

CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN THE EUROPEAN UNION PERSPECTIVE: FROM DIALECTICAL EVOLUTIONS TO A DISTINCT APPROACH

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Abstract: *The article presents some ideas and reasonings about the acquisition by the European Union of the role of recognized actor in the field of crisis management. The author elucidates a progress in the development of the political-legal and institutional framework for crisis management, adopting a comprehensive approach that combines diplomacy, prevention, and civil and military interventions. The research contains an analysis of the path towards the development of a distinct European Union approach to crisis management.*

The author identified the criticisms of the EU in this area and delineated the significant challenges facing the EU on various dimensions, including the diversity of member states' interests and limited resources in certain areas. The perspectives include the need for continued adaptability, strengthening of response capabilities, and a strong commitment to multilateralism and international cooperation. Through these combined efforts, the EU can strengthen its role as an effective global actor in international crisis management.

Keywords: *crisis management; European Union; comprehensive approach; mechanism; prevention; challenges.*

Introduction

The crisis management in the European Union (EU) approach represents a complex and coordinated process, designed to effectively address different types of crises, from natural disasters to anthropogenic emergencies and complex geopolitical conflicts. The EU's approach in the field of crisis management is characterized by its comprehensive, collaborative and multidimensional nature, involving different actors and covering a wide spectrum of activities, from prevention and preparedness to response and recovery. In this sense, the approach reflects the complex and interconnected challenges facing the international community, requiring coordinated efforts at both European and international levels. The crisis management process in the view of the European Union is based on a framework structured in six essential stages: 1) crisis anticipation and prevention, 2) crisis preparation, 3) early warning, 4) crisis response decision, 5) response coordination, and 6) post-crisis review and learning. These stages facilitate a coordinated and effective approach, starting with the preventive identification of potential crises and ending with the evaluation of the crisis response for future improvements.

Reflecting on the research on the EU foreign policy, it is important to appreciate the quality of the EU as a recognized external actor in terms of crisis management, thus accepting the idea of the existence of a European approach to crisis management. However, certain similarities and differences between the European approach to crisis management and the American one have been identified that are important to remember. Indeed, there is scholarly research analyzing this topic, although comparing the EU with the US is known to present methodological challenges due to differences in the nature and structure of the two entities.

Highlighting certain key aspects of the research, we will start from the essence and nature of the European approach on crisis management. In this sense, the studies focus on identifying the distinctive features of the EU's foreign policy, such as the emphasis on multilateral diplomacy, conflict prevention, and the use of soft power instruments, especially with regard to the civil protection mechanism. (Tulmets 2008) Referring to the EU's foreign policy capabilities and structure, the paper starts with the analysis of how the EU's institutional structures, including decision-making processes and interaction between member states, influence its external approach. Comparing it to US foreign policy, differences in US approaches tend to be unilateral and often supported by a significant military presence, and the influence of domestic politics and national capabilities can be determined by studying how EU member states' domestic politics and their nationals' capabilities shape the EU's response to external crises.

In the context of methodological challenges, we mention the fundamental difference that the EU is not a sovereign state like the US, but a political and economic block with a sovereignty distributed among its member states, and this complicates a direct comparison and takes us away from this idea. A vulnerability is the internal diversity of the EU, accentuated by the variety of interests and policies in EU member states, which has already set precedents by leading to an incoherent external response, contrasting with the more uniform approach of the US. Interdependence with other international actors is a *modus operandi* for the EU space, and the EU's foreign policy is often influenced by interactions with other international organizations, unlike the US, which acts more independently.

The element of uniqueness of the European approach is confirmed by the general recognition of a distinct European style in foreign affairs, focused on cooperation, international norms and non-military responses. There is also the need for contextualized analysis, that is, it is essential to take into account the specific context of each foreign policy case. At the same time, the comparative perspective is important, because despite the challenges, the comparison of EU and US foreign policies remains a valuable area of research for understanding the global dynamics and transatlantic relations. In this sense, such an approach helps to elucidate the EU positions and its acts on the global stage and how this differs or resembles the approaches of other major actors such as the US.

