

**Lessons from EU Interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Mali:  
Explaining EU Crisis Response (In-)Effectiveness**

Ingo Peters, Enver Ferhatovic, Rabea Heinemann, Sofia Sturm

Freie Universität Berlin

*IR Working Paper 01/ 2022*

(DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/refubium-36963>)

**Table of Contents**

- 1. Introduction..... 2
- 2. Impact Effectiveness of EU Operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Mali..... 5
  - 2.1 Impact effectiveness measured by good governance indices..... 6
  - 2.1 Promoting good governance through capacity building and socialization ..... 8
  - 2.2 Good governance and local ownership ..... 10
- 3. Lessons to be Learned: Factors influencing EU Crisis Response Effectiveness ..... 13
  - Factor 1: Member States’ political prerogative for CSDP missions..... 13
  - Factor 2: Member States’ preferences and coherent policy implementation..... 14
  - Factor 3: Actor unity in policy implementation..... 15
  - Factor 4: The ambiguity of political leadership ..... 16
  - Factor 5: Securitization and politicization ..... 16
  - Factor 6: Policy complexity, coordination challenges, and institutional reforms ..... 17
  - Factor 7: Policy complexity and political pragmatism on the ground..... 19
  - Factor 8: Insufficient lessons-learned practice ..... 20
  - Factor 9: Local actors’ preferences and lacking policy convergence ..... 21
- 4. Conclusions: EU foreign policy effectiveness in theory & practice ..... 23
  - 4.1 Case-specific vs. general findings ..... 23
  - 4.2 Theorizing explanatory variables for CSDP missions’ impact effectiveness ..... 25
- Bibliography..... 28

# Lessons from EU Interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Mali: Explaining EU Crisis Response (In-)Effectiveness

---

The sobering experiences with Western engagement in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Mali in general and respective EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions in particular, suggest that EU efforts toward conflict resolution and state-building are systematically undermined by a lack of political settlement on the strategic level. This renders political stabilization via promoting good governance on the ground mostly futile. Moreover, the lack of local ownership in partner countries and coherent policies between the EU institutions and the EU Members States limit CSDP missions' effectiveness and impact. The added value of this synoptic analysis rests with its combination of three analytical perspectives: 1) a systematic evaluation of missions' impact effectiveness; 2) the inference of general and case-specific factors constraining and enabling EU crisis response effectiveness, and 3) the suggestion of avenues for theorizing on EU crisis response missions' effectiveness. Moreover, this analysis draws on primary EU sources, expert literature and incorporates additional data springing from interviews in Brussels as well as in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Mali.

Keywords: CSDP Missions; Crisis Management; Policy Effectiveness; Conflict Sensitivity; Ownership; Lessons learned

*„This decision about Afghanistan is not just about Afghanistan. It's about ending an era of major military operations to remake other countries.“ US President Joe Biden (Aug. 31, 2021)*

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The take-over of the Taliban in Afghanistan was a disaster for the US and NATO, but also the European Union's crisis response policy in the Hindukush. This has been aggravated by the recent coups in Mali combined with the emergence of Russian mercenaries and the debate of a troop withdrawal in France and Germany, as well as the re-emergence of political instability

---

<sup>1</sup> Information on the author's institutional affiliation, bibliographical notes, acknowledgement, and a data availability statement can be found at the end of the file!

in Iraq. Instead of establishing a Rapid Reaction Force for evacuating EU personnel and supportive locals or NGOs from such theatres (Council of the European Union 2022), would the EU be better advised to follow US President Biden's stance to end missions trying "to remake other countries"? In short-term Russia's war on Ukraine may lead to re-emphasizing NATO's and the EU member states' policies of traditional deterrence and defence. Hence, we are contributing this analysis to the topical debate on the future of the EU's CSDP missions by asking: How effective has the impact of these missions been in detail (section 2)? Which lessons ought to be learned from the EU's crisis interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Mali? Which factors enable or constrain the impact effectiveness of the EU's civilian and military interventions in the extended neighbourhood (section 3)? And which policy recommendations and avenues for theorizing EU crisis response policy, are emerging (section 4)?

In response to the breakdown of governance in parts of its neighbourhood, the EU has (as of Aug. 2021) dispatched 38 civilian, military, or mixed CSDP missions since its first ESDP operation to the Balkans in 2003 (European External Action Service 2019). The three selected cases – the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL AFG, 2007-2016), the EU Integrated Rule of Law Mission in Iraq (EULEX Iraq, 2005-13), and the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali 2012-continued) – represent both the military and civilian side of EU crisis management. In all three cases, the EU crisis-response policy has been facing **similar structural challenges** as root causes of societal and international conflicts. These encompass a) governance deficits, b) ethnic, religious, social, and economic fragmentation, and c) embeddedness in regional instability and power struggle, combined with poorly managed borders and cross-border interventions. Moreover, these CSDP missions occurred in parallel to multiple international interventions, hence rendering operational policy coordination an indispensable challenge.

Britain in Afghanistan and Iraq, and France in Mali took on special roles as *de facto* ‘lead nations’ inside the EU's policy-making machinery, whereas the United States has been the agenda setter and the international gatekeeper in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regional Organizations play a much bigger role in Mali (ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel) than regional counterparts do in Iraq and Afghanistan. The United Nations (UN) has been a key factor, not least for mandates providing legitimacy for external military and civilian engagements also of the EU. However, despite similar domestic and international contexts, **pronounced differences across cases** exist regarding (colonial) histories, local political and religious cultures and cleavages, and the various legacies of conflicts involving external powers.

***Method issues and decisions:*** In this study, the assessment of EU policy effectiveness (section 2) assumes that effectiveness is an ambiguous concept since ‘multiple actors provide for multiple realities, and multiple yardsticks’ (Jørgensen 1998, 96f). Here **a specific concept of effectiveness** is inferred from a standard (foreign-)policy-cycle model, differentiating output, outcome, and impact effectiveness (Peters 2016, 27)<sup>2</sup>. While the output (defined as a coherent policy definition) and outcome (defined as a coherent policy implementation) dimensions of the EU’s policy-making are evaluated elsewhere (Peters et al. 2021), we focus in section 2 on ***impact effectiveness*** defined as changing a course of events according to the policy objectives designated in pertinent EU documents like mission mandates.

The output and outcome dimensions are considered necessary but insufficient preconditions for the EU’s impact effectiveness and are hence, among others, considered potential explanatory factors for the EU’s impact effectiveness in **section 3**. These ‘explanatory variables’ are not strictly causally inferred from, but ‘grounded in’ our three cases (Corbin and Strauss 1990). Moreover, neither positive nor negative changes on the

---

<sup>2</sup> Various conceptualizations of effectiveness are available, for example, across the gamut of EU foreign policy (Ginsberg and Penksa 2012, 50-5), or regarding the EU as a military conflict manager (Rodt 2014), civilian crisis management (Pirozzi 2015), or the EU as a mediator in international conflicts (Bergmann and Niemann 2013).

ground ought to be mono-causally attributed to EU policies since other international actors' policies – neighbouring countries, the UN, or the US – are as well impacting the political situation on the ground (“attribution problem”, Kahl 2013, 39).

**Information and database:** The policy evaluation in section 2, as well as the analysis of explanatory factors in section 3, are based on extensive document analyses, some 30 interviews within EU institutions in Brussels and with mission staff, perception surveys conducted in the field, publicly accessible reports by the EU, and experts' assessments. The perception surveys which followed a close-to-identical design but were adapted to local contexts and languages were all carried out in 2017 (300 questionnaires in Afghanistan, 295 in Iraq, and 105 in Mali), and covered EU missions' beneficiaries in the case countries (Cissé et al. 2017; Echavez and Suroush 2017; Mohammed et al. 2017).

**Summing up,** our guiding questions have been part of the European Studies and International Relations discourse on the issues of the European Union's 'actorness and power' and foreign policy effectiveness. This analysis contributes to this debate by providing a synoptic view of three EU operations and thus allows distinguishing systematically case-specific from general policy features of the EU crisis response policy and will in conclusion offer policy recommendations as well as perspectives for theorizing on its effectiveness. Hence, this analysis speaks to policy makers' interest in systematic policy evaluation as much as to the theoretically-informed scholarly debate on the EU's foreign policy agency.

## **2. Impact Effectiveness of EU Operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Mali**

Possible **benchmarks for the EU's crisis-response impact effectiveness** are, first, the EU's *strategic objectives*, which are according to the Treaty of Lisbon to “preserve peace, prevent conflicts, and strengthen international security” (TEU/Art.21, 2). These declaratory ultimate ambitions, most significant for internal or domestic legitimation but hardly ever achieved by

international interventions, are inappropriate as the ultimate standards for policy evaluation. Second, *intermediate objectives*, defined in pertinent EU documents like CSDP mission mandates, resemble policy features deemed indispensable preconditions for a sustainable impact of EU crisis-response policy. They are ‘intermediate’ since they – like transmission belts – link strategic to the third category, *operational objectives*. The latter is defined in the EU’s pertinent CSDP-mission mandates and serves as gauges for assessing the EU’s policy effectiveness, for example, the achievement of institutional reforms, the number of trained police or military officers, or judicial personnel.

