



## OPTIONS FOR ENSURING COMMAND AND CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS FOR EUROPEAN UNION OPERATIONS – THE DIMENSION OF COOPERATION WITH NATO –

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*The operational dynamics associated with the development of European security and defence cooperation has undergone significant developments in recent years, reflected in the European Union's numerous operational commitments. In this context, the issue of developing command and control arrangements to support an ever-expanding operational agenda has been a constant concern. We can talk about structuring a model used by the European Union in which there are a number of options that this organisation can use in structuring its own operations. In this inventory, the conduct of EU operations using NATO means and capabilities was the approach initially addressed, which continues to be used in the context of the two organisations' commitments in the Balkans. In addition to the operational aspects, the use of this cooperation framework has allowed the deepening of the NATO-EU Strategic Partnership, with a positive impact on strengthening European and Euro-Atlantic security.*

*Keywords: command and control; Berlin +; capabilities; Althea; Concordia;*



## INTRODUCTION

The European Union's security and defence dimension has made significant progress over the last two decades, especially in terms of capability development and creation of the conceptual-regulatory framework reflected in the development of operational commitments. In this context, the definition of command and control ways for military crisis management operations has been an important dimension on which European debates have focused since the early stages of security and defence cooperation. Basically, this topic was one of the red threads that remained on the EU agenda, whether we are talking about the initial stage, associated with the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), or the maturity stage, through the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), promoted by the Treaty of Lisbon. The interest given to this topic is revealed from at least two perspectives. The first focuses on the political visibility given to strengthening the EU's profile as a relevant player in the field of security and defence, a level on which the issue of command and control arrangements was perceived as a relevant indicator for assessing Europe's potential for missions and operations.

The second perspective focused on the practical importance of the existence of the mechanisms and structures necessary for the conduct of operations in the absence of which they could not have materialised. In this ongoing process, EU-NATO cooperation in the operational field was the starting point. In practice, the framework established at the beginning of European security and defence cooperation continued to be a constant throughout the development of this component. Regardless of the institutional auspices under which the EU's crisis management profile will develop, the parameters of cooperation with NATO in generating and conducting operations have remained unchanged, being used in ongoing European commitments. In this context, the system developed in 2002-2003, also known as the "Berlin +" Agreements, continues to be a viable option for the EU to implement in its political decisions for launching operations.

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## PARAMETERS OF THE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM ASSOCIATED WITH EU OPERATIONS

The specific nature of the security and defence dimension in the EU's institutional and regulatory context also includes all the factors that have influenced the way the EU's command and control arrangements are structured and profiled. Firstly, it is about its intergovernmental profile and, subsequently, the voluntary nature of the contributions, which induces a significant degree of flexibility in defining the framework. CSDP-related intergovernmentalism is also likely to play a key role in member states in developing and guiding this policy of cooperation. Secondly, the coordinates of the ESDP and the CSDP have been aimed at developing a civilian-military profile of European cooperation, which has been reflected in taking up civilian and military capability objectives translated into the types of missions and operations that the EU unfolded. Last but not least, the particularities of the security and defence component concern the parameters of the NATO-EU cooperation relationship, which is mainly in the form of cooperation in operations. In this context, the procedural-functional typology that the implementation of the NATO-EU Cooperation Agreements generated for the development of the control arrangements used by the EU is placed.

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All these factors were taken into account in the creation of the European Union's command and control arrangements for EU civilian and military operations, leading to the development of a complex but useful system, illustrated by the launch of a considerable number of operational commitments with missions and tasks covering different types. Basically, we can talk about a set of options that the European Union can use to conduct missions and operations, depending on the political context, the level and type of contributions put forward, as well as the specific conditions in the theatre of operations. Equally, one can speak of a truly unique model in the context of how to develop command and control arrangements at the level of organisations and multinational arrangements involved in crisis management.

