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Early Institutionalisation of the ESDP Governance Arrangements: Insights From Operations Concordia and Artemis

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Abstract: Immediately after the formal introduction of the ESDP by the Nice European Council in 2000, the new policy was equipped with a starting set of governance structures and procedures for crisis management operations. In 2003, these new arrangements were tested for the first time in the context of military operations, which opened the door for relevant adjustments and adaptations. This article compares and contrasts the relevant institutional developments in the context of the first two EU-led military operations - EUFOR Concordia and EUFOR Artemis - and aims at shedding light on the early processes of the institutionalisation of crisis management governance arrangements. In particular it looks at the role of experiential learning in prompting three complementary processes of institutionalisation: the formalisation and stabilisation of procedures; the importance of inter- and intra- institutional coordination; and the ability of individual actors to influence institutional development.

Keywords: ESDP, crisis management, military operations, governance, institutionalisation, Concordia, Artemis, EU, NATO, Berlin Plus, Framework Nation, political science

Table of Contents:

1. Introduction	2
2. Governance, learning and institutionalization.....	4
3. Concordia and Artemis – background and planning	6
4. Institutional Dynamics in the Planning and Conduct of Concordia and Artemis	9
4.1. From ad-hoc, informal rules to formal structures and procedures	9
4.2. Council-Commission coordination: between turf wars and the ‘reflex to coordinate’	12
4.3. The role of individual actors	14
4.3.1. Did individual leadership matter?	14
4.3.2. Inter-personal relationships and inter-organisational coordination.....	16
5. Conclusion.....	17
References	19

1. Introduction

In 2003, the European Union was involved in direct crisis management activities, launching two military operations codenamed EUFOR ‘Concordia’ and EUFOR ‘Artemis’. These were the first two EU-led military operations under the umbrella of the new European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP)¹, established by the Nice European Council in 2000. In consideration of the intensive development of the ESDP in the past 10 years, it is important to analyse the genesis of this policy domain as this can shed light on its current and future evolution. The following article looks at the implementation of the first two military operations and analyses their effect on the institutionalisation of the EU crisis management governance arrangements. The main question put forward is as follows: what was the effect of the first two EU-led military operations on the institutionalisation of crisis management governance arrangements by early 2004? The starting argument is that the first two EU-led military operations demonstrated a set of working governance structures and procedures and thus highlighted the development of a fully fledged process of institutionalisation in this domain.

The importance of analysing the institutionalisation of EU crisis management arrangements lies firstly in the fact that studies on the processes of institutionalisation in the second pillar of the EU are still in their infancy and this applies even more to the study of the ESDP. Studies on the institutionalisation of the European political space (Sandholtz and Stone Sweet 1998; Stone Sweet, Sandholtz and Fligstein 2001) and on the European Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) (Smith, M.E. 2004) have started the debate on this aspect of the European integration project. Smith for example argues that the CFSP had already developed a system of governance, based on previous institutional developments, formal institutionalisation in the Maastricht treaty, the amendments in Amsterdam and Nice and the practical/operational developments in the CFSP itself from 1991 onwards (Smith, M.E. 2004, 48). However, although this scholarship offers an undoubted contribution to the study of

institutional development and change over time within the second pillar of the EU, it does not cover the institutionalisation of the crisis management governance arrangements.

At the same time, the literature on the development of the conflict prevention and crisis management capabilities of the EU is expanding (Merlingen and Ostrauskaite 2008; Grevi et al. 2009). While both volumes offer an invaluable overview of the institutional developments and operational experience of the EU between 2003 and 2008 they do not aim to study in depth the initial stages of the institutionalisation of the crisis management governance arrangements. As stated earlier, the latter is important as it can shed light on the genesis of the ESDP operational dimension and thus give us a better understanding of the established paths of current institutional and procedural developments. This article aims at contributing namely to this domain in the study of the ESDP.

Secondly, the first two military operations – EUFOR Concordia and EUFOR Artemis – have largely been seen in the literature as just being politically symbolic in building the international credentials of the EU (Bono 2003; Mace 2004; Gegout 2005). Alternatively, authors have focused on their restricted mandates thus pointing to the limited role of the EU on the international stage (Ulriksen et al. 2004; Gourlay 2003). Although such assessments are valid, their main argumentation has been exclusively political and/or effectiveness-based. This has neglected the important aspect of institutional development in the context of the planning and implementation of these operations.

Finally, the choice of military operations as the main case study does not imply that civilian operations cannot offer insights with regard to the process of early institutionalisation of crisis management governance arrangements. In fact, there are already studies that analyse the civilian aspects of the ESDP and offer important insights on its operationalisation and ongoing development (Nowak 2006; Merlingen and Ostrauskaite 2006). However, the relationship between EU military operations (which offer two distinctive operational scenarios - ‘Berlin Plus’ and ‘Framework Nation’, see part 3) and institutionalisation has not yet been researched in detail in the existing scholarship, which adds to the rationale behind the following analysis.

The article starts with a discussion of the notions of governance, learning and institutionalisation and distinguishes three complementary processes of institutionalisation: the formalisation and stabilisation of procedures; the importance of inter- and intra-institutional coordination; and the ability of individual actors to influence institutional development. Then a brief account of the planning and launch of operations Concordia and Artemis is provided. This is followed by an analysis of the institutional dynamics during the planning and conduct of these missions. In particular the role of experiential learning in prompting the three processes of institutionalisation will be highlighted. Finally, the article builds on the findings and draws conclusions on the effects of the first military operations.

