

The Influence of EU Officials in European Security and Defence

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The influence of EU officials in European Security and Defence

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Abstract European Union (EU) foreign policy has long been considered the *domaine réservé* of the member states. This article challenges such conventional state-centered wisdom by analyzing the influence of the Brussels-based EU officials in the Common Security and Defence Policy. Using four case studies and data from 105 semi-structured interviews, it shows that EU officials are most influential in the agenda-setting phase and more influential in civilian than in military operations. Their prominence in agenda-setting can be explained by their central position in the policy process. This allows them to get early involved in the operations. The absence of strong control mechanisms and doctrine in civilian crisis management gives them opportunities to affect civilian missions. Finally, EU officials direct civilian operations from Brussels, whereas the command of military operations is with the member states and NATO.

Key words European Union, CSDP, security policy, EU officials, influence, rational choice institutionalism

INTRODUCTION

European Union (EU) foreign policy has long been considered the *domaine réservé* of the member states.¹ Contrary to other parts of European integration, it ran almost completely without the support of the Brussels-based institutions for nearly 30 years. The six-monthly rotating Presidency was responsible for convening meetings, issuing declarations, and occasionally speaking on behalf of the EU (e.g. Nuttall 2000, Smith 2004). By keeping these functions ‘in-house’, the member states kept their sovereignty costs to a minimum and benefited at the same time from cooperation in the sensitive area of foreign policy.

This intergovernmental practice dramatically changed with the Treaty of Amsterdam and the Cologne European Council in 1999.² The member states strengthened their machinery by creating

1 EU foreign policy refers to European Political Cooperation (1970–1993) and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (1993-date).

2 There is evidence of some ‘Brusselisation’ before this date. After the Single European Act (1987), a small-scale foreign policy secretariat was established and several working groups started to meet in Brussels, see Nuttall (1992,

the post of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). In support, they established a Policy Unit, nominated EU Special Representatives, and increased the staff of the Directorate-General for External Relations (DG E). To carry out civilian and military operations, they created two crisis management directorates, a sizeable military staff (EUMS), civilian planning and operations headquarters (CPCC), and an intelligence capability (SITCEN). These services were located in the Council Secretariat until the Treaty of Lisbon (2009). They are currently part of the European External Action Service (EEAS).³

The creation of these foreign policy bureaucracies in Brussels is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable recent institutional developments in the EU. Small wonder that it has attracted academic attention. Various observers – from very different theoretical perspectives – explain why the member states have delegated new foreign policy functions to Brussels (e.g. Christiansen 2002, Christiansen and Vanhoonacker 2008, Dijkstra 2008, 2010a). Little is known, however, about the *effects* of these developments. This article analyses, in this respect, under which conditions EU officials exert influence in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Influence is defined as getting the member states to do something they would otherwise not have done (cf. Dahl 1957). Given the consensus of decision-making, the member states are conceptualized as a collective principal (cf. Nielson and Tierney 2003). EU officials refer to the High Representative and the civil servants working in the various CSDP services.

Providing empirical evidence from four case studies, this article finds that EU officials exert most influence in the agenda-setting phase of the policy process and more influence in civilian than in military operations. Their prominence in agenda-setting can be explained by their central position in policy-making. Such position allows them to become very early involved in planning. They contribute to the framing of missions and the construction of *faits accomplis*. Their strength in civilian crisis management results from the absence of strong control mechanisms and doctrine. Even though the member states have three controlling military committees, they have only one relatively junior civilian committee. EU officials furthermore direct civilian operations from Brussels, while the command of military operations is with the member states and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Finally, the lack of doctrine makes it difficult for the member states to control civilian crisis management.

This article starts with a discussion of the conditions for influence – the resources and opportunities of the EU officials as well as the control mechanisms of the member states. It then analyses the influence of the EU officials during the crisis management operations in Bosnia, Chad, Aceh, and Kosovo. These cases vary across issues (civilian/military), regions (Europe/non-Europe) and time (2004–2005/2007–2008). As such they give us comprehensive insights into CSDP policy-making. In the empirical analysis, data are used from official documents and 105 semi-structured interviews with officials from the Council Secretariat, European Commission, member states, and international organizations. The interviews have been carried out between 2007 and 2011. These sources are complemented by secondary literature.

EXPLAINING THE INFLUENCE OF EU OFFICIALS

The following section provides a rationalist argument to explain the influence of EU officials in the CSDP. It first identifies whether EU officials have superior bureaucratic resources in comparison to the member states. It subsequently analyses the control mechanism that the member states have at their disposal. It finally discusses the opportunities and mechanisms through which EU officials can

2000) and Dijkstra (2008).

