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„ The Coordinative Success of the European Union's Military Maritime Operations “

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Philippe Simon Goeres Kler, BA

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diplomatische akademie wien
Vienna School of International Studies
École des Hautes Études Internationales de Vienne

Abstract

English

Multilateral foreign policy is an often-overlooked pillar of the EU's military crisis management in combating maritime security threats. This master thesis intends to critically examine the EU's internal and international cooperation experiences in combating piracy off the Somali coast and containing human smuggling in the Mediterranean. In a comparative study, the effect of the political will of EU Member States, cooperation within EU institutions and especially EU-NATO cooperation on the success of two CSDP military operations, EUNAVFOR Atalanta and EUNAVFOR Sophia, is analysed. The results show that the factor of effective cooperation prevails in the preparation stage and in the successful implementation of mandate objectives in Atalanta, while Sophia reveals major gaps regarding the principle of EU solidarity in dealing with the flow of refugees into Europe. Overall, it must be noted that economic interests dominate the EU political agenda and the humanitarian rescue operations of EU forces at sea are subordinated to the military fight against smuggler networks.

Deutsch

Die multilaterale Außenpolitik ist ein oft vergessener Eckpfeiler des militärischen Krisenmanagements der EU bei der Bekämpfung maritimer Sicherheitsbedrohungen. Diese Masterarbeit beabsichtigt, die internen und internationalen Kooperationserfahrungen der EU bei der Bekämpfung der Piraterie vor der somalischen Küste und der Eindämmung des Menschenschmuggels im Mittelmeer kritisch zu untersuchen. In einer vergleichenden Studie wird untersucht, wie sich der politische Wille der EU-Mitgliedstaaten, die Zusammenarbeit innerhalb der EU-Institutionen und insbesondere die EU-NATO Zusammenarbeit auf den Erfolg von zwei GSVP-Militäroperationen, EUNAVFOR Atalanta und EUNAVFOR Sophia, auswirken. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass der Faktor der effektiven Zusammenarbeit in der Vorbereitungsphase und in der erfolgreichen Umsetzung der Ziele bei Atalanta überwiegt, während Sophia große Lücken bezüglich der EU-Solidarität bei der Bewältigung des Flüchtlingsstroms nach Europa offenbart. Insgesamt muss festgestellt werden, dass wirtschaftliche Interessen die politische EU-Agenda dominieren und die humanitären Rettungsaktionen der EU-Streitkräfte auf See dem militärischen Kampf gegen die Schlepperboote untergeordnet werden.

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List of Abbreviations

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AO	Area of Operations
AVPD	Autonomic Vessel Protection Detachments
CGPCS	Contact Group on Piracy of the Coast of Somalia
CMCG	Central Mediterranean Contact Group
CMF	Combined Maritime Forces
CMPD	Crisis Management and Planning Directorate
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CTF	Combined Taskforce
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation / EuropeAid
EDA	European Defence Agency
EEAS	European External Action Service
EMSC	European Migrant Smuggling Centre
EU	European Union
EU NAVCO	European Union Naval Coordination Cell
EU NAVFOR	European Union Naval Force
EU NAVFOR MED	European Union Naval Force Mediterranean
EU OPCEN	European Union Operations Centre
EUBAM	European Union Integrated Border Assistance Mission
EUCAP	European Union Capacity Building
EUFOR	European Union Force
EUGS	European Union Global Strategy
EULPC	European Union Migration Liaison and Planning Cell
EUMSS	European Union Maritime Security Strategy
EUROSUR	European Union Border Surveillance System

EUROPOL	European Police Office
EUTM	European Training Mission
FOC	Full Operational Capability
FPA	Framework Participation Agreement
HMS	Her Majesty's Ship
HQ	Head Quarters
HR/VP	High Representative of Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOMCF	Indian Ocean Maritime Crime Forum
IORA	Indian Ocean Rim Association
IRTC	International Recommended Transit Corridor
JOT	Joint Operation Team
MARSUR	Maritime Surveillance Network System
MIASIT	Missione Bilaterale di Assistenza e Supporto in Libia (Assistance and Support Bilateral in Libya)
MSCHOA	Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
SATCEN	European Union Satellite Centre
SHADE	Shared Awareness and Deconfliction
SIENA	Secure Information Exchange Network Applications
TRADE	Training Awareness and Deconfliction Forum
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Funds
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
VP	Vice President of Commission
WFP	World Food Programme

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1. Introduction

The *European Union Global Strategy* (EUGS) was presented in 2016 by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, with the aim of building a stronger and more united European Union in the face of increasing external crises. As the EU has become more involved in foreign policy crisis management, its interventions have mostly been carried out on land. However, external threats have also extended to the sea, especially the region around the Horn of Africa and the Southern Mediterranean area have become a major focal point for the EU's renewed vision to become an actor in its own backyard. Mogherini was well aware of the EU's aspiration to be an established protagonist in international affairs:

> *"The Strategy (EUGS) nurtures the ambition of strategic autonomy for the European Union. This is necessary to promote the common interests of our citizens, as well as our principles and values. Yet we know that such priorities are best served when we are not alone. And they are best served in an international system based on rules and on multilateralism."*[1]

The concept of multilateralism is central to the promotion and maintenance of international peace - which Mogherini mentions last. Moreover, it constitutes the basis of the implementation of the EU's so-called *Comprehensive Approach* to crisis management and comprises the entire spectrum of soft and hard EU security policies. In promoting civil and military foreign policy instruments within the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), it can recently be observed that the EU has placed clear emphasis on the second component, when deepening partnerships within the EU, but also with external organisations such as NATO or the United Nations.

Over the last fifteen years the EU has seen its strongest internal cohesion area, the economy, threatened by increasing piracy in the Horn of Africa. In 2011, 160 pirate attacks were recorded in Somali waters, however, between 2010 and 2015,

[1] European External Action Service, 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy', Brussels, 2016, p. 4.

this continued to grow, reaching a total of 358 incidents within these five years.[2] In addition to economic interests, the EU, also as a strong defender of international humanitarian law, was from 2013 onwards faced with the task of providing adequate solutions for the impending wave of refugees arriving in Italy via the Mediterranean Route. EU officials had to act quickly to prevent the worsening of the humanitarian disaster, given the deaths of at least 13,000 migrants at sea trying to reach Italy between January 2014 and November 2017.[3] As a response to the increase of piracy in Somali waters and the refugee flows along the Mediterranean Route, the EU launched, for the first time in its foreign policy history, two military naval operations in both regions, called EU NAVFOR Somalia or Operation Atalanta and EU NAVFOR MED or Operation Sophia.

The new term *maritime turn* is repeatedly used in the literature to describe the new geopolitical power plays of the EU that have increasingly shifted from land to the sea.[4] Scholarly research has raised the question of whether and to what extent the EU has been successful in its naval vision of crisis management in its geographical neighbourhood and beyond. In this regard, the primary interest consisted of examining the decision-making process of military operations prior to their launch and quantitatively measuring the implementation of the mandate's objectives particularly in terms of *threat reduction success rates*. However, little attention was paid to the aspect of cooperation between the EU and other actors. Scholarly contributions about Operation Atalanta, criticise the EU for not pursuing a consistent and normative foreign policy, as its main focus is on safeguarding economic interests and disregarding international law in the fight against piracy. Regarding Operation Sophia, it is generally noted that the dismantling of smuggling networks was given priority over elementary search and rescue operations to save migrants from drowning at sea.

This thesis aims to give a descriptive and empirical contribution to the character of the EU's maritime security and defence policy, which leads to my research

[2] Statista Research Department, 'Number of Actual and Attempted Piracy Attacks in Somalia 2010-2021', 2022.
[3] Eugenio Cusumano, 'Migrant Rescue as Organized Hypocrisy: EU Maritime Missions Offshore Libya between Humanitarianism and Border Control', *Cooperation and Conflict* 54 (1), p. 3-4.
[4] See Marianne Riddervold, 'Introduction: A Maritime Foreign and Security Power in the Making?', In *The Maritime Turn in EU Foreign and Security Policies*, 1st ed., Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 1-27.

question: How does effective cooperation affect the success of a military CSDP operation? The academic relevance of this work focuses on the often-overlooked element of intra-European, bilateral, and multilateral cooperation in crisis management operations. To highlight these aspects, I will ask in what ways effective cooperation between internal and external actors affects the success of CSDP operations. Both Operation Atalanta in the Gulf of Aden and Operation Sophia in the Southern Mediterranean are particular examples of differing internal and external forms of cooperation. Although Atalanta and Sophia are often considered similar in the literature, I will show that they differ in both their mandates and operational success.

The development of a conceptual framework is based on an internal-external perspective, which serves as an analytical benchmark for assessing internal and external cooperation efforts in the initiation and progress of sending military forces in maritime environments. In this context I assume that internal cooperation between EU Member States and EU institutions, as well as external collaboration with NATO and the United Nations in operational activities, are prerequisites for their respective effectiveness. To test this hypothesis, I will use a qualitative study-based methodology to develop a comparative case study. Based on secondary sources from previous studies and official documents, the analysis will highlight various cooperation motives that are crucial for the success of an operation. A theoretical bridge is built between the political level and the practical realm - the decision-making process as well as their operational implementation - of crisis management by describing the main elements of the mandate, followed by internal and external efforts at domestic, intra-institutional and international cooperation levels.

The structure of this thesis is divided into four main sections. First, in Section 2, I will provide an overview of the institutional development of the EU´s so-called *Comprehensive Approach* to crisis management. Then, I will outline and discuss the various criteria for assessing the success of CSDP missions and operations used in the literature, which is followed by listing overall challenges in this field of research. In Section 3, I will introduce my own conceptual framework, which focuses on the fundamental conditions for success that constitute a baseline for operational coordination. In Section 4, I will provide a comparative case study

analysis of the two EU's maritime military operations, namely Operation Atalanta and Operation Sophia. I will subsequently highlight the different aspects of effective and successful coordination between the operations, and I will demonstrate that these are a prerequisite for their operational success. Finally, in Section 5 I will present a conclusion regarding the findings of the comparative case study.

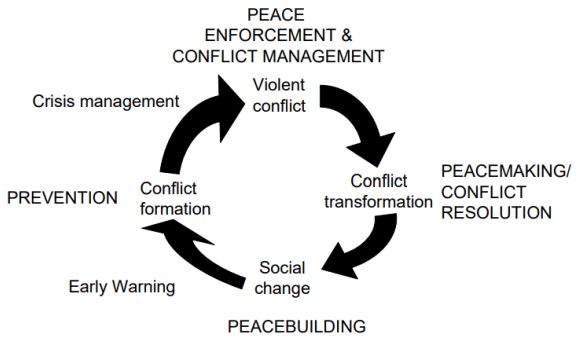
2. Literature Review

2.1. Institutionalisation of the EU´s Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management

Within the EU's institutional framework, the so-called *Comprehensive Approach* to crisis management has evolved to cover an increasingly broad range of external threats and response mechanisms, which has led to an increasing need for coordination by EU decision-makers.[5] In order to grasp the EU´s highly complex *Comprehensive Approach* to crisis management, the first step is to discuss the broad concept of crisis management in general. The second step is to present the EU`s understanding of crisis management, which was published in the EUGS in 2016.

In scholarly contributions, the concept of crisis management is often interpreted in different ways, especially in relation to studies on UN-led peacekeeping operations. In this respect, *crisis management* is frequently used as a generic term for *conflict resolution* or *conflict management*, although it is also commonly used as synonym. Many scholars use the so-called *life cycles of a conflict* to present these terms in different order of priority and sequence (cf**.** Figure 1).

Figure 1: Life Cycle of Different Crisis Responses[6]



[5] Basil Germond and Anna Marchi, 'The EU's Comprehensive Approach as the Dominant Discourse: A Corpus-Linguistics Analysis of the EU's Counter-Piracy Narrative', In *European Foreign Affairs Review* 21 (1), 2016, p. 7.

[6] Erik Melander and Claire Pigache, 'Conflict Prevention: Concepts and Challenges', *Konfliktprävention: Zwischen Anspruch Und Wirklichkeit Wien: The Austrian National Defence Academy*, 2007, p. 12.

These terminological conflations are often misleading in the context of the EU, because each part of a crisis or conflict responses is adapted to a specific type of intervention. Gross and Juncos have emphasised that especially in Euro-jargon for instance, the terms conflict prevention and crisis management are still shrouded by a great deal of terminological confusion.[7] Similarly, Bastian Griegerich gives a variety of types that fall under crisis management, including

> *"traditional peace-keeping missions, peace-enforcement missions and peace-making missions, stabilisation and reconstruction missions, conflict-prevention missions and humanitarian missions."*[8]

On this account, the generic term *crisis management* encompasses the stabilisation or containment of a crisis including different threats as well as the entire conflict cycle from prevention to intervention and peacebuilding. Therefore, in European practice a descriptive character and umbrella term of crisis management including other connotations is sufficient here. The mentioned activities should not be seen as individual steps of *crisis management* within a cyclical process, but rather as an interlocking mechanism called *crisis management*. This reasoning is supported by the EU Treaties themselves, which state in Art 42 (1). that the role of CSDP within the EU is to manage crises through "peacekeeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter".[9] For this reason, the EU sees itself as an international crisis manager within a cross-cutting and flexible crisis response framework. This means for example, that in one crisis area, the EU deploys several missions operations with different civilian and military tasks to manage one particular crisis simultaneously. In one crisis area, flexibility is often determinant factor, as it may imply the transition from a crisis management task such as funding local police forces in crisis areas to a more participatory form of crisis management including the deployment of warships throughout an operational response in the same area. Therein the objectives can

[7] Eva Gross and Ana E. Juncos, *EU Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management*, New York: Routledge/UACES Contemporary European Studies, 2010, p. 4.
[8] Bastian Giegerich, *European Military Crisis Management: Connecting Ambition and Reality*, 1st ed. Vol. 48 Adelphi Paper 397. London: Routledge, 2008, p. 7.
[9] See Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union. Official Journal 115 , 09/05/2008 P. 0038 – 0039, Art 42 (1) TEU.

range from humanitarian action, budget support and mediation to the establishment of humanitarian corridors and sanctions.[10]

Military operations are structurally distinguished in EU jargon from civilian operations because of variations in their respective financial and budgetary support as well as mandate requirements. Statistics show, by 2015, the EU had launched and conducted 32 operations and missions, 10 of which were military in nature, with short-term mandates ranging from three months to just over a year.[11] While most of the funding for missions is provided by the Community budget, the rule of thumb to bear the bulk of the costs of military operations applies to the states themselves.[12] In view of the different mandates, civilian crisis management tasks are caried out by non-military forces to prevent a crisis from escalating further. Their activities include the support for good governance, rule of law and comprehensive justice mechanisms, humanitarian and development aid, security sector reforms, as well as border and coastal security, support for political processes and elections, counterterrorism and anticorruption.[13] In contrast, military crisis management action is primarily characterised by the use of military instruments including national air force assets, military ground personnel and naval units.

In order to obtain an accurate picture of civil and military interventions of the EU, it is necessary to review the last few years of practice. Since the 1990s the EU´s reputation has steadily developed as an international crisis manager both in the so-called EU neighbourhoods and in regions beyond. These regions are for example African countries in the Maghreb or Sahel region in which several EU Members States, most notably France and the UK, perceive historically entrenched cultural, economic, and linguistic interests threatened by domestic conflicts. The multilateral European military operations in these areas in the

[10] Loes Debuysere and Steven Blockmans, 'The EU's Integrated Approach to Crisis Response: Learning from the UN, NATO and OSCE', In *The EU and Crisis Response*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021, p. 88-90.
[11] Thierry Tardy, 'CSDP in Action. What Contribution to International Security?', Chaillot Paper No. 134, Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, p. 9.
[12] Benjamin Pohl, 'EU Foreign Policy and Crisis Management Operations. Power, Purpose and Domestic Politics', 1st ed. London: Routledge, 2014, p. 36.
[13] Thierry Tardy, 'The New Forms of Civilian Crisis Management', In *Recasting EU Civilian Crisis Management*, Report No. 31, Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), 2017, p. 10.

1990s were mainly land and air operations.[14] Examples of EU military operations on land include Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Operation Concordia in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of Congo and EUFOR Tchad. However, not only did the scope of operations change over time, turning combat operations into military training missions (EUFOR into EUTM), but also their objectives, from humanitarian and stabilisation missions to security-related EU missions.[15]

The EU has established itself as an international crisis manager not only by the number of missions and operations it has launched, but also by the lengthy process of institutionalising security policy competences from the Member States level to the EU level. The institutional development of a European crisis management capacity in the field of cooperative security and defence policy has progressed in rapid waves. In historical context, during the turmoil of the Yugoslav war and the end of the Cold War, France and the UK wanted the EU to become more resilient in terms of crisis management capacities. The decisive events took place in the Western Balkans right on the EU's borders, specifically the Yugoslav and Kosovo wars of 1991-2001 and 1998-1999 respectively. These threats confronted the EU Member States with the necessity to include security aspects in the traditional economic-dominant European integration. The idea of creating a Common Security and Defence Policy framework was a breaking point with the EU's traditional foreign policy. The member states' dilemma was that although they wanted a strong security policy posture vis-à-vis external threats, national governments did not want to hand over the sovereign competences to Brussels.[16]

Alongside European integration and a period of greater Europeanisation, the institutional steps are being chronologically dated from the *Maastricht Treaty* of 1993 to the *Petersberg Tasks* and the signing of the *Treaty of Amsterdam* in 1997.[17] The *Petersberg Declaration* is considered the first milestone, in which

[14] Peter Dombrowski and Simon Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia', *Comparative European Politics* 17 (6), 2019, p. 3.
[15] Kamil Zajączkowski, 'EU Military Operations as a Tool in the EU's Foreign Policy Toolbox–The Main Trends and Limitations', *Studia Europejskie-Studies in European Affairs* 25 (4), 2021, p. 13-15.
[16] Thierry Tardy, 'The EU: From Comprehensive Vision to Integrated Action', *European Union Institute for Security Studies,* SSUE Brief 5, p. 1.
[17] Roger Mac, Ginty Sandra Pogodda and Oliver P. Richmond, *The EU and Crisis Response*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021, p. 1.

many EU countries responded the call for taking more active foreign policy action. Among the demands they made were humanitarian rescue missions and combat troop deployments for crisis management.[18] The effective implementation finally occurred at the Franco-British Summit in Saint-Malo in December 1998. Although London initially wanted to improve military expeditionary capabilities, France seized the opportunity to promote an extroverted strategic defence culture in Europe. However, the final negotiations marked a turning point in EU foreign policy cooperation when the Common Foreign and Security Policy was established as the EU's response to the lack of autonomous military capabilities and civilian support forces.[19] Moreover, 11 September 2001 is another defining moment when the EU swiftly incorporated broader guidelines on coherence by means of stabilisation and peacebuilding to respond to rising threats of terrorism. In the spirit of St. Malo, the *European Security Strategy* of 2003[20], the same year in which the first CSDP mission was launched[21], initially identified the need for innovative approaches to establish a more effective crisis management framework at level of the EU and its member states.[22]

This approach was designed to prevent security policy capacities, such as greater military spending, from impeding the development of normative EU values, such as the rule of law and humanitarian aid in crisis areas. Specifically, the 2007 External Relations Council focused on clarifying the debate on the security-development nexus. The agreement was extended to enhance and progressively integrate civilian capacity-building in specific coordination areas such as mediation and policing into crisis management strategies.[23] These were reflected in particular in the Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force in 2009. On an

[18] Publications Office of the European Union, 'Common Foreign and Security Policy'.
[19] See Jolyon Howorth, 'Britain, France and the European Defence Initiative', *Survival* 42 (2), 2000, 33-55.
[20] Council of the European Union, 'European Security Strategy, A Secure Europe in a Better World', Brussels, 2003.
[21] Debuysere and Blockmans, 'The EU's Integrated Approach to Crisis Response: Learning from the UN, NATO and OSCE', p. 88.; See also Hylke Dijkstra, 'Agenda-Setting in the Common Security and Defence Policy: An Institutionalist Perspective',. *Cooperation and Conflict* 47 (4), 2012, 454-472.
[22] Mark Furness and Gorm Rye Olsen, 'Europeanisation and the EU's Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management in Africa', *European Politics and Society* 17 (1), 2017, p. 106.
[23] Council of the European Union, 'Council Conclusions on Security and Development 2831st EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council Meeting', Brussels, 2007; Nicoletta Pirozzi, 'The EU´s Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management', *Geneva Centre for the Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)* EU Crisis Management Papers Series (June), 2013, p. 9.

institutional level it has created the new positions of a Permanent President of the European Commission and a High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP). To this day the treaty provides the legal and institutional framework for the EU's common external policies and activities:

> *"Conflict prevention is still at the heart of EU foreign policy, with the Lisbon Treaty mentioning the prevention of conflict as one of the Union's external action objectives (Art. 21.2). Conflict prevention is usually understood in EU documents as a long-term process aimed at structural change, 'addressing the root-causes of conflict".*[24]

In the post-Lisbon era, the European vision of an even more comprehensive foreign policy has led to the need for better coordination and cooperation.[25] As a result, EU structures were in state of flux between 2008 and 2012. In this period, the new HR/VP, Catherine Ashton demanded the European External Action Service (EEAS), to strengthen economic, civilian, military and normative power beyond the EU's external borders.[26] The ultimate aim was to develop a more comprehensive, coherent and multilateral foreign policy action for the EU in the hope of breaking out of the traditional "CSDP box".[27] To this end, the so-called *Action Plan* was drawn up in 2010 and confirmed in 2013.[28]

Within the same year the *Joint Communication on the EU´s Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crisis*[29] and the detailed version of the 2013 High Representative's *Communication on the Comprehensive Approach* were published.[30] As regards the latter, according to the Council's conclusions of 12 May 2014, the vision under the Commission leadership of José Manuel Barroso

[24] Eva Gross and Ana E Juncos, *EU Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management*, p. 3.
[25] See Germond and Marchi, 'The EU's Comprehensive Approach as the Dominant Discourse: A Corpus-Linguistics Analysis of the EU's Counter-Piracy Narrative', p. 6.
[26] Germond and Marchi, 'The EU's Comprehensive Approach as the Dominant Discourse: A Corpus-Linguistics Analysis of the EU's Counter-Piracy Narrative', p. 2.
[27] Pirozzi, 'The EU's Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management', p. 7.
[28] Christel Vincentz Rasmussen, 'Linking Instruments in Development and Foreign Policy: Comprehensive Approaches in the EU', Vol. DIIS REPORT 2013: 21, Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2013, p. 19.
[29] Debuysere and Blockmans, 'The EU's Integrated Approach to Crisis Response: Learning from the UN, NATO and OSCE'. P. 86.
[30]High Representative of the European Union, 'Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: The EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crises', 17859/13, Brussels: European Commission, 2013.

corresponds to

> *"a working method and a set of concrete measures and processes to improve how the EU, based on a common strategic vision and drawing on its wide array of existing tools and instruments, collectively can develop, embed and deliver more coherent and more effective policies, working practices, actions and results".*[31]

The period that proceeded was then marked by a constantly changing European vision of a *Comprehensive Approach* to crisis management. With the transition at the top of the Commission under Jean-Claude Juncker, the *Comprehensive Approach* was reoriented with greater inclusion of human rights in all EU activities and policies. However, after 2015, general criticism of the rigid adherence to purely Eurocentric ideas intensified. The inadequacies of the EU's policy coordination engagement and its alignment with its internal normative framework were equally criticised. Subsequently, the scope of the *Comprehensive Approach* was even broadened to include a more coordinated and strategic security dimension of political action, including economic aspects of crisis response.[32]

Finally, the High Representative presented the *EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy* (EUGS) to the EU Council in 2016, which constitutes the final version of a comprehensive strategic vision for external crisis management activities - the basis of this thesis. It offers a conceptual framework for consolidating all the elements and instruments required to enhance coordination. According to this, the strategy outlines four levels of action, which are defined as *multi-phase, multidimensional, multilevel, and multilatera*l (cf. Figure 2)[33]**,** which should be included in every crisis management to be effective. The aspects of *multidimensional, multilateralism* and *multilevel* action are particularly relevant

[31] Council of the European Union, 'Council Conclusions on the EU's Comprehensive Approach Foreign Affairs Council Meeting', Brussels, 2014.; Hendrik Hegemann, Regina Heller and Martin Kahl, *Studying "Effectiveness' in International Relations: A Guide for Students and Scholars*, 1st ed. Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2012, p. 9.

