts, in which ‘consistency’, ‘cohérence’, or ‘Kohärenz’ are treated as synonyms (Van Elsuwege 2010: 1013).

However, an increasing number of scholars argue that the distinction between consistency and coherence is an analytical necessity (Cremona 2008; Gebhard 2011; Missiroli et al. 2001; Tietje 1997). Their argument is based on three key differences between the concepts. First, policy coherence has a more positive connotation than policy consistency and is superordinate to it (Missiroli et al. 2001). While consistency merely refers to the absence of contradiction, coherence goes beyond that and involves the promotion of synergies and mutually reinforcing effects between actors, policies, and instruments (OECD 2001). Second, consistency and coherence differ with regard to their “ontological contexts” (Gebhard 2011: 106). While consistency describes the character of an outcome or state, coherence is a dynamic concept defining the quality of a process over time. Finally, the two terms vary in their degree of stricture (Missiroli et al. 2001). Consistency is seen as a dichotomous variable since something is either consistent or it is not (Missiroli et al. 2001). Coherence, instead, is a matter of degree and an attribute of processes. It can never be fully attained and it is thus only possible to compare different degrees of coherence (de Coning 2008a). Although the line between consistency and coherence is often hard to draw in practice, this thesis maintains the distinction for the purpose of analytical precision and views consistency as a necessary, but not sufficient condition for coherence (den Hertog and Stroß 2013).



**Table 3: Consistency and coherence: key differences**

|                     | Consistency                                | Coherence                            |
|---------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Connotation         | negative<br>(absence of contradiction)     | positive<br>(existence of synergies) |
| Ontological context | static / outcome-oriented                  | dynamic / process-oriented           |
| Degree of stricture | dichotomous<br>(consistent / inconsistent) | continuous<br>(variation in degrees) |

Source: own compilation based on Gebhard (2011: 105-106) and Missiroli et al. (2001)

Another debate, more prominent among policymakers than academics, regards the specific *versus* the general nature of policy coherence (McLean Hilker 2004). The question is whether policy coherence should be geared towards a specific goal or, alternatively, seen as a general principle cutting across different policy areas (OECD 2005: 28). The most prominent example of a specific conceptualisation of the term is Policy Coherence for Development, in short PCD. Policymakers in the field of development argue that it is necessary to promote PCD since their policy area is generally given lower political priority in comparison to other policies with shorter time horizons, such as defence or humanitarian aid policies (McLean Hilker 2004). Other specific conceptualisations include coherence geared towards environmental protection, gender equality, or the respect of human rights (Keijzer and Oppewal 2012: 10). The bottom line is that the perspective on the objectives and direction of policy coherence often depend ‘on where you sit’.

This thesis applies coherence as a conceptual tool for the analysis of comprehensive EU crisis management.<sup>20</sup> The latter was defined as the integration of political, economic, and military instruments and policies with the overarching objective of changing the dynamics of a given crisis or conflict towards increased security and stability. However, as Keijzer and Oppewal (2012: 26) argue, the objectives of

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<sup>20</sup> Missiroli et al. (2001) coined the notions of “coherence for security policy” and “coherence for crisis management”. These notions are based on the argument that political discussions about coherence in CFSP moved from the ‘F’ of foreign to the ‘S’ of security in the early 2000s. Due to the broadening nature of EU security policy, the ‘S’ is increasingly incorporated diplomatic and military action.

coherent policy-making are “highly context-specific”. Therefore, the specific objectives of both (a) single EU crisis management policies or activities as well as (b) the overarching objectives of the Union’s crisis response will be outlined in relation to the conflict at hand in the case study sections of this thesis. In more general terms, coherence is understood as the absence of contradiction (consistency) and existence of synergies between various crisis management policies, instruments, and activities geared towards a set of overarching objectives (de Coning 2008a).

### *Process, output, and outcome coherence*

Accounting for the dynamic character of policy coherence, some scholars distinguish process, output, and outcome coherence (Christiansen 2001; di Francesco 2001; den Hertog and Stroß 2013; King et al. 2012). Process coherence refers to the interaction of political and administrative units in the elaboration of policies, instruments, and activities. It is pursued through the activities of coordination or cooperation and entails “developing strategies, determining objectives, planning, setting goals and priorities, sharing information, division of roles and responsibilities, and mobilising resources” (de Coning 2007: 9). Output coherence designates the inter-relation of administrative and political outputs generated in the course of political and administrative processes and the extent to which these relate to overarching objectives (Christiansen 2001). Finally, outcome coherence refers to the inter-relation of the effects or impacts political and administrative outputs have on external targets and the extent to which these effects contribute to overarching policy objectives.

It can be assumed that coherent coordination processes among administrative and political units are necessary conditions for the formulation of coherent outputs (di Francesco 2001; OECD 1996). The causal link that is more often questioned is the one between process and output coherence on the one hand, and outcome coherence on the other (Keijzer and Oppewal 2012: 26). The more the policy process moves from the stages of policy preparation, formulation, and planning towards implementation, the higher is the number of external intervening variables and factors that potentially influence international political outcomes (Keijzer and

Oppewal 2012: 24). It thus becomes difficult to distil the ‘net effect’ of a specific set of policy measures, or the part of the outcome that can be attributed to these policy measures (Keijzer and Oppewal 2012: 8). Several studies evaluating policy coherence across different policy fields therefore recommend that the evaluation of policy coherence best stops at the level of policy outputs (see Keijzer and Oppewal 2012: 24).

Applied to EU crisis management, process coherence refers to the interaction of political and administrative actors responsible for (parts of) the EU’s crisis response. Outputs vary depending on the decision-making level and policy field. They include, for instance, EU decisions, diplomatic demarches, and civilian or military CSDP missions and operations (Thomas 2008).<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, the outcome of EU crisis management is the net effect of these outputs on the dynamics of a conflict or crisis. Exemplary factors intervening between the EU’s crisis management outputs and outcomes include the role of influential Third countries or of peace spoilers in the affected country or region (Thomas 2012: 460).<sup>22</sup> This thesis analyses the degree of output coherence in EU crisis management (as a dependent variable) and investigates independent or intervening variables in corresponding processes of political and administrative interaction. In light of the number of uncontrollable external intervening factors, it does not focus on the multiple causal effects influencing outcome coherence.

### *Categorising coherence*

To account for the complexity of the EU as a multi-layered governance system, EU scholars usually distinguish different categories of coherence. The aim here is not to provide a comprehensive overview of existing categories and taxonomies. Instead, the focus lies on the three most common categories of coherence in the study of EU

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<sup>21</sup> A detailed description of political and administrative outputs follows in section 3.1.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Peace spoilers’ are political leaders, parties, or sub-state actors that obstruct conflict settlement as peace could threaten their power, worldview, or interests (Stedman 1997).

foreign policy, namely vertical, horizontal, and institutional coherence (Nuttall 2005: 97).

Vertical coherence describes the interaction between different spatial or organisational levels of policy-making (Duraiappah and Bhardwaj 2007: 3). Translated into the EU context, it refers to the interaction between member state policies and supranational EU-level policies. It is challenged if “one or more member states pursue national policies that are out of kilter with the policy agreed at EU level” (Nuttall 2005: 93). Classical examples of vertical incoherence can be found in the field of sanctions (Portela and Raube 2009). Despite an EU visa ban on senior Zimbabwean officials imposed in 2002, France invited President Robert Mugabe to the France-Africa Summit in Cannes in 2003; Italy hosted the Zimbabwean leader at the occasion of the funeral of Pope John Paul II in 2005; and the Portuguese Council Presidency even invited him to the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in 2007 (Kubosova 2007). While these measures were technically ‘legalised’ through specific exemption clauses, they contravened the original aim of the EU’s sanctions (Portela and Raube 2009).

Horizontal coherence relates to the interaction between different policies at the same hierarchical or organisational level (Duraiappah and Bhardwaj 2007: 3). In the EU literature, it usually refers to the coherence between different EU-level policies. Policies are horizontally coherent if the objectives they pursue and the means they use are consistent – or at least complementary – and mutually reinforcing. Linking or integrating a set of diverse policies, comprehensive crisis management carries an inherent potential for horizontal incoherence. Examples of complex interdependence and potential trade-offs of close policy integration can be found at the interface between the humanitarian dimension on the one hand, and the political and military dimensions on the other. A close integration of humanitarian aid within a broader political and military strategy may compromise the humanitarian aim of neutral, impartial, and independent aid delivery (de Coning 2008a).<sup>23</sup> Conversely, impartial

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<sup>23</sup> Neutrality, impartiality, and independence are among the universal ‘humanitarian principles’ that govern the way humanitarian responses are carried out. Neutrality implies not taking sides in

humanitarian aid delivery can fuel and prolong conflict by providing warring factions on either side with means for subsistence (Macrae and Leader 2001; Versluys 2007).

A third category of coherence that has gained importance along with the expansion of the role and competences of EU institutions is (inter)-institutional coherence. Institutional coherence is, in fact, a sub-category of horizontal coherence (Nuttall 2005: 97). It refers to the absence of contradiction and the existence of synergies between the activities of different EU-level institutional actors. In this thesis, institutional coherence specifically refers to the interaction between EU-level institutional actors responsible for comprehensive crisis management. Common examples of institutional incoherence include ‘turf wars’ or tensions between the Commission and the Council Secretariat. Tensions typically surface in the grey areas between security and development, including, *inter alia*, civilian crisis management, election monitoring, small arms and light weapons, or issues of external representation (Beger and Bartholmé 2007; Youngs 2007).

**Table 4: Categories of coherence in EU crisis management**

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Vertical coherence</b>      | Between the EU-level crisis response and the crisis responses of the member states.      |
| <b>Horizontal coherence</b>    | Between the objectives and instruments of different EU-level crisis management policies. |
| <b>Institutional coherence</b> | Between EU-level institutions and actors responsible for EU crisis management.           |

*Source: adapted from Nuttall (2005: 97)*

Coherence can be seen as a ‘meta-norm’ of EU governance (Thomas 2008; 2011). It applies to different issue areas, to supranational institutions as well as to the national level. As a meta-norm, coherence is related to other procedural norms<sup>24</sup> embedded in

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hostilities. Impartiality means that aid is delivered regardless of nationality, race, religion, or political ideology. Finally, humanitarian agencies or offices should plan and implement their policies and activities independently of other governmental policies or actions (Council et al. 2008).

<sup>24</sup> We distinguish procedural from substantive norms such as liberty, democracy, or human rights (Manners 2002; Thomas 2008; Thomas 2011).

the EU Treaty texts including the principle of loyal cooperation and provisions on mutual and regular information and consultation (Thomas 2008).<sup>25</sup> But, while the coherence requirement is firmly embedded in EU primary law, compliance remains an essentially political ‘game’.<sup>26</sup> The next two sections introduce alternative ways of viewing this game and lay the ground for the analytical framework in section 2.4.

## **2.2 Liberal intergovernmentalism: a rational game**

Devised by Moravcsik in 1993, liberal intergovernmentalism has become one of the most prominent theoretical approaches in the study of EU integration. It is often used as a first cut explanation to be compared with alternative explanations (Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig 2009: 67). Liberal intergovernmentalism is an application of rationalist institutionalism and combines elements from liberalism, negotiation theory, and functional regime theory (Moravcsik 1993b). This section introduces its key assumptions and propositions and applies them to EU crisis management. From a liberal intergovernmentalist perspective, EU crisis decision-making can be seen as a fast coordination game (Wagner 2003). In this game, the degree of coherence is the unintended consequence of the strategic interaction of a number of rational actors pursuing self-regarding interests (Pilegaard 2003).

### *The primacy of the nation state and actor-centred rationality*

Liberal intergovernmentalism rests on two basic assumptions. The first is that nation states are the key actors in a context of international anarchy (Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig 2009: 68). Liberal intergovernmentalism emphasises the importance of societal economic interests and relative bargaining power. Unlike its realist or neo-realist counter-parts, it does not assume that state preferences are shaped by concerns for national security, that state power is derived from coercive capabilities, or that intergovernmental institutions are insignificant. The EU is viewed as an

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<sup>25</sup> See articles 4(3), 24(3), 32 paragraphs 1, 34 (1)(2) TEU.

<sup>26</sup> This thesis borrows from game theoretical language for illustrative purpose rather than for game-theoretic analysis.

international regime designed to facilitate policy coordination and to ensure credible commitments and compliance under conditions of economic interdependence (Keohane 1984: 51; Krasner 1983: 1).

The second basic assumption is that states and their leaders are rational (Moravcsik 1993b). The rationality assumption is an agency assumption grounded in methodological individualism.<sup>27</sup> It implies that a logic of expected consequences drives human behaviour (March and Olsen 1998). Actors are assumed to calculate the payoffs of alternative courses of action and to choose the option that yields the highest benefits under given circumstances (Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig 2009: 68). In their ability for strategic calculation, actors are, however, constrained by the level of information and the degree of uncertainty about the future (Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig 2009; Simon 1955).

National decision-makers are assumed to pursue a set of consistently ordered preferences and to choose alternative policy options accordingly. National preferences designate a variable set of exogenously given interests regarding “potential ‘states of the world’” (Moravcsik 1998: 20). These fundamental preferences are more stable than the policies, strategies, and tactics, which constitute the ‘currency’ of day-to-day foreign policy-making (Moravcsik 1997). Liberal intergovernmentalism acknowledges that they can include ideational factors such as ideology, but generally views them as causally inferior to material factors (Moravcsik 1993b; 1999).

### *A two-level game in three steps*

These two assumptions constitute the basis for a sequential theoretical approach following three steps: national preference formation, intergovernmental bargaining, and institutional choice (Moravcsik 1993a; Putnam 1988). In the first step, liberal intergovernmentalism opens the ‘black box’ of the unitary state and applies liberal

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<sup>27</sup> Methodological individualism is an approach which analyses social phenomena in terms of the underlying action and interaction of individuals (Wincott 1995).

theory to explain the process of societal preference aggregation. Accordingly, “the foreign policy goals of national governments vary in response to shifting pressure from domestic social groups, whose preferences are aggregated through political institutions” (Moravcsik 1993b). National preferences are thus not fixed, but emerge through the domestic struggle for political influence, the outcome of which varies across states, time, and issue area (Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig 2009: 69). Liberal intergovernmentalists view the relationship between society and state as one between principals and agents where societal principals use elections to delegate power to governmental agents. The main concern of elected leaders is to stay in office (Moravcsik 1993b).

At the second stage, elected representatives take the domestically determined national preferences to the EU ‘bargaining table’. Liberal intergovernmentalism views EU-level negotiations as a game of coordination with distributional consequences (Moravcsik 1993b). The outcome of this game, also referred to as the international ‘supply’ of cooperation, depends on the relative bargaining power of the member states (Moravcsik 1993b). Their bargaining power is shaped by three key factors: the intensity of national preferences, the existence of unilateral or multilateral alternatives to EU-level cooperation, and the potential for compromise and issue linkage (Moravcsik 1993b). Liberal intergovernmentalism accords more bargaining power to large, prosperous, and self-sufficient EU member states “because they gain relatively little from agreement, compared to their smaller, poorer, more open neighbours” (Moravcsik 1993b: 500).

The third stage or theoretical element of liberal intergovernmentalism is institutional choice. Following functional regime theory (Keohane 1984), it posits that governments delegate or pool sovereignty<sup>28</sup> through supranational institutions because they lower the transaction costs of international cooperation, increase the

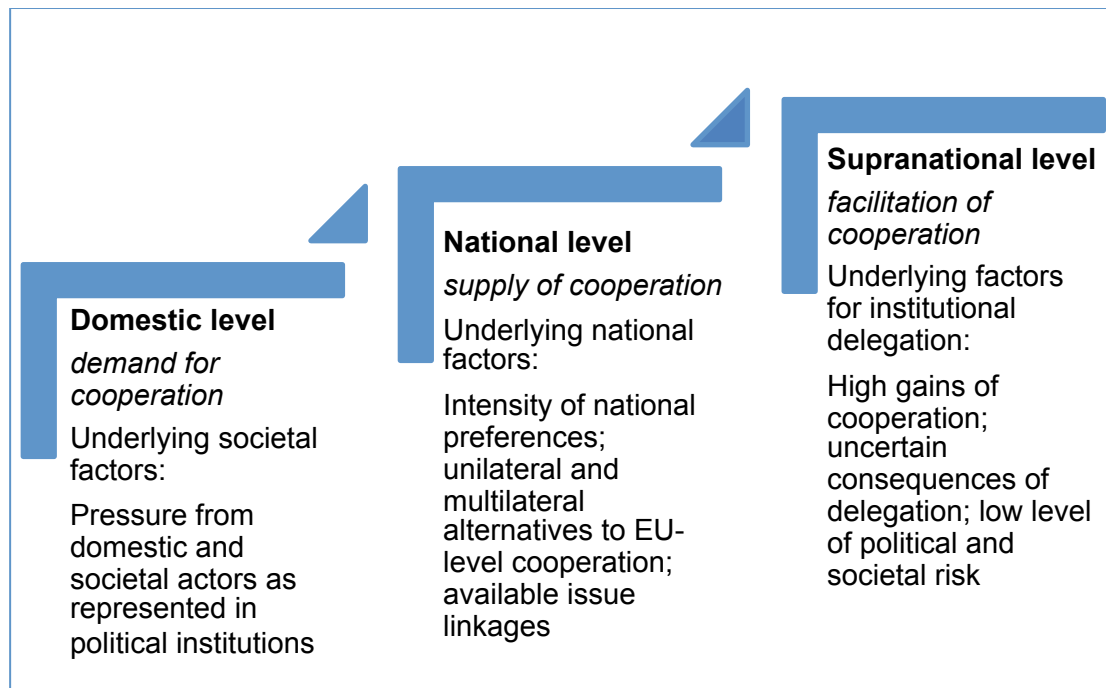
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<sup>28</sup> Moravcsik (1998: 67) distinguishes between the pooling and delegation of authoritative decision-making. The member states *pool* sovereignty if they decide that an issue area should be governed by any other rule than unanimity voting. In the EU context, this usually refers to qualified majority voting (QMV). Member states *delegate* sovereignty when supranational institutions are allowed to take certain (implementing) decisions autonomously, without prior inter-state vote or veto option.



efficiency of intergovernmental bargaining, and secure long-term gains of cooperation through credible commitments (Moravcsik 1993b). Liberal intergovernmentalism views the acts of delegation or pooling as the result of rational calculation by the member states who weigh the gains from more efficient collective decision-making against the increased political risk of being outvoted or out-ruled (Moravcsik 1993b). Governments are most likely to delegate sovereignty to supranational institutions when the joint gains from cooperation are large, when the level of political risk for them and interested societal groups is low, and when there is uncertainty about the future (Moravcsik 1993b).<sup>29</sup> Institutional delegation and pooling lock in policy coordination and raise the costs of non-decisions and non-compliance (Moravcsik 1998: 73).

**Figure 3: Liberal intergovernmentalist steps of EU integration**



Source: own representation based on Moravcsik (1993b)

<sup>29</sup> Future uncertainty relates to “incomplete contracting” that arises when the member states share broad goals but may defect from future contingencies related to these goals. The delegation of sovereignty ties the hands of future governments and thus enhances the credibility of a policy. Without future uncertainty, member states could elaborate mutually binding rules instead of lasting institutions (Moravcsik 1998: 73-74).

### *EU crisis management: a fast coordination game*

From a liberal intergovernmentalist perspective, the key players in EU crisis management are large, prosperous, and self-sufficient EU member states (Moravcsik 1993b). The focus thus lies on France, Germany, and the UK. Due to their economic weight and relative superiority in the military and diplomatic domains, they hold a bargaining advantage over other EU member states (Gross 2009: 4-6). EU crisis decision-making constitutes a fast coordination game, in which power-seeking national officeholders pursue exogenously determined preferences in relation to an evolving emergency or conflict (Wagner 2003).

The EU's legal coherence requirement is a functional norm designed to secure gains from cooperation, to reduce transaction costs, and to increase the efficiency of intergovernmental bargaining. Member states have a self-regarding interest in effective collective problem solving and in enhancing their international influence through the EU. However, in the absence of effective sanctioning mechanisms, they are likely to defect from previous decisions if those contradict important societal interests and national preferences.

The liberal intergovernmentalist theory of national preference formation holds best if societal preferences are relatively stable and well-defined, when cause-effect relationships are certain, and when the decision-making process is de-centralised granting access to societal pressure groups (Moravcsik 1993b). The explanatory power of liberal intergovernmentalism is thus highest in issue areas such as trade or agriculture where societal economic preferences are relatively stable and where the consequences of governmental decisions are calculable. If societal costs and benefits of government decisions are more diffuse and uncertain governments are much less constrained by their domestic constituencies (Moravcsik 1993b).

Liberal intergovernmentalist expectations about the role and autonomy of 'supranational entrepreneurs' depend on the transaction costs of intergovernmental cooperation in terms of the generation of information and ideas (Moravcsik 1998: 54-60). If transaction costs are low and asymmetrical interdependence dominates intergovernmental bargaining, the autonomous influence of supranational

entrepreneurs is assumed to be minimal. However, supranational entrepreneurs may wield influence in policy areas where the level of delegation is high (such as trade and aid); in situations characterised by high degrees of complexity, uncertainty, and urgency (high transaction costs); or if they hold relevant expertise the member states lack (comparative advantage) (Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig 2009: 77). A general pre-condition for autonomous influence on policy outputs is that supranational entrepreneurs have preferences that differ from those of the member states (Moravcsik 1998: 58).

### ***Blind spots and adaptations***

Comprehensive EU crisis management is a hard case for liberal intergovernmentalism. In the context of the present study, the theoretical approach presents two major weaknesses. The first is its narrow conception of the process of domestic preference formation (Wincott 1995). Rooted in political economy, liberal intergovernmentalism focuses on the role of economic interest groups. In policy fields where the societal costs and gains of decisions are more diffuse, such as diplomacy and humanitarian aid, it reverts to realist or ideational explanations (Pilegaard 2003). In these areas, Moravcsik (1993b; 1998) holds that governmental decisions reflect ideological predilections, geopolitical considerations, or a rather vague notion of national interest as perceived by national foreign policy elites. Second, liberal intergovernmentalism is “deliberatively weak on institutions” (Pilegaard 2003: 8). It thus has a strong explanatory bias towards vertical coherence. Liberal intergovernmentalism accords independent preferences, and under the outlined circumstances, also influence to supranational entrepreneurs. But, it makes no prediction about the nature of these preferences or about the way they affect political outcomes (Kassim and Menon 2003). The outlined weaknesses call for three theoretical adaptations.

The first broadens the process of domestic preference formation to include public opinion. Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig (2009) concede that public opinion can influence EU-level decisions if those acquire political salience. Political salience can be defined as “the significance, importance and urgency that an actor ascribes to a

certain issue on the political agenda” (Oppermann 2008: 182). Crisis decisions concerning the use of force or an interference into the internal affairs of a Third country are often consequential, controversial, and visible (Boin et al., 2005: 43). They are thus more likely than other EU-level decisions to draw media attention and to acquire political salience. Societal principals are most likely to influence EU-level decisions if they are aware of these decisions and if they are able to sanction their agents’ foreign policy performance through upcoming democratic elections (Oppermann 2008: 182-184). Under these conditions, rational decision-makers seeking re-election are assumed to opt for positions that are close to “median domestic interest” rather than the median EU interest (Moravcsik 1993a: 30).

The second adaptation concerns national strategic calculation in the absence of salient societal constraints. The substantive focus on crisis management calls for the inclusion of national threat perception, a traditional neo-realist variable. ‘Threat perception’ denotes the assessment of an objectively existing external threat.<sup>30</sup> Perception refers to the perceiver’s limitations in analytical and predictive capacity and to the possibility of purposive misrepresentation by the sender (Gross Stein 2013). This rationalist understanding of threat perception differs from a definition as a predominantly social or discursive construction (Meyer 2009). Walt (1987) assumed that states mainly cooperate or form alliances to balance against collective security threats. Balancing behaviour can include military and non-military means (Bock and Henneberg 2013: 9). From this perspective, coherent EU crisis management is more likely in situations where the member states perceive the existence of a collective threat. Conversely, asymmetric threat perceptions are expected to cause divergent member state behaviour and unilateral action.

The third adaptation extends rationalist assumptions to the preferences and role of supranational entrepreneurs. It draws on the second generation literature on

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<sup>30</sup> A ‘threat’ can be defined as the anticipated loss or harm to an individual or members of a given community (see Astorino-Courtois 2000). In this study, the community refers to the nation state.

‘bureaucratic politics’ (Allison 1971; Allison and Zelikow 1999).<sup>31</sup> Scholars in this paradigm view political decisions as unintended outcomes of competitive bargaining games between bureaucratic actors with their own conceptions of goals and priorities (institutional preferences). Supranational entrepreneurs can be seen as collective rational entities bound by career paths and common structures (Juncos and Pomorska 2012). They pursue institutional preferences while seeking to maximise autonomy and avoiding time-consuming and resource-intensive coordination (Allison and Halperin 1972: 75). Dysfunctional interaction occurs if overlapping competences and resource scarcity increase the necessity for coordination and trigger inter-institutional competition (Christiansen 2001; Klein 2010). Competition is particularly likely if a new institution invades the functional ‘territory’ of established actors within a given policy space (Dijkstra 2009). However, in line with the core assumptions of liberal intergovernmentalism, institutional preferences and rivalries are only assumed to affect policy coherence if the member states delegated sovereignty or if the transaction costs of intergovernmental bargaining are high.

In ‘hard cases’, where economic interests are weak or diffuse, Moravcsik (1997; 2009) encourages careful theoretical synthesis or dialogue between liberal intergovernmentalism and ideational, constructivist-inspired approaches. The plea to introduce ideational factors is also in line with the newer generations of foreign policy analysis and bureaucratic politics (Drezner 2000; Garrison 2003; Jones 2012). Therefore, the following section introduces a sociological institutionalist perspective. It does not only address blind spots of the ‘rational game’, but also helps delineate its explanatory boundaries (King et al. 1994: 101).

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<sup>31</sup> Jones (2012) delineates the second from the first generation, the latter of which focused on role of domestic politics in public policymaking. The third generation employed the term ‘governmental politics’ and departed from the rationalist roots of the paradigm to explore factors derived from social psychology.

**Table 5: Core theoretical components of the ‘rational game’**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Assumptions</b>                       | Centrality of member states; actor-centred rationality  |
| <b>Logic of action</b>                   | Logic of consequences   |
| <b>Causal mechanism</b>                  | Strategic calculation   |
| <b>Perspective on EU decision-making</b> | Fast coordination game  |
| <b>Key causal factors</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Domestic arena: economic and electoral interests</li><li>• Intergovernmental arena: national calculation and threat perception</li><li>• EU institutional arena: overlapping competences and scarce resources</li></ul> |
| <b>Scope conditions</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Societal influence: calculability of economic stakes; political salience</li><li>• Institutional influence: transaction costs of intergovernmental bargaining</li></ul>   |

*Source: own compilation based on Moravcsik (1993a; 1993b; 1998; 2009)*

## **2.3 Sociological institutionalism: a norm game**

Sociological institutionalism is a sub-field of organisation theory (Hall and Taylor 1996: 13). The focus here lies on the constructivist-inspired strand that emerged as part of the ‘cognitive turn’ in sociology (Hall and Taylor 1996).<sup>32</sup> The latter posed a direct challenge to the dominant rationalist paradigm in IR including theories such as neo-realism and neo-liberal institutionalism (Aspinwall and Schneider 2000; Hall and Taylor 1996; Finnemore 1996). From a sociological institutionalist perspective, EU crisis management can be depicted as a multi-level norm game.<sup>33</sup> The degree of

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<sup>32</sup> Hall and Taylor (1996: 15) distinguish an older, ‘normative’ version of sociological institutionalism focusing on institutional roles and a newer, ‘cognitive’ version influenced by social constructivism.

<sup>33</sup> The notion of ‘game’ tends to have a rationalist connotation. Here it rather refers to the idea that players are influenced by different social rules emanating from various levels of the game. These rules can conflict, resonate, or influence each other. In line with constructivist, sociological institutionalist assumptions, players are assumed to follow rules, but they have a degree of agency when faced with the choice between distinct rules that yield a comparable degree of social legitimacy.

coherence depends on the congruence of contextually salient national and organisational norms.

### *Institutions and norms*

Sociological institutionalism starts from the basic premise that institutions ‘matter’. Like their rationalist colleagues, sociological institutionalists view institutions and organisations as environments for political struggles and games. However, they posit that institutions have an autonomous role as they shape political action and outcomes, and not simply reproduce rational contestation among disaggregated units (Aspinwall and Schneider 2000). Unlike liberal intergovernmentalism, sociological institutionalism has no theoretical bias towards any particular analytical level, issue area, or form of cooperation.

Sociological institutionalism defines institutions broadly including “not just formal rules, procedures or norms, but [also] the symbol systems, cognitive scripts and moral templates that provide the ‘frames of meaning’ guiding human action” (Hall and Taylor 1996: 14). This broad definition blurs the lines between ‘institutions’ and ‘culture’ and pictures them as mutually constitutive and analytically inseparable. Where rationalists view transaction costs related to collective action in terms of information seeking, bargaining, and enforcement costs, sociological institutionalists emphasise the costs of overcoming cognitive boundaries stemming from differences in language, faith, geography or epistemic professionalism (Aspinwall and Schneider 2000).

Sociological institutionalists reject methodological individualism in favour of scientific holism and consider that structure and agents are inextricably linked and mutually constituted (Aspinwall and Schneider 2000). Structure is, however, ontologically prior to agency: formal and informal institutions are viewed as independent variables shaping individual preferences, behaviour, and identity (Finnemore 1996). While rationalists view institutions as constraining factors in an agent’s pursuit of exogenously given preferences, sociological institutionalists view them as constraining *and* enabling environments that endogenously constitute individual preferences and identities (March and Olsen 2005). Institutions define

what actors perceive as appropriate, possible, and rational. Human action is seen as driven by a logic of appropriateness rather than by one of consequences. Individuals, organisations and states adopt a certain behaviour not because of rational calculation or considerations of efficiency, but because it enhances social legitimacy (Hall and Taylor 1996: 949).

### *Norms and behaviour*

Socialisation is the causal mechanism linking structures and agents. Rooted in social psychology, socialisation is traditionally defined as a social, interactive process that gradually induces individuals, organisations, and states into the “norms and rules of a given community” (Checkel 2005: 804). Norms can be defined as “shared expectations about appropriate behavior held by a collectivity of actors” (Checkel 1999: 83). Institutions trigger socialisation processes and diffuse models of “‘good’ political behaviour” (Barnett and Finnemore 1999: 713). The outcome of socialisation is sustained norm compliance in the absence of coercion or material incentives (Checkel 2005).

Socialisation research suggests that the induction of agents into a particular collective norm is most likely if:

- it is triggered by a legitimate, stable, well-defined, and cohesive institution;
- the socialising object is a novice with few prior embedded beliefs that conflict with the norm at hand;
- the interaction between socialising and socialised agents is sustained, regular and intense (Checkel and Moravcsik 2001; Lewis 2005; March and Olsen 2009; Zürn and Checkel 2005).

There is little consensus on the substantive norm or issue properties that facilitate socialisation (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Zürn and Checkel 2005).

Scholars, however, agree that dynamics of socialisation at the international level are secondary to those at the national level (Beyers 2005; Hooghe 2005; Lewis 2005; Schimmelfennig 2005). Empirical findings indicate that individuals are more loyal to domestic identities than to supranational ones (Beyers 2005; Hooghe 2005). These findings are in line with the expectation that the degree of socialisation into a



collective norm depends on the level of prior experience as well as the time, intensity, and regularity of social interaction. According to Checkel (2001: 222), the effect of international socialisation is strongest if there is no domestic opposition or if the interaction between socialising agent and object is insulated from domestic pressures and occurs in non-politicised, in-camera settings.

Checkel (2005) distinguishes two ways in which agents can act in line with a logic of appropriateness: the first is role-playing, also referred to as type I or ‘thin’ socialisation. It implies that agents act in accordance with a given norm without being persuaded that it is “the right thing to do” (Johnston 2005). Agents are aware of community norms and consciously adapt their behaviour accordingly. Type II (or ‘thick’) socialisation goes deeper than role-playing and implies that socialised actors accept and internalise norms to the extent that they take them for granted. The key difference is that type II involves a change in the agent’s preferences and/or identity, whereas type I does not.

But even internalised standards of appropriateness do not directly translate into human behaviour (March and Olsen 2009). It is therefore necessary to specify factors that condition the strength or weakness of the relationship between rules and action, or in other words, the “compliance pull” of a given norm (Thomas 2008: 11). There is little agreement on the *substantive* norm properties determining its compliance pull. However, an increasing number of scholars agrees that the prescriptive clarity or determinacy constitutes a relevant *intrinsic* norm characteristic (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; March and Olsen 1998; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig 2011; Schimmelfennig 2003; Thomas 2008). The compliance pull of a norm is assumed to be strongest if it is clear that it applies to a given situation and what policy behaviour it prescribes (Thomas 2008: 11).

### ***EU crisis management: a multi-level norm game***

In analogy to the previous section, EU crisis management can be depicted as ‘multi-level norm game’ in which supranational entrepreneurs and national elites process and balance competing standards of appropriateness emanating from their multiple social embeddedness (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Zürn and Checkel 2005). The

EU is one of the most densely structured transnational institutional spaces in the world and thus qualifies as a “most likely case for socialization dynamics” (Zürn and Checkel 2005). However, the environment characterising EU external action is also an institutionally fragmented multi-level governance system (Stetter 2004). In fragmented and loosely coupled systems, socialising objects are faced with “competing rules of appropriateness” (March and Olsen 2009: 15). One of the key differences between the game portrayed in the previous section and this one is that interaction at the vertical and at the horizontal (inter-institutional) levels is assumed to be of comparable importance for political outcomes.

The collective EU norm this thesis concentrates on is the meta-norm of coherence. From a sociological institutionalist perspective, this norm goes beyond formal legal requirements and encompasses informal norms such as the coordination and consultation reflex, the member states’ consensus-seeking behaviour, and a general “culture of compromise” (Lewis 2005; Thomas 2008). The predominant aim of the pursuit of coherence is not efficiency but an increase in the social legitimacy of the institution and of its participants. An actor is assumed to comply with coherence-related norms if they or the behaviour they prescribe resonate with the actor’s identity (Fearon and Wendt 2002). Non-compliance is expected if the actor is faced with conflicting norms yielding higher degrees of social legitimacy. Competing standards of appropriateness engender norm contestation (Wiener and Puetter 2009). Reflecting the Union’s nature as a multi-level governance system, this thesis distinguishes vertical and horizontal dynamics of contestation.

Vertical norm contestation refers to the interaction between European and domestic standards of appropriateness. As European socialisation dynamics are secondary to domestic ones, socialisation into an EU-level norm has to pass through the filter of domestic structures and norms. The result is national variation in terms of norm interpretation and compliance (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 893). If the European-level norms and policies are largely compatible with those at the domestic level, the member state is likely to comply with them (Börzel and Risse 2000; Checkel 1999). Compliance problems arise when embedded EU-level norms stand in contrast with embedded domestic norms or structures. Vertical norm contestation is less relevant if

political insulation deflects societal legitimacy demands and facilitates a socially-induced shift of loyalty to the supranational collective (Checkel 2005; Lewis 2005).

The interaction of supranational entrepreneurs can be understood as a process of horizontal norm contestation. Institutional growth, specialisation and compartmentalisation multiplied the number of socialisation sites within the Union and fostered the development of sub-cultures (Christiansen 2001; Hooghe 2005).<sup>34</sup> These sub-cultures stem from epistemic professionalism, intra-institutional boundaries (such as departments or directorates), or geographic dispersion. They often have a more intense socialising effect on individuals than the overall organisational culture (Hooghe 2005). The proliferation of sub-cultures thus increases the number of competing standards of appropriateness. It also heightens the cognitive barriers that need to be overcome in cases of inter- and intra-institutional cooperation towards collective political outputs (Aspinwall and Schneider 2000). As March and Olsen (2005) put it, “[s]trong identification with a specific organization, institution, or role can threaten the coherence of the larger system”. Table 6 summarises the key theoretical elements of the ‘norm game’.

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<sup>34</sup> Organisational culture refers to “the set of shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments” (Schein 1996: 236).

**Table 6: Core theoretical components of the ‘norm game’**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Assumptions</b>                       | Formal and informal institutions influence political interaction and outcomes  |
| <b>Logic of action</b>                   | Logic of appropriateness   |
| <b>Causal mechanism</b>                  | Socialisation  |
| <b>Perspective on EU decision-making</b> | Multi-level norm game (vertical and horizontal norm contestation)  |
| <b>Key causal factors</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic arena: domestic norms and legitimacy demands</li> <li>• Intergovernmental arena: EU norms and political insulation</li> <li>• EU institutional arena: organisational norms</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Scope conditions</b>                  | <p>Socialisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cohesiveness of socialising institution</li> <li>• Noviceness of socialisee</li> <li>• Sustained and intense social interaction</li> <li>• Political insulation from domestic pressures</li> </ul> <p>Norm compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norm determinacy</li> <li>• Prescriptive clarity of the norm</li> </ul> |

*Source: own compilation based on Hall and Taylor (1996) and Zürn et al. (2005)*

## 2.4 A game of interests and norms

Human behaviour may be influenced by a combination of habit, emotion, internalised rules, and cost-benefit calculation (Goldstein and Keohane 1993; March and Olsen 2009). The aim of this thesis is not to depict EU crisis management as either a purely rational or norm-driven game. It is conceivable that compliance with the EU-level norm of coherence reflects both the rationalist aim to increase efficiency and reduce duplication *and* the desire to act in accordance with collective standards of appropriateness. The question is rather, how interests and norms interact to yield varying degrees of coherence. The present framework does not seek to pick a theoretical winner, but rather to discern, under which conditions or in which domain either theoretical perspective yields higher explanatory power (Fearon and Wendt 2002; Zürn and Checkel 2005).

The analytical framework applies the previously introduced theoretical propositions to the domestic, intergovernmental, and EU institutional arenas. It addresses the constraining effect of societal actors, dynamics of intergovernmental decision-making, and the role and influence of supranational institutions. In reality, the three arenas overlap and decision-making processes occur simultaneously. The distinction is made for the sake of analytical clarity and to facilitate subsequent empirical cross-comparison. The derived hypotheses are not viewed as mutually exclusive, but as dependent on the proposed situational conditions.

### ***Societal interests vs. engrained norms***

Both theoretical perspectives emphasise the role of the domestic level. However, their assumptions on the most influential domestic factors differ. From a liberal intergovernmentalist perspective, two types of societal forces are assumed to constrain governments in their ability to cooperate at the EU-level: powerful economic interest groups and the median voter interest.

National decision-makers are constrained if a crisis or a corresponding EU measure has calculable effects on relatively stable domestic economic interests. In comprehensive crisis management, these attributes particularly apply to the field of economic sanctions (Wagner 2003: 584). Their societal benefits – namely political influence on the behaviour of a Third country – are diffuse. Meanwhile, the immediate costs are usually concentrated on certain productive business sectors (Dittmeier 2009). If economic losses resulting from EU-level sanctions are high and representatives of the concerned sectors have access to the decision-making process, governments are constrained in their ability to agree or comply with European sanctions.

However, EU crisis management activities may also serve the protection of particular bilateral economic interests in the affected or neighbouring countries. In such cases, economic interest groups can be assumed to push for collective action. The bottom line is that the degree of coherence depends on the divergence or convergence of preferences of influential economic interest groups in the most powerful EU member states.

If EU-level decisions acquire political salience, national officeholders are constrained by the median voter interest. Public opinion matters if there are upcoming elections and if an EU-level decision can be assumed to have electoral consequences. The political salience of a topic or decision increases if it is subject to controversy between government and opposition (Oppermann and Viehrig 2008: 183). Under these circumstances, national officeholders are assumed to avoid risky EU-level decisions and to act in accordance with the perceived public interest (M. Smith 2004: 753). The constraining effect of public opinion thus depends on the timing and nature of the EU decision and the decision-makers degree of uncertainty about potential electoral pay-offs. Electoral calculation can prevent EU-level decisions or lead to unilateral defections. Even if foreign and security policy are usually not the most decisive issues in elections, precedent cases such as the 2003 Iraq war illustrated potential negative or positive pay-offs of salient crisis decisions (Pohl 2012: 11).

A sociological institutionalist perspective instead suggests that national officeholders are constrained by embedded domestic norms. The latter indicate what behaviour is considered appropriate, desirable, and legitimate in light of a state's national identity. National strategic cultures provide a repertoire of rules and standards of appropriateness and can be seen as "an ideational milieu which limits behavioral choices" (Johnston 1995: 46). Out of this repertoire, the present analysis focuses on two sets of norms that the literature identified as particularly relevant in the context EU crisis decision-making: norms on the use of force and on modes of multilateral cooperation (Missiroli et al. 2001; Howorth 2002; Howorth 2004).<sup>35</sup>

The question whether or under what conditions it is legitimate to use military means lies at the heart of national security cultures (Johnston 1995; Meyer 2004). In the EU, answers to these questions traditionally differ. Engrained or institutionalised domestic norms on the use of force can be assumed to shape decisions on the balance

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<sup>35</sup> A detailed discussion of these norms in relation to the 'Big Three' follows in the operationalisation section in chapter 3. This section focuses on the more general link to EU crisis decision-making.

between military and civilian EU instruments, the participation or agreement to military CSDP operations, and respective commitments of resources, military assets, or personnel (Biava et al. 2011).

Regarding norms on modes of international cooperation, the typical dichotomy is between Atlanticism and Europeanism (Howorth 2002). However, Meyer (2005) makes a convincing case for transcending the traditional dichotomy to include the whole spectrum of national predispositions, namely neutrality, unilateral action, bilateral, or multilateral cooperation. These predispositions are assumed to shape general decisions on the use of an EU framework for crisis management or existing alternatives. A predisposition for multilateralism is, for instance, more likely to resonate with coherence than a tradition of neutrality.

Both theoretical lenses suggest that coherent EU crisis management is more likely if decisions are insulated from the domestic context. From a liberal intergovernmentalist perspective, insulation provides national decision-makers with more room for bargaining, including issue linkage and package deals.<sup>36</sup> From the perspective of sociological institutionalism, insulation deflects societal pressures for legitimacy and promotes loyalty shifts towards the European collective. If decisions are not shielded from the domestic context, the theoretical expectations differ, as summarised by hypotheses 1a and b:

**H1a:** If an EU crisis management measure or activity entails important sector-specific economic or electoral costs in one or several of the ‘Big Three’, the degree of coherence will be low.

**H1b:** If an EU crisis management measure or activity conflicts with embedded national predispositions regarding the use of force or preferred modes of cooperation, the degree of coherence will be low.

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<sup>36</sup> In the language of two-level games, independence from domestic constituencies enlarges EU-level win-sets, making agreement more and defection less likely (Putnam 1988; Jacobson et al. 1993).

### *Strategic vs. cooperative bargaining*

What characterises the process of intergovernmental interaction and which outcomes are likely? Liberal intergovernmentalism assumes that national officeholders engage in strategic bargaining. The outcome depends on the decision-makers' calculation of the costs and benefits of EU-level cooperation against those of existing alternatives (Moravcsik 1993b). The most basic alternative is unilateral action (Moravcsik 1993b). The second option is a coalition, consisting of EU member states (such as the EU-3 in Iran), other international organisations (such as NATO and the UN), or international coalitions of the willing (such as the US-led Multi-National Force in Iraq in 2003).

Opting for EU-level cooperation is in the rational interest of national officeholders if it brings about "politics of scale" (Ginsberg 1989; Moravcsik 1998: 30). Politics of scale imply that the bundling of national diplomatic, economic, and military resources increases the influence on a given crisis or conflict, while lowering individual costs and risks. Politics of scale are even more relevant when they help balance against a (perceived) national threat.

These benefits are weighed against the economic and political costs and risks of EU-level cooperation in crisis management. Costs and risks vary substantially, depending on the crisis management activity or issue area. It is arguably cheaper and less risky to agree to a common diplomatic position than to participate in a military CSDP. Political costs comprise losses of national sovereignty and the diminution of bilateral influence on a given conflict, country, or region (Gordon 1997). The aggregation of national cost-benefit calculations in intergovernmental bargaining is assumed to preclude collective decisions, if preferences are incompatible. Otherwise, lowest common denominator outcomes, reflecting the overlap of the preferences of the most influential member states, are expected (Thomas 2011: 21-22).

By contrast, sociological institutionalists expect cooperative intergovernmental bargaining and mutual compromise outcomes (Thomas 2011:18-19). The assumption is that repeated cooperation has socialised national decision-makers into coherence-related norms. But the effect of these norms on intergovernmental cooperation also



depends on their salience and relevance within a given organisational setting (Thomas 2008). They are more salient in institutionalised EU settings than in external settings such as NATO or UN channels. Cooperative bargaining is also more likely if intergovernmental deliberations occur behind closed doors (Lewis 2005; Checkel 2005).

The two theoretical perspectives thus differ in their assumptions on the process and output of intergovernmental cooperation. Liberal intergovernmentalists hold that competitive bargaining under consensus rules produces lowest common denominator outcomes (Moravcsik 1998). Sociological institutionalists, instead, expect member states to make concessions for reasons of collective social legitimation and in the absence of coercion or material incentives (Lewis 2005; Thomas 2008; Thomas 2011). Hypotheses 2a and b summarise the respective determinants of intergovernmental decision-making and – by derivation – the degree of coherence:

**H2a:** If threat perceptions of the ‘Big Three’ diverge, or the costs and risks of participation in joint EU crisis management activities exceed benefits, outcomes reflect the lowest common denominator and the degree of coherence will be low.

**H2b:** If intergovernmental decision-making is insulated from international and societal pressures, cooperative bargaining produces mutual compromise outcomes and the degree of coherence will be high.

### ***Bureaucratic interests vs. norms***

The two theoretical lenses diverge most substantially when it comes to the role and influence of EU institutions. The rationalist perspective makes the influence of supranational entrepreneurs dependent on the degree of delegation or pooling of sovereignty and the distribution of information (Moravcsik 1998: 54-60). Supranational entrepreneurs are assumed to wield influence in policy areas where they have autonomous competences (such as trade and aid), if a situation is characterised by high degrees of complexity, uncertainty, and urgency (high

transaction costs), or if they hold relevant expertise the member states lack (comparative advantage).

In comprehensive crisis management, relevant expertise can also translate into a superior ability to link disparate policy areas (see Moravcsik 1998: 484). EU institutions may have a comparative advantage in fostering horizontal coherence. They could thus maximise the revenues of politics of scale through issue linkage and package deals. However, this comparative advantage is bounded by dynamics of bureaucratic politics. Overlapping institutional responsibilities and resource competition are expected to engender tensions, rivalries, and ultimately, dysfunctional cooperation. These dynamics produce duplication of efforts and implementation gaps, and thus the opposite of politics of scale (Christiansen 2001).

