

OCENJEVANJE NAČRTOVANJA IN IZVAJANJA MISIJ IN OPERACIJ EU: ŠTUDIJA PRIMERA EUFOR ALTHEA V BOSNI IN HERCEGOVINI

ASSESSING THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS: CASE STUDY OF EUFOR ALTHEA IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Povzetek Evropska unija je vzpostavila tesne povezave z državami Zahodnega Balkana v zadnjih tridesetih letih, predvsem zato, da bi zagotovila stabilno, uspešno in dobro delujočo demokratično družbo pri vključitvi v Evropsko unijo. Tudi takratna Evropska varnostna in obrambna politika (EVOP), pozneje preimenovana v Skupno varnostno in obrambno politiko (SVOP), je bila umeščena visoko v političnem programu agende Evropske unije. Nato je predal operacijo Sfor v Bosni in Hercegovini, katere naloga je ohranjanje varnosti v regiji, in Evropska unija je 2. decembra 2004, devet let po koncu vojne, začela operacijo Althea. Eufor Althea je najdaljša vojaška operacija Skupne varnostne in obrambne politike v zgodovini do zdaj. V prispevku so opisani pridobljene izkušnje in vidiki ter posledice zmogljivosti načrtovanja operacije. Temelji na intervjujih, izvedenih v BiH, pri čemer se upoštevata tako Evropska unija kot zunanji vidik glede tematike. Na začetku naj bi bil okvir SVOP predviden kot kratkoročni instrument. Avtorica sklene, da mora Evropska unija, če želi učinkovito načrtovati in izvajati zapletene dolgoročne civilne in vojaške misije ter operacije, ustrezno prilagoditi mandate in svoj splošni pristop. Eufor Althea naj bi kljub dolgotrajni prisotnosti na terenu in brez znakov umika v bližnji prihodnosti dosegla uspeh, in sicer predvsem pri ohranjanju varnega okolja, spodbujanju človekovih pravic in enakosti spolov ter krepitevi zmogljivosti oboroženih sil Bosne in Hercegovine, prav tako naj bi k omenjenim dosežkom prispevala tudi zmogljivost načrtovanja.

Ključne besede *Evropska unija, Bosna in Hercegovina, SVOP, Eufor Althea, načrtovanje, učinkovitost.*

Abstract The European Union has established close links with the countries of the Western Balkans over the past thirty years, primarily with the aim of ensuring a stable, successful and well-functioning democratic society when joining the EU. The

former European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), later renamed the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), was placed high on the political agenda of the EU. NATO handed over the SFOR operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose task was maintaining security in the region, and on 2 December 2004, nine years after the end of the war, the EU began its Operation Althea. EUFOR Althea is now the longest CSDP military operation in history. The article describes the acquired experience and the aspects and implications of the operation's planning capacity. It is derived from interviews conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and takes into account both the EU and external aspects of the topic. At the outset, the CSDP framework was envisaged as a short-term instrument. The article concludes that, in order to effectively plan and implement complex long-term civilian and military missions and operations, the EU must adapt its mandates and general approach. The article claims that EUFOR Althea, despite its long-term presence on the ground and without any signs of withdrawal in the near future, has achieved a certain success, especially in maintaining a secure environment, promoting human rights and gender equality, and strengthening the capabilities of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, it claims that it was the planning capacity that contributed to these achievements.

Key words *European Union, Bosnia and Herzegovina, CSDP, EUFOR Althea, planning, efficiency.*

Introduction One of the six constituent republics of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Yugoslavia), Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), entered a period of war in March 1992 which lasted until December 1995. The violence led to the deaths of 100,000-200,000 people and left almost half the population displaced (New World Encyclopaedia, 2016). The war ended in 1995 with the assistance of the international community under the auspices of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), after negotiations in Dayton between leaders from Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb, and with the official signing of the Dayton Accords¹ in Paris on 14 December 1995. This commenced a long and turbulent path towards restoring peace and security. NATO's first operation, Implementation Force (IFOR), with over 60,000 troops, became operational in December 1995. A year later, the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) took over IFOR's mandate. NATO's presence in BiH for almost nine years ensured the successful implementation of the Dayton Accords in all entities of BiH, encompassing the de-escalation of the conflict and the disarmament and demilitarization of the armed forces and the civilian population, as well as the repatriation of displaced people. NATO expressed its intention to retreat its forces at the Istanbul Summit in June 2004 (Knezović, 2005).

¹ United Nations, General Assembly, Security Council S/1995/999 General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The European Union (EU) intended to take over the operation from NATO. The EU's approach to the Western Balkans was based on strategic objectives aiming at the eventual accession of these countries to the EU, and guaranteed European commitment in BiH (Council of the EU, 2004 b). On 9 July 2004, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) welcomed the intention of the EU to provide for the new operation in BiH with UNSC Resolution 1551², and authorized the EU operation to proceed in November 2004 with UNSC Resolution 1575³.