3 The crisis management bureaucracies, which are the topic of this article, have changed little as a result of their transfer of the EEAS. Empirical findings from the pre-Lisbon period therefore continue to have relevance. See also the conclusion for implications of the Treaty of Lisbon.

exert influence in the CSDP policy process.

Bureaucratic resources

EU officials require superior bureaucratic resources than the member states if they are to exert any influence. Given their limited formal competences in foreign policy, these must primarily be sought in their institutional position and expertise. EU officials are renowned for their institutional memory resulting from their continuity (e.g. Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 2006, Westlake and Galloway 2006). Their central institutional position yields further advantages. They have, for example, an excellent overview of the state of negotiations (Beach 2005). Due to their relatively neutral reputation, they often serve as a broker. This involves becoming party to privileged information (Tallberg 2006). The considerable process expertise of EU officials creates a position of authority as guardian of the orthodoxy.

Networks are another important resource for EU officials (e.g. Haas 1992, Peterson 1995). Through networks, EU officials can gather information and contact relevant stakeholders by means of informal channels. These informal channels are important, as it allows EU officials to go beyond formal gatekeepers, such as the Brussels-based diplomats in the committees, who may have strict instructions from the capitals. Networks are important at different levels. At a more senior level, the High Representative has direct contacts with national ministers and their senior civil servants. Due to their institutional position, desk officers in the various crisis management bureaucracies are part of the core CSDP networks (Mérand *et al.* 2010, 2011).

EU officials also possess considerable content expertise (Wall and Lynn 1993, Beach 2005, Tallberg 2006, Biermann and Siebenhüner 2009). Various CSDP services have already been mentioned. The two crisis management directorates, which have recently been merged in the Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD), employ around 70 civil servants. They take the lead in early planning processes. The EU Military Staff consists of nearly 200 officers and provides the member states with planning documents. The CPCC of around 70 officials is in charge of detailed civilian planning and strategic command. The Situation Centre, which employs some 100 civil servants, provides security and intelligence assessments (Vanhoonacker *et al.* 2010).

These services are thus responsible for much of the information-gathering, information-processing, and planning (Dijkstra and Vanhoonacker 2011, Bicchi 2012). Most operations start with an options paper by the EU officials. The EU officials then go on a fact-finding mission to the theatre. The fact-finding mission in turn provides input for the Crisis Management Concept, which is the first planning document (Mattelaer 2010). The EUMS and the CPCC draft the Strategic Options and the Joint Action. While the military headquarters and the member states are responsible for the launch and implementation of the operation, EU officials continue to fulfill a liaison function between Brussels and the mission. In civilian missions, the CPCC has operational authority over implementation and directs the mission from Brussels. Dealing on a day-to-day basis with implementation may lead to specialization gains (Hawkins *et al.* 2006).

Control mechanisms

Delegation to an agent cannot be enjoyed without certain agency losses. As Lake and McCubbins (2006, p. 343) succinctly state ‘no pain, no gain.’ This does, however, not mean that influence is excessive. Principal-agent literature expects that the member states tolerate some agency loss, as EU officials typically know better which policies are in the EU's interest. Control mechanisms nonetheless constrain such influence.

The ultimate control mechanism is re-contracting. If influence becomes excessive, member states can take functions back. As EU officials anticipate this, they are naturally wary of exerting excessive influence. Member states also put in place checks and balances for day-to-day policy-

making. Formal decision-making and political-strategic oversight in the CSDP, for example, rests with the member states in the committees. The delegation of the CSDP functions among different EU institutions including the Presidency and the European Commission (Dijkstra 2009, 2011a) is another method of restricting influence (Klein 2010). Through detailed instructions, the member states keep a tight rein on EU officials (Hawkins *et al.* 2006, Bradley and Kelley 2008). Agent selection ensures that the EU leadership has preferences close to those of the member states (Hawkins *et al.* 2006).

In addition to such ‘standard’ control mechanisms, member states can also keep the resources of EU officials limited. EU officials typically do not have a say over their own budget, staff or competences. There is also the question of the quality of staff and their loyalties. In the CSDP services, there is only a limited amount of permanent officials. Many of the EU officials are in fact national secondees. While these officials do not necessarily act as national agents (Trondal 2006), they undermine the institutional memory, continuity and thus the expertise of the CSDP services.⁴ Few individuals, moreover, have a personal desire to promote institutional interests (Juncos and Pomorska 2010, 2011). By delegating functions to secondees, there is less chance of shirking.