1. Dialectical evolutions and peculiarities of the European Union's approach to crisis management

The dialectical developments in EU approach in the field of crisis management also refer to how EU approaches and strategies in this domain have developed and transformed through the dynamic interaction of opposing forces or contradictory ideas. This dialectical perspective highlights the conflicts, adaptations and syntheses that have shaped EU crisis management policy. Some of the key aspects of these dialectical evolutions consisted of centralization vs. national sovereignty, integration vs. divergence, the civil approach vs. military approach, multilateralism vs. unilateralism, adaptability vs. coherence.

Starting with centralization *versus* national sovereignty, we note that the trend towards a centralized and coordinated EU-wide approach to effective crisis management is impacted by the desire of member states to retain their sovereignty, especially in sensitive areas such as foreign policy and defense. That is why it was necessary to create structures that allow closer cooperation, such as the EEAS, while respecting the autonomy of the member states. (Yesilada et al. 2017; Skordas 2018)

Referring to integration (Hosli, Lentschig, and D'Ambrosio 2022) and divergence, the efforts to integrate and harmonize security and defense policies at the EU level have been combined in the context of several divergences in the priorities and political interests of member

states. (Deschaux-Beaume 2008; Deschaux-Beaume 2011) Thus, it was indispensable to formulate some common policies and strategies that take into account the diversity of interests and situations at the national level. (Hagemann 2010; Rieker and Giske 2024)

Invoking the civilian approach *versus* military approach, we identified the EU's preference for diplomatic solutions and civilian approaches in crises management, in conditions where the EU was aware of the need for a military intervention capacity for situations where civilian measures are insufficient. Thus, a balanced amalgam of civil and military instruments was developed, emphasizing the importance of civil-military coordination. (Born, Hans, et al. 2006)

Speaking of multilateralism *versus* unilateralism, the EU's commitment to multilateralism and international cooperation is an obvious one, alongside global trends towards unilateralism and nationalism, as well as the pressures for independent EU action. Under these conditions, a compromise was possible by promoting a multilateral agenda while maintaining the ability to act independently when necessary. (Smejkalová 2012)

Elucidating the adaptability *versus* coherence, we found that there was a need for adaptability and flexibility to respond quickly to changing crises, while imposing the rigors of coherence and continuity in crisis management policies and strategies. Therefore, the optimal solution consisted in the development of strategic frameworks that allow adaptation to specific situations, while maintaining a common direction and objectives. (Koenig 2016; Smith 2021; Dandashly, Assem, et al. 2021)

In the above context, these dialectical developments illustrate how crisis management at the EU level is a dynamic and continuously evolving process, characterized by tensions, compromises and adaptations. Understanding these dynamics is essential for appreciating the complexity of the EU's approach to security challenges and international crises.

The dialectical evolution of the EU's crisis management process reflects a shift towards a more integrated and comprehensive approach, characterized by the blending of military, civilian, diplomatic, and humanitarian tools. This evolution signifies the EU's recognition of the complex nature of modern crises, requiring multifaceted and coordinated responses. The EU's approach now emphasizes preemptive action, capacity-building, and the promotion of stability through a blend of soft and hard power, aiming for long-term conflict resolution and sustainable peace rather than merely reactive or short-term interventions.

In support of the idea that the EU has demonstrated its quality as a recognized actor in crisis management, the European approach has acquired several distinct characteristics and focuses on a number of key aspects. The integrated and multidimensional nature of the approach is due to the successful combination of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, covering various dimensions such as political, economic, humanitarian and social aspects. The central element in crisis management in the EU approach has become the EU civil protection mechanism (Tulmets 2008), through which cooperation between civil protection authorities in Europe is facilitated, providing a coordinated and rapid response to disasters by pooling resources and the capacities of the member states. An important process in crisis management is comprehensive risk assessment, where a regular risk assessment is carried out to identify more potential crises and threats. This involves the risk analysis at the regional and national level, taking into account some factors such as security threats, economic instability and climate change. An innovation of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) is the solidarity clause, with reference in Article 222 of the TFEU stipulating that member states must help each other „in event of terrorist attacks and natural or man-made disasters”. The European Union carries out its activities in the field of crisis management in collaboration with international organizations, i.e. the UN, NATO and the WHO, which has proven to be the most effective way to ensure a globally coordinated response in case of crises. A means by which the EU demonstrates its quality as an important actor in regional and global crisis management is

