

# Not Only a Face but also a Voice for Europe

The EU Special Representatives in Africa and the Western Balkans

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Abstract:

International organisations have become more and more important as political actors in their own right rather than as mere tools of nation states. When they thus decide about their course of action, can they learn from their own experience? To answer this question, this paper focuses on the evolving role of the Special Representatives of the European Union (EU) and on the ways in which they contribute to changes in EU crisis management policies. The theoretical basis is a policy-oriented model of organisational learning.

A comparative case study examines the role of the EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) in Africa (Great Lakes and Sudan) and the Balkans (Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina), looking broadly at the period of the past decade (1996-2007). The rising number and changing scope of responsibility of the Special Representatives clearly show the importance of this foreign policy instrument. As proxies of the EU's foreign policy High Representative, they act and interact on a high political level, aiming to enhance the EU's coherence in a given crisis region.

The study finds that, in addition to their efforts at managing the conflict abroad, much of the EUSRs' activity is directed at the internal dimension of EU coordination. This appears as legitimate as it is unavoidable, given that the EU still is not a homogenous actor but a union of 27 member states. Being more than a common sense conclusion, this fact bears relevance for policy-makers and academics alike when judging the EU's capacity to engage in global conflict management.

Contents:

<b>1</b>	<b>Introducing European Envoys and Learning Theories.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Comparing Cases.....</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1	<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i> .....	10
2.1.1	Great Lakes.....	10
2.1.2	Sudan.....	12
2.2	<i>Western Balkans</i> .....	14
2.2.1	Macedonia.....	14
2.2.2	Bosnia-Herzegovina.....	16
<b>3</b>	<b>Lessons for Conflict Management .....</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1	<i>External Dimension</i> .....	17
3.2	<i>Internal Dimension</i> .....	18
<b>4</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>22</b>

# 1 Introducing European Envoys and Learning Theories

International organisations have become more and more important as political actors in their own right rather than as mere tools of nation states. When they thus decide about their course of action, can they learn from their own experience? To answer this question, the paper focuses on the evolving role of the Special Representatives of the European Union (EU) and on the ways in which they contribute to changes in EU crisis management policies.

The EU Special Representatives (EUSR) are a relatively old foreign policy instrument of the EU. Born from a provision of the 1993 Maastricht Treaty, they predate main institutions like the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Their institutional age and their focus on security policy and crisis management as well as their geographical scope make the EUSRs an exemplary research subject for the EU's foreign policy. Surprisingly though, hardly any scholarly work on them or their role in European foreign policy can be found.<sup>1</sup>

EUSRs are appointed by the Council of Ministers (or Council, in short) to represent the Union and its foreign policies in certain crisis regions around the world. Their mission is targeted to ensure a coherent EU presence and an effective policy implementation. The number of EUSRs has risen from two in 1996 and four in 2001 to presently eleven, covering extensively the major regions of concern of the EU: the Western Balkans, Africa and the Middle East, as well as the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The legal basis for sending an EUSR is a Joint Action based on Article 18 (5) of the Treaty on European Union: "The Council may, whenever it deems it necessary, appoint a special representative with a mandate in relation to particular policy issues."<sup>2</sup> This article was introduced by the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997, which by "explicit confirmation of previous practice" (Council of the European Union 2000, 2) formally gave birth to the EUSRs.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Amsterdam has not only created the post for a High Representative for CFSP but also of his unofficial 'deputies,' as the EUSRs would come to be called.<sup>4</sup>

EUSRs are an instrument of the Union's CFSP, and reference to the Treaty's foreign policy objectives is an integral part of their mandates. At the same time, the EUSRs' work bridges across policy areas such as the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), the European

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<sup>1</sup> A recent paper by Giovanni Grevi (Grevi 2007) is the first to counter this trend. Previously, a study on the role of the EUSR for the Middle East Peace Process had appeared in Germany; cf. Dietl 2005.

<sup>2</sup> For a thorough description of the legal (and budgetary) framework of the EUSRs, see Grevi 2007, 17-28.

<sup>3</sup> The first two "special envoys," as they were called then, were dispatched in 1996, to the Great Lakes region and the Middle East, respectively, by a Joint Action on the basis of Article J.8.5 of the Maastricht Treaty. This article provides only a very implicit justification for such an envoy, referring to the monitoring of the international situation and the contribution to the definition of policies by the newly established Political Committee.

<sup>4</sup> For an overview of how ESDP emerged and how it works today, see Howorth 2005 or Smith 2004, and Missiroli 2004, respectively.

Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), and Enlargement Policy. Indeed, military and/or civilian ESDP missions have been set up in all the geographic areas of responsibility of EUSRs, except Central Asia. Conversely, almost all ESDP operations have taken place within the area of responsibility of an EUSR, except the missions in Indonesia (Aceh) and Iraq (Adebahr/Grevi 2007, 59). EUSRs are mandated to provide local political guidance to civilian ESDP missions and, when need be, they tackle the sensitive political profiles of ESDP missions with the local authorities. Moreover, they liaise closely with the Commission representation and the respective crisis management tools under its control, thereby contributing to the EU's comprehensive approach to crisis management and to a more integrated EU foreign policy at large.

Regarding the EUSRs' function and task, the focus of their work is on security policy and crisis management. They represent the Union and its foreign policies, and they contribute to policy-making. They can intervene, on behalf of the Union, e.g. by offering mediation facilities. Finally, they coordinate other EU actors in the field, as well as liaise with international partners. Over the past decade, their mandates have considerably been extended, now covering the full range of crisis management as well as diplomatic activities.

Institutionally, the EUSRs' main points of contact are the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the High Representative for CFSP (HR/SG). They work under the strategic guidance of the PSC, as does every ESDP mission; the High Representative provides operational guidance. These two lines of reporting are also included in every mandate. The actual working level contacts are mainly with the Council Secretariat and the High Representative's Policy Unit. EUSRs report regularly to the Council working groups, thus reaching also the staff in Member States' permanent missions and the relevant Commission units.<sup>5</sup>

The EUSRs' nomination by the Council follows a selection procedure that involves the Council Secretariat, the Policy Unit, and the Presidency on behalf of the Member States. While being appointed by the Council of Ministers, it is, however, from a legal standpoint the European Commission that contracts the EUSRs as CFSP advisors. Due to this status, they are accountable to the Commission for the budget allocated under the financial statement for their missions.

Consequently, the EUSRs are closely linked to all three major players in EU foreign policy – the Council, the Commission, and the Member States – in all phases of their work. This politico-institutional arrangement has created a bridge-building (or fence-sitting, depending on the perspective) function that marks much of the EUSRs' work. The following graph shows the location of EUSRs in the CFSP decision-making system:<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> EUSRs may, on the recommendation of the PSC or the HR/SG, report directly to the Council, but this is very rare.

