

A África e A Europa

Resolução de Conflitos, Governação e Integração Regional

The role of the European Union in conflict resolution in Africa*

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1. Introduction

As of the mid-90s, and particularly in the aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda, where the international community failed to act, there have been an increasing interest and a growing number of initiatives for conflict prevention, management and resolution in Sub-Saharan Africa. In light of the disengagement of the international community from African issues, particularly after the failed intervention in Somalia in 1993, African states and organizations have taken up much of the burden of peacekeeping and crisis management in the region. They have established institutions and mechanisms to deal with crisis management, but they all, without exception, face serious (financial, operational and to some extent also political) constraints.

The international community has responded to the Africans' willingness to take responsibility for dealing with the security problems of the continent, and to their limitations, with a number of bilateral programmes (particularly significant in scope and in the means involved are those from France, the United Kingdom and the United States) and multilateral initiatives aimed primarily at reinforcing African capabilities to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in the region. In some occasions, critical ad hoc support was given to United Nations (UN) and African-led peace support operations.

Ever since the early 90s that the perceived failure of development policies and the increasing number of violent conflicts in the region, particularly internal ones, have to some extent put greater pressure on European policies towards the region. The disruptive impact of conflicts, both internally and in neighboring countries, as well as their negative consequences for the European Union (EU) - both in terms of its cooperation and development efforts in Africa, but also its impact in areas such as migration, organized crime and more recently on the perceived risk of creating 'safe heavens' for terrorist organizations - has further stressed the need for a more active European policy and for more immediate actions aimed at containing and resolving violent conflicts that hinder European and international efforts to prevent conflict and support development in the region. The EU-led Artemis operation in 2003 in Bunia (Ituri district, Democratic Republic of Congo), under French command as framework nation, was perceived by many as a test case to EU capabilities and its political willingness to engage in Africa and successfully lead such a kind of military operation.

The EU intervened at the request of the UN to stabilize and pacify Bunia and surrounding areas to allow for the return of internally displaced people (IDP), the resumption of humanitarian

support and open the way for a reinforced UN mission (MONUC) that took over on September 1, 2003. The impact of this operation was felt not only internally within the EU, but also in relations with African countries and regional organizations, and probably even more so in relations with the UN, NATO and the US. The EU can not, however, rest under the shadow of the success of Artemis operation, as other 'tests' arise to its effective political will and capacity to engage in the prevention and resolution of violent conflicts in Africa: DRC still represents a major challenge; Sudan has been high on the agenda for a year and the proposed support of NATO to the AU peace mission in Darfour (AMIS) is rising the stakes and speeding up the process; the peace processes in Somalia, Burundi and Southern Sudan still need much support and/or to be closely monitored; Guiné-Bissau should not be allowed to continue in its conflict and instability path; and other areas and countries in Africa need a proactive conflict prevention policy that the EU could develop and bring others along.

2. EU policy towards Africa at a turning point

EU policy towards Africa has extended and evolved significantly, particularly since the end of the Cold War. From a policy largely influenced and determined by the colonial links some of its member states had with newly independent African states and an almost exclusive focus on economic and social development, EU African policy has become more complex and comprehensive, with an increasing emphasis on its political dimensions, partly due to the recognition of the 'failure' of its development policies or the little impact they had on the development of the recipient countries. The link between peace, stability, development and respect for human rights, rule of law, democratic principles and good governance was further reinforced in EU cooperation and development policies towards Africa, either in bilateral (the EU has concluded association agreements with practically all African countries) and multilateral agreements with African countries.

Current relations between the EU and countries in Sub-Saharan Africa take place first and foremost within the framework of the Cotonou Agreement and are based on three main pillars: political dialogue, trade and economic cooperation, and development aid. The Cotonou Agreement tries to address the shortcomings of previous agreements by reinforcing the political dimensions of ACP-EU cooperation, namely by enhancing the importance of the respect for human rights, democratic principles, rule of law and good governance, of civil society participation, and of the need to address issues such as the reinforcement of capacities for conflict prevention and management activities in the political dialogue with the region.

Ever since the early 90s, the issue of conflicts in Africa has gained particular importance in the overall EU policy towards Africa and was the subject of intense discussions within the European Union and with other international partners (namely the OECD, the UN and the former OAU, among others). Following these discussions, triggered by a number of factors including the increasing number of violent conflicts in Africa and the willingness of regional organizations to tackle these problems, in 1994, France and the UK presented to the EU a joint non-paper on "Preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping in Africa" suggesting in particular measures the EU (and then also the Western European Union) could take to support the enhancement of African capacities for conflict prevention and resolution. It must also be remembered that these changes in approach and priorities happened at a time when the EU was trying to have a greater political and security role in world affairs. It was developing its newly institutionalized Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and advancing the means through which it could engage in activities with defence implications.