humanitarian aid and development assistance. Through this instrument the EU validates its status as a major provider of humanitarian aid worldwide, that assistance becoming crucial in managing crises, especially those in regions outside the EU, also related to long-term development support. This approach not only affirms the EU's status as a leading global provider of humanitarian support but also highlights its commitment to addressing both immediate crisis needs and long-term development challenges outside its borders. This strategic use of aid and assistance underlines the EU's integrated approach to crisis management, emphasizing the importance of stability, resilience, and sustainable development in crisis-affected regions. The EU has been involved in various global humanitarian efforts and development assistance programs, including response to natural disasters, conflict zones, and support for refugees. For the most up-to-date examples of the EU's involvement in humanitarian aid and development assistance, please refer to the latest reports and press releases from the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

Investing in research and innovation is one way to improve crisis management capabilities through research and technological innovation, with the development of advanced tools for risk assessment, early warning systems and crisis response.

In order to ensure the functionality of this system, there was needed a permanent functional operating structure - the Emergency Response Coordination Center (ERCC), which aims to monitor emergencies at a global level and ensure a rapid emergency support through a coordinated response from EU member states. The EU ERCC and NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Center (EADRCC) are two important entities dedicated to emergency and disaster management, both civilian and the context of international security cooperation. The ERCC, part of the European Union's Civil Protection Mechanism, is created to facilitate a rapid and coordinated response to natural or man-made disasters, both inside and outside the EU. ERCC operates 24/7, monitoring risk situations and coordinating the deployment of humanitarian aid and disaster equipment. This center uses the resources of EU member states, mobilizing response teams, providing technical expertise and ensuring the necessary logistics to respond effectively to crises. On the other hand, EADRCC, which is NATO's main disaster response coordination body, was designed to provide support in the event of major disasters, such as earthquakes, floods or industrial accidents, for both NATO member countries and for its partners. The EADRCC serves as the focal point for coordinating voluntary disaster relief offers between NATO countries and other partner nations in the event of disasters.

The cooperation between ERCC and EADRCC demonstrates the importance of synergy between different regional and international organizations and mechanisms in effective emergency management. This cross-border and multidisciplinary collaboration is crucial to maximize the effectiveness of disaster responses and minimize their impact on affected populations.

The effectiveness of the system is ensured by a political-legal framework - a mandatory condition for ensuring the existence and functioning of the EU by establishing various policies and legislation to strengthen the crisis management procedures, such as the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the EU Strategy on Climate Change Adaptation. The ensuring readiness and improving the effectiveness of joint crisis responses have been made possible by training and exercises, a platform through which joint programs are carried out to achieve more set aims.

A must-have, recognized as vital under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic (Boin and Rhinard 2023), has become the restocking for public health emergencies, which highlighted the importance of public health in crisis management, efforts being channeled towards strengthening the field of public health, improving disease monitoring and coordinating vaccination strategies.

The cyber security has become for the EU an important security dimension issue, which has gained ground with the increasing threats of cyber-attacks. The EU is focusing on strengthening its cyber security capabilities, including establishing a Joint Cyber Unit to coordinate responses to large-scale cyber incidents. The EU Joint Cyber Unit was proposed to strengthen the prevention, deterrence and response to cyber incidents and crises. It was to become operational on 30 June 2022 and be fully established on 30 June 2023, involving collaboration between civil, law enforcement, diplomatic and cyber defense communities, as well as private sector partners. The new EU Cybersecurity Strategy, presented by the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in late 2020, aims to enhance the security of essential services and connected devices. It emphasizes building collective capabilities to counter major cyberattacks and fostering international cooperation for cyberspace security. The strategy introduces the concept of a Joint Cyber Unit to streamline the response to cyber threats by leveraging the collective resources and expertise of the EU and its Member States. The implementation of the EU Cybersecurity Strategy involves enhancing the security of critical infrastructure and digital devices, building collective defense capabilities, and fostering global partnerships for cyberspace stability. A key component is the development of the Joint Cyber Unit to coordinate responses to cyber threats, leveraging EU and member states' expertise and resources. This comprehensive approach aims to protect the EU's digital environment and ensure a safe cyberspace for all stakeholders.

