

Maciej STĘPKA

Jagiellonian University in Kraków

maciek.stepka@uj.edu.pl

EU CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

IDENTIFYING INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINS FOR EARLY WARNING ANALYSIS UTILIZATION¹

ABSTRACT Early warning systems are responsible for monitoring crisis situations and generating warning signals of situations which escalate and pose a threat to international and human security. The application of this instrument often determines the success of preventive measures and efficiency of further crisis management. Being aware of the importance of this mechanism, the EU invested substantial resources for its development within the CFSP/CSDP framework. Nonetheless, the faulty institutional design and insufficient analytical capabilities of the EEAS put the applicability of the system in question. The article analyses a set of early warning institutional arrangements embedded in CFSP/CSDP institutional structure. In doing so, it describes and examines the main institutional and systemic constrains of early warning utilization in the EU conflict prevention framework.

Key words: conflict prevention, early warning systems, Common Foreign and Security Policy, European External Action Service

Słowa kluczowe: zapobieganie konfliktom, system wczesnego ostrzegania, Wspólna Polityka Zagraniczna i Bezpieczeństwa, Europejska Służba Działań Zewnętrznych

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For the past 20 years, the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) has undergone numerous modifications, which resulted in the establishment of a unique institutional blend of interlocking instruments and competencies.² Within this specific setting, the EU has begun to develop conceptual, political, and institutional background for making conflict prevention a distinctive characteristic of the EU engagement in the global arena.³ With the adoption of the Gothenburg Programme, European Security Strategy and the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU has argued that *conflict and threat prevention cannot start too early, and that early identification and understanding of risk factors increases the chances of timely and effective action to address the underlying causes of conflict*.⁴ With this assumption in mind, the EU invested substantial resources in the development of preventive measures and crisis management capacities, which eventually placed the early conflict warning system at the heart of the EU conflict prevention toolbox.⁵

Early Warning System (EWS) is commonly considered as an essential element of an effective conflict prevention capacity.⁶ It can be defined as *the ability to collect and analyse information in the interest of providing strategic choices for preventive action or, as may be required, an informed response*.⁷ The idea behind the system is that it can predict the development of crises and produce warnings and viable response options in a timely manner. The analysis has to be not only accurate, but also compatible with a specific institutional layout and political agenda of the organization it is addressed to. This is when the efficiency of early warnings becomes questionable. The so-called early warning-response gap is a well-known issue in the global and regional conflict prevention and crisis management frameworks. The literature indicates a whole range of reasons behind the inefficiency of the analysis, one of which is institutional constraint.⁸ Arjen Boin et al. describes institutional constraints as communication inefficiency and individual or collective inability to process and produce information in the times of crisis.⁹ He argues that in complex institutional frameworks, crisis situations can be, and

² See M.E. Smith, *Europe's Foreign and Security Policy. The Institutionalization of Cooperation*, Cambridge 2004.

³ See B. Romsloe, "EUs utenriks- og sikkerhetspolitikk – teori og praksis", *Internasjonal politikk*, vol. 63, no. 1 (2005), pp. 89-108.

⁴ *A Secure Europe in a Better World – European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003.

⁵ See E. Gross, A.E. Juncos, *EU Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management. Roles, Institutions, and Policies*, London–New York 2010.

⁶ See J.L. Davies, T.R. Gurr, *Preventive Measures. Building Risk Assessment and Crisis Early Warning Systems*, Lanham 1998.

⁷ S. Rusu, "Principles and Practice of Conflict Early Warning", *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2001), p. 132, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14678800100590613>>.

⁸ See K. van Walraven, *Early Warning and Conflict Prevention. Limitations and Possibilities*, The Hague 1998.

⁹ See A. Boin, P. 't Hart, A. McConnell, "Crisis Exploitation: Political and Policy Impacts of Framing Contests", *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2009), pp. 81-106, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13501760802453221>>.

often are, managed ineffectively. This can be attributed to a number of reasons, be it a high number of analytical units, ambiguous procedures and policies, or simply inter-departmental competition over influence and position in the expertise-making environment.¹⁰ This set of specific problems is often attributed to global organizations, which commonly struggle with defective institutional designs, conflict of interests and competencies, or cognitive biases.¹¹

The EU conflict prevention framework certainly fits this profile being a patchwork of commission- and council-based mechanisms; it can pose several challenges for fully functional early warning and conflict prevention policy.