Since 1995, the issue of conflict prevention has often been addressed by the European Council and the Commission, which in 1996, issued its first Communication to the Council on the subject. The EU official documents on conflicts in Africa stress the following key elements that constitute the basis of EU policy with regard to conflict prevention and resolution in Africa:

- African preeminence and 'ownership' in conflict prevention, management and resolution in the region.
- EU commitment to support efforts in favor of the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa – a priority aim of the CFSP -, in close cooperation and coordination with relevant bodies, namely the UN, OAU and African sub-regional organizations.
- Assist in building African capacity and means of action to prevent and deal with conflicts, through the OAU and sub-regional organizations.
- Develop a pro-active, comprehensive and integrated approach, enhance coordination between EU and member states' efforts and policies, and make a coherent use of EU instruments to best address first of all the root causes of violent conflicts and in support of conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.
- Focus primarily on conflict prevention, while addressing the whole cycle of conflict and peace.

While privileging non-military actions, the EU does not exclude the need to use military means in upholding EU commitment to support peace-related efforts.

2.1. Tackling the issue of coherence, coordination and complex financial procedures

EU policy of conflict prevention puts great emphasis in addressing the root causes of instability and violent conflict. It is therefore understandable that the EU would seek to first of all address the shortcomings of its development policy. The EU (EC and member states combined) is the largest world provider of official development assistance (about 55% of total world aid) and humanitarian aid, and the major donor to Africa. More than 40% of EU aid and humanitarian assistance goes to Africa. EU-relations with Africa are not just limited to aid, though. Other instruments, trade and political and financial instruments are also of great importance in relations with the continent.

In the last few years, there has been an increasing effort within the EU to improve coherence between its various instruments for a more effective action, namely by pursuing a greater coordination between the Commission Directorates dealing with foreign relations (External Relations, Enlargement, Trade, Development and Humanitarian Aid) and streamlining conflict prevention policies towards Africa (and developing countries in general). There is particular concern, in some circles within EU institutions and in some external actors, on the undesired possible impact of EU common policies on developing countries as those might contribute (directly or indirectly) to local crisis and eventual conflicts. That is particularly true with regard to trade, which is often perceived as being less 'development-friendly', in the way trade measures can sometimes have a negative impact on local economic life and social fabric, thus undermining stability and possibly even contributing to fuel conflict where stability is already very fragile.

The Commission efforts to mainstream conflict prevention policies into overall EU external action (at the Community and intergovernmental levels) were further reinforced by the

Commission Communication of 2001 on Conflict Prevention (replacing the previous communication of 1996) and the EU Programme on the Prevention of Violent Conflicts, endorsed by the Göteborg Council of June 2001.

Reform efforts include a simplification of EU procedures that are often too complex and lengthy, to say the least, and are not compatible with the need to quickly disburse funds in order to respond to situations of emergency, eminent crisis or immediate post-conflict needs. In 2001 the Council thus decided on the establishment of a Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM) allowing the Commission to make use of available funds without having to go through the bureaucratic procedures normally required for the approval of a development programme (which take, in average, about 18 months). The RRM has a separate budget of 25 million Euros per year and can be used in a wide-range of areas of EU cooperation, including areas which are essentially political and/or emergency related (namely human rights, election monitoring, institution building, media support, border management, judiciary, police training and provision of police equipment, pacification, resettlement, mediation, civil emergency assistance, rehabilitation and reconstruction).

Unlike humanitarian aid, which is meant to relief human suffering, RRM aims at the preservation or reestablishment of the civic structures necessary for political, social and economic stability. It is therefore meant to be a crisis management tool and, in that sense, it is essentially political in nature: it allows a quick implementation of activities that can, directly or indirectly, influence a crisis situation or a deteriorating political context. The RRM is managed by a unit within the External Relations Directorate General (RELEX) dealing with Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and ACP countries political issues, created in late 2000. The role of this unit is to promote conflict prevention goals within the work of the Commission.

The RRM is a step in the right direction but it is not likely to make the much needed difference. A major step towards that much desired simplification could be the proposal currently being discussed to bring all EU financial instruments into 5 major ones, of which two would be external relations instruments: the Development Instrument and the Stability Instrument. Such changes however touch some sensitive issues that may prove to be major hurdles, namely the issue of the budgetisation of the EDF, the issue of competence between institutions (particularly delicate when it comes to security and stability), the border line between development and stability, to mention some.

Efforts to enhance coordination between EU and member states policies have also been high on the agenda, and that is in principle a role that can also be partially attributed to the Heads of Mission of EC Delegations in third countries, whose powers and resources have been reinforced by the 'deconcentration' policy. As actors on the ground, Delegations are also expected to play an important role in the EU conflict prevention and management policy. There are ongoing efforts to coordinate donor support (within the EU but also with other donors) to the AU and the aim is that similar efforts should be pursued also at the sub-regional level.