2. Implications of the Treaty of Lisbon for the field of crisis management and critical views on the European approach in this field

Returning to the normative framework, it is worth mentioning the importance of the Treaty of Lisbon, entered into force on December 1, 2009, which brought more significant changes to the institutional framework and decision-making process of the EU, including in terms of crisis management. This treaty strengthened the EU's ability to respond effectively to various types of crises and highlighted several mechanisms and principles. The Article 222 of the TFEU, known as the solidarity clause, is a key element introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, stipulating the obligation of member states to provide mutual aid in the event of a terrorist attack or a natural or man-made disaster. (Mölling and Major 2013) We recall that the Treaty of Lisbon strengthened the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), providing the EU with a favorable framework to develop civilian and military capabilities for conflict prevention and crisis management missions: operations peacekeeping, post-conflict stabilization missions and reconstruction assistance. Headed by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service (EEAS) was created to coordinate the EU's foreign and security policy, namely this structure has an important role in the management and prevention of international crises. (Koops and Tercovich 2020; Blockmans and Wessel 2021) At the same time, a mechanism introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon - Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) allows some member states to collaborate more closely in the field of defense and security, including the development of defense capabilities and the improvement the availability of the armed forces. PESCO and CARD (Coordinated Annual Review on Defense) are EU initiatives to strengthen common European defense. They are reviewed annually in order to align and standardize the national defense planning of the member states according to a common directive. It contributes to strengthening defense capabilities and promoting security and defense cooperation and integration within the EU.

Although the EU civil protection mechanism was not introduced as a novelty in the Treaty of Lisbon, the mechanism was nevertheless strengthened and expanded following the entry into force of the treaty, providing a more effective framework for coordinating responses to natural and man-made disasters within and outside the EU. Due to the Treaty of Lisbon, the need to develop an

EU rapid response capability, including the ability to mobilize battlegroups and intervention forces to respond to crises, has been emphasized. The conflict in Ukraine has underscored the need for the EU to reassess its security and defense strategies, particularly in relation to external aggressions affecting its partners. The European Union Battle Groups (EUBGs), despite their potential, have faced challenges in demonstrating their effectiveness, primarily due to indecision regarding their deployment and utilization in line with their initially intended missions. This situation highlights the necessity for the EU to refine its approach to collective defense and crisis response mechanisms.

Some important steps have also been taken to strengthen and improve internal security cooperation, including in areas such as counter-terrorism, border management and police cooperation. (Nimark 2019)

The treaty increased and strengthened the role of the European Parliament in the decision-making process, including in matters related to the crisis management, as well as national ones. (Auel and Christiansen, 2017) It also formalized the role of the European Council, which acquired an important status in setting strategic directions (Kassim and Tholoniati 2021). With reference to the concept of solidarity, it is capitalized on the energy dimension in the content of Article 194 of the TFEU, introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, it mentions the concept of solidarity in energy policy, which is important both for energy security in general, as well as for the response to energy crises in particular. (Giuli and Oberthür 2023) Through these amendments, the Treaty of Lisbon strengthened the EU's ability to manage a wide range of crises, both internal and international, and marked an important step in European integration and cooperation in the field of security and management crises. This topic has been addressed by certain researchers, who have confirmed the EU's effectiveness in crisis management after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. (Blockmans and Awessel 2009)

Neither the wars on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, nor the recent conflicts in the EU's neighborhood have represented an existential threat to some member states, a fact that generates the assumption that this could be the reason for the failure of the European unity test in joint efforts to prevent or resolve conflicts in its proximity. Another reason is how threat perception (Katsioulis 2022) and the degree of unity of EU member states influence the conflict management efforts in neighboring regions. In this sense, there are several aspects that can contribute to this phenomenon. As we mentioned before about the differences in the perception of threats, as an example we can cite the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, the Caucasus and the Middle East, which were not perceived by the majority of member states as direct existential threats to the EU, a fact that significantly burdened the capacity to appreciate emergency situations and to be aware of the importance of unitary approach to conflicts. As a result, in the absence of a common perception of an immediate threat, the mobilization of unified and coherent responses by member states may be more difficult.