1 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This article⁴ introduces the findings of the research conducted in the framework of the project *Improving the Effectiveness of Capabilities in EU Conflict Prevention* (IECEU).⁵ A large portion of the IECEU research was dedicated to examining the effectiveness of ten Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions based on case study research of **six key capabilities** – planning capacity, operational capacity, interoperability, competencies, comprehensiveness and technologies. This paper seeks a deeper understanding of the first – **planning capacity** – and argues that EUFOR Althea has achieved a satisfactory level in this, despite the fact that room for improvement still remains. Each of the capabilities can be analysed from an EU and a non-EU perspective. The two perspectives overlap and thus provide a good overview of different opinions and viewpoints (Mekri, 2015, p. 25).

The applied research method was a qualitative analysis of interviews and focus group discussions. The interviews were conducted in the period between November 2015 and March 2016. Due to the sensitivities of the issues discussed, the names of the interviewees are not disclosed.⁶ All preliminary research findings were afterwards 'tested' at a round table in Slovenia.⁷ Analysis of primary and secondary sources served as a supportive research method.

² Security Council Resolution S/RES/1551 (2004), adopted 9 July 2004.

³ Security Council Resolution S/RES/1575 (2004), adopted 22 November 2004.

⁴ This article is based on deliverable D2.3 of the IECEU Project (<http://www.ieceu-project.com/>), which received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 653371. The responsibility for the content of the article lies solely with the authors and the opinions expressed therein do not reflect the official position of the European Union. The deliverable is based on data collection and interviews conducted by J. Suhonen, K. Sainio, E. Norvanto, J. Salonen, I. Boštjančič Pulko, M. Muherina and B. Udovič, as well as on Deliverable 2.3 of the IECEU project.

⁵ This project received funding from the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation HORIZON 2020. For more info check: <http://www.ieceu-project.com/> (08 June 2017).

⁶ The interview data and details are in the possession of the authors; the interviews were conducted with former and current personnel of EUFOR Althea, local and international regional experts, representatives of the governmental actors of various EU member states, European External Action Service (EEAS) representatives as well as other EU, non-EU and civil society representatives, NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and others.

⁷ Video from the round table with statements of the representatives taking part is available here: <http://www.ieceu-project.com/?p=536>.

Planning capacity is assessed from the perspective of EUFOR Althea's initial mandate, namely the operational planning and capacity-building and training (CBT) of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH) and support to the BiH authorities in maintaining a safe and secure environment (SASE)⁸. Additionally, EUFOR Althea's engagement in Security Sector Reform (SSR) and defence reform is covered, due to its linkage with CBT. Research on EUFOR Althea's planning capacity strived to encompass strategic and operational planning and its implications for the management and implementation of the operation, the lessons learned and the operation's situational awareness (Mekri 2015, pp. 102-104).

2 PLANNING OF EUFOR ALTHEA

EUFOR Althea was established in December 2004 by the decision of the Council of the European Union⁹. It is the longest-running military intervention launched in the framework of the CSDP as one of the EU's crisis management instruments. It was deployed under the Berlin Plus Agreement¹⁰, enabling the EU to utilize NATO's assets and capabilities in the operation (Council of EU Secretariat, 2015).

The history leading up to the launching of the operation began with the Maastricht Treaty, which was the first to identify the EU's objectives regarding external and foreign relations, as the EU realized it had no power over conflict in its immediate neighbourhood.¹¹ This fact had a direct impact on the EU's borders, as the member states began developing the two key levels of common crisis management capabilities: the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), focusing on strategic foreign policy objectives, and, a couple of years later, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which aimed at operational execution of crisis management.

The St. Malo declaration¹² and the Treaty of Amsterdam¹³ expressed the need for operational capabilities, the latter integrating crisis management into the CFSP. In 1999, the European Council approved the Action Plan for Non-Military Crisis Management and the development of institutional structures for its implementation (Gourlay and others, 2006). The ESDP, established at the 1999 European Council

⁸ As stressed at the general presentation at HQ EUFOR Althea, 2 March 2015: the CBT of the AFBiH and support to the BiH authorities in maintaining a SASE represent COM EUFOR's Main Effort within Op ALTHEA.

⁹ Council of the European Union Decision 2004/803/CFSP of 25 November 2004 on the launching of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

¹⁰ The Berlin Plus agreement is a comprehensive package of arrangements finalized in 2003 between the EU and NATO, which enables the EU to make use of NATO's assets and capabilities for EU-led crisis management operations (European External Action Service, 2016a).

¹¹ European Union, Treaty on European Union, Treaty of Maastricht, signed 7 February 1992 in Maastricht, in force from 1 November 1993.

¹² Saint-Malo Declaration, signed on 4 December 1998 in Saint-Malo.

¹³ European Union, Treaty of Amsterdam, amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities, and certain related acts, as signed on 2 October 1997 in Amsterdam, in force from 1 May 1999.

meeting in Cologne (renamed the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) after the Lisbon Treaty¹⁴) became operational in 2003, with the launch of the first CSDP missions.

EUFOR Althea was launched in a context where the future of BiH mattered not only for maintaining peace and security in the EU's neighbourhood but also for the EU's self-perception as a foreign policy and security actor. BiH has been referred to as a 'testing ground' for the CSDP many times (Council of the EU, 2004 b). It contributed to the EU's development from a civilian power to a more multifaceted one, resorting to military instruments with an aim of promoting its own values and goals. EUFOR Althea has allowed the EU to experiment with its military capabilities in a relatively safe multi-actor environment, and the operation has been explicitly framed as an element of a broader and comprehensive EU policy towards the region (Juncos, 2015).

