

## **Matching ambition with institutional innovation: The EU's Comprehensive Approach and Civil-Military Organisation**

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## English summary

The aim of this report is to assess the degree to which institutional developments have enhanced the EU's ability to implement a Comprehensive Approach (CA), which has become something of *raison d'état* for the burgeoning European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Indeed, the EU's assumption of a military role in 1998 was accompanied by the precondition that the Union would represent a unique strategic actor, not duplicating NATO, while drawing on its ability to mix civilian and military crisis management instruments. The question raised in this report is whether the EU has, in fact, lived up to this ambition.

A key feature of ESDP has been the massive institutionalisation of planning and support structures within the Council Secretariat, which is responsible for policy implementation. Yet frequent institutional developments are not necessarily signs of a well-performing civil-military relationship. Whereas the EU literature tends to treat institutional change as a good in itself, this report draws instead on a large literature on civil-military relations in the strategic studies tradition to identify a set of benchmarks for what a civil-military organisation "fit for purpose" would look like. More specifically, the report measures the EU's organisation against two ideal strategic models for organising the civil-military interface: Samuel Huntington's so-called "normal", or stovepipe model of civil-military relations, and Morris Janowitz' "constabulary", or integrated model.

The report argues that institutional innovations have, in fact, sustained a separation of the civil-military interface, despite efforts made towards developing an EU "culture of coordination". This has been largely due to continued military dominance in ESDP, despite the civilian nature of the EU. As the report concludes, however, this military bias is gradually being evened out, amongst other factors because of the increasing autonomy of ESDP, and the move towards a more informal "Janowitzian" structure facilitating civil-military integration.

This has implications for an active non-EU Member State like Norway, which may, for example, find that ESDP structures become less "penetrable". Given the EU's ten year-old history of trial and error in this field, Norway would also have much to learn from the process itself.

## Sammendrag

Hensikten med denne rapporten er å analysere om den institusjonelle utviklingen i EU har understøttet organisasjonens evne til å implementere en såkalte helhetlig tilnærming (comprehensive approach) til sikkerhet. Dette har etterhvert blitt et slags rasjonale for EUs felles utenriks- og sikkerhetspolitikk (FUSP), ettersom den underliggende forutsetningen for at EU skulle utvikle felles militære kapasiteter tilbake i 1998, var at den skulle representere noe nytt og ikke duplisere Nato. Tanken var at EU ville kunne utvikle seg til en annerledes strategisk aktør, med utgangspunkt i organisasjonens unike forutsetninger for å ta i bruk og integrere både sivile og militære kapasiteter. Spørsmålet denne rapporten stiller er om EU faktisk har levd opp til denne ambisjonen.

Ett av de kanskje mest slående utviklingstrekk i FUSP har vært den omfattende institusjonaliseringen av planleggings- og støttefunksjoner innenfor Rådssekretariatet som er ansvarlig for å implementere FUSP. Spørsmålet er om slike omfattende institusjonelle endringer er et ubetinget gode. Mye av den eksisterende litteraturen om EU har en tendens til å se på enhver institusjonell endring som et positivt steg mot en mer integrert struktur. Denne rapporten tar imidlertid heller utgangspunkt i en omfattende litteratur innenfor strategiske studier som nettopp ser på forholdet mellom sivil- og militærmakt. Hensikten er å identifisere noen merkesteiner for hvordan en fungerende sivil-militær organisasjon kan se ut for dermed å kunne vurdere om EU faktisk har evnet å etablere en slik organisasjon.

Rapporten tar derfor utgangspunkt i to idealmodeller for sivil-militær organisering: Samuel Huntingtons såkalte “normale” eller separerte modell, og Morris Janowitz “konstabulære” eller integrerte modell. Rapporten viser at institusjonelle nyvinninger har opprettholdt et sivil-militært skille i FUSP, til tross for en uttalt målsetning om å utvikle en “kultur for koordinering”. Dette bunner i en vedvarende militær dominans innenfor FUSP, til tross for EUs historie som en sterk sivilmakt. Rapporten konkluderer imidlertid med at denne skjevheten rettes gradvis opp. Dette skyldes delvis et ønske om å gjøre ESDP mer uavhengig av Nato, men også at det legges til rette for mer uformelle og integrerte strukturer i tråd med den “konstabulære” modellen. Dette vil blant annet få konsekvenser for Norge, som vil kunne oppdage at det blir vanskeligere å komme på innsiden. Ettersom EU også kan se tilbake på ti år med prøving og feiling for å utvikle en mer effektiv sivil-militær struktur, vil Norge også ha mye å lære av selve prosessen.

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# 1 Introduction

*The only thing harder than getting a new idea into the military mind is to get an old one out.*

Sir Basil Liddel-Hart

The EU's assumption of a military role by the establishment of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in 1998 has been accompanied by the anticipation that the Union will represent a unique strategic actor because of its ability to mix civilian and military crisis management instruments as part of a comprehensive approach. This point was reiterated in the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS), which called for greater coherence between the different instruments at the EU's disposal (Solana, 2003: 13). In fact, acting comprehensively seems to have become something of *raison d'état* for a Union ever more eager to become a global security actor. In recent years, the EU's apparatus for crisis management has also been subject to an impressive number of institutional innovations to support this ambition, although with only limited practical results. The aim of this report, therefore, is to assess the degree to which these institutional developments have enhanced the EU's ability to implement a truly comprehensive approach, while ultimately passing judgment on the appropriateness of the EU's civil-military organisation.

Organising civil-military relations is an area that has occupied strategists and military historians for some time already. A traditional point of concern has been how or when political leaders should interfere in the military sphere once the decision to use force has been made. In view of recent conflicts, however, a more pressing concern has been how and when to integrate civilian and military instruments to gain success in contemporary peace support and stabilisation operations. It is perhaps worth noting, then, that the invention of “new” concepts, whether it be *Comprehensive Approach* (CA) or *Effects-Based Approach to Operations* (EBAO), tends to conceal the fact that they largely point to lessons learned—but often forgotten—in conflicts dating much further back than 11 September 2001. There exists, in other words, an extensive scholarship on civil-military relations, which the institutional approaches often applied in EU studies fail to take into consideration. That is, when the focus is—somewhat mistakenly—on the *novelty* of the EU's comprehensive approach, institutional *innovation* tends to be seen as a good in itself, even though frequent institutional changes are, as it often turns out, not necessarily to be taken as signs of a healthy organisation. Moreover, the ever expanding institutional charts will not tell us much about such factors as the level of personal contact between people at various levels of the organisation, whether organisational structures and/or professional cultures define interaction, if relations are marked by mutual respect, influence is balanced, or whether political objectives are shared and understood the same way by military officers and civil servants alike—in short, whether relations between policymakers, civilian and military personnel together

constitute a civil-military organisation “fit for purpose” (See Forster, 2006: 43). In addressing these issues, this report draws upon two ideal strategic models for organising the civil-military interface: Samuel Huntington’s so-called “normal”, or stovepipe model, and Morris Janowitz’ “constabulary”, or integrated model (Cf. Egnell, 2006). These are presented next. The models are then used to assess the institutional apparatus in support of ESDP. The report argues that, for several reasons, institutional innovations have largely sustained a separation of the civil-military interface, despite efforts made towards developing an EU “culture of coordination”. Finally, the report concludes with some considerations regarding how an EU civil-military organisation “fit for purpose” may be forged.