A vulnerability that has already created precedents in other segments represents the diversity of the national interests of the community states up to divergences on certain vital aspects such as geopolitical, economic, cultural-historical, etc., and these can influence the approach of the member states to certain external conflicts. The listed differences implicitly lead to divergences in foreign policy, one of the implications of which is the weakening of the EU's collective efforts to manage crises and prevent conflicts. Another vulnerability is the limits imposed by the CFSP (Štrbac and Milosavljević 2021) (Bergmann and Müller 2021), this being an area in which member states still retain a significant degree of national sovereignty, a fact that can reduce the EU's ability to act effectively and cohesively. In the absence of a truly unified foreign and security policy, the EU faces major difficulties in adopting a firm united position in the face of crises and conflict prevention.

Addressing the topic of available capabilities and tools (Backman and Rhinard 2018), the EU has limited tools for direct military intervention, being predominantly oriented towards diplomacy, economic sanctions and development aid. Consequently, without significant military

capabilities, the EU is perceived as an actor with limited influence in resolving armed conflicts. The dynamics of the international system have demonstrated the weight of international organizations and major actors of the global political scene, and in some cases, conflict resolution may depend more on the actions of major international actors such as the US, China, Russia or other regional powers, but also UN. The created situation may have the effect of reducing the EU's ability to have a significant independent impact in crisis and conflict management.

In conclusion, the lack of a direct existential threat to the EU, together with the diversity of national interests, the limitations imposed by foreign and security policy, along with the dependence on the capacity and will of other international actors, may contribute to increasing the difficulties faced by EU member states in responds unitarily and efficiently to crises/conflicts in the neighborhood. Moreover, the invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, has been widely recognized by international leaders and officials, including the NATO Secretary General and representatives from the Biden Administration, Poland, and the Baltic States, as not just an act of aggression against Ukraine but a broader threat to European democracy and security. These concerns reflect the broader implications of the conflict, highlighting its potential to undermine democratic values and stability across Europe.

This analysis suggests the need for a more cohesive approach and the promotion of a consolidated position starting from the cultivation of a sense of European identity and the achievement of a common goal within the framework of EU foreign policy.

The Treaty of Lisbon has significant implications for EU crisis management, enhancing the EU's capacity to act through the establishment of the European External Action Service and the position of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. This structural reform aimed to streamline and strengthen the EU's external actions. However, critics argue that despite these improvements, there remains a lack of coherence and decisiveness in the EU's crisis management approach, partly due to the consensus-based decision-making process which can delay responses to crises.

The EU's approach to crisis management, although complex and comprehensive, is not without criticism and challenges, with the critical view of how the EU manages crises focused on several aspects. (Casais, 2019) The first and most visible is the bureaucratic and rigid character of the decision-making process, which is considered a problem both by European decision-makers and by scientific researchers concerned with sensitive topics in the field of community policies, but also in the sector of security and defense. (Vanhoonacker, Dijkstra and Maurer 2010) The EU is often criticized for its bureaucratic and slow processes, which can delay the response to crises, and in emergency situations, time is a very important attribute, with decision delays and bureaucratic delays having serious consequences. In the absence of prompt coordination and political cohesion, although coordination mechanisms exist, member states do not always act independently, leading to a fragmented response. A lack of cohesion can therefore undermine the effectiveness of the EU's response and lead to duplication of efforts.

