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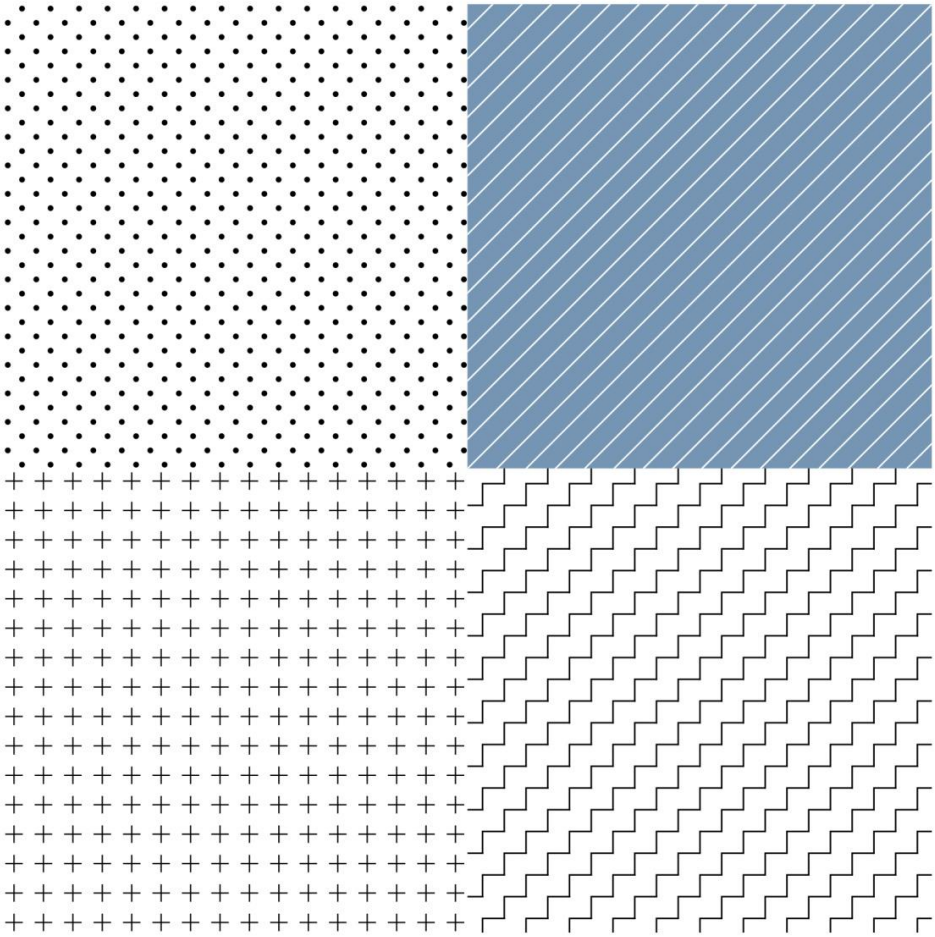

Civil-Military Synergy at Operational Level in EU External Action

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Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict

Colophon

CIVIL-MILITARY SYNERGY AT OPERATIONAL LEVEL IN EU EXTERNAL ACTION

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Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict

Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

This report was produced as part of the project "Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding". It reflects on the challenges found in trying to enhance civil-military synergies in EU action, and identifies opportunities based on the experiences of practitioners on good and bad practices at the operational level. It also puts forward several key recommendations for effective civil-military synergies in EU external missions, contributing to current debates on this topic, which will require further analysis and problem-solving beyond the life of this project. Based on the research and engagement with key stakeholders, it is part of a series of reports that investigate cases of best practices and lessons learned related to several cross-cutting themes that the project focuses on.

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Summary

Although it remained undefined, since the Nice European Council meeting held in 2000, civil-military synergies have become a serious goal of the EU's approach to crisis management and peacebuilding. This situation is informed by two intertwined imperatives, namely; the increased and changed nature of risks for global security and the weakening resource base and the capabilities, especially in the arena of defence of EU member states. The EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (2016) reaffirmed that synergy across EU polices, capabilities and instruments of external action is crucial for the EU's credibility, effectiveness and smooth functioning of the Comprehensive Approach (CA) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

First, this report navigates the conceptual fuzziness surrounding the term 'civil-military synergy' at strategic and operational levels in the EU. The report is based on secondary data collected through an extensive phase of desk-based research, as well as empirical data which has been collected during a series of face-to-face engagements with practitioners of civil and military backgrounds, including those who have served in EU CSDP missions, individual country level peace missions and multinational peace operations. At the level of practice, lacking a clear definition on civil-military synergies at the EU strategic level is not thought to be a major impediment. According to practitioners, the nature of occurrence of civil-military synergies at the operational level does not fit into any neat definition, which actually helps to swiftly navigate, judge and act on different complex dynamics in the operational ground and to seize opportunities arising on a day-to-day basis. For the practitioners, the ill-functioning of the CA is the major impediment for effective operations and one that prevents civil-military synergies at the operational level.

Next, based on several discussions held with the practitioners, this report offers the views and experiences shared on the salient practices of civil-military synergies at the operational level. Based on practitioners' first hand field level experiences, civil-military synergies are more likely to occur in short term missions (i.e., stabilization) with clearly defined mission goals, often carried out in a less crowded operational environment and under a clear command structure and leadership. Grounded in the key learning from these short term missions, practitioners underline the need for improved resources (materially, financially as well as human) and their timely mobilization and flexibility of deployment. They regard processes of coordination, cooperation and coherence of the EU capabilities throughout the operational cycle of a mission and beyond, as key for fostering civil-military synergies at the operational level. To this effect, they also assigned a great importance to the individuals and the leadership styles of mission staff as key ingredients of synergies.

Next, anchored in the 'Whole of Society' approach,[1] this report puts forward three key recommendations for effective civil-military synergies at the operational level in EU external missions. First, adopting a 'politics matter-people matter' approach. Second, 'mak[ing] the EU's comprehensive approach actually comprehensive in action and fully functional while avoiding 'reinventing the wheel'. This recommendation highlights the need for improved processes for

[1] 'Whole of Society' is an approach to peacebuilding and conflict prevention, which pays particular attention to the role of a wide variety of societal actors and their inter-relations in the analysis and implementation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives. It also seeks the integration of different policies and peacebuilding actions across a broad spectrum of security needs (Martin et al 2016:65).

effective coordination, cooperation and coherence of civilian and military capabilities under the CA. Last but not least, recognising and acting upon the primacy of 'local ownership'. Especially taking into account the 'Whole of Society' approach, this demands for increased efforts to embed local realities, working together with local populations; including the non-state local actors and benefiting from their knowledge, power relationships and networks. In its final conclusion, from the vantage point of capability development, this report offers suggestions on how to operationalise these three main recommendations and provides steps the EU should take to foster civil-military synergies at the operational level.

1. What is Civil-Military Synergy in the EU? – Navigating the conceptual fuzziness

While especially at the operational level civil-military synergy remains an important goal, to-date, in the EU's vocabulary, the term civil-military synergy remains undefined. However, a quick scan of the EU's vocabulary includes related concepts such as: multi-stakeholder coherence, CA, integrated approach[2], security-development nexus, Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC)[3] and Civil-Military Coordination (CMCO) that attempt to communicate a notion of civil-military synergy. In the backdrop of this conceptual fuzziness, by combining the main tenets underlying the above concepts in the EU-CSDP vocabulary with the dictionary definitions on the word 'synergy', this report adopts the following working definition on civil-military synergy: 'a combined or cooperative action of civilian and military actors, tools, goals and processes who together increase each other's effectiveness at strategic, tactical and operational levels of an EU operation'. Also, civil-military synergy could mean the civilian and military arms in the comprehensive approach (CA) functioning together to produce a result (effectiveness) that cannot be independently obtainable by either. In light of the above definition, this report identifies cooperation (will), coordination of actions (work) and a common purpose (end state) as important pillars towards civil-military synergy. Owing to all the above elements, the CA is understood as 'synergy of all actors[4] and actions of the international community through the coordination and de-conflicting of political, development, and security capabilities to face today's challenges' (Weezel Op Cit., Serronha 2011:131).

