



DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AUTONOMOUS COMMAND AND CONTROL CAPABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE COOPERATION

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DOI: 10.55535/RMT.2022.3.07

The development of the command and control capability for the crisis management operations conducted by the European Union has been a constant element in the context of European security and defence cooperation. The particular profile of the regulatory framework governing the activities performed under the auspices of the Common Security and Defence Policy has led to a specific EU capability building process. The formulas promoted in relation to both civilian and military components have taken various forms. However, the constant trend is to consolidate the options that the EU can employ in generating and conducting its own operations. They will add to the EU-NATO cooperation framework, developed from the earliest moments of the launch of European military operations. The developments in terms of the potential to generate and lead mixed civil-military commitments have been placed on similar coordinates. In practice, the stage in the development of the EU's command and control capabilities attests to the existence of a comprehensive and equally complex instrument that the EU can employ in managing its own operational commitments.

Keywords: NATO; Operations Centre; Berlin+; command and control (C2), DSACEUR;



INTRODUCTION

The European Union is one of the most active actors in the field of crisis management. Within the almost two decades since the establishment of European security and defence cooperation, the EU has launched about 40 missions and operations having different structural levels and geographical coverage. Practically, the operational dimension has gradually become the main form of expression of the EU profile in the field of crisis management. Equally, considering the historical evolution of this project, institutionally subsumed under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and, subsequently, under the Lisbon Treaty, the operational dimension has been the main objective on which the member states efforts have focused. Illustrative in this regard is the space dedicated to this component in all the *treaties* successively adopted by the European Union since its establishment. The situation is similar with regard to the *security strategies* adopted by the EU member states in 2003 and 2016 respectively.

All these elements indicate the interest in the development of the autonomous capability to generate and conduct operational commitments as a way to concretely support effective multilateralism and to promote a strengthened profile of the EU's external action. In this approach, the main focus has been on achieving preventive action capabilities and avoiding escalating conflicts (*A Secure Europe in A Better World*, 2009, p. 34). The *Security Strategy* adopted in 2003 emphasised the necessity to deeply adapt the way in which the European Union would address conflict and instability situations starting from the premise of the dynamics of the security risks and threats forms of manifestation. Within this paradigm, the set objectives were related to the triad *activism – capability – coherence*, which, at that moment, had to guide the EU external action and the available instruments. It is evident that such an approach could not be implemented in isolation. That is why dialogue and partnership with the states and organisations with which the EU shared values were deepened.

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From the perspective of the concrete objectives¹ (Rutten, 2001, pp. 89-91) adopted in the context of European cooperation, the 2003 *Security Strategy* reflected its incipient stage and also provided the foundation for the development of that dimension. The achievements in that regard were to be emphasised in the context of the document update, five years later. Thus, it was validated the focus on optimising the capability for action (*Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy*, 2008) by the operational commitments launched by the EU, in the timeframe between the two documents, in the Balkans, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

The adoption, in June 2016, of the second Strategy, structured according to the suggestions of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini (2014-2019), represented the beginning of a new stage in the development of the EU's role and external action, in a highly different context, given the increasing globalisation. In this context, it is necessary to emphasise the diversity of opinions regarding the consistency between the two strategic documents. A relatively large analytical segment supports the absence of conceptual consistency, highlighting the major differences between the two documents in terms of content. The second current supports the conceptual consistency between the two documents, the emphasis placed on the development of an active profile and on the potential of the EU as an actor in the international security context being found as the main premise of the 2016 *Global Strategy* (EUGS). From a personal perspective, I share the second approach to this topic, given the permanence of conceptual elements, such as the support for effective multilateralism and the role of the UN in managing the security situation or the importance given to cooperation with partners. It is evident that, the strategic framework adopted in 2016 came to respond to a highly dynamic security paradigm, considering the effects generated by the proliferation of asymmetrical threats as well as of the conventional threats associated with the Russian-Georgian War (2008) and the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula (2014). Under such circumstances, the *Global Strategy* provided the EU's adapted response by integrating the available instruments in a multilateral formula having a multidisciplinary character. The geographical

¹ In compliance with the *Millennium Declaration* adopted by the European Council in Helsinki, in December 1999.

perspective of such an approach was a mixed one, bringing together the concern for the EU's vicinity, from a global perspective, justified by the interconnection of risks and threats, and the exponential potential to affect the European security. The promotion of such a vision paid particular attention to the EU's capability for action in the context of crisis management. Thus, the EUGS directions for action were aimed at *commitment – responsibility – partnerships*, a formula in which the EU's external action was based on the necessity to strengthen the member and partner states resilience. Moreover, it was taken into account the capability to project a relevant response at strategic level, subsumed under a larger objective, namely to establish an integrated approach in relation to not only the external action but also the internal harmonisation of EU policies. Against that background, defence policy became a particular focus, being highlighted the necessity for optimal interaction (*Shared Vision, Common Action*, 2016, p. 30) with other EU cooperation dimensions such as internal market, industry, space etc.

