

## THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

### INTRODUCTION: FROM NICE TO LISBON

It is not easy to define the European Union's role on the international stage. In terms of trade or development cooperation the EU has been a key and acknowledged player at global level for a number of years already. In these fields the European Commission plays a central role, especially through its exclusive initiating powers and management competences.

At the diplomatic and military level on the other hand, the EU's competences are more difficult to define. The launch of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in November 1993, which since 1999 and the signing of the Treaty of Amsterdam includes European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), reflects the desire of Member States to see the EU acquire foreign policy competences that go beyond the economic and developmentalist dimension. Yet at the same time they have no desire to relinquish control to the EU's supranational level, namely the European Commission.

In other words, management of the EU's external relations is shared between two institutions and two different ways of work-

ing: the Commission and the Council, and the Community and intergovernmental systems or, to use Community jargon, the EU's first and second pillars. Given such a configuration, where then to place crisis management?

The answer lies in the conception we may have of crisis management. Crisis management is widely accepted as including a series of activities and programmes that aim to reduce existing tensions in a context of political instability. The panoply of activities that make it possible to achieve this aim is inevitably very vast. Military missions, civilian missions, development cooperation, humanitarian aid, political dialogue and mediation are all means of action to reduce tensions in a difficult region. In short, an effective crisis management policy requires an ability to incorporate a wide range of instruments and actions in the framework of a unitary and coherent strategy centred on the same objective: the promotion of peace.

Conceived as such, any EU crisis management strategy can have but one transverse dimension that includes, on an equal footing, development cooperation and CFSP; hence the first and second pillars. The al-

location of competences between these two fields of action would at first seem evident: development cooperation managed by the Commission in the framework of the first pillar must adopt a long-term perspective, due to the structural impact that it can have on the target societies, while CFSP would intervene more in the short and medium term. This very theoretical distinction nevertheless conceals a much more complex reality.

In 1999, ESDP was set up under CFSP in order to give the EU powers to act in the field of military crisis management.<sup>1</sup> However, the member states did not limit themselves to the military dimension alone. They also conferred upon ESDP competences in the field of civilian crisis management and, more precisely, in four sectors: the rule of law, the police, civilian administration and civilian protection.<sup>2</sup> Yet the EU's development cooperation, which has existed much longer, has never been confined to activities of an exclusively economic and social nature as it extends to areas such as conflict prevention, reconstruction and post-conflict rehabilitation, as well as the promotion of the rule of law, human rights, democracy and good governance.<sup>3</sup> With the creation of ESDP, civilian crisis management activities found

*Federico Santopinto is a researcher with the Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security (GRIP) based in Brussels. A specialist in EU policies for conflict prevention, he has degrees from the University of Florence and the Université libre de Bruxelles. His research largely concerns the process of European integration in the fields of international development, defence and foreign policy. He has worked as an election observer in several post-conflict countries for the EU and OSCE, including Rwanda, Liberia and Democratic Republic of the Congo.*

<sup>1</sup> For further information on ESDP, see F. Santopinto, *La politique européenne de sécurité et de défense: enjeux et réalités*, GRIP analyses, available on the organisation's website, <<http://www.grip.org/bdg/g4592.html>>.

<sup>2</sup> For further information, see A. Nowak, *Civilian Crisis Management within ESDP*, in A. Nowak (ed.), *Civilian Crisis Management: the EU Way*, Chaillot Paper, n° 90, available on the website of the European Institute for Security Studies, <<http://www.iss-eu.org/>>, June 2006, 150pp.

<sup>3</sup> F. Nkundabagenzi and F. Santopinto, *Le développement, une arme de paix: La coopération de l'UE et la prévention des conflits*, Editions Complexe / GRIP, 2003, Brussels, 147pp.

themselves straddling the EU's first two pillars. One could even say that some of these activities are juxtaposed the one alongside the other, thereby inevitably confusing the process by which the European institutions draw up a coherent strategy.<sup>4</sup> It is in this fragmented context that the European Commission's competences in the field of crisis management must be understood.