Given the availability of many concepts that are directly and indirectly targeting the effectiveness of EU missions with respect to its civilian and military capabilities, practitioners did not regard the lack of a clearly defined concept on civil-military synergies to have serious consequences at the operational level. Interestingly, to a larger extent, they welcomed the situation of lacking a clear definition, as it renders them the much needed operational flexibility, autonomy of judgment and action to seize opportunities for synergies as they arise. However, considering the practitioners' preference (especially on the military side) for vagueness in fostering civil-military synergies, a lack of clear cut definitions may lead them to not properly reason out how to foster civil-military synergies in every step needed. Besides, the reliance on certain characteristics and qualities of mission leaderships can also lead to unsustainable ways of fostering synergies at the operational level. By emphasizing the need of putting the EU

[2] EU Global Strategy 2016 implies 'Integrated Approach' as an extension of the Comprehensive Strategy, that will be implemented using a multi-dimensional approach (pp.28-29)

[3] CIMIC is a military function, it is set up to support military missions and gather cooperation of various actors in the operational can tactical level. CMCO is an internal function. It refers to internal coordination of the EU missions at strategic and political levels.

[4] In terms of actors, the main focus of this report is laid on the EU and the civilian and military staff of the EU. However during the CoP events, participants also shed light on the actions and capabilities of other civilian and military actors. In this report, unless otherwise specifically mentioned, civilian and military actors are presented in the broadest sense as captured in these terms. During the discussions, as for the military actors, policies, actions, capabilities of NATO, UN peacekeeping forces, regional military forces; i.e. AU, Saudi led military coalition (in Yemen), and military forces deployed by a single country (USA, France, Russia), non-state armed groups and militias were reflected upon. As for the civilian side; local, regional and international humanitarian actors, civil society actors, private business actors, local and international organization, and international non-governmental and governmental actors, police, judicial actors were reflected upon.

comprehensive approach into actual practice and making it fully functional, operational and optimally capacitated, practitioners predict more opportunities for synergies in the future operations. In order for this to happen, it is thought to be the most important to make material, financial and human resources available without any shortfalls, and the regular upgrading of these resources and timely and effective mobilization, coordination, cooperation and coherence of their use. From a practical point of view, as illustrated in Figure 1, although it is not exactly similar, civil-military synergies are equalled with the fully functional and fully capacitated CA. For practitioners, the different capabilities gathered under the CA are the means for achieving the end goal of civil-military synergies. The EU's ability to cooperate and coherently coordinate the civil and the military capabilities (financial, material and human) are considered as the main processes connecting means with ends. Introducing new concepts and expanding the conceptual terrain is not welcomed by practitioners[5] when already existing concepts that are intended to produce the same results and effects are not being fully implemented. Along the same vein, practitioners also did not see much of usage and added value in the new concept of 'integrated approach' cited in the EU Global Strategy 2016.

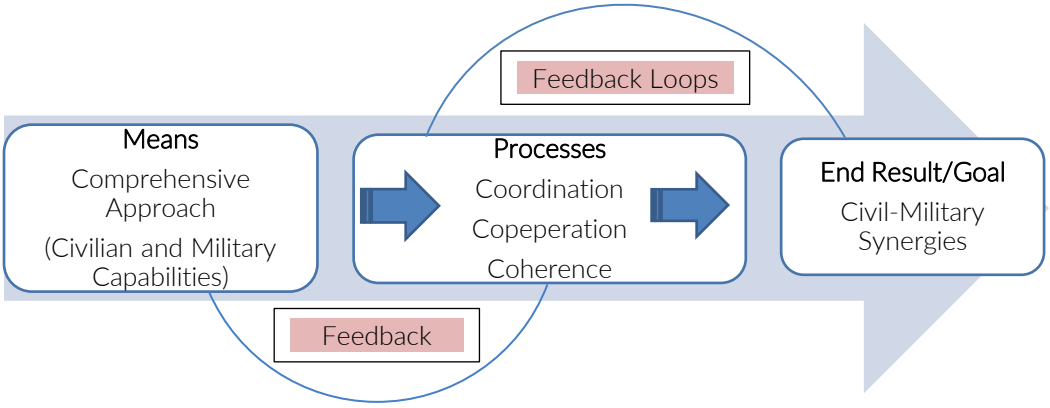

Figure 1: Practitioners' view of critical pathway for Civil-Military Synergies at the EU level relevant to all levels of a mission cycle (Strategic, tactical and Operational)

Building further on Figure 1 and the processes (coordination, cooperation and coherence) denoted in the middle box, the main clusters of activities needed are shown in Figure 2; Coordination Wheel for Human Security. These clusters are not only recommended in terms of successfully completing an entire operational cycle of a particular field mission, but also in terms of regular smoothly functioning practice of the CA.

[5] Also thought to be suffering from the 'conceptual fatigue' already

Figure 2: Coordination wheel for Human Security (Schirch 2015:21)

In addition to the vagueness of the term 'civil-military synergy', practitioners also raised concerns about the dichotomy of 'civil and military' as represented in this wording. This conceptual compartmentalization of the terms civil and military and their representation as binary opposites warrants further attention. This especially is thought to be relevant at the operational level and a concern under the new dynamics of crises and conflict contexts that are increasingly marked by the blurring of previously neatly arranged boundaries between what and who is civil and military. The majority of EU missions are taking place in contexts where the civil-military distinction is increasingly collapsing and especially in contexts where local actors are fulfilling both roles.[6] Having a sharper definition of who is military and who is civil is thought to be inhibiting (sometimes) the ability to capitalize on the ad-hoc opportunities for synergies on the ground level. To illustrate further, in Mali, although it is against the official policy of the EU, if the EU's Security Sector Reform programme is to be successful, working with non-state armed actors with moderate views was found to be quite useful. Working with this particular actor was also considered to be helpful in countering the effects of extremist non-state armed actors.

[6] During the round table, empirical examples to this effect were cited from Iraq. These examples illustrated civilians playing both roles as civilians – engaging in humanitarian relief activities during daytime and engaging in non-state military activities, fighting in the night. Besides, round table participants also raised questions on where police (not in all occasions) and private military actors fit in this spectrum.

2. Civil-Military Synergies: their relevance to EU external missions

Under the CSDP the EU has been developing a wide array of policies, instruments, capabilities and external cooperation instruments (organized thematically and geographically) enabling to effectively apply the CA in its external civilian and military crisis management missions (EEAS and EC 2013:1). If not in all, in most cases, these various instruments are required to be mobilized and applied simultaneously and at various phases of the conflict cycle, although leaving gaps in coherence and effectiveness.