2. Governance, learning and institutionalization

In analysing the institutionalisation of the EU crisis management governance arrangements it is important to clarify the usage of the term governance with regards to a particular policy domain such as the ESDP. This refers to the idea of specific patterns of sub-systemic governance in issue specific policy areas, introduced in the 1980s by the work of Wallace, Wallace and Webb in their analysis of policy making in the European Community (Wallace, Wallace and Webb 1983). Later, Bulmer defined the notion of sub-systemic and issue specific levels of governance as encompassing three main attributes:

- The role of institutions as arenas that shape the access of different groups to the policy process, as players in their own right and as forming a particular “configuration, which predisposes [them] to certain types of activity”;
- The importance of “culture and norms” as part of the institutions which have additional influence in shaping the policy process; and
- Compliance mechanisms present in every policy area across the EU policy system, ranging from “legal sanctions to [...] peer pressure” (Bulmer 1994: 372-3).

Subsequent studies further developed this understanding by suggesting that since institutions are arenas for the interpretation and application of a complex set of both formal and informal rules and codes of conduct, the process of governance entails the making, enforcing and supervising the application of those rules (Anderson 1995, Stone Sweet, Sandholtz and Fligstein, 2001; Smith, M.E. 2001). In particular, Smith pointed out that the process of governance involves “setting goals, devising specific policies (or norms) to reach them, implementing such policies, providing the necessary resources to carry out the policies and establishing some form of policy assessment or oversight to ensure that goals are being met and actors are fulfilling their obligations” (Smith, M.E. 2004: 47). In line with these observations this article uses the term to denote specific policy activity, carried out within a set of formal and informal structures, norms and compliance mechanisms, aimed at organising, structuring, monitoring and evaluating the day-to-day workings of an issue-specific policy area.

Recent studies observe that the development and workings of respective governance arrangements over time point to the process of the institutionalisation of a particular policy area (Sandholtz and Stone Sweet 1998; Stone Sweet, Sandholtz and Fligstein 2001; Smith, M.E. 1998, 2001; 2004). Some scholars see institutionalisation as “the process by which a political space and the respective rules for the management of collective governance tasks emerge and evolve” (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz and Fligstein 2001: 13). Others point out that fundamentally, institutionalisation is closely related to the notion of change, which can be either exogenous (changes in the socioeconomic or political context; in power resources of actors during economic growth, access to new technology or due to crises) or endogenous (induced by process of learning-by-doing and followed by respective institutional adaptations)

(Smith, M.E. 2004: 34).

The following analysis particularly focuses on endogenous processes of change as these give an insight into the micro-dynamics of the respective institutional developments that may occur within short periods of time. In this respect, the concept of learning-by-doing or “experiential learning” (Levy 1994: 283), is useful in shedding light on the rationale behind the formalisation and stabilisation of certain structures and procedures and the role of agents in the process of institutionalisation (see below). Experiential learning has been defined as a process in which the observation and interpretation of experience leads to a change in individual beliefs. This may influence subsequent behaviour and lead to the development of new beliefs, skills or procedures (Levy 1994: 283, 291; Reynolds 2005: 3). In an organisational setting, learning at the individual level may become aggregated and formulated as new procedures and subsequently as wider institutional action. This may take place either as a ‘top-down’ (i.e. from political elites who manage to mobilise political support) or a ‘bottom-up’ (where administrators and/or experts convince political leaders of the relevance of their ideas) process (Levy 1994: 301; Reynolds 2005: 3). In the area of EU crisis management this can be seen through the process of lesson-drawing (‘lessons-learned’) based on the experience of the implementation of respective operations (Grevi et al. 2009).

Returning to the notion of institutionalisation, scholars have observed that the more processes of institutional adaptation and change lead to greater formalisation and stabilisation, the more institutionalised this policy space becomes (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz and Fligstein 2001: 13). Thus, one sign of institutionalisation is the existence and operation of a “shared system of rules and procedures to define who the actors are, how they make sense of each other’s actions and what types of action are possible for the best provision of collective governance” (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz and Fligstein 2001: 13). In addition, Smith observes that the process of institutionalisation can be seen in the increased complexity of institutional action “in that collective behaviours and choices are more detailed and closely linked, thus applying to more situations” (Smith, M.E. 2004: 26). Thus the more important the inter- and intra- institutional coordination are for the effective delivery of the policy shaping, decision-making and implementation processes, the more visible the institutionalisation of the respective policy domain.

Finally, an important characteristic of institutionalisation is the change in influence of individuals (agents) in the course of institutional development. Some scholars emphasise the importance of agency and particularly the role of skilled political actors in the processes of institutional development (Tarrow 1998). Skilled political actors are individuals capable of engaging disparate individuals or groups in cooperation by helping them to form stable perceptions of roles and identity (Fligstein 1999; 2001). The impact of agents’ actions may manifest itself as changes occurring at the micro-level, which may then provoke related changes at the meso- and macro-levels (Stone Sweet, Sandholtz and Fligstein: 11). In the early phases of the process – just after the formal introduction of a new set of structures and procedures – individual actors may have a greater capacity to interpret and influence the

application of certain institutional procedures (Smith, M.E. 2004; see also Burch et al. 2003: 8). However, this capacity may diminish once the process of institutionalisation stabilises over time or in other words, when it reaches “a certain level of formality and binding-ness” (Smith, M.E. 2004: 26). Thus, the greater the difficulty of redefining or rolling back the established governance structures and procedures, the more stable are the governance arrangements and the more institutionalised is the policy area.