## **2 The civil-military interface: Two ideal types of organisation**

The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have (once again) brought into question the strategic limits of the use of force, but they reflect also a more general trend in the way that crises are dealt with:

With the end of the Cold War the political objectives underpinning interventions have become more ambitious, resulting in a greater degree of complexity in the institutional responses of states and international organisations [...] Such changes have also raised questions about the traditional assumptions regarding the structure and sequencing of an intervention (Gordon, 2006).

Robert Egnell has a similar starting point for his discussion of the two models of civil-military organisation when he points out that: “As operations are conducted, the civil-military interface is again of importance in the creation and implementation of comprehensive campaign plans that include all instruments of power” (Egnell, 2006: 1046). Indeed, decision-makers seem well aware of the need to coordinate civilian and military approaches to create effective crisis management strategies.

But civil-military cooperation and coordination have proved hard in practice. Part of the reason for this is arguably rooted in differences of both structure and culture, which result in what Eliot Cohen refers to as an “unequal dialogue” between the civilian and the soldier. That is, the obligation to take lives and put one’s own at risk on behalf of the state often subsumed under the military’s responsibility for the “management of violence” (Cohen, 2001; Huntington, 1965) represents an anomaly to civil society that poses some fundamental challenges to the civil-military interface, as observed, for example, in the debate on “humanitarian space”. This anomaly will tend to create a cultural gap between civilians and the military that may be hard to bridge, despite them being in the same overall line of business (Cf. Feaver and Kohn, 2001).

Another problem is that it tends to be “extremely difficult [for democracies] to escalate the level of brutality and violence to that which can secure [military] victory” (Merom, 2003: 15). The civil-military conundrum, thus, contains two central questions: How should the interface between those who make and approve the political decisions and the military be organised, so that wars can be won, or crises solved, with the “right” level of force used? And how should relations



between military and civilian personnel with regard to the planning for and carrying out of operations be organised, so that the “right” instruments of power are used at the “right” time? Theories of civil-military relations propose two very different set of answers to these questions.<sup>1</sup> One, often referred to as the “normal” theory of civil-military relations, is presented by Samuel Huntington in his classic book *The Soldier and the State* (1957). A central premise in Huntington’s model is his conception of the military profession as a vocation not dissimilar to, for example, medicine or law, which are all recognised by expertise in a particular area of human affairs, and a sense of belonging and commitment to other members of one’s group. As with other vocations, military professionalism is definable, universal and capable of being isolated. In Huntington’s view, then, it is possible to separate military means from political ends. The officers and soldiers ought to represent apolitical servants of the state. Their sole purpose is to fight and win the nation’s wars, which is the “functional imperative” or criterion by which the quality of the armed forces ought to be measured, not the political end for which it fights. Huntington’s answer to the question how to create effective armed forces under proper civilian control is, therefore, a strict division of labour between political decision-making and military implementation. He calls this “objective control”, the essence of which being recognition by civil society of the autonomy of military professionalism. In practice this means that once the decision to use military force has been made, there should be no political interference. In fact, the military should be both physically and ideologically separated from political institutions. This implies that the military would also be separated from other instruments of the state, which, in turn, answer to other “functional imperatives”, broadly speaking those of avoiding war and/or winning the peace.

Quite the opposite answer to the questions above is offered by the sociological school of civil-military relations, created by Morris Janowitz (1960). Taking issue with Huntington’s view of military professionalism, Janowitz claimed, with remarkable foresight at the time of writing, that “the use of force in international relations has been so altered that it seems appropriate to speak of constabulary forces, rather than of military forces” (Janowitz, 1960: 418).<sup>2</sup> This change of role, he argued, added a new set of requirements to the military professional. Proper civilian control and effective use of the armed forces can only be achieved by political integration and education of the officer corps. This cannot be achieved by separation, because of the inevitable political and social impact of the military establishment on civil society. In Janowitz’ view, the professional military officer:

is sensitive to the political and social impact of the military establishment on international security affairs. He is subject to civilian control, not only because of the “rule of law” and tradition, but also because of self-imposed professional standards and meaningful integration with civilian values (Janowitz, 1960: 420).

As Egnell goes on to argue, what we need in the current complex political and security environment is a politically attuned military that is properly integrated with civil society in order to offer coordinated advice, and to develop mutual understanding and trust between the different

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<sup>1</sup> The following paragraph is largely based on Egnell (2006: 1046-49) and Cohen (2001).

<sup>2</sup> The idea of militaries as cosmopolitan law enforcers has received renewed attention lately (See e.g. Elliot and Cheeseman, 2004; Kaldor, 1999).

actors of the civil-military interface (Egnell, 2006: 1049). This would also necessarily require greater integration of the various instruments that a state or an international institution has at its disposal.

Of course, these are ideal types of organisation that are rarely implemented in full. Different states—and international institutions—will carry elements of each, depending amongst other factors on the former experience of the people involved, formal organisational structures, political culture, history, etc. As such, they are only to a limited degree organisations of choice, but should be seen also as products of the environments and political systems in which or out of which they have evolved. Changing the organisation of the civil-military interface is, therefore, often difficult. In rather crude terms, this can be observed, for example, in the massive resistance in the United States military establishment against developing doctrines for counterinsurgency (COIN), since this implies close collaboration between civilian and military elements in nation-building efforts, something which the US Armed Forces “do not do” because of the bitter experience in Vietnam.<sup>3</sup>

Not surprisingly, the American model represents the arch-typical “Huntingtonian” system, while the British model is, according to Egnell, the one that most closely resemble the “Janowitzian” system (Egnell, 2006: 1052-54). Yet again the British model is not simply the result of a conscious choice, but conditioned by such factors as Britain’s unique experiences as a colonial power, its centralised political system, and the shared social backgrounds (and class) of military officers and civil servants, which sustain the typical British administrative practice of close informal relationships between people across different branches and departments. Yet, even in such a benign and flexible institutional culture, the British too have struggled to rid themselves of old thinking when faced with new challenges posed by contemporary conflicts.