In this section, our analysis focuses *first* on the evolving good-governance status according to pertinent indices in section 2.1, *second* on the achievements of EU policy strategies for capacity building and socialisation for promoting the target countries’ good governance institutions and practices (democracy, rule of law, human and gender rights, etc.) in section 2.2, and *third* on the link between institutionalizing good governance and local ownership in section 2.3.

### *2.1 Impact effectiveness measured by good governance indices*

Our case countries have been beset by challenges of areas of limited statehood, exemplified by an inability to exercise effective security governance and scarce institutional capacity (Krasner and Risse 2014, 446). The EU’s (and other international actors’) intermediate objectives, of promoting good governance that is democratization, human and gender rights, and the rule of law, have been mainstreamed throughout crisis response and SSR activities across cases (Council of the European Union 2006). In a first cut, these policy objectives are operationalized by utilizing pertinent indices covering the respective years of a) the mission deployment, b) one major change of mandate, and c) the end of missions or most recent scores.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> For a reflection on viability of indices see, for example, Erkkilä (2016).

Table 1: Good Governance indices across cases			
	Afghanistan	Iraq	Mali
	2006-2012-2017-2020	2005-2010-2014-2020	2013-2016-2021
<b>Democracy Index<sup>4</sup></b>	2006: 3.06 2012: ↓ 2.48 2017: ↑ 2.55 2021: ↓ 0.32	2006: 4.01 2010: → 4.00 2014: ↑ 4.23 2021: ↓ 3.51	2013: → 5.90 2016: ↓ 5.70 2021: ↓ 3.48
<b>Worldwide Governance Indicators<sup>5</sup></b>			
<u>1. Voice and Accountability</u>	2006: -1.11 2012: ↓ -1.27 2017: ↑ -0.99 2020: ↓ -1.08	2006: -1.3 2010: ↑ -0.99 2014: ↓ -1.14 2020: ↑ -1.01	2013: -0.28 2016: ~ → -0.23 2020: ↓ -0,73
<u>2. Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism</u>	2006: -2.22 2012: ↓ -2.42 2017: ↓ -2.8 2020: ↑ -2.73	2006: -2.69 2010: ↑ -2.24 2014: ↓ -2.48 2020: ↑ -2.53	2013: -1,72 2016: ↑ -1.62 2020: ↓ -2.15
<u>3. Rule of Law</u>	2006: -1.86 2012: ↑ -1,64 2017: ↑ -1.56 2020: ↓ -1.81	2005: -1.71 2010: ↑ -1.56 2014: ↑ -1.33 2020: ↓ -1.75	2013: -0,75 2016: ~ → -0.78 2020: ↓ -0.92
<b>Corruption Perception Index<sup>6</sup></b>	2007: 1.8 <i>Scale change!</i> 2012: ↑ (rank) 8 2017: ↑ 15 2021: ~ → 16	2005: 2.2 2010: ↓ 1.5 <i>Scale change!</i> 2014: ↑ (rank) 16 2021: ↑ 23	2013: 28 2016: ↑ 32 2021: ↓ 29
<b>Political Rights/Civil Liberties<sup>7</sup></b>	2006: 5/6 2012: ↓ 6/6 2017: ~ → 6/6 2021: ↓ 7/6	2005: 7/5 2010: ~ → 5/6 2014: ~ → 5/6 2021: ~ → 5/6	2013: 7/5 2016: ↑ 5/4 2021: ↓ 6/5

© Compilation Peters, Ferhatovic, Heinemann, Sturm 2021

<sup>4</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit (2019, 20f; Scale 0-10)

<sup>5</sup> The World Bank Group (2019, Scale -2.5 to +2.5)

<sup>6</sup> Transparency International (2019), scale changed from 1-10 to 1-100 in 2011/12.

<sup>7</sup> Freedom House Country and Territory Ratings and Statuses, 1973 - 2022

As table 1 reveals, the respective scores have remained low across cases. From the low-level baselines, intermediate improvements become visible, while ultimately the situation deteriorated in all cases. Hence, the balance sheet regarding these declared facilitators of the ultimate strategic objectives of the EU (and other international actors) remained sobering.

### *2.1 Promoting good governance through capacity building and socialization*

Zooming in on the achievements and shortcomings of EU impact in our case countries, we first provide our assessment regarding the core operational objective of capacity-building which is the training of police (Afghanistan and Iraq) and the armed forces (Mali), including the promotion of human rights standards and practices, as well as institutional reforms.

**In Afghanistan**, approximately 31.000 Afghan police officers (out of a total of 146.000 ANF) had attended higher education courses facilitated by EUPOL AFG by the end of the mission in 2016 (European Court of Auditors 2015, Observation 24). Another nominal achievement was the build-up of the Female Police within the Afghan National Police, starting at 180 in 2007 to reaching 3,200 female officers by 2016. The establishment of the *Kabul Staff College* was the main achievement of the mission and marked a progressive mission shift for EUPOL AFG from delivering direct training or train-the-trainer activities to the creation and reinforcement of the capacities of the Afghan training institutions promising a lasting institutional innovation for enhancing the sustainability of new training standards (Ferhatovic and Suroush 2018, 16).

Human rights concerns were key to EUPOL Afghanistan and mirrored in the curricular and extensive training of the Afghan police for fostering respect for international standards. Hence, EUPOL organized staff training for the Human Rights, Gender, and Children Directorate at the MoI, and provided hundreds of monitoring, mentoring, advising, and training sessions for the Attorney General's Office and Ministry of Justice. Yet, even in 2016/17 allegations persisted that "the national police has been responsible for



incommunicado detention, enforced disappearances, mass arbitrary detention, and extrajudicial killings during counter-insurgency operations” (UN Committee against Torture 2017, 4). Moreover, high attrition rates of up to 75% in 2011 affected capacity-building efforts (House of Lords 2011, 19).

In the training for **Iraq**, which due to prevailing security concerns where conducted out-of-country until 2012, EU MS offered different courses for police, judiciary, and penitentiary personnel. After seven years, 5,000 Iraqi Criminal Justice System (CJS) personnel and more than 7,000 Iraqi police officers (out of an overall 400,000) were reportedly trained (Christova 2013, 433f). Policy and judicial personnel in Iraq faced violent attacks and suffered significant losses between 2003 and 2011, with figures reported varying from 9,000 to 12,000 (Korski 2010, 238; Christova 2013, 430). The EU’s post-training monitoring data remained limited (Korski 2010, 239) until the end of the mission in 2013 and undermined any more substantial evaluation.

Regarding good governance standards, according to the EU, EUJUST LEX Iraq accomplished significant improvements regarding prison management, prison security, and prisoners' human rights as well as local capacities for fighting domestic violence and human trafficking (European External Action Service 2014, 7). However, the EU Commission admitted after the end of the mission in 2013 that Iraq still lacked a stable rule of law system, as demonstrated by human rights violations by Iraqi Security Forces and affiliated armed groups in their fight against ISIL (European Commission 2014, 7; UN Human Rights Committee 2015).

As of July 2018, **EUTM Mali** had trained 12,000 MAF staff (European External Action Service 2018). However, the education and training levels within the courses varied considerably (Fuhrmann 2016). EUTM Mali has provided training to all ranks in the Malian military forces, including courses on human rights, the protection of women, and the return of

refugees (Carrasco et al. 2016, 137). Nevertheless, serious human rights violations, as well as sexual and gender-based violence by Malian military counter-terrorist operations were reported (Human Rights Watch 2017; UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 2016).

In sum, the impact effectiveness of EU efforts on the level of operational and intermediate objectives across cases is overshadowed by poor results when looking at general governance indices and reports on police and military training and human rights practice. Neither the EU's efforts on improving human rights standards – nor those of other international actors – sufficiently diffuse for sustainably altering the overall good-governance performance of the national police in Afghanistan or Iraq, and the armed forces in Mali. With the takeover of domestic security institutions and the military by the Taliban in Afghanistan in August 2021 (Khan et al. 2021), the continuous political instability in Iraq (U.S. Council on Foreign Relations 2021), and the military coups in Mali in 2020, and 2021 (Haidara 2021), the impact and sustainability of EU capacity building efforts was significantly undermined.

### *2.2 Good governance and local ownership*

According to major policy documents, promoting local ownership by partner countries' elites and societies has been a continuously mainstreamed objective of EU policies (European Commission 2015, esp. 93-5; Peters et al. 2018b, 27-30). Since ownership is another ambiguous concept (Donais 2015, 40-3), we analyse ownership along its inherently relational dimension, taking into account that EU priorities are often diverging from local understandings and practices, possibly encompassing resistance of local actors to EU ambitions (Ejdus and Juncos 2018, 13-7; Cold-Ravnkilde and Jacobsen 2020, 874). Hence, from an EU perspective, 'ownership' relates to recipient countries' political and societal actors embracing EU policy premises including basic norms of 'good governance'. Ownership

ultimately encompasses a *shared* understanding of *inclusive* conduct throughout the policy reform processes.