The sociological institutionalist perspective assigns a broader and more influential role to EU institutional actors. They are understood as socialisation platforms promoting the Union's standards of appropriateness, which constrain and enable national and bureaucratic behaviour. However, comprehensive crisis management brings together officials in the fields of diplomacy, development, and the military. The multitude of actors and issues involved leads to high degrees of institutional specialisation and fragmentation. As a result, horizontal contestation between coherence and other norms embedded in institutional sub-cultures or professional epistemic communities is likely.

The literature on inter-institutional cooperation and the comprehensive approach highlights two cultural cleavages (Baumann 2008; Biava et al. 2011; Drent and Zandee 2010; Gebhard 2011; Gebhard and Norheim-Martinsen 2011). The first is between security and development. It is thus also between long-term structural and short-term operational civilian and military and instruments (Gebhard and Norheim-Martinsen 2011). By promoting an integration of security and development objectives, the meta-norm of coherence conflicts with the professional epistemic norm of apolitical aid (Zwolski 2012a). The second, and somewhat overlapping cleavage is between civilian and military bodies or instruments (Drent 2011). Due to

different professional socialisation, they tend to operate according to different priorities, time horizons, and standard procedures (Baumann 2008).

However, sociological institutionalists would assume that informal and formal institutional cooperation and coordination mechanisms can lower cognitive barriers and increase trust (Christiansen 2001). They provide platforms for social interaction and communication and thus foster common cognitive templates, norms, and procedures. Their socialising effect is contingent on the frequency, intensity, and regularity of social contact. The influence of coordination mechanisms on inter-institutional coherence thus increases with the time of their existence, the regularity of meetings, and the intensity of interaction.

Both theoretical lenses thus predict dysfunctional inter-institutional cooperation. However, the rational perspective traces it back to competition and rivalry, whereas the sociological one emphasises contending organisational norms. Accordingly, potential remedies for incoherence would differ. A rationalist perspective would emphasise a clear separation of competences, while a sociological understanding would suggest the introduction of formal or informal institutional coordination mechanisms. Hypotheses 3a and b summarise the contending expectations on institutional interaction and influence.

**H3a:** If supranational entrepreneurs have overlapping competences and if resources for a given EU crisis management measure or activity are scarce, the degree of coherence will be low.

**H3b:** If formal and informal coordination mechanisms provide for frequent and intense social interaction between institutional actors responsible for EU crisis management activities, the degree of coherence will be high.

### *The game changers*

At an abstract level, the distinction between factors implying a logic of consequentiality or a logic of appropriateness may seem clear-cut. However, in empirical reality, strategic and rule-following behaviour is often hard to distinguish.

The present analysis proposes two remedies. The first is theoretical and entails introducing contextual conditions, under which one logic of action is more likely to guide behaviour than the other (Jupille and Caporaso 1998; March and Olsen 1998; 2009). This section introduces four scope conditions and derives corresponding propositions. The second is methodological and involves juxtaposing rhetoric and action, as well as both of them across contexts and time. An elaboration follows in chapter 3.

The logic of consequences is more likely to guide behaviour if actors have intense preferences, namely if the stakes attached to action alternatives are high (Aspinwall and Schneider 2000; March and Olsen 1998; Sears and Funk 1991). In the context of this study, high *national* stakes mean that a particular EU crisis management measure or decision entails important economic costs/benefits or foreseeable electoral gains/losses. They are also high if crises or conflicts are perceived as important threats or if the participation in collective responses implies high costs or risks. High *institutional* stakes are attached to measures affecting the very core of an institution and thus concern its survival. An institutional player, for instance, faces high stakes if competence overlaps concern one of its central functions or if the expansion of another player bears the risk of significant budget or personnel cuts.

The second condition concerns rational calculation. The ability for calculation is contingent on high levels of information and certainty about existing alternatives and their payoffs. National decision-makers cannot be assumed to act on the basis of economic interests, if they lack information on the potential economic effects of alternative crisis management scenarios at the time of decision-making.

Meanwhile, rule-based behaviour is more likely if norms are deeply internalised (type II socialisation) (Checkel 2005; Johnston 2005). It presupposes long periods of socialisation within stable and cohesive institutions. Embedded or historically engrained norms are thus expected to ‘trump’ newer or shallower norms (type I socialisation) (Checkel 2005; Johnston 2005; Meyer 2004). This is the rationale behind the assumed prevalence of domestic or professional over European or international norms.

However, rule-based behaviour is also contingent on norm determinacy (March and Olsen 2009). The determinacy, or prescriptive clarity, of a norm depends on the existence of competing or conflicting norms, and thus on the level of contestation within a given collective (Cantir and Kaarbo 2012). In the past, Germany has provided an interesting example of sub-national norm contestation: the engrained principle of military restraint has clashed with its similarly engrained predisposition for multilateralism (Edwards 2006: 8). Contested norms present decision-makers with indeterminate behavioural prescriptions.

The outlined scope conditions yield three propositions on the situational prevalence and interaction of logics of action:

- Proposition 1: If stakes are high and information is abundant, while norms are shallow or indeterminate, the logic of consequences prevails.
- Proposition 2: If stakes are low or information is scarce, while norms are embedded and determinate, the logic of appropriateness prevails.
- Proposition 3: If stakes are high and information is abundant, while norms are embedded and determinate, both logics are at play.

These propositions help us discriminate between the two theoretical lenses and respective hypotheses on the basis of observed behaviour. In the case of proposition 3, it is hard to interpret which logic of action is prevalent (Risse et al. 1999: 158). If, for instance, important national economic interests *and* engrained norms on the use of force speak for unilateral intervention, it is difficult to determine *ex post*, which was decisive. The methodological tools presented in the next chapter provide some remedies. An even more intricate scenario is the one where there are neither high stakes nor determinate norms. Under these circumstances, drawing any theory-driven conclusions from observed behaviour represents a challenge. Yet, in the field of crisis management, where decisions tend to be costly, consequential, or norm-related, these circumstances are not very likely to apply.

## Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to lay the foundations for a systematic, theory-based empirical enquiry into the EU's quest for coherence in crisis management. A precondition for systematic enquiry was clarifying and delineating the analytical dimensions of the concept of policy coherence. For the purpose of this study, it was defined as the absence of contradiction (consistency) and existence of synergies between various crisis management policies, instruments, and activities geared towards a set of overarching objectives. It represents a meta-norm applying to the different levels of the EU multi-level governance system. The degree of coherence was portrayed as a matter of compliance, which is subject to political and administrative struggles and games.

The chapter introduced two theoretical lenses offering distinct perspectives on these games. From a rationalist point of view, a high degree of coherence is likely if EU-level decisions are in line with national economic and electoral interests as well as threat perceptions. EU institutional actors are assumed to play a marginal role, contingent on the level of delegated authority and situation-specific informational advantages. From the constructivist, sociological institutionalist perspective the degree of coherence was depicted as a function of conflicting or resonating national and organisational norms. Institutions play an important role as overarching ideational structures, which enable the players of the game to increase trust and lower cognitive barriers. The framework identified four 'game changers' or scope conditions, which respectively incite rational or rule-based behaviour: the magnitude of stakes and the degree of information and certainty on the one hand, and the embeddedness and prescriptive clarity of norms on the other. Table 7 summarises the hypotheses.

**Table 7: Summary of hypotheses**

| Arena             | Theoretical lens <sup>37</sup> | Causal factors  | Effect on coherence |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Domestic          | LI                             | <b>H1a:</b> Conflicting economic or electoral interests in 'Big Three'  | Negative            |
|                   | SI                             | <b>H1b:</b> Conflicting embedded domestic norms on the use of force or on modes of international cooperation                      | Negative            |
| Intergovernmental | LI                             | <b>H2a:</b> High costs and risks vs. low benefits of EU crisis management activity or divergent threat perceptions in 'Big Three' | Negative            |
|                   | SI                             | <b>H2b:</b> Salient EU norms of cooperation and consultation + political insulation   | Positive            |
| EU institutional  | LI                             | <b>H3a:</b> Overlapping competences of supranational entrepreneurs + scarce resources   | Negative            |
|                   | SI                             | <b>H3b:</b> Formal and informal coordination mechanisms + time and intensity of social interaction                                | Positive            |

*Source: own compilation*

The outlined multi-level analytical framework offers a fresh perspective on the micro-foundations of the EU's role as an international security actor. It engages with the decade-old debate in EU studies on the interaction of domestic, intergovernmental, and supranational dynamics. By directly addressing the relationship between agency and structure, it is closely linked to a central debate in the field of IR. The following chapter aims to ensure that the contribution to these theoretical debates remains firmly anchored in empirical reality.

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<sup>37</sup> 'LI' stands for liberal intergovernmentalism and 'SI' for sociological Institutionalism.

## **Chapter 3: Measuring coherence and its causes**

Testing the accuracy and utility of theoretical explanations in empirical terms involves measuring the presence, absence or amount of the concepts used to grasp the phenomenon (Buttolph Johnson and Reynolds 2012: 127). It is thus necessary to establish correspondence rules that connect the dependent variable, the degree of coherence, and the hypothesised causal factors to observable facts in the empirical world. In other words, we must devise operational indicators (Schnell et al. 2008: 127). The research design is the logic linking these indicators to the initial research question and, ultimately, the conclusions of the study (Yin 2009: 26). It defines the units of analysis as well as the criteria for data collection and interpretation.

This chapter starts by translating the dependent variable – the degree of output coherence – into observable indicators. The operationalisation logically flows from its conceptualisation in section 2.1. The chapter then moves on to the indicators for the independent variables. It specifies which types of interests and norms this thesis focuses on and how their existence, influence, and possible interaction are established on the basis of empirical evidence. The final two sections offer overviews of the comparative case study design and the methods of analysis and data collection.

### **3.1 Degrees of coherence**

There have been various attempts to define policy coherence in operational terms (May et al. 2006). However, even in the field of PCD, where measurement is arguably most advanced, the empirical evaluation of the concept is only “in an early and nascent stage” (Keijzer and Oppewal 2012: 33). This section devises an ordinal measure of coherence based on a qualitative assessment of four operational components: consistency, objectives, interaction, and compliance.

#### ***The quest for valid indicators***

Evaluations of coherence across different policy fields predominantly use quantitative *or* qualitative indicators and methods. The main advantage of quantitative approaches is their reliability (Keijzer and Oppewal 2012: 32). They provide solid ground for comparison across countries and over time. However,



quantitative indicators are often inferior in terms of content validity. They are more likely to neglect relevant dimensions of abstract concepts if they do not fit with their assumptions or statistical models (Keijzer and Oppewal 2012: 5).

Policy coherence is a multi-layered and complex phenomenon that is not easily captured by a few data points. Some measures, such as the Commitment to Development Index devised by the Centre for Global Development, aim to gauge the complexity of the concept by incorporating a large number of quantitative indicators into a composite index (Roodman 2012).<sup>38</sup> Yet these types of indices are far from parsimonious and face methodological challenges in terms of the standardisation and value weighting of their components (King et al. 2012).

The advantage of qualitative indicators and methods is that they usually excel in terms of content validity (Keijzer and Oppewal 2012: 32). A concept can be evaluated taking into account its multiple dimensions *and* the specific context. However, context-specificity is often achieved at the expense of reliability. An example is the Union's PCD Work Programme 2010-2013, in which the European Commission (2010) presented a set of targets and indicators for the evaluation of PCD in five priority areas.<sup>39</sup> Overall, it devised 87 mostly qualitative indicators. In the subsequent PCD Report, supposedly based on these indicators, the Commission (2011a: 22-23) itself criticised their lack of precision. It further admonished the use of diverse indicators and methodologies across EU institutions and member states and pointed out problems of *ad hoc* measurement.

When faced with a trade-off between reliability and validity, Buttolph Johnson and Reynolds (2012: 144) recommend favouring the latter. They argue that a valid measure is always reliable while a reliable measure is not necessarily valid.

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<sup>38</sup> The Commitment to Development Index is a composite quantitative measure for the contribution of selected rich countries to global development in seven policy areas (aid, trade, finance, migration, environment, security, technology) (Center for Global Development 2014).

<sup>39</sup> The priority areas include trade and finance; climate change; global food security; migration; and security.

Following this recommendation and taking account of the complexity and dynamic nature of policy coherence, the present study opts for qualitative indicators and methods for the assessment of policy coherence. It does not rely on the Commission indicators for coherence, but devises a measure that stays as close as possible to the conceptual definition provided in section 2.1 (King et al. 1994: 152).

### *The terms of the equation*

When evaluating complex concepts, reliability and validity can be enhanced by clearly outlining “all the terms in the equation” (Keijzer and Oppewal 2012: 31). For the purposes of this work, coherence was defined as the absence of contradiction and the existence of synergies between various crisis management policies, instruments and activities geared towards a set of overarching objectives. Thus, the policy areas, corresponding outputs, and objectives that are central to this work must be specified.

The focus of this study lies on five policy areas, namely: diplomacy; humanitarian aid; development aid; sanctions and restrictive measures; and the CSDP. These areas are at the core of the comprehensive approach to crisis management as outlined in the European Security Strategy and in a more recent joint Communication of the Commission and the HR (Council 2003a: 11; European Commission and HR 2013c: 3). Policy outputs vary according to policy area, level of governance, and phase in the administrative or political decision-making process. At the EU level, they include CFSP instruments such as documents outlining general guidelines and EU decisions, defining actions, positions, and arrangements for implementation.<sup>40</sup> They also comprise decisions on restrictive measures or funding decisions. Concentrating on short- to medium-term crisis response and conflict management, long-term, structural development cooperation is not a central analytical component of this study. The focus is more on the Union’s financial instruments than on multi-annual aid

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<sup>40</sup> These instruments are outlined in article 25 TEU and replace the former distinction between Common Strategies, Joint Actions, and Common Positions.

packages. Table 8 provides a non-exhaustive overview of generic policy outputs in the analysed policy areas.<sup>41</sup>

**Table 8: Policy outputs by issue area**

| Policy field                       | Policy outputs (examples)  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Diplomacy                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speeches, positions, statements, declarations</li> <li>• Demarches</li> <li>• Political dialogue and mediation efforts</li> <li>• Nomination of special delegates to the region or country (such as EU Special Representatives)</li> <li>• Opening of diplomatic representations</li> </ul> |
| Humanitarian aid                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humanitarian and emergency aid, opening of humanitarian field offices</li> </ul>  |
| Development aid                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial instruments: Instrument for Stability (IfS),<sup>42</sup> African Peace Facility (APF)<sup>43</sup></li> </ul>  |
| Sanctions and restrictive measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arms embargoes</li> <li>• Economic and financial sanctions</li> <li>• Targeted (or smart) sanctions (freezing of assets, visa or travel bans)</li> </ul>  |
| CSDP                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact-finding missions</li> <li>• Civilian missions</li> <li>• Military operations</li> </ul>  |

Source: own compilation

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<sup>41</sup> The depicted policy outputs are 'generic' as they do not correspond to specific European or national policy outputs. Rather, they represent categories that will be used to evaluate the coherence of policy outputs across different countries and levels of governance.

<sup>42</sup> Since 2007, the Commission has relied on the IfS for short-term financial support of activities or measures in the fields of conflict prevention, crisis management, and peacebuilding (European Commission 2014b). In March 2014, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace replaced the IfS and increased the focus on conflict prevention.

<sup>43</sup> The APF has been established in 2004 as part of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy's Partnership on Peace and Security. The fund is used for regional conflict prevention, capacity building, and African-led peace support operations as well as conflict resolution (European Commission 2014a).

The Lisbon Treaty introduced eight overarching policy objectives applicable to all areas of EU external action, including the five policy areas under analysis:

- safeguard the Union's values, fundamental interests, security, independence and integrity;
- promote democracy and good governance;
- preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security;
- foster the sustainable development with the goal to eradicate poverty;
- encourage the integration of all countries into the world economy;
- environmental protection and sustainable management of global natural resources;
- assist populations, countries and regions confronting natural or man-made disasters; and
- promote stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance.<sup>44</sup>

As guidelines for EU external action, these objectives are rather vague. It is therefore necessary to outline the specific objectives of crisis management activities and measures in direct relation to the conflict or crisis at hand. Specific objectives will be introduced in each of the case studies in this thesis.

### *The degree of output coherence*

Having defined the policy areas that, in principle, should cohere, their outputs, and overarching objectives, we can now turn to the actual dependent variable. As perfect policy coherence cannot be attained in a democratic governance system it is only possible to compare different *degrees* of output coherence (Gauttier 2004; Ashoff 2005; de Coning 2008a). Therefore, it is measured at ordinal level. There are four operational elements the literature on policy coherence repeatedly uses to discriminate between degrees of coherence:

1. The first is *consistency*, or the absence of contradiction between different policy outputs. As noted above, consistency can be considered a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for policy coherence (Missiroli et

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<sup>44</sup> See article 21 (2) TEU.

al. 2001). An example of inconsistency would be if different players in EU external policy issued contradictory diplomatic statements in reaction to a crisis.

2. The second element is the existence of common *objectives* and of shared priorities among objectives (Duraiappah and Bhardwaj 2007; May et al. 2005; May et al. 2006; Picciotto 2004). A high degree of coherence can be expected if these objectives and priorities are agreed in the form of a common strategy or strategic approach towards a certain conflict or crisis.
3. The third element concerns the process of *interaction* between individuals or entities responsible for the generation of policy outputs. A high degree of coherence is more likely if there is coordinated, non-adversarial, and collaborative interaction (Duraiappah and Bhardwaj 2007: 3; European Commission 2010). Coherence is unlikely if different players compete for policy ‘turf’.
4. The fourth and final element is *compliance* with joint decisions, positions, actions, rules or provisions (Duraiappah and Bhardwaj 2007: 3; Thomas 2012: 459). Full compliance also implies providing appropriate resources and means required for implementation (Duke 2002; Portela and Raube 2009). A lack of compliance could, for instance, mean that the member states agree on a joint EU operation but fail to provide the needed resources.

The operational components form the basis for the ordinal scale summarised by Table 9. Establishing the degree of output coherence is an interpretative exercise based on a variety of data sources (see final section of this chapter). The assessment proceeds in three steps. The first consists of disaggregating the Union’s crisis response into its component policy outputs. The second evaluates the inter-relation of stated policy objectives and priorities. And the third involves analysing the interaction of policy players at the vertical and horizontal levels. Taken together, these steps yield an overall assessment of the degree of coherence in the Union’s crisis response.

**Table 9: Ordinal scale for the measurement of coherence**

| Degree of Coherence | Operational components and indicators  |
|---------------------|--|
| Incoherent          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Consistency</u>: <b>no</b><br/>Indicator: contradiction or interference between policy outputs or activities</li> <li>• <u>Objectives</u>: <b>divergent</b><br/>Indicator: no common strategy, divergent objectives</li> <li>• <u>Interaction</u>: <b>dysfunctional</b><br/>Indicators: no mutual information, adversarial interaction</li> <li>• <u>Compliance</u>: <b>no</b><br/>Indicators: Defection from previously agreed rules or decisions</li> </ul>  |
| Low                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Consistency</u>: <b>yes</b><br/>Indicators: no contradiction or interference between policy outputs or activities</li> <li>• <u>Objectives</u>: <b>non-interfering</b><br/>Indicator: no common strategy, parallel objectives, but no common priorities</li> <li>• <u>Interaction</u>: <b>non-interfering</b><br/>Indicators: mutual information, but no consultation or collaboration</li> <li>• <u>Compliance</u>: <b>minimal</b><br/>Indicator: No defection from previously agreed rules or decisions, but no pooling of means or resources</li> </ul> |
| Medium              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Consistency</u>: <b>yes</b><br/>Indicators: no contradiction or mutual interference between policy outputs or activities</li> <li>• <u>Objectives</u>: <b>complementary</b><br/>Indicators: overlapping objectives but divergent priorities</li> <li>• <u>Interaction</u>: <b>cooperative</b><br/>Indicators: mutual information and coordination</li> <li>• <u>Compliance</u>: <b>partial</b><br/>Indicators: No defection from previously agreed rules or decisions; partial pooling of means or resources</li> </ul>                                    |
| High                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Consistency</u>: <b>yes</b><br/>Indicators: no contradiction or mutual interference between policy outputs or activities</li> <li>• <u>Objectives</u>: <b>collective</b><br/>Indicators: common strategy, same objectives, same priorities,</li> <li>• <u>Interaction</u>: <b>collaborative</b><br/>Indicators: full coordination and division of labour</li> <li>• <u>Compliance</u>: <b>fully compliant</b><br/>Indicators: no defection, full pooling of means and resources</li> </ul>   |

Source: own compilation

This operationalisation can but represent an imperfect approximation of the abstract concept of policy coherence. Still, it has four distinct advantages. First, it takes account of the process-oriented and dynamic ontology of coherence as it permits the degree of coherence to vary over time and throughout discrete episodes of decision-making (Thomas 2012: 460). Second, it is applicable to different policy areas. Third it can be used for the assessment of vertical, horizontal, and institutional coherence. Finally, it is reasonably parsimonious, considering that composite indices for the measurement of policy coherence often include several dozens of component indicators (see European Commission 2010; Matthews and King 2012; Roodman 2012).<sup>45</sup>

### **3.2 Interests, norms, and behaviour**

Detecting the influence of norms and interests in foreign policy decision-making is an intricate exercise. One has to establish correspondence rules that permit us to approximate the cognitive basis of observed behaviour. This section starts by specifying how the presence of the norms and interests relevant to this study is established in empirical reality. In other words, it provides operational definitions for the causal factors identified by the rational and norm games. The chapter then outlines a methodological strategy that helps distinguish the logic of appropriateness from that of consequences. The operational definitions constitute the basis for the methods for data collection and analysis, outlined subsequently in sections 3 and 4.

#### ***Societal, national, and organisational interests***

The degree of coherence in EU crisis management is assumed to depend on societal constraints (H1a) emanating from powerful *economic interest groups* in the ‘Big Three’. The underlying rationale is that national participation in EU crisis management activities or measures creates positive or negative economic externalities. Externalities increase with the level of economic interdependence between the intervening EU member state and the conflict or crisis country. A high

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<sup>45</sup> The security component of the Commission Work Programme 2010-2013 alone comprises 26 indicators (European Commission 2010: 33-40).

level of economic interdependence is operationalised through: the levels of bilateral trade, investment, and resource dependency (energy and raw materials). The assessment is based on official statistics.

Economic interdependence was only assumed to influence crisis decision-making if the sector-specific costs of participation in EU crisis management activities are calculable and if influential interest groups have access to the decision-making process. Where available, this thesis draws on economic risk analyses to evaluate the calculability of sector-specific economic costs. Secondary literature, media reports, parliamentary debates, and interviews with decision-makers or experts help assess access and influence of interest groups on political decision-making processes.

**Table 10: Relevant opinion polling institutes**

| France   | Germany   | United Kingdom             |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| Institut français d'opinion publique (IFOP); Ipsos | Emnid; Forsa Gesellschaft für Sozialforschung und statistische Analyse; Infratest dimap | ComRes; Ipsos MORI; YouGov |

*Source: own compilation*

The second domestic constraint this thesis includes is the *median voter interest*. Where available, the latter is approximated through public opinion polls concerning particular EU crisis management activities. The study draws on newspaper polls and data from renowned national polling institutes (see Table 10). Popularity ratings of leading politicians are included as proxies for person-specific electoral risks and thus as indicators of their likelihood to engage in electoral calculation. Media reports and parliamentary debates allow for qualitative assessments of political salience and the degree of contestation between government and opposition. To compare levels of political salience across member states, the numbers of parliamentary debates that dedicated substantial attention to the conflict or crisis in question are juxtaposed. ‘Substantial’ implies that the conflicts or respective responses are subject to political debate, and not only mentioned in passing. Finally, electoral calendars provide information on the temporal proximity of local, regional, and national elections.



Intergovernmental bargaining is assumed to reflect aggregated *national cost/risk-benefit calculation* (H2a). For nation-specific costs of CSDP measures and aid pledges, the analysis relies on figures in official documents or expert estimates. It is more difficult to assess the costs of political measures in the field of diplomacy. Losses of national sovereignty or of bilateral influence are hard to quantify. The same applies to national benefits from collective EU crisis management measures. They may include increased influence and legitimacy or reduced risk when intervening in a Third country. This study thus evaluates *perceived* political costs, risks, and benefits on the basis of political speech acts and expert interviews. To evaluate national threat perceptions, this thesis draws on national intelligence reports or warnings, where available. They come closest to objective assessments and can be assumed to directly inform decision-makers. Intelligence reports are compared to threat depictions in political discourse.

Finally, the rationalist perspective suggested that inter-institutional tensions occur if *competence overlaps* meet *resource scarcity* (H3a). The Treaties expressly provide for a division of labour between the Commission and the Council in the fields of economic sanctions (Gauttier 2004). However, they do not entirely regulate competence overlaps in issue areas, such as

- declaratory diplomacy and external representation;
- civilian crisis management;
- SSR;
- dual-use goods;
- small arms and light weapons;
- defence-industrial aspects;
- election monitoring; and
- conflict prevention (Duke 2006; Gyllensporre 2010; Justaert 2011).

In terms of resources, there is a traditional divide between the Commission and the institutional actors involved in the CFSP (Duke 2006). The former is responsible for the management of the common budget (Stroß 2012). CFSP institutions are reliant on

Commission approval in areas such as civilian crisis management, financed through the common budget. The Lisbon Treaty enhanced interdependence by distributing the responsibility for the strategic programming of some financial instruments, notably the IfS, between the EEAS and the Commission (Council 2010). While the latter is responsible for the instruments' management, the HR is to ensure political coordination. Secondary literature, political speech acts, media reports, think tank analyses, and expert interviews are used to assess, whether competence overlaps and scarce resources triggered dysfunctional institutional interaction.

### ***Norms and coordination mechanisms***

The sociological institutionalist perspective suggested that the degree of coherence in EU crisis management depended on *embedded domestic norms*. This study focuses on norms concerning the use of force and preferred modes of international cooperation (H1b). It is thus important to establish, how they vary across France, the UK, and Germany.

France traditionally leads the Europeanist camp supporting an autonomous EU role in security and defence (Howorth 2004; Marcussen et al. 1999). It considers the use of force appropriate to defend selected beliefs or values (Meyer 2005: 529). The country derives a sense of international responsibility from its colonial past and its position as one of five permanent members of the UN Security Council. In line with the Gaullist paradigm of 'French Grandeur', another core tenet of French foreign policy is the desire for independence, notably from the US (Krotz 2001).

The UK, in turn, leads the Atlanticist camp of EU member states favouring transatlantic cooperation and the use of NATO for crisis management (Daddow and Schnapper 2013; Gross 2009). It shares France's historically induced global outlook and sense of international responsibility as well as its activist stance on the use of force (Biava et al. 2011: 6; Meyer 2005: 529). Other core tenets of British foreign policy include the primacy of national sovereignty and general scepticism towards closer European integration (Marcussen et al. 1999; Miskimmon 2004; Lehne 2012)

**Table 11: Embedded norms in the ‘Big Three’**

| Norm sets                            | France                                       | UK   | Germany  |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Use of force                         | Activism;<br>international<br>responsibility | Activism;<br>international<br>responsibility | Military and<br>political restraint  |
| Preferred<br>modes of<br>cooperation | Europeanism                                  | Atlanticism                                  | Multilateralism/<br>Euro-Atlanticism;<br>Alliance solidarity;<br>reliability |

Source: own compilation

Finally, German foreign policy is characterised by the commitment to multilateralism, the rejection of power politics, and a distinct culture of military and political restraint (Lehne 2012: 10). Military restraint entails deep scepticism about the appropriateness of the use of force, which is only considered as a last resort (Duffield 1998; Lantis 2002; Meyer 2005). It is institutionalised through the requirement of parliamentary approval for Germany’s participation in military operations. Political restraint translates into a reluctance to assume a leadership role in international affairs or to openly pursue national interests (Duffield 1998: 6). Berlin is a traditional proponent of European integration, including the fields of security and defence. But, it is also keen to pool resources within NATO and to demonstrate Alliance solidarity (Meyer 2004: 5).<sup>46</sup> Berlin thus swings somewhat uneasily between the Atlanticist and Europeanist camps (Gross 2009: 5). Table 11 provides an overview of relevant embedded norms in the ‘Big Three’. As outlined in the last section of this chapter, their impact is assessed through the analysis and juxtaposition of political behaviour and discourse.

When insulated from domestic contexts, a shift of loyalty towards the European collective was assumed to favour *cooperative intergovernmental bargaining* (H2b). The assessment of the latter will proceed in three steps. The first is to establish

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<sup>46</sup> The principle of Alliance solidarity has been deeply embedded in Germany’s foreign policy since 1945. Membership in Western alliances, including the EU and NATO, was key to restoring Germany’s legitimacy in international affairs.

whether the member states have moved away from their initial preferences and towards a mutual compromise outcome. Initial preferences are established through official documents, political discourse, and expert interviews. The second step assesses whether deviations from initial preferences were based on exogenous incentives or on norms endogenous to the process of intergovernmental cooperation. These norms include established procedural standards in EU foreign policy such as the consultation reflex or the consensus norm (Thomas 2011: 19). In a third step, the effect of these norms is evaluated through their use in official discourse. If guided by EU-level norms, decision-makers are assumed to justify decisions on the basis of European unity or the necessity of ‘standing together’.

**Table 12: Formal coordination mechanisms for EU crisis management**

| Coordination mechanism or position   | Coordination area                             | Since | Nature           |
|--|---|-------|------------------|
| EU Special Representatives   | Field level                                   | 1998  | Temporary        |
| EU Operations Centre (EEAS)  | CSDP  | 2007  | Temporary        |
| HR   | Overall external action                       | 2009  | Term: five years |
| Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD – EEAS)                         | Civil-military                                | 2009  | Permanent        |
| Department for Crisis Response and Operational Coordination (DG CROC – EEAS) | Response to man-made and natural disasters    | 2011  | Permanent        |
| Crisis Management Board (EEAS)   | Crisis prevention, preparedness, and response | 2011  | Permanent        |
| Crisis Platform (EEAS and Commission)  | Crisis response and management                | 2011  | Temporary        |

*Source: own compilation*

Finally, the degree of coherence was assumed to be higher if there are formal or informal *institutional coordination mechanisms* providing for sustained, frequent, and intense social interaction (H3b). Table 12 lists the relevant formal coordination

mechanisms in the area of comprehensive EU crisis management. Their impact as well as that of context-specific and informal coordination is evaluated through policy analyses and expert interviews.

### *Distinguishing rule-based and strategic behaviour*

Distinguishing rule-based and strategic behaviour is methodologically challenging (Checkel & Moravcsik 2001). While it is possible to observe norm compliant or non-compliant behaviour and rhetoric, inferring the ‘real’ underlying motivation is more difficult (Goertz and Diehl 1992; Niemann and Mak 2010). Did a decision-maker comply because of norm internationalisation or persuasion or was the norm used to conceal rationalist intentions? While these questions can never be answered with full certainty, there are tools that help distinguish reason from predisposition.

An indicator for the existence of a norm is that non-compliance prompts justification (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 892).<sup>47</sup> Rhetorical justifications for incoherent behaviour would thus constitute evidence for the awareness of coherence-related norms. But only if an actor has internalised a norm, he or she is assumed to display consistent rule-following behaviour and rhetoric across contexts and time (Checkel and Moravcsik 2001: 224; Fearon and Wendt 2002).

Strategic behaviour is assumed to be less consistent. In accordance with the mechanism of rational calculation, preferences and behaviour change according to exogenous incentive structures (Hooghe 2005). The strategic use of norms becomes apparent through selective compliance and their opportunistic application in rhetoric (Schimmelfennig 2003). If, for instance, decision-makers suddenly change their argumentation in the run-up to important national or regional elections, calculation seems more likely than principled discourse. Rational actors may also adopt a strategy of ‘hypocrisy’ and de-couple rhetoric from behaviour (Lipson 2007). An example would be political agreement with an EU-level decision and supportive

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<sup>47</sup> In line with Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 892), we distinguish between the existence of a norm and its actual influence on political behaviour in our operationalisation.

rhetoric on the one hand, and deviant behaviour on the other. The analysis will thus evaluate to what extent key players (a) behaved according to their own rhetoric and (b) acted or argued consistently across time, contexts, and audiences. The outlined methodological strategy complements the theoretical scope conditions presented in the analytical framework.

### **3.3 Crisis responses: cases and players**

The hypotheses derived from the analytical framework are evaluated through a comparative “multiple-case embedded” design (Yin 2009: 59). The selected cases include three instances of post-Lisbon crisis management in Africa, namely in Libya, Somalia, and Mali. Meanwhile, the ‘Big Three’ and various EU institutional players involved in comprehensive crisis management constitute embedded analytical units. This section presents the rationale for the selection of the research design, case studies, time frames, and embedded units.

#### *Case study comparison*

A case study may be defined “as the intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units” (Gerring 2004: 342). Case studies have several advantages over other types of research designs. They are valuable tools for the analysis of contemporary, real life-phenomena where the boundaries between phenomenon and context blur (Yin 2009: 18). They permit the researcher to model path-dependent processes, multiple interaction effects, and non-linear causal relationships, and can uncover spurious causality (George and Bennett 2005a: 9-10). Case study analysis also allows us to account for contextual factors that are difficult to model in purely statistical terms (Kaarbo and Beasley 1999). A case study design is recommended if there is no way to control behaviour, many variables of interest exist, and the investigation relies on multiple sources of evidence (Yin 2009: 18). It is thus particularly suited to the analysis of the dynamic concept of coherence and of the effect of multiple causes and mechanisms on complex and overlapping decision-making processes.

According to Lijphart (1971: 691), “the case study method can and should be closely connected with the comparative method”. The findings of case study comparison can be considered more robust than those of single case studies where it is difficult to determine whether or to what extent findings are idiosyncratic to the specific case (Kaarbo and Beasley 1999). Multiple case studies increase the ground for falsification of established generalisations (Lijphart 1971: 691).

However, case study designs are usually criticised for their lack of generalizability (George and Bennett 2005a; Yin 2009; Buttolph Johnson and Reynolds 2012). In-depth investigation limits the overall number of cases while multiplying the number of variables. Case studies thus excel in terms of internal validity, but they do not permit the researcher to estimate average or net causal effects (external validity) (Gerring 2004: 348). The limitations of case study designs in comparison to large-N evaluations or experimental designs have to be acknowledged. Therefore, the present study aims for analytic, rather than statistical generalisation (Yin 2009: 43). The former entails drawing conclusions with regard to a theory and its causal mechanisms, rather than generalising findings to the whole universe of cases.

For the purpose of this study, a ‘case’ is defined as a crisis or conflict in a particular country or region within a given time period. The main analytical unit within these temporal and spatial confines is the EU’s response to the crisis or conflict. The focus does not lie on the dynamics or specificities of a given conflict, but rather on the reaction of a defined class of actors (or embedded analytical units).

### ***Balancing comparability and variation***

This thesis evaluates the determinants of coherence in cases of comprehensive EU crisis management. Eligible cases should thus satisfy two main criteria: There should be a crisis or conflict outside of the Union’s borders. And the Union’s reaction should represent an attempt to provide a comprehensive response implying the coincidental use of political, military, and economic instruments. The following eight conflict or crisis cases satisfy these criteria:

- FYROM: 2003-2006
- DRC: since 2003

- BiH: since 2004
- Chad and the CAR: 2007-2009
- Somalia: since 2008
- Libya: since 2011<sup>48</sup>
- Mali: since 2013<sup>49</sup>
- CAR: since 2014

When selecting cases, Lijphart (1971: 687) recommends choosing *comparable* cases. Comparable implies that they are similar in a number of important dimensions, which are not central to the analysed causal link. The rationale is that similarity allows us to keep certain variables constant. The present study enhances comparability by focusing on cases of post-Lisbon crisis management. This choice permits us to control for three groups of variables: EU institutional configuration; specificities of political and organisational incumbents; and international context (such as financial and Eurozone crises). The downside of control is that the effect of the ‘constants’ cannot be evaluated. The analysis will, for instance, not be able to draw systematic conclusions on the distinct influence of Angela Merkel’s particular leadership style. The thesis will return to the limitations stemming from case selection in the conclusion.

The focus on post-Lisbon crisis management narrows the group of eligible cases down to five: the DRC, BiH, Somalia, Libya, and Mali.<sup>50</sup> The selection amongst them was based on the diverse cases method (Gerring and Seawright 2007: 97-101). The method foresees a maximisation of variance on relevant analytical dimensions. The latter may include independent or dependent variables and specific combinations of the two. Selection bias most frequently occurs when the values on the dependent

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<sup>48</sup> Libya constitutes a special case since the military operation EUFOR Libya was planned but never deployed. It is included because, contrary to other cases where an EU operation was discussed, EUFOR Libya existed on paper (see Decision 2011/137/CFSP) and reached the final planning stages.

<sup>49</sup> Despite its classification as a training mission, EUTM Mali is conducted as a military operation.

<sup>50</sup> The Union’s crisis management activities in the CAR were too recent at the time of writing.



variable are kept constant (King et al. 1994: 128-132; George and Bennett 2005a: 23). To avoid this type of bias, the present choice was primarily based on the variation of the dependent variable. In other words, the cases were to display varying degrees of coherence.

The problem with this method was that there were no readily accessible measures of coherence prior to empirical analysis. In such cases, George and Bennett (2005a: 23) recommend making a preliminary overview of a larger sample of eligible cases to identify those demonstrating typical variation on the dependent variable. The preliminary screening involved the combination of two strategies:

1. The first consisted of a cursory analysis of the universe of cases on the basis of the operational components and indicators for coherence. It was mainly based on think tank reports and analyses and profited from the author's participation in a collaborative overview study for the European Parliament on lessons learned in the field of the CSDP (see: Dari et al. 2012).
2. The cursory analysis was complemented by preliminary interviews with EU officials and experts. Interviewees were asked for an evaluation of the coherence of eligible EU crisis management cases. A combination of open and probing questions made it possible to assess which cases were considered most or least coherent and to compare specific cases in terms of their degree of coherence.

These two strategies led to the selection of Libya, Somalia, and Mali. Analysts and media reports drew parallels between the EU's response to the Libyan crisis and the foreign policy debacle over Iraq in 2003. Libya was even described as a 'death blow' for the CFSP and CSDP (Armellini 2011; Brattberg 2011). Hence, the degree of coherence was estimated to be relatively low. Meanwhile, EU officials and experts referred to the Union's engagement in Somalia as the 'ultimate example' for the implementation of the comprehensive approach, insinuating a relatively high degree of coherence (Ehrhart and Petretto 2012: 44; Hagström Frisell et al. 2012: 3). Finally, interviews and policy analyses indicated that Mali was representative of an

intermediate degree of coherence. While there were no open inconsistencies, the effort was rather French than truly European (Faleg 2013).<sup>51</sup>

**Table 13: Cases and their variation on relevant dimensions**

|   | Libya   | Somalia  | Mali  |
|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Historical ties</b>                  | Former Italian colony <sup>52</sup>           | Former Italian and British colony                                  | Former French colony                          |
| <b>Key economic interests</b>           | Energy (oil and gas)                          | Maritime trade (Gulf of Aden)                                      | Raw materials in neighbouring Niger (uranium) |
| <b>Key threat(s)</b>                    | Violence against civilians, civil war         | State failure, maritime piracy, organised crime, terrorism         | Jihadist terrorism                            |
| <b>Mode of multilateral cooperation</b> | Major role for NATO (France, UK, and US lead) | Major role for EU, along with NATO and other international players | Major role for France                         |
| <b>Estimated degree of coherence</b>    | Low   | High   | Intermediate                                  |

Source: own compilation

Preliminary analysis also suggested that the cases varied with respect to other relevant analytical dimensions. The factors listed in Table 13 could be assumed to activate a variety of societal and national interests or norms. The three cases thus promised interesting insights into the linkages between a variety of norms and interests on the one hand, and differing degrees of coherence on the other.

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<sup>51</sup> Detailed and systematic evaluations of the degree of coherence follow in the case studies.

<sup>52</sup> Between 1943 and 1951, Libya was under French and British authority.

## *Case boundaries*

The primary criterion for the delimitation of time frames was the simultaneous use of civilian, economic, and military EU crisis management instruments. An additional criterion was the existence of turning points or critical junctures where relevant actors faced a choice between alternatives, which determined the further course of events (Bennett and Checkel 2011: 31-32). While the case study sections comprise historical background information, their main analytical focus lies on the time periods outlined below.

In the Libyan case, the starting point is the outbreak of violence on 15 February 2011. Different civilian and military response options were discussed at the level of the Foreign Affairs Council even at this early stage. The end date of 31 October 2011 reflects several turning points: the capture of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi; the Declaration of Liberation of Libya; the end of NATO operation Unified Protector; and the de-activation of the EEAS Crisis Platform for the Libyan crisis. It thus represents the end of the 'hot phase' of the EU's crisis response and the start of post-revolutionary transition.

In Somalia, the Europeans started to react to the surge of maritime piracy in 2008. Since then, the bundle of EU crisis management instruments and measures has steadily expanded. However, this thesis focuses on the period between November 2011 and November 2012. On 14 November 2011, the Union adopted the Strategic Framework on the Horn of Africa. According to Helly (2011: 4), the adoption marked the transition from an uncoordinated parallel deployment of EU instruments to a more strategic approach. It can thus be seen as a turning point in terms of comprehensive crisis management. In September 2012, Somalia's two-decade long transition phase officially ended. In November of the same year, the newly elected Somali Federal Parliament endorsed the Council of Ministers and thus sealed the beginning of the post-transition era (EEAS 2013a).

Finally, the Mali case study focuses on the period between March 2012 and July 2013. The country had already been destabilised in January 2012, when the Tuareg group National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) launched a

rebellion in Northern Mali. The rebellion was followed by a *coup d'état* by junior officers against the country's democratically elected President on 22 March 2012. The *coup* catapulted Mali crisis into the international spotlight and propelled multilateral crisis management efforts. The end date of the case study corresponds to the second round of presidential elections, which took place on 11 August 2013. The elections marked the return to a democratically elected government and can be considered the formal end point of the Malian crises.

### *Players at the vertical and horizontal levels*

While the overarching analytical units are European crisis responses, the study also includes a number of embedded analytical units. The latter are defined as relevant players at the vertical and horizontal levels that are responsible for (parts of) the EU's crisis response. Their selection logically flows from the analytical framework. At the vertical level, this thesis focuses on France, the UK, and Germany (the 'Big Three'). This choice is in line with liberal intergovernmentalist assumptions, according to which any analysis of EU decision-making has to start with the preferences and power of the member states. The 'Big Three' have comparative advantages in the political, economic, and military arenas (see Table 14). And as External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten (2005) put it, "there is no European foreign policy on a big issue unless France, Germany and Britain are on side".

**Table 14: Combined power of the 'Big Three' in numbers**

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Political weight</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 750 bilateral and multilateral representations around the world</li> <li>• Over 40 per cent of the Union's population;</li> <li>• 25 per cent of the votes in the Council and 33 per cent of the seats in the European Parliament;</li> <li>• France and the UK: permanent members of the UNSC</li> </ul> |
| <b>Economic power</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost 50 per cent of the Union's GDP</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Military power</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nearly 60 per cent of the Union's military expenditures</li> <li>• France and the UK: nuclear powers</li> </ul>  |

*Source: Lehne (2012: 5)*

The 'Big Three' are also relevant when it comes to the evaluation of sociological institutionalist factors. As the previous section illustrated, they differ substantially in

terms of embedded norms on the use of force and preferred modes of cooperation. These differences are reflective of intra-European diversity (Howorth 2004: 212). Other EU member states have a tendency to align with their distinct normative outlooks (Mérand et al. 2011: 126). Most central and Eastern European countries tend to share Britain’s Atlanticist vocation and view NATO as a key guarantor of their security (Asmus and Vondra 2005). Neutral member states such as Sweden, Austria, and Ireland largely align with Germany’s military restraint (Meyer 2005). Meanwhile, the Benelux countries have traditionally backed France’s Europeanist push for more integration in the area of security and defence.

**Table 15: Key players at the horizontal level**

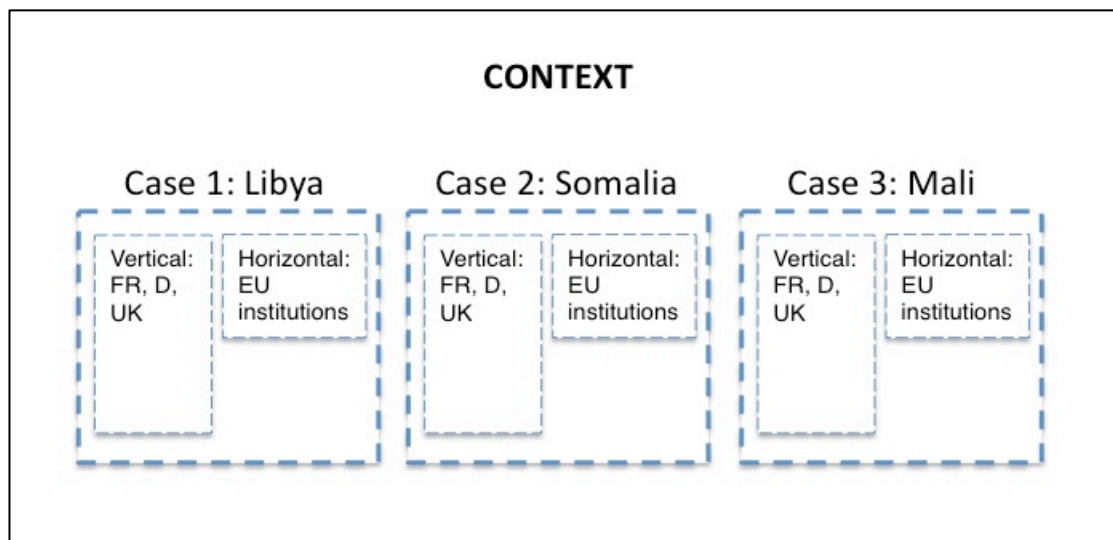
| Institution         | Sub-institutional entities   |
|---------------------|--|
| European Council    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent President</li> </ul>  |
| Council             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreign Affairs Council</li> </ul>  |
| HR                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputies</li> </ul>   |
| EEAS                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis Management Board</li> <li>• Crisis management structures: PSC, Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), EU Military Staff (EUMS), EU Military Committee (EUMC), CMPD</li> <li>• DG CROC</li> </ul> |
| European Commission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission President</li> <li>• DG ECHO</li> </ul>  |
| European Parliament | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• President</li> <li>• Committees on Defence and Foreign Affairs</li> </ul>   |

*Source: own compilation*

In terms of institutions, liberal intergovernmentalists would focus on arenas for intergovernmental bargaining and negotiation and thus on the European Council and Council. Sociological institutionalists would also consider supranational institutions relevant players. The combination of the two lenses leads us to include the whole range of relevant intergovernmental *and* supranational institutions involved in EU crisis response (see Table 15). Players at the horizontal level partly overlap with the coordination mechanisms outlined in Table 12.