In consideration of the starting argument and the above conceptual issues, the following analysis of the planning and conduct of the first two EU military operations pays close attention to signs of experiential learning and the respective adaptation processes. It specifically looks at whether the effects of learning have led to: the formalisation and stabilisation of institutional structures and procedures, greater inter- and intra- institutional coordination and the decreasing ability of agents to influence the ongoing institutional development. These three processes are treated as complementary. In other words, fully-fledged institutionalisation occurs when the three processes can be observed and also when they have been prompted by experiential learning derived from the two military operations.

3. Concordia and Artemis – background and planning

Between 2000 and 2002 – after the formal introduction of the ESDP as a new policy area in the Treaty of Nice – a number of governance structures and procedures were quickly put in place. They were tested in 2003 in two distinctive operations – EUFOR Concordia in Macedonia and ‘Artemis’ in DR Congo.

As observed by a number of authors (Gnesotto 2004; Duke 2005; Howorth 2007; Grevi 2009) the ESDP was quickly equipped with new structures aimed at providing the EU with both politico-strategic direction (the Political and Security Committee) and expert military advice in crisis management (the EU Military Committee aided by the EU Military Staff). In this early stage, the work of these bodies was supported in both the Council Secretariat (the Policy Unit; the Joint Situation Centre; the EU Politico-Military Group, the EUMC Working Group; DG-E External Economic Relations and Politico-Military Affairs, including Directorate VIII ‘Defence Aspects’ and Directorate IX ‘Civilian Crisis Management’), and the European Commission (Directorate General for External Relations (DG RELEX)). In 2003 the latter included 4 new units: the Security Unit; the Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management Unit; the CFSP Counsellor’s Unit; and the European Correspondent Unit (Spence 2006).

In addition, between 2001 and 2002 experts from the EU Military Staff and Directorate VIII developed a set of procedures that provided general guidance for the process of planning, conduct and monitoring of civilian and military operations. This was a framework document which introduced the steps that needed to be taken during the planning of crisis management operations and the structures that were responsible for this. However, this was not a stringent blueprint, but a ‘living document’ that allowed flexible application and permitted the further

evolution of the respective procedures. Reportedly this document incorporated practice and know-how from both the Western European Union and NATO (Interviews with Council officials, Brussels 2006 and 2007). After a period of examination and adjustment, the Council of Ministers agreed on a document called “Suggestions for Procedures for coherent and comprehensive crisis management” (Council, Doc. 11127/03, 2003).

Finally, in the context of military operations, strategic operational and daily tactical command and guidance was exercised by the Operation Commander (at the central Operational Headquarters) and the Force Commander (at the Force Headquarters) respectively. As the EU does not have a permanent Operational Headquarters for implementing EU-led military operations, it has two options. One is to resort to NATO command structures, thus invoking the so called Berlin Plus Agreement between the EU and NATO. In this case NATO’s Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE), provide offices and facilities and de-facto hosts the EU Operation Headquarters. In addition, NATO’s Deputy Supreme Allied Command Europe (DSACEUR), who is always a European general, becomes the Operation Commander.

The other option for the EU is to resort to assets and capabilities of a member state and give it the status of a leading or “framework nation” (Monaco 2003; Gourlay 2004; Faria 2004; Howorth 2007). In this case the framework state provides their national Headquarters, manpower and facilities, which are augmented (and multi-nationalised) for the purpose of the operation by the inclusion of military planners from the participating states. The Operation Commander is always a high-ranking general from the ‘framework nation’. Operation Concordia was implemented on the basis of the Berlin Plus agreement and hence in close cooperation with NATO. Conversely, operation Artemis was implemented under the “framework nation” concept with France providing the Operation Headquarters, the Operation Commander, the bulk of the personnel and the military forces on the ground (for more on the two operational concepts see Petrov 2007).

Operation EUFOR ‘Concordia’ (31 March – 15 December 2003) was a middle-scale, low-intensity, nine month-long mission providing protection and support for the international (OSCE) monitors in FYROM as well as expert advice for the Macedonian state authorities on general security issues. It replaced the NATO-led operation Allied Harmony deployed in the country from December 2002. These operations followed the signing of the Ohrid Peace Agreement between the Macedonian government and representatives of the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA). The agreement put an end to the military conflict between the two sides that unfolded from February to July 2001 (Schneckener 2002; Balalovska et al. 2002; and Mace 2004). The operation was planned and launched in less than three months. It served as a platform for the first practical application of the new crisis management governance arrangements and was considered successful in sustaining the security levels previously achieved by NATO. Although being quite small and limited in size and mandate, it also demonstrated successful EU-NATO cooperation as foreseen in the ‘Berlin Plus’ Agreement (Messervy-Whiting 2005). Importantly though, apart from EUFOR Concordia, the

EU presence in Macedonia comprised, the EU Special Representative (Alexis Brouhns), the European Commission Delegation, the European Agency for Reconstruction, the EU Monitoring Mission and the office of the EU Presidency.

The planning of Concordia greatly benefited from NATO's previous active involvement in Macedonia through operations "Essential Harvest", "Amber Fox" and "Allied Harmony". As a result, most planning documents prepared by the EU military planners adopted relevant elements from the NATO planning and conduct experience on the ground (Bono 2002; Mace 2004). This, greatly shortened the planning process as the EU military planners could skip certain phases and focus only on particular documents such as the Crisis Management Concept, the Initiating Military Directive and the Operational Plan (Grevi 2009).