**Afghan ownership** was key within EUPOL's declared strategies and objectives meant to contribute to sustainable and effective civilian-policing arrangements (Council of the European Union 2007). However, the EU's promotion of ownership and a conflict-sensitive approach, as interviews with Afghans from the cases revealed (Cissé et al. 2017; Echavez and Suroush 2017; Mohammed et al. 2017), have not always been tangible. For example, topics such as Islamic law and local customs were not covered by training curricula, hence diminishing the impact on police training in Afghanistan (European Court of Auditors 2015, Observation 25). In contrast, **EUJUST LEX Iraq** reportedly had excellent relations with its domestic counterparts and Iraqi experts participated in the design of curricula for training courses (Korski 2010, 238). Still, it remained uncertain whether EU training practices were incorporated into the Iraqi police training curriculum since the EU got no access to Iraqi training establishments. Only after the review of the mandate in 2010 evaluation workshops with trainees in several locations in Iraq were organised (Christova 2013, 435).

**EUTM Mali's** regionalization efforts through its extension of training to the G5 Sahel Joint Force in 2016 – another level of the 'local' – could be an avenue towards a „long-desired Africanisation of international efforts“ (Lebovich 2017; Sambe 2018; Dandashly 2021, 31f). So far, however, fostering regional ownership through the G5 Sahel has faced a range of challenges. Primarily, it has been criticized as following an EU-led agenda, while simultaneously undermining the coherence of African institutions' efforts, such as the AU's security structure (APSA) and ECOWAS' political agency (Venturi 2019, 10). Secondly, the ad-hoc nature of the creation of the G5-Sahel has been criticized by some for affecting the quality of its operational effectiveness, given the absence of logistical support, adequate training, equipment, and accountability mechanisms (Cold-Ravnkilde 2018; Cold-Ravnkilde

and Nissen 2020, 947f). Nevertheless, some evidence, such as the high-level consultations between AU, ECOWAS, and G5 in 2016 and 2017 (UN, S/2017/869) and the 2018 Memorandum of Understanding between ECOWAS and G5 Sahel on exploiting synergies (ibid.) could hint at improved political dialogue amongst West African states. Regarding Mali, EUTM's impact effectiveness has been low at best and it needs to be seen whether favouring one regional actor (G5) at the expense of others could steer up regional conflicts (Lebovich 2017), particularly given the 2021 coup and the following French troop withdrawal.

Regarding **Afghanistan**, the focus of the EUPOL mission on civilian policing combined with a lack of local ownership was criticized by the Afghan Ministry of Interior as well as the US and NATO Training Mission (NTM-A) between 2009 and 2011 (Bayer Tygesen 2013). NTM-A's dominance<sup>8</sup> of the international training effort with its focus on fighting the insurgency, and EUPOL's shortage of civilian police trainers, led to poorly-trained police, which in consequence was seen as "corrupt, brutal and predatory...[and]...feared and mistrusted" by Afghan citizens (House of Lords 2011, 3; Eckhard 2016, 171f). Given this sobering balance sheet, survey respondents surprisingly depicted a neutral attitude regarding EU policies. Respondents deemed that EU policies disproportionately benefitted EU officials, state officials, and the military while marginalizing vulnerable communities (Echavez and Suroush 2017, 8f), hence indicating a critical stance on the EU's engagement and its attempt to achieve substantial ownership.

In **Iraq**, successive governments evaluated EUJUST LEX as a politically symbolical engagement. EUNPACK perception surveys (Mohammed et al. 2017, 3) indicated a comparatively low awareness regarding specific CSDP activities, while the awareness of other EU-funded agencies and projects (UNDP, NGOs) and international actors (UN, US)

---

<sup>8</sup> NTMA encompassed about 558 mentor teams with up to 4.000 trainers and an annual budget of 3,5 billion US\$ in 2011 (House of Lords 2011, 15).

was remarkably higher. The overall attitude of respondents towards EU crisis response engagement in Iraq received a positive score (39 % partially satisfied, 30 % satisfied) (Mohammed et al. 2017). EUTM training in Mali has been perceived as too short, or too abstract for the local reality (Djiré et al. 2017, 42). Moreover, the lack of knowledge about the EU engagement among the Malians indicates an improper communication strategy. And yet, respondents held a rather positive view of the EU as being conflict-sensitive (58 %) and helping to mitigate the crisis (72 %) (Cissé et al. 2017).

In sum, the EU's programmatic ambitions (Peters et al. 2018a, Annex 6) concerning strategic, intermediate, and operational objectives in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Mali have not been matched by more than a marginal or at best modest impact effectiveness. Which factors have influenced these sobering results?

### **3. Lessons to be Learned: Factors influencing EU Crisis Response Effectiveness**

Which lessons to be learned<sup>9</sup> are generated from our evaluative case studies concerning factors influencing (if not causing) CSDP missions' effectiveness located at different levels of analysis? Moreover, focusing on the added value of our research, which *best practices* or *bad practices* are identified? These explanatory factors are meant as a springboard for future structured and focused case studies focusing on the causal dimension of EU CSDP missions' effectiveness.

#### *Factor 1: Member States' political prerogative for CSDP missions*

At which level of violence or which phase of a conflict does an external intervention seem most promising (Zartman, 2001) springs from the respective rationales of the intervening international actors, here the European Union? The political prerogative of MS determines the

---

<sup>9</sup> In its self-evaluation the EU speaks of 'lessons learned' (Peters et al. 2018b, 6f). We instead use this term for indicating the difference between ambition and practice. For an EU-commissioned external evaluation see the European Commission (2020a) summary report.

very establishment, features, and timing of CSDP missions partly predefining the prospects of success which is, however, often undermined by the ‘conflict-prevention paradox’ (Newman and Aloyo 2018, 52): Interventions do not occur when these may be *functionally* most promising within the continuum of the respective ‘conflict cycle’, but when they are considered *politically* appropriate.

For example, the EUPOL AFG mission (established in 2006) remained largely ineffective until the EU MS followed up on their pledges in terms of staffing, funding, and political support in 2012. By that time, however, the insurgency was peaking and hence the planning, timing and scope of the mission were problematic. Likewise, regarding EULEX Iraq (established in 2005), the EU did not take advantage of abating violence and a new democratically elected government in 2007 to move its activities on-site but transferred its Headquarters and activities only in 2011 when the level of violence and insecurity had long been intensifying (Peters et al. 2018a, 34 & Annex 5). Moreover, in Iraq and Afghanistan, the missions ended due to vanishing MS support in 2013 and 2016, respectively, before the mandates were fulfilled or at least a political settlement between the conflicting parties in the countries could be reached – an EU policy *bad practice* (Peters et al. 2018b, 17).

#### *Factor 2: Member States’ preferences and coherent policy implementation*

A successful EU crisis response policy depends on the MS’ commitment to the implementation of EU decisions through the timely provision of a) funding, b) sufficient and adequately trained personnel, and c) the required equipment. Across cases, these facilitating factors were problematic most importantly due to financial restrictions and respective implications for other resources (European External Action Service 2015; European Parliament 2016, 24f).

In Afghanistan, for example, the mission missed opportunities and lost credibility due to limited budgets, especially in contrast to the vastly funded US-led NATO training mission

in Afghanistan (NTM-A) (Peters et al. 2018b, 16f, 23f, 53; Upadhyay and Pawelec 2016, 175f; Eckhard 2016, 179f). Likewise in Iraq, the mission funding was dwarfed in comparison to the US engagement, particularly regarding the fight against the so-called Islamic State. This contributed to a major EU expectation – capability gap (Peters 2017, 7f; Ohlers 2017).

In the cases of Mali and Iraq, country-specific expertise was in short supply in Brussels and the missions lacked analytical capacity (Peters et al. 2018b, 28, 41). The EUTM Mali training activities were hampered by largely ignoring the significance of ‘language’. Linguistic barriers between instructors and trainees were a key spoiler for ownership as illustrated by the lack of knowledge of human rights terminology of mission translators (Peters et al. 2018a, 37-9; Carrasco et al. 2016). Additionally, the mission’s ignorance regarding the meaning of ethnic cleavages for sustainable reform of the Malian national army revealed a lack of knowledge and analysis of the reality on the ground (Heinemann 2017, 40). Similarly, in the case of Iraq, the understanding of the political and judicial system of the country’s traditions and realities (Peters et al. 2018b, 39f) remained low. In Mali, at times a lack of communication equipment prevented the MAF from protecting the population in the north. Equipment often arrived with a delay or was “too technical for people to use and ended up just being stashed away” (Bøås et al. 2018).

Thus, shortcomings regarding EU output and outcome effectiveness contribute to mediocre impact.