Recalling the limited military response capacity (Smalec, 2014), the EU is largely dependent on NATO and individual member states' capabilities, and under such circumstances the EU's options in crisis management, which require a rapid and effective military response, are limited. (Tomja and Dumani 2023) A sensitive subject within the community political elite, as I mentioned before, is the political and economic differences between the member states, which create problems and prevent the taking of quick common decisions, which has the effect of generating some answers lacking unity and coherence. (McCray 2014)

Another impediment is an excessive dependence on external partners, and the fact that the EU frequently relies on the US or other NATO member states to respond to crises can reduce the EU's independence and complicate the coordination of responses. (Sperling and Webber 2020; Latici 2020) The exponential growth of challenges in managing global crises, such as pandemics

or climate change, requires globally coordinated responses, which can be difficult to achieve due to the sometimes diametrically opposed interests of some states members and the EU's limited ability to influence a number of policies promoted worldwide. Consequently, these limitations impact the EU's ability to assume leadership in the effective management of global crises.

Another sensitive topic is the civic involvement and transparency, which has generated a series of concerns regarding the level of citizen involvement (Simsa, 2017) and the transparency of the decision-making process in the EU (Bambi, 2021). In the absence of transparency and civic activism, the level of trust and support from European citizens decreases significantly, thus the number of followers of Euroscepticism expands its ranks. Crises often evolve rapidly and require flexible responses, while EU structures and procedures have demonstrated rigidity and slowness to adapt, which has limited the EU's ability to respond effectively to dynamic and rapidly evolving crises.

The issue of allocating financial and material resources for crisis management is often a challenge, given limited budgets and predominantly competing priorities, which ultimately results in insufficient resources, affecting the EU's ability to implement effective crisis prevention and response measures.

Even in the area of crisis management in the EU neighborhood, no progress has been made, and the ways of managing crises at its borders, such as the refugee crisis (Bačić, 2015) or migration pressures (Fontana, 2022), have been criticized for the lack of solidarity and unitary approach. Subsequently, the created situation led to certain internal tensions and affected the EU's image and credibility at the international level. During the migrant crisis, significant differences between EU member states were evident. For example, Hungary built barbed wire fences on its borders to stem the flow of migrants, while Germany adopted an open-door refugee policy in 2015. These divergent approaches highlighted the lack of solidarity and policy convergence between member states, complicating the EU's efforts to manage the crisis in a united manner. This lack of coordination and solidarity has complicated the EU's efforts to effectively manage the migrant crisis, underscoring the need for a more unified and coherent approach across the bloc.

3. The comprehensive approach to crisis management in the view of the European Union

The crisis management in the EU's view is characterized by a comprehensive approach, covering a wide spectrum of activities and strategies, from prevention and preparation to response and recovery. This approach reflects the complex and interconnected nature of contemporary challenges, as well as the need for cooperation and coordination between Member States and EU institutions. There are a number of academic synthesis studies (Nunes, 2016) alongside researches that contain reflections on some facets of the comprehensive approach in the EU's vision and are focused on topics such as: challenges and opportunities within a complex crisis management (Jarmyr and Friis 2008); the unfulfilled promises of the EU regarding comprehensive planning in crisis management (Mattelaer, A. 2013); challenges (Weston and Mérand 2015); the analysis of context, lessons learned and policy implications in various fields (Kammel and Zyla 2018) etc.

D.C. Wendling considers that the key principles of this approach in the EU's view are: the development of local capacities in the failed state; the importance of peacekeeping politics, legitimacy, unity of effort, security, conflict transformation and regional engagement. (Wendling 2010)

In our view, one of the main components of this approach is prevention and preparedness, which consists of regular risk assessment at national and European level to anticipate and prevent crises, the development and implementation of emergency plans and response strategies to cope possible crisis scenarios, developing and implementing training programs and simulation exercises

to train response personnel and improve coordination between different agencies and organizations. Along with prevention and preparedness, another key element is the rapid and coordinated response, which includes mechanisms for coordinating EU and international disaster responses, including the mobilization of member states' resources and capabilities, continuous monitoring of crisis situations and coordination of responses at European level, security and defense cooperation, including civilian and military missions to manage international conflicts and crises. (Post and Post 2015)

The recovery and resilience are considered to be highly significant components of the comprehensive approach, meaning support for reconstruction and recovery, expressed through financial and technical assistance to regions and countries affected by crises, the development of strategies to increase the capacity of communities and member states to resist and recover from crises.