Just two months after the launch of Concordia, the EU member states launched a second military operation, this time in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The operation was codenamed as EUFOR 'Artemis' (12 June – 1 September 2003) and came in response to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's appeal to the international community to provide support to the UN Mission in DR Congo (MONUC). EUFOR Artemis was also a rather small and short mission which focused on securing the city of Bunia - the capital of the Ituri region in Northeast DR Congo. It tested the Framework Nation arrangements and hence became the first EU-led military operation that was planned and conducted independently of NATO. In the context of the Iraq crisis, organising an autonomous military operation was of considerable political significance for the EU. Moreover, being the second EU-led military operation it opened up the possibilities for the improvement and further development of the respective ESDP governance arrangements (Ulriksen et al. 2004).

Similarly to Concordia, the preparation for operation Artemis benefited from the fact that a certain level of planning already existed. Based on contingency plans in the French Ministry of Defence and before the EU gave any indication that it was considering to deploy a military mission in DR Congo, Paris undertook serious planning activities in preparing its own operation there, codenamed 'Operation Mamba' (Ulriksen et al. 2004; Faria 2004; Gegout 2005). When the EU eventually decided to organise its own mission, most of the planning for operation Mamba could be used for EUFOR Artemis which considerably shortened the planning period and allowed the EU to launch the operation in less than a month (between mid May and June 2003). Similar to Concordia, this meant that the EU planners could skip some planning steps and focus exclusively on particular documents such as the Crisis Management Concept and the Operational Plan.

However, the formal introduction of specialised structures and procedures was only a starting element in the overall process of the institutionalisation of the governance arrangements for EU led military operations. The formalisation of ongoing informal practices, the issue of coordination between relevant structures, and the role of individual actors were crucial in revealing the context of the early process of institutionalisation.

4. Institutional Dynamics in the Planning and Conduct of Concordia and Artemis

4.1. From ad-hoc, informal rules to formal structures and procedures

Alongside the newly established ESDP structures and limited set of procedures, a visible characteristic of the governance arrangements for operation Concordia was the high degree of informal consultations which led to the quick completion of the planning phase (Interviews Council officials, Brussels, July 2007). Reportedly between January and March 2003 the EU-NATO consultations on the operational details were mostly based on informal contacts between experts and units rather than on formally established liaison procedures (Interviews EP experts, Council and Commission officials, Brussels, July 2007; Messervy-Whiting 2005). Some officials even considered that informality, flexibility and a high level of innovation constituted some of the defining characteristics of the ESDP governance arrangements in this early period. “Nobody knew what exactly can or cannot be done and where the competences of one start and another end” (Interview Council official, Brussels, July 2007). In addition, officials recall that they did not establish a formal Task Force for the planning of Concordia and did most of the work on the basis of both the weekly internal coordination meetings (see below) and the informal consultations between EU and NATO experts.

For the operation’s implementation phase, an informal group of 15 military experts from both the EU member states and the EU Military Staff was set up on an ad hoc basis within NATO’s Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). Originally, the idea was that in the context of Berlin Plus operations, the EU should transfer all the EUMS staff (135 officers at the time) to SHAPE HQ to ensure a strong EU-ownership of the operation. However, as this proved to be practically impossible for both procedural and security-of-information reasons, the EU opted for an informal arrangement involving a much smaller group (Interview NATO and EU Council officials, May and June 2007). This group kept close contact with the EUMS and Directorate VIII in the Council, while working on a daily basis with designated NATO military planners and the Operational Commander. In effect, the group formed the core command and control capacity of the EU Operational Headquarters within SHAPE. Most importantly, during Concordia, it was not a formally established structure and was not officially considered part of the ESDP governance machinery. However, it performed well and accumulated considerable know-how on EU-NATO coordination on the level of operational command. The consensus in the EU Military Staff and the Military Committee was to keep it in place for the implementation of operation Althea in Bosnia in 2004. Based on the advice of the EU military bodies, this suggestion was accepted by the Political and Security Committee. Thus in the course of 2004 the group was augmented and formally established under the name ‘EU Staff Group’ as a permanent body within the ESDP governance structure in the event of Berlin Plus operations (Interviews NATO and Council Secretariat officials, July 2007, Mons and Brussels). This was a clear case of an institutional development based on previous experience and expert input. The EU Military Staff was active in reflecting on the operational experience and identifying lessons to be learned. In this respect it played an important role in suggesting to the Political and

Security Committee the formal establishment of the new structure. This institutional development proved to be successfully working in the second Berlin Plus operation (EUFOR Althea, 2004-present) (Interviews, EU Military Staff and SHAPE, Brussels and Mons, May and June 2007). In this respect the identified lesson, seems to have been successfully transformed into lessons-learned since the institutional reform was followed by the effective operationalisation of the new structure.

In addition, in 2005 and 2006 new permanent EU-NATO liaison structures were created in the EU Military Staff (NATO Permanent Liaison Team) and SHAPE (EU Liaison Cell) respectively. However, it has to be noted that in addition to the EU-NATO experience in the context of operation Concordia, some other factors were also at play (Interviews with NATO, Council and EP officials 2006 and 2007). In the context of the internal European divide over the war in Iraq in 2003, the heads of state of France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg met in Tervuren and among other things suggested the creation of permanent EU-based operational headquarters for military operations (Tervuren Declaration 29 April 2003). As this was in stark contrast to the trans-Atlantic consensus for avoiding duplication of resources available in NATO (Albright, 1998), the UK strongly reacted against this suggestion. Later a compromise was achieved according to which the EU would not create a standing military Headquarters, but together with NATO would officially establish permanent liaison structures to support the planning of EU operations under the Berlin Plus agreement (European Council December 2003; Quille et al. 2006). Thus, it might be argued that the formalisation of the EU-NATO liaison structures came not only as a result of operational experience, but also as a direct consequence of a political crisis within the EU and following this the involvement of political elites.

