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Conference report

**From comprehensive approach to comprehensive
action: enhancing the effectiveness of the EU's
contribution to peace and security**

Monday 17 – Tuesday 18 December 2012 | WP1202

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Key points

For many years, politicians and officials have described a key EU added value in international security as its ability to bring together a wide range of capabilities, from diplomats to development projects and humanitarian delivery to military activities. The EU's focus regarding implementation of such a “comprehensive approach” has been on crisis management through Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions. However, there is increasing thinking that an EU comprehensive approach must apply to all phases of the conflict cycle. The threat or indeed use of force may be needed to create a framework for a political solution, but crisis response, whether military or civilian, can generally only support solutions to underlying problems that cause conflict rather than solve them on its own. Enduring solutions to conflict challenges almost always require a wider array of long-term programmes and missions. Effective conflict prevention will reduce the need for crisis intervention. In this context, the EU should take into consideration the following approaches and initiatives for using its capabilities in a more coherent, joined up way.

- Having a unified strategy with clear political goals is crucial for the success of any comprehensive approach, whether EU or national. The EU should have a single strategic framework document, shared and signed up to by all relevant EU actors, setting out interests, goals and actions in a country or region. Joint analysis and assessment provide the critical underpinning for common strategy. The European External Action Service (EEAS) crisis platform and crisis management board are good steps in this direction, but are mainly limited to information sharing.
- The EU thus lacks a sufficiently robust process for joint analysis, assessment, and planning that brings together the relevant civilian and military actors. Such a process must also cover more than just crisis response. To foster stronger joint ownership of analysis and planning, EEAS and the Commission could co-chair country-specific task forces. Another approach could be for EEAS geographic desks to play a lead role in coordinating analysis and planning.
- The EU needs an early warning mechanism that leads to preventive action, and should develop the pilot project on the Sahel into a permanent system. This system should be forward looking and broad, encompassing the EU Military Staff (EUMS) and EU civilian bodies as well as input from external sources.
- There is generally a need for much better information sharing on a regular basis both in Brussels and in the field to feed into joint analysis. EU delegations in the field, member states, and outside actors, especially in the humanitarian community, can provide information to the Brussels-based institutions not only for early-warning, but also for identifying lessons and helping the EU to adapt and develop more effective political strategies.

- There is much debate over whether integration rather than just coordination is needed for implementation of the comprehensive approach. Neither is an end in itself, and the EU should aspire to develop structures and processes that will enable it to achieve greater impact. Delivering results on the ground should be the benchmark for determining what EU capabilities need to be integrated and what can be coordinated, but recognising that progress towards greater EU “comprehensiveness” will necessarily be incremental.
- The EU could better develop and exploit the dual position of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP) in joining up EU capabilities, with greater emphasis placed than at present on the component of Vice President of the Commission. The coordinating role of the HR/VP should be further strengthened, for instance as chair of the external relations (RELEX) group of European Commissioners alongside the role of chairing the Foreign Affairs Council.
- The fundamental principle of humanitarian action is that it must be needs based rather than respond to political goals. This principle means that the humanitarian sector cannot have the same role within the comprehensive approach as other EU capabilities. Yet, humanitarian emergencies need political solutions, and so EU humanitarian actors want to engage with the wider comprehensive approach. More discussion with humanitarians is needed to define better the parameters of that engagement.
- Sound preparation in Brussels is essential for effective implementation in the field. Civilian and military staff exchanges between EU institutions and member states as well as participation on an equal footing in joint training and exercises can help to overcome cultural differences and enable people to work better together.
- The EU should streamline the interface between Brussels and the field. The Political and Security Committee (PSC) needs to receive better quality, more coordinated information in order to exercise strategic oversight. Then control over implementation by the PSC, as well as by its subordinate bodies the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM) and Politico-Military Group (PMG), should be more limited to avoid micro-management. Missions should have more autonomy in managing funds, and the rapid reaction elements of the Instrument for Stability could usefully be expanded.
- As another important step towards more effective implementation in the field the EU needs to address the existing shortcomings in information and communications technology that prevent adequate information sharing between different organisations.
- Wherever possible all EU actors in the field should be co-located, and EU Heads of Delegations should have a greater role in ensuring the comprehensiveness of EU action in the field, overseeing at least better coordination and coherence if not integration of these activities. This would help improve transitions between CSDP missions and Commission programmes, coordination with member state embassies, and cooperation with key partners such as UN, NATO, and NGOs.
- Elaboration of an EU wide “fragile states” strategy would bring all capabilities for addressing the conflict cycle into a single conceptual framework and enable better definition of roles and relationships between capabilities. For instance, such a strategy might point towards the creation of a joint unit in charge of policy and operational support on security sector reform (SSR), drawn from EEAS, EUMS, and Commission bodies the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) and the Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation (DEVCO).