Both recent and not so recent experiences have largely discredited the “Huntingtonian” system of strict separation of the civilian and military spheres (Cohen, 2001; Egnell, 2006). Effective international crisis management requires a quick response from flexible teams of people with various professional backgrounds. Civilian instruments cannot simply be “bolted on” once peace is restored, but needs to be involved already in the early phases of planning for a crisis management operation. Janowitz’ call for tight integration throughout the civil-military organisation, therefore, comes across as a pertinent piece of advice, but one that is hard to follow in practice, insofar as it is based on a set of cultural preconditions that are quite rare in the way that (European) armed forces are still organised (See Forster, 2006). Yet, keeping in mind the various factors that constrain organisational flexibility, and the fact that some degree of separation of the civil-military interface tends to be the “normal” state of affairs in most states (and organisations), it is to be expected that the EU, given its stated ambitions towards CA, would “opt for” a more “Janowitzian” approach to civil-military integration. However, the “infusion” of a military culture in the EU was bound to run into challenges well known to and documented by

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<sup>3</sup> According to Eliot Cohen, the “Huntingtonian” dominance in American military thinking has been reinforced by the popular—but to Cohen largely flawed—reading of the Vietnam and Gulf Wars, “the one viewed as a conflict characterized by civilian interference in the details of warmaking, the other a model of benign operational and tactical neglect by an enlightened civilian leadership” (Cohen, 2001: 435).

students of strategy and military history, which inevitably begs the question whether the transition has been as “seamless” as it is often made out to be.

### 3 Flawed by design: Civil-Military Organisation in the EU

One factor needs to be appreciated when looking at the organisation of the civil-military interface in the EU: While the relationship between civil society and the military has traditionally been a central element in the shaping of states, for the EU, military force is, ten years after St-Malo, still the odd element out (van Ham, 2005). The infusion of a military component into an organisation, whose identity and rationale is nested in the accomplishment of bringing peace to the European continent, presented the Union with a very real clash of organisational cultures. But despite the obvious challenges, adding a military element in itself presented the EU and its Member States with the opportunity of moulding and pursuing a specific type of approach—a *comprehensive* one that did not favour certain policy instruments over other, that were not burdened by outdated doctrines and ingrained military thinking, and that could start afresh in the build-up of duly integrated planning and command structures (Gordon, 2006: 351). The question is whether this has, in fact, been the case.

When uniformed officers started moving about in the Justus Lipsius building in 1999, it marked the introduction of a military culture in the EU, which not only meant that civil servants had to get used to the sight, but had to interact with them at different levels. To be able to integrate this new element into the EU machinery, Solana soon after his appointment as High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (HR-CFSP) stated on several occasions the need to build a “strong in-house strategic culture”.<sup>4</sup> One of the early steps was to co-locate all crisis management elements in the Korthenberg building in order to establish a secure environment for them, and provide the physical preconditions for increased interaction between different branches. Part of this co-location exercise included splitting up the Council Secretariat, moving the Directorates dealing with CFSP/ESDP matters in the larger DG-E out of the Justus Lipsius building. Incidentally, and perhaps symbolically significant, this meant moving them further away from the Commission’s premises. The physical separation reflected a very real conceptual and institutional separation of the long term conflict preventive considerations of the Commission in the first pillar, and the Council’s responsibility for short term crisis management in the second. Such a division of labour would on the outset appear to be practical, and perhaps unavoidable because of the pillar structure, but drawing such a sharp line has sustained a somewhat artificial separation of areas of responsibility. This has proved a significant challenge for the coordination of conflict preventive and crisis management tools, especially when it comes to areas where competencies are disputed, such as in the area of civil protection (See e.g. Ehrhart and Quille, 2007; Gourlay, 2006). Although fully appreciating the gravity of the significant challenges posed by this situation, this paper will in the following concentrate on the organisation of the civil-military interface in support of second pillar activities, more specifically the planning for and carrying out of military and civilian ESDP operations.

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<sup>4</sup> Information obtained in interviews. See also Solana’s early speeches as HR-CFSP.

