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**Civil-Military Coordination and Cooperation
in the Context of the EU's Crisis Management
CMCO versus CIMIC**

Conceptual and Terminological Clarifications

by

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A comprehensive security approach

The decisive changes in the international security environment following the demise of the Cold War have produced extensive pressure for adaptation in many security- and defence-related contexts. The spectrum of conventional threats was gradually extended through a range of new security challenges, which have turned effective security policy-making into an intricate venture. Most fundamentally, security has ceased to be a purely national concern; today, security rather necessitates multilateral collaboration and the willingness to coordinate policies as well as institutional structures and capacities. Moreover, the challenges posed by the new forms of threat can no longer be met by way of purely military means. Traditional instruments rather have to be integrated into a broader security political approach. In the context of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), the EU Member States have committed themselves to develop common operational capabilities for crisis management with the overall aim to establish a comprehensive profile for civil-military crisis management and conflict prevention, and more generally, to substantiate the Union's capacities as an international and global actor.

Optimising the civil-military interplay – a challenging necessity

In the course of a series of ESDP crisis management missions in various parts of the world, both the civilian and military capacities of the EU have already come to operation. These early field experiences in the framework of ESDP have shown that the interplay between the civilian and the military components still needs to be optimised. Increased operability has also raised the necessity to reconcile the new operational instruments with the spectrum of political and structural instruments available in the Community framework. Moreover, in order to be able to tap the full security political potential of the EU, enhanced civil-military cooperation in the field has to be backed by improved political and strategic coordination between the EU's institutional actors on the civilian and the military side. In the official context, the efforts taken to tackle these specific institutional challenges are referred to as Civil-Military Coordination (CMCO).

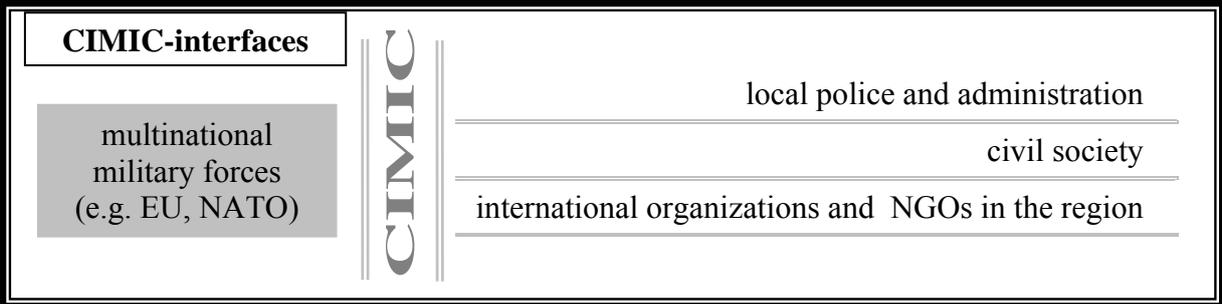
Terminological ambiguity despite intensive debate: CMCO versus CIMIC

The question of optimising the civil-military interplay has recently gained centre stage in the overall debate about efficient and credible EU crisis management. In the course of individual member state contributions to the development of operational capabilities for the EU, also national debates on the issue have been increasingly on the rise. However, given the conceptual comprehensiveness and intricacy of the underlying practical problem, even the expert community has recently become infested by substantial terminological ambiguities about the matter. This lack of clarity about the conceptual implications of various types of civil-military interaction has not least grown with the enhanced pace of policy development and the ever increasing operational activity of the EU in the field. Generally, this confusion about what the challenge of civil-military concertation actually implies in concrete

terms is greatest when it comes to the specification of concepts related to civil-military *cooperation* at the tactical and operational level (CIMIC), and their delineation from the comparatively recent idea of *coordination* that builds the basis of the above-mentioned EU-CMCO. There seems to exist a substantial need for structured and clear-cut information about the matter in order to secure conceptual clarity among both practitioners and academics.

