

# IECEU's Five Findings from the Comparative Analysis of EU's Crisis Management

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1. Variability in CSDP both between and within missions and operations is large. All missions and operations are mixtures of strengths and weaknesses.
2. Strengthening strategic planning mechanisms for adaptation to changing circumstances is needed.
3. Specifically, mandate creation and incorporation of lessons learned into planning processes could be strengthened.
4. Support is also needed for on-going development of communication mechanisms, HR processes, civilian-military and civilian-civilian interoperability, standardization, and CSDP specific technologies and programs.
5. EU's strengths in crisis management are its ability to work with multiple partners and the expertise of its personnel.

In an increasingly complex world, the EU is one of the few international organizations actively engaged in conflict prevention, crisis management, and peacebuilding efforts. The political significance of deploying a CSDP operation or mission is in itself great as it shows Europe's international commitment to help crisis situations. However, there are increasing calls to show effectiveness in conflict prevention and crisis management requiring broad analysis of the way current operations and missions are conducted.

In the analysis of some 1000 pages of study reports including over 200 interviews<sup>1</sup> and a quantitative survey to identify lessons, five central findings on EU's crisis management were made. They are briefly represented here. Policy initiatives and proposals can be found in other IECEU-project material.

The **IECEU** (Improving the Effectiveness of Capabilities in EU Conflict Prevention) is a project aspiring to enhance the conflict prevention capabilities of the EU. The IECEU consortium consists of 11 organizations which represent civilian, research and military expertise from 7 different European countries.

The content of this policy brief is previously published as a part of "D5.1 The Effectiveness of EU Capabilities and the Current Situation in Pooling and Sharing. 2017. IECEU, 653371." The full findings are downloadable from [http://www.ieceu-project.com/?page\\_id=197](http://www.ieceu-project.com/?page_id=197).

**SaferGlobe** is an independent Finnish think tank which produces high-level research and tools to promote peace and security. SaferGlobe is a partner in the IECEU consortium.

A striking feature of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations is their large variability in terms of their capabilities and effectiveness. Variability is also large within individual missions and operations between different capabilities. All missions and operations studied are mixtures of strengths and weaknesses. When variation is as large as it is in these findings, standardization is typically needed. However, standardization needs to be balanced both with the need for simplicity in structures, context-specificity, and flexibility. Standardization in CSDP already exists in a number of areas but is not comprehensive nor necessarily adhered to. Some lack of adherence to existing standardization can directly affect the security of EU's personnel (e.g., medical standards and knowledge of working in hostile environments), and as such require adhering to regardless of the staff's contract type.

Planning forms the core of CSDP, and especially on-going strategic planning needs strengthening. The on-going changes both within local contexts but also within the operations and mission themselves require on-going, extensive, planning support from Brussels, increased focus on operational planning in the field and better coordination between the two. The changes both in the local contexts but also in the operations and missions themselves are on-going and often extensive. The flux within missions and operations is especially tied to short rotations, changes in mandate and the number of staff, which can vary greatly<sup>2</sup>. The local contexts of crisis management are also especially prone to even extensive change. When there are changes in the security situation or the premises that the mission

or operation is built on, the EU is slow or even unable to adapt and adjust. Planning is especially important in differentiating between the strategic and the expedient in changing circumstances.

Mandate creation was found to be especially challenging in terms of effectiveness. Mandates are always compromises between different interests, needs, wants and are thus unlikely to gather unanimous support. However, overly broad mandates created with a limited understanding of the local context or situational awareness, or which do not incorporate lessons learned from earlier missions, operations or mandates, are likely to cause further challenges. These challenges are especially evident in the creation of Operational Plans (OPLANs) and Mission Implementation Plans (MIPs) but also in the creation of a general understanding of the mission or operation of *why* it has been deployed and *what* it is doing. The clarity of message that the mandate conveys is especially important in multinational and complex environments.

Strengthening feedback loops from the operational level implementations to strategic level planning would enable the harnessing of EU's extensive expertise for the development of missions and operations. Figures 1 and 2 show an ideal feedback loop as well as challenges identified in this feedback loop in the analysis of the case studies of the IECEU project.