EUFOR Althea's launch aimed at ensuring the continued implementation of and compliance with the Dayton Agreement, to contribute to a safe and secure environment and to support the Euro-Atlantic integration of BiH.¹⁵ The EU initially deployed 7,000 troops (Kim, 2006). The mandate has evolved and been reconfigured four times, most recently in September 2012. The operation continues to function in line with its peace enforcement mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The most recent mandate of the operation encompasses three main objectives: providing CBT for the AF BiH, which is the non-executive part of the operation; supporting the BiH authorities in maintaining SASE¹⁶ in BiH; and providing support to the overall EU comprehensive strategy for BiH. The non-executive part aims at BiH becoming a security provider rather than a security consumer in the long term (Council of EU Secretariat, 2015).

With the reconfiguration in 2012, EUFOR Althea's troop level dropped to approximately 600, which remains its current strength. The reconstruction of the operation was driven primarily by lack of political will and by withdrawals of the participating nations (Interview no. 21).

¹⁴ *European Union, Treaty of Lisbon, amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community, 13 December 2007, 2007/C 306/01*

¹⁵ *EUFOR Althea's current mandate is twofold: its mission is based on the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) joint action, which has an executive component derived from the UNSC resolution (to support the BiH authorities in maintaining a SASE) and a non-executive component (to provide capacity-building and training for the AFBiH) (Interview no. 39).*

¹⁶ *SASE consists of the following tasks: countermines activities, military and civilian movement control of weapons, ammunition and explosive substances, and management of weapons and ammunition storage sites (Council of EU Secretariat, 2015).*

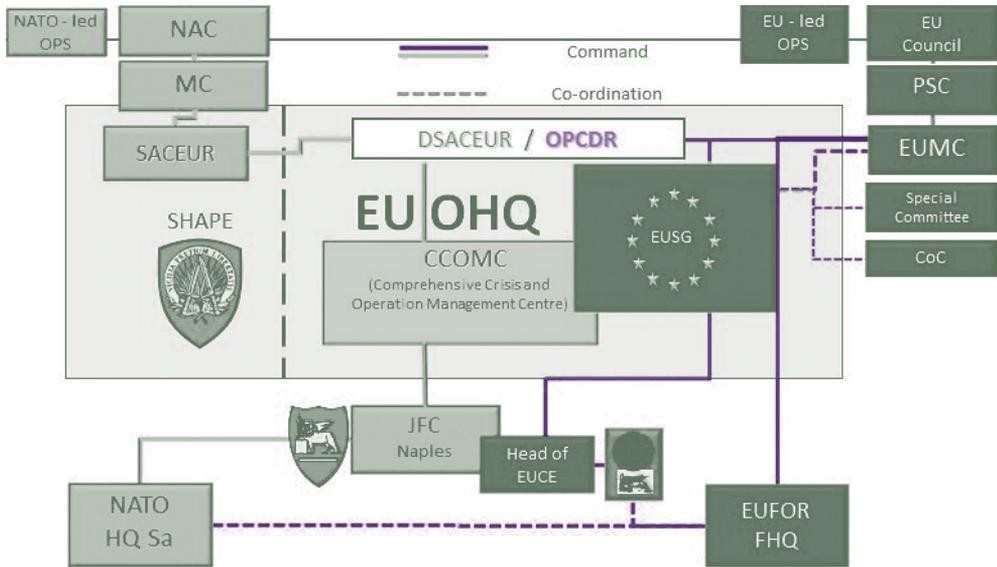
3 PLANNING CAPACITY OF EUFOR ALTHEA

Resolution UNSCR 1575 mandated EUFOR to exclusively inherit the role of SFOR. A robust force of 7,000 troops from 22 EU member states and 11 other countries was deployed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to ensure continued implementation of and compliance with Annex 1-A and Annex 2 of the Dayton Agreement, and to contribute to a SASE. Large number of SFOR troops remained in BiH and were only transferred under the command of EUFOR Althea, which was assessed as operationally smooth and relatively simple, particularly because of the use of 'Berlin Plus' arrangements and the existing SFOR operation plans which formed the basis of EUFOR Althea's strategic and operational planning (Interviews no. 21, no. 23, no. 32, no. 33 and no. 44).¹⁷ The NATO common assets and capabilities as defined in the Specific Agreement for EUFOR Althea comprise mainly Command and Control (C2) items such as Operation Headquarters (OHQ) at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and the EU Command Element (EUCE) at Joint Forces Command (JFC) Naples, and Communication and Information Systems (CIS) and access to NATO's classified networks, specifically intelligence systems and intelligence databases, as well as infrastructure (Interviews no. 21, no. 23, no. 32, no. 33 and no. 44).