Similarly to Concordia, the pre-planning phase for Artemis was marked by highly intensive informal consultations at all levels. These were important in ensuring that France was willing to undertake 'framework nation' responsibilities under the aegis of the EU. Informal consultations between high profile EU officials and key leaders were also extensively held in gaining support for the operation from the UK and Germany. Finally, such contacts were crucial in ensuring that the operation's political and military parameters were acceptable to all member states (Interviews Council Secretariat and Belgian Foreign Ministry, Brussels, June 2007).

However, in contrast to the lack of a formal planning group for Concordia, the actual planning on the politico-strategic level for the second EU military operation – 'Artemis' – was done by a formally established Task Force, as the time for planning was extremely limited (Interviews Council officials, Brussels, July 2007). There is no direct evidence to suggest that this formal group was based on lessons-learned from Concordia, but rather that in the context of acute time constraints and the ongoing (and advanced) planning process in Paris, the relevant structures needed to ensure a trusted and direct channel for coordination between Brussels and Paris. The same structures that were used in the planning of Concordia (mainly Directorate VIII and the Military Staff) constituted the Task Force for Artemis. This was a formal body

responsible for the coordination of the overall planning process, which in addition brought together representatives from other relevant Council Secretariat units – military, politico-military, legal and geographical – as well as Commission representatives. Officials recall that this group of experts maintained close contacts with Paris throughout the whole planning phase. This contributed to ensuring that the overall military planning process was coherent and especially that the French military planners took into account the political realities within the EU. Overall, this was a two-way exchange of information and expertise, which was indispensable for the quick and effective planning of the mission (Interviews Council officials, Brussels, July 2007).

Another example of procedures that were initially carried out informally (and formalised after operational experience) were related to the EU-UN cooperation in crisis management operations. Only about twenty days after the end of EUFOR Artemis, the EU and UN signed a Joint Declaration (19 September 2003), endorsing the creation of two new permanent structures. These were an EU-UN Steering Committee – a joint consultative body between senior officials to biannually discuss areas of future cooperation – and a permanent liaison mechanism linking the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the EU Military Staff during crisis management operations. The latter was based on the exchange of officers and permanent desk-to-desk dialogue between the respective liaison offices in Brussels and New York (Joint Declaration, 19 September 2003). This was followed by the signing of another document on “EU-UN Cooperation in Military Crisis Management Operations” (17-18 June 2004). Thus, it is not surprising that the period between 2003 and 2006 has been defined in the literature as “institutional convergence”, involving “both the creation of formal mechanisms for inter-institutional dialogue [...] and operational steps such as the dispatch of EU police and security sector reform missions to DRC to complement MONUC” (Gowan 2009: 118). In this respect there is evidence that suggests that the UN took into account the importance of lessons-identified from their operational experience by specifically identifying the need for closer coordination and exchange of information between the DPKO and the EU Military Staff (see UN Peacekeeping 2004). Experts observed that reflection on past operational experience played an important role in the ongoing development of EU-UN coordination in crisis management (Homan 2007; Holt and Berkman 2006; Sow 2003). Indeed, scholars largely agree that from 2003 onwards, the growing institutionalisation of the EU-UN relationship in crisis management was visible. The creation of the Steering Committee and the liaison mechanisms between experts certainly meant that some of the identified lessons were also learned as they were quickly translated into these institutional reforms. However, this has not immediately translated into effective coordination between the EU and UN as demonstrated by a number of difficulties in subsequent operations (Major 2009; Gowan 2009; Clement 2009; Tardy 2009).

Altogether, both Concordia and Artemis shed light on the formalisation of procedures and structures that previously were informal (liaison mechanisms, planning arrangements and command structures). They also highlighted the actual operationalisation of structures and procedures that until 2003 were formally existing but were not practically applied. The role of

learning seems to have been evident in some cases - e.g. the formalisation of the EU Staff Group in SHAPE and the EU-UN liaison mechanisms. However, it was not evident in other cases. Time constraints (as in the case of the creation of the EU Task Force for the planning of Artemis) and political compromise on the highest level in the EU (for the creation of EU-NATO liaison mechanisms after Tervuren) considerably influenced the establishment of the respective structures.

4.2. Council-Commission coordination: between turf wars and the ‘reflex to coordinate’

A distinctive early governance practice that started with Concordia and gradually evolved in operation Artemis, was the participation of the Commission in the planning of military operations.

Commission representatives participated in all Council and PSC meetings from the very start of the ESDP. Since early 2002, experts from DG RELEX were invited to participate in all Crisis Response Coordination Team meetings for the development of the Crisis Management Concept for Concordia (see part 4.3. below). Officials recall that in fact the Commission actively participated by outlining its views on the wider aspects of the operation (Interviews RELEX and Council officials, Brussels July 2007). One of the widely discussed points was the ‘mission creep problem’ denoting the potential scenario in which the ESDP operation infringes upon the Commission’s core activities if the military staff on the ground assume policing, border management or customs control duties.