<sup>6</sup> The graph does, of course, not pretend to fully reflect existing hierarchies within CFSP but aims to only give an indicative picture of where the EUSRs are located in the EU foreign policy structure.

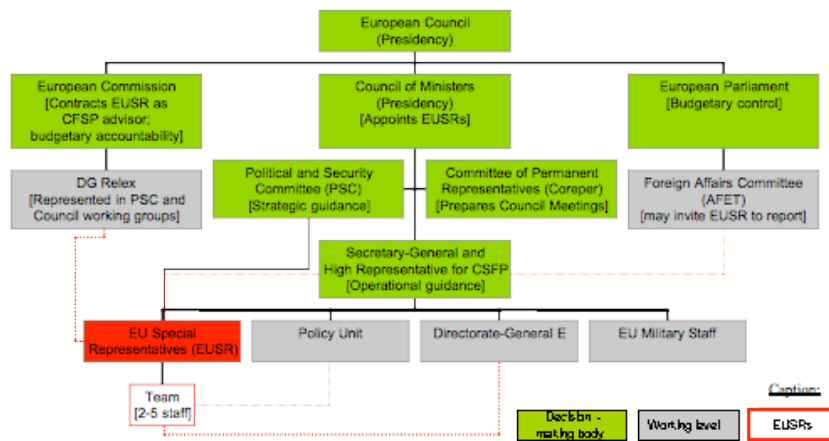


Figure 1: The EUSRs within the CFSP Structure

Already this brief introduction to the work of EUSRs has shown the increased activity of the EU in world affairs. The academic literature attributes most of this dramatic development in foreign policy to significant events or crises that changed the international or regional order and thus required not only the European Union but also other actors, like the United States, to adapt accordingly.<sup>7</sup> The most prominent cases usually mentioned in this regard are the fall of communism in 1989/91, the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-95) and Kosovo (1998-99), the terror attacks in the United States of 2001, and the intra-EU dispute about the US-led intervention in Iraq (2003).<sup>8</sup> While these factors are certainly plausible triggers, they fail to indicate *how* the EU reacted to such developments and *why* it did so in the way it did and not in any other way. Reference to changes in the international or domestic distribution of power therefore remains an indeterminate explanation of institutional change in general, and of the development in EU foreign policy in particular (Legro 2007, 11).

The same is true for the standard explanation that European politicians, whether from the national or EU level, like to give. When asked to explain the EU's rise as an international actor, many of them refer to what the Union has "learned" from its failure in, for example, the Balkan wars in the 1990s, or which "lessons" it has drawn.<sup>9</sup> While reference to world events takes into

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Allen/Smith 1998, 54; Nuttall 2000, 9-10; Tonra 2001, 12; Ginsberg 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Globalisation as an ongoing process has, of course, had its share of influence on the EU's development. It is, however, not singled out as often as the aforementioned events.

<sup>9</sup> These lessons primarily refer to the EU's military capabilities but include also its relations to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) with regard to a so-called "burden sharing," or instruments of conflict prevention. Exemplary is a speech by Javier Solana, the EU's High Representative for CFSP, given in 2005 in which he says: "Finally, there is a lesson for European foreign policy. There is no point denying that the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a dismal low for Europe. But look where we are today. We are united around a single, comprehensive strategy for the region. The Western Balkans are now one of the success stories in EU foreign policy. [...] Indeed, this points to one of Europe's key strengths. After every setback, we re-group, learn the lessons and emerge stronger." (Solana 2005a, 4-5). For a reflection on "policy as a learning system" (not without a normative connotation) by a leading politician, see Steinmeier 2006.

account only external factors, “learning” alludes to the internal processes of how an actor reacts to such outside changes.<sup>10</sup>

Admittedly, the EU is a foreign policy actor with reasonably young institutions. Thus, a “learning by doing” approach can somewhat be expected. Nevertheless, the ‘business’ of foreign policy seems too serious to merely try and err. Talk of learning could therefore be only two things: Either it is a post-hoc euphemism for weak performance. Or there may be some truth to the word and the EU has learned some serious lessons.

Most theoretical approaches to institutional change in the EU seem to believe the former, whether they take a functionalist (Haas 1958, Schmitter 2004), realist (Hoffmann 2000), intergovernmentalist (Moravcsik 1993), or constructivist (Checkel 2005, Tonra 2001) orientation.<sup>11</sup> They disregard the question of how an institution or organisation can learn from its environment. This is particularly puzzling because the analysis of organisational learning (OL) offers not only a fruitful integration of external events and internal responses, but also a link between individual experiences and institutional development. It therefore appears justified to investigate the second alternative, i.e. that learning did take place.

However, “the concept of learning is difficult to define, isolate, measure, and apply empirically,” Levy admits (Levy 1994, 280). What makes engagement in learning theories difficult to start with, is that there is no common or in any way prevailing concept in the theory of organisational learning.<sup>12</sup> A wide range of definitions exist, many emphasising different aspects of the learning process (see Argyris/Schön 1978, Dierkes et al. 2001, Haas 1993). What most definitions have in common is that they see organisational learning as a cognitive process, in which a group of people reach a collective understanding about new (or newly assessed) information, and which can take place at different levels.

Learning can be considered a *cognitive process* when the environment does not directly impact on a person’s behaviour. Instead, external stimuli are mediated “by images or plans, maps or schemes, or generally spoken, by cognitive structures and processes” within the individual (Klimecki/Lassleben 1998, 15). Learning is also rational, although limited by the fact that actors do not possess all information necessary or possibly available (bounded rationality).<sup>13</sup> While learning

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<sup>10</sup> For a comparison of the difference between the everyday and the professional use of the word “learning”, cf. Breslauer/Tetlock 1991, 6-7.

<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey Checkel does analyse a process he calls “social learning”, though (cf. Checkel 2001). This process, however, has more to do with how individuals adapt within an organisation (“socialistaion”) than with what the organisation itself can learn via these individuals.

<sup>12</sup> Worse still, in his overview of the literature, Huber criticises that scholars do not even try to build on each other: “The researchers who have studied organizational learning apparently have, to a surprising degree, not used the results from pervious research to design or interpret their own research” (Huber 1991, 107).

<sup>13</sup> See Haas 1990, 32, Smith 2004, 29; for an introduction to the concept of bounded rationality, see Jones 1999.

is a psychological process at the individual level, it becomes a socio-communicative process at the collective level.