EUFOR Althea is conducted under the authority of the European Council. Its political control and strategic direction is exercised by the Political and Security Committee (PSC). The EU Military Committee (EUMC) monitors the appropriateness of its execution, and the EUMC's chairman acts as the primary point of contact for the operation commander (OpCdr), who is also a Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) in the NATO structure. In his role as OpCdr, the DSACEUR is supported by the EU OHQ, which is the whole of SHAPE amplified by the European Union Staff Group (EUSG) as the core of EU expertise. To ensure synergy and prevent unnecessary duplication, the EUSG is closely interconnected with the SHAPE Comprehensive Crisis and Operation Management Centre (CCOMC), which facilitates access to all SHAPE Directorate entities. The OpCdr reports to the PSC through the chairman of the EUMC on all issues of strategic value for the operation. He also attends EUMC and PSC meetings and briefs them on the EUFOR Althea EUCE (Interviews no. 21 and no. 65 and EUSG, 2016).

¹⁷ 'About CSDP – the Berlin Plus agreement', from the EEAS, accessed on 26 May 2016, at http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/about-csdp/berlin/index_en.htm. This agreement involves a comprehensive package of arrangements finalized in early 2003 between the EU and NATO that allows the EU to make use of NATO assets and capabilities for EU-led crisis management operations.

Figure 1:
Command and control structure and responsibilities¹⁸



4 STRATEGIC LEVEL PLANNING

Strategic-level planning is conducted within the EUSG at OHQ.¹⁹ EUSG also deals with force generation, manpower and organization review, the EUFOR Althea reporting system and financial issues, and provides updated information from the operation itself. The EUSG maintains situational awareness within BiH. Theoretically, a clear military command structure, a solid reporting system, and the availability of NATO assets provide a very good basis for real-time situational awareness. However, the reduced number of troops and, especially, the current low number of liaison and observation teams (LOTs)²⁰ in the field compromise the ability to react and respond in a timely manner to a potential deterioration of the SASE (Interviews no. 34, no. 24 and no. 40).

OHQ will update the operational plans as required in coordination with the NATO Strategic Operational Planning Group. In addition to co-ordinating all operational matters, monitoring current operations, and advising on all operational issues,

¹⁸ Interview no. 47; EUSG basic brief of 7 January 2016.

¹⁹ 'European Union Staff Group: Operation ALTHEA OHQ in Shape', accessed on 23 May 2016, at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/missionPress/files/100608%20Shape%20-%20EUFOR%20Althea%20OHQ%20-%20how%20it%20works.pdf. The European Union Staff Group at EU Operation Headquarters at SHAPE. It supports the DSACEUR in his role as Operation Commander, the individual who plans and directs the operation at the military strategic level of command.

²⁰ 'Liaison and observation teams in EUFOR', accessed on 22 May 2016, at <http://www.euforbih.org/eufor/index.php/eufor-elements/liason-and-observation-teams>.

OHQ participates in operational planning and the process of development for current operations. OHQ is responsible for the reserves concept; co-operating with troop-contributing nations (TCNs) and the EUCE with respect to intelligence and reconnaissance assets; and collaborating with the EU Military Staff (EUMS) in connection with possible EU Battlegroups intervention. In addition, it liaises with NATO on the Balkans Operational Reserve Forces and Strategic Reserve Forces. The role of the OpCdr as the NATO-EU strategic co-ordinator, and his well-functioning interaction with the EUFOR commander (COM EUFOR), was seen as a critical factor for operational success (Interviews no. 34, no. 24 and no. 40 and EUSG 2016).

From a military point of view, the C2 structure of EUFOR Althea is quite complicated due to the several 'layers' of political and military actors. The political-strategic level sometimes provides no coordination or planning guidance directed to the operational level. The EU as a whole should have a common understanding on the preferred strategic development of the country, since political realities limit strategic/operational planning (Interviews no. 25 and no. 34). The operation clearly suffers from lack of a clear end state (Interviews no. 21, no. 28, no. 40, no. 39 and no. 36). The mission staff often lack understanding of what is going on at the HQ level in Brussels, but the same is also true vice versa (Interview no. 21).

Member states' approvals of the mission's extension or its adjustment are crucial and sometimes a showstopper to the planning process and execution. Changes or adjustments of the OHQ-level operation plan (OPLAN) have to be approved by the member nations (Interviews no. 29 and no. 47). EUFOR Althea is quite low on the agenda of the member states, and nations do not usually send their best staff to the operation, since they perceive it as a training opportunity for individuals (Interview no. 28). NATO is the main counterpart for EUFOR in the planning process and is considered to be much better at planning and resource allocation. One EU official stressed that the operation is actually much more NATO-conducted than EU-conducted with a mandate being framed in member states' discussions, but the reality is given by DSACEUR, and sometimes NATO's input is significantly greater. This fact gives more freedom, more input and outcome, but in the end it shows that the EU is not able to provide more than basic instructions (Interviews no. 21 and no. 24).

