

# **The Best Strategic Use of CSDP in EU-Africa Relations**

Essay

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## Abstract

This paper aims to answer to the following research question: ‘What is the strategic use of the Common Security and Defense Policy for EU-African relations?’

To do so, the work first focussed on the current relations between the European Union and Africa. The most important elements in this relations are twofold. Firstly, there are two important cooperation frameworks between the two actors, namely the Joint Africa-Eu Strategy and the Cotonou agreement that was signed in 2000. Secondly, there are areas of cooperation such as trade, development, migration, counter-terrorism and security. These two sides of the partnership form the basis upon which the Common Security and Defence Policy can be based.

Afterwards, the CSDP was analysed in the African continent, first in the extent and then in the exact strategic use of this policy on EU-African relations. As for the extent, research learned that the majority of CSDP missions actually take place in African countries, showing that it is the main theatre. It is a continent that is permanently plagued with instability and insecurity but has limited resources, meaning it is highly dependent on external aid such as in the CSDP context.

Moreover, the paper concluded the best strategic use of CSDP for EU-African relations is in improving stability in Africa and strengthening its relations with the continent. This is all in order to diminish the current security risks for Europe that might stem for the African continent, such as migration and terrorism.

Keywords: CSDP, Africa, EU, security, strategic

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## 2. Preface

The first mission in the context of the Common Security and Defence Policy was introduced in 2003, merely four years after the creation of what then was called the ESDP.

In those times, the main field of interests was in Central and Eastern Europe, with the situation having escalated in the Balkans in the nineties. The main reasoning was that the primary field of interest for CSDP missions would be either in the scope of Europe itself or in its neighbourhood. Yet already in the early 21st Century, the first mission to the African continent was created. It concerned the Operation Artemis that took place in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Over the past two decades, the world has seen a serious amount of conflicts and humanitarian crisis in the African continent. It is therefore not entirely surprising that the main theatre of CSDP missions lies exactly in this region, instead of in Europe's close neighbourhood.

### 3. Introduction

The Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union is an important pillar in its security strategy. With this policy, the EU wants to create a comprehensive approach in order to be able to respond to crisis throughout the world that might affect the security situation in our countries. It therefore puts both military and civilian assets to use by creating peace keeping operations. These missions however are not only limited to the traditional sense of peace keeping, but also entail operations that must prevent conflicts, strengthen the international security or end human rights violations and human suffering.

The European Union emphasizes that what happens outside of its borders can have a strong impact on the security within the Union. The Common Security and Defence Policy was therefore established in order to be able to face the increasingly complex and multidimensional challenges as a unified front, instead of all of the small of a bit less small countries on their own. The interests of all members are linked, thus a strong collaboration between states in the EU based on the Global Strategy is a priority for all.

Africa is certainly one of the most turbulent regions in the world at this moment. It is a brewing continent with a complicated dynamic and history. While the continent is full of potential, it is on the other hand facing a number of difficulties. The European Union highly values its relationship with Africa, certainly the continent's importance in the security environment. Hence, missions to Africa are high on the priority list of the EU's external action and thus for CSDP as well. Consequently, the region is the main theatre of operation of Common Security and Defence Policy missions.

Therefore, it is certainly interesting to research the influence of CSDP on relations between the European Union and Africa. As there has been no comprehensive research done on this subject up until now, this paper aims to answer the question 'What is the best strategic use of CSDP for EU-Africa relations?'.

## 4. Current State of research

The subject of the strategic use of the Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union is one that has seen limited research. Moreover, CSDP's strategic use for relations between the EU and the African continent has been researched even less. Yet there have been a few studies that did cover some elements that could be placed under the subject in part. The first element of the current research that must be stated is the research on the use of CSDP itself.

Since the establishment of the Common Security and Defense Policy, the European Union has struggled to live up to the initial goals of the policy. The foreseen theory behind the document has not been put into practice. There are two elements mentioned in the European Security Strategy published in 2003, namely the component of operations and the component of capability development.

The operational component demanded fast and robust interventions from the European states, but the last two decades have barely seen any realization of that goal.<sup>1</sup> That does not entail that the Eu has not been an active agent around globe, since it has organized more than twenty operations in several theatres, with both civilian and military assets.