The European Constitution (adopted in June 2004 and still to be ratified by many EU member states) proposes the creation of a double-hat EU Minister for Foreign Affairs acting on behalf of the EU Council on all matters relating to external relations and security and defence policy, and being simultaneously a vice-president of the European Commission. If approved, that could further reinforce coherence and improve coordination of the EU external action.

2.2. Developing African regional and sub-regional institutions and capabilities

In line with one of the principles of EU policy on this matter – African preeminence and ownership in conflict prevention, management and resolution –, the EU has actively engaged in a political dialogue with and support of regional and sub-regional organizations in Africa. Since 1994 the EU started a political dialogue (formalized in 1996) with the OAU (now African Union), which is seen as complementary to existing dialogue at bilateral and regional levels. The EU has shown particular interest in supporting the Organization's peace and security efforts. It has therefore supported the development of its Mechanism on conflict prevention, management and resolution and provided financial support to the Peace Fund and early-warning system, as well as institutional support to the organization, but effective actions lied well behind expectations, partly due to limitations from both the EU and the OAU. However, since 2000, EU-Africa dialogue and cooperation have gained a new momentum.

The Africa-Europe Summit (its first meeting was held in Cairo in April 2000, following a Portuguese proposal) has, on the one hand confirmed the little progress made since the mid-90s, but on the other hand it also renewed the commitment of the parties to cooperate, inter alia, in the areas of conflict prevention, management and resolution, and peace-building. Some actions concerning these aims are already under way.

The launching of NEPAD in 2001 and the official establishment of the African Union in 2002 have given new momentum and further boosted cooperation in light of the commitment and willingness demonstrated by the African states in playing a more pro-active and effective role in dealing with the problems of the continent. Reactions in Brussels and in the European capitals in general have been quite positive. The EU considers the AU to be the central organization for peace, security and regional integration on the African continent. In April 2002, a programme in support of AU peace building and transition activities was signed. Its prime objective is to fund the operational activities of the Peace and Security Council; the programme will also reinforce the AU's capacity-building in the transitional phases. It will first and foremost finance AU mediation and peace monitoring activities (e.g. the AU observation mission in Burundi funded under the European Commission's RRM), but it could include support to peacekeeping training, and logistical and financial support for the deployment of African peacekeepers.

Peace and security issues (along with governance, regional integration and trade, and key development issues) are priority issues in the EU-Africa dialogue. The EU is strongly committed to support African organizations' capabilities and efforts to deal with crisis in the region. In late 2003 it decided to allow the use of resources from the European Development Fund (EDF) for the creation of a Peace Facility for Africa in line with the request made by the African Union and a Commission proposal. The Peace Facility will support African-led operations and build African institutions' long-term capacity to carry out such operations. It has a budget of 250 million Euros (from the EDF) for a period of 3 years (2004-2007), of which 200 million are for peacekeeping operations and 35 million for capacity-building. These funds were used for the first time in July 2004 for the support of the AU mission in Darfour (Sudan); more funds are now being committed to support the reinforcement and enlargement of the AU mission. The Peace Facility is actually likely to be depleted before 2007 and there is the question of how will it be funded in the future, as there seems to be reluctance from member states and ACP countries for a further use of EDF resources to finance the Peace Facility.

The EU has also a political dialogue with some sub-regional African organizations - SADC and ECOWAS – which is perceived as complementary to its dialogue with and support to the AU. Political dialogue and cooperation with SADC on peace and security-related matters has been

hampered by internal divisions within SADC regarding the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. The EU provides nevertheless financial support to SADC regional efforts for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Burundi and the peace process in DRC. Finally, the EU supported ECOWAS peace efforts in the region. It provided support to ECOMOG peacekeeping forces in Liberia (1994-97), namely vehicles, and coordinated when possible its development assistance in order to assist ECOMOG operations. The EU has also agreed to finance ECOWAS Mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution, peacekeeping and security and other related peace efforts, including the reinforcement of the capacity of ECOWAS states and Secretariat to control the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, it has reaffirmed its commitment to continue its financial support to the countries in the region that are still in a period of consolidating the peace process. The EU is also supporting IGAD in its efforts to implement the Naivasha accords in Sudan and in the peace process in Somalia.

2.3 Coordination with other international organizations

As mentioned before, the EU is engaged in coordinating efforts with other international organizations and other donors with regard to supporting peace-related efforts in Africa, at the institutional (e.g. support to the AU and sub-regional organizations) and operational levels (peacekeeping, capacity-development, etc), whether these are led by the international community or by regional or sub-regional African organizations or actors.

The EU recognizes a primary role for the UN in the management and resolution of conflicts in Africa and elsewhere. It is highly unlikely that the EU would engage in major peace efforts - much less where a military engagement would be required - outside the UN framework or without the approval or endorsement of the UN Security Council. The EU is the largest financial contributor to the UN system. It pays 37% of the UN's regular budget, more than two fifths of UN peacekeeping operations and about half of all UN member states' contributions to UN funds and programmes, many directly or indirectly related to peace and security. The EU has also been advocating for UN and other countries support to African efforts and ownership in securing peace and stability in the continent.