The main element of learning consists of *information processing*. This is generally seen to take place in four steps: At first, an actor acquires information from the environment, which it, secondly, distributes internally and, then, interprets with its cognitive structures (or vice versa). Fourthly, the interpreted information is stored in the actor's organisational routines.<sup>14</sup> These routines can be of a structural, operational, or ideational nature.<sup>15</sup> The information processing thus takes place at a collective level, i.e. when individual learning experiences become engrained in organisational practices.<sup>16</sup> The storage of knowledge in routines furthermore decreases the organisation's dependence on knowledge that lies in its individual members.

A differentiation between two *levels of learning* is generally made, although different authors have labelled them differently.<sup>17</sup> Argyris and Schön (1978) famously distinguished between single-loop and double-loop learning. Single-loop (or adaptive, evolutionary, exploitative, incremental, operational, reactive, or simple) learning can be characterized as an adaptation within the structure and processes of the present system, i.e. changing the means but not the ends of an organisation.<sup>18</sup> Double-loop (or complex, explorative, generative, strategic, or transformational) learning, on the other hand, includes a change of the governing variables because the existing organisational norms and procedures have proven to be inefficient.<sup>19</sup>

In sum, based on the commonality of approaches one can regard organizational learning as a *cognitive practice of collective information processing leading to a change of organisational routines*. This, however, is a very elaborate definition that does not take into account the opaqueness of the political process in general or, in this particular case, the difficulty of modelling the classified information-processing procedure of a foreign policy bureaucracy. It seems therefore

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<sup>14</sup> Huber 1991, 90. Other authors distinguish three steps: "The cognitive process incorporates perception, analysis and choice" (Starbuck/Hedberg 2001, 333).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. the relatively broad definition by Levitt/March 1988, 320: „The generic term ‘routines’ includes the forms, rules, procedures, conventions, strategies, and technologies around which organizations are constructed and through which they operate. It also includes the structure of beliefs, frameworks, paradigms, codes, cultures, and knowledge that buttress, elaborate, and contradict the formal routines.“ For a similar distinction of three levels of effects, cf. Balthasar/Rieder 2000, 250-251.

<sup>16</sup> Levy 1994, 287; similarly argue Levitt/March 1988, 320, Argyris 1992, 8, and Hedberg/Wolff 2001, 537.

<sup>17</sup> For an earlier overview of the different labels for “higher-level” and “lower-level learning”, as they call it, see Fiol/Lyles 1985, 810; for the elaboration of such concepts, see for example Coopey 1996, Levy 1994, March/Olsen 1976, Miner/Mezias 1996, Nye 1987, Senge 1990, and Weick/Westley 1996. Hedberg is an exception in that he distinguishes three types of learning: adjustment (similar to single-loop), turnover (a middle-type), and turnaround (similar to double-loop) learning (cf. Hedberg 1981, 9-10).

<sup>18</sup> “Whenever an error is detected and corrected without questioning or altering the underlying values of the system [...], the learning is single-loop. [...] Single-loop learning occurs when matches are created, or when mismatches are corrected by changing actions” (Argyris 1992, 8). Interestingly, the difference between two levels of learning resembles the differentiation by Krasner about change *within* a regime (change of rules and procedures) and change *of* a regime (change of principles and norms); cf. Krasner 1983, 3-4.

<sup>19</sup> “Double-loop learning occurs when mismatches are corrected by first examining and altering the governing variables and then the actions” (Argyris 1992, 8-9), a process that others call “reframing” (cf. Hedberg/Wolff 2001, 538).

apt to briefly perform a ‘reality check’ of the concept of learning by looking at how the concept of learning is used in political practice. It is unfortunately true that, to the detriment of the discipline itself, contemporary political science and international relations do not value policy relevance the way they should (Jentleson 2002, 169).

When looking at ways to make the concept of learning adaptable to the ‘real world,’ the focus is on practical (or even operational) ‘lessons learned’ exercises. Many international actors (states potentially as much as international organisations) undertake such efforts in order to be better prepared for similar events in the future – or, put simply: “to draw out lessons from past [...] efforts as a means of helping to plan future ones” (Knight 2001, 36).<sup>20</sup> The examples of such endeavours are plentiful, as a search of the term ‘lessons learned’ in any library would confirm: From conferences and seminars being held to evaluate past (often military) operations or practices of development aid (cf. United Nations 2001; Galama/Tongeren 2002; Folke Bernadotte Academy 2003) to the setting up of more permanent boards, such as the Lessons Learned Unit in the Department of Peacekeeping of the United Nations in 1995 (Knight 2001, 36). Some of these undertakings have also found an expression in the more academic literature, such as a review of the 1999 Kosovo intervention (Spillmann/Krause 2000), an evaluation of the ESDP mission in Aceh/Indonesia (Schulze 2007), or an EUSR’s account of his stint in Afghanistan (Klaiber 2007).

As was pointed out already, talk of ‘learning’ in the political field has a downside, though. The more grandiose lessons learned exercises sometimes are set up as more of an effort to demonstrate an institution’s willingness to learn rather than to actually apply the ‘lessons’ drawn.<sup>21</sup> And even so, a few lessons learned cannot unearth the more long-term processes of learning and change in foreign policy decision-making systems (Eberwein/Ecker/Topcu 1998, 274).

It should therefore be made clear that the idea here is not to adopt this functional, potentially one-off approach to learning. Nor is the argument about abandoning theory altogether (Jentleson 2002, 181). Instead, the aim is to adapt the more lofty definitions from the field of OL to the hands-on reality of policy-makers. After all, what sense does it make – especially for a practical concept such as learning – to analyse whether or not an organisation has learned from its actions, if these findings are of no relevance to the officials in that organisation.<sup>22</sup>

For example, one seemingly practically oriented volume concludes to envisage the learning process

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<sup>20</sup> These exercises differ from theory-based approaches like ‘lesson drawing’ that refer to the transfer of knowledge about policies, ideas or arrangements from one actor to another (Dolowitz/Marsh 2000, 5; cf. also Rose 1991 and 1993, and Stone 2001).

<sup>21</sup> Another such term is “best practices” and their frequent identification as model cases to follow.

<sup>22</sup> Indeed, as Jentleson rightly argues, “There [...] is much that academics can contribute to policy. There are adjustments to be made, organizational cultures to adapt to, relationships to be built, and different modes of operating to be learned” (Jentleson 2002, 180).

“as a never-ending self-critical and self-correcting progressive, spiralling process that questions data, seeks to attain insight into or understand the data, makes judgements about factual truth, and normative validity of the data, and responds to the consequences of acting on those judgements” (Knight/Masciulli 2001, 242).

Desirable as this may be, the implementation of such a process is utterly unrealistic in politics, as it would slow all other processes.