### *Factor 3: Actor unity in policy implementation*

The quality of common policy implementation and impact effectiveness is significantly influenced by the consent or the quality of compromises among EU-MS. Diverging preferences among MS represent manifest cooperation problems, often resulting in a lack of policy coherence regarding policy implementation (‘unity of action’) (Peters et al. 2018b, 7f, 14f). This was manifest in several EU MS’s (Denmark, France, Germany, and Italy) bilateral

police reform efforts in AFG (Ferhatovic and Suroush 2018, 18) or some MS's decisions – most importantly Britain, Germany, Poland, and The Netherlands – to provide more manpower to the US-led NATO training mission Afghanistan (NTM-A) than to EUPOL-AFG (Peters et al. 2018b, 23f; Upadhyay and Pawelec 2016, 176f). Also, the gap between civilian police development concepts of EUPOL AFG and the US/ NATO Counter Insurgency approach reflected a lack of policy integration of western efforts at least until 2011 (Peters et al. 2018b, 15, 23; Upadhyay and Pawelec 2016, 175f).

*Factor 4: The ambiguity of political leadership*

Aside from institutional reforms of the EU's policy-making machinery (see factor 6), **political leadership is one mechanism** for enhancing intergovernmental foreign policy-making on CSDP missions (Simón 2017). Mali is a case in point where France's resolve underpinned the significance of the "lead-nation" concept for co-opting MS and ultimately embedding its national engagement in the EU crisis response policy (Heinemann 2017, 7f; Peters et al. 2018b, 31). Colonial ties of EU MS to regions and countries in crisis may provide a comparative advantage concerning the country and language expertise. Concurrently it may infringe on the EU's legitimacy due to reservations or even resistance of local actors to "neo-colonial" engagements, a factor also visible in the domestic discourse on the Malian coup in 2021 (Haidara 2021). With the withdrawal of French troops on the junta's demand in February 2022, the viability of the EUTM mission and the lead-nation concept has become questionable (The Economist 2022). In short, an inherent tension exists between political leadership by individual EU MS and the representation of the EU as a whole (Okemuo 2013).

*Factor 5: Securitization and politicization*

Another salient factor influencing MS's commitment to EU missions is the 'securitisation' (Taureck 2006) of CSDP missions spilling over from domestic discourses and policy agendas to CSDP missions. Already in the wake of 9/11, the European Council had addressed irregular



migration as a security risk in the wake of the war-on-terrorism dynamics (Ceyhan and Tsoukala 2002, 30f; on similarities to the 1990s see Huysmans 1995). Likewise, domestic concerns regarding migration and border management in the wake of the ‘Arab Spring’ (2011) and the ‘migration crisis’ emerging in 2015 have drastically shifted MS concerns and policy preferences regarding crisis response policy from fostering reforms and good governance in partner countries to prioritizing political stability (Heinemann 2017, 14-9; Peters et al. 2018b, 11, 22; Dandashly 2016). Moreover, this has entailed a spill-over to securitizing development policy as a long-term complement to EU crisis response missions and SSR efforts (Duffield 2014; Bergmann 2017).

This trend of securitization spill-overs across policy fields is identified as a “meta-feature” of EU crisis response policy which is politicizing EU missions beyond their original mandates (Peters et al. 2018b, 35-8; see likewise Raineri and Rossi 2018; Cold-Ravnkilde and Nissen 2020, 939). In contrast, the EU’s lessons learned often entail a “de-politicization” tendency, exemplified by the EU’s basically ‘functional’ understanding of its comprehensive approach, insinuating that peace-building on the ground is foremost about ‘social engineering’ (Peters et al. 2018b, 33f; parallels in Dari et al. 2012, 52; Oksamytna 2011, 10; Gross and Jacob 2013, 23f). Hence, if CSDP missions get into the shadow of MS’s domestic agendas and are at times politicized and at other times depoliticized, this may enhance legitimacy at home but undermine the legitimacy of EU engagements in third countries with negative implications for the impact of CSDP missions on the ground (background talk with EEAS official, Brussels, March 2017).

#### *Factor 6: Policy complexity, coordination challenges, and institutional reforms*

EU crisis-response policy is based on an overwhelming set of **complex policy-making premises** considered necessary for doing justice to the complex challenges at hand. The chief examples are the comprehensive (2013) and the integrated approach (2018) (Tardy 2017)

entailing a demand for enhanced policy coordination – another factor infringing on missions’ impact effectiveness (Peters et al. 2018b, 11-3, 39-42). Beyond the necessary policy coordination between MS, the EU’s complex policy approaches entail multi-institutional foreign policy-making rendering inter and intra-institutional coordination indispensable for a coherent policy implementation via CSDP missions and their ultimate impact effectiveness. Given the multiple geographical or country desks in the EU Commission and corresponding units of the EEAS are involved in shaping and implementing policy, this poses significant challenges to policy coordination involving a multitude of bureaucratic players at times undermining actor unity in Brussels and affecting the impact effectiveness (Peters et al. 2018b, 15; Bátorá et al. 2016, 7ff). Moreover, those ‘turf wars’ within CSDP policy-making leading to delays and inefficiency are more than mere coordination problems but are about competencies, resources, relative influence, and hierarchy inside the EU – that is about lower-level politics (Peters et al. 2018b, 43; Cold-Ravnkilde and Nissen 2020, 939).

Institutional reforms in the EU’s policy-making are applied as a remedy to those challenges. For example, following the introduction of the integrated approach in 2018, a reform of the internal EEAS machinery has occurred for improving managerial and operational policy-making. In 2017, the Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention, and Mediation (PRISM) unit was upgraded to a division, and in 2018 it was integrated into the Directorate Integrated Approach for Security and Peace (ISP). However, this new directorate merely merges the operational level but does not “necessarily do so at the political level (...) (since) member states are largely absent from the new directorate’s activities (...) (and) did not further integrate the work of the EEAS’ Secretary-General for Political Affairs and the geographical divisions.” (Blockmans and Debuysere 2021, 129).

Furthermore, these intra- and inter-institutional overlaps of EU competencies and capacities, instruments, and actions frequently lead to misinterpretations in the field, for

instance on the roles of EU Delegations and CSDP missions concerning representation, reporting, and donor coordination (Peters et al. 2018b, 15, 39-42; European Court of Auditors 2015, Observation 18). Likewise, until 2010, policy coordination between EUPOL AFG, the EU Special Representative, and the EU delegation's local policy-making concerning SSR reportedly was deficient. In contrast, the coordinating role of the EU Special Representative in Mali after 2013 served as a model for other EU crisis interventions in the sense of a *best practice* (European Commission 2016, 10).

*Factor 7: Policy complexity and political pragmatism on the ground*

The previously addressed challenges of the complex premises of EU crisis response policy as represented in its ‘comprehensive’ (2013) or ‘integrated approach’ (2018) (Faleg 2018) moreover often come with a significant gulf between promises made and promises kept questioning the respective policies legitimacy at home and locally and, in consequence, impact effectiveness (Rieker and Blockmans 2019). While ideal-typical premises may provide policy guidelines, in practice creative and pragmatic adjustments are required (‘the art of the possible’).

In Afghanistan, for example, SSR efforts achieved more tangible success once reforms were prioritized in key areas of EU expertise. EUPOL Afghanistan support to the Ministry of Interior, the Afghan National Police, and judicial authorities was post-2012 focused on key systemic elements required for a sustainable security sector, most importantly, for example, the resulting *Professional Training Board* for the development and accreditation of police-training curricula in Afghanistan coordinated international training activities efficiently (European Court of Auditors 2015, Observation 19; Peters et al. 2018b, 15-36). Prioritizing key institution-building reforms applied by EUPOL AFG and refocusing EU engagement on its strengths thus constituted a *best practice*, mindful of limited resources and timelines for the mission (Ferhatovic and Suroush 2018, 18).

Likewise, the operational strategies for Iraq were marked by policy adjustments away from a complex comprehensive approach given the deteriorating security situation in the country. Thus, *de facto* the ambitious comprehensive approach was abandoned on the operational level in favour of pragmatic adjustments which in practice flagged the end of the EUJUST-LEX Iraq mission in December 2013, succeeded by the EU Advisory Mission Iraq in October 2017 (Peters et al. 2018b, 21f; European Commission 2014, 6-12; European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq 2022).

*Factor 8: Insufficient lessons-learned practice*

Another indispensable factor for a mission's impact effectiveness is a well-organized self-assessment and lessons-learned process, facilitating a flexible learning institution within and across CSDP missions (Faleg 2017). The EU has established its approach for gathering lessons, encompassing analyses at different levels (strategic, operational, and tactical) as well as both the planning and implementation phases of missions and operations (Council of the European Union 2008; Peters et al. 2018b, 5-7, 42). However, the EU's missions' lessons-learned procedures involve many actors pursuing their separate evaluations based on diverse categories, criteria, and indicators rendering these quality assurance procedures questionable (European Court of Auditors 2015; Dijkstra et al. 2019, 536f).

Additionally, when it comes to monitoring and evaluating missions in the field these ambitions are often undermined by security concerns and a lack of resources. For example, the EULEX Iraq engagement did not allow for continuous evaluations of mandate implementation and quality assurance according to the EU mandate's ambitions. Hence, the lessons-learned process inside the EU institutions, specifically in the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom) was significantly constrained in practice (Information from background talks, Brussels, March 2017; Peters et al. 2018b, 19f). This is further constrained by the lack of monitoring and

evaluation of capacity-building efforts like the military training in Mali or the police training in Afghanistan or Iraq (for parallels in the Libyan case see Loschi et al. 2018, 7).