To sum up, this thesis opts for a multiple-case embedded design. The cases, defined as EU crisis responses within a given period of time, are Libya (February-October 2011), Somalia (November 2011-November 2012), and Mali (March 2013-August 2013). Meanwhile, the embedded analytical units are France, the UK, and Germany as well as the Union’s institutional actors in the area of crisis management. Figure 4 provides a visual illustration of the research design.

**Figure 4: Multiple-case embedded design**



*Source: own compilation based on Yin (2009: 46)*

### 3.4 Analysing and collecting data

“Too many times, investigators start case studies without having the foggiest notion about how the evidence is to be analysed” (Yin 2009: 127). Such studies often stall at an early stage. It is therefore important to be clear on the chosen analytical strategy. In line with the theoretical framework, this thesis adopted a strategy based on competing theoretical propositions (Yin 2009: 130, 133-135). The advantage of a theory-guided strategy is that it helps concentrate on certain data points while neglecting others (Yin 2009: 130). This section outlines the methods for analysis and data collection. The operationalisation of variables presupposes a qualitative methodology. Beyond this basic choice, the methods ought to fulfil four criteria. They should:

- be in line with the process-based ontology of coherence;

- be compatible with a positivist epistemology;
- help differentiate between rule-based and strategic behaviour; and
- facilitate cross-case comparison.

### *Tracing process coherence*

The analysis of single case studies relied on a combination of two methods: process tracing and directed qualitative content analysis. Process tracing is compatible with a positivist, or rather scientific realist understanding of causation and is thus suited to bridge the meta-theoretical divide that tends to separate the two theoretical lenses applied in this thesis (Checkel 2007). In combination with careful triangulation of data sources, it can help tease out fine-grained differences between rational and rule-based behaviour (Checkel and Moravcsik 2001; Checkel 2007; Schimmelfennig 2005).

Process tracing “attempts to identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and causal mechanism – between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable” (George and Bennett 2005: 206). The researcher identifies a series of intermediate steps and makes theory-informed predictions about their causal links. Process tracing thus generates numerous observations within a single case or sequence of decision-making (Checkel 2007). It typically relies on a combination of deductive and inductive elements (Bennett and Checkel 2011: 22). The process is examined in light of theoretical propositions, but new information that does not fit the hypothesised path may lead to their modification or re-evaluation. Inductive elements prevent theory-driven confirmation bias (Bennett and Checkel 2011: 23).

In this study, the analysis of crisis decision-making took a backwards perspective. It started by identifying the policy outputs of interest within the time periods of investigation. It then proceeded to trace preceding administrative and political processes in the ‘Big Three’ and at the level of EU institutions. The aim was to evaluate to what extent the evidence conforms to theoretical expectations. Within this procedure, equifinality – the possibility that different causal paths can produce

the same outcome – was taken into consideration (Checkel 2007: 17). In addition, the option of inductively discovering alternative explanations for varying degrees of coherence was considered, as was the null hypothesis of an absence of systematic variation (Bennett and Checkel 2011: 23).

To evaluate the influence of norms and perceptions of threat or interest, this thesis combined process tracing with directed thematic content analysis (see Breuning 2011). The latter helped to classify large amounts of political speech acts and expert interviews into a workable number of categories and themes with related meanings (Hsieh and Shannon 2005; Elo and Kyngäs 2008). The chosen directed approach differs from other content analysis techniques due to its deductive character (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Prior to text analysis, the variables identified by the analytical framework were translated into an initial coding scheme (see Appendix 1). To avoid confirmation bias, the coding process allowed for the inductive creation of new themes and categories. The qualitative data analysis software NVivo 9 was used to support the coding and to facilitate systematic comparison across cases and units. An elaboration on the nature and selection of speech acts as well as the conduct of expert interviews follows in the latter two sections of this chapter.

### *Modes of comparison*

For systematic case comparison, King et al. (1994: 45) recommend the method of structured, focused comparison (George and McKeown 1985). The method is ‘structured’ as it uses one set of questions that reflects the overall purpose of the research for the analysis of all the case studies. It is ‘focused’ since it does not take all the available case information into account, but concentrates on specific comparable aspects (George and Bennett 2005a: 67).

The questions used for comparison should be grounded in the theoretical framework and adequately reflect the overall purpose of the study (George and Bennett 2005a: 71). They should be general enough to be applicable to all cases and sub-classes of events or analytical units that are studied (George and Bennett 2005a: 86). To further enhance reliability, Kaarbo and Beasley (1999: 383) suggest complementing the structured questions with equally structured answers. Table 16 outlines the generic



questions for case study analysis, while the hypotheses of this thesis provide corresponding structured answers.

**Table 16: Questions for structured focused comparison**

| Arena             | Question  |
|-------------------|---|
| Domestic          | How did the interaction of domestic interests and embedded norms influence the degree of coherence in EU crisis management?           |
| Intergovernmental | How did norms and calculation interact at the intergovernmental level in influencing the degree of coherence in EU crisis management? |
| EU institutional  | How did EU institutional interests and norms interact in influencing the degree of coherence in EU crisis management?                 |

*Source: own compilation*

Structured, focused comparison lies at the centre of the first and primary mode of comparison, which evaluates the hypotheses across cases (Yin 2009: 176-177). But the multiple-case embedded design provides for two additional comparative dimensions. The first is diachronic and refers to variation over time. Including a temporal dimension permits us to account for path-dependent institutional dynamics or learning effects throughout the three cases (George and Bennett 2005a: 34). Diachronic analysis can, for instance, show whether lessons learnt from a previous case, rather than the posited causal mechanism, account for a particular outcome. The second comparative mode can be labelled ‘nested case comparison’ and refers to the comparison of embedded analytical units across cases. It permits us to evaluate specificities of single actors or policy fields. A cross-case comparison of Germany’s crisis responses will, for instance, show whether the hypothesised causal mechanisms apply in a similar fashion throughout different decision-making sequences and cases (see Table 17).

**Table 17: Three modes of case comparison**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Cross-case comparison</b> | Evaluation of hypotheses across cases                  |
| <b>Diachronic comparison</b> | Evaluation of hypotheses in light of time              |
| <b>Nested comparison</b>     | Evaluation of hypotheses with regard to embedded units |

*Source: own compilation*

### ***Mining for data***

To make valid inferences from structured, focused comparison, it is necessary to systematically collect the same data across cases and analytical units (King et al. 1994: 45). The research question and analytical framework of this thesis call for the combination of multiple data sources. This section outlines the data collection strategies for documentary evidence.

To reconstruct outputs and processes of EU-level and national crisis responses, this thesis relied on a large number of official documents. The latter included reports, minutes, agendas of proceedings, and press releases, and were collected for the European and national level. In addition, a total of 651 transcripts of official speeches, declarations, interviews, and communications by key decision-makers in the process were retrieved. The selection of speech acts focused on key political decision-makers, namely:

- senior EU-level officials;
- the Heads of State or Government of France, the UK, and Germany;
- and the respective Foreign, Defence, and Development ministers.

To shed light on the initial preferences of national decision-makers, electoral incentives, and salient norms, the analysis included 194 transcripts of parliamentary debates. They provide a repository of speech acts, delivered in similar settings and to comparable audiences over time (Breuning 2013: 241). To maximise comparability, only transcripts of general debates (as opposed to Committee meetings) were analysed (see Table 18). All documents were retrieved through keyword searches on

official EU and national digital databases, delimited by the time frames of the case studies. Documentary evidence was corroborated with information from academic literature, reports and analyses from leading European think tanks and NGOs as well as media reports.

**Table 18: Data collection – national parliamentary debates**

| France  | Germany   | United Kingdom                             |
|---|---|--|
| Assemblée Nationale:<br>session ordinaire,<br>comptes rendus<br>intégraux | Deutscher Bundestag:<br>Plenarprotokolle der<br>Sitzungen | House of Commons,<br>daily Hansard debates |

*Source: own compilation*

### ***Behind the scenes: expert interviews***

Interviews are amongst the most important instruments in the process tracer’s methods repertoire (Tansey 2007: 767). They help corroborate evidence from other sources; fill information gaps in the reconstruction of events or decision-making episodes; provide insights into what a set of relevant actors thinks; and permit the researcher to directly address hypothesised causal links and mechanisms (Tansey 2007: 766-767). Interviews are of particular relevance for the analysis of EU crisis decision-making, as sensitive information is often not publicly available and important parts of the process occur behind closed doors.

The selection of interview partners followed a purposive (non-random) sampling strategy (Blaikie 2009: 178). The objective of interviewing was not to generalise to a population of actors, but rather to get information from individuals who were either closely involved in administrative and political decision-making processes or held relevant expertise (Tansey 2007: 768). To avoid one-sidedness and resulting bias, respondents were selected across governance levels, policy areas, and sectors. In addition, a balance between French, German, and British nationals was sought.

The identification of relevant interview partners was based on two criteria (Tansey 2007: 770-771). The first was positional and involved the selection of relevant players on the basis of organisational charts. The second was reputational and relied,

both on mentions in documents and on the snowballing technique (Tansey 2007: 770). The goal of the latter was to identify individuals that were not listed in organisational charts, but were nevertheless closely involved in or well informed about the analysed decision-making processes.

The expert interviews were semi-structured. They followed a pre-determined questionnaire but left ample room for probing questions or requests for further examples. The questionnaire was based on prior case knowledge and mainly consisted of open-ended questions (for an example, see Appendix 3). Open-ended questions maximise response validity as they permit the interviewee to provide a personal interpretation of events or episodes and to organise answers in his or her own words (Aberbach and Rockman 2002: 674). This is particularly relevant for elite interviewing, as highly educated and knowledgeable individuals are often reluctant to be put into intellectual straightjackets by close-ended questions (Aberbach and Rockman 2002: 674).

Between July 2011 and December 2013, the author interviewed a total of 46 experts in Brussels, Paris, London, Berlin, and Rome (for a list, see Appendix 2). Due to limited availability, three interviews were conducted by telephone. Prior to the interview, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study. Depending on their nationality and preference, interviews were held in English, German, French, or Spanish, and usually lasted between 45 and 75 minutes. At the end of each interview, respondents were invited to indicate how they would like to be referenced, if at all. Interviews were not recorded due to the sensitivity of the topic and the simple fact that recording (or any other electronic) devices were not permitted in several of the interview locations. The conversations were, however, transcribed in the immediate aftermath on the basis of notes and recall. All interview quotes appearing in this thesis were translated to English by the author. They are referenced according to interviewee preferences and distinguished by capital letters and interview year.

Interviews bear at least three potential sources for bias. First, there may be problems of recall as the events analysed in this thesis lie, at least, several months back. Interviewees may have forgotten details and intricacies of decision-making

processes. Second, interviews can be subject to ex-post rationalisation and social desirability bias (Schnell et al. 2008: 233, 255). According to George and Bennett (2005a: 102), policy-makers have a tendency to depict past events as “careful, multi-dimensional process of policymaking”. Finally, interviewees may consciously distort or omit information, for either private (career-related) or official reasons related to standards of confidentiality and professional loyalty. Recognising the potential for bias, interviews were carefully treated as ex-post accounts of events and the resulting information was compared across data sources and interview partners (Yin 2009: 108-109).<sup>53</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This chapter prepared the ground for empirical enquiry. It translated the elusive concept of coherence into observable, qualitative indicators, and grouped them along an ordinal scale. It further provided indicators for the theoretically derived independent variables. A comparative case study design was chosen to account for the complexity of policy coherence as a social phenomenon without clear boundaries. The comparison focuses on three cases of post-Lisbon crisis management in Africa, namely in Libya (February 2011-October 2011), Somalia (November 2011-November 2012), and Mali (March 2012-August 2013). The main method this thesis applies for within-case analysis is process tracing. Cross-case comparison follows the method of structured, focused comparison. The analysis draws on insights from official documents, political speech acts, national parliamentary debates, analyses by leading think tanks, media reports, and 46 semi-structured interviews with EU and national officials.

The following four chapters represent the implementation of the outlined research design and methods. After a brief contextual background, the case studies evaluate the degree of coherence in EU crisis management. The subsequent sections turn to the causes of (in)coherence by systematically addressing the questions of structured,

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<sup>53</sup> Thematic text analysis with the data analysis software NVivo provided for direct comparison across interview partners and with official political discourse.

focused comparison and the answers proposed by the hypotheses. Chapter seven brings the findings of the three case studies together, in line with the outlined modes of case comparison.

## Chapter 4: Libya – the first test for post-Lisbon crisis management<sup>54</sup>

The Libyan crisis in 2011 was the first major foreign policy crisis after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. It was a crisis in the EU's neighbourhood. A UN resolution was passed authorising "all necessary measures" to protect civilians. Support for Western-led intervention from the region itself was clear. The UN's reaction was lauded for its unprecedented speed, strength, and unity. NATO's military intervention was described as a success and proof of the Alliance's *raison d'être*. Meanwhile, the EU's crisis reaction was described as hesitant, slow, divided, and essentially incoherent. The question is: Was the Union's crisis response really as incoherent as media reports suggested and, if so, why?

Despite the absence of an overarching strategy, the Union's crisis reaction was largely coherent in evacuation, humanitarian assistance, and economic sanctions. However, unilateral member state actions or inactions stood in the way of a unified and synergetic crisis reaction in terms of diplomacy and defence. National divisions – particularly between the 'Big Three' – restrained the autonomous impact of institutional actors to achieve vertical coherence. Their ability to ensure horizontal coherence was further limited by competitive dynamics resulting from overlapping competences and resource dependence. Cognitive barriers stemming from the diversity of organisational cultures reinforced both intra- and inter-institutional tensions.

This chapter starts with a background section on EU-Libya relations, the 2011 crisis, and international reactions. Section 2 evaluates the degree of coherence in the Union's crisis response as relatively low. Sections 3 and 4 analyse the underlying causes. The former evaluates the role of France, the UK, and Germany and the latter addresses the role and interaction of the Union's institutional players.

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<sup>54</sup> Some of the empirical findings of this case study have been published in academic journals, policy briefs, and edited volumes (see: Koenig 2011a; 2011b; 2012; 2014b; 2014a).

## 4.1 Libya, the crisis, and the EU's response

In the past, Libya traditionally resisted the Union's attempts to export its own values. At the same time, it was subject to a diversity of partly competing European national economic and security interests. This section reviews the historical relationship between the Union and Libya before turning to the main topic of this case study: the 2011 crisis and the Union's short- to medium term response.

### *The EU and Libya: a changing relationship*

After three decades of Italian colonial rule and an interim period of British and French administration, Libya became a constitutional monarchy in 1951. In 1969, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi executed a military *coup d'état* against King Idris. Eight years later, Gaddafi proclaimed the Socialist People's Libyan Arab *Jamahiriya*. The *Jamahiriya*, or state of the masses, was forged around networks of familial and tribal patronage; characterised by the absence of political parties; and founded on the principles of Arab nationalism and anti-imperialism (Joffé 2011: 235).<sup>55</sup> It soon acquired the reputation of a 'rogue state' and sponsor of anti-Western terrorism (Zoubir 2009: 414).<sup>56</sup> But the real turning point only came in the early 1990s when Libya was accused of implication in the bombings of the Pan American Airways flight over Lockerbie (1988) and the *Union des Transport Aériens* (UTA) flight over Chad and Niger (1989). The UN reacted by imposing economic sanctions on Libya's oil sector and air travel in 1992 and 1993 (Joffé 2011: 236).<sup>57</sup>

Libya's international isolation only ended in 1999 when it surrendered the two Lockerbie suspects to be tried before a Scottish Court (Zoubir 2009: 406). The UN and the EU immediately lifted their sanctions. In the following years, Libya agreed to

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<sup>55</sup> The regime adhered to the idea that Arab nations, united by their history, religion, culture, and language should oppose Western colonialism, expansionism, and interference.

<sup>56</sup> The regime was accused of being responsible for the killing of a British policewoman in 1984, leading the UK to break off diplomatic relations. In addition, it was suspected of supplying of weapons to the Irish Republic Army and held responsible for the bombing of Berlin's 'La Belle' discothèque in 1986.

<sup>57</sup> See UN Security Council resolutions 748 (1992) and 883 (1993).



compensate the families of the Lockerbie and UTA bombings victims, abandon its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and cooperate in the field of counter-terrorism (Joffé 2011).

The 2000s saw the strengthening of commercial and diplomatic ties with Europe. In 2006, Libya became the EU's third biggest supplier of crude oil and its sixth biggest supplier of natural gas (European Commission 2012b). The desert state also developed into an important export market for European goods, including defence equipment (Joffé 2011: 238).<sup>58</sup> The rise in bilateral trade coincided with diplomatic *rapprochement*. In December 2007, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy received Gaddafi in Paris. In August 2008, the former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi signed a friendship treaty with Libya and welcomed its leader for his first visit to Rome a year later. Former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair actively developed the British-Libyan relationship, culminating in the controversial release of Lockerbie bomber Abdelbaset Al-Megrahi in 2009 (Freeman 2011). During a 2004 visit to Tripoli, former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder announced the renewal of bilateral ties with Libya and invited its leader to Berlin. The visit, however, never materialised as successor Angela Merkel rejected the idea in principle and allegedly even refused to shake the tyrant's hands (Alexander 2011).

In 2007, the European Commission initiated negotiations for an EU-Libya Framework Agreement. According to Joffé (2011: 243), the Commission acted as "technical vehicle" for the negotiations while the political thrust mainly came from Italy, France, and the UK. All three had commercial objectives, and Italy was particularly keen to Europeanise its bilateral efforts in the area of migration control (Joffé 2011; Zoubir 2009). As a result, the negotiations mainly focused on the country's economic development and migration management, and less on normative issues such as human rights and democratisation. Overall, EU-Libyan relations were representative of a broader pattern associated with the Union's relations with its

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<sup>58</sup> Between 2004 and 2010, EU member states, led by Italy, France, the UK, and Germany, granted export licenses for €1,13 billion worth of arms exports to the autocratic regime (Council 2011c).

Southern neighbourhood, which consisted of prioritising stability and security at the expense of the promotion of democracy and human rights (Hollis 2012).

### *The Libyan uprising and international reactions*

Events in December 2010 put an end to the illusion of stability. The self-immolation of Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi triggered a historic wave of uprisings against state oppression in the Arab World. Within weeks, the long-standing Tunisian and Egyptian dictators gave way to popular demands and stepped down. In February 2011, the wave of protests attained Libya. The arrest of human rights activist Fethi Tarbel on 15 February 2011 sparked riots in Benghazi. Protests soon spread to other parts of the country and transformed into a general uprising against Gaddafi and his clan. The regime reacted with massive repression and violence against civilians. In a televised speech on 22 February 2011, Gaddafi swore to fight to “his last drop of blood”, threatened to “cleanse Libya house by house”, and urged his supporters to “fill the streets” and to attack the “rats” and “cockroaches” protesting against him (in Wiley 2011). On 5 March 2011, defected regime members and rebel leaders created the National Transitional Council (NTC) in Benghazi, which declared itself “the sole representative of all Libya” (National Transitional Council 2011).

In a press statement of 22 February 2011, the members of the UN Security Council (UNSC) voiced their “grave concern” over the situation in Libya and urged the Libyan government to “meet its responsibility to protect its civilians” (UNSC 2011).<sup>59</sup> The UNSC unanimously adopted resolution 1970 on 26 February 2011, referring the situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and imposing an arms embargo and targeted sanctions on key members of the Libyan regime.<sup>60</sup> On 7 March 2011, the Gulf Cooperation Council called for the imposition of a no-fly zone

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<sup>59</sup> The responsibility to protect is an emerging international norm, which has developed in the realm of the UN since 1999. If a government manifestly fails to fulfil the duty of protecting its own population, the international community has to intervene, including the use of coercive measures such as sanctions and the use of force (Gottwald 2012).

<sup>60</sup> UNSC, *S/RES/1970 (2011)*.

over Libya (Keyrouz 2011). The Arab League echoed this call on 12 March 2011 (Khalaf 2011). Faced with continued violence and assured of regional support, the UNSC passed resolution 1973 on 17 March 2011, establishing a no-fly zone and authorising the member states to “take all necessary measures (...) to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack (...) while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory”.<sup>61</sup>

Two days later, a multi-national coalition, spearheaded by the US, France, and the UK started a campaign of air strikes against Gaddafi’s forces. On 23 March 2011, NATO took charge of the naval enforcement of the arms embargo. At the end of the month, the Alliance took over command of all air operations and unified the naval and aerial components under operation ‘Unified Protector’.<sup>62</sup> Despite daily air strikes, a military stalemate emerged in April 2011 (Alcaro 2011). The stalemate was not broken until early August 2011, when the rebels launched a forceful offensive from the Nafusa mountains. They eventually took over Tripoli on 22 August 2011 as Gaddafi and his family fled the city.

During a conference in Paris on 1 September 2011, the international community met with the Libyan opposition and agreed that the UN would play a leading role in coordinating support for the country’s reconstruction and consolidation. On 16 September 2011, the UN General Assembly formally recognised the NTC as Libya’s sole representative and granted it a UN seat. Gaddafi was captured and killed on Libyan territory on 20 October 2011. Three days later, the NTC announced the end of hostilities and declared the country’s liberation. Consequently, NATO ended all air operations over Libya on 31 October 2011.

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<sup>61</sup> UNSC, *S/RES/1973 (2011)*.

<sup>62</sup> Operation Unified Protector was carried out by eleven EU member states, Norway, Turkey, the US, Canada, Jordan, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

### *The Union's multifaceted response*

In reaction to the Libya crisis, the EU used a broad range of its crisis management instruments. On 20 February 2011, HR Catherine Ashton (2011b) issued a declaration on behalf of the EU condemning the violent repression against peaceful demonstrators and urging the regime “to refrain from further use of violence”. Two days later, at a meeting in Cairo, she announced the suspension of the negotiations on the EU-Libya Framework Agreement (Ashton 2011c). The Heads of State or Government went a step further at the extraordinary European Council meeting on 11 March 2011, urging Gaddafi to “relinquish power immediately” (European Council 2011). They also recognised the NTC as “a political interlocutor”. On 22 May 2011, the HR opened an EU office in Benghazi with the aim of coordinating with the member states and international organisations and of preparing the ground for European support in the transition phase (EUROPA 2011). On 12 November 2011, Ashton opened a full-fledged EU delegation in Tripoli (European Commission 2011b).

The Union's diplomatic response was paralleled by efforts in civil protection and humanitarian aid. Only a week after the outbreak of riots in Benghazi, Commission DG ECHO activated its civil protection mechanism. Together with the Consular Unit of the Situation Centre, the EUMS, and the Hungarian Council Presidency, DG ECHO facilitated member state consular operations by identifying and pooling transport for the evacuation of an estimated 5,800 EU nationals (DG ECHO 2011). In addition, the EU and its member states were the most important humanitarian donors throughout the Libyan crisis, pledging over €154,5 million (DG ECHO 2011). A large share of these funds went to the International Organisation for Migration and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to support their efforts in managing the refugee crisis.<sup>63</sup> On 29 August 2011, DG ECHO opened a field office in Tripoli to provide emergency aid.

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<sup>63</sup> As of 9 October 2011, 721,772 people had fled Libya due to the crisis (International Organisation for Migration 2011).

The EU implemented the sanctions imposed by the UNSC resolutions and went beyond them. On 28 February 2011, the Council imposed an arms embargo against Libya and targeted sanctions (that is, a visa ban and an asset freeze) on 26 persons affiliated to the Gaddafi regime.<sup>64</sup> On 10 and 21 March 2011, the Union broadened the restrictive measures to include key Libyan financial entities and another 11 persons. In line with UNSC resolution 1973, the Council foresaw the implementation of the no-fly zone and extended the asset freeze to additional persons as well as to the Libyan National Oil Corporation and five of its subsidiaries. On 12 April 2011, the Union imposed a *de facto* oil and gas embargo by subjecting 26 energy firms allegedly financing Gaddafi's regime to the asset freeze (AFP 2011b). Finally, the Council imposed sanctions on Libyan port authorities on 7 June 2011 (Council 2011e). It decided to lift its autonomous sanctions on 28 Libyan entities and to make unfrozen assets available to the benefit of the NTC on 1 September 2011 (Council 2011d).

The Union also made plans for a military CSDP operation in support of humanitarian assistance operations. On 1 April 2011, the Council adopted Decision 2011/210/CFSP on operation EUFOR Libya. Contingent on a request by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the operation would have been mandated to contribute to the safe movement and evacuation of displaced persons and support humanitarian agencies in their activities. Operation EUFOR Libya was to have an initial duration of four months and the reference amount for common costs was fixed at €7,9 million. The Council decided that its Operational Headquarters would be in Rome and appointed an Italian Operations Commander. However, UN OCHA never requested the activation of EUFOR Libya. Table 19 provides an overview of the Libyan crisis and major international and European reactions between 15 February and 31 October 2011.

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<sup>64</sup> See Council Decision 2011/137/CFSP.

**Table 19: Libyan crisis and EU response**

| Date             | Crisis and reaction   |
|------------------|---|
| 15 February 2011 | Arrest of human rights activist Fethi Tarbel and beginning of riots in Benghazi   |
| 20 February 2011 | Ashton condemns violence against civilians on behalf of EU  |
| 22 February 2011 | Suspension of negotiations on EU-Libya Framework Agreement  |
| 23 February 2011 | Commission DG ECHO activates civil protection mechanism   |
| 26 February 2011 | Adoption of UNSC Resolution 1970  |
| 28 February 2011 | Council adopts decision 2011/137/CFSP implementing UNSC Resolution 1970   |
| 10 March 2011    | Council extends economic sanctions to key financial institutions  |
| 11 March 2011    | Extraordinary European Council meeting: Heads of State or Government urge Gaddafi to relinquish power and recognise NTC as a political interlocutor |
| 5 March 2011     | Establishment of National Transitional Council in Benghazi  |
| 17 March 2011    | Adoption of UNSC Resolution 1973  |
| 19 March 2011    | Multi-national coalition begins campaign of air strikes   |
| 21 March 2011    | Council imposes autonomous sanctions against 11 persons and 9 entities  |
| 23 March 2011    | NATO assumes command of enforcement of naval embargo  |
| 24 March 2011    | Council amends decision 2011/137/CFSP to implement UNSC Resolution 1973   |
| 31 March 2011    | NATO assumes command of all air operations over Libya   |
| 1 April 2011     | Council adopts decision 2011/210/CFSP on operation EUFOR Libya  |
| 12 April 2011    | Council imposes autonomous sanctions on Libyan oil and gas sector   |
| 22 May 2011      | Ashton opens EU liaison office in Benghazi  |

| Date              | Crisis and reaction  |
|-------------------|--|
| 7 June 2011       | Council imposes sanctions on Libyan port authorities                           |
| 22 August 2011    | Libyan opposition takes over Tripoli   |
| 29 August 2011    | Commission DG ECHO opens field office in Tripoli                               |
| 1 September 2011  | Paris conference on Libya  |
| 16 September 2011 | UN General Assembly formally recognises the NTC as Libya's sole representative |
| 20 October 2011   | Gaddafi is captured and killed   |
| 23 October 2011   | NTC declares end of hostilities and Libya's liberation                         |
| 31 October 2011   | NATO ends all air operations over Libyan territory                             |

*Source: own compilation*

## 4.2 A low degree of coherence

Having reviewed the different elements of the EU's crisis response, we now focus on the dependent variable, the degree of coherence. This section starts by specifying the overarching objective(s) of the Union's response to the Libyan crisis and scrutinises the extent to which it was based on a common strategy, objectives, priorities, and principles. It then moves to key European players at the vertical and horizontal governance levels and evaluates whether their action and interaction were in line with or positively contributed to the Union's stated objectives.

### *United on ends – divided on means*

The Libyan uprising caught Europe by surprise (EEAS Official A 2011). The EU's crisis management did not follow an integrated strategy, but was rather reactive and "very ad hoc" (EEAS Official D 2013). Nevertheless, there were some common European priorities. The HR and member state representatives repeatedly called for the cessation of violence against civilians and emphasised the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the safety and evacuation of European nationals. A common political objective, namely, that Gaddafi should relinquish power so that the

country could “embark on an orderly transition”, emerged within weeks after the outbreak of violence (European Council 2011).

Europeans were united on the political objective but divided on the appropriate means to attain it. On 3 March 2011, President Sarkozy and Prime Minister David Cameron wrote a joint letter to their counter-parts in the European Council calling for political support to the NTC, humanitarian assistance, the full implementation of the arms embargo, and the readiness to contribute to a no-fly zone over Libya (Sarkozy and Cameron 2011). At the extraordinary European Council, the member states fell short of endorsing the proposed no-fly zone. A decisive intervention by Chancellor Merkel led to a less specific commitment to “examine all necessary options, provided that there is a demonstrable need, a clear legal basis and support from the region” (European Council 2011). Meanwhile, Ashton warned that a no-fly zone would entail significant risks and potentially large numbers of civilian deaths (in Nicholas and Traynor 2011).

While the meaning of “all necessary options” was deliberately left open, the member states agreed that their examination was to be guided by two key principles. The first was Libyan ownership, including assurances of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. The second was multilateralism: the cooperation with other international partners such as the UN or NATO, and crucially also with the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council. European leaders continuously underlined these principles in declarations and rejected allegations of Western-led regime change, a goal that was clearly *not* inscribed in UNSC resolutions 1970 and 1973.

### ***Diplomacy: mixed messages***

On 20 February 2011, the same day Ashton condemned the use of violence by the Gaddafi regime, Berlusconi declared that he had not called Gaddafi as he did not want to “disturb” him in a situation that was “still in flux” (in Reuters 2011a). One day later, former Italian foreign minister Franco Frattini stressed that Europe should not intervene, interfere, or try to export democracy to Libya (in Stratfor 2011). Meanwhile, Czech foreign minister Karel Schwarzenberg dismissed the Union’s condemnations as an attempt to demonstrate its “own importance” (in Philipps



2011). He held that the EU should not “get involved too much” as Gaddafi’s fall would entail “bigger catastrophes in the world” (in Philipps 2011). As a result, the press reported that the EU was “struggling to speak with one voice following a massive loss of life in Libya” (Philipps 2011).

Another issue subject to vertical incoherence was the recognition of the NTC. In early March 2011, a British mission, consisting of diplomats, Special Forces, and intelligence agents arrived in Benghazi with the aim of establishing first contacts with the Libyan opposition (Chulov et al. 2011). The team – which seemingly arrived unannounced and heavily armed – was captured by Libyan rebels and only released some days later. European diplomats were reportedly “puzzled by the unilateral act of James Bond diplomacy” (McGreal and Wintour 2011), which impaired Cameron’s endeavour to forge a strong EU alliance against the Libyan regime at the extraordinary European Council.

One day before the extraordinary European Council on 11 March 2011, France surprised its European partners by recognising the NTC as the sole legitimate representative of Libya and announcing the exchange of ambassadors. A spokesperson of Ashton reacted by saying, “we cannot unilaterally rush into recognising groups”, a position backed by Germany, Britain, Italy, and others (EurActiv 2011). The latter were displeased with France’s unilateral move, as it precluded a common approach towards the Libyan opposition (European Diplomat A 2011). When asked why the French had not consulted their European partners before, French Diplomat A (2011) said that this was “*la diplomatie électro-choc*” geared to push the other member states towards recognition. However, after heated discussions, the Heads of State or Government only agreed to recognise the NTC as *a* and not as the *sole* political interlocutor (European Council 2011).

According to European Diplomat E (2013), the EU liaison office in Benghazi established in May 2011 provided for regular intra-European consultation and coordination on the ground. However, the British “continued to hold their cards to the chest” (European Diplomat E 2013). He described the British position as a typical example of “splendid isolation” based on the desire to steer the Libyan

dossier. Italy became the second European nation to grant full diplomatic recognition to the NTC, Germany followed suit in June, and the UK in July 2011. But the EU as a whole only recognised the NTC at the margins of the UN General Assembly in September 2011.

### *Sanctions: initial reluctance and controversial interpretation*

While the ‘Big Three’ pushed for the immediate imposition of sanctions, Italy, Malta, and Cyprus vetoed a corresponding decision at the Foreign Affairs Council meeting on 23 February 2011. The three Mediterranean countries feared that a strong stance would have migratory consequences. These fears were fuelled by Gaddafi’s repeated threats to “unleash an unprecedented wave of illegal immigration” if Europeans exerted pressure on the regime (Hewitt 2011). Even after the Europeans agreed on sanctions, Italy continued to drag its feet. It initially insisted on a “narrow interpretation” of the asset freeze on the Libyan finance sector and continued to oppose the imposition of an oil and gas embargo (Castonguay 2011). But, once initial reluctance was overcome, the Europeans gradually strengthened their sanctions regime.

Another controversial issue was the delivery of arms to Libyan rebels. In June and July 2011, the Italians and French dropped arms on Libyan territory. Juppé (2011a) justified this action as support to the self-defence of Libyan civilians under threat. He further argued that the arms embargo imposed by UNSC 1970 and implemented by the EU only targeted the Gaddafi regime (Juppé 2011d). The British initially opposed the delivery of arms stating that the embargo applied to the “whole of Libya” (Hague 2011). They softened their stance in direction of the French (and US)<sup>65</sup> position in late March 2011 (Cameron 2011c). German Official C (2013) described the delivery

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<sup>65</sup> At the London conference on 29 March 2011, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared that the aim of protecting civilians with all necessary measures inscribed in resolution 1973 overrode the absolute prohibition of arms delivery to the Jamahiriya foreseen by resolution 1970 (Watt 2011).

of arms as a “creative interpretation of international law”. However, these doubts were not expressed publicly (European Diplomat F 2013).

### *The use of force: minimum consensus*

The most blatant divisions among the member states concerned the use of force and the CSDP. While France and the UK were key proponents of UNSC resolution 1973, Germany broke ranks and abstained in the corresponding vote on 17 March 2011 (together with Brazil, India, China, and Russia). On 23 March 2011, when NATO took over the naval enforcement of the arms embargo, Germany immediately announced the withdrawal of its warships and Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) staff from the Alliance’s operations in the Mediterranean (Benitez 2011b).<sup>66</sup>

The decision to transfer the command to NATO then divided the French, the British, and the Italians. During the first three weeks of March 2011, the French foreign minister issued press statements rejecting a NATO takeover arguing that the US-led Alliance would send the wrong signals to the Arab world (see for example Juppé 2011c). Meanwhile, the Italians wanted to avoid a French-led coalition of the willing and made the use of their airbases conditional on a handover to NATO (European Diplomat C 2011). The US and the UK also urged the French to agree to a NATO lead. Yet it was only some days after the start of air operations, when the French realised that the success of the operation might depend on American capabilities that they gave in (Senior NATO Official A 2011). A condition was that Arab countries would be welcomed to join the NATO-led operation (French Diplomat A 2011).

Due largely to Germany’s rejection of the use of force, an important military role for the EU was soon off the agenda (EEAS Official E 2013). However, Germany was not the only member state that was reluctant. The only two that pushed for engagement in the framework of the CSDP were France and Italy. At the

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<sup>66</sup> The two German navy vessels were redeployed with NATO’s counter-terror operation Active Endeavour one week after the start of the Alliance’s Libya operations (Benitez 2011a).

extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council meeting on 11 March 2011, Italy proposed a naval EU-NATO operation for the enforcement of the arms embargo. According to a European Official (2012), “this would have been an interesting way to cooperate with NATO. (...) Militarily, it would have been feasible”. The proposal was supported by the French but rejected by several member states, including the UK and Germany, who preferred NATO lead (European Diplomat A 2011).

After lengthy deliberations, the member states decided on operation EUFOR Libya, which French Diplomat C (2011) described as the “EU’s consolation prize”. Several member states, including Germany and Britain, had insisted that its deployment should depend on a call by UN OCHA. The French wanted to broaden this condition to include a potential call by the then French-led UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (European Diplomat F 2013). At the time, UN OCHA, known for its strong stance against blurring humanitarian and military lines, was under British lead. Germany and the UK both calculated that, under these circumstances, a call for EUFOR Libya would be rather unlikely (European Diplomat F 2013). And in fact, the call never came.

### *Institutional coherence: contested leadership*

Shortly after Ashton condemned the use of force and called on the Gaddafi regime to refrain from further violence, similar statements by the Presidents of the European Parliament, European Council, and European Commission followed (Ashton 2011b; Ashton 2011a; Buzek 2011; Barroso 2011; Van Rompuy 2011). Largely consistent with one another as well as with other EU documents, the multiplicity of statements had few repercussions in the media (Busse 2011). However, as European Diplomat A (2011) critically remarked, “[t]his is not what we understand by ‘speaking with one voice’”.

On the role of the EEAS, a Senior Commission Advisor (2011) noted: “It had a limited role, at least initially. Humanitarian aid was supposed to be coordinated by the department for crisis response under Agostino Miozzo. Yet the relationship and coordination with DG ECHO still leaves [much] to be desired, in part due also to bureaucratic competition and battles for turf”. In addition to tensions between the

Commission and the EEAS, the role of DG CROC was contested within the EEAS. Operational from January 2011, the department was the ‘newcomer’ among the Union’s crisis management structures. According to a European Official (2012), it was unclear at what point the leadership of DG CROC started and, more importantly, when it was to be handed over to other actors such as the EUMS.

The European Parliament (EP) was an ardent critic of the response of the HR/EEAS to the Arab spring in general, and to the Libyan crisis in particular: “We would like to see from you a more proactive approach” or “[y]our job is superfluous, it’s money thrown out of the window” were amongst the critiques that emerged from the EP (in Anon. 2011b). The EP’s criticism enabled the HR to defend the EU’s reaction to the Libyan crisis publicly, but it also increased the publicity of intra-European divisions (Anon. 2011a).

In addition, the EP actively pushed for a more proactive European crisis response. On 8 March 2011, the Liberal group invited two NTC representatives to Strasbourg. In a resolution of 10 March 2011, parliamentarians called for strong diplomatic, humanitarian, and military assistance of the Libyan opposition, including the diplomatic recognition of the NTC (European Parliament 2011). On 9 March 2011, Ashton coincided with the NTC representatives in Strasbourg and had to resist pressure by members of the EP (MEPs) to establish contact with them. The divisions of the member states only allowed for a “secret” meeting behind closed doors (Helwig 2013: 247).

### ***Overall assessment***

The EU’s crisis response did not follow a collective strategy. Nevertheless, the Europeans rapidly agreed on a common political objective, which was that Gaddafi should relinquish power. In areas of common priority, such as the evacuation of national citizens and the provision of humanitarian aid, the EU’s action was forceful, coordinated, and coherent. After the initial reluctance of some Mediterranean member states was overcome, the Europeans gradually established a strong sanctions regime. But at the same time, there were vertical inconsistencies in the Union’s first diplomatic reactions to the crisis. Unilateral member state initiatives prevented a

common European approach towards the Libyan opposition. In addition, there were unilateral deviations from the Union's sanctions regime. Most importantly, the Union was openly divided on the use of force and modes of multilateral cooperation.

Meanwhile, the role of the Union's institutions in fostering a coherent crisis response was limited and their interaction was fraught with tensions and duplications. They did not speak with one, but rather with many voices. Though interviewees reported cooperative relations between DG ECHO and parts of the EEAS, there were tensions surrounding the new department for crisis response (EUMS Official 2012; EEAS Officials D and E 2013). The EP criticised the European crisis response while the press quoted European diplomats saying that the CFSP had "drifted away" or that the CSDP "died" over Libya (Armellini 2011). The combination of these factors leads to the conclusion that the degree of coherence of the EU's response to the Libyan crisis in 2011 was relatively *low*.

### **4.3 The 'Big Three': diverging interests and norms**

Did conflicting interests or norms stand behind member state divisions and unilateral actions? The previous sections indicated that Italy – a former colonial power with strong economic and political ties to Libya – was a relevant player in the EU's crisis response (see Koenig 2011b). But, in line with theoretical assumptions and for reasons of cross-case comparability, the following focuses on the 'Big Three'. The analysis starts by evaluating the French response before moving the British and German ones.

#### ***France: domestic incentives and Europeanism***

France played a leading role in the drafting process of UNSC resolutions 1970 and 1973 and was the first nation to recognise the NTC. It pushed for the imposition of the no-fly zone and demonstrated military leadership in its implementation. But why did France play such a proactive role, leading the EU at times and leaving it behind at others?

Prior to the crisis, France was Libya's third most important trading partner after Italy and Germany. It received 15.7 per cent of its total imports in crude oil from the

desert state (International Energy Agency 2011) and accounted for 18.7 per cent of total foreign direct investment in Libya making it the country's leading foreign investor (Salem 2011). But despite strong economic ties, France was among the first nations calling for economic sanctions against the regime. At the time, it was still uncertain whether or to what extent the Gaddafi regime would survive the crisis. It thus seems unlikely that France's early leadership on the Libyan dossier originated in economic costs-benefit calculation.

However, such a calculation might have played a role in the subsequent approach towards the NTC. In September 2011, the French newspaper *Libération* published a letter, dated 3 April 2011, in which the NTC promised the French government the right to exploit 35 per cent of Libya's oil in exchange for complete and sustained support (de Filippis 2011). While Paris and the NTC denied the existence of such a deal, the latter admitted that the future exploitation of Libyan oil resources would reflect its appreciation for the support (Rousseau 2011). Such lucrative perspectives might have contributed to France's unilateral recognition of the NTC and its controversial decisions to provide the Libyan opposition with arms and military advisors.

But France's leading role in the Libyan crisis also has to be seen against the backdrop of its broader reaction to the Arab uprisings and the resulting domestic criticism (French Diplomat A 2011). France's reaction to the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings was reluctant and slow. In January 2011, three days before protesters forced the Tunisian leader to step down, former foreign minister Michèle Alliot-Marie offered the expertise of French security forces to quell the uprising (Willsher 2011). The government's stance was sharply criticised at the domestic level, culminating in the publication of a letter by French diplomats under the pseudonym 'Marly' on 22 February 2011. The diplomats criticised Sarkozy's foreign policy as "amateurish", "impulsive", and "improvised", and rejected the President's continued backing of the Tunisian and Egyptian regimes as "mainstays of the south" (Marly 2011). As a result, Alliot-Marie had to resign while Sarkozy's approval ratings dropped to an all-time low of 30 per cent in February 2011 (Ruitenbergh 2011).

“Libya represented a turning point in France’s reaction to the Arab uprisings” (French Diplomat A 2011). It was also a good opportunity to mark a shift away from the much-criticised patterns of ‘politique arabe’ and ‘Françafrique’ towards democratisation and human rights.<sup>67</sup> This shift was well received by the French public. In March 2011, not only a great majority in the Assemblée Nationale, but also 66 per cent of the French population approved of military intervention in Libya (Ifop/l’Humanité 2011).<sup>68</sup> These approval rates were relevant for Sarkozy as he prepared for presidential elections in April 2012, in which he was not only facing his Socialist opponent but also intense electoral pressure from the populist right-wing party National Front. Various interviewees interpreted Sarkozy’s leadership on the Libyan dossier as an attempt to distract the domestic audience from internal economic problems by demonstrating France’s capability to act abroad (European Diplomat D 2013, German Official C 2013, Think Tank Expert A 2013).

In public declarations, the French government justified its proactive role on the basis of the responsibility to protect (Juppé 2011e). French politicians argued that the international community needed to learn its lessons from previous massacres such as the one in Srebrenica, and emphasised the need to support the Libyan’s popular quest for liberty, democracy, and human rights (Juppé 2011f). These norm-based arguments resonate with key principles of French foreign policy including its sense of international responsibility and the Gaullist concept of the ‘*mission civilisatrice*’ (Skupin 2011).<sup>69</sup> The pronounced support for the opposition was in line with a national identity shaped by the emergence from the French revolution in 1789. But

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<sup>67</sup> Conceived by General de Gaulle, the “politique arabe” designates France’s special relationship with the Maghreb countries (Skupin 2011: 19). Françafrique is a more pejorative term used to describe a traditional network of clientelistic economic and political ties between France and its former colonies (Sold 2012).

<sup>68</sup> Approval rates gradually dropped starting from April 2011 when a military stalemate between the rebel forces and Gaddafi loyalists emerged. But even at their lowest point (June-August) they were still at 49 per cent (Schu 2013).

<sup>69</sup> The ‘*mission civilisatrice*’ can be seen as a sub-category of the French sense of international responsibility. It reflects a self-understanding of being predestined to spread democracy, freedom, and human rights – “universal values of enlightenment and the French Revolution” (Marcussen et al. 1999: 620).



the relative absence of these principles and values in France's reaction to the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings indicates that they were at least not the most decisive factors behind the nation's proactive response to the Libyan crisis.

When it came to the implementation of the no-fly zone, France's preferred option was a Franco-British-led coalition of the willing (van Loon 2012). This preference was in line with the country's traditional desire for independence and autonomy in security matters (Bucher et al. 2013). Pragmatic considerations pushed France to accept NATO leadership (French Diplomat A 2011). But when speaking about operation Unified Protector, the French President and foreign minister continued to emphasise that the Franco-British couple was, in fact, leading "l'Europe de la défense" (Sarkozy 2011). They belittled NATO's role, stating that it was merely the military arm of the political decision-making body, which was the Libya Contact Group (Juppé 2011b).<sup>70</sup> According to a French military source, they tried to find "a way to get Nato involved without it being seen to head the operation" (in Willsher 2011).

Meanwhile, France continued to push for a military CSDP operation (European Diplomat A 2011). According to European Diplomat C (2011), "it did not matter whether it corresponded to the needs or whether it was logical. The important thing was to present some EU crisis management contribution". The instinctive push for an EU role was consistent with France's traditional Europeanist stance of promoting the Union's politico-military ambitions (French Diplomat A 2011). When the Europeans settled for the compromise of operation EUFOR Libya, the French were disappointed (Senior NATO Official A 2013). At the Foreign Affairs Council on 21 March 2011, Juppé (2011a) said that the Union was behaving like a "humanitarian NGO". After the meeting, he told the press: "The common security and defence policy of Europe? It is dead" (Ash 2011).

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<sup>70</sup> The Libya Contact Group was established following the London Conference on 29 March 2011, and conceived as a forum for political discussion on the situation in Libya. Co-chaired by the UK and Qatar, the group included 21 nations as well as representatives of the UN, NATO, the EU, the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Conference, and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

France's proactive role in the Libyan crisis was thus in line with electoral considerations, its traditional sense of international responsibility, and its activist stance on the use of force. The insistence on a distinct European role resonates with the country's traditional Europeanist stance. However, there was a disconnect between the pragmatic acceptance of a NATO framework and the maintenance of a Europeanist discourse. The de-coupling between speech and action indicates that – though influential – Europeanist principles were not decisive in light of prevailing strategic incentives. Strategic political and economic considerations seemed to motivate France's unilateral deviations from EU coherence norms.

### ***UK: enlightened self-interest and Atlanticism***

The British leadership on the Libyan dossier was less pronounced than that of France. Nevertheless, the UK was the first country to propose a no-fly zone, closely cooperated with France on the drafting of the UNSC resolutions, and was a key contributor to NATO operation Unified Protector. Why did the UK insist on involving NATO and what role did it foresee for the EU?