In supporting the level of ambition assumed by the EUGS, the autonomous action capability was a distinct component, associated with the role of the CSDP and the development of defence capabilities. In fact, the EUGS added additional value in substantiating a new security vision, in which cooperation under the institutional auspices provided by the Lisbon Treaty was a significant component. Practically, the CSDP was seen from the perspective of the general note based on the multidimensional approach and the implementation in all the stages of crisis and conflict situations. Moreover, the operational commitments were valued from the perspective of the EU's objective to be able to rapidly, responsibly and decisively respond to crisis situations. In addition, the CSDP operational optimisation was seen as an objective based on two pillars – *national contributions from the perspective of strengthening interoperability and development of the EU's response capability*. As for the latter, the focus was on harmonisation and synergy between different levels, including from the perspective of institutional convergence, as well as on the civil-military complementarity generalisation (ib., pp. 47-48). We can thus speak about elements of consistency in the external action strategic framework. They can be also found at the level of European cooperation in the field of security and defence (ESDP-CSDP),



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particularly at the operational dimension level. Basically, the common thread between the two strategies is represented by the central role played by the EU capability to generate operational commitments at the level of the pursued objectives.

“BERLIN+” OPTION

From a practical perspective, even since the initial stages of the development of European cooperation in the field, the types of operational commitments the EU could participate in were aimed at three formulas – *autonomous military operations*, *civilian operations* and *“Berlin+”-type operations*. The latter represented a rather particular case, derived from the evolution of the EU security and defence dimension, and in close correlation with the previous cooperation between NATO and the Western European Union² (*Final Communiqué Issued at the Ministerial Meeting of the North-Atlantic Council*, 1996). Equally, that type of operations should be also seen from the perspective of the initial stages of European cooperation under the ESDP, when the operational priority assumed by the EU was aimed at the Western Balkans area. In this regard, structuring the operational cooperation framework with NATO got absolutely necessary, considering the Allied commitments in the area as well as the incipient stages of the European project. Based on those realities, in late 2003 it was concluded a cooperation agreement between the EU and NATO, regulating the procedures through which the Allied command and control capabilities could be employed in the operations conducted by the European Union. The definition of the cooperation framework between the two organisations allowed the EU to launch the first crisis management military operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina (EUFOR ALTHEA) and former Republic of Macedonia – today, North Macedonia (Operation CONCORDIA).

As far as functioning was concerned, the *“Berlin+”* Agreement implementation entailed employing the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) to ensure, at strategic level, the functions

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² The origins of the *“Berlin +”* Agreement can be found in the parameters agreed at NATO level (decisions taken between 1994 and 1996) aimed at supporting the operations conducted by the Western European Union, see <https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1996/p96-165e.htm>, retrieved on 12 April 2022. Following the takeover of the latter’s functions at the EU level, they have been translated into the agreement between the EU and NATO.

of the EU Operational Command. In this context, the option agreed at the level of the cooperation framework was aimed at employing DSACEUR (Deputy Supreme Allied Command Europe) as the European command option for the EU “Berlin+”-type operations. At operational level, the implementation was achieved by the identification of the necessary resources at the level of NATO command structure. As for the experience of operational commitments in the Western Balkans, the utilised formula was aimed at employing the EU Command Element within the Joint Force Command in Naples (up to 2004, AFSOUTH), the EU establishing liaison structures.