A critical control mechanism is the oversight committees. This includes the Political and Security Committee at ambassador level, but particularly the underlying working groups. To carry out oversight, national diplomats perform, with the help of their ministries, many of the same information-gathering and processing tasks as the EU officials. They can thus be conceptualized as small shadow bureaucracies, which have the aim of narrowing informational asymmetries (Lake and McCubbins 2006). The quality of oversight in the working groups is, however, conditioned by the expertise in the ministries as well as the coordination in the capitals (e.g. Vanhoonacker and Jacobs 2010).

There is an important difference in the oversight of military and civilian missions. The Military Committee (EUMC), composed of two- and three-star generals, is supported by two working groups. It deals with one/two operations at the same time and receives instructions directly from the defense ministries. The Civilian Committee (CIVCOM), in contrast, consists of junior to mid-career diplomats (Cross 2010). It has up to a dozen civilian missions on its agenda and is not supported by working groups. Moreover, its instructions come from the interior, justice, and even the defense ministries, while the diplomats come from the ministry of foreign affairs. There is in this respect tremendous variation among the member states. Striking is also the lack of civilian doctrine compared with the doctrine resulting from the long tradition of multinational military operations (Benner and Bossong 2010). Doctrine provides member states guidance. The absence of civilian doctrine makes it more difficult for them to evaluate proposals of the EU officials.

Opportunities

In case of superior bureaucratic resources and a lack of strong control mechanisms, there are may be opportunities for exerting influence (Thatcher and Stone Sweet 2002). They differ throughout the policy process. Agenda-setting relates to the ability of EU officials to get certain issues high on the agenda (Tallberg 2003, Princen 2007). Apart from their formal right of initiative, they can raise awareness through informal channels (Peters 2001, Pollack 2003).⁵ Princen and Rhinard (2006) distinguish between a political and administrative route to agenda-setting. The political route involves top-down pressure, while the administrative route is about bottom-up momentum building.

4 Former Director-General EUMS, Lt. General David Leakey, once said that his staff consisted of ‘swimmers, floaters and sinkers.’ He also noted that member states ‘should not treat the EUMS as a language school and a staff college by sending unqualified people’ (Impetus 2010, p. 4).

5 The Commission had the shared right of initiative before the Treaty of Lisbon, while the High Representative could initiate policy through the Presidency. The Policy Unit could further issue options papers. The Treaty of Lisbon has reinforced these formal competences.

EU officials have the ability to alternate between these political and administrative venues due to their central institutional position (Baumgartner and Jones 1991). When issues get stuck at one level, EU officials can try the other.

EU officials also get very early involved in CSDP missions. This gives them a first mover advantage. Such advantage allows for conflict expansion and framing (Princen 2007). By getting like-minded member states involved and by keeping opposing actors outside the inner circle, EU officials can create momentum. Raising expectations with external parties is another strategy, which may result in a *fait accompli* for the member states. Framing CSDP missions in a way to make them more palatable for some of the opposing member states is a final early mover advantage. The later one gets involved, the more difficult to change the dominant discourse.

During decision-making, EU officials can affect the process through their informational advantage. By manipulating ‘either the construction of policy alternatives or information about the consequences of different alternatives’ (Bendor *et al.* 1985, p. 1042, Dahl [1963] 2003), officials can exert influence over the member states. They have a particular strong position if they possess hidden information (Arrow 1985). More frequently, however, the member states may suffer from information overload or information fragmentation between different actors. As a result, the member states may be incapable of evaluating all policy options in time due to limited information-processing skills.

During implementation, EU officials can act on their own preferences rather than ‘strictly and faithfully [following] the preferences of the member states that created and empowered them’ (Pollack 2003, p. 38). Their ability for hidden action is important (Arrow 1985). This implies that ‘the agent's action is not directly observable by the principal’ (Arrow 1985, p. 37), but that it partially affects the payoffs. Hidden action leads directly to influence. Influence is, however, limited through the control mechanisms. Particularly important here is the choice of command and control. In military operations, the member states rely on NATO or national assets for the Operations Headquarters.⁶ The situation is different during civilian missions, where the Brussels-based CPCC plays a central role during implementation. It has the formal commanding authority over the missions.