The strategic benchmarks for setting missions that CSDP can carry out, which have a decisive influence on the structuring of operational procedures for command and control arrangements, are set out in the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the EU Global Security Strategy (EUGS). According to the TEU, civilian and military capabilities

generated under the auspices of the CSDP can be used in operations outside the EU, such as: disarmament, humanitarian, rescue, evacuation, military counselling and assistance, conflict prevention and peacekeeping, crisis management operations – including peace and post-conflict stabilisation ones. The contribution to counter-terrorism missions is also considered, including from the perspective of support for third countries in carrying out these missions on their own territory [Art. 43 (1), 2012, pp. 39]. Last but not least, the strategic framework offered by the TEU draws attention to the possibility of implementing a flexible approach to structuring operational commitments. From this perspective, it is foreseen that the responsibility for carrying out missions such as those mentioned can be entrusted to a group of interested member states that have the necessary capacities to carry them out (Art. 44).

At the same time, the EUGS provides further clarification on the need for the EU to be able to respond, in addition to external commitments, to requests from member states, which may be formulated under the conditions of Art. 42 (7) 222 – assistance in case of disasters and man-made incidents. From this perspective, operational tasks related to internally combating, threats such as terrorism, hybrid, cyber ones, threats to energy security, organised crime and the external management of the EU's borders are envisaged. From this perspective, the EUGS also draws attention to the possibility of combined use of CSDP missions and operations, together with other specialised instruments and agencies available to the EU in the field of internal security (EU Global Strategy, 2016, p. 20).

From the perspective of structuring the system of governance at the strategic level of operational commitments, the EU Treaty stipulates the central role of the EU Council, supported by the coordinated work of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HRVP) and the Political Committee Security (PSC). Within this system, the PSC is responsible for monitoring the security situation, and in case of deployment of operational commitments, exercises political control and ensures their strategic orientation (Art. 38). In practice, the Political and Security Committee acts as a decision-making support element for the EU Council, from the perspective of assessing commitment options as well as key operational planning documents. By the same token, the PSC plays a central role in preparing



the regulatory framework needed to launch an operation, namely to make a recommendation to the Council based on the views expressed by the EU Military Committee and the specialised civilian structures. During its operations, the role of the PSC is to keep the Council regularly informed of developments in the fulfilment of its mandate (EU Council Decision 2001, pp. 1-3).

## MILITARY COMMAND AND CONTROL OPTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF EU-NATO COOPERATION

From a chronological perspective, the adoption in December 1999 of the EU's first Global Security and Defence Objective did not incorporate the development of a command and control capability for EU operations. The chosen method targeted the use of NATO capabilities, the negotiations on this topic including laborious steps to develop a framework for cooperation between the two organisations relevant in the operational field.

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The background to these arrangements can be found in the decisions taken at meetings (Berlin, Brussels, 1996) of the Foreign Ministers of NATO member countries held between June and December 1996. These referred to the framework of cooperation at that time between NATO and the Western European Union (WEU)<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the possibility was established for the latter to use allied capabilities (separable, but not separate) for possible WEU-led operations. These guidelines were to be formally reconfirmed at a higher level at the NATO Summit in Washington (23-25 April 1999). The decisions made on this occasion included the adoption of flexible options in providing command-control elements for WEU operations. These were aimed at identifying European command options at NATO level, as well as an allied command to provide the necessary command-control arrangements for the operation.

The decisions made in Washington (1999) also took advantage of the context created by the adoption of the French-British Declaration of December 1998, which stated the interest in *“creating an autonomous*

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<sup>1</sup> An organisation created by the signing of the Brussels Treaty on 17 March 1948 by Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, with the defensive aim of ensuring the defence of Western Europe in the event of aggression. Article 5 of the Brussels Treaty stipulated that collective defence would be ensured in the event of aggression against any of the members of the organisation. The WEU continued to operate with a low profile until 2010, with the central role of ensuring collective defence being taken over by NATO.