The following article analyses a set of institutional arrangements embedded in CFSP/CSDP institutional structure. In doing so, it describes and examines the main institutional and systemic constraints of early warning utilization in the EU conflict prevention framework. The first part of the article focuses on the principal theories of the so-called early warning response gap. It emphasizes the main reasons behind unsuccessful performance of preventive policies and focuses on possible explanations for the gap. The second section of the article is devoted to the description of the institutional design of the EU conflict prevention framework. It outlines the most important component sources of information involved in the process of early warning production, dissemination and utilization. The last section focuses on examination of institutional constraints which decrease the efficiency of the EU conflict prevention policies.

WARNING-RESPONSE GAP – AN INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The so-called early warning-response gap represents a situation when timely delivered information on a potential conflict fails to generate a proper political response.¹² Such a problem of responsiveness to early warnings is attributed to several issues ranging from different threat perceptions among decision makers, bystander syndrome, ineffective delivery of warnings and, last but not least, institutional constraints.¹³

Institutional constraints refer to specific technical limitations that make dissemination and delivery of early warnings much more challenging. One of the main aspects of the institutional constraints is flawed organizational design of a conflict prevention framework. This problem refers mainly to the excessively polycentric early warning systems scattered all around the institution. According to Zenko, such a situation contributes to informational chaos and further issues with analysis dissemination and

¹⁰ See A. Boin et al., *The Politics of Crisis Management*, New York 2005, p. 34.

¹¹ See D. Carment, K. Garner, "Early Warning and Conflict Prevention: Problems, Pitfalls and Avenues for Success", *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1999), pp. 103-121, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/11926422.1999.9673176>>.

¹² H. Adelman, S. Schmeidl, "Towards the Development of an Early Warning/Response Network", *Refuge*, vol. 15, no. 4 (1996), pp. 21-27.

¹³ See A. Austin, "Early Warning and The Field: A Cargo Cult Science?", in idem, M. Fischer, N. Ropers (eds.), *Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict*, Wiesbaden 2004, pp. 129-150.

communication between analytical units.¹⁴ It should be noted that before a warning reaches a policy-maker, it has to cover a distance between several analytical units and departments involved in the conflict prevention framework; the bigger the distance, physical and otherwise, the smaller the chance of success of an early warning.¹⁵

Another aspect of institutional constraints focuses on the problem of different strategic or security cultures that may be engaged in the early warning system and conflict prevention framework. Choo argues that analytical coherence within the system is absolutely essential in order to produce clear and usable information for a decision maker.¹⁶ That is why it is crucial that the 'analysts-warners' are not only a part of the same system, but also share the same 'playbook', that is identification of threats and understanding of responses viable for the organization they work for.¹⁷ Thus, the 'warners' also have a responsibility to educate themselves in the decision-making mechanisms of their organization. Empirical evidence shows that the greater familiarity early warning analysts have with policy making mechanism, the easier it is to write warnings intended for specific responses.¹⁸ In this regard, a complex and unpredictable decision making environment seriously affects the efficiency of the early warning system.

The third dimension of institutional constraints refers to conflict of interest and competencies. It builds on the two previously mentioned issues and leads to potential conflicts between analytical components involved in the early warning system. There is an interesting body of literature exploring the phenomenon of interest-based behavior among intelligence and analytical units involved in security policies.¹⁹ Apparently, in a situation when competencies are not clearly indicated in the organizational framework, the units involved in the system tend to use their powers to assume dominant position and place themselves as close to the decision maker as possible.²⁰ Such a situation is counter-productive and potentially leads to conflict within the framework.

¹⁴ See M. Zenko, R.R. Friedman, "UN Early Warning for Preventing Conflict", *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 18, no. 1 (2011), p. 25, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2011.527504>>.