CIMIC in national defence and international operations

In contrast to CMCO, CIMIC concepts do not only apply to the EU context. Most Member States have their own (albeit not substantially differing) CIMIC conceptions. Originally, military concepts on civil-military cooperation used to be concerned mainly with the domestic relationship between the armed forces and the civilian authorities, and various actors in civil society, respectively. This approach was basically linked to the idea of comprehensive national defence. Anyway, the grand changes in the European security environment and the increasing importance of multilateral security solutions have added an international component to the idea of civil-military cooperation. CIMIC in the context of international operations is mainly concerned with the enhancement of cooperation at the various civil-military interfaces in the operational context, including the relationship towards other collective actors (international, governmental, non-governmental organisations) deployed in the region concerned. Depending on the specific context of each operation, CIMIC-oriented measures may assume various different functions. The general idea of most national CIMIC conceptions lies in the use of civilian resources, and in some cases, even in the take-over of civilian duties through the military, as a means to secure local support and thus, to create favourable conditions for military success.



CIMIC has recently become a core element in all international crisis management operations involving military components, and therefore, it is also of increasing importance for the respective missions conducted in the ESDP framework. In 2002, the EU Member States have agreed on a specific CIMIC concept for the EU in order to provide respective guidance for ESDP crisis management missions. To ensure inter-organisational compatibility, the EU-CIMIC doctrine borrows largely from the counterpart established earlier by NATO. However, an in-depth analysis shows that in line with its comprehensive approach to security, EU-CIMIC clearly goes beyond traditional CIMIC conceptions in terms of their exclusive focus on the military support function of CIMIC. According to EU-CIMIC,

the overall aim is to deliver on the challenge of managing complex crisis situations by effecting composite responses in the service of the mission purpose. Therefore, the *mutual* benefit of both military and external civil actors is to remain central at all times.

The conceptual delimitation of CIMIC and CMCO

As the above outline shows, EU-CIMIC focuses exclusively on civil-military relations at the operational and tactical level. Even though CMCO comprises a different and much broader range of issues it is often mistakenly associated or even equated with EU-CIMIC. However, CMCO is exclusively concerned with the civil-military interfaces *within* the EU's institutional set-up. Single aspects of CMCO are linked with operational issues; its main focus, however, remains – in contrast to CIMIC – at the politico-strategic and institutional level.

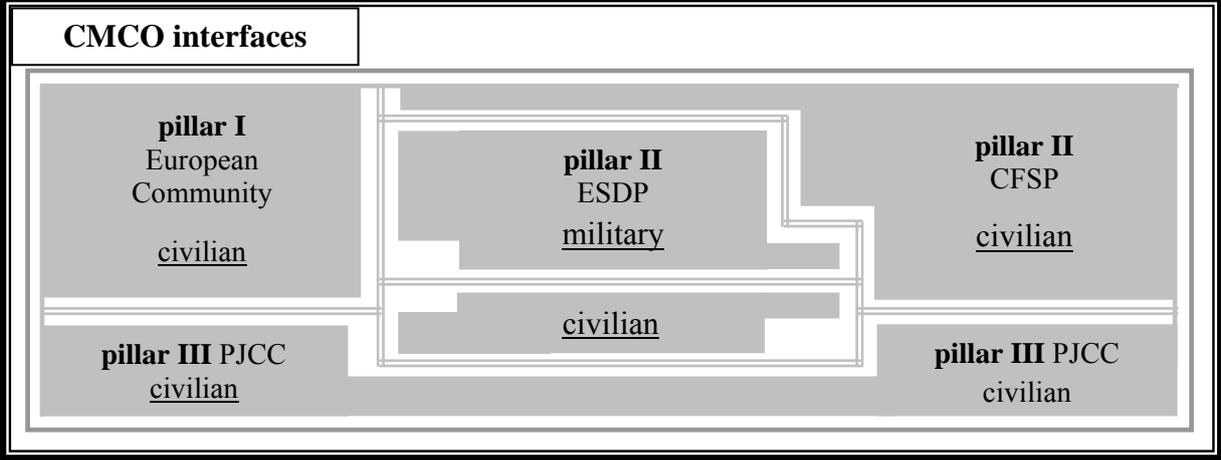
Institutional multi-dimensionality as both comparative advantage and liability