The EU's dedicated search for civil-military synergy, especially at the operational level, is related to two intertwined imperatives. First, related to the changes in the broader context of security. Second, related to the declining resource base of the EU member states. As for the first imperative, the changing context and new and renewed threats to security and peace, at a global scale is worth highlighting (EU Global Strategy 2016). Realities encountered since the end of the Cold War (European Commission 2008:4-6 and EEAS 2015b), the aftermath of the 9/11 event, and wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria have put increased demands for new configurations in civil-military relations and the effective combination of them. 'To fit the purpose', international crisis management and peace operations are not only growing in number, but they are also fast adapting in character.[7] The involvement of more and different actors in the battlefields and planning-rooms of these missions at strategic-political, operational and tactical levels have added more complexities to these missions (Haugevik and Carvalho 2007:6). The EU initial crisis management operations in the Balkans, sub-Saharan Africa and more recently in Afghanistan, continue to cast doubts on the EU's overall effectiveness of these missions and its ability to effectively combine civilian and military capabilities (Gross 2008:3). The recent endeavours of the EU's SSR programmes in Africa (i.e., AMIS in Sudan/Darfur) also provide compelling evidence of the urgent need for increased synergy between the EU's civilian and military capabilities and tools (Ibid p.14). It is under these pressures that the EU High Representative for Security and Defence Policy – recently reiterated "For Europe, soft and hard power go hand in hand" and emphasised effectiveness of EU missions as a matter of credibility and gaining strategic autonomy for missions abroad (EU Global Strategy 2016).

Shrinking defence budgets and the lethargic state of affairs of defence cooperation among the EU member states provide grounds for the second imperative for EU civil-military synergy. According to most recent observations, the state of affairs of the EU's defence capabilities and defence cooperation paint a worrisome picture. The EU's revamped efforts for more synergies across its crisis management instruments, between the civil-military arms of the CA is thought to be well informed by this reality (CEPS 2015:2, Nečas et al 2012:147, Biscop and Coelmont 2011:8, EEAS 2015b). Currently, Europe is faced with a twisted dilemma as to how to upgrade its defence capacities and more importantly, how to achieve them at a lower cost. Given these realities, Europe cannot afford huge inefficiencies in their defence sectors,

[7] At UN level, the same point was echoed in 2009 New Horizon Report on UN peacekeeping. As it puts, "the scale and complexity of peacekeeping are mismatched with existing capabilities. The demands of the past decade have exposed the limitations of past reforms and the basic systems, structures and tools of an organization not designed for the size, tempo and tasks of today's missions". (p.iii)

duplication of its capacities and wasting resources. These inefficiencies will not only generate less capable military forces, but also will lead to member states misallocating and deploying their precious defence resources in EU external missions (CEPS 2015:2). To this effect, as the EU Global Strategy 2016 indicates, the development of a full spectrum of defence capabilities is necessary to respond to external crisis but also to carve out critical conditions of autonomy of decision and action in EU external missions (2016). As Egnell Robert rightly pointed out, the EU has arrived at a historical juncture where it must look beyond a 'balancing act' and 'think outside the box' by simultaneously privileging societal and functional imperatives of its main capabilities and instruments that do not sacrifice each other's operational effectiveness (2009). The functional imperative is the ability to deploy military force against external threats. The societal imperative is equivalent to soft power, deriving from European values and institutions. In considering the balance between them, European traditions and norms can also be seen as a restraining influence against functionality – i.e., military solutions – at any cost. The challenge for the EU is to maintain the effectiveness of both forms and drivers of intervention, both separately and when used in conjunction with each other.

3. Reshaping of the EU Policy Context

The EU continues to adjust its policy environment to facilitate synergies between civil-military capabilities gathered under the Comprehensive Approach (CA). However, the development of these capabilities has being taking place over decades, at different paces, vigour and giving more attention to one set of capabilities over the other, at times. Over time, shifts occurred in the EU's vocabulary, moving from 'relations', 'coordination' and even 'coherence', to 'synergy' and 'effectiveness'. The last semantically implies the EU's current framework of thinking and its ambitious vision of civil-military synergy. Although, the term 'synergy' still remains undefined, the emphasis on the terms 'synergy and effectiveness', goes beyond what was expected to be the outcome of CIMIC cooperation (a focus on will) and CIMCO coordination (a focus on action).

It is not until the Nice European Council in 2000, that for the first time a clear articulation of the need to foster civil-military synergy was declared and anchored within the overall conceptual framework of civil-military relations (Driver 2010:138-139). The Nice conference paved the way for establishing several political and military bodies to provide the structural make-up of the ESDP under the leadership of the Political Security Committee (PSC). The PSC was mainly tasked with ensuring "synergy between the civilian and military aspects of crisis management" (Ibid). Below the level of the PSC, the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) and a supporting European Union Military Staff (EUMS) were established to provide military planning, command, and control. While remaining in its own directorate, the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM) was also tasked with the responsibility of providing planning and control functions for fulfilling the requirements from the civilian side of affairs (Driver 2010:138-139).

In 2008, the review of the ESS (European Council, 2008) underlined the importance of combining civil and military expertise to further develop the EU's crisis management capabilities. 'The Declaration of strengthening capabilities' issued by the Council of the EU serves as the first concrete milestone set in the direction of civil-military synergy. In addition, in 2009 during the Swedish presidency of the Council, a comprehensive report identified several areas for civil-military synergy. Since the signing of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, under which the European External Action Services (EEAS) (operational since 2010) was established, the EU has become more active in identifying ways for implementing the CA and fostering civil-military synergy at an operational level. The establishment of the EEAS is also hailed by many as an important step taken by the EU for bridging the longstanding institutional divide between the Commission (responsible for the civilian side of affairs) and the Council (military side of affairs). The Commission for exploring civil-military synergy was part of its 'New Deal for European Defence', establishing military and civilian headline goals 2010, using the general budget to fund dual-use projects and further development of an integrated framework for EU defence cooperation and current defence review process of EU member states. Last but not least, in 2011 and in 2014, the Council reiterated the importance of civil-military synergy and preparing a working towards a work plan to facilitate it (Benrais and Quinet 2015:10).

The long trajectory of development of the CA and the uneven nature of development of the civilian and military capabilities is also reflective of certain geopolitical realities the EU has been facing for a particular time in history and a certain framing of these conflicts by the EU that demands a different configuration of the civilian and the military capabilities. The EU's

Global Strategy 2016 is reflective of continuation of these earlier patterns of uneven development of civil and military capabilities under the CA. This time, while being somewhat timid on the side of the civilian capability development, the EU Global Strategy 2016 is indicating more investment and focus on the military capability development. Probably its main target is fostering military-military synergies (imperative one as discussed earlier in this report) at the strategic level and utilizing this level of synergies to find effective responses to the nature of threats to global security that are increasingly defined by using frameworks of violent extremism or terrorism. Although military-military synergies are important, there hardly seems to be any reflection on how the stronger case made for increased investment for military capability development and military-military synergies will affect civil-military synergies and their consequences at the operational level. These are all taking place while the capability gaps remain unaddressed, such as: civilian and military components of CSDP missions at the operational level that are not aware of the capabilities available to each other, underutilization of existing capabilities, duplication and waste of human and material resources gathered under the CA.

