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## **Making sense of EU comprehensive security towards conceptual and analytical clarity**

In: *European Security*, Vol. 20:2, 221-241,

### **Abstract**

European leaders frequently vaunt the European Union's distinctiveness in adopting and pursuing a comprehensive approach to security. The EU's profile as an international actor is designed to span across all dimensions of security. As a result, its security policy portfolio involves a large number of institutional actors and policies that need to be coordinated. The ambition of the EU to provide security in a comprehensive manner raises challenges at the politico-strategic level, at the level of operational and policy planning and in day-to-day implementation. So far, the field is lacking an inclusive analytical framework for the analysis of providing security through a distinctively comprehensive civil-military, economic and political organisation. This article seeks to close this gap by providing suggestions for how the wide range of issues related to comprehensive security could be structured, and by framing the matter theoretically and with reference to existing conceptual work and empirical research.

### **Keywords**

comprehensive security, the Common Foreign and Security Policy, securitisation, security governance

### **Introduction**

It has become something of a platitude in both academic and political discourse that the profile of the European Union (EU) as a crisis manager and security provider is *sui generis*, i.e. distinct from other comparable actors, most importantly NATO, and the UN. This assertion commonly goes with the mantra that unlike other organisations, the EU and its Member States dispose of a uniquely wide array of political, operational, diplomatic, economic, and structural instruments for the

management of crises and conflicts. Based on these arguments, EU leaders frequently vaunt the EU's distinctiveness in adopting and pursuing a comprehensive approach to security. This approach is reflected in the risk assessment laid down in the European Security Strategy (ESS), which underlines the necessity and inherent challenge of countering each threat with a 'mixture of instruments' (Council of the EU 2003).

The ambition of providing security in a comprehensive manner is not unique to the EU. In fact, in recent years, comprehensive approaches have become what could be called the gold standard in international security affairs: This is not least reflected in the virtual forest of terms that has cropped up in the literature and in the political debate to engage broader conceptions of security and how to deal with the complex challenges of today's security environment. These include the Comprehensive Approach (CA) as such, Whole-of-Government (WoG) approaches, Human Security, Civil–Military Coordination, Civil–Military Cooperation, Network Centric Warfare (NCW), Effects Based Operations (EBO), Counterinsurgency (COIN) and Integrated Missions and Planning (IM/P).

Today, international organisations and nation states alike have to provide for a broad range of potential security challenges instead of limiting their efforts to the traditional range of conventional security political concerns, i.e. those inherently state-centric and military in nature. Providing security today demands inclusive solutions that transcend the realm of high politics and cut across various policy fields. While the core aspects of security remain relevant, other aspects are gaining in importance and must be taken into account. Today, security is as much a matter of physical safety, political freedom and economic stability as of environmental balance or sustainable development. Structural measures have to be combined with operational instruments, matters of external security with internal security concerns and civilian instruments with military capabilities. Providing security has thus become a multi-factorial and expansive challenge. This, in turn, demands the coordination of a range of policy fields, which in the traditional security paradigm have been kept separate.

In the case of the EU, this intricate challenge is exacerbated by a complex multi-level structure. The EU's security policy portfolio involves a large number of institutional actors and policies that need to be coordinated across bureaucratic, organisational and functional boundaries. The ambition of the EU to provide security in a comprehensive manner raises challenges on the politico–strategic level, on the level of operational and policy planning and in day-to-day implementation. Despite its popularity, the

concept of comprehensive security, and what the or a Comprehensive Approach (CA) actually implies in strategic, operational and organisational terms have remained inherently elusive issues. Several international organisations have adopted a CA that distinctly reflects their structural origins. However, the EU sticks out as a special case, in so far as its profile spans across all dimensions of security. Given the broad range of instruments it has at its disposal, it appears that the EU is virtually meant to act comprehensively – that it is fulfilling some sort of teleological drive, which originates in its history and experience as an organisation. This alleged holistic predisposition as a security political actor has turned the EU into a popular subject for the study of comprehensive security actorness, although the EU policy-makers have remained reluctant to outline and/or define such an approach officially or in greater conceptual and structural detail.

Both institutional analyses and mission case studies have sought to analyse the functioning and performance of the EU as a comprehensive security provider. However, research on the institutional, operational and strategic implications of the EU's comprehensive approach has also been fairly disparate and selective. So far, the field is lacking an inclusive analytical framework for the analysis of the various aspects of providing security through a distinctively comprehensive organisation. This article seeks to close this gap by providing suggestions for how the wide range of issues commonly related to comprehensive security could be structured, and by framing the matter theoretically and with reference to existing conceptual work and empirical research. Building on these two elements, it seeks to contribute to the development of a putative research agenda, aimed at reorganising both scholarly and political debates about the EU's comprehensive approach to security.

### **State of research**

In recent years, the changing paradigms in international security affairs have prompted a large bulk of literature on the widening of the security agenda of states and organisations alike; the necessity and challenge of a comprehensive approach to security; and its strategic, organisational and operational implications. The specific case of the EU has found broad interest in all these regards.

A prominent strand in the literature takes a historical perspective, and adopts a largely descriptive approach to the way the EU's security political actorness has changed since the end of the cold war (e.g. Gross 2008). Many works within this strand tend to

– explicitly or implicitly – abide by a teleological argument, which presents the widening of the EU's security agenda as a continuation of the integration process. Along these lines, the EU's comprehensive approach is thought of as a reflection of its very *raison d'être* as an organisation – a natural consequence of what is sometimes referred to as the 'EU founding myth', or the perceived historical responsibility for creating lasting peace among democratic European states (see Schimmelfenning 2003, Van Ham 2005). Gilbert (2008) warns against this generalised version of European history, arguing that a progressive conception of the European integration project risks to (re)produce an oversimplified version of contemporary European history. The assumption that the EU acts comprehensively because of some historical propensity to do so, risks leading to a similarly oversimplified or faulty image of the EU as a security actor.