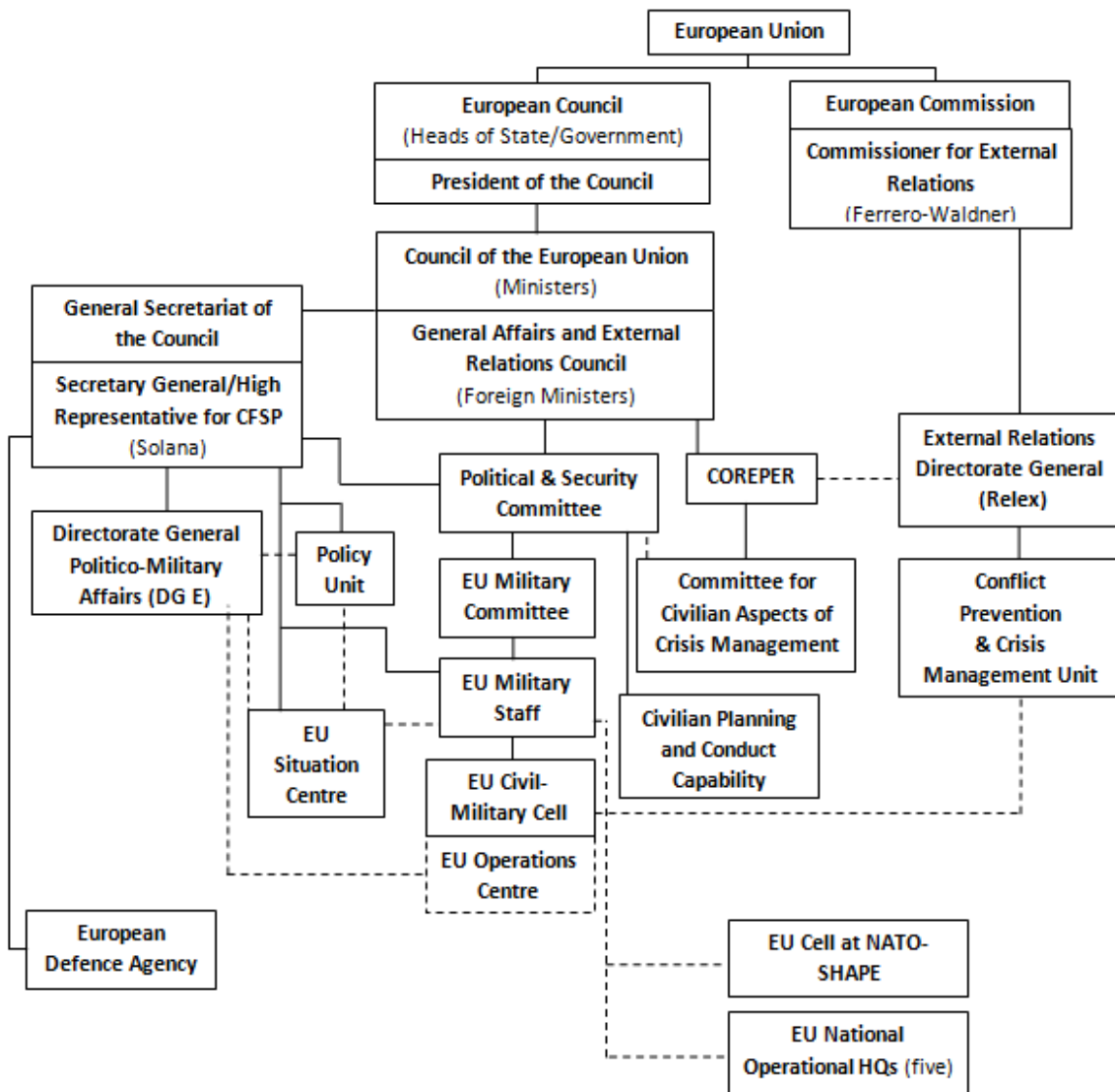


Figure 3.1: ESDP Institutional Set-Up.<sup>5</sup>

Civilian and military crisis management elements are in the EU coordinated in the Political and Security Committee (PSC), which provides the overall strategic assessment in a crisis situation, and exercises full political control of ESDP operations (See figure 3.1). It receives advice from and instructs the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) and the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM), and provides thus a minimum level of coordination by merging the organisational outputs of the two branches. Below the politico-strategic level, the civilian and military “arms” are divided. Until recently, it has also been a striking feature of the

<sup>5</sup> The figure may differ slightly from the one found in, for example, the recent book by Jolyon Howorth (2007: 69). This is due to the massive and rapid institutionalisation of ESDP, as remarked above, but it reflects also that an organisational chart is not an objective image of an organisation, but merely an interpretation of how a complex structure interacts. That said relative placement and format of lines are deliberate means of illustrating interaction.

Notes to figure: A fully drawn line denotes a formal connection as described in the treaties, while a stapled line denotes either a weaker connection or an informal one.

EU's crisis management framework that there has been no clear hierarchy of civilian and military sub-units that correspond to each other and interact—at least not in a formalised manner—at the lower levels. There has been no direct civilian equivalent to the European Union Military Staff (EUMS), which operates under the direction of and reports to the EUMC.

On the civilian side, tasks have been loosely divided on a functional and geographical basis between the Policy Unit and the DG-E, whereas the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM) is formally attached to COREPER. It has, however, started to report more substantially to PSC in step with the gradual increase in operational activities in ESDP. In addition to these organisational differences, and perhaps partly due to them, the EUMS has in practice remained somewhat on the side of the traditional DG structure, although it is formally an integral part of the Council Secretariat.

Although most people are keen to point out that working relations have improved, interview data indicate that military personnel to a lesser degree than the civilian personnel engage in interaction with other units, unless it occurs within the space of those parts that target civil-military coordination specifically, i.e. the Civil-Military Cell (CMC), or when practical operational needs demand it (See also Khol, 2006: 127). Integration of the civil-military interface in a “Janowitzian” sense is, therefore, largely absent below the politico-strategic level in the EU. Part of the reason for this is arguably that:

[w]hilst Council statements frequently reiterate the requirements for coordinated planning [...], it initially failed to create a genuinely ‘coherent’ structure. Rather it facilitated periodic comings together of what remained essentially separate and parallel planning processes which enjoyed only occasional convergence, particularly during the routine and initial phases of a crisis [...] (Gordon, 2006: 352).

It was not until late 2003 that the Council started taking concrete institutional steps towards more coordination between its civilian and military branches. By then, successive European Councils since 1999, and the Swedish (2001) and Danish (2002) Presidencies in particular, had highlighted the need to do more in this area (See Khol, 2006). In November 2003, the Council put forward the concept of Civil-Military Co-ordination (CMCO) in a paper addressing “the need for effective co-ordination of the actions of all relevant EU actors involved in the planning and subsequent implementation of the EU's response to the crisis” (European Council, 2003a). CMCO must not be confused with CIMIC, which is a militarily derived concept concerned with force protection by way of cooperation with civilian and local authorities on the tactical level, as part of a complex military operation (Cf. Khol, 2006: 124-125). The EUMC adopted its own version of CIMIC, heavily influenced by NATO's concept, for EU crisis management operations in 2002 (European Council, 2002). CMCO, on the other hand, was envisaged as an internal mechanism and a process for creating a “culture of coordination” rather than putting “too much emphasis on detailed structures and procedures” (Khol, 2006: 127).

Nevertheless, the period since 2003 has been marked by a number of institutional add-ons to make up for an original structure that is perhaps best described as being “flawed by design” (or

perhaps “devoid of design”), to borrow a phrase from Amy Zegart (1999). As Radek Khol points out: “The framework for crisis management efforts was created by the military, while civilian input came later on and did not change the strategic planning approach fundamentally” (Khol, 2006: 127). In addition, institutional developments have often resulted from struggles and compromises between the Member States, and have, therefore, reflected other considerations than the desire to create an effective civil-military organisation. This is illustrated in the next chapter, which gives a brief recapitulation of developments since 2003, while highlighting some of the problems and challenges that the EU has imported to its civil-military organisation along the way.

## 4 The rise and fall of Berlin plus

To be able to plan and conduct its first military operation in Macedonia in 2003, the EU, both for political and structural reasons, had to rely on NATO assets, access to which was secured by the long overdue Berlin plus agreement in December 2002.<sup>6</sup> In practical terms, operation *Concordia* was carried out with NATO-SHAPE as operational headquarters. An EU Staff Group (EUSG) of nine officers was established, and D-SACEUR was designated EU Operation Commander. Berlin plus did not provide for a permanent EU presence in NATO-SHAPE, but the EUSG was kept on for lessons learned when *Concordia* was terminated in December 2003, since an EU take-over of NATO's operation SFOR in Bosnia was anticipated. As part of a larger defence package, endorsed by the December 2003 Council and entitled “European Defence: NATO/EU Consultation, Planning, and Operations”, a permanent EU Cell at NATO-SHAPE was established, while NATO was invited to set up liaison arrangements with the EUMS (European Council, 2003b). Since December 2004, the EU's military operation *EUFOR Althea* in Bosnia has been conducted from NATO-SHAPE. During this time, the EU Cell has grown to some 20 EU officers.