Before examining these competences, however, it is useful to take a brief look at the Treaty of Lisbon. The reforms this brings in terms of external relations, in particular the appointment of Catherine Ashton as new High Representative for the Union (HRU), who also sits on the Commission, and the creation of an External Action Service, have caused speculation that the EU's present pillar structure would finally be superseded. In fact, the Lisbon Treaty will not change the EU's functioning outside its borders. When the HRU intervenes in the field of cooperation, s/he will do so within the framework of the European Commission's competences and its semi-supranational procedures. When acting in the political, diplomatic and security field (CFSP and ESDP), s/he will don another hat and again become what the High Representative is today: an 'agent' of the Council and its Member States and not a policy decider. Lisbon therefore lays down a bridge between the two areas of European action

but does not seem to change the EU dual Community and intergovernmental operating system in the field of foreign policy.

#### DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The European Commission manages more than EUR 7 billion a year in Official Development Aid (ODA).<sup>5</sup> This is a considerable sum that can contribute undeniably to promoting stability in the target countries.<sup>6</sup> More precisely, there are three ways in which European aid can play a part in crisis management strategy:

- by striking at the root causes of conflicts, whether economic, political, social or cultural
- by influencing directly the behaviour of politicians who receive the aid, through engaging in political dialogue and applying the principle of aid conditionality
- by implementing programmes designed specifically for crisis management and conflict prevention, in particular through the Instrument for Stability.

#### The root causes of conflicts and political analysis

The idea of making systematic use of development cooperation as a whole in the

context of prevention strategies and crisis management is not the fruit of purely theoretical thinking. On the contrary, it resulted from a very concrete need, confirmed in all its gravity from the 1990s. Before this period, there was no concept of viewing ODA in the light of the social and political tensions present in the regions to which it was granted. Development strategies, influenced by the neoliberal thinking that prevailed in the 1980s, was based on an essentially macro-economic approach that was independent of any analysis of stability or social context. But over the years conflict prevention, especially in Africa, called into question the effectiveness of this apolitical approach.

Rwanda provides an interesting example in this respect. In the late 1980s Kigali was seen as a stable and dependable capital. Cited as an example in the management of international financial aid, Rwanda was referred to as 'The Switzerland of Africa'. These judgments were based exclusively on a macro-economic analysis which, at the time, was seen as largely sufficient for assessing a government's performance. A few years later the conflict and then genocide (almost 800,000 dead in three months) in the country raised doubts about the criteria applied when evaluating development aid. Was Rwanda such a good pupil after all? Had not aid programming ignored the

<sup>4</sup> The EU's ability to adopt a global and coherent approach to crisis management is evoked by the European security strategy that defines the EU's strategy in the field of international security. See also C.Egenhofer, *Policy Coherence for Development in the EU Council: Strategies for the Way Forward*, CEPS, June 2006, 215pp.

<sup>5</sup> When you add to this the ODA granted bilaterally by the EU Member States, European aid represents close to 55% of total global aid.

<sup>6</sup> G. Evans, *Conflict prevention and development cooperation: From crisis to peaceful governance*, International Crisis Group, available at the organisation's website, <[www.icg.org](http://www.icg.org)>, 2006, 8pp.

need to maintain and strengthen social and political cohesion? These questions raised a more fundamental doubt: could an economically well-managed cooperation strategy cause divisions between groups inside a country if managed poorly in political and social terms? It would be a mistake to believe that development aid alone could have sparked the political crisis and genocide that followed. However, the Rwandan example does show that the thinking behind development strategy must also take into account the political and social stability of the beneficiary country.

While poor cooperation policy can contribute to a situation of conflict in a given society, better aid programming can, conversely, ease tensions. It is in this way that development aid came to be recognised as a genuine tool in the service of positive action in the face of crises. With this in mind, from the mid-1990s the EU developed two concepts that define the strategic role awarded to cooperation in the interests of stabilisation: the root causes of conflicts and structural stability.<sup>7</sup> The EU believes that the root causes of conflicts must be sought beyond the political and military events revealed when a crisis erupts. The causes are more

structural in nature, such as poverty, social inequalities, human rights violations, ethnic divisions and legitimacy of government, and generally speaking are to be found in all the underlying social, economic and political conditions. As to structural stability, this expression refers to social, economic and institutional structures that are capable of absorbing tensions in a peaceful framework.<sup>8</sup>

The issue for the EU is therefore to be able to strike at the root causes of conflicts and strengthen structural stability by means of the many cooperation programmes managed by the various Commission services. To be effective, development aid should therefore allocate a key role to political analysis, especially at the programming stage, in order to identify the root causes of conflicts and the elements that are likely to promote structural stability in the country to which these programmes are addressed.<sup>9</sup>