The concept of CMCO is intrinsically linked with the institutional specificities of the EU as an external actor, meaning its characteristic multi-pillar structure, the separation of supranationally and intergovernmentally directed policies, and the resulting fragmentation of its instruments for crisis management. The EU's role in the world, and more specifically, in international crisis management, is effected through different (and sometimes conflicting) institutional channels, which implies in the first place that the Union disposes of a uniquely wide array of instruments for the management of crises and conflicts. However, apart from providing the EU with a comparative advantage in respect to other international organizations (e.g. NATO), this structural diversity also produces an intrinsic need for inter-institutional concertation. Enhanced coordination is needed at all levels and across all channels of institutional action if the large set of instruments at hand is to be used and employed effectively. The challenge of ensuring inter-pillar coherence (civ ~ mil and civ ~ civ) and of retaining procedural transparency throughout all phases of engagement lies at the core of these efforts. Another important point is the so-called *intra*-pillar coherence, meaning the coordination of various crisis management aspects within each of the main pillars: (a) within the Community pillar (civ ~ civ) and (b) within the second pillar of ESDP (civ ~ mil). CMCO is thus concerned with the civil-military interfaces

- between both the civilian and the military dimension of the ESDP and the civilian crisis management components of the Community pillar (civ ~ civ and civ ~ mil),
- between the various Community instruments relevant for crisis prevention or management, and
- between the military and the civilian dimension of the ESDP itself.

In view of the envisaged comprehensiveness of EU crisis response, also third pillar elements have recently gained importance in the context of crisis management. In the framework of CMCO, this includes all aspects of internal security that have an inherent external dimension (fight against terrorism, organised crime, border control, management of migration flows, intelligence cooperation). However, in general it is mainly the relationship between the first and the second pillar, and thus, between the mostly structural crisis management instruments governed by the European Commission and the operational instruments available through the ESDP that builds the framing reference for the

CMCO debate. What appears most decisive about this civil-military interface is the largely different procedural focus of the actors involved on each side. While the European Commission mainly focuses on preventive and long-term action, the institutional actors in the framework of ESDP are mostly confronted with immediate and short-term crisis response.



CMCO – tackling the comprehensive challenge of developing a culture of coordination

CMCO is concerned with all inter-institutional processes within the EU that to some extent relate to the prevention or management of crises and conflicts. It does not only comprise structural and operational actions throughout all phases of a crisis, it also includes the institutional interactions during the routine phase (strategic assessment and control). Given the individual character of each crisis, this comprehensive challenge cannot be tackled by way of rigidly pre-constructed procedural models. Instead, it appears more important to establish a basic “culture of coordination” among the institutions involved, and thus, to provide the necessary framework conditions for enhanced functional synergy. The overall aim lies in the progressive enhancement of the quality of interaction at the various interfaces, which in turn is thought to serve the aim of increasing both efficiency and visibility of EU crisis management action. Enhancing the EU internal coherence is expected to have major effects on the ability of the EU to interact with other international actors and organizations. The central idea of a culture of coordination has far-ranging political significance, as its realization does not only affect the Union’s internal set-up, but also and most significantly, its fundamental character as a foreign and security political actor in the world. What becomes clear at this point is that CMCO is a much more comprehensive and complex concept than the aforementioned military EU-CIMIC. To some extent, CMCO provides for the necessary institutional prerequisites of operational civil-military cooperation (CIMIC). CMCO can thus be thought of as a conception of civil-military interaction that is, in abstract terms, superordinate to the idea of CIMIC.

CMCO core issues and instruments

The issue of civil-military coordination has been central since the very outset of the ESDP development process. However, the increasing operational activity of the Union has made the necessity of enhanced coordination ever more pressing, and it has incited the need for concrete concepts and substantial methodological suggestions. The working process resulting from this pressure for action has brought up a set of core issues, which should help to structure the enormously wide and complex field of CMCO:

- a) General enhancement of inter-institutional processes;
- b) Coordination during the routine phase (early warning, assessment and control);
- c) Consolidation of planning capacities (Comprehensive Planning), i.e. of the civil-military cell;
- d) Enhanced coordination in the field – operation management;
- e) Institutionalisation and improvement of evaluation standards (Lessons Learned)
- f) Resource and capability management;
- g) CMCO-specific training;
- h) Incorporation of CMCO in exercise policy.