However, the need for improved monitoring and mission evaluation has generally been acknowledged by the EU. Transforming fragmented processes into an integrated organizational-learning system by applying standardized methods and procedures is a declared EU MS policy. Hence, the first semi-external evaluation of the European Court of Auditors of EUPOL AFG in 2015 was a *best practice* which was followed by an EU-commissioned external evaluation of EU Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding conducted between 2018 and 2020 (European Commission 2020b).

#### *Factor 9: Local actors' preferences and lacking policy convergence*

As elaborated in section 2.2, the EU's crisis response policy considers local ownership and conflict-sensitive policy conduct based on the "Do-no-harm" principle indispensable for a sustainable impact on fragile states and societies (Peters 2017, 18f; European Commission 2021, specifically Annex 5). However, this premise hinges upon converging preferences between the EU and local cooperation partners which are often not given or even met by local resistance preventing a local 'buy-in' to EU policies and good governance norms (Stedman 1997; Schroeder et al. 2014; Tull 2019).

When engaging 'locals', careful identification of possible partners of the political elite as well as their (long-term) role in the conflict and society at large is of utmost importance for facilitating internal and external legitimacy. However, in all three conflict settings, the EU's policy showed a pattern of supporting weak or illicit governments on the national level, and pre-existing dominant regional or local actors which undermined impact effectiveness (Peters et al. 2018b, 40; Cold-Ravnkilde and Jacobsen 2020, 866, 74). The Malian government, for example, has neither dealt effectively with reported human rights abuses by the MAF nor with the domestic conflicts splitting the country and society. Instead, the regime in Bamako

transferred issues of internal instability and insecurity to external partners such as MINUSMA or the French *Opération Barkhane* (Bøås and Ba 2017, 31). Moreover, the need for a multi-ethnic composition of the Malian Armed and Police Forces, indispensable for overcoming pre-existing societal cleavages, has continuously been ignored (Barea 2013).

In Afghanistan, the convergence of policy preference and strategies between ‘local’ governments and EU policy was missing, for example, concerning the traditional role of women in society. EU’s ambition to mainstream human rights and gender and to include women in the police overstretched the demand for changes in the partners’ standards and configurations of power in society (Hancock 2013, 2; Peters et al. 2018b, 26f). Another mismatch of preferences was detected in Mali where the EU stressed the non-combat character of the EUTM Mali while Malian counterparts were expecting weapon supplies (Skeppström et al. 2015, 357; European External Action Service 2015). This expectation-delivery gap was ultimately overtaken, however, by the Junta’s contract with the Russian mercenary *Group Wagner (Afrique 17.09.2021)*. To narrow this gap, early and long-term engagements with domestic actors could have achieved mutual socialisation and sustained effectiveness. SSR reforms typically take a long time while the EU prefers short- or mid-term engagements, resulting in a “limited potential to build legitimate, operational and sustainable police and army forces,” however (European Commission 2021, specifically Annex 5; Bøås et al. 2018).

On the operational level of training police forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, the EU’s responsiveness to local demands and inclusion portrayed ambiguous practices. In Iraq amendments to course curricula and the incorporation of Work Experience Secondments in EU police training reportedly were initiated in response to demands from the Iraqi CJS (Dari et al. 2012, 56; Peters et al. 2018b, 21) – a *best practice*. In the Afghan case, however, a lack of inclusion of local actors was identified as *bad practice* since local stakeholders were not

involved in the implementation of the Mission's Operational Plans and subsequent mandate reviews (Ferhatovic and Surosh 2018, 19).

Overall, the EU's inability to enhance local ownership resulted repeatedly in problematic political deals, in particular since the necessity to build up the security capacity of the central government was considered essential across cases. Choosing local elites as partners consolidated existing power structures across levels of government. A more inclusive approach, however, may have fostered resistance from domestic elites due to infringements on their "traditional" political influence and power. In consequence, striking this balance defines whether the EU will be an effective actor in peacebuilding and SSR.

In sum, the plethora of explanatory factors generated in this section shows that those factors are located across different levels of analysis and were visible across the cases though to varying degrees. Notwithstanding, this list of causal factors is by no means exhaustive but remains confined to those emerging most prominently from our evaluative case studies.

#### **4. Conclusions: EU foreign policy effectiveness in theory & practice**

This analysis combines an evaluative with an explanatory approach toward EU foreign policy regarding CSDP missions. Finally, the academic significance of two aspects of our findings shall be discussed: *First*, which of the findings are case-specific, and which findings can be generalized? *Second*, how can the explanatory variables generated for missions' impact effectiveness be theorized by embedding them in pertinent IR and European Studies theories?

##### *4.1 Case-specific vs. general findings*

Case studies are examples of a "class of events" but are the lessons to be learned from our analysis merely case-specific or are they suitable for generalization? Regarding the evaluative dimension, the overall assessment found a sobering lack of impact of the EU crisis response efforts across cases. On the operational level, the impact was measurable but still

modest and ambiguous, while it was meagre on the level of intermediate objectives.

Transferring good governance norms and practices has not been sustainable not least due to a lack of diffusion across levels of partner countries' institutionalized practices indicating a lack of ownership.

Concerning the causal dimension of our investigation, we found several factors – ranging from overly complex EU policy premises, deficient knowledge, inappropriate analysis and lessons-learned processes at the policy output level to policy-coordination challenges as well as a lack of coherent policy implementation across all levels of policy-making. The EU tends to focus on narrow security concerns in terms of mission safety rather than addressing structural issues of the conflicts (Bøås and Rieker 2019, 15f). Additionally, major factors regarding the respective conflict context and local partners' preferences and ownership influence the prospects for EU policy effectiveness.

We complemented our analysis by indicating other case studies on EU candidate states or the EU's immediate neighbourhood (Bøås and Rieker 2019, 15), for example regarding the observed tendency to securitize or (de)politicize its crisis response (Raineri and Rossi 2018) or the lack of monitoring EU missions operational activities (Loschi et al. 2018). Our analysis also resonates with and supports some EU lessons learned (see the documents cited in the subsection on factor 7 above) as much as key findings in the overwhelming body of expert literature on, for example, coordination challenges inside the EU policy machinery (Dari et al. 2012, 52f; Gross and Jacob 2013, 23f; Arnaud et al. 2017).

In consequence, first, we conclude that the findings become more case-specific the lower the level of analysis and policy-making get. Second, despite all differences in detail – regarding the relative significance or the mix of evaluative or causal findings – our analysis supports the claim that our empirical results are not case (or case-set) specific but of general validity.



#### 4.2 Theorizing explanatory variables for CSDP missions' impact effectiveness

We conclude that most of our evaluative as much as causal findings are general features of EU crisis response missions render a cautious exercise in theorizing appropriately. Based on a configurative premise (Rihoux and Ragin 2009), all factors are necessary but most likely not sufficient conditions for impact effectiveness. However, that does not mean that “everything matters” but indicates that further comparative case studies possibly focussing on specific combinations of factors (configurations) are required to specify the scope conditions under which a given factor might acquire significant and possibly dominant explanatory power.

As a start, *first*, we hypothesize that most explanatory factors addressed above may be relevant in every case (like analytical shortcomings underlying EU policy-making; factors 1, 7 & 8), but their peculiar manifestation (like missing knowledge regarding language, ethnic issues, or traditional political practices) will likely differ. *Secondly*, factors located in the MS preferences or the EU's policy-making machinery like the conflict-prevention paradox or securitization mechanism (factors 1 & 2) are of general importance. We hypothesize that factors relating to the partner countries and local features (factor 9) tend to be case-specific like the respective resonance of local with EU good governance norms that is. *Thirdly*, the numerous factors listed in section 3 imply that the explanation of the achievements and shortcomings of EU CSDP missions are “overdetermined” in the sense that more causes are present than are necessary to cause the effect. While at first sight merely an academic issue, this overall conclusion has significance also for the opportunities and limits of policy-making and recipes for improving conflict response effectiveness. Rather than hoping for one big twist for improving such a complex policy, continuous efforts for adjusting the policies and policy-making processes are required across the whole gamut of factors influencing policy effectiveness.