[32] See Michael E. Smith, 'Developing a 'Comprehensive Approach' to International Security: Institutional Learning and the CSDP', In *Constructing a Policy-Making State?: Policy Dynamics in the EU*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 253-270.

[33] European External Action Service, 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy**'**.; See also Eugénia da Conceição-Heldt and Sophie Meunier, 'Speaking with a Single Voice: Internal Cohesiveness and External Effectiveness of the EU in Global Governance', *Journal of European Public Policy* 21 (7), 2014, p. 961-979.

because they are based on international and national cooperation that influence the effectiveness on the mandate implementation in military operations.[34]

Figure 2: Table of EU Global Strategy Showing Four Levels of Action

Multiphased: The EU can act "at all stages of the conflict cycle, acting promptly on prevention, responding responsibly and decisively to crises, investing in stabilization, and avoiding premature disengagement when a new crisis erupts".[35]
Multidimensional: The EU can leverage "all available policies and instruments aimed at conflict prevention, management and resolution"[36] bringing together CSDP missions and operations, humanitarian assistance and, above all, cooperation.
Multilevel: The EU can act to resolve complex conflicts at international, regional, national, and local levels.
Multilateral: The EU can engage all actors on the ground necessary for conflict resolution - international organisations, civil society, and bilateral donors - to achieve sustainable peace through a comprehensive agreement based on a broad, deep, and lasting regional and international partnership.

Arising from the *EU Global Strategy*, the EU's multilateral approach specifically entails conducting military operations in cooperation with or in support of international or regional organisations such as the United Nations, NATO, or partners at the international, regional, and sub-regional levels. The relationship between the UN and the EU is a cornerstone at the multilateral level, as the basis for cooperation was expressed in the first *EU-UN Joint Declaration on Cooperation* in Crisis Management in 2003. The record shows that operational cooperation has developed significantly since then.37 Militarily, the linkage is

[34] Per M. Norheim-Martinsen, *The European Union and Military Force: Governance and Strategy*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 518.
[35] European External Action Service, 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy', p. 10.
[36] European External Action Service, 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy', p. 28.
[37] See Alexandra Novosseloff, 'Options for Improving EU-UN Cooperation in the Field of Peacekeeping', In *The EU, the UN and Collective Security: Making Multilateralism Effective*, 1st

further strengthened by the fact that current EU military operations are mostly conducted under a UN mandate, supported by UN Security Council resolutions, or conducted in parallel with UN peacekeeping missions. The UN is the highest international legal body that legitimises the EU's use of force in its crisis management operations.38 Overall, the EU still considers the UN to be the peacekeeping authority of the international system, because

> *"the EU's military operations and missions are strictly related to the international activity of the United Nations and international regional organisations. They act as their support or complement their activities. The said collaboration stems from the principle of effective multilateralism in its external relations promoted by the EU".*[39]

On the other hand, the cooperative relationship between the EU and NATO is vital for reinforcing the *EU Global Strategy*, merely by the fact that 21 EU Member States are members of the transatlantic alliance. However, in practice the EU has used NATO's collective assets and capabilities in its own operations only twice in more than 30 EU missions and operations. Although the formalities of cooperation are clearly stipulated in the *Berlin Plus Agreement,* which was adopted on 17 March 2003, it does not have a well-established tradition in practice. This agreement was intended to formally coordinate the political, institutional, and operational framework between the two organisations. Nevertheless, both organisations have conducted jointly coordinated operations in the past in which they decoupled their military and civilian tasks in order to avoid duplication.[40]

ed. London: Routledge, 2012.; Mihaela-Adriana Pădureanu, 'Cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union in the Fields of Peacekeeping and Crisis Management in Unpredictable Times', *European Institute of Romania,* EIR Working Papers Series No. 41, 2022, p. 2-29.

[38] See Tardy, *'CSDP in Action. What Contribution to International Security?'*, p. 26.

[39] Zajączkowski, 'EU Military Operations as a Tool in the EU's Foreign Policy Toolbox–The Main Trends and Limitations', p. 15-16.

[40] Thierry Tardy and Gustav Lindstrom, 'The Scope of EU-NATO Cooperation', In *The EU and NATO: The Essential Partners*, Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2019, p. 11-14.

2.2. Success Criteria and Conditions of CSDP Operations

The body of academic work dealing with EU security policy and particularly with the EU's crisis response measures is extensive. Basically, the voluminous work can be divided into two broad categories. The first category analyses the evolving nature of the EU as an international crisis manager in relation to the overall and individual image of the EU as a security guarantor. The second category comprises contributions that have devised specific conditions and success criteria for measuring the effectiveness of EU missions and operations. Observations on the EU as an effective crisis manager can be summarised in five points.

First, it is generally noted that the EU tends to set short-term crisis management objectives in the mandates for operations in order to better handle a sudden and negative event. In turn these objectives then can only partially be fulfilled.[41] For instance, Haesebrouck calls into question the intergovernmental nature underlying the problematic definition of a common EU position on the launching of civilian and military interventions. He argues that the EU has not been able to agree on a common definition of a crisis, whereby smaller have been CSDP operations preferred to larger operations. In his comparative analysis, he further notes that hesitant member state behaviour ultimately led to moments in which both EU states and EU institutions agreed on the lowest common denominator in operational planning.[42] In the end, these essentially followed a set of internally agreed criteria that proved to be reasonably small, manageable and with good prospects of producing the minimum expected outcomes.[43]

Secondly, the representatives of the liberal school, in particular, underline that the EU focused to a greater extent on internal security than on external peacekeeping. In the EU's foreign policy, this is primarily rooted in preserving the integrity of the core of the Union and monitoring its external borders prior to taking

[41] Nicolas Papanastasopoulos, 'Crisis Management in Foreign Affairs, Gearing Crisis Situations in Greek Foreign and Defence Policy', *International Journal of Political Science* 4 (2), 2018, p. 3-4.
[42] Tim Haesebrouck, 'Explaining the Pattern of CSDP-Operations: Towards a Theoretical Synthesis', *Romanian Journal of European Affairs* 15 (2), 2015, p. 5.
[43] Janina Johannsen, *The EU's Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management*, 1st ed. Vol. 204, Demokratie, Sicherheit, Frieden, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2011, p. 51.

measures to stabilise external crises.[44] Accordingly, other scholars question the credibility of the EU's political role in international crisis management in relation to its unique, broad policy toolkit for general planning and implementation measures in crisis situations.[45]

Thirdly, one of the most highlighted points of criticism of the EU's active response behaviour is the tendency to mandate very unequal civilian and military crisis responses. Pohl notes, for example, that early CSDP operations differed significantly from today's in terms of their scope, mandate, duration, and geographical location. As a result, the EU's crisis management architecture has lost structural flexibility in providing the necessary resources needed due to the various types of operations. A long-standing civilian mission that urgently need further resources, may not be able to continue its activities because another previously launched military operation has been given priority in fund allocation.[46] Furthermore, the decision-making process prior to the launch of EU crisis responses is under criticism, because of its belated responses to emerging or current crises.[47]

Fourthly, to opt for a military operation instead a civilian intervention in crisis areas has been considered critical on many occasions. Carina Böttcher argues, for example, that military interventions in contrast to civilian missions only freeze conflicts. She adds that although a military option is capable of creating more room for negotiations, but it is not a sustainable long-term solution in terms of building stable institutions and rule-of-law capacities in the countries concerned.[48] Furthermore, Sweeney and Wynne point out that it should be not be a question of whether to choose a military or civilian mission in EU internal deliberations on the full range of external security threats. Operations should never interfere with each other, since every threat deserves to be pursued equally, whether it is for

[44] Mac Ginty, Pogodda, and Richmond, *The EU and Crisis Response, p.* 8.
[45] Linda Barry, 'European Security in the 21st Century: The EU's Comprehensive Approach', *The Institute of International and European Affairs* IIEA European Security and Defence Series, 2012, p. 2.
[46] Pohl, *EU Foreign Policy and Crisis Management Operations: Power, Purpose and Domestic Politics*, p. 30.
[47] Christoph Meyer, 'CSDP Missions and Operations', In-Depth Analysis PE 603.481, Brussels: European Parliament, 2020, p. 7.
[48] Carina Böttcher and Marie Wolf, *Moving EU Civilian Crisis Management Forward: More Capable, More Flexible, More Responsive (DGAP-Bericht)*, Berlin: Forschungsinstitut der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, 2009, p. 9.

example the fight against climate change, the deterrence of pirate ships, or the fight against smugglers' boats.[49]

Many conclusions from studies on the EU's effective crisis management capacity stem from in-depth analyses, largely influenced by a number of reports evaluating the success or failure of UN peacekeeping missions.[50] Similarly, EU crisis responses are often categorised into the binary scheme of success or failure based on a set of fulfilment criteria. Maja Garb, for example, identifies three success criteria for NATO, CSDP and UN missions which are: 1) “the mandate or objectives”, 2) “the stabilisation of political and security situation” and 3) “the support guarantee of the local population”.[51]

Furthermore the literature elaborates several types for success for EU CSDP operations and missions. In Garb´s analysis the degree of completion of a land mission is divided into a rating scale of “success”, “partial success”, “partial failure”, or even “complete failure”.[52] In this regard, other analyses reveal that most missions have only succeeded partially on a short-term basis or may have succeeded if the unintended long-term consequences, including inter alia rule of law mechanisms and stable institutions, would have been factored in.[53] EU Operations that might be qualified for partial success in the short term comprise the operation in Mali, together with Concordia, EUFOR RD Congo, EUFOR Tchad and Mission Artemis.[54] Regarding long-term success criteria, Kammel, Nervanto, Ruohomäki and Rodt note that in order to conduct a successful operation, not only ambitious objectives need to be aligned with available resources, but also a thorough understanding of the operational context is

[49] Simon Sweeney and Neil Winn, ‘Understanding the Ambition in the EU’s Strategic Compass: A Case for Optimism at Last?’, *Defence Studies* 22 (2), 2020, p. 14.; Daniel Fiott and Lindstrom Gustav, ‘Strategic Compass: New Bearings for EU Security and Defence?’, *EU Institute for Security Studies* Chaillot Papers 171, 2021, p. 4-5.
[50] See for example Séverine Autesserre, ‘The Crisis of Peacekeeping: Why the UN Can’t End Wars’, *Foreign Affairs* 98, 2019, p. 101-16.; Duane Bratt, ‘Assessing the Success of UN Peacekeeping Operations’, *International Peacekeeping* 3 (4), 1996, p. 64-81.; Paul F Diehl and Alexandru Balas, *Peace Operations*. Vol. 2, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2014.
[51] Maja Garb, ‘Evaluating the Success of Peace Operations’, *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies* 42 (1), 2014, p. 55.
[52] Garb, ‘Evaluating the Success of Peace Operations’, p. 55.
[53] R Carayol, ‘Mali. Le Jeu Trouble de l’État Avec Les Milices’. Orient XXI, 9 August 2019.
[54] See Annemarie Peen Rodt, ‘Effectiveness in Operational Conflict Prevention: How Should We Measure It in EU Missions and Operations?’, In *Seminar Publication on Contemporary Peace Operations – From Theory to Practice*, FINCENT Publication Series 2/2017, Helsinki: Forsvaret, 2017, p. 79-86.

required. In their assessment of CSDP operations in Africa, they conclude that a successful operation must also involve a precise planning which is tailored to the unique situation in the crisis area. However, their results reveal that none of the operations under study were able to meet the success criteria, because the objectives of their mandates did not address the roots of conflict.[55]

Further research also incorporates internal and external dimensions into their analytical frameworks when evaluating the success of CSDP interventions. To this end, internal or external evaluations apply different types of indicators to assess success. On the one hand internal evaluations of interventions are typically conducted under the premise of a narrow notion of effectiveness, which reflects the interests of the intervener.[56] Therefore success is attained "when a mission achieves its purpose in an appropriate manner, seen from the perspective of the intervener and the conflict in which it intervenes to prevent (further) violent conflict."[57] On the other hand studies that analyse the external effects focus less on the internal learning processes of interventions, which often leads to generalising the EU's successes and failures.[58]

A particular contribution that should be highlighted in this context originates from Ginsberg and Penksa in their very influential book *The European Union in Global Security: The Politics of Impact.* They propose their own methodological framework for evaluating CSDP operations that includes both functional and political internal and external impacts. In addition to metrics related to the traditional political decision-making level, called "mission catalyst" and "mission mandate", they create different levels of analysis for the internal politics of an operation including mission evaluations that examine the internal effects within the EU's foreign policy decision-making system. Ultimately, they conclude that the potential success is due to the approval of local governments to operational

[55] Gitte Højstrup Christensen, Arnold Kammel, Elisa Nervanto, Jyrki Ruohomäki and Annemarie Peen Rodt, 'Successes and Shortfalls of European Union Common Security and Defence Policy Missions in Africa: Libya, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic', Copenhagen: Royal Danish Defence College, 2018, p 12-13.
[56] Rok Zupančič, Nina Pejič, Blaž Grilj and Annemarie Peen Rodt, 'The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo: An Effective Conflict Prevention and Peace-Building Mission?', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 20 (6), 2018, p. 599-600.
[57] Zupančič et al., 'The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo: An Effective Conflict Prevention and Peace-Building Mission?', p. 600.
[58] Kateryna Zarembo, 'Perceptions of CSDP Effectiveness in Ukraine: A Host State Perspective', *European Security* 26 (2), 2017, 190-91.

measures at national level, which is called *local ownership*. However, they add that this approval originates from intergovernmental cooperation. In the end, this is a representative argument that shows that cooperation is a requirement for a positive outcome of a mission.[59]

Fifth, in the literature, a large variety of success categories and metrics are used to evaluate the performance of CSDP crisis management responses. In this context, most academic contributions - as Garb alludes - have not yet developed commonly agreed criteria for success within the framework of the cooperation. This assumption originates form the EU's practice of designing missions on a case-by-case basis, which makes it quite difficult to establish common criteria for CSDP missions.[60]

However, Christoph Meyer compiles a list of categories related to the evaluation of success, which include most of the success variables from the literature. The categories are “political”, “temporal”, “locally coherent” and “military”.[61] According to Meyer, success can be assessed by the degree to which political goals are achieved. These ambiguous politico-strategic objectives, which are pre-defined by CSDP decision-makers, would require extensive interpretation or classification if multiple objectives are listed. Success can also be measured by how quickly agreement on an intervention is reached and appropriate action is taken. Therefore, a quick response is likely to be financially less hazardous, less burdensome, and more rewarding when compared to a later response. Success can also be assessed by the extent to which the implementation measures of the region concerned meet the EU´s policy objectives. However, this evaluation criterion is particularly controversial, as the EU has developed a tendency to increasingly focus its activities on the pursuit of so-called strategic interests. According to Meyer, success can also be measured by specific criteria related to the implementation of military objectives. These include the proper authorisation of an operation in the host country, democratic oversight, control of military operations by the competent EU crisis management bodies, as well as democratic legitimacy of the UN Security Council to launch an operation and the

[59]Roy H. Ginsberg and Susan E. Penksa, *The European Union in Global Security: The Politics of Impact*, 1st ed, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
[60] Garb, ‘Evaluating the Success of Peace Operations’, p. 52.
[61] Meyer, ‘CSDP Missions and Operations’, p. 8-10.

approval of mission funds by the European Parliament and national parliaments.

Annemarie Peen Rodt refines Meyer's categorisation in a unique comprehensive theoretical framework in her book *The European Union and Military Conflict Management: Defining, evaluating and achieving success*. Equally using the external and internal approach, she establishes criteria for assessing success on the one hand and predictive conditions on the other.[62] Therein, she further develops the internal and external dimensions and assigns the subsidiary criteria "goal attainment" and "goal appropriateness" to the internal and external levels, respectively.[63] Firstly, "internal goal attainment" assesses the achievement of the envisaged goal or objective specified in the mandate statement. This criterion takes particularly account of EU political and military objectives. The second criterion, "internal appropriateness", evaluates the way of the operation´s management and the implementation of these objectives in the field. The indicators scrutinized under this criterion are “timeliness, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness”.[64] The first indicator assesses a time span from the European Council's decision on a joint crisis management operation to the provision of the necessary financial, military and human resources by EU Member States.[65] "Timeliness" is a precondition for the second indicator, "efficiency", which evaluates whether the mandate objectives of an operation have been successfully implemented within a reasonable timeframe. Thirdly, the participating EU Member States do not only have to bear the financial costs of the military operation itself, but also the political costs incurred for the EU, i.e. military personnel killed in combat. The external success criteria, in turn explain the overall success of military operations and are termed as "external goal attainment" and "external goal appropriateness ". The first external indicator, “external goals attainment”, assesses irrespective of the EU whether the military operation has successfully fulfilled its purpose, i.e., to what extent it has contributed to the continuation, expansion, escalation, and aggravation of a

[62] Annemarie Peen Rodt, ‘The European Union and Military Conflict Management: Defining, Evaluating and Achieving Success’, 1st ed. London: Routledge, 2014, p. 35-53.
[63]Rodt, ‘The European Union and Military Conflict Management: Defining, Evaluating and Achieving Success’, p. 18,
[64] Rodt, ‘The European Union and Military Conflict Management: Defining, Evaluating and Achieving Success’, p. 18-34.
[65] Rodt, ‘The European Union and Military Conflict Management: Defining, Evaluating and Achieving Success’, p. 24.

crisis.[66] In contrast, "external goal adequacy" examines an operation from beginning to end to evaluate whether all of the operation´s objectives have been fulfilled.

Finally, in the first years of CSDP operations, the success assessments of land operations outweighed those of EU maritime operations.[67] However, this changed in the late 2000s when threats, such as piracy, endangered the overall economic situation of the EU. The operation to fight piracy called EUNVAFOR Atalanta in the Gulf of Aden, is still considered successful by many scholars.[68] This operation is considered as reference model for EU maritime operations that follow, because of its certain degree of flexibility. This applies to both the ability for adaptation to the maritime environment and to use a variety of military tools in crisis management. In contrast, EUNAVFOR Med Sophia stands out in the literature because it´s the first anti-trafficking operation at sea that can provide additional political support for CSDP operations and support broader goals and approaches of the EU´s foreign policy.[69]

2.3. Challenges of Evaluating Success of CSDP Operations

The academic work that paves the way for evaluating the success of EU crisis management operations using different analytical models in the literature raises a number of pertinent theoretical and methodological issues.