EU's strengths in crisis management are its ability to work with multiple partners – comprehensiveness and integrated approach – and the expertise and skills of its personnel. Both strengths can be further developed. For comprehensiveness, the integrated approach needs

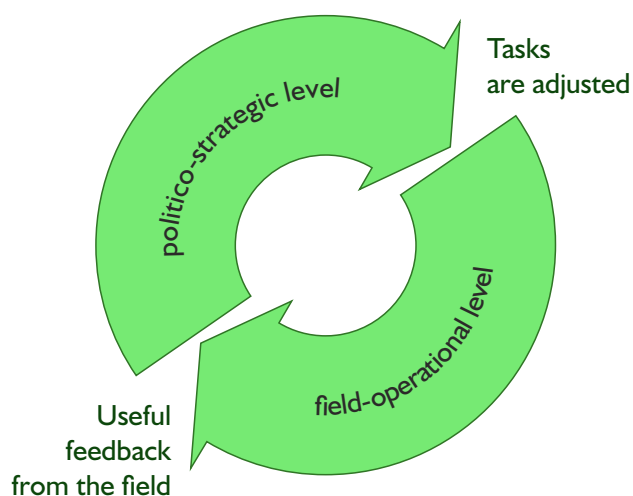


Figure 1. Ideal feedback loop

strengthening especially through the creation of joint planning mechanisms. The competences of the personnel and their ability to work effectively are complicated by short rotations, lack of adherence to hand-over rotations, uneven use of pre-deployment training, lack of possibilities of mentoring, and a limited amount of in-mission training. On a more systematic level, recruitment processes vary greatly, and if problems with recruited staff become evident, it may be difficult or impossible to remove low performers.

Finally, strengthening the on-going development of civil-military and civil-civil interoperability, standardization, CSDP specific technologies, and programs is needed. There are multiple standards and systems in use, often based on national systems but also created by individual missions. The tasks, function, and personnel of the different CSDP missions and operations vary greatly, as of course do member state policies. However, there is potential for joint development of many of the supportive functions, which may provide in better systems overall. A clear example are in-mission trainings where joint-trainings could be organized on, for example, the local context, some specific skills, and cross-cutting themes. Further development of

common tools to use in civilian crisis management would also aid in creating tools for the integrated approach.

The results of this study are unlikely to be surprising to EU personnel working with CSDP missions and operations. There is on-going development within the CSDP to enhance crisis management, but the implementation of new strategies, guidelines, and practices in the operations and missions is lagging behind strategic and conceptual development in Brussels. Change takes time, and in a complex multi-national structure, change takes even longer necessitating a long-term focus on implementation.

### Further Development of CSDP

Current conflict prevention mechanisms require further development and evaluation both within the EU but also more widely. Specifically, more understanding is needed on what prevents conflict, and whether the conflict prevention mechanisms in use do in fact prevent conflicts. Mechanisms required include evaluation, baseline studies, and clearer understanding of different conflict dynamics and conflict drivers.