Conclusion

From this overview of bureaucratic resources, control mechanisms, and opportunities it is possible to come to two preliminary conclusions. First, EU officials have a central institutional position in the CSDP policy process. They get early involved in possible operations through planning and fact-finding. This gives them opportunities for influence in the agenda-setting phase. They can push for operations in both political and administrative venue and alternate whenever necessary. Second, EU officials are expected to exert more influence in civilian operations. The member states have a weak control mechanism in CIVCOM for civilian missions. In addition, expertise is scattered in the capitals between different ministries, which makes coordination difficult. The member states can also not rely on civilian doctrine to guide them in evaluating proposals. Finally, EU officials have a number of opportunities during civilian implementation, which they do not possess in the military missions.

MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OPERATIONS

Operation Althea in Bosnia

⁶ The Brussels-based Operations Centre was activated for the first time early 2012 for the coordination of the military operations in the Horn of Africa. Its purpose is, however, facilitation rather than command.

Following the Dayton agreement of 1995, the NATO deployed some 60,000 troops to Bosnia. It significantly downsized its mission over time to 7000 troops. In December 2004, it handed over the military operation to the EU. The EU has made adjustments to the operation as well. At the time of writing, discussions continue about the future.

While the relative contribution of the United States to the NATO operation decreased in the period 1995–2004, the takeover was by no means automatic. The first signals for the takeover came from the EU High Representative Javier Solana (interviews with national officials 2009). He saw the operation as part of setting up the EU's institutional structures. 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating' (interview with national official 2009) and a takeover from NATO in the Western Balkans was a logical first step. Solana was supported by France and the United Kingdom. These three actors presented planning papers to the Council in February 2003 (Council 2003). The United States was not against the takeover, but it was wary of autonomous EU operations (e.g. Operation Artemis, Giegerich *et al.* 2006). As a result of the transatlantic tensions over Iraq, it therefore blocked the handover for six months (interviews with national officials 2009).

Important about the handover was that, following the civil war, the Bosnians had little faith in European troops. The dominant discourse was therefore one of continuity (interviews with national officials 2009). The EU would have the same number of troops, mandate, capabilities and command and control structures as the NATO operation (Council 2003, Financial Times 2003). Solana, on the other hand, thought that the military operation should also have added value for the overall effort of the EU in Bosnia. The mission should help tackle some of the most persistent problems and signal that the EU was now in the lead. In a report, Solana (2004) therefore argued for a 'new and distinct mission.' The EU mission would, after all, be in a 'very different position from that when NATO first deployed' (Solana 2004). He noted that the operation should contribute to the work of the High Representative/EU Special Representative in Bosnia and to the fight against organized crime.

The member states were less convinced. They noted that these were not traditional military tasks and they objected to their military being used for policing tasks (interviews with national officials 2009). Moreover, the Commission argued that the Bosnians had to take ownership. Using EU troops for the fight against organized crime was not a good idea. In an inter-institutional competence battle, it also objected to strengthening the EU Special Representative, who reported to Solana (interviews with Commission officials 2009). At the end of the day, more coordination, rather than a reallocation of competences, between the actors on the ground was stressed (Council 2004). The fight against organized crime became eventually a key supporting military task rather than a primary objective (Council 2004, Leakey 2006). Apart from the discussions over mandate, EU officials did not play a prominent role. They facilitated the negotiations between the EU and NATO on practical details, such as the delineation of the mandate, 'over the horizon' troops, and the role of NATO's regional command in Naples (Bertin 2008).

Discussions over the mandate started once again with the appointment of the first Force Commander, General David Leakey. Solana instructed him, during a personal meeting, to carry out a 'new and distinct' mission using the supporting tasks from the mandate (interviews with Althea and national officials 2009). In accordance, Leakey decided to make the fight against organized crime the 'centrepiece of his agenda' (Bertin 2008, p. 68). He deployed troops to combat fuel smuggling at border crossings and to limit illegal logging in the timber industry (Leakey 2006). His actions met resistance from many of the member states, the EU Police Mission in Bosnia, and the Commission. The five major contributing member states were 'very, very unenthusiastic, if not in opposition, to their military being used this way' (interview with Althea official 2009). The member states eventually reacted by reducing the number of troops in Bosnia after Leakey's departure in 2005, which equates to *post hoc* re-contracting. The troubles between the military operation and the Police Mission led to more coordination and a stronger role for the EU Special Representative.