capacity of the EU to respond to international crises when NATO is not involved” (Chaillot Paper 47, 2001, pp. 8-10). Against this background, the Washington Summit expressed the allied readiness to support the EU’s operational commitments through the relevant elements of the NATO command structure. The measures envisaged concerned:

- Ensuring EU access to NATO capabilities in support of the Union’s military operations planning process.
- Creating the necessary conditions to ensure the availability of the capabilities needed for EU operations.
- Identify the options for securing the European order from NATO for EU operations, with direct reference to the fulfilment by DSACEUR (Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe) of this responsibility.
- Adapting the NATO Planning System (NDPP) to provide the necessary response to EU operations. The aim was to manage, at the level of the force planning system, the fact that most EU member states were also members of the North Atlantic Alliance, and therefore had the same package of forces and capabilities committed to both organisations<sup>2</sup>.

In these coordinates, the following years marked the development of the political framework of the cooperation relationship, starting from the advanced landmarks in Washington and considering the initiation of the process of transferring the WEU *acquis* to the EU. Thus, on 16 December 2002, the EU-NATO Declaration on European Security and Defence Policy was adopted, which addressed the possibility of making available the means and capabilities of NATO planning and command to the EU ([www.nato.int-1](http://www.nato.int-1)). On these coordinates, on 17 March 2003, the practical aspects were adopted in the form of Cooperation Agreements between the two organisations, known as the “Berlin +” Agreements. The issues regulated through them aimed at:

- Information security issues arising from the conduct of EU operations using NATO means and capabilities.
- The EU’s use of allied planning resources and capabilities in its own crisis management operations. To this end, a long-term



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<sup>2</sup> According to the NATO Washington Summit Communiqué. *An Alliance for 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, <https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-064e.htm>, 15 December 2021. It should also be noted that the Treaty of Amsterdam (signed on 2 October 1997) emphasised the full connection between NATO and the EU, including from the perspective of taking over the latter’s functions [Art. J (7 (1) TEU Amsterdam)].



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perspective was envisaged by including the requirements and types of capabilities anticipated to be required for EU operations in the NATO defence planning process.

- EU access to NATO’s common capabilities (communications and command) for its own operations.
- Establish the necessary procedures for the provision, monitoring, return and eventual withdrawal of NATO capabilities.
- Defining the central role of DSACEUR as the main commanding option for EU operations using NATO resources and capabilities.
- Structuring the NATO-EU consultation system during an EU-led crisis management operation (Berlin Plus agreement).

The institutional set associated with the command and control elements was completed in December 2003 by the adoption, at EU level, of a concept document (Chaillot Paper 67, 2003, p. 45). That was the first step in the development of institutional interaction aimed at the implementation of operational coordination on a permanent basis, including from the perspective of the “Berlin +” provisions. The main aim was to create an EU cell within the Supreme Allied Command in Europe (SHAPE), doubled by a liaison within the structure of the Allied Southern Command (AFSOUTH) in Naples, responsible for the Balkan perimeter. At the same time, NATO was invited to open institutional liaison arrangements at the level of the EU General Staff (EUMS). Under these auspices, the Chief of Staff AFSOUTH became the Chief of Staff of the EU Command Element, supported by an EU Director of Operations (Rittimann, 2021, p. 1)<sup>3</sup>.

From the perspective of the operational planning steps, in the case of the EU decision to launch an operation using NATO capabilities, the following sequence was considered:

- The EU Presidency and the High Representative are informing NATO of their intention to launch an operation using allied capabilities. In this context, the request for the NATO agreement to appoint DSACEUR as commander of the respective operation is also formulated.

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<sup>3</sup> The rationale for creating the liaison element within AFSOUTH was to cover both operational and tactical issues and the issues related to the activation of reserve forces under the responsibility of the Naples Command.