Therefore, I will break down the definition presented earlier on into its most basic elements and propose the following “4R” definition of OL: *Organisational learning can be understood as the rewriting of rules as a result of reflection of new information.*

- A rewriting of rules is what was previously termed a ‘change of organisational routines’.
- A result of reflection refers to the ‘cognitive practice of collective information processing’.

When a collective process of reflection has taken place in an organisation, and when this reflection has led to a rewriting (figuratively speaking) of organisational rules, then we shall speak of organisational learning taking place.

In the remainder of this paper, I will look at two major regions of concern for the EU’s crisis management, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Western Balkans. As it happens, each sports two EUSR mandates, for the Great Lakes region and Sudan, and for Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina respectively, all of which had an ESDP mission placed under their supervision.<sup>23</sup> Following a strategy of maximum variation sampling, the four mandates therefore paint quite a full picture of EUSR involvement in European foreign policy.

Given the scarcity of official reports available to researchers, and the dearth of secondary literature on the subject, the study will focus on interviewing the actors involved in EUSR work.<sup>24</sup> Semi-structured interviews were conducted both with a broad range of former and current EUSRs and with their staff and the Secretariat/Policy Unit staff respectively as well as with Commission officials, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), and experts from think tanks specialised on EU affairs.<sup>25</sup>

From this comparison of four EUSRs in two conflict regions, I will draw conclusion with regard to the internal and external dimensions of EU crisis management, based on a consideration of policy-oriented organisational learning as defined previously.

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<sup>23</sup> In the past months, one more EUSR, for Kosovo and the African Union respectively, has been dispatched to each region. I will touch briefly on them in the third part.

<sup>24</sup> Oisín Tansey underscores the usefulness of interviews in such a case: “Other advantages of elite interviews relate to the particular weaknesses of archival documents, as interviews can compensate for both the lack and limitations of documentary evidence” (Tansey 2007, 767).

<sup>25</sup> All in all, as part of my dissertation research, between September 2006 and February 2008 I conducted interviews with 50 different individuals.

## 2 Comparing Cases

### 2.1 SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

#### 2.1.1 Great Lakes

In the winter of 1995/96, a political and humanitarian crisis had befallen Rwanda, Eastern Zaire and Burundi. To a certain extent, this was a continued effect of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and Burundi, but at the same time the crisis was an expression of a long-standing fragility of the region. During that period, millions of refugees had settled in Eastern Zaire, their presence threatening to destabilise the whole „Great Lakes region.“<sup>26</sup>

The international community tried to alleviate the suffering mainly by providing humanitarian aid. The flow of money into the region had reached a rate of one million U.S. dollars a day, more than half of it emanating from the EU (the Community plus member states).<sup>27</sup> It was clear, however, that such aid would not provide a solution to the underlying political problems. In this situation, three insights dominated EU discussions aimed at halting the crisis: First, it was acknowledged that the roots of the crisis were not found in just one state but stretched across boundaries; second, the crisis was seen as another periodic upheaval that was part of a long-term predicament plaguing the region; and, third, if the EU wanted to have an impact on the situation itself, it needed a political visibility commensurate with its economic commitment.<sup>28</sup>

Such reasoning may have been motivated by more than a utilitarian desire not to waste money. It also followed the logic of a spillover effect from one domain (economic aid) into the other (political influence).<sup>29</sup> While it was clear that, at that time, the EU with its still infant CFSP had little to no influence on the ongoing crisis, the assumption was that any given political presence would be bolstered by the existing economic assistance – and *vice versa*.

In this situation, the former UN Special Representative for Mozambique, Aldo Ajello, became the first EU Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region.<sup>30</sup> The mandate's objective was to assist the countries of the region in resolving the crisis, complementing rather than competing with existing

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<sup>26</sup> The name most commonly refers to the region around the Central African lakes Albert, Edward, Kivu, Tanganyika, and Victoria. The region spans the territories of Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda as well as portions of the territories of the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), Tanzania, and Kenya (Moller 2002, 31). However, there is no agreed definition, neither geographically nor politically, of which territory the Great Lakes region encompasses. The EUSR mandate, interestingly, has never defined the area of responsibility.

<sup>27</sup> McLoughlin 1998, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>29</sup> For two groundbreaking works on the spillover effect in European integration and its functionalist logic, see Haas 1958, Schmitter 1969: “Spillover refers [...] to the process whereby members of an integration scheme [...] attempt to resolve their dissatisfaction [with performance in one sector of cooperation] either by resorting to collaboration in another, related sector (expanding the *scope* of mutual commitment) or by intensifying their commitment to the original sector (increasing the *level* of mutual commitment) or both” (Schmitter 1969, 162; emphasis in original).

<sup>30</sup> Joint Action 96/250/CFSP of 25 March 1996.

international initiatives such as those of the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Given the inexperience of member states with such an instrument, the EUSR's working mandate was deliberately left broad, if not vague: to support the ongoing crisis management efforts by international and African actors; to establish and maintain close contacts with all parties involved; and to help with the preparations of a peace conference. Another important part of the EUSR's work that, however, was not contained in his mandate, were his efforts to narrow the considerable policy differences that existed in EU Member States' approaches to this region. Especially former colonial powers like France, the United Kingdom, and Belgium had a particular, though sometimes diverging interest in the region.<sup>31</sup>

The first ever mandate of an EUSR was initially limited to eight months but has been continuously extended – like all other EUSR mandates that should follow. In 1999, fighting had broke out again: Laurent Kabila, with support from Rwanda, Uganda, Angola, Burundi, and Eritrea, had ousted President Mobutu of Zaire in May 1997 and renamed the country as Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo). The EUSR intensified his support to international mediation efforts, led by UN and OAU, without, however, succeeding in organising the regional conference intended to bring the warring parties together (Schmidt 1998, 267). In the wake of these events, other neighbouring countries were drawn in,<sup>32</sup> turning the conflict into what commentators early on dubbed “Africa's first world war.”<sup>33</sup> The situation left the EU being involved, both politically and economically, but in no better position to stop the fighting than the other international actors, both African and non-African, and their myriad of special envoys (Krause/Schlotter 2007, 362).

The Lusaka Peace Agreement of 1999 formally brought a ceasefire and a commitment to withdraw all foreign troops (Moller 2002, 35). The EU supported the follow-up to the Lusaka Agreement, which Special Envoy Ajello had helped negotiate, with the establishment of a Joint Military Commission. Yet, fighting between different rebel groups, most with foreign support, persisted and both ceasefire and troop withdrawal were largely ignored (International Crisis Group 2000, 2; Fiedler 2004, 323).