Yet, at this early stage, the role of the Commission in the planning of crisis management operations was still rather weak. In 2002-2003, almost everyone in the Council Secretariat perceived the role of the Commission as secondary, following the lead of the Council. Generally speaking, the Council was willing to have the Commission involved and specifically to have its expertise in providing supporting (flanking) activities in the theatre of operation. Yet, beyond this, the Commission was carefully kept away from assuming a strong political role – i.e. one that could have potentially challenged the approach of the Council, as expressed in the Crisis Management Concept (Interview Council officials, Brussels June 2007).

From the Commission point of view, in 2003 Council-Commission cooperation largely lacked the ‘reflex to coordinate’, which inevitably resulted in a number of tensions both in Brussels and on the ground (Interview RELEX official, Brussels, July 2007). Officials observed that at this time the level of mutual suspicion was considerable, mostly because both institutions were quite protective about their core activities (Interviews Council officials, Brussels June/July 2007). This is striking, particularly because even at this early stage in the development of the EU’s crisis management capabilities, there was already an ongoing discussion for better coordination of all available instruments and achieving a comprehensive approach to crisis management (Gross 2009: 177). However, one of the specific weaknesses of the EU, in the context of both the planning and implementation of EUFOR Concordia, was

the failure to link the purely military instruments at its disposal with the pre-accession political and economic objectives set for Macedonia. This was important as in this period Skopje was determined to qualify for candidate status for EU membership by 2005 (Mace 2004). The operation particularly lacked a structured coordination framework for establishing systematic linkage between the Commission-led Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) programme and the mandate of EUFOR Concordia (including the political priorities set by the EU Special Representative). Despite the fact that the EUSR organised weekly coordination meetings among all EU actors on the ground, their different mandates, institutional procedures and even distinctive political goals led to a weak operational coordination for the duration of Concordia (Gross 2009: 179). Thanks to this practice, the EUSR and the EUFOR Commander maintained good relations between each other. However, this could not entirely remedy the weak leverage of the EU vis-à-vis the Macedonian government (Interviews Council officials, May 2007; Gross 2009: 179).

In contrast, the Commission was genuinely more supportive and pro-active in both the planning and implementation of EUFOR Artemis, as it was clear that the peace process in DR Congo was in great danger, and this could have easily threatened its presence and considerable investments in the country (Interview, think-tank expert, Brussels, June 2007). Similarly, a RELEX official observed that: “The Commission was rather insisting on the EU going there because we had an interest in bringing the situation under control. For quite some time we were investing a lot of money, programs and human potential in the peace process there and we were interested in strengthening the EU-UN cooperation in Congo” (Interview, Relex official, Brussels, July 2007).

After the approval of the Concept of Operation, a number of Commission officials from DG RELEX, DG Development and the Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), with input from the Council Secretariat, elaborated two internal policy documents. These were very important as they informed the EU action regarding the overall political process in DR Congo (macro-level) and the importance of close cooperation between ECHO and the military personnel on the ground (micro-level) (Interview Council official, Brussels, July 2007).

Also, ECHO was on the ground in DR Congo since 1999, and the politico-military experts in Brussels were aware of the added value in establishing good cooperation with it. Indeed, after the deployment of the EU troops in Bunia, the French Force Commander, immediately appointed a civil-military liaison officer who kept close contact with the ECHO representatives in providing better coordination between military action and humanitarian aid (Faria 2004; Homan 2007). As a result, Council-Commission cooperation was much improved throughout the whole operation. According to participants in the planning and observers, the closer Council-Commission coordination in both Brussels and Bunia provided for a stronger EU ownership in implementing the operation (Interviews with RELEX officials and think-tank experts, Brussels, June 2007).

Thus, compared to Concordia, operation Artemis demonstrated the application of a stronger cross-pillar coordination and a more visible civil-military approach to crisis management. Officials observed that crises like the one in the DRC clearly demonstrated the artificiality of the split between the crisis management activities of the Commission and the Council. The main lesson identified in this respect was that the civilian side needed to be involved much earlier in the planning process in identifying parallel military and civilian follow-up measures. After the mission, opinions converged that had there been more time and better-established coordination mechanisms between the two, a more coherent approach to the crisis could have been achieved earlier in the planning process (Interviews RELEX and Council officials, Brussels, May and June 2007).

Overall, in the context of operation Artemis the Council-Commission cooperation was more visible than in EUFOR Concordia. However, it seems that this development was mostly driven by the interest of the Commission to strengthen its presence in DR Congo than by an explicit top-down or bottom-up learning process. However, one could still say that there were attempts in Brussels to transform the lesson-identified (on the need to strengthen Council-Commission coordination and introduce integrated civil-military planning from the early stages of the planning process) into lessons-learned through another round of institution-building. Since 2003, there has been growing support for joint civil-military and stronger cross-pillar coordination in crisis management operations and the recent creation of the European External Action Service (2009) represents one of the most visible institutional advances in this respect. However, at the time of writing there are still many unresolved political and institutional challenges which make this perspective still unclear (Grevi 2009; Whitman and Juncos 2009; Duke 2008).

4.3. The role of individual actors

4.3.1. Did individual leadership matter?

An important characteristic of the ESDP governance arrangements in 2003 was that in the context of new institutions and recently agreed procedures, skilled individual leadership seemed to have mattered for the successful application of novel internal codes of conduct at the strategic planning level in Brussels. It was particularly important for the establishment of inter-institutional coordination mechanisms bringing all the relevant structures together.