To this end, the European Commission has developed a number of tools. Among them, the Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) play a central role. For each aid beneficiary country, the Commission draws up, through its delegations in particular, a strategy document covering a five-year period in which

it analyses the local economic and political context in order to identify the priorities for aid programming.<sup>10</sup> The same exercise is carried out at a sub-regional level, by compiling the Region Strategy Papers (RSPs). The beneficiary countries and civil society, as well as the EU Member States, are expected to contribute to this work. The complex procedures involved in drawing up the strategy documents should make it possible to identify shared priorities with a view to greater convergence of the initiatives taken in the field of cooperation. According to the Commission's stated recommendations on conflict prevention and management,<sup>11</sup> the CSPs and RSPs must include an analysis of political stability, the possible root causes of conflicts and the viability of local institutions, so that the cooperation programmes can be targeted accordingly.

Other tools have also been introduced to strengthen the Commission's ability to engage in political analysis. An *Indicative list of the root causes of conflicts*,<sup>12</sup> consisting of around 25 questions made available to EU delegations worldwide, has been drawn up as an aid to the analysis of tensions and of a country's degree of stability. The Commission has also set up a Crisis Room charged

<sup>7</sup> *The EU and the issue of conflicts in Africa: Peace-building, conflict prevention and beyond*, Communication from the Commission to the Council, SEC (96) 332 final, and the communication on conflict prevention of 2001, COM (2001) 211 final.

<sup>8</sup> For further information on the concept of structural stability see M. V. Gibert, *Monitoring a region in crisis: The EU in West Africa*, Chaillot Paper, n° 96, chapter 3, January 2007, pp. 34-37.

<sup>9</sup> The importance for the European Commission of developing its own capacity for political analysis in the context of its cooperation competences was raised frequently by former Development Commissioner João de Deus Pinheiro. See in this respect *Can EU Development Assistance Contribute to Peace and Security?* speech given by João de Deus Pinheiro at the CESD/ISIS conference on the future of the CFSP, Brussels, 24 December 1998.

<sup>10</sup> These will then be specified in the National Indicative Programmes (NIP) that cover the same period.

<sup>11</sup> See the communication on conflict prevention of 2001, COM (2001) 211 final.

<sup>12</sup> This list can be found at the address <[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/cfsp/cpcm/cp/list.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/cfsp/cpcm/cp/list.htm)>.

with monitoring round-the-clock the political situation in countries in receipt of European aid.<sup>13</sup> A *Monitoring List*, classifying the countries at highest risk, has been drawn up in this connection.

Lisbon should allow the EU to improve its capacity to gather analysis and information. The new European External Action Service will permit the joining together of the DG RELEX Crisis Room and its equivalent in the Council Secretariat, the Situation Centre (SitCen). The SitCen works mainly on the information shared by members states while the DG RELEX Crisis Room is based on the exploitation of open source information. Putting together such an EU body represents an important step forward. The capacity to be able to base EU action on high quality information and analysis, however, does not represent only an institutional challenge, but also a cultural one.

#### Political dialogue and aid conditionality

While in the long term development aid can have an impact on the root causes of

conflicts, in the short term it can influence the behaviour of the officials who receive it. The principle of the political conditionality of aid first appeared in EU cooperation agreements in the late 1980s.<sup>14</sup> The principle aims to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law, but also peace and stability through a structured political dialogue that should ideally accompany development aid. If the EU considers that the beneficiary country is failing to make progress in the stated fields, this dialogue can culminate in genuine sanctions, such as the cancelling of aid or the adoption of restrictive measures. The terms of the political dialogue are normally defined in the association agreements that the EU concludes with the different regions of the world.<sup>15</sup>

Due to its growing importance, conditionality has been extended to other strategic fields, such as the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). These new orientations are clearly evident in the most important cooperation treaty ever signed by the EU: the Cotonou Agreement.<sup>16</sup> The version of

the treaty signed in 2000 did not include clauses covering terrorism and WMDs. These were included when the treaty was revised in 2005, despite the resistance of many ACP countries that feared it was a case of Europe meddling in their internal affairs.<sup>17</sup>

Aid conditionality is a political and diplomatic tool that rests on development cooperation activities. This therefore raises the questions of whether the principle is framed by CFSP or by development cooperation, and of who, at the Commission or the Council, is in a position to activate it. Conditionality is revealed here as the means of action that is ideally situated at the point where the EU's first two pillars meet. The final decision on adopting sanctions of course lies with the Council.<sup>18</sup> However, the political dialogue that precedes the adoption of this extreme measure (and that is designed to avoid it) is conducted by the Troika: that is, the Member States exercising the EU Council Presidency, the Council Secretariat and the Commission. What then is the exact division of responsibilities between the Council and the Commission in this field? This is not clear. In

<sup>13</sup> The Council has an office with similar functions: the Situation Centre.