NATIONAL OPTIONS FOR THE AUTONOMOUS MILITARY OPERATIONS

Simultaneously with the NATO transfer of responsibilities, the first autonomous military operation of the European Union, known as EUFOR Artemis, took place. It was launched on the basis of the EU Council Decision 2003/4321/CFSP (OJEU/OJL 147, 2003, p. 42) in DR Congo, Bunia perimeter, to ensure the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, according to the Security Council Resolution no. 1484/30.05.2003 (<https://digitallibrary.un.org/>). Although limited in duration, but effective in achieving the objectives in a high-risk environment, *Operation Artemis* has a special relevance for the discussed topic, from at least two perspectives. Firstly, it is about testing the EU’s ability to rapidly deploy relevant capabilities and staff in an impermissible operational environment. Practically, the experience and type of employment contributed decisively to the development of the concept of Battlegroups, which would be assumed at EU level, a distinct dimension of effort by adopting, in May-June 2004, a new Headline Goal³ focused on strengthening the speed of deployment. In practice, the typology of the EU operation would become the main formula for supporting the Union’s deployment capability in the field of crisis management, representing, since 2007, the preferred option to ensure the military component of the EU’s rapid response.



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³ *Headline Goal 2010*, approved by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 17 May 2004, endorsed by the European Council of 17 and 18 June 2004. The text is available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/sede110705headlinegoal2010_/sede110705headlinegoal2010_en.pdf, retrieved on 14 April 2022.



France and the United Kingdom adopted, in December 1998, during the St. Malo Summit, a Declaration in which it was stated the necessity for the EU to develop crisis management capabilities. Under those auspices, on 25 November 1999, the Franco-British Summit in London indicated the readiness of the two states to make national commands available to the EU to ensure the necessary C2 functions.

Secondly, it is about promoting the first model for conducting EU autonomous military operations. From the perspective of the conditions of the initial stage of European cooperation and the absence of structures dedicated to ensuring command and control elements (C2) at EU level, the solution adopted was aimed at using national capabilities. Thus, it was used the Operational Command (OHQ) at Mont Valérien, provided by France to ensure the operation management. In the case of *Operation Artemis*, the procedure was employed until the OHQ was provided with personnel from member states. Given France's role as a framework nation in supporting the commitment in Bunia, the use of national capability accelerated the process of preparing and launching the operation. It also ensured a high level of cohesion at the level of the chain of command, as well as at tactical level, by using a unitary set of capabilities, especially in terms of communications.

Referring to the positions of the EU member states on the possibility of developing the EU's capability to act in the field of crisis management, it must be emphasised the role of France and the United Kingdom. Their efforts were part of a trend inaugurated in the context of the crisis in the former Yugoslavian space, marked by intense conflicts and extreme humanitarian implications. The complexity of the developments in the Western Balkans highlighted the need for a much stronger role for Europeans in managing security in geographical proximity. Based on these considerations, France and the United Kingdom adopted, in December 1998, during the St. Malo Summit, a Declaration in which it was stated the necessity for the EU to develop crisis management capabilities (CVCE, 1998, <https://www.cvce.eu>). Under those auspices, on 25 November 1999, the Franco-British Summit in London indicated the readiness (Rutten, ib., pp. 77-78) of the two states to make national commands available to the EU to ensure the necessary C2 functions. The parameters thus advanced were consolidated immediately after the completion of *Operation Artemis* through the member states concrete actions. The option for using national commands to conduct autonomous military operations was addressed as a permanent option, which allowed the advancement of concrete offers from France (Mont Valérien), the United Kingdom (Northwood), Germany (Potsdam), Greece (Larissa), Italy (Rome). Following the exit of the United Kingdom from the EU, completed

on 31 January 2020, the role of Northwood Command was taken over by the contribution of Spain (OHQ Rota), whose operational capacity was validated through a crisis management exercise, held between 16 and 24 April 2018 (MILEX-18)⁴.

At the level of EU commitments, national command options have also been tested in other operations, such as EUFOR D.R. Congo (April-November 2006), in which OHQ was provided by Germany, including its commander, in the person of a German General Karlheinz Viereck. To that were added the operations in Chad and the Central African Republic (OHQ France), which took place between January 2008 and March 2009. Their relevance in the EU operational environment is related to the strong multinational character, relevant from the perspective of the participation of 28 member states and three third countries. Also, in structuring the command and control arrangements, a new option was chosen, in the sense of designating an operational commander of a different nationality from that of the state providing the OHQ. Last but not least, the discussion should also address *Operation Atalanta*, launched in December 2008 and for which the C2 arrangements were provided by OHQ Northwood, and from February 2021 by OHQ Rota.

The mentioned aspects highlight the viability of the option to use the member states capabilities as platforms for building the multinational profile in generating the command and control arrangements for autonomous military operations. Practically, as the EU profile in crisis management has matured and, at the same time, against the background of an increasingly dynamic agenda, the approach to ensuring command options by employing rotational capabilities has become largely identified with executive missions. In this approach, the conceptual clarification of the executive character of an operation is achieved from the perspective of the degree of interaction with the state that receives the assistance provided by the military commitment⁵.