Beyond the financial contribution of the EU to the UN system and activities, the EU is getting more engaged in crisis management and conflict prevention in close collaboration with the UN in Europe, but also in Africa and elsewhere (e.g. the EU Police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina handed over from the UN in January 2003; the EU military operation 'Artemis' in Bunia also in 2003; support for setting up an integrated police unit in Kinshasa, at the request of the UN and the DRC authorities; a security sector reform operation in DRC). Furthermore, the EU and the UN agreed to establish a joint consultative mechanism whose task will be to examine ways and means to enhance mutual coordination and compatibility in areas like planning, training, communication and regular information on lessons learned and best practices.

In the field of crisis management, the EU has also a close collaboration with OSCE. Although the OSCE areas of activity do not include Africa, its experience in election monitoring, institutional building, confidence-building measures, small and light weapons, among others, could be useful in the EU dialogue and cooperation with African regional and sub-regional organizations.

Collaboration with NATO in this particular area has developed significantly since the start of the negotiations on the "Berlin Plus" arrangements. Being more focused on the operational

level, it is meant to enhance EU capacities to conduct crisis management operations wherever the EU considers necessary. So far, the use of NATO assets and capabilities available to the EU under existing EU-NATO arrangements have only been used in Europe (military operation CONCORDIA in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), but there is in principle no geographic constraint to EU-led operations (other than operational constraints which may help explain the decision to limit EU-led peacekeeping operations to a maximum distance of 4,000 Km and humanitarian interventions to a maximum of 10,000 km). Those assets can in principle be used in whatever scenario or part of the world where the EU decides to conduct such type of operations. In late November 2003, both organizations conducted their first joint Crisis Management Exercise on how the EU plans at the strategic politico-military level for an envisaged EU-led operation (in a 'Petersberg tasks' scenario) with recourse to NATO assets and capabilities where NATO as a whole is not engaged. The focus of the exercise was on planning prior to a decision to take action and deploy forces.

The future collaboration between NATO and the EU will depend very much on the evolution of ESDP and of the relationship between the two organizations. NATO, under the pressure of the US, seems to be now taking a closer interest in Africa or at least trying to make a point that Africa is not 'chasse gardée' of the EU. NATO is willing to assist the AU mission in Darfour with planning, airlift, communications and training, and will conduct in June 2006 its first major military manovres in Africa, in Cap Vert. EU-NATO collaboration is likely to develop further despite some 'competition' and the political differences between some European states and the US, as well as between some EU member states. The more the EU will appear as a valid and capable partner, the more the links are likely to develop, although that does not exclude frictions along the way.

2.4. Dealing with the institutional divide

Relations between the Commission and the Council, as well as with these and the European Parliament, have in various occasions been marked by differences of perspectives and priorities, often related to their different but sometimes 'overlapping' competences.

The EU has a multitude of tools that range from economic instruments (economic and development cooperation, trade, emergency and reconstruction and rehabilitation aid) to legal and political ones (political dialogue, mediation or ESDP instruments) which allow it to address in a comprehensive manner the root causes as well as the immediate causes of conflict. As the European Security Strategy, 'A Secure Europe in a better world' adopted by the European Council in December 2003, has pointed out, this is a quite unique advantage of the EU with regard to other international actors. Furthermore, unlike a single country (which can also dispose from a varied range of instruments) the financial means the EU can mobilize are certainly much more significant. Other international organizations have the means, but few have such a variety of complementary tools. Most of the afore-mentioned instruments the EU has at its disposal to promote long-term peace and stability are managed by the European Commission. Instruments falling within the CFSP (where the Commission shares the right of initiative with the Council) and ESDP (a fully intergovernmental policy) are of the Council responsibility (although CFSP budget is also managed by the CE), although that could also change with a comprehensive reform of the financial instruments and within the framework of the European Constitution. The institutional battle is open and it is likely to be a fierce one.

The EU intervention in DRC was most welcomed by the Commission, but it also raised some concerns with regard to overall EU priorities in crisis management and namely regarding

previous European policy towards Africa. There are concerns within the Commission that the EU Council may be putting too much emphasis on the military instruments for crisis management in detriment of civilian crisis management and conflict prevention instruments and policies. Military intervention is seen as a short-term and expensive instrument that, if isolated, is not likely to have the same strong and durable long-term political and economic impact as the other instruments the EU has at its disposal. However, there is also the recognition by the Commission that such crisis management operations are indeed sometimes necessary and complementary to other EU instruments. However, it is the Commission view that military instruments ought to be used only when all other instruments have failed and as a last resource.