Probably the most pertinent challenge refers to the study of the EU´s *Comprehensive Approach* to crisis management. In this respect, research increasingly emphasises the challenge of integrating the variables of EU actors, instruments and tools into an analytical framework in a coherent, flexible, and mutually supportive way. For example, looking at all the elements and relevant parts of the official document of *EU Global Strategy* that relates to successful

[66] Rodt, 'The European Union and Military Conflict Management: Defining, Evaluating and Achieving Success', p. 25-26.
[67] Dombrowski and Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia', p. 3.
[68] Zajączkowski, 'EU Military Operations as a Tool in the EU's Foreign Policy Toolbox–The Main Trends and Limitations', p. 13.
[69] Meyer, 'CSDP Missions and Operations', p. 6.

crisis management operations, it seems rather impracticable to analyse the full range of tasks of the comprehensive EU approach to crisis management using only one analytical framework. Today, no analytical framework seems to exist that is robust enough to compactly represent the ambitions and scope of all the actions undertaken by EU actors under the specific objectives of the *EU Global Strategy*.[70] For this reason, only one specific aspect of EU crisis management operations will be considered in the next section, namely the *cooperative conditions for success*. In doing so, a particular challenge remains that is related to the concept of success itself. To give an example, the theoretical and methodological challenges, encountered by the researchers, can be ascribed to the prevailing semantic confusion of analogous terms of success. Furthermore, challenges are ascribed to the subjective view of researchers, the public media as well as the EU leadership and EU policy makers.

Firstly, it should be noted that success metrics themselves are inherently subjective as mentioned. The concept of success not only conceptually overlaps with notions including *impact, result, effect, consequence, performance,* and *effectiveness*, but also with *responsiveness* and *coherence*.[71] For example, although the terms *success* and *effectiveness* are often used as synonyms, they can have different meanings. According to a common interpretation, the term *effective* denotes the ability to achieve a desired effect, while *successful* indicates the ability to achieve the intended effect. In this respect, *effective* is semantically closer to efficient performance while *successful* refers more to a beneficiary outcome of a certain CSDP operation. In the literature, the terms of *impact*, *effect*, and *consequence* describe the success of an operation in a host country. Since this analysis examines the success of maritime operations, these terms must be excluded from the definition of success.

Secondly, most theoretical approaches that attempt to explain or measure the success of EU crisis management operations encounter methodological constraints and limitations on the basis of subjective terminological assumptions.[72] These are mainly due to the subjective selection of entities to be

[70] Fernanda Faria, 'What EU Comprehensive Approach? Challenges for the EU Action Plan and Beyond', *European Centre for Development Policy Management* 71, 2014, p. 11.
[71] Hegemann et al., *Studying 'Effectiveness' in International Relations: A Guide for Students and Scholars*, p. 15.
[72] Zarembo, 'Perceptions of CSDP Effectiveness in Ukraine: A Host State Perspective', p. 190.

studied such as member states, military, civilians, EU personnel, local elites and local populations. This often results in a diametrical relationship both to the definition of conditions and the derivation of success criteria. Therefore many studies assume theoretical causal relationships between *impact* and *outcome*. In this context, *impact* means the effect of mandate implementation on the situation in the host country, while *outcome* denote the results and benefits of mandate implementation.[73]

Thirdly, another factor that leads to the incorrect selection of terms by researchers is the media in particular. By reporting on expected successes of CSDP operations, media play a crucial role as they provide concrete figures to the public such as the decrease in pirate attacks off the Somali coast and the destruction of smuggler boats in the Mediterranean. However, media reports often tend to trivialise the complexities of qualitative success evaluations. For example, CSDP operations that are in reality not very successful in terms of their specific mandate goals are rapidly portrayed as supposed successes through resorting to preselected success figures.

Fourthly, another factor that leads to subjective assumption on the meaning of success by both researchers and the EU's political leadership elite, is the EU level itself. From the researcher´s perspective, subjective assumptions arise from politicisation at the initiating level of crisis management operations. This results from the political pressure exerted by the EU Member States, as they decide whether or not to implement ad hoc intergovernmental crisis management measures. CSDP operations were typically initiated based on political decisions, which often involved bargaining procedures between the most and least affected member states by a certain crisis. For this reason, it must be assumed that a broad approach to cooperation at the EU level runs the risk of being highly politicised instead of being responsive to an emergency situation triggered by a crisis.

In contrast, from EU´s leadership elite´s perspective, the evaluation of success is not always based on objective criteria. Within the political framework of CSDP decision-making, a partial failure of an operation would never be politically termed

[73] Zarembo, 'Perceptions of CSDP Effectiveness in Ukraine: A Host State Perspective', p. 190.

as anything other than a success. In view of the political costs, i.e. in the interest of national constituencies, member states would not label the performance of EU forces as negative, as their own forces are participants in EU operations. A supportive example can be found in the analysis of EU agencies that constantly review their own missions for success. These are mainly focused on long-term crisis management goals, whereas the EU authorities often tend to only offer short-term solutions. As a result, full learning cycles are generally limited to technical assistance issues and remain highly dependent on high-level political dynamics.[74] Furthermore, *Crisis Management and Planning Directorate* (CMPD) within CSDP structures, prefers to use quantitative data to qualitative data when reporting on mission success. This is due to the fact that the evaluation of success follows a political top-down principle rather than a military bottom-up strategy at the EU leadership level when adjusting mission mandates, end-of-mission reports and conducting strategic reviews.[75]

In view of these challenges, the need for refining an adequate conceptual framework for the EU's *Comprehensive Approach* to crisis management arises, which is divided into a politico-strategic and operational level. In this context, *strategic* refers to the vision and objectives that are set in the EU decision-making processes, while o*perational* describes the effective execution and achievement of these *strategic* objectives.

[74] Raphael Bossong, 'EU Civilian Crisis Management and Organizational Learning', *European Security* 22 (1), 2013, p. 95.
[75] Tardy, 'CSDP in Action. What Contribution to International Security?', p. 38-39.

3. Conceptual Framework: Conditions to Assess Success of CSDP Military Naval Operations

In contrast to a theoretical framework, a conceptual framework is chosen to assess the conditions for the success of military operations. This framework will not offer a general account of the causal relations between subjects and objects in a particular context but develops its own research direction based on its own units of analysis and dimensions with a view to a comparative analysis.

Therefore the conceptual model adopts a two-pronged approach in its operationalisation by describing the conditions for success and providing an in-depth analysis of how the necessary internal and external conditions for success are met. These internal and external evaluation conditions of two maritime CSDP operations for military crisis management are examined comparatively.

A definition of success is of utmost relevance in any academic work, as it is intended to illustrate the specific research objective. Annemarie Peen Rodt defines a certain structure for the definition of success. According to this, the concept of success in relation to operational efforts is interpreted based on three initial criteria, focusing on the ways but also the means used to achieve these goals. Success is therefore structurally framed and ascribed to include the three components in its definition: 1) military operation, 2) crisis management operations and their operational implementation 3) within the framework of CSDP.[76]

The example of CSDP Operation Atalanta better illustrates the structural set-up of a definition of success. Thus 1) the deployment of warships off the Somali coast is the very act of a military operation in order to 2) achieve a deterrent effect on pirates as part of the operational implementation of the mandate, which has been 3) legitimised by an official legal UN mandate and therefore proceeds within the framework of CSDP. In applying this definition, the *ends* are products of the *ways* and *means*, because the capture and deterrence of pirates (ends) can only

[76] Rodt, 'The European Union and Military Conflict Management: Defining, Evaluating and Achieving Success', p. 148-154.

be achieved through effective patrolling (ways) which is based on prior EU-NATO coordination (means).

Based on this, Rodt has identified specific conditions for the success of EU crisis management operations, that she conceptualises in an internal and external dimension. In this respect, the success of an operation depends not only on internal EU cooperation but also on external cooperation of the EU with international crisis management actors.

Based on these conditions, Rodt establishes a comprehensive definition of success that outlines important internal and external indicators to measure the effectiveness of an operation´s performance. For example internal success indicators comprise the timely provision of material, financial and human resources for military operations that are provided by EU Member States and its institutions. The external level includes the implementation of the objectives that the EU has set in a crisis management operation. Therefore, the overall success of a CSDP military operation can be considered as achieved

> *"when its (the operation´s) purpose has been achieved and implemented in an appropriate manner from both an internal actor-specific and an external target-specific perspective".*[77]

This definition is valuable when it comes to evaluating an operation in terms of success indicators. However, it does not reflect internal and external cooperation, as an essential part of the operation´s overall success. Therefore external factors of cooperation and the concept of multilateralism, which is strongly emphasised by the *EU Global Strategy* are considered to be synonymous. It should be noted that multilateralism builds on effective internal EU cooperation.

The research question that follows will ask if the prospects of success of a military operation are based on the proposed dual approach of internal cooperation between member states and EU institutions as well the external conditions of the EU engaging in regional and international cooperation efforts.

[77] Annemarie Peen Rodt, 'Successful Conflict Management by Military Means', *Ethnopolitics* 11 (4), p. 387.

Research Question*: How does effective cooperation affect the success of a military CSDP operation?*

The assumption that internal and external coordination efforts are prerequisites for the overall success of CSDP military operations can be justified by two specific explanations.

First, the EU Member States and the EU institutions should jointly support an agreement to conduct a military operation. Successful implementation of the operation and the resulting EU success will benefit all member states equally. Germany, for example, would participate in a military operation, although it traditionally has little involvement in international operations, to safeguard national economic interests by fighting piracy at the EU level. Secondly, EU member states expect that the EU, as a representative of their interests, will advance multilateral policy efforts with international organisations such as NATO, the UN and third countries.

For example, Germany would be willing to give the EU full authority for the strategic direction of a military operation on condition that the EU ensures Germany's economic interests in cooperative efforts. However, cooperation at the EU level is limited by a minimal willingness to compromise, as a result of diverging interests. Consequently, EU Member States may deviate from previous agreement if their national interest cannot be reconciled with these.[78] On this basis, the main hypothesis of this conceptual framework is:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *An operation is likely to be successful if there is consistent coordination within the EU (internal) by the member states, the institutions and outside the EU (external) by the regional and international actors involved in crisis management.*

[78]Jan Wouters, Sijbren De Jong and Philip De Man, 'The EU's Commitment to Effective Multilateralism in the Field of Security: Theory and Practice', *Yearbook of European Law* 29 (1), 2010, p. 170.

Proceeding from H1, two conditions in H2 and H3 are proposed from *an internal actor-specific* perspective in order to assess relevant political and interinstitutional cooperation bases. These are intended to indicate whether an action has been carried out in accordance with the mandate or the intra-European will for cooperation. Additionally, the aim is to evaluate whether the objectives are achieved efficiently and cost-effectively from the perspective of the Union.[79] Furthermore, a third condition in H4 is established to assess the *external goal-oriented* perspective in terms of the mission's ability to cooperate with other regional and international actors towards fulfilling its mandate.

The first condition for a successful implementation of the mandate for military operations is the intergovernmental commitments of the EU Member States. In this context, internal political cooperation**,** whether formal or informal, constitutes the necessary prerequisite for the elements of security cooperation, i.e., coordination at the operational level. This means for example when security-related matters feature high on the agenda, mandate implementation may follow political declarations, thus facilitating consensus-building.[80] However, a premise for general political cooperation at the EU level is that CSDP is essentially a state-driven process and that operations have to be initiated and supported by at least some politically influential states. These include in particular the Big Three: Germany, France and formerly the United Kingdom. These economically strong EU member states have more military, material, technical, financial and diplomatic resources compared to smaller EU Member States. Thus, in order for operations to be launched, it is necessary that these states provide sufficient human and financial resources for CSDP military operations. In case the Big Three do not allocate their resources to an operation, smaller member states may be excluded from participating in an operation, as they would not be able to bear a possible higher distribution of costs.[81] In addition, the bulk of the funding for EU military operations - in contrast to civilian missions, where the EU provides the

[79] Rodt, "The European Union and Military Conflict Management: Defining, Evaluating and Achieving Success", p. 24.
[80] Furness and Olsen, 'Europeanisation and the EU's Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management in Africa', p. 117.
[81] Marina E. Henke, 'Networked Cooperation: How the European Union Mobilizes Peacekeeping Forces to Project Power Abroad', *Security Studies* 28 (5), 2019, p. 902-904.

majority of the funding - has to be provided by the Big Three, because without their financial support, a military operation cannot be executed in the first place.[82]

However, the interest in providing resources varies among member states, as they pursue national interests that derive from past colonial relations, security and economic interests or alignment with broader political agendas or ideas. Taken together, the second of this conceptual framework is as follows.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *Those CSDP military operations where there is internal coordination between at least three active EU member states may have a higher chance of success.*

Secondly, the mandate also must contain clear and realistic objectives from the perspective of the internal actors to ensure that the operation can be carried out efficiently. A prerequisite for this is interinstitutional coordination, which is based on the time formula set out in a mandate. A generally applicable time formula should be structured to reflect both the need to define what the measure is intended to achieve (end state) and the need to set a limited timeframe (end date). As an example, the goal of a mandate is to achieve the complete isolation of the threat of piracy (end state) within a few years (end date). The time formula in the mandate especially includes *timeliness*, which is:

> *"a short reaction time between the point in time where policymakers become aware of the fact that the link between ends, means and ways could be further strengthened and the point in time where they set out to actually do so".*[83]

Another prerequisite is based on functional cooperative communication between headquarters and the operational area as well as between the command structures of military operations themselves.[84] In this regard the effects of rapid

[82] Matthias Deneckere, 'The Uncharted Path towards a European Peace Facility', *European Centre for Development Policy Management* No. 248, 2019, p. 1.
[83] Anne Ingemann Johansen, 'Assessing the European Union's Strategic Capacity: The Case of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia', *European Security* 26 (4), 2017, p. 514.
[84] Meyer, 'CSDP Missions and Operations', p. 7.

rotation of military personnel during a military operation, especially in key positions, should be reduced as much as possible. To do otherwise would not be conducive for the continuity of the implementation of a military operation´s mandate.[85] Furthermore, EU institutions such as the EEAS or the High Representative/Vice-President should not reject the scope and objective of an operation against the will of the member states when planning and conducting crisis operations.[86] The result could be that EU member states in the EU Council would use the possibility to veto the decision on an external crisis management operation. However, a practice has emerged in which EU member states are rather uncomfortable with vetoing a CSDP operation, which has led the EU institutions, and member states in particular, to adopt a unified approach when deciding whether to launch a crisis response.[87] In case that the objective can be fulfilled through interinstitutional cooperation in adhering to the time formula, the third hypothesis is then as follows:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *Those CSDP military operations which display consistent internal coordination between EU institutions/agencies may have a higher chance of success.*

Third, from an external perspective, the operational success of military crisis management operations depends on effective coordination with regional and international actors. On one hand, cooperation with regional partners such as Libya in the Mediterranean and Somalia in the Horn of Africa is decisive for the conditional success of military operations, as both countries have access to the sea. On the other hand, the EU's cooperation with international organisations such as NATO or the United Nations is essential for the success of military crisis management operations.[88]

[85] Tardy, 'CSDP in Action. What Contribution to International Security?', p. 44.
[86] Pirozzi, 'The EU's Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management', p. 5.
[87] See for example Mai'a Davis Cross, *Security Integration in Europe: How Knowledge-Based Networks Are Transforming the European Union*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press. 2011.
[88] Rodt, "The European Union and Military Conflict Management: Defining, Evaluating and Achieving Success", p. 49.

Multilateral cooperation ranges from informal and formal cooperation to material, financial and personnel mutual assistance. Another crucial element is the mutual exchange of information, which is fundamental to the success of any multilaterally managed crisis in EU's neighbourhood. Overall, it can be assumed that in military operations, cooperation between the EU and other organisations is ubiquitous. The EU has never conducted a military operation that did not involve other international actors, including the UN or NATO. The ulterior motive has always been to attain a consensus or agreement on political and military matters based on matching interests and the mutual respect to not to actively disrupt or discredit parallel operations.[89] Therefore the fourth hypothesis of the conceptual framework is as follows:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): *Those CSDP military operations which display consistent external coordination between the EU and other international actors such as NATO and the UN may have a higher chance of success.*

[89] Rodt, The European Union and Military Conflict Management: Defining, Evaluating and Achieving Success" p. 49-50.

4. Case Studies

4.1. Method and Case Selection

This section will elaborate a qualitative case study based on a comparative analysis of two CSDP military operations in the maritime domain, namely European Union Naval Force – Somalia (EU NAVFOR Somalia) – Operation Atalanta and European Union Naval Force – Mediterranean Operation Sophia. Based on secondary literature, the effects of internal and external cooperation on the success of military CSDP crisis management operations at sea will be compared on the basis of individual studies.[90] The aim is to determine whether the EU has succeeded in achieving and implementing the cooperation goals set out in the *EU Global Strategy*.

The reasons for examining two military CSDP operations in this master's thesis are twofold: First, the EU as a maritime security actor can be better studied on the basis of recent military activities. The analysis of a single type of crisis response can increase the comparative value by examining the rhetoric of political leaders and the practical behaviour of the military forces in theatre. The fact that one operation has recently ended and the other is still active can provide valuable insights in the present state of maritime cooperation in military operations.

One might assume that Atalanta and Sophia have many similarities, but the case studies will show that there are significant structural differences. Three specific aspects in the study of these structures and mechanisms are therefore the EU's distinct capacity for military cooperation with third actors, but also its general performance as a military actor and its strategic orientation in military activities. The assessment within the concept of crisis management and a multi-level cooperation approach therefore provides

[90] See for methodological references Sidney Tarrow, 'The Strategy of Paired Comparison: Toward a Theory of Practice', *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (2), 2010, p. 230-259.

> *"a privileged insight into the EU's security strategy: maritime operations entail both a high degree of diplomatic negotiation and operational coordination– among and between EU officials, its member states and external actors– and highlights the operational commitment of valuable member-state resources."*[91]

The second reason for choosing military operations at sea is that they are less well researched compared to land-based EU military operations on the African continent. In particular, crises at sea have domino effects, reaching Europe in the form of migration flows or declining economic prosperity due to pirate attacks, that occur unexpectedly and might cause further problems. For example, the EU needs to develop a solution to distribute arriving refugees among the EU countries according to a fair principle as well as introduce measures to provide economic relief through disrupted shipping supply chains. In this respect, the European Council adopted the *EU Maritime Security Strategy* (EUMSS) in June 2014, which includes an action plan, objectives and measures.[92] This strategy aims the successful conduct of maritime operations that require a higher level of coordination, especially with strategic partners such as NATO and the United Nations to combat piracy and human smuggling. In light of the foregoing, it becomes clear that the EU itself places great emphasis on the specific conditions for the success of Operations Atalanta and Sophia. Therefore an examination on the conduct of operations in both regions is of great value to the EU´s pursuit of strategic autonomy:

> *"Connected to the EU's interest in an open and fair economic system is the need for global maritime growth and security, ensuring open and protected ocean and sea routes critical for trade and access to natural resources. The EU will contribute to global maritime security, building on its experience in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean (…)."*[93]

[91] Dombrowski and Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia', p. 15.
[92] Dombrowski and Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia', p. 5.
[93] European External Action Service, 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy', p. 41,

4.2. Operation Atalanta (8 December 2008 – present)

The European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) - Operation Atalanta within the framework of the CSDP is not only the longest-running military operation but also the first air- and sea-based anti-piracy operation in the Western Indian Ocean.[94] It was only last year, on 1st January 2021, that an EU Council decision came into force extending the mandate for another two years, until 31st December 2022.[95] Nearly 14 years into the mandate, it is interesting to note that the operation, launched on 8 December 2008, was originally intended to last only one year under an *Accelerated Assessment Procedure,* to deter and combat piracy on the high seas off the Somali coast and in Somali territorial waters.[96]However, the global threat of piracy has not been a new issue, but already prompted the President of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to make several statements in 2005 and 2006.[97] Following a series of UN Security Council resolutions, the international community was subsequently called upon to provide basic protection for International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other merchant vessels. The EU responded to this call and, alongside other participating states, formed Combined Task Force 150, which entered Somali waters under NATO auspices and served as an impetus for supporting additional military forces to fight piracy.[98] The fact that Somali pirates were responsible for almost half of all reported pirate attacks worldwide at that time, prompted the EU Council to eventually decide on 10 November 2008 to deploy military forces to the region.[99] It is astonishing that the mandate for this operation was set in only four weeks. Moreover, the initial operational capability was also remarkable in terms of timing, as the EU forces arrived in the area of operations (AOO) after only five days from

[94] EU Naval Force – Somalia, Operation ATALANTA', 2020.
[95] Naida Hakirevic Prevljak, 'EU Naval Operation Atalanta Extended until December 2022', Naval Today, Taylor & Francis, Spring 2021, 2021.
[96] Joris Larik, 'Europe's Fight Against Piracy: From the Barbary Coast to Operation Atalanta', *Fondation Pierre Du Bois*, Papiers d´actualité, Current Affairs in Perspective 4, 2013, p. 2.
[97] Trineke Palm, 'Cooperative Bargaining in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy: EUNAVFOR Atalanta', *Contemporary Politics* 25 (2), 2019, p. 132.
[98] Felix Seidler, 'Enduring Freedom und Active Endeavour: Wie effektiv kann maritime Terrorismusbekämpfung sein?', In *Jahrbuch Terrorismus* 6 (2013/2014), Leverkusen-Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2014, p. 379.
[99] Larik, 'Europe's Fight Against Piracy: From the Barbary Coast to Operation Atalanta', p. 1.

the official start.[100]

4.2.1 Mandated Operational Flexibility

The mandate of Operation Atalanta, the operational core of any operation, has acquired a kind of operational flexibility in reducing the piracy threat through subsequent mandate extensions.