While Britain had economic interests in Libya, its trade ties were weaker than French or Italian ones. It received 8.5 per cent of its total crude oil imports from Libya, but was not among Libya's top trading partners (International Energy Agency 2011). The consequences of the Arab uprisings for the fluctuation of the oil price were discussed in the House of Commons, but there is no evidence that these discussions had major influence on the British reaction to the Libyan crisis. Parts of the public debate even centred on the question why Britain should risk intervention in a case where its national interests were *not* directly at stake (Johnson and Mueen 2011).

Britain's domestic context provides some answers to this question. The Arab uprisings were the first major foreign policy crisis for Cameron's relatively new coalition government, which had been criticised for its cautious reaction to the events in Tunisia and Egypt. When violence broke out in Libya, the Prime Minister clearly distanced himself from the diplomatic rapprochement of the previous government and its "dodgy" deals with the Gaddafi regime, including the controversial release of the Lockerbie bomber Al-Megrahi in 2009 (House of Commons 2011b). UK

Diplomat C (2013) commented on the difficult relationship with the Gaddafi regime: “In the 1980s, there was the Lockerbie bombing and a British policewoman was killed. Then, there was a process of reconciliation and normalisation under the Blair government. So it was clear that Britain had to play a role in 2011.”

However, players in the domestic arena were divided on the nature of this role. Cameron’s strong backing for the no-fly zone was supported by an overwhelming majority of 557 Members of Parliament (Snowdon 2011).<sup>71</sup> This support was in line with Britain’s sense of international responsibility and activist stance on the use of force. UK Diplomat C (2013) noted that there “was a striking element of continuity between the Blair and Cameron governments on foreign intervention”. By contrast, the British public, sceptical of the use of force after Iraq and Afghanistan, was divided on the Libyan intervention.<sup>72</sup> The contrast between elite and public opinion suggests that the latter was not decisive for Britain’s leadership in the Libyan crisis. British decision-making on the Libyan intervention was generally described as “top down” (Johnson and Mueen 2011). The fact that there were no major elections on the horizon might have reinforced this trend.

In official statements, the government justified the intervention as being “necessary”, “legal”, “right”, and in Britain’s national interest (Cameron 2011d). It was necessary because Gaddafi continued to exert violence against civilians. It was legal because there was a clear UNSC resolution and broad regional and international support. And it was right because Britain “should not stand aside while this dictator murders his own people” (Cameron 2011d). The emphasis on the legitimacy of the Libyan intervention was reinforced by assurances that there was no commensurability with the intervention in Iraq in 2003 (Daddow and Schnapper 2013; Mulholland 2011). The intervention was portrayed as being in Britain’s national security interest as it

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<sup>71</sup> Only 13 Members of Parliament opposed military intervention in Libya (Snowdon 2011).

<sup>72</sup> YouGov polls of 22 March 2011 showed that 45 per cent were in favour and 36 per cent against intervention. Meanwhile ComRes polls on the same date indicated that only 35 per cent supported intervention while 43 per cent opposed it (Snowdon 2011). Although these results are inconsistent they both indicate that the British public was divided.

helped prevent the development of a “failed pariah state festering on Europe’s southern border” (Cameron 2011a). However, according to Clarke (2011: 8), Libya’s strategic importance for Britain clearly ranked behind concurrent developments in Yemen, Somalia, or the Gulf.

Throughout the crisis, the UK displayed a clear preference for keeping the Americans on board and using NATO. On 24 February 2011, Cameron and Obama discussed the events in Libya and agreed to “coordinate on possible multilateral measures” (Anon. 2011c). When the Americans proved reluctant to get involved in military intervention, Cameron (2011b) reassured the House of Commons on 14 March 2011 that the contact between the two administrations was extremely regular and said he wanted “the US to focus on what is happening in Libya”. When the extraordinary European Council failed to endorse the Franco-British proposal of the no-fly zone, the British Prime Minister said: “Of course the EU is not a military alliance and I don’t want it to be a military alliance. Our Alliance is NATO” (in Nicholas and Traynor 2011).

But, for the first time, the UK’s key partner in the Alliance was France. The Lancaster House Treaties, a Franco-British defence agreement signed in November 2010, was one of the building blocks for the strong bilateral cooperation on Libya. According to Senior NATO Official B (2013), Britain almost *had* to play an important role in the crisis. “Refusing to play this role”, he said, “would have been like going on a holiday on your own within the first two weeks after the wedding”. For the UK, the Franco-British leadership was also an opportunity to show that it could cooperate with France without having to pass through Brussels (Senior NATO Official B 2013).

British politicians emphasised that Brussels could play a role in the domain of sanctions, where it “could actually make a difference” (Cameron 2011e). They spoke of the need to reform the European Neighbourhood Policy by introducing stronger conditionality in order to turn the Union into a “magnet for positive change in the region” (Hague 2011). But at the same time, they downplayed the Union’s role in the domains of diplomacy and military crisis management. Ashton’s comments on the

potential risks of a no-fly zone at the extraordinary European Council led to open clashes with Cameron (Nicholas and Traynor 2011).

Meanwhile, operation EUFOR Libya did not appear at all in British parliamentary debates, public speeches, or interviews. Even when Foreign Secretary William Hague was directly asked about potential military efforts to secure the delivery of humanitarian aid in the House of Commons in April 2011, he did not mention the EU or EUFOR Libya (House of Commons 2011a). When asked for the underlying reasons for this omission, UK Diplomat B (2013) explained: “It is part of British political instinct. If the Foreign Secretary stood up in Parliament arguing that we would do something, but only if the EU agreed to it, he would be perceived as weak”. The reluctance to involve the Union was thus in line with Britain’s ingrained Atlanticist leaning and sceptical stance on European integration (Daddow and Schnapper 2013).

### ***Germany: calculated restraint and Alliance loyalty***

From the outset of the Libyan crisis, Germany condemned the use of violence, pushed for the deferral of the case to the ICC, and called for strong economic sanctions. However, it rejected the use of force and abstained in the vote on UNSC resolution 1973. For the first time since World War II, Germany simultaneously diverged from all of its three main Western partners: France, the US, and the UK (Hansel and Oppermann 2013: 3). So why did Germany break ranks? How did the abstention resonate with traditional principles of German foreign policy? And why did it nevertheless agree to operation EUFOR Libya?

In 2010, Germany was amongst Libya’s most important trading partners and its second biggest foreign investor (Maitah et al. 2011; Salem 2011). The country ranked fourth on the list of Germany’s crude oil suppliers (Anon. 2011d).<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, Germany played a leading role on the sanctions dossier, insisted on the

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<sup>73</sup> In 2010, Germany received 7.7 per cent of its total crude oil imports from Libya (International Energy Agency 2011)

imposition of an oil and gas embargo, and was not among the first to recognise the NTC. It is thus unlikely that Germany's energy interests played a decisive role in its response to the Libyan crisis (van Loon 2012: 40). More generally, bilateral trade with Libya was not a vital German economic interest (Miskimmon 2012: 402). By 2010, the desert state ranked sixty-sixth on the list of Germany's export destinations and thirty-eighth in terms of imports. Siding with the emerging economies in the UN vote was certainly more lucrative (Miskimmon 2012; van Loon 2012).

The official narrative justifying the abstention in the Security Council was that, after "careful" and "difficult" consideration, the government concluded that the risks of German military participation exceeded the benefits and that the consequences of a no-fly zone were unforeseeable (Westerwelle 2011a). This narrative was complemented by the argument that Germany could not interfere everywhere (Westerwelle 2011a). At the same time, the Chancellor and the foreign minister underlined that Germany was not neutral and that they fully supported the political objectives on UNSC resolution 1973 (Westerwelle 2011a; Merkel 2011).

The abstention in the vote on UNSC resolution 1973 ranges amongst the most controversial decisions in post-unification German foreign policy (Hansel and Oppermann 2013). There was a strong domestic consensus that Germany should not play an important military role in the conflict (Think Tank Expert A 2013). Opinion polls in March 2011 showed that a majority of Germans were in favour of NATO intervention but against German participation (Emnid 2011). The questions that stirred the domestic debate were (a) whether Germany could have supported the resolution without participating in its military implementation,<sup>74</sup> and (b) whether it was necessary to withdraw Germany's assets from NATO's operations in the Mediterranean (Senior NATO Official A 2013; German Diplomat 2013). The debate oscillated between two sets of principles of German foreign policy: multilateralism

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<sup>74</sup> An approval of UNSC resolution 1973 would not have entailed any obligations of military participation in its implementation (Nachtwei 2011: 4).

and alliance solidarity on the one hand, and the culture of military restraint on the other.

The key driver behind the decision to abstain was the smaller coalition partner, the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP) led by foreign minister Guido Westerwelle (Hansel and Oppermann 2013).<sup>75</sup> The opposition soon accused the latter of presenting himself as a “prince of peace” in the light of his party’s plummeting popularity rates and proximate local elections in Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland Palatinate (Gabriel 2011). In both cases, the FDP faced the risk of not clearing the five per cent hurdle (Miskimmon 2012: 399). The hypothesised causal relationship between local elections and the decision to abstain is “inherently unfalsifiable” (Hansel and Oppermann 2013: 5). But as a European Diplomat (2013) put it, “the question is not so much whether there truly is a link between foreign policy decisions and electoral results. It is a more a question of the minister’s perception. He knows very well that a small error in foreign policy can come at a high price and is thus concerned about the potential risks of such decisions”.

There are, however, indicators that electoral calculation was not the sole determinant of Germany’s abstention. Hansel and Oppermann (2013) present a credible alternative explanation. They argue that Westerwelle’s position on Libya was in line with the foreign policy tradition of former liberal foreign minister and honorary FDP Chair Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who was a strong advocate of military restraint. The fact that Westerwelle consistently advocated a ‘Genscherist’ stance of military restraint in different contexts in the past, such as decisions concerning operation EUFOR RDC or the UN mission in Lebanon UNIFIL in 2006, provides substance to their argument (Hansel and Oppermann 2013: 25-26).

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<sup>75</sup> The leading role of the Liberal Party in Germany’s decision to abstain in the vote on the Libyan intervention was conditioned by concurrent international developments and coalition politics. Chancellor Merkel’s top priorities at the time were Euro crisis management and the nuclear turn-around after the Fukushima disaster. Contradicting the foreign minister on an issue which was not of primary importance and in his remit would have further undermined the stability of the coalition (Hansel and Oppermann 2013: 27; Miskimmon 2012: 400, 405).

Another relevant factor was the US's initial reservation about military intervention and its unexpected change in position. During the first two weeks of March 2011, German policy-makers thought that the Americans would veto UNSC resolution 1973 and calculated that they were "on the safe side" with an abstention (European Diplomat D 2013). Berlin was caught by surprise when the Americans decided to shift their position in favour of draft resolution 1973 one day ahead of the UNSC vote (Miskimmon 2012: 398).<sup>76</sup> But despite the US's last minute shift and ensuing pressure by the French and the British, Germany stuck with its decision to abstain (Miskimmon 2012: 398). While the initial adherence to the American position was in line with Merkel's Atlanticist outlook, the subsequent reluctance to adapt the position resonated with Germany's traditional culture of military restraint.

Germany did not veto NATO Operation Unified protector. According to Think Tank Expert A (2013), a veto would have been the "weapon of mass destruction of alliance politics". A German Diplomat (2013) described the country's behaviour within the Alliance as a "difficult balancing act", which became apparent in words and deeds. When justifying the abstention in the UNSC, German politicians emphasised the country's strong engagement in NATO's operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan (Westerwelle 2011a). Only days after the withdrawal of the AWACS and warships from NATO operations in the Mediterranean, defence minister Thomas de Maizière pushed through a decision in the Bundestag allowing for the transfer of the AWACS to Afghanistan. He justified the decision as a sign of Alliance loyalty, which became necessary against the backdrop of the Libyan intervention (De Maizière 2011). Furthermore, Germany did not withdraw its officers from NATO's command structures, 103 of which actively participated in the Alliance's targeting for Libya (Kossendey 2011). In June 2011, De Maizière agreed to deliver precision weaponry components to its NATO partners in support of the Libyan air campaign and

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<sup>76</sup> The shift in the American position reportedly resulted from joint pressure by former Secretary of State Clinton, former National Security Council member Samantha Power, and former American UN Ambassador Susan Rice (Cooper and Myers 2011). Clinton allegedly even threatened to resign unless President Obama supported the resolution (Senior NATO Official A 2011; German Diplomat 2013).



downplayed the domestically contested decision as “established Alliance routine” (Fried and Winter 2011).

Considering Germany’s stance of military restraint, it seems surprising that it agreed to operation EUFOR Libya. “The difference”, European Diplomat A (2011) explained, “was that resolution 1973 was about military intervention against the regime while EUFOR Libya was a humanitarian assistance operation”. The character of EUFOR Libya as a humanitarian operation with bounded objectives and a limited time frame was also more acceptable for the German public than an open-ended military operation without a clear exit strategy. In fact, a narrow majority of polled Germans was in favour of the country’s participation in operation EUFOR Libya (Infratest dimap 2011).<sup>77</sup>

Nevertheless, foreign ministry representatives were cautious in their elaborations on EUFOR Libya in the Bundestag in April 2011: “This is not about the approval of military action. (...) We want to enable the implementation of humanitarian action” (Pieper 2011). Meanwhile, German diplomats in Brussels were instructed to push for the designation of EUFOR Libya as a ‘mission’ rather than an ‘operation’. “This was a very important point for many members of the Bundestag” (European Diplomat D 2013). While these instructions had repercussions for some of the Union’s planning documents, the Council Decision and website were unambiguous about the military nature of *operation* EUFOR Libya.

#### **4.4 Institutional overlaps and tensions**

When the Libyan crisis broke out, HR Ashton had been in the office for just one year and the EEAS had only been operational for one and a half months. The crisis thus constituted a very early test for the Union’s post-Lisbon crisis management machinery. This section assesses the role and influence of the Union’s institutional

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<sup>77</sup> According to a survey conducted in mid-April 2011, 50 per cent of the Germans were in favour of participation in operation EUFOR Libya while 45 per cent opposed it (Infratest dimap 2011).

players. It starts by evaluating the factors associated with the rational game and then turns to explanations in the realm of sociological institutionalism.

### *The struggle for competences and resources*

Competence overlaps between different institutional actors led to tensions and competition for turf. One of the areas of overlapping competences is external representation. While there were no open turf wars between the EU's representatives, EEAS Official D (2013) described the Union's multiplicity of voices in the Libyan crisis as "embarrassing". He explained that there was no protocol in terms of the sequencing of diplomatic statements and stressed the need for increased coordination between the respective cabinets.

The tensions surrounding the new department for crisis response originated from overlapping competences and unclear leadership. In a speech at the Irish Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) in March 2012, the Director of CROC himself explained that he faced an "extremely difficult task" (Miozzo 2012). He described the situation as one where everyone agreed to coordination, but nobody wanted to be coordinated (Miozzo 2012). EEAS Official E (2013) commented: "The problem in the crisis management structures is that everyone is trying to do everyone's job. The Crisis Response Department was very new and tried to find its own role in this constellation". Tensions were further fuelled by personal animosities between the leading officials in the Union's crisis management structures (EEAS Officials D and E 2013).

In the case of inter-institutional coordination between Commission DG ECHO and the department for crisis response, relations were fraught due to interdependence and resource scarcity. The structural division between strategic guidance in the EEAS and resources in the Commission created a need for constant inter-institutional coordination. In the Libyan crisis, the department for crisis response, with few staff and resources, was dependent on DG ECHO. But ECHO refused to be coordinated by the new department (Senior Commission Advisor 2011; Senior EEAS Official A 2011).

## *Clashing organisational cultures*

Another source of inter or intra-institutional tension was the difference in organisational cultures. Clashes of organisational cultures within EU institutions were particularly salient during the Libyan crisis as it was preceded by a substantial re-organisation of departments leading to the blending of institutional traditions. In the EEAS review (2013b: 1), Ashton explained: “For Brussels based staff there followed a period of enormous uncertainty about their role in the new organisation and how they would relate to its new culture”.

One of the traditional organisational clashes within the EU foreign policy machinery, but also in national contexts, concerns the role and degree of integration of humanitarian aid. ECHO’s desire for independence has to be seen against its adherence to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence, and neutrality. According to EEAS Official D (2013), “ECHO would be happy to get rid of the EU stickers on their agencies and cars. But they needed to be associated with us because they did not have access to Gaddafi-controlled areas. There is always a tension between being too closely associated with foreign policy goals and being isolated”.

In his speech at the IIEA, Miozzo (2012) explained that he attempted to introduce a “culture of coordination” and a “culture of emergency” to the EEAS. Miozzo himself has a background in civil protection, which can at times contrast with the military or diplomatic backgrounds of other EEAS officials (Senior Commission Advisor 2011). He illustrated the cultural barriers he was facing: “I tried to introduce a code of communication in a totally different language that is not always understood by my colleagues. I tried to introduce a time frame, a reaction time that is totally different from the diplomatic reaction time” (Miozzo 2012).

One important structural change foreseen by the Lisbon Treaty was the transfer of the crisis management structures from the Council Secretariat to the EEAS. When asked about the EEAS, an EU Official (2011) described the EEAS as a Commission-dominated institution where “procedure overrules strategy”, and in which crisis management structures, are being “marginalised”. She added that the identity of the

Commission was much “stronger” than that of the Council Secretariat. The latter had only existed for one decade and lacked “real continuity” as it served the incoming Council presidencies (EU Official 2011).

The anticipated marginalisation within the EEAS had conduced some officials from the Council Secretariat’s crisis management structures to change position, that is, to move to different departments within the Secretariat before the transfer (French Diplomat B 2011). Meanwhile, others that had been transferred to the EEAS were frustrated and were trying to return to the Council Secretariat. This phenomenon also explained the EEAS’s initial lack of expertise in the field of crisis management (European Diplomat A 2011).

### *The lack of coordination and socialisation*

Interviewees in Brussels reported two obstacles to coordination between the EEAS and the Commission. First, the HR was said to be “often absent from college meetings (due also to her crowded agenda)” (Senior Commission Advisor 2011). In addition, she failed to convene the dedicated External Relations Group of Commissioners created in early 2010. Second, relations between the EEAS and Commission suffered from a lack of communication and interaction. EEAS official A (2011) that had previously worked in the Commission criticised the bureaucratisation of information exchange with his former colleagues. When asked about the added value of the EEAS, French Diplomat A (2011) commented: “Before, DG RELEX was part of the Commission. Now, there is something like an extra layer between the Commission and the EEAS”.

Between March and October 2011, the EEAS Crisis Platform was regularly convened to ensure overall coherence of the Union’s response to the Libyan crisis. EEAS officials described the Platform as a useful coordination mechanism as it brought all the relevant players from the crisis management structures together and facilitated communication and coordination (EEAS Official C 2011). However, coordination at the top did not necessarily encompass officials at lower levels (EUMS Official 2012). “They often do not want to seek the higher hierarchical layer

to sort things out. They do not feel they need to find a compromise and simply move on with their own ideas of how things should go” (EEAS Official D 2011).

A number of factors prevented the triggering of more informal socialisation dynamics, and thus, the development of a shared *esprit de corps* throughout the EEAS. The recent creation of the new institutional actor did not yet provide for intense and sustained interaction amongst its component parts. The lack of contact was reinforced by the fact that EEAS staff continued to be geographically scattered across eight different buildings in Brussels until February 2012 (Juncos and Pomorska 2012: 4).

In addition, interviewees criticised the initial composition of the HR’s cabinet or described it as lacking direction (Senior Commission Advisor 2011; EU Official 2011; EEAS Officials A 2011 and D 2013). Some interviewees held that the cabinet did not comprise enough Commission experts and thus lacked relevant know-how in terms of Commission policies and procedures (EEAS Official D 2013). Others criticised the absence of national security and foreign policy experts, and thus the lack of strategic expertise (EU Official 2011). It is unlikely that such perceptions of the EEAS’s leadership fostered its acceptance as a force for cohesive socialisation or enhanced its capacity to lower cognitive barriers within and across institutions.

Finally, the ability of the HR to increase vertical coherence was limited. Throughout the Libyan crisis, national representatives and EU officials voiced their discontent with the HR’s inability to lead or ensure coherence. In December 2011, the foreign ministers of twelve EU member states addressed a joint letter to the HR, in which they implicitly criticised the preparation of the FAC Meetings and deficient coordination between the EEAS, the Commission, and the Council Secretariat (Reynders et al. 2011). However, during the Libyan crisis, the member states were not willing to empower the HR. As a Senior Advisor to the Commission (2011) put it, “Libya was ‘Chefsache’”. The crisis was “too important and too dramatic for the EU to be a real protagonist” (Italian Official 2011). European Diplomat C (2011) mentioned that the British and French even tried to prevent Ashton from travelling to

Libya after the fall of Tripoli. The HR thus operated under heavy constraints (Helwig 2013: 248).

## **Conclusion**

The Libyan crisis showed that relevant crisis management players were aware of the common standards of appropriateness related to coherence and consistency in EU external action. A general sense of disappointment about the Union's incapacity to speak with one voice; continuous criticism of the HR and the EEAS for failing to ensure coherence and consistency; and the member states' discontent when faced with unilateral actions or inactions testify to norm influence. However, awareness did not prevent single players from deviating, leading to a relatively low degree of coherence. The latter can be seen as a result of the complex interplay of norms and interests at various levels of the EU's post-Lisbon crisis management machinery.

The context of the Arab uprisings and Gaddafi's violent reaction and rhetoric led to high public salience and politicisation, which brought domestic perspectives and electoral horizons to the fore. Germany's abstention illustrated the relevance of electoral stakes in light of the public's calculable adherence to pacifism. Lucrative economic prospects might have contributed to France's sustained, partly unilateral support to the NTC as well as Germany's siding with the emerging economies in the UN vote. The Libyan case thus offers confirming evidence for the negative effect of conflicting societal interests on the degree of coherence in EU crisis management (H1a).

Nevertheless, UK crisis decision-making seemed rather detached from domestic interests. Its military leadership was in line with its traditional sense of international responsibility and activist approach to the use of force. In addition, Britain's distinct preference for a NATO role corresponded its traditional predispositions on modes of international cooperation. The French insistence on a European contribution and the German adherence to military restraint can equally be traced back to ingrained national norms. There are thus instances of incoherence in the Libyan crisis response that can be traced back to vertical norm contestation, as suggested by hypothesis 1b. National predispositions largely prevailed over EU-level coherence norms. Yet the

German case also presents us with a situation where economic and electoral interests carry the same behavioural implications (abstention) as the domestically ingrained norm of military restraint. Cross-case comparison in chapter 7 will allow for a more informed discussion on the underlying logics of action.

As the crisis demanded a quick and forceful reaction, there was little time for inter-governmental bargaining and negotiation. France's unilateral recognition of the NTC and the UK's calculated push to make operation EUFOR Libya dependent on a request of UN OCHA are examples of competitive (H2a) rather than consensual or cooperative intergovernmental interaction (H2b). Furthermore, Germany openly justified its abstention – and thus divergence from European partners – on the grounds that the risks exceeded potential benefits of collective action. In line with liberal intergovernmentalist assumptions, all three cases led to lowest common denominator outcomes.

The high stakes associated with the reaction to the Libyan crisis induced the member states to restrain the role of EU institutional players in ensuring vertical coherence. Contextual factors further limited their potential contribution to horizontal coherence. The recent institutional re-shuffling created new competence overlaps and resource dependencies within the EEAS and with the Commission. In addition, the absence of a clear division of labour in the area of external representation led to a multiplicity of 'European voices'. In accordance with hypothesis 3a, competence overlaps generated competition for turf and bureaucratic resistance to coordination. As the Libyan crisis was a very early test for the post-Lisbon institutional infrastructure, the impact of socialisation and learning dynamics was still limited and sub-organisational norms continued to prevail over a unifying 'culture of coordination'. There was thus little evidence for hypothesis 3b.

The Libyan crisis also reflected broader trends. While the French repeatedly emphasised that the Europeans were in the lead, critical observers rather described it as "following from the front" (Vaïsse and Kundnani 2012: 15). The crisis unveiled the gradual decline of European military capabilities, a trend accelerated by the economic and debt crises. As a result, the Americans had to provide 90 per cent of

the strategic enablers for the air campaign (Biscop 2012: 1308). However, the US is less and less willing to support expensive operations in Europe's backyard. On 10 June 2011, outgoing US Defense Secretary Robert Gates (2011) prominently declared, "there will be dwindling appetite and patience in the US Congress – and in the American body politic writ large – to expend increasingly precious funds on behalf of nations that are apparently unwilling to devote the necessary resources or make the necessary changes to be serious and capable partners in their own defense".

At the same time, the crisis illustrated that the Europeans have to be prepared for strategic surprises in their neighbourhood, which might require the use of hard power. The multitude of complex and interlinked short, medium, and long-term challenges emanating from it confirmed the need for a comprehensive approach. Some European member states may still be able to spearhead a military intervention. But sustaining it and embedding it in a multidimensional longer-term crisis response requires more unified and coherent European action.



## Chapter 5: Somalia – coherent crisis management and collective interests

On 18 November 2011, the EU launched its first post-Lisbon crisis management simulation exercise, based in Brussels and member state capitals. The exercise was to incorporate ‘lessons learned’ from the Union’s crisis management in Libya and it was the first time that the EEAS took the lead (EEAS 2011a). It started four days after the adoption of an EU Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa. The crisis took place in a fictitious country named ‘Alisia’. The African Union and neighbouring countries Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Uganda were involved. It took little imagination to guess that the exercise was modelled on Somalia. The fact that the first theoretical test of post-Lisbon comprehensive crisis management was based on a Somalia-type conflict is indicative of the level of ambition and direction of EU crisis management. Observers have described the scenario as over-ambitious and “frankly too complex” (Dowdall 2011).

However, in recent years, Somalia has become a focus of EU crisis management and a showcase example for the implementation of the comprehensive approach. The present chapter shows that – despite limitations – the degree of coherence was *relatively high*. It argues that the EU’s engagement in Somalia was subject to a comparably low degree of interest polarisation among the member states. While embedded foreign policy principles played a role in domestic and intergovernmental discussions, they did not prevent European compromise outcomes. Meanwhile, institutional actors actively pushed for the implementation of the comprehensive approach and informal, bottom-up cooperation compensated for institutional tensions and rivalries.

This chapter starts by introducing relevant contextual information on the Somali conflict and international responses. Section two evaluates the degree of coherence of the Union’s engagement and illustrates why it can be classified as *relatively high*. Sections three and four present underlying reasons at the level of the member states and the EU institutions.

## 5.1 Conflict causes, symptoms, and reactions

In the past decades, Somalia turned into a safe haven for jihadist terrorists and pirates and acquired the reputation as the world's worst failed state. This section provides an overview of the country's multiple challenges before moving to overlapping international responses. While the present case study focuses on the Union's post-Lisbon crisis management, earlier international and European responses are outlined to provide the necessary context.

### *State failure and the rise of piracy*

A former British and Italian colony, Somalia's history is one of chronic unrest.<sup>78</sup> In 1991, a coalition of clan-based armed opposition groups put an end to two decades of dictatorial rule by Major General Mohamed Siad Barre. The dissolution of Somalia's central government plunged the country into a state of perpetual civil war. Since 2000, international peace conferences endorsed various transitional governments, but their authority and legitimacy was limited (ICG 2012b: 3). In 2004, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was established and became Somalia's sole internationally recognised interlocutor. Two years later, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), an Islamist umbrella group, emerged victorious from fighting with an alliance of warlords and rapidly extended its authority from Mogadishu to South Central Somalia (Bradbury 2010: 21). A US-backed Ethiopian intervention forcibly ousted the ICU from the capital in December 2006.

However, the ICU's disintegration propelled the radicalisation of jihadist insurgent organisations. One of its main splinter groups – *al-Shabaab* – retained control of large parts of South and Central Somalia.<sup>79</sup> In 2009, a merger of four Islamist groups, named *Hizbul Islam* (Islamic Party), joined the fight against the transitional authorities. Both organisations explicitly targeted the West and its peace efforts. In

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<sup>78</sup> Somalia was divided into British and Italian Somaliland. After independence in 1960, the two regions united and became the Somali Republic.

<sup>79</sup> The full name is *Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen* (Movement of Striving Youth).

2010, the TFG only controlled around 20 per cent of the Somali territory and was beleaguered in Mogadishu (Observatoire de l’Afrique 2010: 4). While the regions of Puntland and Somaliland had been *de facto* autonomous since the 1990s, the remainders were governed by warlords, clans, and armed insurgents.

In addition to political and security-related challenges, Somalia faced extreme poverty, periodic drought, and recurrent famines. In 2008, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance rose from 1,8 to 3,25 million (Council Secretariat 2010). The combination of humanitarian emergency and perpetual violence triggered massive displacement. In 2011, one quarter of the Somali population was uprooted – either internally displaced or fleeing to neighbouring countries (UNHCR 2011). Due to the intensity of economic, political, and social grievances, the Fund for Peace (2014) has consistently classified Somalia as the world’s worst failed state since 2008.

Among the symptoms of state failure was a dramatic surge in maritime piracy. In 2008, the number of pirate attacks in the waters off the Horn of Africa increased tenfold (Weber 2009: 70). Somali pirates targeted daily food shipments by the World Food Programme (WFP). Following a deadly attack on a WFP ship off the Somali coast in 2007, the organisation issued an appeal for international action against piracy. It warned that piracy threatened relief deliveries to over one million Somalis (UN News Centre 2007). In addition, more than 15 per cent of global annual trade passed through the Gulf of Aden and the Suez Canal (Helly 2009: 192). In 2011, the costs of Somali piracy to the global economy were estimated at \$7 billion (One Earth Future Foundation 2011).<sup>80</sup> In the same year, UN representatives reported growing links between piracy and terrorism as *al-Shabaab* was becoming “more desperate for funding” (Reuters 2011b).

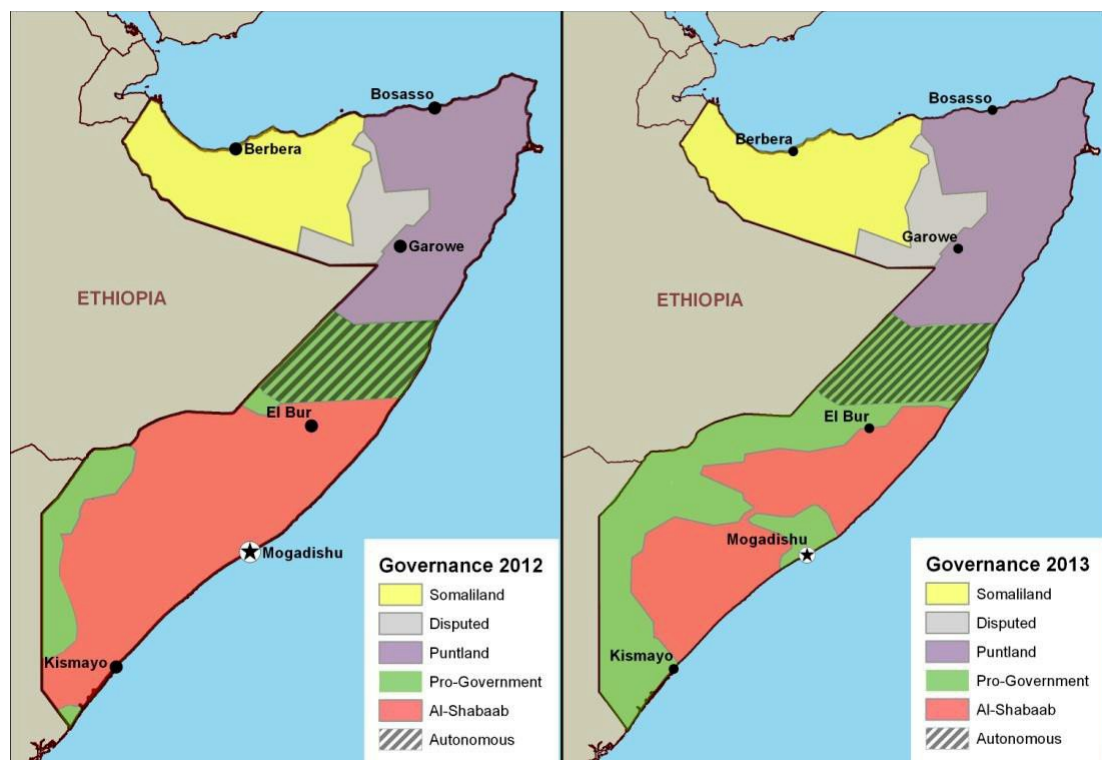
After prolonged stagnation in the Somali peace process, there were first signs of progress in 2011 and 2012. Supported by Kenyan and Ethiopian troops, the African

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<sup>80</sup> Costs *inter alia* included costs of rerouting, security equipment, ransoms, and prosecutions.

Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) had gained ground in the fights against *al-Shabaab* and gradually pushed it out of Mogadishu. In September 2011, Somalia’s federal and regional authorities agreed on a Roadmap for the End of Transition. Developed under the auspices of the UN, the Roadmap set benchmarks leading towards the establishment of permanent democratic institutions by mid-2012. The National Constituent Assembly accordingly adopted a provisional constitution in August 2012 and elected Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as Somalia’s new President. But despite claims that the country had “turned a page” and embarked upon “a new political era”, the institutions remained fragile and the security and humanitarian situations precarious (EEAS 2013a: 2). In 2013, the country still ranked last on the Failed States Index (Fund for Peace 2014).

**Figure 5: Political map of Somalia (2012 vs. 2013):**



Source: (AFRICOM 2013)

### *International responses*

Throughout Somalia’s bloody history, the interest of the international community waxed and waned (Bradbury 2010: 8). UN and US interventions in the early 1990s led to large numbers of victims on both sides. A turning point was US operation

‘Irene’ in 1993, which became known as the ‘Black Hawk Down’ incident. Within little more than 12 hours, 18 American soldiers and 350 to 1,000 Somalis were killed in Mogadishu. The incident prompted President Bill Clinton to withdraw forces. Ever since, Western governments have been reluctant to deploy ground troops to Somalia (ICG 2012b: 2). The incident was followed by a period of international neglect.

The attacks of 9/11 and the beginning of the US-led ‘war on terror’ reignited international attention. However, the 2000s generally saw a preference for African solutions to Somali problems. Following the ouster of the UIC, the UN-authorized AMISOM replaced Ethiopian troops in 2007.<sup>81</sup> AMISOM was mandated to use all necessary means to support and protect the transitional authorities in the exercise of their governmental functions, to train Somali security forces, and to facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid.

In 2008, international attention shifted towards maritime piracy. In the course of the year, the UNSC adopted six resolutions on the deteriorating security situation in Somali waters.<sup>82</sup> With resolution 1816, approved on 2 June 2008, the Security Council declared Somali piracy a threat to international peace and authorized foreign warships to use “all necessary means” and to “enter the territorial waters of Somalia for the purpose of repressing acts of piracy and armed robbery”.<sup>83</sup> On 7 October 2008, the UNSC agreed resolution 1838, intensifying the plea for collective action.<sup>84</sup> And resolution 1851, adopted on 16 December 2008, extended the authorization of all necessary means to the Somali territory.

International attention also translated into a number of international counter-piracy operations. In October 2008, NATO launched operation Allied Provider responsible for naval escorts of WFP vessels and deterrence. The Combined Task Force 151, a

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<sup>81</sup> UNSC, *S/RES/1744* (2007).

<sup>82</sup> See UNSC resolutions 1801, 1814, 1816, 1838, 1846, and 1851.

<sup>83</sup> UNSC, *S/RES/1816* (2008).

<sup>84</sup> UNSC *S/RES/1838* (2008).

US-led multinational naval force, started to patrol Somali waters in January 2009. In the following years, other international players, including China, Russia, Iran, India, and Japan have at one time or another sent ships, surveillance aircraft, or personnel to Somalia's coastal areas. The UN established a Contact Group on Piracy off the Somali Coast in January 2009 to coordinate international counter-piracy efforts.

In 2012, the international community stepped up its diplomatic, economic, and military support to the Somali peace process. On 22 February 2012, the UNSC decided to raise AMISOM's troop ceiling to 17,731.<sup>85</sup> The decision came one day before the London conference on the future of Somalia bringing together 55 Somali and international delegations. The conference aimed at fostering greater international coordination and concentrated on the root causes and symptoms (such as famine, refugees, piracy, and terrorism) of Somali instability. A second high-level Somalia conference, focusing on the post-transition period, took place in Istanbul on 31 May and 1 June 2012. By then, the Horn of Africa had "become the military theatre with the widest array of international forces after Afghanistan" (Khanfar 2012).

### *The EU's response: aid and counter-piracy*

The EU supported international efforts for an inclusive Somali peace process and conducted political dialogue.<sup>86</sup> Piracy became an increasingly salient topic in the dialogue with the federal and Puntland authorities (EEAS 2011: 1). However, the dialogue was largely conducted from abroad. Until 2013, neither the EEAS nor the member states had diplomatic representations in the country due to the dire security situation (Holzer and Jürgenliemk 2012: 3).<sup>87</sup>

The EU has been the biggest aid donor in Somalia. Between 2008 and 2013, the Commission allocated €412 million under the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund to

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<sup>85</sup> UNSC, *S/RES/2036* (2012).

<sup>86</sup> Political dialogue was conducted in accordance with article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement.

<sup>87</sup> At field level, EU activities were coordinated through the Somalia Unit within the EU Delegation in Nairobi, Kenya. The UK was the first member state to reopen an embassy in Mogadishu in April 2013.

the focal sectors of governance, education, and economic development (EEAS 2012). Between 2008 and 2012, DG ECHO pledged another €243 million to support short-term relief in the fields of food security, nutrition, health, water and sanitation, hygiene promotion, shelter, protection, and livelihoods support (EU Delegation Kenya 2013). To enhance stability and security in Somalia, the Union made substantial contributions to the chronically under-funded and under-staffed AMISOM. Between 2007 and 2013, it provided €444 million under the APF (Council 2013d). Funds mainly covered allowances, but also operational running costs, transportation, and medical expenses. The Union provided another €4,75 million for the establishment and functioning of the AU Strategic Management Planning Unit under the IfS. In total, the Union thus disbursed more than €1,1 billion to Somalia between 2007 and 2013.

France, Denmark, and the Netherlands bilaterally escorted WFP convoys in 2007 (Helly 2009: 393). In May 2008, Spain sent an informational note to the Council requesting increased attention to Somali piracy, which affected “the legitimate interests of the member states” (Spanish Delegation 2008). Taken up by a dynamic French Council Presidency, the note eventually led to the adoption of Council Joint Action 2008/851/CFSP on 10 November 2008, establishing the Union’s first maritime operation EU NAVFOR Atalanta. Based on UNSC resolutions 1814, 1816, and 1838, Atalanta’s primary aim was to protect and escort WFP vessels. Secondary aims were the protection – on a case-by-case basis – of vulnerable merchant vessels and the prevention and deterrence of acts of piracy and armed robbery.<sup>88</sup> With its Operational Headquarters in Northwood, Atalanta was the first CSDP operation under British lead. It was launched on 8 December 2008 and had an initial duration of 12 months. It was later extended until December 2014.<sup>89</sup> Typically comprising around 1,200 personnel, it is among the largest CSDP operations to date (Atalanta 2014).

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<sup>88</sup> See Council Joint Action 2008/851/CFSP.

<sup>89</sup> See Council Decision 2010/766/CFSP.

Atalanta was very successful in deterrence and protection. It had a 100 per cent success rate in the protection of WFP and AMISOM vessels (EU NAVFOR Somalia 2014). In addition, the number of attempted and successful pirate attacks significantly dropped since 2008 (see Table 20).<sup>90</sup> However, the Union’s counter-piracy operation merely tackled symptoms and did not provide a sustainable solution to the problem of piracy (Weber 2009: 71). Aid deliveries may have arrived at the coast, but often disappeared on the mainland. Due to the dire security situation, only few reached South Central Somalia (Ehrhart 2013).

**Table 20: Pirate attacks in Somali waters (January 2008 - December 2013)**

| Year                | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Total attacks       | 24   | 163  | 174  | 176  | 35   | 7    | 2    |
| Of which successful | 14   | 46   | 47   | 25   | 5    | 0    | 0    |

Source: EU Naval Force Somalia (2014)

In addition, the Union faced problems with the prosecution of pirates. Neighbouring and European countries were reluctant to take the lead in this costly and complex task. The Union signed transfer agreements with Kenya (2009), the Seychelles (2009), and Mauritius (2011) but their judicial systems were soon overstretched. As a result, nine out of every ten captured pirates were later released (The Guardian 2011).<sup>91</sup> Weber (2009: 81) noted the discrepancy between the Union’s counter-piracy action at sea and its political action on land and criticised the glaring absence of “a coherent overall concept for Somalia”.

### *Towards a more strategic approach*

Shortcomings propelled the Union’s narrative of a comprehensive approach to Somalia, “linking security with development, rule of law and respect for human

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<sup>90</sup> The decrease in pirate attacks did not only stem from international military counter-piracy efforts, but also from increased adherence to best management practices and the use of armed security services (Ehrhart 2013).

<sup>91</sup> Whereas there were 581 pirate attacks between 2008 and 2014, only 149 suspects of piracy were transferred to competent authorities with a view to their prosecution (EU NAVFOR Somalia 2014).



rights, gender related aspects and international humanitarian law” (Council Secretariat 2010). On 14 November 2011, the Union adopted the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa (Council 2011a). Its second comprehensive regional strategy promised a more pronounced focus on the “underlying challenges”.

In line with the Framework, the Council appointed an EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa on 8 December 2011 and tasked him initially to focus on Somalia and on piracy. His mandate included enhancing coherence, effectiveness, quality, and visibility of the EU’s engagement and coordinating with international and regional interlocutors (Council 2011b). In September 2012, the EU further strengthened its diplomatic profile by appointing Special Envoy Michele Cervone d’Urso. He became the first (Nairobi-based) EU ambassador to the Republic of Somalia in two decades (EU Delegation Kenya 2012).

Furthermore, the EU substantially reinforced its engagement in the framework of the CSDP. On 15 February 2010, the Council established the military training mission EUTM Somalia.<sup>92</sup> The objective of the mission, located in Uganda, was to contribute to the training of Somali security forces. It was the first time that the mandate of a military CSDP operation explicitly mentioned the security-development nexus (Ehrhart and Petretto 2012: 20). The operation counted around 120 military trainers, had a reference amount for common costs of €4,8 million and an initial duration of 12 months.

At a meeting on 23 March 2012, the Foreign Affairs Council extended Atalanta’s mandate and broadened it to include Somali coastal areas. The operation was authorised to target the pirates’ logistic dumps on the shore. At the same meeting, the Council, for the first time, activated the EU Operations Centre.<sup>93</sup> It was tasked to support the planning process for the foreseen regional maritime capacity building

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<sup>92</sup> See Council Decision 2010/96/CFSP.

<sup>93</sup> The European Council decided to set up the EU Operations Centre in December 2004. The body was to enable the Union to plan and conduct an operation – in particular in situations where no national Headquarters was identified and a civil-military crisis response was required.

mission EUCAP NESTOR. The Operations Centre was also mandated to “coordinate and increase synergies between the three CSDP actions in the Horn of Africa” (Council 2012f). In addition to four core officers, the activated Operations Centre comprised 16 seconded staff from the EUMS, the Brussels-based support cell for EUTM Somalia and liaison team of operation Atalanta as well as member state personnel (Council 2012f).

EUCAP Nestor, a civilian mission augmented with military expertise, was launched on 16 July 2012. The aim of the mission, which initially focused on Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, and the Seychelles, was to strengthen sea-going maritime capacities. It also aimed at supporting the rule of law sectors in Puntland and Somaliland, notably through the creation of a Coastal Police Force (Council 2012e). The mission employed 137 international staff and had an annual budget of €23 million (EEAS 2013c).

Complementing CSDP activities, the Union provided additional funds to the rule of law dimension of counter-piracy and counter-terrorism. The Commission financed the Regional Maritime Security programme (2012-2017) supporting regional capacity building in the rule of law sectors through the European Development Fund. Under the IfS, roughly €15 million was pledged for the Critical Maritime Routes Programme (2010-2015). And for the period between 2012 and 2016, another €22,3 million was earmarked for capacity-building in the areas of counter-terrorism, money laundering, resilience, and the recovery of “newly accessible areas” in Somalia (Council 2013d). Table 21 provides an overview of key events in the Somali peace process and of the Union’s above-described crisis responses.

**Table 21: Somali crisis and EU response (2008-2012)**

| Date              | Crisis and reaction   |
|-------------------|---|
| 15 May 2008       | Spanish informational note calls for EU action against Somali piracy                  |
| 2 June 2008       | UNSC resolution 1816 authorises all necessary means in fight against Somali piracy    |
| 7 October 2008    | UNSC resolution 1838 intensifies call for collective action                           |
| 10 November 2008  | Adoption of Joint Action 2008/851/CFSP on operation Atalanta                          |
| 8 December 2008   | EU launches operation Atalanta  |
| 16 December 2008  | UNSC resolution 1851 extends authorisation of all necessary means to Somali territory |
| 15 February 2010  | EU launches EUTM Somalia  |
| 6 September 2011  | Roadmap on the End of the Transition adopted by signatories                           |
| 14 November 2011  | Council adopts Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa                             |
| 8 December 2011   | Council appoints EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa                     |
| 22 February 2012  | UNSC resolution 2036 raises AMISOM's troop ceiling to 17,731                          |
| 23 February 2012  | London Conference on the Future of Somalia  |
| 23 March 2012     | EU broadens mandate of Atalanta and activates the Operations Centre                   |
| 1 June 2012       | Istanbul conference on Somalia's post transition phase                                |
| 16 July 2012      | EU launches EUCAP NESTOR  |
| 1 August 2012     | Somali Constituent Assembly adopts Provisional Constitution                           |
| 20 August 2012    | Official end of Somali transition   |
| 10 September 2012 | New President of Somalia elected  |

| Date              | Crisis and reaction                                     |
|-------------------|---|
| 26 September 2012 | EU appoints Ambassador to Somalia                       |
| 6 October 2012    | New Prime Minister of Somalia appointed                 |
| 13 November 2012  | Federal Somali Parliament endorses Council of Ministers |

*Source: own compilation*

## 5.2 A relatively high degree of coherence

The positive assessment of EU crisis management in Somalia is based on the multitude of EU instruments and activities. But it also reflects a relatively low level of polarisation in the aims and interests of Europe's various stakeholders. This section shows that the degree of coherence in EU crisis management was *relatively high*, but not without limitations.