- The EU Political and Security Committee approves the Concept of the operation and initiates the process of drawing up the Joint Action. The documents are also sent to NATO during the consultation process.
- Formulation of the NATO response to accept the EU's request regarding the role of DSACEUR. The reply shall provide the conditions for the completion of the Joint Action required to launch the operation.
- Initiation by the Military Committee of the Military Initiation Directive. The PSC/COPS also issues an additional request for the structuring of the EUOHQ within SHAPE.



## OPERATIONAL EXAMPLES

The development of the framework for operational cooperation between the two organisations was also influenced by the security developments in the former Yugoslav space and the humanitarian catastrophe that accompanied the outbreak of war in this area. The hotbed of instability has pulled together the efforts of the two organisations. Thus, in 1995, NATO launched the first crisis management operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the end of the Cold War. It was deployed in December 1995, with the official title of the Implementation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (IFOR), on the coordinates established by Resolution no. 1031 [S/RES/1031 (1995)] of the UN Security Council. Also known as the *Joint Endeavor*, the NATO Operation was a consistent commitment (approximately 60,000 troops), made up of contributions from member and partner states. The main objectives were to support the process of implementing the military provisions of the Peace Agreement<sup>4</sup> signed on 14 December 1995, in Paris, and to create the conditions for the return of war refugees. Thanks to IFOR's work, the local security environment has made great strides, best illustrated by the return of a large number of refugees and the holding of general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in September 1996.

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<sup>4</sup> The *General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, better known as the *Dayton Agreement*, after Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, near Dayton, Ohio, USA, where they were negotiated in November 1995.



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Against this background, in November-December 1996, a plan to strengthen the security situation was adopted, in which NATO had an operational contribution. IFOR's mandate was implemented until December 1996, when it would be taken over by a new NATO mission (Bosnia and Herzegovina Stabilization Force – SFOR). Pursuant to Security Council Resolution No. 108<sup>5</sup>, SFOR was to ensure the continuation of IFOR's actions aimed at implementing the military aspects of the Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its troops were around 32,000 troops from NATO member states as well as from partner states. In the following years, against the background of the normalisation of the security situation in the area, the SFOR troops would decrease, reaching approximately 12,000 soldiers in the period 2001-2002. In terms of the chain of command, SFOR was placed under the authority of AFSOUTH. In parallel with the development of the multinational commitment on the military dimension, the normalisation of the security situation was also approached from the perspective of civilian issues, in particular through the deployment of the Civilian Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH). According to the mandate established by the Security Council Resolution no. 1035 of 21 December 1995 (S/RES/1035 (1995)), the role of this mission was to contribute both to the normalisation of internal security and to the training of local police forces.

The escalation of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia led to a strengthening of international engagement in regions of northern Macedonia, where the security situation had been deteriorating rapidly since March 2001. Prompt intervention by the international community led to the signing of the *Ohrid Agreement* (13 August 2001), which paved the way for the launch of multinational operational commitments. The first steps in this direction were taken by NATO by launching Operation *Essential Harvest* on 22 August 2001. This was intended to be a short-term (30-day) commitment to collect illegal weapons from Albanian insurgent groups. The structure of the mission included contributions from European allies, with logistical support provided by the US. The goal was to be achieved very quickly, with the operation ending on 26 September 2021. In the meantime, the Macedonian

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<sup>5</sup> The text of Resolution 1088 can be consulted at <https://www.nato.int/ifor/un/u961212b.htm>, retrieved on 12 September 2021.

authorities were asking NATO to continue its commitment to normalise the security situation. Allied debates led to the decision to launch a new commitment aimed at supporting the international civilian presence (EU and OSCE) deployed in Macedonia to monitor the implementation process of the Ohrid Agreement. The new mission would be called *Amber Fox* and would run from 27 September 2001 to 15 December 2002. Subsequently, the mandate was extended by missions in support of government institutions to take control of security throughout the territory. This approach would be implemented under the auspices of the third operation launched by NATO, which began on 16 December 2002. Known as *Allied Harmony*, the new operation would have significantly fewer staff, in line with previous progress.