Operation Concordia – like EUFOR Artemis – was planned and supervised on the basis of regular meetings in the framework of the Crisis Response Coordination Team. The latter consisted of officials (Director-level) from relevant Council Secretariat and Commission directorates. During Concordia, these were representatives from Directorate VIII, Directorate IX, the EU Military Staff, the Cabinet of the HR/SG, the Policy Unit, Western Balkans desk officers, the SITCEN and representatives of DG RELEX. The team did not have any decision-making powers, but aimed at ensuring inter- and intra-institutional coordination and hence a good level of comprehensiveness and coherence in relation to the operational planning.

Between 2001 and 2002, experts from the General Secretariat began to discuss the setting up of inter-institutional coordination mechanisms to allow for regular meetings (including at short notice) during the planning and conduct of ESDP operations. Although these types of meeting were used in both the WEU and NATO, this practice was still quite new for the recently established ESDP and according to EU officials was not regarded as necessary by all bodies within the Secretariat. Reportedly, experts from Directorate VIII considered themselves as exclusively responsible for elaborating the politico-military aspects of the EU-led military operations and doubted the relevance of the CRCT meetings (Interview Council official, Brussels, June, 2007).

In such a context and in a period of newly established structures and procedures, officials and analysts observed that skilled individual leadership was crucial for providing relevant guidance. Between 2001 and 2003, the deputy Director General of Directorate General-E – the Dutch diplomat Pieter Feith – played an active role in making the meetings of the Crisis Response Coordination Team a regular practice within the Council Secretariat. Reportedly, he was aware that the successful planning of military operations depended on the input from a wide range of expertise (military, geographical, legal, cross-pillar, etc.) than just the one offered by Directorate VIII. Thus, he was very much in favour of this idea and consistently insisted on its introduction and regular application (Interviews with Council officials, think-tank and EP experts, Brussels, June 2006 and June-July 2007). Thanks to his support, the CRCT weekly meetings were gradually established as a normal practice despite the ongoing opposition of Directorate VIII. They were regularly held during the planning and conduct of operation Concordia and similar coordination mechanisms were established within the Task Group for operation Artemis (Interviews Council officials, Brussels, July 2007).

Similarly Pieter Feith, strongly supported the role of the Committee of Contributors in monitoring and supervising the implementation of operation Concordia. In general, the Committee comprises all contributing states for the respective EU operation (in the case of Concordia there were 13 EU and 14 non-EU member states). It convenes once a month in Brussels, discusses current developments of the operation, and gives advice to the PSC. Its added value is that it provides a forum for meetings, information exchange and discussions among the contributing states, some of which are not EU members. In 2003 this had important political implications, because the Committee served as a representation and discussion forum for non-EU NATO member states (e.g. Turkey and Norway) and some Central and Eastern European countries aspiring to EU membership at that time. Initially the Committee's managerial and supervisory functions over the conduct phase were strong, being firmly supported by Pieter Feith. According to observers, he saw the committee's functions as relevant for the wider legitimacy and credibility of the operation and consistently pushed for taking into account its views (Interview Council Secretariat official, Brussels, July 2007). Every EU operation still has a Committee of Contributors, but as it meets only once per month, it largely relies on information from the respective expert working groups in the Council Secretariat and hence its managerial and supervisory competences are considered to

be weaker compared to these bodies (Interviews, Swedish and Bulgarian permanent representations and Council officials, Brussels, June 2006 and July 2007).

In short, it seems that individual leadership on the politico-strategic level in Brussels played an important role for implementing and fine-tuning some of the newly established governance procedures in the context of military operations.

4.3.2. Inter-personal relationships and inter-organisational coordination

The role of individual actors could also not be ignored at the strategic operational and the tactical level of command during the conduct of EUFOR Concordia. Insiders observed that from the very beginning of the operation, the Operation Commander (also NATO's DSACEUR) in SHAPE Headquarters (see part 3 above) and the Force Commander in Skopje failed to establish a strong working relationship. Instead, the coordination between them was marked by considerable tensions, which resulted in a lack of common understanding and thus a disjointed approach to the implementation of Concordia (Interviews in SHAPE and the Council Secretariat, Mons and Brussels, June-July 2007).

The Operation Commander had an explicitly military approach to the conduct of the operation and was clearly more used to NATO's hierarchical military coordination mechanisms than the more political logic present in the EU, characterised by multiple consultations, bargaining and compromises. He was new not only to the specifics of EU policy-making but also to the 'Berlin Plus' type of operations - the planning of which involved parallel decision-making processes (in the North Atlantic Council and the PSC) and multiple reporting channels leading to a rather cumbersome command and control process (Interviews in SHAPE and the Council Secretariat, Mons and Brussels, June-July 2007).

In tune with the Berlin Plus Agreement, the Force Commander had to report to SHAPE via the regional NATO headquarters - 'Allied Forces Southern Europe' (AFSOUTH, in Naples). The Operation Commander being a double-hatted official, had to report to both the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the Political and Security Committee in Brussels. This not only led to a cumbersome coordination process, but also increased the distance between the Force Commander and the PSC, which impacted on the ability of the EU to exercise proper political control. Practitioners and scholars alike observed that these arrangements blurred the EU's ownership over the command and control of the operation (Interviews think tank experts, Brussels June 2006; Gross 2009: 178).