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⁴ For further details regarding the certification of the Operational Headquarters provided by Spain, see <http://armada.defensa.gob.es>, retrieved on 16 April 2022.

⁵ In the absence of the receptor state capability for action, the EU commitment has an executive character, while the support commitment (especially, preparation missions) has a non-executive character (doc. 17107/14 on 19 December 2014, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-17107-2014-INIT/en/pdf>, retrieved on 16 April 2022). Within the same classification, we can also speak about the executive missions robust posture accommodation at the chain of command level and, subsequently, at the C2 elements, from the perspective of the coherence and effectiveness of the mandate objectives implementation.



It is also the case of the EU maritime operations in the Mediterranean, such as EUNAVFOR MED (also known as *Operation Sofia*) (Council Decision/CFSP/2015/778 on 18 May 2015, OJEU, L 122/19.05.2015, pp. 31-35) and its successor operation, EUNAVFOR MED Irini, launched on 31 March 2022, both led by OHQ Roma having Italian commanders.

INTEGRATED APPROACHES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The European Council on 12-13 December 2003 validated the proposal to establish a Civil-Military Cell within the EU Military Staff. The structure responsibilities were mainly related to supporting the operations command and control process, emphasising the early warning, situational awareness and strategic planning dimensions. Moreover, it was extremely important the way in which the Cell ensured a superior level of connectivity between the civilian and military components of the operations conducted under the ESDP.

The discussion regarding the command options developed in the context of European cooperation cannot be comprehensively performed without taking into consideration the bivalent nature of the EU operational commitments. More precisely, it is about the fact that the EU's potential to conduct crisis management operations is related to both civilian and military perspectives. Despite some conceptual-practical delineations between the two components, the realities in the theatres of operations in different geographical areas indicated the need for an integrated approach, within which the civil-military interaction could generate a response that was better adapted to local realities. The utility of such an approach became more evident after the launch of the first wave of EU operations and missions, between 2003 and 2005, the particular dynamics being able to generate additional concerns in relation to ensuring sufficient C2 capabilities.

The initiation of the commitments in the Western Balkans represented a considerable effort not only from the perspective of the engaged contingents but also from the one of ensuring the EU credibility to meet the challenges in the theatre. Therefore, the issue of ensuring C2 arrangements was validated as an extremely important one. In this regard, the European Council on 12-13 December 2003 validated the proposal to establish a Civil-Military Cell within the EU Military Staff. The structure responsibilities were mainly related to supporting the operations command and control process, emphasising the early warning, situational awareness and strategic planning dimensions. Moreover, it was extremely important the way in which the Cell ensured a superior level of connectivity between the civilian and military components of the operations conducted under the ESDP. It was thus advanced the possibility of conducting a civil-military operation, as it would be the case of the European Union Monitoring Mission in Aceh (Indonesia), conducted in the period

between September 2005 – December 2006. On the same coordinates was performed the planning of the European Union Border Assistance Mission in Rafah (24 November 2005), at the crossing point between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

From an institutional perspective, the relevance of the Civil-Military Cell had value with regard to the integrated management dimension of the crisis management issues in the context of the EU institutional complexity. All the mentioned aspects occurred, mention should be made, under the circumstances of the EU operational appetite, got manifested, in that period, in launching a significant number of military and civilian operations and missions in the Balkans (EUPOL Proxima, EUPM BiH, EUFOR Concordia EUFOR Althea), Africa (EUFOR Congo) and Georgia (EUJUST Themis). Practically, the operational pace in the mentioned period of time was aimed at launching an EU operation every three months.

Against that background, the practical relevance of the Cell for the EU operations was additionally strengthened by the European Council Decision on 16-17 December 2004 aiming at the establishment of an Operations Centre within the Cell. It had an ad-hoc character, being activated following a particular decision of the Foreign Affairs Council. Equally, the reason why its establishment was decided was related to generating an additional command and control option, able to also respond in the event of conducting mixed civil-military operations. The Centre reached full operational capability on 1 January 2007, being activated for the first time in the context of MILEX 07 exercise, conducted between 9 and 15 June 2007 (Press Release 10362/07, Brussels, 4 June 2007).