From an EU perspective, events in the former Yugoslavia were a distinct point on the agenda of political debates. An additional perspective was induced by the adoption of the Declaration of St. Malo (4 December 1998) (cvce.eu), in which the Franco-British Summit indicated the need to develop the EU's autonomous capacity to be able to make operational commitments in the field of crisis management. Against this background, a year later, the Helsinki European Council (10-11 December 1999) reiterated this message, stressing the importance of developing the EU's capacity to act when NATO is not engaged. In support of this goal, the decision was made to create a Reaction Force with strength of 50-60,000 troops, capable of being deployed within 60 days and with the possibility of being kept in the theatre for up to a year (Helsinki European Council).

In parallel with the development of crisis management instruments, the EU continued, in partnership and coordination with NATO, its diplomatic involvement in the management of the Balkan conflict situation. These steps led to the conclusion of peace agreements in the area and the creation of conditions for the deployment of peacekeeping missions. At the NATO Summit in Prague (20-21 November 2002), the North Atlantic Alliance reconfirmed the agreement on EU access to its own means and capabilities for crisis management operations. This decision was based on the fact that the EU expressed its interest in taking on a greater role in crisis management in the Balkans, during 2002 and was formalised following the Copenhagen European Council (December 2002).



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The level of interaction and the convergence of transatlantic efforts in managing the situation in the region was also a distinct item on the agenda of the EU-US Summit in May 2002. Under these auspices, strengthening the partnership in the context of crisis management was addressed with priority, in direct connection with the security developments in the Balkans and in the context of the initiation of EU operational commitments on the civilian component in this area (EU-US Summit).

In early January 2003, the Macedonian authorities called on the EU to consider deploying a military mission in support of the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement and supporting the institution-building process in the field of security reform. According to the provisions of Joint Action 2003/92/CFSP (OJL, 2003, L 34), adopted by the EU on 27 January 2003, the planning process was given the green light on the coordinates of the “Berlin +” Agreements, in order to launch a military operation as a successor to the mission *Allied Harmony*. From this perspective, NATO was invited to accept the appointment of Admiral Rainer Feist, then the DSACEUR, to serve as operational commander of the EU mission. It also called for NATO approval to organise operational command (OHQ) within SHAPE. The entire chain of command associated with the operational commitment was to operate under EU political control and strategic direction, with the operational commander being required to regularly inform EU structures. Through them, NATO would be regularly informed on how to use the capabilities made available to the EU mission. The initiation of the EU approach was also reflected in the acceleration of negotiations on the conclusion of the Agreements, which were finalised on 17 March 2003 through an exchange of letters between the EU High Representative, Javier Solana, and NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson.

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for the implementation of the agreement. The implementation of the “Berlin +” cooperation framework was reflected in the implementation of the EU’s advanced measures in January 2003, with strategic coordination ensured through regular meetings at the level of the Political and Security Committee and the North Atlantic Council. In operational terms, OHQ’s associated staff within SHAPE, as well as those in the EU Command Element established in AFSOUTH had double subordination in relation to the two organisations.

At the level of the theatre of operations, the takeover of the main responsibility by the EU operation was followed by the transformation of the NATO presence by reducing the residual presence in NATO HQ Skopje, led by a High Military Representative of the North Atlantic Alliance. To ensure the transition process and effective coordination at the area of responsibility, the *Concordia Force Command (FHQ)* was placed with the NATO structure (nato.int.-2, 2003). All these elements contributed to the transfer process between the missions of the two organisations, the procedure used by most contributing states being to keep important segments of their quotas under the auspices of the EU. *Concordia* ran until 15 December, with an extension of its mandate in September 2003, with around 350 troops. During its tenure, *Concordia* made a substantial contribution to the implementation of the Framework Agreement, which eliminated the risk of instability and conflict being resumed. Also, the implementation of the *Berlin + Agreements* ran smoothly, proving to be a functional solution to ensure the continuity of the commitment. Following the completion of Operation *Concordia*, the European Union launched a civilian police mission, *EUPOL Proxima* (2003-2005), which focused on supporting the reform of the police force and border management.