Solana thus played a role in getting the handover from NATO on the EU agenda. He took the

initiative and teamed up with the important member states. They managed to keep the mission on the agenda amidst opposition from the United States during the Iraq crisis. As such, Solana had modest influence during agenda-setting. Solana and the CSDP officials were, however, much less effective in pursuing their interests in the planning and conduct of the operation. Solana's aim to focus on the fight against organized crime met conservatism from the member states in the Military Committee. When Leakey tried to make the EU operation 'new and distinct' through the fight against organized crime, the member states reduced forces. The member states thus exerted clear control over EU officials during this operation. Military doctrine presented the member states with guidance in this respect.

Military operation in Chad

In 2008, the EU launched a 3700-strong military operation in eastern Chad and the Central African Republic for a period of exactly one year. The purpose of this operation was to provide a 'safe and secure environment' for internally displaced people, refugees from the neighboring Darfur region, and personnel from the UN. After the mandate had ended, the UN took over the well-functioning military operation.

Shortly after the election of the French President Sarkozy in 2007, France suggested that the EU should become engaged in the humanitarian crisis in Darfur (*Correspondance européenne*, 21 May 2007). This led to extensive brainstorming between the France and EU officials in the crisis management directorates, who were secretly invited to the military headquarters in Paris (interview with EU official 2010). It resulted in the Council Secretariat writing an options paper. This gave EU officials the opportunity to put forward a realistic plan (Mattelaer 2008). It focussed the attention squarely on eastern Chad, where insecurity continued to affect the lives of hundreds of thousands of Darfur refugees. Within the UN, a military operation to eastern Chad had already been discussed, but the Chadian Government was reluctant to host UN peacekeepers (UN 2007). France together with the officials in the crisis management directorates therefore suggested a one-year EU bridging operation, after which the UN could take over (interview with Council Secretariat and national officials 2009, 2010).

The early involvement of EU officials was important with a view to the framing of the operation. From the start it was clear that Germany and the United Kingdom were unenthusiastic about this French adventure (Mattelaer 2008, Berg 2009, Dijkstra 2010b). Support from the other member states was thus crucial for the operation to materialize. EU officials therefore stressed that it was going to be a humanitarian mission in support of activities of the UN. This fitted well with 'effective multilateralism' as emphasized in the European Security Strategy. Moreover, the EU would be an impartial actor with respect to local politics and the operation would only last one year. It were these conditions that eventually ensured that most of the member states looked favorably at the operation (interviews with national officials 2009). In addition, EU officials helped France with the complex negotiations on the UN Security Council Resolution 1778. They also raised external expectations through a fact-finding mission in August 2007. Finally, they used their position and expertise to underestimate the common costs of the operation (interviews with Council Secretariat officials 2009, 2010). These costs were a significant concern for Germany and the United Kingdom.

Despite these efforts to make the operation look appealing, the member states remained very reluctant to come on board (Dijkstra 2010b). Germany and the United Kingdom simply refused to participate in the operation and objected to the common costs. Other member states declined to make contributions during the various force generation conferences. It remained difficult for them to see how the EU could be perceived as impartial given close ties between France and the incumbent regime. In addition, they realized that the overall investment in eastern Chad would serve French interests most (Mattelaer 2008). EU officials could not do much about it. At the end of the day, Sarkozy called his counterparts to ask for troop contributions (interviews with national

officials 2009). Some of the member states (notably Ireland and Poland) were forthcoming, but overall enthusiasm remained limited. Most were happy to politically support the operation, but not to send troops.

In addition to these problems with force generation, it took considerable time to activate the Operations Headquarters. This resulted in a delay of the operation, which only reached Initial Operational Capability on 15 March 2008. A shortfall in helicopters made the military operation less mobile (interview with EUFOR official 2009). Moreover, the situation on the ground differed from what the EU had planned for. Instead of confrontations with armed rebels, the EU was faced with lower-level petty crime and human rights violations in the refugee camps, for which it was ill-equipped (Oxfam 2008). The main cause was a security vacuum resulting from the absence of UN police trainers. EU officials in Brussels could do little about it. Problems became worse when the Security Council failed to agree on time on the handover. The EU eventually had to force the UN to do their planning and to arrive on time by means of high-level interventions (interviews with EU and UN officials 2009). It still had to make more than 2000 troops and capabilities available for the UN force to guarantee an adequate follow-on.