The Council perspective is not fundamentally different from the one of the Commission in the sense of acknowledging the primacy of some long-term instruments for sustainable peace and stability. However, better coordination between the various EU means is needed, and some crisis management instruments have been and may still need to be further developed. As the European Security Strategy prepared by Javier Solana points out:

“Conflict prevention and threat prevention cannot start too early. In contrast to the massive visible threat in the Cold War, none of the new threats is purely military, nor can any be tackled by purely military means. Each requires a mixture of instruments. (...) The challenge now is to bring together the different instruments and capabilities: European assistance programmes and European Development Fund, military and civilian capabilities from memberstates and other instruments. All of these can have an impact on our security and on that of third countries. Security is the first condition for development. Diplomatic efforts, development, trade and environmental policies, should follow the same agenda. In a crisis there is no substitute for unity of command. (...) Greater coherence is needed not only among EU instruments but also embracing the external activities of the individual member states. Coherent policies are also needed regionally, especially dealing with conflict. Problems are rarely solved on a single country basis, or without regional support, as in different ways experience in both the Balkans and West Africa shows.”

Anyway, if the changes proposed by the European Constitution are implemented, and namely the creation of a European Minister for Foreign Affairs and a foreign service, EU external relations would have a single face and voice diluting to some extent at least the perceived differences between the Council and the Commission and as the Minister would sit and have important responsibilities in both institutions.

2.5. Engaging actively in conflict resolution in Africa

The Artemis operation

On June 12, 2003, the Council of the European Union adopted a decision^[18] to launch its first fully autonomous (outside the ‘Berlin plus’ framework agreed with NATO) crisis management military operation outside Europe. Operation “Artemis”, as it was code-named, was the first ESDP operation in Africa. It took place within the framework of UNSC resolution 1484 adopted on May 30, 2003, and the Council’s Joint Action adopted on June 5, 2003. The UNSC Resolution authorized the deployment of an Interim Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF) in Bunia, the administrative center of the Ituri district in DRC, until the 1st of September.

France acted as the framework nation^[19] of operation Artemis and had therefore the command of the operation and of the forces. Other 16 EU countries and future EU member states contributed to the operation, as well as some non-European states (Brazil, Canada and

South Africa), although few of them with forces on the ground. Around 2000 troops were deployed: 1100 in Bunia, 850 in the operational headquarters and supporting bases in Entebbe and Kampala (Uganda). Most of the 1100 forces engaged on the ground in Bunia were French (about 85%), 70 troops from Sweden and 100 men (genie units) from the UK. The vast majority of these forces had to be deployed (over a distance of 6200Km), like almost everything else used for the operation (around 400 combat vehicles were deployed, as well as other military and communications equipment, fuel, food, etc).

It is hard to tell whether it was France that judged it politically advantageous - either for the purposes of its European policy and/or because of the susceptibilities of another French intervention in the Great Lakes region after operation 'Turquoise' in Rwanda - to bring operation 'Mamba' under the EU banner, or whether EU high officials in the Council saw it as a good opportunity to heal the bitter political differences among member states on intervention in Iraq and give a boost to ESDP. Probably all these considerations (and eventually others) have played a part on the decision of France, EU officials and member states. In any case, there were two parallel tracks with the UN Secretary-General requesting support to France and to the EU.

There seems to be wide consensus, though, that if there had not been the intervention in Iraq with all the controversy and divisions surrounding it, one could question to what extent would the Europeans have intervened in DRC. What is certain is that the decision was made on political grounds. From the military point of view, there were probably more problems than advantages in bringing the operation under the EU banner. In fact, French military were apparently not so willing to transform it into an EU-led military operation, for fears that the decision-making process within the EU would drag for too long the effective launching of the operation, which needed to be rapid and they had already prepared for it.

No matter how or why Artemis happened, its success has been generally and widely acknowledged by many different actors in Europe and Africa. The EU-led force was successful in accomplishing its mission:

The security situation in Bunia improved significantly; A significant number of refugees were able to return to the city; Economic life revived in Bunia, with the city markets reopening and the somewhat normalization of local economic activity from August 2003 onwards. Better security conditions also allowed humanitarian support to resume and extend.

Furthermore, the improved security situation in Bunia allowed for the Interim Ituri Administration and the Ituri Assembly to resume their work and, at the national level, it gave a new boost to the negotiations between the government and the armed groups. It also gave, as intended, the time for the UN to prepare the new reinforced MONUC mission.

In the outcome of operation Artemis, there was also the acknowledgement of some shortcomings the EU would need to address for a more effective crisis management role. The lessons learned assessment highlighted well known weaknesses (although they have not put at risk the successful realization of the operation) in terms of European military capabilities, in particular the weak capacity for strategic transportation, the need for better and secure means for long distance communications, better information technology, intelligence sharing, and the need to improve the inter-operability of European armed forces. For other actors and analysts, though, the EU-led operation had other more important shortcomings, some inherent to its mandate: the time and location of the operation allowed only to stabilize Bunia and the surrounding area, while the fighting and violence against civilians continued outside Bunia.