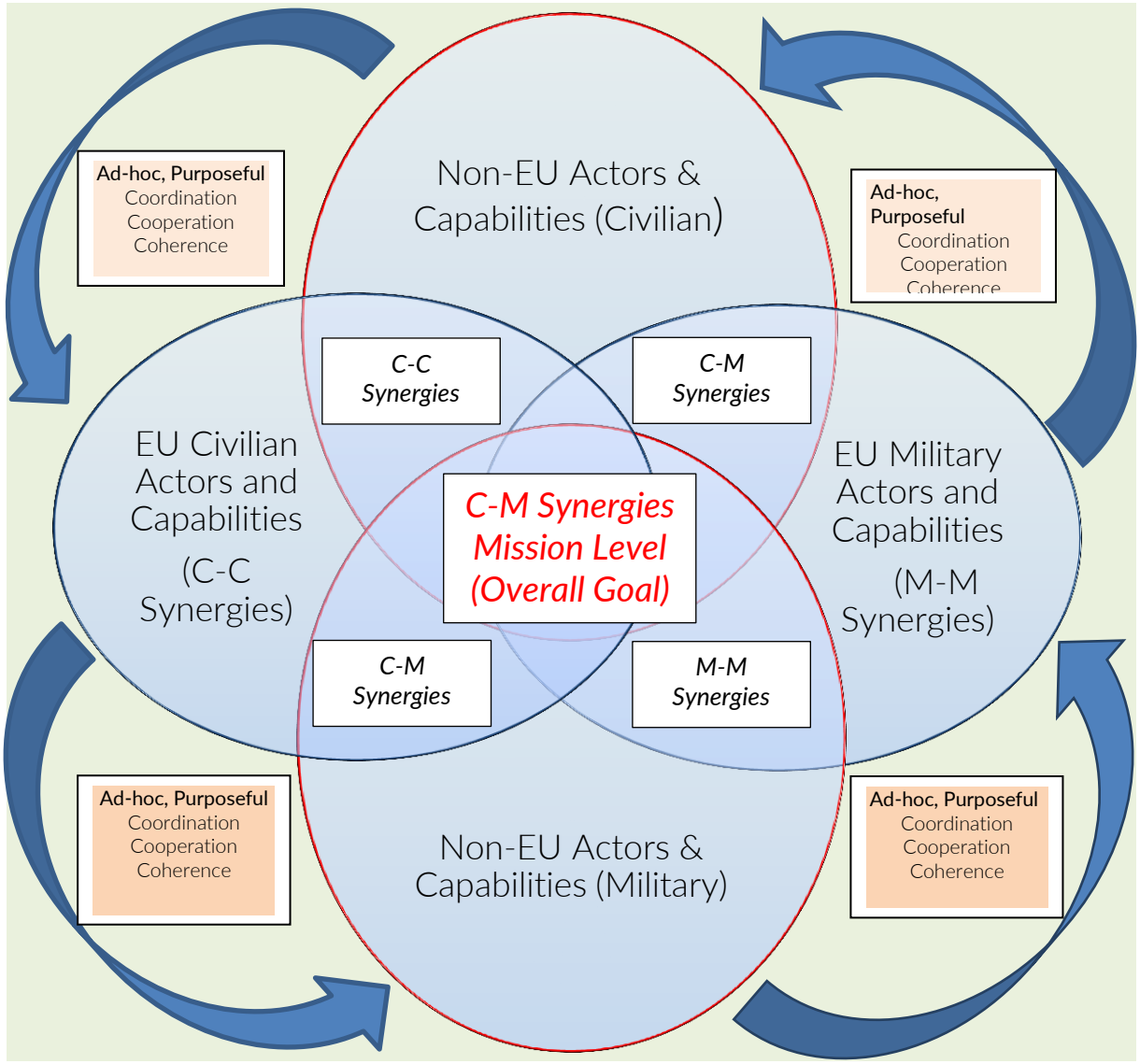

Figure 3: Individual and overlapping areas for fostering Civil-Military Synergies across the EU and between the EU-non-EU actors in any given context

As depicted in Figure 3, for an ideal scenario of civil-military synergies in the overall operational context (effectively achieving the overall mission goal), it important to have synergies between civil-civil, military-military, civil-military synergies between different actors and capabilities across all EU institutions (vertical and horizontal) and with non-EU actors and capabilities at institutional and operational level. Although this figure does not clearly depict the non-state actors (stacked under the non-EU actors and capability cluster in this diagram), their influencing power for fostering, enhancing and inhibiting synergies is taken into account. Given this partially controllable environment (policy and operational) applicable to civil-military synergies, according to practitioners, at least what the EU can do is to make serious efforts to coordinate, cooperate and strike coherence of all the capabilities in the EU realm and specifically in the CA. Earlier, as depicted in the Figure 2 Coordination Wheel for Human Security, actions and processes of joint assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (and learning) and capacity building play a critical role in terms of fostering civil-military synergies purposefully and on a regular basis. Using a heuristic device, the key message in Diagram 3 for the EU is conducting a strategic reflection of all components in this diagram, individually, together, and of the overlaps, different levels, types of actors, their relationships with each other; connecting structures and processes at the same time.

4. Civil-Military Synergies: Ground Views

At a recently held round table meeting[8] on civil-military synergy (with a focus on practice), practitioners from both civil and military backgrounds first scrutinised the usage and the utility of the term civil-military synergy in operational contexts. Strikingly, participants from both ends of the civil-military spectrum agreed on the non-existence of the term 'civil-military synergy' in their everyday operational vocabulary. For both civilian and military actors, thinking and acting using the terms effectiveness, cooperation and coordination are more useful and important in their point of view. In other words, the term 'synergy' is considered as an end state scenario, related to the overall goal of the missions. Further, from the operational point of view, synergy is considered as something to be naturally occurring, rather than 'engineered or planned' at the strategic level. From a practice perspective, what is found to be more important is setting everyday smaller targets and corresponding steps and action points to enable situations of effective civil-military interfaces.

Achieving some degree of coherence, coordination and cooperation and de-conflicting between civilian and military actors and their activities are found to be more practical and realistic goals to be pursued. To this effect, both actors articulated the importance of maintaining each other's autonomy when pursuing coherence, effectiveness and synergy in everyday micro-level interaction. Autonomy of actions taken based on the presented empirical situations at hand was found to be crucial to avoid potential risks for civilians. In their opinion, overt, well planned and 'must' implement rigid templates for creating synergy do not give flexibility to the implementer on the ground. Besides, implementing such pre-planned templates could be harmful as well. As the practitioners repeatedly emphasized, there cannot be strict templates and formulas for civil-military cooperation and collaboration, as every operational context and the dynamics presented in each context are different and fast changing. Therefore, opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between civil actors within the same mission and with outside civil and military actors are judged as the situations unfold.

As they illustrated for instance, if the military is always required or ordered to be embedded in the local contexts and among the local civilian population, this may have harmful consequences. For example, for the purpose of realising the optimal results for counter-insurgency operations and strategies that focus on 'winning the hearts and the minds' and 'population centric-intelligence strategies', it could carry serious risks to the civilian local population for their seeming collaboration with the 'enemy' forces. Given these views, practitioners opined that it should be left to the mission leaderships on the ground and to their regional and localized commands to decide whether the pre-determined strategies and guidelines are to be followed, continued, and discontinued, under what conditions and the extent of their application. In practice, especially from the military point of view, 'autonomy' – which they refer to as being able to 'judge, decide and do' according to the unfolding ground realities – from operation to operation and from moment to moment, is more important. From the practitioners' perspective, as much as respecting the overarching normative commitment towards a 'Whole of Society' approach, when it comes to civil-military synergies at the

[8] This section of the paper is based on the discussions held with the practitioners from both civil and military sides of affairs at the WOSCAP round table on Civil-Military Synergy held on 26th September 2016 at Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), The Hague. Meeting report can be found here.

operational level, the EU must find ways to strategically benefit from comparative advantage of various local actors on ground.