Accordingly, the mandate has developed characteristics that point to a considerable expansion of the operation's field of activity. In the course of the mandate, the operation has subordinated its original intentions, including the humanitarian aspects, to its focus on economic interests. Although the operation has been more or less tailored to the precarious situation off the Somali coast by expanding the operation's radius of action in 2009 and 2012 through Council Decision 2012/174/CFSP to monitor illegal fishing activities and to conduct attacks on pirate bases on land when necessary, its initial tasks are still being pursued (cf. Figure 3). Atalanta´s active units have deterred attacks and demonstrated military presence in the area of operations and in Somali territorial waters (cf. Figure 4).

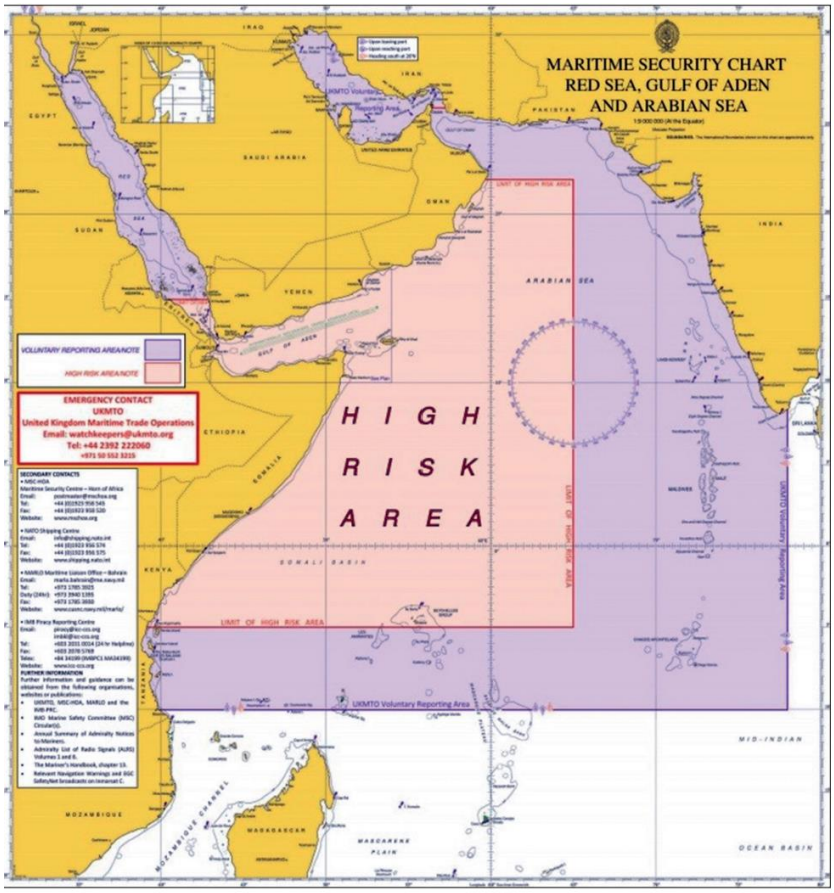
Figure 3: Chronology of EU Naval Force Somalia – Operation ATALANTA´s Mandate Extensions[101]

(Author´s own illustration)

Start on 8 December 2008 until 23 March 2012
On 23 March 2012: decision on mandate extension until December 2014
On 31 November decision on mandate extension until 12 December 2016
On 28 November 2016: decision on mandate extension until 31 December 2018
On 30 July 2018: decision on mandate extension until 31 December 2020
In December 2020: decision on mandate extension until 31 December 2022

[100] Basil Germond. 'The EU's Security and the Sea: Defining a Maritime Security Strategy', *European Security* 20 (4), p. 567.
[101] Information retrieved from European Union External Action Service, 'EU Naval Force - Somalia Operation ATALANTA'.

Figure 4: Fight Against Somali Piracy: Areas of Operation[102]



The main tasks of Operation Atalanta initially consisted of the value-oriented objective of protecting the UN World Food Programme and the benefit-oriented objective of protecting trade routes.[103] However, looking at the whole range of mandated activities, Atalanta´s expanded mandate in 2012 was to implement:

- "The protection of World Food Programme (WFP) vessels delivering aid to displaced persons in Somalia and the protection of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) shipping.
- The deterrence, prevention, and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the Somali coast.

[102] Source retrieved from UK Hydrographic Office. 'Maritime Security Chart: Q6099: Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea'
[103] Palm, 'Cooperative Bargaining in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy: EUNAVFOR Atalanta', p. 133.

- The protection of vulnerable shipping off the Somali coast on a case-by-case basis.
- In addition, the EU NAVFOR also contributes to the monitoring of fishing activities off the coast of Somalia".[104]

Therefore, the loss of the original humanitarian perspective can gradually be observed. Atalanta's focus shifted almost entirely to the protection of merchant vessels in the course of the operation. Furthermore, the Atalanta command structure has also increasingly withdrawn from active operations, relying for example more on the deployment of Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachments (AVPD) on ships, i.e. the use of uniformed military personnel travelling on a ship with the explicit permission of the flag state.[105]

The change of modus operandi for Operation Atalanta was initially viewed rather negatively. However, the statistics clearly show that the presence of EU naval patrols, primarily to protect merchant vessels, including WFP ships bringing aid to Somalia, had a deterrent effect on pirates. This has led to a drastic decrease in pirate attacks to a point where there have been virtually no attacks in the immediate vicinity of African coasts.[106]

In 2015, Atalanta substantially achieved and implemented the objectives set out in its mandate, in particular reducing the threat of piracy by providing security assets and protecting over 1,400 WFP shipments and over 700 AMISOM vessels.[107] In 2011 and 2012 there were 265 suspicious events, 350 attacks, 72 of which were by pirates, and 73 incidents, whereas in 2018 and 2019 there were only 9 suspicious events, 3 attacks, none of which were by pirates and only one incident.[108] One prior incident for example was the hijacking of the American cargo ship, which began on 9 April 2009 when four pirates hijacked the American freighter *Maersk Alabama* in the Indian Ocean. This led to a hostage situation

[104] European External Action Service, 'European Union Naval Force Somalia. Operation Atalanta', *Media and Public Information Office*, Northwood: European Union Operation HQ, 2012, p. 5.
[105] Palm, 'Cooperative Bargaining in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy: EUNAVFOR Atalanta', p. 139.
[106] Dombrowski and Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia', p. 21.
[107] Dombrowski and Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia'. p. 24. See also Hans-Georg Ehrhart and Kerstin Petretto, 'Stabilizing Somalia: Can the EU's Comprehensive Approach Work?', *European Security* 23 (2), 2014, p. 179-194.
[108] European External Action Service, 'Key Facts and Figures', 11 May 2022, 2022.

and a subsequent rescue operation by armed forces.

4.2.2 Internal Cooperation

The most important aspect in terms of intra-EU cooperation is the political cooperation between EU Member States in order to generate the necessary resources if needed and to have the political will to achieve the objectives of the *EU Global Strategy*.[109] However, there is also a constant need for coordination within the institutions prior and during a military CSDP deployment to achieve the objectives of the *EU Global Strategy*. The positive aspects of the internal political and interinstitutional levels of cooperation will be presented, followed by examples that highlight the weaknesses internal cooperation.

The rapid deployment of financial, material and human resources, the quick execution of their duties at the beginning and the fact that the operation continues to this day is primarily due to the national willingness of the EU Member States to engage in negotiations.[110] In particular, the low degree of polarisation between the United Kingdom, Germany and France was decisive for the launch of Atalanta.[111] Although the positions of the different states were not uniform at the beginning, they developed different roles over time, which were conditioned by certain national interests.

Initially, France was the driving force of the launch and deployment of Operation Atalanta in the Gulf of Aden and convinced the more reluctant member states.[112] The French takeover of the EU Council Presidency and the view that the risk of casualties for European troops in the maritime domain could be kept lower than in land operations resulted in the impetus for a joint EU naval operation in the

[109] Anand Menon, 'Don't Assume CSDP Will Flourish without the UK'', *European Leadership Network* (blog), 2016.
[110] Palm, 'Cooperative Bargaining in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy: EUNAVFOR Atalanta', p. 139.
[111] Nicole Koenig, 'EU Security Policy and Crisis Management: A Quest for Coherence', New York: Routledge, 2016, p. 99.
[112] Marianne Riddervold, 'A Geopolitical Balancing Game? EU and NATO in the Fight Against'. *ARENA Centre for European Studies* ARENA Working Paper 4/2014, 2014, p. 6, 12-17.

Indian Ocean.[113] Therefore France´s ambitions thrived primarily on the national foreign policy idea of addressing the conflict in Somalia with an EU military operation in addition to its own protracted land operations in the Sahel region.[114] In addition, France, along with other EU states, had already operated ships in the Western Indian Ocean, which could simply be reflagged once European Atalanta forces were deployed.[115] For example, the French naval ships of Operation Alycon, which were tasked to escort WFP vessels form November 2007 onwards, were later integrated into Operation Atalanta. As part of the attempt to create a unified European army, Paris had already stationed 3,000 troops in neighbouring Djibouti and military infrastructure in Chad, Gabon and Djibouti before Atalanta has begun.[116] In this respect, it can be assumed that France certainly wanted to use the visibility of Atalanta presence in the Western Indian Ocean to distinguish itself as a political mobiliser within the framework of a Global-Power-EU-Coalition with the gaol of counterbalancing the US strategic dominance within NATO military operations.[117]

In contrast, the British leadership was initially unwilling to support strong EU military action against the pirates and was particularly critical regarding French proposals for a separate EU operation.[118] Its participation in previous international military operations were marked by its Euro-Atlantic mindset.[119] However, the UK discarded its initial position and adopted a pro-European view, which can be illustrated by two arguments: First, the UK considered an EU operation as more beneficial for protecting their economic interests than a NATO operation at that point of time. Secondly, the foreign policy EU competitor France should not hold a leading position in the strategy planning of an EU operation.

[113] Catherine Gegout, 'Causes and Consequences of the EU's Military Intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A Realist Explanation', *European Foreign Affairs Review* 10 (3), 2005, p. 440.
[114] Koenig, *EU Security Policy and Crisis Management: A Quest for Coherence*, p. 99.
[115] Oscar L Larsson and J. J. Widen, The European Union as a Maritime Security Provider – The Naval Diplomacy Perspective', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2022, p. 11.
[116] Mohammed Khalid. 2010. 'India and Djibouti in the Indian Ocean Geopolitics'. *Research Journal Social Sciences* 1, 2010, p. 36.
[117] Zajączkowski, 'EU Military Operations as a Tool in the EU's Foreign Policy Toolbox–The Main Trends and Limitations', p. 18.
[118] Annette Weber,. 'EU Naval Operation in the Gulf of Aden (EU NAVFOR Atalanta): Problem Unsolved, Piracy Increasing, Causes Remain', In *The EU as a Strategic Actor in the Realm of Security and Defence?,* RP 14, Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2009, p. 71-73.
[119] Palm, 'Cooperative Bargaining in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy: EUNAVFOR Atalanta', p. 135.

This decision is underpinned by the fact that the mandate of NATO's Operation Allied Provider was to be taken over by the EU upon completion, which in turn aroused the interest of the UK.[120] In this context, the geographical location of the pirate attacks is particularly noteworthy, as the Gulf of Aden is an elemental shipping route between Europe and Asia and would lead to economic bottlenecks if the threat of piracy were to continue**.** Then, affected vessels would use alternative routes, which would strain supply chains to Europe. As a result, for the first time in the history of CSDP operations, the UK, with its frigate and military experience, was given primacy in the coordination of a CSDP operation. Their participation with their prestigious Navy raised the profile of the operation in the European context. Moreover, this influenced the decision of other EU member states to become more involved. The British Navy's HMS Northumberland, which joined the NATO operation in late 2007 and Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150) became part of Atalanta a year later.[121]

The role often attributed to Germany as a bystander changed into a supporter role of a military crisis management operation by opposing the expansion of NATO´s operation's mandate and supporting EU mandate, because Atalanta's rules of engagement were considered much clearer and more robust compared to those of NATO.[122] This allowed Germany to assert its economic driven foreign policy interests within the framework of Atalanta.[123] In retrospect, this move is mainly due to Germany's foreign policy goal of prioritising the preservation of economic security, as the country was the largest EU exporter in 2008 and was economically most affected by Somali piracy. In addition, German decision-makers also recognised the economic importance of the Gulf of Aden, as it was estimated that that around 20 percent of world trade passed through in 2012.[124] Thus, Berlin´s priority was to secure trade routes and vulnerable ships by deploying patrolling warships in the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) off the Somali coast and escort merchant ships through the Gulf of Aden.

[120] Anna Umlaufova, 'NATO-EU Maritime Cooperation'. Background Report XXII NATO 01, Prazsky Studentsky Summit, 2016, p. 8.
[121] Larik, 'Europe's Fight Against Piracy: From the Barbary Coast to Operation Atalanta', p. 5.
[122] Koenig, *EU Security Policy and Crisis Management: A Quest for Coherence*, p. 102.
[123] Marianne Riddervold, 'Finally Flexing Its Muscles? Atalanta–The European Union's Naval Military Operation against Piracy', *European Security* 20 (3), 2011, p. 399.
[124] Paul Pryce, 'The Maritime Alliance: Flow Security, Mahan, And The Future Of NATO', NATO Association of Canada, 27 August 2013.

Berlin ultimately even exceeded the threshold of its traditional symbolic contribution in the form of frigate support.[125]

As a result of the internal coordinating efforts of the three major EU member states prior to the launch of Operation Atalanta, although these actually pursued three different focal points of interest, a number of successes were achieved at the operational level. In material terms, full operational capability (FOC) was already achieved in February 2009, with the completion of the operation's development consisting of a force of at least six warships, several reconnaissance aircraft and up to 1,500 soldiers.[126] In addition, personnel numbers were gradually increased to a dozen ships supported by three maritime reconnaissance aircraft and eight helicopters. This was a novelty in EU crisis management, considering the deployment of resources in previous operations. In 2016, eight years after the launch, the national EU armies still deployed an average of five to ten frigates and support vessels as well as two to three maritime reconnaissance ships.[127] This initial coordination of EU policies resulted in an equitable distribution of financial resources with lower individual costs. Moreover, the respective operating costs of each country's ships and logistical infrastructure were lower than in conventional land operations. This is evidenced by the fact that 17 Member States were still actively contributing to the operation in 2019.

Due to the results that have been achieved so far, i.e. the decrease in pirate attacks, EU Member States gradually reduced the provision of their resources, but only up to the threshold at which the threat of pirate attack was not present. With regard to financial burdens, member states have for example developed a certain unwillingness to consider an increase in common costs over the course of the operation.[128] This resulted in a reduction in the mandate budget from €14.9 million in 2013 to 2015 to €11.7 million at present.[129] The result, however, was

[125] See F. Reininghaus, 'Operation Atalanta at the Horn of Africa - The German Contribution to the First Maritime Operation of the European Union', *Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Norskies w Gdyni* 84, 2014, p. 134–51.
[126] Radomír Kaňa and Monika Mynarzová, 'Interoperability between EU Countries in the Security Area', In *European Integration 2012*, 329, VŠB-Technical University of Ostrava, 2012, p. 112.
[127] Germond and Marchi, 'The EU's Comprehensive Approach as the Dominant Discourse: A Corpus-Linguistics Analysis of the EU's Counter-Piracy Narrative', p. 8.
[128] Niklas I.M Nováky, 'Who Wants to Pay More? The European Union's Military Operations and the Dispute over Financial Burden Sharing', *European Security* 25 (2), 2016, p. 228-233.
[129] United Kingdom: House of Lords: Select Committee on the European Union, *Turning the Tide on Piracy, Building Somalia's Future: Follow-up Report on the EU's Operation Atalanta and*

not only a general decrease in financial contributions, but also that the annual cost of Operation Atalanta to member states is estimated to be between €1 and €1.5 billion, far in excess of six years' development assistance.[130]

The last mandate extension of Operation Atalanta, most recently in 2021, did not lack the political will to provide the necessary troop capacity to deploy sufficient military personnel.[131] Given the peak of 1,943 military personnel in 2008, the number decreased by an average of 900 in 2020.[132] While still a high number compared to other CSDP operations, the decrease did not affect the ability to fulfil its counter-piracy task effectively. The initial success is still consistent because pirates permanently have ceased their activities.[133] A similar picture of track record emerges in terms of material resources, as the originally dominant number of ships available for EU operations has shrunk over time to roughly the level of the US, Chinese and Russian navies active in the Gulf of Aden. However, Atalanta has not lacked maritime reconnaissance aircraft, and medical support, as the decline in flag changes have not had repercussions on interrupting possible pirate attack.[134] However, these must be taken into account in any threat situation, especially Atalanta, as the volume of ships in the Gulf of Aden that may potentially be targeted by pirate attacks is simply enormous. For example, there are figures that indicate that between 2005 and 2013, 179 ships were hijacked in the Horn of Africa and ransoms of more than $400 million were paid.[135]

Regarding the second hypothesis, intra-institutional coordination has played a crucial role in the possible success of Operation Atalanta. In the course of its military activities, Operation Atalanta is shaped by a strong influence of EU

Beyond, 3rd Report of Session 2012-13, Vol. 43. (2012-13)HL 43, The Stationery Office (TSO), 2012, p. 8.

[130] See Ehrhart and Petretto, 'Stabilizing Somalia: Can the EU's Comprehensive Approach Work?*',* p*. 179-194.*

[131] Dombrowski and Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia', p. 7-8.

[132] Daniel Fiott, 'As You Were?: The EU as an Evolving Military Actor', In *The CSDP in 2020: The EU's Legacy and Ambition in Security and Defence.* Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, 2020, p. 113.; Germond and Marchi, 'The EU's Comprehensive Approach as the Dominant Discourse: A Corpus-Linguistics Analysis of the EU's Counter-Piracy Narrative', p. 9.

[133] Ehrhart and Petretto, 'Stabilizing Somalia: Can the EU's Comprehensive Approach Work?', p. 185.

[134] Zajączkowski, 'EU Military Operations as a Tool in the EU's Foreign Policy Toolbox–The Main Trends and Limitations', p. 24.

[135] Dombrowski and Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia', p.18.

institutions and agencies through parallel civilian missions and strategic guidance. The *EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy*, developed in 2011 and coordinated by a Special Representative for the Horn of Africa region, is a key factor for the launch of cooperation between Atalanta and its two civilian sister missions, EUTM Somalia and EUCAP Nestor.[136] The civil-military cooperation focused on EUTM Somalia, launched in April 2010 to train and educate Somali National Army personnel and EUCAP Nestor (2012 to 2017), which aimed to strengthen piracy-affected countries in the region in building effective rule of law mechanisms.[137]

Furthermore the extensive flexibility of the rotating mandate's command structure in 2015 can be overall considered beneficial, because communication between ground forces in the area of operations via the EU Headquarters (HQ) and the EU EEAS have been well coordinated, unbureaucratic, simple and, according to naval officers, exemplary in terms of European capabilities.[138]

The broad intra-institutional approach for cooperation initially adopted seemed to face obstacles in the implementation process. These were caused by intra-institutional tensions regarding different views on the Somali conflict. In particular, the Commission and the EEAS reportedly had no appropriate coordinating procedures at the project level.[139] For example, in the area of development cooperation, differences of opinion were evident between the EEAS and the Commission's Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation/EuropeAid (DEVCO). Accordingly, DEVCO staff were concerned that EEAS colleagues would shift the focus of development cooperation with Somalia to economic or security-related objectives. This eventually led the Commission to refuse to fund equipment for the EU-trained Somali army. Traditional crisis management structures were further challenged by the strong involvement of Commission Directorate-Generals. These included Directorate-General for Development and Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid, as well as Directorate-General for

[136] Council of the European Union, 'EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy', 11855/12, Luxembourg, 2012.
[137] Hans Merket, 'Making the Puzzle Fit: Security and Development as Part of a Comprehensive Approach', In *The EU and the Security-Development Nexus* 12, Studies in EU External Relations, Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2016, p. 335.
[138] European External Action Service, 'Key Facts and Figures'.
[139] Pirozzi, 'The EU's Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management', p. 15.

Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.[140]

In summary, hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 can be confirmed inasmuch as on the one hand, intergovernmental political cooperation has been possible prior to the launch of Atalanta due to the experience already gained in the operational field with Combined Maritime Forces and NATO. On the other hand, the cooperation at the beginning of the operation was facilitated by the respective national interests of the three large EU Member States, Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Accordingly, the EU was able to provide sufficient military, material, technical and financial resources for Operation Atalanta. As a result, initial success was also achieved in combating pirate ships, protecting merchant vessels, resulting in a drastic reduction in pirate attacks. The following decrease of these resources did not inhibit a continuation of the ongoing coordination patterns and operational progress. Although interinstitutional disagreements between EU authorities indicate a certain operational fatigue in the EU, this has not affected the coherence of Operation Atalanta.

4.2.3. External Cooperation

The most important condition for the EU's efforts to progress in external cooperation at the multilateral level is a fruitful cooperation with NATO and the United Nations. Therefore partnerships between NATO´s Operation Ocean Shield, its predecessor NATO Allied Protector and the EU Operation Atalanta are central to success.

Prior to the launch of operational cooperation between EU and NATO in Operation Ocean Shield and Operation Atalanta in the Horn of Africa, the international community made several attempts to establish a multinational coordination mechanism. This was intended to facilitate information sharing and coordination to address the problem of piracy around Somalia.[141] This was made possible through successful cooperation between countries such as Canada, France, Denmark and the Netherlands and the deployment of warships. Between

[140] Damien Helly, 'Lessons from Atalanta and EU Counter-Piracy Policies', In *EUISS Seminar Reports*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2011, p. 4-5.
[141] Roger Middleton, 'Piracy in Somalia: Threatening Global Trade, Feeding Local Wars', *Chatham House Briefing Paper* AFP BP 08/02, 2008, p. 8-10.