However, the effectiveness has been dismal. In nearly all cases, the EU has taken reactive actions that had not been well conceived before, consisting of inadequate strategic thought. One of the main issues is that there is an intention to take action, but the means remain rather limited.<sup>2</sup> This combination results in many operations of poor quality that are not able to attain the necessary goals.

In order to resolve this continuing issue, a clarification of the priorities must be finalized and recognized by all involved parties. We must therefore conclude that the strategic use of the Common Security and Defense policy is lacking.

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<sup>1</sup> Witney, "Where Does Csdp Fit in EU Foreign Policy."

<sup>2</sup> Biscop and Coelmont, "Europe Deploys Towards a Civil-Military Strategy for CSDP."

## **5. Research gap**

There is certainly a lack of research on the strategic use of the Common Security and Defense Policy for the relations between the European Union and the African continent. While there has been some research done concerning the effectiveness and the implication of the CSDP, which could be combined and put together so that the strategic use of the Policy becomes a bit more defined, there is no comprehensive work. An overview of all the necessary elements to analyse the strategic use has not been written yet. On EU-Africa relations in particular, there has been barely any attention to the implication of the Common Security and Defense Policy in this relationship. This paper will therefore aim to fill in the wide gap currently existing in the literature and research the strategic use of CSDP regarding all the African states in general.

## **6. Research questions**

This paper aims to answer to the following research question: ‘What is the strategic use of the Common Security and Defense Policy for EU-African relations?’. To do so, different subordinate questions need to be posed beforehand. Firstly, the question on what are the current relations between the European Union and Africa will be regarded. Secondly, attention will turn on the extent of the CSDP on the African continent at this moment. Thirdly, the paper will work towards the main question on what the best strategic use of the CSDP is for Eu-Africa relations.

## 7. Methodology

As a methodology, a comprehensive literature study is used. The first step is the reading and analysis of the basic documents on the Common Security and Defense Policy and the European Union's approach to cooperation on the security domain. This entails in the EU's Shared Vision from 2016, written out in the report named *Shared Vision, Common action: A stronger Europe*. Of course the handbook on Common Security and Defense Policy from 2017 is essential here. The second step contains the search for secondary works that comment on the utility of CSDP and detail the different practical uses of the policy. As there is not yet any comprehensive work on the topic, variant sources on the EU's relations with Africa will be placed besides each other in order to reach a general picture of the current situation and the future possibilities.



## **8. Research and result of research**

### **8.1 Common Security and Defence Policy**

The European Union is an intergovernmental organization that strives for peace, prosperity and democracy. In order for that to even be on the table, both internal and external security has to be guaranteed. The Common Security and Defence policy (CSDP) was established to pursue security, focussing on crisis management and defence. It involves both military and civilian missions to maintain peace and forms a politico-military arm to the already existing Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).<sup>3</sup>

### **8.2 Eu-African relations**

#### **8.2.1 Outside of EU context**

Africa's relations with the European Union goes far beyond merely the CSDP operations in the region. European countries, NGO's and other organization also have their own missions and interests in particular African countries or regions. The security policy of the EU and their CSDP is relatively new, and therefore has limited experience with peacekeeping or crisis response operations. However, many countries in Europe do have long historic ties with African countries and have developed an approach based on diplomatic ties, trade, development and humanitarian aid, energy security and antiterrorism. The CSDP cannot dismiss this strategic tradition in the African continent of its members. As they have their own security policy individually or in the context of bilateral or multilateral cooperation between European countries, the European Union must find a way to use this experience to be able to act as the intergovernmental actor that it is in the field of global security and defence.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Union, *Handbook on CSDP*.

<sup>4</sup> Rummel, "In Search of a Trademark: EU Civilian Operations in Africa."

### 8.2.2 Within EU

Africa is a brewing continent with a complicated dynamic and history. It is a region full of potential but is also facing a number of difficulties. The European Union highly values its relationship with Africa, the continent's importance in assuring security environment is not to be neglected. Therefore, Africa holds an importance place in the EU Global Strategy and is mentioned in the priorities of its external action. The Global strategy for the EU in Africa entails the following.

Generally, the European Union wants to invest in peace and development in the African continents as a way of investing in its own security. To do so, cooperation with several organisations in the region should be strengthened. These organisations include first of all the African Union, but also more regional organisations such as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development in eastern Africa, the East African Community and the Economic Community of West African States.