Notwithstanding the multi-level and complex C2 structure, political realities, and sometimes lack of coordination between the political-strategic level and the operational-tactical level, the interviewees perceived the current planning system based on NATO assets as functional, and considered the planning process to take all the necessary factors into account. The EUSG at OHQ is seen as 'the core', liaising with all the SHAPE Directorate's branches, particularly through the Strategic Operations Centre, thereby enabling a complete interface in all areas. The EUSG maintains a close relationship with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and EUMS through recourse to SHAPE's assets at OHQ when needed, in accordance with the CSDP (Interviews no. 24 and no. 47). Strategic planning is perceived to be problematic, since at the outset of the operation there was a clear lack of discussion

regarding the end state, which should define what milestones should be reached for the operation to end and leave the country (Interview no. 67, 68). The so-called end state is listed very vaguely as “(...) to be based on progress in building efficient state level structures, in particular in the area of security and defence. This objective is primarily the responsibility of the BiH government assisted by EU civilian actors. Moreover, it will be important to avoid the creation of a culture of dependence upon EUFOR” (Council of EU 2004, 4). Some of the respondents perceive that the continuation of the operation mainly serves the EU’s political purposes (IECEU, Round table discussion of experts, 2016).

5 OPERATIONAL PLANNING AND EXECUTION

When EUFOR Althea was deployed there were already OPLANs in place, prepared by SFOR HQs and troops, and work continued largely in line with the existing plans. SFOR OPLANs formed the basis for EUFOR Althea’s strategic/operational planning (Interviews no. 21, no. 23, no. 32, no. 33 and no. 44).

EUFOR Althea uses a ‘standard military’ operations planning process (OPP) and follows NATO’s Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD). OHQ at SHAPE will update or develop the operational plans as required in coordination with the NATO Strategic Operational Planning Group. The key element at OHQ is the EUSG, which supports the DSACEUR in his role as OpCdr and is responsible to him for the day-to-day running of the operation and operational planning. OHQ co-ordinates all operational matters, and advises on operational issues and participates in operational planning and the development process for current operations (Interviews no. 21, no. 23, no. 32, no. 33).

Planning is usually carried out in parallel with the EUCE at JFC in Naples and HQ EUFOR Althea in Sarajevo. Parallel planning entails the various individual levels sharing information and products with subordinate units as soon as these are ready to be used in the subordinate units’ planning. Subordinate units keep the higher levels informed of their planning through back-briefing. This enables dialogue between the various levels from early in the planning phase, and the OPLANs at OHQ and EUFOR Althea level are co-ordinated. Finally, COM EUFOR is able to act, put the plan into action, and distribute the necessary orders/directives/guidance within the OPLAN framework.

The OpCdr pays regular visits to EUFOR Althea, enabling face-to-face contact between the commanders, supporting COM EUFOR Althea’s leadership, and giving him direct strategic/operational level guidance (Interview no. 34). The OPLANs at both the strategic-operational level (OHQ) and operation level (Area of Operation in BiH) are reviewed in light of the security situation and the development of the operational environment in BiH. Since the beginning of the operation, the OpCdr’s OHQ OPLAN has been revised four times, and COM EUFOR’s OPLAN five times (Interviews no. 40, no. 41, no. 46 and no. 47).

The current planning process produces detailed and co-ordinated plans, and the decision-making process is functional and takes into account all the factors that need to be considered. However, the political guidance or member states' 'approval', linked to national interests/agendas related to extending or adjusting the mission, nominating reserves, or amending the operational plan, must be taken into consideration. The role of the EU member states/TCNs is crucial and sometimes slows down the planning process and execution (Interviews no. 29, no. 34, no. 35 and no. 47).²¹

6 TECHNOLOGIES AS PART OF PLANNING CAPABILITIES

The J6 (Communications) element of the EUSG at OHQ/SHAPE provides military strategic expertise to ensure the delivery of NATO information systems and communication support for EUFOR Althea. The EUSG/J6 maintains secure CIS systems across two environments (EU and NATO) which are technically different, and also operates secure communication links from EU OHQ at SHAPE through EUCE (Naples) to HQ EUFOR (in Sarajevo) (Interviews no. 46 and no. 47). The use of NATO CIS, NATO secure networks and intelligence systems, and the NATO intelligence database has provided an efficient and cost-effective mechanism for EUFOR Althea since the beginning of the operation. Similarly, one of the EUMC's major lessons, already identified in 2007, was that 'the use of NATO CIS assets was a pragmatic and cost-effective solution for the beginning of the EU operation and provided EUFOR with appropriate CIS support' (Council Document 2013). Although the communications established under the Berlin Plus agreement worked well, means of mobile communication were scarce and often unreliable, because of the use of often incompatible national systems in the Multinational Task Forces. This has also been a challenge in operations established since EUFOR Althea. Currently, NATO HQ Sarajevo supports the static CIS infrastructure at Camp Butmir (HQ EUFOR Althea) and deployable secure CIS systems are supported by EUFOR Althea personnel (EUSG 2016). In December 2010, a civilian contractor²² was selected to provide full operation and maintenance support for the CIS on behalf of NATO HQ Sarajevo and HQ EUFOR Althea.

7 IMPLICATIONS OF PLANNING CAPACITY ON SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AND DEFENCE REFORM

Originally, EUFOR Althea's engagement in Security Sector Reform (SSR) was connected to the European Union Police Mission's (EUPM) inefficiency in filling

²¹ Any major changes or adjustments to the OHQ level OPLAN must be approved by the member nations. National caveats and national agendas were not seen as obstructing interoperability per se but were considered to be a phenomenon that presents challenges to operational planning. The issue of the strong national agendas of certain individual nations (e.g. Turkey and Austria) is not seen as significantly hampering interoperability in practice.