<sup>14</sup> For more information on conditionality in general, see:

- P. Uvin, *The influence of aid in situations of violent conflict: A synthesis and commentary on the lessons learned from case studies on the limits and scope for the use of development assistance incentives and disincentives for influencing conflict situations*, OECD/CAD, Paris, September 1999, 29pp.

- V. Dimier, *Constructing conditionality: The bureaucratization of EC development aid*, *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 11, 2006, pp. 263-280.

<sup>15</sup> The principle of aid conditionality is particularly important in the Cotonou Agreement signed between the EU and the ACP countries. For more details on this subject, see:

- J. Mackie and J. Zinke, *When agreement breaks down, what next? The Cotonou Agreements Article 96 Consultation Procedure*, ECDPM (European Center for Development Policy Management), Discussion Paper 64A, Maastricht, August 2005, 19pp.

- H. Hazelzet, *Suspension of development cooperation: An instrument to promote human rights and democracy?*, ECDPM Discussion Paper 64B, Maastricht, August 2005, 23pp.

- L. Mbangi, *Recent cases of Article 96 consultations*, ECDPM Discussion Paper 64C, Maastricht, August 2005, 22pp.

<sup>16</sup> The Cotonou Agreement is an association agreement that governs cooperation between the ACP countries and the European Union.

<sup>17</sup> A. Bounds, *Brussels Attacked over Aid Rewards*, *The Financial Times*, 7 August 2006. See also *Whose governance?* Paper of the CONCORD Cotonou Working Group, July 2006, available on the organisation's website <[www.concordeurope.org](http://www.concordeurope.org)>, 1p.

<sup>18</sup> The sanctions or restrictive measures are adopted by the Council by means of CFSP common positions, approved unanimously.

some cases the Commission plays a major role while in others it can find itself in the background. It all depends on the country and the political context. The formula of the Troïka has been emblematic for a long time of the division of competences within the EU in the field of external relations. The Lisbon Treaty should nevertheless introduce a major change in this field. As the European Delegations will be answerable to the new European External Action Service, and thus to the High Representative for the Union (HRU) Catherine Ashton, it is presumed that the political dialogue will be conducted under the HRU's supervision. The role of the new President of the European Council Herman van Rompuy remains so far to be clarified. Van Rompuy could play a key role in the adoption of possible sanctions as mediator among the different positions within the European Council. It will depend, however, on how he will interpret his function.

Aid conditionality and the dialogue that accompanies it remain among the most valuable instruments available to development cooperation at times of crisis. These tools serve to lend a major political and strategic role to European aid, the importance of which has grown continuously over recent years. The effectiveness of political dialogue and aid conditionality nevertheless depends on the EU's ability to adopt a coherent line of conduct towards its interlocutors.

### **From the Rapid Response Mechanism to the Stability Instrument**

All development cooperation programmes are tools that could help prevent or manage conflicts if directed correctly at their root causes. However, the European Commission also has programmes designed specifically for crisis situations.<sup>19</sup> Among these, the Instrument for Stability (IS) is particularly significant as it embodies the philosophy and orientation the EU plans to lend to its development policy.

The IS is an EU budgetary line with its origins in the Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM), which was launched in 2001<sup>20</sup> and marked a turning point in the EU's awareness of the importance of development aid as a conflict management tool. When it was created, the RRM did not implement any new activity as such but rather established accelerated administrative procedures with the aim of re-using existing EU cooperation programmes in emergency and crisis situations. On average, the time needed to launch an aid programme is 18 months, but thanks to the RRM the Commission was able to intervene much more quickly.<sup>21</sup> In its emergency actions, the RRM could not exceed a period of six months in the field.

At first sight, the RRM was of the nature of a fast-track administrative procedure for short-term projects. However, the speed of

action it provided in crisis situations meant that this tool could lend development programmes a direct political role that they otherwise lacked. The RRM's main aim was to implement actions able to have an immediate influence on a deteriorating political situation. It was thus not designed to help populations in difficulty or to promote their economic and social development as such, but rather to provide an opportunity to intervene in a situation at risk of deteriorating. The eminently political aim of the RRM also explains why humanitarian aid provided by ECHO was not included in the programmes that the mechanism could activate: ECHO has the sole aim of responding to the sufferings of populations, and consequently its action must in principle be neutral and impartial.