### *Aligned interests without strategic guidance*

According to the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa the Union's objective is to "support the people of the region in achieving greater peace, stability, security, prosperity and accountable government" (Council 2011a: 4). In relation to Somalia, common objectives specifically included the eradication of the root causes of piracy. To pursue these objectives, the document identified five focal areas for EU engagement:

- democratic and accountable state structures;
- peace, security, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution;
- mitigation of the effects of insecurity in the region (piracy, organised crime, terrorism, migration);
- poverty reduction, economic growth, and prosperity; and regional cooperation (Council 2011a).

In addition to the comprehensive approach, which can be seen as the *leitmotif* of the document, guiding principles for EU action included regional ownership and mutual responsibility (Council 2011a: 13).

The Framework identified a variety of common interests: “the region’s geo-strategic importance, the EU’s historic engagement with the countries of the region, its desire to support the welfare of the people and help lift them from poverty into self-sustaining economic growth, and the need for the EU to protect its own citizens from the threats that emanate from some parts of the region and address common challenges” (Council 2011a: 13). Somali-based terrorism and – above all – piracy stood out as collective priorities. Smith (2012: 1) describes operation Atalanta as the *first* CSDP operation, which directly defends EU rather than third party interests. The collective priority of counter-piracy is also reflected in material terms. The member states’ annual costs for operation Atalanta were estimated at €1-1,5 billion (Ehrhart 2013; Holzer and Jürgenliemk 2012: 10). This is more than the amount of development funds spent in a period of six years (see above).

The Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa outlines collective European objectives and interests, but it does not provide strategic political guidance. One third of the document’s text is a summary of existing measures and initiatives (Council 2011a: 8-12). It identifies future areas for action, but specific measures and sub-strategies are left in the hands of the Commission, Council, and member states. There is no concrete guidance on the implementation of the different strands of action (Ehrhart and Petretto 2012). Pirozzi (2013: 15), therefore, suggests that the strategy is “more a reverse engineering exercise, consisting in the development of a conceptual umbrella aimed at providing ex post coherence to a number of different and often non-aligned activities”. Hagström et al. (2012: 4) call it a “descriptive document, explaining and communicating what type of actor the EU wants to be rather than giving clear directions on how the EU should act”. And despite the Framework’s comprehensive outlook, its first review concluded that linkages between conflict drivers and risks to development remained to be addressed (EEAS 2013f: 4).

### *Vertical coherence and compromise outcomes*

Sporadic Somali piracy attacks had been recorded since the 1990s (Ehrhart 2013). They partly constituted reactions to the foreign exploitation of Somali fishing

grounds. In 2005, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization reported that 700 trawlers, mainly of European and Asian origin, were illegally fishing in Somali waters (in Geise 2009: 5). In addition, European firms dumped toxic and nuclear waste in Somali waters. Silently tolerated for decades, these practices caused severe environmental damage and affected the livelihood of many Somalis depending on the fishing industry. While they were certainly not the sole causes of the rise of piracy, they stood in stark contrast with the Union's objectives with regard to Somalia.

Beyond these basic contradictions, there were no major inconsistencies between EU and national responses to the Somali crisis. However, tensions arose in three issue areas: the allocation of resources to AMISOM; the activation of the Operations Centre; and the strengthening of operation Atalanta. In 2012, the APF came under pressure as it was also considered a potential source of funding for the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) (Daemers 2014: 2). APF funds were limited and repeated calls to other non-traditional donors to share Europe's financial burden with respect to AMISOM remained unanswered. The situation led to tensions between the UK and France. The former was in favour of raising allocations to Somalia while the latter was pushing for a transfer of funds to Mali.<sup>94</sup> UK Diplomat B (2013) described the rivalry as "silly business. (...) On both sides, there was anxiety that there would not be enough money for either dossier. There was mistrust towards the French and the fear that they would earmark all the money for Mali." A compromise was eventually found permitting the allocation of funds to both dossiers. UK Diplomat B (2013) candidly commented: "We love to argue but after all it's the Germans who pay".

A second bone of contention between France and the UK was the activation of the Operations Centre. The activation was a political compromise, which has to be seen against the backdrop of the UK's rejection of a permanent civil-military headquarters in mid-2011. The French strongly pushed for the activation and the British

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<sup>94</sup> According to the corresponding decision-making procedure, requests of APF funds above €10 million have to be approved by the member states at the level of the PSC (Poulton et al. 2010).

reluctantly agreed. However, they imposed limitations: the Operations Centre remained outside of the formal command chain; its staff was limited to 20 out of a maximum of 103; and its activation was to end after two years (Biscop 2012: 1304). Furthermore, the body – initially conceived as a cell capable of planning and running a civil-military operation – was only staffed with military personnel. Its potential to foster civil-military synergies was thus restricted from the outset. Though a compromise was found, it was not in line with original objectives of the Operations Centre.

A third controversial issue was the broadening of Atalanta's mandate. France, the UK, and the Netherlands were in favour of extending the mandate to the Somali shore to prevent pirates from easy retreat. However, other member states, led by Germany, Spain, and Austria, were concerned about the risks of onshore operations for the Somali civilian population and their own military (Dempsey 2012). The prospective use of helicopter attacks and the fear of being dragged into ground operations evoked painful memories of the 1993 'Black Hawk Down' incident (Gebauer 2012). The reluctant member states eventually agreed, but introduced limits on land-based operations. Soldiers were only allowed to enter Somali territory by air and within 2km from the shoreline. In addition, attacks were limited to pirate logistics and the use of rockets was excluded.

### *Institutional coherence despite tensions*

Prior to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the Commission and the Council had different policy frameworks for their engagement with Somalia (Greco et al. 2010: 60). The Treaty provided the "theoretical foundation" for the comprehensive approach to Somalia, which was codified in the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa (European Diplomat D 2013). But, despite generally positive assessments, the institutional implementation of the comprehensive approach was not without tensions.

According to European Diplomat D (2013), the more established crisis management institutions "rejected" the Operations Centre. Senior EEAS Official B (2013) illustratively described the body as a "miscarriage" resulting from a "rotten

compromise”. The relationship between the civilian crisis management bodies and the Operations Centre and their respective command chains remained unclear (EUMS Official 2012).

Tensions also arose between the EEAS and the Commission DG for Development and Cooperation/EuropeAid (DEVCO) in the field of development cooperation. According to Soliman et al. (2012: 24), DEVCO staff were concerned that their EEAS counter-parts would shift the priorities of development cooperation with Somalia towards security-related or economic objectives. In line with these concerns, the Commission refused to fund equipment for the EU-trained Somali army (European Diplomat F 2013). More generally, interviews with Brussels-based officials indicated the need for “more effective communication and clear guidelines on workflows between” the EEAS and DEVCO (in Soliman et al. 2012: 25).

### ***Overall assessment***

The Union’s crisis management in Somalia was based on a set of common objectives and underpinned by collective interests. Over the years, European countries – individually and collectively – dedicated large amounts of resources to the pursuit of these objectives. The interaction among EU member states and between institutional players was largely consistent. However, the Union’s crisis management has to be seen against the backdrop of decades of illegal business practices in Somali waters. Whilst there were no open divisions among the member states, tensions surrounding the use of force slowed down collective counter-piracy efforts. Institutional mechanisms, aimed at fostering synergies and coherence, were described as rotten compromises. And, finally, there was a perceived and material imbalance between the Union’s counter-piracy efforts and its development objectives.

German Official B (2013) rejected the depiction of Somalia as a showcase example of coherent EU crisis management. He insisted that it only had the *potential* of becoming one: “The various activities could still be orchestrated in a more effective way and cooperation could be smoother.” This statement reminds us that perfect policy coherence is elusive and that it is only possible to compare varying degrees of coherence. The analysis therefore contents itself with concluding that – compared to



other cases of EU crisis management – the degree of coherence in the Somali case was *relatively high*.

### **5.3 The ‘Big Three’: concurrent interests and compromised norms**

How did one of the most complex international conflicts become the most-quoted example of coherent EU crisis management? And what explains the series of variably consistent compromises? This section evaluates British, French, and German national interests in Somalia exemplifying the relatively low degree of polarisation. It further illustrates how national norms and foreign policy principles fed into European compromise outcomes.

#### ***France: economic interests and Europeanist drive***

France was the first nation to answer the WFP’s call for assistance in 2007. It was the key driving force behind the establishment of operation Atalanta and became one of its most important contributors. In addition, it bilaterally trained Somali soldiers in Djibouti. France pushed for the creation of the other two CSDP operations and for the activation of the Operations Centre. But at the same time, it was reluctant to provide European funds to AMISOM. What are the underlying reasons for France’s puzzling role?

When asked why their country played a proactive role in the Somali crisis, French Diplomats C, D, and E (2013) primarily highlighted piracy and its important impact on commercial interests. Piracy off the Somali coast affected the fishing trade, and thus an important French economic interest (Helly 2009: 394). The Indian Ocean tuna industry alone was estimated to be worth up to \$6 billion (BBC 2009). In 2008, piracy in the Horn of Africa cut the usual tuna catch of the French and Spanish fishing fleets based in the Seychelles by half.

The hi-jacking of the French luxury yacht *Le Ponant* in April 2008 additionally illustrated the potential security threat to citizens. Sarkozy’s government reacted by authorising Special Forces to pursue pirates on land. The rescue operation, which led to the release of the hostages and the death of one pirate, signalled the resolve of the

French authorities (Germond and Smith 2009: 580). The threat to French nationals was not confined to Somali waters as several kidnappings by jihadist insurgents in following years demonstrated.

French Diplomats C, D, and E (2013) also related France's proactive role in the Somali conflict to threats emanating from terrorism and regional destabilisation. However, terrorism was only of secondary importance, as France was not considered a "first target" for Somali jihadists. And while Djibouti (host to the largest French military base in Africa) was a regional focus, Somalia was not. According to French Diplomat C (2013), "you have to distinguish between the Horn of Africa and Somalia. Africa in general is of course a French priority. But in Africa we concentrate on our former colonies". The relatively lower threat perception of terrorism and of regional destabilisation explains the French tendency to focus on the symptoms, rather than the root causes of the Somali conflict.

Overall, Paris was in favour of multilateral engagement with Somalia (French Diplomat D 2013). Operation Atalanta constituted an attempt to "Europeanise" counter-piracy efforts. It served the dual purpose of facilitating burden-sharing and substantiating France's traditional push for *l'Europe de la défense*. A visible push was particularly relevant in light of Sarkozy's controversial decision to return France to NATO's integrated command structure by 2009 (Willett 2011: 21). Domestic critics feared a loss of French and European independence. Extending the military CSDP to a new global threat could be presented as a sign of continued European (and French) autonomy. A leaked 2009 cable from the US mission to the EU mentioned that the French circulated a non-paper on a potential training mission for the "europeanization of France's pledge to train Somali military forces in Djibouti" (USEU 2009c). Paris thus had an important "European interest" in Somalia, which was strongly embedded in the trio of CSDP operations (French Diplomat D 2013).

France's push for the activation of the Operations Centre was in line with this "European interest". Paris had been a fervent supporter of the establishment of an independent EU operational Headquarters since 2003. However, considering the UK-imposed limitations, the activation of the Operations Centre could only constitute a

‘second best’. Nevertheless, the French expected that Somalia would create a precedent: “We hope that the Operations Centre will be able to transmit the expertise gained in Africa. It is a model for the future that needs to be reinforced.” (French Diplomat C 2013)

While Paris provided important political and material support to the CSDP missions and operations in the Horn of Africa, it was less willing to finance AMISOM. Following the UNSC’s decision to raise the troop ceiling in February 2012, the French UN representative underlined that Europe could not carry all the financial implications and called for new contributors. Similar calls were reiterated throughout 2012. In October, French Permanent Representative to the UN Gérard Araud (2012) warned that the Union would not be able to keep up the level of financing in 2013 in light of AMISOM’s high costs and “needs expressed in other parts of the African continent”. Though not explicitly mentioned, these needs included the Malian crisis, which clearly was a French priority (see chapter 6).

### *UK: national interests and calculated Europeanism*

The UK played a major role in the diplomatic, humanitarian, and military responses to the Somali conflict. It did not only lead international crisis responses but also European efforts. Atalanta was the first CSDP operation under British command, and the UK pushed for the maintenance of EU funding to AMISOM. What are the reasons behind British leadership? What role did London foresee for the EU? And why did it impose strict limitations on the Operations Centre?

The UK had important historical, security-related, and economic reasons to take the lead on Somalia. Bilateral relations date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Northern Somalia became the British protectorate of Somaliland. After the Second World War, Britain also took control of Italian Somaliland before both territories were released into independence in 1960. Due to historical ties the UK hosts the largest Somali diaspora in Europe.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Estimates range from 350,000 to 1 million (in Muir 2012).

Furthermore, counter-piracy constituted an important domestic economic interest. Annually, the British shipping industry contributes £10,7 billion to the UK's GDP (Wintour 2012). Additionally, £192 million had been paid in ransoms to Somali pirates between 2008 and 2012. Representatives of the shipping industry and seafarers Unions (such as Nautilus International) pushed for a greater UK engagement in counter-piracy and for better multilateral coordination (House of Commons 2012b; Redfern 2011).

Somalia was also increasingly perceived as a threat to UK's security interests. In 2011, Somali terrorism was moving up on the agenda of the National Security Council. Among the reasons were increasing numbers of British citizens known to have joined *al-Shabaab*'s training camps. Intelligence services warned that these 'foreign fighters' would – sooner or later – bring terrorism back to their homeland (Norton-Taylor and Hopkins 2012; Rifkind 2012). In November 2011, Cameron stepped up his rhetoric and spoke of Somalia as “a failed state that directly threatens British interests” (in Sengupta 2012). Meanwhile, 14 per cent of British citizens considered “failed and weak states such as Somalia, Yemen, and Pakistan” the number one threat to the “British way of life” in 2012 (Chatham House and Yougov 2012). The fact that one of the men involved in the deadly 2013 machete attack on a British soldier had been detained earlier – suspected of being on his way to an *al-Shabaab* training camp – substantiated domestic concerns.

A traditional maritime power with a strong navy lobby, the UK was expected to take a leading role in counter-piracy. As France, it favoured multilateral solutions, but unlike France it initially preferred NATO engagement (UK Diplomat C 2013). In line with its Atlanticist leanings, the UK was concerned that an EU engagement would entail duplication and challenge NATO's primacy in this important new area of engagement. However, London agreed to operation Atalanta when it became clear that the Alliance was overstretched and that the CSDP operation would only start after termination of NATO operation Allied Provider (Page 2011: 47). Taking command of the operation presented the UK with an opportunity to show commitment to the military CSDP. And though Atalanta was not the optimal solution, “it was still preferable to doing nothing or – even worse – allowing the

French to take the lead in a high-profile multilateral anti-piracy operation that clearly affected British shipping interests” (Smith 2012: 17-18). But due to the downscaling of the Royal Navy and other international commitments, the UK only rarely committed a ship to the CSDP operation (Willett 2011: 23). It was thus leading the EU’s counter-piracy efforts militarily, but not materially.

In a speech in June 2012, UK Europe minister David Lidington acknowledged that the Union was leading counter piracy efforts off the Horn of Africa. He underlined that NATO remained “the bedrock of Britain’s national security”, but that the EU’s advantage was its broad range of complementary civilian and military tools (Lidington 2012). However, he also added that there were “no institutional barriers to a more effective CSDP and no need for renewed debate over structures” (Lidington 2012). The speech came three months after the activation of the Operations Centre.

When asked about his country’s perspective on the activation, UK Diplomat C (2013) answered: “We don’t like it. There are eight people sitting in a room looking at each other and wondering what they are doing. (...) The Operations Centre makes no difference. We agreed to it because everyone else wanted it. But it has done nothing to enhance coordination. (...) And that confirms our belief that no European Headquarters is needed.” Presented with the French view that the imposed limitations curbed the body's effectiveness, he claimed that the UK simply “restricted the damage: it is better to have eight people wasting their time than 24”. Britain thus endorsed a robust EU role in counter-piracy, but clearly maintained its traditional scepticism about further integration in the area of security and defence.

### ***Germany: commercial interests and compromised restraint***

Berlin made substantial humanitarian and military contributions to the management of the Somali conflict. It provided approximately 20 per cent of the EU’s assistance to Somalia and has been among its top ten bilateral humanitarian aid donors for over a decade (Auswärtiges Amt 2014). Germany was a driving force behind operation Atalanta and one of its largest and most permanent contributors (Weber 2009: 71). Initially opposed to the broadening of the operation’s mandate towards a more robust

role, Berlin eventually agreed. Why did it make these important contributions and what explains its changing position on Atalanta?

The Gulf of Aden is the most important commercial shipping route between Europe and Asia. And in 2008, Germany was the world's largest exporting economy. Over 92 per cent of its overseas trade was transported by sea (Flottenkommando der Marine 2008: 31). It ran the world's biggest container fleet and its third biggest merchant fleet (Weber 2009: 71). Germany was thus among the economies worst affected by Somali piracy.

In the parliamentary debate on continued participation of German soldiers in Atalanta in November 2011, foreign minister Westerwelle underlined the important humanitarian contribution of operation Atalanta. But – in contrast to Germany's traditional restraint when it comes to interest-based foreign policy – he also stressed that securing the Gulf of Aden was a vital economic interest (Westerwelle 2011b). Influential domestic interest groups – notably the German Shipowners Association and the Association of German Industry – actively lobbied for the defence of this interest (German Official C 2013). Their influence could be derived from various meetings with politicians and their repeated mentioning in parliamentary debates on operation Atalanta (see for example Deutscher Bundestag 2012a).

But Berlin's support to counter-piracy also went beyond particular interests. The political backing of operation Atalanta was largely consensual. The operation permitted Germany to fulfil its multilateral obligations against the backdrop of troop reductions in the Balkans (Weber 2009: 71). An EU engagement was more popular with the German public than yet another controversial US-led or NATO operation (Germond and Smith 2009: 585). And Germany was also a strong advocate of a comprehensive approach to counter-piracy including a rule of law dimension, which NATO could not provide (German Official B 2013). Accordingly, politicians carefully portrayed Atalanta as only one instrument within the broader EU crisis response. They emphasised the need to go beyond symptoms and to tackle the root causes (European Diplomat I 2013). When the UK and France started to push for the

extension of Atalanta's mandate to include land-based operations in late 2011, Germany was reluctant and slowed down Brussels discussions.

However, in the first quarter of 2012, the German governing coalition gradually shifted position towards endorsing a more robust Atalanta mandate. This shift reopened the political battleground between the principles of multilateralism and military restraint. The governing parties emphasised the importance of being a credible and reliable partner and accused the opposition of isolationism (Deutscher Bundestag 2012b). Opposition representatives, in turn, criticised the government's lack of assertiveness in European negotiations and its renunciation of responsible politics in favour of risky adventurism (Deutscher Bundestag 2012a).

Both sides used Germany's abstention in the 2011 UN vote on the Libyan no-fly zone as a rhetorical weapon. Opposition representatives insinuated that the government attempted to atone for the Libyan foreign policy failure. Meanwhile, foreign minister Westerwelle criticised the lack of European solidarity and emphatically reprimanded the opposition: "Never remind us of Alliance solidarity again. (...) Never again!" (in Deutscher Bundestag 2012b). On 10 May 2012, a majority of Social Democrats and Left Party members voted against the broadening of Atalanta's mandate, while most Greens abstained. This was the first time in the history of the German Federal Republic that a military operation was approved against the will of the opposition (mp/AFP/dpa 2012).

Even if the decisions on the use of force in Libya and Somalia substantively differed, the inversion of the same politicians' positioning with regard to multilateralism and military restraint speaks for a strategic use of foreign policy norms rather than for a principled approach. The government's wavering and gradual shift might have resulted from pressure by European partners on the one hand and by economic interest groups on the other. Meanwhile, the government accused the opposition of "political opportunism" in light of the proximate regional elections in North Rhine-Westphalia (Jungholt and Sturm 2012). Regional elections in the most populous German state are traditionally seen as a harbinger of the federal election. Aware of

the traditionally pacifist German public, the opposition had electoral incentives to demarcate itself from the government.

Meanwhile, internal unity prevailed regarding Germany's pro-integrationist and Europeanist stance. It supported France's quest to activate the Operations Centre. The support was also in line with Berlin's long-standing advocacy for an autonomous civil-military EU operational Headquarters. The activation was initially seen as a first step towards this objective. However, the UK-imposed limitations had a sobering effect. When asked whether the activation of the body represented a model for the future, German Diplomat A (2013) conceded that it had a useful coordinating function. "But", he continued, "it is also a homunculus that nobody needed. It's simply not a civil-military Headquarters."

## **5.4 Institutions and bottom-up coordination**

Senior NATO Official A (2012) described the Union's engagement in Somalia as a positive example of the implementation of the comprehensive approach. He also noted, that "Ashton often talks about Somalia, sometimes even so often that you start to wonder about the Union's other operations." Why did EU institutional actors recurrently present Somalia as a success story? What contribution did they make to this apparent success? And what explains remaining limitations and challenges to inter-institutional coordination?

### *Institutional influence and contending explanations*

There was a notable institutional push for the implementation of a comprehensive approach to the Somali conflict. On 28 May 2009, the then High Representative Javier Solana wrote a letter to EU foreign and defence ministers urging them to address the root causes of Somali piracy (USEU 2009b). He proposed to build on the success of operation Atalanta and to consider six new areas of work:

- Appointment of an EUSR to the region;
- regional maritime capability development;
- reinforced support to the African Union;
- capacity building for the Somali security sector;



- long-term development assistance strategy; and
- reinforcement of international legal framework to change the cost benefit calculus of would-be pirates (Solana 2009; USEU 2009c).

Most of the proposed initiatives were implemented in the course of the following years.

There were also signs of institutional influence beyond the HR. Leaked cables from the US Mission to the EU (2009c; 2009a) for instance highlighted the role of the former Head of the Council Secretariat's Operations and Exercises Unit, Didier Lenoir.<sup>96</sup> The reporting American diplomat described Lenoir as a “savvy operator in the EU system” and as “a key actor in forming the EU’s successful counter-piracy mission” (USEU 2009a). In 2009, Lenoir informally proposed a model of transatlantic cooperation, in which the US would provide logistical support and funding to Somali soldiers while the EU be responsible for training. And, in fact, a similar division of labour was later implemented: EUTM Somalia did the training and the US paid the allowances of trained soldiers (German Official B 2013). This compromise was perhaps not solely based on Lenoir’s proposal. But the fact that he – and not member state officials – was repeatedly mentioned in US cables can be seen as an indicator of his influence. More generally, the 2013 EU Foreign Policy Scorecard noted that the EEAS had played a “significant role in coordinating European strategy towards Somalia” in the post-Lisbon era (Vaisse et al. 2013: 127).

In interviews with EU and national officials, two explanations for the observed autonomous influence of EU institutional actors appeared. The first highlighted their superior ability to link various strands of EU action. According to Senior EEAS Official A (2012), “EU crisis management in Somalia was coherent because the challenges are so complex. The member states simply do not have the national or bilateral instruments to tackle them.” Institutional actors thus had the ability to increase collective gains and had acquired an informational advantage through

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<sup>96</sup> From 2010 to 2013, Lenoir was Head of the EEAS’s Integrated Strategic Planning Division before becoming Director of the CMPD.

learning processes since 2008. The second explanation rather emphasised the congruence of national interests. The argument was that the member states' collective will to act on Somalia empowered institutional actors in their coordinating function (EU Official 2011). From this perspective, the institutions' repeated mentioning of Somalia was seen as a "craving for success stories" at a time where the new institutional actors faced a great deal of public criticism (European Diplomat H 2013; German Diplomat A 2013). An overarching explanation could be that the low degree of interest polarisation among the member states also made it easier for EU institutions to acquire a sense of ownership in the process (Academic Expert B 2013).

### *'Structural restraints' and 'cultural reluctance'*

Despite the positive impact of the post-Lisbon institutional framework, Ehrhart and Petretto (2012: 11) noted that "struggles about the meaning, the direction and the institutional prerequisites of a comprehensive approach" continued. In a seminar of the EU Institute for Security Studies on operation Atalanta and EU counter-piracy policies, experts attributed these struggles to institutional rivalry, "structural restraints", and "cultural reluctance" (Helly 2011). Structural restraints included the separation of geographic and operational DGs as well as the disparity in short- and long-term planning cycles between the EEAS and the Commission (European Diplomat F 2013). Within the EEAS, civil-military cooperation was challenging due to continued stove-piping (Ehrhart and Petretto 2012: 11). Furthermore, the EEAS lacked the resources to provide funding for the equipment of the soldiers trained by EUTM Somalia. The aforementioned US-EU compromise on funding thus represented a necessity.

Cultural reluctance could, once more, be observed at the interface between DG ECHO and other EU crisis management actors. Maritime piracy called for the military escort of humanitarian vessels. The EU repeatedly framed humanitarian aid as one element of its overall comprehensive approach to Somalia. An example was a Commission press release (2012a), which spoke of "the comprehensive approach including security support, development assistance and humanitarian aid".

Humanitarian aid practitioners criticised the Union's rhetoric for conveying the perception that the different measures all shared the same objectives (Pontiroli et al. 2013). They underlined the importance of respecting the humanitarian principles. A member of the Humanitarian Aid Department of the German Foreign Office (2013) shared these concerns and explained that his department continuously insisted on rhetorical separation of humanitarian escorts and counter-piracy operations. The fact that Somalia has been among the countries with the highest number of attacks on aid workers throughout the past decade shows that the risks of aid politicisation are real (Humanitarian Outcomes 2013).

### *Coordination and its mixed effects*

A large number of EU institutional players were involved in the Union's response to the Somali conflict. In addition to the traditional players – the crisis management structures, DG DEVCO and DG ECHO – it involved maritime security-related bodies such as DG Mobility and Transport, DG for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, and private sector interlocutors (Helly 2011). The combination of old and new actors called for unprecedented levels of inter-institutional coordination. However, Ashton did not play a leading role in coordination (European Diplomat A 2013). And the EEAS and Commission reportedly lacked “proper coordination mechanisms at project level” (Pirozzi 2013: 15).

Analysts suggest that the relatively high degree of coherence rather resulted from informal modes of communication and coordination. Summarising expert discussions, Helly (2011) reported that there was “interactive influence between CSDP and other instruments”. He added that the EU's institutions “learned comprehensiveness ‘by doing’” (Helly 2011). One example was interdepartmental discussion on draft Council Conclusions. Similarly, Pirozzi (2013: 15) mentioned that the CMPD and DG DEVCO held various meetings during the planning phase of EUCAP Nestor. Inter-institutional coherence thus emerged bottom-up rather than top-down.

Institutional actors and member states were in favour of the appointment of an EUSR for the region (Soliman et al. 2012: 28). Assessments of his coordinating role have

been positive (Pirozzi 2013: 15). Even the British commended the EUSR's work. Europe Minister Lidington (2013) noted that he had "fully met his mandate" and enabled the Union to play a "full role in regional stability" and Somalia's Peace Process.

Meanwhile, assessments of the Operations Centre were less positive. Its foreseen civil-military coordinating role was limited due to its exclusive military staffing. The body was formally subordinated to EUCAP Nestor's civilian command, but the fact that the political compromise prevented the establishment of formal relationships between the command chains led to tensions (EUMS Official 2012). According to UK Diplomat C (2013), staff in the three Somali CSDP operations "reported that they did not hear anything from the Operations Centre". He explained that operational coordination and communication between the mission and operations worked very well and that they did not need to go through the Operations Centre (UK Diplomat D 2013). According to Senior EEAS Official B (2013), institutional players were aware of the UK's strategic intention to close the new body down "after two years – for reasons of inefficiency".

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that one of the key reasons for the relatively high degree of coherence was the low level of interest polarisation among the member states (H1a). Each of the 'Big Three' had important national economic interests in responding to the Somali conflict. And counter-piracy undoubtedly constituted a collective priority. Contrary to previous examples of EU crisis management, all of the 'Big Three' played a leading role. France was the 'engineer' behind the Union's CSDP missions. The UK was leading international diplomatic efforts and operation Atalanta. And Germany provided crucial aid and military resources. In the latter case, influential economic interest groups visibly pushed for a more robust national engagement in counter-piracy. The collective interest in counter-piracy also included other member states, as their initial bilateral initiatives in the Gulf of Aden illustrated.

Domestic political contexts and electoral incentives had a less immediate impact on the degree of coherence, but helped explain British and French leadership. The UK

was aware of its important Somali diaspora, which pushed for international engagement and bore a (perceived) risk of domestic backlash. France's leading role in extending the CSDP to counter-piracy assuaged domestic critics of NATO reintegration. In Germany, electoral calculation might explain the opposition's decisive positioning against a reinforcement of operation Atalanta.

Embedded national foreign policy principles and norms played a role in the forging of intergovernmental compromises. However, the UK slightly deviated from its traditional euro-sceptical stance and Germany from its position of military restraint. In both cases, rational considerations seemed to prevail. Evidence from the Somali case thus favours hypothesis 1a over 1b and points to the prevalence of the logic of consequences.

The case also displays a relatively high degree of institutional coherence and signs of autonomous institutional influence on the degree of coherence. A number of proposals put forward by institutional players were eventually implemented. However, these proposals did not contravene member state preferences. It is therefore hard to conclude whether socialisation processes, informational asymmetries, or simply unified preferences of the member states – as 'collective principal' – were the pivotal explanatory factors.

Some argued that Somalia finally translated "Brussels theory" on the comprehensive approach into practice (Senior NATO Official A 2012). Others concluded that the CSDP had come of age or that the Union was finally ready to play a more robust military role (Page 2011; Smith 2012). However, the imbalance between the Union's commitment to Somalia's development and maritime counter-piracy remains. And its robust engagement through operation Atalanta has to be seen in light of the specific attributes of maritime counter-piracy: risks are comparatively low and benefits are not only high and visible, but also largely shared. Collective action can thus be seen as a positive-sum game with calculable payoffs. These attributes crucially distinguish naval from ground operations. The German case was illustrative in this regard: Berlin was the first to provide a vessel for Atalanta, but the option of targeted terrestrial interventions triggered a long and difficult domestic debate. The Union may thus be

modelling crisis management exercises on Somalia, but comprehensive *and* robust intervention still remains Brussels theory, as opposed to Brussels practice.

## Chapter 6: Mali – between collective strategy and individual action

The EU has increasingly been dealing with the Sahel zone since 2008. Growing awareness of a set of complex and interlinked security challenges led to the development of the Union's first comprehensive regional strategy with a particular focus on Mali (EEAS 2011b). But the strategy was soon overtaken by events on the ground. A *coup d'état* in March 2012 uncovered Mali's democratic facade. In January 2013, Islamist rebels marched towards the capital and threatened the country's national sovereignty. The French reacted immediately by launching a forceful military intervention.

Europe diplomatically backed the French intervention and sped up preparations for a military training operation. However, it failed in conflict prevention and the member states were reluctant to complement political with operational support. Policy analyses and media reports described Mali as yet another setback for the military arm of the CSDP (Faleg 2012; Stephens 2013; Witney 2013). The EU was, once again, criticised for evading its responsibility in the neighbourhood (Faleg 2013). Whereas the US stayed in the background and NATO reacted with 'deafening silence', the Malian crisis caught the EU "asleep at the steering wheel" (Godement 2013). Reflecting the discrepancy between collective strategy and mostly unilateral implementation, the degree of coherence is classified as intermediate.

France's proactive stance was in line with its national strategic interests and threat perception. But Mali was not of vital interest to other EU member states whose threat perceptions diverged from that of France. Despite the existence of numerous coordination mechanisms, there were inter-institutional tensions over the distribution of funds. France's activism restrained the HR's room for manoeuvre and reduced the role of the EEAS to a filtering mechanism for national interests. Mali showed that collective regional strategies might provide Europeans with a common narrative, but not necessarily with incentives for collective action in the face of an emergency.

This chapter begins by presenting background information on Mali's crises and international responses. Section two evaluates the degree of coherence of the Union's crisis response, which it classifies as *intermediate*. The subsequent analysis identifies underlying causes at the national (section three) and EU levels (section four).

## **6.1 Malian crises and international responses**

In 2012, Mali – previously considered a model of African democracy – turned into the “epicentre” of regional instability (Bello 2012). A rebellion by the Tuareg tribe (a minority ethnic group of nomadic Berbers with longstanding grievances), a *coup d'état*, and the gradual Islamist takeover of Northern Mali uncovered a set of complex and interlinked security and development challenges. This section provides an overview of the subsequent and interlinked crises and international responses.

### ***The 'model democracy' and its hidden challenges***

Although Mali's democracy was never entirely stable, some essential elements were in place (Wing 2013: 477). There was a civilian government holding regular elections, which were generally considered free and fair. The political system was decentralised with an independent constitutional court and various participatory mechanisms (Perry 2013: 3-4). The political landscape was characterised by a multitude of political parties and civil society organisations which generally enjoyed freedom of expression and association (Wing 2013: 477). In 2006, the American development agency USAID portrayed Mali as “one of the most enlightened democracies in all of Africa”. Due to its reputation as peaceful, stable, and democratic country it became a ‘darling’ of the Western aid establishment (Bergamaschi 2013: 10).

Nevertheless, Mali remained one of the world's poorest countries. In 2011, it ranked 175th on the UN's Human Development Index. The country's core development challenges included low levels of education, poor health and social services, and rapid demographic growth (Perry 2013: 2). These challenges were exacerbated by strenuous climatic conditions including sporadic rainfall, periodic droughts, and frequent flooding. The results were rising food prices triggering recurrent regional



food crises (Perry 2013: 2).

Underneath the democratic facade, Mali's political and security institutions were weak and corruption flourished (Bergamaschi 2013: 4). In 2011, the country ranked 118<sup>th</sup> on the Corruption Perceptions Index.<sup>97</sup> Since Mali's independence in 1960, the Tuareg called for enhanced economic development and political inclusion of the North (Bergamaschi 2013: 2). However, the failure of subsequent governments to respond to these calls triggered vicious cycles of violent uprisings and hard-handed repression during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and deepened the country's North-South-divide (ICG 2012b: 2). In November 2011, the MNLA, an organisation advocating the creation of an independent Tuareg territory in the Sahara, was established.

Meanwhile, Northern Mali was gradually turning into a sanctuary for terrorist groups and criminal networks. By 2012, it had become an operating basis for Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), and the largely Tuareg *Ansar Dine*.<sup>98</sup> These groupings financed their activities through ransom payments and drug trafficking while profiting from "opportunistic alliances" with sectors of the administration and the population (Marchal 2013: 493).

### ***Coup d'état and international reactions***

The Libyan conflict escalated the brewing crisis in Mali (Kuperman 2013). By December 2011, around 30,000 returnees from Libya had crossed Mali's borders (UN 2012). Mostly young and under-educated, they represented an additional challenge to the impoverished communities in Northern Mali (UN 2012). The returnees included large numbers of Tuareg fighters who had served the Gaddafi regime as mercenaries (Simon et al. 2012). With them came "unspecified and unquantifiable numbers of arms and ammunition" (UN 2012).

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<sup>97</sup> Transparency International publishes the Corruption Perceptions Index annually. It ranks 177 countries in ascending order "by their perceived levels of corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys" (Transparency International 2014).

<sup>98</sup> *Ansar Dine* means 'helpers of religion'.

Spill over from Libya precipitated a Tuareg rebellion in Northern Mali in January 2012. Initially led by the MNLA, the insurgency rapidly spread from Gao to the Kidal and Timbuktu regions (Simon et al. 2012). In March 2012, the MNLA and *Ansar Dine* pushed the government forces out of Northern Mali. Disgruntled by the inability of the incumbent government, led by Amadou Toumani Touré, to handle the Tuareg rebellion in the North, a group of junior officers staged a *coup d'état* in Bamako on 21 March 2012. The MNLA sensed the power vacuum in the capital and proclaimed the independence of the *Azawad* state – a territory the size of France – on 5 April 2012 (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Political map of Mali (as of 6 April 2012)**



Source: *Political Geography Now* (2012)

The reaction of the international community to the *coup d'état* was unified. The UNSC (2012) strongly condemned it and called “for the immediate restoration of

constitutional rule”. The Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) suspended Mali and put its Standby Force “on high alert for all eventualities” (ECOWAS 2012). It also imposed economic, financial, and diplomatic sanctions. International pressure led to the signing of a framework agreement on 6 April 2012, whereby the military junta agreed to hand power over to an interim government led by Dioncounda Traoré (Simon et al. 2012).

### *Islamist takeover and military intervention*

In late May 2012, the MNLA agreed to join forces with *Ansar Dine* with the aim of transforming Northern Mali into an Islamic state. However, fighting between the two groups broke out in late June 2012, and the Islamists subsequently evicted the MNLA from Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu. On 28 June 2012, *Ansar Dine* declared full control of Northern Mali. It imposed a strict version of sharia law and started to destroy ancient Sufi shrines in Timbuktu.

Within a week, the UNSC declared the situation in Mali “a threat to international peace and security” and called for targeted sanctions against Islamist fighters.<sup>99</sup> Following a request for military assistance by Mali’s interim authorities, the UNSC passed resolution 2071 on 12 October 2012, tasking ECOWAS and the African Union to develop a detailed plan for military intervention.<sup>100</sup> The resolution also called on regional and international organisations, including the EU, to provide training and support to the Malian security sector. On 20 December 2012, the UNSC unanimously adopted resolution 2085 authorising the deployment of an African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) for an initial period of one year.<sup>101</sup> However, the resolution did not include a timetable or commitments for troop generation (Marchal 2013: 488). UN Special Envoy for the Sahel, Romano Prodi,

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<sup>99</sup> *S/RES/2056 (2012)*.

<sup>100</sup> *S/RES/2071 (2012)*.

<sup>101</sup> *S/RES/2085 (2012)*.

predicted that a deployment of AFISMA before September or October 2013 would not be feasible (Hammond 2012).

Aware of the unpreparedness of the African force, *Ansar Dine* started to prepare for a military offensive. On 4 January 2013, the group suspended a ceasefire agreed in December 2012 (Chatham House 2013). Five days later, the Chairman of the African Union called NATO's assistance for a joint operation with African forces. However, the call remained unanswered.<sup>102</sup> On 10 January 2013, the Islamists started a military offensive on the South and captured the town of Konna situated around 600 km from Bamako. Malian President Traoré immediately requested assistance from France. Within 24 hours, the French President, François Hollande, authorised and launched a military operation codenamed *Serval*.

Shortly after, on 16 January 2013, a terrorist incident illustrated the international dimensions of the crisis. AQIM-linked terrorists took 800 people hostage in a gas plant near *In Amenas* in South-Eastern Algeria. In return for the safety of the hostages, the Islamists demanded an end to French military operations in Northern Mali (DPA 2013b). The hostage crisis ended four days later when Algerian Special Forces raided the site. By then, 39 foreign hostages had been killed (BBC 2013).

Three weeks later, the French-led operation had re-captured all major cities in Northern Mali and dispersed the Islamist rebels (Francis 2013: 2). Numbering 4,000 French troops, operation *Serval* was divided into two stages. During the first ten days, the objectives were “to secure Bamako, stop the terrorist offensive, strike the enemy's rear bases and prepare for the arrival of African forces” (Heisbourg 2013: 11). During the second stage, the objectives were broadened to include the restoration of territorial integrity and the fight against terrorism (Heisbourg 2013: 11). The operation was supported by ECOWAS troops who arrived on the ground in January 2013 and operated under the mandate of AFISMA. It received broad international backing and logistical support from several European countries,

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<sup>102</sup> According to Senior NATO Official A (2013), Mali was not substantially discussed and fell under “any other business”.

including the UK, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Denmark as well as from the US, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates.

The process of political transition was re-launched on 29 January 2013 when the Malian authorities adopted a Transition Roadmap. They committed to hold elections in July 2013 and to negotiate with the North (ISIS 2013). On 25 April 2013, the UNSC passed resolution 2100 authorising the deployment of the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). MINUSMA was to comprise a total of 11.200 military personnel and 1,440 police. It was authorised to use all necessary means to support the political process and execute various stabilisation tasks and replaced AFISMA on 1 July 2013. Presidential elections were held, as scheduled, on 28 July 2013. In a second round on 11 August 2013 the Malians elected Ibrahim Boubacar Keita with a solid majority of 78 per cent. The presidential elections were widely seen as a milestone on Mali's path towards political normalisation (UN News Centre 2013a).

### ***EU responses to Mali's crises***

The EU started to acknowledge the complex challenges emanating from the Sahel in 2008. After several fact finding missions in the region, the Commission and the Council Secretariat presented a joint options paper on 1 October 2010. In light of the deteriorating security situation and kidnapping of European nationals, the Foreign Affairs Council of 25 October 2010 tasked the HR and the Commission with the elaboration of a regional strategy. On 8 March 2011, the EEAS (2011b) presented the Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel.

On 22 March 2012, Ashton (2012a) condemned the *coup d'état* in Bamako and called for “the reestablishment of the constitutional order and the holding of democratic elections as soon as possible”. One day later, the Foreign Affairs Council (2012c) tasked the HR to “accelerate implementation of the Sahel Strategy” (Council 2012c). In the following months, the HR and the Foreign Affairs Council repeatedly called for the restoration of constitutional order and the cessation of hostilities in the North (Ashton 2012b; Council 2012a). They expressed the Union's concern about

the humanitarian and human rights situations and condemned the destruction of cultural heritage.

Aside from diplomatic declarations, the Union's reaction to the *coup* included the immediate suspension of development aid (with the exception of humanitarian aid) (Piebalgs 2012). The gradual resumption of aid was made conditional on the presentation of "a credible and consensual roadmap for the restoration of constitutional and democratic order" (Council 2012b). On 11 April 2012, Commissioner for humanitarian aid, Kristalina Georgieva (2012), warned of "a major humanitarian disaster which could spill over to neighbouring countries" and announced an increase in EU humanitarian funding by €9 million. In June 2012, the Commission further raised humanitarian aid for the Sahel by €40 million to address the food crisis and provide emergency assistance to the 400,000 Malians displaced by conflict (European Commission 2012c).

The EU's more political engagement only started after the UN General Assembly in September 2012 (Bello 2012: 16). On 15 October 2012, EU foreign ministers declared the situation in Northern Mali "an immediate threat to the Sahel region (...) as well as to West and North Africa and to Europe". It invited the HR and the Commission to provide financial and planning support to the AU and ECOWAS. The Council requested that the planning of a military CSDP operation for the training and reorganisation of Mali's security forces be pursued "as a matter of urgency" (Council 2012d). A draft crisis management concept (CMC) for the EU Training Mission (EUTM) in Mali was adopted on 10 December 2012. The CMC foresaw the deployment of around 200 instructors for an initial period of 15 months and excluded involvement in combat operations (Council 2012b).

France's unilateral intervention in January 2013 received Europe's full diplomatic backing. On 11 January 2013, Ashton (2013b) condemned the Islamist offensive "in the strongest terms" and announced the acceleration of preparations for EUTM Mali. On 17 February 2013, the foreign ministers held an extraordinary Council meeting. They established EUTM Mali and raised personnel numbers to 500 non-combat troops and 200 soldiers (Council 2013a). The operation's budget was doubled and its

mandate was made more robust (Marchal 2013: 492). EUTM Mali deployed on 2 April 2013 with contributions from 23 EU nations. France was in the lead, “followed by Germany, Spain, the Czech Republic, Britain and Belgium” (Benitez 2013). In addition, the Union pledged €50 million to support AFISMA.

After the presentation of Mali’s Transition Roadmap, the EU fully resumed its development cooperation (European Commission 2013b). On 15 February, the Commission (2013a) approved a short-term stabilisation package of €20 million under the IfS to provide immediate support to local authorities and to prepare for elections. The high-level international donor conference in Brussels co-organised by the EU and France in mid-May 2013 marked the transition to longer-term support. The international community pledged a total of €3,25 billion to help rebuild Mali (European Commission 2013d). The EU allocated €1,35 billion, of which €523,9 from the Commission. European donors underlined that the disbursement of funds was tied to the implementation of the Transition Roadmap, including the holding of free and fair elections. To this aim, the EU launched an election observation mission headed by former Development and Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Louis Michel on 5 July 2013 (EEAS 2013d). In a preliminary assessment, he described the elections as “a successful first step on Mali’s path towards democratic renewal” (Michel 2013).

**Table 22: Malian crises and EU response**

| Date          | Crisis and reaction                               |
|---------------|---|
| January 2012  | MNLA-led Tuareg rebellion in the North            |
| 21 March 2012 | <i>Coup d'état</i> in Bamako                      |
| 22 March 2012 | UNSC, Ashton, ECOWAS, and the AU condemn the coup |
| 23 March 2012 | EU suspends development aid to Mali               |
| 28 March 2012 | ECOWAS suspends Mali’s membership                 |
| 3 April 2012  | ECOWAS imposes economic sanctions on Mali         |
| 5 April 2012  | MNLA proclaims independence of the Azawad state   |

| Date               | Crisis and reaction   |
|--------------------|---|
| 6 April 2012       | Framework Agreement for restoration of constitutional order signed          |
| 12 April 2012      | Dioncounda Traoré becomes interim President                                 |
| 28 June 2012       | <i>Ansar Dine</i> declares full control of Northern Mali                    |
| 5 July 2012        | Adoption of UNSC resolution 2056  |
| 28 September 2012  | Traoré agrees to host ECOWAS troops   |
| 12 October 2012    | Adoption of UNSC resolution 2071  |
| 15 October 2012    | EU starts planning for EUTM Mali  |
| 10 December 2012   | Adoption of CMC for EUTM Mali   |
| 20 December 2012   | Adoption of UNSC resolution 2085  |
| 4 January 2013     | <i>Ansar Dine</i> suspends ceasefire  |
| 9 January 2013     | African Union Chairman calls on NATO for assistance                         |
| 10 January 2013    | Islamist offensive on Konna   |
| 11 January 2013    | France launches operation <i>Serval</i>                                     |
| 15 January 2013    | UNSC declares unanimous support for French intervention                     |
| 16-19 January 2013 | <i>In Amenas</i> hostage crisis   |
| 17 January 2013    | Foreign Affairs Council establishes EUTM Mali; first AFISMA troops deployed |
| 29 January 2013    | Transition Roadmap adopted; EU pledges €50 million for AFISMA               |
| 15 February 2013   | EU decides IfS short-term stabilisation package of €20 million              |
| 15 May 2013        | High-level international donor conference on Mali                           |
| 2 April 2013       | Deployment of EUTM Mali   |



| Date           | Crisis and reaction                      |
|----------------|--|
| 25 April 2013  | Adoption of UNSC resolution 2100         |
| 1 July 2013    | AFISMA merges into MINUSMA               |
| 5 July 2013    | EU launches election observation mission |
| 28 July 2013   | First round of presidential elections    |
| 11 August 2013 | Second round of presidential elections   |

*Source: own compilation*

## 6.2 An intermediate degree of coherence

Having reviewed the Malian crises and the EU's response, we now focus on the dependent variable, the degree of coherence with which European resources were mobilised. This section starts by assessing the extent to which the Sahel Strategy provided the Union with collective objectives, principles, and priorities. It then addresses the interaction of key European players at the national and supranational levels to evaluate whether their actions and contributions were in line with the Union's stated objectives.