Another strand in the literature deals with how the move towards a military role for the EU represented a shift in its very external image. As the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP, now CSDP) was introduced, there was a reappraisal of a 20-year-old debate concerning the EU's status as a 'civilian power' (Duchene 1972, Bull 1982, 1983) by a number of commentators questioning whether the Union could still retain the status of a civilian power if it acquired military capabilities (Smith 2000, Stavridis 2001, Telo 2006). Some have argued that CSDP is still within the remit of a civilian power, since hard power issues like collective defence and nuclear capabilities have remained within the domain of NATO (Joergensen 1997, Smith 2000). Others have argued that the military dimension has muddled the Union's 'distinct profile' as an actor with a civilian international identity (Zielonka 1998, Manners 2002, 2006, Whitman 2006). Along similar lines, before the question of comprehensive actorness was even raised, the introduction of CSDP spurred a renewed theoretical debate concerning the question whether 'actorness' could in fact be bestowed on an international institution in the first place, and whether it is feasible to talk about 'partial actorness' or 'composite actorness' short of statehood (Sjöstedt 1977, Taylor 1979, Ginsberg 1989, 2001, Allen and Smith 1990, Rummel 1990, Piening 1997, Peterson and Sjursen 1998, Ginsberg 1999, Bretherton and Vogler 2006, Engelbrekt and Hallenberg 2008). At the heart of the literature's tendency for 'labelism' lies the fact that it is not feasible to imagine that the EU has remained or can remain unaffected by its newfound role as a security actor, including a military hard power component.

However, while some scholars have been inclined to assume that the EU does or can act comprehensively because of some *a priori* and normatively conditioned propensity to do so, others have sought to analyse comprehensiveness along actual developments. One strand in the literature is made up of a bulk of empirical studies (e.g. Juncos 2007, Kurowska 2009a), institutional analyses (e.g. Björkdahl and Strömvik 2008), mission case studies and studies focusing on a particular functional area of EU security policy. As such, research on the institutional, operational and strategic implications of the EU's comprehensive approach has been fairly disparate and selective. Many studies deal with specific aspects of comprehensiveness, such as the so-called 'security-development nexus' (e.g. Chandler 2007), the blurring lines between internal and external security (e.g. Rhinard and Eriksson 2009), civil-military coordination in crisis management operations (e.g. Gross 2008), and enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy as crisis management tools and, as such, hybrids that combine political measures with security provision (e.g. Lynch 2005, Kamov 2006). Characteristic of most of this literature is that in each specific case very few references are made to other aspects of comprehensiveness. There is a tendency towards highly specialised studies, which, ironically, means that much of the existing work fails to paint the larger picture and, thus, contribute to the understanding of comprehensive actorness proper.

In this article, we hold that clarifying the implications of comprehensive security provision is a threefold analytical challenge: first of all, there has to be a clarification of concepts and terminology. In recent years, we have seen a proliferation of concepts related to the overall idea of a comprehensive approach, which partly overlap or have a distinct focus on a particular area. There is increasing confusion about the way the concept is applied in empirical analyses and how related terms, such as WoG, CMCO, IM/IMP, human security, NCW and COIN, can be engaged to discuss specific aspects of comprehensiveness in the EU context. Secondly, there is also a need for a more focused theoretical debate. Despite various attempts at conducting theoretically informed empirical research, there is still no established set of frameworks for the study of the EU's comprehensive approach. Last but not least, we argue that the scholarly debate needs to be structured along a specific set of functional issues that need to be taken into consideration when dealing with the EU's comprehensive approach and, particularly, its practical implications. We argue that these revolve

around three specific functional interfaces. We hold that identifying these interfaces will also help to make greater sense of existing empirical work.

Before presenting a possible framework for organising this field of research in terms of certain functional areas, this article will engage in a synoptic discussion of different concepts related to comprehensive security and then explore the range of theoretical tenets that could add to the ambition of establishing a more inclusive analytical framework for the study of the EU's comprehensive approach.

### **Towards conceptual clarity**

Despite the topicality of comprehensive security and the growing presence of the term in the literature, there has been little scholarly concern about how to maintain conceptual clarity among all the labels commonly related to a wider security conception. There appears to be limited awareness about the compound nature and the various facets of the concept, particularly in the field of EU studies. Generic terms like 'human security', 'civil–military coordination' or 'integrated missions' are often used interchangeably with the EU's 'Comprehensive Approach', while comprehensiveness as such is, as alluded to above, taken as a given standard in any security-related venture embarked on by the EU and its Member States. Insofar as comprehensive security provision through an institutional setup as complex and multifaceted as the EU's involves a wide range of interrelated yet distinctive issues, it is useful to discuss the way the wide range of concepts out there fit into the larger picture of comprehensive actorness, and where distinguishing lines need to be drawn for the sake of conceptual and analytical clarity.

A common denominator for all these concepts is their focus on widening the conventional perspective on security towards a not purely military, territorial and state-centric understanding, but one that includes other security-relevant aspects such as civilian operations in various areas (police, security sector reform, rule of law, civil protection and civil administration), development, environmental issues, humanitarian aid, structural cooperation and diplomacy. As a generic concept along these lines, comprehensive security has become a popular leitmotif for new policies and institutional reforms in response to new challenges raised by recent changes in the global security environment.