2007 and 2008 these served as a protective force for vulnerable United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) vessels that entered Somali waters with escorts.[142] Building on the coordinated military efforts, Combined Taskforce 150 (CTF150) or Combined Taskforce 151 (CTF-151), a naval task force of the *Coalition of the Willing* under the US-led Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), was established in 2009 to support the fight against terrorism and particularly counter-terrorism at sea.[143] Thus, EU leadership also strived to institutionalise partnerships by integrating the efforts of third countries into coordination partnerships with the EU.[144] The *Framework Participation Agreements* (FPAs) concluded between the EU and non-EU states in 2004, included contributions of Norway, Croatia, Montenegro, Ukraine and Serbia, which, among others, provided key personnel at various intervals for Operation Atalanta.[145]

In terms of EU-NATO cooperation, the international maritime presence in the Gulf of Aden is a key example of the EU's role as an international crisis manager. The strength of unity that Operation Atalanta represents through its EU-NATO presence dwarfs unilateral operations by global and independent actors, such as China, Russia and India, which are also conducting anti-piracy operations in the area.[146] However, due to the intergovernmental nature of the two organisations, joint efforts during the Atalanta deployment remained essentially informal and rarely formalised.[147] To this day, the informal EU-NATO cooperation in counter-piracy is still widely regarded as a model of international cooperation, in particular because of the early consultations between the two parties.

The main reason for the more informal procedures stemmed from the necessity of collaboration between their respective mandates, which had clear overarching goals. The staff of the two organisations have developed a modus operandi that allows them to operate reasonably efficiently in complimentary but detached

[142] Larik, 'Europe's Fight Against Piracy: From the Barbary Coast to Operation Atalanta', p. 1-2.
[143] Carmen Gebhard and Simon J. Smith. 2015, 'The Two Faces of EU–NATO Cooperation: Counter-Piracy Operations off the Somali Coast', *Cooperation and Conflict* 50 (1), 2015, p. 113.
[144] Germond and Marchi, 'The EU's Comprehensive Approach as the Dominant Discourse: A Corpus-Linguistics Analysis of the EU's Counter-Piracy Narrative', p. 8-9.
[145] Thierry Tardy, 'CSDP: getting third states on board', Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, SSUE Brief 6, 2014, p. 1-4.
[146] See for extensive literature review on studies dealing EU-NATO cooperation in the Gulf of Aden in Gebhard and Smith, 'The Two Faces of EU–NATO Cooperation: Counter-Piracy Operations off the Somali Coast', p.107–27.
[147] Gebhard and Smith, 'The Two Faces of EU–NATO Cooperation: Counter-Piracy Operations off the Somali Coast', p. 121.

operations. One of the most prominent frameworks for cooperation between EU and NATO personnel in theatre is the so-called *Shared Awareness and Deconfliction* (SHADE) group.[148] Within this group, staff from both organisations have met informally to discuss their tactical strategy for upcoming duties. SHADE was responsible for the establishment of the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden. With a milestone of informal cooperation set, the parties agreed on the establishment of recommended shipping routes based on shared information about operational experiences in the Indian Ocean. This subsequently helped to curb piracy in the Gulf of Aden. In the end this allowed a better distribution of respective operational areas and a more precise coordination and division of tasks between the EU and NATO.

A few specific examples underline EU-NATO cooperation efforts from the EU's point of view. One important step at the EU level was the establishment of an EU Naval Coordination Cell (EU NAVCO) in September 2008, which was later integrated into the structure of Operation Atalanta. Its purpose was to improve coordination between the parties for the protection of vessels off the Somali coast.[149] September 2009 was a also defining point in time regarding EU coordination initiatives. Following UN Security Council Resolution 1816, cooperation between NATO and the EU was officially strengthened for the first time by the EU Council decision of 15 September 2008. Furthermore, through a EU Council decision on 23 March 2012, the EU initiated the creation of an Operations Centre (EU OPCEN) to support CSDP missions in the Horn of Africa, as well as liaison teams with the headquarters in Djibouti and the Combined Maritime Force in Bahrain.

In addition, joint efforts were also made by EU and NATO officials to informally deepen their strategic partnership. Based on a gentlemen's agreement, EU and NATO command officers, as well as the CMF officials, held several informal meetings starting in 2010. The aim of these meetings was to coordinate, on the basis of a six-month rotation, the deployment of forces to deter pirates from entering nearshore waters in the first place. In the months before, coordination

[148] Joris Larik, 'Europe's Fight Against Piracy: From the Barbary Coast to Operation Atalanta', p. 4.
[149] Gebhard and Smith, 'The Two Faces of EU–NATO Cooperation: Counter-Piracy Operations off the Somali Coast', p. 108.

efforts were heavily focused on open waters in the Gulf of Aden. The lack of coordinated forces in the coastal area resulted in ships passing through the Somali basin falling victim to pirate attacks.[150] The willingness of NATO commanders and the commander of Operation Atalanta to hold several informal meetings and thus enhance effective cooperation can be seen as an expression of mutual recognition.[151] Within this constellation, the UK in particular played a decisive role in promoting informal cooperation, as Atalanta´s headquarters were closely located to NATO's maritime headquarters in Northwood. The synergy between the two institutions, was clearly evident by the strong cooperation with the multinational naval coalition Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). It was in this spirit that the Training Awareness and De-confliction Forum (TRADE), a coordinated forum to raise awareness of maritime tactical training opportunities for navies operating in the Western Indian Ocean, was created.[152]

Two other examples of successful cooperation at the operational level can be found in relation to information and communication systems. One is the MERCURY system, a neutral communication channel that provided information to all SHADE participants to enable better real-time coordination. The second system is the EU's independent Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) in Brest, France.[153] The centre has the capabilities to provide EU Member States, non-EU participants as well as companies and their vessels access to statistics on the current threat situation in high-risk areas. It is therefore a prime example of effective cooperation, as it is a frequently used source of information for the maritime shipping industry.[154]

The picture of informal cooperation, which has so far been presented only positively, must be put into perspective, despite the lack of fundamental cooperation efforts at the formal level. This is partly because, although the NATO Secretary General and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs always

[150] Gebhard and Smith, 'The Two Faces of EU–NATO Cooperation: Counter-Piracy Operations off the Somali Coast', p. 118.
[151] Claudia Fahron-Hussey, *Military Crisis Management Operations by NATO and the EU: The Decision-Making Process, 1st ed, Opladen: Springer*, 2019, p. 211.
[152] Stefano Ruzza, 'The Horn of Africa: NATO and the EU as Partners Against Pirates', In *Projecting Resilience Across the Mediterranean,* Cham: Springer, 2020, p. 228–230.
[153] EU Naval Force – Somalia. Operation ATALANTA. 'Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA)', 2020.
[154] Larik, 'Europe's Fight Against Piracy: From the Barbary Coast to Operation Atalanta', p. 4.

publicly highlight the need for stronger cooperation between the two organisations, their institutional influence on their respective military commands, according to the top-down principle, is hardly noticeable.[155] Despite similar mandates and objectives of both organisations, there were no formal meetings between the command of EU Operation Atalanta and the command of NATO's Operation Ocean Shield. This is due to the intergovernmental nature of the two organisations. At the EU level, there were two different perspectives on how to achieve a balanced engagement of the member states of both organisations. While pro-NATO states in the *Euro-Atlanticist coalition*, including inter alia the Netherlands or the United Kingdom, argued that NATO remained the more effective option.[156] In contrast, France was clearly in favour of an EU operation in order to demonstrate the EU military power off the Somali coast.[157]

In this context, the question arose at the international level whether the EU should be given priority over NATO, also because of joint activities of NATO and the EU in similar geographical areas. A particular example of the aforementioned split position was the calculated decision at the EU planning level to launch Operation Atalanta on the same day that NATO's Operation Allied Provider ended in December 2008. However, this was not formally recognised as a handover.[158] Formal cooperation already had a negative connotation at the beginning of Atalanta, as no further NATO engagement in the region was planned at the time of the operation's launch. Nevertheless, in March 2009, NATO announced a follow-up mission, Operation Allied Protector, just as the EU was considering extending Atalanta until December 2009.

In the end, Operation Ocean Shield took over from Operation Allied Protector in August 2009 and ended in 2016. In this regard, informal cooperation was expressed through NATO and the EU often having used the same ships, aircrafts and personnel in the fight against piracy.[159] Although both organisation do not

[155] Gebhard and Smith, 'The Two Faces of EU–NATO Cooperation: Counter-Piracy Operations off the Somali Coast', p. 113.
[156] Niklas I.M. Nováky, *'European Union Military Operations: A Collective Action Perspective', 1st ed, London: Routledge,* 2018*, p.* 45, 83.
[157] Palm, 'Cooperative Bargaining in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy: EUNAVFOR Atalanta', p. 134.
[158] See in detail Fahron-Hussey, *Military Crisis Management Operations by NATO and the EU: The Decision-Making Process*.
[159] Germond and Marchi, 'The EU's Comprehensive Approach as the Dominant Discourse: A Corpus-Linguistics Analysis of the EU's Counter-Piracy Narrative', p. 16.

have integrated chains of command, no official tasks were shared, no joint planning was foreseen[160], and no exchange of sensitive information occurred[161], cooperation is evident given the fact that 21 EU Member States are also NATO Members and thus a certain degree of trust has always existed beyond organisational boundaries.[162] As such, throughout its entire period, the informal levels of cooperation remained outside the so-called *Berlin Plus Framework* of 2002[163] as far as the deployment of NATO capabilities is concerned.[164] In summary, the initial formal links but necessary informal willingness of NATO and the EU to cooperate appears to have been successful.[165]

In contrast to the EU-NATO partnership off the Somali coast, EU-UN cooperation differed in most aspects, with the exception that both the UN and the EU developed a practice of informal cooperation. The EU's multilateral efforts with the UN bodies encountered many hurdles and blockages because of length of Operation Atalanta's mandate. These issues were particularly evident in the military and maritime aspects of Atalanta, as the UN, unlike the EU, focused mainly on humanitarian purposes inside Somalia. Nevertheless, both organisations have jointly created and supported a large number of regional forums, suitable for improving regional cooperation. For example, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), EU cooperation increasingly focused on prosecution of piracy criminals. In addition, the Indian Ocean Maritime Crime Forum (IOFMC) was established in 2015 as part of these cooperative efforts. This was an important regional mechanism that coordinated the actions of regional maritime law enforcement agencies, especially regarding illegal trafficking and smuggling.[166]

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[160] Gebhard and Smith, 'The Two Faces of EU–NATO Cooperation: Counter-Piracy Operations off the Somali Coast', p. 107.
[161] Gebhard and Smith, 'The Two Faces of EU–NATO Cooperation: Counter-Piracy Operations off the Somali Coast', p. 114-15.
[162] Gebhard and Smith, 'The Two Faces of EU–NATO Cooperation: Counter-Piracy Operations off the Somali Coast', p. 120.
[163] Gebhard and Smith, 'The Two Faces of EU–NATO Cooperation: Counter-Piracy Operations off the Somali Coast', p. 108.
[164] Germond and Marchi, 'The EU's Comprehensive Approach as the Dominant Discourse: A Corpus-Linguistics Analysis of the EU's Counter-Piracy Narrative', p. 16.
[165] Fahron-Hussey, *Military Crisis Management Operations by NATO and the EU: The Decision-Making Process*, p. 212.
[166] Christian Bueger, Timothy Edmunds and Robert McCabe, 'Into the Sea: Capacity-Building Innovations and the Maritime Security Challenge', *Third World Quarterly* 41 (2), 2020, p. 233.

Other cooperation efforts were primarily aimed at coordinating the fight against piracy. A cornerstone of this cooperation was the founding of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS).[167] This voluntary, informal, and comprehensive framework was established in January 2009 and brought more than fifty countries and international organisations together to discuss and coordinate anti-piracy measures. Especially representatives of EUNAVFOR Atalanta played an important role at participating at this forum.[168] Based on informal cooperation procedures, UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme and Atalanta teams have already conducted joint training to improve mutual skills and practices in the transfer of suspected pirates. As a result of the positive experience, UNODC was particularly interested in joint capacity building with Atalanta and its sister land-based missions EUTM Nestor and EUCAP Somalia in rendition of suspected pirates. This led, for example, to regional actors such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) being strengthened by the EU and other key regional actors.[169]

However, due to its non-formal character, EU-UN cooperation efforts were confronted with the problem of so-called *captured and released phenomenon* of Somali pirates.[170] Due to the intergovernmental nature of Atalanta and the insufficient efforts to coordinate with the Somali leadership and other coastal states in the region, especially regarding the provisions of international law and human rights, this issue is unlikely to be ever resolved.[171] The process of so-called *legal termination*, i.e. the transfer of captured pirates into the custody of the states concerned to ensure a uniform procedure, would have been essential for the EU's credible deterrence campaign. Similarly, a missing EU-wide legal

[167] Zajączkowski, 'EU Military Operations as a Tool in the EU's Foreign Policy Toolbox–The Main Trends and Limitations', p. 17.
[168] Alexandru Voicu and Ruxandra-Laura Bosilca, 'Maritime Security Governance in the Fight against Piracy off the Coast of Somalia: A Focus on the EU Response', *EURINT* 2 (2015), 2015, p. 376-78.
[169] Christian Bueger, 'Effective Maritime Domain Awareness in the Western Indian Ocean', *Institute for Security Studies* Policy Brief No. 104, 2017, p. 7.; See also United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2018. 'Global Maritime Crime Programme Annual Report 2017', Vienna.
[170] Mathilda Twomey, 'Muddying The Waters of Maritime Piracy or Developing The Customary Law Of Piracy? Somali Piracy and Seychelles', In *The New Zealand Association for Comparative Law* Yearbook 19, Wellington: Association for Comparative Law, 2013, p. 38.
[171] Douglas Guilfoyle, 'Prosecuting Pirates: The Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, Governance and International Law', *Global Policy* 4 (1), 2013, p. 76-79.

regime for the prosecution of pirates or other criminal actors in maritime operations has had a direct impact on the EU's operational behaviour due to jurisdictional issues.[172]

In summary, the second hypothesis can be confirmed to the extent that the EU was able to gain experience in combating piracy in cooperation with other actors even prior to the launch of Atalanta. In addition, the external coordination and EU-NATO cooperation in the initial phase of the operation proved to be particularly valuable. The existing operational experience has enabled the EU to establish direct contacts with regional and international actors who were engaged militarily in the Horn of Africa. Over time, the operation has revealed some shortcomings in cooperation, but these have not had a major impact on its success.[173] Sometimes the operation has been impeded by formal, i.e. political and institutional, obstacles, but informal communication forums have remained largely effective. The mutual exchange of informal information and the coordinated division of labour, especially between NATO and the EU, are therefore decisive in ensuring that there have been no pirate attacks to date. Moreover, Atalanta's cooperation with UN agencies can be considered very similar to EU-NATO, as this partnership has also been dedicated to the fight against pirate attacks and the protection of merchant vessels.

[172] Tim Edmunds, 'Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of Africa: States of Somalia', *EU-CIVCAP Working Paper* 1, 2017, p. 4
[173] Riddervold, 'A Geopolitical Balancing Game?', p. 546.

4.3. Operation Sophia (22 June 2015 – 31 March 2020)

The Operation European Union Naval Force Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED) – Operation Sophia, named after the girl Sophia, who was born to a Somali migrant mother on board of the German frigate Schleswig-Holstein, was an EU military operation which was launched in 2015 in response to large refugee flows in the Mediterranean Sea and ended on 31 March 2020. The launch happened after hundreds of migrants tragically died on 29 April 2015 while trying to cross the Mediterranean on a boat from Mistrata in Libya towards the Italian island of Lampedusa. The operation's mandate, which was legitimised by UN Security Council Resolution 2240 and conducted within the framework of CSDP, was unique in that it focused on combating smuggling networks on the Central Mediterranean Route.[174] Only two months after the launch of the EUNAVFOR MED *Crisis Management Concept*, the entire planning process, starting from a decision of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on 22 June 2015, took just five weeks. Structurally, the tasks should be carried out in four successive operational phases, all within the framework of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). In sequence (cf. Figure 5) Phase I, a deployment and assessment phase, was dedicated to the detection and monitoring migration networks through conducting intelligence operations that were not subject to a UN resolution. In contrast, Phases II and III were more operational, involving search operations in Libya's international and internal waters, as well as the seizure, removal or decommissioning of people-smuggling vessels. The scope of action, without obtaining a UN mandate, was extended to the high seas off the north-eastern coast of Libya to address the root causes, i.e. the flight in countries of origin and transit. Finally, Phase IV was dedicated to the termination of the operation. Ultimately, Sophia failed to progress to the final two phases and was superseded by the follow-up naval operation EU NAVFOR IRINI, which took over the

[174] EUNAVFOR MED, Operation Sophia, 'High Representative and Vice-President Federica Mogherini Visits the Eunavfor Med Headquarters in Rome', 24 September 2015, 2015.

enforcement of the UN arms embargo with air, satellite and naval forces.[175]

Figure 5: Chronological Development of Mandates and Expansion of Tasks[176]

(Author´s own illustration)

Development of Operation Sophia	**Timeline**
Phase I	*22 June 2015 to 27 July 2015*
Phase II	*28 September 2015*
UNSC adopted Resolution 2240 "against the trafficking of migrants and the smuggling of people at sea in the Mediterranean".[177]	*9 October 2015*
UNSC adopted Resolution 2292 under Chapter VII of the UN Charter authorizing "the inspection of suspected embargo-breaking vessels off Libya's Coast".[178]	*14 June 2016*
The Council of the EU extended the mandate of Sophia until 27 July 2017 and added two supporting tasks.	*20 June 2016*
The European Council approved a Joint Communication on migration by the EU High Representative and EU Commission.	*3 February 2017*
European Parliament Resolution addresses the role of the EU´s external actions to strengthen Sophia, to protect EU external borders and to prevent human smuggling and trafficking.	*5 April 2017*
The Council extended the mandate of Sophia until 31 December 2018.	*27 July 2017*
The Council extended the mandate of Sophia mandate until 31 September 2019 but suspended its naval assets.	*31 March 2019*
The Council extended Sofia's mandate until March 2020, while the Navy's funding remains suspended.	*26 September 2019*

[175] Chloé Peyronnet, 'EUNAFVOR MED Opération IRINI à l'épreuve Des Défis Contemporains de l'Union de La Région de Méditerranée Centrale', *Paix et Sécurité Européenne et Internationale*, 2022, p. 2.
[176] Tania Latici, ''Legislative Train Schedule: European Union Naval Force – Mediterranean Operation Sophia'. DEVELOPMENT – DEVE, European Parliament, 2022, p. 2.
[177] Latici, 'Legislative Train Schedule: European Union Naval Force – Mediterranean Operation Sophia', p. 1.
[178] Latici, 'Legislative Train Schedule: European Union Naval Force – Mediterranean Operation Sophia', p. 1.

Sophia's mandate was officially suspended and the naval operation EU NAVFOR IRINI has taken over the enforcement of the UN arms embargo by air, satellite, and sea means. The objectives of the operation are to inspect vessels suspected of transporting weapons or related material to Libya, to further train the Libyan coast guard and to prevent human trafficking along the Libyan coast in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2292.[179]	*31 arch 2020*

4.3.1. Mandated Operational Flexibility

Operation Sophia's mandate, which defines its scope of action and activities, developed a certain operational flexibility in successive phases, but this was considerably limited by the expansion of tasks in the mandate. The combination of fighting trafficking networks and rescuing migrants on the high seas has proved contradictory. Considering the specificities of the operation, the broad task list was not tailored to the precarious situation in the Mediterranean. The fight against criminal human traffickers was given priority over the plight of people in distress at sea.

The launch of EU military operations in a given region is typically initiated only after a so-called invitation has been issued by the UN Security Council. However, UN Security Council Resolution 2240, which permitted combating people-smuggling networks in the Mediterranean, was only issued after Sophia had already been in operation for four months. Even more surprising was that the Sophia mandate for the first time provided for the possibility of operating in the territorial and internal waters as well as on the land of a sovereign state without the prior consent of the country in question. The requirement for this was an authorisation by the UN Security Council, which the CSDP leadership was

[179] Press Office – General Secretariat of the Council, 'EU Launches Operation Irini to Enforce Lybia Amrs Embargo', 195/20, Brussels: Council of the EU, 2020.; See also Camila Kirtzman, 'SOPHIA to IRINI: A Shift in EU Mediterranean Operations', 5 November 2020.

awaiting. In this context, the geographical scope of dismantling smuggling networks on the high seas under Phase II posed a particular challenge to the mandated activities, because the mandate stipulated that EU naval forces had to be able to operate in Libyan territorial waters after a given stage, on the basis of a UN security clearance. This meant that the search operations planned in Phases IIB and III in Libya's internal waters for smuggling vessels were bound to fail. Although the EU tried to mediate between all parties in the UN Security Council, but the Libyan authorities, China and Russia blocked any intervention in Libyan internal waters as well as on the Libyan mainland.[180] This ultimately impeded the EU from obtaining a legal mandate to conduct operations in Libya´s territorial waters, which meant that the Sophia High Command maintained its limited original mandate. As a result, Sophia's focus intensified on dismantling smuggling networks, which was seen as a controversial issue.