¹⁵ See A. Ricci (ed.), *From Early Warning to Early Action? The Debate on the Enhancement of the EU's Crisis Response Capability Continues*, Brussels 2008.

¹⁶ C.W. Choo, "Information Use and Early Warning Effectiveness: Perspectives and Prospects", *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, vol. 60, no. 5 (2009), pp. 1071-1082, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/asi.21038>>.

¹⁷ See B. Pohl, "The Logic Underpinning EU Crisis Management Operations", *European Security*, vol. 22, no. 3 (2013), p. 320, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2012.726220>>.

¹⁸ See B. Harff, T.R. Gurr, "Systematic Early Warning of Humanitarian Emergencies", *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 35, no. 5 (1998), p. 561, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022343398035005002>>.

¹⁹ See M. Phythian, P. Gill, S. Marrin (eds.), *Intelligence Theory. Key Questions and Debates*, London-New York 2008.

²⁰ See M. Dunn Cavelty, V. Mauer, "Postmodern Intelligence: Strategic Warning in an Age of Reflexive Intelligence", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 40, no. 2 (2009), pp. 123-144, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0967010609103071>>.

EU CONFLICT PREVENTION FRAMEWORK – INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

Studying utilization of early warning mechanisms and conflict prevention polices requires identification of two basic communities within the framework – ‘warnees’ and ‘warners’. In this case, the decision-making environment is considered to be the ‘warnees’, embedded in the Council of European Union. The ‘warners’, on the other hand, represent the community of the so called ‘knowledge producers’ responsible for the development and dissemination of early warning analysis.²¹ This differentiation may seem straight forward, but within such a complex institutional design as the European Union traditional divisions become blurred.

The most common point of reference for the ‘warners’ community is the European External Action Service (EEAS) with the Office of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP) in command.²² As Hynek indicates, the EEAS and its analytical capability is rather a patchwork than a coherent and fully-fledged system.²³ Such an opinion stems from the fact that the EEAS is in its essence a sum of intergovernmental (originated in the Council) and communitarian (originated in the European Commission) components of the Common Foreign and Security Policy.²⁴ In the aftermath of the Lisbon Treaty reform and the adoption of the comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, the EU started pooling its analytical resources under one institutional framework. The comprehensive approach (CA) is a guiding principle behind the prevention and management of external conflicts and crises at the EU level. It calls for consistency between different areas of EU external actions and close cooperation within its political and institutional framework.²⁵ The comprehensive approach places special emphasis on the development of shared analysis in order to improve situational awareness in regard to external crises and conflicts. This applies to all the components involved in early warning and preparedness, conflict prevention, crisis response and management and early recovery.²⁶ This is how

²¹ See H. Adelman, A. Suhrke, *Early Warning and Conflict Management*, Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, Kopenhagen 1996.

²² See S. Keukeleire, T. Delreux, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union*, Houndmills–New York 2014, pp. 23–45.

²³ N. Hynek, “EU Crisis Management after the Lisbon Treaty: Civil-Military Coordination and the Future of the EU OHQ”, *European Security*, vol. 20, no. 1 (2011), p. 94, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2011.556622>>.

²⁴ See T. Henökl, “Conceptualizing the European Diplomatic Space: A Framework for Analysis of the European External Action Service”, *Journal of European Integration*, vol. 36, no. 5 (2014), pp. 453–471, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2013.865731>>.

²⁵ See A. Mazurkiewicz, “NATO and EU Approach Towards Civil-Military Relations”, *Polityka i Społeczeństwo*, vol. 2, no. 12 (2014), pp. 125–140.