### *A comprehensive and collective strategy?*

The Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel represents the Union's first attempt to design a comprehensive regional strategy. It is based on the assumptions that security and development are inextricably linked and that the complex challenges in the Sahel demand a regional response (EEAS 2011b). The strategy underlines the principles of African responsibility and ownership as well as the need to coordinate with other international organisations and global partners (EEAS 2011b).

The Strategy outlines the Union's common interests in relation to the Sahel region, namely the prevention of terrorist attacks, the containment of drug trade, the protection of trade and communication links (roads and pipelines), and the preservation of existing and prospective economic interests (EEAS 2011b). The fight against AQIM and other terrorist and criminal networks stands out as a priority. The

document summarises the region’s core challenges, the Union’s main objectives as well as its lines of action and committed resources (see ).

**Table 23: The Sahel Strategy at a glance**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Challenges</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance, development, and conflict resolution</li> <li>• Regional and international coordination challenges</li> <li>• Security and the rule of law</li> <li>• Fight against/prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation</li> </ul> |
| <b>Objectives</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing insecurity</li> <li>• Improving development</li> <li>• Strengthening governance and stability</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Lines of action</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development, good governance, and internal conflict resolution</li> <li>• Political and diplomatic</li> <li>• Security and the rule of law</li> <li>• Fight against/prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation</li> </ul>             |
| <b>Resources: approximately €650 million</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10th European Development Fund</li> <li>• IfS</li> <li>• European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument</li> <li>• Thematic programmes and budget lines</li> </ul>  |

Source: EEAS (2011b)

However, several analysts questioned the Strategy’s comprehensiveness. Bello (2012: 17) argued that there was an over-emphasis on development instruments to the detriment of a more “serious and direct security commitment”. He criticised the Union’s piecemeal approach to crisis diplomacy and its inability to go beyond “soft power” (Bello 2012: 8). Faleg (2013: 3) agreed that “you cannot turn a comprehensive strategy (...) into comprehensive action if you neglect or deny the use of military power.”

The extent to which the member states shared the Strategy’s objectives and priorities was also questioned. Some argued that the strategic document, which was negotiated over the course of three years, represented a lowest common denominator outcome (Think Tank Expert B). While the Sahel region represents a key strategic priority for

France, this was much less the case for the UK or Germany – let alone for smaller Eastern European countries (German Official B 2013; European Diplomat B 2013).

### *Vertical coherence: more words than deeds*

There were few reports of inconsistencies or unilateral deviations in the Malian crises. One exception was national ransom payments to Islamist groups, which contradicted the Union's declared aim to fight terrorism and criminal networks in the Sahel. A New York Times article of February 2013 ascribed part of the responsibility for crisis escalation in Mali to the Europeans who had “knowingly bankrolled Islamist radicals” (Weddady 2013). Since 2003, the UK, Germany, France, Spain, Sweden, Austria, and the Netherlands reportedly transferred over \$130 million to African terrorist organisations to liberate hostages (Weddady 2013). For instance, in July 2012 Spain and Italy paid ransom to AQIM-affiliated Islamist groups for the release of aid workers. The decision was controversial, but the EEAS and the Commission remained silent, illustrating the absence of a common strategy on ransom payments (Bello 2012: 4).

In the diplomatic and aid arenas, the EU's activities were largely coherent even if French contributions visibly stood out. The member states generally displayed a preference for a political solution and underlined the principle of “African solutions for African problems” (ISIS 2013: 10). Even France long rejected direct military involvement and pushed for an African lead. In mid-December 2012, French foreign minister, Laurent Fabius (2012b), still claimed that France would “not at all be first in line”. The Sahel Strategy designated Mali as the most important aid recipient in the Sahel region and urged the member states to gear their bilateral aid towards the Strategy's objectives (EEAS 2011b). Before aid suspension, France was Mali's primary European donor, followed by the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark (OECD/DAC 2011). The gap between France and its European partners broadened at the high-level donor conference on Mali in May 2013. France pledged €280 million, which amounted to almost three times the contribution of any other EU member state (European Commission 2013c).

France was also in the driving seat concerning preparations for EUTM Mali. It pushed for military involvement in the CSDP framework starting in mid-2012, but received little support from European partners. Few of them demonstrated real interest in the planning of EUTM Mali (Coolsaet et al. 2013: 3; Marchal 2013: 492). An exception was Spain, which was keen to stabilise the Sahel zone to prevent potential migratory consequences (European Diplomat E 2013).

Prior to its military intervention in January 2013, France informed its key international and European partners, including Germany, Britain, and HR Ashton. Other member states were only notified after the launch of the operation (European Diplomat D 2013). However, there was little resentment about this selective procedure as most Europeans were glad that France reacted to the emergency (European Diplomat F 2013). They knew that intra-European consultations would have taken too much time and that France was the only member state capable of rapid intervention (German Official A 2013). France's unilateral intervention thus received strong and unified European backing. Prodi (in Kirk 2013) described the Union's accord as unprecedented: "I can say it's a miracle that all the 27 member states agree. I never before found such a level of agreement. This is different from Libya. This is different from any other case we had before".

While some member states provided logistic support, none offered ground troops. The French intervention sped up preparations for EUTM Mali, but the Europeans faced difficulties in identifying a 50-soldier team for the protection of trainers (Marchal 2013: 492). In February 2013, preparations stalled as Belgium failed to provide clearance for the use of its medical evacuation helicopters due to budgetary constraints (Gros-Verheyde 2013; Marchal 2013). It called for an increase in EUTM's common costs. But certain large contributors – notably Germany and the Netherlands – were reticent. Eventually, the common costs were raised from the initial reference amount of €12,3 million to an estimated €23 million (EEAS 2013e). But the common costs still amounted to less than 4 per cent of the total costs of operation *Serval*, estimated at €647 million by the end of 2013 (AFP 2013a).

Another discussion that was mainly held behind closed doors concerned the potential deployment of a civilian CSDP mission parallel to EUTM Mali (European Diplomats D and F 2013). France tabled various options in the area of SSR and policy training in spring/summer 2013. However, other EU member states rejected them on the grounds that a civilian mission would lead to duplication with MINUSMA and that Mali lacked the ‘absorption capacity’ (European Diplomats D and F 2013; UK Diplomat B 2013). The question of prioritisation in light of an increasingly strained CFSP budget also played a role.

### *Institutional coherence: implementation gaps*

The Sahel strategy was published two months after the EEAS had been declared operational. With its comprehensive outlook it was in line with the new Service’s core mission of enhancing the coherence of EU external action. Academic Expert B (2013) described the Sahel Strategy as the “golden child of the EEAS. It is like saying: ‘this is why we are here.’ (...) It is a flagship project.” Comprehensive regional strategies provide direction and a benchmark for assessment. Although they do not automatically bring about greater institutional coherence, they foster timely and comprehensive engagement with a region and permit different EU-level actors to sit at a table and to “throw around ideas” (Academic Expert B 2013).

However, the strategy turned out to be less preventive and less regional than planned. The Libyan crisis delayed its implementation by six months (Godement 2013). The institutions did not use the delay to adapt the document to the changing strategic context created by the Arab Spring (Rouppert 2012: 6). It did not help prevent the creation of a *de facto* theocracy in Northern Mali or the deterioration of security conditions in 2012. Furthermore, the strategy neglected pivotal regional players such as Algeria and Nigeria (Bello 2012). Godement (2013: 2) traced some of the strategy’s implementation gaps back to the “usual internecine ‘wars’ inside the EU bureaucracy” and to the “lack of adequate military expertise within the EEAS.” In addition, cumbersome bureaucratic procedures slowed down institutional coordination (Rouppert 2012: 6).

The EP joined in on the criticism of the Union's Malian crisis response. In January 2013, MEPs in the defence and foreign affairs Committees (2013) judged it "astonishing" that the Islamist offensive had surprised the Union and argued that – in light of recurrent warnings – it should have been prepared. They criticised the member states for their "lack of solidarity" with France and urged them to provide support on the ground (EP-AFET/SEDE 2013). They MEPs further stressed that the HR and EEAS should have exerted more pressure on the member states. In its subsequent report on the EEAS review, the EP (2013: 4) used Mali as prime example for overly slow decision-making procedures and implementation in the area of the CSDP and CFSP.

### *Overall assessment*

The EU's response to the Malian crises offers a rather mixed picture in terms of coherence. Europe displayed few open inconsistencies and contradictions. It disposed of a comprehensive strategy, outlining collective objectives and priorities, and providing 'agreed language' for crisis management activities in the region. The Union adhered to the Strategy's key principles. By yielding diplomatic backing to ECOWAS crisis management activities, it acted in line with the principles of African responsibility and ownership. Europe also engaged with international and regional players in the UN and more specific coordination bodies in line with the principle of effective multilateralism. In line with the Strategy's objectives, the Sahel states – and Mali in particular – became focal points of EU financial assistance.

But despite the existence of a common strategy and recurrent warnings, the Union failed in conflict prevention. Strategy implementation was slow and displayed an imbalance towards development instruments. Meanwhile, the pooling of member state resources was heavily biased. The French led Europe in all arenas: diplomatic, military, and economic. When they intervened unilaterally in January 2013, Europe's unified diplomatic support did not entail equivalent operational backing. Subsequent decisions on EUTM Mali were made relatively quickly, but deployment was fraught with unilateral reluctance. And though EUTM Mali was celebrated as an important contribution to international crisis management, it did not represent a direct response

to the emergency situation in January 2013. Discussions on a civilian CSDP contribution ended in non-decision. Due to the discrepancy between the Union's strategic commitment on the one hand and the reluctance to provide common resources for timely and preventive implementation on the other, the degree of coherence of the EU's crisis management is classified as *intermediate*.

### **6.3 The 'Big Three': French interests and loyal partners**

If preventing the creation of an Islamist safe haven at Europe's doorstep was a collective priority, why was Europe not more assertive? And what explains the asymmetry of member state contributions? This section examines the roles and interplay of the 'Big Three' in the EU's Malian crisis management and the balance between collective and national interests and norms.

#### ***France: preventing 'Sahelistan' and preserving interests***

France clearly led international and European crisis management efforts in Mali. The division of labour between Africans and Europeans was worked out in Paris. All drafts for UNSC resolutions on Mali between March 2012 and August 2013 were French. Paris was also the key driver behind the development of the Sahel strategy and operation EUTM Mali. Why did France play such a proactive role? And why did it react to the January 2013 emergency unilaterally?

France's immediate economic interests in Mali were limited. However, regional destabilisation held potential implications for interests in neighbouring Niger (Ahluwalia 2013; Francis 2013). The latter accounted for 33 per cent of the French uranium supply (Bresler 2013). France is highly dependent on uranium imports as 80 per cent of its electricity production comes from nuclear power (Bresler 2013). In addition, there were clear ties between political decision-makers and domestic economic players. The French government held over 80 per cent of the shares of nuclear multinational Areva, which was heavily invested in Nigerien uranium mines (EurActiv 2014). The fact that France ordered its Special Forces to these mines in February 2013 testifies to the salience of these economic interests.

The Sahel also constituted a French priority in terms of security interests. France had been a target of Islamist terrorist attacks since the 1990s (Francis 2013: 12). It declared war on AQIM in July 2010, which retaliated by declaring war on France. In 2012, the terrorist organisation held six French hostages in the Sahel region. Further security concerns included potential domestic repercussions of regional destabilisation emanating from France's large Malian and Algerian Diasporas (German Official A 2013). In addition, the Islamist offensive in January 2013 posed a direct threat to approximately 6000 French citizens living in Bamako (Rettman 2011). The combination of these factors contributed to a high national threat perception.

Mali was already a growing priority for Hollande's government in 2012. However, military intervention was initially not an option for the French President who had promised his voters a clean break from old patterns of Françafrique. In his Dakar speech on 12 October 2012, he announced a re-balancing of Franco-African relations and declared that the times when France played the role of Africa's "gendarme" were definitely over (Hollande 2012b). Accordingly, Hollande and foreign minister Fabius advocated an African-led intervention in Mali throughout 2012, and repeated that there would be no French troops on the ground. They underlined that the French role was one of a facilitator willing to provide logistical support and training (for example: Fabius 2012a; Hollande 2012a). However, in January 2013, fear of regional destabilisation and its repercussions prevailed over the announced departure from Françafrique. But even then, the political elite was keen to portray the French intervention as an essentially African undertaking.

Hollande launched operation *Serval* at a time when his approval ratings were at a low point of 37 per cent (AFP 2013b). The intervention represented an opportunity to contravene domestic criticism of his perceived indecision. IFOP polls of 21 January 2013 showed that popular support for the intervention (65 per cent) was comparable to that of the Bosnian (1994) and Libyan (2011) ones (Guibert and Revault D'Allonnes 2013). Demonstrating decisiveness in foreign and security policy also matched Hollande's electoral promise to re-balance the distribution of power *vis-à-vis* Germany's dominant role in the economic arena (Wiegel 2013a).



In the month after the launch of operation *Serval*, Hollande's approval rate rose by 6 per cent (Europe1.fr/Reuters 2013). Considering the precedent cases of Georgia (2008) and Libya (2011), the French President was certainly aware of the positive impact decisive crisis management could have on popularity ratings (Revault D'Allonnes 2013). But these precedent cases also showed that the positive impact tends to be short-lived. It was likely that domestic political attention would rapidly return to the country's pressing economic problems. In addition, the French public was wary of engagement in a protracted conflict after years of military involvement and significant French casualties in Afghanistan (Revault D'Allonnes and Wieder 2013). The increase in presidential popularity was thus rather a "collateral benefit" of operation *Serval* than a pivotal factor behind Hollande's decision to intervene (Lemarié and Revault D'Allonnes 2013). And the positive effect of the intervention on the President's popularity ratings was indeed short-lived (Tessier 2013).

According to official declarations, the key objective behind France's proactive approach to Mali was to prevent the creation of a 'new Afghanistan' at Europe's borders. French politicians already warned of the emergence of 'Sahelistan' and of the creation of a safe haven for 'narco-terrorism' in mid-2012 (see for example Fabius 2012c). The political discourse resembled American narratives on the international "war on terror" (Marchal 2013). Political analysts denounced these narratives as examples of securitisation brushing over the complexity and specificity of the Malian situation (Francis 2013; Dowd and Raleigh 2013; ICG 2012a).<sup>103</sup>

The official justification for *unilateral* intervention in January 2013 was that intra-European decision-making would have taken too long (Fabius 2013c). But, marking the difference in style from the previous government, Fabius (2013b) underlined that prior consultations with most European partners had taken place. Government representatives also asserted that France was "not alone". They repeatedly mentioned African operational support, Europe's engagement in the fields of logistics and

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<sup>103</sup> Securitisation is a constructivist concept associated with the Copenhagen School of security studies. It designates an extreme version of politicisation, purposively used to confer legitimacy on the use of extraordinary measures under the cover of 'security' (Buzan et al. 1998).

training, and unified diplomatic backing by the international community (Fabius 2013a; Hollande 2013). However, the opposition soon criticised France's "solitude" and "isolation" and denounced the intervention as improvised and ill-prepared (Anon. 2013). They compared the Malian with the Libyan intervention and blamed the President for his failure to prepare a broad multilateral coalition (Anon. 2013). Former Secretary of State for European Affairs and Foreign Trade, Pierre Lellouche (2013), argued it was "like going to Afghanistan alone" and that the French were acting like Europe's "mercenaries" paying the "price of blood" for the security interests of the whole continent.

### *UK: calculated support and division of labour*

Britain's role in the Malian crisis was not pronounced. Before January 2013, it displayed little interest in the Sahel region. The UK supported the French intervention in January 2013 logistically with two C-17 transport aircraft and a small technical team. They also made a substantial contribution to EUTM Mali. But why did the UK not side with France as in the Libyan case and what role did they play in the European context?

Mali was not of immediate economic or strategic interest for the UK. Bilateral trade was negligible and the country was not an important national security concern. There was a potential risk that regional destabilisation and a proliferation of armed Islamist groups in the Sahel would affect strategically important areas, including Nigeria and Sierra Leone (Nougayrède et al. 2012). But the fact that no British Foreign Secretary had paid a visit to Mali before March 2013 can be seen as an indicator for the relatively low foreign policy salience of Mali. UK Diplomat B (2013) confirmed: "Before 2013, we were simply absent from the region. (...) We did not start from a low base – we started from zero".

The absence of immediate national interests in the Sahel explains Britain's reluctance to shift EU resources and attention away from the strategically more relevant Horn of Africa region. The UK was not pleased with the appointment of political heavyweight Prodi – a former Italian Prime Minister and President of the EU Commission – as UN Special Envoy for the Sahel in October 2012 (Marchal 2013:

491). The largely French-inspired appointment was perceived as an attempt to divert EU funds away from Somalia. But at the same time, the British gave the French “a free hand” in the Mali dossier (European Diplomat D 2013). The *laissez-faire* strategy was not only related to strong Franco-British ties in security affairs, but also a matter of strategic calculation. According to European Diplomat D (2013), the ‘deal’ struck with France was: “We support you in the Sahel if you support us in Somalia”.

Beyond national calculation, the Sahel and Mali did not receive much public or political attention until early 2013. A review of 2012 parliamentary debates in the House of Commons shows that only three of them addressed Mali. The Sahel region was generally framed as a humanitarian rather than a security issue (House of Commons 2012a). Public attention rose with the French intervention in January 2013. But while the UK provided immediate diplomatic backing, it clearly excluded a combat role for British troops (Cameron 2013b). The refusal to put ‘boots on the ground’ was backed by a majority in the House of Commons and was in line with British public opinion. A YouGov survey of January 2013 showed that 63 per cent of the polled rejected a deployment of British troops to Mali while only 15 per cent were in favour (Nelson 2013).<sup>104</sup> UK Diplomat C (2013) illustrated the domestic constraints his country was facing: “It is very sensitive for us to send ground troops after the experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq. (...) In January 2013, it was politically necessary to publicly declare that we are not going into another intervention.”

However, the *In Amenas* crisis triggered a noticeable shift in political discourse and threat perception (Marchal 2013: 492). When it was clear that six British nationals had been killed in the kidnapping, Mali and AQIM rose to the top of the political agenda. On 18 January 2013, Cameron (2013a) compared the threat from the Sahel region to that from Pakistan and Afghanistan. At a National Security Council meeting on 22 January 2013, he ordered a shift in resources and attention away from

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<sup>104</sup> Meanwhile, almost half of the polled approved of Britain’s logistical support to France (Nelson 2013). Later in 2013, of course, the UK government lost a motion in the House of Commons to respond militarily to the use of chemical weapons in Syria (see chapter 8).

the UK's counter-terrorist focus on Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Middle East, and towards what he called a “‘a generational struggle’ against al-Qaida-inspired militants in north Africa” (in Wintour & Borger 2013). He added that Mali could not become “another Afghanistan or even another Libya” and that “the world needs to come together to deal with the threat in North Africa” (in Francis 2013: 13). He thus adopted the French narrative of the ‘international war on terror’.

The *In Amenas* kidnapping also pushed the UK to “ally itself closely with a broader European effort” (Dennison 2013). Following the Algerian crisis, Britain pledged additional surveillance support to France and offered up to 200 military personnel for the training of Anglophone West African troops (Prime Minister's Office 2013). In January 2013, the press reported that the Prime Minister put the forces on “high alert” for a potential emergency deployment to Mali in support of the French (The Week 2013). The Foreign Office later dismissed these reports. The UK became the fifth biggest contributor to EUTM Mali by contributing 37 military personnel (EEAS 2013e).

According to UK Diplomat B (2013), the rationale behind the British contributions to crisis management in Mali was to demonstrate loyalty with France within the confines of domestic constraints: “We could support EUTM Mali – that would not involve combat troops. We could contribute with airlift – that would not involve combat troops. We could send civilians to Mali – that would not involve combat troops”. UK Diplomat B (2013) added: “We are in favour of the EU acting more effectively in this part of the world. This is good news, especially as we don't want to do it ourselves.”

The latter statement illustrates the boundaries of the UK's engagement in the region. On 21 January 2013, Hague downplayed Britain's role in francophone West Africa, referring to its minor diplomatic presence and stating that it was not “omnipotent” (in Wintour 2013). He alluded to a division of labour between France and the UK with regard to East and West Africa (Buchsteiner 2013). A French diplomat confirmed this perspective: “Sudan is an American responsibility. The British take care of Somalia, and we take care of francophone Africa” (in Scheen 2013). In line with this

division of labour, the UK's short-term support did not entail longer-term financial commitment (European Diplomat F 2013). The UK's pledge at the Mali donor conference on 15 May 2013 amounted only to one fifth of the German and one fourteenth of the French contributions.

### ***Germany: restraint and Alliance solidarity***

Before the *coup d'état* in March 2012, Germany had already been involved in the training of Malian security forces for several decades. Nevertheless, Berlin was reluctant to follow the French lead after the *coup* and clearly rejected any involvement in combat operations. In 2013, it offered logistical support to operation *Serval*, became the second biggest contributor to EUTM Mali, and made significant aid contributions. Why was Berlin initially reluctant and what explains the apparent shift in position?

Mali was not a priority in terms of Germany's economic interests. The Foreign Office (2013) described bilateral trade as "relatively insignificant" and added that there was no important German investment in Mali. In November 2012, foreign minister Westerwelle proposed to mediate between the interim government and Tuareg groups in the North. Unlike Paris or Washington, Berlin was not associated with important economic or geo-strategic interests (Sattar 2012b).

Mali remained rather absent from the German domestic discourse until late 2012. When asked for the reasons, European Diplomat F (2013) explained that "Africa is not an important topic for the German public". "It is different in France where interests in Africa are an integral part of the public agenda", European Diplomat E (2013) added. German politicians even explicitly mentioned the indifference of the public concerning Mali in parliamentary debates (Mißfelder 2013; Stinner 2013). The debate only became more animated when Merkel (2012) announced Germany's willingness to contribute to a military European training operation during a speech in Strausberg on 22 October 2012. The possibility of a military engagement tends to raise the domestic political salience of any issue in Germany (European Diplomat F 2013).

The announcement to contribute to European crisis management in October 2012 coincided with the adoption of the French narrative of 'Sahelistan' and an increasing depiction of the situation in Mali as a threat to Europe. In Strausberg, Merkel (2012) declared that free and democratic states could not accept the creation of a safe haven for international terrorism in Northern Mali. One day later, development minister Dirk Niebel warned that Mali could turn into a "second Afghanistan" (Sattar 2012b). Foreign minister Westerwelle soon joined the chorus, stating: "If northern Mali falls, then terrorist schools will be created there... and then not only Mali and the region, the North African nations, will be threatened, but also us in Europe" (Daryl 2012).

But beyond official narratives, Germany's threat perception remained much less alarmist than that of France. At a briefing on 23 October 2012, German intelligence chief, Gerhard Schindler, told the Bundestag that jihadists in Northern Mali would only pose a threat to Europe within some years (Sattar 2012a). Meanwhile, the German Armed Forces Association cautioned against an unreflective "military adventure" in West Africa (DPA 2012). A German Diplomat (2013) argued that Berlin was reluctant to be "dragged into another African adventure" aimed at the protection of French national interests. He explained that three precedent cases contributed to this perception: the operations EUFOR RDC in 2006; EUFOR Chad/CAR in 2008-2009; and EUFOR Libya in 2011 (German Diplomat 2013).

Until January 2013, Germany thus adhered to its traditional stance of military restraint. Government representatives were cautious in their support for a European engagement. In intra-European consultations, Germany insisted on the clarification of the political aims and operational requirements of EUTM Mali (German Officials A and B 2013). Less than a week before the Islamist offensive, Westerwelle (2013) still refused to discuss the German contribution, unless these preconditions were clarified.

According to European Diplomat E (2013), "it was primarily the Franco-German relationship that brought Mali on Germany's agenda". January 2013 brought the principle of Alliance solidarity to the fore. The Franco-German dimension became particularly salient, as the French intervention coincided with preparations for the

50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Elysée Treaty (European Diplomat D 2013). Germany's swift provision of two Transall aircraft for the transport of ECOWAS troops to Bamako thus represented an important political signal (Think Tank Expert B 2013).

But Germany's alleged solidarity with France soon became subject to domestic contention. A number of government and opposition representatives argued that Germany's support was deficient. On 19 January 2013, Bundestag President Norbert Lammert told the press that he considered the provision of the Transall aircraft a "first demonstrative signal that Germany is not positioning itself as in the Libyan case". But he added that he could not imagine that "anybody would take this for the German contribution" (DPA 2013a). The latter was one of several statements linking Mali to the Libyan case. Support to the French in Mali was seen as an opportunity to rectify Germany's reputation of unreliability in the eyes of the most important European partner (Gebauer & Wittrock 2013).

Germany thus provided an additional Transall aircraft and an air-to-air refuelling plane in support of operation *Serval* later in January 2013. In late February 2013, the Bundestag authorised further logistical and air-to-air refuelling support and 150 troops for AFISMA as well as 180 troops for EUTM Mali. Germany was also the second most important European donor at the international aid conference in Brussels in May 2013. It accounted for one fifth of the European Commission contribution and pledged another €100 million bilaterally for the period of 2013-2014 (FAZ 2013). According to Think Tank Expert A (2013) Germany's gradually increasing engagement in Mali showed that it had learned its lessons from Libya. This time, the government opted for a "middle-way" between the principles of military restraint and Alliance solidarity.

## **6.4 Institutions: between tensions and French leadership**

The Sahel Strategy was presented as a flagship project for the EEAS. However, analysts criticised implementation gaps and heavy bureaucratic procedures (Godement 2013; Rouppert 2012). This section explores potential causes in the

realms of bureaucratic politics and organisational cultures. It then evaluates the role of institutional coordination mechanisms for horizontal and vertical coherence.

### *Resources for security and development*

The Sahel Strategy emphasised the inextricable link between security and development. But the emphasis did not translate into an equivalent allocation of funds. The Council and the Commission faced recurrent tensions about the use of development funds for the implementation of security-related measures (Rouppert 2012: 7-8). One example was the discussion on Commission funds for counter-terrorism measures. In a speech at the EP in November 2012, EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator Gilles de Kerchove expressed concern about the reduction of funds under the IfS dedicated to counter-terrorism (in Rouppert 2012: 8). In a 2012 reflection paper, he argued that the Union should use EDF and Development Cooperation Instrument funds for certain counter-terrorism measures (EPLO 2012).

Another example concerned operation EUTM Mali. The EU set out to train Malian security forces, but could not provide them with much-needed military equipment (European Diplomats E and F 2013). In February 2013, EUTM Operations Commander General François Lecointre urged the Europeans to provide equipment, which would cost “much more” than the operation’s foreseen common budget (Fletcher 2013).

### *Coherence meets humanitarian space*

In December 2012, Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Georgieva urged all parties involved in the Malian crisis to respect humanitarian principles (European Commission 2012d). “Without safe and secure access for humanitarian workers our aid cannot save those whose lives are now hanging in the balance”, she added. The fragility of the humanitarian space had been highlighted in October 2012 when Al Qaeda-linked militants kidnapped six aid workers in Niger. To protect the humanitarian space, DG ECHO did not require any visible indication of EU funding



from its implementing partners in Mali.<sup>105</sup> In April 2013, after the French intervention and the deployment of EUTM, the Council reiterated calls for the respect of the humanitarian space in Mali.

Humanitarian principles were also relevant at the national level. A Member of the Humanitarian Aid department of the German Foreign Office (2013) explained that all documents related to Mali had to pass over his desk: “If a governmental declaration, for instance, stated that we are supporting the Malian government with moral, military, humanitarian, and development-related measures, we would argue that these measures have to be clearly separated. We do not want to be mentioned in the same breath with politically controlled instruments or measures”.

The practical impact of such rhetorical intricacies might be limited. But they are indicative of the inherent tensions between the humanitarian aid principles and the integrative dynamic of the comprehensive approach to crisis management. Three humanitarian aid practitioners argued that the Malian/Sahel crisis represented a crucial test for the Union’s commitment to humanitarian principles (Pontiroli et al. 2013). They admonished the loss of these principles in the search for coherence and emphasised that humanitarian aid is one form of “crisis response”, but not “a means of crisis management” (Pontiroli et al. 2013). They further outlined the “potential dangers of EU coherence”, namely the risks for aid workers and limitations to access to people in need if humanitarian aid is viewed as a political tool (Pontiroli et al. 2013). Perceived politicisation is more likely if individual action by one member state, parallel to EU action, suggests interest-based intervention. The reference to France’s role in Mali is implicit. These aid practitioners commend the European Commission for its respect of the humanitarian principles, but call on the member states to follow suit. Their article clearly illustrates that the epistemic norms of the

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<sup>105</sup> The concept of humanitarian space usually refers to four aspects: physical access to people in need; the respect of the humanitarian principles; the security conditions in the working environment; and the ability of affected populations to reach assistance and protection (Overseas Development Institute 2014).

humanitarian community clash with the Union's coherence-related norms and these clashes transcend various governance levels.

### *Coordination mechanisms and their limitations*

The capacity of the HR to ensure vertical coordination was limited. Analysts noted that Ashton kept “strangely quiet” on operation EUTM Mali until January 2013 and failed to provide “decisive leadership” (Coolsaet et al. 2013: 3; Faleg 2013: 2). But her potential for leadership was also confined by France's vital national interests and unilateral actions (Bello 2012: 4). Ashton's vertical coordination efforts largely constituted a reaction to the French intervention in January 2013. She convened the Crisis Platform twice in the weeks following the French intervention. After the extraordinary FAC Council on 17 January 2013, she also activated the ‘Clearing House’ mechanism – a dedicated platform within the EUMS – to facilitate the pooling of EU and international logistical support to AFISMA (Ashton 2013a).

Meanwhile, the EEAS played a role of “softener” in Mali (European Diplomat E 2013). It adapted the mainly French drafts for Council Conclusions and made them more coherent. “The EEAS thus acted as a kind of filter for particular interests of the member states” (European Diplomat E 2013). This role is not negligible, as a number of member states perceived the French push for EU crisis management in Mali as arrogant and ungrounded (Marchal 2013: 491). However, soft-washing national interests does not correspond to the EEAS's foreseen role as a coordination hub for the Union's various crisis management measures and activities.

The Sahel Strategy also led to the creation of a number of formal and informal coordination mechanisms. In 2012, the HR appointed Peteris Ustubs as EEAS Director for West and Central Africa and Senior Sahel Coordinator. His mandate was to promote a common vision for the Sahel countries and to engage with regional partners and other international players (Bello 2012: 3). He coordinated the Sahel Task Force responsible for the evaluation of the Strategy's implementation. The Task Force was an informal coordination group, meeting twice or three times a month. It was composed of various EEAS officials (crisis management structures and geographic departments), relevant Commission services (Service for Foreign Policy

Instruments, DG ECHO, DG DEVCO, and DG Home Affairs), and the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator (Pirozzi 2013: 16).

But in March 2013, the Council appointed another coordinating figure. The member states appointed senior diplomat and former French ambassador to Mali, Michel Reveyrand-de Menthon, as EUSR for the Sahel. His mandate included regional and international coordination and the implementation of the comprehensive approach in line with the Sahel Strategy, and thus overlapped with that of the Senior Sahel Coordinator (Council 2013b). UK Diplomat A (2013) noted that these overlapping responsibilities caused tensions and “institutional oddities”, as the member states preferred to interact with the EUSR: “The EUSR is much more responsive to the member states. (...) He only responds to the HR and is not answerable to other EEAS institutions or the Sahel Coordinator” (UK Diplomat A 2013). The member states were thus advocates of a comprehensive EU approach to the Sahel, but used institutional overlaps to their advantage.

## **Conclusion**

Though Mali was a good example of diplomatic unity, it was not the Union’s best demonstration of collective action. This result is partly due to the intra-European distribution of interests. The Sahel Strategy listed a range of collective security and economic interests (EEAS 2011b). But, as our analysis has shown, the only member state with tangible economic and security-related stakes in the region was France. Aware of this asymmetry, the other member states also viewed the Sahel as an essentially French responsibility. They accepted French leadership within the EU, but did not make comparable contributions. Mali thus confirms the link between national interests and coherence posited by hypothesis 1a and draws specific attention to the distribution of national stakes. If the latter is highly asymmetric, truly collective and coherent action is unlikely.

The influence of electoral calculation on the degree of coherence was mixed. Evidence suggested that the French President was aware of the short-lived positive impact decisive crisis management behaviour could have on popularity ratings. Yet President Traoré’s call for emergency assistance was certainly a more important

factor in the decision for rapid intervention. Mali was not very salient in the British and German public discourse. However, politicians in London and Berlin cautiously avoided the impression of involving their country in an open-ended African ‘adventure’. Caution was important in light of war-weary constituencies with little appetite to see their countries engaged in another Afghanistan. This was particularly the case for the German government, which was preparing for federal elections in September 2013.

Despite a preference for limited involvement, both Britain and Germany felt compelled to demonstrate loyalty with France. In the UK’s case, support for Mali was presented as a trade-off for French backing in the Horn of Africa and can thus be interpreted as an intergovernmental bargain (H2a). Meanwhile, Germany opted for a middle way between its traditional foreign policy principles of alliance loyalty and military restraint. It was cautious and reluctant at first, but gradually provided substantial logistic and financial support. Germany’s change in position can be seen as a response to French expectations and to demands of a domestic political elite eager to restore the country’s image of reliability after Libya. The shift thus represents an example of norm-based, rather than strategic behaviour.

According to Think Tank Expert B (2013), “EU crisis management in Mali was coherent *because* of France’s strong engagement”. However, France’s leadership also restrained the autonomous influence of EU-level actors. And while the member states subscribed to a comprehensive strategy for the Sahel, they preferred to interact with institutional players that were more responsive to them than to the wider EU crisis management system.

More generally, the Union’s crisis response to Mali underlined Europe’s collective preference for “African solutions to African problems”. In other words, it showed that European decision-makers prefer to use African forces as proxies when national security interests on the ‘Dark Continent’ are at stake (Olsen 2014). But Mali illustrated the practical limitations of this strategy. The preparations for AFISMA were too lengthy to deter an Islamist offensive or to provide immediate responses. In

addition, the African-led operation heavily relied on external planning assistance and funding.

Mali also confirmed the American tendency to leave the stage to Europeans when it comes to African theatres. Yet the French heavily relied on American support in terms of reconnaissance and strategic enablers (such as airlift and air-to-air refuelling). The Americans initially planned to issue a bill for their support, illustrating once more their dwindling appetite to fill in for European capability gaps.<sup>106</sup> Ultimately, Mali demonstrated that ‘strategic surprises’ in Europe’s neighbourhood cannot be tackled with ‘soft power’ alone and that neither African proxies nor ‘Uncle Sam’ will provide Europe with the necessary sharp edge.

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<sup>106</sup> In January 2013, the Washington announced it wanted to charge Paris \$20 million for the use of its C-17 transport aircraft. It later withdrew the claim arguing that there was a misunderstanding and that transport support would be provided free of charge (Wiegel 2013b).

## **Chapter 7: Comparing crisis responses and explaining variation**

Coherence in EU crisis management is a matter of degree. This is one of the obvious findings that emerge from the analysis of three post-Lisbon cases of EU crisis management. The cases displayed substantial variation in terms of the degree of coherence. The Union's response to the Libyan crisis was often inconsistent, leading to the assessment of a low degree of coherence. In comparison, Europe's collective reaction to the Somali conflict displayed a relatively high level of coherence. The response to Mali's crises fell in between and was thus evaluated as demonstrating medium coherence.

This chapter draws the findings of the case studies together, providing systematic explanations for the observed variation. The contextual sections of the case studies showed that the conflicts and international responses differed in many important respects. However, this thesis chose to focus the comparison on three guiding questions:

- How did the interaction of domestic interests and embedded norms influence the degree of coherence in EU crisis management?
- How did norms and calculation interact at the intergovernmental level in influencing the degree of coherence in EU crisis management?
- How did EU institutional interests and norms interact in influencing the degree of coherence in EU crisis management?

The chapter compares findings across cases to evaluate the explanatory power of the structured answers proposed by the hypotheses. Sections 1 to 3 address the domestic, intergovernmental, and EU institutional levels respectively. Section 4 turns to the role of embedded analytical units and situates the players' actions and interaction within a broader contemporary context. The conclusion summarises the findings of comparative analysis in light of the hypotheses.

## 7.1 When domestic interests trump norms

The three case studies showed that domestic constituencies and contexts were crucial to understand variation in the degree of coherence in EU crisis decision-making. This section evaluates the role and influence of domestic factors comparatively across cases. It starts with economic interests and then moves to electoral considerations and embedded norms.

### *Coherence meets market power*

Each of the analysed conflicts created positive or negative economic externalities for European domestic players. However, their nature and distribution varied. The Libyan crisis affected the economic interests of various EU member states. While those were not the sole reasons behind the Libyan intervention, they held substantial explanatory power when it came to unilateral member state actions or inactions and their timing. As outlined in chapter 4, France's unilateral moves partly coincided with lucrative perspectives in the Libyan energy sector. UK Diplomat C (2013) also acknowledged Britain's "dividends of the intervention. Our relations with the Libyans are certainly better than those of countries who played a less immediate role in 2011".

European Diplomat C (2011) underlined the importance of the private sector for intergovernmental decision-making in the field of restrictive measures: "The question for the member states was how to implement sanctions without damaging domestic companies". While not at the centre of the present analysis, Italy represents an important example in this regard. Rome "had high stakes in Libya", which was its most important energy supplier (Italian Official 2011). In 2010, the desert nation provided 22 per cent of Italian oil imports and 13 per cent of its gas imports (International Energy Agency 2011). In March 2011, the director of Italian energy giant ENI urged Europe to refrain from further sanctions and warned that they amounted to "shooting ourselves in the foot" (in Dinmore and Chaffin 2011). European Diplomat C (2011) explained: "ENI was a major player because it had strongly invested in the Libyan energy sector. It was clear that it had most to lose".

ENI's pressure was certainly one factor behind Rome's initial reluctance to impose sanctions on the Libyan energy sector.

However, the impact of sanctions on the energy sector was not devastating, as Italy had three main energy suppliers aside from Libya: Russia, Norway, and Algeria. In addition, the crisis escalated in the spring and summer months when energy requirements are reduced (European Diplomat C 2011). The asset freeze was seemingly more important. The Libyan Central Bank and the Libyan Investment Authority held around 7.5 per cent of the shares of Italian Bank UniCredit SpA (Castonguay 2011). These shares explain why Italy initially insisted on a "narrow interpretation" of the asset freeze on the Libyan finance sector (Castonguay 2011).

The distribution of economic interests in the Malian case was clearly more asymmetric. Potential regional destabilisation indirectly affected a major French economic interest, namely the security of uranium supply from neighbouring Niger. These interests help explain why France adopted a proactive approach to the Sahel region, and a forceful unilateral approach to the Malian crisis in January 2013. Conversely, the relative absence of economic interests of other member states are in line with their reluctance to follow France's lead in 2012 and to provide substantial operational and economic support. While French politicians cautiously denied the existence of a 'hidden economic agenda', other European decision-makers *did* ask themselves whether they should support the country's efforts to secure its uranium supply (Academic Expert B 2013; European Diplomat E 2013; German Official C 2013).

The contrast with Somalia is striking. When asked which member states were particularly interested in the EU's Somali crisis management, European Diplomat F (2013) simply replied, "all of them". Maritime piracy was a collective priority for the member states and the international community at large. The Union is a global trade power and the Gulf of Aden one of its major trading routes. The influence of economic interest groups on the political decision-making process was also more visible than in the other two cases (Germond and Smith 2009; Pohl 2012). Calls by shipping and economic associations for a more robust European role in counter-



piracy were openly discussed in parliamentary debates. One reason for the open involvement of economic interest groups might be that the negative externalities of maritime piracy as well as the potential benefits of robust counter-piracy operations were calculable. The specificity of maritime operations further allowed for the protection of economic interests without inflicting immediate damage on the local population.

Overall, the three cases indicate that the existence and distribution of economic interests and stakes influences the degree of coherence in EU crisis management. The empirical evidence is in line with the causal link posited by hypothesis 1a and thus proves the applicability of liberal intergovernmentalist explanations to the hard case of EU crisis management. The Somali case, in particular, shows that EU crisis management can represent a positive-sum game with calculable, collective pay-offs (politics of scale) and few individual risks. These conditions increase the likelihood of coherent EU crisis management. Conversely, deviations and unilateral measures are likely if economic interests compete, in a zero-sum fashion, or if the distribution of potential losses among member states is asymmetric.

### *The pressure of the principal*

Libya, Somalia, and Mali also differed in terms of political salience. Table 24 provides an overview of the numbers of parliamentary plenary sessions containing substantial debates on the conflicts within the case study time frames.<sup>107</sup> Based on this indicator, Libya stands out as most salient. While the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings had sensitised national publics and political elites, the controversial, difficult, and lengthy NATO intervention kept the political debate alive. Mali comes second in terms of political salience. It invaded the debate in January 2013 with the Islamist offensive and the *In Amenas* hostage crisis. However, once the success of

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<sup>107</sup> All protocols of plenary sessions in the British, German, and French parliaments that contained references to the three conflicts within the given time frames were carefully screened. Single protocols were classified as 'substantial' if the conflicts or corresponding national/EU measures were (a) subject to discussion (not only mentioned in passing) and (b) mentioned more than twice. Table 24 lists the number of protocols containing 'substantial' parliamentary debates.

operation *Serval* became increasingly certain, the political attention rapidly dropped. Finally, the Somali conflict was most insulated from domestic political debates. The relatively low salience reflects the fact that Somali piracy was on a course of steady decline during the studied time period.<sup>108</sup> In addition, only few controversial crisis management decisions were taken at the European level.

**Table 24: Debates on conflicts in parliamentary debates**

| Conflict / parliaments of       | France    | UK        | Germany   | Total      |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Libya (15.02.2011-31.10.2011)   | 24        | 40        | 15        | 79         |
| Somalia (14.11.2011-13.11.2012) | 1         | 12        | 9         | 22         |
| Mali (21.03.2012-11.08.2013)    | 32        | 14        | 18        | 64         |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>57</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>42</b> | <b>165</b> |

*Source: own compilation*

Variations across member states are also worth noting. The Libyan crisis received substantial political attention in France, the UK, and Germany. The differences in the Malian and Somali cases were more pronounced. Mali was at the very top of the French political agenda. It became quite prominent in Germany once Merkel declared a general willingness to make a military contribution in October 2012. Meanwhile, the House of Commons only really dealt with Mali in January 2013 – in particular after the *In Amenas* hostage crisis. Conversely, Somalia was much more salient in the British and German parliaments than in the French one, where it was barely mentioned. Finally, the variation shown in Table 24 reflects Germany’s relatively lower public interest in Africa as well as the apparent ‘division of labour’ between France and the UK with regard to East and West Africa respectively.

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<sup>108</sup> The number of total pirate attacks in the waters off the Somali Coast fell from 176 in 2011 to 35 in 2012 (EU NAVFOR Somalia 2014).

Overall, questions on the use of force received disproportionate domestic attention. The Libyan case offered an interesting picture in this regard. In France, the public and the political elite were in favour of intervention. Decisive action in the military domain was unlikely to endanger perspectives for the 2012 presidential elections. In the UK, there was a clear disconnect between a supportive political elite and a rather sceptical and opposed public. But, no major elections were at the horizon and the government and opposition were not divided. In Germany, the topic divided government and opposition, who were facing important and proximate local elections. Meanwhile, polls indicated that the German public was opposed to a participation in the intervention. It is likely that potential electoral risks were factored in to Berlin's decision to abstain in the vote on the UNSC resolution 1973. In line with hypothesis 1a, diverging median voter interests and corresponding electoral calculation negatively influenced the degree of EU-level coherence.

The Malian and Somali crises were generally less salient in the domestic arena. And indeed, the respective case studies displayed fewer observable links between public opinion and governmental behaviour. The positive, but short-lived effect of Hollande's decisive intervention in Mali on public opinion was a 'collateral benefit', but not a key underlying motive. The UK's relatively restrained attitude in the Mali case could be traced back to a combination of a rather war-tired public and the absence of significant national economic and security interests. Meanwhile, Berlin's shift in position towards a more robust role in Somalia occurred in spite of a traditionally pacifist public and approaching local, as well as presidential elections.

Political salience thus stands out as a major intervening variable between the preferences of the principal and the agent's actions. This finding is in line with one of the hypothesised scope conditions of this study. Strategic electoral calculation seemingly only influenced political behaviour if public salience, relevant opinion polls, and party competition implied potentially high stakes for political decision-makers in proximate elections.

### *Variable norm games*

Embedded norms influenced national behaviour and rhetoric across the three cases, but the 'norm games' played out differently. In the Libyan case, the 'Big Three' adhered to their traditional stances. The French and British leadership in the military intervention was in line with their sense of international responsibility and their proactive attitude to the use of force. France pushed for a European role while the UK adhered to NATO's primacy. Meanwhile, Germany acted in line with its traditional stance of military and political restraint. Its uneasy position between Atlanticism and Europeanism translated into a rather reluctant endorsement of operation EUFOR Libya on the one hand, and attempts to compensate for the lack of Alliance solidarity on the other.

The picture was more blurred in the Malian crisis. Only France clearly acted in line with its traditional principles. It intervened forcefully, demonstrated its sense of international responsibility, and tried to Europeanise its effort once the emergency situation in January 2013 was overcome. Meanwhile, Britain refrained from a proactive stance and left the international responsibility to France. And Germany balanced the principles of multilateralism and military restraint. It initially adhered to a position of restraint, but alliance solidarity became more salient in January 2013. Conforming to the latter, Berlin provided military and logistic support. But it also minimised related risks by rejecting any involvement in combat operations.

In the Somali case, traditional national positions shifted. France pushed for the engagement of the military CSDP in counter-piracy, but Europeanism and international responsibility did not extend to the Somali mainland. The UK agreed to EU, rather than NATO leadership in counter-piracy for pragmatic reasons. Germany, instead, compromised its traditional stance of military restraint by giving in to British and French demands for a more robust engagement of operation Atalanta.

Deviations from embedded national norms thus mostly occurred in the Malian and the Somali cases. Pursuant to constructivist, sociological institutionalist assumptions, the higher degree of political insulation may have facilitated a shift of loyalties towards the European level. The important role of the Franco-German friendship in

Berlin's considerations of support in Mali can be seen as an example. But, in the Somali case, it seems more likely that important economic interests and strategic considerations motivated the shift away from long-standing embedded norms.

### *A matter of stakes and certainty*

The empirical evidence confirms that the influence of domestic constraints depends on the scope conditions. The most immediate impact of economic interests on the degree of coherence could be observed in the Somali case. The stakes were high, the costs were calculable and the payoffs of coordinated and robust counter-piracy operations were measurable. Similar clarity existed for the Libyan case in the field of economic sanctions. The repeated coincidence of high stakes and national deviations from long-standing foreign policy principles suggests the conclusion that important economic interests (H1a) have, in fact, prevailed over embedded norms (H1b) in explaining varying degrees of coherence.