Conceptual issues and approaches

1. There is no common and clear definition of the comprehensive approach across EU institutions in Brussels or in national capitals. This diversity is not surprising considering the different roles, capabilities, cultures, and organisational structures across the EU system. At its broadest the comprehensive approach can potentially apply to virtually all EU external action, such as enlargement and neighbourhood policy, climate change and energy, trade, or any other issue that requires organisations with different roles and responsibilities to work closely together in order to achieve political objectives.
2. Discussion of the comprehensive approach within the EU has until now focused on crisis management through CSDP missions. There is, however, increasing thinking that an EU comprehensive approach must apply to all phases of the conflict cycle, and so encompass prevention, post-conflict stabilisation, state and peace building as well as crisis response and CSDP.
3. The threat or indeed use of force may be needed to create a framework for a political solution, but crisis response, whether military or civilian or civil-military, can generally only support solutions to underlying problems that cause conflict rather than solve them on its own. Enduring solutions to conflict challenges almost always require a wider array of long-term programmes and missions. A comparative strength of the EU lies in its ability to apply long-term programmes to address the root causes of conflict. Effective conflict prevention will reduce the need for crisis intervention.
4. Within this context, the comprehensive approach is essentially about the structures and processes that enable deployment of the EU's range of diplomatic, military, development, and humanitarian capabilities in a more joined up, coherent way, thereby supporting more effective implementation in the field. In working with the EU's humanitarian component, the Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), other EU instruments need to respect the principles of needs-based humanitarian action of independence, neutrality and impartiality.
5. There is much debate over whether integration rather than just coordination is needed for implementation of the comprehensive approach. Neither is an end in itself, and the EU should aspire to develop structures and processes that will enable it to achieve greater impact. Delivering results on the ground should be the benchmark for determining what EU capabilities need to be integrated and what can be coordinated, but recognising as well that progress towards greater EU "comprehensiveness" will necessarily be incremental.
6. Since neither coordination or integration of instruments is an end in itself, the crucial starting point for the comprehensive approach is to have a coherent strategy with clear political goals. It is critical for the EU to understand the problem it is trying to solve, establish sound strategic objectives, and then determine the right instruments to use as well as how to use them. In the absence of well-framed objectives there is a danger that policy will become driven by instruments rather than by strategy.
7. The EU will need to formulate a specific strategy and objectives for each country or region where it carries out missions and programmes to address conflict related challenges. The EU cannot fit problems into its institutional structures, rather it must learn to adapt its institutions to each conflict environment it decides to confront. It could be extremely valuable, however, for the EU to have an overarching conceptual view on how to deal with conflict.
8. Elaboration of an EU fragile states strategy would highlight that the comprehensive approach encompasses more than just CSDP and crisis response by drawing in all EEAS and Commission activity that addresses the full conflict cycle. It would address the need for a common political strategy and concept to deal with conflict challenges that member states could buy into. An integrated EU fragile states strategy would provide a means of better promoting and embedding across the EU system the

OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) fragile state principles and the goals of the New Deal for engagement in fragile states, along with principles of humanitarian action. It could thus substantially help to break down barriers between EEAS, EUMS, and Commission Directorate-Generals, most importantly DEVCO and ECHO, and enable better definition of roles and relationships.