At the domestic level, comprehensive security conceptions have focused on enhancing interagency processes between governmental departments (mainly

ministries of defence, foreign affairs, justice and the interior) in order to improve effectiveness of national responses to current security challenges. Roughly, these concepts can be subsumed under ‘Whole of Government’ (WoG) approaches, where priorities, procedures and degree of institutionalisation (e.g. through interdepartmental meetings) vary greatly between different states. Some European states such as Austria, Sweden or Italy have long-standing traditions of cross-departmental relations, including close coordination between their internal and external security agencies. That said, most European states have reorganised their security sectors and adopted elements of the WoG concept in the wake of the 9/11, Madrid and London attacks.

Apart from this domestic context, the notion of ‘WoG’ has also been engaged in the context of (predominantly UN) peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction, where the concept points to the necessity of involving all policy sectors to achieve a desired end state in a conflict region (see e.g. Patrick and Brown 2007). This concept comes closest to the security sector approach, which the EU has adopted in the context of CSDP and, as such, reflects only part of the EU's comprehensive approach.

Although EU leaders frequently vaunt the EU's distinctiveness as a comprehensive actor, comprehensive security is neither an invention of EU policy-makers, nor is it a particular feature of the EU to engage in a widening of its security agenda. As Sven Biscop remarks (2008, p. 13), up until around 2003, the EU largely played the part of the follower in the ‘comprehensive trend’ that gained momentum in the decade following the end of the cold war. When in the early years of CSDP, European policy-makers started to embark on the development of a comprehensive approach distinctive to the EU, the conceptual field was already populated with concepts of other international organisations, most notably NATO and the UN. Both have employed the notion of comprehensiveness in designing and planning their operational activities. However, the focus of their comprehensive approaches, respectively, is very different from the EU approach.

The UN was the first organisation to introduce an elaborate model of comprehensive action. The label of ‘Integrated Missions’ (IM) was adopted to meet the ambition and strategic aim of the UN to reconcile and coordinate its policy instruments across various departments (UN Capstone Doctrine 2008, De Coning 2009). The EU has later adopted a similar strategy of internal coordination in its concept of ‘Civil–Military Coordination’ (CMCO), which was developed as a working concept to ensure coherent action across institutional boundaries within the EU and across

different policy fields. The notion is mistakenly similar to the UN concept of Civil–Military Coordination (CMCoord) and the NATO concept of Civil–Military Fusion (CMF) and Co-operation (CMC). The EU's focus in CMCO, however, lies on the internal coordination of various policy strands and between the main governing institutional actors (the Council and the Commission), whereas the above-mentioned UN and NATO concepts focus on civil–military interaction at theatre level, and thus, with external actors such as NGOs present in a crisis region or civil society actors in the host country. Moreover, labelling internal coordination within the EU as CMCO – i.e. as a ‘civil–military’ matter – is inherently misleading, since much of what CMCO has been about has been mere inter-institutional issues. As a result and in addition to the confusion with NATO and UN concepts, CMCO has often been wrongly related to Civil–Military Cooperation (CIMIC), which is a fixed military term for relations between national and multinational armed forces and civilian actors at the operational level. While the EU has adopted CIMIC aspects for its operations under CSDP, CIMIC is by no means synonymous with or even similar to CMCO (see Gebhard 2008).

Other, essentially military concepts commonly related to comprehensive security include NCW, EBO and COIN. Again, the EU has partly adopted some of these elements within the CSDP framework. In conceptual terms, however, they are not what the EU's Comprehensive Approach is mainly about. Network-centric and effects-based approaches have been developed in the context of technological aspects of comprehensive security in the military field. The NCW and EBO are, in other words, exclusively defence-related (see e.g. Cebrowski and Garstka 1998) and, thus, only to a limited extent relevant to the EU's comprehensive approach.

This brief and non-exhaustive terminological discussion is meant to illustrate the importance of employing the many concepts commonly related to comprehensive security in a sound and consistent way. Empirical research into the EU's qualities and performance as a comprehensive security actor would benefit from a more focused conceptual but also theoretical debate, which is what this article seeks to inspire. In the following section, we discuss a selective range of theoretical tenets that we consider particularly useful for the development of a comprehensive security research agenda.

## **Theoretical tenets of comprehensive security**

In EU Studies, Securitisation is not commonly referred to as a basic tenet of comprehensive security although it provides some essential analytical arguments for the way comprehensive security agendas evolve within states and organisations. The term was coined by the Copenhagen School and developed particularly in the seminal work of Barry Buzan et al. (1998). They defined securitisation as a ‘more extreme version of politicisation’; that is, as a process that ‘takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics’ (p. 18). The constructivist assumption underlying this definition is that in contrast to traditionalist approaches, security is not barely a materialistic matter that is dominated by the balance of power, capabilities and the use of force but an issue that is conditioned by the very way threat perception takes place and intrudes political communication (p. 19) and action.

What prompted Buzan et al. (1998) to develop a new framework for the study of security was the progressive widening of international security agendas that took place after the end of the cold war to challenge the old and state-centric view of IR-traditionalists. Buzan and Hansen (2009) define the conceptual widening of security as considering ‘specific non-military sectoral dynamics as phenomena in their own right’ (p. 189). Buzan et al. (1998) emphasise that the impetus for this functional expansion has come from diverse sources (policy-makers, NGOs, academia), and that the new security agenda was mostly presented as a conceptual and operational answer and reaction to the changing global strategic landscape (e.g. Nye 1989, Crawford 1991, Haftendorn 1991). While traditional security concerns began to take a back seat, policy-makers, planners and scholars started to claim security status for other – economic, societal and environmental – issues. However, rather than mere pragmatism Buzan et al. identify highly political dynamics behind this gradual establishment of a wider security agenda. Whether or not a matter is perceived and declared a security concern not least determines and justifies the measures and means to handle it. Moreover, it informs about the wider political agenda of a state or organisation.