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<sup>31</sup> While Belgium used to be the colonial power in Zaire (now: DR Congo) and Rwanda-Burundi, neighbouring countries were colonies of, respectively, the United Kingdom (Uganda and Tanzania in the East) and France (Congo-Brazzaville in the West). See also Fiedler 2004, 318; Fiedler adds Germany to the list of former colonial powers. While this is of course true, Germany had nonetheless lost its colonies (including today's Burundi, Rwanda and Tanganyika/Tanzania) already during the First World War and this distant past did not play a considerable role in German politics in the 1990s anymore. Likewise, Portugal is sometimes mentioned as a former colonial power in Africa (Krause/Schlotter 2007, 353), but it does not have such close ties to the countries of the Great Lakes region.

<sup>32</sup> “At one level it is a conflict between two regional alliances – a ‘Great Lakes’ alliance of Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi, versus one of Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. On another level, it is a violent mixture of national civil wars, including those of Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and Angola, all of which are partly fought on Congolese soil” (International Crisis Group 2000, 1).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. also Doyle 1998; or the comments of U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, in front of the UN Security Council, quoted in CNN 2000. Others use the term “Africa's Great War”, e.g. Shearer 1999; Moller 2002, 35.

When President Laurent Desiré Kabila was assassinated in January 2001, his son, Joseph Kabila, took over and embarked on a process of national dialogue, democratisation, and economic liberalisation. He concluded peace agreements with Rwanda, Uganda, and the most important rebel groups; in the wake of this effort, a large part of the foreign troops left the country (Krause 2003, 166). The EU continued to support this process mainly through its Special Representative.

Since then, EUSR Ajello concentrated his efforts mostly on the DR Congo, and there shifting his focus from conflict resolution to sustaining a fragile peace and a delicate political transition (Grevi 2007, 112-3). Part of the EU's efforts, and of the EUSR's increased responsibility, was the EU's first autonomous military operation "Artemis" in Eastern Congo, conceived as a three-month long 'bridging mission' in preparation for the launch of a UN operation.<sup>34</sup> 1.400 troops under French command (lead nation) were dispatched to protect civilians that had fled the fighting in the area bordering Uganda and Rwanda (cf. Faria 2004, 48).

Two more ESDP operations followed, one supporting Congolese police (EUPOL Kinshasa) and another dealing with security sector reform (EUSEC RD Congo), in 2004 and 2005, respectively. This marked the second element in the new focus of the EUSR's work, i.e. a shift away from building a policy consensus among member states to "managing the growing EU projection in the field" (Grevi 2007, 113). In 2006, the DR Congo saw another mission from the EU, this time to support the elections there (EUFOR DRC).<sup>35</sup> It therefore does not come as a surprise that the Council, during these years, continued to extend the mandate of Ajello who, by his extensive experience and the respect he commanded from regional and international actors, had become a most valuable asset for the Europeans.

After four successive ESDP missions in the country, it is fair to say that, given the multiplicity of the means employed on the ground, the DR Congo has become, together with the Western Balkans, "the largest laboratory for EU crisis management" (Grevi 2007, 114). In all this, it was the permanent presence of EUSR Ajello as a coordinating authority which helped politically prepare as well as smoothly run these missions (ibid, 116).<sup>36</sup>

### 2.1.2 Sudan

In the summer of 2005, nearly ten years after the first EUSR was deployed to the Great Lakes, another EUSR was sent off to Africa. The EU had gradually scaled up its commitment to the neighbouring continent, both in terms of economic development, exemplified in the succession of

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<sup>34</sup> For an extensive analysis of operation "Artemis" in Bunia, capital of the Ituri province in North-eastern Congo, see Faria 2004, 47-55.

<sup>35</sup> Council Joint Action 2006/319/CFSP of 27 April 2006.

<sup>36</sup> After nearly eleven full years in office, Aldo Ajello, the first ever and longest-serving EUSR, handed over, in February 2007, to Roeland van de Geer, a Dutch career diplomat with considerable experience in Africa (Council Joint Action 2007/112/CFSP of 15 February 2007).

traditional conventions (Yaoundé, Lomé, and Cotonou), and with regard to crisis management issues, most notably following the transformation of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU) in 2002. The latter had led to an increased cooperation in the field of security: In late 2004 the EU adopted an “Action Plan for ESDP support to Peace and Security in Africa,”<sup>37</sup> followed, in December 2005, by a broader strategy “EU and Africa: Towards a Strategic Partnership.”<sup>38</sup>

In this framework of growing overall involvement, the EU became engaged more intensely in Sudan, both to assist implementation of the Peace agreement for the conflict in the South and to engage in conflict resolution in the Eastern Sudanese region of Darfur. For the latter, the EU supported the ceasefire commission monitoring the situation in Darfur as well as the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS), whose number of military and police continued to rise as hostilities persisted (Faria 2004, 17). In response to a joint AU/EU/UN assessment mission in early 2005, all parties propped up their engagement: The African Union launched AMIS II with more than 7,000 police and military personnel, and the European Union dispatched a civilian-military supporting action to this mission.<sup>39</sup> Simultaneously, it issued the mandate for another EUSR, the former Finnish parliamentarian and Minister for the environment, Pekka Haavisto.<sup>40</sup>

Discussions about the supporting action and the EUSR’s specific mandate centred around the question of how robust that mission should be, and whether the EUSR should focus on Sudan only or on the African Union as a whole (cf. Grevi 2007, 102-3). Eventually, in both cases the ‘lighter’ options prevailed, though not without an element of “experimentation” (ibid, 103). The EUSR then operated on two levels: On the political level, he supported the international mediation efforts for Darfur as well as the implementation of the peace agreement in Southern Sudan. On the operational level, he was, from the outset, integrated in the chain of command of the AMIS support mission, with the head of the military component double-hatted as his Military Adviser,<sup>41</sup> and the head of the EU Police Team double-hatted as his Police Advisor.<sup>42</sup>

In May 2006, a peace agreement could be reached for Darfur. EUSR Haavisto had attended the peace talks in neighbouring Abuja, working also closely with the envoys of individual EU member states (Grevi 2007, 105).<sup>43</sup> Likewise, he engaged, also in cooperation with the EUSR for the Great Lakes, in negotiations on dispute settlement at Sudan’s Eastern border with Uganda, which led to

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<sup>37</sup> Council Document 10538/4/04 of 16 November 2004.

<sup>38</sup> Council of the European Union 2005.

<sup>39</sup> Council Joint Action 2005/557/CFSP of 18 July 2005.

<sup>40</sup> Council Joint Action 2005/556/CFSP of 18 July 2005.

<sup>41</sup> PSC Decision Darfur/1/2005 (2005/653/CFSP) of 29 July 2005.