Besides this controversy, positive figures were also recorded in the first two years of its operational activities. The business model of smugglers operating from the Libyan coast has declined. In July 2017, 470 vessels were destroyed, and 110 suspected smugglers arrested since the operation began.[181] In addition, Sophia was able to report positive figures in terms of people rescued at sea, as indicated by the decrease in the number of dead migrants (cf. Figure 6). The operation was able to move quickly from the Phase I, in which both security and humanitarian results were achieved without collateral damage, to more onerous Phase II tasks. These were the dismantling of large-scale smuggling and trafficking, capacity building, implementation of the UN Security Council oil and arms embargo, search and rescue operations and more traditional situational awareness operations at sea.[182] By 31 December 2016, Operation Sophia had arrested 101 suspected smugglers and traffickers, destroyed 372 vessels and conducted 222 search and rescue operations. In the process, 31,899 migrants were rescued at sea and 253 arms embargoes were imposed.[183] Furthermore, according to official

[180] Mireia Estrada-Cañamares,'Operation Sophia before and after UN Security Council Resolution No 2240 (2015)', *European Papers-A Journal on Law and Integration* 1 (1), 2016, p. 188.
[181] Martin Baldwin-Edwards and Derek Lutterbeck, 'Coping with the Libyan Migration Crisis'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45 (12), 2019, p. 2253.
[182] Johansen, 'Assessing the European Union's Strategic Capacity: The Case of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia', p. 519-521.
[183] Nicolas Gros-Verheyde, 'Quel Est Le Bilan de l'opération Sophia (EUNAVFOR Med) Jusqu'à Aujourd'hui ?', *Bruxelles 2 (B2)* (blog),Taylor & Francis, 11 January 2017.

EU figures, the EU itself intercepted over 2 500 people, inspected 13 ships and seized 2 weapons.[184]

Figure 6: Table of Migrant Deaths by Main Mediterranean Routes (2014-2018)[185]

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Central route	3,165	2,877	4,581	2,834	316
Eastern route	59	806	434	62	0
Western route	59	102	128	223	98
Total	**3,283**	**3,785**	**5,143**	**3,119**	**414**

The positive and negative aspects mentioned can only superficially indicate to what extent successive mandate extensions have had or are having a permanent deterrent effect on smuggling networks. In order to assess the extent of impact of cooperation on rescuing migrants at sea or stopping the illegal smuggling of people, it is necessary to take a close look at internal and external cooperation prior to the launch and during Operation Sophia.

4.3.2. Internal Cooperation

The path to multilateralism is shaped by the political will of EU member states and the will to cooperate between EU institutions. In this context, observations of cooperation at the beginning and during Operation Sophia can be made on two different levels. First, from the perspective of cooperation between states, and secondly from the perspective of intra-institutional EU cooperation. The latter particularly involves many EU bodies, agencies and institutions, because the EU is more directly affected due to the geographical proximity and sensitive nature of migration flows into Europe.

[184] Council of the European Union, 'Foreign Affairs Council, 18-19 April 2016, 2016.
[185] Figure retrieved from A. Triandafyllidou and M.L., 'Migrant Smuggling Data and Research: A Global Review of the Emerging Evidence Base', 2, Geneva: International Organisation for Migration, 2018, p. 111.; Original Data Source: International Organization for Migration, 'Migration Within the Mediterranean', 2022.

The initial rapid deployment of resources and military forces in Operation Sophia in the Southern and Central Mediterranean, as well as the time-limited mandate were due to volatile, indecisive and polarised positions of EU Member States on the issue of migration flows.[186] They did not display high degrees of previous national willingness and intention to engage in cooperative dialogues and partnerships of a joint military operation.[187] It was not until the disastrous Lampedusa incident on 29 April 2015, in which approximately 650 migrants drowned in Libyan waters south of Lampedusa, that they changed their state positions.[188] As a result, an agreement to launch an operation under the CSDP framework was only reached in April 2015. Within the unification process in the EU Council, the problem of criminal and illegal immigration in the central Mediterranean was not treated as an EU problem, but still as an Italian issue.[189] The pattern of cooperation among major EU countries during the migration crisis is a prime example on how overcoming domestic competing political positions. In retrospect, it was only with hindsight that consensus could be reached on a specific mandate based on an operation at sea with minimal risk and cost, due to earlier political sensitivities around Mare Nostrum.[190] As a result, the main impetus for extending the Sophia Mandate in all following cooperation agreements was given by the Italian government, through which rapid resources made it possible to complete Phase I in just two months.[191] In terms of promoting intra-European cooperation in the operation, no great credit can be given to the three member states, Germany, France and the UK. These countries were holding back on an operational solution under the CSDP prior to the launch of Sophia, while Italy's navy and coast guard were already playing an active role in

[186] Marianne Riddervold, 'A Humanitarian Mission in Line with Human Rights? Assessing Sophia, the EU's Naval Response to the Migration Crisis'. *European Security* 27 (2), 2018, p. 166.
[187] Giulia Mantini, 'A EU Naval Mission Without a Navy: The Paradox of Operation Sophia', *IAI Commentaries*, no. 19, 2019, p. 9.
[188] BBC, 'Mediterranean Migrants: Hundreds Feared Dead after Boat Capsizes', BBC, 19 April 2015.
[189] Margriet Drent, 'Militarising Migration? EU and NA Militarising Migration? EU and NATO Involvement at the European Border', *Clingendael Spectator* 4 (72), 2018, p. 1.
[190] Dombrowski and Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia', p. 41.
[191] Niklas I.M. Nováky, 'The Road to Sophia: Explaining the EU's Naval Operation in the Mediterranean', *European View* 17 (2), 2018, p. 200.

rescuing migrants and refugees at sea in the Strait of Sicily in Operation Mare Nostrum, which took place from 18 October 2013 to 31 October 2014.[192]

On the day the unilateral naval operation Mare Nostrum ended and the EU Frontex Operation Triton began, Italy, as a framework state – a state from which the operational activities that has to share the burden of managing the migration problem, warned against a backlash without a CSDP replacement operation. Because unlike Mare Nostrum, Triton had a more limited mandate and essentially focused only on securing EU maritime borders and not on rescuing migrants at sea.[193] The launch of Triton was the result of the EU Commission's initiative for a new, innovative border management operation. This suited the reluctant role of the Big Three, as they rejected the basic idea of a CSDP operation and preferred an EU Frontex intervention.[194] Despite the increase in drowning incidents in 2014, many EU Member States continued to oppose the idea of exchanging Mare Nostrum with an EU search and rescue mission.

France, for example, preferred the concept of a less risky follow-on mission through interdiction, border control and proactive land operations in Libya.[195] For its part, the United Kingdom wanted to end Mare Nostrum because of its perception that the operation had worked as an unintended *pull factor*, encouraging migrants to cross the Mediterranean and leading to more deaths.[196] Berlin had a similarly sceptical stance towards all previous operations that had served as a general bridge to Europe for migrants and argued that the EU should focus more on controlling its borders.[197] In the end, a minimal consensus was reached by means of Operation Frontex Plus, later renamed Operation Triton. It was intended to support Italian efforts, but not to replace or substitute for their obligations in monitoring and surveillance.[198] Triton had far less resources and

[192] Mihaela Mustăţea, 'Italy and the Mare Nostrum Operation (October 2013-October 2014)', *Euro-Atlantic Studies* EAS New Series No. 2, 2019, p. 104.
[193] Nováky, 'The Road to Sophia: Explaining the EU's Naval Operation in the Mediterranean', p. 198.
[194] See Jorrit Rijpma and Mathias Vermeulen, 'EUROSUR: Saving Lives or Building Borders?' *European Security* 24 (3), 2015, p. 457-459, 465–468.
[195] Dombrowski and Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia', p. 35.
[196] Alan Travis, 'UK Axes Support for Mediterranean Migrant Rescue Operation', *The Guardian*, 27 October 2014.
[197] Nováky, 'The Road to Sophia: Explaining the EU's Naval Operation in the Mediterranean', p. 202.
[198] European Commission, 'Frontex Joint Operation "Triton" – Concerted Efforts to Manage Migration in the Central Mediterranean', Memo/14/566, Brussels.

was not capable of carrying out search and rescue operations on a permanent basis.

Beyond that, the Libya issue exacerbated the disagreements both between the Big Three and between them and Italy, as the Libyan authorities received different levels of political support from the four EU governments involved in the region. While France provided bilateral logistical and military support to Khalifa Haftar - a warlord rivalling the Libyan government in Tripoli - since 2016, Italy actively participated in capacity building to strengthen the internationally recognised government in Tripoli with a bilateral military mission called MIASIT.[199] Given the complex political situation in Libya, cooperation was ultimately not implemented due to the two rival governments and numerous grey borderland controlled by rival warlords and jihadist groups.[200] Effective cooperation with a stable Libya at the regional level, envisaged by the establishment of EU bodies such as the EU Migration Liaison and Planning Cell (EULPC) as well as civilian CSDP missions such as EUBAM Libya and parallel UN political missions, was however hampered by the fact that Sophia had no permission to operate in Libyan territorial waters.[201] This also resulted in a lack of effective law enforcement tools for apprehended people smugglers.[202]

However, the Lampedusa disaster on 18 April 2015 gave a decisive twist to the predominant opposition of the Big Three. Because of the media hype about this tragic event, the reluctant positions of the member states changed and finally supported a joint EU operation, including search and rescue tasks, in an extraordinary meeting of the European Council on 23 April 2015. Moreover, the EU foreign and interior ministers even agreed on an interinstitutional 10-point plan for immediate action.[203] For geographical reasons, Italy as a strong framework state and Rome as a national Operational Headquarters – central authority issuing operational orders - played a decisive role in this phase. The traditional

[199] Matteo Ilardo, 'The Rivalry between France and Italy over Libya and Its Southwest Theatre', *Austria Institut Für Europa und Sicherheitspolitik* 5, 2018, p. 2.
[200] Mikael Eriksson, 'A Fratricidal Libya: Making Sense of a Conflict Complex', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 27 (5), 2016, p. 828.
[201] Sophie Dura, 'The EU in the Central Mediterranean: Impact and Implications of the Comprehensive Approach', *European Journal of Migration and Law* 20 (2), 2018, p. 208-210.
[202] Dombrowski and Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia', p. 34.
[203] Nováky, 'The Road to Sophia: Explaining the EU's Naval Operation in the Mediterranean', p. 203.

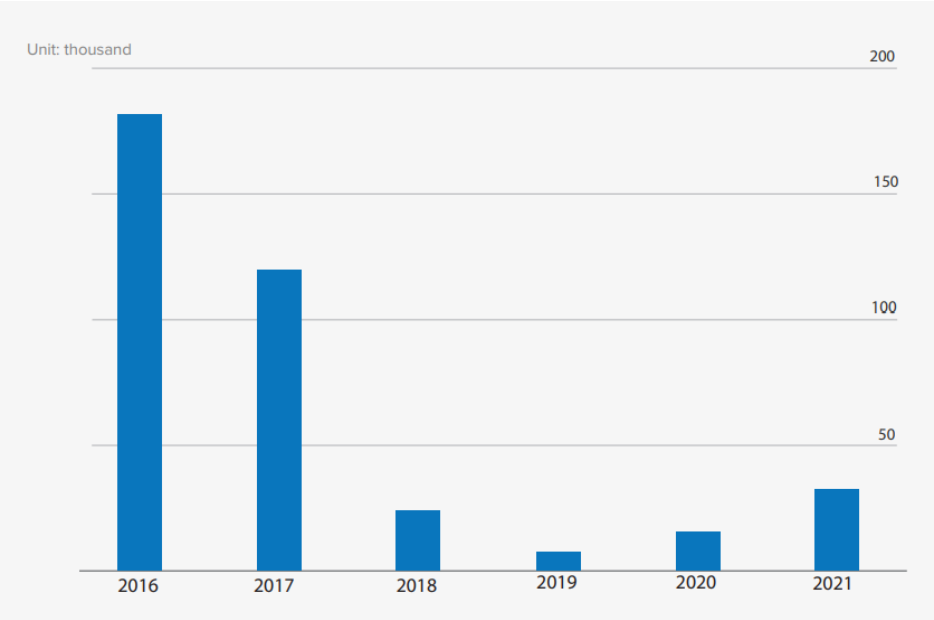
modus operandi in the planning process, which usually takes between four and six months, was replaced by faster response times, as there was not enough time to develop the military strategic options and have them approved by the Council. In this way, the rapid launch of Sophia to counter people smugglers and irregular migration flows in the central part of the Mediterranean Sea was greatly facilitated.[204] Moreover, Rome provided more than 50 percent of the troops for the operation, which amounted to more than 100 million € per year. Because this tragedy was now no longer seen as an immigration crisis in the political setting, but as a humanitarian crisis, the Big Three also had to react quickly. Germany offered a frigate and ten ships even before Sophia was launched. France agreed to provide aircraft and patrol boats. The UK even offered the Royal Navy's flagship, HMS Bulwark.[205]

UNCHR data shows that despite the late coordination of the three major member states and Italy, Operation Sophia achieved success at the operational level, as evidenced by the drastic decrease in the total number of migrants arriving by sea between 2015 and 2020 (cf. Figure 7). However, the consequence of this was that migration shifted strongly eastwards via the Balkan Route, which resulted in a 9 percent decrease on the Central Mediterranean Route in 2016.[206] The initial success was therefore possible due to the quick financial, material and human capacities. As a result of the fairly large human and material contributions, the operation was able to deploy forces only four days after its official launch by the Council on 22 June 2015 and reached full operational capability within 35 days.[207] Furthermore four naval units and five air forces were also deployed in Phase I.[208] Perhaps most notable, is the fact that it was one of the most active operations in CSDP history, peaking at 1,666 personnel from 26 EU Member States.[209] Moreover, within the first seven months of the operation a total of 24 EU Member

[204] Nováky, *'European Union Military Operations: A Collective Action Perspective'*, p. 175.
[205] Ian Traynor, 'Migrant Deaths: EU Leaders to Triple Funding of Rescue Operations'. *The Guardian*, 23 April 2015.
[206] Operation Commander Operation SOPHIA (EEAS), 'EUNAVFOR MED – Operation SOPHIA Six Monthly Report: June, 22nd to December, 31st 2015', 5653/16, Brussels: Council of the EU, 2016.
[207] European External Action Service, 'EU Concept for Military Command and Control – Rev 8', 8798/19, Brussels: Council of the EU, 2019
[208]House of Lords European Union Committee, 'Operation Sophia, The EU´s Naval Mission in the Mediterranean: An Impossible Challenge'. 14th Report of Session 2015–16, HL Paper 144, 2016, p. 13.
[209] Fiott, 'As You Were?: The EU as an Evolving Military Actor', p. 113.

States decided to participate in the operation, while by the end in 2020, as many as 22 countries were still involved in the operation in total.[210]

Figure 7: Arrivals of Migrants by Sea in Europe from Libya (2016-2021) [211]



However, after two years of successful operation, EU Member States' intention to prolong their active financial participation declined due to the interruption of Phase IIB. This could essentially only cover the running costs for the Operational Headquarters in Rome and the Force Headquarters – main base of standby operational forces - in the area of operations.[212] Moreover, the objective of managing migrant flows to Europe and, above all, saving lives at sea, was seriously compromised by the uneven distribution of the burden among member states.[213] This led to a period of intergovernmental deadlock at the EU level in 2018 and 2019, which created obstacles in the operation and thus impeded the

[210] Ana Paula Brandão, 'The CSDP-FSJ Nexus in Maritime Security: The Case of Operation Sophia', Barcelona, 2018, p. 17.
[211] Regional Bureau for Europe (UNHCR), 'Arrivals to Europe from Libya - 2021 in Review', United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021.
[212] Riddervold, 'A Humanitarian Mission in Line with Human Rights? Assessing Sophia, the EU's Naval Response to the Migration Crisis', p. 5.
[213] Annegret Bendiek and Raphael Bossong, 'Shifting Boundaries of the EU's Foreign and Security Policy: A Challenge to the Rule of Law', Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik 12, 2019, p. 12.

essential implementation of the mandate. Minimal intergovernmental cooperation was the result when EU Member States refused to distribute refugees rescued on in the Mediterranean among member states according to an equitable principle of distribution. Italy, in particular, was affected by a right-minded government's domestic policy to take drastic measures within Operation Sophia. Therefore Italian port authorities resisted taking in rescued migrants, which led to the country suspending its naval activities in March 2019. These and other disagreements ultimately led to the operation being terminated in 2020 due to Italy's and other EU countries´ further resistance.

The tasks of dealing with the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean is marked by the operational interinstitutional cooperation between Sophia and parallel EU missions. In this context, the cooperation of Sophia with Operation Triton and its successor Operation Themis is particularly noteworthy. When comparing the two Frontex missions, Operation Themis is significant in the sense that it had a clear mandate for search and rescue operations as opposed to Triton, which highlights the humanitarian importance of the cooperation with Sophia. The interinstitutional cooperation behind the scenes of Operation Sophia with the European Commission, the EDA, Europol and PESCO under CSDP leadership also plays a crucial role in the cooperation pattern of parallel military and civilian missions in the managing the migration crisis.[214] PESCO is placed under interinstitutional cooperation, because its establishment should strengthen cooperation with EU institutional bodies and agencies through a certain form of military harmonisation of EU Member States.

The Commission's role was predetermined by its early participation in crisis management in the Mediterranean for the remainder of Operation Sophia. A main impetus for the rapid cooperation in the run-up to Operation Sophia can be found only a few days prior to the Lampedusa tragedy on 19 April 2015, when a broader initiative by the EU Commission and EU High Representative Mogherini was launched. In a *fast track procedure* – which simplifies the standard planning process by eliminating certain steps so that the EU can deploy operations at very short notice - the EU leadership developed on 10 April 2015 the so-called *Crisis*

[214] Press Office – General Secretariat of the Council, 'Special Meeting of the European Council, 23 April 2015', 204/15, Council of the EU, 2015.

Management Concept that paved the way for a forthcoming military naval operation in the Mediterranean to specifically dismantle the smugglers' business model in four phases.[215] In the implementation phase of Operation Sophia the Commission worked early on reinforcing the potential success of Operation Sophia through establishing parallel infrastructures such as the set-up of large financial support funds including the EU Trust Fund for Africa or the Aurora project.[216]

Successful operational cooperation within the EU can be mainly found in technical cooperation. For example, in early 2015, institutional actors benefited from numerous improvements in situational awareness with regard to the threat situation of human smuggling networks in the Mediterranean as well as information and planning capacities in their operational activities. These were mainly possible using EU-SATCEN's technological stealth instruments, in particular air reconnaissance systems.[217] During the Sophia operation, 60 suspicious ships were detected with the help of this reconnaissance system. In addition, Sophia's close cooperation with the EU Integrated Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya) is particularly noteworthy in this context. Both operations worked together in dismantling smuggling networks through the mutual use of technical equipment and the collection and exchange of important information.[218] Effective cooperation also involved the European Defence Agency, which added a wealth of technological advantages and was able to significantly enhance Sophia's activities at the beginning of the operation.[219] Among the many technical tools provided by the EDA and integrated into Operation Sophia´s activities was the Maritime Surveillance Network System (MARSUR). This was a civilian technology that made it possible to improve

[215] Nováky, 'The Road to Sophia: Explaining the EU's Naval Operation in the Mediterranean', p. 204.
[216] Chiara Loschi, Francesco Strazzari, and Luca Raineri, *The Implementation of EU Crisis Response in Libya: Bridging Theory and Practice*, Brussels: EUNPACK Working Paper D 6.02, 2018, p. 13-15.
[217] João Almeida Silveira, 'The Evolution of EU's Maritime Security Thinking', In *Developments and Advances in Defense and Security. Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies Vol. 152*, Singapore: Springer*, 269-280,* 2019, p. 277.
[218] Loschi et al, *The Implementation of EU Crisis Response in Libya: Bridging Theory and Practice*, p. 2.
[219] Anne Bakker, Margriet Drent, Lennart Landman and Dick Zandee, 'A Stronger CSDP: Deepening Defence Cooperation', The Hague, Netherlands: Clingendael Institute, 2016, p. 3-4.

maritime situational awareness and to generate an overview of maritime situation and make it accessible to the active forces.[220]

Cooperation based on technological advances was also a decisive factor in the early CSDP-Frontex or Sophia-Triton partnership, which were initiated by the central EEAS command structure as cooperation facilitator.[221] By sharing responsibilities and overlapping operational activities, Frontex and Operation Sophia were able to cover different sea areas (cf. Figure 8). These included, for example, dealing with immigration issues and preventing and detecting cross-border crimes such as smuggling. The need for close cooperation was further enhanced by the fact that a Frontex liaison officer was stationed in the Operation Centre and Operation Sophia headquarters. In addition, Operation Sophia had access to the several Frontex information platforms where crucial operational experiences and data could be exchanged, moreover, locations of naval units could be shared between Frontex and CSDP commands structures. In support of Operation Sophia, Frontex was able to provide a number of analytical reports and alerts through the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) information exchange platform, established by the European Council in 2013, which influenced the outcome of far-reaching military action.[222] Finally, in July 2018, the FRONTEX agency launched a new initiative with the newly founded Crime Information Cell. It was tasked in particular with collecting and forwarding information on human smuggling networks and implementing the UN arms embargo against Libya in line with Security Council resolutions.[223] The same technical cooperate patterns between Triton and Sophia changed when Frontex launched Operation Themis in February 2018. Themis was mainly mandated with the search for people in distress at sea, while the focus of Sophia had already shifted heavily to dismantling smuggling boats.[224] In addition, cooperation

[220] Other tools illustrating the increasing interoperability within EU missions and operation were the use of *GEOHUB* and *EU J1 FAS*
[221] Dura, 'The EU in the Central Mediterranean: Impact and Implications of the Comprehensive Approach', p. 209.
[222] Dura, 'The EU in the Central Mediterranean: Impact and Implications of the Comprehensive Approach', p. 210.
[223] Elodie Sellier, 'The European External Action Service, Counterterrorism and the Imperative of Coherence', *The International Spectator* 53 (4), 2018, p. 140.
[224] Lizzy Davies, 'Italy: End of Ongoing Sea Rescue Mission 'puts Thousands at Risk', The Guardian, Taylor & Francis, 31 October 2014.

deteriorated due to political blockades between EU Member States and financial bottlenecks in the funding of Sophia.