Another asset of the securitisation approach is that it raises analytical awareness about the political and intellectual sensitivity in simply tacking the ‘security’ label onto an ever-wider range of issues. Buzan et al. emphasise that it is important to maintain a coherent understanding of security at all times to prevent the concept from becoming devoid of its meaning and implications. The main criterion they put into place is the

involvement of an ‘existential threat’, where ‘existential’ is not confined to endangered human existence as it would be according to the traditionalist security paradigm (p. 21) but depends on the peculiarities of the actor at stake. In the political sector, for example, the EU could be existentially threatened by events that undermine its integration telos (p. 22).

In their ‘New Framework for Analysis’ Buzan et al. (1998) identify five sectors that constitute a comprehensive or widened understanding of security: the military, the environmental, the economic, the societal and the political sector. They think of this distinction as a ‘purely analytical device, as different lenses through which to see different views of the same issues’ (p. 172). These sectors are also reflected in political reality, where security is the integrating force that intrinsically links them with each other. For the pursuance of comprehensive security, the key therefore lies in the management of cross-sectoral dynamics (p. 173).

The complex nature of the contemporary security environment and the cross-sectoral/inter-pillar dimensions of EU security policy has also led to the gradual development of an EU security governance research agenda (Norheim-Martinsen 2010a). Since the 1990s, various notions of governance have become a central approach in studies of the EU (e.g. Marks et al. 1996, Hix 1998, Kohler-Koch and Eising 1999, Hooghe and Marks 2001, Jachtenfuchs 2001, Christiansen and Piattoni 2003, Tallberg 2003, Jachtenfuchs and Kohler-Koch 2004, Bulmer et al. 2007). This so-called ‘governance turn in EU studies’ (Hix 1998) has marked a shift away from the traditional integration theories towards treating the EU as an evolving, yet fairly stable policy-making system (Wallace 2005). These are insights that come across as uncontroversial in other domains of EU policy, but that have so far not benefited the study of the EU’s security and defence policy, because of the general exclusion of high politics from the governance research agenda. However, a growing literature on ‘security governance’ has sought to extend this agenda to cover also this domain (Krahmann 2003a, b, 2005, Kirchner 2006, Schröder 2006, Kirchner and Sperling 2007, Hollis 2010). The value of the governance approach rests not so much with the way it competes with alternative approaches, but more with its ability to emphasise the strengths of existing theories and perspectives (Webber et al. 2004, p. 4). Most importantly, while not disregarding the state as a key actor in international security structures, it opens up to theories that are more sympathetic to alternative actors and channels of influence than those that look at traditional state sources of power in

classical hierarchical systems. For example, the governance literature suggests that network analysis can ‘offer valuable insights into the structure and function of the multiple, diverse and frequently overlapping control and coordination arrangements that together make up global and security governance structures’ (Rosenau 1995, Krahmann 2005, p. 22). Network approaches can be useful because they allow us to pursue power relations within non-hierarchical structures, and draw attention to how actors both within and between organisations interact irrespective of formal organisational boundaries and procedures. As such, they are able to accommodate cross-sectoral issues, formal and informal processes, as well as actors whose formal source of influence is unclear, as would be the case, for example, with some of the semi-independent security agencies that are located on the side (or even inside) of the EU's formal organisation, such as the European Defence Agency (EDA). The insights of network analysis can help to improve our understanding of the internal dynamics of the EU's security policy by focusing on such questions as who are the most powerful or influential actors, and by showing what material and other resources a certain actor can mobilise to increase his or her influence within a particular governance structure (see e.g. Merand et al. 2010).

The centrality of formal and informal institutionalisation to security governance is another source of further insight into the management of comprehensive security within the EU (Webber et al. 2004). The EU institutions involved in security issues are populated by an increasing number of permanent representatives, as well as seconded officers, diplomats and civil servants who are often seen to develop some degree of collective *esprit de corps* (see Duke 2005, Meyer 2006, Howorth 2007). This has led to an alleged shift of weight from national to EU institutions, a process often referred to as ‘Brusselsisation’; that is, the tendency for security policy to be formally and/or informally, influenced, formulated and, to some extent, driven from within the EU's different institutional structures (cf. Howorth 2007, p. 30). However, the actual salience and impact of such a shift is a matter that needs to be substantiated further. As the need for centralised institutions in the implementation of a comprehensive approach grows, be it for strategic and operational planning, early warning, contingency planning or policy analysis, their role as effective implementers also needs to be evaluated.

Many of the organisational and operational implications of implementing a comprehensive security agenda since the end of the cold war have been referred to as

unprecedented challenges – be it for state actors or organisations like the EU. Very few analyses (e.g. Schröder 2006, Benner and Bossong 2009, Mölling and Major 2009) about comprehensive security have sought to approach this issue from the point of view of traditional organisation or public administration theory (PA). However, organisation theory (and with it, PA) offers some important tenets for the study of comprehensive security actorness, most particularly when it comes to pinning down the practical implications of implementing such conceptions. From an organisational perspective, the functional widening of security agendas has one particular consequence: in most cases, the attempt of acting comprehensively will have an impact on interagency processes within the respective state or organisation. New tasks have to be performed, new procedural links need to be established, and actors have to redefine their role and position themselves within a new functional set-up. In the literature about comprehensive security, these implications are often vaguely referred to as ‘challenges of coordination’, and accordingly, any failure to meet these challenges in any way is commonly identified as a ‘lack of coordination or coherence’.