The line between the influence of electoral calculation and embedded norms is admittedly hard to draw. As Pohl (2012: 15) rightly points out, European electorates expect decision-makers to pursue national norms *and* interests. But generally, electoral calculation only seemed to influence the degree of coherence in EU crisis management under very specific circumstances. The median voter interest mattered for politically salient decisions on the use of force, if government and opposition were divided, and if there was an electoral horizon. Under these circumstances, cross-case comparison showed that politicians variably used national norms in political discourse. Electoral calculation thus seemed to have prevailed over embedded national norms.

But beyond the few situations that presented decision-makers with calculable economic or electoral stakes, national norms had an important impact on the coherence of crisis decision-making. This could be seen in the strong Atlanticist orientation of the UK, the consistency of France's Europeanist drive, and the recurrence of Germany's culture of military restraint. The analysis of political rhetoric further showed that decision-makers attempted to conceal deviations from their national constituencies. One example was France's continued emphasis on

Europe's leadership in the Libyan crisis, despite *de facto* NATO lead. Other examples included the UK's omission of operation EUFOR Libya in parliamentary debates as well as the repeated insistence of German politicians on the civilian and humanitarian character of operations EUFOR Libya and Atalanta. The de-coupling of rhetoric from reality points towards a strategic manipulation of embedded national norms. But it also shows that the latter continue to yield a higher degree of legitimacy than EU-level norms of coherence. To put it more bluntly, domestic interests trump domestic norms; but domestic norms trump coherence.

## **7.2 Intergovernmental competition and cooperation**

The analysis shows that the 'Big Three' are the key actors in EU crisis management. But Italy's important role in the Libyan crisis indicates that other member states with particular historical or economic ties to the conflict country or region can be equally relevant for the degree of coherence. Under consensus rules, liberal intergovernmentalism predicts lowest common denominator outcomes, whereas sociological institutionalism expects mutual compromise outcomes. This section provides an overview of intergovernmental outcomes and discusses underlying dynamics of competitive or cooperative bargaining.

### ***Lowest common denominator outcomes***

Lowest common denominator outcomes can be observed in all three cases. In the Libyan case, operation EUFOR Libya was described as a minimal consensus between the French and Italian push for an involvement of the CSDP and the more reluctant other member states. The result was a planned operation that was not in line with the preferences of the UN or of the Libyan opposition. Interviews indicated that there was an element of calculation behind this compromise outcome. The insistence of the UK to make its activation dependent on a call by UN OCHA significantly lowered the chances of deployment and thus also of potential risks.

Another lowest common denominator outcome was the declaration by the extraordinary European Council on 11 March 2011, which welcomed the NTC as *a* rather than *the* legitimate interlocutor. By recognising the NTC as the sole

interlocutor the day before, France attempted to push the other member states to deviate from their more cautious positions. Overall, Europe failed to agree on a common diplomatic line towards the NTC. Italy was the next EU member state to unilaterally recognise the NTC. An Italian Official (2011) commented: “If others do not play by EU rules, we find our own way. But this should have been decided at the EU level”. This statement shows that the member states are indeed aware of coherence-related norms. But, if one member state deviates, strategic considerations come in its stead.

In the Somali case, the decision to activate the Operations Centre for the coordination of the CSDP missions and operations was described as a lowest common denominator outcome. The decision was a political compromise between the UK and the other member states, led by France and, in the words of German Diplomat A (2011), “the UK won”. The result of this compromise was an institutional entity with few and exclusively military staff, a limited operation period, and no command responsibility. By restricting the scale and scope of the Operations Centre, the UK drew the other member states closer to its own preference, which consisted of rejecting additional European institutional structures (UK Diplomat B 2013).

Mali was a special case as France was in the driving seat and did perhaps not demand as many compromises from the other member states. But the dragging preparations of EUTM Mali, and the failure of conflict prevention in 2012, can also be seen as a lowest common denominator outcome. France failed to draw the other member states closer to its own preferences. In addition to the asymmetry of economic interests, discussed in the previous section, this failure can be assigned to the initial divergence in national threat perceptions. Until January 2013, France was the only member state truly preoccupied by potential security-related threats emanating from the situation in Mali.

### *Mutual compromise outcomes*

In all three cases, there were also examples where the member states moved away from initial preferences and towards mutual compromise outcomes. They either

overcame existing divisions or acted collectively in spite of them. In the Libyan case, the member states agreed to open an EU liaison office in Benghazi in May 2011 despite their differences on the approach to the NTC (European Diplomat C 2011). The fact that the corresponding decision was taken behind closed doors, and had few repercussions in the media might have facilitated consensus on this particular measure. The latter is in line with hypothesis 2b, which posits that insulation from international and societal pressures facilitates cooperative bargaining and the forging of mutual compromise outcomes.

In the Somali case, one of the viable compromise outcomes was the strengthening of operation Atalanta in March 2012. In line with the preference of France, the UK, and the Netherlands, the operation was amended to include robust on-shore operations. But, reflecting the positions of Germany, Spain, and Austria, the scope and scale of land-based operations was restricted. The amendment thus represented a mid-way between the desire for forceful intervention of some member states and the risk adversity of others.

As for Mali, a mutual compromise was reached after the start of France's unilateral operation. The Islamist offensive showed that the threat emanating from the Sahel zone was real and that the French warnings had to be taken seriously. The member states thus agreed to fast-track the planning procedure for the operation EUTM Mali, and to increase the number of its personnel. Aware of the incoherent image the EU delivered in the Libyan crisis, national decision-makers were keen to project an image of unity. The French President informed key European partners and Ashton prior to unilateral intervention in Mali. The other member states showcased a textbook example of European coherence by yielding unified diplomatic support to the French intervention. In return, the French government praised its European partners for their solidarity. The adherence to these procedural coherence-related norms in the diplomatic realm seemingly occurred in the absence of material or strategic incentives.



### *Towards 'European domestic politics'*

The above suggests that EU foreign policy is not as insulated from issue linkage and competitive bargaining as some scholars suggest (see for example Smith 1998; M. E. Smith 2004). The analysed cases show that intergovernmental outcomes are crucially dependent on the interplay of national economic, electoral, and security-related interests (H2a). However, national preference functions also include domestically ingrained national norms. When decisions are relatively insulated from domestic audiences and not directly relevant for influential economic players, ideational factors even prevail. The differing national positions on the Operations Centre represent a good example in this regard. The decision to activate the body presented policy-makers with low economic stakes and risks on the one hand, and ingrained, determinate norms on modes of international cooperation on the other. It is thus likely that the lowest common denominator outcome stemmed from the latter, rather than from strategic considerations. In some cases, EU-level coherence norms tempered intergovernmental interaction. Generally, this tempering effect was more salient when deliberations occurred within EU channels and behind closed doors (H2b).

The analysis of parliamentary debates and political speech acts further suggested that precedent cases had an important mediating influence on perceived costs, risks, and threats. In the Libyan case, experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan fuelled fears of yet another complicated, open-ended, and potentially illegitimate intervention in an Islamic country. In the Somali case, the reluctance to get involved on the mainland also stemmed from the memory of the failed and bloody international interventions in the early 1990s. Finally, the French narratives of 'Sahelistan' and of the 'war on terror' created a direct link between Mali and Afghanistan, which few now consider an example to follow. A question on Mali by Labour Party member David Winnick in the House of Commons on 29 January 2013 illustrates the link between precedents, threat perception, and the willingness to act: "After 11 years of warfare in Afghanistan, does the Secretary of State [for Defence, Philip Hammond] accept that there is no appetite whatever in this country for British troops to be sucked into a new war, a war far away, and a war that could easily escalate?"

Finally, the Franco-British wrangling on the distribution of APF funds between Mali and Somalia showed that processes of socialisation and rational learning are often hard to separate (Levy 1994). The eventual compromise between France and the UK may be related to EU-level coherence-related norms and the socialising effects of repeated interaction. But, it may equally reflect processes of rational learning in repeated games. Leaders of both countries know that they have to rely on each other's support for future security and defence projects – within or without the EU. Overall it seems that intergovernmental bargaining is increasingly evolving into a new form of 'European domestic politics'. National preferences do not necessarily converge over time. However, compromises – even if 'rotten' – become socially *and* rationally desirable in light of repeated and multidimensional cooperation.

### **7.3 EU institutions: limited impact and divisions**

The analysed case studies occurred during a period of difficult institutional consolidation. They constituted early tests for the post-Lisbon crisis management 'machinery' and a basis of valuation for the performance of the HR as well as for the 2013 EEAS review. This section analyses the role of exogenous and endogenous factors behind institutional influence and interaction and links them to the Union's own evaluations. It thus addresses the third and last question of structured, focused comparison: how did EU institutional interests and norms interact in influencing the degree of coherence in EU crisis management?

#### *Agents under close constraints*

Across the three cases, the autonomous influence of institutional players generally depended on the levels of delegated sovereignty, determined by the legal division of competences.<sup>109</sup> It was substantial in humanitarian aid and development cooperation where the level of delegation is high. Institutional influence in diplomacy and defence varied across cases, but was generally more restrained.

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<sup>109</sup> See articles 2-6 TFEU.

Institutional players arguably had least autonomous influence on the Union's crisis management in the Libyan case. Their backstage role has two main reasons. The first was the timing and unexpected nature of the Arab uprisings (EEAS Official A 2011). With the EEAS barely operational and several important posts still vacant, the events put Brussels in "a state of shock" (European Diplomat A 2011). The second reason was the combination of relatively high stakes and intergovernmental divisions. Commenting on the criticism of the HR's performance in the Libyan crisis, European Diplomat B (2011) underlined: "Ashton cannot be the scapegoat if the member states all have their stakes". An Italian Official (2011) also dismissed the criticism as hypocritical: "Her room for manoeuvre crucially depends on the political will of the member states to delegate power – to empower the EU. Without this, Ashton cannot be in the driving seat." The relatively high stakes did not only stem from the general context of the Arab uprisings, but were also related to the involvement of a broad range of international and regional players and the military and political challenges of interfering in a full-fledged civil war.

In the case of Mali, the influence of institutional players on the degree of coherence was also limited. By drafting the Sahel Strategy, the Commission and the EEAS had some leverage on the Union's overarching collective narrative for crisis management in the region. But, once the crisis escalated in early 2013, France acted unilaterally. The EEAS played the role of a filtering mechanism between France's particular interests and the other member states. By enhancing the level of trust at the intergovernmental level, it had slightly more influence on the degree of coherence than in the Libyan crisis. But when comparing the two cases, European Diplomat E (2013) also pointed out that "Libya was more important".

The Union's crisis management in Somalia offered most evidence of institutional influence. Institutional players might not have been the key drivers. However, they presented proposals for the Union's crisis management, which were not only incorporated, but also discussed by external players such as the US. The influence of institutional players can be explained by three factors: the high degree of complexity, the congruence of national preferences, and the institutions' superior ability to link a broad range of civilian and military EU instruments.

Somalia was the most protracted and complex of the three analysed conflicts and no EU member state voiced a preference to tackle its challenges bilaterally. NATO was overstretched in Afghanistan and unable to deal with the civilian and rule of law dimensions of the conflict and its symptoms. The Union thus represented a default option for collective action. It was in the member states' very interest to empower its institutional actors. On the link between national preferences and institutional coherence, an EU Official (2011) commented: "If there is a strong political will on the side of the member states, certain administrative hurdles can be overcome. But if the political will is lacking, administrative hurdles continue to stand in the way".

Overall, case comparison suggests that institutional influence depends on the degree of delegated sovereignty, and on *ad hoc* delegation in the areas such as diplomacy or defence.<sup>110</sup> The latter is contingent on the level of stakes and the congruence of national preferences. If larger EU member states have high stakes and divergent preferences, the influence of institutional actors is likely to be under close constraints. If preferences converge, member states are more likely to empower the Union's institutions. But even then, their room for manoeuvre is confined as the absence of examples in which institutional players acted contrary to national preferences indicates. This study did not include cases where none of the larger member states had important stakes. Such cases would be interesting in terms of institutional influence, but without their stakes, substantial and comprehensive EU engagement would also not be very likely.

### ***The security-development nexus***

Having discussed the factors determining the degree of institutional influence, let us now turn to the nature of this influence. Institutional players had greater leverage on horizontal than on vertical coherence, but their ability to link the various elements of the Union's crisis response suffered from competence struggles. Across cases,

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<sup>110</sup> *Ad hoc* delegation is a form of delegation, which is limited in time and scope. It allows the principal to broaden or narrow the agent's autonomy flexibly depending on contextual conditions (Elsig 2007: 10; 2010: 500).

tensions most frequently occurred at two interfaces: between the EEAS and the Commission, and within the EEAS's crisis management structures.

The former mainly concerned the distribution of resources between development and security objectives or activities. In the Libyan case, bureaucratic tensions arose between the EEAS's new crisis response department DG CROC and Commission DG ECHO. In Somalia, Commission DG DEVCO was wary of the diversion of resources from development towards security-related objectives. For both EUTM Somalia and EUTM Mali, the Union provided training through the CSDP, but failed to provide the necessary (Commission) resources to equip and pay the trained soldiers. Furthermore, the EP criticised the slow pace, with which funding decisions were adopted in response to the Malian crisis (Gualtieri and Brok 2013).

The question of the use of Commission funds for security-related measures lies at the heart of the comprehensive approach. In the discussions preceding the joint Communication on the "Comprehensive Approach" (2013b), the member states and the EEAS called for a more flexible use of the Commission's financial instruments (Academic Expert A 2013). They pushed for an increase in open-ended budget earmarks and for their extension to non-civilian measures. However, in these discussions, the Commission was reticent. It viewed proposals for a more flexible use of its instruments as attempts to gain control over its budget (Senior EEAS Official B 2013).

Within the EEAS crisis management structures, tensions particularly surrounded the new institutional player with coordinating responsibility, namely DG CROC. They could be traced back to responsibility overlaps. The problem was one of contested organisational leadership rather than one of scarce resources. Overall, the three case studies validate the hypothesised link between competence overlaps and resource-based interdependence on the one hand and institutional incoherence on the other (H3a). However, as they were largely without financial implications, competence quarrels within the crisis management structures were also less relevant for the overall degree of coherence than divisions along the security-development nexus.

### *Epistemic professionalism and cultural diversity*

Embedded organisational norms and cultural clashes also influence the degree of institutional coherence. The case studies illustrate how the comprehensive approach conflicts with the apolitical character of aid (Zwolski 2012a). The EP's Development Committee took up these cultural dividing lines in its recommendation for the EEAS review and specifically pointed to the tension between PCD and the comprehensive approach to crisis management. It urged "the EEAS and the Commission to make sure that the 'comprehensive approach' does not undermine the specific objectives and principles of development cooperation or divert scarce resources away from poverty reduction" (Gualtieri and Brok 2013: 13). The statement confirms that coherence very much depends on 'where you sit'. It also underlines the difficulty of separating strategic and principled institutional behaviour in practice. Both a rational interest in fencing development funds and an adherence to embedded professional epistemic norms clash with the pursuit of overarching political or security objectives.

The humanitarian aid community constitutes an even more articulate proponent of the norm prescribing apolitical aid. While coherence implies common objectives, the protection of the humanitarian space demands a clear positioning outside of these objectives. In each case study and at different governance levels, representatives of the humanitarian community defended the neutrality, impartiality, and independence of aid. They admonished any meshing with political objectives or military means. At the same time, realities on the ground rendered a neat separation difficult. In Somalia, the humanitarian aid community even called for military protection of WFP vessels. Other crisis management players generally accepted the distinctiveness of humanitarian aid. Nonetheless, the tension between integrating and isolating humanitarian players in the implementation of the comprehensive approach is likely to persist.

Within the EEAS, the blending of organisational cultures raised cognitive barriers. Commission officials and procedures initially dominated the new institution. EEAS Official D (2013) and previous Commission official described the interaction with officials coming from the Council Secretariat as follows: "The Council people have

no idea about the EU's cooperation policies. They only think in terms of the CFSP and in an *ad hoc* fashion. The Commission has much longer time horizons and prepares the programs and budgets well in advance. You notice immediately when you are working with a person that comes from the Council. It is really hard to understand their procedures and they speak a different language. There are still distinct identities." Asked how national diplomats blended in, he added, "with them the cultural cleavage is even bigger" (EEAS Official D 2013). These cognitive barriers may not have a visible impact on the overall degree of coherence in EU crisis management, but they impair the EEAS's ability to coordinate its various component parts.

### *Top-down and bottom-up coordination*

The case studies offer mixed evidence with regard to the hypothesised positive impact of coordination mechanisms on institutional and horizontal coherence (H3b). Considering the described inter-institutional tensions and cultural divides between the EEAS and the Commission, the intended bridging function of the HR could have had a tempering effect. However, throughout the three case studies, Ashton was criticised for her relative absence from the Commission. The EEAS Review (2013b: 8) acknowledged that the HR had not convened the External Relations Group of Commissioners often enough.

The Crisis Platform, which was activated for Libya and Mali, provided an interface for targeted exchange between top officials of the EEAS and the Commission. However, the unclear division of competences in crisis management also fuelled tensions at this level (European Official 2012; Senior EEAS Official 2011). Only activated temporarily and for specific crises, the Platform did not provide for sustained inter-institutional interaction. Short-term crisis coordination at the top of the hierarchy did not entail increased coordination at lower levels or further down the lane of the crisis response cycle. European Diplomats (D and F 2013), for instance, reported problems of sequencing between CSDP operations or missions and ensuing Commission measures. Accordingly, the Joint Communication on the Comprehensive Approach called for a "more systematic use" of the Platform to

facilitate coordination and “intelligent sequencing” (European Commission and HR 2013b: 6).

Evidence from the three case studies thus disconfirms the established link between formal institutional coordination mechanisms and policy coherence. From a sociological institutionalist perspective, this finding is not surprising. By uprooting existing institutional structures, the Lisbon Treaty temporarily increased institutional fragmentation within the Union’s crisis management machinery. The officials brought together in the EEAS were not novices without prior ingrained beliefs, but came from diverse institutional and professional backgrounds and identities.

Furthermore, attempts to introduce a culture of coordination top-down have, so far, failed. These attempts date back to 2003 when, the Council (2003b) agreed the concept of Civil-Military Co-ordination. It encouraged a culture of co-ordination as opposed to a working culture of ‘stove-piping’, referring to the compartmentalised ways of operating of EU staff in the field of crisis management (Drent, 2011: 4). When asked about the effectiveness of these attempts, Senior EEAS Official A (2012) argued that, “coherence should be part and parcel of how people work and think. We are setting up new institutions and think that coherence should be in their genes. (...) But then realism comes in. In crisis management, we are still very much working in a stovepipe way”.

Dynamics of bottom-up coordination had a more positive effect on the degree of coherence. Informal modes of coordination as well as personal communication and people-to-people contacts attenuated inter- and intra-institutional tensions. Examples were the informal separation of responsibilities between the HR and the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy in the area of external representation. Other examples included informal inter-institutional coordination mechanisms in the case of Somalia, as well as informal staff-to-staff contacts between EEAS officials and their former Commission colleagues.



## 7.4 EU players: converging *and* diverging

The above sections provide a comparative synthesis of the first three years of post-Lisbon crisis management. However, to gauge the influence of norms and socialisation processes, a diachronic dimension is necessary. Broadening the time frame allows for a more nuanced perspective on the evolution of the EU as an international security actor, as discussed in the concluding chapter. This section thus situates the observed behaviour within a broader context and time frame: How did the role of single players evolve throughout cases? And to what extent do relevant norms and interests converge or diverge? The section starts by reviewing the role of the ‘Big Three’ before moving to institutional players.

### *French, European, and African activism*

France had an activist approach to all three analysed conflicts. Together with Britain, it was leading the Libyan intervention. It was the engineer behind the European crisis management efforts in Somalia. And it conducted the emergency intervention in Mali. France’s activism also went beyond the analysed cases, as support to UN forces in Ivory Coast (2011), willingness to join US-led air strikes on Syria (2013), and the unilateral intervention in the Central African Republic (2013) demonstrated. The European Foreign Policy Scorecard consequently classified France as the most activist EU member state in 2013 (European Council on Foreign Relations 2014). French Diplomat E (2013) explained that other EU member states generally do not share “the same sense of international responsibility”, which he related to France’s past as a colonial and global power.

But French leadership is also built on permissive domestic conditions. The position of the President as *chef des armées* allows for a much more immediate and reactive approach to international crises than is the case in other member states, notably Germany. In addition, the French public values decisive presidential crisis management. French Diplomat E (2014) explained this appreciation as follows: “If there is a challenge, the President has to live up to it. If he doesn’t, he will always be accused of indecision or lack of courage. The President thus has the choice between good and bad. This is what we understand by the representation of power”.

France also pushed for a European role in crisis management in all three cases. French Diplomat D (2013) noted: “Every time we decide something, we ask ourselves, which role Europe could play – what the European product could be”. However, France’s partners tend to view its Europeanist push with scepticism. Several interviewees depicted it as an attempt to Europeanise self-regarding French interests (European Diplomats G and I 2013; German Diplomat 2013; German Officials B and C 2013; Senior NATO Officials A and B 2013). The French support for *l’Europe de la défense* was, for instance, perceived as an attempt to re-vitalise the country’s struggling defence industry (European Diplomat G; German Diplomat 2013). French narratives of a common ‘European interest’ meet with particular scepticism if they concern interventions in francophone Africa, where the country “seems to intervene every other week” (UK Diplomat C 2013).

But the three case studies were also illustrative of the internal tension between two traditional principles of French foreign policy: Europeanism and autonomy. This tension was reflected in France’s White Paper on Defence and National Security, published on 29 April 2013. It incorporated lessons from the Malian intervention and announced a “return to Africa” (French Government 2013). The Paper stressed the need to maintain France’s “sovereignty, by making sure it retains resources to act and influence events” (French Government 2013: 125). It promoted a more sober form of Europeanism by calling for an urgent and “pragmatic revitalisation of the (...) CSDP” (French Government 2013: 62). But it also highlighted its limitations, including the member states’ diverse strategic cultures and perspectives on the use of force, which it described “a source of mutual suspicion” (French Government 2013: 17). French Diplomat E (2013) added: “We have to accept these differences and count on *ad hoc* coalitions”.

The White Paper also emphasised the responsibility to protect, but mentioned a trade-off between rapid reaction and international consultations: “How can we reconcile the urgency which, in certain situations, applies to the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect, with the patience that is essential to achieving an international consensus?” (French Government 2013: 31). The 2013 White Paper indicated a decreasing willingness to wait for reluctant European partners in future

crises, especially if national values or interests call for a rapid response (French Diplomat E 2013). The interventions in Mali and the Central African Republic showed that France remains keen to Europeanise unilateral engagements *ex post*. Europeanisation does not only enhance legitimacy, but also facilitates financial burden sharing – a French priority in times of austerity.

### ***Britain's responsibility constrained***

British Diplomat B (2013) depicted his country's predisposition for an activist foreign and security policy as instinctive: "It is in our blood really. There is a presumption of intervention based on the British perspective and on its colonial legacy in Africa. There is a common expectation that if something happens in the world, we should deal with it. This is a key difference with the political leaders of Slovenia, Croatia, or even Germany". This instinct helps explain the UK's leadership in the Libyan and Somali cases.

Another British instinct is its reliance on the US and the emphasis on NATO's primacy. The Libyan case clearly showed that the transatlantic Alliance remains the UK's instrument of choice when it comes to high-intensity conflicts. German Official C (2013) commented that "it is better to be the junior partner in a bilateral relationship, than one among 28". But while the UK remains interested in the African continent, the US is increasingly turning towards the Pacific. "The British fear that the US wipes them off on the way and that they will have to put up with the European partners and play a greater leadership role in Europe" (German Official C 2013). The Lancaster House Treaty (2010), sealing a special relationship with France in security and defence, can be seen as a consequence of this fear. And Britain's European lead on Somalia showed that a NATO framework might not always be practicable.

Pragmatic European alliances do, however, not entail increasing Europeanism. British Diplomat B (2013) insisted that it was not in the UK's "national psyche" to think of the EU in terms of follow-up. He also found clear words on the differences between the 'Big Three' on the preferred modes of multilateral cooperation: "We are similar to the French: if we don't get broad multilateral agreement, we are not afraid

to go ahead. This is very different for the Germans who would not do anything unless there was broad European agreement.”

However, the UK is also facing increasing domestic restraints when it comes to forceful or unilateral intervention. The British public is scarred by the controversial intervention in Iraq in 2003. Over a decade of substantial military engagement in Afghanistan with large numbers of victims has led to an ‘intervention fatigue’ (Clements 2014: 119). In addition, austerity politics have entailed important defence budget cuts. The impact of domestic constraints was very visible in the case of Syria where public opinion prevailed over Atlanticism. Following a chemical weapons attack close to Damascus on 21 August 2013, the US proposed limited military air strikes against the allegedly responsible Assad regime. In favour of supporting the Americans, Prime Minister Cameron put a motion to parliament. However, on 29 August 2013, the motion was defeated by 285 to 272 votes. Elite and public were wary of another, potentially illegitimate intervention, based on shaky evidence about the regime’s use of chemical weapons, and with unforeseeable regional repercussions. Here, the link to Iraq was even more pronounced than in the Libyan case.<sup>111</sup> Cameron conceded that the public did not want military intervention and correspondingly withdrew his pledge for military support (Dominiczak and Whitehead 2013).<sup>112</sup>

The UK’s growing domestic constraints on the use of force do not imply a general shift away from its traditionally activist security policy. However, public opinion can be assumed to play a more important role in the future. Its influence will depend on the conditions surrounding intervention (stated rationale, international or regional support, UN mandate) and on the domestic context (electoral salience, party political

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<sup>111</sup> A key difference between the Libyan intervention and the proposed Syrian one was the absence of a UN resolution authorising the use of force in the latter case.

<sup>112</sup> The UK’s vote was influential at a global scale. Only two days later, Obama announced his intention to seek congressional approval. In the run-up to the vote, the Assad regime agreed to hand over its chemical weapons, thereby averting military intervention altogether.

consensus, and approval rates of the government) (Clements 2014: 131). Overall, the emergence of a more vocal domestic veto player is not likely to facilitate collective EU decision-making on military crisis management.

### *Berlin's new international responsibility*

Germany's culture of military restraint played an important role in decisions on the use of force. It was the rationale behind the abstention on UNSC resolution 1973. It slowed down European discussions on operations EUFOR Libya and EUTM Mali. And it divided government and opposition in the vote on the reinforcement of operation Atalanta.

European Diplomat F (2013) described Germany's distinct approach to the use of force as follows: "The British and the French see a problem and say: 'let's do it'. The Germans first ask how can we attain our goals sustainably? What is the added value of the military? And what is our exit strategy?" This cautious approach is closely linked to German history and a political system that makes the use of force dependent on parliamentary approval. Aware of a generally pacifist public, German politicians know that an activist security policy can "lead to international gains, but entail domestic losses" (German Official C 2013). Finally, there is the perception that Germany has the economic clout to attain international gains without having to project military force (German Official C 2013).

The latter point is reminiscent of Germany's traditional role as a civilian power (Krotz 2001). But it is also illustrative of its growing confidence as a leading economic power within Europe. In recent years, Berlin has become more assertive in its pursuit of national interests abroad. According to Guérot and Hénard (2011), its policy-makers feel they have "overcome the burden of history". Examples include Germany's open defence of commercial interests in the Somali case and arms deals with Saudi Arabia at the height of the Arab uprisings. An Italian Official (2011) critically commented: "Germany has become a 'reluctant power' that mainly thinks in terms of economic security". Less critical observers argue that Germany increasingly resembles a 'normal' power that yields more room to domestically

defined national interests in foreign and security policy decision-making (Bulmer and Paterson 2010; Oppermann 2012).

However, the Libyan crisis clearly showed that Germany's partners and allies did not welcome the discrepancy between economic power and military restraint. The ensuing German domestic debate, oscillating between the principles of Alliance solidarity and military restraint, continued to haunt German security policy in the Somali and Malian cases. Meanwhile, the international pressure was maintained. Senior NATO Official B (2013) argued: "Germany needs to act even when it doesn't perceive its essential national interests to be involved. Solidarity with collective NATO decisions should be reason enough". Though understanding of Germany's historical specificity, UK Diplomat C (2013) noted: "We do think it would be good to review this historical position. And we absolutely think that there is nothing ethically or morally wrong with German intervention abroad."

The effects of this international pressure became visible in January 2014 when German Federal President, Joachim Gauck, launched the new foreign and security policy narrative of 'responsibility'. In his opening speech at the 50<sup>th</sup> Munich Security Conference on 31 January 2014, he announced a more active German foreign and security policy, which is commensurate with its weight. This proactive role expressly included the use of military force. He argued that restraint could be "taken too far" and that some used "Germany's guilt for its past as a shield for laziness or a desire to disengage from the world" (Gauck 2014). But, he also warned of power politics or unilateral interventions and strongly advocated European cooperation. The new narrative had been pre-agreed with the foreign and defence ministers, whose speeches echoed it, even if in less fervent terms (Steinmeier 2014; von der Leyen 2014).

The immediate implementation of this narrative was an enhanced German engagement in Africa. In February 2014, Berlin agreed to send parts of the Franco-

German brigade to reinforce EUTM Mali.<sup>113</sup> It was the first time that the Brigade was deployed to Africa. Furthermore, it decided to contribute to EUTM Somalia (then stationed in Mogadishu) and to pledge 80 troops as well as transport and sanitary aircraft for the Union's military operation in the Central African Republic (EUFOR CAR), launched on 1 April 2014. One month later, the German government published its new Africa Policy Guidelines, which underlined the promise to play "a more prominent role" on the continent (Federal Government 2014: 3). The reference to international pressure was explicit: "Western partners are also looking more to Germany, which they expect to show a level of commitment commensurate with its position and capabilities (Federal Government 2014: 3).

It remains to be seen whether the new narrative of responsibility will truly change German security policy. Gauck (2014) underlined that the use of force remains the last resort and that Germany should not agree to it "unthinkingly". "A democracy must, of course, have the right to remain on the sidelines occasionally", he added. The latter brings us back to domestic constraints. In May 2014, polls showed that only 37 per cent of Germans were in favour of greater engagement in international crises while 62 per cent opposed it (TNS Infratest 2014). Half of the opponents justified their opinion with German history. Whereas a large majority of the polled supported greater humanitarian and diplomatic engagement, 82 per cent rejected a stronger military contribution (TNS Infratest 2014). These numbers are significant, as military operations will continue to require parliamentary approval. Germany's foreign policy might thus become more active, but its capacity to enact the new responsibility in the military realm continues to depend on domestic constraints.

### *Institutional learning, socialisation, and obstacles*

During the first five years after ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, there were signs of institutional learning and socialisation. Learning effects can be observed across the

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<sup>113</sup> François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl established the Brigade in 1987 by as a sign of Franco-German friendship and security cooperation. Until 2014, only parts of it had been deployed in the Balkans.

three analysed cases. The Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa was based on lessons from the Sahel Strategy. The Union's 2011 crisis management simulation exercise that was modelled on a Somalia-type conflict incorporated lessons from the Libyan crisis response. And operation EUTM Mali was designed on the basis of EUTM Somalia. In addition, there was continuous "learning by doing" concerning, for instance, the new crisis coordination mechanism such as the Crisis Platform (Senior EEAS Official A 2012). But the lesson learning process was also described as "an endless negotiation process" (EEAS Official C 2012). "There is always a risk that this process is hampered by political sensitivities and that the results are watered down" (Senior EEAS Official A 2012).

Socialisation processes had first effects in lowering institutional tensions. In 2013, EEAS Official D (2013) mentioned that a common EEAS *esprit de corps* was "gradually flourishing". Senior EEAS Official B (2013) spoke of an "unbelievable intensification of cooperation within the EEAS, especially between the old Commission staff and the former members of the Council Secretariat that have joined the service". Socialisation dynamics may continue to forge a *common esprit de corps* among EU officials in the EEAS, but their effect on national officials is likely to be weaker. If constructivist assumptions hold, diplomatic rotation should limit the degree to which their loyalties shift from the capitals to the EEAS.

By presenting a Joint Communication on the EU's comprehensive approach to external crises and conflicts, the EEAS and the Commission (2013b) attempted to forge a shared understanding of its implementation. In addition, the Council approved the revised crisis management procedures in June 2013. The review updated the concrete steps for comprehensive conflict analysis and planning and should accelerate decision-making (Council 2013f). One of the key innovations foreseen by the new procedures is to base EU crisis management on a "political framework for crisis approach". The document precedes the CMC and outlines the parameters of the crisis, the motives for collective action, and potential response options (Mattelaer 2012). It is to be drafted by the relevant services within the EEAS (Pirozzi 2013: 13).



The new crisis management procedures should provide more clarity about the division of responsibilities. However, a German Diplomat (2013) predicted a “new great game”. The preceding analysis and various interviews allow for speculation on the parameters of this game: the member states fear a loss of influence in the planning process and hold on to multiple decision steps and push, together with the EEAS, for a more flexible use of the Commission’s financial instruments. Meanwhile, the latter fences its budget and with it its decreasing role in EU foreign policy. The humanitarian aid and development players uphold the norm of apolitical aid in an increasingly politicised procedure. Finally, the military struggles to maintain its voice in a process largely populated by civilian players.

## **Conclusion**

The omnipresence of coherence and the comprehensive approach in the politico-administrative discourse testifies to the awareness of coherence-related norms. However, the three case studies suggest that the Union’s crisis management players are only thinly socialised into these norms (Checkel 2005). National security and/or economic interests as well as embedded domestic and organisational norms (still) prevail.

Domestic contexts strongly constrained the member states in their ability to act coherently. In line with hypothesis 1a, conflicting economic and electoral interests negatively influenced the degree of coherence. The empirical evidence suggests that a high degree of coherence in EU crisis management is more likely if national economic interests converge without competing. It is also more likely when EU decision-making is relatively insulated from domestic constituencies. However, in accordance with the proposed scope conditions for rational calculation, the influence of domestic interests was dependent on the level and calculability of stakes. When stakes were low or uncertain, member states were more prone to act in line with embedded norms. Pursuant to hypothesis 1b, ingrained norms on the use of force and modes of multilateral cooperation were particularly salient in EU crisis decision-making.

The evaluation of intergovernmental interaction showed that competitive and cooperative dynamics interacted. Under consensus rules, the member states agreed on lowest common denominator *and* mutual compromise outcomes. High stakes, risks, and urgency facilitated strategic interaction. Contrary to our assumption in hypothesis 2a, the costs of collective EU crisis management activities did not play a decisive role. But national threat or risk perceptions, mediated by precedent cases, helped explain the willingness for collective action (H2a). Meanwhile, longer and politically insulated intra-European consultations were more conducive to mutual and viable compromises (H2b).

Confirming liberal intergovernmentalist expectations, the influence of institutional players crucially depended on the degree of delegation of national sovereignty, and thus on the legal division of competences.<sup>114</sup> Nonetheless, the member states also delegated competences *ad hoc* in domains such as a diplomacy and defence. *Ad hoc* delegation was contingent on the level of stakes and the congruence of national preferences. The cases showed that high stakes and divisions tended to constrain the autonomy of supranational entrepreneurs. Their ability to ensure vertical coherence was thus rather limited.

Institutional influence on the degree of horizontal coherence was hampered by inter- and intra-institutional competition and rivalry. Tensions generally occurred when competences were not clearly divided and concerned the distribution of resources (H3a). Competition for turf was most obvious at the intersection of security and development, and thus between the EEAS and the Commission. Furthermore, coherence-related norms clashed with the norm of apolitical aid. Attempts to establish a unifying organisational culture met with resistance. While there were first signs of institutional learning effects and socialisation, continuing processes of procedural change and rotation make a rapid consolidation of these effects unlikely. Based on the first years of operational post-Lisbon crisis management, hypothesis 3b has to be rejected.

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<sup>114</sup> See articles 2-6 TFEU.

Case comparison thus offered evidence for five out of the six hypotheses. The findings reflect the initial assumption that the degree of coherence in EU crisis management is a function of competing *and* conflicting interests and norms. However, they also indicate that – depending on the level of stakes and certainty – domestic and national interests tend to prevail over embedded norms. There were some examples where economic or electoral interests led decision-makers to deviate from long-standing norms. In contrast, the analysed case studies did not include situations where ingrained norms clearly prevented decision-makers from endorsing an option with potentially high electoral or economic payoffs. Similarly, there was no evidence of autonomous institutional influence contravening collective, or even individual national preferences. Overall, case comparison suggests that the Union represents a rather unpredictable crisis management actor, whose multi-level coherence is contingent on the context-specific balance between domestically defined interests, stakes, and salient norms.

## **Chapter 8: Conclusion**

According to the EEAS Review (2013b: 3), one of the three key elements that stood out during the first years of operation of the Service was the comprehensive approach, making “the EU uniquely able to tackle all aspects of a foreign policy issue”. However, the HR and Commission acknowledged that “the ideas and principles governing the comprehensive approach have yet to become, systematically, the guiding principles for EU external action across all areas, in particular in relation to conflict prevention and crisis resolution” (European Commission and HR 2013b: 2). The comprehensive approach is thus a central theme of post-Lisbon crisis management, but its implementation still faces important obstacles.

This thesis analysed these obstacles by investigating the causal factors behind varying degrees of coherence. It applied liberal intergovernmentalism and sociological institutionalism to evaluate the influence and interaction of norms and interests across governance levels. The derived hypotheses were examined on the basis of three prominent cases of post-Lisbon crisis management: Libya (2011), Somalia (2011-2012), and Mali (2012-2013).

This concluding chapter starts by summarising key findings of theory-led analysis in light of the hypotheses and propositions. To link these findings to the broader picture, section two addresses potential trade-offs in the pursuit of coherence in the issue area of crisis management. On this basis, section three draws conclusions for the Union’s role and future as an international security actor. The chapter closes by discussing the limitations of this study and points towards future avenues of research.

### **8.1 Linking theory and evidence**

The theoretical starting point of this thesis was the assumption that coherence is a function of conflicting interests and norms. Coherence was understood as the absence of contradiction (consistency) and existence of synergies between various crisis management policies, instruments, and activities geared towards a set of

overarching objectives. How coherent were the Union's crisis responses? And to what extent did underlying multi-level rational or norm games account for variation?

### *Varying degrees of coherence*

This study showed that coherence is, in fact, a dynamic concept. It is a matter of degree and can never be fully attained. The Union's response to the Libyan crisis in 2011 displayed inconsistencies and contradictions between different crisis management instruments and activities. There was no common EU strategy in response to the crisis (Balfour 2011; Biscop et al. 2012). While there were some common objectives, such as Gaddafi's resignation, the member states were openly divided on the means to attain this goal. Additionally, the process of EU crisis management was characterised by inter-institutional rivalries and tensions. Analysts and media reports drew parallels between the EU's response to the Libyan crisis and the foreign policy debacle over Iraq in 2003. Libya was even described as a 'death blow' for the CFSP and CSDP (Armellini 2011; Brattberg 2011). For these reasons, the Union's coherence in the Libyan crisis response was categorised as *low*.

By contrast, the Union's response to the Somali conflict was described as a showcase example for the implementation of the comprehensive approach. The Union had a common Strategic Framework outlining a range of common objectives as well as the collective priority of counter-piracy (Council 2011a). It deployed a large range of instruments and measures, including development and humanitarian aid, political dialogue, civilian and robust military CSDP operations, and support to the rule of law sector. There were no open divisions between the member states and few reported inter-institutional tensions. Collectively, the Europeans were the most important aid donor to Somalia and heavily invested in maritime counter-piracy. The coincidence of consistency, strategy, collaborative interaction, and collective resources led to the conclusion that the Union's crisis management in Somalia displayed a *relatively high* degree of coherence.

Finally, the case of Mali proved to sit in between. The Union disposed of a collective regional strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel with a collective focus on counter-terrorism (EEAS 2011b). However, there was an imbalance in favour of

development instruments and the Strategy's implementation displayed gaps. The Union failed to act despite recurrent warnings by the French and thus missed its chance for conflict prevention. When the situation escalated in January 2013, France had to act unilaterally to prevent an Islamist offensive from reaching the country's capital. The French reaction triggered European diplomatic and logistic support and sped up the Union's crisis management efforts. There were few open divisions or tensions between EU member states and institutions. However, the distribution of development and security-related resources indicates a disproportionately French, rather than collective effort. The discrepancy between collective strategy on the one hand, and largely unilateral implementation on the other, led to the classification of the Union's crisis response in Mali as *intermediate*.

The overview of the three crisis management cases in Table 25 shows that coherence varies over time, but not in a linear fashion. There was no steady increase (or decrease) in the degree of coherence throughout the three subsequent crisis management cases. The variation on the dependent variable thus confirmed that legal and institutional provisions alone do not determine the degree of coherence in EU crisis management. This finding might seem unsurprising. However, as outlined in section 1.3, some scholars and policy-makers seem to assume that there is a linear positive link between institutional coordination mechanisms and legal provisions on the one hand, and coherence on the other.

**Table 25: Variation in the degree of coherence**

| <b>Conflicts</b>           | <b>Libya (2011)</b>  | <b>Somalia (2011-12)</b>  | <b>Mali (2012-13)</b>   |
|----------------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Consistency</b>         | Partial contradiction between policy outputs or activities                           | Largely consistent  | Largely consistent  |
| <b>Common objectives</b>   | No common strategy and few common objectives   | Common strategy, collective priority: piracy  | Common strategy, collective priority: counter-terrorism   |
| <b>Interaction</b>         | Member state divisions, no mutual information, adversarial institutional interaction | No open member state divisions, few inter-institutional tensions (security-development) | Unilateral French intervention, but no open member state divisions                                |
| <b>Compliance</b>          | Partial defection from previously agreed rules or decisions                          | Important collective resources, no defection  | Strongly asymmetric distribution of resources – at institutional and national level, no defection |
| <b>Degree of coherence</b> | <b>Low</b>   | <b>Relatively high</b>  | <b>Intermediate</b>   |

*Source: own compilation*

### *The power of the rational game*

From a liberal intergovernmentalist perspective, EU crisis management was depicted as a fast coordination game (Wagner 2003). The degree of coherence was seen as the unintended result of strategic interaction between rational actors pursuing self-regarding interests. The key actors in the game were prosperous and large member states, which have most bargaining power. The influence of supranational entrepreneurs was assumed to depend on the level of delegation, the transaction costs of intergovernmental bargaining, and their comparative advantage in terms of information and issue linkage. These basic assumptions led to the three hypotheses on the determinants of coherence listed in Table 26.

**Table 26: Liberal intergovernmentalist hypotheses**

| Arena                    | Hypotheses  |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Domestic</b>          | <b>H1a:</b> If an EU crisis management measure or activity entails calculable sector-specific economic costs or expected electoral costs in one or several of the ‘Big Three’, the degree of coherence will be low.                                     |
| <b>Intergovernmental</b> | <b>H2a:</b> If threat perceptions of the ‘Big Three’ diverge, or the costs and risks of participation in joint EU crisis management activities exceed benefits, outcomes reflect the lowest common denominator and the degree of coherence will be low. |
| <b>EU institutional</b>  | <b>H3a:</b> If supranational entrepreneurs have overlapping competences and if resources for a given EU crisis management measure or activity are scarce, the degree of coherence will be low.  |

*Source: own compilation*

Case analysis and comparison suggested that economic interests played an important role for the degree of coherence. The most visible example for the influence of sector-specific economic costs was EU decision-making on sanctions and restrictive measures in the Libyan case. Italy’s reluctance to agree to sanctions and initial deviations could be traced back to the disproportionate costs sanctions on Libya’s energy and financial sectors inflicted upon influential economic players. In terms of sector-specific gains, the Somali case offered an interesting example. Collective EU counter-piracy measures were clearly in line with key economic interests in the ‘Big Three’. These interests may not have been the sole factors behind the relatively high degree of coherence, but there is evidence that economic players made their voice heard in the political process.

Electoral interests also influenced the coherence of EU crisis-decision-making. However, as Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig (2009) suggested, the key intervening variable was political salience. The latter was particularly high if decisions concerned the use of force; if government and opposition were divided; and if elections were approaching. In addition, the popularity or approval rates of national decision-makers seemed to enhance their likelihood to engage in electoral calculation. The main example in this respect was Germany’s decision to abstain in the vote on UNSC resolution 1973, authorising the use of force in the Libyan case.



The decision to abstain was taken right before important regional elections, at a time when Germany's political parties were divided, and the approval rates of the foreign minister were at a low point. The empirical evidence thus confirms the importance of domestic constraints as outlined in hypothesis 1a.

National decision-makers took their domestically determined preferences to the European bargaining table. In line with hypothesis 2a, there were some examples where domestic constraints led to lowest common denominator outcomes. The failure to act decisively on the brewing crisis in Mali in 2012 is one of them. Neither the UK, nor Germany had domestic incentives to follow France's calls for action in the Sahelian country. The Mali case also confirmed the need to broaden the process of preference formation to include national threat perception. Though counter-terrorism represented a common strategic priority on paper, national intelligence reports showed that only France held this perception. For the UK and Germany, terrorism in the Sahel was not a real priority until early 2013.

Finally, liberal intergovernmentalist assumptions on the influence of supranational entrepreneurs were largely confirmed. Institutional actors played a role in domains where the levels of delegation were high, namely in development and humanitarian aid. In areas of diplomacy and defence, their influence was generally marginal and strongly constrained by national prerogatives. The relatively superior influence of supranational entrepreneurs in the Somali case could be traced back to the congruence of national preferences and the EU institutions' superior ability to link multiple elements of the Union's crisis response in a context marked by high levels of complexity. In line with hypothesis 3a, contested institutional leadership led to tensions within the EU's crisis management structures. The combination of competence overlaps and resource interdependence triggered dysfunctional cooperation between the Commission and the EEAS.

Overall, the application of liberal intergovernmentalism to the field of EU crisis management holds considerable explanatory power. The liberal perspective was particularly useful in elucidating the important role and influence of domestic players and interests as well as the decision-makers' perception thereof (see also Pohl 2012).

The depiction of EU decision-making as a two-level game permitted us to establish links between the domestic, intergovernmental, and supranational arenas. An example was Germany's acquiescence to the reinforcement of operation Atalanta, which arguably resulted from the combined pressure of domestic economic players on the one hand, and European partners on the other. However, a range of member state decisions affecting the degree of coherence could not be traced back to domestic interests or intergovernmental bargains. Liberal intergovernmentalism thus missed an important dimension, which called for the introduction of an alternative game.

### *The influence of norm contestation*

This study applied sociological institutionalism to depict EU crisis management as a multi-level norm game. In this version of the game, the degree of coherence was understood as a function of horizontal and vertical norm contestation. It was thus seen as the result of the interaction between EU-level coherence norms on the one hand, and embedded national or organisational norms on the other. Institutions were expected to play a key role as socialising platforms at all governance levels. Their socialising effect was made contingent on the time and intensity of interaction. Table 27 lists the derived hypotheses.