As with the military operation in Bosnia, EU officials played a role in the agenda-setting of the mission. While it is difficult to exactly distinguish between France and the CSDP officials in the crisis management directorates (some of whom held the French nationality), EU officials clearly supported France in creating momentum, framing the operation and eventually pushing it through at the political level. The institutional position of the EU officials was critical in this respect. They were early involved in the process and their centrality helped them significantly. EU officials, on the contrary, played hardly a role in the planning, the force generation, and implementation. These issues were decided by the member states, many of whom lacked enthusiasm for the mission. The military-strategic planning and the conduct of the operation were done by the military headquarters in Paris.

Aceh Monitoring Mission

The Aceh Monitoring Mission was a direct result from a peace agreement between the Government of Indonesia and the Aceh rebels. This peace agreement had been negotiated after the tsunami had devastated the province of Aceh in 2004. For 15 months, EU and ASEAN monitors oversaw the implementation of the agreement, which included the monitoring of weapons decommissioning and the withdrawal of the Indonesian army (2005–2006).

The peace negotiations between the parties, following the tsunami, took place in Helsinki. They were mediated by the office of the former Finnish President Ahtisaari. Ahtisaari realized that he would not be able to oversee the implementation of an eventual agreement (Accord 2008). In January 2005, shortly after the first round of negotiations, he therefore contacted Solana and the Deputy Director-General External Relations of the Council Secretariat, Pieter Feith about possible EU involvement (Accord 2008). He had known Feith since the 1970s. They told him to ‘go ahead’ with mediation (Merikallio 2008, p. 80). Following a second round of negotiations in February, the EU planners started to look into a possible monitoring mission. In May, they presented their plans to the negotiating parties in Helsinki (Merikallio 2008; interviews with Council Secretariat officials 2009, 2010). This created external expectations, at least with the negotiating parties, that the EU would be involved in the implementation of the peace agreement. These expectations only increased when EU officials went on a fact-finding mission to the region in June. It effectively created a fait accompli for the member states. The outside world expected the EU to deliver.

The possible Aceh Monitoring Mission was not very popular with the member states. While they recognized that the EU could bring added value, only four were initially in favor (Grevi 2005). National ambassadors in Jakarta, in fact, had been sending critical signals about the situation on the ground (Merikallio 2008; interview with Commission official 2009). Various member states were

thus wary about a ‘mission creep.’ Financing the operation was also a particular problem, as the CFSP budget was insufficient to cover all expenses. On 26 July, Solana intervened by addressing the ambassadors in Brussels. He noted that the EU had no other choice than to undertake this mission (interviews with Council Secretariat, Commission and national officials 2009). Meanwhile, EU officials creatively suggested financing the operation through ad hoc contributions of the member states. None of the member states was particularly pleased with this solution, but they decided to go along with it. Many noted, however, that the financial structure of this mission did not set a precedent (Grevi 2005).

EU officials also played a crucial role in setting the parameters of the mission. Noteworthy is the limited mandate, which was only concerned with security issues and excluded development and human rights, and the initial six-month duration of the mission (Schulze 2007). This was the best means for the EU to declare success and to get out as soon as possible. Moreover, EU officials kept the total authorized strength of the mission to a minimum. This was presented as a fait accompli to the negotiating parties and the member states. EU officials furthermore exceptionally wrote all the planning documents on the ground in Aceh, because of time pressure and the lack of planning staff at headquarters during the summer (interviews with Council Secretariat and national officials 2009). Finally, EU planners suggested an Initial Monitoring Presence – unforeseen in the peace agreement – to cover for the period between the peace agreement and the deployment of the EU monitors. It would avoid an immediate escalation.

EU officials were also intensively involved in the implementation of the mission. Feith became the Head of Mission on the ground and he took many of his staff members with him from Brussels to fill the senior positions. While the decommissioning of weapons was primarily a Finnish-led exercise, Feith pro-actively promoted confidence between the parties. An important example is the Commission on Security Arrangements (COSA). While not foreseen in the peace agreement, Feith used these meetings – initially twice per week – to discuss with the parties all incidents that had taken place and issues that might threaten the peace agreement. Many observers stress the importance of pro-active monitoring (Schulze 2007, Kirwan 2008; interviews with mission staff 2009). Feith and his colleagues had an interest in making the operation a success and they acted in this regard.

EU officials thus played a crucial role in the Aceh Monitoring Mission. In close cooperation with President Ahtisaari, the mission was put on the agenda. EU officials then raised external expectations with the negotiating parties, while keeping the member states out of the loop. Solana used his political profile to stress the importance of this mission for the EU. His civil servants found a solution to budgetary problems and they used their position as liaison between the negotiating parties and the member states to set the important parameters of the mission. After the mission was launched, EU officials took up the senior positions in the mission to affect the implementation on the ground. Contrary to the previous two military operations, EU officials thus played a major role in Aceh. They provided leadership during agenda-setting, creatively wrote the planning documents, and affected the actual implementation of the operation on the ground.