Besides the existing mechanisms at the institutional level of the EU to bring the civilian and military arms of the CSDP missions together, practitioners recognised the importance of the effective utilization of these existing mechanisms. On the structural front of actions, optimizing the uses of the EU's existing CMCO structure and further development of spaces for integrated, coordinated and cooperative planning of operational missions, were pointed out as key for operational effectiveness. Ensuring the full functioning of the OpsCentre to reach its full capacity when planning and conducting new CSDP missions, are pointed out as helpful. Besides, they welcome creating more opportunities at field level to enable effective cooperation between the military and civilian actors on the ground. Without wasting more time on reinventing the wheel, overwhelming support was extended for modelling and building on the already relatively well developed mechanisms and structures for cooperation and coordination at the UN level. UN OCHA, CMcoord and UNDPKO structures, the UN concept of the Integrated Approach[9] and their underlying organizing principles were cited as good points of references to this effect. Although there can be differences in the main entry points for UN and EU peace missions, learning from the UN system and from its mistakes was considered useful. As in a series of special reports, to name a few, the Report of the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) 2015, A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping 2009 and the Brahimi Report 2000, all aimed at increasing the UN's effectiveness and accountability in peace operations, these were considered a good enough base for the EU to seek further guidance.[10] It is regarded as important to adhere to the four focus areas and the key principles of peace operations – primacy of politics, responsive operations, stronger partnerships and field focused and people-centred – identified in the UN-HIPPO report (*op cit*., Schirch 2015:159).

While recognizing the importance of structural factors for effective field operations, in other words, the hardware needed for civil-military synergies in CSDP missions, practitioners assigned great importance to the role of 'individual agency'. Individual personalities of EU missions and of the top level civilian and military leaderships was considered as a key ingredient for fostering an effective operational environment in which civilian and military actors and their capabilities can be used in a more coordinated and de-conflicting manner. The importance of individual agency was even prioritized over the structural, procedural and bureaucratic aspects related to effectiveness. In other words, the theme of 'people matters' was highlighted. Trust building and networking under regular and in complex mission environments were identified as an important precondition for civil-military synergy at the operational level. Given the importance of frequent interaction aimed at trust building, frequency of changes to the middle-level staff composition of EU missions was considered detrimental. This is applicable to both the military and civilian staff assigned to the EU missions, because both are drawn from the

[9] Meaning a system-wide coordination across the political, security, development, rule of law, human rights and humanitarian dimensions. It is especially aimed at strategic partnership between UN peacekeeping operational and UN country Teams (Coning *Op cit*.,National Defence University/Finnish Defence Forces International Centre, Civil-Military Synergies, p.22)

[10] These reports are available via www.un.org/sg/pdf/HIPPO_Report_1_June_2015.pdf, http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/newhorizon.pdf, www.unrol.org/files/brahimi%20report%20peacekeeping.pdf

national services of a particular member state. It is often the case that these staff are unable and unwilling to move out of the country for a long time and at a short notice, especially to be stationed in an external mission outside their regular work stations (away from the home country base). The reasons for unwillingness to be deployed in an operational mission for a long time, sometimes can be due to familial obligations and career concerns. Trust building and networking was considered as a key pathway for successful collaboration and cooperation in the operational theatre. According to practitioners' first-hand experiences, it takes least six months to achieve a decent working relationship and realise some level of trust with each other. Therefore, developing personal contacts and trust building in short term EU missions (that are less than twelve months) with frequent changes to the mission staff seems almost impossible. This is especially the case with the military staff who usually serves around six months or less in a particular mission. Further, the transfer of knowledge across the civil and military divide is also considered to be lost in these scenarios. The overlaps in the civilian and military deployment cycles also inhibit trust building between the two types of actors. Therefore, providing more and regular opportunities for communication between civil and military actors, even without the presence of an external mission in the immediate sight, was recommended as a useful (soft) investment.

4.1 Best practices 'Best' kept off the record

During the desk-based phase of research, only a handful of empirically verifiable examples were found as best practices on civil-military synergy at operational level. Thus the roundtable event was used to find more examples of best practices on civil-military synergy at operational level. This discussion was broadened to include the non-EU related examples of best practices of civil-military synergy as well. Following up on the findings of the desk-based research, participants further discussed what might constitute a best practice according to their experiences and shared relevant examples to that effect. In this discussion, the participants first pointed out, especially in the field of civil-military relations, the word 'best' is a misnomer and too idealistic. Therefore, the discussion was aimed at sharing experiences of what could be considered as good or salient practices on civil-military synergies and at identifying what the underlying factors are in each of these examples enabling civil-military synergies.

Example 1: Multilateral Anti-piracy missions off the Horn of Africa

Multilateral anti-piracy missions conducted off the Horn of Africa, to which EU-CSDP was an integral member, were discussed as rare examples of salient practice of civil-military synergy at the EU level. The EU-CSDP missions contributed to both military and civilian capabilities to operationalise 'Shared Awareness and De-confliction' (SHADE) (main mechanism to coordinate the actions of the EU's Operation Atlanta), the Combined Maritime Force (CMF) and NATO's Ocean Shield, as well as to other complementary operations conducted by some of the EU individual member states (de Langlois and Capstack 2014:30).[11] This case was marked as an instance of a salient practice of civil-military

[11] Under CSDP, EU contributed to the overall anti-piracy mission through European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR), Regional Maritime Security Capacity Building Mission in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean (EUCAP Nestor), EU training mission in Somalia (EUTM Somalia) www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eucap-nestor/documents/factsheet

synergy in relation to mission's overall goal. The almost total collapsing of shared strategic interests of the EU members who took part in the mission and the actual risks that they faced in protecting their vital interests (i.e., economic) were identified as two main factors that enabled civil-military synergy in this case. The main conclusion derived from this particular example of salient practice is the 'requirement of high degree of common strategic political interest among the mission contributors' if civil-military synergy is to be realised at the operational level. However, as reminded by the participants, this mission was largely military in its character, planned and executed based on NATO rules, with a minimal level of involvement from the civilian components. Nevertheless, this particular example offers valuable insights, depending on the nature of the threat, into what capabilities should be given priority when seeking civil-military synergies.

As far as the EU capabilities relevant for this case are concerned, this specific case illustrates, not only of the importance of the availability of capabilities in terms of material and human resources, but also of the willingness to deploy them in a tightly-coordinated manner possibly subject to being under a command structure. As confirmed by existing literature and the roundtable participants, the balance between civilian and military capabilities used for a mission depends on the nature of each case and the principle of "who can contribute the best under what conditions and when in the operational cycle" (principle of comparative advantage). As this case further illustrated, the main location of the mission which naturally limited the participation of other actors (especially the range of civilian actors usually present in a ground CSDP operation) facilitated the conditions for the military to carve out the necessary autonomy to 'get things done' as per their strategic calculations. In other words, in terms of number and variety of actors, the case illustrates a less complex situation. On the one hand, this case of the EU ATALANTA operation can be regarded as a success story in terms of civil-military synergies in its own right. However, when compared with the overall achievements of the EU's overall approach to Somalia,[12] the synergies between the military ATALANTA operation and these civilian missions remain unimpressive. While the ATALANTA operation helped to realise civil-military synergies at one level of EU-CSDP and reached the main limited goal of 'containment' and addressed one of the main symptoms of the overall crisis situation of Somalia and in the neighbouring areas, the other related civilian missions launched under the CA did not enjoy the same conditions to be successful. Lack of dedication of EU capabilities in terms of material and human resources and colliding of different agendas and interests of various civilian actors involved in these missions have only reduced the EU's ability to get things done. Nevertheless, the main findings of this example that privileges the ad hoc and context specific nature of co-ordination and synergy goes against the EU's efforts aimed at standardization and formalization of a process of lessons learned.[13]

Example 2: Dutch Mission in Uruzgan, Afghanistan (from 2006-2010)