Operational readiness was achieved on 22-23 March 2012, when the Foreign Affairs Council adopted the decision to facilitate the planning and integrated management process of the operations conducted by the EU in the Horn of Africa. The focus was also on strengthening the synergies between the EU commitments in the area of Somalia (*Operation Atalanta*, EUTM Somalia and the civilian operation to strengthen the maritime capabilities in the region – EUCAP Nestor). Without interfering with the chain of command, the Centre ensured a C2 platform, from the perspective of the interaction between the EU structures involved in conducting the mentioned operations and the member states having personnel deployed within the entity (PRESSE,



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7858/12, Brussels, 2012). The decision parameters were maintained for the following two years, subsequently the Centre readiness being extended until 2016. Thus, through the Council Decision 2014/180/CFSP on 1 December 2014, the future of the Operations Centre was placed in the larger context of reviewing the EUMS functioning, namely the identification of a formula to make permanent the exercise of command and control responsibilities.

From this perspective, the extension of the readiness period played an intermediary role, ensuring the civil-military coordination for the operations in the Horn of Africa. Moreover, it received additional tasks regarding the geographical responsibility for the Sahel, from the perspective of launching new commitments in the area (EUTM Mali, EUCAP Sahel – Niger, EUCAP Sahel – Mali). In the new context, the Centre was to function as an integrated (civil-military) structure having the role of facilitating the operations planning and command process as well as of strengthening the civil-military synergy at operational level. Moreover, its responsibilities also included the interaction between the Council structures, the EU special representatives and the activity in the field. Without being officially appointed commander of the missions in Africa, the Chief of the Centre was mainly responsible for the requests of the commanders in the theatre, while the prerogatives regarding planning documents management and mission command decisions lay with operational commanders coordinated by the Political and Security Committee.

Even in the absence of a fully integrated profile, the Operations Centre planted the institutional-practical seeds for the generation of the command and control structures having a permanent character. In this regard, the types of work and the interaction with the member states as well as with the missions deployed in different geographical areas were to serve as a starting point for the next period. Mention should be also made that the conduct of the missions and operations in Africa represented a pilot episode in this direction, being relevant from the perspective of the multitude of commitments in the area as well as of the large spectrum of objectives, which allowed for comprehensively covering C2 arrangements.

In parallel with the development of the Operations Centre, in August 2007 clarifications were provided regarding the way in which command and control arrangements for civilian operations were

to be met. Through the document “Guidelines for Command and Control Structure for EU Civilian Operations in Crisis Management” (Doc. 9919/07) it was established a dedicated permanent structure, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC). It was to become operational starting the end of 2007, within the General Secretariat of the EU Council, under the authority of the High Representative. The CPCC Director was to perform the duties of operational civilian commander for such commitments, and the command in the theatre was to be provided by the head of mission. The operational commander also ensured the command and control of EU commitments at strategic level, in compliance with the COPS role in political control and strategic direction, in accordance with the provisions of the EU Treaty.

However, it cannot be stated with certainty that the activity of the Operations Centre contributed to the effectiveness of the civil-military functionality in the field of crisis management. In this context, no significant progress was made with regard to the procedural-institutional functionality of the command and control structures. The situation was mainly generated by the asymmetry in terms of the institutional way in which the two components of the EU commitment were structured. Thus, for the military component, the developments up to that moment were the result of two formulas related to the “Berlin+” agreements and the national commands, which did not necessarily involve the EU institutional establishment. Moreover, the CPCC Director integration responsibilities for all the civilian operations and missions did not mirror the approach to the military component. In the latter case, there was no such layer, the responsibility for operations being exercised by each operational commander and, from there, under the COPS coordination, through the High Representative. Under those auspices, the Chief of the Centre responsibility for coordinating with the civilian missions commanders was difficult to harmonise with the chain of command/national between the CPCC and civilian commitments. Moreover, the effectiveness of combined (civil-military) operational actions could not favour a general-level synergistic approach, given the difficulty in identifying a formula to develop a single chain of command, different rules of engagement and a procedural framework adapted for each component. Thus, at the civilian level, the financial resources that were necessary to sustain operations came from the EU budget, while,



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The Military Planning and Conduct Capability was established within the EUMS. It represents a permanent structure having C2 responsibilities at strategic level for the EU non-executive military commitments. The moment the decision was adopted, the MPCC became responsible for the training missions conducted by the EU in Somalia, Mali and the Central African Republic.

for the military component, they were ensured by a dual system, aimed at the joint funding for a limited number of costs through Athena Mechanism⁶ and national contributions.