The following examples may suffice to point to options for embedding the explanatory factors springing from our (and others') empirical research theoretically:

- The significance of member states' preferences and actor unity inside the EU (factors 1-4), can be theorized by drawing on Moravcsik's *liberal intergovernmentalism* combining domestic preference formation, institutional coordination, and international bargaining under conditions of policy interdependence (Moravcsik 1998, 18-35).
- The analysis of these policy-cycle components (see factors 1 & 5) could further be augmented by relating to the conflict prevention paradigm (Newman and Aloyo 2018) and securitization theories (Buzan et al. 1998; Balzacq 2009).
- The identified shortcomings of the EU's lessons-learned processes (factor 7) inside EU institutions mostly turning a blind eye towards the *politics* of crisis response policy ("de-politicization"; factor 3) and instead focusing on coordination problems and institutional challenges might be embedded in the principal-agent theory resonating with the relationship between MS and EU institutions (e.g. Hawkins et al. 2006, 3-38)
- The coordination challenges based on disagreements on policy goals and strategies (factors 4 & 6) – can be viewed through the lenses of institutionalist research. Historical, sociological, or neoliberal institutionalism offers promising explanatory variables (Hall and Taylor 1996; Martin 1993). Additionally, hypotheses for explaining coordination problems and intra- and inter-institutional politicking could be drawn from the "bureaucratic politics" model of foreign policy decision-making (e. g. Rosati 1981).
- Regarding the preconditions for effective crisis response efforts laying with "partner countries" and local actors (factor 9), theoretical aspects of the governance-in-areas-of-limited-statehood research offer explanatory factors and hypotheses at the domestic level of the partner country (Börzel 2021, chapter 3).

- Further, the challenges of lacking ownership in partner countries and societies as well as strategies for enhancing local ownership (factor 9) draw our attention to social constructivist theories regarding the construction of identities and their influences on the preference formation of “local” actors as well as regarding processes of localizing international norms (Weldes 1996; Acharya 2004).

The analytical results of this project can hardly be ascribed to the *sui-generis* character of the EU polity – at least not in principle (Øhrgaard 2004) – since conflict response policies by other international actors we hypothesize, may well show similar features (see for example the UN's lack of achievements in Timor-Leste, Belo and Koenig 2011). This informed guess puts comparative research onto the priority research agenda (Dijkstra et al. 2019; Cold-Ravnkilde and Jacobsen 2020), and indicates that a systematic effort on a meta-review applying a structure, focused comparison approach (George 1979) of missions and operations of single international actors as much as across actors is more than overdue! Understanding the effectiveness of the EU crisis response policy will thus depend on a complex research programme combining approaches from IR, European Studies, or other fields of study. With the plethora of factors from different levels of analysis defining the impact, effectiveness will depend on investigating different but interconnected causal mechanisms the findings of which will have to be pooled and synoptically analysed in order to improve our academic understanding for better political advice!

Ultimately, the insight into the overdetermined impact effectiveness of EU CSDP missions may suggest pouring some water into the wine of geopolitical aspirations entertained by the EU Commission and Council as much as EU member states reinvigorated in the wake of the Russian war on Ukraine (Council of the European Union 2022). An argument for a sober perspective on the potential and limits of EU CSDP missions has to be made. Hence, we conclude with President Biden that also the EU might be well-advised not to engage in

“remaking other countries” and to adjust the scope of CSDP missions’ mandates accordingly. Without political settlements among conflicting parties in any given state or society, “functional” conflict response policies will – besides humanitarian aid – mostly be in vain as the cases of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Mali show (MacGinty 2010).

### Bibliography

- Acharya, Amitav. 2004. "How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism." *International Organization* 58 (1):239–75.
- Afrique, Jeune. 17.09.2021. "Mali-Russia: Bamako to sign contract with Wagner Group." <https://www.theafricareport.com/127421/mali-russia-bamako-to-sign-contract-with-wagner-group/> Accessed 16.03.2022.
- Arnaud, Yannick, Cristian Barbieri, Matthias Deneckere, Tommaso De Zan, and Tobias Flessenkemper. 2017. "Analysis of CSDP institutional and policy aspects and lessons learned." CIVILEX D2.1. Brussels: CIVILEX.
- Balzacq, Thierry. 2009. "Constructivism and securitization studies." In *The Routledge handbook of security studies*, edited by Victor Mauer Myriam Dunn Cavelty, 72-88. London: Routledge.
- Barea, Juan C. 2013. "The Malian Armed Forces Reform and the Future of EUTM". 93/2013. Madrid:
- Bátora, Jozef, Steven Blockmans, Enver Ferhatovic, Ingo Peters, Pernille Rieker, and Eva Stambol. 2016. "Understanding the EU's crisis toolbox and decision-making processes". EUNPACK D4.1. Brussels: CEPS.
- Bayer Tygesen, Christian. 2013. "A cloud over EUs legacy in Afghanistan?" The Europe Center (TEC). [https://tec.fsi.stanford.edu/news/a\\_cloud\\_over\\_eus\\_legacy\\_in\\_afghanistan\\_20130219](https://tec.fsi.stanford.edu/news/a_cloud_over_eus_legacy_in_afghanistan_20130219). Accessed 26.09.2018.
- Belo, Néelson De Sousa, and Mark R Koenig. 2011. *Institutionalizing community policing in Timor-Leste: Exploring the politics of police reform, Occasional Paper 9*. San Francisco: Asia Foundation.
- Bergmann, Julian. 2017. *Capacity Building in Support of Security and Development (CBSD): securitising EU development policy? , DIE Briefing Paper 24*. Bonn: DIE.
- Bergmann, Julian, and Arne Niemann. 2013. "The European Union as an Effective Mediator in Peace Negotiations? Conceptual Framework and Plausibility Probe". Mainz:
- Biden, Joseph R. 2021. Remarks by President Biden on the End of the War in Afghanistan (Aug. 31). Washington D.C.: The White House.
- Blockmans, Steven, and Loes Debuysere. 2021. "Institutionalizing the integrated approach to external conflict." In *The Making of European Security Policy: Between Institutional Dynamics and Global Challenges*, edited by Roberta Haar, Thomas Christiansen, Sabina Lange, Sophie Vanhoonacker, 149-65. London: Routledge.
- Bøås, Morten, and Boubacar Ba. 2017. *Mali: A Political Economy Analysis*. Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs.
- Bøås, Morten, Abdoul Wahab Cissé, Aboubacar Diallo, Bard Drange, Frida Kvamme, and Eva Stambol. 2018. "The EU, security sector reform and border management in Mali". EUNPACK D7.4. Brussels & Oslo: NUPI.

- Bøås, Morten, and Pernille Rieker. 2019. "EUNPACK Executive Summar of the Final Report & Selected Policy Recommendations". Brussels:
- Börzel, Tanja A., Risse, Thomas. 2021. *Effective Governance Under Anarchy: Institutions, Legitimacy, and Social Trust in Areas of Limited Statehood* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buzan, Barry, Ole Weaver, and Japp de Wilde (ed.). 1998. "Security: A new framework for analysis." Boulder CO/ London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Carrasco, Carmen Márquez, Cristina Churruca Muguruza, and Rocío Alamillos Sánchez. 2016. *Case Study: Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)*. Leuven: Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies (KUL-GGS).
- Ceyhan, Ayse, and Anastassia Tsoukala. 2002. "The securitization of migration in western societies: Ambivalent discourses and policies." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 27 (1):21-39.
- Christova, Alina. 2013. "Seven Years of EUJUST LEX: The Challenge of Rule of Law in Iraq." *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 9 (3):424-39.
- Cissé, Abdoul Wahab, Ambroise Dakouo, Morten Bøås, and Frida Kvamme. 2017. "Perceptions about the EU crisis response in Mali - a summary of perception studies". EUNPACK D7.7. Brussels: NUPI.
- Cold-Ravnkilde, Signe Marie. 2018. "A fragile military response". Copenhagen: DIIS.
- Cold-Ravnkilde, Signe Marie, and Katja Lindskov Jacobsen. 2020. "Disentangling the security traffic jam in the Sahel: constitutive effects of contemporary interventionism." *International Affairs* 96 (4):855-74.
- Cold-Ravnkilde, Signe Marie, and Christine Nissen. 2020. "Schizophrenic agendas in the EU's external actions in Mali." *International Affairs* 96 (4):935-53.
- Corbin, Juliet, and Anselm Strauss. 1990. "Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria." *Qualitative Sociology* 13 (1):3-21.
- Council of the European Union. 2006. Council Conclusions on Promoting Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in Crisis Management (14884/1/06). Brussels: Council Secretariat.
- . 2007. Council Joint Action 2007/369/CFSP of 30 May 2007 on establishment of the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL AFGHANISTAN). Brussels: Council Secretariat.
- . 2008. Guidelines for identification and implementation of lessons and best practices in civilian ESDP missions (15987/08). Brussels: Council Secretariat.
- . 2022. A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. Brussels: Council Secretariat.
- Dandashly, Assem. 2016. "The EU and the US reactions to the Arab Spring 2011: (new) responses to a changing Middle East and North Africa." In *The European Union's Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective. Beyond the "Actorness and Power" Debate*, edited by Ingo Peters, 142-62. London and New York: Routledge.
- Dandashly, Assem, Hylke Dijkstra, Marta Marafona, Gergana Noutcheva and Zachary Paikin. 2021. "Multipolarity and EU Foreign and Security Policy: Divergent Approaches to Conflict and Crisis Response". JOINT Research Papers No. 6. Brussels and Maastricht:
- Dari, Elisa, Megan Price, Jense Van der Wal, Marlene Gottwald, and Nicole Koenig. 2012. *CSDP Missions and Operations: Lessons Learned Processes*. Brussels: European Parliament.
- Dijkstra, Hylke, Petar Petrov, and Ewa Mahr. 2019. "Learning to deploy civilian capabilities: How the United Nations, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and European Union have changed their crisis management institutions." *Cooperation and Conflict* 54 (4):524-43.