Although its action and determination has weakened one of the major militia groups, it did not neutralized its opposing militias, thus allowing for a renewed cycle of violence and revenge. Given the limited time of the operation, the effective demilitarization of Bunia did not really take place or was not fully accomplished. Weapons were no longer visible in Bunia, but it did not mean the town was a weapons-free zone - it must be pointed out though that the task of the forces operating under Artemis was demilitarization and not disarmament. MONUC contingents have been doing it in the follow-up of Artemis.

The EU presence in the DRC continues beyond the limited military operation in Ituri, in its support to the peace process both at the Ituri district level and at the national level, and to the reconstruction and development of the country in order to create the necessary conditions for long-term stability and peace. The concentration areas of its cooperation programme with the DRC, to where substantial aid and financial support (from envelope A of the Indicative Programme) are channeled, include the health system, institutional support to the democratic transition and rule of law (namely the reform of the public administration, the judicial system and the police, and support to the electoral process), and macro-economic support. Most of the non-programmed aid under the indicative programme (34 million Euros under envelope B, out of the total 205 million euros allocated to the indicative programme) are channeled to the eastern part of the country and to Ituri in particular, and aim essentially at supporting the civil administration, doing urgent rehabilitation, reestablishing the rule of law, namely through the training of judges and the construction of prisons and supporting human rights activities (pacification activities, etc). The EU is also supporting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in DRC through a multi-regional and multi-donor programme run by the World Bank. Commission funding will come from the EDF fund for intra-ACP conflict prevention. The same fund will also support an integrated police unit in Kinshasa whose role is to provide security for the transition (securing buildings, personalities, etc). The EU is also engaged in the Security Sector Reform in DRC.

Why was Artemis important?

Although limited in time, scope, in its geographical area of action and in the number of forces involved, operation Artemis was nevertheless significant in many different ways.

It was the first EU crisis management operation outside Europe, and to some, the fact that it was in Africa adds to the significance. This does, at least to some extent, suggest EU political interest and willingness to act in the region and to contribute more actively to its stabilization, going beyond its traditional trade and aid instruments (although that had probably not been the main motivation for the launching of the operation).

It provided an opportunity for healing political differences between EU member states, and especially between France and Britain, following the controversy and frictions about the intervention in Iraq.

It was the first fully autonomous EU military operation, without using NATO assets. As stressed by EU representatives, it showed the EU is perfectly capable of acting alone. This was not so much welcomed by NATO officials (by the US in particular), who stressed autonomous EU military operations should not happen again, although NATO had no desire to support Artemis operation given the priorities it had at the time, namely in the Balkans and in Afghanistan.

It was decided and mounted very rapidly: it took only 6 to 7 weeks between the UNSC resolution 1484 and the deployment of the first military forces into Bunia. Even the decision-making within the EU council was very rapid. In the end, it was the political will that really

mattered, despite the operational weaknesses or institutional constraints; that is probably the main lesson that comes out of Artemis.

Coordination and cooperation among all EU key actors involved (the French military leading the operation, Secretariat of the Council, Commission, and member states) was very good. No doubt human resources in Brussels were under considerable strain, but fears of a lack of linkage between the different actors were after all not confirmed.

It reinforced the EU stance and credibility as a capable actor in international security and foreign policy. As such it has reinforced EU links with the UN in the area of crisis management (the EU is already a major partner for the UN in areas like development or humanitarian aid). Furthermore, there was very good cooperation with the UN, on the ground as well as at the highest political level.

With regard to the EU-NATO relationship, and despite the negative reaction that was expressed by some NATO allies (the US above all), the EU has reinforced its position and credibility as an international actor. The increasing EU activities in the area of crisis management, whether conducted with NATO assets or not is actually likely to boost cooperation with NATO rather than hinder it in the longer term, albeit on probably somewhat different grounds than previously. There is a lot of ground for more cooperation and complementarity between EU and NATO, and that may well be very soon put to the test again, this time in Africa, in Darfour.

Operation Artemis, along with other EU engagements in crisis management, has also contributed to give a boost to on-going EU efforts to reinforce EU crisis management capabilities. While the chances that EU member states will agree to increase military expenditure are slim, particularly in the current economic situation in Europe, the current focus is more on enhancing rationalization, flexibility and coordination of European capabilities. The EU rapid reaction force (RRF, a force of 60000 man) is operational for humanitarian and peacekeeping missions since 2003. In November 2003, the EU decided on the creation of a European Defence Agency in the field of defence capabilities, development, research, acquisition and armaments, operational since June 2004[25]. Since January 2005, the first two battle groups (out of 13 planned) are ready to be deployed at any time for peace missions under the UN framework.