<sup>42</sup> PSC Decision Darfur/2/2005 (2005/654/CFSP) of 29 July 2005.

<sup>43</sup> The mandate was extended by Council Joint Action 2006/468/CFSP of 5 July 2006.

his taking over a monitoring responsibility there (ibid, 106-7).<sup>44</sup> Pekka Haavisto quit as EUSR in April 2007, leaving the job to Swedish diplomat Torben Brylle.<sup>45</sup>

## 2.2 WESTERN BALKANS

### 2.2.1 Macedonia

Unfolding events in 2001 demanded that the newly established EU crisis management institutions be put to a test before being solidly established. Once more it was proven that political crises do not wait for mechanisms to be operational. Following violent attacks by Albanian extremists in the Republic of Macedonia<sup>46</sup>, the EU engaged in a shuttle diplomacy hitherto unseen: Series of EU emissaries travelled to Skopje, from External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten and the EU troika to High Representative Solana (Reichwein/Schlotter 2007, 261; Schneckener 2001, 92).

The small and young country of Macedonia soon became a testing ground for the new EU foreign policy instruments. A “Stabilisation and Association Agreement,” the new framework on the road to EU membership, was initialled, in April 2001, shortly after the outbreak of the crisis, in order to strengthen the government in power. However, the Agreement’s benefits were held back until the government agreed to make concessions to the other side (Piana 2002, 212). A breakthrough was reached in August 2001, when the Macedonian government and the Albanian leaders met in Ohrid to negotiate and, eventually, agree on a Framework Agreement outlining, *inter alia*, a constitutional reform to the benefit of the Albanian minority. To implement the disarmament part of the Ohrid Agreement, two consecutive NATO operations were deployed.<sup>47</sup>

In order to be represented in the crisis mediation efforts, the EU had appointed, in June 2001, former French Defence Minister François Léotard as its Special Representative.<sup>48</sup> His original task was to closely monitor the developments on the ground and to support political dialogue between the parties with a view to contributing to a settlement (Grevi 2007, 92). He did so successfully, both acting in his own capacity as a respected former politician and in support of the High Representative (Reichwein/Schlotter 2007, 262-5).

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<sup>44</sup> This new task was included in the mandate by Council Joint Action 2007/108/CFSP of 15 February 2007, which also extended the EUSR’s mandate.

<sup>45</sup> Council Joint Action 2007/238/CFSP of 19 April 2007.

<sup>46</sup> The country is officially recognised by the EU as “former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” or FYROM. In this paper, however, either the full constitutional name (Republic of Macedonia) or a shorthand (Macedonia) is used. For an extensive account of how the EU, for four years, unsuccessfully tried to agree on recognition of the country, see Reichwein/Schlotter 2007, 241-252.

<sup>47</sup> Operation “Essential Harvest” was deployed on 27 August 2001, aiming to disarm ethnic Albanians. As a follow-up, operation “Amber Fox” was dispatched on 23 September 2001, mandated to protect the international monitors in Macedonia; for more information on these NATO operations, see Stefanova 2003; Yesson 2003.

<sup>48</sup> Council Joint Action 2001/492/CFSP of 29 June 2001.

At the end of October, Alain Le Roy replaced his fellow countryman Léotard. Given their different backgrounds – one politician and ‘trouble-shooter,’ the other a career diplomat – this change of personnel also reflected the progress made on the way to calming the crisis. Le Roy’s main task was to supervise the agreement’s implementation, thereby facilitating further progress towards European integration.<sup>49</sup> From then on, Macedonia has seen the highest turnover of EUSR. At the end of October 2002, Alain le Roy handed over to the Belgian Alexis Brouhns.<sup>50</sup> EUSR Brouhns served in Skopje for a good year, and it was during his period turn at the helm that ESDP operations *Concordia*, a military stabilisation operation, and *Proxima*, a successive police monitoring mission, were deployed to Macedonia.<sup>51</sup> In both cases, the EUSR was meant to be the primary interface between the ESDP head of mission and local political authorities, as well as to coordinate the missions with other EU activities on the ground (Grevi 2007, 93).<sup>52</sup>

In early 2004, Sören Jessen-Petersen, a former Assistant High Commissioner at Geneva headquarters of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), took over.<sup>53</sup> Soon followed Swedish diplomat and former ambassador to Yugoslavia and Macedonia, Michael Sahlin, serving in this post until October 2005,<sup>54</sup> when Erwan Fouéré, a Commission official of Irish nationality, was appointed. This was a major innovation because the new EUSR for Macedonia was, simultaneously, Head of the Commission delegation<sup>55</sup> – a point that I will take up again in part 3.2.

Today, EU action in Macedonia is often hailed as successful example of, if not conflict *prevention*, then at least crisis *management*, based on the lessons of Bosnia and Kosovo and in close cooperation with the United States and NATO.<sup>56</sup> The end of the police mission to Macedonia (EUPAT) in June 2006, successor to operation “Proxima,” concluded five years of ESDP engagement in the country.<sup>57</sup> Already in December 2005, the European Council had granted Macedonia candidate status (European Council 2005). EUSR Fouéré now concentrates on supporting important steps on the way to European integration, including reform of the judiciary, and on coordinating the various EU actors on the ground (cf. Grevi 2007, 96).

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<sup>49</sup> Council Joint Action 2001/760/CFSP of 29 October 2001.

<sup>50</sup> Council Joint Action 2002/832/CFSP of 21 October 2002.

<sup>51</sup> Council Joint Action 2003/92/CFSP of 27 January 2003 (for *Concordia*) and Council Joint Action 2003/681/CFSP of 29 September 2003 (for *Proxima*).

<sup>52</sup> Council Joint Action 2003/446/CFSP of 16 June 2003; and Council Joint Action 2003/870/CFSP of 8 December 2003. Previously, the mandate had been extended by Council Joint Action 2002/963/CFSP of 10 December 2002.

<sup>53</sup> Council Joint Action 2004/86/CFSP of 26 January 2004, extended by Council Joint Action 2004/531/CFSP of 28 June 2004.

<sup>54</sup> Council Joint Action 2004/565/CFSP of 26 July 2004; extended by Council Joint Action 2005/98/CFSP of 2 February 2005; and Council Joint Action 2005/589/CFSP of 28 July 2005.

<sup>55</sup> Council Joint Action 2005/724/CFSP of 17 October 2005.

<sup>56</sup> Piana 2002, 212-3 and 216: “NATO and EU collaboration on the matter was remarkably good and close, something that one could not have imagined two years previously” (216).

<sup>57</sup> Established by Council Joint Action 2005/826/CFSP of 24 November 2005 with a duration of six months.