The example of the Dutch mission in Uruzgan, Afghanistan (from 2006-2010) was used to shed light on another case of salient practice of civil-military coordination at the level of day-to-day action. The Dutch contingent was deployed in Uruzgan province as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The Dutch acted as a lead nation in Uruzgan. The main mission of the Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) was to "assist the local government in building its capacity, authority and influence and prioritizing and synchronizing reconstruction and development programmes with assisting the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), in order to set the conditions for a secure and stable Uruzgan Province". Although this case does not directly qualify as an example of civil-military synergy in relation to mission's overall goal (which ultimately failed, as a result of getting caught up in Dutch national politics), it still qualifies as a case of effective civil-military coordination, an important step in the direction of synergy (see Figure 1

[12] This is constituted of a number of long term civilian missions (EUTM, EUCAP Nestor)

[13] Presently, under the EEAS and in the CSDP structure, Lessons Management Group is used of this purpose.

for critical path for civil-military synergies). Further, the closely assessed, planned, coordinated, aligned, and sequenced execution of civilian and military components of the mission in the operational field were discussed as key factors underlying its claimed limited level of success. Especially in the backdrop of the EU's CSDP missions' reputation for being ad-hoc in coordination and cooperation at operational level, this example highlights the added value of intentional coordination and cooperation between civilian and military capabilities in the entire operational cycle of a mission. The claimed success of effectiveness between civil and military components of the Uruzgan mission also alluded to the effective cooporation and coordination with the local Afghan communities. The overall mission composition that integrated the local knowledge and expertise cutting across a swathe of actors drawn from the local tribal leaders, religious leaders, local civil society actors, professionals, civil engineers, construction workers and the youth is pointed out as another important factor for success. Moreover, in this example, the success of the Dutch mission in Uruzgan found at the operational level is tied to the 'embeddedness' in the 'Whole of Society' approach.

According to the practitioners, there are many micro-level examples that they consider as best practices at the operational level that are not in any way documented and importantly, cannot be documented. According to their experiences, public documentation of the ground-level best practices carries risks for the civilian actors who are part of them. This is especially the case under the current realities of new warfare, where the insurgents deliberately target civilians as a strategy to gain attention to their demands. Besides, a majority of humanitarian civilian actors feel uncomfortable to openly collaborate and acknowledge their collaboration with the military as these are perceived to damage their image as non-political actors. Neutrality, independence, and non-partisanship are operational principles necessary in order for humanitarian actors to have safe access to people in need of humanitarian assistance (Schirch 2015:80).

Given such considerations, many micro-level everyday examples of civil-military cooperation and coordination are kept off the record, yet they present successful examples of civil-military effectiveness. Due to the sensitive nature of interactions between civilian and military actors and for the sake of protection of civilians (local population and civilian organizations) and other tactical reasons, working 'off the record' is perceived as a necessary measure. However as the civilian actors emphasized, at least for the internal organizational learning purposes and for the sake of some form of accountability, an internal form of documentation of best/worst examples can be still useful. Practitioners from both civilian and military backgrounds also emphasised that effectiveness and civil-military synergy are related to the operational context, and depend on the opportunities that arise out of the dynamics in the operational sphere. For example, first hand experiences from the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)[14] highlighted how a wide range of factors, from specificities in the operational context, individual personalities, the level of trust established between different stakeholders in and outside of the mission, to frequent rotation of staff played, affected the civil-military effectiveness. Consequently, the practitioners do not necessarily think synergy should come from the top, but rather be generated at the field level, as appropriate and necessary.

Along the same stream of thinking, it was mentioned that 'synergy' cannot be planned. While coordination, cooperation, joint assessment, mission planning and working on relationships (trust building), can be planned and structured because they are important interim

[14] For details of the mission refer to http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusma/

pillars of civil-military synergy. On another note, from the vantage point of practice, participants did not regard documenting the examples of best/worst practices that occur on a more unplanned and ad-hoc basis as necessary. Institutionalising such examples as model behaviours was found to have limited use, since each deployed mission is faced with drastically different and unique conditions at the operational level. Therefore too much planning and models imposed from the top may prevent exploiting the valuable opportunities that arise on ad-hoc basis in the operational sphere. Related to this, a degree of flexibility, given to each mission and its leaderships from both civilian and military ends of the spectrum, is considered crucial.

It appears that the chances of realising civil-military synergies are more likely in short term missions (i.e. stabilization missions), drawing from the limited number of salient practices of civil-military synergies and many examples of non-synergies relevant to both the EU-specific and other external peace operations – those cutting across all the activities: conflict prevention and mediation, peacemaking, peace enforcement, peacebuilding – and many sub-variations under them, such as SSR, stabilization and counter-insurgency operations, governance reforms. The benefit of operationalising in a restricted environment, having clear goals and a command structure (often assigned to the military) comes across as defining factors for civil-military synergies at the operational level. However, as the complex and relatively long term case of Uruzgan tells us, contrary to the conditions under which the EU-ATALANTA mission became a success, the intentional planning, coordination and coherence of civil-military interface are also defining factors underlying synergies. It is also found that, internally at the EU level, planning and deploying shorter-term missions such as ATALANTA, is much easier to coordinate and align coherently. However, for longer term missions, such as Security Sector Reform where both civil and military actors take part, often taking place in a more crowded (in terms of actors, policies, agendas and interests) and relatively stable/less stable operational environment, are more challenging for realising synergies. Given the latter scenario, it is imperative for the EU to improve its coordination, cooperation and coherence with other actors and dedicate a substantial level of attention and resources to this end.

5. Challenges and Opportunities: Old and New

There are many challenges hampering civil-military synergy or effectiveness. Some remain at a more generic level (civil-military relations in general), whereas others are specific to EU external missions. Although some of these challenges can be called as 'old' challenges, still it is worthwhile recasting some of them here, as they continue to impact on civil-military synergy at the operational level.

Contentious relationships between civilian humanitarian organizations and militaries operating in the same environments is one continuing general challenge that deserves attention. To this effect, conceptual issues, differences and the distinct norms and principles that these actors hold are identified as underlying factors. However, as recent experiences of complex multinational peace operations (i.e. Democratic Republic of Congo-DRC) highlight, contentious relationships between civilian and military actors are simply beyond the level of 'differences' but reflect a combination of complex sets of intertwined factors. To a name a few: the sheer number of international actors (civilian and military), and the fast changing security dynamics and the humanitarian situation on the ground (Van Pottlebergh 2009: 359). Besides,

in the operational theatre, regardless of the nature of the mission (i.e., SSR, short term stabilization mission, long term peacebuilding, humanitarian crisis intervention) civilian and military action could still belong to different timeframes. Therefore, spending too much time to make a decision by the civilian actors whether to cooporate with the military or not could result in a lost opportunity for effective civil-military engagement (Rosen 2009; 608).

Another challenge is the civilian and military actors' lack of knowledge of one another's organizational identities, each other's security concerns, and working procedures. Civilian actors, particularly, humanitarian actors' self-perception of themselves as being 'different' and 'non-political', as opposed to the military actors is noteworthy here. However, such perceptions are not found to be the case, always, as civilian humanitarian actors can be as political as the military due to their role in promoting the political components of the state-building and stabilization operations (Egnell 2013:241). Besides, under current complex multinational operational contexts, these conventional rigid perceptions and identity boundaries can be questioned.