Rule of law mission in Kosovo

Following the war in Kosovo in 1999, the UN put in place an international civilian administration. Over time, however, calls for formal independence from Serbia increased. In 2005, a status process was set in motion under the leadership of President Ahtisaari. The handover of UN responsibilities to a EU rule of law mission (EULEX) was a cornerstone in this process. Due to status-related problems this handover was messy. Yet since 2008 some 2800 EU and local experts are carrying out executive tasks and helping local authorities in the areas of police, justice, and customs.

EU officials have been closely involved in this process. Following the riots in March 2004, which triggered the status negotiations, Solana put one of his civil servants, Søren Jessen-Petersen,

at the helm of the UN mission (interviews with UN officials 2010). In addition, his Western Balkans Director, Stefan Lehne, became involved in the negotiations under Ahtisaari. In the spring of 2005, Solana moreover co-authored a paper with Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn on the future EU involvement in Kosovo (Solana and Rehn 2005a). One of the major points was that the EU would play a key role in Kosovo by taking over functions from the UN. However, the report also noted that an EU presence could not be a simple continuation of the UN administration, as the reputation of the UN had been badly damaged. The EU would instead focus on the rule of law.

The appointment of Jessen-Peterson led to brainstorming meetings on the ground in Kosovo about the future international presence. The EU started to send over experts and over time it became conventional wisdom that the EU would take over (interview with UN official 2010). At the end of 2005, Solana and Rehn wrote a second report (Solana and Rehn 2005b), which suggested a fact-finding mission. This fact-finding mission, which took place in February 2006, in turn, stated that any EU presence had to be carefully planned. A permanent planning team on the ground was required. The member states went along and the planning team was established in May. It sent its first options paper to the member states in September 2006 (Grevi 2009). In line with the discourse of Solana (and of Ahtisaari), the planning team suggested a light presence of less than 1000 international staff members. This light option became unattainable when it became increasingly clear that there would not be an agreement between the Government of Serbia and the authorities of Kosovo on status (interviews with planning team, UN and Council Secretariat officials 2010, 2011). The member states insisted, for example, on robust anti-riot capabilities, more judges, and border guards.⁷

The disagreements on status also had an impact in Brussels, where the member states were divided (Dijkstra 2011b). Because it was difficult to plan on the basis of disagreement, EU officials assumed in their documents that there would be a final agreement on status (interviews with Council Secretariat, national officials 2010). This allowed the planning to go ahead. However, as the Kosovo dossier was divisive, the member states preferred not to talk about it regularly – particularly not at ambassador level. Since CIVCOM was at a too low level to take real decisions, the process went in circles. Eventually EU officials had to take many decisions themselves (interview with Council Secretariat and national officials 2010). The situation was worsened by the fact that since EULEX was such ambitious mission, the chain of command for civilian missions completely had to be changed. Solana already foresaw this at the Hampton Court European Council in October 2005, but it was difficult for the national diplomats in CIVCOM to agree.

In March 2007, Ahtisaari unveiled his plan for ‘supervised independence,’ which was endorsed by the Kosovo authorities but rejected by Serbia. This created a stalemate in the UN and led to the eventual unilateral declaration of independence in February 2008. Because the UN Security Council could not agree, there was no new resolution. This made it difficult for the UN to hand over functions (and equipment) to the EU (Dijkstra 2011b). The United States and leading member states put tremendous political pressure on the UN; and EU officials worked out technical details with UN counterparts (interviews with Council Secretariat and UN officials).

After Serbia finally agreed that the UN would hand over parts of its responsibilities to the EU, the mission was launched in December 2008. EULEX reached full operating capability by April 2009. While a new command and control structure was established in Brussels for this mission, in practice it has been difficult for the member states to keep control over implementation. The sheer size of the operation leads to information overload and CIVCOM delegates have more on their agenda than Kosovo. One national interviewee noted ‘[the people in the CPCC] are the real experts ... I am dealing with nine missions, so it is ... difficult to have an in-depth picture’ (2010). That having said, the room for EU officials and the mission to manoeuvre is conditioned by the tremendous political difficulties on the ground. The mission has been pro-active with arranging

⁷ Needless to say, three of the original four Integrated Police Units have withdrawn since the start of EULEX. Their added value is limited given the professionalism of the Kosovo Police and the presence of NATO.

practical matters, but in implementation it came, time and again, across political issues.