²² 'ATCO awarded NATO contract in Sarajevo', ATCO Structures & Logistics material, accessed on 31 May 2016, at <http://www.atcosl.com/en-ca/Media-Room/News-2010/081210-NATO-Contract-Sarajevo>.

the law-enforcement void. Consequently, EUFOR became heavily involved in the fight against organized crime. The EUFOR involvement in fighting crime ran counter to accepted SSR norms and highlighted the continued weakness of Bosnian law enforcement. By the end of 2005 EUFOR had scaled down its contribution in this area, allowing the EUPM to become the primary international law enforcement agency in BiH (ISSAT, 2016).

EUPM's closure in 2012 marked an important transition for BiH's authorities, forcing them to take ownership of SSR. Today the EU still remains committed to strengthening the rule of law in BiH through other instruments, including the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and the reinforced office of the EU Special Representative (EUSR). Military reform in BiH has been progressive while police reform has been slower. The police force continues to be ethnically divided despite the creation of state-level agencies. A general lack of coordination and cooperation between law-enforcement agencies hampers the ability of the police to deliver a full range of services (European Commission, 2015).

NATO still owns the strategic dimension of the reform process, working closely with BiH's Ministry of Defence (MOD). EUFOR, on the other hand, has an important role in the implementation of the technical and tactical aspects of the reform, and the organizations try to complement one another's efforts as much as possible. Currently, NATO and EUFOR seek to co-ordinate their efforts to foster defence reform, with NATO's objective being to support the development of the capacity of the defence sector in pursuit of NATO standards, thereby preparing BiH for possible future NATO membership. The EU aims to strengthen the country's security sector in order to ensure its consistent stability in connection with the EU integration process (Interview no. 39)²³.

Lack of a nationally owned strategy covering the defence sector has been a major barrier to a consistent reform process in BiH. The political framework in BiH makes the reform process challenging; a collective presidency directs the BiH Ministry of Defence and the country's armed forces, but BiH's three main ethnic groups differ in their views and vision for the development of the defence sector. In consequence, the government has so far been unable to produce a defence strategy (Interview no. 56). BiH's defence budget (€ 250,000,000) is very limited. To establish some sort of common baseline for the capacity-building and equipping process, EUFOR and NATO are jointly conducting an assessment with the aim of identifying the armed forces' current capabilities. They see this joint effort as potentially enabling them to focus their efforts on building appropriate defence capabilities and helping them co-ordinate and regulate third-country support. In addition, it should help to ensure

²³ *As EU and NATO requirements are in line with one another, the joint reform efforts can help both organizations reach their long-term goals for the country. One interviewee described the cooperation between the two organizations, stating that no decision is taken on any aspect of SSR without the EUFOR and the NATO commanders first discussing it, before approaching any local authorities.*

that EUFOR Althea concentrates its capacity-building efforts on the right elements (Interviews no. 21, no. 34, no. 53 and no. 56).

8 IMPLICATIONS OF PLANNING CAPACITY ON INTEROPERABILITY

Civil-military synergies in BiH were unfortunately destined to be lost from the beginning. The two CSDP missions, EUPM and EUFOR Althea, were planned separately and there was no joint strategic planning or set of connecting structures (Interviews no. 22, no. 23, no. 31).

Moreover, the interviewees stated that cooperation with another EU actor, the European Union Monitoring Mission (until August 2007), was poor or non-existent. The presence of and cooperation with the UN during the initial stage was described as 'shallow'. Despite Berlin Plus, cooperation with NATO at the field-operations level was also considered poor; NATO directed its attention and activities toward the AF BiH, and CBT was not within Althea's mandate at that time. On account of the predominance of the OHR, the OSCE played only a minor role in terms of cooperation. The presence of NGOs in BiH was strong, and in fact, EUFOR Althea cooperated with them and aimed at information sharing, although this group of actors was described as the 'most difficult', both because of their unwillingness to share information and differences in working logic that sometimes even posed security risks for their personnel (Interviews no. 22, no. 23, no. 31, no. 32, no. 33, and no. 54).

9 IMPLICATIONS OF PLANNING CAPACITY ON CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TRAINING

Developing the CBT of the AF BiH in close coordination with NATO is currently one of the key tasks of EUFOR, but the comprehensive nature of BiH's defence reform only allows EUFOR's role to be minor when compared to that of other actors' (Interviews no. 28 and no. 34).²⁴ The aim is to support BiH's efforts to develop into a 'security provider' rather than being a 'security consumer', that is, to enhance local ownership by the BiH authorities and their autonomy. The current stage of the operation may lead to a major restructuring or might even be the first step towards the conclusion of the operation. The situation has stalled due to the political circumstances in BiH, which are currently not favourable. In general, the political design of BiH is not conducive to completing all tasks (Interviews no. 28 and no. 52).

²⁴ 'About EUFOR', accessed on 23 May 2016, at <http://www.euforbih.org/eufor/index.php/about-eufor/background>. In 2012, the operation reconfigured and moved its focus to CBT for the AFBiH. It nevertheless retained its obligations to support the BiH authorities in maintaining a SASE; Council of the European Union press release '2992nd Council meeting – foreign affairs', Council document 5686/10 (Presse 10), Brussels, 25 January 2010.