There has also been some evolution at the level of command structures since the EU military operation in DRC, with measures to develop EU Military Staff operational planning capacities and coordination, to improve the links with NATO military headquarters, and the validation of the framework nation concept (rather than the idea of a European headquarters, as it had been proposed before). It remains though the problem of financing of ESDP operations. One of the limitations of the 'framework nation' concept is financial. Few EU member states have the capability to conduct such type of operations, particularly when these imply strategic capabilities, and they can't always bear the cost of EU interventions. In operation Artemis, France not only paid for its troops (which constituted the large majority of the forces involved in the operation) and equipment, but also for the transportation costs and the costs of the Force Headquarters (costs for the latter would be considered as common costs, but were nonetheless supported by the framework nation). There is a recognized need for the EU to find ways of sharing the burden of costs. A new financial mechanism (Athena) was created in February 2004 with the aim of speeding up the decision making process for the funding of ESDP operations, but the problem remains of sharing the burden of the costs.

Operation Artemis also contributed to feed the debate on the linkage between civilian and military cooperation and complementarity with other EU instruments. Despite fears by some inside and outside the European institutions that a reinforcement of the military dimension of crisis management may be pursued in detriment of the civilian dimension, the emphasis of EU crisis management instruments and policy is likely to remain on the civilian dimension of it for different reasons, including financial ones. There is a wide-recognition that it is important to have the possibility of using military instruments and capabilities when needed, but the issue of the balance and coordination and complementarity between the military and the civilian power assets is very much at discussion these days. Operation Artemis may have contributed to exacerbate such fears as it was essentially a military operation. The civilian dimension of it was not much visible and yet probably at least equally needed. It is recognized that, for instance, the issue of an integrated police, an urgent reform of the judiciary system and the support to the Ituri administration are important elements for the stabilization of the situation in Bunia and in the district beyond the EU military intervention. In that sense, benefits of military efforts may prove to be short-lived if they are not immediately or simultaneously accompanied by other complementary measures.

The crisis in Darfour

The EU role in Darfour is a very different example of EU engagement in conflict resolution in Africa, but no less important, not just for the dimension of the humanitarian catastrophe of the conflict in Darfour, but also for what is at stake politically for the African Union and indirectly for its supporters, the EU included.

The AU plays the leading role in the mediation, management and resolution of the crisis in Darfour. The African Union mission in Sudan (AMIS), established in 2004, has been growing considerably in the number of forces and in the scope of the mission. Limited initially to a monitoring mission to observe the cease-fire and consisting only of about 300 military, the mandate of AMIS II has been reinforced to include the protection of civilians and its peacekeeping force is expected to reach nearly 8000 men by the end of September 2005 and 12000 later on, compared to the nearly 2500 currently on the ground. To an organization that is just emerging from decades of paralysis due namely to the political conservatism of African States who pretended to praised above all the principles of State sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference, but who paid little respect to them, today's African Union tasks are huge to any standards of international organization and its efforts and political will quite remarkable. However, nobody can expect the AU to become in such a short period of time and with such limited resources and capacity an organization fully able to respond to the huge tasks it is up to without substantial and sustained international support. The AU is at the same time under huge pressure to prove itself, to assert its political credibility and to ensure African ownership of the processes it leads, and nowhere else is that pressure as big as in Sudan, whose government refuses any international intervention other than African.

The EU is committed to support AU efforts and the organization capacity. It is a major contributor to the AU peace efforts everywhere in Africa and to the building of capacity of the organization. EU support to the resolution of the conflict in Darfour is mostly channeled through the AU and included financial, logistics, planning and political support to the AU mediation efforts and cease-fire monitoring mission. EU military staff and observers also participated in the planning and preparation of the monitoring mission and in the mission itself. The EU also supports UN efforts to ensure compliance with the demands of the UN Security Council. Furthermore, the EU is also a major contributor to the relief effort in Darfour.

All European contributions included, the EU has already invested some 600 million euros in the resolution of the conflict and has just made an additional offer of equipment, airlift, training, assistance and advisory teams, support in the area of police, additional military observers, media support and aerial observations, plus an additional financial support of about 60 million euros from the Peace Facility for Africa (and at least 40 million more from the member states to the AU to support the expansion of AMIS II in the coming months. The deployment of European forces to Darfour is not envisaged, although there are signs that some EU nations could envisage the deployment of police forces alongside AU police, essentially because the AU may not yet be able to gather the necessary numbers of trained police officers. It would however be up to the AU to make such a request. It shouldn't be ruled out though that EU forces could be more directly involved on the ground, although that is not the priority at this stage and would probably be considered only to secure the success of the AU mission if not possible through other means. It is not just the situation in Darfour that is at stake in the AU Mission; it is the AU credibility and capacity itself and to some extent also the EU strategy towards crisis management and conflict resolution in Africa.