- Djiré, Moussa, Djibril Sow, Kissima Gakou, and Bakary Camara. 2017. *Assessing the EU's Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Interventions in Mali*. Bamako: Université de Sciences Juridique et Politiques de Bamako.
- Donais, Timothy. 2015. "Operationalising local ownership." In *Local ownership in international peacebuilding: Key theoretical and practical issues*, edited by Alpaslan Özerdem Sung Yong Lee, 39-54. London: Routledge.
- Duffield, Mark. 2014. *Global governance and the new wars: the merging of development and security*. 2nd ed. London: Zed Books Ltd.
- Echavez, Chona, and Qayoom Suroush. 2017. "Assessment of EU's Response in Afghanistan: Did EU's conflict response through EUPOL deliver as it intended". EUNPACK D7.6. Brussels: CEPS.
- Eckhard, Steffen. 2016. *International Assistance to Police Reform, (chapt. 6: The EU's Contribution to Police Reform in Afghanistan, 159–187)*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ejdus, Filip, and Ana E Juncos. 2018. "Reclaiming the local in EU peacebuilding: Effectiveness, ownership, and resistance." *Contemporary Security Policy* 39 (1):4-27.
- Erkkilä, Tero. 2016. "Global governance indices as policy instruments: Actionability, transparency and comparative policy analysis." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 18 (4):382-402.
- European Commission. 2014. Multiannual Indicative Programme for Iraq 2014-2017 (Ref. Ares(2014)2072691). Brussels.
- . 2015. Operating in situations of conflict and fragility. An EU staff handbook. Reference Document No 17: Tools and Methods Series. Brussels: DEVCO /EuroAid.
- . 2016. Annual Report on the Sahel Regional Action Plan. Brussels (SWD2016/482 final).
- . 2020a. EU Support for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding (2013-2017), External Evaluation (carried out 2018-2020). Brussels: DEVCO Evaluation and Results Unit.
- . 2020b. External Evaluation of EU's Support to Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding (2013-2018), Volume 1, Main Report. Brussels: DEVCO, Evaluation and Results Unit.
- . 2021. Working Better Together As Team Europe. Brussels: DG INTPA.
- European Court of Auditors. 2015. "The EU police mission in Afghanistan: mixed results." Special Report No. 7. Luxembourg:
- European External Action Service. 2014. Strengthening the efficiency and credibility of the criminal justice system and enhancing the rule of law. Brussels/ Baghdad: Delegation of the European Union to Iraq.
- . 2015. Annual 2014 CSDP Lessons Report. (EEAS 2015/256). Brussels: EEAS.
- . 2018. EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM). Factsheet (July 2018). Brussels.
- . 2019. Military and civilian missions and operations. Brussels: EEAS.
- European Parliament. 2016. EU-led security sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration cases: challenges, lessons learnt, and ways forward. Brussels: European Parliament.
- European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq. 2022. "Mission Webpage." <https://www.euam-iraq.eu/>. Accessed 15.04.2022.
- Faleg, Giovanni. 2017. *The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy Learning Communities in International Organizations*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2018. "The EU: from comprehensive to integrated approach." *Global Affairs* 4 (2-3):171-83.
- Ferhatovic, Enver, and Qayoom Suroush. 2018. "Assessing EUPOL Impact on Afghan Police Reform (2007-2016)". EUNPACK D7.3. Brussels:

- Fuhrmann, Jan. 2016. "'The response has been very positive'. In an interview, Brigadier General Franz Pfengle explains how Germany is helping to stabilise Mali." <https://www.deutschland.de/en/topic/politics/peace-security/the-response-has-been-very-positive>. Accessed 04.09.2018.
- George, Alexander L. 1979. "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison." In *Diplomacy: new approaches in history, theory, and policy*, edited by Paul Gordon Lauren, 43-68. London: Free Press.
- Ginsberg, Roy, and Susan Penksa. 2012. *The European Union in global security: the politics of impact*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gross, Eva, and Marine Jacob. 2013. "Assessing the EU's Approach to Security Sector Reform (SSR)". Brussels: European Parliament.
- Haidara, Boubacar. 2021. "Inside Mali's coup within a coup." *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/inside-malis-coup-within-a-coup-161621>. Accessed 14.07.2022.
- Hall, Peter A., and Rosemary C.R. Taylor. 1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." *Political Studies* 44 (5):936-57.
- Hancock, Louise. 2013. "Women and the Afghan Police. Why a law enforcement agency that respects and protects females is crucial for progress". London:
- Hawkins, Darren G., David A. Lake, Daniel L. Nielson, and Michael J. Tierney. 2006. "Delegation under anarchy: states, international organizations, and principal-agent theory." In *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*, edited by Darren G. Hawkins, David A. Lake, Daniel L. Nielson and Michael J. Tierney, 3-38. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Heinemann, Rabea. 2017. *The European Union's Crisis Response in the Extended Neighbourhood. The EU's Output Effectiveness in the Case of Mali, EUNPACK (WP D7.1)*. Brussels: FU.
- House of Lords. 2011. *The EU's Afghan Police Mission*. European Union Committee Contents. London: UK Parliament.
- Human Rights Watch. 2017. "Mali: Unchecked Abuses in Military Operations." <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/08/mali-unchecked-abuses-military-operations>. Accessed 12.03.2018.
- Huysmans, Jef. 1995. "Migrants as a Security Problem: Dangers of 'Securitizing' Societal Issues." In *Migration and European Integration. The dynamics of inclusion and exclusion*, edited by Robert Miles and Dietrich Thranhardt, 53-72. London: Pinter Publishers
- Jørgensen, Knud Erik. 1998. "The European Union's Performance in World Politics: How Should we Measure Success?" In *Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy*, edited by Jan Zielonka, 87-101. The Hague: Kluwer Law International.
- Kahl, Martin. 2013. "Causes, Effects and Effectiveness –Conceptual, Epistemological and Methodological Considerations." In *Studying 'Effectiveness' in International Relations. A guide for students and scholars*, edited by Hendrik Hegemann, Regina Heller and Martin Kahl, 35-60. Opladen, Berlin & Toronto: Barbara Budrich Publishers.
- Khan, Muhammad F. , Sajid Ali, and Hashmat U. Khan. 2021. "Ethnic Conflict and the Political Instability in Afghanistan." *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 4 (2):419-34.
- Korski, Daniel. 2010. "EUJUST LEX (Iraq)." In *European Security and Defence Policy. The First 10 Years (1999-2009)*. edited by Giovanni Grevi, Damien Helly and Daniel Keohane, 231-42. Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies.



- Krasner, Stephen D., and Thomas Risse. 2014. "External actors, state-building, and service provision in areas of limited statehood: Introduction." *Governance* 27 (4):545-67.
- Lebovich, Andrew. 2017. "Serious questions remain over G5 Sahel military force." European Council on Foreign Relations.  
[http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_serious\\_questions\\_remain\\_over\\_g5\\_sahel\\_military\\_force\\_7300](http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_serious_questions_remain_over_g5_sahel_military_force_7300). Accessed 11.03.2018.
- Loschi, Chiara, Francesco Strazzeri, and Luca Reineri. 2018. "Working paper on the implementation of EU Crisis Response in Libya: Bridging theory and practice". EUNPACK D6.2. Brussels:
- MacGinty, Roger. 2010. "Hybrid peace: The interaction between top-down and bottom-up peace." *Security dialogue* 41 (4):391-412. doi: 10.1177/0967010610374312.
- Martin, Lisa. 1993. "The Rational State Choice of Multilateralism." In *Multilateralism Matters. The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form*, edited by John Gerard Ruggie, 91-121. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Mohammed, Khogir, Dlawer Ala'Aldeen, and Kamaran M. Palani. 2017. "Perceptions about EU crisis response in Iraq - a summary of perception studies". EUNPACK D7.5. Brussels:
- Moravcsik, Andrew. 1998. *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*. Edited by Peter Katzenstein, *Cornell Studies in Political Economy*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Newman, Edward, and Eamon Aloyo. 2018. "Overcoming the Paradox of Conflict Prevention." In *Just Security in an Undergoverned World*, edited by William Durch, Joris Larik and Richard Ponzio, 44-69. Oxon: Oxford University Press.
- Ohlers, C. Alexander. 2017. "Operation inherent resolve and the Islamic state: assessing 'aggressive containment'." *Orbis* 61 (2):195-211.
- Øhrgaard, Jakob C. 2004. "International relations or European integration: is the CFSP sui generis?" In *Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy*, edited by Ben Tondra and Thomas Christiansen, 26-44. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
- Okemuo, Gloria. 2013. "The EU or France? The CSDP Mission in Mali the Consistency of the EU Africa policy." *Liverpool Law Review* 34 (3):217-40.
- Oksamytna, Kseniya. 2011. "The European Union Training Mission in Somalia: Lessons Learnt for EU Security Sector Reform." *Istituto Affari Internazionali. IAI Working Papers* 11 (16):1-16.
- Peters, Ingo (ed.). 2016. "The European Union's Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective. Beyond the 'Actorness and Power' Debate." London and New York: Routledge.
- . 2017. "The European Union's Crisis Response in the Extended Neighbourhood: The EU's Output Effectiveness in the Case of Iraq". EUNPACK D7.1. Brussels: FUB and NUPI.
- Peters, Ingo, Enver Ferhatovic, Rabea Heinemann, Susan Berger, and Sofia Marie Sturm. 2018a. "European Union's Crisis Response in the Extended Neighbourhood. Comparing the EU's Output Effectiveness in the Cases of Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali". EUNPACK D7.1. Brussels: FUB and NUPI.
- . 2018b. "Lessons to be learned from the EU Crisis Response in the Extended Neighbourhood: EU Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali.". EUNPACK D7.9. Brussels: NUPI & FUB.
- Peters, Ingo, Enver Ferhatovic, Rabea Heinemann, and Sofia Sturm. 2021. "The effectiveness of EU crisis response in Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali." In *The EU and crisis response*, edited by Roger MacGinty, Sandra Pogodda and Oliver Richmond, 166-200. Manchester: Manchester University Press.