Interviewees stressed that the shift from the initial implementation of compliance with the Dayton Agreement and contributing to a SASE to providing CBT stems from the fact that the original mandate no longer matched the needs on the ground. EUFOR Althea's current focus on CBT actually derives from the member states' inability to decide 'where to go' and their unwillingness to contribute troops and resources to the operation.

EUFOR Althea is currently implementing a highly integrated and jointly co-ordinated training plan with the AFBiH, together with NATO and several bilateral partners. Within this joint framework, delivering effective CBT requires careful coordination of all the efforts by international actors. This is critical, as sometimes nations have been willing to provide training or donate equipment outside the agreed training plan. In consequence, the capacity and resources of EUFOR Althea and NATO HQ Sarajevo have become tied up for a long time in training the AFBiH in the use of particular equipment. Donations are sometimes politically linked to national interests. All this is reflected as a lack of sustainability of the capacity-building efforts (Interviews no. 36, no. 34, no. 39, and no. 24).

Several interviewees confirmed the existence of one major obstacle to effective CBT for the AF BiH; although the training is organized and planned very well and is currently also co-ordinated between EUFOR Althea, NATO and the AF BiH, financial support is a considerable challenge. EUFOR Althea conducts training mainly with its own equipment. When the training is completed, the trained AF BiH units should possess the skills and knowledge needed, but do not have the equipment and assets to execute what they are trained for. Certain budget allocations should therefore be made for purchasing equipment and basic assets for the AF BiH, since they have very limited resources to invest or procure practically any equipment. Currently, the Athena mechanism cannot be used to fund equipment or material for the AF BiH. One solution might be an 'Equip and Train' programme which is based on an assessment of the AF BiH's long-term needs. There has already been some progress in this regard, as the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD) is working on the issue (Interviews no. 36, no. 34).

10 LESSONS LEARNED PROCESS

Several papers and reports addressing lessons identified within the operation have been issued by the EU institutions since 2004.²⁵ Sometimes these lessons have been implemented, while on other occasions old problems either re-emerged or were not sufficiently dealt with. Examples of these are the need for better coordination of EU instruments and for more efficient procurement procedures, which have been

²⁵ See, for example, the Council of the European Union and European External Action Service's 'Annual 2014 CSDP Lessons Report' (partially accessible to the public as of 26 May 2015, Annex C: EUMS contribution still limited), 6777/15, of 3 March 2015, and the Council of the European Union's 'Op Althea – Consolidated Report on "Historical Lessons Identified" from the execution of Operation Althea', Council document 14181/07, Brussels, of 11 March 2013.

recognised as continuous problems by the Council (Interviews no. 28 and no. 30). The most significant progress has been made with a comprehensive approach, namely coordination and coherence between the individual actors in BiH. Further lessons have been learned about the Berlin Plus agreement, cost-sharing agreements, sharing of intelligence, and having clear delineation of tasks whenever NATO and EU military operations are in the same theatre (Emerson, Gross 2007; Leakey 2007).

The current lessons learned (LL) process in EUFOR Althea is based on a standard operating procedure (SOP) (HQ EUFOR 2011). Under this SOP, EUFOR Althea's J3 (Operations) branch is responsible for managing, directing, and staffing the LL process within EUFOR. Also, SOP states that each branch at HQ and at the unit HQs conducts its own process and designates LL analysts/points of contact tasked with dealing with J3. However, because of a range of factors, e.g. the temporary nature of HQ EUFOR, the frequent rotation of personnel or lack of trained personnel, this is not always achieved (Interviews no. 46 and no. 40, EUMS 2012).

Official public documents make no specific reference to a pre-planned and formal lessons learned process or products of best practices in EUFOR Althea (Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union, 2012).²⁶ According to the EUFOR OHQ operational documents, LL capability should prioritize EUFOR Althea's observations on the implementation of its key tasks, including elements such as capability requirements, concept development, and structures, along with the consequent reconfiguration of the operation. Also, the procedures for LL reporting should be integrated into the six-monthly review (SMR) process (Interview no. 46).

EUFOR Althea SMRs do not directly include observations, lessons identified or best practices. Most of the reviews nevertheless feature recommendations, which can be understood as observations/lessons identified or even best practices. (Interview no. 34). Most of the recommendations or best practices are related to national caveats and the restrictions to operational effectiveness; the importance of Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) assets and Information Operation campaigns; the coordination between EUFOR and other EU/international actors (a very good 'best practice' has been the joint EUFOR Althea and NATO HQ Sarajevo coordination of the CBT for the AF BiH); the importance of a comprehensive approach at all levels; the inadequate training level and skills of staff officers; and the short tours (tour lengths should be 12 months for key posts and not less than six months for other posts at HQ) (Interview no. 46). The LL process has been implemented in all staff exercises and field-training exercises. The results and action bodies have been specified in final exercise reports, and these findings were presented in the OHQ LL report to the EUMS. The EUFOR Althea LO's report from 2015 dealt with AFBiH's lack of capabilities, along with procedures that have an impact on CBT planning and conducting of CBT activities, the reserve forces concept and reserves' activation process, CBT planning, assessment, and CBT cooperation with NATO HQ Sarajevo,

²⁶ There were approximately 30 lesson observations for EUFOR Althea in the ELMA database in February 2012.

as well as military-camp management in the light of in-sourcing vs. outsourcing camp management (Interviews no. 28, no. 30 and no. 47).

