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Citation for published version (APA):

Dijkstra, H. (2018). *Implementing the integrated approach: Investing in other international organisations*. Istituto Affari Internazionali. EU Global Strategy Watch No. 1

Document status and date:

Published: 01/07/2018

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Please check the document version of this publication:

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
- The final author version and the galley proof are versions of the publication after peer review.
- The final published version features the final layout of the paper including the volume, issue and page numbers.

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Implementing the integrated approach: Investing in other international organisations

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Abstract

This contribution points at the importance that the EU ascribes to partnership in the EU Global Strategy and other policy documents as a tool to implement the integrated approach to conflict and crises. It notes that the EU, as part of the implementation of the integrated approach concept as defined in the EU Global Strategy, has actually paid very little attention to other international organisations, and has failed to properly invest in relevant partners such as the UN and the OSCE. The contribution makes a case for the EU to think more about what other international organisations actually need in terms of resources and how the rules-based global order more generally should be strengthened in order to fully implement the integrated approach.

Partnership with other international organizations (IOs) has long been a key objective of the European Union (EU) in addressing international security challenges. This is also evident in the EU Global Strategy, which states that “[t]he EU will be a responsible global stakeholder, but responsibility must be shared and requires investing in our partnerships. Co-responsibility will be our guiding principle in advancing a rules-based global order”.¹

Partnership with other IOs is important: While the EU has developed as a serious foreign policy actor, it does not possess the full spectrum of foreign policy instruments (e.g., collective defence with nuclear deterrence). Nor is the EU-option always the most effective or legitimate in foreign policy matters (e.g., in Eastern Ukraine or Sub-Saharan Africa). In other words, the EU cannot do everything alone. The concept of partnership therefore deserves a central place in the implementation of the integrated approach concept as defined in the EU Global Strategy. A truly integrated approach not only requires partnership within the “multilateral approach”, but also when it comes to the multi-phased, multi-level and multi-dimensional approaches identified in the Strategy.²

Partnership with other IOs is nothing new. Indeed, already in 2013, the Joint Communication on the EU's Comprehensive Approach noted that “the EU needs to engage and work together with other international and regional actors. The role of the EU is linked – to a greater or lesser extent – to the action (or non-action), resources and expertise of others”.³ In other words, it is thus well known and well accepted that partnership with other IOs is required to achieve a truly integrated approach. The EU Global Strategy stresses this even further.

Implementing partnerships with other IOs is, however, a whole different matter. When thinking conceptually about partnerships at the programmatic level, it is critical for the EU to do two things. First, it has to define its own profile. What are the foreign policy and security actions that the EU wants to develop, itself? The EU Global Strategy – although not entirely written in operational language – offers important insights in this respect. It puts the emphasis on the security of EU citizens and it prioritizes the EU neighbourhood. It talks about strategic autonomy, thereby reaffirming the St Malo tradition and the EU's modest role in crisis management.⁴

¹ European External Action Service (EEAS), *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy*, June 2016, p. 18,

² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

³ European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises*, 11 December 2013, JOIN(2013) 30 final, p. 11, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/csdp/structures-instruments-agencies/eu-military-staff/save_the_date/docs/joint_communication_on_comprehensive_approach.pdf

⁴ See for an overview the special issue: Hylke Dijkstra, “Introduction: One-and-a-half cheers for the EU Global Strategy”, In *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 37, No. 3, p. 369-373, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2016.1244241>



Second, the EU has to define how it relates to other IOs and how it seeks to invest in them. Here, the EU Global Strategy is relatively undetermined at both the programmatic and operational levels. The Strategy stresses that NATO remains the cornerstone of collective defence for most EU member states (the neutral non-NATO members naturally excluded). It does, however, not go much further than this generic statement. The EU-NATO joint declarations from July 2016 and July 2018, which were entirely developed and implemented separately from the EU Global Strategy, focus largely on capabilities, crisis management and issues such as cyber and hybrid threats.⁵ They do not present a statement on actual collective defence and the division of labour in this area.

The relations with some of the other IOs remain even further underdeveloped. Strikingly, despite some ambitious proposals in the early 2000s on EU–UN cooperation,⁶ it does not appear that the EU Global Strategy has provided real additional momentum at the programmatic level. The visit of Secretary-General António Guterres to Brussels in May 2018 was notable. Yet thinking about EU–UN cooperation no longer reaches the level it aspired to in 2003–2004, when the EU ambitiously suggested, not only the “bridging model”, but also a modular approach as well as over-the-horizon standby forces.⁷ The EU is strongly supporting on going UN reform efforts — spearheaded by Guterres — but it is not clear how this leads to further EU–UN cooperation in peace and security.