For mainly political reasons, Berlin plus was a precondition for the EU to get off its feet militarily in 2003, after ESDP was declared operational at Laeken in 2001, but it has in many ways hampered the development of an integrated civil-military organisation in support of ESDP. Due to the physical and conceptual separation below the politico-strategic level, it inevitably pushed the level of coordination upwards to meetings between the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the North Atlantic Council (NAC). Work in the PSC-NAC channel has also been hampered by traditional conflicts of interest. Meetings were originally scheduled once a month, but have in reality been less frequent. When they do meet, discussions tend to be limited, while attempts to discuss closer practical collaboration between NATO and the EU are effectively put

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<sup>6</sup> Berlin plus is based on the decision of the NATO summits in Berlin in 1996 and Washington in 1999. Its four elements (§10 of the 1999 Washington Summit Declaration), being assured access to NATO planning facilities; presumption of availability of capabilities and common assets; NATO European command options for EU-led operations; and adaptation of NATO defence planning system to incorporate forces for EU operations, were agreed by the North Atlantic Council meeting on 13 December 2002. The agreement was delayed for over a year because of the strained relations between Turkey (NATO Member) and Cyprus (EU Member).

down by a handful of states.<sup>7</sup> For example, when the African Union (AU) requested strategic airlift for its forces in Darfur in Spring 2005, it developed into a virtual “beauty contest” between NATO and the EU ('NATO chief urges end to "beauty contest" with EU,' 2006). As a result, the EU ended up transporting a minor portion of the AU forces, while NATO (i.e. the United States) took care of the rest.

In more practical terms, a situation where an ESDP operation is carried out from within NATO naturally leaves the EU with a limited opportunity to learn from or make adjustments to the operation as it proceeds. Moreover, EUFOR Althea has arguably not produced the kind of mutual reinforcement and practical development of EU-NATO relations that were first envisioned. A case in point is that while EU officers have become well integrated at NATO-SHAPE, carrying out their duties as any NATO officer would, contact with the EUMS is limited. According to one EU officer, there is an inherent scepticism in Brussels of anything that tastes of NATO, while “there has neither been any evaluation of what the EU has got out of Berlin plus, nor of how relations can be further utilised” (Interview with EU officer, NATO-SHAPE, May 2006). NATO has also, on the initiative of D-SACEUR, attempted to set up informal staff-to-staff contact points with the Council Secretariat, but have been met with scepticism on the part of EU officials (Interview with NATO official, NATO-SHAPE, May 2006).

NATO’s practical influence upon the EU’s approach to the civil-military interface has naturally been significant by virtue of the fact that most EU military officers have considerable experience from the Alliance (See also Bono, 2004). But its legacy seems to have waned in step with the growing emphasis on internal EU civil-military coordination through the CMCO process since 2003, as further steps were introduced in a second document titled “Civil-Military Co-ordination: Framework paper of possible solutions for the management of EU Crisis Management Operations“, adopted in May 2006 (European Council, 2006; see also Ojanen, 2006).

Albeit having Berlin plus as framework for *EUFOR Althea* was a political necessity at the time, it has arguably emerged as a constraint on effective coordination with other EU activities in the region. Reliance on the PSC-NAC channel has been problematic, but it is also clear that the potential for developing closer relations on the working level has been forfeited, and that there has been considerable resistance at the EU institutional level towards cooperation beyond the strictly necessary. Given the current situation, we may well be witnessing the final phase of the second and last operation conducted in the Berlin plus framework.<sup>8</sup> This has, of course, a political

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<sup>7</sup> A NATO official reported that the political climate has gradually deteriorated to a stage at which one refrains from entering into debates in the first place rather waiting for a formal objection by Turkey, Greece or France (Interview with NATO official, NATO-SHAPE, May 2006).

<sup>8</sup> The EU reduced its military presence from 6000 to 2200 soldiers in 2007. At an informal meeting between EU Defence Ministers in Deauville in France on 1 October 2008, termination of *EUFOR Althea* and its replacement by a civilian mission was discussed, but no decision has been made (See 'EU defense ministers support Bosnia withdrawal,' 2008). The obvious contender for a new Berlin plus operation, the prospective EU take-over of NATO’s operation KFOR in Kosovo, will most likely be carried out as an *autonomous* ESDP operation, which has become EU lingo for operations outside the Berlin plus framework.

side to it, but it also reflects a perceived gap between the strategic concepts of NATO and the EU respectively.<sup>9</sup>

## 5 Reforming the civil-military structures

Having initially drawn heavily on NATO's CIMIC approach, the EU's civil-military thinking was first centred on the operational and tactical levels, while lacking a "strategic" component (Gordon, 2006: 351). CMCO raised the awareness of the need to connect civil and military resources along the whole spectrum from strategic planning to actual implementation in response to a crisis, while integrating CIMIC conceptually in the overall CMCO approach (Ehrhart and Quille, 2007: 13). Implicitly it also highlighted the paradox of branching out the responsibility for military operational planning and command to another organisation, which operates on a different understanding of civil-military relations altogether. NATO does not have civilian capabilities with which to coordinate, while its approach to CIMIC "has tended to 'instrumentalise' the civil sector in support of a military mission and creates perceived obstacles to more genuinely 'holistic' strategy" (Gordon, 2006: 348; see also Smith, 2007: 396). In this context, developing an autonomous institutional capacity for planning and running ESDP operations made practical sense, although it was political rather than functional imperatives that pushed for institutional change.

The political controversy surrounding the establishment of the EU Civilian and Military Planning Cell (CivMilCell) goes back to the informal "Chocolate Mini-Summit" between France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg in April 2003, and the French initiative to set up an autonomous EU military operational HQ (OHQ) outside Brussels. The so-called Tervuren-initiative was heavily criticised by Britain who deemed it an unnecessary duplication of existing structures. As a compromise, the establishment of the CivMilCell was agreed as a part of the abovementioned defence package endorsed by the December 2003 Council (European Council, 2003b).