Institutional roles and relationships

9. Turf wars and diverse cultures constitute significant impediments everywhere to integrating the activities of different institutions. This problem is compounded within the EU by the historic legacy of the EU's division into different "pillars" prior to the Lisbon Treaty, and continuing legal issues over which EU component, whether EEAS, member states, or different Directorates in the European Commission, controls which competency, budget line, mission or project. Thus, despite the desire contained in the Lisbon Treaty to ensure unity, consistency and effectiveness in EU foreign policy through the creation of a single post of HR/VP, many of the relevant competencies for implementing a comprehensive approach are spread across the EU system.
10. DEVCO, ECHO and FPI constitute the most critical parts of the Commission for addressing conflict issues and coming together in the comprehensive approach. Other Directorate-Generals may also play important roles, such as DG Enlargement in the Western Balkans or DG Home Affairs, which helps non-EU countries to combat serious organised crime, an increasing problem in conflict environments. Within the EEAS, along with diplomatic and regional expertise there are a number of crisis management structures that also play an important role in the comprehensive approach, including the Crisis Management Planning Department (CMPD), the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), and EUMS. In addition, EU member-states are represented on a number of inter-governmental committees, most notably the PSC and the EU Military Committee (EUMC). Both of these committees are chaired by representatives of the HR/VP.
11. The role of the EEAS in coordinating EU external activities is a key issue. The principle that the EEAS should serve as the "chairman" of the inter-institutional board has become largely accepted, and EEAS initiatives such as the crisis platform, which brings together a variety of EU institutional actors, are widely viewed as positive measures. There is more controversy, though, over whether the EEAS should go beyond development of joint strategies and coordinating collective EU efforts and attempt to involve itself in implementation of those efforts on the part of European Commission DGs over which it has no legal competence.
12. Support for this view is based on the argument that the EEAS should have the right to question implementation by other institutional partners if it runs counter to agreed strategies and political goals. A perception exists that not only is project implementation sometimes carried out in isolation from agreed strategies, but that Commission DGs at times may try to develop political strategies independently of the EEAS. On the other hand, there remains a strongly held position within the EU Commission that the comprehensive approach must maintain respect for Treaty roles and competencies as well as for the specificity of its different instruments.
13. The highest hurdle in the Brussels-centric inter-institutional debate is the question of political authority. It is not always clear where ultimate authority lies in the EU system. In that context, the role of the HR/VP, combining the positions of chair of the Foreign Affairs Council (which brings together national foreign ministers), Vice President of the European Commission and head of the EEAS, is both central and crucial. The EU could arguably better develop and exploit the dual position of the HR/VP in joining up EU capabilities, with greater emphasis placed than at present on the component of Vice President of the Commission. The coordinating role of the HR/VP should be further strengthened, for instance as chair of the external relations (RELEX) group of European Commissioners alongside the role of chairing the Foreign Affairs Council. The cabinet of the HR/VP should examine how it can work more closely with the

Commission and share more information. Strengthening the role of the HR/VP would require the full backing of the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission.

14. Apart from the EU, individual countries and other international organisations, notably NATO and the UN, have struggled with the definition and implementation of the comprehensive approach. The UN, which perhaps has the closest type of bureaucratic and political constraints to that of the EU, took well over a decade to improve its definition and implementation of its integrated mission process. The first steps in this process began in the early 1990s, when the changing nature and complexity of conflict led the UN to examine its structures and ways of working. Similarly, experiences in Afghanistan drove some member-states to develop more effective ideas and implementation for bringing together political, diplomatic, development and military capabilities. Other member-states have very under-developed ideas on the comprehensive approach, constituting an additional impediment to progress within the EU.
15. EU inter-institutional issues and continuing tensions, together with the history of developing the comprehensive approach in the UN as well as individual countries, all serve to reinforce the point that progress in achieving more comprehensiveness in how the EU addresses the conflict cycle is likely to be incremental in nature. As organisations develop habits of working more closely together, levels of trust can build up and lead to greater willingness to integrate activities.
16. In addition to EU institutional impediments to implementation of the comprehensive approach, there are policy and cultural issues that cause additional difficulties in joining up diplomatic, military, development and humanitarian actions. For example, some EU member states have expressed concern that the comprehensive approach may overly “civilianise” CSDP to the detriment of military capabilities and action. Yet, all CSDP military missions to date, as well as NATO operations, have taken place in response to conditions and conflict in fragile state environments. If military CSDP operations occur within the framework of a comprehensive EU strategy rather than as short-term “band-aid” type solutions, they are likely to be more effective and there will potentially be more support for them within the overall EU system.
17. ECHO and the humanitarian community fear politicisation of humanitarian aid delivery. The fundamental principle of humanitarian action is that it must be needs based rather than respond to political goals. Political neutrality is therefore critical in order to maintain access to all populations who need aid. This can inevitably create tensions with other EU actors who are focused on achieving political goals. There was apparently some confusion over the respective roles of the EEAS Crisis Response Department and DG ECHO during the Libyan crisis in 2011, for example.
18. However, there is broad support within the EU for the respect of humanitarian principles within the comprehensive approach. Ideas that have emerged for strengthening wider EU support for ECHO’s humanitarian delivery include having EEAS explicitly state that it supports the principles of humanitarian action, making Heads of Delegation (HoD) responsible for advocating EU policies on humanitarian action with local authorities, and training EU field operators in humanitarian principles.
19. While humanitarian principles mean that the sector cannot have the same role within the comprehensive approach as other EU instruments, humanitarian emergencies need political solutions and so EU humanitarian actors want to engage with the wider comprehensive approach. But what part of the wider comprehensive approach are humanitarian actors willing to engage with? Humanitarian actors can offer a great deal of information about what is happening on the ground, and ECHO already shares information with other relevant EU stakeholders on a continuous basis. More discussion with humanitarians is needed to define better the parameters of their relationship with the comprehensive approach and where useful additional points of engagement may lie, such as on situational analysis, assessment and planning as