²⁶ Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, *The EU’s comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises* (JOIN/2013/0030), Brussels, 11 December 2013.

the EEAS inherited *the supporting bodies and the chain of command from the Councils' Secretariat, with the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), the Situational Centre and European Union Military Staff.*²⁷ As a result of the reforms and institutional reconfigurations, the EEAS has at its disposal a number of resources including specialized departments and agencies responsible for analyzing and monitoring conflict zones all around the globe and putting conflict prevention and early warning at the heart of the EU external policies.²⁸ In that regard, the overseeing directorate (CSDP and Crisis Response) coordinates or cooperates with the following components which are involved in the EU early warning system:

1. Conflict Prevention, Peace-building and Mediation Division (CPPMD) – the division operates under the supervision of Security Policy and Conflict Prevention Department and is responsible for the monitoring of implementation of the Gothenburg Programme. The role of CPPMD is not entirely clear even among security practitioners and politicians dealing with the EEAS. According to empirical research, the division is identified as both early warning provider and the horizontal coordinator of units involved in early warning information gathering and sharing.²⁹ In fact, CPPMD is responsible for a little bit of both. It provides operation support to the EEAS country teams in order to shorten the distance between 'warners' and 'warnees'.³⁰ It also gathers information from other field offices identifying and managing risks. Thus, it is not only a rigid predictive mechanism, but also one of the first units which analyzes possible preventive measures.³¹
2. European Union Military Staff (EUMS) – after the Lisbon Treaty, the EUMS was transferred from the Council of European Union to the EEAS and represents the only military body within the EEAS analytical framework. The EUMS is a vital part of the European conflict prevention machinery, but it does not fall under the CSDP and Crisis Response supervision. It consists of mainly military experts seconded by the Member States and feeds primarily on information delivered by the national intelligence services.³² The Staff provides opinions and expertise in the field of military related issues as well as civilian crisis management.³³

²⁷ N. Hynek, "EU Crisis Management...", p. 93.

²⁸ The EEAS is also responsible for implementation of preventive and mitigating measures, however it is not within the scope of this article. For more information please see E. Gross, A.E. Juncos, *EU Conflict Prevention...*

²⁹ T. Beswick, *EU Early Warning and Response Capacity for Conflict Prevention in the Post-Lisbon Era*, The Hague 2012.

³⁰ See I. Manners, "Sociology of Knowledge and Production of Normative Power in the European Union's External Actions", *Journal of European Integration*, vol. 37, no. 2 (2015), pp. 299-318, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2014.990141>>.

³¹ See T. Beswick, *EU Early Warning...*

³² See G. Hauser, F. Kernic (eds.), *European Security in Transition*, Aldershot 2006, p. 47.

³³ See B. Tonra, "European Union Security Dynamics: In the New National Interest", *European Security*, vol. 20, no. 4 (2011), pp. 608-610, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2010.528405>>.

3. EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (INTCEN) – as a result of several institutional reforms, the Centre has become possibly the most influential and dynamic early warning mechanism within the EU conflict prevention framework.³⁴ It includes national and open source intelligence capabilities as well as the resources of the Situation Room and Consular Crisis Management.³⁵ The INTCEN is responsible for constant monitoring of the fragile states and conflict sensitive regions, and produces the most up-to-date early warning analyses.³⁶ The Centre handles secure communication feeds from foreign affairs offices, security agencies and intelligence communities. At the same time, it works in close cooperation with the EUMS under Single Intelligence Capacity framework.³⁷

The Gothenburg Programme committed the EU to enhancing conflict prevention tools, including early warning and response capabilities. The main idea was to calibrate and redesign preventive analysis for planning, decision-making and evaluative purposes. The programme clearly states *that the principle objective of the EU external and security policy is to monitor potential conflict situations on the basis of accurate information and analysis, as well as design clear options for action for both long-term and short-term prevention.*³⁸ In order to meet these commitments, the EU has been developing an impressive range of potential sources of early warning information including geospatial, human, open-source and signals intelligence.³⁹ Table 1 describes some examples of the most commonly identified sources of early warnings.

Table 1. Examples of early warning mechanisms in the EU

Sources of Early Warnings	Origin	Description
Country Strategy Papers (CSP)	EEAS	Country Strategy Papers are essential to the EU early warning system. CSPs are prepared by the European External Action Service (conflict prevention units and respective delegations) with input from the Member States. At first, the analysis was designed to support the European Development Fund and the donor community, but with time it changed into a risk assessment analysis. The standard Country Strategy Paper consists of 1) framework of relations between the EU and the country of interest; 2) country diagnosis; 3) assessment of past and present cooperation; 4) strategy for future actions. The latest edition of the papers covers 141 countries.