Figure 8: Operation Sophia and Operation Triton Covered Areas of Operation (2015-2018)[225]

Regarding the interinstitutional relationship between Europol and Sophia, this was characterised by the joint fight against the illegal smuggling networks. The *Memorandum of Understanding* of 22 December 2015 formed the basis for the coordination of joint activities as well as promoting knowledge sharing, participation in joint field and training exercises.[226] In addition, Europol established the so-called European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) in 2016, which complemented Europol's Joint Operation Team Mare (JOT Mare) and Operation Sophia by providing strategic and operational information on human trafficking. The EMSC was also founded to help police and border authorities coordinate highly complex cross-border operations to combat smuggling. It therefore acted as a centre of excellence and enabled Sophia, for example, to integrate Europol's SIENA platform (Secure Information Exchange Network

[225] Source retrieved from: Fernando Alfaro Martínez, 'Enforcing Jurisdiction Against Vessels Suspected of Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking', *Revista de Direito Brasileira* 20 (8), 2018, p. 29.
[226] Europol, 'EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia and Europol Determined to Strengthen Bilateral Cooperation', 22 December 2015.

Application) into its work.[227] Established in 2009, this platform facilitates the exchange of operational and strategic crime-related information between EU and Member State law enforcement agencies, as well as cooperation with third parties with whom Europol has cooperation agreements.

In contrast to examples of technical cooperation involving Sophia and other EU agencies and institutions, the establishment of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) aimed at political cooperation between EU Member States. Launched in 2017, PESCO today comprises 27 national armed forces aiming for joint structural military integration.[228] In order to achieve political cooperation, the focus was on strengthening the EU as an international security actor, with the aim of maximising the effectiveness of defence spending. However, participation in meetings and projects during the period of Sophia was inconsistent, which therefore inhibited the setting of comprehensive interim targets and only served as a means for states to achieve their broader goals related to national migrant policies.[229] As a result, the structural top-down leadership of PESCO hindered coordination through the formation of blocks by EU Member States.[230] Ultimately, it followed that unclear strategic objectives were formulated, clear implementation options and concerns about the costs of EU operations were hampered by member states, which ultimately led to PESCO failing to achieve presentable results after its expiry. Finally, PESCO cooperation was not a driving factor for the multilateral success of Operation Sophia.[231]

Overall, significant gaps in the provision of information between EU institutions at the operational level can be observed, which are primarily due to the intergovernmental nature of CSDP and other EU foreign policy institutions.[232] For example, Sophia's day-to-day activities - detecting smugglers' boats but also migrant boats - was highly dependent on intelligence provided by Europol, but

[227] Dura, 'The EU in the Central Mediterranean: Impact and Implications of the Comprehensive Approach', p. 211.
[228] See Larsson and Widen, 'The European Union as a Maritime Security Provider–The Naval Diplomacy Perspective', p. 9.
[229] Sven Biscop, 'European Defence and PESCO: Don't Waste the Chance', *EU IDEA Policy Papers* 1, 2020, p. 3.
[230] Jessica Larsen, 'The European Union as a Security Actor: Perspectives from the Maritime Domain', DIIS Report 1019:6, Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2019, p. 44.
[231] Sven Biscop, 'European Defence and PESCO: Don't Waste the Chance', 8-9.
[232] Dombrowski and Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia', p. 34.

also national police forces and coastguard authorities. This is particularly evident from the *European Strategic Reviews*. Moreover, Europol itself even noted that the dependency of EU Member States to exchange crucial information, including on money laundering activities that national authorities had collected, affected the ability of Sophia to fulfil its mandate.[233] Moreover, a practical obstacle in the mandate of Sophia and Frontex was that not one EU authority was in command of activities in Libyan territorial waters. For this reason, the routes and movements of smugglers had to be identified and then intercepted before they even set sail off the Libyan coast. [234] The only success in cooperation with Libya was the training of the Libyan coast guard and the enforcement of the UN arms embargo in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1970 of 2011.[235] However, this partnership was not effective because Operation Sophia experienced a degree of operational fatigue as EU military ships continued to withdraw to their own maritime borders after 2018. Moreover, Sophia itself did not have a satisfactory exit strategy in its mandate, which they could hand over to their Libyan partner at the end of their operations in 2020, although this was clearly foreseen in the original mandate.[236]

The first and second hypotheses cannot be confirmed in the case of Operation Sophia, as there was no intergovernmental political cooperation through previous efforts. This is despite the fact that successes were achieved at the beginning, with deployment of the three large EU member states, Germany, France and Great Britain. The brief functional cooperation, which was only triggered by a humanitarian catastrophe, was underlined by the success in combating smuggler vessels, the decrease in the numbers of refugees and migrants drowning at sea. While the capacity to build greater military, material, technical and financial resources was intact in 2015, the volatile will of EU Member States caused the success to be short-lived. It is evident from the decrease in financial resources and interinstitutional political cooperation, although cooperation seemed to be

[233] Europol, 'Migrant Smuggling in the EU', 2016.
[234] Larsson and Widen, 'The European Union as a Maritime Security Provider–The Naval Diplomacy Perspective', p. 15.
[235]United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Operational Data Portal: Refugee Situations', 2018; See also Marius Pricopi, 'EU Military Operation Sophia: Analysing the Shortfalls', *Scientific Bulletin* 2 (42), 2016, p. 122-27.
[236] Johansen, 'Assessing the European Union's Strategic Capacity: The Case of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia', p. 519.

working well at the technical level. Ultimately, the unwillingness of member states to cooperate especially had a detrimental impact on the Sophia-Frontex cooperation. An example of this is the increasing flexibility of the operation's mandate and the expansion of its range of tasks, which is contrary to the way the EU had chosen to fulfil its tasks, such as stopping smugglers' boats in Libyan coastal waters.

4.3.3. External Cooperation

A defining aspect of the EU's efforts to advance external cooperation at the multilateral level is the interaction with international organisations especially with NATO and the UN. Particularly important is also the cooperation with non-governmental organisations in the Mediterranean region, which are strongly engaged in Sophia's daily work given the humanitarian aspect of helping refugees in need.

In the run-up to Operation Sophia, some efforts by EU Member States at the multilateral level in the Mediterranean became visible with UN Special Agencies and NATO. Therefore, the initial success of Operation Sophia was due to the broader strategic framework of international and regional partnerships established in the Southern Mediterranean.[237] In this context, some formal partnerships of the EU were based on regular exchanges with UNHCR and UNICEF, as well as on the joint naval presence in the region of EU countries and other non-EU NATO members. An example of this kind of partnership was between the often-competing US and Turkey with the EU in the former NATO operation Active Endeavour, which lasted from 4 October 2001 to 9 November 2016. This early readiness for cooperation between the EU and NATO highlights that the following official partnerships between NATO's follow-on Operation Sea

[237] Larsson and Widen, 'The European Union as a Maritime Security Provider–The Naval Diplomacy Perspective', p. 14.

Guardian, which has begun on 9 November 2016 and continues to this day, and the EU's Operation Sophia are key to its success.[238]

However in the run-up to Operation Sophia, these suggested formal channels of communication encountered strong institutional and operational obstacles, mainly caused by political blockades of EU Member States. The period from 2013 to 2015 was essentially marked by the so-called *European externalisation of migration policy*, which had direct influence on EU-NATO cooperation.[239] This generally means extending border and migration controls beyond EU borders. In this approach, a unified EU mandate was needed to contain the emerging migration crisis, but only national missions were launched in the early 2010s. The launch of a CSDP operation was still completely unthinkable at that time.[240] However, in summer 2014, EU Member States were able to reach at least a minimal agreement on launch of the coordinated Operation Triton under the border management agency Frontex in the joint fight against the growing problem of migration and people smuggling in the Mediterranean. It succeeded Mare Nostrum, but never received a mandate to counter the actual crisis.

Then in the course of Operation Sophia, the formal channels of cooperative communication were mostly characterised by further operational obstacles due to political challenges between EU Member States. There were only two multilateral cooperation efforts at the beginning of Sophia, which strengthened operational coordination at a low scale. One example concerns the intent to cooperate in a different geographical maritime region further east in the Mediterranean, by countries participating in NATO's Permanent Maritime Group 2 and the Frontex mission Poseidon, which supported Greece´s border management.[241] With regard to the general cooperation of 22 NATO countries in the Aegean Sea, Germany, but especially the two rivals Greece and Turkey jointly

[238] See Dombrowski and Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia', p. 37-38.; Alessandra Giada Dibenedetto, 'Implementing the Alliance Maritime Strategy in the Mediterranean: NATO's Operation Sea Guardian', *NATO Defense College* 134, 2016, p. 1-16.
[239] See Anja Palm, 'Did 2016 Mark a New Start for EU External Migration Policy, or Was It Business as Usual?', *Instituto Affari Internazionali,* IAI Working Papers 16 (33), 2016, p. 1-18; Victoire D´Humières, 'European Union/African Cooperation: The Externalisation of Europe's Migration Policies'. *Fondation Robert Schuman* European Issues (472), 2018, p. 1-9.
[240] Nováky, 'The Road to Sophia: Explaining the EU's Naval Operation in the Mediterranean', p. 200-204.
[241] Dorin Savin, 'Consideration Regarding NATO and European Union Relationship', *Research and Science Today: Scientific Review* 1 (17), 2019, p. 40-41.

took the initiative and requested a naval operation in the Eastern Mediterranean from NATO. Although there were some conflicts on a geostrategic and political level in connection with the so-called Cyprus conflict between Greece and Turkey, these could be overcome due to the dual membership of Cyprus and Greece in the EU and NATO. Moreover, Germany took a leading role because the NATO fleet, operating under German command both in international waters and in the territorial waters of Turkey and Greece, uniquely provided both the coast guard and Frontex with real-time information on the whereabouts of refugees, smugglers and migrant boats.[242]

Another example of multilateral cooperation initiative was a high-level NATO-EU summit in Warsaw in 2016, which addressed operational deficits caused by political obstacles and proposed stronger cooperation ties and joint decision-making procedures.[243] The aim was to replicate the experience of Operation Atalanta, which provided the foundation for the Operation Sea Guardian and Sophia coordination, which started in 2016. Therefore, maritime awareness in the region was to be improved through an informal and non-political mutual exchange of information. The principle of *solidarité de fait* or so-called *practice before principle* was called upon, with EU and NATO officials seeking regular mutual consultations and pragmatic cooperation. The aim was to resolve delicate issues concerning structural and interstate divergences of interest. The result, however, was moderate and the pursued approach ultimately ended up on mainly logistical support, as shown by the examples of mutual refuelling of operational vessels during the two naval operations in the Mediterranean and the provision of medical assistance by NATO at the request of the EU.[244]

The failure of formal cooperation efforts at the multilateral level, especially in relation to the EU-NATO partnership, is ultimately illustrated by the establishment of the SHADE Forum. This forum, which essentially followed the model of the SHADE platform for the Indian Ocean, was a prime example of the political challenges between EU Member States. Although it was meant to bring together

[242] Drent, 'Militarising Migration? EU and NATO Involvement at the European Border', p. 4.
[243] Savin, 'Consideration Regarding NATO and European Union Relationship', p. 40-41
[244] Bart M.J. Szewczyk, 'Operational Cooperation', In *The EU and NATO: The Essential Partners*, Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2019, p. 23.; Riddervold, 'A Humanitarian Mission in Line with Human Rights? Assessing Sophia, the EU's Naval Response to the Migration Crisis', p. 6

countries and international organisations for the purpose of identifying some coordinated solutions to military and civil operational issues, this format did not reach a sufficient magnitude with many countries participating.[245] Therefore it did not have a real impact on the further course of enhancing the rescue tasks of migrants at sea and the fight against human smuggling networks.

The examples above show that informal cooperation surpasses the basic lack of formal work. This is due to the strong overlap between NATO's and Sophia's mandate objectives. In this respect, the main problem in the cooperation between EU and NATO was the impediment by institutional mandate maximisation, contractual overlap and strategic self-image. In this regard, a major source of potential friction is the scope and hierarchy between EU Article 42(7) on mutual defence and NATO's Article 5 on collective defence.[246] There were conflicting views both in the military leadership and in the political decision-making bodies about the different goals and ideas on the consequences of the migration crisis, which lay in the respective mandate specifications of the threat of migrant smuggling to be combated. Since the publication of NATO's so-called *Alliance Maritime Strategy* in 2011, for example, the partnership on the NATO side pursued fundamentally different counter-terrorism tasks than on the EU side.[247] In military jargon, it was often claimed that NATO conducted so-called *kinetic operations* – which involve military action relying on active warfare - against terrorist activities, while the EU continued to focus on soft security practices and border control, as outlined in the EUGS.[248]

The main problem in strengthening EU-NATO cooperation and ultimately also the long-term success of the operation, was thus that Sophia was the first EU military operation with an open mandate to use coercive measures such as the destruction of smuggling vessels.[249] One the one hand, this often led to a lack of

[245] Marcus Houben, 'Operational Coordination of Naval Operations and Capacity Building', In *Fighting Piracy off the Coast of Somalia: Lessons Learned from the Contact Group*, European Union Institute for Security Studies 20, 2014, p. 28-29..
[246] Szewczyk, 'Operational Cooperation'. P. 28.
[247] See Dibenedetto, 'Implementing the Alliance Maritime Strategy in the Mediterranean: NATO's Operation Sea Guardian'.
[248] Giovanni Faleg, 'The Civilian Compact. Three Scenarios for the Future', In *The CSDP in 2020: The EU's Legacy and Ambition in Security and Defence*, Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, 2020, p. 136.
[249] Riddervold, 'A Humanitarian Mission in Line with Human Rights? Assessing Sophia, the EU's Naval Response to the Migration Crisis', p. 161.

mutual solidarity. In some cases, for example, NATO was accused of adopting some of the EU's proposals and practices in the fight against piracy.[250] On the other hand, this coercive element was the main reason why the EU did not obtain a legal UN Security mandate for moving on to Phase IIB.[251] Referring back to the objectives of the Warsaw Summit, the exchange of important and sensitive information became thus a problem in promoting mutual consultation and pragmatic cooperation.[252]

It becomes clear that the failure of cooperation was due to the EU's minimal consensus-building. In support of this argument, it is necessary to point out that even prior to the launch of the two operations, there were numerous discussions about transforming NATO's counter-terrorism mission Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean into a broader, non-Article 5 operation called Sea Guardian. However, the fact of not establishing an Operation with respect to the principle of collective defence, was blocked by some EU member countries resulting in the two military operations Sophia and NATO follow-on Operation Sea Guardian. These were thereafter often degraded to political and purely symbolic operations, as cooperation with a politico-military organisation only took place on the so-called *deconfliction level* for purely political reasons.[253] As a result, the few channels for information exchange were very poor and it was not feasible to carry out formal cooperation activities in the face of similar mandates to eventually avoid overlapping for political reasons.[254]

In addition to EU-NATO cooperation, the EU undertook collaboration efforts with African partners. The establishment of the so-called Central Mediterranean Contact Group (CMCG) in 2017, aimed to facilitate only the exchange of information between European and African countries affected by migration via the Central Mediterranean Route. It was primarily a structural counterpart to the CGPCS in the Indian Ocean and operated through a series of flexible high-level

[250] Dombrowski and Reich, 'The EU's Maritime Operations and the Future of European Security: Learning from Operations Atalanta and Sophia', p. 37.
[251] Thierry Tardy, 'Operation Sophia: Tackling the Refugee Crisis with Military Means', *European Union Institute for Security Studies,* SSUE Brief 30, 124, 2015, p. 2.
[252] Szewczyk, 'Operational Cooperation', p. 26.
[253] Drent, 'Militarising Migration? EU and NA Militarising Migration? EU and NATO Involvement at the European Border', p. 6.
[254] Drent, 'Militarising Migration? EU and NA Militarising Migration? EU and NATO Involvement at the European Border', p. 6.

meetings where participants, primarily EU officials alongside NATO, could determine both the agenda and the direction of consultations.[255] However, in retrospect, the CMCG was neither a functioning multilateral mechanism, nor a specific forum for systematically addressing migration issues in the Mediterranean, as discussions moved to other international bodies after only three meetings. One indication of its short existence as an international cooperation forum was that the CMCG was initially founded on the unilateral initiative of Italy and was supported and joined by other EU Member States quite late.

In addition to these multinational efforts, Italy and the EU joined effective coordination efforts with NGOs at the regional level. Especially, due to the proximity of EU countries and the sensitive issue of the migration, Italy worked closely and smoothly with NGOs such as Open Arms or Migrant Offshore Aid Station.[256] Furthermore EU maritime forces also cooperated extensively with NGOs in search and rescue operations.[257] However, there was an imbalance of EU and NGO in the number of search and rescue missions of refugees carried out. These were predominantly performed by NGOs, which led many critics to draw conclusions about the EU's actions. The EU was increasingly accused of collaborating with people smugglers because Sophia forces were obstructed to be very diligent in this area of Sophia´s mandate. This is ultimately due to the inflexibility of Sophia, as the operation was already divided into phases in its mandate, which made it impossible to adapt the predefined tasks to the situation. Another example is the fact that Sophia was never given a mandate to operate in Libyan territorial waters, which would have allowed it to expand its efforts to pursue smugglers' vessels in favour of rescuing refugees at sea. Therefore, many NGOs shared the view that:

> *"the objective is less to stop migration flows than to disrupt smuggling routes and capabilities and, hence, reduce the flows originating from*

[255] Ruxandra-Laura Boșilcă, Matthew Stenberg and Marianne Riddervold, 'Copying in EU Security and Defence Policies: The Case of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia', *European Security* 30 (2), 2021, p. 227-28.
[256] Eugenio Cusumano, 'United to Rescue? Humanitarian Role Conceptions and NGO–NGO Interactions in the Mediterranean Sea', *European Security* 30 (4), 2021, p. 556-57.
[257] Larsson and Widen, 'The European Union as a Maritime Security Provider–The Naval Diplomacy Perspective', p. 17.

the Libyan coast, which has been (together with the eastern route) the main point of departure of migrants coming to Europe."[258]

Moreover, NGOs have noted a paradox in that the Sophia´s activities in the Mediterranean encouraged rather than discouraged people smuggling. In the context of humanitarian international law and UN Law of the Sea, the operation was often accused of being inhumane and more focused on fighting human trafficking and securing borders than on rescuing refugees in need.[259] As a result, both the Italian authorities and Operation Sophia were criticised for creating an unintended *pull effect* by targeting search and rescue operations. Moreover, the short-term military solutions reinforced the public perception of migrants as a security risk.[260] As Sophia had no authorisation to operate in Libyan territorial waters and thus only patrolled EU borders, it was an unintended encouragement for traffickers to persuade people to set sail in unseaworthy vessels, knowing that EU personnel would be there to help them on the high seas.[261]

In summary, the second hypothesis cannot be confirmed. In short, EU leaders had to choose between strengthening the EU's external action and the credibility of its values and commitments and gave priority to the former. This implies that those military CSDP operations in which there is consistent external coordination between the EU and NATO, the UN and regional actors have a higher chance of success. However, this only occurred on an informal level of joining efforts with material support on a small scale. The overlapping mandates of NATO and the EU in the same crisis area and Sophia´s ability to use force rapidly of limited comprehensive formal and informal cooperation. Accordingly, political differences emerged when it came to joint efforts at higher cooperation levels such as SHADE MED and the CMCG. Ultimately, it is all related to the unusual mandate of Sophia, which aimed from the outset to operate in Libyan territorial waters to stop people smuggling, and the fact that the NGO's paradox regarding Sophia

[258] Tardy, 'CSDP in Action. What Contribution to International Security?', p. *2.*
[259] Graham Butler and Martin Ratcovich, 'Operation Sophia in Uncharted Waters: European and International Law Challenges for the EU Naval Mission in the Mediterranean Sea', *Nordic Journal of International Law* 85 (3), 2016, p. 248-250.
[260] Judith Sunderland, 'The Mediterranean Migration Crisis: Why People Flee, What the EU Should Do', Human Rights Watch, 2019.; See also Riddervold, 'A Humanitarian Mission in Line with Human Rights? Assessing Sophia, the EU's Naval Response to the Migration Crisis'.
[261] Johansen, 'Assessing the European Union's Strategic Capacity: The Case of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia', p. 520-21.

being more oriented towards the pursuit of smuggling boats and not towards sea rescue operations. At the international, but also at the regional level, NGO critics precisely highlighted the tendency of minimal compromise at the level of EU Member States.[262]

[262] Giulia Mantini, 'A EU Naval Mission Without a Navy: The Paradox of Operation Sophia', In *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, IAI Commentaries 19 (33), 2019, p. 3.