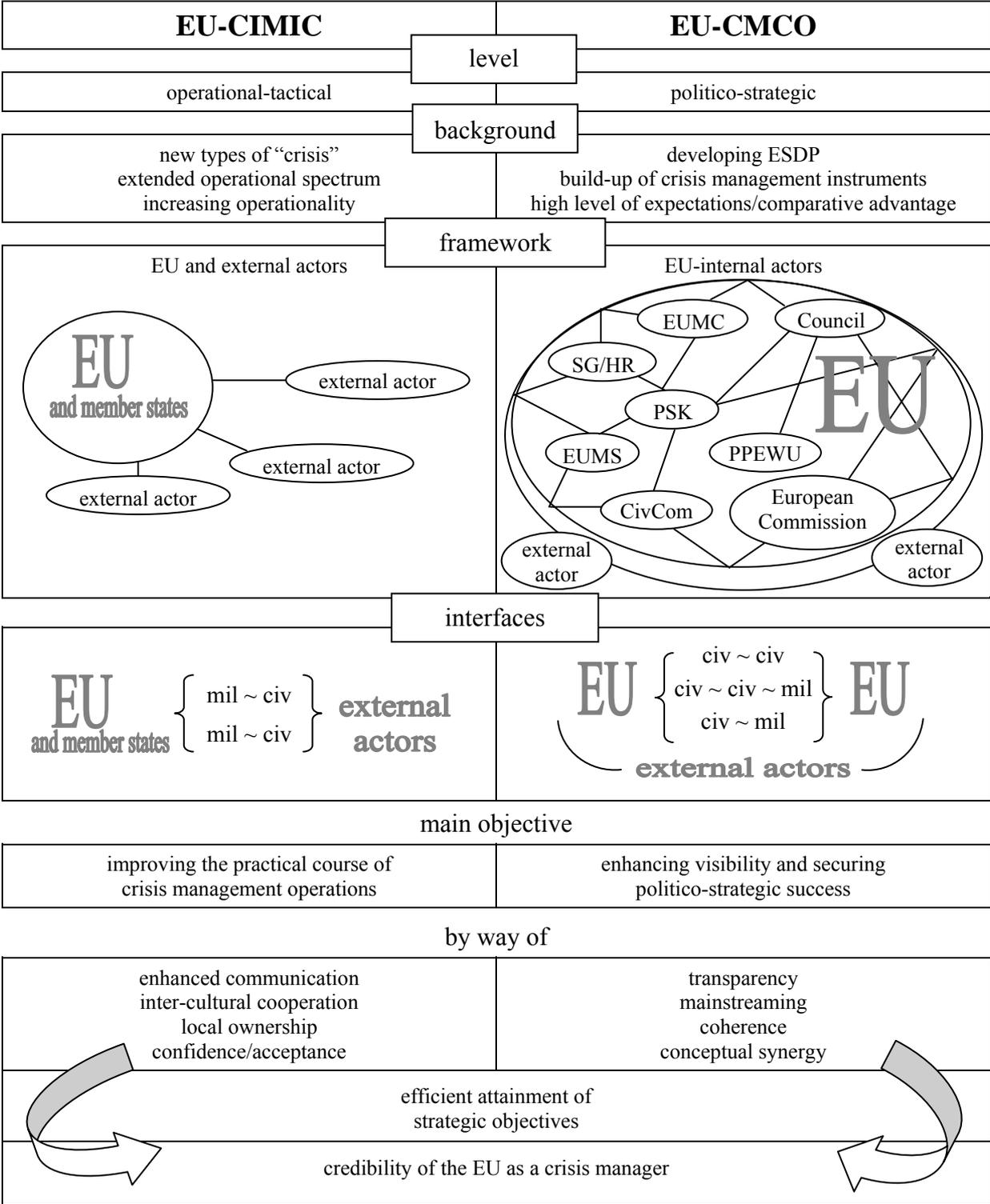
The general enhancement of inter-institutional processes presents a horizontal challenge, whose significance certainly applies to all other aspects of CMCO. Specific instruments, mostly models for procedural standardisation, have been developed for the application of the CMCO concept into practice:

- Crisis Management Concept (CMC)
- Crisis Management Procedures (CMP)
- Guidelines for Joint Fact Finding Missions
- Guidelines for EU Crisis Response Information Activities

These instruments are designed as so-called *living documents* in order to allow for continuous adaptation and the improvement of concepts according to practical necessities.

CMCO as key to the credibility of the EU as a crisis manager

The issue of CMCO has not only gained momentum in the specific context of the ESDP debate, it has also become a core concept in respect to the consolidation of the EU as a global player. Today, the consistent implementation of CMCO is largely seen as key to the credibility of the EU as a crisis manager. Therefore, it is not only of strategic importance, it is also perceived to have a decisive impact on the present and future course of the European project.





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