Coordination is one of the oldest puzzles in the study of administrative and implementing structures. Organisation theory can therefore provide some insight as to how these ‘challenges of coordination’ can be conceptualised, explained on a more abstract level and operationalised in empirical studies. Very generally speaking, coordination is all about interaction between organisational units and the failure thereof. The most immediate result of successful coordination – as it is most commonly assumed – is punctually, efficient interaction and, procedurally, overall efficiency. As Wildavsky (2002, p. 131) has noted, coordination is ‘one of the golden words of our time’ (p. 132). Yet, from a critical point of view, coordination is not merely a tool for direct organisational improvement nor does every institutional reform openly aiming at better coordination necessarily enhance overall efficiency or guarantee operational success. Peters (2006) definitely has a point when stating that coordination is on the one hand traded as the ‘Holy Grail’ (p. 115) of effective and successful administration – some kind of panacea for any sort of organisational problem in administrative management – but on the other hand, it also constitutes one of the most common bones of contention whenever multiple organisational entities interact in a certain sectoral context, such as in the case of security provision. ‘Coordination’ can indeed be said to have different meanings: it either stands for the

technical arrangement of interactions to ensure functionality, for the constructive interaction between participant entities of an organising system, i.e. for a way to enhance the system's output or performance (the 'Holy Grail'), or it can take on a malign subtext where the role of the coordinator is contested and, therefore, coordination holds an air of rivalry and competition.

Organisational theory argues that the way coordination evolves within a certain setting depends on several factors (Egeberg 2004): the overall constitution of the organisational system including the functional ratio between its parts ('organisational type'; see e.g. Greenwood/Hinings 1988), the nature and consistency of the constituent entities ('organisational locus', 'organisational demography'; see e.g. Garvey 1997, Jönsson et al. 2000) and, last but not least, the organisational environment ('context'; see e.g. Olsen 2003).

Analyzing coordination from an organisational perspective is always and most centrally about where coordination is needed, in what way and to what extent. Only then it is possible to assess, whether coordination has been successful, where or whether more of it is needed and in what way it is conditioned by intervening factors.

The first step is to locate interfaces within an organisational system, i.e. to identify where coordination is needed. The notion of 'coordination' implies that it occurs at places where two organisational trajectories meet as it is suggested by their function or the purpose or objective of the overall process. Complex systems typically feature several layers of this kind of interfaces that are partly intersecting. The analytical benefit of identifying these interfaces becomes lies in the assessment of the independent variables introduced earlier. Factors like 'organisational demography' or 'organisational structure' take on a completely different meaning for each interface.

It then needs to be clarified which sorts of costs are involved if coordination is lacking, not functioning or not happening at all as that determines the way coordination is to be provided. Wildavsky (2002) pointed out that put simply, 'achieving coordination means avoiding bad things' (p. 132). The PA theory differentiates between different types of – bad things – 'collateral damages' of imperfect or failed coordination. Peters (1996) suggests the following categories: redundancy/duplication (i.e. two or more entities perform the same task), lacunae (i.e. a certain task is not performed at all) and conflict/overlap (i.e. two or more entities doing similar tasks with different objectives and following divergent goals).

Last but not least, from an organisational perspective, there is an essential difference between coordination at the political level and coordination at the administrative level. In every day parlance, and also in many empirical assessments of the EU's security governance, these two very different forms of 'arranging parts' are commonly lumped together under the label of 'coordination'. In essence, coordination at the administrative level is primarily about keeping up procedural flows or functionally enabling a certain organisational process. Political 'coordination' in the sense of convergence in turn is strictly speaking not an organisational process. It involves administrative activities such as coordination meetings and consultation but the subject of coordination is not an organisational one. It is important to differentiate whether 'coordination' means 'organisational enabling' or 'searching for convergence' (either among Member States or between the pillars) as these two really constitute two very different issues.

By bringing together these various theoretical approaches in a research agenda article, we aim to inspire a more theoretically informed discussion of the overall challenge of a comprehensive approach for the EU. While we do not suggest that these different theoretical perspectives be considered and brought together in some sort of super-framework for the study of the EU's comprehensive approach, we hold that it is important to aim to locate individual research contributions within this range of theoretical options.

In the following section we discuss three functional interfaces along which empirical research about the EU's comprehensive approach could be organised. This is meant to add to the conceptual clarification and the discussion of possible theoretical perspectives by structuring the field analytically and making greater sense of existing case study research.

### **Three functional interfaces**

As the above review has shown, much of the empirical literature on the EU's comprehensive approach is fairly selective and dispersed. Many very diverse issues are referred to as matters of comprehensive actorness, but very few analyses attempt to grasp the EU's comprehensive approach as a whole. Most contributions focus on specific aspects of comprehensive actorness without contextualising the matter within the broader picture. In an attempt to structure this largely disintegrated field of study, we suggest that a more inclusive analysis of the EU's comprehensive approach could

be arranged along the following three interfaces: the interface between the structural and the operational elements of security, the interface between internal and external security matters and the interface between civilian and military components.

Each of these interfaces can be broken down to another structural level, which in turn helps to map out the number of specific issues to be considered, to classify and to locate them within the thematic complex of comprehensive security. Each specific issue retains its peculiarities but placing it in an inclusive analytical matrix (see Table 1) can help to draw cross-sectoral conclusions and to contribute to the development of a functional definition of comprehensive actorness.

<b>structural-operational</b>	<b>internal-external</b>	<b>civilian-military</b>
security-development	terrorism-border control	coordination- organizational culture
security-trade	organised crime-border control	coordination-planning
security-foreign policy	integration-migration	coordination-operations

Table 1. Functional interfaces in the EU's comprehensive approach.