4.4. Atalanta-Sophia Comparison

After reviewing the background and motivations for launching the CSDP military operations Sophia and Atalanta and a concluding account of the internal and external levels of cooperation of these operations, the differences, similarities as well as evolving novelties of cooperation between EU and international actors will be the subject of discussion. In this regard, the previous analysis of both naval operations shows the contradiction to the assumption often made in other studies that Atalanta was a fundamental and inspiring model for Sophia.[263] To test this with regard to Hypothesis 1, the extent to which effective internal and external cooperation resulting from EU-internal institutional and national partnerships, as well as operational partnerships with NATO and the United Nations, can lead to the success of CSDP military operations at sea, is examined. Furthermore it is determined whether politicisation between states in internal EU coordination, but also in multilateral fora, has been an obstacle to internal and external cooperation in the overall planning, implementation and European representation of Atalanta and Sophia.

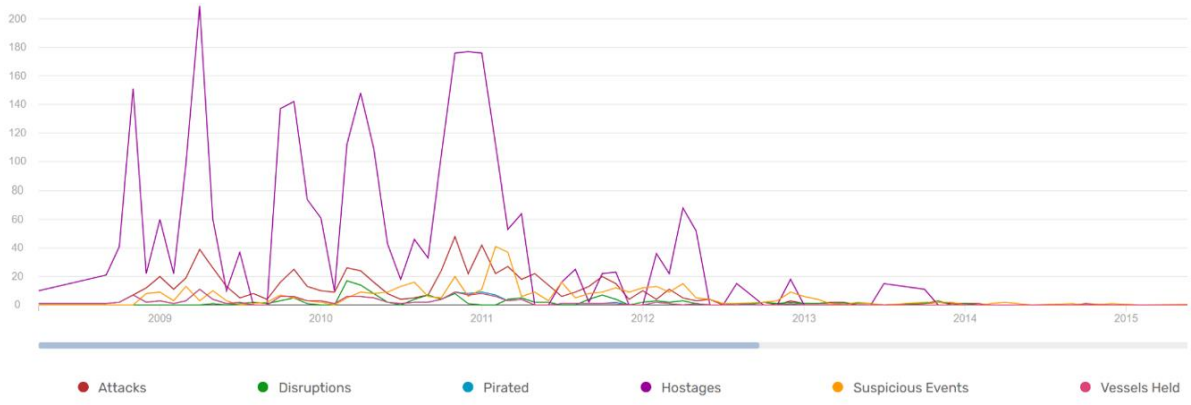
The mandate structure of both operations already shows signs of politicisation tendencies, which reflects the differences in operational flexibility. For instance, Sophia's mandate was significantly more vulnerable to political influence or pressure than the one of Atalanta. This can be attributed either to the political will or unwillingness to conduct a military CSDP operation – depending on which operation one is looking at. Thus, multilateral cooperation under Atalanta was strengthened in a success-oriented manner by expanding its range of tasks, i.e. from pure patrol missions to combating arms and drug trafficking and monitoring illegal activities at sea off the coast of Somalia. This is evidenced by the most recent mandate extension on 21 April 2021 until the end of December 2022 and four previous mandate extensions. In contrast, Operation Sophia tended to limit multilateral cooperation from the outset due to the unmanageable workload arising from an overly broad spectrum of operational tasks, including the failed bid to operate in Libyan territorial waters by EU leadership. Similarly, the short-

[263] See for example Boșilcă et al., 'Copying in EU Security and Defence Policies: The Case of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia', p. 226.

term mandate extensions of 20 June 2016, 25 July 2017, 29 March 2019 and 26 September 2019 to 31 March 2020, point to a lack of political compromise among EU Member States in reaching a united solution for managing migration flows and taking the precautionary measures to prevent further humanitarian disasters. Finally, Operation Sophia could not even proceed to Phase IIB, in which suspicious vessels in Libyan territorial waters are boarded, searched, seized and tracked, all of which required a UN Security Council approval. Therefore, operational flexibility by combining a broad range of tasks and the suspension of the need for naval resources in 2019 did not prove useful in the case of Operation Sophia

With regard to the implementation of its objectives, the success record of Sophia has some outstanding deficits when compared to Atalanta's overall performance. On the one hand, both operations were able to achieve their objectives to reduce the threats of piracy and human smuggling in the first years of their implementation. This is illustrated, for example by the decline in pirate attacks as a result of EU naval presence off the Somali coast. (cf. Figure 9).

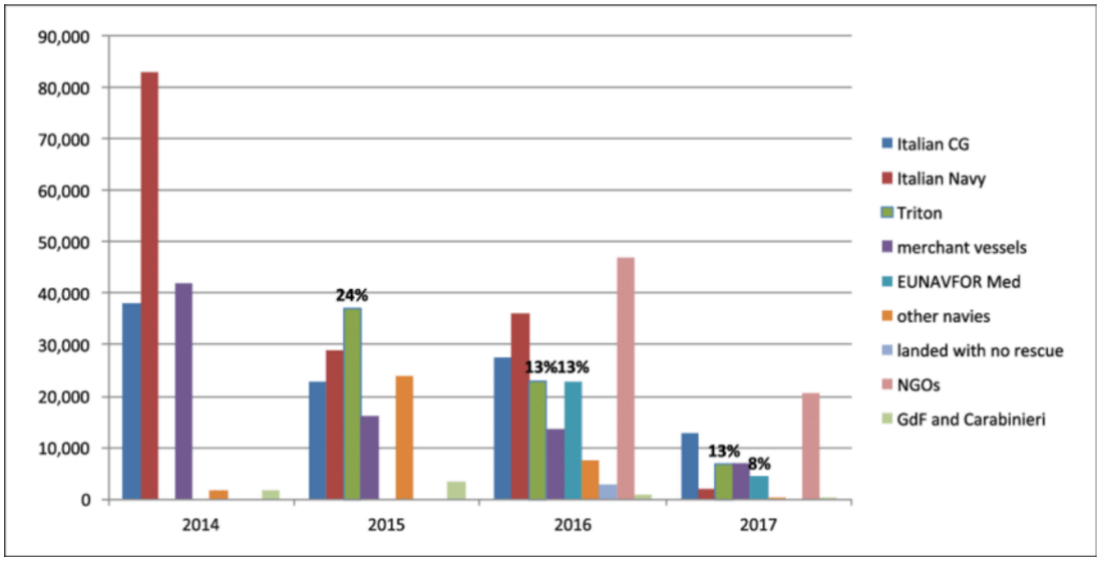
Figure 9: Development of Pirate Activities off the Somali Coast[264]



[264] Source retrieved from European External Action Service. 2022. 'Source: EU Naval Force – Somalia: Key Facts and Figures'. 11 May 2022.

On the other hand, however, there are major differences in connection with the fundamentally humanitarian aspect of the EU's military operation Sophia, in which the EU should have assumed responsibility for guiding responsible immigration flows on its doorstep. Particularly noteworthy is the shift from Sophia to the successive implementation of cooperative border controls with EU law enforcement agencies away from search-and-rescue operations. Although the rescue of between 13 and 16 percent of all migrants arriving in the Mediterranean can be attributed to Sophia´s naval deployments in 2015 and 2016, the involvement of Sophia forces in sea rescues decreased noticeably within the first six months of 2017 (cf. Figure 10). Attention shifted to Sophia's new mandate-specific support tasks, which included the training of the Libyan coast guard and enforcing the UN arms embargo. In 2017 to 2018, EU officials virtually suspended search and rescue operations because there were insufficient resources to focus on combating smuggling. This was due to examples such as Italy's resistance to Operation Sophia, which they expressed by closing ports to rescued refugees.

Figure 10: Number of Migrants Saved in the Mediterranean Sea (2014-2017)[265]



[265] Source retrieved from Eugenio Cusumano, 'Migrant Rescue as Organized Hypocrisy: EU Maritime Missions Offshore Libya between Humanitarianism and Border Control', *Cooperation and Conflict* 54 (1), 2019, p. 11.

The shortcomings or successes in cooperation during the operational mandates of Sophia and Atalanta originated in the years preceding their launch. In the run-up to both operations, there were major disparities in the degree of politicisation between EU Member States in terms of the threat to be addressed and the manner of engaging in military naval campaigns, which ultimately determined the EU's internal coordination efforts. The case studies show that these different patterns of internal willingness of EU Member States to cooperate are due to their geographical proximity and the degree of prioritising different maritime security threats. Ultimately, these were also materialised in the course of implementing the Atalanta and Sophia mandates.

In the decision-making process of Atalanta, the political polarisation between the Big Three with regard to operational objectives was accordingly less pronounced than in the initial phase of Sophia. Although the government positions could not have been more dissimilar at the outset, the incentives of protecting economic security were united by the UK's backing of France's position and Germany as an economic frontrunner paying maximum attention to the Somali coast. The UK therefore shared France´s interests in the Sahel region and consequently preferred EU’s anti-piracy operation over NATO to better protect economic incentives against threats. However, a requirement for the British concessions was that headquarters are located on British soul in Northwood, near NATO headquarters. In the southern Mediterranean, however, different conditions prevailed before Sophia came into being. While Atalanta was strongly driven by France, Italy seized the initiative to push other EU states to eventually launch Sophia. Italy's role is underlined by the fact that Italy acted as a framework state in all EU missions and operations in the Central Mediterranean, as there were no national objections. In the early search and rescue operations of migrants at sea the Italian government insisted on an EU-wide military deployment through reminding member states of the solidarity principle. After the Big Three rejected this proposal claiming that such operations would be rather pull factors for refugees than function as a declining factor in migrant numbers. Their justification for this was that they were primarily committed to control the EU's external borders to help reduce the number of incoming refugee flows. In the end, only a humanitarian disaster forced EU Member States into participating in a CSDP operation, whose process can be described as more or less coordinated. Sophia

was thus born out of national security considerations related to managing large migratory flows into the EU via the Mediterranean Route in a military rather than civilian way.

Moreover, both Atalanta and Sophia developed several important EU-internal institutional partnerships with parallel missions in terms of interinstitutional cooperation. Although they show many similarities, they also bring significant differences in their respective mandates and actions to the fore. The overall strong cooperation between Frontex and Sophia derived in particular from its predecessor mission Triton, whose mandate was being taken over by Sophia, and from the overlap of mandate objectives with Themis.

In contrast, no comparable parallel maritime mission was launched prior to Atalanta off the Somali Coast. Furthermore Atalanta's cooperation engagements were not primarily directed at enhancing collaboration with EUTM Somalia and EUCAP Nestor land missions. It is clear, and also illustrated in the analysis, that their mandates, objectives and geographical areas of operation are too far apart to really work together effectively at a high level. As a result, the partnership with the EU civilian missions in Somalia only developed formally, as there was no clear strategic framework and as the operation progressed, joint mandate objectives for EUCAP Nestor, EUTM Somalia and EUNAVFOR Atalanta were not put into practice. Finally, the broader framework of cooperation between Sophia, Frontex and Europol must be particularly taken into account, because it was essentially based on technical cooperation. However, a major difficulty was that Operation Sophia was heavily dependent on the provision of important information from other EU agencies, in particular Europol and national EU Member States. The fact that this practice was not applied to Atalanta is mainly due to differences of opinion within the EU Commission as to whether the focus in the region should be on development cooperation with Somalia on land or on economic and security objectives at sea.

Furthermore, similarities and differences in the EU's engagement at a multilateral level are apparent. During its CSDP naval operations, the EU was able to demonstrate several successful and balanced levels of multilateral cooperation with the NATO Alliance. In particular, mutual support in logistical and material terms was proven valuable. For example, the EU benefited mainly from standing

naval forces provided from NATO by EU dual member states. In East Africa in particular, the EU participating states were able to exchange their flags when one operation took over from others or tasks were reallocated between NATO and the EU. In contrast, Operation Sophia focused on information exchange, as there was no such operational advantage in the Mediterranean. Overall, the common feature of Sophia and Atalanta was that exchanging crucial information between NATO and the EU was at times significantly impaired or blocked by national interest from EU Member States. In contrast to Atalanta, Sophia suffered from significant shortcomings since NATO´s Operation Sea Guardian and the CSDP Operation informally obstructed each other's reporting and information sharing. Therefore Sophia was largely dependent on other parallel EU missions to gather operational intelligence, which also proved difficult in the end. NATO-EU cooperation thus dates back to earlier cooperation efforts at the so-called *deconfliction level*, where the lowest common political denominator was sought to align or coordinate mutual efforts in order to prevent or resolve conflicts between the two organisations.

However, Sophia held a hard security mandate, and in the aftermath of the 2016 Warsaw Summit, it became clear that NATO was widely and erroneously perceived by the public as a provider of kinetic (hard) security, while CSDP was associated with soft power, which, in the end, it was not. Thus, Sophia, like Operation Sea Guardian, featured a powerful coercive dimension in the fight against migrant smuggling, since one of the main objectives of its mandate was to dismantle smuggling networks at sea when necessary, through using special force units, along with subsequent actions such as seizure, search, and diversion of smuggling boats. Also compared to Atalanta, the cooperation between Sophia and Operation Sea Guardian was marked by significant differences at the operational level. Indeed, NATO's involvement in naval operations to rescue refugees in need or prevent their passing across the Mediterranean was more limited and irregular than its participation with Atalanta to combat piracy. As a result, material support was limited, partly due to the principle of *solidarité de fait*. In contrast, Atalanta had a partial and weaker coercive dimension, but only insofar as it was about eliminating piracy through a stronger deterrent effect than relying on the power of constant use of force in actions. Therefore, Atalanta was able to work more closely with NATO than Sophia, as both NATO and the EU

were involved in a force dimension and the informal partnership seemed to be comparatively easier. Finally, the partnership was also underpinned by the fact that both EU and NATO members had previously worked together in various groupings such as Combined Taskforce 150.

In summary, the comparison between EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta and EUNAVFOR Operation Sophia shows that Sophia is only partially based on the Atalanta model. Thus, the greatest similarities in launching an EU naval military operation can be seen in the common will to cooperate in the face of an EU-wide threat that endangers the EU's fundamental values and economic interests. However, unlike Atalanta, the act of proactively addressing the threat of people smuggling and refugee flows in Sophia was only triggered by a humanitarian disaster that led to the creation of the framework for a CSDP operation. In contrast, Atalanta decision-making was characterised by less polarisation and a longer cooperative spirit among EU Member States, linked to less politically propagated economic interests, and domestic pressures were not as imminent due to the humanitarian dimension and proximity to the European mainland. During Operation Sophia, national political oppositions were more visible and were reflected in the decreasing deployment behaviour in terms of personnel, material and financial support for the operational budget. This can be explained mainly by positive figures related to the reduction of smuggler boats active in the Mediterranean, which reduced the political pressure from the interest of the national electorate and therefore also lowered the interest of a continuation of participation by member states. In contrast, Atalanta commanders and EU officials were better able to validate the collaborative actions throughout the course of Atalanta, which meant that the success figures also extended over a longer period of time.

5. Conclusion

This thesis aims to determine what role cooperation between EU Member States and EU institutions plays in the success of EU military operations at sea. The decision to address this topic arose from the perception that there is a contradiction in the EU's comprehensive crisis management of the last twenty years. The EU seeks to establish itself as an international peacemaker and guarantor of peace, but it fights conflicts by fueling them and not by addressing the roots of conflict. This contradiction is illustrated by the EU's two major maritime military operations, Sophia and Atalanta, which have been or are being conducted in a relatively new domain of operations in the framework of CSDP due to a number of external threats, such as illegal piracy or human trafficking at sea. The EU is trying to implement its new global vision by a military approach, even though its traditional foreign policy direction of civilian peace-building missions is based on the internal, values-based and humanitarian solidarity principle.

The first section of my thesis reviews the body of literature, which chronologically elaborates the institutionalisation of the EU's comprehensive approach to crisis management. This is followed by an overview of the analytical criteria used in studies when assessing the success of international civilian and military crisis operations. A list of challenges that may arise in the political and academic debate on the decision-making process and operational effectiveness of CSDP crisis operations follows this part. Throughout this section, I have been able to make two basic observations.

First, there are studies that present their findings comparatively between the different types of NATO, UN and EU missions, but there are also numerous studies that look in depth at the decision-making process leading up to an EU operation.

Second, research studies either draw on quantitative methods to develop criteria for evaluating the success of operations, or work with qualitative analyses using interviews with EU policymakers, the military officials or governmental representatives to determine the success of operations. These observations led

to my conclusion that cooperation between states and institutions at the EU level is of marginal importance in assessing the success of CSDP operations. In my opinion, when evaluating the success of maritime military crisis operations, the component of cooperation between states and institutions at EU level must not be left out as a condition but must be included as an essential and equally important aspect. This is particularly evident in relation to Operation Sophia and Operation Atalanta, from which the research question of this thesis is derived: How does effective cooperation affect the success of a military CSDP operation?

In the second section, I have developed an appropriate conceptual framework that divides the conditions for the success of an operation into EU-internal and EU-external multilateral dimensions of cooperation. In this context, the main hypothesis of this thesis is that an operation can only be successful if there is consistent coordination both within the EU (internal), by the member states and institutions, and outside the EU (external), by the regional and international actors involved in crisis management.

In the third section, my analysis is based on two specific case studies of two EU military operations. The first operation examined is Atalanta, the longest-running EU maritime operation in the Horn of Africa, whose lasting success in combating piracy is considered particularly high in the literature. The first individual analysis shows that the EU Member States continuously cooperated in the fight against piracy both prior to and during the operation. This is indeed astonishing, but also not surprising, as the EU Member States' desire for strong cooperation and the accompanying success was driven by economic interests. However, it should be noted that cooperation within the EU institutions is rather difficult, although multilateral cooperation between international organisations follows a cooperative pattern. This contrasts with Operation Sophia, whose success was short-lived, which is also reflected in the operation's duration of only five years.

The second individual analysis shows that there was little to no cooperation between France, Germany and the United Kingdom before the launch of the operation, as the aforementioned states were reluctant to take on the responsibility of search and rescue missions in the Mediterranean. Later on, they agreed on a lowest common denominator, whereby the willingness to cooperate in the initial phase of Operation Sophia was only initiated by the humanitarian

disaster in 2015 and the subsequent political pressure. Therefore, the driving force behind the EU Member States' willingness to cooperate in the initial phase of this operation was a combination of rescuing people and dismantling trafficking networks, the humanitarian aspect, however, was subordinated to the fight against smuggling in the course of the operation.

In the fourth section, based on the results of the comparative analysis, with regard to Atalanta the main hypothesis can be confirmed, while in comparison the patterns of internal and external cooperation in Operation Sophia are not sufficient to confirm the hypothesis in its entirety. In this context, probably the most important finding is that the structure of mandates contributes greatly to determining the level of cooperation before and during an operation. The best way to illustrate this is by using a timeline that begins with the emergence of a threat and ends with a military operation.

This representation can be used to accurately reflect the objective and approach of the mandate the pre-history of Sophia and Atalanta, which is shaped by the political positions of the three major EU Member States. Atalanta's first mandate was established on a specific objective with several tasks. However, the political will and the idea to keep adding new tasks to the operation through mandate extension in case of positive successes was fundamental from the beginning. In contrast, Operation Sophia, which obtained a mandate divided into successive phases, shows only minimal political will on the part of the EU Member States prior to the launch of the operation. Atalanta is primarily focused on achieving realistic objectives and was mandated by the UN to enter Somali coastal waters from the outset. As a result, Atalanta's objectives could be periodically reassessed, which had the great advantage of allowing further responsibilities to be transferred as the mandate was extended. In contrast, Sophia failed to reach the envisaged Phase III of IV due to the already defined initial objectives of the successive mandate. Moreover, it was not possible for the EU leadership to adequately adapt the predefined tasks to the situation. In addition, Sophia was never given a mandate from the United Nations to operate in Libyan territorial waters.

In summary, the comparative analysis shows that the political interests of the member states strongly affect the success of EU military operations. These run

like a thread from the emergence of an external threat to the planning, launch and execution of an operation. It can be concluded that in the absence of a common vision among actors prior to the launch of an operation, the intergovernmental character prevails in all informal and formal aspects of a planned cooperation.

In conclusion, this thesis is able to make a critical comment, first, on the logic of cooperation in both the planning and implementation of Sophia and Atalanta. In this respect, the approach of Sophia is to be seen critically, as the image of a military operation with the aim of fighting smuggler networks is conveyed to the outside world rather than aiming for a humanitarian solution to save human lives at sea. In contrast, operations such as Atalanta are only successful if the EU's economic interests can be protected.

Secondly, in this overall picture regarding the success of operations, the media also play a crucial role, often misrepresenting the reality of a supposed success of a CSDP operation and occasionally tending to exclude the numbers of drowned people from this track record. Accordingly, the literature remains indifferent to the contested notion of success, leaving subjective assumptions about what success actually means in the dark. To this end, this thesis has attempted to include a clearer picture of cooperative efforts within the EU and in the international realm in this equation and to expand the definition of success accordingly.

Third, this analysis raises a number of questions for a more comprehensive examination of the EU's military operations. For example, it would be interesting to analyse which EU state, apart from France, Germany and the UK, could politically block the EU agenda of cooperation in multilateral meetings. Moreover, this comparative study has raised some specific facts and questions that could be useful for new insights from a different perspective than internal and external cooperation. For example, research questions could be asked about the extent to which Brexit has had a positive impact on the UK's cooperation with the EU, or whether cooperation with NATO has become stronger after all. Other questions could also relate to the current EU military operation in the Mediterranean. Therefore, it would be worth asking to what extent Operation Irini can be seen as

a successor to Sophia or Atalanta, as the results of my study show that Operation Sophia cannot be considered as a successor to Atalanta.

In summary, reflecting on my research question, I can state that cooperation is an elementary building block for military CSDP operations and affects their success or failure. In the words of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini:

"Yet we know that such priorities are best served when we are not alone."[266]

[266] European External Action Service, 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy', p. 4.

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On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.