Although the document made it quite clear that "NATO is the forum for discussion and the natural choice for an operation involving the European and American allies", it sanctioned the conduct of EU *autonomous* military operations. In such cases, the main option would be "national HQs, which can be multi-nationalised for the purpose of conducting an EU-led operation" (European Council, 2003b). This formalised a lead nation principle, which had already been used for the military operation *Artemis* in Congo, which was launched in June 2003 and led from Paris, whereas five national HQs (Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Greece) were identified for use in future operations. The other option was, somewhat defensively worded, the possibility that:

In certain circumstances, the Council may decide, upon the advice of the Military Committee, to draw on the collective capacity of the EUMS, in particular where a joint

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<sup>9</sup> A the NATO Summit in Strasbourg/Kehl 3-4 April 2009, the Member States authorised the Secretary General to start work on a new Strategic Concept, which is set to be presented at the next Summit towards the end of 2010.



civil/military response is required and where no national HQ is identified. Once such a decision is taken, the civilian/military cell in the EUMS would have responsibility for generating the capacity to plan and run the operation”

And the document goes on to make it perfectly clear: “This would not be a standing HQ” (European Council, 2003b).

To navigate clear of all duplication charges, the document also highlighted the added value in being able to run joint civil-military operations (Quille, et al., 2006: 14) However, since the establishment of the CivMilCell and the OpCen were a result of a compromise including France—who really wanted an autonomous military OHQ—the new unit naturally received a heavy military bias, placed as it was inside the EUMS (Gordon, 2006: 354). The CivMilCell was developed by military officers, and by 2006, one year after it was formally established, people on the civilian side regarded it as a definitive military unit, and had yet to be significantly involved in or even informed about its tasks and functions (Interviews, Council Secretariat, May 2006).

The military bias was augmented by the fact that in case of a situation where the OpCen was to be actually manned, “the centre would operate separately from the strategic role of the EUMS, under a designated Operation Commander”, but still “a core staff, essentially ‘double hatted’ from the EUMS, would be required to maintain the necessary level of readiness” (European Council, 2003b).<sup>10</sup> As such, the OpCen and the CivMilCell, despite its fairly balanced composition in the end of military and civilian personnel,<sup>11</sup> largely reflect traditional civil-military thinking, in which the civilian side is invited to take part in the military planning process, but *de facto* given a military support role (Smith, 2007: 396-97).

Although there remains considerable uncertainty as to when the OpCen will be activated, there is an expectation that it will only be used “in case of a predominantly military operation” (European Council, 2008). The military component will then be organised, as any military OHQ, in five divisions, including a CIMIC division, and the civilian component will remain under the control of DG E. That is, the agreement on OpCen does not really provide for *integrated* operational planning, merely co-location and prospects for working “hand in hand”, as stated in the Council document (European Council, 2008), while there appears to be a high threshold for invoking the capacity. Of course, civilian and military operations have different operational needs, which need to be reflected in mandates and in planning and command options (Quille, et al., 2006: 16). There is certainly no need to set up a full military OHQ to run most civilian operations, but one would expect that the OpCen would benefit from having also a permanent civilian “core staff” to plan for this. This would presumably improve connectivity across the whole spectrum of strategic and operational planning.

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<sup>10</sup> Since 1 January 2007, the OpCen has been allocated permanent facilities (premises and equipment) in Brussels. It has a permanent staff of eight officers. A total of 89 officers and civilians will be able to start planning of an operation within five days of a decision by the Council, and the OpCen will reach full operational capacity within 20 days (European Council, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> In addition to the OpCen Permanent Staff, the CMC consists of a Strategic Planning Branch of eight military and seven civilian experts, including two permanent Commission representatives.

The use of the CivMilCell in connection with the planning for the operations in Aceh and Sudan, which involved military observers and counsellors, underlined its potential for linking work across the civil-military interface (Hansen, 2006: 27). But the operations themselves were not classified as integrated operations, but as civilian missions to be carried out from DG E, which has after all developed considerable experience over the course of planning and conducting more than 15 highly diverse missions since 2002. But due to lack of established procedures and constant understaffing on the civilian side, there is limited capacity for turning these valuable experiences into lessons learned (Interview, Council Secretariat DG E, May 2006).

Lowering the threshold for invoking the OpCen capacity could be a suitable way of pooling resources. As preparations for the OpCen were underway in 2006, people on the civilian side also anticipated that future civilian operations would be able to draw upon the new capacity (Interview, Council Secretariat DG E, May 2006). That proved not to be the case. Instead the Council decided on 18 June 2007 to set up the somewhat ambiguously titled Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC). The name of the unit reflects British opposition against giving it formal status as civilian OHQ, although it is routinely referred to as such (Interview with CPCC official, Council Secretariat, April 2009). Accordingly, it does not have an ordinary planning unit, but it does have a Planning Methodology Unit (consisting of eight people), which will assist in the drafting of civilian strategic options and operation plans. Apart from that, it resembles an ordinary OHQ, organised in a Mission Support Unit (13 people) and a Conduct of Operations Unit (39 people), totalling 64 persons.

The CPCC draws on the staff and expertise of DG E IX (Civilian Crisis Management Directorate), which remains intact and will continue to be responsible for political and strategic guidance. In terms of strengthening the civilian crisis management arm in ESDP, then, the CPCC is clearly a step forward. It increases manpower, and establishes procedures and a suitable physical environment (premises, secure lines of communication, etc) for planning and conducting civilian operations, which so far has been conducted, more or less *ad hoc* from inside DG E. It also establishes a parallel structure to the military chain of command by identifying a Civilian Operation Commander to lead the CPCC, who will respond directly to PSC and HR-CFSP (Grevi, 2007: 38). As such, it goes some way towards *evening out* the initial military bias that has characterised the EU's civil-military organisation from the start.

But at the same time, it confirms a "Huntingtonian" separation of the civil-military interface by formalising a system of two chains of command, and by identifying specifically where they are to be bridged, namely at the politico-strategic level in the PSC, and at the level of strategic planning in the CivMilCell. As such, it resembles still what Rupert Smith calls a traditional stovepipe structure from the tactical to the strategic, in which, except in particular cases, there is little interaction between the "pipes" (Smith, 2007). The danger is that such a rigid system lacks flexibility and to some degree weakens the incentive for nurturing contacts between the civilians and the military officers.