long as needs based humanitarian delivery is kept separate. In the field, it can be a huge challenge to deliver humanitarian aid in conflict environments in a way that is politically neutral and seen to be as such. Here again, further discussions could be useful to explore the extent of potential engagement points with other EU actors and how best to exploit complementarities as well as how to de-conflict activities as needed, all while respecting each other's mandates.

20. Traditionally, development assistance aspired to be apolitical, focusing on poverty reduction and human development independently from the political environment in the recipient country. The Millennium Development Goals, for example, say nothing about good governance, security and conflict. Some of this older development culture may still be present in parts of DEVCO, but it has taken important steps in recent years to strengthen its efforts directed towards fragile states and the conflict cycle, in particular conflict prevention and state building. DEVCO has created a new fragility unit, along with a pool of deployable staff that can reinforce DEVCO mission personnel during a crisis.
21. OECD DAC guidelines on development are extremely important in DEVCO programming. Aid programmes that do not count as official development assistance under DAC rules ("DAC-able" in development jargon) make DEVCO, as well as any national development agency, look like they are doing less than they actually are. Not all elements of SSR, for instance, are DAC-able, and there has been interest in some parts of the EU and its member states in revising DAC rules to incorporate more development activity related to security sector assistance in the context of conflict prevention and state building.
22. DEVCO would in any case like to see much more dialogue between development related security programmes (i.e. SSR projects) and military activity. Formulation of an EU fragile states strategy would help to promote and make progress on such a dialogue. For instance, such a strategy might point towards the creation of a joint unit in charge of policy and operational support on SSR, drawn from EEAS, EUMS, and FPI, and DEVCO. In the UN, the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO) and UN Development Programme (UNDP) have set up such a joint SSR unit.
23. Much more basic knowledge about existing EU resources and procedures could usefully be made available across the system. Not everyone working on the comprehensive approach is aware of what the EU can potentially do or provide. One idea to improve general knowledge is to have more joint education of Brussels-based officials on the comprehensive approach, perhaps modelled on the CSDP courses offered by the European Security and Defence College.

The foundations for comprehensive action: joint early warning, assessment and planning

24. The EU needs an early warning mechanism that leads to preventive action, and should develop the pilot project on the Sahel into a permanent system. This system should be forward looking and broad, encompassing the EUMS and EU civilian bodies as well as input from external sources.
25. There is generally a need for much better information sharing on a regular basis both in Brussels and in the field to help form joint analysis, and not only in response to crises. EU delegations in the field, member states, and outside actors, especially in the humanitarian community, can provide information to the Brussels-based institutions, and not just for early-warning but also for identifying lessons and helping the EU to adapt and develop more effective political strategies to address the conflict cycle. Within the EU, DEVCO and ECHO in particular have a well-established, long-term presence in many parts of the world, and are a valuable source of information for Brussels-based institutions. ECHO has been in Somalia since 1992, which can give it a deeper perspective on many elements of the instability challenges there.
26. Analysis, assessment, and planning should be as integrated as possible across the

EU system. Having joint or comprehensive analyses from across the EU system is a real potential advantage for developing stronger and more durable political solutions and mandates for EU missions. Analysis, however, is still largely contained within EU “silos”. The EU’s new crisis platform and crisis management board, which are convened by EEAS, are good steps forward. However, the crisis platform is mainly about information sharing and lacks a process for joint analysis and assessment, and it only covers crisis response rather than the entire conflict cycle. Consequently, the EU could usefully explore other formats for joint analysis across the institutional system.