The RRM's other distinctive feature was that the Commission could use it without having recourse to the committees on which the EU Member States are represented, although they did have to be notified of any decisions taken by Brussels. The RRM therefore provided the Commission with a genuine politico-diplomatic tool that it could manage autonomously.

This new autonomy and the political role the Commission acquired thanks to the RRM could explain why for a long time the Member States restricted this instrument to a very limited budget (EUR 30 million a year).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> C. Gourlay, *Community Instruments for Civilian Crisis Management*, in A. Nowak (ed.), *Civilian Crisis Management: the EU Way*, Chaillot Paper, n° 90., 20pp.

<sup>20</sup> EC Regulation n° 381/2001 of 26 February 2001.

<sup>21</sup> The RRM has an annual budget of EUR 30 million and can intervene for a period of up to six months.

<sup>22</sup> F. Nkundabagenzi and F. Santopinto, *Le développement, une arme de paix: La coopération de l'UE et la prévention des conflits*, chapter 7, Editions Complexe / GRIP, 2003, Brussels, 147pp.

Despite the reluctance of some, the unique nature and potential of the RRM nevertheless soon gave convincing evidence of the need to strengthen it.

The opportunity to do so came at the time of the major European Union budgetary reform that entered into force in 2007. This grouped together into just six major lines the 91 budgetary lines available to the EU for external relations and cooperation. Among them was the Instrument for Stability (IS), which replaced the Rapid Response Mechanism. Allocated a bigger budget than its predecessor (EUR 2,062 million for the 2007–2013 period), the IfS adopted the thinking behind the RRM, thereby strengthening the Commission's political role and ability to act in emergency and crisis situations. Furthermore, the actions implemented by the IfS could now have a duration of 18 months (extended for a further six months if needed), which undoubtedly improved their political impact.

More precisely, the IfS can be used in two different ways. In the short term, as for the RRM, almost EUR 1.5 billion (72% of the total budget) is destined for the re-use of the EU's various cooperation programmes in emergency situations by activating accelerated procedures. The IfS lists several programmes to which it can have recourse,

including the promotion of the rule of law and good governance (support for the administration, legal system, etc.), the adoption of socio-economic measures, disarmament, demobilisation and reinsertion (DDR) of former combatants, reconstruction, repair of infrastructures, access to natural resources, eliminating anti-personnel mines and weapons, aid in the field of human rights, and aid to civil society.<sup>23</sup>

Like the RRM, the IfS must only be used when traditional cooperation instruments cannot be activated quickly enough to respond effectively to a conflict or natural disaster. The aim is essentially twofold. First and foremost, to establish a bridge between the cooperation activities of the EU's first pillar and possible crisis management missions deployed under CFSP. Second, to restore the political and social conditions that make it possible to redeploy traditional development aid programmes in the longer term, notably to strike at the root causes of a conflict. In this way, the IfS establishes the principle of linking security to development that is so often raised within the international community. Such a target raises a question on the duration of IfS projects (18/24 months). This duration is three times longer than the projects implemented under the former RRM. Nevertheless, as the field experience shows, a country re-emerging

from a war usually needs several years before achieving a minimum of stability. It would probably be better to avoid fixing any bureaucratic deadline when facing a post-conflict situation. Finally, a minor part of the IfS budget is allocated to conflict prevention and management actions in the longer term (about EUR 484 million, again for the 2007–2013 period). Here the Commission can finance any activity designed to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to counter transregional threats, as in the fight against terrorism. In most cases the activities take the form of EU support for the institutional and administrative capacities of the various regional and international organisations.

#### **Other specific crisis management programmes**

Alongside the Instrument for Stability there are other EU initiatives that are addressed more or less directly at conflict management or prevention.

The Peace Facility is no doubt the most important to note here. This is a fund of EUR 250 million set up by the EU in 2004, with a further EUR 50 million added in 2006, which provides financial support for regional African peacekeeping missions.<sup>24</sup> The sum of EUR 300 million has just been confirmed for the 2008–2010 period.<sup>25</sup> The Peace

<sup>23</sup> EU OJ L327 of 24 November 2006.