It is also worth noting that such a strict formalisation of civil-military relations resonates badly with a British “Janowitzian” approach, which may partly explain its principled stance against many of the recent institutional add-ons in support of ESDP. British scepticism is often viewed in context of its “privileged relationship” with the United States and dismissed as typical Euro-scepticism. However, since the change of course in the lead up to St-Malo in 1998, Britain has consistently supported the strengthening of ESDP (See Howorth, 2000; 2005). But its focus has been on capabilities rather than on institutions, as reflected most recently in its insistence on strict capability criteria for “permanent structured cooperation”, included in the Lisbon Reform Treaty. The British approach tends to be typically pragmatic, aiming, for example, to get its own people, such as Robert Cooper, Director General for Politico-Military Affairs at the Council Secretariat and a close associate of Solana, and Lieutenant General David Leakey, former commander of *EUFOR Althea* in Bosnia and Director General of EUMS since 2007, appointed to positions where they are able to change the organisation from within.<sup>12</sup> France, on the other hand, has been eager to set up permanent institutions as a means to strengthen the military side of ESDP. This French drive is often viewed against the background of its ingrained scepticism towards NATO ever since its decision to leave NATO’s integrated military structure in 1966. But incidentally the EU’s civil-military organisation has also come to resemble the French “Huntingtonian” system of strict separation, and its fairly conservative approach to civil-military coordination in general (Cf. Ehrhart and Quille, 2007; Forster, 2006).<sup>13</sup>

As a result, the overall EU civil-military coordination process has come to be dominated by two parallel objectives or strategies, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but may get in the way of each other: One is the set-up of strong, balanced civilian and military institutions, which are bridged by units with a specified, formal responsibility for civil-military relations, while the other is the nurturing of a “culture of coordination” that shall ideally transcend and reduce those formal institutional barriers.

## 6 Building a culture of coordination

Being able to work together requires a common perception of challenges and concepts amongst the people involved, a shared situational awareness, and a mutual understanding of and respect for the others side’s qualities and responsibilities. In short, things need to make sense, common sense, to everyone involved. Yet the problem is that people with different professional backgrounds are used to different organisational structures (hierarchy vs. network), different ways of solving problems (intuitive vs. analytical), different views on good leadership (authoritarian vs. inclusive), different ways of communicating (accepting orders vs. encouraging discussion), etc (Cf. Danielsen, 2008). This is why not only civilians and soldiers, but also humanitarian workers and police officers or lawyers may seem to find themselves at odds with each other in crisis management operations. Building a “culture of coordination” at the EU level, therefore,

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<sup>12</sup> This British approach has found support in Member States such as the Netherlands and Sweden.

<sup>13</sup> It is, therefore, unclear whether the French decision to return to NATO’s integrated military structure will change its approach to ESDP significantly. One may also note that Germany, which has a similar civil-military approach, has been a strong supporter of permanent ESDP institutions.

inevitably means attempting to reconcile inherently different professional cultures. This can hardly be achieved without extensive human interaction.

This point finds support in the fact that once an operation is up and running, people who are engaged in the same theatre of operations tend to work out practical ways of working together. To coordinate the activities of the EU Police Mission (EUPM) and *EUFOR Althea* in Bosnia, for example, people in DG E VIII and IX and EUMS soon set up weekly informal Core Team Meetings (CTMs), which was supplemented by expanded CTMs including the EU Special Representative (EUSR) and representatives from the Commission. Within these Core Teams, which have since then been routinely set up for other ESDP operations, civil-military coordination have reportedly become a matter of routine, and there are no major difficulties in sharing information and views across institutional boundaries (Interviews, Council Secretariat, May 2006). As one commentator, quoting an EUMS official working in the CMC, also remarked: “During a crisis ‘when people are dying on us’, it becomes easier to reach practical arrangements on the ground and in Brussels on how to tackle the situation” (Knutsen, 2008: 37). In the event of major challenges, the incentive for working together is stronger and cooperation will often follow naturally. That is not necessarily the case in the early phases of strategic and pre-operational planning, with the result that civil-military coordination is often insufficient.

To avoid this, the EU has, on Solana’s initiative, drafted the concept of *Comprehensive Planning*, inspired by the UN’s similar concept for “integrated mission planning” (Ehrhart and Quille, 2007: 11; see also Eide, et al., 2005; European Council, 2005a). The overall purpose, as described by Hans Gerhard Ehrhart and Gerard Quille, is to improve CMCO by engaging all relevant EU actors at the earliest stage of the planning process. It is supposed to be valid for all phases of EU engagement, and to cover transitions from one operation or mission to another, also crossing the pillars. It is, however, a non-binding concept, which is, therefore, dependent on the goodwill of the parties involved.

No permanent structures for Comprehensive Planning have been put in place, but so-called Crisis Response Coordinating Teams (CRCT) have been established as an *ad hoc* basis for crisis management operations since 2003 (See European Council, 2003c). A CRCT is envisaged as a flexible grouping of senior officials at director level from the Council Secretariat and the Commission, who will convene to help prepare the overall Crisis Management Concept, which elaborates the EU’s political objectives and proposes to the PSC a broad set of options (Gordon, 2006: 352). To this end, it performs an early joint situation assessment, and seeks coherence between the range of civilian and military Strategic Options proposed via CIVCOM and the EUMC. The Crisis Management Concept, in turn, lays the framework for the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) and the Operation Plan (OPLAN).<sup>14</sup>

As a result of the Comprehensive Planning initiative and subsequent elaboration of the concept, the EU has taken a few potentially significant steps towards creating a shared situational

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<sup>14</sup> For a detailed breakdown of the planning process, consult Lindstrom (2007: 19-21). See also Ehrhart and Quille (2007: 9).

awareness at the Director level, designed to trickle down to lower levels as they develop their concepts and plans. The initiative has also brought about some clarification of concepts and procedures. However, at the same time it has been accompanied by institutional developments that have placed the responsibility for developing corresponding military and civilian Strategic Options, CONOPS and OPLANs firmly within the civilian and military chains of command respectively. In addition, as Stuart Gordon points out: “There is already some evidence to suggest that the CRCT concept has not yet functioned optimally in the planning of current EU operations and exercises and that other, more *ad hoc* liaison processes have tended to emerge as a reaction to specific problems” (Gordon, 2006: 352). Often, more immediate and practical problems tend to take the focus off the overall picture. Moreover, Comprehensive Planning has not created incentives for closer human interaction at lower levels beyond the eventual implicit requirements that more integrated Crisis Management Concepts will have for the elaboration for subsequent concepts and plans. This will have to be stimulated by other means.

## 7 Concluding remarks

The analysis of the current institutional set-up for implementing the Comprehensive Approach shows that even across the ESDP civil-military nexus the EU has not played up to its ambitions. On the one hand, the EU has sought a “Janowitzian” approach to the civil-military interface, perhaps best captured in its aim of developing a “culture of coordination”. But on the other hand, it has through the institutionalisation of its crisis management structures confirmed a “Huntingtonian” separation of its civilian and military arms.