A special place was won by international cooperation through global partnerships with international organizations, such as UN, NATO, and other entities to address global crises, providing humanitarian aid to countries outside the EU affected by natural disasters or conflict.

The share of research and innovation has grown exponentially through investments in new technologies to improve crisis monitoring, prevention and response capabilities, through research to better understand crisis dynamics and to develop effective methods of managing them.

The political and legal framework concludes the list of components of the comprehensive approach by focusing on the development and implementation of legislation and policies to strengthen the crisis management capabilities at the EU level, but also by the political commitment of EU leaders to combine their efforts in crisis management and take quick and efficient decisions.

Addressing the institutional component, T. Frunzeti (Frunzeti 2012) considers that by applying the concept of a comprehensive approach to the crisis, the EU strengthens its defense, development and diplomacy components. A structure through which a consolidation of that concept was expected was the European External Action Service and the Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD), institutions that capitalize on both civilian and military components, articulating them around the concept of "civil-military coordination" (CMCO). The latter seems to be one of the most visible realizations of the will to develop a comprehensive approach within the European institutions. There are appreciated the institutional actions, aimed at strengthening civil-military cooperation, ensuring the necessary foundation for civil-military coordination. We remind that the notion "civil-military coordination" in the context of both the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Security and Defense Policy elucidates the need for effective coordination of the relevant actions of the EU member states, which are involved in the planning and subsequent implementation of the EU's response to the crisis. The objective was to implement the necessary reforms in the EU to enable effective coordination between civilian and military actors. The document emphasizes the importance of coordination culture, having to create a new organizational routine of coordination. CMCO through institutional and cultural impact was presented as a prerequisite for the implementation of a management crisis in Europe under the Political and Security Committee (PSC). Indeed, the PSC is the one that can reflect when in a moment of crisis all available European options (civilian and military), in order to properly coordinate. Through the concept of crisis management and then through the joint action of the PSC, the mission framework is established in a coherent and coordinated manner, leveraging the concept of crisis management and joint actions. The PSC plays a critical role in the EU's crisis management by evaluating all European civilian and military options to ensure proper coordination during crises. This approach ensures that the EU's response to crises is comprehensive, integrating various strategies and resources for effective resolution. Thus, through this comprehensive approach, the EU aims to effectively manage both internal and international crises, ensuring the security, stability and well-being of its citizens. This involves close collaboration between member states and EU institutions, as well as constant adaptability and innovation to meet changing challenges. The comprehensive approach to crisis management emphasizes the importance of coordination between different actors

in the fields of governance, security, and economic and social development for sustainable and rapid crisis resolution. This strategy promotes collaboration between actors with common visions and effective coordination with other stakeholders, ensuring an integrated and multifactorial approach to solving complex issues.

The comprehensive approach to crisis management in the European Union emphasizes the integration of various policies and tools across different sectors, including security, defense, diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian fields, to address crises effectively. In the context of security and defense, this approach entails close coordination between civilian and military capacities, ensuring that EU actions are coherent, and that resources are used efficiently to prevent, respond to, and recover from crises. This unified strategy aims to strengthen the EU's ability to act as a global security provider, addressing both immediate threats and underlying causes of crises.

The crisis management within the EU in the fields of security and defense faces a number of complex challenges, reflecting the dynamic nature of the global security environment, the geopolitical complexity of the contemporary world, the unique essence of the EU as a supranational entity, as well as the structural and political specificities of EU alongside its internal dynamics. Among the most significant challenges are transnational and hybrid ones, diverging interests of member states, dependence on NATO and external allies, limited military and civilian capabilities, budgetary and resource pressures, responding to regional and global crises, integrating security policies and defense, legitimacy and public support.