## 2.2.2 Bosnia-Herzegovina

The rise in ESDP operations alluded to in the introduction was preceded by the appointment of another EUSR. In anticipation of the deployment of an EU Police Mission for Bosnia-Herzegovina (EUPM), the international representative and guardian of the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement was additionally appointed EU Special Representative, thus giving the long-standing reconstruction effort in Bosnia-Herzegovina a distinctive CFSP mark.<sup>58</sup> The Brit Lord Ashdown became High Representative of the international community, while at the same time treading a new path for an EUSR: He was to be the first ‘European-international double-hat’ (Bendiek 2007, 225).

In addition, and due to the enhanced EU presence on the ground, ways had to be found to integrate the EUSR into the existing structures. Ashdown was therefore included in the chain of command of the soon-to-establish EUPM<sup>59</sup> and granted authority to give direction to the EUPM Police Commissioner.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, the mission that was to start in January 2003 was one of the reasons why the EUSR was appointed in the first place (and mandates were effectively passed on the same day), based on an “aspiration to take a comprehensive view of the EU engagement in the field of rule of law, across institutional divides” (Grevi 2007, 83). Nearly two years later, Operation “Althea” was launched, in December 2004, as a successor to NATO’s Stabilisation Force (SFOR), stationed in Bosnia-Herzegovina since 1996.<sup>61</sup> This meant that, in addition to the EU Police Mission there, another ESDP operation was active in the area of responsibility of EUSR Ashdown.

At the beginning of 2006, the international mediator and former German politician Christian Schwarz-Schilling succeeded Paddy Ashdown in the two positions of EUSR and HR.<sup>62</sup> Other than Ashdown, who is said to have neglected his assigned European role in favour of his international hat (Jopp 2006, 236), Schwarz-Schilling had pledged to strengthen the EUSR and even phase out the Office of the High Representative (OHR).<sup>63</sup> While effectively doing the former, he did not achieve the latter in a situation where the Bosnian authorities failed to adopt the constitutional amendments deemed necessary by the international community to cede its supervisory function (Grevi 2007, 89). Schwarz-Schilling thus handed over, in June 2007, to Miroslav Lajčák, a Slovak diplomat and former Personal Representative of Solana for the Montenegro referendum, with competencies unchanged.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Council Joint Action 2002/211/CFSP of 11 March 2002.

<sup>59</sup> Council Joint Action 2002/210/CFSP of 11 March 2002.

<sup>60</sup> Article 2 (3) of Council Joint Action 2002/211/CFSP of 11 March 2002.

<sup>61</sup> Council Joint Action 2004/570/CFSP of 12 July 2004; on the same day, the EUSR mandate was extended by Council Joint Action 2004/569/CFSP of 12 July 2004.

<sup>62</sup> Council Joint Action 2006/49/CFSP of 30 January 2006.

<sup>63</sup> This pledge was also mirrored in a change to the EUSR mandate, as effected by Council Joint Action 2006/523/CFSP of 25 July 2006. Therein, he is tasked to “support planning for a reinforced EUSR office in the context of the closure of the Office of the High Representative (OHR)” (Article 1).

<sup>64</sup> Council Joint Action 2007/427/CFSP of 18 June 2007.

### 3 Lessons for Conflict Management

This concise overview of EUSR activity in only four of presently eleven mandate areas allows for a range of conclusions with regard to EU conflict management policies. The most important is a distinction between an internal and external dimension of conflict management in the case of the European Union. While security policy normally ought to be directed at the issue at stake and the conflicting parties, the multi-dimensional nature of European Foreign Policy (Ginsberg 2001, 21; Rhodes 1998, 16) makes consideration of the internal dimension a necessity.

This internal dimension refers not only to the potentially diverging 27 national foreign policies of member states, but also to the well-known discrepancy between first pillar (supranational) activities of the European Community and second pillar (intra-governmental) operations of the Council. Even differences within CFSP, for example between the more politico-diplomatic EUSR and a military mission need to be looked at.

#### 3.1 EXTERNAL DIMENSION

As mentioned previously, Macedonia ranks high on the EU's list of successful crisis management operations. At first it was the High Representative Solana himself who was very active, flying to the country once a week or every ten days at the height of the crisis. The EUSR then was proposed not only to partly relieve Solana of the negotiation activity, but also because the EU realised that, as soon as Solana was back on the plane, things came to a standstill.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, an EUSR was necessary in order to be represented locally at high-level at all times.

In neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina, the rationale was not only to strengthen overall EU involvement (including through the following EUPM), but also to use the EUSR as a political instrument vis-à-vis the Bosnian government.<sup>66</sup> This was also part of an effort in international cooperation, where the gradual phasing out of the OHR's executive mandate was foreseen. Here, however, the limitations of the EU as a post-conflict reconstruction agent became clear: the Commission's policy focus is on routine negotiations and enlargement, whereas the country still is in apparent need of international assistance in building its institutions. This makes the EUSR sit between two stools (his two hats) without being able to properly fulfil neither mandate.<sup>67</sup>

Only recently, an EUSR for Kosovo was nominated after the breakaway Serbian province had declared independence in mid-February 2008. In parallel to an ESDP rule of law mission, Peter Feith, a long-standing Council official, was dispatched to Kosovo. He is also the International Civilian Representative for Kosovo, thus following the Bosnian rather than the Macedonian double-

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<sup>65</sup> Interview, 27.11.07.

<sup>66</sup> Interview, 31.10.07.

<sup>67</sup> Interview, 06.11.07.

hat model.<sup>68</sup> This appointment comes after, in the second half of 2007, the German Ambassador to the Court of St. James in London, Wolfgang Ischinger, had acted as the EU's representative, alongside the United States and Russia (the so-called troika), in the last round of negotiations on the future status of Kosovo (International Crisis Group 2007, 2).<sup>69</sup>

### 3.2 INTERNAL DIMENSION

It is no secret that the first EUSRs were dispatched as an *ersatz* for policy rather than based on one (Grevi 2007, 41). While definitely being a 'face' of the European Union (EU Council Secretariat 2007), they were also a fig leaf – and they lacked the 'voice' as they had no political guidance to speak. Aldo Ajello made it his first task to identify the policies of key member states, trying to bridge the gap and come up with a proposal that is acceptable to all. He was travelling extensively, at a time when only few politicians were travelling to Africa, which won him trust by the African counterparts.<sup>70</sup> Yet at the same time, he worked towards the inside of the EU, furthering a convergence of views among member states and greatly helped by his expertise and respect he commanded among European policy-makers.<sup>71</sup>