From the very start, the military arm of the EU was simply “added to the civil structure as a separate limb”, as noted by Björn Müller-Wille (2002: 61). And since civilian crisis management was also new to the EU, it had to start building institutional structures from scratch. In this context, “[t]he military were first to seek to restructure the operational civil-military interface and harvest any potential synergies” (Gordon, 2006: 340). The military side had structures in place that could be adapted to the new strategic environment, but this was not the case with the civilian side, which initially came out on its heels. This tendency has been strengthened by the strong ties with NATO, and the highly politicised process of institutionalising ESDP, behind which looms the ever present struggle between those wanting an autonomous EU military capability and those wanting to avoid duplication. This led to a military bias throughout the strategic and operational planning process, which only recently has been sought “evened out” by a strengthening of the civilian arm through the establishment of CPCC and the post of a Civilian Force Commander. The result has, nevertheless, been a classical stovepipe structure, which has not appeared to create the necessary incentives for a “culture of coordination” to take root.

This does not necessarily mean that the institutionalisation of ESDP has failed the EU’s stated ambitions, or that the current institutional separation of the civil-military interface is set in stone. Today, the EU is more capable of planning for and conducting ESDP operations along the whole civilian-military spectrum than only a few years ago—and the tendency has been to do it alone. The gradual disintegration from NATO is a telling point in more than one respect. Clearly, strained political relations have been one reason for why Berlin Plus has not become the platform

for a more fruitful EU-NATO relationship it was intended to be. But also on the practical working level, it appears that resistance within the EU institutions has been a major obstacle for more cooperation between the two. In this context, talk of a “Reverse Berlin Plus” remains little more than an academic construct (See e.g. Biscop, 2006).

Continuing to rely on the physically and doctrinally separate operational planning capacities at NATO-SHAPE, in any case, comes across as counterproductive to the effective integration of the EU’s civilian and military instruments. This is also a problem with the primacy given to national OHQs as the preferred option for military operational planning for autonomous ESDP operations. This, according to former Director of the European Defence Agency (EDA), Nick Witney, “inevitably means loss of continuity and momentum while the choice of OHQ for each operation is made, and the chosen headquarters gears itself up” (Witney, 2008: 48). Moreover, the EU aspires to fulfill a real need for an integrated civil-military planning capacity that cannot, and perhaps should not be developed at the national level. But the states that will be plugging their resources into such multi-national structures for integrated planning and command will need the know-how and capabilities to do so to stay relevant as partners.

The creation of the OpCen as part of the CivMilCell was potentially a step forward towards a fully integrated EU OHQ, but it has been endowed with a high threshold for activation. The creation of the cell in itself gave rise to high expectations, prompting Solana to characterise it as a “pathfinder, leading the way to a more complete integration of civilian and military expertise within the Council’s structures” (cited in Ehrhart and Quille, 2007: 7; European Council, 2005b: 9). But it received an unfortunate military bias due to the political controversy that preceded it. For the moment, the EU Comprehensive Planning Initiative (CPI) may facilitate integration throughout the strategic and operational planning process, but it remains a non-binding concept. It has, nonetheless, made some headway towards clarifying concepts and procedures, which may, in turn, lead to a greater degree of shared situation awareness throughout the planning cycle. In the end, however, people tend to stick with their own, and to cater to more immediate practical issues if not in some way induced to break with their usual habits.

Simulating real challenges in joint exercises is one way of creating incentives for human interaction, which may be built upon in subsequent crisis situations (Cf. Danielsen, 2008). The EU has to date carried out three crisis management exercises: CME 02 in May 2002, CME/CMX 03 together with NATO in November 2003, and CME 04 in May 2004. Since 2004, it has also carried out three military exercises: MILEX 05 in November 2005, MILEX 07 (testing the OpCen) in June 2007, and MILEX 08 in June 2008. Lessons learned from these exercises are not open to the public, but judging from frequency alone, they come across as too rare and isolated events to have a significant impact on daily working relations, or even to involve the same people more than once or twice, due to length of rotation periods at least on the military side. It is also a case in point that the current EU Battlegroup training system makes no provisions for EU-led exercises involving the strategic level or civilian crisis management elements (Lindström, 2007: 28).

If for a brief moment putting political realities aside, one could imagine a more radical re-organisation of the whole Council Secretariat. Rather than having dedicated “cells” for civil-military coordination, one could instead go for a model of functionally and/or geographically ordered “cells” in which military officers and civilians work together on a daily basis. In practical terms, this would mean that the EUMS would represent merely the overall organisational entity comprising all military personnel, and not the physical section of the Korthenbergh building where all the officers sit. Also some contingency planning and doctrine development would be carried out in integrated cells with a balanced representation of civilian and military personnel, although it is to be expected that some parts of it should have to cater to the specific needs of both branches respectively. This would, however, require a massive re-arrangement of the whole Council Secretariat.

A more informal structure based on social interaction in civil-military “cells” could make it harder for outsiders like Norway to get access to the planning process. On the other hand, an enhanced role for civilian crisis management would offer an opportunity for Norway to play on its track record and considerable experience in, for example, international policing and monitoring activities, although this would require actively setting up relationships with the Council Secretariat in this regard. In any case, Norway could have much to learn from the institutionalisation process that the EU has been going through to establish an effective civil-military organisation.

Finally, current plans for yet another reorganisation of the Council Secretariat do carry a potential for solving some of the existing problems. The establishment of a new Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD, the name is not confirmed), which is being set up this Summer (2009), will lift civil-military planning activities *out* of the EUMS, *up* to Deputy Director level, and *back* to the Crisis Management Concept (CMC) stage (Interviews, Council Secretariat, April 2009). The CMPD will be made up of people from DG E VIII and IX, the CivMilCell and other EUMS units, and even parts of the Commission, but since there is no money to hire people, it will not be reinforced with more civilians. There is, therefore, an inherent danger that the military bias will be carried on into the new Directorate, since the some 60 civilians involved in the CPCC are still meshed in the daily running of nine operations, trying to “shoot the wolf that is closest to the sledge”, to quote a CPCC official (Interview, Council Secretariat, April 2009).

That said it is the continued Huntingtonian *mindset* that seems to permeate the ESDP structures—and which has more to do with institutional culture than formal institutional structures—that needs to be broken. The somewhat impressive track record of institutional innovations and in later years suggests that there is no quick fix to this problem.

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