³⁴ See L. Montanaro, J. Schünemann, *Walk the Talk. The EU Needs an Effective Early Warning System to Match its Ambitions to Prevent Conflict and Promote Peace*, Madrid 2011.

³⁵ *EEAS Organizational Chart*, at <http://eeas.europa.eu/background/docs/organisation_en.pdf>, 9 March 2016.

³⁶ T. Beswick, *EU Early Warning...*, pp. 7-8.

³⁷ E. Gross, A.E. Juncos, *EU Conflict Prevention...*, p. 61.

³⁸ Presidency Conclusions, *EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts (Gothenburg Programme)*, Gothenburg, 15-16 June 2001, p. 12.

³⁹ See L. Freedman, "The Politics of Warning: Terrorism and Risk Communication", *Intelligence and National Security*, vol. 20 (2005), pp. 379-418, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02684520500281502>>.

Watchlist	EEAS The Council	The Watchlist is a confidential biannual report on the countries which are of strategic importance for the EU. The report includes special supplements on terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, migration towards the EU and environmental threats. The list is the main driver of the work program of the EUMS and INTCEN. It is prepared at the EEAS, but it is controlled by the PSC, which submits new themes and countries for analysis.
Tariqa 3	EEAS	The most sophisticated data gathering system built explicitly for early warning purposes. Developed by the Commission, Tariqa 3 feeds on multiple sources (open and secret) including Lexis Nexis, Factiva, Latest News (press agencies), Google, Oxford Analytica, Proquest (academia) etc. The system utilizes text and audio-video based sources using the most advanced search engines. Tariqa 3 enables cluster based analysis and scenario drawings, which makes it suitable for identification of commonalities and behavioral trends among targeted countries or regions. Tariqa's scenario drawing isolates weak and strong signals and calculates the impact of a given factor in regard to security situation and conflict dynamics.
EU Special Representatives (EUSR)	EEAS	EUSRs promote stabilization as well as policies and interests of the EU in the troubled countries and regions. They play a vital role in the conflict prevention framework since they are obligated to update and report to CSFSP/CSDP institutions and assist them in identifying recommendations and options for potential responses to emerging crisis situations.
Regional Crisis Response Planning Officer (RCRPO)	EEAS	RCRPOs are one of the most promising developments in the EU conflict prevention framework. They work as officials within the EU delegations' political departments and are exclusively responsible for monitoring conflict dynamics and early identification of crises.
Virtuoso40 (Versatile Information Toolkit for End Users Oriented Open Source Exploitation)	EEAS	The state of the art mechanism which is supposed to be a one-stop platform for the use of all analytic tools. Virtuoso is a surveillance and data gathering tool which feeds mainly on open source information. It is designed to find, select, and acquire information from public sources and analyze it to provide relevant information useful to the decision-maker. The project Virtuoso was concluded in 2013 and its utilization and wider implementation in the EEAS conflict prevention framework have not yet been finalized.

Source: own elaboration.⁴⁰

The EU conflict prevention framework includes additional supporting agencies working in close cooperation, but not within, the EEAS main institutional frame – the European Union Satellite Centre (EUSC) and the European Union Institute for

⁴⁰ EEAS Website, at <http://eeas.europa.eu/background/organisation/index_en.htm>, 7 March 2016; European Commission Website, at <http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm>, 8 March 2016; Council of European Union Website, at <<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/home/>>, 8 March 2016; Virtuoso Project Website, at <<http://www.virtuoso.eu>>, 9 March 2016.

Security Studies (EUISS). The EUSC contributes to the early warning system by producing specialized expertise in the areas of satellite imaging and geospatial intelligence.⁴¹ It supports conflict prevention and crisis management thematic directorates within the EEAS as well as the European Commission. The Centre coordinates several joint projects including the “Global Monitoring for Environment and Security” and “Global Monitoring for Security and Stability”, which are designed to directly interface with the EU early warning and conflict management departments.⁴² The EUISS plays a clear-cut role in the EU conflict prevention domain serving as a think tank responsible for long-term security analysis dissemination of research on the EU foreign and security policy. The Institute works as an analytical capacity and a forum for debate between external experts and decision makers. The EUISS produces strategic prognosis on the state of the EU foreign and security policies and contributes to further advancement of the EU strategic culture.⁴³ As Table 1 indicates, the European Union does not suffer from the lack of early warning information or even knowledge dissemination systems. So the question is why the European Union still struggles with the absorption of early warnings and what are the main systemic constraints responsible for that?