There is a strong paradox in the EU–UN relationship. On the one hand, with nearly 100,000 blue helmets currently deployed, the UN has clearly outgrown the EU in the area of security. This requires a business-like approach on the side of the UN: The UN can no longer afford to wait, for instance, for the EU to put together a bridging operation. On the other hand, precisely because of these ambitions, the UN needs troop contributors more urgently than ever before. Furthermore, as a result of the Trump administration creating havoc across the global governance landscape, the resource base of UN peacekeeping is being challenged.⁸ As one of the biggest supporters of UN peacekeeping — also due to the presence of France and the United Kingdom in the Security Council — the EU has potentially a lot to offer here.

⁵ Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 8 July 2016, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24293/signed-copy-nato-eu-declaration-8-july-en.pdf>; Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 10 July 2018, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/36096/nato_eu_final_eng.pdf

⁶ Claudia Major, “EU-UN cooperation in military crisis management: the experience of EUFOR RD Congo in 2006”, in *Occasional Paper*, n. 72, Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, September 2008, p. 9-12
<https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/op-72.pdf>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Nikki Haley, *Remarks at a UN Security Council Open Debate on Peacekeeping*, 28 March 2018, <https://usun.state.gov/remarks/8359>

This also points toward the need for renewed thinking within the EU. While the EU has been promoting the language of partnership, effective multilateralism and a rules-based global order, it does not sufficiently ask itself what other IOs actually expect in terms of support. The UN would probably greatly welcome the availability of one of the EU Battlegroups in support of UN missions. At a time when the UN faces capabilities shortfalls, it is disturbing to see that the EU has deployable capabilities but does not actually use them. Also on the UN side, there is no time for the politics and caveats that come with relatively minor European contributions. You either participate to UN missions or you do not.⁹ Similarly, when the EU deploys a parallel mission, for instance as is the case in Mali, it does not always live up to UN expectations.¹⁰

The situation is not necessarily better with other partners. Quite surprisingly, the OSCE has again become an important partner in East–West relations by virtue of the large-scale Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. This mission is critically important for European security. Once again, the EU's approach has been less than forthcoming. The EU support has been mostly *ad hoc*, relating to extra-budgetary project money and the occasional armoured vehicles.¹¹ This comes against the backdrop of a chronically underfunded OSCE. One could imagine the EU putting forward a stronger and more permanent investment.

With the African Union (AU), there is mainly a debate over the compensation of soldiers, who are largely paid through the EU's African Peace Facility. While UN Troop Contributing Countries are compensated with US\$1,332 per soldier per month, the EU recently reduced its contribution to the troops of the AU Mission in Somalia from \$1,028 to \$822 per soldier per month.¹² This has caused friction. More worrisome, there is actually very little strategic discussion with the AU on how the AU mission fits in with the EU comprehensive approach for the Horn of Africa.

The EU Global Strategy has been very much about defining the “EU interest”: the things that the EU wants to achieve in international relations and the means that the Union has at its disposal. As a foreign policy actor, however, it is important to take a stronger interest in what other international actors, and particularly other IOs, actually want. If the EU truly wants to strengthen the rules-based

⁹ Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom, for instance, withdrew a handful of police officers from the UN mission in South Sudan, without informing the UN, when the local security situation worsened. This resulted in a serious clash between the UN and these contributors. Michelle Nichols, “U.N. memo on South Sudan leaves out criticism of Britain”, in *Reuters*, 21 July 2016, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-southsudan-security-un-idUKKCN1012WM>

¹⁰ Hylke Dijkstra et al., “Partners in conflict prevention and peace building: How the EU, UN and OSCE exchange civilian capabilities in Kosovo, Mali and Armenia”, in *EU-CIVCAP*, DL 4.2, 4 September 2017, https://eucivcap.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/eu-civcap_deliverable_4-2.pdf

¹¹ OSCE, *EU donates vehicles to OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine*, 3 February 2016, <https://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/220086>

¹² Paul Williams, *Paying for AMISOM: Are Politics and Bureaucracy Undermining the AU's Largest Peace Operation?*, 11 January 2017, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/01/amisom-african-union-peacekeeping-financing/>

global order and put forward an integrated approach, it should also facilitate, invest in and help out other IOs. This should be less on a *quid pro quo*, or transactional, basis. The EU can also do much good by being a donor, an investor and by leading from behind – remembering that is not necessary for the EU's integrated approach that it be multi-dimensional, multi-phase and multi-level in every respect.

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