For many civilian actors, establishing a working relationship with the military is undesirable. The military is often attempting to use their work (i.e., NGOs) for military purposes, which is found to be problematic. In such situations, NGO's follow the policy of 'total non-engagement' as a protection mechanism and a way of avoiding the risks of their humanitarian work and to protect the humanitarian space necessary to fulfil its core responsibilities. Non-engagement with the military is used to avoid getting politicized and being an aide to military objectives. However, there are some humanitarian NGOs who may coordinate with the military forces to achieve their goal of humanitarian relief of suffering, whereas, others show reluctance or even oppose collaborating with military forces to avoid undermining their operational requirements and humanitarian goals of providing temporary and immediate relief to populations affected by conflict (Schirch 2015:69-73).

Similar to the views of the civilian actors, military actors are also faced with challenges such as how to engage with the civilian actors. For the military, the sheer number and diversity of civilian actors, groups and organizations, mandates and the complex identities all these actors carry in one single operational context is a major issue. As Pugh notes, one of the key obstacles for closer cooperation with the civilian actors in multinational and interagency cooperation is related to the presence of enormous diversity of civilian actors. Moreover, the "jungle" of civilian organizations sometimes makes it hard for military actors in the field to keep the various organizations and their activities apart. In the same vein, either lack of actual guidelines or adherence to existing guidelines by non-humanitarian actors is pointed out as another problem (Aulin and Vogelaar 2015:13). To this effect, the outdated nature of the existing guidelines to match the demands of today's operating environments is worth highlighting (*Op cit*., NMCG 2011, OCHA 2011 and IASC 2011 in Metcalfe et al 2012: 11). Taken together, it is fair to conclude, these challenges are found to be negatively impacting bottom–up arrangements targeting civil-military synergy and effective functioning of the already established institutional arrangements such as CIMIC (Pugh 2001:345). Further, to this effect, practitioners from both civil and military backgrounds pointed out the increasing dilemmas they face in dealing with the number of private military actors and private security contractors. Especially according to the civilian practitioners, the private military and security contractors who often fall through the cracks of existing institutional arrangements, guidelines and systems of accountability poses a major dilemma for them to corporate with them. This

situation is especially found to be grave when they engage with the official military actors (i.e., drawn from a national army, serves under a clear command structure) who are increasingly using the services of these private military and security actors.

As emphasised by the practitioners and scholars in the field of civil-military relations, communication lies in the heart of civil-military relations and presents a sure way of increasing each other's effectiveness.[15] However, introducing inadequate and often ad-hoc cooperation procedures are not enough to achieve a decent level of communication to facilitate a path for civil-military synergy (Biscop and Coelmont 2011:8). Adding to this point, practitioners also highlighted the importance of having regular communication between civil and military actors even in no-conflict environments. According to their field experiences, the longer the conflict is fought, the worse the communication and trust building between the civilian and military actors gets. Providing more joint-training opportunities for civil-military cooperation, structured facilitation of information sharing between military and civilian actors for the purpose of mission planning and execution, and exchange of knowledge on the available military and civilian capabilities are other steps for encouraging civil-military synergy (Schirch 2015, Serronha 2011:137). Addressing the language barriers through sharing knowledge about each other's use of operational terminologies and mapping of such terminologies at various phases of a multinational and interagency operations are other suggestions offered by both scholars and practitioners (Schirch 2015:82-83, Haugevik and Carvalho 2007:10).

Specific to EU external missions, the complicated nature of military-military relationships is identified as an impediment for civil-military effectiveness. Although there are universal characteristics shared between the militaries of European Union member states, there are also significant differences in terms of languages they speak, types of trainings received and availability and use of different equipment (de Langlois and Capstack 2014: 28). Also not forgetting to mention the different foreign policy goals and national interests they are abide by. For effective functioning and implementation of the EU's CA a certain degree of coherence among the various national militaries that contribute to the military arm of the CA is important. Given this, especially those practitioners who are from the military backgrounds have pointed out, it is very urgent for the EU to introduce a defence attaché system to its missions. By doing so, the EU will be able to bypass the national caveats often hampering military-military and civil-military synergy in EU external operations. According to them, establishing a military attaché system in the EU diplomatic missions and in the country specific missions can be done by bringing in ex-military officers and retired high-ranking military personals who have served in multinational peace missions in the past. This proposal for an EU military attaché system was seen as helpful in conflict prevention, analysis and swift identification of the opportunities for civil-military cooperation and coordination at an early stage of a conflict. Further, it could also help civilian and military components of an EU mission to work closely on everyday basis. As the practitioners from both civilian and military backgrounds assured, given the overall makeup of the military attaché system as a 'go-between' system, it could help the EU missions to strengthen its relations with non-EU civilian actors. In their views, non-EU civilian actors (such as, civil society actors, local and international NGO's and humanitarian actors) who are usually unwilling to work with the obvious military actors may find it much easier to engage with the

[15] Researchers also warn not to forget where the distinct notion of military is being produced, the historical context that enabled to conceptualize the military as a distinct social organization within the broader social organization (Rosén 2009: p. 610).

EU missions through this system. The defence attaché system was also proposed as an antidote to the regular changes to the military postings in the EU missions and consequently, resulting in a loss of valuable knowledge obtained by military personnel on a specific context and a mission. As a practitioner pointed out, currently the opportunities for establishing a defence attaché system in the EU missions remained untapped and were hampered, as decisions related to defence are only taken by the Council level and are subject to a slow phase of processing.

Given the importance attributed to communication for civil-military synergy and civil-military relations by both practitioner and scholars, making consistent efforts to develop clear structures and mechanisms for communication for coordination, leadership, and deployment of dedicated capacities to support them, are ways forward (Schirch 2015: 92, Rosen 2009; 610). To this effect, devising communication strategies that are firmly anchored in shared goals, such as the protection of civilians and human security and moving away from the mind-set of 'difference', is important. Creating conditions for identifying constructive opportunities and complementary approaches are considered important. Most importantly, accepting and respecting where civil-military engagement is not possible is crucial (Byman 2001:29). Related to this, another suggestion that comes from both scholars of civil and military backgrounds (Egnell 2013, de Langlois and Capstack 2014 and Driver 2010), and as confirmed by the practitioners, is adopting a 'measured approach' to civil-military coordination. A 'measured approach' must acknowledge and deal with both negative and positive consequences of coordination, and seek to answer more specific questions, such as: when is coordination necessary for effectiveness?; what are the aims of coordination?; who are the actors to be involved?; and to what extent and at what level of command do these different actors need to be coordinated? (Egnell 2013:238).

Amongst other practical suggestions, engaging civil and military actors from the beginning of a planning process of a mission, making dedicated and consistent efforts for civil-military coordination, cross-checking the different tasks for consistency with other missions, a clear delineation of tasks and defining the areas where the different missions can mutually benefit from each other are considered important (Schirch 2015:82-83). Following the recommendations of the UN Brahimi report, providing strategic guidance and developing mechanisms and procedures to hold the mission leaderships accountable for the success or lack of success, are other bold and noteworthy recommendations.

As reiterated by both practitioners and scholars, clearly, what is not needed is 'reinventing the wheel' and more or new layers of structural and bureaucratic hurdles. Instead, effective use of the already existing structures, capabilities and instruments at the EU is found to be more crucial. In this regard, learning from already established and somewhat successful mechanisms in the UN system and the aiming of EU individual member states at civil-military synergy at operational level was brought to attention.

In the light of the two imperatives mentioned above, increased civil-military synergy is what enables the EU to maintain its ability to act effectively and to the highest standards in crisis management. The EU Global Strategy 2016 re-affirms that synergy is a matter of

credibility. Some of the most recent initiatives, namely, facilitating capability development,[16] especially, investing in dual capability development, changes introduced to the financing methods (i.e., transferring programming of the Instrument for Stability (IfS) from the Commission to the EEAS), were undertaken in order to tackle long-term (mostly capacity building) and short-term crisis response dimensions (Biscop & Coelmont 2011:31). These are indications of the EU's seriousness in search for civil-military synergy and operational effectiveness of its external missions.