From this perspective, on 8 July 2017, a new stage in the development of the EU command and control arrangements was set, by adopting the Decision to establish, within the EUMS, the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) (Council Decision 2017/971, OJEU 46, 2017, pp. 133-138). It represents a permanent structure having C2 responsibilities at strategic level for the EU non-executive military commitments. The moment the decision was adopted, the MPCC became responsible for the training missions conducted by the EU in Somalia, Mali and the Central African Republic. According to the agreed parameters, we can also speak about an approach meant to ensure symmetry with the typology used for the civilian aspects of crisis management. Thus, the EUMS General Director was to incorporate the attributes of commander of the non-executive military missions, being responsible for operational planning, in compliance with the EU Treaty (Art. 38). The Operations Centre responsibilities were thus transferred and, starting on 19 November 2018, the new structure responsibilities were extended. The new level of ambition (Fiott, 2019, p. 83) was for the MPCC to meet the command and control arrangements for an autonomous military operation⁷ at Battlegroup level.

The establishment of the MPCC and the transfer of exclusive military responsibilities to it was followed by the creation of new coordination and cooperation arrangements between the two command and control structures in compliance with the Common Security and Defence Policy bivalent profile. Thus, during 2017, a new structure got operational within the European External Action Service, namely the Joint Support Coordination Cell (JSCC), whose main objective was to ensure civil-military synergy at the level of EU commitment in the field of crisis management. To this end, the JSCC structure is composed of personnel belonging to the CPCC and the MPCC, having

⁶ Starting in June 2021, the Athena Mechanism missions and functioning were taken over by the European Peace Facility, established by the Council Decision CFSP/2021/509 on 22 March 2021.

⁷ Structures having approximately 1,500 troops, able to deploy within 5-10 days following the adoption of the decision to launch an operation. For further details regarding the *EU Battlegroup Concept* (doc.11624/14 on 14 December 2016), see <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11624-2014-EXT-1/en/pdf>, retrieved on 20 April 2022.

as responsibilities the management of the aspects of joint interest for both types of operational commitments, such as communications, logistics, medical support etc. Thus, civilian and military expertise is brought together, providing a strategic perspective that is coordinated at the level of the EU operational commitments management.



CONCLUSIONS

Without doubt, the problem of command and control arrangements represents one of the main themes on the European cooperation agenda in the field of security and defence. As it can be noticed, the development of the EU autonomous capability in correlation with the types of commitments in which the organisation can get involved is one of the most dynamic aspects. Since the first EU Headline Goal was established, it has been constantly addressed at the level of the European project, entailing highly complex institutional formulas and often having a character that is innovative in the contemporary operational environment. To a great extent, this situation was generated by the particular way in which crisis management is addressed at the EU level as well as by the practical response formulas that are themselves complex formulas of operational expression. From this perspective, it can be advanced the opinion that the development of the command and control system has been focused on providing some practical management solutions for the diversity of the EU operational potential manifestation.

Equally, we speak about a system that has developed, to a certain extent, asymmetrically in relation to the evolution of the EU operational profile, especially with regard to its military dimension. The development has been aimed at the combination between the national capabilities and the ad-hoc formulas implemented at the EU level, compared to the civilian dimensions, where the single permanent option was assumed long before. This situation largely derives from the political aspects associated with the development of an autonomous capability, mainly from the perspective of the complementarity with the steps taken in the operational field by other multinational organisations, especially NATO.

However, the assessment cannot be comprehensively done without considering the interagency nature of European cooperation, which is reflected in the preponderant role played by the member

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Given the mentioned aspects, the current state of development of the EU capability to simultaneously plan and conduct crisis management operations represents a relevant indicator for the degree of maturity achieved by the European cooperation in the field.

states with regard to the conduct of executive operations. Moreover, there should be considered the advantages of the system developed by the EU from the perspective of the potential for flexibility, which has allowed for the generation of an extensive set of commitments, including the mixed ones, the latter representing a significant added value in the operational context.

Given the mentioned aspects, the current state of development of the EU capability to simultaneously plan and conduct crisis management operations represents a relevant indicator for the degree of maturity achieved by the European cooperation in the field. The general tendency is to standardise the civilian and military approaches and, subsequently, to strengthen the permanent character of the related structures. Without doubt, we speak about a process that is evolving, its results adding new solutions that will complete the options for using the EU-NATO cooperation framework.

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