3. What prospects for an EU role in conflict resolution in Africa?

It is now to some extent more likely that the EU will increasingly engage in peacekeeping operations, and perhaps also in peace-enforcement, particularly in situations where humanitarian needs are pressing and/or the risks of conflict break-up or escalation are very high, with potentially even higher costs to European nations. Besides, these are the type of situations that are more likely to appeal to European public opinion and where European leaders will probably have less difficulties in getting public endorsement for such operations (at least while the level of risk remains relatively 'low').

Nevertheless, the main emphasis of EU policy in this regard is likely to remain closely linked to the essential principles of its well established policy. Addressing the root causes of conflict and instability in Africa will remain a priority and conflict prevention the privileged approach. Political will for further EU engagement in Africa remains a key issue although that can not be blamed on the new member states who have for instance been supportive so far of EU policy in Darfour.

Short-term military operations are not the long-term solution for African problems, but they may at times be necessary and instrumental in creating the minimal conditions for long-term instruments to be used. How to take the maximum benefit of such short-term military operations to enhance long-term goals is a key issue where there is ground for improvement, whether they are EU-led or conducted by the UN or by other regional organizations. There is also a need for better coordination of EU policies and with bilateral initiatives of EU member states. It is however necessary that the latter are willing to put their national interests in second place when it comes to deal with priorities in Africa – which may prove to be a major challenge, although one can say that, to some extent, things have somewhat improved. The same goes for coordination with international organizations/actors and the UN in particular.

EU policy aimed at developing and reinforcing African capabilities to deal with conflict-related situations in the region is likely to be further reinforced. That is currently a strong priority of EU dialogue and cooperation with the African Union and other African organizations. It has been also high on the agenda in the EU dialogue with other international organizations, particularly with the UN, but also the G8 and the OSCE. Programmes or initiatives that have proven to be successful in building African national and regional capacities for crisis

management ought to be expanded, taking into account the major capacity weaknesses of most African states and organizations (e.g. command and control, logistics, specialized skills like engineering and medical services, communications, and movement control). That is already the case with the French programme RECAMP (Renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la paix), created in 1996, under which French forces teach and train African forces in peacekeeping skills, organize multinational military exercises and have pre-positioned military equipment in three depots (Dakar, Libreville et Djibouti) available to African forces participating in peacekeeping initiatives in Africa. France proposed to 'europeanise' RECAMP and discussions on how to do it are underway. The next RECAMP exercise will be under the banner of the AU, with France assuring the logistical organization and the financial support to the participating African forces, and the EUMS being involved in all planning stages. Other possibilities could be for the EUMS to provide military or civil-military advisory to African organizations, or support them with relevant information for peace operations (e.g. intelligence information, imagery from the EU Satellite Center). There are already some examples of this occurring (e.g. with the AU).

However, unlike many bilateral initiatives for capacity-building of African forces, the EU should continue to focus primarily on dialogue and cooperation with, and development of African regional and sub-regional organizations. Reinforcing EU African organizations (and their capabilities) is in itself an important confidence-building measure in a continent thorn by conflicts, where internal and regional threats are sometimes hard to separate.

Training and programmes for the reinforcement of African capabilities to deal with conflict-related situations ought also to take into account the context in which African forces are likely to operate, and, in most of the cases, that is not a traditional peacekeeping context. African forces have in the last years been operating in rather complex conflict situations where peace making and peace enforcement skills have often been required. Yet, some of the initiatives aimed at reinforcing their skills and capabilities are sometimes too much focused on traditional peacekeeping.

There is also a selfish interest in the whole issue of developing African capabilities for conflict related activities. Europeans are less willing to engage in peace support missions in Africa now than they were in the 80s or early 90s. They have continued to be involved, but more on their own and in very specific and limited type of operations or, as in the last few years, in support of regional efforts (particularly when there was a high risk that those regional efforts could fail). Operation Artemis is a good example of the type of military engagements Europeans could eventually be willing to perform in Africa, in the future: short, precise, limited in scope. Whether EU member states would be willing to intervene more often under the EU banner rather than on their own, is yet to be seen. However, given the positive experience of operation Artemis and the recent agreements on ESDP for a pretty flexible approach to the political control of EU-led military operations, it may become increasingly more difficult for EU member states to justify, politically, engaging in such operations alone or without at least consulting the EU. Furthermore, there may be some significant political advantages in performing a military operation under the EU banner, namely in terms of perceived neutrality, but also in terms of a comprehensive approach to conflict-related situations, to the extent the EU can back such operations with supporting policies at the civilian level during and in post-conflict situations, given the wide-range of instruments it has at its disposal.

A more open dialogue with African actors could lead to a more effective use of resources and probably to more flexible and innovative approaches to crisis management in the region and

capacity-building of African actors. Much depends on African actors, too. There have been many European/international and African initiatives and plans to deal with problems in the region. It is to be expected that those initiatives will be followed by effective action.