A few main recommendations stemmed from the desk based research and engagements with the practitioners from both civil and military backgrounds. For realising civil-military synergy at operational level, inputs at the strategic-political level are crucial. Setting clear political aims for each mission, in other words, embracing the 'primacy of politics' at all levels of EU action, is crucial. Clear identification of a crisis and the development of an overall EU approach, based on EU level foreign policy goals, that takes the capabilities of EU institutions, structures and actors in the CA is important. This will help in creating a common point of departure in the planning of operations and help driving the different actors that are involved towards a common purpose (Egnell 2013:240).[17] A clear and steady commitment from the member states is a precondition for effective application of already developed civil-military capabilities. This is not only a point relevant to the EU missions, but to other security actors in multinational operational missions who are deployed in the same operational theatre.[18] Undoubtedly, strategic and political ambiguities at the top level affect the individuals at operational and tactical levels. Giving field staff enough political room for manoeuvre and initiative and appropriate delegation of authority (and resources) create enabling conditions for civil-military synergy (Serronha 2011:137). In parallel to 'politics matter' which would allow the EU to take the full range of power relations (vertically and horizontally) into account, an attitude of 'people matter' and putting both these into action is found to be crucial. Appointing the 'right people', with matching skills and the right attitude[19] is proven to have made the most impact on civil-military synergies at the operational level. In terms of capabilities, 'people matter' approach requires investing in human resource and personal development of the EU missions staff. To this effect, drawing from Schirch's extensive field work (2015) in the area of civil-military-police relations, investing in capacity development on intercultural competency and adaptive leadership skills can be recommended.

From the perspective of a 'Whole of Society' approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, practitioners from both civil and military backgrounds underscored the importance of 'local actors and local ownership' and embedding in the local realities for realising civil-military effectiveness and sustainability on the ground. Putting the EU's policy commitments towards local ownership into actual practice is cited as the first step in this

[16] EEAS document titled 'Promoting synergies between the EU civil and military capability development' identified several areas where civil-military synergy can be fostered (February 2011). Development of dual capabilities through joint research and technology efforts is one of the highlights of this document.

[17] Funding, resources, reluctance of establishing a joint planning unit for civil and military arms if CSDP missions, insufficient command structures are identified as some challenges at EU strategic level (National Defence university/Finnish Defence Forces International Centre (2015) Review: Civil Military Synergies (p. 70)

[18] This point was further elaborated in the context of Un missions in the UN New Horizon Report 2009 (p. iii)

[19] Refer Schirch and Mancini-Griffoli 2015: pp. 66-68 and 106-107 (case studies on Kenya and Ghana) for detailed empirical verified cases to this effect.

direction. Taking the needs of the local societies into account is pointed out as fundamental for effective and sustainable interventions. Especially working together with local groups and learning from their local security governance arrangements and mechanisms (i.e., early warning systems) before low intensity conflicts flare-up is highly recommended. As for the practitioners, engaging with locals, jointly finding opportunities where an impact can be made, respecting local knowledge and voice, and recognising their needs and their potential contribution to the missions, are considered as the most important ingredients of a successful mission. Applying the principles of 'broadening and deepening' and recognizing the strategic value of local engagement is crucial for meaningful engagements (Schirch 2015: 96-98).[20] Further, according to findings from a number of empirically verified case studies, the benefits of including women and religious leaders in such local processes and engagements are uncontested (Schirch and Mancini-Griffoli 2015:121).[21] As most recent empirical evidences from Libya, Burundi and Mali demonstrate, working at micro-local levels of governance is also proven to be more successful than working at the top-down national level efforts aimed at civil-military synergy at the operational level. As the EU-SSR missions in Burundi and Mali demonstrate the consequences for not engaging with non-state local actors are drastic and have real consequences for accomplishing synergies at the operational level (Vogelaar and Jayasundara-Smits 2016:7-8).

As also pointed out by the CoP participants, despite many shortcomings in the ways in which the local governance arrangements work, they are still seen as better counterparts for effective operational missions. Because, from the vantage point of view of the local communities (bottom-up), whose relationship with the national governments are considerably weaker or even almost non-existent due to the prevailing crisis and conflict situations, local actors and the local governance arrangements are seen as having more legitimacy and capability to address the local needs, especially the security needs. As the participants mentioned, although the EU and other main security actors have a preference to deal with the national level of government as highlighted in the case of Libya, Mali and Burundi, sometimes, for more effective operational missions, working at the local level with actors who can bring a comparative advantage for effectiveness of the operational mission should not be ruled out. In the broadest sense, if capabilities are understood as "the ability to get things done", it is imperative for the EU not to adapt its current legal and policy frameworks to enable working with certain types of local actors (i.e., non-state local actors), at least pragmatically issue-based and on the basis of limited cooperation.

[20] Broadening is referred to as including as many and diverse stakeholders as possible. Deepening principle of local ownership refers to situation where civil society engagement evolves from isolated, project-based efforts toward platforms for joint implementation and joint institutional oversight (pp.96-99).

[21] To this effect the participants of the round table event cited examples of the valuable contributions made by women' groups in Liberia for national peacemaking efforts and DDR processes. A case study from Afghanistan highlights a best practice of involving religious leaders to increase the legitimacy of a community-based multi-stakeholder policing programme. In this case, the presence of the religious leaders helped reaching the main purpose of the programme - learning to listen and respond to local people's needs (Schirch, Lisa and Deborah Mancini-Griffoli. (eds.) (2015):121

6. Concluding Remarks

Last not least, the next most compelling question is what all these challenges identified related to inhibiting civil-military synergies of the EU external action and the numerous recommendations for increased civil and military synergies offered by the practitioners' in this report mean for the EU capabilities. To this effect, first of all, it is worth recasting that the presence and active engagement of a broad range of actors (local, regional, international) including both that are actively participating in the EU peace missions, but also the ones that are at the receiving end of the EU actions and policies (development, security and foreign policies) is the new norm that any EU peace mission (or any other) has to accept and deal with. In this new environment, the EU as a single actor or any actors taking part in a collective effort with other local, national and regional actors, are increasingly dependent on each other (their policies, resources, soft and hard power) for fostering civil-military synergies at the operational level.

Given these realities, first of all, it is important for the EU as a whole, to act together, upgrade and mobilize its existing civilian and military capabilities in a coordinated and coherent manner, vertically and horizontally. Although the EU's reputation as a soft power can leverage the coordination and cooperation with external civilian and military actors, the EU's image in the domain of the hard power (military power) does impact negatively on its ambitions and goals on civil-military synergies. To this effect, the need of projecting and developing both soft and hard powers at similar scales and complementarily to each other under the CA and externally with other security actors are important. As repeatedly highlighted by the practitioners, achieving civil-military synergies in the EU external action, especially at the operational level, is largely dependent on the capabilities of a broad range of actors (including that of non-state actors) external to the EU, and the ways in which they mobilise, utilise and interact with the EU's capabilities at the operational level. As many micro-level field level examples in this report revealed, strategically tapping into the capabilities of the local actors in terms of their power relations, social, economic, political and cultural networks, local knowledge and intelligence has better chances of fostering, optimising and sustaining civil-military synergies at the operational level. Although doing so maybe harder for the EU-military actors, reshaping of the current EU policy environment and even sometimes bending of the existing rules and boundaries is necessary.[22]

[22] Practitioners shared an example from another multinational peace operation to elaborate this point further, which this report cannot share as the information was shared under the Chatham house rule.

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