It seems that in very rare cases, the ‘field-level’ observations go through the EU Military LL Process (ELPRO) and that these observations eventually become official best practices. The key lessons and best practices listed in the EEAS Annual Reports are very general in nature and seem to be of little importance at the field level. It may take a very long time for an observation to be approved for learning and finally propagated as a best practice (Interview no. 28). Widespread use of informal best practices and mechanisms, such as information-sharing within personal networks, for learning and improving various phases is present in EUFOR. However, the informal mechanisms are highly dependent on personal relationships, leaving doubts about reliability and reach (Interviews no. 28, no. 30, no. 41, no. 34, no. 39, no. 37, no. 35 and no. 36).

Conclusion The CSDP missions and operations have been envisaged as a rather short-term response to a crisis. The current trends, however, indicate that they are used as relatively long-term post-conflict institution-building instruments. This fact highlights the importance of planning capacity, which has significant influence on the implementation of a given mission. The stabilization and reconstruction of a multicultural and multi-ethnic community in BiH became a litmus test for the Union’s commitment to becoming a political and security actor that projects peace and stability across the entire continent. BiH’s future therefore mattered not only to the citizens of the country, but also to the EU’s perception of itself as a foreign-policy and security actor. In this sense, EUFOR Althea’s deployment meant projecting its aspirations for the region in a relatively safe, risk-free environment, with low costs.

The timeframe of planning the mission in BiH was not a critical question in the case of BiH, since the military problem had largely ceased to exist by the time EUFOR Althea took over its tasks from SFOR. Notwithstanding the political divisions related to the CFSP, and in the face of institutional opposition from some quarters (initially the Council and the Commission) (Flessenkemper, Helly 2013, p. 9), EUFOR Althea was launched at a time of momentum for the ESDP. Following the events of the 1990s, particularly in BiH and Rwanda, several Member states developed a common understanding of the need to develop the EU’s crisis management capabilities. No rapid deployment was deemed necessary and force generation did not present a challenge for the Union. Furthermore, the operation was not very demanding in terms of planning, since it was carried out with recourse to NATO assets and capabilities under the Berlin Plus arrangements.

Access to NATO planning assets, structures and capabilities under the “Berlin Plus” arrangements, which contributed to a smooth and relatively simple transition from SFOR to EUFOR Althea, is clearly extremely beneficial and important for the functioning of the operation. The present planning system based on NATO assets takes all the necessary factors into account. The operation has a clear military command

structure and reporting system, and the availability of NATO assets provides a good basis for real-time situational awareness. There is also a well-integrated and jointly coordinated training plan with AF BiH together with NATO and several bilateral partners.

Despite the fact that deployment and initial planning were successful, the EU has failed to define and agree on an end state. The evaluation criteria for the operational tasks have been discussed and drafted at the OHQ level since 2005, but the CSDP operation still lacks official time-limited benchmarks. Lack of coordination or planning guidance exercised from the strategic/political level towards the operational level is a clear inadequacy. As for the CBT work, EUFOR Althea has only recently come to an understanding with NATO and the AF BiH on the coordination of efforts and resources aimed at building a specific set of capabilities of the AF BiH. A fully funded plan for the procurement of key assets and equipment and an agreement on the goals against which the development of the AF BiH could later be evaluated are still required.

Efficiency associated with the capabilities and their implementation is more difficult to assess. EUFOR Althea had good initial planning capacity, but certain gaps and weaknesses which manifest themselves in operational capacity were identified in the course of the research process. Lack of human intelligence (HUMINT) capability is a gap that hinders efficient and effective intelligence-gathering. It is also questionable to what extent the 17 LOTs can maintain and produce situational awareness, especially in the current context. Other problems with the LOTs lie in the personnel breakdown, especially in the low proportion of female officers and older personnel, as well as in the short rotation cycles, which hinder the development of relationships of trust with locals and follow-up on the implemented policies. Apart from these, the LOTs that are living among the local population across BiH seem to have been an excellent tool for gathering information, bringing visibility to the operation, and engaging with a wider audience. Another force element that the interviewees mentioned as having been an excellent asset in the first years of the operation was the IPU.

There are still some challenges to be addressed. The operation suffers from a lack of a clearly defined end-state. The 'political realities' and the member states' role are crucial and often do not add positively to the planning process and execution of the operation. The reduced number of troops, and especially the current low number of LOTs, compromise the ability to react and respond in a timely manner to a potential worsening of the SASE in BiH. In EUFOR Althea's case national caveats have certainly been a challenge to operational planning.

The conflict in BiH ended 20 years ago and it is questionable whether the EU's 'hard power' is still required at this stage. Consequently, the question arises of whether BiH would be able to ensure a SASE at this stage. However, this question lies beyond the scope of the present article and the IECEU research project.

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