Reportedly consultations between the two commanders were scarce, which led to mixed messages being given to both the Macedonian authorities and other international actors in Macedonia (Interviews Council Secretariat, NATO and EU Staff Group officials Brussels and Mons June-July 2007; see also Mace 2004). For example, between 15 and 28 May 2003, the two failed to consult each other and coordinate their meetings with the Macedonian government. In mid May, the Force Commander and the EUSR discussed with the Macedonian President and members of the government the possibility of extending EUFOR

Concordia until December 2003. The authorities in Skopje were in favour, but stressed that it should not continue longer than that. The presence of a military operation in 2004 would have sharply contrasted with the country's aspirations to present itself as a stable and working democracy aspiring to join both the EU and NATO (Mace 2004). Yet, in a subsequent visit to Skopje (27-28 May) the Operation Commander met the EUSR and expressed the opinion that the mission should either finish at the end of September 2003 or continue until March 2004 (Internal Memo, General Secretariat November 2003). Reportedly, he had little awareness about the ongoing dialogue conducted earlier by the Force Commander and the EUSR and about the fact that the Macedonian government was unwilling to continue the operation beyond 31 December 2003. This not only increased the frustration of the Force Commander and the EUSR but also led to confusion in the government. Overall, although this confusion was quickly resolved, the episode only added to the perceived inability of the EU to project a strong presence in Macedonia (Interviews Council Secretariat officials June 2007, Brussels; Internal Memo, General Secretariat November 2003).

After the change of the French Force Commander with the Portuguese Major General Luis Nelson Ferreira dos Santos on 30 September 2003, the working relationship between SHAPE Headquarters and the Force Headquarters substantially improved and the implementation of the operation was smooth. Reportedly, the Operational Commander Admiral Feist had a good rapport with the new Force Commander and from this moment the conduct of Concordia did not suffer from coordination problems between the two (Interviews EU Staff Group and Council Secretariat officials Mons and Brussels July 2007).

The existence of tensions between the Force and Operation Commanders demonstrated that when most institutional practices and procedures are new and untested, the institutional interactions can be strongly personified. It also became visible that in the context of Berlin Plus operations, the different organisational logics embodied by the respective commanders may fuel conflicting agendas and negatively impact the political dialogue with both the host country and other international actors. As a result, the quality of the conduct phase would most surely suffer. It can be assumed that the more the 'Berlin Plus' coordination and consultation practices are applied and tested, the clearer the expectations between the EU and NATO will be and personified conflicts will therefore diminish. This clearly opens the opportunity for the accumulation and utilisation of experiential learning which at the time of operation Concordia was still limited.

5. Conclusion

This article started with the argument that the first two EU-led military operations demonstrated a set of working governance structures and procedures and thus highlighted the development of a fully fledged process of institutionalisation in this domain. However, in the light of the above analysis, this starting statement needs to be qualified.

Firstly, the analysis demonstrated that Concordia and Artemis shed light on the practical operationalisation of some of the newly created governance arrangements for crisis management operations. In other words, despite their shortened planning process, the two operations demonstrated the actual working of the respective structures in Brussels and the application of new procedures for command and control. Moreover, they highlighted the importance of good coordination for the successful implementation of the operational tasks on different levels in the chain of command. These were observed between the operational and force commanders, between the Council and the Commission and within the Council itself (internal coordination in the Council Secretariat). In all those cases good coordination appeared to be crucial for the successful implementation of operational tasks. The formalisation of certain structures and procedures was also visible such as the creation of the EU Staff Group in SHAPE HQ, the EU-NATO and EU-UN liaison mechanisms, as well as the Crisis Response Coordination Team.

However, the analysis also demonstrated the importance of individual actors during this period. On the one hand individual actors were important in specifying and fine-tuning the new governance procedures - as in the case of Pieter Feith. On the other hand individual tensions negatively impacted information-exchange in the chain of command. The latter was visible in the coordination difficulties between the Operation Commander and the first Force Commander during EUFOR Concordia. In short, individual actors were influential in directing, fine-tuning and even re-defining recently established governance arrangements for EU crisis management. However, these governance arrangements still lacked the kind of institutional stability that distinguishes a well institutionalised policy domain from a fledging one. Furthermore, although coordination had undoubted importance, it was also a contentious issue as the two case studies demonstrated variation and fluctuation in coordination practices rather than an increase in inter- and intra-institutional cooperation.

Thus the first two military operations demonstrated a mixed picture regarding the institutionalisation of the EU crisis management arrangements by 2004. Whilst some signs of the latter were present (formalisation), this did not represent a fully fledged process of institutional stabilisation and emancipation from individual influence. The two missions also did not demonstrate the improvement or systematisation in inter-institutional coordination and cooperation. Furthermore, while in some cases the formalisation of structures and procedures was based on lessons-learned (EU Staff Group; EU-UN liaison mechanisms), in others it was not (EU-NATO liaison mechanisms; Council-Commission coordination). In addition, the two case studies demonstrated that the actual transformation of lessons-identified into lessons-learned often depended not only on formal institutional reform that addressed the identified needs, but also on the subsequent implementation of the new structures and procedures in the respective missions.

Although the first two EU military operations were small and limited in duration, size and mandate they were important in shedding light on several important processes. Firstly, the importance of Council-Commission (and civil-military) coordination in ensuring the

comprehensiveness of EU crisis management. Secondly, the effects of lesson-drawing from previous operational experience and finding the best ways for their implementation - beyond piece-meal institutional reform. Finally, individual actors were of critical importance in driving forwards institutional development, especially in the early phases of new policy developments. All of these processes are currently still relevant in the context of the post-Lisbon institutional reforms and will most surely continue to inform our understanding of the institutionalisation of the EU crisis management governance arrangements.

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