Today, the Union can make a completely different balance sheet with regard to its Africa policy from what was there ten years before. In fact, it was operation *Artemis* in the summer of 2003, which had brought member states sufficiently close together that, from then on, Ajello could concentrate more on the external dimension of his mandate.<sup>72</sup> This shows that common action – necessitated by events on the ground and the desire to test a new ESDP tool in a relatively permissive environment – can help bring about a more unified position afterwards.<sup>73</sup>

Finally, the most noteworthy internal development probably is the double-hat of the Macedonian model. Following various double-hattings of sorts (e.g. that of Javier Solana as High Representative for CFSP and Secretary-General of the Council Secretariat, or of Paddy Ashdown as EUSR and High Representative of the international community in Bosnia-Herzegovina), this was the first time that a personal union spanned the first and second pillar of EU policy as they were created under the Maastricht Treaty. Two years before this double-hat was introduced, the Treaty establishing a new Constitution for Europe had been signed. The Treaty foresaw the post of an EU Foreign Minister who should also be Vice-President of the Commission, thus wearing a similar "intra-EU" double-hat. This should bring the two main instruments of EU external relations – diplomacy and aid, broadly speaking – closer together (Everts/Keohane 2003, 171).

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<sup>68</sup> Council Joint Action 2006/304/CFSP of 10 April 2006.

<sup>69</sup> This, however, was not a formal EUSR position as Ischinger's nomination was not based on Article 18 (5) TEU.

<sup>70</sup> Interview, 19.11.07.

<sup>71</sup> Interview, 27.02.07.

<sup>72</sup> Interview, 19.02.08.

<sup>73</sup> No doubt, more often than not the former is impeded by a lack of the latter.

While the negative Treaty referenda in France and the Netherlands in spring 2005 stymied all further discussion on this topic, the new EUSR could be regarded as a test case of this pillar-spanning arrangement. Instead of terminating the mandate of the EUSR as the Council had initially contemplated, it became a testing ground for a Treaty provision in limbo.<sup>74</sup>

By 2007, a new Treaty had been passed, containing the same clause about the double-hatted EU foreign minister.<sup>75</sup> A few months later, another EUSR was dispatched to test this pillar-encompassing construction in a different environment. Following long discussions about the EU's involvement in crisis management in Africa as well as about the advantages and difficulties of the double-hat model, a new EUSR mandate was passed in December 2007 for the African Union (AU). With it, Koen Vervaeke, a Council official, became the second (intra-EU) double-hatted EUSR, acting as both the Special Representative of the Union and the Head of Delegation of the European Commission, and being located in Addis Ababa.<sup>76</sup>

Such engagement was in line with the EU's commitment to support the AU, last recognised in the "EU Africa Strategy" of December 2005. It also underscores that the fault line of the EU's engagement in Africa is no longer between member states and former colonial powers, but between the Commission and the Council as guardians of their respective pillars.

## 4 Conclusion

Briefly, what is it that the EU has learned – in the sense of the definition elaborated above – from these mandates?

- In the Great Lakes, reflection about achieving a political weight commensurate with its economic assistance led the EU to dispatch an envoy in the first place. While Ajello was also a substitute for policy, his contributions to the policy process, based on his regional expertise and standing, were soon welcomed by EU decision-makers. Finally, Ajello could shift his focus from trying to build a policy consensus to actively coordinating the various European actors in the field.
- In the case of Sudan, reflections about a larger mandate for the whole of the AU were discarded in favour of an experimental mandate that introduced some functional double-hatting at the level below the EUSR. Later on, these deliberations were taken up again and an EUSR for the African Union was created.

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<sup>74</sup> Interview, 22.10.07.

<sup>75</sup> Article 9 D of the Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community.

<sup>76</sup> Council Joint Action 2007/805/CFSP of 6 December 2007. A day earlier, the Commission had adopted the appointment of Koen Vervaeke as Head of the Commission Delegation to the AU.

- Macedonia is most known for the pillar-spanning double-hat that was created there, based on considerations how the EU could be best represented in a country that is no longer crisis-ridden but not yet stable enough to be treated ‘normally.’ Moreover, reflections made about how to put into practice an element from the ill-fated constitutional Treaty played a major role. But also before, the High Representative’s shuttle diplomacy and the support it received from the creation of a resident EUSR represent an important lesson.
- Finally, Bosnia-Herzegovina stands for yet another double-hatting that was equally directed at coordinating EU activities (the police mission) and at strengthening the EU’s role vis-à-vis other international actors.

This overview shows that the EU has not only learned with regard to the conflict issue, but also concerning its internal arrangement in how to deal with a conflict. Indeed, the latter dimension, it appears, even takes prominence. This distinction between an internal and external dimension of conflict management in the case of the European Union would then be an important lesson for policy-makers and academics alike.

There are both normative and pragmatic considerations that drive the EU’s engagement in crisis management activities. The EU has pledged, in its 2003 Security Strategy, to follow the demands of an “effective multilateralism” (European Council 2003). The Union’s norms and values (mainly democracy, human rights and the rule of law) not only figure prominently in the Treaty, but also in every EUSR’s mandate. In addition, there is a pragmatic concern with security threats, mainly directed towards the regions in the EU’s neighbourhood (understood in a large sense and used here to avoid the term ‘periphery’ for its derogatory meaning): the Western Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa.

In all these regions, EU Special Representatives are active as part of the Union’s comprehensive approach to crisis management. They have helped the EU to develop from a mere aid-giver pursuing ad hoc political intervention only to a fairly coherent, at times strategic actor that works alongside major powers like the United States or Russia and international organisations such as the United Nations and the African Union. They are, to quote none less than the High Representative himself, “the visible expression of the EU’s growing engagement in some of the world’s most troubled countries and regions. [They provide] a rough picture of what EU foreign policy is all about: conflict resolution, crisis management, tackling the new security threats and standing up for our values and interests. We seek comprehensive solutions to complex and multi-dimensional problems” (Solana 2005b, 2).

This notwithstanding, it could also be shown that there exists an important internal dimension to the EU’s crisis management activities. Fifty years after the founding of the European Economic

Community, EU foreign policy in general and crisis management in particular also have a function in the continuous pacification of the European continent. Just like the Internal Market was not an end in itself but followed the higher goal of tying post-war Western Europe together, the EU does not engage in conflicts abroad for purely humanitarian reasons.

This internal dimension of European coordination, however, is not only legitimate because member states are themselves subjects of international law and the study of internal EU processes therefore amounts to much more than, say, examining the frictions within the U.S. administration. It also underlines the role of the EU as a model of conflict management: More than ever, regional groupings like the African Union or the Mercosur in South America look at the EU as a successful model to overcome internal conflict – even by engaging into global conflict management.

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