- Pirozzi, Nicoletta. 2015. "The European Union and Civilian Crisis Management after Lisbon." *European Foreign Affairs Review* 20 (2):287-306.
- Raineri, Luca, and Alessandro Rossi. 2018. "The Security–Migration–Development Nexus in the Sahel: A Reality Check." In *The Security–Migration–Development Nexus Revised: A Perspective from the Sahel*, edited by Bernardo Venturi, 13-34. Rome: Istituto Affari Internazionali
- Rieker, Pernille, and Steven Blockmans. 2019. "Plugging the capability –expectations gap: towards effective, comprehensive and conflict-sensitive EU crisis response?" *European Security* 28 (1):1-21.
- Rihoux, Benoit, and Charles Ragin. 2009. *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Rodt, Annemarie P. 2014. *The European Union and military conflict management: Defining, evaluating and achieving success*. Oxon, New York: Routledge.
- Rosati, Jerel A. 1981. "Developing a Systematic Decision-Making Framework: Bureaucratic Politics in Perspective." *World Politics* 33 (2):234-52.
- Sambe, Bakary. 2018. "Bakary Sambe: 'Le fort engagement du Sénégal au Mali prouve qu'il avait sa place dans le G5 Sahel'." Timbuktu Institute, African Center for Peace Studies. <http://www.timbuktu-institute.org/index.php/toutes-l-actualites/item/74-bakary-sambe-le-fort-engagement-du-senegal-au-mali-prouve-qu-il-avait-sa-place-dans-le-g5-sahel>. Accessed 10.03.2018.
- Schroeder, Ursula C., Fairlie Chappuis, and Deniz Kocak. 2014. "Security sector reform and the emergence of hybrid security governance." *International Peacekeeping* 21 (2):214-30.
- Simón, Luis. 2017. "France and Germany: the European Union's 'central' Member States." In *Foreign Policies of EU Member States. Continuity and Europeanisation*, edited by Amelia Hadfield, Ian Manners and Richard G. Whitman. New York, Abingdon: Routledge.
- Skeppström, Emma, Cecilia H. Wiklund, and Michael Jonsson. 2015. "European Union Training Missions: security sector reform (SSR) or counter-insurgency by proxy?" *European Security* 24 (2):353-67. doi: 10.1080/09662839.2014.972382.
- Stedman, Stephen J. 1997. "Spoiler problems in peace processes." *International security* 22 (2):5-53.
- Tardy, Thierry. 2017. *The EU: from comprehensive vision to integrated action*. Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies.
- Taureck, Rita. 2006. "Securitization theory and securitization studies." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 9 (1):53-61.
- The Economist. 2022. "Mission incomplete: France withdraws its forces from Mali." In *The Economist*.
- The Economist Intelligence Unit. 2019. "Democracy Index 2019." <http://www.eiu.com/Handlers/WhitepaperHandler.ashx?fi=Democracy-Index-2019.pdf&mode=wp&campaignid=democracyindex2019>. Accessed 07.04.2020.
- The World Bank Group. 2019. "Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) 2019." <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/Home/Reports>. Accessed 31.03.2020.
- Transparency International. 2019. "Corruption Perception Index 2019." <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2019#results>. Accessed 31.03.2020.
- Tull, Denis M. 2019. "Rebuilding Mali's army: the dissonant relationship between Mali and its international partners " *International Affairs* 95 (2):405-22.
- U.S. Council on Foreign Relations. 2021. Politik Instability in Iraq. Global Conflict Tracker. Washington D.C.: Center for Preventive Action,.

- UN Committee against Torture. 2017. "Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Afghanistan". CAT/C/AFG/CO/R.2. New York:
- UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. 2016. "Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Mali". CEDAW/C/MLI/CO/6-7. New York:
- UN Human Rights Committee. 2015. "Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Iraq". CCPR/CO/IRQ/5. New York:
- Upadhyay, Dinoy K., and Maria Pawelec. 2016. "Statebuilding and policy reform in Afghanistan: EU and US engagement in comparative perspective." In *The European Union's Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective. Beyond the 'Actorness and Power' Debate*, edited by Ingo Peters, 165-86. London and New York: Routledge.
- Venturi, Bernardo. 2019. "The EU and the Sahel: A Laboratory of Experimentation for the Security-Migration-Development Nexus". 17/38. Rome: Istituto Affari Internazionali.
- Weldes, Jutta. 1996. "Constructing National Interests." *European Journal of International Relations* 2 (3):275-318.

Ingo Peters, Enver Ferhatovic, Rabea Heinemann, Sofia Sturm

*Affiliation for all authors: Center for Transnational Relations, Foreign and Security Policy, Otto-Suhr-Institute for Political Science, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany.*

Corresponding Author: Ingo Peters ([ingo.peters@fu-berlin.de](mailto:ingo.peters@fu-berlin.de))

ORCID iD Ingo Peters: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7168-564X>

### **Biographical Notes:**

**Ingo Peters** ([ingo.peters@fu-berlin.de](mailto:ingo.peters@fu-berlin.de)) studied political science at Freie Universität Berlin (Dr Phil., 1987) and the University of Lancaster (UK; MA in International Relations and Strategic Studies, 1983). He is currently an associated professor at the Otto-Suhr Institute for Political Science, Freie Universität Berlin, and executive director of the Center for Transnational Studies, Foreign and Security Policy. His teaching and research areas are German foreign policy, European security and EU foreign policy, transatlantic relations, and IR theory. (75 words)

**Enver Ferhatovic** ([enver.ferhatovic@fu-berlin.de](mailto:enver.ferhatovic@fu-berlin.de)) studied Political Science/Law (M.A, 1999) at Freie Universität Berlin. Between 2000 and 2013 he worked for the UN, OSCE, and EU in New York, Sarajevo, Khartoum, Kabul, Nairobi, Brussels, and Berlin. Between 2016 and 2019 he was the research fellow for EUNPACK. His teaching and research areas are European Security and Foreign Policy, IR theory, and Peacebuilding. He is currently writing his PhD on CSDP policing. (69 words)

**Rabea Heinemann** ([rabea.heinemann@posteo.de](mailto:rabea.heinemann@posteo.de)) holds a MA in International Relations from Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and University of Potsdam, and a BA in European Studies from the University of Magdeburg. She has studied in St. Petersburg and worked in Brussels and Vienna in EU-related foreign policy institutions. Currently, she works at GIZ where she advises the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) regarding European development and international policy. (73 words)

**Sofia Marie Sturm** ([sofiamariesturm@rocketmail.com](mailto:sofiamariesturm@rocketmail.com)) holds a BA in Political Science from the University of Vienna and an MA in International Relations from Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and University of Potsdam. She has studied in Jerusalem and worked in foreign policy institutions in New York and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Currently, she works at GIZ where she focuses on the design of future-fit policies and strategies in German development politics. (73 words).

### **Acknowledgement:**

This paper was prepared in the context of the EUNPACK project (A conflict-sensitive unpacking of the EU comprehensive approach to conflict and crises mechanism), funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no.: 693337.

The authors are grateful for the invaluable research support from Susan Bergner, Linda Bachg, Charlotte Wiesner, and Paul Hollenbach. We very much appreciate Eva Magdalena Stambøl's (University of Aalborg, DK) magnificent input to earlier versions of this text.

### **Data Availability Statement:**

No data set is directly associated with the paper but data supporting the results can be retrieved through the EUNPACK project page: <http://www.eunpack.eu> or the Project Manager, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) <http://www.eunpack.eu/about-us/participants/norwegian-institute-international-affairs-nupi> (Morten Boas: [mbo@nupi.no](mailto:mbo@nupi.no))

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/refubium-36963>

**Word count:** pretext >454; manuscript: 11.289;