Despite the fact that the Lisbon Treaty incorporated a large portion of external affairs to the EEAS, the whole process of decision-making remained within the Council's competencies. The Council of European Union and the High Representative can be defined as the primary customers (‘warnees’) of the EU early warning system. They represent the peak of the institutional machinery governing the EU conflict prevention framework. That includes taking decisions on the development of new resources and implementation of preventive actions and civilian or military missions.⁴⁴ However, the proceedings within the Council are not limited to the ministers of the Member States and include additional bodies responsible for supporting the decision-making process.

The specialized working groups and committees⁴⁵ are involved in the initial phase of decision-making in the Council. They serve as preparatory bodies where the national representatives set up negotiations and develop a preliminary plan for further proceedings. In the case of conflict prevention and security framework, the preparatory bodies process the initial early warnings and formulate secondary recommendations for their respective ministers and ambassadors.⁴⁶ In this way, the working groups support the Political and Security Committee (PSC), which is described as one the most important bodies in the EU foreign and security policy institutional framework. The Committee presides at the level of national representatives (ambassadors) and is

⁴¹ See A. Gruszczak, “Technologie satelitarne na rzecz bezpieczeństwa Unii Europejskiej”, *Kultura i Polityka*, no. 16 (2014), pp. 94-113.

⁴² See EU Satellite Centre Website, at <<https://www.satcen.europa.eu>>, 8 March 2016.

⁴³ See EU Institute for Security Studies, at <<http://www.iss.europa.eu>>, 8 March 2016.

⁴⁴ See J. Peterson, S. Helene, *A Common Foreign Policy for Europe? Competing Visions of the CFSP*, London–New York 2005.

⁴⁵ To exemplify: Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom), Politico-Military Group, Military Committee Working Group, European Union Military Committee (EUMC).

⁴⁶ See P. Koutrakos, *The EU Common Security and Defence Policy*, Oxford 2013, p. 42.

chaired by a European official appointed by the High Representative. In order to assure coherence of the EU preventive actions, the Committee allows (on ad hoc basis) participation of representatives from other relevant conflict prevention institutions.⁴⁷ According to its mandate, the PSC is responsible for *monitoring the international situation in the areas covered by the CFSP, defining policies and delivering opinion to the Council*,⁴⁸ In that sense, it proposes initial response options to the Council of Foreign Affairs and the High Representative.

In such complex institutional designs as the EU, the relationship between the 'warner' and 'warnee' is not always straightforward. The institutional layout of the conflict prevention framework substantially impacts the efficiency of the early warning system. The analysis does not always reach the decision maker and preventive measures are not always formulated and launched in a timely manner. The whole purpose of the EU early warning systems is to enable evidence-based conflict prevention policy which would increase the efficiency of the European Union as a global actor and security provider. However, is it possible to reach this goal and high efficiency of the system while at the same time supporting a complex and often incoherent institutional framework?

INSTITUTIONAL LIMITATIONS FOR EARLY WARNING UTILIZATION

This section identifies and discusses some of the main institutional and systemic constraints of early warning utilization within the EU conflict prevention framework. It is based on a series of semi-structured interviews conducted in Brussels between May and June 2011. The research sample was based on analysts assigned to work for or within the EUMS, Situation Room and the CPPMD. The key criticism which stems from the gathered material can be narrowed down to the following three aspects: 1) unclear division of competencies; 2) different working and analysis-making cultures; 3) lack of individual and collective capacity to manage information on violent crises.⁴⁹

The institutional design of the EU conflict prevention and crisis management can be confusing even for a person familiar with the EU external and security policies.⁵⁰ The number of units responsible for analysis and decision-making, their competencies and the additional issues concerning the national and European politics have created

⁴⁷ See C. Steindler, "Mapping Out the Institutional Geography of External Security in the EU", *European Security*, vol. 24, no. 3 (2015), pp. 402-419, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2015.1028187>>.