EU officials thus played an important role with regard to EULEX. They were very early involved (much earlier than all the member states) and they occupied places in all the important parts of the process. Together with Rehn, Solana set some of the parameters of the operation, although the changing international environment required some adjustments to the initial plans. Assuming settlement, EU officials planned the mission and it became conventional wisdom that the EU would take over. EU officials had to take a leadership role, because the member states in the committees did not want to discuss Kosovo too often and because they lacked the expertise to get this operation off the ground. In the launching and early conduct of the operation, EU officials took a pro-active approach. Apart from the institutional role in agenda-setting, EU officials thus exerted influence due to their expertise *vis-à-vis* the member states and the overload of information, which the member states have difficulties dealing with.

CONCLUSION

The influence of the EU institutions has historically triggered much scholarly debate. For a long time, this debate played particularly in the domain of the internal market and the regulatory policies. Foreign policy as the exemplification of ‘high politics’ was generally considered a member states’ affair (Hoffmann 1966). With the strengthening of the EU bureaucracy, as part of the Treaty of Amsterdam and the Cologne European Council, the absence of the EU institutions in foreign policy is no longer obvious. The CSDP services in the Council Secretariat, and now in the EEAS, are generally considered important actors in Brussels. This article has analyzed under which conditions they exert influence in the policy process.

The empirical evidence suggests that EU officials played a significant role in the agenda-setting of the CSDP missions and that they had more influence in civilian than in military operations. Their prominence in agenda-setting can be explained by their central position in policy-making and their resulting very early involvement in planning. In the case of Bosnia, Solana was an early proponent of the takeover from NATO. For the military operation in Chad, EU officials teamed up with France. With regard to the Aceh Monitoring Mission, EU officials had strong contacts with Ahtisaari. As for the rule of law mission in Kosovo, EU officials were omnipresent from the beginning and acted with considerable foresight. While in all cases EU officials thus played a role in agenda-setting, it is noteworthy that in military operations they closely cooperated with key member states, whereas in civilian missions they were more actors in their own right.

This variation between military and civilian missions was significant as well in the decision-making and implementation of the CSDP. The efforts of EU officials to make the operation in Bosnia ‘new and distinct’ were blocked by the member states. EU officials likewise faced tremendous opposition from some member states and a lack of military contributions in the case of Chad. The mission was eventually launched due to intensive French lobbying. The implementation took place outside the Brussels’ realm. In civilian crisis management, it was quite a different story. EU officials were the main drivers behind getting the Aceh Monitoring Mission approved. They suggested the limited mandate and they had an impact on implementation. In the case of Kosovo, EU officials pushed for another mandate than that of the UN mission. They took a pro-active role in the launch and implementation. For the member states, it was difficult to exercise control due to the problems surrounding status and the lack of sufficient civilian expertise at committee level.

The European External Action Service has now taken over all the CSDP services. While most of the empirical material dealt with pre-Lisbon policy-making, the crisis management set-up in the EU has not changed. One would therefore not expect dramatically different results. Several comments on the changes are needless to say in place. First, the High Representative has received a bigger mandate in terms of scope. Not only did she take over Solana’s portfolio, she is also in

charge of the external relations bits of the European Commission. It is therefore not a surprise that she has taken less of an interest in CSDP and that she has not been pushing for new operations as much as Solana had been doing during his terms in office (Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet and Rieger 2011).⁸ Second, while prior to Lisbon the chairmanship of the Political and Security Committee and CIVCOM rotated among the member states, they have become permanent positions embedded within the EEAS. This has removed potential obstacles for EU officials to push for their preferences, yet it has also resulted in less dynamism.

Overall, however, EU officials have retained their important role in the CSDP policy-making. This article has shown that in a number of instances (agenda-setting and civilian crisis management) they exert significant influence. In many other instances, member states have established relevant control mechanism to avoid excessive influence. One of the challenges of the member states, in this respect, is to better organize their civilian crisis management structures. Too often, there is a lack of coordination between the different line ministries in the capitals (justice, interior, defence, finance, and foreign) and an absence of the necessary expertise. The status of CIVCOM can also be increased in Brussels. Without appropriate control mechanisms, EU officials will continue to benefit.

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⁸ At the time of writing, several small-scale CSDP operations in Africa were under consideration. The momentum for these operations came from the CSDP services rather than from the High Representative herself.

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