The interface between the structural and the operational is the one feature of comprehensiveness that is arguably most particular to the EU and its specific character as an organisation. Unlike other comparable organisations, the EU has evolved as a structural actor in the first place. For more than four decades, the EU's (and formerly EC's) external portfolio was mainly composed of its external trade policy, development cooperation, and regional cooperation as well as of loose intergovernmental coordination within the European Political Cooperation (EPC), and outside the community framework. With the exception of humanitarian aid, the EC/EU's has thus for a long time mainly focused on long-term, structural measures in the area of crisis management. Even humanitarian aid, however, was largely carried out by organisational partners and did not involve their own EC/EU capabilities. The operational element, which today forms the core of the EU's crisis management profile, was established fairly late. Pushed by the rapidly changing global circumstances after the end of the cold war, the EU started to develop and assume a more proactive role on the international scene. When the CSDP was introduced as a

means to back up the EU with operational assets, the intricate question emerged as to how these new components of external action could be reconciled with the structural instruments the Community already had at its disposal.

The origins of this contentious issue date back to the early years of European integration (Gauttier 2004, Nuttall 2005), when it turned out that cooperation in political matters would take a distinct path from economic integration. Apart from the fact that the creation of the CSDP has perpetuated the ‘old divide’ between the intergovernmental/political and the supranational/economic strand in European integration, its subsequent substantiation has also fuelled a long-standing internal conflict between the main institutional players, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union. It has been clear from the beginning to all actors involved in the process that the value added of the CSDP could not be tapped without instantaneously reconciling it with the broader institutional framework of the Union and the Community, respectively (Gebhard forthcoming). Accordingly, recent efforts at enhancing the capacity of the EU to deliver on its holistic potential and, thus, to translate its comprehensive profile into effective and credible action, focus primarily on the improvement of institutional coherence.

The structural–operational divide, however, is not only one between different institutional actors. It is in fact a divide between competing logics of interaction: the integrationist logic on the one hand and the logic of intergovernmental cooperation on the other. Each of these two logics follows a different finalité and, thus, underlies a different set of interests and objectives. What is more, with respect to security, this division is generally also about short-term measures on the one hand and a long-term perspective on the other. In the ESS, the EU has confirmed and acknowledged, for instance, that security and development are inherently connected and, thus, need to be looked at as two tasks subscribing to the same functional aim: safety, well-being, and sustainability. In institutional and political terms, however, the procedural path towards achieving this aim is contested. Institutional actors compete for funding, resources and power. Member states disagree about the priorities to guide the achievement of these overarching goals, and they divert responsibilities to minimise budgetary pressure, gain domestic support or maximise their immediate and long-term benefits.

Similar circumstances condition the interface between security and trade (see e.g. Orbis 2008). By tradition, the EU/EC has employed its economic instruments for

political purposes, either in a positive manner to foster integration and the establishment of market economies in unstable and transitional countries or by way of sanctions and negative economic measures such as embargoes. The diversification of the global strategic landscape after the end of the cold war and progressing globalisation have increased the importance of economic instruments for the provision of security. Moreover, the establishment of the CSDP and the conduct of crisis management operations within its framework have placed the EU's economic policies into a new context, the context of conflict resolution and post-conflict peace building. Policy-makers and specialists on the ground alike stress the importance of coordinating the massive accounts of EU economic measures with operational efforts in a certain region or country. The challenge is not only to time structural and operational measures in the best way possible but also to reconcile strategic planning processes and to foster the mainstreaming of interactions between the institutions involved.

Recent steps towards the establishment of a common European External Action Service (EEAS) have brought another issue to the fore: the coordination of operational crisis management measures with diplomatic efforts and foreign policy actions. While this security-foreign policy (or operational-diplomatic) interface does not exactly coincide with the structural-operational divide between CSDP and the Community policies as outlined above, it has similar implications in terms of institutional coordination and the necessity to reconcile short-term with long-term action. In order to tap the full potential of its functional spectrum, the EU has to find a way to integrate its diplomatic standing into an inclusive crisis management portfolio. Again, here the tension lies in the (sometimes opposing) organisational *esprit de corps* of the various institutional actors involved and in the extent to which Member States align their positions to a common objective.

In recent years, a second interface between external and internal security matters has become increasingly relevant for both state actors and international organisations. Since the end of the cold war, the international strategic environment has not only seen a multiplication of non-conventional threats. The changing global circumstances have also forced political actors to redefine one of the main parameters of traditional security (i.e. defence): territoriality. The proliferation of asymmetric and trans-boundary threats such as cyber-terrorism, human trafficking and transnational organised crime has put common state-centric understandings of security into

question (Schröder 2006). Security provision is no longer exclusively a matter of territorial defence against an exogenous aggressor nor is there an exclusive ‘internal’ realm that can be dealt with separately. Today’s security challenges transcend conventional distinctions between matters of external security and internal security, order and safety issues (Rhinard and Eriksson 2009). As a result, many forms of threat and aggression cannot be tackled by either the external security apparatus of a state (traditionally, its national defence system), its internal security apparatus (police, border control, law enforcement, civil administration) or a regional organisation (arrangements of collective defence such as within NATO).

The ESS underlines the salience of a comprehensive approach to security in acknowledging the blurring of lines between the external and the internal security realms. Two main conclusions are drawn from the change in strategic circumstances: most of today’s security challenges cannot be tackled by conventional defence or based on purely military means, but require a combination of instruments that span across the functional boundaries of external and internal security. Given the changing nature of today’s threats, Member States have to combine their efforts and cooperate not only in matters of defence but also in respect to challenges that seem to arise on the domestic level. Cooperation and vertical integration in security matters have become a political and strategic necessity.