⁴⁸ See J. Rehr, H.-B. Weissert (eds.), *Handbook on CSDP. The Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union*, Directorate for Security Policy of the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports of the Republic of Austria, Vienna 2010.

⁴⁹ See L. Montanaro, J. Schünemann, *Walk the Talk...*

⁵⁰ See D. Spence, "The Early Days of the European External Action Service: A Practitioner's View", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2012), pp. 119-121, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/187119112X615098>>.

a blurry and distorted image of the framework.⁵¹ This situation is the result of an unequal development of the institutions and instruments and the lack of internal integrity within the CFSP.⁵² In fact, the conflict prevention framework has undergone several changes in the last decade.⁵³ The pre-Lisbon early warning components like Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit have been rearranged or incorporated into the new thematic directorates within the EEAS. Even experts and academics cannot agree on the coherent description of the early warning and conflict prevention system in the EU.⁵⁴ The most common indications of the central point of the system are either the INTCEN (civilian) or the EUMS (military).⁵⁵ Indeed, these two units are responsible for most of the early warning analysis produced within the EU. At the same time, the empirical data suggests that there is a conflict of interests and certain competition between them.⁵⁶ This clash of military and civilian domains is not without basis. The EUMS was transferred from the intergovernmental institution (the Council) to a communitarian body such as the EEAS. The Military Staff kept its separate military characteristics and chain of command. According to the EEAS organization design, the EUMS remains separate from the main frame of the CSDP and Crisis Response Directorate and works directly under the High Representative.⁵⁷ At the same time, the INTCEN has gained substantial resources with the incorporation of the former Joint Situation Centre and the development of its intelligence and analysis making capacity. After the Paris Attack of 2016, the Centre has also become one of the most important forums for the EU intelligence sharing and cooperation.⁵⁸

The situation of unclear competencies may lead to decreased performance and utilization of early warning within the framework. What is more important, it may contribute to deepening the incoherence within the EU analysis making community. The Initiative for Peace-building-Early Warning Cluster conducted in 2013 a series of interviews with the EEAS experts and revealed that in fact within the EU conflict prevention framework there is a dualistic interpretation of threats and challenges to international security. The differences go even deeper and reflect on day-to-day cooperation.

⁵¹ See S. Duke, "The European External Action Service: Antidote against Incoherence?", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2012), pp. 45-68.

⁵² See M.E. Smith, "The European External Action Service and the Security-Development Nexus: Organizing for Effectiveness or Incoherence?", *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 20, no. 9 (2013), pp. 1-17, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2012.758441>>.

⁵³ See D. Spence, "The Early Days..."

⁵⁴ See L. Montanaro, J. Schünemann, *Walk the Talk...*; see also F. Cameron, *An Introduction to European Foreign Policy*, London–New York 2012, pp. 230-265.

⁵⁵ See *ibid.*

⁵⁶ See T. Beswick, *Improving Institutional Capacity for Early Warning. Synthesis Report*, The Hague 2012.

⁵⁷ See S. Post, *Toward a Whole-of-Europe Approach. Organizing the European Union's and Member States' Comprehensive Crisis Management*, Berlin 2015.

⁵⁸ See A. Gruszczak, "EU Intelligence-led Policing: The Case of Counter-terrorism Cooperation", in M. O'Neill, K. Swinton, A. Winter (eds.), *New Challenges for the EU Internal Security Strategy*, Newcastle upon Tyne 2013, pp. 16-39.

The best example is the encryption incompatibilities between different early warning units, which affect inter-departmental cooperation and communication of shared early warnings.⁵⁹ This incoherence stems from civilian and military analysis-making cultures embedded in the system. According to the research, the incoherence in identification of threats and interpretation of early warning signals may lead to risk aversion and lower the efficiency of the system. In other words, the inconsistencies in the definition of threats may lead to inaction due to unclear and incoherent prognosis.