More specifically, stimulating economic growth and creating more jobs must be high on the priority list. With the Economic Partnership Agreements already in place, Africa's participation in the world trade ought to be extended, resulting in more African integration and mobility. Here the funding of sustainable development and combining his with other efforts such as on migration, education, medicine and climate is crucial.

Security is another element needing attention, which consist of assisting local organisations with conflict prevention, fighting organised crime and terrorism and helping with controlling migration and border administration.

For these purposes, the EU will use diplomacy, NGO's and trust funds, and the Common Security and Defence Policy.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> European Union, "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe."

### 8.2.3 Cooperation frameworks

To formalise relations, two cooperation frameworks have been agreed upon concerning Africa.

The Joint Africa-Eu strategy is the over-all basis for EU partnership with African countries. Placing the cooperation on a more official footing, mutual interests and goals were defined. It was written in 2007 and is implemented by the means of periodical action plans. These detail the course of events for a few years at a time and list the priorities for joint action.<sup>6</sup>

The second important commitment is the Cotonou agreement of 2000. It entails a partnership agreement between the European Union and developing countries from the Caribbean, the Pacific and Africa, counting 48 Sub-Saharan countries. Aiming for the integration of these countries in global trade and improving prosperity, it focusses on development cooperation, on economic and trade cooperation and on the political dimension<sup>7</sup>. However, this agreement expires in May 2020 and negotiators are working hard at the moment to create an agreement to pose as a successor to Cotonou<sup>8</sup>.

### 8.2.4 Areas of cooperation

There are several areas of cooperation. The first is trade, for which the Cotonou Agreement was established. It consists of a series of Economic Partnership Agreements with 48 countries from Sub-Saharan Africa. The second area is development, funded by the European development fund that supports programmes and initiatives in the region. The third is migration, now based mainly on the Malta declaration and focussed on Lybia. The fourth is counter-terrorism and the fifth is security. It is for these last elements that the Common Security and Defence Policy is the most important.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Consilium Europa, "EU-Africa Relations."

<sup>7</sup> Consilium Europa.

<sup>8</sup> Benjamin Fox, "Cotonou Successor: EU-Africa Relations at the Crossroads – EURACTIV.Com." se

<sup>9</sup> Consilium Europa, "EU-Africa Relations."

## **8.3 CSDP in Africa**

### **8.3.1 Extent**

Currently, the majority of the Common Security and Defence Policy operations are deployed in the continent of Africa. It is consequently the main theatre in which the CSDP is active and has most of its interests.<sup>10</sup> The European Union performs operations in the context of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, falling under the scope of peace support operations. Both civilian and military personnel have been deployed in a broad variety of tasks, which range from police training, to force protection, surveillance of borders between countries and piracy-detering activities. There are currently nine CSDP missions being performed on the African continent, as it is a region that has continuously been plagued with conflicts, tensions and failed states in the past decades. The threats include border disputes, racial violence and terrorist actions, which all demand swift responses. In order to effectively resolve similar issues, there is a need for deployment of civilian support and military personnel that has the capabilities and permission to act in combat missions when needed. As funds and resources of the countries involved are rather limited, the African security highly depends on the intervention and support of international beneficiaries.<sup>11</sup>

### **8.3.2 Strategic use of CSDP**

The EU has undertaken and is currently still undertaking operations in the African continent with the application of both civilian and military instruments in the CSDP context. These missions aim for an comprehensive approach and coordination with EU officials in the region. Some of the most known missions are currently EUTM Mali and EUTM Somalia.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Tardy, "The EU and Africa: A Changing Security Partnership."

<sup>11</sup> Tor, "Peacekeeping in Africa: The EU at a Crossroads."

<sup>12</sup> EU Website, "Military and Civilian Missions and Operations - European External Action Service."

For the EU, it would be extremely valuable to have a stable African continent to its south. The entire collection of actions of the European Union should be placed in that context. In order to be able to resolve issues that plague Europe, such as migration and the terrorism threat, the African continent needs to be in better condition. Therefore the European Union deploys CSDP missions in the region.