Providing security across the internal–external interface has several political and structural implications for the EU. Firstly, the blurring of lines between internal and external security matters challenges established national arrangements of task sharing between the Member States’ defence machinery and their internal security apparatus, which means that cross-departmental coordination and integration at the national level becomes salient. Secondly, the necessity to integrate areas of domestic responsibility (such as law enforcement and border control) with other Member States challenges national sensitivities about sovereignty and the general understanding of state territoriality. Thirdly, the attempt of providing security across the internal–external interface by way of a comprehensive European approach challenges the EU’s ability to align its Member States and ensure vertical coherence, as well as willingness to integrate, which in many internal security matters implies the readiness to share sensitive information. And last but not least, while the blurring of lines between the internal and the external security realms is a widely recognised strategic assumption, there are diverging interests within the EU concerning the salience of certain threats

and the priorities Member States set for their domestic restructuring efforts. Member states do not only have different levels of ambition, e.g. in regard to transnational terrorism and organised crime, there are also regional discrepancies concerning e.g. migration pressure or the vicinity of failed and failing states, which affect vertical cohesion and willingness to integrate and join efforts in certain policy areas such as border control and counter-terrorism.

What complicates the picture is that for the EU, providing security across the internal–external interface is a multi-level challenge: despite some substantial integration progress in recent years, each Member State retains their domestic ‘internal security’ arrangements along with each their national defence regimes. Hence, each member state is facing the challenge of having to reconcile interdepartmental procedures and policies and to reorganise the relationship between ministries (interior, justice, foreign affairs, defence), which in turn conditions and determines the EU’s performance and success at delivering a comprehensive ‘European’ approach.

Finally, a third interface between the civilian and the military has eventually gained prominence, if not dominance, in studies of EU security, following the establishment of CSDP in 1999. On the one hand, the infusion of a military component into an organisation, whose identity and rationale until then had been nested in the accomplishment of bringing peace to the European continent, presented the EU with a very real clash of organisational cultures. On the other hand, the acquisition of military instruments also represented an opportunity for moulding and pursuing a specific type of approach – a comprehensive one that did not favour certain policy instruments over others that were not burdened by outdated doctrines and ingrained military thinking and that could start afresh in the build-up of duly integrated planning and command structures. Instead, the military arm was ‘added to the civil structure as a separate limb’ (Müller-Wille 2002, p. 61). This has, in turn, generated particular challenges concerning the way civil–military relations have been managed in the EU context.

As regards the interface between coordination and organisational culture, there is, as discussed above, a well-known disconnect between the long-term structural instruments managed by the Commission, and the short-term operational – military and civilian – instruments managed by the Council. However, the EU has also struggled with coordination within the CFSP/CSDP domain as such, as reflected in

the many initiatives taken to improve civil–military relations over the last years. These problems are not particular to the EU. Indeed, there exists an extensive scholarship on civil–military relations in the field of strategic studies, which the institutional approaches applied in many EU analyses often fail to take into consideration (Huntington 1957, Janowitz 1960, Kaldor 1999, Egnell 2006, Norheim-Martinsen 2010b). That is, when the focus is on the novelty and appropriateness of the EU's comprehensive approach, institutional change tends to be seen as a good in itself. Yet frequent institutional changes are, as it often turns out, not necessarily to be taken as signs of an emerging civil–military organisation 'fit for purpose' (Forster 2006, p. 43). Moreover, the ever expanding institutional charts will not tell us much about the level of personal contact between people at various levels of the organisation, whether organisational structures and/or professional cultures define interaction, if relations are marked by mutual respect, influence is balanced, or whether political objectives are shared and understood the same way by military officers and civil servants alike. In short, it will not inform us about whether a sense of institutionalised civil–military strategic culture is actually taking root. Comparing the level and mode of integration between civilian and military elements of CFSP/CSDP with traditional models and challenges of organising the civil–military interface can offer new insights into these issues (Norheim-Martinsen 2010b).

A second set of challenges is rooted in the interface between coordination and planning. A key question is how new procedures and mechanisms for civil–military coordination have facilitated a 'culture of coordination'. This is not principally a matter of developing 'detailed structures and procedures', to quote the EU's own concept of Civil–Military Co-ordination (CMCO; European Council 2003), but of encouraging regular interaction and collegiate work forms between actors across the civil–military interface (Khol 2006). Studies of how socialisation mechanisms and work form impact on EU representatives' sense of shared esprit de corps have to date focused mainly on the politico–strategic level (Duke 2005, Meyer 2006, Howorth 2007, Juncos and Reynolds 2007). There is, therefore, a particular need for research on both formal and informal civil–military coordination at the lower levels of strategic and operational planning. The establishment of the new Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD), which has overlapped with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, is also a potentially significant step towards better civil–military planning and coordination. When fully operational, the CMPD is set to lift civil–

military planning activities out of the EUMS, up to Deputy Director level and back to the Crisis Management Concept (CMC) stage. It integrates people from the old DG E VIII and IX, the CivMilCell and other EUMS units, and even parts of the Commission. This should, in theory, augur well for coordination across the board. However, an issue that has been raised is that since there is no money to hire people, the new unit will not be reinforced with more civilians. There is, therefore, an inherent danger that the military bias, which has dominated the crisis management planning process so far, is carried on into the CMPD. This is, as such, an issue closely related to the above relationship between institutional change and organisational culture. Indeed, many of the coordination issues that the EU has tried to address in recent years seem to have more to do with organisational culture than formal institutional structures. The somewhat impressive track record of institutional innovations in later years suggests that there is no quick fix to this problem.