In the context created by the launch of Operation *Concordia*, the development of EU-NATO cooperation has made significant progress, both in terms of coordination in the conduct of crisis management assistance programs and in terms of strengthening institutional dialogue and consultation. To this end, on 29 July 2003, the two organisations adopted a Strategic Guidance Framework, the main role of which was the “*Convergent Approach to Security and Stability in the Western Balkans*” ([www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu)). Through this approach, the prevailing option in addressing security challenges is in the context of the evolving operational profile of the EU in the field



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of crisis management. There is also a structured agenda to harmonise the potential of the two organisations in terms of supporting the stabilisation process, as well as assisting states in carrying out security sector reform programs. Based on these guidelines, the European Council of 12 December 2003 indicated the EU's readiness to play a stronger role in the stabilisation efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including through a military mission. From an institutional perspective, the European Council indicated the need to accelerate the process of implementing the permanent EU-NATO liaison arrangements, on the coordinates proposed by the EU Presidency (mentioned above), which aimed, in practice, at formalising the typology used for Operation *Concordia*.

Against this background, on the occasion of the NATO Summit in Istanbul (28-29 June 2004), the decision was reached to end the SFOR operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the end of the year. Subsequently, appreciations were expressed for the EU's readiness to take on new operational responsibilities in this area, explicitly mentioning the option of using the "*Berlin +*" Agreements to launch a military operation (www.nato.int - 3). This was to complement the EU's civilian police engagement on 1 January 2003. The EU option was presented to the UN Security Council by letter from the Irish Foreign Minister (29 June 2003), who held the rotating Presidency of the European Union. According to it, the EU's strong message of launching a military mission to support the stabilisation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina was reiterated, based on the provisions of the Dayton Accords (S/2004/522).

Responding to the convergence lines outlined at EU-NATO level, the UN Security Council adopted on 9 July 2004, Resolution No. 1551, which confirmed the applicability of the international framework for the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and for an EU military mission (S/RES/1551, 2004), which enabled the beginning of the planning process. Subsequently, the EU Council adopted Joint Action 2004/570/CFSP (OJL, 2004, pp. 10-14) of 12 July 2004 on the launch of the EU military operation under the name *Althea*. The structuring of the planning process, respectively of the command and control arrangements, was done in the same approach used for *Concordia*. Admiral Feist took over as operational commander, C2 elements being secured through the use of NATO means and capabilities. The initial

structure included a number of 7,000 troops to be secured through the transfer of SFOR contributing states to EUFOR Althea. Similar to the decision to reduce NATO's presence, the end of the SFOR mission was followed by the establishment of a new allied structure, NATO HQ Sarajevo. It would be located next to EUFOR Command in Camp Butmir, an additional justified option in terms of coordination between EU contingent missions and NATO HQ tasks in support of defence reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the fight against terrorism and supporting the work of the International Criminal Court in The Hague (Bertin, p. 74). Gradually, the staff and structure of *Althea* changed substantially as the security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina returned to normal. The mission currently includes around 600 EU member states and partner troops, supported by a reserve (shape.nato.int) with a regional geographical profile covering the perimeter of the Balkans.

## CONCLUSIONS

Clearly, the analysis of the option of providing command and control arrangements for EU operations through the use of NATO capabilities cannot be unidirectional, as its implications go beyond operational aspects. Thus, the importance of those mechanisms based on the "*Berlin +*" *Agreements* is valued primarily in the political arena. Their signing, after several years of negotiations, has been instrumental in overcoming differences between some member states and the United States over the development of European security and defence cooperation. The completion of the agreements and the launch of the first EU operations in the Balkan perimeter were limited to the context of that period, deeply marked by the implications of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the expansion of the US and NATO operational effort in Afghanistan. In this context, the way in which the concerns of non-member states of both organisations are concerned with how to develop European cooperation in the field of security and defence, as is the case in Turkey, Canada, Norway and, last but not least, the USA. From this perspective, the "*Berlin +*" *Agreements* played a key role in developing their contribution to the European Union's crisis management operations in the coming years.