For that, the root causes of the poor security environment need to be resolved, including poverty, state failure and the lack of sufficient governance and attention to development. Moreover, the more immediate security crisis that pop up over the continent need quick and comprehensive solutions.<sup>13</sup> To solve these issues, the European Union is well equipped as it has a continuum of tools and policies at its disposal. Instruments such as diplomacy, economic policies, development and humanitarian aid are certainly at the EU's disposal. In order to establish more meaningful and profitable relations with Africa, CSDP missions should be chosen and executed in light of the needs of the continent. The best strategic use of CSDP must thus be focussed on improving the EU-African relations by addressing the most problematic regions that can also effect the security environment in Europe.

The best strategic use of the Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union lies therefore in the crisis response operations and humanitarian aid that they provide for African countries. This aid is supposed to guarantee long-lasting solutions for peace and development in the African countries, meaning that it must help Africa move forward. By carrying out CSDP missions in Africa, the EU therefore deepens its interests and involvement, resulting in stronger EU-Africa relations. The final aim for Europe when creating stronger EU-African relations is a stable Africa, so that the southern neighbour of our continent can no longer be the region of origin of security issues such as migration and terrorism.

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<sup>13</sup> Akokpari, "The EU and Africa: The Political Economy of an Asymmetrical Partnership."

## 9. Discussion and Conclusions

Through this research, it has become clear that there certainly is a strong advantageous result of the strategic use of Common Policy and Defence missions concerning the relationship between the European Union and the African continent.

First, the current relationship between the European Union and Africa has been brought in the picture. Here we found that there are several cooperation framework in existence. The main framework that plays a major role in these relations is the Joint Africa-Eu Strategy, as it forms the basis for all partnership aspects between both actors. The second important cooperation framework is the Cotonou agreement that was signed in 2000, which entails the trading partnerships the EU has with developing countries, of which many are on the African continent.

Secondly, there are several areas of cooperation between the EU and Africa. The entail trade, development, migration, counter-terrorism and security.

We conclude for this that there are a number of setting and contexts established by which the European Union is connected to the African continent. These connections for the basis upon which the Common Security and Defence Policy can be based.

After the detailing of the relations between the European Union and Africa, this paper analysed the Common Security and Defence Policy in the African continent. To do so, the paper first regarded the extent of Common Security and Defence Policy missions and engagement in Africa. The majority of CSDP missions actually take place in African countries, showing that it is the main theatre in which the European security strategists are interested in.

The research has shown that the African security is highly dependent of external interventions. Countries have been continuously plagued by border disputes, racial

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violence and the rise of terrorism and piracy. Several are now seen internationally as failed states and cannot re-establish the needed societal infrastructure without a helping hand. Hence the European Union invests most of its CSDP missions and capabilities in the African continent.

Subsequently to detailing the extent of CSDP missions in the region, the last part of the research goes into detail on the strategic use of the Common Security and Defence Policy regarding EU-African relations.

Here, it is imperative that the importance of stability in Africa for the European Union's security is underlined. Many of the current security risks and threats that Europe has to deal with have their connection to what is happening in a number of African countries. Problematics such as migration and territory cannot be handled on European soil, but must be addressed in the region of their origin. It is in this context that the strategic use of Europe's CSDP must be placed, connecting to the improvement of relations to Africa that come with effort in the region.

The paper therefore concludes that the strategic use of the Common Security and Defence Policy for EU-African relations is in improving stability in Africa and strengthening its relations with the continent. This is all in order to diminish the current security risks for Europe that might stem from the African continent, such as migration and terrorism.

## 10. Annexes

### 10.1 List of Literature

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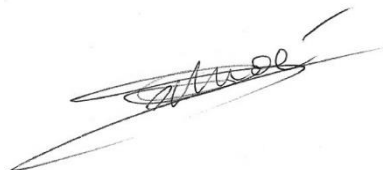


## 11. Affidavit

I declare that I have written the present essay independently and on my own. I have clearly marked any language or ideas borrowed from other sources as not my own and documented their sources. The essay does not contain any work that I have handed in or have had graded as a previous scientific paper earlier on.

I am aware that any failure to do so constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as if they were my own – even if I summarize, paraphrase, condense, cut, rearrange, or otherwise alter them.

I am aware of the consequences and sanctions plagiarism entails. Among others, consequences may include nullification of the essay, exclusion from participation in the CSDP Olympiad. These consequences also apply retrospectively, i.e. if plagiarism is discovered after the essay has been accepted and graded. I am fully aware of the scope of these consequences.



Officer-Cadet Evelyne Schroé

Brussels, Belgium in December 2019