27. Linked to this, the EU should have a single strategic framework document, shared and signed up to by all relevant EU actors, setting out interests, goals and actions in a country or region. To foster stronger joint ownership of analysis and planning, EEAS and the Commission could co-chair country-specific task forces. Another approach could be for EEAS geographic desks to play a lead role in coordinating analysis and planning.

Achieving effective implementation in the field

28. Various discussions within the EU about activities on the ground can serve to illustrate the importance of improved coherence and comprehensiveness. In relation to the conflict cycle, it is not always obvious that all EU actors understand the short and long-term impact of different instruments and activities. For example, a criticism levelled at DEVCO notes that it has spent around €120 million each year in Mali over the last decade, but that the growing instability there raises questions over the utility of some EU development projects. The rejoinder argues that this critique is unfair since most of these projects would not have had security objectives, and that CSDP operations deployed with little or no regard for long-term development (including state-building) goals in theatre can also be viewed in a critical light.
29. There are also inherent tensions between national capitals and field operations where the consequences of not making progress in tackling conflict related challenges are witnessed at first hand. For example, a common view from the field can get split up into departmental components in national capitals. Plus, so much effort goes into reaching decisions in Brussels that field missions are not always given the leeway they need.
30. In a similar vein, the inter-governmental CSDP committee system can be criticised for sometimes being too slow to act, and for too much micro-management by member-states of CSDP operations. In order to improve the decision-making relationship between Brussels and field missions, the PSC, along with its subordinate bodies CIVCOM and PMG, needs to receive higher quality, more consolidated documentation in order to exercise strategic oversight. The committees should then limit when they exercise control over operations.
31. In addition, there are many calls to make some EU financial instruments more flexible, such as expanding the rapid reaction elements of the Instrument for Stability (IfS), along with more mission autonomy in managing funds. There has also been much general criticism of the inflexibility and cumbersome procedures of some EU funding mechanisms, most of which are managed by the European Commission, albeit many steps have been taken in recent years taken to improve the responsiveness of Commission instruments.
32. Sound preparation in Brussels is essential for effective implementation in the field. Civilian and military staff exchanges between EU institutions and member states as well as participation on an equal footing in joint training and exercises can help to overcome cultural differences, create a culture of teamwork, and enable people to work better together. Another important improvement that the EU needs to address to support implementation in the field are existing shortcomings in information and communications technology that prevent adequate information sharing between

different EU bodies.