Starting from the most significant security and defense challenge, the diversity of member states' interests, we remark that EU member states have various national interests and often different priorities in terms of security and defense, and as a result certain difficulties may arise in formulating an effective common policy and to some incoherent responses to crises. The effective integration and coordination of civilian and military resources and capabilities in crisis management is indispensable for strengthening civil-military cooperation, and close collaboration between different agencies and bodies, both at EU and Member State level, would ensure cohesion in this sense.

The EU does not have the same military resources as some major national powers, such as the US, and this limits the EU's options for direct military interventions and requires greater reliance on diplomatic and economic policy. Many EU member states are also NATO members and rely on the transatlantic alliance for their security (Latici 2020), and as a result the development of an autonomous EU approach to security and defense may be complicated. Confronting transnational threats such as terrorism, cyber-attacks and humanitarian crises requires the EU to adopt a global approach in the context of international cooperation to face these challenges. (Pașcu and Chiriac 2022). Contemporary crises can develop quickly and have multiple dimensions (political, humanitarian, military), which conditions the EU to react quickly and develop adaptive plans.

The tensions between national sovereignty and European integration in the field of security and defense (Perez Bustamante, 2023) also create difficulties in the delegation of security powers at the supranational level. (Ekengren and Hollis, 2020) The allocation of financial resources for defense and security is often limited by national budgetary constraints, and this limits the EU's abilities to invest in new security and defense initiatives.

Public opinion in different member states can be divided regarding commitment to military actions or security policies, which can create difficulties in gaining public support for EU security interventions or policies. With reference to the evolution and adaptation of security strategies, we mention the need to adapt to new types of threats (Jacuch 2020) and to develop appropriate security strategies (Shcherbak 2021), a situation that can generate challenges in updating and modernizing approaches of security and defense at EU level.

Therefore, the stated challenges highlight the complexity and difficulty of managing the security and defense sector in such a diverse and interconnected block as the EU. To meet these challenges effectively, a coordinated and flexible approach is needed, which takes into account the diverse interests of member states and the changing dynamics of global security.

Conclusions

The EU's distinctive crisis management approach involves advancements in political, legal, and institutional frameworks, alongside a comprehensive strategy that merges civilian and military resources. All of them reflect the complexity and constantly changing dynamics of the global security environment, as well as the EU's role and capacity to effectively respond to crises. Despite challenges like coordinating diverse member states' interests and limited resources, the Treaty of Lisbon and developments several robust institutions and mechanisms for crisis management like the EEAS and CSDP have significantly strengthened the EU's capabilities, aiming to balance internal initiatives with external alliances like NATO for effective crisis response. Looking forward, the EU aims to adapt to global dynamics, emphasizing the development of its capabilities, technology integration, and international cooperation to remain effective in managing crises.

The conclusions on dialectical developments in EU crisis management reflect the continuous interactions between opposing forces and contradictory ideas that have shaped EU policies and practices in this area, these developments illustrating how the EU has adapted and responded to emerging challenges in an international environment complex and changing. Despite global trends towards unilateralism and nationalism, the EU has remained committed to promoting multilateralism, also developing the ability to act independently when the situation calls for it. The EU has sought to maintain a balance between the need for adaptability and the need for strategic coherence, involving adaptation to specific crises while maintaining common long-term directions and objectives.

The EU's crisis management strategy reflects a dynamic process, balancing between diverse national interests and the collective European goal of effective crisis response. This approach involves integrating both civilian and military capabilities, promoting multilateralism while also developing the capacity for independent action. The EU strives for strategic coherence alongside adaptability to address specific crises, showcasing a commitment to synthesize various approaches within a complex, changing international environment.

In conclusion, the EU's crisis management strategy is an ongoing evolution, aimed at adapting to global security shifts and emerging threats. The focus on enhancing both civilian and military capabilities, promoting a rules-based international order, and fostering cooperation is crucial for its effectiveness. Despite all the criticisms and challenges, the EU's commitment to agility, cohesion, transparency, and adaptability is vital in addressing complex challenges in a changing geopolitical landscape, ensuring it remains a key actor in international crisis management.

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