<sup>24</sup> *African Union Commission – European Commission Joint Declaration*, Addis Ababa, 2 October 2006, p.1, available on < [http://ec.europa.eu/development/body/tmp\\_docs/AUdeclarFR.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/development/body/tmp_docs/AUdeclarFR.pdf)>.

<sup>25</sup> For more information on the Peace Facility, read the interim evaluation report produced in 2005 by a consortium managed by the ECDPM, *Mid-Term Evaluation of the African Peace Facility*, Maastricht, 18 November 2005, 148pp.

Facility is distinctive in that it is funded by the EDF – that is, out of the budget granted to development aid for the ACP countries (Cotonou Agreement) – and managed by the Commission. Thus, since 2004, part of the budget for the eminently civilian policy of development cooperation has been used for actions of a politico-military nature. Many development organisations protested against this measure. They did so not to call into question the recognised usefulness of the Facility but rather to demand that it be financed out of military or other specific budgets and not those intended to tackle the economic and social problems of the ACP countries. The European Union responded to these criticisms by stressing that the Facility, already used in Darfur (EUR 192 million) and in the Central African Republic (almost EUR 20 million), should be used only for certain non-military aspects of African peacekeeping missions with the aim of promoting the conditions of stability needed for development aid to be reactivated in the crisis zones. In addition, the EU regards the Facility as a tool with which to strengthen the institutional capacities of African organisations in crisis management, and thus as a development action.<sup>26</sup>

Initiatives to support human rights, the rule of law and democracy are also very important to a crisis management strategy,

especially when they address unstable countries and failed states where viable institutions must be restored. Programmes of this kind are found everywhere in the cooperation agreements that the EU concludes with different world regions (the ‘geographic’ programmes). The EU also has a specific programme that aims to promote democracy and human rights: the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), allocated a budget of EUR 1,104 million for the 2007–2013 period. The EIDHR is a thematic EU programme aimed at all developing countries and is not negotiated with the beneficiary countries, unlike the geographic programmes. Usually implemented by non-government organisations or UN agencies, the actions supported by the EIDHR, like those of all the other EU thematic programmes, can be implemented without the prior agreement of the beneficiary country’s government. These programmes are particularly important for all countries that are not covered by cooperation agreements with the EU or by the geographic programmes that accompany them.

Assistance with democratisation and the holding of elections is another EU cooperation activity that acquires particular importance in crisis situations.<sup>27</sup> In many countries gripped by conflict, Europe and the international community look to elections as a

means of deciding between rivals for power in a non-violent manner, especially when faced with situations of military and political deadlock. The holding of elections thus often represents the conclusive and culminating stage of international crisis management strategies, one that must subsequently clear the way for traditional cooperation and reconstruction. However, for poor countries without infrastructure it is very expensive to set up democratic institutions and organise elections. Thanks to its development cooperation policy, the Commission has significant budgets with which to finance this. Its role has consequently become crucial and it is a field in which the European executive has acquired a genuine know-how. In addition to the actions to assist democratisation that it supports regularly through the EIDHR or geographic programmes, the Commission has come to specialise in electoral assistance and monitoring, sending numerous missions to unstable countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.<sup>28</sup>

The promotion of good governance is another field favoured by the Commission. Here it has adopted a detailed strategy designed to strengthen the capacities of the beneficiary countries. In addition, it has drawn up a system for evaluating the quality of governance of its partners so as to encourage them to adopt the required reforms

<sup>26</sup> The OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has identified the conflict prevention and management activities that can be regarded as ODA. See in this connection the document *Conflict prevention and peace-building: What counts as ODA?* OECD/DAC, 3 March 2005, available at the organisation’s website, <[www.oecd.org/dac](http://www.oecd.org/dac)>, 1p.

<sup>27</sup> *Survey of European Democracy Promotion Policies 2000–2006*, Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), Richard Youngs edition, 2006, 236pp.

<sup>28</sup> Regarding the impact of electoral processes and democratisation on conflicts, see P. Risley and T. D. Sisk, *Democracy and United Nations peace-building at the local level: Lessons learned*, International Institute for Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 2005, 45pp.

through political dialogue.<sup>29</sup> Among the subjects treated, management of the security sector is assuming growing importance.<sup>30</sup> More generally, aid to good governance as a whole plays a not insignificant role in crisis management strategies, especially in the case of failing states.