33. The most difficult issue in any debate over implementation relates to chains of command. Currently, different EU activities on the ground report to different institutions in Brussels, such as the EEAS, committees of member-states or disparate Directorate-Generals in the European Commission. To ensure unity of action, ideally the EU would have a single chain-of-command from Brussels to the theatre of action, but this kind of structure does not appear realistic since the EU does not have a clear head-of-government like national systems.
34. Still, the UN model giving authority to its special representatives to direct different UN activities on the ground holds an appeal for elements of the EU system. The Union already has special representatives (EUSRs), for example in the Horn of Africa, and could consider granting some of them stronger political authority over EU activities, especially CSDP missions.
35. There appears to be much interest in giving EU Heads of Delegations a leading role in ensuring the comprehensiveness of EU action in the field in their respective countries, overseeing at least better internal coordination and coherence if not integration of these activities. This would help improve transitions between CSDP missions and Commission programmes. Given these coordinating roles and extensive local knowledge, EU delegations can constitute a particularly key source of information and assessment feeding into the Brussels system. Delegations would also have more involvement in developing common EU strategies, and consolidating the lessons identified from EU activities in the field.
36. To help further leverage the role of delegations in promoting a closer joining up of different EU activities, it was suggested that as a general rule (as much as practically possible), all EU actors, or at least Heads-of-Missions, should be co-located in EU delegations. This would not only save money, but also help ensure daily information-sharing by all EU actors. In addition, delegations can coordinate political strategies and EU activities with those of member-states, which often have separate national projects on the ground. Delegations can help as well to reach out to key external partners, whether local government and civil society, regional or international organisations such as UN, the African Union and NATO, or international NGOs.
37. Cooperation and coordination with these external partners is a critical component of the comprehensive approach. Many international NGOs have maintained a long presence in the field and also have extensive knowledge of the country in question. As stressed in fragile state principles, little if any sustainable progress can be achieved without the strong involvement and if possible leadership of local government and civil society organisations. Moreover, the EU almost always deploys alongside other regional or international organisations (i.e. ECOWAS, AU, UN, NATO, OSCE) which usually share the same basic political goals, and are often carrying out similar or complementary activities.
38. Learning and applying lessons from EU operations and activities in the field constitutes a final critical component of effective implementation. Few, if any lessons appear to be shared across the EU institutional system. Plus, some lessons sent to Brussels from the field, especially those related to CSDP operations, are closely vetted by member-states to avoid direct criticisms of their actions, with the result that the lessons identified are usually relatively weak in their prescription compared with actual experiences in theatre. The EU should try to develop not only a more joined up lessons process, but also a much more independent audit process of the lessons from EU actions. For example, the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), based in Paris, has organised very useful lessons seminars (and written lessons reports) for CSDP operations, and this independent lessons model could be extended more comprehensively to involve the full range of EU actors in theatre.
39. Consideration should be given to setting up an evaluation and lesson-learning

division in the EEAS Crisis Management Structures (for example in CMPD), taking 1% of the CSDP budget for funding its work. This division should work with sister units in the Commission and member states to prepare and conduct joint evaluations and lesson-learning processes.

40. A peer review system could be set up between organisations particularly involved in implementing a comprehensive approach, for example the UN and EU. Country-focussed peer reviews could be used to take stock of progress in implementing comprehensive approaches, identifying lessons and learning from each other how to overcome obstacles.
41. Another potential measure would have heads of delegations and heads of missions send in coordinated progress reports covering activities of CSDP missions and Commission programmes, for example on SSR. Commission and CSDP monitoring timetables would need to be aligned to enable the preparation of joint reports, which would then be discussed in joint sessions of geographical working groups and crisis management working groups.

Conclusion

42. There appears to be strong, broad support within the EU for the idea of the comprehensive approach in the sense of widespread recognition of a need for better working relationships across the EU's different components in order to have more impact in tackling the full conflict cycle. There also seems to be a stronger weight of views that initial progress towards more comprehensive EU action in addressing the conflict cycle may initially need to take the form of coordination in key areas rather than integration in order first to establish greater trust and habits of working more closely together. The integration of strategy through the formulation of single strategic framework documents is, however, a critical early step for the EU to examine. EEAS and Commission co-chairing of country-specific task forces could also lead to more integrated analysis and planning.
43. As noted earlier in this report, the huge challenges they were facing in the field led the UN and individual states to change their practices in order to work in a more comprehensive way. With many people's lives at considerable risk, it was seen as unacceptable to have different parts of the UN or the same government not working closely together. Progress was not easy and came only after many mistakes were made. People who have worked in the field in conflict environments are generally much more willing to take on board the measures needed for implementation of a comprehensive approach, as they have witnessed at first hand the cost of not acting together. Upstream prevention is a more difficult phase to try to coordinate or integrate because the huge driver of conflict pressures is absent, but the need to work more closely together on smaller scale missions focused on prevention is also critical.
44. Any organisation involved in implementing a comprehensive approach tends to prefer to be supported by others rather than supporting them. Ultimately, there needs to be an acceptance on the part of institutions that sometimes the key is to support another's actions rather than to prioritise their own in order to achieve wider, shared objectives.
45. There does not appear to be any shortage of crises related to state fragility and conflict, including in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, and Syria. The EU already plays an important role in helping to address the difficult problems arising from fragile and conflict affected environments. It can do much more if it rises to the challenge of turning a comprehensive approach into comprehensive action.

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