The last major constraint concerns the EU capacity to process and disseminate early warnings within its institutional system. It may seem that the Union has caught itself in a comprehensiveness trap trying to feed on every source of information potentially useful for early warning purposes.⁶⁰ Currently, there are twenty sources of early warnings subscribed to the conflict prevention framework.⁶¹ Since the early days of the EEAS, it has been known that its institutional and human capacity is not sufficient to process the amount of information that flows into the EU early warning system.⁶² Moreover, the analysis making units feed on all types of intelligence without having specialized resources and coherent methodologies in place.⁶³ The raw data needs to be processed consecutively by several departments in order to be usable by the decision makers and it takes time. Finally, the insufficient capacity to manage the information affects the potential for timely early response. Even though there is a substantial amount of early warnings existing in the framework, there are no communication capabilities dedicated to conflict prevention. In fact, the analytical units are responsible for making and disseminating information among the decision makers. This model of a conflict prevention system undermines not only the effectiveness of the warnings but also the efficiency of the whole system.

CONCLUSIONS

The early warning system is considered as an integral part of every conflict prevention framework. It is a watchdog capability which is tasked with monitoring crisis situations and generating early warning signals on situations which escalate and pose a threat to international and human security. The reason behind every system is to strengthen conflict prevention policies and facilitate evidence-based policymaking. Since 2001 and the introduction of the Gothenburg Programme, the European Union has begun embracing early warning as a key element of its conflict prevention and crisis management

⁵⁹ See T. Beswick, *Improving...*, pp. 12-13.

⁶⁰ See C. Gourlay, "European Union Procedures and Resources for Crisis Management", *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 11, no. 3 (2004), pp. 404-421, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1353331042000249019>>.

⁶¹ See L. Montanaro, J. Schünemann, *Walk the Talk...*, p. 22.

⁶² See T. Beswick, *EU Early Warning ...*

⁶³ See eadem, *Improving...*, p. 11.

capacity. Alas, this process has not proceeded without problems. One of the major issues with the framework concerns institutional constraints which obstruct utilization of early warnings. To put it differently, the institutional design and capacity of the system makes it inefficient and problematic for the EU to commit to evidence-based foreign and security policy-making.

Since the origin of the CFSP/CSDP, the experts and scholars have been pointing out the lack of common voice within the EU foreign affairs domain.⁶⁴ To counter this problem, the EEAS was established. Its main task was to overcome the differences and contribute to the common European security culture. Nonetheless, placing the framework under control of one person and locking the analytical staff in the same building turned out to be merely the beginning of much needed reforms. Even though the EU has made a substantial progress in consolidating its conflict prevention capabilities, the institutional design struggles with internal problems and incompatibilities. One of the most important institutional constraints is the incoherence of security and analysis making cultures. The differences between the civilian and military capabilities not only generate a conflict of interests, but they also lead to unnecessary tensions within the framework. Secondly, the institutional incapacity to manage the information processing and dissemination poses a threat to the whole system. The massive inflow of raw data makes it impossible for the EU analysts to create advanced prognoses and recommendations in a timely manner.

The EU conflict prevention framework is still in the making. The EEAS is a relatively young institution which has a potential to become a key player in the global conflict prevention and crisis management framework. However, there is still need for the calibration of the system and further advancement of internal cohesion and institutional compatibility. Alas, conflict prevention and early warning are not considered as a priority in the current EU foreign policy. This may cause a setback in further development of the framework and the EU's capability to act as a liable and effective global actor.

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⁶⁴ See S. Keukeleire, T. Delreux, *The Foreign Policy...*

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Maciej STĘPKA holds MSc in Political Science from the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and MA in European Studies from the Jagiellonian University in Kraków (JU); PhD candidate at the Institute of European Studies at the JU Kraków. Received PRELUDIUM and ETIUDA research grants funded by National Science Centre, Poland, and was a guest researcher at the Amsterdam Centre for Contemporary European Studies (UvA) (2017), Utrecht University (2016), and Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (2012, 2015). His research interests revolve around critical policy and security studies, European integration as well as border and migration studies.