Finally, there is the issue of operations and coordination. There are numerous analyses of the more than 20 operations the EU has carried out under CSDP, but few accounts that specifically take a broader view of these operations. In the research literature, even in the few edited volumes that cover CSDP operations explicitly, operations tend to be treated in isolation from each other and are subjected to different benchmarks (see Deighton and Mauer 2006, Merlingen and Ostrauskaite 2008, Grevi et al. 2009). Each individual operation naturally needs to be evaluated on the basis of what its purpose is or was, but given the role that operations play in relation to the overall image of the EU as a security provider, they also need to be seen in toto to be able to determine how a comprehensive civil–military approach plays out in practice. Moreover, there is a lack of connectivity in the literature between the analysis of civilian and military operations. No fully integrated operations have been carried out so far, while the most publicised ventures in Africa, such as Artemis and EUFOR Tchad/RCA, have been hailed as strictly military success stories. Multiple operations in one theatre do not necessarily reflect a comprehensive approach in practice. In fact, operations like Artemis and EUFOR Tchad/RCA suffered from a severe lack of coordination with other EU but also UN instruments on the ground. On the other hand, EUFOR DR Congo in 2006, which received due criticism on the military side, seemed to have fared significantly better when it comes to coordination. This is a point that needs to be taken into consideration when the EU's operational record is scrutinised. At the moment, it seems that the EU is constantly drawn into a discourse

where military robustness in itself is treated as the only or most important benchmark for successful intervention, while the EU often fails to ‘sell’ the point about the ‘upsurge in civilian crisis management’ as the real ‘success of the ESDP’ (Kurowska 2009b, p. 34). Ten years into CSDP it is perhaps time to move beyond the notion that the EU needs to repeatedly ‘prove itself’ as militarily capable, and to start concentrating instead on the combined added value or comparative advantage that EU operations may offer.

Summing up, we argue that distinguishing between these main functional interfaces is crucial to a more in-depth understanding of the EU’s provision of comprehensive security and that it can help to untangle and structure this very broad debate in European studies.

### **Concluding remarks**

Our ambition with this article has been to contribute to conceptual and analytical clarity by structuring the wide range of issues that is commonly discussed under the label of ‘Comprehensive Security’. We have identified three major interfaces that are crucial to ‘comprehensive actorness’: the structural–operational, the internal–external and the civil–military interface. While we hold that this distinction can help to reorganise the field and make more sense of existing empirical research, we are also aware that in order to develop a full-fledged research agenda some further steps are needed. As the discussion of each of the above interfaces has shown, comprehensive security provision concerns all work levels of the EU system: the politico–strategic, the operational and the tactical. Therefore, a useful way of structuring the research field further could be to break each of the three interfaces down to different work levels in order to gain a better understanding of the specific issues that come into play at each level:

At the politico–strategic level, comprehensiveness is mainly a matter of horizontal coordination, and the streamlining of policies along the lines of a set of overarching strategic goals. This mainly includes coordination across the operational–structural interface, the interface between internal and external security matters, but also some aspects of the civil–military interface. At the level of operational planning, comprehensive security is determined by inter-organisational processes and the way institutional actors and their supporting apparatus are interacting with each other. The development of an institutional ‘culture of coordination’ between actors with different

professional backgrounds is needed in order to ensure timely and effective implementation of the different instruments at the EU's disposal. In the EU, this means breaking down inherent barriers between the foreign policy and the security policy machineries of the Member States and the EU, between the development and the security policy branch of the EU, between civilian and military planners and between trade and security matters. At the level of day-to-day implementation, a similar 'culture of coordination' is needed amongst the people on the ground. For all the talk about civil–military coordination amongst the Brussels-based actors, it counts for little without a clearer understanding of the more tangible day-to-day challenges of coordination in theatres of operation.

Another aspect that will need to be developed further is what the actual determinants of comprehensive action really are. An initial list of potential mechanisms could include:

- A shared understanding of what CA actually entails among the organisational and political actors involved to enable coordination, cooperation, integration
- Political consensus – unity of action (vertical coherence among Member States)
- Capabilities, material/force commitments (including operational skills)
- Budgetary framework, concertation of financing through different channels
- Structural coherence (horizontal/cross-pillar and vertical issues)
- Procedural efficiency
- Inter-organisational coordination (EU-UN, EU-NATO)

This non-exhaustive list of potential determinants could serve as a starting point for the formulation of hypotheses, which could then guide further more systematic research into the topic.

Last but not least we also hold that there needs to be further research on the practical and strategic implications of a comprehensive approach and, similarly, what the implications are if and when organisational actors like the EU fail to enable the effective implementation of such an approach. Along with a focus on the organisational and structural circumstances conditioning the related success or failure of the EU – the 'determinants' – there has to be a focus on the effect of a policy or operation 'on the ground'. It is now widely recognised that given the changing nature of conflicts and the varieties of threats and forms of aggression, comprehensiveness is not a choice but an operational and strategic necessity. Solving or tackling a complex

and multi-dimensional conflict or crisis situation is a functionally indivisible task, which rules out compartmentalised solutions. The EU might be a peculiar actor to deliver on these terms, but assuming comprehensiveness behind EU action simply because the EU appears well disposed to act in such a way is not sufficient. Actual results need to be measured, analysed and evaluated against more rigid analytical frameworks. Only through further research into each of these issues will we be able to take the understanding of the EU as a comprehensive security actor beyond the current tendency towards case-by-case analyses and disparate studies of isolated areas of the broader subject. Structuring this vast field constitutes a first step towards this end.

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#### Notes

An earlier version of this article was presented at the Thirteenth Biennial Conference of the European Union Studies Association in Baltimore, USA, 9–11 May 2013.

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