Positive reflections can also be seen in the structuring of the framework for participation in the allied command and control arrangements of some EU member states (e.g. Finland, Sweden).



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However, there were a number of limitations on the possibility of accommodating highly complex political issues in these cooperation arrangements, which prevented some EU member states (Cyprus and Malta) from participating in the implementation of these agreements.

Equally, the assessment of political relevance cannot exclude the beneficial effects of the constant security situation on the Balkan perimeter. In practice, the conclusion of agreements and the launch of EU missions have ensured the continuity of international engagement in supporting the stabilisation and normalisation process in this region. The coordinates mentioned enabled the premises for the development of the European and Euro-Atlantic course for the states in the area and the substantial reduction of the security uncertainties in this perimeter.

From the perspective of the process of developing European cooperation and maturing the EU's operational profile, cooperation arrangements and, subsequently, ensuring the launch of commitments through the use of NATO capabilities were likely to support this development. It is clear that these corresponded to a distinct stage during the European project in which the level of expertise and the capacity to generate substantial operational commitments were in the embryonic stage. In practice, the definition of operational cooperation arrangements between the two organisations has significantly contributed to overcoming these difficulties inherent in any initial stage, providing the necessary transition interval, strengthened through an effective approach, including in terms of financial and resource implications. Against this background, the definition of operational arrangements has substantially contributed to the development of a true culture of NATO-EU cooperation, underpinning the Strategic Partnership between these organisations by adopting a comprehensive agenda. In the absence of the framework for cooperation created through the "Berlin +" Agreements, it is difficult to assess how the multidisciplinary profile of NATO-EU cooperation could have reached today's level, developed successively through Declarations adopted by the President of the European Council, the President European Commission and NATO Secretary General, 2016-2018.

In terms of technical aspects and operational effects, in the context of the implementation of the EU-NATO cooperation framework, the balance is undoubtedly positive. The supporting elements of this assessment can be seen from the perspective of the fulfilment

of the mandate of the EU missions deployed in the Balkans at the level of which there was no syncope or regressions in strengthening the security situation. Similarly, the lessons learned from the EU's operational commitments reveal the functionality of this cooperation framework and the benefits of the *mil-to-mil cooperation* on the contingents deployed by the two organisations in different locations in the Balkans. The capitalisation of the practice accumulated in the latter aspect will be valued in the coming years, by developing a practice of cooperation between EU and NATO missions in other geographical areas, such as Afghanistan, Africa, the Mediterranean, or in the context of naval efforts to combat piracy. This experience has made it possible to overcome the consequences of political differences which have not affected the use of the “*Berlin +*” *Agreements* in other regional contexts, thus providing practical solutions, with applicability in local conditions.

Last but not least, it should be noted that the conduct of operations using NATO resources and capabilities continues to be effective in the context of operations in the Balkans, ensuring the necessary predictability and coherence of security management in this geographical area. At the same time, the progressive development of European security and defence cooperation has contributed to the enrichment of the inventory of options available for the EU to carry out its own operations. In this context, the command and control arrangements are placed, including the capabilities provided by the member states and the creation of the Military Planning and Command Capability at EU level. Also, the approach of this subject in the context of the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy also includes the civilian component of crisis management, context in which the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability such operations was developed. Thus, the possibility of using the “*Berlin +*” *Agreements* strengthens the relevance of issues concerning command and control arrangements in the context of crisis management at EU level, while also offering the prospects for a multidisciplinary and relevant approach in a transatlantic context.



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*The conduct of operations using NATO resources and capabilities continues to be effective in the context of operations in the Balkans, ensuring the necessary predictability and coherence of security management in this geographical area.*



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