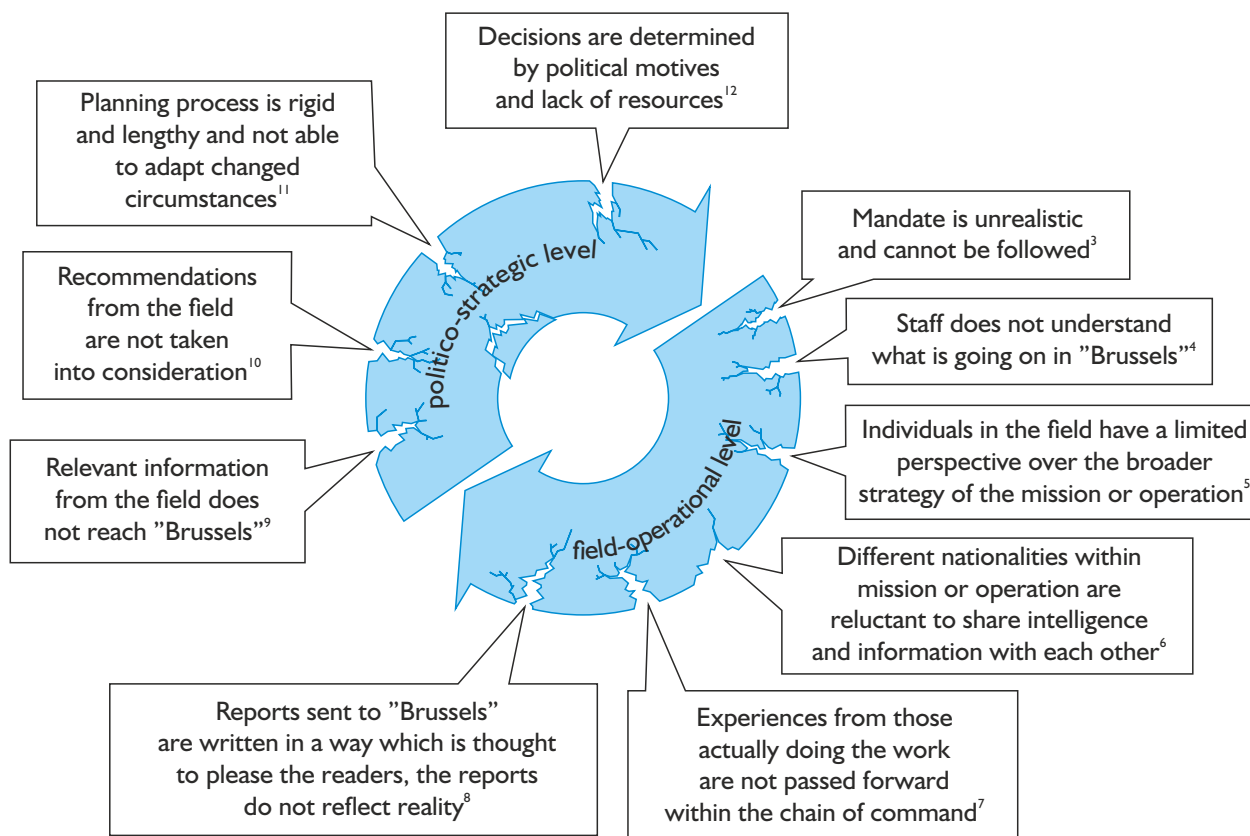


Figure 2. Challenges identified in practice in the ideal feedback loop

Intertwining internal and international security concerns cause further challenges to creating conflict prevention mechanisms. The EU's Early Warning System offers an interesting possibility for further study and development. With its combination of expertise, research, and missions, the EU is well-placed to drive the development of conflict prevention further.

The extent of the indirect impact on the operating context of the missions and operations was considered in this study in detail. When engagement is short and limited, the indirect impact is naturally limited too. However, by creating employment, being a source of revenue, and enacting change, the direct impact of EU's actions are accompanied by both positive indirect impact to be amplified and negative indirect impact to be mitigated. These indirect impacts are often context-specific, and their identification requires mapping and conflict sensitive practices. Both a positive direct and a positive indirect impact can be seen in terms of gender; where initiatives to strengthen gender parity are strengthened indirectly by the presence of women, especially in operational roles.

The changing role and functions of crisis management continue to be debated after the Lisbon treaty, which may hinder cooperation in the field. Specifically contested are the optimal

length and size of engagement. The term "crisis management" implies immediate short-term response whereas the reality of crisis management is often long-term engagement with the inclusion of capacity building. Some components of longer-term engagements are quite close to other EU instruments including tools for development. The current planning mechanisms are not well-suited for either, being too cumbersome for short-term engagements and too disjointed for long-term engagements.<sup>13</sup> One potential avenue of development is to advance both long- and short-term engagement simultaneously and in more clearly differentiating between the two. The longer-term engagements could especially be used in Europe's close neighborhood, while short-term engagements could be specifically designed to complement the work done by other international organizations.

The findings also demonstrate the value of large-scale macro-level studies of CSDP missions and operations, through finding generalized rather than context-specific findings. Although the missions and operations are very different, at their core, they employ similar structures. There is great potential and value in CSDP missions and operations, but also room for on-going development.

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