Other cooperation programmes play an important role in conflict management. The disarmament, demobilisation and reinsertion (DDR) of former combatants is one such activity, financed by the Commission under the first pillar. Post-conflict reconstruction and mine clearance are also financed out of these budgets. More complex is the policy of combating the proliferation of weapons. Arms trading is a sensitive sector over which the member states do not want to relinquish control, hence the division of competences between the Council and European Commission. In principle, it is the Commission that intervenes in collecting and destroying arms in conflict zones, through the DDR programmes, while the Council controls the transfer of arms between Member States. But it is a division that needs more clarification and that caused the Commission to have recourse to the European Court of Justice to shed light on the respective roles.

The development cooperation programmes are not the only ones that can be included

in a crisis management strategy. Humanitarian aid, for example, plays an important role despite lying outside the cooperation framework. This activity is managed by an autonomous Commission agency, ECHO, under the authority of the new Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva. Although ECHO has to provide emergency aid to any population in distress, remaining strictly neutral and apolitical as a result, its activities in conflict zones are de facto part of a global approach to crisis management. Another similar initiative that also lies outside the cooperation framework is the monitoring and information mechanism in the field of civil protection. This tool enables the Commission to deploy experts in the field rapidly and to coordinate the civil protection actions of Member States outside the EU. This mechanism, which is now under the control of Commissioner Georgieva (before Lisbon, it was under the Environment Commissioner's control), can also be used in countries in conflict, in this case working in close cooperation with the EU Council Presidency.

#### **Conclusion: post Lisbon**

Development aid has been shown in recent years to be a fundamental asset in confronting international instability, an asset whose strategic value has long been under-

estimated by foreign and defence ministries. The conflict in Afghanistan is the latest example. Admittedly, the contribution that cooperation can make to a crisis management strategy is less visible and spectacular than international peacekeeping missions or the armed intervention of nation states. Above all, aid and cooperation are not tools likely to bring immediate results, reassure public opinion or attract media attention. Yet, while discreet, these tools offer an irreplaceable contribution in bringing lasting peace to centres of instability in the world.

As a result, the Commission, which manages EU development aid, inevitably finds itself invested with a fundamental political role in any crisis management strategy. From their side, Member States progressively realised the growing geopolitical weight that development cooperation could have at the EU level. This is probably why, when the ESDP was launched with its intergovernmental mode of functioning, it was extended to include the civilian management of crises and thus, in practice, cooperation programmes. The division of competences for external relations within the European Institution thus became more complex.

A clarification should be brought about by the Treaty of Lisbon and the reforms it foresees in external relations. The appoint-

<sup>29</sup> *Governance in the European Consensus on Development: Towards a harmonized approach within the European Union*, Commission Communication, COM (2006) 421 final. See also the Commission staff Working Document accompanying the communication, SEC (2006) 1020.

<sup>30</sup> F. Santopinto, *Development aid and conflicts before and after 9/11: Developing a tool for the benefit of the EU*, GRIP Analyses, December 2006, 10pp.

ment of a High Representative sitting on the Commission and Council and the creation of the European External Action Service are intended to end this dualism between the Commission and Council, between CFSP/ESDP and development cooperation. The Lisbon Treaty remains nevertheless a work in progress. As we saw in the introduction, it does not remove the dual intergovernmental and Community system of functioning found in EU external policy. The new post of HR, with its role of coordinator of the Commissioners involved in external relations, as well as the creation of the European External Action Service, will certainly bring clarity in the EU crisis management activities. Still, the EU competences in external relations will remain shared between three main ac-

tors, maybe four: the president of the Commission, the High Representative/vice president of the Commission, the new permanent president of the European Council, without forgetting the role of the rotating Member State presidency that could still preserve some competence in foreign relations. The Lisbon Treaty doesn't establish clear hierarchical relations among these actors, consequently raising several questions on how the role of the Commission will evolve when using its cooperation policy in order to face international instability.

These clarifications represent a major stake for the European Union. Indeed, the EU has formidable capacities and tools to help promote stability worldwide. It has one

of the most extensive and sophisticated cooperation policies in the world. It has 136 delegations, most of which are located in the developing countries, including in the most distant and marginal countries where many Member States do not have embassies. It is also in a position to conduct civilian and military crisis management missions, which can be integrated with a development cooperation strategy. It is the world's number one trading power. But above all, it enjoys an image and credibility in the world that is denied most nation states. Yet it needs still something essential: a genuine foreign policy in order to take full advantage from such assets. On this point, the Treaty of Lisbon represents a step forward, but it remains also an open challenge.