The analysis showed that national decision-making was often shaped by domestically embedded standards of appropriateness. As suggested by hypothesis 1b, ingrained norms were particularly relevant for decisions on the use of force and on the framework for multilateral cooperation. Prominent examples include the UK's strong adherence to Atlanticism, France's consistent push for European crisis management contributions, and Germany's instinctive military restraint. In several cases, these norms conflicted and thus negatively influenced the degree of coherence. Examples where they influenced collective European outputs, in the absence of immediate economic or electoral incentives, included the UK-imposed limitations on the EU Operations Centre and the German push for the designation of operation EUFOR Libya as a *mission*. However, adherence to national predispositions varied from case to case. It was most pronounced in the Libyan case where EU and international

decision-making processes were politically salient. Somalia – the case with the lowest level of political salience – displayed the most evident deviations.

**Table 27: Sociological institutionalist hypotheses**

| Arena             | Hypotheses   |
|-------------------|--|
| Domestic          | <b>H1b:</b> If an EU crisis management measure or activity conflicts with embedded national predispositions regarding the use of force or preferred modes of cooperation, the degree of coherence will be low.   |
| Intergovernmental | <b>H2b:</b> If intergovernmental decision-making is insulated from international and societal pressures, cooperative bargaining produces mutual compromise outcomes and the degree of coherence will be high.  |
| EU institutional  | <b>H3b:</b> If formal and informal inter-institutional coordination mechanisms provide for frequent and intense social interaction between institutional actors responsible for EU crisis management activities, the degree of coherence will be high. |

*Source: own compilation*

Case comparison showed that the degree of coherence increased when the level of political salience decreased. This finding is in line with hypothesis 2b, but raises the question whether co-variation really stemmed from the shifting of national loyalties to the European level. The answers are mixed. In the Malian case, loyalty with France played an important role for the British and German decisions to yield logistical support and strong diplomatic backing. However, loyalty considerations did not entail substantial material and operational support, for instance, in the form of ground troops. In the Somali case, it seemed that pragmatic considerations and domestic economic interests, rather than shifting loyalties, stood behind European compromise outcomes. Hypothesis 2b thus only finds partial confirmation.

The socialising impact of formal institutional coordination mechanisms was (still) limited. During these first years of post-Lisbon crisis management, institutional actors found themselves in a difficult transition phase. Attempts to introduce an overarching culture based on the comprehensive approach and coordination met with bureaucratic resistance and longer-standing professional norms. The most prominent example of horizontal norm contestation was between the humanitarian principles and coherence norms. To a lesser extent, this line of contestation was reproduced at

the security-development nexus. It is too early to tell whether formal coordination mechanisms will lower these cognitive barriers over time. Meanwhile, informal cooperation and people-to-people contacts showed their first effects in attenuating inter-institutional tensions. However, our case study evidence largely falsifies hypothesis 3b.

Overall, the norm game provided an important complement to the rationalist game. Although embedded norms were not always decisive, they often shaped national and institutional crisis decision-making and rhetoric. Ingrained national and professional norms were more influential than EU-level coherence norms, providing further evidence to constructivists arguing that processes of national or sub-organisational socialisation prevail over their respective European or pan-organisational counterparts (Beyers 2005; Hooghe 2005; Lewis 2005; Schimmelfennig 2005). This study thus confirmed that long-standing norms should be included in national and institutional preference functions in the field of EU crisis management. The analysis of vertical and horizontal norm contestation allows for a more fine-grained analysis of norm influence across governance levels and helps draw the boundaries of rational behaviour.

### *The relevance of game changers*

The question of boundaries between rational and rule-based behaviour leads us to the so-called ‘game changers’. The evaluation of the two theoretical lenses showed that the degree of coherence in EU crisis management is indeed a function of norms and interests. But it also indicated that their respective explanatory power depends on contextual scope conditions. We argued that high stakes and certainty of pay-offs favoured strategic calculation while the existence of socially embedded and determinate norms rather incited rule-based action. Table 28 reiterates the propositions on the interaction of the logics of consequences and appropriateness.

**Table 28: Game changers – three propositions**

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Proposition 1</b> | If stakes are high and information is abundant, while norms are shallow or indeterminate, the logic of consequences prevails. |
| <b>Proposition 2</b> | If stakes are low or information is scarce, while norms are embedded and determinate, the logic of appropriateness prevails.  |
| <b>Proposition 3</b> | If stakes are high and information is abundant, while norms are embedded and determinate, both logics are at play             |

*Source: own compilation*

For the purpose of this study, high stakes were defined as important economic and electoral pay-offs. In line with proposition 1, EU member states mostly deviated from embedded norms when faced with high and calculable stakes. This could be seen in the case of Somalia where counter-piracy presented measurable incentives for collective action. As a result the UK deviated from its Atlanticist preference and Germany from the culture of military restraint. Furthermore, high electoral stakes seemed to influence Germany's abstention in the vote on UNSC resolution 1973. Domestic contestation between multilateralism and restraint suggested that German politicians were faced with indeterminate norms. At the same time, opinion polls and approaching elections presented them with relatively high and calculable electoral incentives. Electoral calculation is thus more likely to have shaped Germany's abstention than its embedded culture of military restraint.

An example for the applicability of proposition 2 was the decision to activate the Operations Centre for the CSDP mission and operations in Somalia. The economic costs of the activation were relatively low and the public salience of the measure was almost nil. In this decision, the 'Big Three' clearly acted in line with embedded norms on the preferred modes of international cooperation. France pushed for the activation; Germany seconded it; and the UK stuck to its traditional Atlanticist position by minimising the scope and scale of the institutional body.

Finally, the Libyan intervention presented examples for proposition 3. National decision-makers were faced with high stakes *and* salient, determinate norms. The behaviour and rhetoric of the 'Big Three' suggested that both logics of action were at

play. France agreed to NATO leadership for pragmatic reasons. But, in line with its Europeanist vocation, it continued to emphasise that Europe was in the lead, and pushed for engagement in the framework of the CSDP. The UK reluctantly agreed to CSDP operation EUFOR Libya. However, British decision-makers did not mention Europe's potential military contribution to its domestic audience. Equally reluctant, Germany also agreed to operation EUFOR Libya, but carefully depicted it as an essentially humanitarian, non-military endeavour at the domestic level. Faced with high stakes and competing standards of appropriateness, emanating from different governance levels, Europe's decision-makers agreed on an operation that was not in line with external (UN and Libyan) expectations, and never deployed.

Overall, the analysis suggests that the degree of coherence in EU crisis management is likely to vary on a case-by-case, depending on the situation-specific combination of salient norms and interests. Coherence is most likely if the member states' interests and threat perceptions are congruent, if the risks of casualties are relatively low, and if there is ample time for internal coordination and consultation. Conversely, incoherence becomes likely in situations of urgency, where a strong and potentially costly or risky response is required, and if the EU and NATO are competing for a crisis management role.

## **8.2 Coherence and its trade-offs**

The analytical findings lead us back to the broader implications of intra-European coherence. The latter is usually seen as a necessary condition for efficiency, effectiveness, and ultimately EU actorness. But, are these assumed linkages truly valid for the issue area of crisis management? This question leads us back to the distinction of process, outcome, and output coherence.<sup>115</sup> While the core of this study has focused on the links between process and output coherence, this section situates

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<sup>115</sup> Process coherence referred to interaction of political and administrative players in the elaboration of common crisis management policies and activities. Output coherence designated the inter-relationship between various crisis management activities and instruments. And outcome coherence was defined as the interplay of the effects of crisis management activities and measures

the findings in the broader causal chain leading from process to outcome, in other words, to the effectiveness of comprehensive EU crisis management.

### *Coherence and timeliness*

It lies in the nature of crises that they often require immediate and forceful reaction. However, comprehensive EU crisis management usually involves intensive and time-consuming internal coordination. The latter is particularly relevant for instruments in the realm of the CSFP, as (most) decisions require unanimity. In addition, internal national coordination processes precede or run parallel to EU deliberations. The member states tend to display differing reaction speeds, depending on their political culture and systems. As European Diplomat F (2013) explained: “There are those that argue that everything has to happen quickly, and those that emphasise thoroughness”. The present study showed that France can be assigned to the former and Germany to the latter category. Reaction times particularly differ with regard to decisions on the use of force.

The trade-off between timeliness and coherence was visible in the Libyan and Malian cases. In Libya, the imminent massacre in Benghazi would not wait for European consensus. In Mali, intra-European consultations and procedures prolonged the planning process for operation EUTM Mali. In January 2013, France was the only nation capable of providing a timely response to the Islamist offensive. The French President could decide on intervention within 24 hours. French Diplomat E (2013) commented: “We had to intervene very quickly and that is always easier alone than in coalition.”

Proposals to use the Union’s rapid reaction instrument, the Battlegroups, generally met with little enthusiasm.<sup>116</sup> In Libya, the deployment of the Battlegroup was considered in the framework of operation EUFOR Libya. However, the main contributors to the Battlegroup then on stand-by were reticent: Sweden and Finland

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<sup>116</sup> The Battlegroups are units of around 1,500 troops, which are usually based on contributions of several member states. Since 2007, they have been rotating on a bi-annual basis so that two were readily deployable (within five to ten days) at all times (Council 2013c).

were wary of blurring the demarcation between military and humanitarian activity; the Netherlands pointed to budgetary limitations; and a German contribution was contingent on parliamentary approval (Koenig 2012). These reservations rendered the deployment of a single coherent Battlegroup rather unlikely. When France intervened in Mali, the ‘Weimar Battlegroup’, consisting of German, Polish, and French troops, was on stand-by. However, its deployment was not really considered (Ziedler 2013). A senior French military officer critically remarked: “Battlegroups are fine if there is no combat. If we had to fight, we would probably see very few Germans and Poles in the field” (in Rettman 2013).

According to EEAS Official E (2013), the tension between coherence and timeliness also extends to the Union’s institutional actors: “In a crisis, there is no time to coordinate with other institutions. (...) Being comprehensive comes at a price.” The combination of a broadening notion of EU crisis management and an increasingly inclusive planning process might, in fact, prolong rather than condense the reaction time of the Union’s institutional crisis management machinery (Senior EEAS Official A 2011).

### *Coherence over time*

The analysis also showed that European crisis responses tend to become more coherent *over time*. In the case of Somalia, the Union gradually built up a range of collective activities and measures before embedding them within a comprehensive Strategic Framework. Coherence also increased in the cases of Mali and Libya after the most urgent and consequential decisions had been taken. In the Libyan crisis response, the most divisive month was March 2011, when divisions on diplomatic reactions, sanctions, and the use of force coincided. Reflecting on the early divisions, French Diplomat A (2011) argued: “The question of coherence is a double-edged sword. Sometimes, the procedure is not coherent but there is an approach with leadership, and dissensions are overcome *ex post*.” In fact, the EU member states overcame the divisions on sanctions; endorsed the Franco-British-led military intervention; and reached a diplomatic compromise by opening an EU liaison office in Benghazi in May 2011. In the case of Mali, France’s unilateral intervention was



immediately welcomed and triggered a substantial acceleration of the dragging European crisis management agenda.

The gradual increase of coherence is in line with the analytical findings of this study. With time, the level of uncertainty and risk drops. Crisis management instruments usually move into the civilian realm. With decreasing urgency, risks, and uncertainty, crises also tend to become less salient. Political decision-making thus increasingly takes place behind closed doors and is less constrained by domestic legitimacy demands or electoral payoffs. An EU role in civilian crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction is usually less controversial for the member states. In addition, its added value is internationally recognised. While key national interests and norms slowly recede to the background, EU-level socialisation dynamics come to the fore.

Increased time for coordination and consultation does not, however, imply that policy outputs become more substantive. The pursuit of coherence implies taking into account and reconciling a number of partly conflicting interests and norms of different groups or stakeholders. The result is often a second-best solution (Hoebink 2005: 17). This study identified a range of intergovernmental outcomes, which were described as lowest common denominators or ‘rotten compromises’, rather than substantial or innovative crisis management contributions.

### ***Coherence and effectiveness***

The “link between coherence and the impact of European foreign policy is as old as European foreign policy itself” (Barbé et al. 2009: 385). Decision-makers and academics tend to assume there is a linear positive relationship between coherence and effectiveness. However, the link between collective outputs and outcomes is far from linear. A full-fledged analysis of the effectiveness of the Union’s crisis responses goes beyond the scope of this study. But a brief juxtaposition of the EU’s objectives in the analysed cases and their attainment proves illustrative.

In Libya, the Union’s collective goal was that Gaddafi should relinquish power so that the country could “embark on an orderly transition” (European Council 2011).

Gaddafi was eventually ousted, but mainly through the rebels and the substantive military support by the NATO-led intervention. The Union's common objective was thus attained *despite* internal divisions on the use of force. Even if the Europeans had collectively agreed on the use of military means, they would have had to rely on the participation of others, notably the US, due to their lack of capabilities.

Meanwhile, Libya's democratic transition was far from orderly. Addressing the UNSC in September 2013, UN Libya Envoy Tarek Mitri reported that the country's "faltering" transition was fraught with political disagreements and severe security problems (in UN News Centre 2013b). Reflecting political tensions, Libya's interim Parliament extended the post-revolutionary transition period by another year in December 2013 (Associated Press 2013). But Libya's rocky transition rather stems from the country's lack of democratic tradition than from intra-European divisions.

The Union's collective objectives in relation to Somalia, as outlined by the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa, were to "support the people of the region in achieving greater peace, stability, security, prosperity and accountable government" (Council 2011a: 4). The eradication of piracy represented a priority. The Union's collective counter-piracy effort led to visible successes. Between 2011 and 2013, the number of attempted pirate attacks off the Somali coast dropped from 276 to 7 (Atalanta 2014). However, it is questionable whether this success will last without sustainable solutions on land (Ehrhart 2013). The fact that Somalia still ranked last on the Failed States Index in 2013 shows that the broader objectives of the Strategic Framework remain to be attained (Fund for Peace 2014).

There was thus a disconnection between the relatively high degree of coherence of the Union's crisis management on the one hand and the Somalia's continued political, economic, and security-related grievances on the other. But "even if the EU had a perfect comprehensive approach, this would not guarantee success given the manifold local, regional and international intricacies of the Somalia issue" (Ehrhart and Petretto 2012: 4).

The Sahel Strategy outlined three key objectives for the region: reducing insecurity, improving development, and strengthening governance and stability (EEAS 2011b). A strategic priority was the fight against AQIM and other terrorist networks. After the *coup d'état* in Bamako in March 2012, the Union's priority for Mali became "the reestablishment of the constitutional order and the holding of democratic elections" (Ashton 2012a). Between 2012 and 2013, Mali experienced the worst decline on the Failed States Index on a global scale (Pavlou 2013). The Union did not prevent the Islamist offensive in January 2013. It was only after French-led intervention that the country's constitutional order and territorial integrity were restored. While the collective objectives of the Union's regional strategy reflected the situation on the ground, forceful unilateral intervention was decisive for their implementation. It remains to be seen whether the successes attained by French-led intervention can be consolidated in the medium-term (ICG 2014: i). Meanwhile, intra-regional trust remains low and regional cooperation in tackling interlinked security challenges is faltering (ICG 2014: i).

The positive link between output and outcome coherence is thus not linear, as external variables intervene. In complex and multidimensional conflicts, lasting solutions can hardly be imposed from outside. This problem is not EU-specific, as past US failures to pacify Vietnam or Somalia demonstrate (Niemann and Bretherton 2013: 267). The difficulty to establish causal links between crisis management outputs and impacts also stems from the fact that the latter may only become visible in the longer run, if at all. According to the UN Development Programme (2008), between 25 and 50 per cent of post-conflict countries fall back into conflict in the course of a few years. In general, coherence can thus be seen as a necessary but not sufficient condition for effective and sustainable EU crisis management (Stahl 2006; Thomas 2012).

The argument slightly differs if situations require rapid and forceful intervention. The cases of Mali and Libya showed that unilateral responses or coalitions of the willing might be more effective. In these particular situations, coherence is thus neither a necessary, nor a sufficient condition for goal attainment. Process coherence and respective compromise outcomes may even stand in the way of effectiveness in

the short-term (Missiroli et al. 2001: 4). Unless decision-making rules in the area of CFSP change towards QMV, the potential trade-offs between coherent, timely, and effective European crisis management are likely to persist (Wagner 2003). The above does not preclude an ex-post Europeanisation of national crisis management efforts once situations move from immediate to medium- and longer-term activities in the realm of structural conflict prevention. Though there is no guarantee for effectiveness, the Union's combined economic and political weight, and thus potential for politics of scale, remains unparalleled.

### **8.3 The EU's future as a security actor**

At the end of the analysed time frame of this study, the Union's narrative of comprehensiveness was stronger than ever. The EEAS review (2013b: 3) identified the comprehensive approach as central guiding principle of the Service. The HR and the Commission underlined the ambition for comprehensive EU security actorness in their Joint Communication on the comprehensive approach. And the Council approved new procedures "for coherent, comprehensive EU Crisis Management" (Council 2013f). This section evaluates the extent to which the Union has lived up to this self-conceptualisation and outlines potential future paths amidst ideational and material constraints.

#### ***A comprehensive actor?***

The ideational consensus among Europe's key crisis management players still lies with the traditional role concept of civilian power. The overview of the three post-Lisbon crisis management cases showed that the Union's responses in the arena of development and humanitarian aid were quick and substantial. It was the most important humanitarian aid donor in the Libyan crisis and the largest development aid donor to Somalia. Two days after the *coup d'état* in Bamako in March 2012, the Union suspended development aid cooperation with Mali. In fact, the immediate aid suspension constituted the Union's sole substantial response to the deteriorating security situation in the country. Later in 2013, Europe pulled its collective economic weight and pledged more than one third of the dedicated international funds for Mali's post-conflict reconstruction. Even if the distribution of aid among the member

states differed across conflicts, the Union's role as major aid donor was not internally contested.

The same cannot be said for the Union's military role. In the Libyan case, there were open divisions on the use of force. A reinforcement of Somali operation Atalanta provoked divisions among the member states. And there was little appetite to engage militarily in Mali as the lengthy preparations for the small-scale military EU training operation demonstrated. There were signs of ideational convergence among the 'Big Three' on questions concerning the use of force. But while Germany announced a more proactive foreign and security policy, the UK signalled greater restraint. At the same time, the French demonstrated an increasing willingness to act without or before its European partners.

The Union's profile as an international security actor is also materially bounded. The analysed conflicts showed that its military capability gaps are widening. The Libyan air campaign would not have been possible without substantial US support in intelligence, surveillance and recognition, air-to-air refuelling, and precision ammunitions. Italy even had to withdraw its aircraft carrier in the midst of NATO's Libya operation due to defence budget cuts (AFP 2011a). Similarly, the French intervention in Mali heavily relied on US in the area of air logistics, including air-to-air refuelling and transport (Croft 2013). Though capability gaps were less salient in Somalia, former naval power Britain was rarely able to contribute a ship to operation Atalanta due to the downscaling of the Royal Navy (Willett 2011: 23).

On 19 and 20 December 2013, the European Heads of State or Government met in Brussels to discuss – for the first time in five years – the future of European defence. On the eve of the meeting, President Hollande made a proposal for the creation of a common permanent fund for EU military operations (Ricci 2014). “We can't continue to do things on a case-by-case basis and improvise as we're doing in places like Mali and Libya,” a French diplomat commented (in Hale 2013). The proposal came two weeks after Paris had embarked on yet another costly and unilateral military intervention in the CAR. However, the European Council did not endorse the French proposal. Amongst others, the UK rejected the proposal on the grounds of

sovereignty considerations and the fear of duplication with NATO. Chancellor Merkel argued: “We cannot finance military operations if we are not included in the decision-making process” (in Reuters 2013).

The rejection of the French proposal leaves doubts about the practicability of article 44 of the TEU allowing for intra-European coalitions of the willing and able. Few of the experts and decision-makers interviewed in the context of the present study were even aware of this Treaty provision. European Diplomat D (2013) questioned its added value, as decisions would still require unanimity and thus be subject to intra-European negotiation.

While a collective fund for military operations was ruled out, the December European Council meeting agreed on further initiatives in the field of pooling and sharing. The member states decided to intensify their defence cooperation in four areas: long-range reconnaissance drones, air-to-air-refuelling, satellite communications, and cyber capabilities (European Council 2013). However, these initiatives will not offset defence budget cuts in the medium to long-term (Senior NATO Official A 2013). In 2012, the outgoing Director General of the EUMS, Ton van Osch (2012), conceded that pooling and sharing initiatives would only make up for around 1 per cent of national defence budget cuts. And while global defence spending is generally on the rise, Europe’s share continues on its steady course of decline (IISS 2013).

There are thus ideational and material constraints to comprehensive EU actorness. The first years after the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty clearly reaffirmed the Union’s profile as a civilian power. Within the CSDP, the existing trend of a majority of civilian missions is bound to continue. Meanwhile, the military CSDP is likely to concentrate on small-scale operations and the lower end of the Petersberg tasks. In functional terms, military training and capacity building could constitute a new focal area, as illustrated by EUTM Somalia, EUTM Mali, and EUCAP Nestor (German Official A 2013). Another future area of engagement, that is slightly more controversial, could be small, targeted operations aimed to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid (European Official 2012). In the medium-term, the EU can be seen

as a comprehensive actor with a multitude of civilian instruments but with a rather dull military edge.

### *A regional actor?*

The Union's role as an international security actor remains firmly anchored in its neighbourhood. Sub-Saharan Africa is increasingly understood as a part of Europe's broader neighbourhood and with it one of the world's most conflict-ridden regions (HIIK 2014). According to European Diplomat E (2013), "Africa is and will continue to be Europe's key security concern. It is in the neighbourhood and it is a region where we can make a difference." Accordingly, post-Lisbon EU crisis management has displayed an important regional focus. All of the new CSDP missions and operations were deployed on the African continent (see Table 29).

Europe's increasing engagement as a security actor in Africa is also in line with the international division of labour in crisis management. The Libyan and Malian crises showed that the US has little appetite to intervene in the region. The Americans are shifting their attention towards the Pacific and increasingly consider Africa as Europe's backyard. They have become less willing to provide costly military support for operations in the region. The American reluctance to lead the Libyan operation and their attempt to bill the French for operational support in Mali were illustrative in this regard.

The limited US interest in Africa goes hand in hand with NATO's geographic outlook. In an interview following the *In Amenas* hostage crisis in January 2013, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen (2013) ruled out a role for the Alliance in Africa. He rejected allegations that Somalia, Mali, Algeria, Niger, and Mauritania constituted "a new front" for NATO. He added that the latter could not be "the world's policemen" and called for a division of labour while welcoming Europe's engagement in Mali.

**Table 29: CSDP missions and operations (2010-2014)**

| Name         | Location                             | Nature   | Type                       | Staff <sup>117</sup> | Duration                     |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| EUTM         | Somalia                              | Military | Training                   | 125                  | Since 2010                   |
| EUFOR        | Libya                                | Military | Military                   | /                    | Planned: 2011 <sup>118</sup> |
| EUAVSEC      | South Sudan                          | Civilian | Aviation security          | 34                   | 2012-2014                    |
| EUCAP SAHEL  | Niger                                | Civilian | Rule of law                | 41                   | Since 2012                   |
| EUCAP Nestor | Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia, Seychelles | Civilian | Maritime capacity building | 137                  | Since 2012                   |
| EUBAM        | Libya                                | Civilian | Border                     | 110                  | Since 2013                   |
| EUTM         | Mali                                 | Military | Training                   | 560                  | Since 2013                   |
| EUFOR        | CAR                                  | Military | Military                   | 400-600              | 2014-                        |

Source: EEAS (2014c)

However, the Union's increasing focus on Africa is not equally backed by all EU member states. The case studies showed that the 'Big Three' diverged in this regard. Germany was much less willing to intervene in African conflicts than the UK and France with their historical ties to the regions and respective Diasporas or expatriate communities. Along with its new narrative of international responsibility, Berlin showed greater willingness to engage in African theatres. But the crisis in Ukraine (2013-) might also re-focus the Union's attention back to the East. In any case, it

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<sup>117</sup> Staff numbers refer to EU or international staff. They based on the *status quo* in 2013 (EEAS 2014c).

<sup>118</sup> Operation EUFOR Libya was planned, but never deployed. It is listed on the EEAS website under „completed operations“ (EEAS 2014c).



might be more difficult to persuade Eastern European and Baltic countries to engage in costly African operations while Russia is flexing its muscles in their more immediate neighbourhood.

### *A strategic actor?*

The literature on the EU's role as an international security actor shows that the European Security Strategy of 2003 remains the key reference document (Council 2003a). The Report on the Implementation of the Strategy of 2008 constituted an attempt to update it in light of the changing security environment (Council 2008b). However, the Report was published just after the Russo-Georgian war and at the height of the financial crisis, and did thus not receive much attention (Senior Commission Advisor 2011). Since then, a “discourse coalition of ‘euro-strategists’” – consisting of decision-makers, scholars, and think tank experts in Brussels – has been pushing for the development of a new ‘grand strategy’ covering all relevant aspects of EU external action (Rogers 2009).

As part of this push, Italy, Poland, Spain, and Sweden initiated the “think tank process for a European Global Strategy” (EGS 2014). The aim of the initiative, launched in 2012, was to forge a collective strategic culture and vision that would feed into a revised strategic document. However, Think Tank Expert A (2013) described the process as a “non-starter”. The participating institutes presented their report to decision-makers, but the resonance was feeble. There were hopes that the 2013 European Council on Defence would launch a political process for the revision of the European Security Strategy, but the conclusions did not mention the document. It thus seems that the Union – or at least its member states – are not ripe for an overarching strategic overhaul.

However, the present study showed that the Union *was* ready for the formulation of regional strategies. In addition to the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa and the Sahel Strategy, the Union also published a Strategic Framework for the Great Lakes Region in mid-2013 (European Commission and HR 2013a). Admittedly, some interviewees argued that these documents did not represent real strategies (German Diplomat 2013; UK Diplomat A 2013). The goals were often vague and the

described measures more often represented enumerations of existing EU activities than targeted action plans. The analysed crisis management cases showed that the strategies served as reference documents and provided ‘agreed language’. However, they did not significantly affect the Union’s more immediate crisis response. Their effect on medium- to longer-term activities is also questionable. The strategies are not legally enforceable and as the Strategic Framework for the Great Lakes region prominently states on page one: they have “no budgetary impact as such” (European Commission and HR 2013a).

The new crisis-specific political frameworks foreseen by the revised crisis management procedures might have more impact (Council 2013e). As the Commission and HR (2013b: 4) emphasised, responses to conflicts or crises “must be context-specific and driven by the reality and logic of real life situations encountered: there are no blue-prints or off-the-shelf solutions”. According to the new procedures, the member states or the HR can initiate the process of designing a political framework document, which would be taken forward by the EEAS Crisis Management Board (Mattelaer 2012). The strategic potential of these documents will depend on the ability of the relevant EEAS services to weave together the different crisis management measures while taking into account the various member states’ preferences and interests. The documents are still subject to national consent. The extent to which the EEAS will be able to overcome existing obstacles to horizontal and vertical coherence in a timely fashion and without diluting the policy output remains to be seen.

Overall, it does not seem that the Lisbon Treaty has truly enhanced the Union’s security actorness. Its internal coherence is fragile and depends on the context-specific combination of material and ideational incentives to deviate. It would thus be misleading to start an analysis of EU crisis management on the basis of a unitary actor assumption. When the Union does act collectively, it is not the quickest, nor the most robust security actor. The UN tends to agree before the Union and NATO has a clear advantage when it comes to quick and forceful reaction. However, Europe’s collective economic weight and ability to combine various civilian and some military instruments place it in a unique position to influence regional developments in the

neighbourhood in the medium- to long-term. The effects of this influence might not be as visible as ‘quick wins’ in the military realm – but they might be more sustainable in the longer run. The quest for coherence in crisis management thus remains an important aim and unifying norm, despite recurrent ideational and rational incentives to deviate.

## **8.4 Limitations and future avenues of research**

This study sought to contribute to the literatures on policy coherence, EU crisis management, and EU foreign policy. It demonstrated the benefits of theory-led, comparative enquiry into the multiple layers of comprehensive EU crisis management. However, the choices of theory, research design, and cases also entailed limitations. This section discusses some of the study’s limitations and points towards future avenues of research.

### ***Case selection and implications***

In-depth qualitative investigation into processes of multi-level crisis decision-making necessarily restricted the number of selected cases and analytical units. Three potential limitations follow. First, this study opted for the analysis of three crisis management cases in Africa. The choice was based on perceived variation on the dependent variable and was advantageous in terms of case comparability. However, it also narrowed the applicability of findings and excluded potential explanatory factors. The study did not include cases in Europe’s Eastern neighbourhood. Crisis management on the continent and in light of enlargement perspectives provides a different level and distribution of stakes. It can be assumed that *effective* crisis management in Balkans is of greater relevance to more EU member states than would be the case in Mali.

Second, there were specificities related to the chosen time frame. The study focused on post-Lisbon crisis management between February 2011 and August 2013. Within this time period, the Union’s crisis management machinery was undergoing substantial changes and revisions. In addition, national debates centred on the effects of the financial crisis and on the future of the euro zone rather than European foreign

policy. Furthermore, crisis decision-making took place in the shadows of a decade of interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, which have, to an extent, discredited the use of force as a means of external intervention. The specificities of the chosen time frame may partly account for the member states' limited enthusiasm concerning the military implications of invoking action via the CSDP; a generally more inward-looking perspective; and heightened inter-institutional tensions.

The third limitation concerns the choice of embedded analytical units. This study chose to focus on France, the UK, and Germany. The selection was based on their weight in EU crisis decision-making as well as their variation on relevant norm-related dimensions. But, as Italy's role in the Libyan crisis showed, other EU member states with particular historical or economic ties to the conflict country or region may be equally relevant for the degree of coherence. In addition, the analysis of the role and influence of norms would have profited from the inclusion of a neutral country such as Austria or Finland. Neutrality would have enhanced variation with regard to norms on preferred modes of cooperation and the use of force (Howorth 2002; Meyer 2005).

Future studies on the causes of coherence in EU crisis management might thus opt for a longer time frame. Case comparison over time could solidify conclusions on the link between national norms and behaviour as well as on the impact of institutional socialisation processes at the European level. In addition, the effects of subsequent administrations and political leaders could be evaluated. To provide a more comprehensive picture of EU crisis management, cases from various regions, including the Western Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Middle East could be included and compared.

### *Calculation or socialisation?*

In empirical reality, the lines between calculation and socialisation remain hard to draw. It is not always possible to reconstruct the whole crisis decision-making process as some passages may occur in small circles and behind closed doors. Even interviews with decision-makers might not uncover the real motivating factors

behind political decisions. Furthermore, the motivations behind these decisions are likely to be based on a variety of factors and considerations.

This study showed that ideational predisposition and strategic calculation might point towards the same policy outputs. For example, the UK's adherence to Atlanticism may be principled, but it also promises greater influence in a special bilateral relationship and entails important benefits in terms of financial burden sharing. Similarly, Germany's culture of restraint may well stem from historical roots, but could also serve as an excuse to avoid risky and costly foreign interventions that are not of direct or primary national interest. The European context also represents a difficult case when it comes to disentangling processes of social and rational learning as it offers repeated and sustained interaction among the same players (Levy 1994).

Notwithstanding, the interface between norms and interests certainly yields interesting future avenues for research. Analyses could further scrutinise the scope conditions that help distinguish logics of action. This study showed that detailed process tracing and the comparison of rhetoric and behaviour across audiences and time could provide clues as to which logic prevailed. A broader empirical basis and a longer time frame might yield interesting insights in this regard. The literatures on the strategic use of norms (Goffman 1959; Schimmelfennig 2003; Shannon 2000) and on 'organised hypocrisy' (Brunsson 2002; Lipson 2007) would provide useful tools for the analysis of de-coupling of rhetoric and behaviour across governance levels.

### *Crisis management and domestic politics*

Liberal intergovernmentalist theory yielded valuable insight into the analysis of EU crisis decision-making. The depiction of EU crisis management as a two-level game showed that national decision-makers stand at the interface of partly conflicting and partly congruent societal and European demands. Liberal intergovernmentalism gives priority to governmental interests, namely the desire to be re-elected. Political leaders first ask how decisions are likely to affect their own power before considering potential systemic implications. As Pohl (2012: 2) argued, liberalism could be "characterised as 'realism reversed'".

The empirical analysis provided evidence for trade-offs between internal losses and external gains. In the Libyan case, Germany weighed potential risks and domestic losses against diffuse and uncertain international gains. In Mali, the UK's domestic 'peace' prevailed over costly support to France. And in Somalia, domestic and European demands pointed towards collective European action. The study also illustrated cross-country variation in societal constraints. While domestic publics in France and (to an extent) in the UK seem to expect decisive crisis management behaviour from their leaders, the German public tends to reward cautious and considerate action. Electoral calculation is thus a mechanism where historically shaped societal norms and governmental interests meet (Pohl 2012). Overall, this study suggests that the neglect of the domestic arena entails a real risk of omitted variable bias.

However, the application of liberal intergovernmentalism to the 'hard' case of comprehensive crisis management also has its limitations. There are instances in which the domestic incentive structure is ambiguous (Pohl 2012: 15). This is particularly the case for less visible and less consequential decisions such as those in the diplomatic arena or concerning EU-internal institutional developments. In these areas, decision-making is contingent on the preferences of national foreign and security policy elites. To grasp the nature of these preferences, the present study relied on social constructivism and neo-realism. But the parsimony of liberal intergovernmentalism was necessarily compromised.

Future research might investigate further under which conditions domestic constraints become salient. A large, cross-national series of expert interviews with political decision-makers could yield further insight into the elements of preference functions in crisis decision-making and the weight of domestic constraints therein. Finally, the role and influence of domestic economic interest groups in crisis decision-making deserves greater empirical attention.

### ***EU actorness and effectiveness***

If coherence is a central component of actorness, then the latter is also a matter of degree (Niemann and Bretherton 2013: 266). This study showed that there is a

rationale to return to the micro-foundations of EU actorness and to assess internal and external constraints in selected policy areas. Reviewing material and ideational – internal and external constraints – provides a more realistic perspective on EU actorness and can also provide room for (cautious) forecasting (Meyer 2011). It can thus contribute to lowering the ever-growing expectations on the EU's role in international affairs (Meyer 2011: 688).

A promising avenue for research lies at the intersection of foreign policy analysis and sociological role theory (Aggestam 2006; Cantir and Kaarbo 2012; Thies and Breuning 2012). The combination allows us to bridge agency and structure and to evaluate the ideational and material factors underpinning international roles. Role theory provides the link between identity, norms, foreign policy behaviour, and external expectations (Breuning 2011: 16). Meanwhile, foreign policy analysis provides useful tools for the study of processes of contestation concerning Europe's international roles among foreign policy elites, and between these and their publics (Cantir and Kaarbo 2012). A multi-level role theoretical framework thus permits us to bring the domestic dimension in and to link it with external role expectations (Aggestam 2006; Koenig 2014a). The combination of these two theoretical strands would allow us to shed new light on the ongoing debate on the nature and future of Europe's international roles.

Finally, more empirical research is needed to test the link between coherence and effectiveness. This study only provided a brief overview in this regard. However, this overview indicated that the often-assumed positive link between the two concepts “is more intuitive than well-founded” (Missiroli et al. 2001: 3-4). Scholars have started to question this link systematically by evaluating intervening variables in various policy areas (Brattberg and Rhinard 2013; Bretherton and Vogler 2013; Edwards 2013; Elsig 2013; Groen and Niemann 2013; Niemann and Bretherton 2013; Thomas 2012). These are valuable contributions that ought to be taken into account when discussing the Union's role as a power in international affairs. But a detailed study into the issue area of crisis and conflict management is still missing. Such a study might provide substance to those claiming that the Union's own definition of

effectiveness or success is, in fact, more contingent on its internal ability to agree than on its external ability to achieve (Edwards 2013: 287).

## **Conclusion**

The preamble of the Lisbon Treaty emphasised the Union's resolve to "implement a common foreign and security policy including the progressive framing of a common defence policy (...), thereby reinforcing the European identity and its independence in order to promote peace security, and progress in Europe and in the world". A review of the first years of post-Lisbon crisis management shows that there is, yet again, a gap between ambition and reality (Hill 1993). The institutional innovations introduced by the Treaty have not significantly enhanced the Union's coherence, and thus its ability to agree or to act collectively. Europe was not independent from its Atlantic allies. And the effects of the Union's collective crisis management on peace, security, and progress in the world were often hard to discern. Meanwhile, the pursuit of a common defence policy has lost traction as compared to the preceding decade.

Hill (1993: 321) proposed two solutions to close the famous capabilities-expectations gap: either lower expectations or increase capabilities. This study argued that a better understanding of the ideational and material constraints of coherent EU crisis management might bring expectations down to a more realistic level. But there are also external factors that continue to call for increased capabilities. The Union's neighbourhood now includes Africa's arc of instability that regularly demands rapid and forceful responses. The US and NATO prove to be more and more reluctant to provide financial and operational backing for operations in Europe's broader neighbourhood. In addition, the crisis in Ukraine visibly brought power politics back to the European continent. While a more robust CSDP might not have altered Europe's response to the Crimean crisis, credible deterrence with tangible military capabilities still represents an important asset. The rationale behind the quest for coherence, and thus greater ideational and material convergence that would allow for "early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention" thus remains valid (Council 2003a: 11).



## Appendix 1: Initial coding scheme

The initial coding scheme was devised on the basis of the analytical framework and operationalisation of variables (chapters 2 and 3). It constituted the basis for thematic qualitative content analysis of political speech acts and transcribed expert interviews. Not every case study included references to all of the initial codes. Additional codes and sub-categories were created inductively in relation to the specificities of the case studies. Examples include the codes ‘responsibility to protect’ for the Libyan case or ‘Françafrique’ for the Malian case.

| Concept/<br>variable               | Code                         | Definition  |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Coherence</b>                   | Common objectives            | References to common EU aims with regard to a particular conflict or crisis                             |
|                                    | Common priority              | References to collective EU priorities with regard to the management of a particular conflict or crisis |
|                                    | Common strategy              | References to common EU strategies in relation to a given conflict or crisis                            |
|                                    | Common resources             | References to financial or personnel contributions to EU-level crisis management activities             |
|                                    | Consultation or coordination | References to processes of mutual consultation or coordination among EU member states or institutions   |
|                                    | Mutual information           | References to information exchange between member states or EU institutions                             |
| <b>National economic interests</b> | Bilateral trade              | References to bilateral trade relations with conflict or crisis country                                 |

| Concept/<br>variable                          | Code                  | Definition   |
|---|-----------------------|--|
|   | Foreign investment    | References to levels of foreign investment in conflict or crisis country   |
|   | Interest group        | References to economic interest group or representative thereof in relation to a given conflict or crisis  |
|   | Raw materials         | References to raw materials (oil, minerals, gold etc.) in conflict or crisis country   |
| <b>National security interests</b>            | Threat perception     | References to security threats (e.g. regional stability, organised crime, migration, terrorism, energy security) emanating from a given conflict or crisis |
| <b>Electoral calculation</b>                  | Political controversy | References testifying to domestic political controversy about EU or member state crisis management activity or instrument                                  |
|   | Public opinion        | References to the role of public opinion in relation to a given conflict or crisis   |
|   | Elections             | References to upcoming elections in relation to crisis management activities or instruments  |
| <b>National cost/risk-benefit calculation</b> | Alternative           | References to potential costs, risks, or benefits of non-EU international cooperation (unilateral, NATO, UN etc.)  |
|   | Benefits              | References to potential benefits or advantages of collective EU crisis management activities or instruments  |

| Concept/<br>variable  | Code                         | Definition  |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|---|
|                       | Costs                        | References to material costs of collective EU crisis management activities or instruments   |
|                       | Risks                        | References to potential risks or negative security-related repercussions of collective EU crisis management activities or instruments   |
| <b>National norms</b> | Alliance solidarity          | References to solidarity or loyalty with key international partners and alliances (such as NATO)  |
|                       | Atlanticism                  | References in favour of partnership and cooperation with the US, bilaterally or within NATO   |
|                       | Europeanism                  | References in favour of EU-level cooperation or proactive EU role in relation to a given conflict or crisis   |
|                       | Independence                 | References on the ability to act independently, and if necessary, unilaterally with regard to a given conflict or crisis  |
|                       | International responsibility | Value-based justifications for action or leadership with regard to a given conflict or crisis (can include references to the responsibility to protect, human rights appeals, democratic values etc.) |
|                       | Multilateralism              | References to importance of multilateral cooperation or resource pooling in the management of a given conflict or crisis  |
|                       | Reliability                  | References to ambition of representing a 'reliable partner' in international affairs  |

| Concept/<br>variable              | Code                    | Definition   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Bureaucratic politics</b>      | Competence overlap      | References to unclear division of roles or responsibilities within or between EU institutions  |
|                                   | Competition             | References to rivalry or competition between or within EU institutions   |
|                                   | Resource dependence     | References to resource-based interdependence between European institutions (such as reliance on funds of another organisation) in relation to given conflict or crisis |
| <b>Organisational culture</b>     | Organisational norms    | References to organisational or sub-organisational norms (such as humanitarian principles)   |
|                                   | Procedures              | References to divergent or incompatible procedures or processes in relation to crisis management   |
|                                   | Time frames             | References to diverging time horizons in relation to crisis management   |
| <b>Institutional coordination</b> | HR                      | References to the role of the HR in a given crisis response  |
|                                   | CMPD                    | References to the role of CMPD in a given crisis response  |
|                                   | Crisis Management Board | References to the role of the Crisis Management Board in a given crisis response   |
|                                   | Crisis Platform         | References to the role of the Crisis Platform in a given crisis response   |
|                                   | DG CROC                 | References to the role of DG CROC in a given crisis response EU  |

| Concept/<br>variable | Code                  | Definition  |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---|
|                      | EEAS                  | References to the role of the EEAS in a given crisis response                             |
|                      | EUSR                  | References to the role of the EUSR in a given crisis response                             |
|                      | Informal coordination | References to informal coordination and consultation processes in a given crisis response |
|                      | Operations Centre     | References to the role of the EU Operations Centre in a given crisis response             |

Source: own compilation.

## Appendix 2: List of interviews

| Interviewee (designation) | Interview location | Interview date   |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Academic Expert A         | Rome               | 19 June 2011     |
| Academic Expert B         | Brussels           | 10 April 2013    |
| Academic Expert C         | Brussels           | 10 April 2013    |
| EEAS Official A           | Brussels           | 9 June 2011      |
| EEAS Official B           | Brussels           | 15 March 2012    |
| EEAS Official C           | Brussels           | 15 March 2012    |
| EEAS Official D           | Brussels           | 12 April 2013    |
| EEAS Official E           | Brussels           | 11 April 2013    |
| EU Official               | Brussels           | 7 June 2011      |
| EUMS Official             | Brussels           | 2 March 2012     |
| European Diplomat A       | Brussels           | 6 June 2011      |
| European Diplomat B       | Rome               | 7 June 2011      |
| European Diplomat C       | Brussels           | 7 November 2013  |
| European Diplomat D       | Berlin             | 4 June 2013      |
| European Diplomat E       | Berlin             | 5 June 2013      |
| European Diplomat F       | Berlin             | 5 June 2013      |
| European Diplomat G       | Paris              | 25 November 2013 |
| European Diplomat H       | Paris              | 25 November 2013 |
| European Diplomat I       | Paris              | 25 November 2013 |
| European Diplomat J       | Paris              | 25 November 2013 |
| European Official         | Brussels           | 2 March 2012     |
| French Diplomat A         | Brussels           | 8 June 2011      |

| Interviewee (designation)  | Interview location | Interview date   |
|--|--------------------|------------------|
| French Diplomat B  | Brussels           | 28 June 2011     |
| French Diplomat C  | Paris              | 25 November 2013 |
| French Diplomat D  | Paris              | 25 November 2013 |
| French Diplomat E  | Paris              | 27 November 2013 |
| German Diplomat  | Brussels           | 11 April 2013    |
| German Official A  | Berlin             | 4 June 2013      |
| German Official B  | Berlin             | 4 June 2013      |
| German Official C  | Berlin             | 6 June 2013      |
| IOM Official   | Rome               | 13 June 2011     |
| Italian Official   | Rome               | 15 June 2011     |
| Member of the Humanitarian Aid Department, German Foreign Office | Berlin             | 6 June 2013      |
| Policy Analyst A, OECD Unit for Policy Coherence for Development | Paris              | 19 March 2012    |
| Policy analyst B, OECD Unit for Policy Coherence for Development | Paris              | 19 March 2012    |
| Senior Commission Advisor  | Brussels           | 8 June 2011      |
| Senior EEAS Official A   | Brussels           | 7 March 2012     |
| Senior EEAS Official B   | Brussels           | 9 April 2013     |
| Senior NATO Official A   | Brussels           | 9 June 2011      |
| Senior NATO Official A (second interview)                        | Brussels           | 12 April 2013    |
| Senior NATO Official B   | Brussels           | 10 April 2013    |
| Think Tank Expert A  | Berlin             | 6 June 2013      |

| Interviewee (designation) | Interview location | Interview date   |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Think Tank Expert B       | Berlin             | 25 June 2013     |
| UK Diplomat A             | London             | 8 August 2012    |
| UK Diplomat B             | London             | 28 November 2013 |
| UK Diplomat C             | London             | 28 November 2013 |

Source: own compilation.



## Appendix 3: Sample interview questionnaire

Interview questionnaires usually consisted of 8 to 12 questions. Variation in nationality, expertise, position, and role in the decision-making process called for their flexible adaptation. Questionnaires usually followed a sequence moving from introductory, general questions, to more specific, case-related ones, and ended with one or two broader concluding questions. The order of questions was flexibly modified depending on the flow of the conversation and the respondents' use of keywords. The following sample questions were directed to a national diplomat:

### *Introductory question*

1. In your view, what are the most important obstacles to coherence in EU crisis management?

### *Libya*

2. How would you assess the degree of coherence in the EU's response to the Libyan crisis? What were its strengths and weaknesses?
3. How would you explain France's proactive role in the Libyan crisis?
4. Why did France recognise the Libyan National Transitional Council one day ahead of the extraordinary European Council?
5. How would you explain Germany's abstention in the UN Security Council?
6. What role did the High Representative and European External Action Service play in the coordination of the EU's response to the Libyan crisis?

### *Somalia*

7. According to you, how coherent was the Union's crisis management in Somalia?
8. Why did the United Kingdom play such a proactive role in European and international crisis management in Somalia?

9. Would you say that the activation of the EU Operations Centre for the operations and missions in Somalia increased the coherence in EU crisis management?

*Mali*

10. Would you describe security in Mali – or more broadly in the Sahel zone – as a priority for your country?
11. Why did the EU member states not react to France's recurrent warnings on the brewing Malian crisis in 2012?

*Concluding question*

12. Finally, how would you evaluate the Union's future in crisis management and as an international security actor?

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